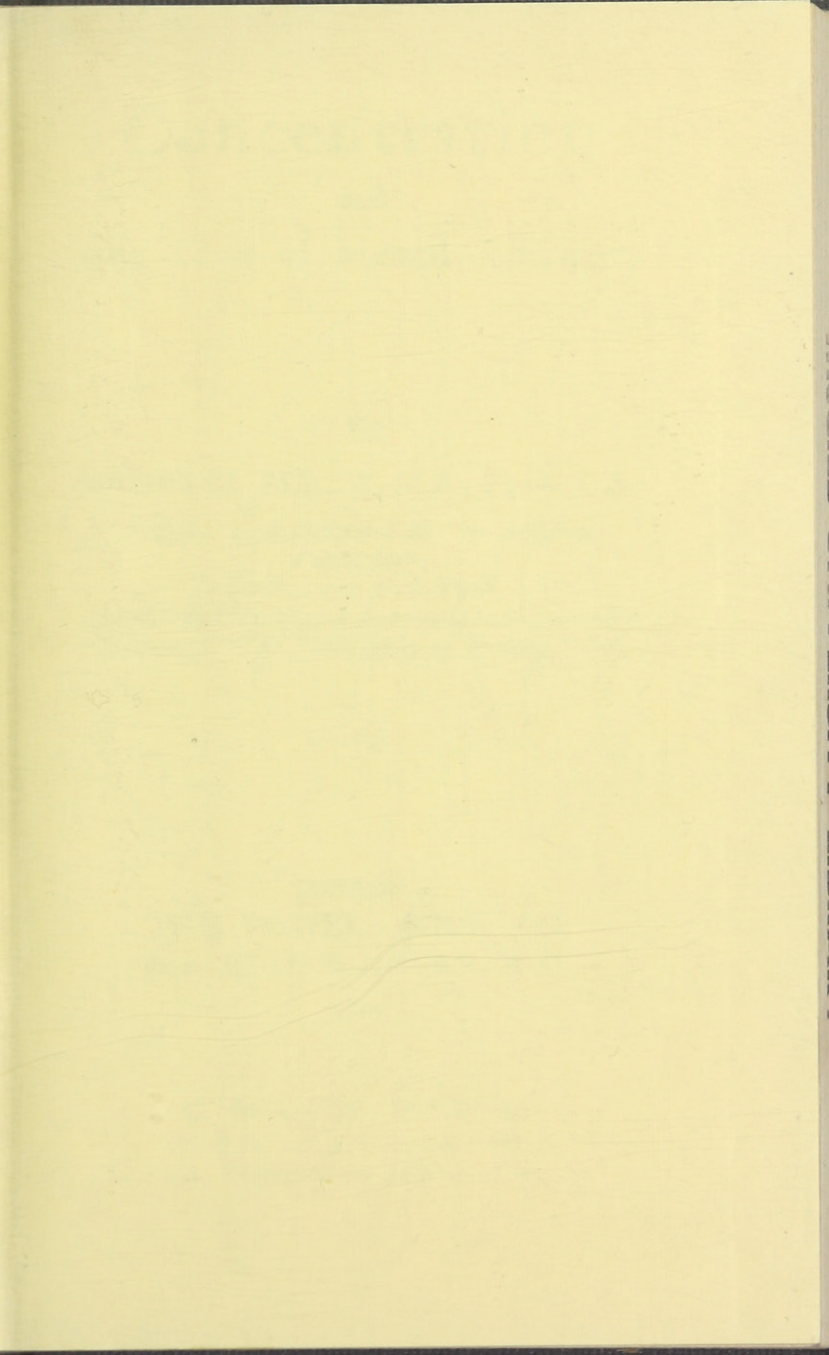
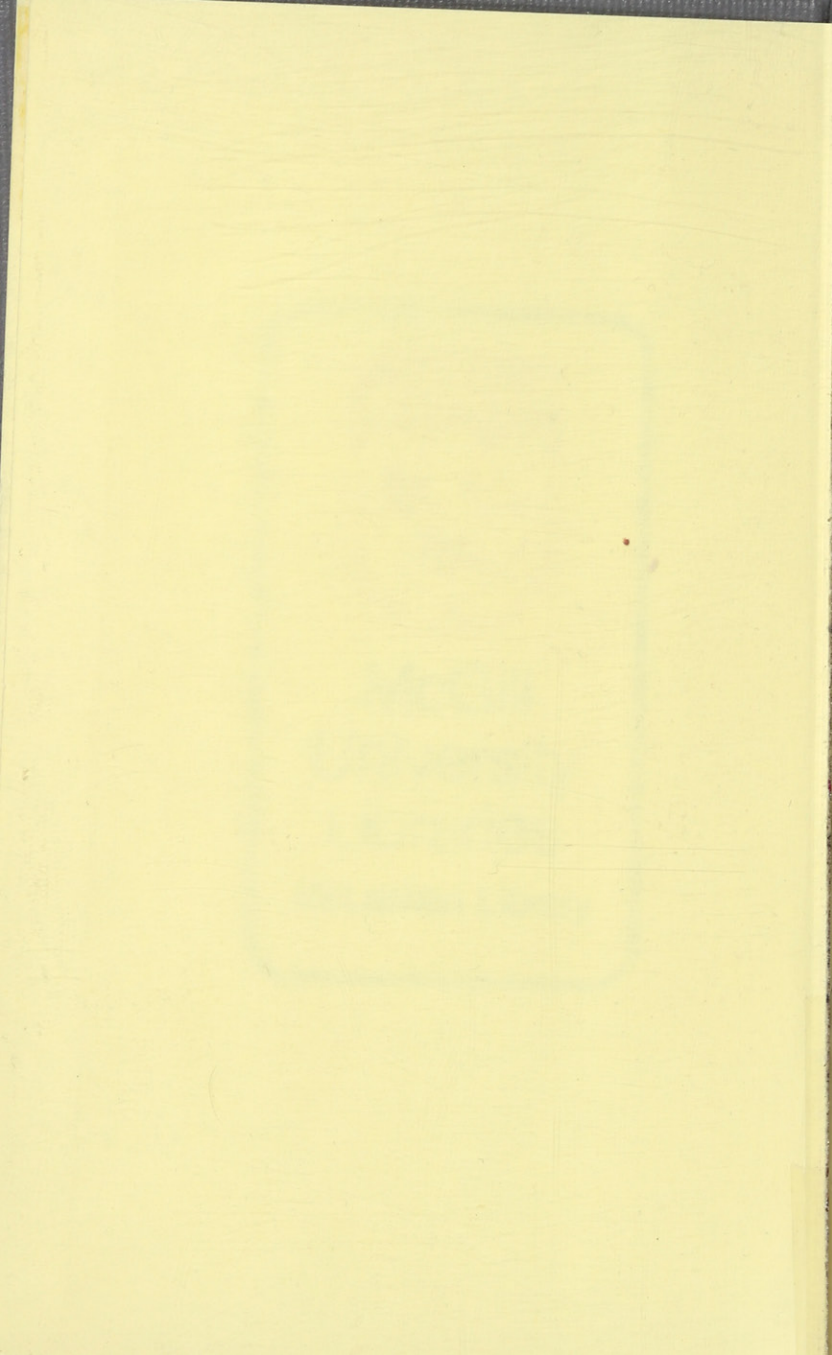




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Concentration

and

The Laws of Mental Efficiency

By

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LONDON :

THE POWER - BOOK CO.

329, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.

1915

C. MAURICE DOBSON,

PUBLISHER & BOOKSELLER,

146, KENSINGTON HIGH ST., W.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

CONCENTRATED CONCENTRATION

To get the best out of this book do not read it straight through. It is a book on Concentration, and it is concentrated. It contains the essence of many books. Every sentence is full of thought and meaning. Here you have no words without purport, but much tuition in little space. If you take one section each day and revise for ten days afterwards you will get good results from the study. To do otherwise is inadvisable. The book can be *read* in an hour, *studied* in a week, *absorbed* in a month, but it will take a year to master it. It is printed as it should be read. Each paragraph is divided from the next by a larger than usual space. Each section is isolated. Take this as a hint as to how it should be read.

Blank spaces are left throughout the Book for Notes on each chapter, and at the end for Notes on practice.

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This book is dedicated to the man who wishes to think for himself, who desires to stand alone and clothe his thought in appropriate language.

Too many people are vendors of second-hand thinking, and the consequent lack of originality is the reason why the mind of the mob so often submerges the mind of the man who strives for an expression of his individuality and personality ; thus originality and initiative become stifled.

We are indebted to the late Prof.

Huxley for the best definition of a trained mind. "That man, I think, has had a liberal education," he says, "who has been so trained in youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work that as a mechanism it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all its parts of equal strength and in smooth working order—ready, like a steam-engine, to be turned to any kind of work, and spin the gossamers as well as forge the anchors of the mind; whose mind is stored with a knowledge of the great and fundamental truths of Nature, and of the laws of her operations; one who, no stunted ascetic, is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience; who has learned to love all

INTRODUCTION

7

beauty, whether of nature or art, to hate all vileness, and to respect others as himself."

HENRY CHELLEW

LONDON,

July, 1915.

NOTES

KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

WASHILL CINCINNATI

The first of these is the fact that the
 world is not a uniform whole, but is
 divided into different parts, each of which
 has its own characteristics and its own
 history.

The second of these is the fact that the
 world is not a static whole, but is
 constantly changing and developing.

The third of these is the fact that the
 world is not a simple whole, but is
 extremely complex and varied.

The fourth of these is the fact that the
 world is not a single whole, but is
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NOTE

KNOWLEDGE OF SELF

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RECORDS OF THE

I

In all probability no age has ever manifested more of the spirit of restlessness than our own. Our civilization becomes more complex as the years roll by, and the result is found in a whole host of mental disorders, chief of which is that of mind-wandering or lack of self-possession or poise.

The Eastern and Western worlds are quite distinct in this regard, and the farther West we go the greater the volume of impetuosity, hustle and haste.

Thinking with us is not an art, rather is it an automatic process whose laws are supposed to be beyond human knowledge.

The chaos of our social life, which eventuates from the riot of thoughts and feelings in the individual is proof positive that balance of mind and sound judgment is not our ruling characteristic. A thousand agencies are afoot to foster this spirit, and the name of manifold excitements is legion.

If we place ourselves under cross-examination we must confess with frankness that few escape the spirit of the age, and hence our lives are over-taxed because of our waste of time and energy.

Self-possession can only come through self-knowledge and self-reverence.

The mystic and mighty powers of the mind are yielding to scientific

research and analysis, and psychology is taking rank as our foremost science. The education of the self is the most imperious claim upon us all ; yet, what little we know of ourselves!

If " Freedom is the right to be responsible for oneself," then it is obvious that self-knowledge is the only way to self-mastery and liberty. Man has made conquest of the two poles, but he has not made conquest thus far of himself.

The value of time is becoming more and more emphasized, not because life is so short, but on account of the fact—as Arnold Bennett has well demonstrated—we do not know how to live on twenty-four hours a day. The time factor is the last and least some of us trouble about. Our days are spent in

fuss and fume and our nights in vain imaginings.

Balance of temperament can only follow long and serious training, of both body and mind. It is not, as some have stated, "A gift of the gods." Success does not lie in our stars, but in ourselves. That there are recognized rules for mind training as well as for the body is becoming commonplace among educationists and those whose duty and privilege it is to train the young.

If we are to learn how to prevent our thoughts becoming fugitive, like sparks flying from the forge, we must reckon no method too hard for constant practice until we possess all our faculties and know how to run efficiently the entire human mechanism.

SOME CAUSES OF
DISTRACTION

II

Mental distraction is caused in the first instance by an untrained mind. Temperament also plays a very large part here, but with training one can win such power over the feelings as to establish poise between the intellect and the emotions.

Some people, as we know, live a purely intellectual life, cold and austere, whilst others live almost entirely governed by the sentiments. The balanced life is a happy combine of both. Lack of will power is a source of continual torment with many people. The powers of volition are either too impulsive, or dormant.

Hasty and faulty judgments have

their roots in wrong thinking and bad mental training. A hasty temper and violent passion may become a splendid asset if trained to express itself in enthusiasm for some profitable and ennobling object in life.

An explosive temperament expressing itself in fits of anger is not only a sign in most people of temporary insanity, but actually induces a poison into the blood which disorganizes the whole body and destroys effective mental activity. This is a well known physiological fact.

Excitement and a continuous craving for varied pleasures is yet another cause of mental disturbance. We admit that life without variety would indeed be a prosaic and humdrum affair, but, none the less, it is well for those who

CAUSES OF DISTRACTION 19

suffer from lack of concentration not to unduly seek constant mental stimulus from outside sources.

ERRORS IN DIET

III

Very hot foods should be avoided as much as possible and condiments also ; and the cruet should be viewed with grave suspicion. This savours as heresy in these days, when matters of food reform are taboo in polite society. But the fact remains, that many, if not most of our mental troubles begin at the table, and, alas! do not end there. Over-eating is certainly not the road to clear, consecutive and analytical thinking.

Alcohol constantly induced will cause the motor areas of the brain to become hardened and less sensitive to sensation and stimulus, and often leads to brain paralysis and sometimes death.

We would not introduce the invidious in a book of this kind, but the consensus of medical testimony is in favour of this view, which is by no means a new one. Certain it is that no one can successfully concentrate following the introduction of alcohol into the system.

To labour this statement would only be to explain the obvious, despite the fact that it is alleged that some actors and singers are at their very best when under the influence of wine or stimulants.

Much also could be said of the dangers of smoking, and all other forms of the use of narcotics.

People who have too many irons in the fire never make great success in life except in rare cases. On the other

hand the monomaniac is a person to be avoided. As a rule such are selfish in the extreme, narrow in vision, and lack capacity for feeling. A life well planned and consistently followed in the pursuit of ideals and ambitions is the one most to be desired.

Bodily fatigue (the result of over exertion) is a well-known cause of mind-wandering. It may be said that walking is the finest of all forms of exercise ; and systems of physical exercise must not be followed if weariness is the result of endeavour to promote the health of the body.

Plain diet, fresh air, deep breathing, will do more to promote mental energy than all other " systems " put together. By breathing exercise we mean ordinary deep nasal breathing, the abdo-

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men being used as a bellows and the chest capacity filled to its utmost with regular and uniform inhalations and exhalations.

Brain fag has a number of well-known causes, and we have already enumerated several.

Worry may be called the greatest humbug in the world, and only the cultivation of an optimistic spirit coupled with care of the body will succeed in slaying this greatest of all mental torments.

Fear has slain more people than all the armies in the world put together. It may be said that fear is a greater enemy of man than death itself, and our regrets are but the embers of our ideals.

Alas for those who live in three

dimensions, who live three lives at once, who live in the past, the present, and the future, because they are full of apprehension and forget that it is possible for any man to own the horizon if he will but possess his own soul in peace ; and practise the art of concentration as suggested by this manual.

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WHAT CONCENTRATION IS

IV

The word "concentration" comes from the Latin "*concentrum*," which may here be interpreted as that point or place where the self or the ego is the centre of all activities in the mind, and from that centre radiates in ever widening areas the human aura or the subtle influence which we now call Personality.

Concentration does not mean to fall into a state of meditation or mental abstraction, a closing of the eye of the mind; on the contrary it means to focalize the whole of the mental energies upon one assigned task or idea.

There is a great gulf fixed between the words "contemplation" and "concentration," and we shall do well in our

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studies to keep this fact ever in mind. Whatever we do we should do systematically and analytically.

The study of mathematics or the study of logic may be looked upon in a supplementary sense as one of the most effective means of promoting concentration. This broad hint may be followed to practical issues by those who care for more involved studies. We should plan each day as much as possible and let nothing interfere with the cultivation of this habit of life.

The ability to concentrate gives a man power of keen analysis of any proposition, task or duty. It enables him to see the whole in all its parts, and to take up any part and place it in its true position or perspective. It is the subservience of the entire mental and

physical powers to the ego, soul or mind.

What is known as the subconscious area of the brain, or the subliminal mind, (that is to say the automatic part which is responsible for the formation of our habits), can be trained to such a high degree of perfection that consecutive thinking and remembering can be always relied upon.

The tendency of the human mind is ever to do over again that which it has done before, and each time more readily than before. Backed by strong desire and sustained attention we should at all times be able to concentrate or focalize our powers, like the rays of the sun in the burning-glass, upon the thing engaging the mind.

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THOUGHT POWER

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V

By mind or thought power we mean organized mental energy based on correct sensations, and we must remember that however lofty the intellect, however great the mind, all effective knowledge and wisdom—which is knowledge rightly applied—has come into the mind through the humble doorways of the five senses.

“Thought power” is a phrase used to indicate that thought itself is a specialized form of mental energy, a thing in itself as real as the Law of Gravitation or the Marconigram, and as mystic.

Shakespeare was right when he declared “There’s nothing either good

or bad but thinking makes it so." Thoughts are things and destroy or create at will. Most of our thinking originates in desire or feeling, and it may be said that the life of man is one-third intellect and two-thirds sentiment.

Usually the thing we desire most ardently we find no difficulty whatever to concentrate upon. But there are times when memory fails, as in the case of our futile endeavour to recall a word or a name, or the details of an event.

There are several causes of this fallacy, chief of which is the lack of a clear impression or sensation when we originally heard the name or word, or witnessed the event. The whole secret of clear thinking lies in two words, "observe" and "compare."

Correct thinking is the inevitable result of correct sensating ; that is to say, the highest use of the five senses which are the main avenues to the mind. Many people look but do not see, many hear but do not understand. A greater amount of attention or degree of observation, coupled with a keener sense of comparison, would bring about inevitably greater powers of the mind.

Indeed, it may be said that the two main laws of concentration are to be found in the words we have already laid emphasis upon, " observe " and " compare."

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HABIT FORMATION

VI

Habit formation is the key to successful concentrating of the mental processes. Here lies the source of our success or failure. The mind, by training and continuous exercise, can be built up like a switchboard connecting from the central power-house of the brain the various sub-stations linked up by the five senses.

System sometimes defeats the end of good literature, but system is the secret, if secret there be, of concentration. Logical progression of thought and action can only issue from a clear plan and a well-defined purpose leading to a well-chosen goal. It is a splendid thing to aim high, but it is much better to hit the mark.

There is one word here which we cannot emphasize too much. It is the word "practise." If at first you don't succeed, if you fail in your efforts to master the law of concentration—practise, practise, practise.

MEMORY TRAINING

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VII

By the word "memory" we mean the retaining power of the mind. The body and brain, the organ of memory, being so dependent one upon the other, it is imperative to obey the laws of health. The whole apparatus of thought can easily be disorganized by neglect of any one of these primary laws.

The brain being the seat of all sensation and thought, it is obvious that whatever impairs the activity of the brain lessens the capacity to think, remember and imagine. Assuming that these laws are observed we may pass on to those known and recognized means whereby the mechanical or automatic processes of thought are developed.

This is pre-eminently a reading age, when books are cheap and free access can be obtained to many libraries. However, it is well to point out that of the vast number of books read by this generation how little is retained! This is on account of the haphazard and unsystematic habits of reading.

Far better would it be for each individual to map out for himself a course of useful study of an instructive and recreative character lasting for twelve months, not more than one book per week, except text books or scientific manuals, and this method would habituate the mind unconsciously in the development of concentration.

All readers possessing poor memories will find it an excellent plan to discuss the books they read, join a reading circle

to this end, and further, by making an outline or digest, they will be astonished at the results following.

INATTENTION AND
ABSTRACTION

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VIII

The secret of emptying the mind of miscellaneous thoughts and concentrating on one theme alone lies in the province of will, which is that form of positive energy whereby we choose our own thoughts and hold them, or through want of such power our thoughts hold us as willing or unwilling captives.

Worry and fear destroy memory and disintegrate almost all the mental faculties. Faith, hope, courage, determination, are positive qualities without which the mind is a chaos of unwilling impulses.

Watch the face of those you converse with, especially the eyes, and by this

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means you will be able to fix your attention upon the matter in hand.

The eye can "speak" as well as the tongue, and riveting the attention upon the face will do more to retain the subject matter of a conversation, sermon or lecture than probably anything we can suggest.

What is called "the Law of Eventuality," *i.e.*, following closely each event as it happens, each phase of the developing plot of a story, each sentence in a conversation or printed page, will assure to the student certain means of attaining power to focus the mental energies. This habit can be so developed as to give to the personality great power of control of others, for the average mind is guilty of most of the mental sins we have already mentioned.

The intensive study of history or the plot of a well-written play will be found conducive to these powers of the mind.

Usually those who have ability to speak several languages and pursue the study of mathematics and geometry are found possessors of good memories and powers of concentration. This is obvious, because each and all of these studies demand effort of the will and the assembling of all the mental energies upon one thing at a time.

To learn a poem off "by heart" is an excellent aid to the development of memory, and in children cannot be emphasized too strongly. Music may be treated in the same way, as also the dramatic arts. Every young man should study the art of debating, and

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link himself up to somebody whose aim is self-improvement and self-culture.

In these days of many excitements it is a fact to be deplored that debating societies are on the wane, with little prospect of being succeeded by better and nobler institutions. The apparent growing distaste for letter writing, owing no doubt to the introduction of the typewriter and other mechanical devices for connecting one's thoughts, is a symptom of the craving for variety and a lack of a steady interest in the more important affairs of life.

In our haste to save time we lose some of the best means of increasing the sum of our powers of personality.

THE LAW OF INTENSITY

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IX

If you increase the pressure of steam in a boiler it becomes more powerful in its action and you get a greater volume of energy. The same law works in the case of electric voltage or light—the result is correspondingly greater. The brighter the light, the more vivid the photograph. The louder the swell of the organ, the greater the mass of sound and the further away it can be heard.

This law operates in every department of life. The man who is most enthusiastic or intensely interested, accomplishes the most in the shortest time. This power of mental intensity draws out the latent energies and exhilarates the whole brain area.

To concentrate we must operate this law and generate interest in all we say or do.

Find that which interests you most, and you will not find it at all difficult to concentrate. A little reflection will teach us that when we are intensely interested we observe keenly, remember accurately, think rapidly and clearly like people inspired from some mysterious source. We can work in a way wonderful to ourselves and achieve greater results—all because of this switching on a greater measure or degree of mental stimulus by the operation of the will.

That great enemy of man—vacillation—can only be conquered by effort of will.

Do one thing at a time.

We make our own thought-world, and to cultivate power in the mental realm we must do only one thing at a time. The thorough person is the one who cultivates assiduously this habit of doing one thing at a time—and the first thing first—second things second, and so on in order of importance each day.

This habit cannot be acquired without much effort, singleness of purpose, determination and grit. Get absorbed in your work by realizing its essential dignity and sacredness. To such a person the clock is not his master—rather is he the master of time, for he works energetically, consecutively and consistently. The live fish go up the stream—the dead go down. He who seeks for the line of least resistance will never be able to concentrate upon a

single idea or purpose unless it be that of some lower impulse or motive.

Our difficulties are not the enemies we imagine them to be, they are oft angels in disguise and are sent to bring out the true metal in our make-up. We must be in earnest to cultivate the virtues and graces of order, punctuality, thoroughness and self-respect, and the supreme power of self-reliance.

Few persons in this world are born with great or unusual gifts—most of those who have achieved greatness have done so by hard work and long toil.

Concentration is much more the power to repose the mind than strain it—indeed we emphasize this distinction lest any trace of mental confusion should lurk in any mind on this point.

We recall the words of one writer:—
“ All self-development—true development—is a question of earnest desire, long-sustained effort, concentrated expectation, and ceaseless reaching forward. It cannot be attained in a minute. It is a thing of forever. But, hard as it is—laborious as it may seem—when we understand that thoughts are things and that the intelligent direction of mental currents enables us to control ourselves (and so our environment), then we come to see the use—the necessity—for training ourselves in so careful a fashion.”

Nature works from within to without—from centre to circumference, and this is why those who know how to work in the thought world are in possession of all that is worth the having. “The kingdom is within you.”

Seek ye that, and all these things shall
be added unto you.

THE LAW OF CONTINUITY AND
PERSISTENCE

E

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X

“Stick to it!” is an excellent motto for the student of concentration. Beyond the mere bald fact that it always pays to stick fast to any proposition worth while to hold on against all odds in the battle of life, it is a curious fact, and one most important, that the human mind by a strange law works like an automatic piece of machinery, and when the will decides that a thought or idea shall be held in the mind—in the direct line of attention — all other thoughts of a like kind come swarming out of the hive of the subconscious area of the brain and assemble at the point of perception, just like a regiment of soldiers on church parade.

Backed by persistence and patience this great principle develops the mind

to an amazing degree. There can never be any physical quietness without conscious and persistent exertion of the will. Only along these lines can we obtain self-control. Like playing a game of billiards, the whole of the physical and mental energies must be riveted upon the immediate thing or purpose in hand.

Unsteady hands and shaking nerves would be fatal here, and so the theory holds good for every department of social and business activity. The diplomat must first learn the art of self-control before he engages in the subtleties of foreign policy, otherwise both he and his country would soon find out the fatal weakness, and possibly war would supervene.

By an effort of will we can learn how

to back-pedal the mechanism of the mind as well as that of a cycle. Un-sound health is perhaps the most prolific source of unsteady nerves, coupled, of course, with a lack of care in matters of diet as we have already stated. This is the fount from which springs most mental aberrations and distractions.

The art of repose is almost one of the lost arts. Indeed, the fuss and fume of the age in which we live is indicative of a whole host of mental diseases as we have already observed ; it is dis-ease, want of ease and rest.

As is well known, there are times when the farmer will let his arable fields lie fallow for years in order that they may reinvigorate from the powers of both air and sunshine and rain, and so rest from productivity in the way of crops,

of roots, or wheat. Why not adopt this method with that field of limitless production—the brain?

Recreation of a kind suitable to the type and temperament of the individual is as important as food and air. We must all learn to stop this feverish haste, this nervous over-reaching of our powers, and conserve our energies for the days yet to be. Trite as this counsel may seem, it lies at the very base of all mental power.

Knowledge is born of silence, and wisdom comes from contact with the outer world. Knowledge is truly power when rightly applied, and we cannot adapt ourselves to our environment or fit into the general scheme of things unless our minds are well under control and we become poised through a trained will.

Electric energy is of use only in so far as we are able to harness it to some useful purpose. Left unfettered it may destroy with all the vividness of the lightning flash in the forest.

So likewise the energies of the mind are capable of rendering service when guided by the trained intellect, and directed by the cultivated will. Unorganized thought is so much waste power, but when the mental energies are organized thought-power becomes the greatest power in the world.

THE LAW OF VIBRATION

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XI

Everybody in the world craves happiness and all strive for it. We may take the word here to mean a state of being where the person feels an inward peace or satisfaction arising from harmony with outer conditions of life and experience.

Instinctively we all know more or less when our social, domestic, or business atmosphere is congenial or calculated to promote our finer feelings and higher impulses. Each individual has a keynote of vibration, along which is the line of least resistance, for the development of the ego or personality.

Cynics and pessimists are those who, so to speak, have struck the wrong

trail, or who have met with some subjective or objective experience which has warped the powers of the mind or the will centre.

The line of vibration is, for each one, his or her line of evolution, and before we settle into any profession or occupation, form friendships, or establish a home, it is of paramount importance that we get an inward assurance that we shall be in harmonic relationship with our entire environment.

Unless this great principle is observed we cannot attain to proficiency in art, science or commerce, nor can we expect at all to be at home with anyone or with any specific undertaking.

The waves of thought which emanate from the brain centres attract or repel

according to their kind. Hence it may be said (with some degree of reservation of course) that we should trust our first impressions of places or persons more than any other sense of perception or impression coming along the sensory nerves from the outer world.

Second thoughts may at times be good and valuable, but first impressions are invariably a token to approach or otherwise. Our instincts, which are instruments tested in a myriad experiences, we do not trust as we ought—the result is that our lives are full of adjustments and readjustments absorbing our thoughts, time and energy, and our existence becomes a nightmare.

The only way to escape from these conditions of life, which hinder rather than help the evolution of the person-

ality, is to endure such personal sacrifice as the occasion or situation may call for, and thus become freed for engaging in those pursuits which alone can create efficient mental activity and dominion of all the powers of the self. The masters of destiny are those who master circumstances by attaining self-mastery.

THE LAW OF ATTRACTION

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XII

“ Like attracts like ” is a saying as old as the hills, yet how few realize what potent agencies for good or ill are wrapped up in that phrase.

We sometimes wonder why certain things transpire in our own daily life and conversation, why certain events come upon us. The reason is here in this well-worn phrase, and we shall do well to pay special attention to it in our study of the law of mind control.

If it is an axiom that “ an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit,” how then can we expect to gain the best things of life unless we prepare the needful mental conditions for their

reception. Like creates like, and if we would achieve certain results we must put ourselves by an effort of will or a change of location or environment into direct harmony with the things we most desire.

The very law of cause and effect stands as witness of this eternal truth, and to observe it is to succeed—to neglect it is to fail. There is a subtle magnetism of thought like that in the magnetic ore. The secret of many of the so-called occult sciences lies here, and has been known to initiates and adepts in all ages.

Miserable thoughts held long enough in the mind bring about misery, and inversely joyous thoughts bring joy in their train. The mind works automatically in this manner, and we may

say that the secret power of personality is to be found here also.

Kindred minds best associate, because of the fact that our thoughts, as we have already observed, possess, as it were, a kind of social instinct, a bias towards communal existence.

This fact is so important that it cannot be impressed upon the student too much. Thought power is made negative or neutralized when we enter an uncongenial atmosphere. Our thoughts cannot breathe, and fail to come to birth in words and deeds.

For activity of mind and energy of thought, we should seek to live in a magnetic field similar to our own. This prime factor alone can bring about harmonious thought vibrations leading

to power of concentration. Should we, however, find it more or less impossible to escape from the meshes of an environment foreign to our impulses and springs of conduct, we can only find relief in adaptation to conditions.

Here again the will alone can save us from both ourselves and circumstances. The "I will" of the trained mind is an almost irresistible power. Self-reliance based upon self-knowledge will eventuate in self-control and comparative happiness. This stoic quality of the mind is the one great power to keep the wavering mind afloat in all times of stress, worry, and care.

POWER TO WILL

UNIVERSITY MICROFILMS

XIII

The mystery of Personality is the great problem in the Science of Psychology. No man can freely express or explain the doctrine of the Trinity in Religion—but the historic fact is there all the same.

Just so in the realm of mental science we claim that there is a trinity of faculties which are conveniently grouped as Power to Think, Feel and Will. Thinking and feeling depend primarily upon sensation—but volitional power is apparently a faculty above these two—the judge presiding in the court of thought and feeling.

This triangle of faculties may be called the area of personality, and they

take sequence in the order of thought, feeling and volition (*i.e.*, the power to act).

Thus we arrive at the composite ego, and by means of this form of analysis are able to see why men act in different ways.

One man is built large in perception or the region of thinking, another has an extensive range of feelings, and another may be of great will power. The reverse holds good also in many other instances.

Impulsiveness is a mental disease, and can only be cured by consistent and persistent application of the laws formulated in this book. Lack of volition is best cured by resolving to do the thing which is hard and distasteful.

Rise early—take a shower-bath—walk several miles in the early air—and the resulting power to control the mechanism of the mind will be more than worth all the apparent agony of refusing to take the line of least resistance.

The drug habit, sleeplessness, and errors of diet disintegrate the dynamic power of the brain and induce procrastination, hesitancy in speed and action, and general mental debility.

Concentration depends almost entirely upon the power to will—the conscious and deliberate act, resulting from a motive which is based upon right reason coupled with correct feeling.

THE INDEPENDENT MIND

XIV

Think for yourself, cultivate your own personality. As we have already observed, too many are slaves to second-hand ideas, and few care to think out a way for themselves.

Most of the so-called ideas we hold are opinions only—they are very seldom convictions, all because we are too impressionable, and lack self-reliance and the courage that goes with conviction. Amid the clamour of ideas invading our minds from without, we have scarce a moment in which to grow thoughts and cultivate initiative, which are really creations of our own personality.

There are too many average people

of no distinct personal characteristics at all. Such facts would be fatal to progress were it not for courageous minds which think for themselves and insist upon the right to express their own thoughts aloud.

Resolve at all costs to go in for intensive mental culture—weeding out the repressive conventionalisms which are oft mental parasites, and concentrate on a definite plan of life and action.

The reliant mind is alone capable of constructive thought. Did we but realize and recognize that our minds are oft the prey of suggestion and thought vibrations from other minds, we should be more on our guard in keeping the senses negative when desirous of focussing upon any plan or project.

To this end will power must be developed and the awareness of the ego be intensified by constant practice of such laws as we have outlined. We conclude with the words of Samuel George.

“ We are surrounded by thought, and burdened with dangerous, insidious unseen forces, which we are sure to absorb unless always in a positive mental attitude. To many of us such an attitude is neither easy nor agreeable.

“ The frequent, though perhaps needless moods of despondency, discouragement, petulance, hurry, anxiety and bodily weakness which come to us partly from the above causes, are continually reminding us that we need this time of silent thought, which will

clear the atmosphere and be to us a source of strength and inspiration.

“ It is deplorable to see the almost universal waste of force shown in the face and character of nearly every person with whom one comes in contact. One cannot pass persons on the street or see them in crowds, even in the most casual way, without noticing it. Successful business men, whose very success blinds them to the realization of these wastes, often point to their so-called success as evidence that the opposite is true, and forget that there were grander heights, a broader success which they failed to reach.

“ It is not possible that they are the ones who have the longer road to travel in correcting their faults and making the most of themselves, for until we

realize our needs we are not likely to make much progress toward supplying them.

“Just as when the apple is ripe it falls, so those who are ripe for improvement and an enlargement of power, capacity and fortune will easily find in this line of thought, clues that will be of great service. If it is ground they have covered they will be the first to see the advantage of joining in the practical thought plans suggested. In its review they may also find new ideas.”

TO CURE MIND-WANDERING

XV

To correct this habit the following exercise is recommended when passing a shop window : accustom yourself to see all that it contains in such a comprehensive glance, that you can a moment afterwards mentally reproduce it. ✓

Follow the same rule with groups of animals and people, and after a few weeks of this practice you will have acquired the habit of giving all your attention to what you see.

It must be understood, however, that this exercise is only a training to educate our attention, and must not be carried to excess. The habit once formed, learn to absorb yourself

at once in what is useful and agreeable, and refuse to dwell upon trifles and annoyances.

It is well also to learn to concentrate our thoughts on any idea, any subject or object of interest, examining it on every side, comparing and reflecting upon its qualities and defects, in order to acquire the habit of judging quickly and correctly when working or reading, and to persevere in this until neither noise nor conversation can distract our attention: and lastly let us learn to profitably reflect upon all we see and hear.

HOW TO INCREASE ATTENTION

XVI

Select an object for attention, in the room, or out of doors—say, a chair or a tree. Gaze at this object attentively, persistently, steadily. Do not strain the eyes: use them naturally. Now note the object's size. Estimate this. Observe its distance from yourself, and from other objects around it. Note its shape. Determine how it differs in shape from other things near it. Clearly note its colour. Does it in this harmonize with its surroundings? If so, how? If not, in what respect? Make out its material. How was it made? What is its true purpose? Is it serving that purpose? Could it in any way be improved? How might this improvement be brought about?

In seeking the above information, *hold the mind rigidly to its task*. It will be hard at first ; but persistence in the exercise will ultimately secure ease and swiftness.

Now, without looking further at the object, write out all results as nearly as you can remember.

Repeat this exercise for ten days, resting two days, with the same object, and on the tenth day look at the object and observe improvement.

HOW TO GAIN POISE

XVII

“ Trembly ” nerves which are the result of disease require very special medical and sometimes metaphysical treatment. Can steadiness be increased by practice? Yes, as for instance in the case of hand trembling. Trembling can frequently be overcome by intelligent practice and determined Will. In the end any such practice must tend to increase the power of Will itself.

The question of the possibility of gaining in steadiness by practice is thus definitely settled.

The chief object of the following suggestions is growth of Will. Hence, Will must always be present in the movements directed. Let the mind

constantly affirm : " Attention! I resolve to will! I am wholly engaged in willing this act!" Practise these rules :

1. Stand erect, with toes turned outward, heels two inches apart. Breathe naturally. In the most resolute mood possible stand perfectly still while counting one hundred at a moderate rate. There should be no movements except those of breathing and blinking. Do not stare. Do not permit the body to sway. Stand firmly, but naturally. Relax and rest one hundred counts. Repeat, with rests, six times.

2. Be seated, erect, but in an easy posture. Remain perfectly quiet as above directed while you count one hundred. Rest as before. Repeat, with rests, six times.

3. Repeat above exercises every day for ten days, with rest of two days. The time suggested is merely an example; practice may well be continued indefinitely.

THE CURE OF WORRY

H

XVIII

In plain, untechnical language, Dr. Geo. W. Jacoby has said, "Worry works its irreparable injury through certain cells of the brain, and that delicate mechanism being the nutritive centre of the body, the other organs become gradually affected. Thus, some disease of these organs or a combination of organic maladies arising, death finally ensues.

"Scientifically, but little is known about those subtle senses—perception, thought, judgment and reason—except that they are closeted behind the frontal bones, and that it is here the Will power is generated to be communicated to every other part of the body. The cells located here, some of

them in constant service, others acting only now and then, are the most important in the brain. They are the mental citadel, and it is here the awful malady we call worry makes its first deadly assault.

“ Considered as a disease, worry, when it does not kill outright, frequently injures to the extent of inducing sickness, physical discomfort, and the inclination to seek relief in suicide. It is, perhaps, one of the worst of ills to which the mind is subject.

“ The remedy for the evil lies in the *training of the Will to cast off cares and seek a change of occupation when the first warning is sounded by Nature* in intellectual lassitude and disinterestedness in life. Relaxation, combined

with recreation, is the certain foe of worry, and '*Don't fret*' one of the *healthiest of maxims.*'

To effectually eradicate a tendency to worry we should recognize its cause, which is ignorance combined with fear. In any case where we have knowledge there is no cause for fear and as a result there is no worry. The cure for worry is, therefore, knowledge which gives one confidence and surety. Thus knowledge is twin brother to faith.

Whenever tempted to worry about any subject or person, at once set up examination of the mental condition of the moment. As soon as that has been done get the necessary information on the matter which will allay fear or do whatever may be necessary to set the mind at rest. Inaction,

when there is fear, allows the thing feared to take possession of the mind and finally to hypnotize it into a paralysed condition, but mental and, if necessary, physical action will dispel the worry as if by magic.

In such conditions as worry Knowledge is the power which sets one free from its dominion.

THE CURE OF HESITANCY

XIX

There are those whose Will power is very good when they have decided what they will do. But they find it difficult to arrive at decision. They balance the pros and cons to weariness, and cannot settle the matter in hand. That is to say, they believe themselves to be engaged as indicated. The truth is, their minds are confused, and it is but vaguely that they think at all. If this is your habit—that of indecision—you must summon your entire strength to its destruction. The difficulty is more or less constitutional; nevertheless it may be overcome.

1. Carry always with you a strong sense of resolution.

2. Cultivate consciousness of self and self-possession.

3. Remember always where you are and what you are doing.

4. Under no circumstances permit yourself to become excited or confused. If you find either of these conditions obtaining, defer the matter until calmness returns. If it cannot be deferred, summon tremendous Will ; remember, " I must be calm ! " and decide as best you can. At the next emergency profit by this experience. But waste no energy in useless reviews of mistakes. Store away the mood of coolness for future use.

NERVE CONTROL THROUGH
BREATH CONTROL

XX

Deep breathing brings about a complete dilation of the lungs, which purifies the blood, and, as a consequence, improves the general health. A large quantity of oxygen inhaled and held in the lungs in contact with the blood completely burns up and eliminates all residue and waste matter, regulating the chemical properties of the body, and destroying all the germs of disease.

Thus the physical constitution is completely reorganized, and we perceive it in a diminution of nervousness, an increasing calmness, and a brighter outlook on life.

Calmness and control of the nerves

being an absolute condition to the development of the will, we can cultivate them by the following exercise that is connected in a way with the above.

Seat yourself comfortably with the body erect, expel all air from the lungs, then inhale deeply through the nostrils for three seconds, diffusing the air successively through all the different parts of the lungs, then exhale. This is a sort of gargling of the lungs that can be repeated ten minutes at a time, three or four times a day, in the open air.

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