

AN IRON WILL

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PRESENTED BY MARK SALMON



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Training The Will

"It is impossible," says Sharman, "to look into the conditions under which the battle of life is being fought, without perceiving how much really depends upon the extent to which the will-power is cultivated, strengthened, and made operative in right directions."

MENTAL DISCIPLINE

"It is," says Professor Mathews, "only by continued, strenuous efforts, repeated again and again, day after day, week after week, and month after month, that the ability can be acquired to fasten the mind to one subject, however abstract or knotty, to the exclusion of everything else. The process of obtaining this self-mastery--this complete command of one's mental powers--is a gradual one, its length varying with the mental constitution of each person; but its acquisition is worth infinitely more than the utmost labor it ever costs."

"Perhaps the most valuable result of all education," it was said by Professor Huxley, "is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not; it is the first lesson which ought to be learned, and, however early a man's training begins, it is probably the last lesson which he learns thoroughly."



DOING THINGS ONCE

When Henry Ward Beecher was asked how it was that he could accomplish so much more than other men, he replied:

"I don't do more, but less, than other people. They do all their work three times over: once in anticipation, once in actuality, once in rumination. I do mine in actuality alone, doing it once instead of three times."

This was by the intelligent exercise of Mr. Beecher's will-power in concentrating his mind upon what he was doing at a given moment, and then turning to something else. Any one who has observed business men closely, has noticed this characteristic. One of the secrets of a successful life is to be able to hold all of our energies upon one point, to focus all of the scattered rays of the mind upon one place or thing.



CENTRALIZING FORCE

The mental reservoir of most people is like a leaky dam which we sometimes see in the country, where the greater part of the water flows out without going over the wheel and doing the work of the mill.

The habit of mind-wandering, of worrying about this and that,
"Genius, that power which dazzles mortal eyes,
Is oft but Perseverance in disguise."

Many a man would have been a success had he connected his fragmentary efforts. Spasmodic, disconnected attempts, without concentration, uncontrolled by any fixed idea, will never bring success. It is continuity of purpose alone that achieves results.

LEARNING TO SWIM

The way to learn to run is to run, the way to learn to swim is to swim. The way to learn to develop will-power is by the actual exercise of will-power in the business of life.

"The man that exercises his will," says an English essayist, "makes it a stronger and more effective force in proportion to the extent to which such exercise is intelligently and perseveringly maintained"



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"I WILL."

"There are no two words in the English language which stand out in bolder relief, like kings upon a checker-board, to so great an extent as the words 'I will.' There is strength, depth and solidity, decision, confidence and power, determination, vigor and individuality, in the round, ringing tone which characterizes its delivery. It talks to you of triumph over difficulties, of victory in the face of discouragement, of will to promise and strength to perform, of lofty and daring enterprise, of unfettered aspirations, and of the thousand and one solid impulses by which man masters impediments in the way of progression."

As one has well said: "He who is silent is forgotten; he who does not advance falls back; he who stops is overwhelmed, distanced, crushed; he who ceases to become greater, becomes smaller; he who leaves off gives up; the stationary is the beginning of the end--it precedes death; to live is to achieve, to will without ceasing."



"THE WILLS, THE WON'TS, AND THE CAN'TS."

"There are three kinds of people in the world," says a recent writer, "the wills, the won'ts, and the can'ts. The first accomplish everything; the second oppose everything; the third fail in everything."

The shores of fortune, as Foster says, are covered with the stranded wrecks of men of brilliant ability, but who have wanted courage, faith, and decision, and have therefore perished in sight of more resolute but less capable adventurers, who succeeded in making port.



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A TAILOR'S NEEDLE

It is in one of Ben Jonson's old plays: "When I once take the humour of a thing, I am like your tailor's needle--I go through with it."

This is not different from Richelieu, who said: "When I have once taken a resolution, I go straight to my aim; I overthrow all, I cut down all."

And in business affairs the counsel of Rothschild is to the same effect: "Do without fail that which you determine to do."

Gladstone's children were taught to accomplish *to the end* whatever they might begin, no matter how insignificant the undertaking might be.



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WHAT IS WORSE THAN RASHNESS

It is irresolution that is worse than rashness. "He that shoots," says Feltham, "may sometimes hit the mark; but he that shoots not at all can never hit it. Irresolution is like an ague; it shakes not this nor that limb, but all the body is at once in a fit."

The man who is forever twisting and turning, backing and filling, hesitating and dawdling, shuffling and parleying, weighing and balancing, splitting hairs over non-essentials, listening to every new motive which presents itself, will never accomplish anything. But the positive man, the decided man, is a power in the world, and stands for something; you can measure him, and estimate the work that his energy will accomplish.



CONSCIOUS POWER

"There is hardly a reader," says an experienced educator, "who will not be able to recall the early life of at least one young man whose childhood was spent in poverty, and who, in boyhood, expressed a firm desire to secure a higher education. If, a little later, that desire became a declared resolve, soon the avenues opened to that end. That desire and resolve created an atmosphere which attracted the forces necessary to the attainment of the purpose. Many of these young men will tell us that, as long as they were hoping and striving and longing, mountains of difficulty rose before them; but that when they fashioned their hopes into fixed purposes aid came unsought to help them on the way."



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DO YOU BELIEVE IN YOURSELF?

The man without self-reliance and an iron will is the plaything of chance, the puppet of his environment, the slave of circumstances. Are not doubts the greatest of enemies? If you would succeed up to the limit of your possibilities, must you not constantly hold to the belief that you are success-organized, and that you will be successful, no matter what opposes? You are never to allow a shadow of doubt to enter your mind that the Creator intended you to win in life's battle. Regard every suggestion that your life may be a failure, that you are not made like those who succeed, and that success is not for you, as a traitor, and expel it from your mind as you would a thief from your house.

There is something sublime in the youth who possesses the spirit of boldness and fearlessness, who has proper confidence in his ability to do and dare.

Never admit defeat or poverty. Stoutly assert your divine right to hold your head up and look the world in the face; step bravely to the front whatever opposes, and the world will make way for you. No one will insist upon your rights while you yourself doubt that you have any.

DR. CUYLER

"It is astonishing," says Dr. Theodore Cuyler, "how many men lack this power of 'holding on' until they reach the goal. They can make a sudden dash, but they lack grit. They are easily discouraged. They get on as long as everything goes smoothly, but when there is friction they lose heart. They depend on stronger personalities for their spirit and strength. They lack independence or originality. They only dare to do what others do. They do not step boldly from the crowd and act fearlessly."



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FORCE OF WILL IN CAMP AND FIELD

It was an iron will that gave Nelson command of the British fleet, a title, and a statue at Trafalgar Square. It was the keynote of his character when he said, "When I don't know whether to fight or not, I always fight."



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NAPOLEON

"What would you do if you were besieged in a place entirely destitute of provisions?" asked the examiner, when Napoleon was a cadet.

"If there were anything to eat in the enemy's camp, I should not be concerned."

When Paris was in the hands of a mob, and the authorities were panic-stricken, in came a man who said, "I know a young officer who can quell this mob."

"Send for him." Napoleon was sent for; he came, he subjugated the mob, he subjugated the authorities, he ruled France, then conquered Europe.



Napolean Continued

May 10, 1796, Napoleon carried the bridge at Lodi, in the face of the Austrian batteries, trained upon the French end of the structure. Behind them were six thousand troops. Napoleon massed four thousand grenadiers at the head of the bridge, with a battalion of three hundred carbineers in front. At the tap of the drum the foremost assailants wheeled from the cover of the street wall under a terrible hail of grape and canister, and attempted to pass the gateway to the bridge. The front ranks went down like stalks of grain before a reaper; the column staggered and reeled backward, and the valiant grenadiers were appalled by the task before them. Without a word or a look of reproach, Napoleon placed himself at their head, and his aids and generals rushed to his side. Forward again over heaps of dead that choked the passage, and a quick run counted by seconds only carried the column across two hundred yards of clear space, scarcely a shot from the Austrians taking effect beyond the point where the platoons wheeled for the first leap. *The guns of the enemy were not aimed at the advance. The advance was too quick for the Austrian gunners.* So sudden and so miraculous was it all, that the Austrian artillerists abandoned their guns instantly, and their supports fled in a panic instead of rushing to the front and meeting the French onslaught. This Napoleon had counted on in making the bold attack.

What was Napoleon but the thunderbolt of war? He once journeyed from Spain to Paris at seventeen miles an hour in the saddle.

"Is it *possible* to cross the path?" asked Napoleon of the engineers who had been sent to explore the dreaded pass of St. Bernard.

"Perhaps," was the hesitating reply, "it is within the limits of *possibility*."

"*Forward, then.*"

Magnificent Will Power

It was this which was the basis of General Wheeler's unparalleled military advancement: a second lieutenant at twenty-three, a colonel at twenty-four, a brigadier-general at twenty-five, a major-general at twenty-six, a corps commander at twenty-seven, and a lieutenant-general at twenty-eight.

General Wheeler had sixteen horses killed under him, and a great number wounded. His saddle equipments and clothes were frequently struck by the missiles of the enemy. He was three times wounded, once painfully. He had thirty-two staff officers, or acting staff officers, killed or wounded. In almost every case they were immediately by his side. No officer was ever more exposed to the missiles of death than Joseph Wheeler.

CONQUERORS OF FORTUNE

Benjamin Franklin had this tenacity of purpose in a wonderful degree. When he started in the printing business in Philadelphia, he carried his material through the streets on a wheelbarrow. He hired one room for his office, work-room, and sleeping-room. He found a formidable rival in the city and invited him to his room. Pointing to a piece of bread from which he had just eaten his dinner, he said:

"Unless you can live cheaper than I can, you cannot starve me out."



COMMERCIAL COURAGE

Cyrus W. Field had retired from business with a large fortune when he became possessed with the idea that by means of a cable laid upon the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, telegraphic communication could be established between Europe and America.

He plunged into the undertaking with all the force of his being. It was an incredibly hard contest: the forests of Newfoundland, the lobby in Congress, the unskilled handling of brakes on his Agamemnon cable, a second and a third breaking of the cable at sea, the cessation of the current in a well-laid cable, the snapping of a superior cable on the Great Eastern--all these availed not to foil the iron will of Field, whose final triumph was that of mental energy in the application of science.



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PROCEED, AND LIGHT WILL DAWN

It is related by Arago that he found under the cover of a text book he was binding a short note from D'Alembert to a student:

"Go on, sir, go on. The difficulties you meet with will resolve themselves as you advance. Proceed; and light will dawn, and shine with increasing clearness on your path."

"That maxim," said Arago, "was my greatest master in mathematics."

Balzac

Had Balzac been easily discouraged he would have hesitated at the words of warning given by his father:

"Do you know that in literature a man must be either a king or a beggar?"

"Very well," was the reply, "*I will be a king.*"

His parents left him to his fate in a garret. For ten years he fought terrible battles with hardship and poverty, but won a great victory at last. He won it after producing forty novels that did not win.



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"I TRAMPLE ON IMPOSSIBILITIES"

"It is all very well," said Charles J. Fox, "to tell me that a young man has distinguished himself by a brilliant first speech. He may go on satisfied with his first triumph; but show me a young man who has not succeeded at first, and has then gone on, and I will back that man to do better than those who succeeded at the first trial."



PERSISTENT PURPOSE

Persistency of purpose is a power. It creates confidence in others. Everybody believes in the determined man. When he undertakes anything his battle is half won, because not only he himself, but every one who knows him, believes that he will accomplish whatever he sets out to do. People know that it is useless to oppose a man who uses his stumbling-blocks as stepping-stones; who is not afraid of defeat; who never, in spite of calumny or criticism, shrinks from his task; who never shirks responsibility; who always keeps his compass pointed to the north star of his purpose, no matter what storms may rage about him.

The persistent man never stops to consider whether he is succeeding or not. The only question with him is how to push ahead, to get a little farther along, a little nearer his goal. Whether it lead over mountains, rivers, or morasses, he must reach it. Every other consideration is sacrificed to this one dominant purpose.

The success of a dull or average youth and the failure of a brilliant one is a constant surprise in American history. But if the different cases are closely analyzed we shall find that the explanation lies in the staying power of the seemingly dull boy, the ability to stand firm as a rock under all circumstances, to allow nothing to divert him from his purpose.



SUCCESS AGAINST ODDS

Success is not measured by what a man accomplishes, but by the opposition he has encountered, and the courage with which he has maintained the struggle against overwhelming odds. Not the distance we have run, but the obstacles we have overcome, the disadvantages under which we have made the race, will decide the prizes.

"It is defeat," says Henry Ward Beecher, "that turns bone to flint, and gristle to muscle, and makes men invincible, and formed those heroic natures that are now in ascendancy in the world. Do not, then, be afraid of defeat. You are never so near to victory as when defeated in a good cause."



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To Conclude

"Every condition, be it what it may," says Channing, "has hardships, hazards, pains. We try to escape them; we pine for a sheltered lot, for a smooth path, for cheering friends, and unbroken success. But Providence ordains storms, disasters, hostilities, sufferings; and the great question whether we shall live to any purpose or not, whether we shall grow strong in mind and heart, or be weak and pitiable, depends on nothing so much as on our use of the adverse circumstances. Outward evils are designed to school our passions, and to rouse our faculties and virtues into intenser action. Sometimes they seem to create new powers. Difficulty is the element, and resistance the true work of man. Self-culture never goes on so fast as when embarrassed circumstances, the opposition of men or the elements, unexpected changes of the times, or other forms of suffering, instead of disheartening, throw us on our inward resources, turn us for strength to God, clear up to us the great purpose of life, and inspire calm resolution. No greatness or goodness is worth much, unless tried in these fires."