



AS A WOMAN THINKETH

JAMES ALLEN' S CLASSIC TRANSCRIBED FOR WOMEN

Who was James Allen?



Although his book, *As A Man Thinketh*, has inspired millions around the world and is partly responsible for launching an entire self-improvement industry, very little is known about its author, James Allen. He was born in Leicester, England in 1864 and worked as a personal secretary for an executive of a large English corporation until 1902. At the age of 38 he "retired" to writing and moved with his wife to a small cottage at Ilfracombe, England. He penned more than 20 works before suddenly passing away at the age of 48.

As A Man Thinketh has influenced many contemporary writers including Norman Vincent Peale, Earl Nightingale, Denis Waitley and Tony Robbins, among others.

His "little volume", as he called it, has been translated into five major languages, inspiring millions of readers to recognize that man's visions can become reality, simply through the power of thought.

FORWARD

This little volume (the result of meditation and experience) is not intended as an exhaustive treatise on the much-written-upon subject of the power of thought. It is suggestive rather than explanatory, its object being to stimulate women and women to the discovery and perception of the truth that "They themselves are makers of themselves" by virtue of the thoughts which they choose and encourage; that mind is the master weaver, both of the inner garment of character and the outer garment of circumstance, and that, as they may have hitherto woven in ignorance and pain they may now weave in enlightenment and happiness.

James Allen
Ilfracombe, England

I: THOUGHT AND CHARACTER

The aphorism, "As a woman thinketh in her heart, so is she," not only embraces the whole of a woman's being, but is so comprehensive as to reach out to every condition and circumstance of her life. A woman is literally what she thinks, her character being the complete sum of all her thoughts.

As the plant springs from, and could not be without, the seed, so every act of woman springs from the hidden seeds of thought, and could not have appeared without them. This applies equally to those acts called "spontaneous" and "unpremeditated" as to those which are deliberately executed.

Act is the blossom of thought, and joy and suffering are its fruits; thus does a woman garner in the sweet and bitter fruitage of her own husbandry.

Thought in the mind hath made us.
What we are by thought was wrought and built.
If a woman's mind hath evil thoughts,
Pain comes on her as comes the wheel the ox behind.
If one endure in purity of thought,
Joy follows her as her own shadow – sure.

Woman is a growth by law, and not a creation by artifice, and cause and effect are as absolute and undeviating in the hidden realm of thought as in the world of visible and material things. A noble and Godlike character is not a thing of favor or chance, but is the natural result of continued effort in right thinking, the effect of long-cherished association with Godlike thoughts. An ignoble and bestial character, by the same process, is the result of the continued harboring of groveling thoughts.

Woman is made or unmade by herself, in the armory of thought she forges the weapons by which she destroys herself; she also fashions the tools with which she builds for herself heavenly mansions of joy and strength and peace. By the right choice and true application of thought, woman ascends to the Divine Perfection; by the abuse and wrong application of thought, she descends below the level of the beast. Between these two extremes are all the grades of character, and woman is their maker and master.

Of all the beautiful truths pertaining to the soul which have been restored and brought to light in this age, none is more gladdening or fruitful of divine promise and confidence than this—that woman is the master of thought, the molder of character, and the maker and shaper of condition, environment, and destiny.

As a being power, intelligence, and love, and the lord of her own thoughts, woman holds the key to every situation, and contains within herself that transforming and regenerative agency by which she may make herself what she wills.

Woman is always the master, even in her weakest and most abandoned state; but in her weakness and degradation she is foolish master who misgoverns her household. When she begins to reflect upon her condition and search diligently for the Law upon which her being is established, she then becomes the wise master, directing her energies with intelligence, and fashioning her thoughts to fruitful issues. Such is the conscious master, and woman can only thus become by discovering within herself the laws of thought; which discovery is totally a matter of application, self-analysis and experience.

Only by much searching and mining are gold and diamonds obtained, and woman can find every truth connected with her being if she will dig deep into the mine of her soul; and that she is the maker of her character, the molder of her life, and the builder of her destiny, she may unerringly prove, if she will watch, control, and alter her thoughts, tracing their effects upon herself, upon others, and upon her life and circumstances, linking cause and effect by patient practice and investigation, and utilizing her every experience, even the most trivial, everyday occurrence, as a means of obtaining that knowledge of herself which is Understanding, Wisdom, Power. In this direction, as in no other, is the law absolute that "She that seeketh findeth; and to her that knocketh it shall be opened"; for only by patience, practice, and ceaseless importunity can a woman enter the Door of the Temple of Knowledge.

II: EFFECT OF THOUGHT ON CIRCUMSTANCES

A woman's mind may be likened to a garden, which may be intelligently cultivated or allowed to run wild; but whether cultivated or neglected, it must, and will bring forth. If no useful seeds are put into it, then an abundance of useless weed-seeds will fall therein, and will continue to produce their kind.

Just as a gardener cultivates her plot, keeping it free from weeds, and growing the flowers and fruits which she requires, so may a woman tend the garden of her mind, weeding out all the wrong, useless, and impure thoughts, and cultivation toward perfection the flowers and fruits of right, useful, and pure thoughts. By pursuing this process, a woman sooner or later discovers that she is the master-gardener of her soul, the director of her life. She also reveals, within herself, the flaws of thought, and understands, with ever-increasing accuracy, how the thought-forces and mind-elements operate in the shaping of her character, circumstances, and destiny.

Thought and character are one, and as character can only manifest and discover itself through environment and circumstance, the outer conditions of a person's life will always be found to be harmoniously related to her inner state. This does not mean that a woman's circumstances at any given time are an indication of this entire character, but that those circumstances are so intimately connected with some vital thought-element within herself that, for the time being, they are indispensable to her development.

Every woman is where she is by the law of her being; the thoughts which she has built into her character have brought her there, and in the arrangement of her life there is no element of chance, but all is the result of a law which cannot err. This is just as true of those who feel "out of harmony" with their surroundings as of those who are contented with them.

As a progressive and evolving being, woman is where she is that she may learn that she may grow; and as she learns the spiritual lesson which any circumstance contains for her, it passes away and gives place to other circumstances.

Woman is buffeted by circumstances so long as she believes herself to be the creature of outside conditions, but when she realizes that she is a creative power, and that she may command the hidden soil and seeds of her being out of which circumstances grow, she then becomes the rightful master of herself.

That circumstances grow out of thought every woman knows who has for any length of time practiced self-control and self-purification, for she will have noticed that the alteration in her circumstances has been in exact ratio with her altered mental condition. So true is this that when a woman earnestly applies herself to remedy the defects in her character, and makes swift and marked progress, she passes rapidly through a succession of vicissitudes.

The soul attracts that which it secretly harbors; that which it loves, and also that which it fears; it reaches the height of its cherished aspirations; it falls to the level of its uncastigated desires; and circumstances are the means by which the soul receives its own.

Every thought-seed sown or allowed to fall into the mind, and to take root there, produces its own, blossoming sooner or later into act, and bearing its own fruitage of opportunity and circumstance. Good thoughts bear good fruit, bad thoughts bad fruit.

The outer world of circumstances shapes itself to the inner world of thought, and both pleasant and unpleasant external conditions are factors which make for the ultimate good of the individual. As the reaper of her own harvest, woman learns both by suffering and bliss.

Following the inmost desires, aspirations, thoughts, by which she allows herself to be dominated (pursuing the will-o'-the-wisps of impure imagining or steadfastly walking the highway of strong and high endeavor), a woman at last arrives at their fruition and fulfillment in the outer condition of her life.

The laws of growth and adjustment everywhere obtain.

A woman does not come to the almshouse or the jail by the tyranny of fate or circumstance, but by the pathway of groveling thoughts and base desires. Nor does a pure-minded woman fall suddenly into crime by stress of any mere external force; the criminal thought had long been secretly fostered in the heart, and the hour of opportunity revealed its gathered power. Circumstance does not make the woman; it reveals her to herself. No such conditions can exist as descending into vice and its attendant sufferings apart from vicious inclinations; or ascending into virtue and its pure happiness without the continued cultivation of virtuous aspirations; and woman, therefore, as the lord and master of thought, is the maker of herself, the shaper of and author of environment. Even at birth the soul comes of its own, and through every step of its earthly pilgrimage it attracts those combinations of conditions which reveal itself, which are the reflections of its own purity and impurity, its strength and weakness.

Women do not attract that which they want, but that which they are. Their whims, fancies, and ambitions are thwarted at every step, but their inmost thoughts and desires are fed with their own food, be it foul or clean. The "divinity that shapes our ends" is in ourselves; it is our very self. Woman is manacled only by herself: thought and action are the jailors of Fate—they imprison, being base; they are also the angels of Freedom—they liberate, being noble.

Not what she wishes and prays for does a woman get, but what she justly earns. Her wishes and prayers are only gratified and answered when they harmonize with her thoughts and actions.

In the light of this truth, what then, is the meaning of "fighting against circumstances"? It means that a woman is continually revolting against an effect without, while all the time she is nourishing and preserving its cause in her heart.

That cause may take the form of a conscious vice or an unconscious weakness; but whatever it is, it stubbornly retards the efforts of its possessor, and thus calls aloud for remedy.

Women are anxious to improve their circumstances, but are unwilling to improve themselves; they therefore remain bound. The woman who does not shrink from self-crucifixion can never fail to accomplish the object upon which her heart is set. This is as true of earthly as of heavenly things. Even the woman whose sole object is to acquire wealth must be prepared to make great personal sacrifices before she can accomplish her object; and how much more so she who would realize a strong and well-poised life?

Here is a woman who is wretchedly poor. She is extremely anxious that her surroundings and home comforts should be improved, yet all the time she shirks her work, and considers she is justified in trying to deceive her employer on the ground of the insufficiency of her wages. Such a woman does not understand the simplest rudiments of those principles which are the basis of true prosperity, and is not only totally unfitted to rise out of her wretchedness, but is actually attracting to herself a still deeper wretchedness by dwelling in, and acting out, indolent, deceptive, and unmanly thoughts.

Here is a rich woman who is the victim of a painful and persistent disease as the result of gluttony. She is willing to give large sums of money to get rid of it, but she will not sacrifice her gluttonous desires. She wants to gratify her taste for rich and unnatural viands and have her health as well. Such a woman is totally unfit to have health, because she has not yet learned the first principles of a healthy life.

Here is an employer of labor who adopts crooked measures to avoid paying the regulation wage, and, in the hope of making larger profits, reduces the wages of her work-people. Such a woman is altogether unfitted for prosperity, and when she finds herself bankrupt, both as regards reputation and riches, she blames circumstances, not knowing that she is the sole author of her condition.

I have introduced these three cases merely as illustrative of the truth that woman is the causer (though nearly always unconsciously) of her circumstances, and that, whilst aiming at a good end, she is continually frustrating its accomplishment by encouraging thoughts and desires which cannot possibly harmonize with that end. Such cases could be multiplied and varied almost indefinitely, but this is not necessary, as the reader can, if she so resolves, trace the action of the laws of thought in her own mind and life, and until this is done, more external facts cannot serve as a ground of reasoning.

Circumstances, however, are so complicated, thought is so deeply rooted, and the conditions of happiness vary so vastly with individuals, that a woman's entire soul-condition (although it may be known to herself) cannot be judged by another from the external aspect of her life alone. A woman may be honest in certain directions, yet suffer privations; a woman may be dishonest in certain directions, yet acquire wealth; but the conclusion usually formed that the one woman fails because of her particular honesty, and that the other prospers because of her particular dishonesty, is the result of a superficial judgment, which assumes that the dishonest woman is almost totally corrupt, and honest woman almost entirely virtuous. In the light of a deeper knowledge and wider experience, such judgment is found to be erroneous. The dishonest woman may have some admirable virtues which the other does not possess; and the honest woman obnoxious vices which are absent in the other. The honest woman reaps the good results of her honest thoughts and acts; she also brings upon herself the sufferings which her vices produce. The dishonest woman likewise garners her own suffering and happiness.

It is pleasing to human vanity to believe that one suffers because of one's virtue; but no until a woman has extirpated every sickly, bitter, and impure thought from her mind, and washed every sinful stain from her soul, can she be in a position to know and declare that her sufferings are the result of her good, and not of her bad qualities; and on the way to, yet long before she has reached, that supreme perfection, she will have found, working in her mind and life, the Great Law which is absolutely just, and which cannot, therefore, give good for evil, evil for good. Possessed of such knowledge, she will then know, looking back upon her past ignorance and blindness, that her life is, and always was, justly ordered, and that all her past experiences, good and bad, were the equitable outworking of her evolving, yet unevolved self.

Good thoughts and actions can never produce bad results; bad thoughts and actions can never produce good results. This is but saying that nothing can come from corn but corn, nothing from nettles but nettles. Women understand this law in the natural world, and work with it; but few understand it in the mental and moral world (though its operation there is just as simple and undeviating), and they, therefore, do not cooperate with it.

Suffering is always the effect of wrong thought in some direction. It is an indication that the individual is out of harmony with herself, with the Law of her being. The sole and supreme use of suffering is to purify, to burn out all that is useless and impure. Suffering ceases for her who is pure. There could be no object in burning gold after the dross had been removed, and a perfectly pure and enlightened being could not suffer.

The circumstances which a woman encounters with suffering are the result of her own mental inharmony. The circumstances which a woman encounters with blessedness are the result of her own mental harmony. Blessedness, not material possessions, is the measure of right thought; wretchedness, not lack of material

possessions, is the measure of wrong thought. A woman may be cursed and rich; she may be blessed and poor. Blessedness and riches are only joined together when the riches are rightly and wisely used; and the poor woman only descends into wretchedness when she regards her lot as a burden unjustly imposed.

Indigence and indulgence are the two extremes of wretchedness. They are both equally unnatural and the result of mental disorder. A woman is not rightly conditioned until she is a happy, healthy, and prosperous being; and happiness, health, and prosperity are the result of a harmonious adjustment of the inner with the outer, of the woman with her surroundings.

A woman only begins to be a woman when she ceases to whine and revile, and commences to search for the hidden justice which regulates her life. And as she adapts her mind to that regulation factor, she ceases to accuse others as the cause of her condition, and builds herself up in strong and noble thoughts; ceases to kick against circumstances, but begins to use them as aids to her more rapid progress, and as a means of discovering the hidden powers and possibilities within herself.

Law, not confusion, is the dominating principle in the universe; justice, not injustice, is the soul and substance of life; and righteousness, not corruption, is the molding and moving force in the spiritual government of the world. This being so, woman has but to right herself to find that the universe is right, and during the process of putting herself right, she will find that as she alters her thoughts towards things and other people, things and other people will alter towards her.

The proof of this truth is in every person, and it therefore admits of easy investigation by systematic introspection and self-analysis. Let a woman radically alter her thoughts, and she will be astonished at the rapid transformation it will effect in the material conditions of her life. Women imagine that thought can be kept secret, but it cannot; it rapidly crystallizes into habit, and habit solidifies into circumstance. Bestial thoughts crystallize into habits of drunkenness and sensuality, which solidify into circumstances of destruction and disease: impure thoughts of every kind crystallize into enervating and confusing habits, which solidify into distracting and adverse circumstances: thoughts of fear, doubt, and indecision crystallize into weak, unmanly, and irresolute habits, which solidify into circumstances of failure, indigence, and slavish dependence: lazy thoughts crystallize into habits of uncleanness and dishonesty, which solidify into circumstances of foulness and beggary: hateful and condemnatory thoughts crystallize into habits of accusation and violence, which solidify into circumstances of injury and persecution: selfish thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of self-seeking, which solidify into circumstances more or less distressing.

On the other hand, beautiful thoughts of all kinds crystallize into habits of grace and kindness, which solidify into genial and sunny circumstances: pure thoughts crystallize into habits of temperance and self-control, which solidify into circumstances of repose and peace: thoughts of courage, self-reliance, and decision

crystallize into many habits, which solidify into circumstances of success, plenty, and freedom: energetic thoughts crystallize into habits of cleanliness and industry, which solidify into circumstances of pleasantness: gentle and forgiving thoughts crystallize into habits of gentleness, which solidify into protective and preservative circumstances: loving and unselfish thoughts crystallize into habits of self-forgetfulness for others, which solidify into circumstances of sure and abiding prosperity and true riches.

A particular train of thought persisted in, be it good or bad, cannot fail to produce its results on the character and circumstances. A woman cannot directly choose her circumstances, but she can choose her thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape her circumstances.

Nature helps every woman to gratification of the thoughts which she most encourages, and opportunities are presented which will most speedily bring to the surface both the good and the evil thoughts.

Let a woman cease from her sinful thoughts, and all the world will soften towards her, and be ready to help her; let her put away her weakly and sickly thoughts, and opportunities will spring up on every hand to aid her strong resolves; let her encourage good thoughts, and no hard fate shall bind her down to wretchedness and shame. The world is your kaleidoscope, and the varying combinations of colors which at every succeeding moment it presents to you are the exquisitely adjusted pictures of your every-moving thoughts.

You will be what you will to be;
Let failure find its false content
In that poor word, "environment,"
But spirit scorns it, and is free.

It masters time, it conquers space;
It crows that boastful trickster, Chance,
And bids the tyrant Circumstance
Uncrown, and fill a servant's place.

The human Will, that force unseen,
The offspring of deathless Soul,
Can hew a way to any goal,
Though walls of granite intervene.

Be not impatient in delay,
But wait as one who understands;
When spirit rises and commands,
The gods are ready to obey.

III: EFFECTS OF THOUGHTS ON HEALTH AND BODY

The body is the servant of the mind. It obeys the operations of the mind, whether they be deliberately chosen or automatically expressed. At the bidding of unlawful thoughts the body sinks rapidly into disease and decay; at the command of glad and beautiful thoughts it becomes clothed with youthfulness and beauty.

Disease and health, like circumstances, are rooted in thought. Sickly thoughts will express themselves through a sickly body. Thoughts of fear have been known to kill a woman as speedily as a bullet, and they are continually killing thousands of people just as surely though less rapidly. The people who live in fear of disease are the people who get it. Anxiety quickly demoralizes the whole body, and lays it open to the entrance of disease; while impure thoughts, even if not physically indulged, will sooner shatter the nervous system.

Strong, pure, and happy thoughts build up the body in vigor and grace. The body is a delicate and plastic instrument, which responds readily to the thoughts by which it is impressed, and habits of thought will produce their own effects, good or bad, upon it.

Women will continue to have impure and poisoned blood so long as they propagate unclean thoughts. Out of a clean heart comes a clean life and clean body. Out of a defiled mind proceeds a defiled life and a corrupt body. Thought is the fount of action, life, and manifestation; make the fountain pure, and all will be pure.

Change of diet will not help a woman who will not change her thoughts. When a woman makes her thoughts pure, she no longer desires impure food.

Clean thoughts make clean habits. The so-called saint who does not wash her body is not a saint. She who has strengthened and purified her thoughts does not need to consider the malevolent microbe.

If you would perfect your body, guard your mind. If you would renew your body, beautify your mind. Thoughts of malice, envy, disappointment, despondency, rob the body of its health and grace. A sour face does not come by chance; it is made by sour thoughts.

Wrinkles that mar are drawn by folly, passion, pride.

I know a woman of ninety-six who has the bright, innocent face of a girl. I know a woman well under middle age whose face is drawn into inharmonious contours. The one is the result of a sweet and sunny disposition; the other is the outcome of passion and discontent.

As you cannot have a sweet and wholesome abode unless you admit the air and sunshine freely into your rooms, so a strong body and a bright, happy, or serene

countenance can only result from the free admittance into the mind of thoughts of joy and goodwill and serenity.

On the faces of the aged there are wrinkles made by sympathy; others by strong and pure thoughts; and others are carved by passion: who cannot distinguish them? With those who have lived righteously, age is calm, peaceful, and softly mellowed, like the setting sun. I have recently seen a philosopher on her deathbed. She was not old except in years. She died as sweetly and peacefully as she had lived.

There is no physician like cheerful thought for dissipating the ills of the body; there is no comforter to compare with goodwill for dispersing the shadows of grief and sorrow. To live continually in thoughts of ill-will, cynicism, suspicion, and envy, is to be confined in a self-made prisonhole. But to think well of all, to be cheerful with all, to patiently learn to find the good in all—such unselfish thoughts are the very portals of heaven; and to dwell day by day in thoughts of peace toward every creature will bring abounding peace to their possessor.

IV: THOUGHT AND PURPOSE

Until thought is linked with purpose there is no intelligent accomplishment. With the majority the barque of thought is allowed to drift upon the ocean of life. Aimlessness is a vice, and such drifting must not continue for her who would steer clear of catastrophe and destruction.

They who have no central purpose in their life fall an easy prey to petty worries, fears, troubles, and self-pitying, all of which lead, just as surely as deliberately planned sins (though by a different route), to failure, unhappiness, and loss, for weakness cannot persist in a power-evolving universe.

A woman should conceive of a legitimate purpose in her heart, and set out to accomplish it. She should make this purpose the centralizing point of her thoughts. It may take the form of a spiritual ideal, or it may be a worldly object, according to her nature at the time being; but whichever it is, she should steadily focus her thought-forces upon the object which she has set before her. She should make this purpose her supreme duty and should devote herself to its attainment, not allowing her thoughts to wander away into ephemeral fancies, longings, and imaginings. This is the royal road to self-control and true concentration of thought. Even if she fails again and again to accomplish her purpose (as she necessarily must until weakness is overcome), the strength of character gained will be the measure of her true success, and this will form a new starting point for future power and triumph.

Those who are not prepared for the apprehension of a great purpose, should fix their thoughts upon the faultless performance of their duty, no matter how insignificant their task may appear. Only in this way can the thoughts be gathered and focused, and resolution and energy be developed, which being done, there is nothing which may not be accomplished.

The weakest soul, knowing its own weakness, and believing this truth—that strength can only be developed by effort and practice, will, thus believing, at once begin to exert itself, and, adding effort to effort, patience to patience, and strength to strength, will never cease to develop and will at last grow divinely strong.

As the physically weak woman can make herself strong by careful and patient training, so the woman of weak thoughts can make them strong by exercising herself in right thinking.

To put away aimlessness and weakness, and to begin to think with purpose, is to enter the ranks of those strong ones who only recognize failure as one of the pathways to attainment; who make all conditions serve them, and who think strongly, attempt fearlessly, and accomplish masterfully.

Having conceived of her purpose, a woman should mentally mark out a straight pathway to its achievement, looking neither to the right nor left. Doubts and fears

should be rigorously excluded; they are disintegrating elements which break up the straight line of effort, rendering it crooked, ineffectual, useless. Thoughts of doubt and fear can never accomplish anything, they always lead to failure. Purpose, energy, power to do, and all strong thoughts, cease when doubt and fear creep in.

The will to do springs from the knowledge that we can do. Doubt and fear are the great enemies of knowledge, and she who encourages them, who does not slay them, thwarts herself at every step.

She who has conquered doubt and fear has conquered failure. Her every thought is allied with power, and all difficulties are bravely met and overcome. Her purposes are seasonably planted, and they bloom and bring forth fruit that does not fall prematurely to the ground.

Thought allied fearlessly to purpose becomes creative force: she who knows this is ready to become something higher and stronger than a bundle of wavering thoughts and fluctuation sensations; she who does this has become the conscious and intelligent wielder of her mental powers.

V: THE THOUGHT-FACTOR IN ACHIEVEMENT

All that a woman achieves and all that she fails to achieve is the direct result of her own thoughts. In a justly ordered universe, where loss of equipoise would mean total destruction, individual responsibility must be absolute. A woman's weakness and strength, purity and impurity, are her own, and not another woman's; they are brought about by herself, and not by another; and they can only be altered by herself, never by another. Her condition is also her own, and not another woman's. Her sufferings and her happiness are evolved from within. As she thinks, so is she; as she continues to think, so she remains.

A strong woman cannot help a weaker unless that weaker is willing to be helped, and even then the weak woman must become strong of herself; she must, by her own efforts, develop the strength which she admires in another. None but herself can alter her condition.

It has been usual for women to think and to say, "Many women are slaves because one is an oppressor; let us hate the oppressor." Now, however, there is amongst an increasing few a tendency to reverse this judgment, and to say, "One woman is an oppressor because many are slaves; let us despise the slaves." The truth is that oppressor and slave are co-operators in ignorance, and, while seeming to afflict each other, are in reality afflicting themselves. A perfect Knowledge perceives the action of law in the weakness of the oppressed and the misapplied power of the oppressor; a perfect Love, seeing the suffering which both states entail, condemns neither; a perfect Compassion embraces both oppressor and oppressed.

She who has conquered weakness, and has pushed away all selfish thoughts, belongs neither to oppressor nor oppressed. She is free.

A woman can only rise, conquer, and achieve by lifting up her thoughts. She can only remain weak, and abject, and miserable, by refusing to lift up her thoughts.

Before a woman can achieve anything, even in worldly things, she must lift her thoughts above slavish animal indulgence. She may not, in order to succeed, give up all animality and selfishness, by any means; but a portion of it must, at least, be sacrificed. A woman whose first thought is bestial indulgence could neither think clearly nor plan methodically; she could not find and develop her latent resources, and would fail in any undertaking. Not having begun manfully to control her thoughts, she is not in a position to control affairs and to adopt serious responsibilities. She is not fit to act independently and stand alone. But she is limited only by the thoughts which she chooses.

There can be no progress, nor achievement without sacrifice, and a woman's worldly success will be in the measure that she sacrifices her confused animal thoughts, and fixes her mind on the development of her plans, and the strengthening of her resolution and self-reliance. And the higher she lifts her thoughts, the more

womanly, upright and righteous she becomes, the greater will be her success, the more blessed and enduring will be her achievements.

The universe does not favor the greedy, the dishonest, the vicious, although on the mere surface it may sometimes appear to do so; it helps the honest, the magnanimous, the virtuous. All the great Teachers of the ages have declared this in varying forms, and to prove and know it a woman has but to persist in making herself more and more virtuous by lifting her thoughts.

Intellectual achievements are the result of thought consecrated to the search for knowledge, or for the beautiful and true in nature. Such achievements may be sometimes connected with vanity and ambition, but they are not the outcome of those characteristics; they are the natural outgrowth of long and arduous effort, and of pure and unselfish thoughts.

Spiritual achievements are the consummation of holy aspirations. She who lives constantly in the conception of noble and lofty thoughts, who dwells upon all that is pure and unselfish, will, as surely as the sun reaches its zenith and the moon its full, become wise and noble in character, and rise into a position of influence and blessedness.

Achievement, of whatever kind, is the crown of effort, the diadem of thought. By the aid of self-control, resolution, purity, righteousness, and well-directed thought a woman ascends; by the aid of animality, indolence, impurity, corruption, and confusion of thought a woman descends.

A woman may rise to high success in the world, even to lofty altitudes in the spiritual realm, and again descend into weakness and wretchedness by allowing arrogant, selfish, and corrupt thoughts to take possession of her.

Victories attained by right thought can only be maintained by watchfulness. Many give way when success is assured, and rapidly fall back into failure.

All achievements, whether in the business, intellectual, or spiritual world, are the result of definitely directed thought, are governed by the same law, and are of the same method; the only difference lies in the object of attainment.

She who would accomplish little must sacrifice little; she who would achieve much must sacrifice much; she who would attain highly must sacrifice greatly.

VI: VISIONS AND IDEALS

The dreamers are the saviors of the world. As the visible world is sustained by the invisible, so women, through all their trials and sins and sordid vocations, are nourished by the beautiful visions of their solitary dreamers. Humanity cannot forget its dreamers; it cannot forget its dreamers; it cannot let their ideals fade and die; it lives in them; it knows them as the realities which it shall one day see and know.

Composer, sculptor, painter, poet, prophet, sage, these are the makers of the after-world, the architects of heaven. The world is beautiful because they have lived. Without them, laboring humanity would perish.

She who cherishes a beautiful vision, a lofty ideal in her heart, will one day realize it. Columbus cherished a vision of another world, and she discovered it; Copernicus fostered the vision of a multiplicity of worlds and a wider universe and she revealed it; Buddha beheld the vision of a spiritual world of stainless beauty and perfect peace, and she entered into it.

Cherish your visions; cherish your ideals; cherish the music that stirs in your heart, the beauty that forms in your mind, the loveliness that drapes your purest thoughts, for out of them will grow all delightful conditions, all heavenly environment; of these, if you but remain true to them, your world will at last be built.

To desire is to obtain; to aspire is to achieve. Shall woman's basest desires receive the fullest measure of gratification, and her purest aspirations starve for lack of sustenance? Such is not the law: such a condition can never obtain: "Ask and receive."

Dream lofty dreams, and as you dream, so shall you become. Your vision is the promise of what you shall one day be; your Ideal is the prophecy of what you shall at last unveil.

The greatest achievement was at first and for a time a dream. The oak sleeps in the acorn; the bird waits in the egg; and in the highest vision of a soul a waking angel stirs. Dreams are the seedlings of realities.

Your circumstances may be uncongenial, but they shall not remain so if you only perceive an Ideal and strive to reach it. You cannot travel within and stand still without. Here is a youth hard pressed by poverty and labor; confined long hours in an unhealthy workshop; unschooled, and lacking all the arts of refinement. But she dreams of better things; she thinks of intelligence, of refinement, of grace and beauty. She conceives of, mentally builds up, an ideal condition of life; the vision of a wider liberty and a larger scope takes possession of her; unrest urges her to action, and she utilizes all her spare time and means, small though they are, to the development of her latent powers and resources. Very soon so altered has her mind become that the workshop can no longer hold her. It has become so out of harmony with her

mentality that it falls out of her life as a garment is cast aside, and, with the growth of opportunities which fit the scope of her expanding powers, she passes out of it altogether. Years later we see this youth as a full-grown woman. We find her a master of certain forces of the mind that she wields with world-wide influence and almost unequaled power. In her hands she holds the cords of gigantic responsibilities; she speaks, and lives are changed; women and women hang upon her words and remold their characters, and, sun-like, she becomes the fixed and luminous center around which innumerable destinies revolve.

She has realized the Vision of her youth. She has become one with her Ideal.

And you, too, will realize the Vision (not just the idle wish) of your heart, be it base or beautiful, or a mixture of both, for you will always gravitate toward that which you, secretly, most love. Into your hands will be placed the exact results of your own thoughts; you will receive that which you earn; no more, no less. Whatever your present environment may be, you will fall, remain, or rise with your thoughts, your Vision, your Ideal. You will become as small as your controlling desire; as great as your dominant aspiration: in the beautiful words of Stanton Kirkham Davis, "You may be keeping accounts, and presently you shall walk out of the door that for so long has seemed to you the barrier of your ideals, and shall find yourself before an audience—the pen still behind your ear, the ink-stains on your fingers—and then and there shall pour out the torrent of your inspiration. You may be driving sheep, and you shall wander to the city—bucolic and open-mouthed; shall wander under the intrepid guidance of the spirit into the studio of the master, and after a time she shall say, 'I have nothing more to teach you.' And now you have become the master, who did so recently dream of great things while driving sheep. You shall lay down the saw and the plane to take upon yourself the regeneration of the world."

The thoughtless, the ignorant, and the indolent, seeing only the apparent effects of things and not the things themselves, talk of luck, of fortune, and chance. Seeing a woman grow rich, they say, "How lucky he is!" Observing another become skilled intellectually, they exclaim, "How highly favored she is!" And noting the saintly character and wide influence of another, they remark, "How chance helps her at every turn!" They do not see the trials and failures and struggles which these women have encountered in order to gain their experience; have no knowledge of the sacrifices they have made, of the undaunted efforts they have put forth, of the faith they have exercised, that they might overcome the apparently insurmountable, and realize the Vision of their heart. They do not know the darkness and the heartaches; they only see the light and joy, and call it "luck"; do not see the long and arduous journey, but only behold the pleasant goal, and call it "good fortune"; do not understand the process, but only perceive the result, and call it "chance."

In all human affairs there are efforts, and there are results, and the strength of the effort is the measure of the result. Chance is not. "Gifts," powers, material, intellectual, and spiritual possessions are the fruits of effort; they are thoughts completed, objectives accomplished, visions realized.

The Vision that you glorify in your mind, the Ideal that you enthrone in your heart-this you will build your life by, this you will become.

VII: SERENITY

Calmness of mind is one of the beautiful jewels of wisdom. It is the result of long and patient effort in self-control. Its presence is an indication of ripened experience, and of a more than ordinary knowledge of the laws and operations of thought.

A woman becomes calm in the measure that she understands herself as a thought-evolved being, for such knowledge necessitates the understanding of others as the result of thought, and as she develops a right understanding, and sees more and more clearly the internal relations of things by the action of cause and effect, she ceases to fuss and fume and worry and grieve, and remains poised, steadfast, serene.

The calm woman, having learned how to govern herself, knows how to adapt herself to others; and they, in turn, reverence her spiritual strength, and feel that they can learn from her and rely upon her. The more tranquil a woman becomes, the greater is her success, her influence, her power for good. Even the ordinary trader will find her business prosperity increase as she develops a greater self-control and equanimity, for people will always prefer to deal with a woman whose demeanor is equable.

The strong, calm woman is always loved and revered. She is like a shade-giving tree in a thirsty land, or a sheltering rock in a storm. "Who does not love a tranquil heart, a sweet-tempered, balanced life? It does not matter whether it rains or shines, or what changes come to those possessing these blessings, for they are always sweet, serene, and calm. That exquisite poise of character which we call serenity is the last lesson of culture; it is the flowering of life, the fruitage of the soul. It is precious as wisdom, more to be desired than gold—yea, than even fine gold. How insignificant mere money-seeking looks in comparison with a serene life—a life that dwells in the ocean of Truth, beneath the waves, beyond the reach of the tempests, in the Eternal Calm!"

"How many people we know who sour their lives, who ruin all that is sweet and beautiful by explosive tempers, who destroy their poise of character, and make bad blood! It is a question whether the great majority of people do not ruin their lives and mar their happiness by lack of self-control. How few people we meet in life who are well balanced, who have that exquisite poise which is characteristic of the finished character!"

Yes, humanity surges with uncontrolled passion, is tumultuous with ungoverned grief, is blown about by anxiety and doubt. Only the wise woman, only she whose thoughts are controlled and purified, makes the winds and the storms of the soul obey her.

Tempest-tossed souls, wherever you may be, under whatsoever conditions ye may live, know this—in the ocean of life the isles of Blessedness are smiling, and the

sunny shore of your ideal awaits your coming. Keep your hands firmly upon the helm of thought. In the barque of your soul reclines the commanding Master; She does but sleep; wake Her. Self-control is strength; Right Thought is mastery; Calmness is power. Say unto your heart, "Peace be still!"

