

***PRENTICE
MULFORD***



***THE COLLECTED
WORKS OF PRENTICE
MULFORD***

Prentice Mulford

The Collected Works of Prentice Mulford

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Chapter One

THE MATERIAL MIND V. THE SPIRITUAL MIND

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THERE belongs to every human being a higher self and a lower self--a self or mind of the spirit which has been growing for ages, and a self of the body, which is but a thing of yesterday. The higher self is full of prompting idea, suggestion and aspiration. This it receives of the Supreme Power. All this the lower or animal self regards as wild and visionary. The higher self argues possibilities and power for us greater than men and women now possess and enjoy. The lower self says we can only live and exist as men and women have lived and existed before us. The higher self craves freedom from the cumbrousness, the limitations, the pains and disabilities of the body. The lower self says that we are born to them, born to ill, born to suffer, and must suffer as have so many before us. The higher self wants a standard for right and wrong of its own. The lower self says we must accept a standard made for us by others--by general and long-held opinion, belief and prejudice.

"To thine own self be true" is an oft-uttered adage. But to which self? The higher or lower?

You have in a sense two minds--the mind of the body and the mind of the spirit.

Spirit is a force and a mystery. All we know or may ever know of it is that it exists, and is ever working and producing all results in physical things seen of physical sense and many more not so seen.

What is seen, of any object, a tree, an animal, a stone, a man is only a part of that tree, animal, stone, or man. There is a force which for a time binds such objects together in the

form you see them. That force is always acting on them to greater or lesser degree. It builds up the flower to its fullest maturity. Its cessation to act on the flower or tree causes what we call decay. It is constantly changing the shape of all forms of what are called organized matter. An animal, a plant, a human being are not in physical shape this month or this year what they will be next month or next year.

This ever-acting, ever-varying force, which lies behind and, in a sense, creates all forms of matter we call Spirit.

To see, reason and judge of life and things in the knowledge of this force makes what is termed the "Spiritual Mind."

We have through knowledge the wonderful power of using or directing this force, when we recognize it, and know that it exists so as to bring us health, happiness and eternal peace of mind. Composed as we are of this force, we are ever attracting more of it to us and making it a part of our being.

With more of this force must come more and more knowledge. At first in our physical existances we allow it to work blindly. Then we are in the ignorance of that condition known as the material mind. But as mind through its growth or increase of this power becomes more and more awakened, it asks: "Why comes so much of pain, grief and disappointment in the physical life?" "Why do we seem born to suffer and decay"

That question is the first awakening cry of the spiritual mind, and an *earnest* question or demand for knowledge must in time be answered.

The material mind is a part of yourself, which has been appropriated by the body and educated by the body. It is as if you taught a child that the wheels of a steamboat made the boat move, and said nothing of the steam, which gives the real power. Bred in such ignorance, the child, should the wheels stop moving, would look no farther for the cause of their stoppage than to try to find where to repair them, very

much as now so many depend entirely on repair of the physical body to ensure its healthy, vigorous movement, never dreaming that the imperfection lies in the real motive power--the mind.

The mind of the body or material mind sees, thinks and judges entirely from the material or physical standpoint. It sees in your own body all there is of you. The spiritual mind sees the body as an instrument for the mind or real self to use in dealing with material things. The material mind sees in the death of the body an end of all there is of you. The spiritual mind sees in the death of the body only the falling off from the spirit of a worn-out instrument. It knows that you exist as before only invisible to the physical eye. The material mind sees your physical strength as coming entirely from your muscles and sinews, and not from source without your body.

It sees in such persuasive power, as you may have with tongue or pen, the only force you possess for dealing with people to accomplish results. The spiritual mind will know in time that your thought influences people for or against your interests, though their bodies are thousands of miles distant. The material mind does not regard its thought as an actual element as real as air or water. The spiritual mind knows that every one of its thousand daily secret thoughts are real things acting on the minds of the persons they are sent to. The spiritual mind knows that matter or the material is only an expression of spirit or force; that such matter is ever changing in accordance with the spirit that makes or externalizes itself in the form we call matter, and therefore, if the thought of health, strength and recuperation is constantly held to in the mind, such thought of health, strength and rejuvenation will express itself in the body, making maturity never ceasing, vigour never ending, and the keenness of every physical sense ever increasing.

The material mind thinks matter, or that which is known by our physical senses, to be the largest part of what exists.

The spiritual mind regards matter as the coarser or cruder expression of spirit and the smallest part of what really exists. The material mind is made sad at the contemplation of decay. The spiritual mind attaches little importance to decay, knowing in such decay that spirit or the moving force in all things is simply taking the dead body or the rotten tree to pieces, and that it will build them up again as before temporarily into some other new physical form of life and beauty. The mind of the body thinks that its physical senses of seeing, hearing and feeling constitute all the senses you possess. The higher mind or mind of the spirit knows that it possesses other senses akin to those of physical sight and hearing, but more powerful and far reaching.

The mind of the body has been variously termed "the material mind," the "mortal mind" and the "carnal mind." All these refer to the same mind, or, in other words to that part of your real self which has been educated in error by the body.

If you had been born and bred entirely among people who believed that the earth was a flat surface and did not revolve around the sun, you would in the earlier years of your physical growth believe as they did. Exactly in such fashion do you in your earlier years absorb the thought and belief of those nearest you, who think that the body is all there is of them, and judge of everything by its physical interpretation to them. This makes your material mind.

The material mind seeing, what seems to it, death, dissolution and decay in all human organization, and ignorant of the fact that the real self or intelligence has in such seeming death only cast off a worn-out envelope, thinks that decay and death is the ultimate of all humanity. For such reason it cannot avoid a gloom or sadness coming of such error, which now pervades so much of human life at present. One result or reaction from such gloom born of hopelessness is a reckless spirit for getting every possible gratification and pleasure, regardless of right and justice so

long as the present body lasts. This is a great mistake. All pleasure so gained cannot be lasting. It brings besides a hundredfold more misery and disappointment.

The spiritual mind teaches that pleasure is the great aim of existence. But it points out ways and means for gaining lasting happiness other than those coming of the teaching of the material mind. The spiritual mind, or mind opened to higher and newer forces of life, teaches that there is a law regulating the exercise of every physical sense. When we learn and follow this law, our gratifications and possessions do not prove sources of greater pain than happiness, as they do to so many.

By the spiritual mind is meant a clearer mental sight of things and forces existing both in us and the Universe, and of which the race for the most part has been in total ignorance. We have now but a glimpse of these forces, those of some being relatively a little clearer than those of others. But enough has been shown to convince a few that the real and existing causes for humanity's sickness, sorrow and disappointment have not in the past been seen at all. In other words, the race has been as children, fancying that the miller inside was turning the arms of the windmill, because some person had so told them. So taught their would remain in total ignorance that the wind was the motive power.

This illustration is not at all an overdrawn picture of the existing ignorance which rejects the idea that thought is an element all about us as plentiful as air, and that as blindly directed by individuals and masses of individuals in the domain of material mind or ignorance, it is turning the windmill's arms, sometimes in one direction, sometimes in another; sometimes with good and sometimes with evil results.

A suit of clothes is not the body that wears such suit. Yet the material mind reasons very much in this way. It knows of no such thing as clothing for the spirit, for it does not know

that body and spirit are two distinct things. It reasons that the suit of clothing (the body) is all there is of the man or woman. When that man or woman tumbles to pieces through weakness, it sees only the suit of clothes so going to pieces, and all its efforts to make that man or woman stronger are put on the suit instead of making effort to reinforce the power within which has made the suit.

There are probably no two individuals precisely alike as regards the relative condition or action on them of their material and spiritual minds. With some the spiritual seems not at all awakened. With others it has begun to stretch and rub its eyes as a person does on physical awakening, when everything still appears vague and indistinct. Others are more fully awakened. They feel to greater or lesser extent that there are forces belonging to them before unthought of. It is with such that the struggle for mastery between the material and spiritual mind is likely to be most severe, and such struggle for a time is likely to be accompanied by physical disturbance, pain or lack of ease.

The material mind is, until won over and convinced of the truths, constantly received by the spiritual mind at war and in opposition to it. The ignorant part of yourself dislikes very much to give up its long accustomed habits of thinking. It costs a struggle in any case at first to own that we have been mistaken and give up views long held to.

The material mind wants to more on in a rut of life and idea, as it always has done, and as thousands are now doing. It dislikes change more and more as the crust of the old thought held from year to year grows more thickly over it. It wants to live on and on in the house it has inhabited for years; dress in the fashion of the past; go to business and return year in and year out at precisely the same hour. It rejects and despises after a certain age the idea of learning any new accomplishments, such as painting or music, whose greatest use is to divert the mind, rest it, and enable you to live in other departments of being, all this being

apart from the pleasure also given you as the mind or spirit teaches the body more and more skill and expertness in the art you pursue.

The material mind sees as the principal use of any art only a means to bring money, and not in such art a means for giving variety to life, dispelling weariness, resting that portion of the mind devoted to other business, improving health and increasing vigour of mind and body. It holds to the idea of being "too old to learn."

This is the condition of so many persons who have arrived at or are past "middle age." They want to "settle down." They accept as inevitable the idea of "growing old." Their material mind tells them that their bodies must gradually weaken, shrink from the fullness and proportion of youth, decay and finally die.

Material minds say this always has been, and therefore always must be. They accept the idea wholly. They say quite unconsciously, "It must be."

To say a thing must be, is the very power that makes it. The material mind then sees the body ever as gradually decaying, even though it dislikes the picture, and puts it out of sight as much as possible. But the idea will recur from time to time as suggested by the death of their contemporaries, and as it does they think "must," and that state of mind indicated by the word "must" will inevitably bring material results in decay.

The spiritual or more enlightened mind says: "If you would help to drive away sickness, turn your thought as much as you can on health, strength and vigour, and on strong, healthy, vigorous material things, such as moving clouds, fresh breezes, the cascade, the ocean surge; on woodland scenes and growing healthy trees; on birds full of life and motion; for in so doing you turn on yourself a real current or this healthy life-giving thought, which is suggested and brought you by the thought of such vigorous, strong material objects.

And above all, try to rely and trust that Supreme Power which formed all these things and far more and which is the endless and inexhaustible part of your higher self or spiritual mind, and as your faith increases in this Power, so will your own power ever increase.

Nonsense! "says the ultra material mind." If my body is sick, I must have something done to cure that body with things I can see and feel, and that is the *only* thing to be done. As for thinking, it makes no difference what I think, sick or well."

At present in such a case a mind whose sense of these truths new to it, has just commenced to be awakened, will, in many cases, allow itself to be for a time overpowered and ridiculed out of such an idea by its own material mind or uneducated part of itself; and in this it is very likely to be assisted by other material minds, who have not woken up at all to these truths, and who are temporarily all the stronger through the positiveness of ignorance. These are as people who cannot see as far ahead as one may with a telescope, and who may be perfectly honest in their disbelief regarding what the person with the telescope does see. Though such people do not speak a word or argue against the belief of the partly awakened mind, still their thought acts on such a mind as a bar or blind to these glimpses of the truth.

But when the spiritual mind has once commenced to awaken, nothing can stop its further waking, though the material may for a time retard it.

"Your real self may not at times be where your body is" says the spiritual mind. It is where your mind is—in the store, the office, the workshop, or with some person to whom you are strongly attached, and all of these may be in towns or cities far from the one your body resides in. Your real self moves with inconceivable rapidity as your thought moves. "Nonsense" says your material mind; "I myself am wherever my body is, and nowhere else"

Many a thought or idea that you reject as visionary, or as a whim or fancy, comes of the prompting of your spiritual mind. It is your material mind that rejects it.

No such idea comes but that there is a truth in it. But that truth we may not be able to carry out to a relative perfection immediately. Two hundred years ago some mind may have seen the use of steam as a motive power. But that motive power could not then have been carried out as it is today. A certain previous growth was necessary--a growth and improvement in the manufacture of iron, in the construction of roads, and in the needs of the people.

But the idea was a truth. Held to by various minds, it has brought steam as a motive power to its present relative perfection. It has struggled against and overcome every argument and obstacle placed in its way by dull, material, plodding minds. When you entertain any idea and say to yourself in substance: "Well, such a thing may be, though I cannot now see it" you remove a great barrier to the carrying out and realization by yourself of the new and strange possibilities in store for you.

The spiritual mind today sees belonging to itself a power for accomplishing any and all results in the physical world, greater than the masses dream of. It sees that as regards life's possibilities we are still in dense ignorance. It sees however, a few things--namely, perfect health, freedom from decay, weakness and death of the body, power of transit, travel and observation independent of the body, and methods for obtaining all needful and desirable material things through the action and working of silent mind or thought, either singly or in co-operation with others.

The condition of mind to be desired is the entire dominancy of the spiritual mind. But this does not imply dominancy or control in any sense of tyrannical mastership of the material mind by the spiritual mind. It does imply that the material mind will be swept away so far as its stubborn resistance and opposition to the promptings of the spiritual

are concerned. It implies that the body will become the willing servant, or rather assistant of the spirit. It implies that the material mind will not endeavour to act itself up as the superior when it is only the inferior. It implies that state when the body will gladly lend its co-operation to all the desires of the spiritual mind.

Then all power can be given your spirit. Then no force need be expended in resisting the hostility of the material mind. Then all such force will be used to further our undertakings, to bring us material goods, to raise us higher and higher into realms of power, peace and happiness, to accomplish what now would be called miracles.

Neither the material mind nor the material body is to be won over and merged into the spiritual by any course of severe self censure or self denial, nor self punishment in expiation for sins committed, nor asceticism. That will only make you the more harsh, severe, bigoted and merciless, both to yourself and others. It is out of this perversion of the truth that have arisen such terms as "crucifying the body" and "subjugating the lower or animal mind." It is from this perversion that have come orders and associations of men and women who, going to another extreme, seek holiness in self denial and penance.

"Holiness" implies wholeness, or whole action of the spirit on the body, or perfect control by your spirit over a body, through knowledge and faith in our capacity to draw ever more and more from the Supreme Power.

When you get out of patience with yourself, through the aggressiveness of the material mind, through your frequent slips and falls into your besetting sins through periods of petulance or ill temper, or excess in any direction, you do no good, and only ill in calling or thinking for yourself hard names. You should not call yourself "a vile sinner" anymore than you would call any other person a "vile sinner," If you do, you put out in thought the "vile sinner" and make it temporarily a reality. If in your mental vision you teach

yourself that you are "utterly depraved" and a "vile sinner," you are unconsciously making that your ideal, and you will unconsciously grow up to it until the pain and evil coming of such unhealthy growth either makes you turn back or destroys your body, For out of this state of mind, which in the past has been much inculcated, comes harshness, bigotry, lack of charity for others, hard, stern and gloomy and unhealthy views of life, and these mental conditions will surely bring physical disease.

When the material mind is put away, or, in other words, then we become convinced of the existence of these spiritual forces, both in ourselves, and outside of ourselves, and when we learn to use them rightly (for we are now and always have been using them in some way), then to use the words of Paul: "Faith is swallowed up in victory," and the sting and fear of death is removed. Life becomes then one glorious advance forward from the pleasure of today to the greater pleasure of tomorrow, and the phrase "to live" means only to enjoy.

Chapter Two

WHO ARE OUR RELATIONS?

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THE man or woman who if most like you in tastes, motives, and habits of thought, and to whom you feel most attracted, may not be brother, sister, cousin, or any physical relative at all. But such person is to you a very near relation.

Your brothers or sisters may not be like you at all in mind, taste, and inclination. You may associate with them because they are members of the family, but were you not to know them as brothers, sisters, or other relatives, or were you to see elsewhere their exact counterparts in character, you might not like such counterparts at all.

Physical or "blood relationship" has very little bearing on the real or mental relationship. It is possible for a brother or sister, a father or mother to be very closely allied to you in thought and sympathy. Again, it is possible for a father or mother, brother or sister, to be very remote from you in thought and sympathy, and to live in a realm or atmosphere of thought very unlike yours.

You can live neither healthfully nor comfortably, unless with those whose thought-atmosphere (a literal emanation from them) is similar to your own. Physical relationship may or may not furnish such an atmosphere. Compel a labouring man whose thought goes little beyond his eating, drinking and daily round of work, to live exclusively with a company of artists and philosophers, seeing none of his own kind and order of thought, and that man's spirits would in time be depressed, and his health would suffer. The same law works when the superior mind is compelled to constant association with the inferior. Such may be your position among physical relatives.

Children live, thrive and are exhilarated by the thought-atmosphere emanating from their playmates. Cut them entirely off from such association and they droop. As a child, you lived upon this atmosphere of childhood; that is, you lived in the spiritual relationship of childhood, and regarding a certain playful thought nutriment, received it and also gave it to your playmates. You may wonder now why you cannot arouse the old feeling and exhilaration coming either from the associations of childhood or youth. It is because your spirit requires another thought food or atmosphere, which only another and probably higher order of mind can give. That received, and time would pass as quickly and pleasantly as it did with the associates of your earlier physical existence.

Those who can furnish it are your real relations. But such relationship cannot exist unless you can furnish them with the same quality of thought in return. The real or spiritual relations of many merchants, mechanics, and those of other callings, are their brother merchants, mechanics, or those of similar occupations. They prove this by their lives. They feel more at home with those whose business is like their own than they do in the places they may call home, to which they resort to eat, sleep, and spend often a tiresome Sunday, longing for Monday's coming, and the more welcome life of the market-stall and store. Because there they are amongst their real relations, and are being literally led and stimulated by the thought-atmosphere furnished them by these relatives, which they also furnish in turn.

Every order of mind or quality of thought must have association with a corresponding order of mind and quality of thought, or it will suffer. But "blood relationship" has little to do with furnishing such order of thought.

There is a vast amount of unconscious tyranny exercised through the ties of physical relationship. Children often, when grown up, place the mothers or fathers in their minds in a sphere and method of life where they may or may not

care to belong. Then thought, seldom if ever expressed, runs in substance thus: "Mother is getting too old to wear bright colours. She must dress more subdued." "It is ridiculous for mother (if a widow) to marry again" (very hard cash reasons sometimes entering into this sentiment)." Mother, of course, does not want to enter into our gayer life, so she can stay at home and take care of the children." or, "It is time father retired from business," or, "Father's idea of marrying again is ridiculous."

No force is more subtle in its workings, nor more powerful to bring results for good or ill than the steady output of thought from one or several minds combined, on one person to effect some desired result, and whether this is done intelligently and consciously, or blindly, the force works the same result.

Now a continual flow of this kind of thought, coming from, possibly, three or four minds to whom "mother" was instrumental in furnishing new bodies, and continually directed on "mother," is a very powerful force to direct and keep her exactly where the children find it most convenient to have her. The whole conventional current of thought also flows as an aid in this direction. "Mother," says this unspoken sentiment, "must of course grow old, retire gradually from a more active and gayer life, and retire also to a corner of the household, to associate with other shelved and declining parents, and be useful as a general upper nurse in times of sickness or other family emergency." Through the action on her on these minds, many mothers cease to have any privileges as individuals, and eventually do exactly as their children desire.

Possibly it is here remarked or thought, "But should I not go to my mother or other near relative with my cares and trials, and receive her help, as I have always been in the habit of doing? Ought not those of my own family, above all others, to help me in time of need?"

Certainly, if the mother or any of your physical relatives are glad and anxious so to do. Certainly, if such service from a relative comes directly from the heart and is not impelled by the sentiment taking sometimes this form of unspoken expression: "I suppose I must do this because it is my brother, or my son, or other physical relative who asks it." Asks it? Many, many are these services which are unconsciously demanded, rather than asked, in these cases. Loads are piled upon relatives simply *because* they are relatives. Favours in money--in the endorsement of notes, are in a sense exacted through sympathy of relatives. Support, food, shelter, maintenance, are expected from relatives when it cannot be procured elsewhere. Hospitality is *expected* from relatives, when to expect hospitality is to make such entertainment the result of a demand. Presents are expected from relatives, when to expect a gift makes it rather an extortion.

Real gifts are always surprises. No one expects a surprise since expectation destroys surprise. Relatives visit and "camp down" on other relatives simply because they are relatives, and a vast amount of grudging, grumbling, but unspoken thought is always going out when relatives use each other's houses to save hotel bills.

No real or lasting good comes of any gift bestowed on another unless the heart goes with it, and its bestowal is to the giver an act of unalloyed pleasure. Because something else goes with the material gift, the food, the shelter, the loan, which though not seen, and little known, is more important than the form itself. That is the thought which goes with it, That thought strongly affects, for good or ill, the person who receives the gift. If, as giving within your means, you bestow the merest trifle in money upon a person in need, and the thought that goes with it is not only the most sincere desire to help that person, but you feel a keen sense of pleasure in giving such help, then you throw upon that person a certain thought-element which will never

leave them, and benefit them eternally and in proportion to the quality, power and force of your thought. Then you do far more than relieve their present physical necessity. You give them a certain amount of spiritual power. Your wish that their power may be so developed and increased as to enable them to live above beggary, and draw to themselves the goods of this earth (as all will and must, when grown to a certain stature in spiritual power), is a great help for them in time to acquire such power. You have sent and sown in them a seed of thought which will take root and bear fruit at some period of their real or spiritual existence.

But if you give grudgingly, if you give under any sort of compulsion, if you give food, shelter, clothing, money, anything, only because circumstances compel you so to do, or because people might talk unfavourably of you for not giving, or because other people are so giving, then your gift does relatively little good, no matter on whom bestowed, be it even mother, father, brother, sister, son or daughter.

You relieve, then, only a physical necessity, and that only for a time. You may possibly feed a body, shelter it, clothe it. But you do not, and cannot feed properly the spirit that uses that body if the thought going with your gift is not that of the most perfect willingness and hearty pleasure in relieving that body's necessities. The grudging thought accompanying the gift, the thought common to that position when the recipient of the gift (no matter how near the relationship) is endured rather than enjoyed, the thought accompanying any gift to any person, or relative, that is given principally because custom and public opinion require it, or because of the recipient's importunity, is a great damage both to giver and taker. It is the sending to the one who receives a current of thought, evil in its character and result. It brings back to the giver from the one who takes a response in thought of like nature, and this also is harmful. Because, if you receive a gift which you have in any way

extorted your feeling for the giver is not that of warm, glowing gratitude, but something quite different.

The Christ of Judea, when commending the widow who cast her mite into the treasury, did so in our estimation and as seen in this light, not merely because she gave in proportion to her material means, but because he saw that her thought of desire to help in whatever way help was needed, going with that mite, was far more heartfelt and genuine than that of richer people who cast in larger sums, but cast in also with them a lower character of thought and motive. He saw, also, that the woman's thought was actually doing far more to help than that of the others, for it was purer, less mixed with lower motive and therefore far the stronger.

"Is it not my duty," some may ask, "to feed, clothe, shelter, and support a very near relative or parent, if helpless, in their old age?"

The term "doing from a sense of duty" does not always imply that the thing done, be it the person helped or the patient nursed through sickness, is done from the impulse of love for that person or love for the doing. It is sometimes done mechanically, or with dislike for the doing. It is sometimes a forced and painful performance. For such reason little good is done, for if physical necessities are temporarily relieved, spiritual necessities are not, and unless the spiritual portion of our natures is fed there can be no permanent relief or good done the physical. Parents who in old age are supported by their children merely from a sense of duty, have sometimes their spirits wounded and starved--wounded, because they feel they are endured encumbrances---starved, because no real love goes with the gift or service done by these children. Children who come into the world unwelcomed by the parent and are brought up only because custom, conventionality and public opinion demand their support from that parent, are most unfortunate, and suffer from the blight and starvation

thereby caused their spirits. Genuine heartfelt love is literally life giving, and if received by the child is for it a source of cheer, health, strength, and activity.

There is a certain trained conscience whose basis of education is fear of public or private opinion. This sometimes really impels acts which are said to be done from a "sense of duty." If public opinion should suddenly change, and cast no censure at all on the person who refused to support very near relatives in want or old age, a proportion of such relatives would probably go to the poor-house, and the son or daughter who sent them there would be acting out their real natures, and not feigning a sentiment they did not possess.

Mothers sometimes say, "I don't care what becomes of me, so that my children are well brought up and educated." A mother should care a great deal for her own cultivation. If her cultivation and growth in wisdom are checked, that of her children will be checked. It will be checked if she sinks herself in her endeavour to favour her children. A genuine mother will continually compel the admiration and respect, as well as love of her children. Such admiration and respect can be compelled only by a woman who knows the world, has standing and position in it and is ever pushing forward to more commanding place and position. Such admiration and respect from son or daughter cannot be compelled by the mother who retires to a household corner, becomes a cross between upper nurse and governess, neglects her dress and personal appearance, and teaches her children that she is at their disposal and use in all family emergencies, real or fancied. For this very reason are many mothers ignored, snubbed, and ridiculed by their grown-up children.

If mothers so sink themselves, as they falsely imagine, to benefit their children, they pay in cases a terrible penalty. If you allow your will constantly to be overborne by another; if you give up your own preferences and inclinations, and

become only another's echo; if you live just as others desire, you will lose more and more, for this existence, the power of self-assertion; you will absorb so much of the other mind and thought about you as to become a part of that mind, and so act in accordance even with its silent will and unspoken desire; you will fossilize, and sink into a hopeless servitude; you will lose more and more of both physical and mental power for doing anything; you will become the chimney-corner encumbrance, the senile parent, the helpless old man or woman, endured rather than loved.

This, in many instances, has been the effect of the grown-up children's minds upon a parent. It is the silent force of those minds, continually working on that of the parent, which helps to break the parent down physically, and the decay and mental weakness, commonly charged to "advancing years," is due in part to the injurious effect of a mind or group of minds, seeking to usurp and overpower another. This evil is done unconsciously. The son wishes to manage the farm. His will may be strong. He gains power step by step. He takes as rights what at first he took only by a father's permission or as privileges. He goes on step by step, having his way in all things, great and small, perhaps being aided by others of the children, using their silent force in the same direction. And this may be a combined force almost impossible for one person to withstand if continually exposed to it. It is a steady, incessant pressure, all in one direction. It works night and day. It works all the more efficaciously, because the parent so exposed to it is utterly ignorant of such a force and its operation upon him. He finds himself growing weak. He becomes inert. He lacks his old vigour, and thinks it is through the approach of old age.

I knew a man over seventy years of age and as sound, active and vigorous in mind and body as one of forty. He had organized and built up a large business. His several children at last took it into their heads that it was time "father retired from business." Henceforth, the thought spoken and

unspoken, bearing month in and month out on father from the children, was this desire and demand that he should retire from business. Confiding his situation to a friend, he said, "Why should I retire from business? I live in it, I like it, and so far as I can see, am able to conduct it properly." But the persistent demand and force brought to bear on him from these foes of his own blood and household were too great to withstand. He did retire. The sons and daughters were satisfied. The father soon commenced to decline in health. He lived about two years afterwards, and one of his last remarks was, "My children have killed me."

"Ought I not to love my children above all others" asks one. The term "ought" has no application to the nature of love. Love goes where it will, and to whom it will, and where it is attracted. You cannot force yourself to love anything or anybody. There have been parents who had no real love for their children, and children who had no real love for their parents. Neither party can be blamed for this. They were lacking in the capacity for loving. They were born so lacking. They are no more to be censured for such deficiency than you would censure a person for being born blind or cripple.

Some parents fancy they love their children, yet do not. A father who loses his temper and beats his son does not really love that son. It would be better to say that he loved to beat him, or tyrannize over him. Government in the family is necessary; but no sound, loving government is administered on a basis of anger and irascibility. Parents sometimes interfere and seriously affect the future of a child by opposing its desires in the choice of a profession. The parent may be prejudiced against certain walks in life. The child may wish to follow one of these walks. It meets a bitter, uncompromising opposition on the parent's part. There is no reasoning, discussion, or counselling in the matter--nothing but a stern, positive "No." Such sentiment and act are not impelled by love for the child on the parent's

part. They are impelled by the parent's love for his or her own opinion and a love of tyranny.

Parents sometimes forget that after the child emerges from the utter physical and mental helplessness of infancy, it is becoming more and more an individual. As an individual it may show decided tastes, preferences and inclinations in some direction. No parent and no person can break or alter these tastes and preferences. No one can make that child's mind over into something else. For the child's mind as we call it, is really a mind or spirit, which has lived other physical lives from infancy to maturity, if not to old age, and as it comes into possession of its new body, and acquires a relative control over that body, it will begin to act out the man or woman as it was in its former life, and that may be a man or woman very closely related to the parent or hardly related at all. But in any event, the parent is dealing with an individual, who is growing more and more into tastes, preferences, and traits of character which belong to and are a part of it. These must have expression. They will have expression in mind or spirit, whether allowed to physically or not. If the boy is ever longing to go to sea, and the parent forbids, the boy is on the sea in mind; and if so in mind, it is far better that his body should follow, for there is only damage when mind and body are not working in correspondence together. If the mother refuse to allow the boy to go to sea because she fears its dangers for him, still she is loving her own fears and her own way, too, more than she does her son.

The parent sometimes usurps a complete tyranny, not only over the child's body, but over its mind. The child's tastes, inclination, tendencies and preferences are held as of no importance whatever. If the boy wants to be a sailor, and the parent wants him something else--that something else the parent may insist that he shall be, but does he succeed? Let the host of mediocrity in all callings in the land

answer. And mediocrity means the mechanical following of any pursuit in which there is no live interest.

More than this; where a body is compelled to do one thing, or live in a certain way, and the mind longs to live in another, there is a force set in motion which in many cases tears mind and body apart; and parents sometimes grieve over the loss of a child, when they are responsible for the death of its body from this cause.

How long, then, should parental control continue over the child--or, rather, over a spirit for which you have been an agency for furnishing with a new body? Is it unreasonable to say that such control should not continue after such body, emerging from the helplessness of infancy, shall have acquired such control of its organization as shall enable it to meet all physical demands and necessities? To go beyond this, and give food, clothes, shelter, maintenance, to a person, is doing him or her a great injustice, and even cruelty. In so doing you do not grant exercise to those faculties which must be used in coping successfully with the world. You make the children the less fitted to be self-sustaining, and earn their own living. You teach them to lie in a soft, luxurious bed, when they should be out in the world exercising and making more strong and dexterous their powers, both of mind and body.

Parents sometimes make themselves unjustly responsible, and inflict needless mental suffering on themselves, for the errors and tendencies of their children. A son or daughter takes a wrong course--or, rather, let us put it, a course where the evil is more prominent or more opposed to conventional ideas of propriety than other habits more tolerated and deemed reputable, but which may be the subtle, and for the most part unknown, sources of as great ills as those condemned by society. A son takes to drink or reckless associates and commits some crime. The parent condemns herself for not having looked more carefully after her boy. She may accuse herself as having

been, through her neglect, the prime agency for her son's misdeeds.

Madame, you blame yourself far too much. You did not make that son or daughter's character. It was made long before that spirit had the use of its last new body. What traits, what imperfections were very prominent in its last existence, will appear in its next. If that was a thieving spirit before, it will probably show thieving tendencies now. If it was gross, animal and gluttonous, then similar tendencies will show themselves now. You, if grown to a more refined plane of thought, may do much to modify and lessen these tendencies.

But all that you will do in this respect will be done through the silent force and action of your superior thought on your child's mind. It will not be done through a great deal of verbal counsel or physical punishment or discipline.

Whatever a mind is on entering on a new physical experience, whatever imperfection belongs to it, must appear and be acted out and beget pain and punishment of some kind, until that spirit sees clearly for itself, how, through its errors, it brings these punishments on itself. These lessons can only be learned when that person has full freedom, so far as parental control goes, to live as it pleases. You may for a time control such a life, and make it externally live as you please. But such external life is only a veneer, if the mind be full of lower tastes and inclinations. The sooner these are lived out, the sooner will that person learn the real law, which inflicts pains and penalties for breaking its unchangeable rules, and the sooner will it know the happiness which comes of living in accordance with its rules. That every spirit must do for him or herself.

A parent may mould a false character for a child. It may teach indirectly, through the effect of its own mental condition operating on the child, how to feign what the world calls goodness, how it may seem, as regards outward

conduct, to be what it is not at all in secret tendency and inclination,--how, in brief, to be a hypocrite.

No person is really reformed by another, in the sense such a term is sometimes used. Reform must come from within. It must be self-sustaining. It must not depend wholly on another's presence or influence. If it does, it is only a temporary reform. It will fail when the influence of the person on whom it depends is removed. We hear sometimes the assertion, "such or such a person's wife has been the making of him" (meaning the husband). By the way, why do we never hear of the man's being the making of his wife?

A man may be prevented from intemperance, or he may continually be braced up to meet the world through his wife's influence and mental power. But if in such reform he relies entirely upon her; if he cannot sustain himself without her continual presence and prompting, his is no lasting reformation, and he is also a very heavy and damaging load for her to carry. It is a one-sided piece of business when one person must supply all the sustaining force for two, and if this is persisted in, the wife, or whoever so supplies it, will at last sink under such burden, and there will be two wrecked lives instead of one. No person can "make another," in the highest sense. But one person having the superior mind, can, if in a very close and long-continued association with one weaker, give temporarily to the weaker their very life and force, if their desire it very strong to help the weaker. If it be the husband who so receives of the wife, and is so dependent on the wife then he does not represent any character of his own. He represents and is clothed temporarily with his wife's character, or as much of it as he can appropriate. If she dies, or is removed from him, then he relapses and sinks into his real self, unless he is resolved to be self-sustaining, and evolve force out of himself instead of using another's. If she continues to supply him, she is only sustaining his temporary character, which cannot last when

its source of supply is removed, and in such continuance she will certainly in time exhaust herself.

Parents often unconsciously teach their children to lie down upon them, to depend upon them too long for moral support. The result of this error is that then the parent's life is dragged out, through carrying so heavy a load, the child ceases to have any genuine love for its parent. You may pity what is decrepit, weak, and shattered. Love it you cannot. Love is based on admiration, and admiration is not compelled by decay.

The tendency called instinct, which impels the mother bird to turn its young out of the nest, so soon as they have sufficient strength to fly, and the animal in weaning its young to turn them adrift and leave them to shift for themselves, is founded on the natural and divine laws. We may say it is the custom of the brutes and is therefore "brutal." But would it be a kindness for the bird to encourage the young to stay in the nest where it could not gain strength, and when a few weeks will bring the storms and severity of winter, which the parent bird itself cannot withstand? Again, the parent, be it bird, animal, or human mother, needs after these periods of bringing their young into the world and rearing them, a season of entire rest and recuperation, and the duration of such resting season should be proportionate to the complexity of the organization and the force expended by such organization. During such periods, the parent should be freed from any and all demands from the child. Birds and animals in their natural or wild life take such periods of rest. But thousands of human mothers are never free from the demands of their children, until worn out they drop into their graves. They should be as free, so far as their children are concerned, as they were in girlhood, and before they became mothers. Motherhood is a most necessary and an indispensable phase of existence for ripening and developing qualities. But no one experience should be followed and dwelt in forever.