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Introduction

SOME YEARS AGO, a young physician of great promise, came to me in deep distress. After years of struggle, he was beginning to make a name for himself in Pathology. But, just as he saw the way opening before him, his path was suddenly blocked. He discovered that he had tuberculosis. This meant that he must drop all his work; must go to a sanitarium in a different climate; must give up, temporarily at least, the researches that held such promise of distinguished achievement. There was very little to be said. For words, in such a situation, are of small help. But, as is

often the case, there was something to be DONE. I knew that his chance of recovery would be greatly impaired if he worried and fretted—if he developed mental habits of bitter rebellion—if he kept comparing his unhappy present with the future that he had hoped for so keenly. So the thing that I did was to give him two short essays by Sir William Osler, "Aequanimitas," and this present little book, "A Way of Life."

He recovered. I do not know where he is working now. But I do know that these pages, written by Sir William years ago, gave to that young physician a very precious knowledge of how to meet unexpected difficulties—of how to deal with the haunting ghosts of apparent failure, and to transform them into the realities of patience, of success, of healing and of inner peace.

In these modern days of mental stress and strain, many books and many writers are

attempting to give badly needed information about the dangers of constant anxiety, uncertainty and fear. I know of no book—large or small—that contains such a satisfactory method of mental health—such a useful technique of mental discipline, as this short lecture of Sir William Osler's. All physicians treasure the *Religio Medici* of Sir Thomas Browne. Many of us love Dr. Harvey Cushing's *Consecratio Medici*. Side by side with these two books, one might fairly set Sir William's *Aequanimitas* and this Yale essay on *A Way of Life*. But Sir William's appeal is a wider one than that of either Sir Thomas Browne or of Dr. Cushing. They speak primarily to the man of medicine. Sir William speaks to everyone—to physician and layman, to old and young—to women as well as to men.

If we could only acquire the mental habits, that Sir William describes—teach ourselves his technique of "day-tight mental

compartments"—there would be fewer so-called "nervous breakdowns"—fewer anxiety states and depressions—and many, many more useful and contented people.

JOHN RATHBONE OLIVER.

Pointe au Pic, Canada
August 25th, 1931.

*The Salutation of the Dawn**

*LISTEN to the Exhortation of the Dawn!
Look to this Day!*

For it is Life, the very Life of Life.

In its brief course lie all the

Varieties and Realities of your Existence:

The Bliss of Growth,

The Glory of Action,

The Splendour of Beauty;

For Yesterday is but a Dream,

And Tomorrow is only a Vision,

But Today well lived makes

Every Yesterday a Dream of Happiness,

And every Tomorrow a Vision of Hope.

Look well, therefore, to this Day!

Such is the Salutation of the Dawn.

*This poem from the Sanskrit was sent to Dr. Osler by de Haviland Hall. It was inscribed by Dr. Osler in a copy of "A Way of Life," in his own library. Hence its inclusion here.