

THE  
PHILOSOPHICAL  
RESEARCH  
SOCIETY

Manly P. Hall, President and Founder

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CONTRIBUTOR'S BULLETIN - October 1982

GRANDMOTHER'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE



Dear Friends:

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y esteemed Grandmother never followed another drummer-- in sober fact she played the drum herself, and rather expected to have a following. She benefited from the wisdom of her family back through several generations. Her mother, for example, traveled considerably in days when transatlantic crossings were apt to be strenuous. Once on the way to Le Havre, she met a heavy spell of weather. The ship rolled like a cork and the passages were awash above the sills of the cabin doors. All the ventilators were washed overboard and only a few resolute souls made the perilous journey to the dining salon. Among these, of course, was my great Grandmother who sat at the captain's table even though the captain himself was absent for several days. Out of this experience, my Grandmother always referred to the sea as "that awful ocean." Even when there was no ripple in sight, the ocean was still terrible.

My maternal grandfather, Arthur Whitney Palmer, was by nature a chronic worrier. He also had a bad case of nerves and was a chain cigar smoker, which Grandmother always referred to as an abominable habit. The facts are not clear, and she may have been party to a conspiracy--in any event the family physician warned Grandfather that he must give up smoking. He then took up eating hard candies of the type generally referred to as "sour balls." When he insisted on chewing these in bed, Grandmother was not amused. Deprived of his escape mechanisms, Grandfather settled down to worrying about everything in general and the varnish business in particular. When the office ran smoothly for several days, he began to fidget. For him, no news was bad news. His anxieties were contagious and, for the rest of her life, Grandmother sustained herself through periods of tranquillity by saying, "Cheer up, the worst is yet to come."

When we had more or less direct contact with the Sioux and Blackfoot Indians in South Dakota, Grandmother was always a little nervous. Reaching back into her treasure chest of memories, she recalled the experiences of her own Grandmother who lived in Haverhill, Massachusetts (pronounced Haverill by anyone who ever lived there) and went to church escorted by sober-faced citizens with loaded muskets. There was a local heroine named Hannah Dustin. She and her children were kidnapped by Indians, but escaped

and finally returned home after facing numerous perils.

In Sioux Falls, South Dakota, a local Indian took a fancy to me and viewed Grandmother with a kind of awe. When she found out that the handsome redman had been presented a special medal by the Great White Father, she decided that the only decent thing to do was to invite him to tea in our rooms at the local hotel. She poured with exceptional grace and delicacy and, with a perfectly straight face, the Indian drank the brew and munched the crackers as "one to the manor born." This resulted in another of her great phrases which could fit almost any occasion, "You never can tell."

One of Grandmother's most eloquent reactions to circumstance was a sniff. One Sunday when my uncle got up and left his church pew just as the collection plate was being passed, Grandmother sniffed. When the minister discussed the importance of foreign missions, she also sniffed. She never could understand why we had to save people living on the other side of the earth while there were a great many at home who needed conversion. When my uncle appeared at a garden party in a Prince Albert coat, striped trousers, spats, and a white sailor cap, Grandmother sniffed in his face.

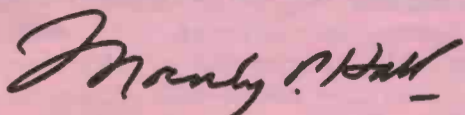
Grandmother brought me to San Diego in the worst spell of weather that the city had ever experienced and, in due time, we were pleasantly settled in an old-fashioned house next door to the home of a direct descendant of Ulysses S. Grant. While in this pleasant atmosphere, Grandmother gave me drawing lessons. She was a creditable artist and with her assistance I learned considerably about composition and coloration. One day we took a carriage ride to Point Loma. At the extreme end was an area of small light weight pebbles. At that time she told me that these were the results of volcanic eruptions, and that certain parts of Point Loma were the oldest land areas in Western America. She often made unusual statements that seemed to suggest considerable study and reflection. Occasionally, she could also quote the "Bard" and others of similar vintage. She was having some difficulties with her children who were perpetuating an ancient family feud. Her philosophy on this occasion was derived directly from King Lear: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child!" She had a number of occasions in which these lines were appropriate, and she always believed that she rose triumphant over all outrageous circumstances with the simple statement, "The worst is yet to come." One day I asked her, "Grandma, when is the worst going to come?" She answered firmly, "I don't know, dear, all we can do is wait and see."

She played no favorites between her children. If she fell ill while staying with one daughter, she planned another spell of bad health when she visited with the other daughter. She always had trouble with doctors. She enjoyed them, instructed them in their own profession, recommended old family remedies when modern medications failed, but seldom if ever took their advice. On one occasion she suffered from a painful attack of kidney stones. The attending physician recommended surgery, but admitted that the operation would be serious. While pondering the alternatives, she remembered a family friend who cured herself by copious doses of olive oil. The doctor was dubious, but Grandmother explained to me that this was a normal reaction when the doctor did not know what to do next.

Grandmother bought a large can of Italian olive oil, drank three glasses a day and, in about a week, got rid of the stones. When the physician admitted that the cure was complete, she presented him with the remaining contents of the olive oil can. She then explained to me the importance of a wide acquaintance. She firmly believed that, if you knew a large number of persons, some one among them could help you to solve any problem that came along. In her older years, Grandmother nursed a number of ailing friends and neighbors and when they complained too loudly and too often, Grandmother would pat the sick person's hand and announce with due solemnity, "After all dear, we are all born to suffer." This was supposed to revive failing spirits. I will say that she practiced what she preached. She seldom complained unless she found a sympathetic ear.

When Grandmother resisted the temptation to discuss her symptoms with various acquaintances, she reminded me that it was always a mistake to tell your troubles. It would make your friends unhappy and delight your enemies. I think her philosophy of life could be summarized in a few simple words. Remember always that a lady should so live that she would never be ashamed of her conduct. She takes it for a proven fact that, if she deserves consideration, she will receive it. If under those conditions she is not treated genteelly, she always has the right to a sniff and, if this is not sufficient, a firm, hard stare. If both these procedures are ineffective, the man is not a gentleman and therefore is not worth knowing, and she should therefore depart with dignity. In the years I knew her, I can't remember that she ever departed. Those who knew her well held her in the warmest affection, and passing strangers naturally chose to be on their good behavior in her presence.

Most sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Manly P. Hall". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name.

Manly P. Hall

RECOMMENDED READING:

Adams, W. Marsham	Book of the Master of the Hidden Places (P)	\$ 6.95
Aurobindo, Sri	Essays on the Gita (C)	11.00
Barton, Bruce	Man Nobody Knows: Modern Life of Jesus Christ (P)	3.95
Brunton, Paul	Quest of the Overself (P)	5.95
Chu, W. K. & Sherrill W. A.	Astrology of I Ching (P)	9.95
Clark, Linda	Best of Linda Clark (P)	4.50
Cornell, H. L.	Encyclopedia of Medical Astrology (C)	25.00
David-Neel, Alexandra	Buddhism--Its Doctrines & Its Methods (P)	2.95
Davison, Ronald	Synastry--Understanding Human Relations through Astrology (C)	15.95
Dogen (Masunaga, Reiho, Transl.)	A Primer of Soto Zen (P)	2.95
Fromm, Erich	Art of Loving (P)	3.95
Girard, Raphael	Esotericism of the Popul Vuh (P)	7.50
Horney, Karen	New Ways in Psychoanalysis (P)	3.95
Kapleau, Philip	Three Pillars of Zen (P)	6.95
Kozminsky, I.	Numbers, Their Meaning, Magic (P)	3.95
Saint-Germain, Comte de	Practical Astrology (P)	3.95
Saint-Germain, Comte de	Practice of Palmistry (P)	6.95
Sun Bear & Wabun	Medicine Wheel--Earth Astrology (P)	5.95
Twain, Mark	Mysterious Stranger & Other Stories (P)	1.95
Van Der Leeuw, J. J.	Conquest of Illusion (P)	1.95

All of the above books are available at the Arts of the World Gift Shop at PRS or order by mail by adding 6% of the total cost of the order (\$.75 minimum) for shipping and handling for 4th class book rate. Orders may be shipped by UPS, the fastest way, by adding 10% of the total cost of the order (\$1.50 minimum). California residents, please add appropriate sales tax. All prices subject to change without notice. Checks or money orders should be made payable to:

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