SUCCESS.

(DIARY LEAVES)

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It is said in China there has been a wheat harvest of four hundred-fold return. Each ear of grain has been saved. Each row has been heaped up. Each tiny grain has been collected. The earth is good. But somewhere it has so happened that in place of an expected twenty-fold return there resulted five. Was it the earth?

Not rarely does it happen that some beginning, apparently well thought out on all sides, is nevertheless for some reason or other not entirely successful. It is possible to foresee different surrounding conditions. It is possible to reserve apparently the best means, to select a fitting time. In a word, all the external conditions will be as it were present, and for all that the result will for some reason not turn out as was expected. Something has interfered with the best expression. Usually in such cases people direct their gaze in a far circle. They will be on the verge of assuming cosmic causes. They suspect snares of the dark invisible forces and try thus to find self-justification for their failure. But it has been said: seek closer by.

In reality there may have been foreseen many external conditions. The best possibilities were employed. Large stores of energy were expended. But the cause which prevented success did not lie in external conditions. No outside miscreants did the interfering. A tiny unseen rascal within oneself applied his effort, and the long-awaited, deeply thought-out success ended up perhaps in only a hundredth part of the result. What then is the name of this secret malefactor which placed itself around the human heart? Confusion, irritation, suspicion, doubt, self-pity, self-conceit...... No matter how this dark miscreant calls itself, which stretches forth its hand in injury. Its principal name will probably be "treachery."

Of course people commit treachery by the most diverse irritations and suspicions. For the greater part such a name for their thought and behaviour does not even enter their heads. But, looking deeply, you see only betrayal of the very best. It is not that man may have reflected badly about the current matter itself; it may be this matter was left fully arranged; it may be, indeed, he expected the greatest usefulness for himself. Of course the dark principle does not act directly.

The very best strivings may be undercut by the transient dark arrows. Very often man does not even realize these sendings. They flash past in space as if unnoticed. So many times the sender himself will deny the presence of an unjust judgment. From these small routine injustices, from tiny irritations and suspicions are formed wounds difficult to heal. Alas, again these black arrows! How much has been said and written about them! Why repeat. But if you again see them, can you keep silent, can you fail to call attention! If to some this reminder is superfluous, still to others it will be indeferrably useful. Yet is it superfluous to many?

"From a candle, the house burns down." From the same smallest causes sometimes, something already composed is ruinously postponed and even lost altogether. Man knows he is summoned. You see, he has already sewn together his garments for advancement. He speaks about this in ecstasy and exaltation. But the awaited moment
arrives and a whole multitude of small considerations interferes. Something does not come off, something is belated, someone does not arrive, someone whispers something frightening. One cannot even foresee all these tiny domestic crudities which like rolling stones come tumbling out of dark corners. Whatever happens—we shall not judge, but that date is lost. And beyond this date perhaps many other dates are distorted. A blow in one place echoes somewhere else entirely unexpectedly. To whom and where is the harm imposed?

How often it is, that very fine, very hearty people suddenly in a moment of darkening send a harmful arrow. Thus sometimes without knowing it, one's guest brings in on his clothes a poisonous insect or some germs of disease. Indeed, he has not wished this, yet for all that he brought them in, because somewhere at a needed moment he did not maintain observantness. It is said—blessing is a timid bird. So also success is very much of an unbroken steed. One has but inconspicuously to place a thorny twig under the saddle, and even under an experienced hand the horse will be unmanageable. How needful then is it in all one's routine to avoid everything thorny and all that can infringe upon any dates?

In descriptions of battles you have had occasion to read how at times all has been arranged and calculated, but someone did not arrive at a designated place and then the fallen out link destroyed the entire front. Thus, not only expect success but treasure it. If then it be possible that success exceed what has been ordained, then to such achievement apply especial forces and particular skill. This already will be your achievement.

How indissoluble is the concept of achievement from the concept of success! Of course achievement is in good. It is also possible to think of success only in good. What kind of success can there be in injury? This would contradict the word itself. Indeed achievement is only good. And then treasure it as a most precious blossom,