



## Recording a Miracle

Miss G. R.

*Inside Yourself* by Louise Morgan, 1954

I HAD NOT yet met Alexander when an incident occurred which gave me the impulse to write this book. An old American friend of mine, Miss G. R., of New York, turned up in London in 1952 after several years' absence. She was so much altered in appearance that it gave me a shock. Never have I seen such a deterioration in any human being. Her figure as I recalled it was slender and upright, her complexion clear and bright, and she was always full of energy, with quick, darting movements. But now her head was sunk between her shoulders, her skin had the look of old parchment, she had grown stout and round-shouldered, one leg dragged, and she could stand only with the help of a stick. She had not walked for months. Only a spark of her old spirit was left. She made a gallant attempt to be gay but the moment she ceased struggling her face became almost a death-mask.

The story she told me was the tragic one of failure to recover properly from a serious disease, and gradual lapse into invalidism. She had seen specialist after specialist, faithfully following all that was prescribed for her, including treatments which were intensely painful, only to grow slowly but steadily worse. Fortunately for her, she had a fairly substantial income, so she was able to travel to London for what she called "final consultations". I thought of suggesting that she first consult Alexander, but her medical arrangements were already fixed. Examination followed examination, and treatment followed treatment for three or four months until one day by the chance of a door being left ajar, she heard her

name spoken and one consultant say to another, "Poor soul! You agree with me, there isn't a hope."

She took this for her death warrant, but out of consideration for the doctors' feelings did not betray the fact that she had overheard their verdict. Instead, she explained that she was obliged to return home immediately for family reasons, and booked her return passage to New York. As soon as I heard what had happened, I went to see her and succeeded in persuading her to cancel the sailing and see Alexander. I felt sure he could help her, and must have conveyed my feeling of certainty to her. She did see him, and was so impressed by his personality that she decided to make a final effort to save herself, and put herself entirely in his hands. She even borrowed one of his books, but was too exhausted and depressed to read it.

A few days later I accompanied her to her first lesson. Alexander had made special room for her because of her need and because he felt her case was a challenge to him, and that he could learn something from it. I fancied as he shook hands with her that he was reading exactly what her trouble was. Then he helped her take off her hat and coat while I took her bag and stick, and she was lowered gently and carefully into the Queen Anne chair.

"Well, here I am," she announced in her breezy way.

"And only just in time," said Alexander. "My dear lady, you are quite the worst case of harmful use of yourself that I've seen in fifty-six years of teaching."

"My dear sir," she replied tartly, "that is not a very complimentary thing to say to a lady."

Smiling, he went on to explain. "I mean that you are one mass of pressure from head to foot. Your head is pressing down on your neck and back, crushing the bones of the spine together and crushing down the muscles of your back. You have lost inches in height, I can see. You no longer have any control of your use of yourself. You are pressing yourself down all the time. Pressing down, down, down."

“Well, I never! Tell me more!” she demanded, looking really interested.

“Let me show you instead,” he said. He took up her stick and imitated her hobble. He did it perfectly, because he began life as an actor. It made her laugh in spite of herself.

“You see how I am pressing down my whole weight on that stick of yours, pushing it down into the ground, making terrific efforts to do so. See how it jerks my whole arm out of the shoulder and strains my back. See how it pulls my whole body out of shape. This is what you have been doing to yourself day after day. All the exercises you have been doing have only intensified the pressure. Now you know what is the matter with you. You perhaps were very ill, and found it hard to walk after you got up again? I thought so.”

“But how do you know all this? You haven’t even examined me,” she challenged him.

“I diagnosed you at a glance. You must remember I’ve been diagnosing people from this viewpoint for more than half a century. A wrinkle speaks volumes. The expression of the eyes can tell the whole story. Posture is a complete give-away. But don’t be downhearted. You’ll be throwing that horrible stick away one of these days.”

Miss G. R.’s eyes lighted up with excitement. “Oh, Mr Alexander, you can’t possibly mean . . .”

“Yes, I can, and do. And now let’s get down to work,” he said, taking up his position beside her and putting his hands on her head.

With deft and expert touches of hand and fingers he explored her head and neck muscles, turning the head slightly from side to side, feeling the various parts of the head and neck as if he were so to speak dissecting the living muscles and fibres.

After working in this way for nearly half an hour, he asked her, “Are you tired?”

“Too interested to be tired,” she replied.