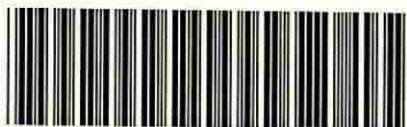


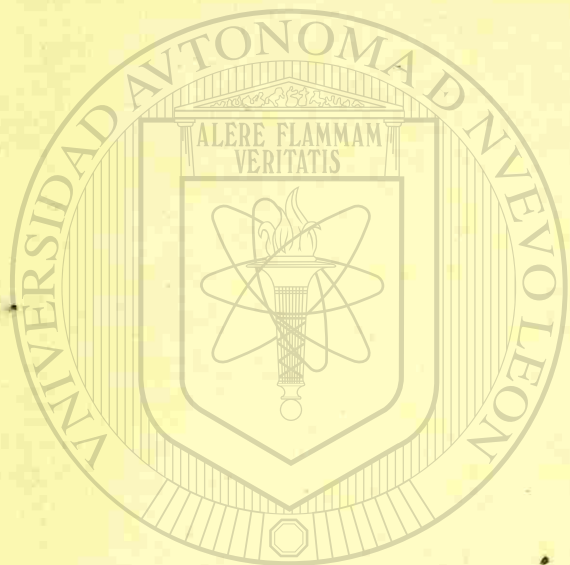
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a
Girl Again*

*Lucy
Elliot
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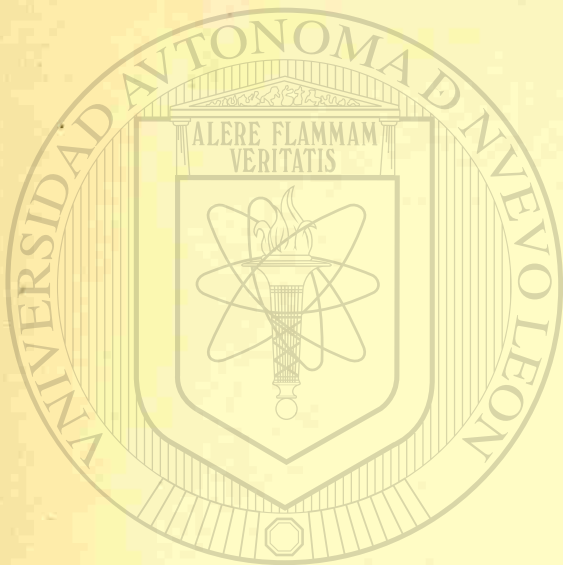
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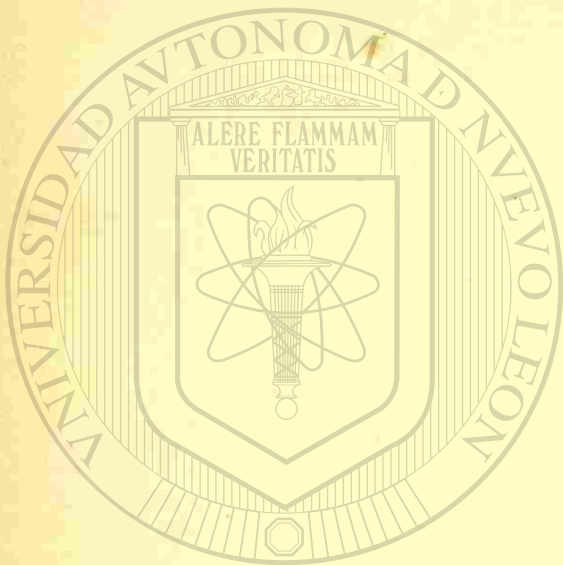


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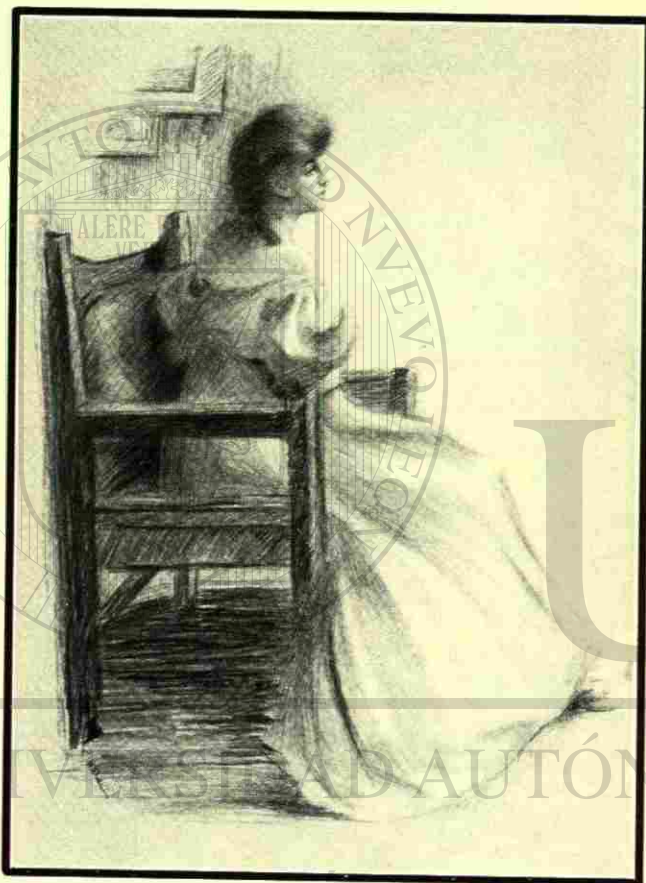
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If I Were a Girl Again

By Lucy Elliot Keeler

*There is always a golden age, soon to be behind us,
which at every period of our life is before us.*

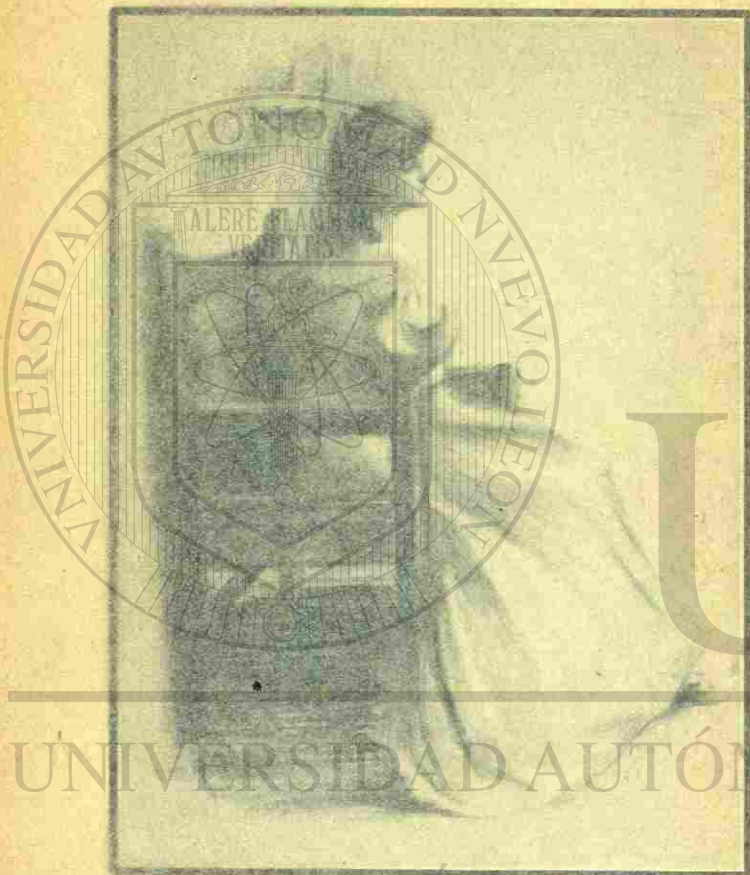


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To the Memory
of
The Older Woman



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To the publishers of the *Outlook*, the *Congregationalist* and the *Advocate and Guardian*, thanks are returned for the privilege of including in this collection chapters heretofore published in those papers.

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IF I WERE A GIRL AGAIN

I

IF I were a girl again—if some benignant fairy should touch me with her wand and say, *Be a girl again*, and I should feel bursting over me the generous impulses, the enthusiasm, the buoyancy, the ambition, that belong to sixteen—some things I should do, and some things I should not do, to make me at fifty the person whom now at fifty I should like to be.

First of all, I should study self-control—the control of body, of speech, of temper; a power best learned in youth before the current of habit has deepened the channel of self-will and impetuosity that seems to be cut in

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If I Were a Girl Again

every human heart. I should count one hundred, like Tattycorum, before I would allow myself to utter unkind, impulsive words; I should scorn to burst into tears because of some petty correction or grievance; I should learn to sit quietly, to close a door gently, to walk calmly, even when my thoughts were boiling within me.

I should shun, if I were a girl again, the tendency to be sensitive and suspicious. Because my friend talks to another person, or because a group of acquaintances seem to be enjoying themselves apart from me, I should not fancy myself neglected. I should not construe thoughtlessness into intentional slights, nor abstraction into indifference. I should say oftener to myself, "My friend did not see that I was here; she has not heard of my return; she is busy with her music; she is tired after her journey. I will trust in her friend-

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If I Were a Girl Again

ship, just as I would have her trust in mine."

If I were a girl again, I should be more careful about my conversation. I should beware of slang and gossip and a tendency to drop into silence. I should avoid sarcasm like the plague, remembering that the person who uses it shows her sense of her own inferiority. Nobody ever had so many enemies as Disraeli; and it is to be remembered that sarcasm was his most powerful weapon. I should practice the art of such gay repartee as is free from satire and unkindness, learning to tell a story well, and to dwell upon what is kindly and happy. I should be more ready to express my appreciation and thanks for services rendered; be quicker with my praise and tardier with my criticism. I should cultivate a distinct enunciation, enlarge my vocabulary, and remember Lord Chesterfield's dictum "never to utter

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If I Were a Girl Again

one word, even in common conversation, that should not be the most expressive with which the language could supply him."

If I were a girl again, I should be a better student. I should worry less over my lessons, and potter less; but I should think as I study, and try to understand statements in one reading rather than by saying them over and over, like a parrot. I should be more thorough, not passing to one lesson until I had mastered the last; and I should be ashamed of poor spelling or illegible handwriting or faulty pronunciation.

I should be more scrupulous about making and keeping engagements; I should be less daunted by obstacles and defeat, and be less, I hope, the slave of petty but annoying habits.

These things I should do if I were a girl again. But suppose I have passed my girlhood! Suppose I am thirty! Still, shall I not at fifty wish

If I Were a Girl Again

that I could retrieve the past twenty years? Should I not employ them differently? Again, say I am fifty. At seventy could I not better use those precious years of preparation? There is always a golden age, soon to be behind us, which at every period of our life is before us—just as to-morrow's yesterday is still to-day. So we may all take courage. It is never too late to mend.

THE VULNER- ABLE HEEL

II

"I CANNOT bear science," a young college girl said, running her finger along the electives, as she and the Dean were arranging her studies for the following year. "I cannot bear it; and I am very stupid at it. I am not so stupid in history; suppose I take that."

"Once there was a mother," replied the Dean, smiling down into the frank eyes fixed upon her, "a mother who wished her son to be immortal. So she dipped him into the river Styx, by which he was made invulnerable except in the heel with which she had held him during the process. One would have thought that Achilles, grown up, would have protected that weak spot—gone wading in the Styx himself, or at least have guarded his heel

14

The Vulnerable Heel

in battle with his shield. But no, he used to say, 'I cannot bear to talk about my heel, mother; it is a stupid subject. See, instead, how the muscles grow in my arms, and what a magnificent shield Vulcan has forged for me. I am really not so stupid with my shield!'"

Even while the dimples came in the girl's cheeks there was interrogation in her eyes. "But you believe in specialties?" she began at the first pause.

"Oh, decidedly, but the rounded education first; knowing something about all the great lines of thought, and, more than that, a habit of not shirking what is difficult or even dull. Things are hard and dry in proportion to our ignorance of them, and performance is the only safe path of escape. I am tempted to ask you to try the biology, my dear, in place of the history. Stupid things are just the things one does not know enough about to care for."

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The Vulnerable Heel

The boy who broke the barometer because it had said rain all through his vacation, lost only a prospective pleasure for his pains. By a different selection of sports he might have pressed the rain into his service. Queen Elizabeth, grown old and ugly, caused all mirrors to be banished from her apartments; whereas, the modern woman, knowing her vulnerable points, multiplies her mirrors, studies therein her dress, her walk and her pose, and makes defect to serve her. Louis XV would not allow death to be spoken of in his presence; and, from the very fear that a drive or a conversation might suggest the subject, deprived himself of valuable aids to mental and physical health.

Emerson once made the suggestion that every young person should be encouraged to do what he is afraid to do, and we all know how the principle applies in physical matters. An

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The Vulnerable Heel

object in the dark frightens us, and grows more dreadful when we flee ignorantly from it. When we bravely approach it, touch it, handle it, it proves inanimate, and inoffensive. The same law holds good in the subtler matters of brain and soul. It is not by avoiding the evil, it is rather by grappling with it, that character is made strong and life quickened. Ruskin scorns the reader who praises a book because its author agrees with him in opinion. Our best reading is that which brings us another point of view, which shows us our errors and weaknesses, which opens new fields for our mental footsteps.

Our principle of selection is too often that of the college girl. We choose easy places because they are easy, the valleys rather than the hills; whereas achievements, as well as the glow of life, come from friction with its difficulties.

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I WONDER WHY?

III

"**B**LOTTING-PAPER for programmes? I wonder why!" and the three girls, after a moment's stare at the unusual spectacle of music programmes printed on moist blotting-paper, dismissed the question from their minds, and began a vigorous use of the programmes as fans.

"Send me a receipt to make me think," writes a young girl; "I cannot follow out things in my own mind. I wonder why!"

"I wonder why! I wonder why!"

My dear young ladies, your words are admirable. The trouble is with the punctuation. Exchange the exclamation point for the interrogation, and teach your minds better manners than to ask a question without waiting for a reply. Be severe with

18

I Wonder Why?

it. Say: "You want to know? then find out. If not now, to-morrow; and, mind, no sugar-plums of love-stories until your lesson is learned."

A bother? Certainly. Real toil, oftentimes. Nothing worth while comes without toil; but, believe me, these intellectual quests bring forth fruit, some forty, some sixty, yes, some a hundredfold! Rightly pursued, they not simply inform, but educate; they inculcate habits of promptness, thoroughness, and perseverance; necessitate intercourse with books and men; teach discrimination and integrity to the mind; in short, make up a little prescription for that sad disease, the inability to think.

Rightly pursued. Which means not merely shifting the quest on to other minds and imbibing the result. In the world of business accurate answers are more important

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I Wonder Why?

than methods of solution; but in the arithmetic class the answer is important only as a proof. The trained mind may snatch what it needs from any source; but it has won the ability to do so from slow and regular processes.

The mind that does not grow deteriorates. Alice in the Chess Country learned younger than we that it takes all the running one can do to stay in the same place. Every time that we "wonder why" and do not attempt to learn why, the mind makes a backward slip. The thing itself may be unimportant, but the habit and the discipline of mind are of great importance.

So here is a little suggestion for idle days. You wonder whence comes that odd spot of light on the ceiling. Try to think it out where you sit. Is it a direct, reflected, or refracted light? Move an object or two in the room, hold up your hand for a shadow.

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I Wonder Why?

Satisfy yourself before you dismiss the subject. What makes that odd curve on the surface of the river? Is it the remains of an old bridge, an old dam? When was the dam there? Why was it removed? A day of low water may solve the problem, or a call on the oldest inhabitant. I wonder how deep the water is? Why not make a plummet and use it from your boat? How far is it from one house to another? Measure your step and learn to pace off a distance accurately. Why are there three flutes in an orchestra? Why is the name on the Dutch stamp *Nederland*, and is that synonymous with the Netherlands and Holland? Consult an encyclopædia.

And blotting-paper for programmes! I wonder why! Mr. Theodore Thomas could have answered that question. He might have said, "That rustle from a thou-

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I Wonder Why?

sand stiff papers in careless hands would seriously interfere with the music. It is a trifle, perhaps, but attention to trifles is the secret to success."

I wonder why?

22

SOME REASON WHY

IV

A CONTINUOUS stream of persons passed through the Art Gallery and a woman sitting there listened with no small amusement to the comments made upon a certain small portrait by a distinguished American artist. The picture was of a young girl, sitting bolt up-right on a straight-backed chair, a small hard pillow placed stiffly between her back and the chair. The child had on a little blue sack and looked out of the canvas with bright, wistful eyes.

"883. Sargent! Of course. How exactly like him with his continual mannerisms! To pose a poor child in that awkward and difficult position! No girl would ever sit so of her own accord." Such were the frequent expressions of the many.

23

Some Reason. Why

Finally an elderly woman, beautifully dressed, her face alive with intelligence, came in search of a particular picture. Stopping before the small head she examined it with manifest satisfaction, and turned to her companion with moist eyes. "You know this dear child has a great affliction, a hardening of the spine, so that her back is stiff and this is her habitual posture. She has a lovely character, as one may see shining from these eyes, and Sargent has translated it to the life. Without the pose he has given her, however, something would have seemed lacking. As it is, it is perfect."

The woman on the bench grew thoughtful. Is it always so, she asked herself, that everything has its explanation? that what we condemn as exaggerated or false is simply something we do not yet understand? that our hasty conclusions merely stamp us as ignorant, and that we do

24

Some Reason. Why

not enjoy because we are unable to appreciate?

She had still a half hour before her friends should join her and, leaning back, she opened the magazine in her hands, and read as if in answer to her thoughts, an anecdote told by Thackeray's daughter:

"Mrs. Grote, the historian's wife was utterly unconventional. One afternoon when my sister and I went to call upon her, she proposed to take us for a drive in her buggy. She put on a grey hat with a green feather and a long green veil. There were only two seats, so my sister had to cling on as best she might, and in this style away we dashed, Mrs. Grote driving, down Bond Street and through the crowded Park. We were in high glee; but Mrs. Grote remarked on the ill-breeding of the English, who would stare. It never occurred to her or to me that there was anything to stare at."

25

Some Reason Why

Oh yes, Mrs. Grote, the woman murmured to herself; there is always some reason for it. If people stare at you look at yourself in a mirror; if people do not like you, ask yourself if you are likable; if your accounts do not come right, look to your addition; if your neighbour is "luckier" than you, imitate her perseverance or tact; before you stamp a symphony as dull, inquire if you are a competent judge of classical music; before you criticise a portrait think of the possible characteristics of artist and sitter. There is always some reason why.

26

BLEACHING THE BRAIN

V

"I CANNOT come now, I am bleaching my brain."

"What, Aunt Jeannette?"

"Bleaching my brain—the grey matter, you know. I cannot come now."

The young girl laughed. She moved about the room, gathering her aunt's wraps as well as her own, and finally asked: "Whose prescription are you using, Fiske's or Anthony Hope's?" She remembered that "The Indiscretions of the Duchess" was in her own private corner, which her aunt had usurped; but she felt rather proud to think that the "Critical Period of American History" was there also, and she asked the question cheerfully, expecting at least a word of commendation.

"Fiske's," came the prompt reply.

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27

Bleaching the Brain

"The other would serve, but this is quicker. There are two ways of bleaching, you know," she continued, as she smilingly laid down the book and accepted the bonnet and hat-pin which her niece held out to her. "One is to employ the kind of books which keep your head cool and empty."

"And the other, the quicker way?"

"To take the best books and misread them. To turn the page, after your eye has blankly followed each line upon it, while your mind has been out the window climbing the Berkshire Hills or hurrying across Spain. It is the quicker process, because it is more complex. It destroys one's power of attention, and at the same time fosters the self-deception that one is improving her mind."

There are a great many persons who, like Aunt Jeannette's niece, use the reading habit to bleach their brains. It is not merely that they

Bleaching the Brain

read a great deal of worthless matter, but they read a great deal of valuable matter in a worthless way, quite unconscious that the higher the bank from which they slip the deeper will they sink into the stream. Such readers usually care much more to be able to say that they have read a certain book than to be able to tell its trend of thought. Mr. Mallock, however, says that he does not call a woman cultivated whose one question at dinner is, "Have you read so and so?" He calls a woman cultivated who responds as one passes from subject to subject, who, by a flash in her eye, by a flush in the cheek, makes him feel that books are not mere names to her, but things. Such a reader is able to recreate in her mind the images produced by the author; to place a book in its proper relation to the real thought of the age; to distinguish in it what belongs to the past and what to the present; to

Bleaching the Brain

seize upon what is of practical import to herself ; to aim at insight rather than information. Reading without thought—and thoughtful reading may be proved by what one remembers and what one can pass on to others—is simply worse than no reading at all. It is a mere shift for killing time, for keeping one's thoughts in "a state of agreeable titillation," for avoiding the trouble of digestion and reflection.

The reading habit when properly directed, is a boon simply priceless ; and proper direction means careful selection as well as thoughtful attention. When there is so much inviting us what are we to take, what will best nourish us in our growth towards perfection ? "Do you not know," asks Ruskin, "that what you lose to-day you cannot gain to-morrow ? Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with kings and

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Bleaching the Brain

queens ; or jostle with the common crowd when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society wide as the world, multitudinous as the days, the chosen and mighty of every place and time ? In that you may always enter and take rank and fellowship according to your own wish." "Go with mean people," says Emerson, "and you think life is mean : be sure to read no mean books ;" and Browning asks,

Shall I sit beside
Their dry wells with a white lip and filmed
eye,
While in the distance heaven is blue above,
Mountains where sleep the unsunned tarns ?

Persons of the reading habit are liable to another malady of the brain, no less fell than the bleaching. It is congestion, strangulation, intellectual gluttony, and takes place, as Emerson says, whenever our accumulation overruns our power to use. During the reign of Louis Philippe, one of

31

Bleaching the Brain

the secret agents of the French police rendered most important service. Having read Cooper's "Spy," he aspired to the sort of ambition which distinguished the hero of that work, and was desirous of playing in France the part which Cooper assigned to Harvey Birch during the War of Independence. Harvey Birch, for he adopted this name in all his reports, never belied his professions of fidelity. He rendered services which would have merited a fortune; but when the term of them ended, he contented himself with asking for a humble employment, barely enough to supply his daily necessities.

In some such practical way will the quality and manner of our reading make itself visible. Ethics no longer sanction self-cultivation purely for the benefit of self, and we must ever remember the poet's warning:

Know not for knowing's sake,
But to become a star to men forever.

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CEREBRAL CREASES

VI

THE little article on "Bleaching the Brain" has called out several personal letters of inquiry asking for more definite suggestions upon the subject. Answer may be made that a doctor might as well be called upon to give a definite prescription to cure illness. The first step is to realize that one has a malady; but remedies must vary to suit individual needs. The only dyer for a bleaching brain is the owner of the brain. Any other person can but

Seek to wake the mood,
The spirit, which alone

can make these remedies of any use, and possibly suggest a few threads along which one may feel his way to healthier habits of reading and thinking.

33

Cerebral Creases

The surface of the brain, scientists tell us, is made up of innumerable cells of past and present impressions, which, when grouped, constitute thought and emotion; and among these clustered cells run sharp furrows, upon the number and irregularity of which depends in some way the amount of our intelligence. In the lower animals, idiots, savages, and young children, the furrows are shallow and symmetrical and few in number. These furrows are, to speak very simply and unscientifically, channels of communication between the thought-cells. The acquisition of a new idea is attended by the transit of a wave along a new path, and the more often this path is traversed the more indissoluble will be the idea. One might compare the furrows to a far-branching system of railroad tracks, and the impression-cells to the little towns along the route. The railroad alone is what

Cerebral Creases

makes the towns serviceable to the traveller; and in the same way, association, classification—a way out—is what alone makes the impression-cells valuable to us.

In short, the aim of the true student is not so much to store facts as to group the essence of facts into ideas, to get more creases into his cerebrum, and to deepen those already there.

The request has been, however, for definite suggestion, and there is a single one which, like the doctor's prescription of sleep and fresh air, is suited to every case. It is the power of concentration—one of the commonest expressions and one of the rarest acquisitions in the world. Do you doubt that statement? Sit down and untie and tie again your shoe-lace. Can you so concentrate your thoughts upon that simple operation as to think meanwhile of nothing else? Or has your mind so fallen into the

Cerebral Creases

habit of straying off over a dozen matters a minute that you have lost—or never learned—the power of focusing it on any single thing for five consecutive minutes? If you can perform the feat, you possess one of the greatest powers of the universe. If in any moment of mental distress you can turn, if but for a moment, your whole thought to treading upon a certain line of nails in a sidewalk, you are, for that moment relieved of anxiety; you have gained an atom of concentrative power, and are on the road to control over mind and mood.

The power of concentration is of inestimable value to the reader, the writer, and the student. Too often we sit idly, like Matthew Arnold's Scholar Gypsy,

Twirling in our hand a withered spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall,
when the spark must be kindled from
our own fires. Horace Greeley could

Cerebral Creases

sit on a door-step and write editorials on his hat while the great war processions passed by; Frederick the Great could withdraw all his thought from a critical battle to send a note of assurance to his mother, and make all the princes sign their names thereto; Napoleon could lie down and fall asleep instantly while cannon roared about his ears; Darwin could calmly pursue his investigations of science on the top of a crowded coach.

Inexorable law reads that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds by "the reiterated choice of good or evil that gradually determines character." To wait for a propitious retirement, for silence and leisure, is often to lose the opportunity of a lifetime; while the ability to concentrate one's attention upon the single matter in hand, irrespective of environment, means enormous economy of time, of effort, of thought, of achieve-

Cerebral Greases

ment. Perhaps no other single talent serves so effectively to open up cerebral transit-ways, which, like the Continental roads to the Eternal City, lead straight to the Intellectual Life.

THE FAIR FLOWER— CONVERSATION

VII

"THERE grows within each heart," says Browning, "the giant image of perfection." It is this longing for improvement which makes pardonable the discussion of so threadbare a topic as conversation. What to say and how to say it are the only elements of the art, and all that can be written has been written about them; but just as the child is impressed by each new combination of the kaleidoscope, so comment upon this subject calls attention to it, and we thereupon make one more little step of progress.

For, indeed, that is the chief consideration: to have attention called to our slipshod methods of speech; to listen to ourselves as others hear

Cerebral Greases

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"THERE grows within each heart," says Browning, "the giant image of perfection." It is this longing for improvement which makes pardonable the discussion of so threadbare a topic as conversation. What to say and how to say it are the only elements of the art, and all that can be written has been written about them; but just as the child is impressed by each new combination of the kaleidoscope, so comment upon this subject calls attention to it, and we thereupon make one more little step of progress.

For, indeed, that is the chief consideration: to have attention called to our slipshod methods of speech; to listen to ourselves as others hear



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us; and to take thought for what we say and how we say it.

Paradoxical as the statement may seem, the how is more important than the what. One person may give me an accurate description of a landscape, while another by her beguiling language, without any description, may induce me to go to see it for myself. A person who can, in speaking of the weather or the commonplace happenings of the day, invest them with charm and a new light, stirs my emulation more than one who tells me scientific truths in an unattractive manner. I would rather have a request refused in a kindly, graceful way than granted grudgingly.

The successful converser has first of all a welcoming, good-natured, even joyous manner, which does more for her before she opens her mouth than a burst of eloquence can do afterwards. She enunciates



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clearly, pronounces correctly, and avoids anything like screaming or shouting. She does not sit in the middle of the room or talk much about herself. She does not shuffle her feet or crack her finger joints; she looks straight into your eyes and never seems to care what others beside yourself are saying or doing. She avoids questions as a rule, thinking it better to say, "I hope you are not tired with your long walk," rather than, "Are you tired?" or, "You are musical, I suppose," rather than crudely, "Do you like music?" She listens sympathetically, and never cuts off a story with, "I know that, isn't it good?" She does not talk Europe with those who have never been there, she does not lapse into moody silence, she remembers Sidney Smith's *dictum* never to talk more than a half-minute without pausing to let others have a chance. Moreover, she has learned the forms

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of polite speech, and uses them with discrimination. She knows when to say she will be "pleased" to do a favour, when "happy" and when "glad," in open-hearted frankness, but she is never oily or given to flattery. She tries in talking to cover her acquaintances with glory rather than to shine herself, bringing them out, giving to each the chance of expression, covering their blunders, turning the subject when it gets in a dangerous groove.

Does this seem an unattainable goal? Does not the young pianist, considering her teacher's technique and expression, feel equally hopeless? Yet care and years and practice will raise her to her level. "I made it a rule," Lord Chesterfield said, "never to utter one word, even to my valet, which was not the most apt and elegant with which the language could supply me." People cannot acquire the gift of conversa-

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tion by practising upon it only in company. The home, the family table, the market-man, the shop-girl are all instruments upon which to practise.

Let the young aspirant, therefore, learn to think consecutively, for as she thinks so will she talk; let her persevere to acquire a fluent use of words; let her read good books and magazines and keep informed of the news of the day; let her endeavour to adapt her conversation to her listener—music to one, horses to another, bicycles to a third; let her avoid personalities and flee any disposition to whine; let her remember that she is lovelier when admiring than when criticising, and that wit at the expense of others always reacts upon one's self; and let her cultivate the humorous side of her nature without condescending to satire or unkindness. She will learn that a first advance in friendliness is usually safe;

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that an anecdote or bit of news kept in reserve may bridge over an uncomfortable pause; and that environment has much to do with the success of a party. Charles Dudley Warner says that "talk always begins to brighten with the addition of a fresh, crackling stick to the fire," and Madame de Girardin used to insist that "an amusing conversation cannot start if the chairs are arranged symmetrically." A few trifles about the rooms to handle or examine, a cup of tea or a dish of almonds are helps which the wise often call to their service, but they all pall before the talent of fresh, stimulating and discreet conversation—the most desirable of accomplishments and the fairest flower in society.

OPENING DOORS

VIII

AROUND a dinner table at an Adirondack resort sat five guests who in the few days of their sojourn had found many topics of congenial conversation. One evening, however, the sixth seat was occupied by a sturdy youth with sunburned face, whose presence seemed to invoke a general silence. The widow talked in low tones to her daughter; the married couple devoted themselves to each other; and the college girl sitting next to the newcomer, regretted that she was not plain and fifty that she might have the privilege of addressing him as frankly as she would one of her own sex.

"I may at least push open a door," she resolved, "and if he has any

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gumption he will find a way to come in."

There was a pink spot on her cheek as catching the eye of the lady opposite she commented upon the absence of dogs about the hotel, gradually passing to the law prohibiting the hounding of deer. A question came up which no one seemed able to answer, and the young woman, fingering an olive, wondered if her ruse would fail.

After a slight pause the newcomer, with a glance at her, addressed the only other gentleman at the table, deftly caught the ball of conversation as it seemed falling, held it, and tossed it on to victory.

"I wanted to cry bravo," the girl exclaimed after the young hunter had left the table. "Not many fellows of twenty could have done it so well or would have even ventured. They would have preferred to hug their silence, and we should all have played

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sticks while he stays. It is so comfortable to have people enter in."

"More than that," smiled back the woman opposite, "not every young woman would have thrown open a door. It is easy to be a miser with one's social opportunities and niggardly in sharing small successes with others. Even my old age has had its hint just now." She caught the girl's hand as the group left the table, and as they passed through the office she glanced at the register.

"Did you know," she questioned, "that this young fellow belongs to one of the proudest families in the country? No, of course you did not; you would have done as much for the humblest. Go on, my dear, opening doors, and may I sometimes be there to enter in."

ABOUT LETTER WRITING

IX

"NOT merely a pleasant letter, but a charming letter," said the young Dean, nodding her head emphatically; "a letter which any one would hesitate to consign to the waste-basket. I should like to give the writer not only the best room in the college, and the nicest room-mate, but a seat at my own table. Girls do not appreciate, do not begin to appreciate," she went on, "the power a letter can wield. For purely selfish reasons all women ought to cultivate the art."

The young Dean was right. From selfish motives alone all women ought to cultivate the art of writing not simply a pleasant but a charming letter. Such an accomplishment gives to its possessor a power analogous to that of great personal beauty, cre-

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ating a first impression that paves the way for almost any degree of acquaintanceship desired. One's personality may be such that she would attract no attention whatever among strangers, and her real attractions of mind and heart go unnoticed; whereas preceded by such a note as the young applicant wrote to the college Dean, she would be eagerly sought out, material advantages offered her, and the best that is in her brought to the light. A good letter-writer has a password effective as the "Open Sesame" of Ali Baba, which caused the fast-barred doors to fly open, and vast treasures to spread at his feet.

"Yes, indeed," the reader may sigh, "it is a great accomplishment. I would give anything to possess it, but letter-writers are born, not made. Put a sheet of note-paper before me and my mind instantly becomes its rival in blankness."

What is such a person to do? Stop

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trying? But she appreciates how large a part letters play in modern life; how without them strangers whose lives might touch and enrich her own must ever run at parallel lines, acquaintances that might bring joy and inspiration into life are forgotten, and prized friendships gradually lose strength and perish. She is aware that without letters wearisome, time-taking calls and journeys are necessitated, business is impeded, carelessness is unjustly attributed, and many of the most graceful and helpful thoughts of mankind go forever unsaid. No wonder then she inquires sadly if letter-writers are indispensably "born."

Banish that thought forever. Facility comes only by practice, and if you are out of practice you must needs resort to the youthful method of rewriting and copying. There is no disgrace about such a procedure. The great Agassiz we are told, in his

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biography, wrote and rewrote his simplest letters to contemporary scientists, reaching a mature age before he felt able to send his first draft. The charming letter is seldom the outcome of the moment of writing. It is thought over before, while one digs in the flower-bed, perhaps, or brushes one's hair, or waits for the carriage to drive to the piazza. It never fails to refer to something definite in the earlier letter, to acknowledge the pleasure its arrival gave, to answer any questions it may have contained. Such a letter is apt in phrase and word, expresses interest in the affairs of the other, and touches more or less lightly, according to the degree of friendship upon one's own affairs and prospects. Never to mention one's self is a mistake, for usually you are the person of whom your correspondent wishes to know; but one must beware of tedious details, while criti-

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cism and fault-finding are unpardonable.

The best reply to a letter is written soon after its arrival, when one's spirits are attuned, so to speak, with the writer's; but if a delay seems desirable, a few simple notes on the envelope, of points to be mentioned in reply, will facilitate an acceptable answer later on.

Gossip is altogether out of place in a letter. Not only is it in execrable taste, but set down in black and white it may be used to work harm to yourself and others; but pleasant comment upon those known to whom you write is most welcome. Emerson says that the very "abstaining to repeat and credit the fine remark of our friend is thievish;" and every fine remark is sure to cast reflected credit upon the one who passes it on.

To younger friends, bits of information and kindly advice, deli-

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cately given and more or less disguised, are often of help to the recipient. "I would rather you would tell me than not," a sensitive boy once replied to his chum's elder sister, who was asking pardon for giving him so many suggestions: "for you somehow seem to say it more to yourself than to me."

So much for the "what." The "how" is not less important. "There is nothing so neat," says dear old Sir Thomas More, "that will not be made insipid by inconsiderate loquacity; so also there is nothing in itself so insipid that you cannot season it with grace and wit if you give it a little thought." Alas! too many persons fancy that thought is an unnecessary commodity in letter-writing, and that such a process as composing an attractive opening, rearranging a tumbled sentence, or rewriting an illegible clause is undignified. On the contrary facility comes by no

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other means, and the person who says that she cannot write an interesting letter confesses that she is too lazy or too indifferent to her friend to give the letter just such attention.

The girl who is really anxious to cultivate this happy art should read the letters of Celia Thaxter, Scott, Cooper, Lamb; observe their style and substance and for a time imitate their forms and expression. She might, also, register a private vow that each letter she sends shall be so kind and cordial and winning, so free from anything like gossip or slander, that not only will the recipient set it apart from the common pile bound to the waste-basket, but its possible reappearance years later shall bring neither shame to the sender nor anything but renewed pleasure to the reader.

ON READING

X

YOU ask for suggestions upon reading, and your request reminds me of the young lady who, having a half-hour of leisure, begged Voltaire to tell her the history of the world!

You inquire if I have read a half-dozen new novels, and in the same breath you complain that you cannot cope with the piles of current literature, much less make up the old. Truly, books are in the saddle and ride the world, and you want to know what to do about it.

First, then, let me beg you to adopt some principle of selection.

Amassing flowers,

Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours?

Which lily leave?"

But be sure that, whatever you

About Letter Writing

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On Reading

choose, some one will consider that particular choice a foolish waste of time. If it lie in the line of your life-work, so much the better; but anything which attracts your attention will serve, be it, as Sir Herbert Maxwell says, "the precession of the equinoxes or postage-stamps, the Athenian drama or London street-cries: follow it from book to book, and unconsciously your knowledge, not of that subject only, but of many subjects, will be increased, for the departments of knowledge are divided by no octrol."

Having chosen a subject, much of the art of reading lies in judicious skipping. "You may know the flavour of a cheese," declares Oliver Wendell Holmes, "without eating it entire." The art is to pass over all that does not concern us while missing nothing that does. In every volume, in every magazine, in every newspaper even, there is a little bit

On Reading

that we ought to read, and much, very much, that is better disregarded. In this we must be as independent of custom as in the selection of our subject.

We lose vigour through thinking continually the same set of thoughts, and the person who has leisure to read uninterruptedly may well have several books on hand at the same time with which to vary though not encroach upon his chosen field. In this way a historical student may obtain a fair idea of science and belles-lettres. Imaginative literature should have a place in every course of reading. Fox said that "men first found out that they had minds by making and tasting poetry;" Lowell, that "poetry frequents and keeps habitable the upper chambers of the mind, which open towards the sun's rising;" and Frederic Harrison puts the "emotional side of literature as the one most needed for daily life."

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Certain outlines of history and biography should become familiar; and in these days of theological and sociological novels, that department is almost barred the term "light reading." May I here offer a protest against many of the so-called "strong" novels of the day—sordid, pessimistic, without a ray of light to "gild the unguarded moments we steal from time"? For my part, I prefer to learn, if learn from novels I must, from contemplation of what is brave and fair and of good report, rather than from hatred of what is mean and low and foul. "An underbred book," says Charles Dudley Warner, "is worse than any possible epidemic."

As to magazines, too many of our best works there see their first light for us to disregard them; and newspapers must have our regular but summary attention. Mr. Hamerton declares that the reason the

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French peasants are so bewildered and out of place in the modern world is because they never read a newspaper. By means of head-lines and editorials, however, we may quickly wrest the essentials and discard the remainder.

After the what comes the how. To get from a book the best it can give, you must be properly presented to it. The name of the author is as important as the name of your hostess at a reception. One of Souvestre's most charming works, "Les Derniers Bretons," owed its failure in England to being translated from a German version—the absurd result of the bad practice of not reading prefaces. Francis Lieber's advice to his son was that "whenever you get a new book you must decide whether you will read or study it through at once, or put it away as a book of reference, to read parts upon occasions. If the latter is the

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case, you must read the table of contents. If that is wanting, you must glance over the book, so that you know what subjects are treated. If you put it on the shelf without this, you might as well not possess it at all. Mark this for all your life: the question is always important, when we own a thing, 'Are we master of it?' Books, money, fields, power, knowledge, are not our own, although we may own them, if we are not master of them."

There are two ways of impressing what we read upon the memory. One is by repetition, as Watteau painted St. Nicholas in a shop until he could produce them with his eyes closed; and the other by concentration of thought upon a single reading. The first is the parrot and the schoolboy method; the second, that of the time-saver and the thinker. This power of concentration is one of the most difficult things in the

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world, and is attained only by earnest effort. The practice of making brief notes from memory after one has read a chapter or volume is admirable discipline; and some system of marking and note-making is indispensable. Do not be tempted to leave a passage before its meaning is clear to you, content if the author "babbles pleasantly enough to keep your thoughts in a state of agreeable titillation;" and pay close attention to words. We have all laughed over the school-teacher in "Marcella" who, when unable to pronounce a word herself, dismissed it with "Say Jerusalem, my dear, and pass on!"

Ruskin complains that we are prone to say, "How good that passage is—that is exactly what I think!" whereas the right feeling should be, "How strange that is! I never thought of that before, and yet I see that it is true; or, if I do not now, I hope I shall some day." The reader

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who looks for advancement must read with an open mind. Whether you agree with a book or not is of little consequence. The point is, does it make you think? Does it illumine the dark places in your mind, and stir your feelings to the point of right action? "What Guizot learned this morning," a contemporary said of him, "he has the air of having known from all eternity." Above all, readers must not imagine that all the pleasure of composition depends on the author. The reader must himself bring something to the book. Everything depends on the spirit with which we approach it. The key to all secrets we must carry in ourselves.

There is no good thing, however, without its dangers, and the love of reading accedes to the general law. It is apt to be indulged in to downright gluttony, and to occupy time which should be given to other duties. "How dare I read Wash-

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ington's campaigns," wrote Emerson, "when I have not answered my letters? Much of our reading is a pusillanimous desertion of our work to gaze after our neighbours."

It is not so much the badness of a novel that we should dread as its overwrought interest. "The best romance," says Ruskin, "becomes dangerous if by its excitement it renders the ordinary course of life uninteresting, and increases the morbid thirst for acquaintance with scenes in which we shall never be called to act." Have we the courage of the German boy reading a blood-and-thunder novel? In the midst of it he said to himself: "This will never do. I get too much excited over it. I cannot study so well after it. So here it goes." And he flung the book into the river. He was Fichte, the great German philosopher.

Finally, why should we read? To be "deep-versed in books, and shal-

On Reading

low in ourselves" ? to "know for knowing's sake, the wonder it inspires" ? so that we may lose ourselves in the contemplation of a description and never raise our eyes to the towering mountain and the flying cloud ? Does self-burial in one's library come from the love of literature ?

Indeed, no. While to use books rightly is to go to them for help ; to appeal to them when our knowledge and our power of thought fail ; to be led by them into purer conceptions than our own, and receive from them "the united councils of all time against our solitary and unstable opinion," it is yet more than this. Whenever we find another human voice to answer ours, and another human hand to take in our own, we should open that book. "All the books," affirms Walter Besant, "that were ever written are valuable only as they help us to read and under-

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stand the language in which they are written."

So, my dear young lady, I have drawn this bare outline around the subject you indicated. It is as different from the realization as "ten minutes by the clock differs from ten minutes of happiness," as it is different from the two points in the adventure of the diver :

One when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge ;
One when, a prince, he rises with his pearl.

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RECIPES FOR THINKING

XI

"IF you have such a thing," a sprightly young girl wrote to an older friend, "will you send me a recipe to make me think? You may laugh, but I really do not form opinions and follow up things in my own mind as I know I ought to do. I have not formed the habit—if so important a thing can be called a habit."

Thinking is a good deal like complexion. If from very childhood a person has lived on plain, nourishing food, eschewing sweetmeats and pastry and pickles; if she has worked and played under God's bright sky, stretching, expanding and suppling the muscles; if she has been careful and regular in her habits—her complexion calls for no cosmetics.

If, on the contrary, a person has had improper or scanty food, if she

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has yielded to adverse circumstances and lazily refrained from exercise, if she has let herself slip into uncleanly or irregular habits and violated the laws of nature, her complexion needs a thorough course of treatment. It means not reading recipes nor sleeping in some preparation, it means hard work, my dear, self-denial, self-control. There is no doubt, however, but it can be done, and the result is more than worth the effort.

"We take readily to proprietary medicines," says Charles Dudley Warner. "It is easier to dose with these than to exercise ordinary prudence about our health. And we readily believe the doctors of learning when they assure us that we can acquire a new language by the same method by which we can restore bodily vigour: take one small patent-right volume in six easy lessons, without even the necessity of shaking, and without a regular doctor, and we

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shall know the language. Some one else has done the work for us, and we need only absorb."

No Meisterschaft system, however, will save you, my dear girl. You need the old-fashioned grammar first. Before you can think you must have something to think about. You must get something into your head before you can get anything out. The brain is the most delicate of instruments, and nothing but ceaseless, patient effort will enable you to use it with perfect skill.

The remedies which the best physicians would recommend for your case are right reading, right conversation and right observation.

Did you ever notice how people seem to dread being left alone with their own minds, and how they read to escape thinking? Watch the occupants of a railway station. Some suck their minds into a vacuum with novels; the less fortunate employ for

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the same purpose a stale newspaper or the time-cards upon the wall. "Have you a mind, visit it often," says an Eastern proverb, "for thorns and brushwood obstruct the road which no one treads." "There are few brains," Lowell suggests, "which would not be better for living, for a little while, on their own fat."

The best reading, however, is the proper food of the mind. No one can read Emerson or Goethe or Browning without being unconsciously educated, without being taught to think. The very effort to comprehend their meaning is thought. Such writers are a recipe in themselves.

In any reading attention must be your watchword. Challenge every point that the writer makes. Do you agree with him? If so, why? If not, why? How would Shakespeare have regarded it? Has any other great author expressed the

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same thing? If so, refer to it. Which is more forcible and why? Notice the figures of speech. Are they additions or detractions? If they refer to science or nature, verify them; to classical literature, make them your own. Scrutinize words. Why is this chosen rather than another? What other words come from the same root, and what is their relationship? A page mastered in this way outweighs a volume superficially skimmed.

Next in importance to books for the would-be thinker is conversation. Talking shapes our thought for us and gives to airy nothings a local habitation and a name. But in the same degree that we must shun commonplace and mediocre writers, must we strive after the best in conversation. Intercourse with strong minds will strengthen ours. The ambitious tennis player seeks a superior antagonist. He bears defeat

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smilingly, knowing that every contest has taught him a new trick of serving, a better plan of placing balls. Against the strong sense of a wise converser our dull ideas are sharpened and polished into effective weapons. But we must bring them forward and submit them to the process, even though our choicest nicks be ground away, and the comfortable rust of years which has covered us like a garment be dissolved.

Few of us appreciate the effect of nature upon our character. We are educated by what calls forth in us attention, love, admiration. It is the "stoop of the soul," says Browning, "which in bending up-raises it too." What would Ruskin have been without the inspiration of the mountains? Thoreau without his Walden? Wordsworth without his lakes and valleys? The last-named poet struck a key-note when he wrote of his Lucy:

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"Beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face."

We learn to think as we take diseases, by contagion. The sweeping stars teach us lessons of infinite order and steadfast purpose. The rolling oceans and the great winds speak to us their prophecies and aspirations. The mountains create in us the exalted mood; the grass and flowers and birds offer their rich gifts to every passer-by. Day by day Mother Nature opens her great text-book and stands ready to instruct us. "We are all richer than we think," mourns Montaigne, "but we are brought up to go a-begging." The power of thought is not external; it is implanted in our minds, and

"To know"

Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without."

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THE STARRY SKIES

XII

IF, day after day, the same persons should gather about your dinner-table, persons of transcendent beauty of face and form, possessing qualities of mind and heart with which even a cursory acquaintance would reveal to you undreamed-of wonders, and an intimate friendship with which would bring you lasting delight and lift you above the petty irritabilities of your nature; if, wherever you went, such companions should attend you, never interfering, never intruding, never growing old—would it not pass belief that you should be ignorant of their names and residences, that you should lower your veil as they passed, that meeting them in foreign lands you should be unable to distinguish them one from another?

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The Starry Skies

Yet nothing is more universal than this miracle of ingratitude and ignorance in regard to the stars in the heavens. "I blush with shame," a student recently said, "to think that thirty years of my life had passed before I knew the brilliant square of Pegasus, the beautiful cross of the Swan, or how to distinguish Sirius from Jupiter or Venus; to think that, when I could not sleep, I should light my lamp to read

All that I know
Of a certain star,

when I might contemplate unparalleled beauty and majesty shining by the very light of God!"

This is no plea for the difficult study of astronomy. Right ascension, perihelion, and logarithms are not essential to the observer. What she wants is to be able to group the stars into constellations, to call them by name, to distinguish them in

The Starry Skies

whatever position they have shifted, to lead the eye of a companion along lines and "pointers" to a certain favourite, to approximate distances by degrees, to see with a poet's eye, love with a poet's heart.

With the winter months the most beautiful constellations rise into evening view. Orion, the Pleiades, and the Great Dipper, almost everybody knows, and with these as starting-points, any one with ordinary vision, patience, perseverance, and the charts in such a book as Warren's "Recreations in Astronomy," can familiarize herself with the heavens. Warren's book is mentioned because, as one of the Chautauqua text-books, it may be found in nearly every village in the country. Other simple text-books with charts will serve as well.

The student should begin with the circle of constellations in the north, because they are always in sight.

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The Great Dipper, which is part of the Great Bear, is first noted, its "pointers," the two stars on the side farthest from the handle, leading unfailingly to the polar star. Continuing the line through Polaris, one comes to some bright stars in the form of a great W, which is Cassiopeia. The Little Dipper or Bear has Polaris for the end of its handle, and curves towards the handle of its larger and brighter relative.

Continuing the line from the bowl of the Great Dipper through Polaris and Cassiopeia, it leads to a great square of bright stars, Pegasus; to which Andromeda, a line of bright stars, is added as a handle, making another large dipper. The end star of the handle is the middle of a shorter line, running up and down, named Perseus, and this line curves at its base towards Capella, a beautiful star of the first magnitude.

Mythology says that Cassiopeia,

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wife of Cepheus (whose constellation is near her), sought to rival the Nereides in beauty, who, in turn, prayed Neptune to avenge them. This god sent a sea-serpent to ravage the coast; and, to stay the plague, the graceless king and queen chained their daughter Andromeda to a rock, in sacrifice to the monster. The gallant Perseus mounted his winged horse Pegasus, took in his hand Medusa's head, which froze every beholder with fright, slew the serpent, and released Andromeda. The impartial Greeks placed them all together in the sky.

Among the other northern constellations which the student must not miss are Cygnus, the Swan, with its beautiful cross; Lyra, with its brilliant Vega, a star of the first magnitude; and Boötes, with another great star, Arcturus.

After leaving the northern constellations, turn to Orion, the prince of

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The Starry Skies

all, and study its treasures of first and second magnitude stars, its nebulae, its double star in the foot, composed of a white and a blue sun; and the other double stars, blue and purple, and blue and yellow, respectively. One should also read the mythology on the subject, and know the names of its parts—as, for instance, that the belt stars are called the Three Magi. Following the belt as a guide, on each side, about equally distant, are two brilliant stars, Sirius below and Aldebaran above—the latter the eye of the Bull, one of the signs of the zodiac; and the former, Sirius, a part of the constellation of the Great Dog, and the most magnificent star in the heavens. A line from the Pleiades to Sirius cuts Aldebaran and Orion.

After Orion and its attendant subjects, the student should undertake the signs of the zodiac, at least one of which—the Bull, with Aldebaran for its eye—has already been noted.

The Starry Skies

After this the map of the sky is easily read and understood.

For the whereabouts of the wandering planets one must depend upon the reports printed from month to month in many of the periodicals.

Such a study of the stars is of greater interest if it is done in company with one or two others. Opera-glasses reveal many beauties invisible to the naked eye. Two light sticks a yard long firmly joined by short cross-pieces facilitate two persons' finding the same star by each person looking along one of the parallel sticks. It is also well to remember, in estimating distances, that the "pointers" of the Great Dipper are five degrees apart. As one becomes an enthusiast, she will recollect that by rising early in the morning she may in winter see the stars of summer, and in the summer the winter display; and thus from insomnia itself learn the ubiquitous law of compensation.

WANTED—A MEMORY

XIII

"I SHOULD have enjoyed this book greatly," a bright young student said to an older friend, "if I had not been haunted by the thought that I ought to remember it. It gave me a kindred feeling for that character of Mary Wilkins whose anxious wife sprinkled gentian into his tea and over his victuals. The gentian may have been good for him, but it spoiled his meals."

Others than this schoolgirl wake up, at times, to the consciousness of their feeble memories. Wake up, perhaps, only to intrench themselves behind them as an excuse to palliate their carelessness and to preclude all mental effort; or to accept them as a mere infirmity of nature, an affliction like myopia or insomnia, to be publicly paraded.

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Wanted—A Memory

The truth is, that a trained memory is a virtue, not an accomplishment; it is acquired and not hereditary; and its absence should be condemned, not condoled.

In a chamber of every brain lurks a messenger who, moment by moment, carries from the eye, the ear, the fingers, treasures which we call impressions. They are not stored idly away. Each one passing through the laboratory of the mind becomes a part of the whole, and changes the intellectual composition, as a chemical compound is changed by a new ingredient. From this well, enriched or defiled, the owner dips his resources; and it is certain that nothing can be drawn forth that has not been put in.

The habit of thinking and the habit of remembering are so closely related that the same prescription applies to both. This may be summarized into two ingredients—attention and prac-

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Wanted—A Memory

tice. The conductor looks into hundreds of faces day after day, and seldom mistakes in collecting a ticket at the proper station. The politician remembers unerringly the names of constituents whom he sees only at long intervals. The letter-carrier can tell you the number of every house on his beat. The historian has a multitude of dates at his tongue's end. How have they accomplished these feats? First, by the concentration of their attention; second, by the continual practice of their chosen tasks.

It was not of faces or names or house-numbers, however, that the young girl was thinking. She was a lover of good literature; and to read a book and then forget it seemed to her like "rearing a towering scheme of happiness and beholding it razed." She was unaware that even what of good she had forgotten had deepened and broadened the

Wanted—A Memory

channel of her mind; and that borrowed images had been transmuted into instinct. Ignorant of this, she mourned that what she would have retained had passed away. She mourned and asked a remedy.

The first mistake, my dear young lady, lies in the manner of your reading. While choosing worthy books, you read them for the pleasure they give you at the moment. You do not attempt to remember; and remembering without effort is, to the uninitiated, as hopeless as squaring the circle. You must give your undivided attention to what you read, "chaining your mind lest it fall abroad with liberty." Being a reasoning creature and not a parrot, you should comprehend an ordinary statement at the first reading. An enormous waste of faculty results from the schoolboy practice of learning a rule by repeating it over and over. If, however, the sentence or para-

Wanted—A Memory

graph is abstruse, it should be re-read slowly and thoughtfully, and not left until it is mastered.

The one-reading habit secures vivid impressions, a prime factor of a good memory. Benvenuto Cellini records that when in his boyhood he saw a salamander come out of the fire, his grandfather gave him a sound beating that he might remember so unique a prodigy; and Lowell says that the same theory held in mediæval France where the children were annually whipped at the boundaries of the parish, lest the place of them might ever be lost through the neglect of so inexpensive a mordant to the memory. The cuticle of the mind may be stimulated to vivid impressions by the exercise of the imagination. A writer cites the case of the Battle of Bunker Hill.

"What did the eyes see?" he asks. "Fifteen hundred Americans intrenched upon the hill. Colonel

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Wanted—A Memory

Prescott, General Putnam and General Warren are in command. But how are these Americans dressed and equipped? Like what do these intrenchments appear? What is the expression on the faces of the commanders and soldiers? Show me the Pine-Tree banner that fluttered fearlessly in the smoke of battle. Show me those three assaults, those repulses, the clouds of smoke, the desperate fight with the butts of muskets, the hillside red with the fallen foe. Come, painter! how looked Boston and the burning Charlestown, the waters between, the war-ships, the blue New England sky?" It is reading thus by the light of the imagination that one is enabled to remember.

The next aid to memory is the process of sifting. From the great mass of literature carefully select the portion which seems best suited to your needs. Much of this, if you have a

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Wanted—A Memory

healthy memory, you will read with oblivion. Even among the best you must discriminate, gathering, as Carlyle says, "the metal grains here available, the dross-heaps there avoidable;" and for the last you may safely follow Mrs. Malaprop's advice to "illiterate them from your memory."

The sifting process is greatly aided by the constant practice of taking notes as you read. However brief and unconnected they may be, they will yet form solid pegs on which to hang your acquisition, and will serve to dissipate the haziness of your mental atmosphere. Sometimes the heart of a whole chapter may be compressed into a few lines, and the subsequent abstract serve to recall the matter of an entire volume.

After an image has been developed upon the photographic plate of the mind, how shall it be fixed there into the faculty which we call memory? As Mr. Squeers long ago discovered,

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Wanted—A Memory

practical application is the only mordant. The lad set to wash the windows of Dotheboys' Hall was not likely to forget that "to clean is a verb, active"; and in modern educational systems the youth draws his plan in the studio and then works it out in wood or metal in the workshop. Thurlow Weed, in the beginning of his political career, had a memory like a sieve. Dates, names, appointments, faces—everything escaped him. He began night after night, to relate the events of the day to his wife. He recalled the dishes he had for his meals, the editorials he had read, the letters he had written, the streets he had walked, the very words he had heard and spoken. To this practice, continued for nearly fifty years, he attributed his marvelous memory.

If, after every chapter you read, you would close the book and make yourself think over or repeat aloud

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Wanted—A Memory

the contents of the chapter, you would read far less and remember far more. Always preface your continuation of a book by a brief summary of what has gone before and close each reading with a mental or written statement of the principal events, characters, causes, and results you have encountered. Its most striking phrases might be introduced into your own conversation, and the best anecdotes repeated to your friends.

Rare indeed is the dinner-table that may not be enlivened by such memory practice; and the speaker will have the additional reward of seeing his listeners bring their contributions to the common feast. The correction of error, the addition of incident and personal recollection, and the freedom of discussion, cannot fail to strengthen first impressions, rivet attention, stir curiosity, and classify acquisition.

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Wanted—A Memory

After all, memory is only knowledge made available; and knowledge without it is as useless as the contents of a safe to which the key is lost. What if our joy in perfecting it be "three parts pain"? Is it not compensation enough that whereas once

In subtle mockery

Thou smilest at the window where I wait
Who bade thee ride for life,

now

Thou standest before me glad and fleet,
And layest undreamed-of treasures at my feet?

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DRY THINGS

XIV

"SOMEBODY sent me 'Sesame and Lilies' for a birthday present," a bright young girl told me. "I supposed that I should hate Ruskin, but really," with surprise, "he is delightful!"

A week later she overtook me on the street. "You like morning walks. May I go with you to-morrow — early — before breakfast?" "Yes," I replied, smiling at her earnest crescendo and rosy cheeks, "I shall be delighted; but what restless spirit has been pricking you? Did you ever in your life see the sun rise?"

"That is just it. Do not for the world let the girls know, but I have been reading Browning a little. Why do people talk so about his hidden

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Dry Things

meanings? That description of the sunrise, who could not understand that? Understand—why, it is as easy as Longfellow, and—now I want to see it!"

The next morning she was waiting for me at the gate. "It is well that Browning rang the bell. I should have taken another nap for all anybody else. Just see the dew on the grass! Why it is like rain. And hear those birds sing! I should like to run. Everybody is asleep, can't we have a race? What fun this is! And I have always thought that if one thing were worse than another it was getting up in the morning. See those clouds breaking; now I *must* say it:

"Day!

Faster and more fast,
O'er night's brim, day boils at last;
Boils, pure gold, o'er the cloud-cup's brim
Where spurning and suppressed it lay:
For not a froth-flake touched the rim

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Dry Things

Of yonder gap in the solid grey
Of the eastern cloud, an hour away,
But forth one wavelet, then another curled,
Till the whole sunrise, not to be suppressed,
Rose, reddened, and its seething breast
Flickered in bounds, grew gold, then over-
flowed the world."

There was a mist over the child's eyes. Ruskin is right, I said to myself, when he wonders, not at what men suffer, but at what they lose.

My companion was silent while we walked down the hill. As we turned towards her home she said suddenly: "I shall never dare say again that I dislike history, or that I cannot endure Thackeray, or that the old paintings in the galleries are hideous. I shall be discreetly silent about things I cannot appreciate; for I believe now that dry things are just things we do not know enough about to care for."

THE BROAD VIEW

XV

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light.
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But westward look, the land is bright.

WHAT does it mean, this something in Clough's lines which beyond rhythm and picture appeals to us? And to what does Carlyle refer when he talks fiercely of respectability with its thousand gigs? and Matthew Arnold when he asserts that the occupant of every gig is a Philistine? Is it not a warning to get out of the cramped narrowness of our daily lives? to open more than one outlook on life—else we shall catch but faint and tardy glimpses of the radiance that floods it?

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The Broad View

ing that a pet bird of his called Roma was meant; and was greatly consoled on discovering that it was merely the capital of the world! "*Rien!*" wrote Louis XIV because it chanced that day there was no hunt; and while he wrote Paris surged on to storm the Bastille. But emperors and kings are not alone in their narrownesses.

All of us know the woman who after a journey comes back to tell us the minutest details of the room in which she was quartered, the situation of the bureau, the number of shelves in the closet; what she thought about the paper on the wall and what her sister to whom she had spoken thought about it. If we ask concerning the music which we had longed to hear, she is reminded that returning from a certain concert she slipped and fell and her husband had to call a carriage and how it took them to the wrong hotel and the ex-

The Broad View

act remarks they made to the driver; and then follows a list of remedies, the order of hot compresses and cold arnica until you feel that you could perform it all backwards and in the dark. If you ask about the university settlement in which her friends were engaged she is reminded of her own children and recounts the number of garments she has made for each and offers to send you their photographs and write their ages on the back. She tells you what carpets she is going to take up, and makes you guess how long they have been down, and floods your brain with her petty concerns until you are irritated and exhausted and her presence becomes intolerable.

We do not all err along this line. Our especial window may not face the domestic side. It may be that philanthropy magnifies the importance of some Borrioboola Gha, to the exclusion of our own development or

The Broad View

the interests of those about us; it may be even books and self-improvement which narrow our vision to the strip of sky which we think monopolizes the sunshine of life.

Broad views do not depend upon environment. Go where you will, have what you crave, you can never be anything but what you are. The great question for each of us is, "What horizon shall I draw around my life?" Because we do not shine in society, shall we therefore avoid its softening and enlarging influences? Because we appreciate that we are neither skilled pianists nor artists, shall we therefore hesitate to study harmony and form? Because our acquaintances are uncultured, shall we therefore neglect the quickening atmosphere of books? Because our first youth has flown shall we therefore fall behind the times we are in?

SHUT-INS

XVI

THE young girl thought it was cruel. She turned her face to the wall and let her thin fingers rest supinely in the strong hand which covered them. "Dear," the man said gently, "your voice is the sweetest thing in the world to us now, but wouldn't this be a good day to drop the whine? It is a very easy habit when one is so weak, but the habit will be harder to break to-morrow." It was then that the girl turned to the wall. She had been brought up to obey, however, and obeying she became a pleasanter convalescent, and very soon recognized the wholesomeness of her father's lesson.

It is with keen recollection of the unwelcomeness of such suggestion that the whilom invalid begs to say

Shut-Ins

to her sister invalids, "Let us drop the attitude of the shut-in."

The response is prompt and widespread: "Gladly would we resign the conditions, put aside our sufferings and deformities and helplessness. Do you bring a remedy, or would you take away a consolation? What do you mean?"

The reply is certain to seem cruel. It must first emphasize that illness is an abnormal physical condition, accompanied almost always by an abnormal condition of mind. For one person whom invalidism ennobles there are fifty whom it degrades; the average sick person is more biased, more petulant, more selfish than the same person would be in health, and therefore just so much less capable of sound judgment and counsel. For such persons to band themselves together into organizations is to inoculate themselves with diseases of others, foster mor-

Shut-Ins

bid introspection and mock resignation and often drag the well into needless, vicarious misery.

I fear many faces are turning indignantly to the wall, but permit me to relate another incident from life. Two sisters, differing widely in age and temperament were suddenly deprived of a competency and went to live in humble quarters. The elder kept the house and a few boarders, toiling early and late without leisure for mental or physical recuperation. The younger, strong and rosy, found an easy situation in an office. One evening when the housekeeper was manifestly too ill to wash the dishes, the younger excused herself from all assistance, saying that it was the day to send her "shut-in" letter and her conscience would not allow her to neglect its preparation. Taking her Bible from a stand, she went off to the peace of her own room. Whether she caught the expression of my face,

Shut-Ins

or whether she acted from a love of proselyting, I do not know, but on my departure she handed me a little leaflet. It proved to be one of the many published communications from an invalid. The writer began with a minute description of herself, her environments and her sufferings. She thanked God that He had given her a cheerful spirit and asserted that she tried to smile no matter what her pain, and that she seldom spoke of her agony. She moralized a little, assured her readers that she loved them all, and closed with a request for certain reading matter.

It was to answer this maudlin letter from a stranger that my young philanthropist allowed her sister to toil on unaided ; and I cannot believe it an unjust sample of many kindred cases. Far be it from me to make light of suffering or the divine gift of consolation. Rather because I have known such exquisite examples of

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Shut-Ins

both am I urged on to iconoclasm. The invalid who "serves" is she who is self-unconscious instead of self-sacrificing, which last always contains an element of egotism. She discourses neither of her ailments nor her patience. She offers rather than demands sympathy. She never taxes a busy friend with failing regard for herself. She seeks contact with whatever is brave and bright and wholesome and progressive. She cultivates the company of the well. She never signs herself a "shut-in"—why should she? The motto does not read one way for the strong and another for the weak. For both it is

"Look out and not in, and
Lend a hand."

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SHAMS

XVII

"HANDS off!" was the sign over a case of magnificently bound books in the British building at the Columbian Exposition. Several young women stopped for a moment to read the titles, and one, in spite of the printed injunction, put out her hand to draw forth a volume. To the surprise of all, a block of wood fell into her fingers. "Shame on you, England," she exclaimed aloud; "there was no necessity for your bookcases here, and to think that you have them filled with painted shams. Shakespeare and Bacon and Thackeray would despise such empty compliments."

As the girls went out in couples, one pressed the arm of another with a light laugh. "Bravo for Marie and her avowed hatred of shams! Was

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Shams

sincerity her strong point at college?"

"We used to envy her her very name," returned her companion, "until her mother came and called her Maria; we were led to believe her the youngest girl in the class until she inadvertently mentioned some memories of the Centennial; she laughed at our plain note-paper until we discovered that she had hers engraved at a stationer's with a left-over crest; and her sealskin jacket turned out to be a plush. Shame on you, Marie," and the roguish girl copied the air of the earlier speaker, "there was no necessity for anything nicer than a plush jacket, and to think you set us all agog with envy! She travelled through the South last year with my sister and me," the taller girl continued, "and we spent several weeks in a quiet, inexpensive place near St. Augustine. We drove to the magnificent Ponce de Leon one day for luncheon, and after-

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Shams

wards, she and my sister went to the parlour to write letters. Unfortunately they each addressed the same person; and while Ruth called attention to the fact that she was making the most of her aristocratic opportunities, and explained our journey in detail, Marie, on the hotel stationery, vaunted the glories of 'this charming spot where we are spending the month.' "

More famous persons than foolish Marie have succumbed to the fleeting honours of hypocrisy. Macaulay wrote a letter to his constituents dated Windsor Castle. He happened to be there a half-hour, and took that opportunity to write the letter, or rather to date it, for he carried it with him ready written. It has been thrown up to him ever since. A famous Italian character possessed a number of wigs of different lengths, which he wore in rotation in order to sustain the impression that his hair was

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Shams

cut from time to time. All who looked at the famous Carolus-Duran portraits at the Chicago exhibition were struck by the folly of the woman who masked the dignity of her eighty years under all manner of false appliances and youthfulness of costume.

It was the fashion of the ancients when an ox was led out to sacrifice, to chalk the dark spots so the animal might seem to be of unblemished whiteness. Let us fling away the chalk, and shake ourselves free from shams! Pretending to be a little wiser, a little richer, a little more beautiful, a little more aristocratic than we really are, degrades us in our own eyes and makes us a laughing-stock to others.

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FLATTERY

XVIII

AN American lady one day going into a Chinese kitchen was mystified to see the cook rubbing molasses over the mouth of a hideous paper image nailed to the wall.

Upon inquiry she learned that the image was a kitchen idol, the duty of which was to watch and report to some higher god whatever was said and done in the kitchen, and that its mouth was anointed in this fashion so that it could relate only sweet things.

"I have a lurking sympathy for the idol," the lady declared. "I can understand its helpless misery. Many and many a time have people heaped compliments and gifts and repulsive sweetnesses upon me in order to seal my lips or pervert my judgment. I am not sure but the crude molasses

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Flattery

of the heathen Chinese is better than concocted 'taffy' of more civilized acquaintances."

"It is much easier to flatter than to praise," says Richter, and his distinction is wise, for while praise implies merit in the receiver and honesty in the giver flattery is based on no foundation and is spread without discrimination.

Schoolgirls, with their ardent affections and gushing confidences, need to learn the ill effects upon both themselves and their friends of indiscriminate praise. Because you love your laughing little seat-mate is that any reason why you should tell her that she is the prettiest girl in school? You thereby deaden your own judgment and plant in her a seed of vanity. Why not, if you must praise her to her face, tell her rather what is strictly true, that she is the best-natured girl you know and that you feel happier whenever she is in the

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Flattery

room. That will strengthen your own integrity of mind and encourage her to let nothing mar the disposition which gives you so much pleasure.

Such sincerity of praise is inspired by the very best that is in us, and is diametrically opposed, in intention and in result, to those obsequious, fulsome words and attentions which fill us with false hopes and encourage us by deceitful representations.

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MY LADY TEAZLE

XIX

"HERE comes Lady Teazle! Excuse me; walk on and I will follow," and my incomprehensible friend disappeared suddenly into a shop which a moment before she had no thought of entering. Soon afterwards I heard her quick footsteps behind me, and with a smile she replied to my astonished look, "The morning is too lovely to be spoiled."

"Who is this Mrs. Teazle?" I questioned.

"She bears another name in the blue book," was the answer. "Teazle is her pseudonym. No, not after Sheridan. Did you ever visit a cloth factory? Nothing has ever been invented that is so effectual as the field teazle for raising a nap on cloth."

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My Lady Teazle

After an interview with Lady Teazle my temper is as rough as this chevriot jacket. Where is the good of it? For my part, I like to rub people the right way!"

Where, indeed, is the good of it? Do the beatitudes include "Blessed is she who telleth unpleasant truths"? or "Blessed is she who vexeth her neighbour without a cause"? Is there any virtue in disconcerting one's acquaintances, irritating and wounding one's own familiar friends?

True good breeding prefers smoothing people the right way. It is content to call a bonnet becoming, without adding, "So much more becoming than the one you wore last season!" If your profile is poor, it can see something beautiful in your full face. If your dinner is cold, it can admire your flowers. If it cannot truthfully praise your book, it can at least thank you cordially for your presentation copy. It is inter-

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My Lady Teazle

ested but never inquisitive, it is equally free from familiarity and haughtiness; it makes no exactions, and calls for no apologies.

It has been said that there is no greater evidence of crudity than a belief that a declaration of an honest opinion is always in order, and that silence is deceit. Courtesy need never mean insincerity; the attempt to make things pleasant does not involve deception; there is no incompatibility between truthfulness and consideration for the feelings of others.

Emerson said that it was much easier for Thoreau to say *no* than *yes*; and Robert Louis Stevenson, commenting on the expression, declares that while it is a useful accomplishment to be able to say *no*, it is the essence of amiability to prefer to say *yes* when it is possible.

Nobody ever had so many enemies as Disraeli, whose most power-

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My Lady Teazle

ful weapon was sarcasm, and Carlyle, of whom Miss Fox said that after talking with him she wondered whether anybody ever did any good in the world, was not a lovable man. As Dr. John Brown, however, walked along the street, with smiles and nods, his presence was felt like a passing sunbeam. No house he visited but the humblest servant knew him, and for each there was a word of recognition. His was indeed a reconciling spirit.

In a trolley car one day, each entrance and exit of the passengers was accompanied by an irritating squeak of the door. A workingman rose, took a little oil-can from his pocket and deliberately oiled the slide. As he slowly capped the can he gave a smiling apology to the crowded car: "I always carry it round, because I find such a lot of things, everywhere, that squeak."

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WHAT'S IN A NAME

XX

YOU are named Elizabeth and called Betsy, or Gertrude and called Tutie, or the stately Margaret and called Peg? And it annoys you? You think you would be better natured if you were called by your right name? One of the loveliest women I know has no other name than "Number Five." As far as poetry and distinction go she might as well be a convict or a ditch-digger; and yet she decided early in life that such a thing as a name should not mar her disposition.

She is older than you schoolgirls, and yet her face is one that age can never cheat of its charm. Her lips are not exactly ruby, nor her mouth the shape of Cupid's bow, but she has

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What's in a Name

such a fine, sweet voice that the moment she speaks all faces turn towards her. Its secret cannot be told, but it makes friends of everybody. In a general laugh you can hear through all that sweet caressing voice; not because it is more penetrating or louder than the rest, for it is soft and low; but it is so different from the others, there is so much more life—the life of sweet womanhood—dissolved in it. She never laughs, however, when giving way to her sense of the ridiculous might wound the feelings of others.

Her eyes are so bright that she sees at once when a discussion tends to become personal, and heads off the threatening antagonists. She sees when a subject has been knocking about long enough, and dexterously shifts the talk to another track. She sees as well as anybody the ridiculous element in a silly speech, or the absurdity of an ex-

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What's in a Name

travagant one, but she sees too whatever is bright and good in it and brings that forward. Your eyes may be younger, dear girls, but tell me, can they see as far as that?

Number Five is just the person for a confidante. Everybody wants to be her friend. The shy become quite easy in her presence. With her own sex she is always helpful and sympathizing, tender, charitable, sharing their griefs as well as their pleasures. Men, young or old, find in her the same sweet, sincere, unaffected friend. Her generous nature always comes to the relief of the depreciated or abused. "You must not talk so," she sometimes has to say, "you misunderstand the case"; and the very slanderer is glad when she comes to the rescue. For after all, girls, people like you a great deal better if you uphold what you think is right, rather than if you meekly acquiesce in all that is said.

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What's in a Name

Lastly, her promises are always sacredly fulfilled. If you should ask any one if she had met him at an appointed time, he would be likely to reply with astonishment, "Of course she did; why, she *said* she would!" Do you ask who is this Number Five, so fascinating, so wise, so full of knowledge? She is the creation of Oliver Wendell Holmes, and she is, Betsy, Tutie, Peg, the woman you may each become if you will.

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TAKING OFFENSE

XXI

SIR ROGER DE COVERLEY, in his walks about London, once had occasion to inquire which was the way to St. Anne's Lane; upon which the person he spoke to, instead of answering his question, called him a "young Popish cur," and asked him who had made Anne a saint? The boy, being in some confusion, inquired of the next he met the way to Anne's Lane; but was called a "prick-eared cur" for his pains, and, instead of being shown the way was told Anne had been a saint before he was born, and would be one after he was hanged. Upon this he inquired no more, but, going into every lane, asked "what they called it?"

Thus railed the kindly Addison at persons who not only take offense

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Taking Offense

but seem to court it, as if a sensitive plant, shrinking from every touch and making the passer-by feel guilty for his unwitting contact, should grow rankest along the highway and crowd the haunts of men.

Every word is capable of degradation, and in recent years "sensitive" has met its fate. It no longer expresses the poetic sensibility of a Keats or a Raphael; to the thinking person it signifies, rather, ignorance, selfishness and conceit. These are strong terms; but the malady is grievous.

"We can make ourselves miserable to any extent with *perhapses*," writes Ruskin; and *perhapses* are the principal diet of the persons who take offense.

"I saw your friend Miss White at a reception yesterday," one well-dressed girl said to another; "but she did not seem to remember me, so I did not speak." "Indeed?" replied

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the other; "that is just what she said of you."

So two persons with mutual likings and interests were guilty of marked rudeness to each other, and to their common friend.

"Did you notice how Mary Case put her parasol before her face as she passed, so she could not see me on the porch?" complained a girl to her brother, oblivious of the fact that the afternoon sun was pouring directly into her friend's near-sighted eyes.

"The minister has not called here this summer. Of course he need not if he does not choose to. I can go to some other church." Thus innocent remarks are built into contrary meanings; absent-minded friends are harshly judged; hurt feelings and aching secrets and disguised jealousies are fondled and fostered until the poor, self-tortured soul thinks it is mightily abused, and prides itself on its own tragic susceptibility.

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All for want of a little common sense—a little of that high quality of imagination which enables a person to put herself in the place of another. How quickly then would we exclaim: "I know you did not dream of my presence"—"I remembered that you were in great sorrow"—"I understood that your dinner-table was small and your social indebtedness large"—"I never doubted but the report was false."

Friendship requires concession, excuse and great charity. What we need is to put off our foolish suspicions, our irritating sensitiveness, our readiness to take offense; to refrain from calling out, "Here is a nerve laid bare; touch it and see it quiver;" to be too proud to parade even the hurt we cannot sometimes but feel. Dumas, when somebody taunted him with having a black father, replied, "My grandfather was a monkey;" and Balzac's unailing

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advice was "Laugh in your sleeve at those who calumniate you." It is by such hardiness, rather than by moping and brooding, that success and happiness are achieved.

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THE GRACE OF EXPLANATION

XXII

THE next thing to war is a great railroad strike, when men and women, furious from hunger and maddened by the words of ignorant or unscrupulous leaders, attempt to better their condition by resort to armed force and the destruction of property. It was in the midst of such turbulence a few years ago that a slender, dark-haired gentleman hurried down the steps of Armour Institute in Chicago to a company of ruthless workmen who were overturning locomotives, burning cars and tearing up the tracks. Curious onlookers, fearing for the man's life, watched him as he talked to the strikers and, to their astonishment, saw a score of them turn from their nefarious work and follow the newcomer into the building.

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The Grace of Explanation

Dr. Gunsaulus, for it was he, uttered no words of condemnation. He told the men that he had heard their shouts of execration against the rich, and he simply wanted to show them one plan the rich had for helping the poor. Using all his eloquence of persuasion, he led his followers into the institute, of which he is president, and there showed them how young people of their own class were being taught carpentry, blacksmithing, printing, dressmaking, millinery, cooking, all the profitable trades for both sexes, together with sufficient bookkeeping to fit them for the business and competition of the world. The hard faces softened, and in words straight from convinced hearts the men assured Dr. Gunsaulus that they had never imagined there was such a school in the world. They could feel nothing but respect and honour for a capitalist who gave so generously and intelligently for the uplifting of the poor.

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The Grace of Explanation

A near-sighted girl who had been introduced to a college student met him soon after and failed to recognize him. The young man had lifted his hat and was deeply hurt at the imagined slight. Hearing of the fact through a friend, the offender lost no time in sending an explanation of her apparent rudeness. A flush of surprise came over the sensitive boy's face as he said, "She has made me her friend for life."

These incidents emphasize the old French proverb that all being explained all is pardoned, and open one's eyes anew to the reciprocal qualities needful to social harmony. Only those edges dovetail in which the points of one side are met by the indentures of the other, and the person who scorns to offer a reasonable explanation is like an ignorant carpenter who attempts to fit point to point and hollow to hollow.

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CULTIVATING THE INTUITION

XXIII

THEOLOGIANS tell us that conscience is not a reasoning faculty, that the judgment maps out the situation in all its phases while conscience declares the unerring alternative, "do it," or "do it not." What conscience is to the spiritual nature, intuition is to the social nature. It is a God-given faculty which may be clouded by neglect or deadened by disobedience to its decrees; or it may, by prompt acceptance of its dictates, grow into the genius of our lives.

A young woman came to me the other day with a little confidence and a little deduction therefrom. The deduction had come with the convincing force of experience, quite apart from the poetic pleasure she had taken in Browning's earlier wording of it,

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The Grace of Explanation

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Cultivating the Intuition

"I used to hold by the instructed brain;
the heart leads surelier."

At the seashore she had met a brilliant society woman, and had been led into a somewhat intimate acquaintance with her. On parting the elder woman had given the younger a cordial invitation to visit her when in the city where she lived. Some months later my friend visited New York, and, remembering the proposal, followed a natural inclination to send her her card. Before the mail was collected however, she had time to reconsider her act. "The lady is very rich," she said to herself; "she is surrounded by her own gay circle; her engagements are many; why should I fancy she cares to see a summer acquaintance who is plain and poor and a rustic at best?" So, blushing at her own folly, she threw the card into the fire.

A month later, by one of those strange fatalities which show us that

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the great world is after all but a little ball lying in God's palm, she learned that the very week in which the impulse to visit her friend had taken hold of her, that lady had been bowed by a greater sorrow; and that in her pride and anguish and humiliation her thoughts had gone back to her strong, pure, unspoiled companion of the summer before, and that she had longed for a clasp of her hand and the kindly generosity of her interpretations.

"And I failed her," the girl said, sorrowfully. "Being rebuffed could not have hurt me half so much. Friendliness ought not to be an affair of calculation, but of inspiration."

This was her little deduction; and I thought of the strong posthumous words of Emerson:

"If we could retain our early innocence, we might trust our feet uncommanded to take the right way to our friend in the woods; but we have

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Cultivating the Intuition

interfered too often, the feet have lost, by our distrust, their proper virtue, and we take the wrong path and miss him." And again, "Right thought comes spontaneously, comes like the morning wind, comes daily, like daily bread, to humble service. It does not need to pump your brains to think rightly. Oh no, the ingenious person is warped by his ingenuity and misses."

"Thank God, no paradise stands barred to entry." This inspiration which the young woman craved, call it intuition if you will, resides in all of us. To cultivate it we have simply to welcome its calls; to hesitate for no feeling of bashfulness or awkwardness, but to put into direct, instantaneous practice whatever kind, helpful thoughts occur to us. After all, why are we here, if not to "make life less difficult to those about us"?

TAKING THE INITIATIVE

XXIV

INTO a well-filled street-car running along a fashionable quarter of a western city there entered the other day a poorly dressed little woman carrying a handsome sturdy boy. He was about two years old and possessed a vocabulary of just that number of words. He would look down the aisle towards some gentleman and call "Papa" in the most seductive of tones, trying it upon all the men in the car, meeting always with a quick response and filling the intervals of conversation with ingratiating smiles.

As the baby went out on his mother's shoulder he fixed his eyes upon the one person who had paid no attention to his advances, a richly dressed, proud-faced woman seated

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in a corner, and, stretching out his small hand towards her as he passed called, "Hello!" There was an instant of expectant silence. The men looked over their papers, and the women held their breath. Was the small chap's friendliness to meet with open repulse? There was just a flash of hesitation on the lady's part before she returned his homely word, "Hello," adding with a smile and a wave of her hand, "Good-bye."

The men again bent their eyes on their newspapers, the women gathered up their slipping parcels; but there was an air of courtesy abroad which one does not often associate with the atmosphere of electric cars.

"They have half conquered Fate who go half-way to meet her," quoted a woman to whom a younger girl had been telling the incident; "that little fellow will succeed in life if he keeps on as he has begun. The

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world would be a great deal nicer place if more of us followed his example in taking the initiative."

"I would give anything to have such a disposition," the girl replied. "When people are about I can never think of anything to say, or the proper thing to do. I feel friendly enough but it is not my nature to show it."

The elder woman smiled as she ran her fingers over the keys of the piano. "I would give anything," she echoed, "to play this impromptu as you do. When people ask me to try it, I seem to have no technique. But I never imagined," she went on more seriously, "that the defect was in my nature. My fingers are formed much like yours, my ability to understand is perhaps as good. I fancied the lack was in practice; but perhaps it is not my nature to play well."

The girl stared, but she was quick

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of comprehension. "Suppose I did not even feel friendly?" she asked.

"I believe in reflex action," replied her aunt. "I believe that when a person feels morose and moody, by putting on a brave smile and adopting a cheerful tone of voice her mood will actually change to match her expression; and in the same way persistence in doing small kindnesses will transform the coldest of us into women glowing with helpfulness and good cheer."

Does not this simple theory open up visions of active effort to many girls and women who, with or without "feeling friendly enough" have never learned the expression of their real selves? The way to take the initiative is simply to take it. There is always somebody to smile at, somebody in a corner to stretch out a hand to, some one to whom a book or a basket of flowers would be a boon, a letter an incentive to better

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achievement; and there is always that high table-land of endeavour pointed out by Lowell:

"Be noble; and the nobleness that lies
In other men, sleeping but never dead,
Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;
Then shalt thou see it gleam in many eyes,
Then will pure light about thy way be shed,
And thou wilt nevermore be sad or lone."

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SYMPATHETIC VIBRATIONS

XXV

"I WONDER why it is," Alice exclaimed, as she and the doctor neared the river, "that a great iron bridge like this should forbid a single horse and two little people to trot across?"

The doctor laughed. "It is not a case of a single horse and two little people. The bridge does not even notice us till we are half over, but before we leave it is all in a tremour. Teams just behind would pick up and augment our rapid vibrations to a dangerous degree." He reined up the horse beside two tall pine-trees. "Jump out and let us experiment."

Putting his thumbs against the trunk of one tree and Alice's against the other, he told her to push each time he counted. For ten counts the

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Sympathetic Vibrations

trees stood unyielding. At the eleventh there was a slight movement of the upper branches and at the thirteenth both trees were waving in unison.

If two clocks are placed on the same shelf and their pendulums adjusted to swing in exact unison, and one of them be set running, in the course of time the other will start up in sympathy. Each vibration of the active pendulum adds to the swing of the other, which, beginning in a very small way, increases until both are making their full stroke.

The violinist, Sarasate, once found his memory deserting him at a recital, but he discovered the reason of the mishap in time to prevent a failure. A lady was fanning herself in the front row of chairs. The violinist stopped playing. "Madame," he said, "how can I play in two-four time when you are beating six-eight?" The lady shut up her fan

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Sympathetic Vibrations

and the recital was concluded successfully.

All human intercourse may be said to be founded upon one of these two incidents. Either we help one another or we hinder.

Perhaps we have fanned our whims so long in six-eight time that we forget how many lovely melodies depend on two-four time. Or perhaps we have hung our pendulum of action so heedlessly that we can neither give an impulse to others nor catch the swing of their own.

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THE VALUE OF MONEY

XXVI

TWO attractive girls, evidently suburbanites, sat opposite me in the cars, and from their conversation which I could not help hearing my fancy easily followed them through the earlier hours of the day. One of them, in their tour of the shops, was continually saying, "How cheap this lace is!" "What a bargain in ribbons!" "This cloth is going for a song!" and the close of the day found her pocketbook depleted and her arms loaded with so-called bargains none of which exactly suited her. Her companion had spent no more money, but she had just the dress pattern that she desired, gloves of the exact shade that would be most serviceable, and a simple becoming hat of unmistakable "air."

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"Why is it," the younger girl exclaimed, almost in tears, "that you always get so much more for fifty dollars than I do?"

"Because," the other replied laconically, "I do not fritter."

One of the greatest benefits which redounds to the self-supporting girl is the proper appreciation of money. The girl who has fingered her typewriter all winter in order to spend her vacation at the seashore will be less likely to indulge in needless extravagances than the one who has taken a check from her father's ready hand. She knows by experience that some things are superficial and some are essential, and she saves on the one to spend on the other. She learns to sink trifles and know solid values; to plan at home what she is to buy, deciding definitely upon colour, material, quantity and price, and not allowing herself to fluctuate under the eloquence of the salesman. Above all

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she learns never to buy a thing merely because it is cheap. The gambling table is not a surer grave for a boy's money than the bargain counter for the girl's.

Of all Dickens's characters none exasperates the reader so much as Harold Skimpole. Handsome, accomplished, artistic, fascinating, he had no idea of the value of money. As he continually repeated, with a fervour which leads one to doubt his veracity, he was a child in shillings and pence. Therefore he let his wife and daughters go ragged, permitted his friends to pay his debts, and wore out his life in attitudinizing.

Far more lovable is Thackeray's Colonel Newcome, and yet Miss Mulock was emphatic in declaring that not for the world would she have Colonel Newcome for a father, uncle, husband or confidential friend. Why? Because he, like Harold Skimpole was deficient in the one

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point, the pivot upon which society turns, the right use and conscientious appreciation of money.

But is the average girl, who despises the weakness of these men, standing on a different plane? Is she making herself, day by day, more intelligent in the use of money? Does she know the exact amount of her income or allowance? Does she live within it? Is she punctilious in the keeping and balancing of accounts, and informed concerning receipts, checks and drafts? Or is she "only a girl" in the matter of money—thoughtless, wasteful, inconsiderate, rather proud of the fact that she is free-handed and above pecuniary consideration?

I once knew a girl so impressed with palmistry that she actually changed her character to conform to the lines in her hand. If these instances of the young shopper and the characters of fiction work in any

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girl reader a juster appreciation of the money line in her life's palm, they will not have been repeated here in vain.

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THE BORROW- ING HABIT

XXVII

STUDY hour was over in the Lakeside Seminary and a group of girls was chatting in the room of one of the students. She had been at the seminary but a few weeks, but already she was a favourite. A knock at the door was followed by the appearance of a pretty girl in hat and jacket, who touched her short golden hair as she spoke to the girl who advanced to welcome her: "Alice, I have no small change to-day; will you lend me a quarter to appease the barber? You see these locks need trimming."

"Of course," laughed the other, going for her pocketbook, "and bring me a curl for interest."

The group of girls was silent as the door closed behind the borrower and

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her steps died away down the hall. "Good-bye quarter," murmured one at last, and the others exclaimed, "It is a shame," and "We would not tolerate it in a less attractive girl."

"Olive never remembers to pay her debts," one of the company replied to Alice's looks of surprised inquiry, "and she has no scruples about borrowing. We often have to do without chocolates, but not Olive. We are all her bankers."

Olive Thorne had never been abundantly supplied with pin-money. She had little extra for candy and flowers and ice-cream, but she cared greatly for those things, not only for herself but to give to others. "Will you lend me a dollar?" she had said timidly, one day to her room-mate, and the prompt response had helped her over a difficulty. The next loan was only a dime, and when Olive spoke of returning it her room-mate laughingly repulsed her. Olive bor-

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rowed a half-dollar one day of the friend she was walking with, and treated three other girls to ice-cream. She was a long time in repaying that loan, and to do it, at last, gave the money that should have been reserved for the laundry bill. She decided to use her credit at the laundry and pay at the end of the term. When Christmas came she had just enough money to buy her railroad ticket and to send a few choice flowers back to a favourite teacher. It was a week after the holidays that the above conversation took place.

As the group of girls spoke regretfully of "Olive's ways," the girl herself walked lightly down the street, dreaming no more of the unpleasant impression she had created among her companions than of the character she was devising for herself.

When Olive graduated from the seminary she tried to shake from her

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mind the remembrance of many little debts; a sheet of stamps, a knife which she had unfortunately lost, some society dues and a few dollars in small instalments. She could not pay them then, but she would send some nice presents to the girls from her home. That would be a much pleasanter way for the girls to accept such dribblets.

Once at home the girls' claims faded from her memory. She did the household marketing, and the household pocketbook was often called upon to supply her with gloves and the newest style of stationery. Once a silver dollar fell from her brother's coat pocket, as she brushed his clothes. "Just what I need," she exclaimed. "I will borrow it." It did not trouble her much, a few weeks later, finding her father out of his office, to open his money drawer and take a small sum. "It is all the same," she said to herself, "I will

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pay the milliner, instead of having the bill sent to him."

To-day the sweet girl face, which her schoolmates had found so winning, bears a hardened, careless expression. Olive Thorne has no friends and few seek her society. She finds it difficult to borrow even a new book from a neighbour, and drafts are frequently sent from other towns to be collected from her by the local banker. She is distrusted by every one.

It is vain for her to plead that, had circumstances been otherwise, she would never have erred. Conduct is only character made visible; circumstances only bring out latent defects and do not create them. We prepare ourselves, says George Eliot, for sudden deeds, "by our reiterated choice of good or evil."

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A TIMID CHILD

XXVIII

THIS is a very simple story of a timid child; how she came by her faint-heartedness and how she left it behind; and of a mother whose own fear made her brave.

The little girl was born timid. Her first recollection is of fainting at the sight of a tall and unknown uncle advancing to take her in his arms; and her second of her breath seeming to fail whenever a loud ring came at the door. Every strange face, every unremembered form, every unusual noise, every animal unfamiliar to the neighbourhood, sent her pale and breathless to hide in the folds of her mother's skirts. Great as were palpable terrors, those of the imagination harried her more. Overhearing some one read from a newspaper that a church floor had fallen through,

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every church service thereafter was one of patient waiting for the inevitable destruction; while an older schoolmate's composition on the ingenuities of the Inquisition was sufficient to fix her strained eyes on the walls of every strange room to discover the exact moment of their beginning to close upon her.

What could be done with such a little coward? Say "nonsense" and she would simply sit a little stiller, bite her lips a little harder, and suffer more intolerably. The mother was timid herself and partly understood, but to allow the child to grow up in this attitude meant a life warped and self-centred, if not utterly ruined. The small brain was fast covering itself with creases of communication from one terror to another; and the mother began the task of obliterating the prenatal and inherited channels of thought, and paralleling them with others of quite another character.

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She started on the principle of the best teachers who never tell a pupil how *not* to spell a word, but always present it in its correct form. She never mentioned fear, but talked much of courage, and dwelt upon deeds of bravery culled from history and newspapers and the reports of the children. Visitors were kept waiting in the vestibule while guesses were made as to what favourite caller or what inviting store-packages might be at hand, until the child was eager to satisfy her curiosity in the protecting wake of some elder going to the fearsome door. Bags of candy left in dark and distant rooms were offered to whoever would bring them, and when the exploit was attempted a door was left ajar and a voice raised in conversation that the small thing might know some protector was near. Favourite songs were kept for bedtime, when the mother courageously sat as far away

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as the foot of the stairs, or even at the piano singing in her cheeriest tones; and favourite reminiscences of a generation before were reserved for those night hours when the child, whose very dreams were a fear, left her bed in search of comfort.

Thunder and lightning were made friends in another way. Drawings of the flashes, both in the forked variety familiar to the eye and the waved outlines revealed to the camera were passed about, and the child hired to verify the different portrayals. Discords on the piano, followed by their resolutions, were applied to the thunder-bolts, and the girl was gently taught to see how the air was cleared and cooled and the world made more lovely by the dreaded thunder-storm.

With advancing years and stature, the child was tempted forth at night ostensibly to take care of an older brother, and on family travels she was

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honoured by being given charge of the checks, and later of making arrangements with hotel clerks and sleeping-car porters of fearful aspect and strange grimaces. A cousin having been killed on a falling bridge, railroad viaducts were alarming to an extent that no familiarity seemed to abate. "They frighten me too," the mother once observed, "but without waiting to look out the window I start down the aisle for a glass of water and smile at every baby on the way." That prescription was, if not a cure, at least partial distraction.

In those days too, the girl's reason was oftener appealed to in the work of regeneration. "I find for myself," the mother would say incidentally,—oh the grace and effectiveness of the incidental!—"that when I am frightened I must act at once. If I think burglars are at the window, I jump up and get a light and satisfy

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myself; if an object in the dark makes me tremble, I drag my unwilling feet towards it, touch and examine it, and nearly always discover that what seemed gigantic at a distance grows familiar when it is near."

The girl was also taught outdoor sports, for which she was naturally little inclined. Bravely her mother sent her forth to learn to row and shoot and skate and ride, that the woods and the waters might teach her hardihood and love of nature, quicken her wits, and make her courageously ready for emergencies.

The story has gone far enough. If this child, predisposed to timidity could grow through judicious care to be the opposite of the thing she was, so that the earth and its creatures, its solitudes, its storms and its midnights came to be joys to her; what may not any mother, any teacher, accomplish with any child committed to her care? What

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may not a timid girl do with herself?

"The common problem, yours, mine, every-one's

Is—not to fancy what were fair in life,
Provided it could be—but finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means: a very different thing."

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THE REGNANT SOUL

XXIX

THE world was once a block of marble : struck on one side, the other did not quiver. To-day it is a mass of sensitive fibre. Wound it anywhere and it winces everywhere. Let a heroic deed be done on some desert coast, and far inland in distant lands, stranger voices shall applaud and countless hearts be spurred to braver endeavour.

One day off the Portugal coast, a poor fisherman capsized in his boat and was struggling hopelessly in the water. A young woman walking along the beach perceived his necessity, flung herself into the sea and brought the drowning man safe ashore. It was Amelia, the queen of Portugal.

On hearing of the courageous deed,

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Emperor William sent Queen Amelia the German gold salvage medal. Her modest reluctance to accept it recalls in comic contrast, a story Captain Marryat delighted to tell. The officer's gig containing beside himself a middy and an athletic bumboat woman, once capsized. The woman could swim like a fish and as Marryat rose to the surface she laid hold of him. He shook her off saying, "Go to the boy : he can't swim."

"Go to the boy," she echoed, above the winds and waves ; "what! hold up a midshipman when I can save the life of a captain? Not I, indeed!" and no entreaty could prevail upon her to relinquish her impending honours. Fortunately some one else saved the boy.

One day in the sixth story of a factory came the cry of fire. Forty girls sewing there made a wild dash to the narrow stairway and the

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barred windows. The voice of the smallest person in the room made itself heard above the confused shrieks of terror. She recalled the girls, and marshalled them safely into the elevator. There was no room for her, but she ordered the boy to descend. She escaped by stairways and halls, though almost overcome by smoke and flame. It seems she knew every turn of the old building.

Outside the girls crowded about her, begging her pardon for their frequent jibes at her timidity, and asking how she could have done it.

She answered simply that the possibility of a fire in that high building had been always before her, and that she had lain awake nights planning exactly what she would do. Her instinctive fear had been so overwhelming that she had mentally and systematically schooled herself to action. Thus while the body cringed,

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her soul was heroic. The habit of a trained mind made opportunity impossible to pass by.

From Queen Amelia of Portugal to the little sewing girl of the Chicago factory, and far back into the ages,

"Great deeds are trumpeted, loud bells
are rung,
And men turn round to see;
The high peaks echo to the peans sung
O'er some great victory;
And yet great deeds are few; the might-
iest men
Find opportunity but now and then."

"What then?" girl readers naturally ask; "what above the thrill of entertainment shall these tales of heroism profit us?"

Well, chance does not make a heroine: it simply translates her to herself. It is written in the very structure of the brain that as we habitually think so we shall habitually act. To recognize an opportunity and fail to seize it: to pause because it is only a fisherman in the water,

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or a little midshipman, while you are a queen, forsooth! or greater honour beckons elsewhere; to perceive one's deficiency and fail to school mind and muscles to overcome that very deficiency: not thus reads the lore of heroism. We may never wear the crown nor spend our days in a fire-trap; but the least of us may make our words and our deeds swift, obedient servants of a regnant soul.

DON'T CRY, GIRLS

XXX

"**C**ONSIDER what a great girl you are; consider what a long way you have come; consider what o'clock it is; consider anything—only don't cry!" So spoke the White Queen to Alice in the Chess Country, and the White Queen knew better than veritable dictators what was good for the daughters of men.

In the novels of our grandmothers' time the heroine was wont to indulge in soft sobbing, or to burst into violent weeping, or at least to bedew her handkerchief with her tears upon the most trifling occasions. Happily, however, Lydia Languish is out of fashion, and the sensible girl of to-day devours her disappointment, covers her chagrin with a jest, and calls her pride to keep back her tears.

Don't Cry, Girls

She knows that crying will never make two and two five, nor solve the difficulty that presents itself. She knows that only in novels are tears becoming to the face, and she sensibly objects to reddening her eyes and making blotches upon her cheeks. Physiology and common sense have taught her, too, that crying makes her nervous and hysterical and clouds her powers of thought, so that any indulgence in that line hinders rather than helps her in rising above discouragements. She only wishes that her mother had treated her in her childhood as she treated her sons—making them ashamed to cry over trifles and teaching them habits of self-control.

If you want people to like you—and what girl indifferent as she may appear, does not ardently desire that?—do not weep or whine. This is a selfish world, and it is not going to stop and ask what is the matter. It

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Don't Cry, Girls

only cares for results of the happy kind. If you will smile, it will gladly smile with you; and if it sees that you smile when you would rather cry, it will respect you all the more. There is nothing more debasing to a human being than incessant brooding over its wrongs; and grumbling and fretting, whether silent or spoken, use up just so much force. So be joyous if you can, girls, but good-natured at all hazards. A welcoming gracious manner and light-heartedness will do more for you than beauty or learning or the riches of India.

"I seek no thorns," said Goethe's wise mother to a sentimental maiden, "and I catch the small joys. If the door is low, I stoop down. If I can remove the stone out of my way, I do so. If it is too heavy, I go around it. And thus every day I find something which gladdens me."

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MORBIDNESS

XXXI

"DO you know," said a young girl, slipping up to an older woman at a reception—O the faith of the young girl in the woman a dozen years her senior!—"I feel that I am growing morbid. Were you ever morbid? and whatever is a person to do?"

The woman smiled. "Your ailment is about as exceptional as hunger," she replied, "or as sleepiness, or the love of holidays." Then as they moved together towards a tea-table, "Do not coddle your morbidness, my dear."

Better advice the girl will never get. Nothing responds more promptly to cultivation than a tendency to look upon the dark side of things, to peep and potter about one's own deficiencies, to brood over what happened

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Morbidity

yesterday and what is likely to happen to-morrow, to make mountains out of petty troubles that extend not a hand's breadth beyond our sphere.

It is the eye, as Emerson says, that makes the horizon, and, although annoyances and trials and griefs spring up, we want to get the knack of seeing around them, or through them, or over them. An hour of grumbling, either spoken or silent, uses up so much force. Sydney Smith used to say that if it were his lot to crawl he would crawl contentedly; if to fly he would fly with alacrity; but as long as he could help it he would never be unhappy. Nothing is so impregnable as gayety and courage, and there are always a thousand reasons for being courageous. Duty is hard sometimes, and presses the joy out of life? Possibly, as seen in prospect; but is it not "a singular way of honouring duty, that of seeming to

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Morbidness

drag it through life instead of wearing it as a crown"?

Morbidness has not reserved its thrusts for any one alone. Everybody has to exert herself against it, even the persons whom we regard as entirely happy; so when we succumb to it and see others cheerful about us, be sure that we are just so much weaker than they.

How, then, shall we go to work to resist the blue devils which hover around? Eugenie de Guerin answered to that question: "Work, work, work. Keep busy the body which does mischief to the soul. I have been too little occupied to-day, which gives a certain ennui which is in me time to ferment." Emerson declares that to fill the hour, "that is happiness: to fill the hour and leave no crevice for a repentance or an approval"; and Goethe's wise mother told Bettina that it was her habit to dispatch at once whatever she had to do, the most disagreeable always

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Morbidness

first, "gulping down the devil without looking at him." Daniel Deronda's rule of life was "to get more interest in others and more knowledge about the best things."

Proper association is one of the greatest agencies for realizing health and happiness. We should get the capacity for seeing charms in people, and lose no chance of giving pleasure. "I expect to pass through this world but once," the old maxim reads, "if, therefore, there be any kindness I can show or any good I can do, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again." To go and sit down by some one whose continual lot it is to suffer pain, to visit the poor and needy, teaches many things by simple comparison. Exercise in the open air and right habits of living, wide views of life, a variety of occupations, a pride that will keep back tears, a willingness to be happy rather than miserable and

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Morbidness

to seek the small joys, the resolve to put on gladness "that majestic atmosphere in which one may live the charmed life," a little more pluck which will scorn to run at the first defeat, prompt decision against coddling one's morbidness, a few more self-conquests, a little more heroism—these will transform a life of dreariness into one of triumph.

Above all, as Emerson wrote to his daughter, "Finish every day and have done with it. For manners and for wise living it is a sin to remember. You have done what you could; some blunders and absurdities no doubt crept in; forget them as soon as you can. To-morrow is a new day; you shall begin it well and serenely, with too high a spirit to be cumbered with your old nonsense. This day for all that is good and fair. It is too dear, with all its hopes and occupations to waste a moment on the rotten yesterdays."

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ONE STEP AT A TIME

XXXII

A MUSEUM having been opened in a provincial town, the doorkeeper was particularly enjoined to let no one pass without first taking charge of his stick or umbrella. Presently in sauntered an individual, his hands stuck in his pockets.

"Sticks and umbrellas to be left here," vociferated Cerebus.

"Cannot you see that I have none?"

"Then you must go out and get one; my orders are positive: I cannot let you in without."

If the doorkeeper had been a woman, the absurd anecdote would have been characteristic of one phase of her disposition. The careless, easy-going sight-seer, unencumbered by an umbrella, and the fortunate

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One Step at a Time

possessor of pockets, would have awakened in her an instinctive desire to drop an obstacle in his way.

"Bridget, Bridget!" she calls at four o'clock Monday morning, "this is wash-day, and to-morrow is ironing-day, and the next day is Wednesday—week half gone and nothing done yet!" and poor Bridget, instead of springing up with the energy born of a new week, drags herself forth oppressed by the three busy days that her mistress has rudely heaped upon her. "Ah," exclaimed poor Sarah Maud, eldest of the nine little Ruggleses in the "Birds' Christmas Carol," "I could mind my own manners, but the manners of nine!"

It is in their own paths, however, that women like best to place incumbrances. The Lord made them patient, so why should they not toil over all the hard places that can be found; the Lord made them self-sacrificing, so why not wear out their

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One Step at a Time

lives a little sooner; the Lord gave them highly strung nerves—why not try how many times those nerves can vibrate before snapping?

It is all such a mistake! If the way lies through a low doorway, stoop as you take it: humility will not hurt you. If a rock blocks the pathway, pass around it: better to take the extra steps than to stumble and fall. If the spring sewing weighs in perspective, look only at the first simple little frock. If the lesson at the end of the book seems impossible, learn those in the front. If the reformation of the world grows hopeless, let reformation begin in one's own heart. If next week's duties seem more than you can bear, forget them in those of this week. If the clouds piling at sunset predict a rainy morrow, lo! to-night was never surpassed.

The hill of attainment?—single steps lead to its summit. Most of us are asked to climb in the old step-by-

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One Step at a Time

step way which even a child understands; and for the few whom He bids fly to the top, "the Lord will provide the wings."

**SIT STILL, MY
DAUGHTER!**

XXXIII

IN one of Dickens's books is a person who is nervous. If the author had wanted us to like her he would have made her control herself. He chose, instead, to show us that she was a servant girl in action and in mind as well as in body. He wished that every girl who read about her should say to herself, "O, I never want to be like her," and every boy, "Save me from such a sister or such a wife." She had never been taught to sit still. When she spoke she tried to rub her shoulders in an impossible place, or she pinched her cheek or winked her eye or made up faces. When others talked she continually changed her position or cracked her finger joints. She was

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Sit Still, My Daughter!

a very distressing person to have about.

Many real girls, alas, are like her. If they sit in rocking-chairs they rock until every one else is fairly dizzy. In armchairs they make a continual tattoo with their finger nails. They search for imaginary knots in the cushions, they tap their feet against the floor, they turn suddenly to stare out of a window behind them. With their fingers they trace letters upon their dresses. They sit on one foot for a while and then sit on the other. They run their fingers through their hair, they get the fidgets in their arms.

It is curious to watch the mouths of persons riding in the street cars. Scarcely a single one is in repose. Tongues are moistening lips, and fingers picking at them. Lips are sucked in, pouted, bitten or puckered. Teeth are engaged with tobacco, gum or candy. Jaws are moving aimlessly.

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Sit Still, My Daughter!

Notice the scholars in a school-room. One leans on his elbow and incessantly rubs his finger over his lips. One smooths his eyebrows, the hand of another travels over every part of his face. Under the desks the foot of the crossed legs swings with the regularity of the pendulum, and toes work nervously inside the boots.

All these people are wasting vital energy as well as making themselves an affliction to their friends. They are sharpening instruments with which to file and rasp the nerves of themselves and every one about them.

Ruskin says to girls, "Be sure that people like the room better with you in it than out of it." Was he thinking of the fidgetty people who create an atmosphere of discomfort all about them?

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SPEAK IT OUT

XXXIV

"**R**UN and tell her, or she may hear it from somebody else," said a young man laughingly to the pretty sister at his side. "There she stands. I will hold your impedimenta and entertain Fred until you return." The girl tried to frown upon the speaker, but ended by handing him a bouquet and fan, and moving off towards a severe-looking woman on the opposite side of the room.

"She would not condescend to gossip," he said, as both youths looked after her admiringly, and one questioningly, "but she dearly loves to retail a compliment. I believe in every chamber of her brain is stowed away some nice thing she has heard about somebody, to be delicately imparted to the particular person when

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Speak It Out

he or she appears. It was your remark about that lady's classic profile which has just taken my sister away. She does not do it for effect either. She says it is stark selfishness: she likes to see the pleasure on people's faces."

"That is the reason, then, that I seem to grow an inch taller whenever I talk with her," Fred replied. "It is like 'Alice in Wonderland.' When I have to swallow warnings about my faults, jokes about my blushing, and so-called frankness in general, I wither all up. Your sister makes a shy fellow think he amounts to something."

No wonder she is a popular girl, and that all kinds of persons make opportunities to meet her. She never thinks it her duty to tell people unpleasant truths, or to declare her whole opinion of them, or to carry unkind intelligence. Metaphorically speaking, she never treads on one's

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Speak It Out

foes. She never croaks. She never gives social stabs. She prefers the oil and wine treatment of wounds. She sees no virtue in making enemies. She agrees with Oliver Wendell Holmes in thinking that friendship does not authorize one to say disagreeable things. She openly declares that she would rather be loved than hated.

"See, now," exclaimed Fred, who had been watching the girl while he was thinking this; "that stern profile is transformed. It does pay to speak out the nice little things one thinks."

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RIDING THE WHITE HORSE

XXXV

A BOY of seven years, delighting in an array of birthday presents, was dared by his sister to throw his gifts into the garden well. He did it before a number of admiring little girls, and thought himself a great hero. His uncle, who had been a celebrated general in the Civil War, found him later in the day crying over his loss. "My dear, you must beware of riding white horses," was his reply to the wondering child.

The little sister who had dared him jumped up in a rowboat one day, crying, "Who is afraid!" She came to grief, naturally, and inflicted a ducking on her innocent friends in the boat with her. "So it is you," her uncle said at the dinner-table, "you who like to ride on white horses!"

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Riding the White Horse

An older brother, just back from Europe, in relating his adventures in the Alps, told of a young woman who climbed with his party to the top of Mont Blanc. On reaching the summit she asked the guide to lift her on his back, in order that she might be able to say that she had climbed higher than any one else in the world.

"She rode up, so to speak," commented the general, whimsically, "on one of our white horses."

"What is it you mean, uncle?" asked the young people. "Our horses are brown, and we never ride them. Tell us, please."

So, as they gathered around him, he told them how in battle the soldiers and officers who rode white horses were at once ranked in the minds of the others as foolhardy and eager to court attention. The rider of a white horse was as inviting a mark to the enemy's sharp-shooters

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Riding the White Horse

as the bull's-eye of a target to a marksman. He seemed to say to the enemy, "Shoot me, if you dare." He endangered not only his own life, so valuable to his country, but the lives of his innocent comrades who were stationed near him.

Riding the white horse is a common trait of the age—the desire to be conspicuous, if only by a badge, a bit of ribbon. The riders are apt to dress in brighter colours than are elsewhere worn, to affect longer coats or larger sleeves or wider skirts or tinier hats than their associates. The girl who saunters up and down the principal streets of the town; who indulges in loud conversation or laughter or in startling expressions that savour of slang; the girl who smokes cigarettes and tipples a little at a so-called soda fountain rides a white horse that is sure, sooner or later to draw shots from the ranks of good society.

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HOSTESS AND GUEST

XXXVI

ONE of the loneliest places in the world is a little circle of persons who know each other intimately or who have some absorbing interest in common, while you yourself stand there bodily but mentally outside the common bond. You may be a Bryn Mawr graduate and deep in collegiate lore; but just find yourself in a group of Smith girls and where are you? or when is a domestic girl so hopelessly alone as among slum workers? or a Bostonian so out of touch as in an ardent gathering of Chicagoans? No less isolated is the visitor among a circle of intimate friends of her friend. They never mean to be inattentive; they would be shocked at any conscious disposition towards selfishness. It is

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Hostess and Guest

simply that all their allusions to persons and things, all their jokes and mannerisms and the very books they have read have a local colour; and the outsider cannot so speedily adjust herself. Some of us were talking about it the other day, and we asked if we did not often label our friends' friends as bright or stupid, dull or entertaining, by the degree with which they succeeded in grasping the tone of "our set."

Persons who know each other intimately make many allowances and interpret actions and words largely by contraries; but strangers are not able to do that. A pert speech from a girl notoriously courteous, or an audacious phrase from one particularly shy, causes mirth among intimates; whereas in a stranger it would provoke criticism upon both speakers and listeners. "I shall always be remembered as a sort of buffoon," the brilliant Gov. Thomas Corwin once

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Hostess and Guest

said, "because I have said some laughable things; but I have always tried earnestly to be thorough and practical." In the same way, sentiments and manners which are foreign to our real natures are often credited as habitual with us. A young girl mimicking a foreign teacher who said "compulsions of conscience," was dubbed by a certain hearer as illiterate; while another who lolled upon the dinner table in imitation of a person whose manners she despised was regarded at that moment as belonging to the same class. Bad habits are easier to acquire than good ones.

Visiting is not always an unmixed pleasure, for the guest is largely at the mercy of her hostess who can make or mar the pleasure of it all. Such a one carries long in her heart the memory of some cordial little word or deed that costs the giver simply nothing; and which is repaid often in full measure. "I shall

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Hostess and Guest

always remember Miss Phelps," once said a young girl to her hostess, "because at your reception, when I stood in line, she stopped to chat with me instead of hurrying by like the others as though I had some malignant disease, and even came back to speak with me between arrivals. I mean to give a luncheon for her next time she comes to my town." One little phrase of Miss Sarah Jewett's always recurs to my mind :

"Wherever you place two persons one is always hostess and the other always guest, either from circumstances alone or from their different natures, and they must be careful about their duties to each other." Does not this small mirror reflect the whole circle of our social sky?

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BE A HISTORIAN

XXXVII

"AUNT JEANNETTE? Be a historian? If I only might!"

The young girl's eyes were shining with the enthusiasm of the narrative she had been reading aloud. It was of life in the dark, untamed forests of Canada three centuries ago; with gleams of courtly splendours, beautiful women and heroic men; and the tale of how little Madeleine de Verchères with her younger brothers had held the fort for a week against a band of savages. No wonder that having closed the book with the exclamation "O, to write like Parkman!" she was startled by her aunt's interrogation, "Why not be a historian yourself?"

Yet in the very chapter she had read, Parkman acknowledged that he

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Be a Historian

had used almost the words of the little heroine of Verchères, as they had been written down from her lips many years before; and that the old faded parchment to which he was thus indebted was history little short of invaluable.

What is history but the record of every-day happenings viewed in the perspective of years, and with philosophical side-lights? Therefore the accurate recording of our happenings is the first step towards making history.

Young people could hardly put their vacations to better advantage than in drawing out the local and family history, biography and tradition stored in the memories of their parents and grandparents; and putting this down in writing, with dates, localities and proper names, discriminating between what is really important and what is merely padding, and shunning any attempt at

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Be a Historian

fine writing. Simplicity and accuracy should be the rule of work.

Histories of buildings in one's locality are interesting, and are to be recommended as subjects of school compositions. Often they reach back to the founding of the city; odd and noteworthy events have happened in them, and persons celebrated in local annals have passed familiarly in and out their doors. A student of such a building would need to examine the deeds of the land as recorded in the court-house, she would consult biographies of former owners; she would have a fruitful topic of conversation with older residents.

In addition, girls may well urge their parents to write out from time to time notes of their lives, to be left a rich legacy for their children. The parent would record remembrances of his parents and grandparents, the home of his childhood, his youth-

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Be a Historian

ful games, studies, occupations and travels. He would tell of the distinguished personages he had seen and talked with, what they had said and how these sayings affected his own character.

How would you to-day regard a record kept after these suggestions by your grandmother, recording what Washington had said to her mother, or Lafayette to her father, or Cotton Mather to some earlier ancestor? Would not the book be your choicest possession?

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THE LOVE OF ADMIRATION

XXXVIII

THERE died some time ago in Paris a young lady of remarkable beauty, of social distinction and of royal ancestry, whose death is at once a crime against society and a warning to it.

None who ever met this young woman driving in the parks of Paris, or saw her at the opera or races, can forget the impression made upon him by her personal appearance. Under waving hair of intense darkness, and lighted by flashing black eyes, shone a face totally devoid of colour resembling in its pallor Parian marble rather than flesh and blood. She was always dressed in white, with varying accessories of diaphanous drapery, ermine,

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The Love of Admiration

dazzling diamonds and such expensive orchids as were absolutely without colour.

It was known in Paris that the grandmother of this lady, herself of remarkable beauty, had been in the habit—under pretext of illness—of being bled, in order to maintain the dazzling whiteness of her complexion, and that the granddaughter moved by a similar passion for adulation had resorted to the same means for the same end. Weakened in her inherited constitution by the folly of her grandmother, she was unable long to withstand the drains upon her own vital force, and during one of the operations outraged nature ceased to act.

Every reader of this incident will turn from it shocked and saddened as from something too abnormal to serve even for a text. Yet it is worth while to ask ourselves how many times the love of admiration has

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The Love of Admiration

been the spring of our own action and how wholesome have been the results.

It has more than once led a woman to have a cut made in a sound tooth that a piece of gold or a diamond might be inserted; many a time has it led a man to risk his life by a descent of Niagara, or by an ascent by balloon. Two hundred years ago, by moving some silly children in Salem to affect contortions, it led directly to the witchcraft delusion, and it gave cause for one of Spain's greatest statesmen to say that he never went to a funeral without wishing he were the corpse. It leads a giggling girl to rock a boat and cry out "Who's afraid?" for her older sisters to be married in lion's dens or at the top of some tall tower; to care less for thoroughness than for superficiality of culture; to court show at the expense of truth. It is, in the words

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The Love of Admiration

of Emerson, "as if a man should neglect himself while treating his shadow on the wall with marked respect."

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A BEAUTY PRE- SCRIPTION

XXXIX

THE hotel parlor was stuffy with plush upholstery and unaired portières, and the person for whom I was waiting seemed to be retrimming her hat before putting it on. I had left home to forget the little cares of the day and the forthcoming days,—the unanswered letters, the family wardrobe, the family dinners, the party I ought to give, the paper for the club—and here they all came crowding back on my mind with the force of an avalanche.

The only other occupant of the room was a little old woman in wrinkles and faded merino, who hearing my sigh, brought a book of photographs from the table and laid it on my lap.

"Do you live here?" I asked after

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A Beauty Prescription

I had thanked her and returned her smile.

"Only a night now and then," she replied; "I travel. My business is to make people beautiful."

From her arm hung a little bag within which, I fancied, lurked pots of creams and boxes of face powder. Anxious to forestall any efforts towards a sale, I remarked that my friend and I were going to a missionary meeting and the hour must be near at hand.

"You are interested in such things?" she replied, her face brightening. "I am an old woman and you are young, but troubles come to all ages. May I tell you a dream I had last night?"

"Do," I answered cordially, "I shall be delighted to hear it." So she began, and unconsciously her tale fell into Biblical form, as if that were the tongue she had learned at her mother's knee.

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A Beauty Prescription

"Lo, I walked through the valley of the shadow of death, and clouds and thick darkness were round about me.

"One tiny spot of light lay on the path before me, but it was as small as hoarfrost on the ground and sent no ray into the darkness.

"Then I cried, 'O God, be not far from me! O God, make haste for my help!'

"And a still small voice said unto me, 'Fear not, only go forward.'

"So I stepped into the blackness and lo! the speck of light moved on and rested just before me.

"Then I stepped upon it and stood firm, and each time I moved forwards the light went before me and pointed out my footsteps.

"Then I laughed in my joy and I knew that I should never fear any more, neither poverty, nor care, nor life, nor death; for the Lord it is that shall make darkness light before me and crooked things straight."

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A Beauty Prescription

The door opened and my friend entered, making profuse apologies.

"Don't!" I said. "I have been taking a lesson. This lady's business is to make people beautiful. Good-bye," I whispered, leaning over her chair; "I shall not forget your prescription."

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WHY NOT?

XL

IN one of Emerson's last public addresses he referred in glowing terms to some poet whose name he did not think it necessary to speak. A group of schoolgirls, on leaving the hall, fell into conjecture on the subject, each offering her own solution to the problem. As one of them turned off into a side street, she espied the lecturer coming slowly behind. Impulsively she ran back: "Please, Mr. Emerson," she cried, "wasn't it Wordsworth?" With a smile half sphinx-like and all serene, the sage responded, "Why not?"

For a moment both stood silent, then the girl ran on into the fast-gathering dusk. Years have passed. The brief, unprinted address has faded from her mind; but the answer which was but a second

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Why Not?

riddle follows her still. In the perplexities of later life, when problems she could not solve have hedged her in, she has seemed to see a face of tenderness and wisdom turned upon her, urging her to solve her own riddles; she has seemed to hear a voice which, while never answering her petition, has comforted and cheered her. Is it thus that a kind Father answers our impulsive requests? Why not?

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THE ART OF BEING INTERESTING

XLI

UGLINESS, George Eliot tells us, consists not in plainness of feature or dullness of colour, but in being uninteresting.

Whereupon a new vista seems opened before the plain, the old, the poor, the unfortunate. This good thing, the art of being interesting, may outlast beauty and youth and riches and strength: let us hasten to acquire it. Which way shall we turn? How is one to become interesting?

The engraver, Timothy Cole, tells how he arrived in Holland after months spent in the Italian galleries, with his mind imbued with the fair and heavenly images of classic art. As he walked through the great museum at Amsterdam, a strange sad-

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The Art of Being Interesting

ness came over him, and he felt inclined to look upon the collection of small Dutch pictures as upon a dreary waste. How should he ever learn to love those *genre* subjects, with what appeared to him their gross materialism? He could have wept. He had descended from Parnassus, and was once more among the haunts of men.

"I resolved, however," he wrote to a friend, "to plod on in faith, doing my best to engrave whatever came to hand. Nine months have passed since that day, and now I marvel greatly, as I pause before my favourites in the gallery, that I could have been so blind to their charming qualities. Every day I made a new discovery until I began to count the masterpieces by the score. Now I see working in these earnest Dutchmen, the same spirit of sincerity and love and reverence which actuated the Italians. These honest workers

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The Art of Being Interesting

tell us in their pictures that all things are miracles, and that each part and tag of anything or of any one is a miracle; and so they paint the hair of a cow's back with the same reverence that Fra Angelica painted the flowers of Paradise, and an old woman's face is as divine as that of an angel. How can there be too much fidelity and realism where nature is approached with humility and reverence?"

What is it that so charms us in Mr. Cole's narrative? Is it not his resolve to understand, to sympathize, to do his best in interpreting the "miracles" he saw; and his success therein? The prescription is of universal efficacy. Persons and things jostle us on every hand. Striving to understand them, to enter into their feelings and processes, and to interpret their best in our own acts and words—this is to be interesting.

The old button-maker who, to or-

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The Art of Being Interesting

nament his wares, cut grooves upon them, was an observer and noticed that the closer the grooves the more iridescent the button. Following out the process on steel plates, he originated the wonderful "diffraction grating" which is now used in place of the glass prism upon all great telescopes, to break the ordinary ray of light into its primary colours. The Austrian baker in his cellar seeing some marbles dancing with regularity on a toy drumhead, reasoned that the Turks with their picks were undermining the walls of the city. He communicated his suspicions, investigations were made, countermines prepared, and the enemy put to flight. An invalid boy spending his days watching the ants near his door-step, in later years unfolded a history of the little creatures which is almost human in its fascination; while the men and women who most influence our thoughts and

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The Art of Being Interesting

sway our actions are those with deep knowledge of people. "Take up every man as you take up a leaf," Cholmondelay wrote to Thoreau, "and look attentively at him: else you will moulder away." To be interesting one must be interested, and interest comes by contact. Browning's Paracelsus failed because he sought a pedestal above his fellows. Too late he learned:

To see a good in evil, and a hope in
Ill success; to sympathize, be proud
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts,
Which all touch upon nobleness, despite
Their error, all tend upwardly, though weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him.

It is this passion of the imperfect for the perfect which, as Matthew Arnold affirmed, is at the root of true interest; and so long as a person

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strives to see it, and to sympathize with it, and to attain unto it, that person is holding at arm's length the ugliness which we are assured consists in being uninteresting.

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U. A. N. L.

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