

Misty-mindedness.

"She is the dearest woman in the world," lamented her friend, "but she is so misty-minded!"

It was only too true. The woman in question was warm-hearted, charitable and well-meaning in all the relations of life, but she was a trial to all who knew her because of her ingrained habits of inexactness, of unpunctuality and of general vagueness of mind.

Misty-mindedness is the feminine counterpart of absent-mindedness. That masculine failing, however, is usually the accompaniment of genius. The man who, with his head in the clouds, listens with upturned face to the music of the spheres cannot be expected to remember to pay his butcher's bill or order the coal.

Pasteur at a dinner party dipped his cherries one by one into his glass of water and carefully wiped them, explaining that they were covered with microbes, and then with a fine unconsciousness drank off the glass of water.

A famous archbishop, also dining out, forgot that he was not at his own table, and remarked loudly to his wife, "This soup is again a failure, my dear."

The great theologian, Neander, would walk to his class room with a broom under his arm instead of an umbrella, or wander through the streets of Berlin unable to recall the situation or number of his own house. A United States Senator was observed not long ago, at a Presidential dinner, to pull from his pocket in place of his handkerchief a huge blue woolled sock and unconsciously wipe his heated brow.

Such absent-mindedness brings only an indulgent smile, but feminine misty-mindedness is another matter. This does not imply genius, only indefiniteness. Its possessor may, and indeed usually does, go through life in gentle unconsciousness, but her friends live in an atmosphere of exasperation.

There is more than one woman who habitually rustles down the church aisle just as the sermon begins and says smilingly after to her pastor: "You must excuse my being always late. You know in the church where I formerly attended the service began at eleven and it seems more natural to me to come at that hour than at half past ten."

The wife of one of our most distinguished novelists has a most hospitable heart and frequently invites her friends to dine informally, but she then forgets all about the matter. When they appear in her drawing room at the time named, she smilingly observes:

"Now did I ask you to dinner? Well, well, I'd quite forgotten it, but I'm delighted to see you. Just wait one moment while I put on my bonnet, and we will run around the corner to the restaurant and have a charming evening together."

A number of college girls became interested in settlement work in a city near by, and invited one hundred Jewish children to spend a day in the college grounds. A simple luncheon was prepared by the girls, consisting of milk and unlimited supplies of sandwiches. Unfortunately, the sandwiches were all made with ham, and a certain chill was thrown over the feast as one by one the conscientious but disappointed little Israelites opened them and laid aside the meat.

A young girl came to her aunt in despair, with a beautiful cloth suit covered with tarry oil. "Never mind," comfortingly observed the elderly and experienced matron, "vaseline will take it all out." The girl industriously rubbed the skirt well with the vaseline, but saw no improvement. In despair she called the aunt to look at the garment, now a mass of grease. "Mersey!" gasped her distressed relative. "Did I say vaseline? I meant gasoline."

Mrs. Deland tells of a woman who attempted to congratulate her on a recent book. "Oh, I do want to thank you for your stories! I have never read anything more delightful than your Old Chestnut Tales."

It is the misty-minded woman who keeps her appointments a day too late; who goes to the wrong

station to meet her friend arriving in an unknown city; who cannot understand how her bank account can possibly be overdrawn when she still has unused checks in her book. She never learns what is the trouble. Her gentle soul is perpetually being hurt by critical, impatient, even fault-finding words, uttered in moments of indignation by her nearest and dearest; she forgives them, for she never cherishes a feeling so definite as anger, but she painfully wonders why they were said, since she had intended to do just the right thing.

Several writers have sounded the note of warning. Dr. Johnston is quoted as having said, "If a boy says he looked out of this window when he looked out of that whip him." Kaskin has emphasized the necessity of training children in accuracy of observation and of speech. Emerson sums it up in his Essay on Punctuation: "The discomfort of unpunctuality, of confusion of thought, of inattention to the wants of to-morrow, is of no nation. Scatter-brained and afternoon men spoil much more than their own affair in spoiling the temper of those who deal with them."

After all it is a matter of definiteness. Exact knowledge of the things of every day life, of money, of time, of engagements, is what is needed. It would seem easy enough for one to be practical, to be punctual, to be accurate, but it is not easy. Doubtless, to her own dismay and her neighbors' exasperation, the misty-minded women will always be with us, and will continue to wander vaguely, smilingly, exasperatingly through life. The Congregationalist.

For Dominion Presbyterian.

December Snowdrops.

BY H.L.G.

Why, dear little snowdrops, you're made a mistake,

In thinking the beautiful spring time is here;

'Tis only December! Why did you awake

And peep through the ground at the close of the year?

Pull down your white caps and fall gently asleep,

Last not to the soft, siren breezes that play,

They'll only deceive you and leave you to weep,

'Tis winter that's coming, so hide you away.

And wait till the snow and the frost winds are past,

Nor murmur because you must patiently rest,

'Tis better than perishing out in the blast,

God's time, little snowdrops, is always the best.

Tobogganing with an Elephant.

Elephants are so clever, and so often the winners in an encounter with men, that it is a pleasure to copy a story from Chums concerning one that was fairly outwitted. This was an African elephant—taller, lighter and nimbler than the Asiatic. Like most elephants when roused, he was equal to any gymnastic feat. This is the story:

An English sportsman, "out after elephants," had wounded a magnificent specimen. Unfortunately for him the wound was slight and the animal, greatly infuriated, turned and charged him.

It was a terrifying sight. With its enormous ears spread out like sails, and emitting shrill notes of rage, the monster came thundering over the ground like a runaway locomotive. The hunter fired another shot, but missed; his nerve was shaken, and throwing down his rifle he sought safety in flight.

Near at hand was a steep hill, and to this he directed his steps, for being but slightly acquainted with the climbing powers of the elephant, he thought his pursuer might be baffled by the steepness of the ascent. It was a terrible disappointment to find that the elephant could climb a hill as quickly as he could, good runner as he was.

He would have been overtaken if he had not thought of a really ingenious expedient. He knew that elephants never run, or even walk, down a steep incline, but always crouch, gathering their feet together, lean well back and slide down. Just as the ferocious animal had got within a few yards of

him, therefore, the wily hunter suddenly doubled and ran down the hill again.

Quick as a flash the elephant turned, gathered itself together, and, trumpeting with baffled rage, slid down after its victim. The hunter had just time to spring out of the way as the great beast came tobogganing after him, smashing the trees and shrubs, and carrying everything before it like an avalanche.

Then once more the hunter dashed to the top of the hill, while the elephant, unable to stop itself, went careering down to the very foot, where, apparently understanding that it had been outwitted, and feeling very sore and disappointed, it rose to its full height and walked wearily back to its native woods.

People Who Live in Nests.

Travellers who have returned from the heart of Africa and the Australian continents, tell wonderful stories of nest-building people who inhabit the wilds of those countries.

In the bushmen of Australia, we find, perhaps, the lowest order of men that are known. They are so primitive that they do not know enough to build even the simplest forms of huts for shelter.

The nearest they could approach to it is to gather a lot of twigs and grass, and, taking them into a jungle, they built a nest for a home, much as does a bird. The nest is usually built large enough for a family, and if the latter be very numerous, then the nests are of a very large size.

Into this place they all turn and snuggle and curl up together like so many kittens. Sometimes the foliage will grow together and form a sort of natural covering, but there is never any attempt at constructing a protection from the rain storms, and it is a marvel how they endure them.

When there is a particularly good piece of jungle for home sites, it will be quickly appropriated for the purpose, and sometimes hundreds of these nests will be found together in the bush, as it is called.

But though the bushmen of the Australian colonies are the very lowest in the scale of ignorance, they possess a rare instinct that equals that of many animals, and is in its way as wonderful as man's reason.

It is almost impossible for them to be lost. Even if they be led away from their home blindfolded for miles, when released they will unerringly turn to the right direction, and though these are very similar, they never make a mistake.—Christian Observer.

Well Done, But Not Worth Doing.

A Norwegian named Bella Kutridge has just accomplished a difficult task, to which he has dedicated four years of his life. Four years ago, when he was eighty-one, and in order to find an occupation at once intelligent and useful for his leisure time, he set to work to write as many words on a postal card as it would hold. He made it a point not to use a magnifying glass or spectacles, but to use common pens and to write plain. He wrote one thousand words easily, and by interlinations the number of words increased to three thousand, and afterward to six thousand. At the end of the third year, by writing smaller, he managed to get twenty thousand words on the post card. Then he resolved even to surpass this feat. Having read a novel, he found that it contained forty-six thousand words. The indefatigable old gentleman thereupon determined to copy it on a post card. He worked at his task three months and attained his object. He is now eighty-five years of age, and he thanks Providence for having allowed him to finish his task. He can sleep in peace; his work in this world is finished.—Independence Belge.

"Among so many, can He care?
Can special love be everywhere?
I asked; my soul bethought of this,
In just that very place of His
Where He hath put and keepeth you,
God hath no other thing to do!"

—Mrs. A. D. T. Whitney.