

eight of my experience in match-making and flirtations, such as it is, to bear upon the subject.

Well, as you can see, I began by studying my own case and applying the argument ad hominem to myself. You are domestic enough, old fellow; your income with your modest salary, is more than enough for your bachelor wants, and you have fallen in love half-a-dozen times, in an indolent sort of way, with very sweet, good girls, while you have danced with dozens with whom you could be perfectly happy for life. And yet you are unmarried! Are you afraid of the money question, or are you diffident of approaching a young lady with matrimonial intent? Is there any obstacle in the way of your marrying for which you cannot have yourself to blame, or is it a selfish, lazy disposition of mind which leads you to think that you are more comfortable, or that you have more enjoyment in life as a bachelor in lodgings, where every attention your landlady pays you is added to the price of your dinner, and anything the cat consumes is not deducted from your monthly account, than you would with a lovely, loving wife, and toddling wee things pulling your whiskers and kissing their "papa's?" Goodness knows there is no doubt as to which of the two any one but an inhuman, self-indulgent epicurean would prefer; and you hope and pray that you may never have reason to think yourself so abandoned to your own pleasure and sensual enjoyment as such a man. Then why do you not plunge into the matrimonial sea at once, instead of wasting other ten or twenty years of your life in single blessedness, to find yourself looked upon as an old fogy by young ladies who are now in the arms of their nurses?

Such were the ideas that flashed through my mind, and kept beating and beating until they at last forced from me the unwilling admission that I was afraid to embark upon the waters of matrimony—positively afraid to give up the quiet anchorage in a haven which, however dull and comfortless, was at least safe and secure, to spread full canvas to the breeze and sail out with a consort upon the open main. A hazy vision of stuck up but expensive dinners to the friends of my wife and myself, of a self-contained abode of bliss it might be and probably would be, but no less certainly than with a rent of indefinite hundreds of dollars a year, of expensive furniture, of a servant, in the singular or plural, mayhap in the masculine as well as feminine, obscured my bright picture of the home fireside, while a long array of grocers' bills, butchers' bills and milliners' bills—particularly the latter—seemed to dwarf the unpresuming account of my worthy landlady into utter nothingness. Yes, I was afraid I confess; but was I to blame, or could the fair being who might have made my home happy be considered to be the cause of all the visionary woes? I could not bring myself to think so, and I hope my fair readers will thus far admit the truthfulness and reality of my reasoning. At least I have been candid enough, for I have given the exact shape in which the problem presents itself for solution, and my own innermost thoughts in regard to it.

But who is to blame? you ask. Who is to blame? you repeat. Well, I will give you my opinion, arrived at after carefully weighing the argument, pro and con, to the best of my ability. The fault rests with one who, unfortunately, in these days is all-powerful; for whom men and women knowingly make fools of themselves; for whom they sacrifice the comforts of home and the love of each other whom they copy and imitate slavishly and avowedly, laying aside reason and common sense and charity, laying down anything and everything, even their very lives, beneath the juggernaut wheels of this god of the nineteenth century—the god of Fashion. Do not mistake my meaning, ladies! I do not blame any one. But you and I have to sacrifice ourselves at the shrine of Fashion, but the fact is still true and still mournful to contemplate. We are powerlessly in the clutches of a horrid monster, that dictates to us in our houses and in those of our friends; in the garments which we wear, and in the food which we eat; at the dinners which we give, as well as those which we receive; and even in the form of religion which we profess. But you are more helplessly dictated to than we are—I had almost said more willing victims. We go about in shooting-coat and thick-soled boots without incurring the scorn of our companions so long as we have a good heart beating under the tweed cloth, and our actions are regulated by gentlemanly feelings. But you are afraid of each other's criticism, and put too much faith in dress.

I am aware that I am treading upon delicate grounds, as those who live in class houses should not throw stones. And, in truth, though our houses have a good deal of solid masonry, they have also some glass. You may ask us why we will persist in wearing the uncomfortable beaver and the swallow coat, with its dangling appendages, "the unsindest out of all." Alas! Fashion has ordered such things to be worn, and Fashion's imperative commands must be obeyed. But we have at least the merit of some degree of stability in our fashions, while you—

I will not press the subject too hard, for it must be tantalizing to yourselves. On you rush, all of you, jostled by your house-maids, and sped by your ladies'-maids, in a vain endeavor to keep pace with the ever-changing, swift-footed shadows of Fashion, which seem to lead you along like the ever-flitting light of the "Will-o'-the-Wisp." Behind you an endless succession of long skirts and short skirts, wide skirts, and narrow skirts, loose sleeves and tight sleeves, large bonnets and small bonnets, that beggars all description; while before you there is the prospect of innumerable changes, all ordained and prescribed by Fashion, the arbiter and ruler of right.

I know it is hard to follow fashion at all unless you keep close behind it. You cannot wear dresses of the fashion of last year; but why should you not confuse Fashion by getting ahead of it altogether? Let your ingenuity and fancy—in which you beat us hollow—devise some unknown but simple style, each of you choosing the one that suits you best, the simpler the better, and stick to it for a reasonable time in spite of the adverse criticisms of your quasi friends. You will gain *clout*, you will spend less money, and you will acquire the esteem of every gentleman; and your favored admirer will love you all the more that he is not compelled to put his love for you in the scale against your expensive habits of dress. I know that if I could only find one young lady who—but I have said enough; perhaps some of my readers may say I have said too much, and transgressed the bounds of politeness in thus lecturing them. But, while I humbly crave their pardon, I can plead that every word I have written I truly believe, and that in this, my first appearance in literature, I have strictly adhered to what perhaps a more practiced writer would not for a moment consider, the truth.

K. M. G. E.

THE LAW OF NEGLIGENCE.

In the year 1869, Henry Stout, an infant of six years, had his foot mangled and crushed while playing with other children on a turn-table, belonging to the Sioux City and Pacific Railway, in the town of Blair. A suit was brought by his next friend, in the Circuit Court of the United States, at Omaha, Nebraska, against the company for \$25,000 damages. The jury, upon the first trial of the case, disagreed; but a second trial on the 9th of May last, resulted in a verdict of \$7,500 for the plaintiff. The ground of the action was, that it was the duty of the defendant to keep the turn-table securely locked and fastened, so as to prevent it being revolved or tampered with by children; or to keep the same guarded, so as to prevent injuries, such as befell the plaintiff. It appears upon the latter trial that the turn-table was constructed and left just as all railways construct and leave their turn-tables.

Judge Dillon presided at both trials and instructed the jury, that if the company did not know, and had no good reason to suppose, that if they resorted there they would be likely to get injured, then a verdict could not be found against the defendant. But on the other hand, if the defendant did know, or had good reason to believe, under the circumstances, the children of the place would resort to the turn-table to play, and that if they did, they might or would be injured, then, if the defendant took no means to prevent accident, defendant would be guilty of negligence, and would be answerable for damages caused to children by such negligence. The finding of the jury as we have stated above, was that the company were guilty of neglect of a want of due and proper care, in the construction of machinery of a dangerous character, and so leaving it exposed, that as reasonable men, the officers of the road ought to have foreseen that such accidents would occur.

The charge of the judge was sound law, and under the circumstances, we do not see how the verdict could be otherwise. Only once in a great while do juries comprehend their position. In this case they seem to have understood the gist of the matter. No one man in a thousand is capable of sitting on a jury, for not one in a thousand people "as they run," are sufficiently learned to draw either an inference or an opinion.

WOMEN AS THEY WERE.

"YOUNG ladies of the time of Edward IV.," says a recent writer, "were brought up with greater strictness than their descendants under Victoria. Mammies in those days kept their daughters a greater part of the day at hard work, exacted almost slavish deference from them, and even, as an able antiquarian states, counted upon their earnings. After they had attained a certain age, it was the custom for the young of both sexes to be sent to the houses of powerful nobles to finish their education by learning manners, and thus a noble lady was often surrounded by a bevy of fair faces from the owners of which she did not scruple to receive payment for their living. "Let us follow a lady of gentle blood through her occupations of a day. She

rises early—at seven, or half-past—listens to matins, and then dresses; breakfast follows; and this her costume: a silk gown, richly embroidered with fur, open from the neck to the waist in front, and having a turn-over collar of a darker color; a broad girdle with a rich, gold clasp; skirts so long as to oblige the owner to carry them over the arm; shoes long and pointed; a gold chain round the neck; and, to crown all, the steeple-cap, with its pendent gossamer veil. After regaling herself with boiled beef and beer, she will possibly, if religiously inclined, go to the chapel; if not, to the garden, and weave garlands. This occupation enlivened by gossip with her friends, will take her until noon, when dinner is served, after which an hour or so will be spent with the distaff or the spinning-wheel. At six o'clock supper is served, after which, perhaps, follow games at cards or dice, or possibly, a dance. Of the latter our young lady is extremely fond, and has been known, once or twice, when agreeable company was in the house, to commence dancing after dinner and to continue until supper, when, after a short respite, she began again. She has grown tired of the old carole, and now dotes upon those merry jigs imported from France. Later on, another meal is served, called the re-supper, or banquet, after which she may drink a glass of warmed ale or a cup of wine, if she be so inclined, and then retire for the night. Another day, in the proper season, she may go a-hawking or ride on horseback, or hunt the stag, or shoot rabbits with bow and arrow, or witness bear-baiting, or some other such refined amusement.

"Young ladies of this age are cautioned by a M. de Montaigne, who appears to have been somewhat of a poet and a social reformer, against being too quick to fall in love, from talking scandal, from drinking too much wine, and from chattering at table. They are enjoined to practise habits of industry, to respect the aged, to refrain from quarrels, and, above all, never to allow gentlemen to kiss them in secret!"

HABITS OF LITERARY LABOR.

WHEN Mr. Pickwick informed Mr. Jingle that his friend Mr. Snodgrass had a strong poetic turn, Mr. Jingle responded:

"So have I—Epicpoem—ten thousand lines—revolution of July—composed it on the spot—Mars by day, Apollo by night—bang the field-piece—twang the lyre—fired a musket—fired with an idea—rushed into wine-shop—wrote it down—back again—whiz, bang—another idea—wine-shop again—pen and ink—back again—cut and slash—noble time, sr."

There are other people beside Mr. Pickwick who accept this method of literary production as quite natural and legitimate. We remember seeing, some time ago, a sketch by an extravagant humorist of a man, who wrote a book in a single night, tossing each sheet as it was finished over his left shoulder, pursuing his work with a pen that hissed with the heat of a terrible friction, and fainting away into the arms of anxious friends when the task was finished. Preposterous as the fiction was, it hardly exaggerated an idea prevalent in many minds that literary production is a sort of miraculous birth, that is as strenuous and inevitable as the travail which brings a new being into life. Indeed, there are, some, perhaps many, writers who practically entertain the same notion. They depend upon moods, and if the moods do not come nothing comes. They go to their work without a will, and impotently wait for some angel to stir the pool, and if the angel fails to appear that settles the question for them. Such men of course accomplish but little. Few of them ever do more than show what possibilities of achievement are within them. They disappoint themselves, disappoint their friends, and disappoint a waiting public that soon ceases to wait, and soon transfers its expectations to others. Literary life has very few satisfactions for them, and often ends in a resort to stimulating drinks or drugs in order to produce artificially the mood which will not come of itself.

There is a good deal of curiosity among literary men in regard to the habits of each other. Men who find their work hard, their health poor, and their production slow, are always curious concerning the habits of those who accomplish a great deal with apparent ease. Some men do all their writing in the morning. Some of them even rise before their households, and do half their days work before breakfast. Others do not feel like going to work until after breakfast and after exercise in the open air. Some fancy that they can only work in the evening, and some of these must wait for their best hours until all but themselves are asleep. Some cannot use their brains at all immediately after exercise. Some smoke while writing, some write on the stimulus of coffee, and some on that of alcohol. Irregularity and strange whims are supposed to be characteristic of genius. Indeed, it rather tells against the reputation of a man to be methodical in his habits of literary labor. Men of this stripe are supposed to be mechanical plodders, without wings, and without the necessity of an atmosphere in which to spread them.

We know of no better guide in the establishment of habits of literary labor than common sense. After a good night's sleep and a refreshing breakfast, a man ought to be in his best condition for work, and he is. All literary men who accomplish much and maintain their health, go to their work in the morning, and do it every morning. It is the daily task, performed morning after morning, throughout the year—carefully, conscientiously, persistently—that tells in great results. But in order to perform this task in this way, there must be regular habits of sleep, with which nothing shall be permitted to interfere. The man who eats late suppers, attends parties and clubs, or dines out every night cannot work in the morning. Such a man has in fact, no time to work in the whole round of the hours.—Late and irregular habits at night are fatal to literary production as a rule. The exceptional cases are those which have fatal results upon life in a few years.

One thing is certain; no great thing can be done in literary production without habit of some sort; and we believe that all writers who maintain their health work in the morning. The night-work on our daily papers is killing work, and ought to be followed only a few years by any man. A man whose work is that of literary production ought always to go to his labor with a willing mind, and he can only do this by being accustomed to take it up at regular hours. We called upon a preacher the other day—one of the most eloquent and able men in the American pulpit. He was in his study, which was out of his house; and his wife simply had to say that there was no way by which she could get him, even if she should wish to see him herself. He was wise. He had his regular hours of labor, which no person was permitted to interrupt. In the afternoon he could be seen; in the morning, never. A rule like this is absolutely necessary to every man who wishes to accomplish much. It is astonishing how much a man may accomplish with the habit of doing his utmost during three or four hours in the morning. He can do this every day, have his afternoons and evenings to himself, maintain the highest health, and live a life of generous length.

The reason why some men never feel like work in the morning is, either that they have formed other habits, or that they have spent the evening improperly. They have only to go to their work every morning, and do the best they can for a dozen mornings, in succession, to find that the disposition and power to work will come. It will cost a severe effort of the will, but it will pay. Then the satisfaction of the task performed will sweeten all the other hours. There is no darker or deadlier shadow than that cast upon a man by a deferred and waiting task. It haunts him, chases him, hurries him, sprinkles bitterness in his every cup, plants thorns in his pillow, and renders him every hour more unfit for its performance. The difference between driving literary work and being driven by it is the difference between heaven and hell. It is the difference between working with the will and working against it. It is the difference between being a master and being a slave.

Good habit is a relief, too, from all temptation to the use of stimulants. By it a man's brain may become just as reliable a producer as his hand, and the cheerfulness and healthfulness which it will bring to the mind will show themselves in all the issues of the mind. The writings of those contemporaneous geniuses, Scott and Byron, illustrate this point sufficiently. One is all robust health, the result of sound habit; the other all fever and irregularity. What could Poë not have done with Mr. Longfellow's habit? No; there is but one best way in which to do literary work, and that is the way in which any other work is done—after the period devoted to rest, and with the regularity of the sun.—Dr. J. G. Holland; Scribner's for February.

WITHOUT A NEWSPAPER.

Nothing presents a sadder commentary upon the present condition of society than the large number of families, both in town and in country; but more especially in the latter, that subscribe to no paper of any kind. Hundreds and thousands of families are thus growing up utterly ignorant of what is transpiring in the world around them—ignorant of the mighty events of the day. But who can tell the vast amount of injury that is being inflicted upon the rising generation—those who are to take our place in the world at no distant day—growing up without any knowledge of the present, or any study of the past; this ignorance, too, being imbued into them by the sanction of those who should and doubtless do know better, did they only think of the injurious effects of their insane course. Let the head of every family think of this, and place in the hands of those for whom he is responsible, the means of acquiring some knowledge of the moving panorama in which we act our different parts.

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