Peg along / by George Lincoln Walton.

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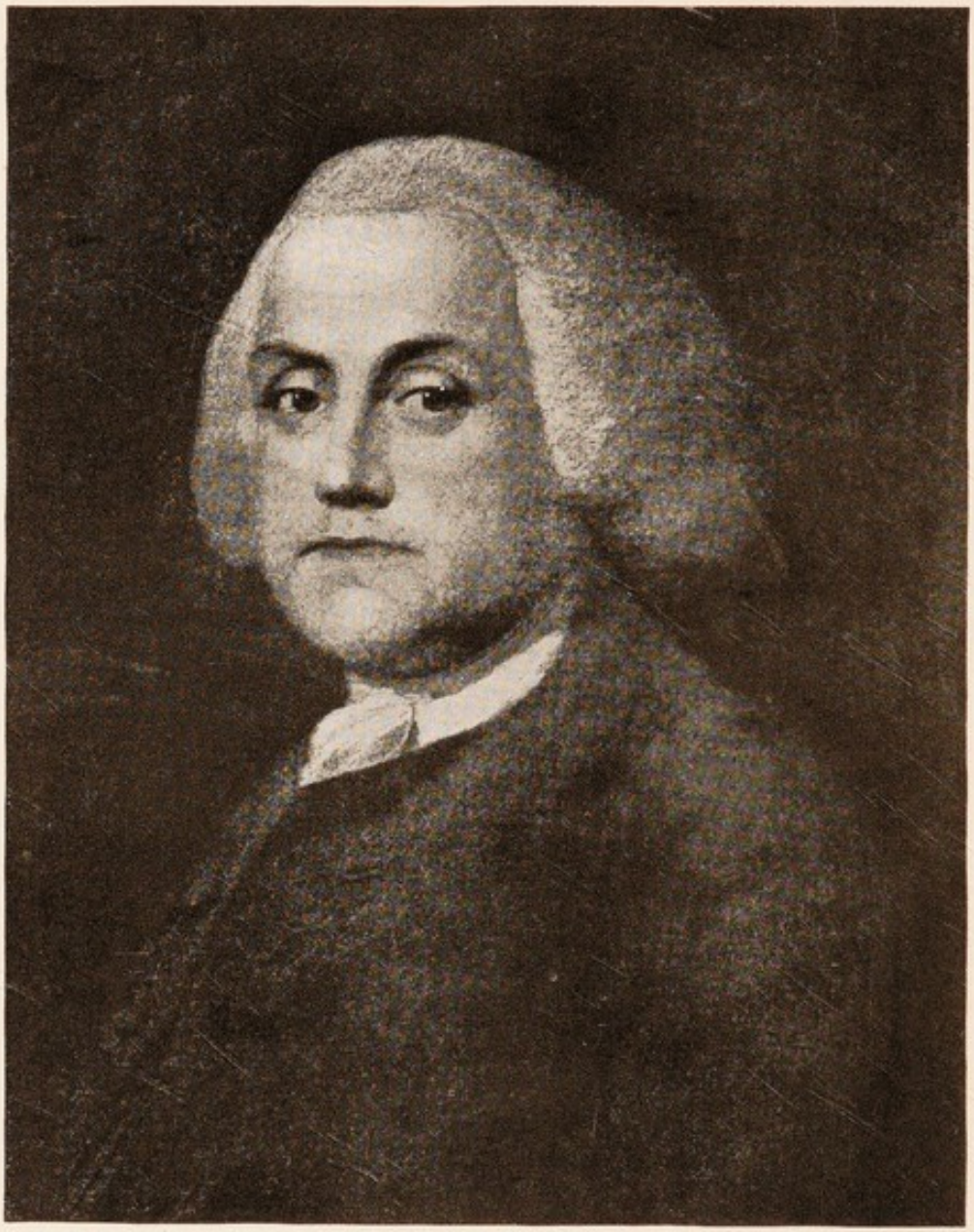
FIRST PRINTING, SEPTEMBER 20, 1915
SECOND PRINTING, OCTOBER 4, 1915
THIRD PRINTING, DECEMBER 14, 1915



B. Franklin

Painted by Benj. Wilson in 1759. Taken from Franklin's home in Philadelphia by Major John Andre in 1778 and carried to England by Sir Charles Grey. Presented to the United States at the Franklin Bicentennial in 1906 by Earl Grey, Governor-General of Canada. Now hanging in the White House, Washington. Reproduced from Franklin's Autobiography by courtesy of Houghton Mifflin Company.

PEG ALONG

BY

GEORGE LINCOLN WALTON, M.D.

CONSULTING NEUROLOGIST
TO THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL; AUTHOR OF "WHY WORRY," "THOSE NERVES," AND "THE FLOWER FINDER"

Truths that the theorist could never reach
And observation taught me, I would teach.
COWPER

PHILADELPHIA & LONDON
J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER, 1915

PRINTED BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY
AT THE WASHINGTON SQUARE PRESS
PHILADELPHIA, U. S. A.

TO

CRISPIN AND CRISPIANUS

INDUSTRIOUS SAINTS OF SOISSONS
BORN TO THE PURPLE
THEY MADE SHOES FOR THE POOR
AND PEGGED THEIR LIVES AWAY
WITHOUT
UNFAVORABLE COMMENT

PREFACE

The aim of the educational method in mind-training is four fold. The first step is to impress the individual with the need of such training, the second to stimulate his desire for betterment, the third to make clear to him the nature and bearing of his faulty mental habits, the fourth to show him how they may be modified. The main obstacle in the way of this accomplishment is the attitude of the individual regarding his own mental status. However ready he may be to acknowledge poor memory, defective mathematical ability or weakened power of application, he balks at allowing, even to himself, that he is querulous, cranky and unreasonable. Each display of these characteristics, obvious and pitiful though it may be to the outsider, is amply justified in

his own eyes by the peculiarly aggravating nature of the attending circumstances. To explain the bearing of faulty habits, and offer suggestions for their relief to one who denies their existence is labor wasted.

This book, a continuation of prior efforts in the same direction, is offered in the hope that something in lighter vein will prove of value in a field where its own weight handicaps the ponderous treatise.

GEORGE L. WALTON.

Boston, 1915.

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PEG ALONG

I

INTRODUCTION

NOT ALTOGETHER IN THE THIRD PERSON

THE first time I read the Waverley novels, I read them, prompted by a New England conscience, page by page, without a skip, from editor's note to index. In the introduction to the first of the series, I found a long description of the author's early history and mental make-up: how fond he was already, as a youth, of fabulous invention, how prone to revery, and how desultory in his schooling, how he browsed at will in literary pastures, with his appetite rather than his industry to thank that the cud achieved was worth the chewing. In my youthful ignorance I wondered

why he did not get on with his story. Since then I have learned that Sir Walter was right. Though he was still in doubt whether his books were ever to acquire distinction, he knew that if they were read at all the reader would wish to know what kind of a man it was who wrote them.

This prevalent desire has been recognized from the time of Ptah, bald-headed father of the gods, down to the successful mixer of chewing gum with pepsin, whose face, in vanishing perspective, is almost as familiar as the product of his genius. The portraiture of the daily paper, whether verbal or pictorial, is in answer to the same demand. I remember the occasion when my father, having delivered a public address, took up the morning edition, anxious to learn the criticism of his effort. All he found was that he was a short, pleasant-looking man, who wore a frock coat and striped trousers!

Coming to my own case, one lady writes from a distant state that she has read "Why Worry"—I hope I am not too boastful, perhaps she simply stumbled on it in the library —and writes to ask whether she correctly reads between the lines that I am somewhat of a worrier myself. Again, only the other day, I met a lady who had had occasion to see much of me in earlier life. She said she had read my books with interest and was curious to know whether I was as fussy now as I was twenty-five years ago!

Taking these facts into consideration, I venture at the outset of this book to set at rest any doubt there may remain as to whether I am, or have been, a sharer in the faulty mental habits whose modification is attempted in my writings. It will perhaps cover the ground to repeat the answer I gave a certain lady who said, " I think you must have had me

in mind when you wrote 'Why Worry.'" My answer was, "Why no, I had myself in mind." Still further to incriminate myself, I must relate what happened in the course of a certain meeting of the American Neurological Association. One of the sessions was held at the Baltimore Country Club. In the course of the afternoon my friend Dr. Dana and I decided to forego an hour of the program to get a glimpse of the flora in the vicinity. The taxicab was at the door about which I hovered, with one eye rudely fixed, I fear, upon the clock, while Dr. Dana paused to converse with a lady of his acquaintance. When he finally joined me he said the lady wanted to know who was his "little old nervous friend." "What did you tell her?" I asked. "I told her," he said with a smile, "it was the man who wrote 'Why Worry'!"

After this confession I need only add that I give no advice to others

that I do not need myself, and that I offer no maxim for the aid of others that I do not have occasion myself to use may times in the day. It is from my own experience that I have learned to distrust the optimism of the average mental healer, as well as the overconfidence of the "cured." For this reason I do not expect to annihilate the faulty mental habit, but only hope to curb it. That this alone is well worth while, I can also from my own experience testify.

Not but there are those who claim to have been cured even by my modest efforts. I recently met a friend whose approach is always heralded by a clearing of the throat with a note peculiar to himself. "I have read, hm, hm, your book," he said, "and it has cured me, hm, hm, of all my nervous habits, hm, hm!" If I allowed myself to become puffed up by the praise of such readers my case would rival that of the inflated frog

in the parable. I believe it was Dr. Griggs who warned his hearers that if all they did was to listen and approve, his lectures had accomplished nothing, but that he would credit himself with having done some good in the world if, on reaching home, somebody would just speak pleasantly to his aunt!

A word about titles: I have been accused of concealing otherwise worthy matter under titles bordering on the bizarre, but I can assure you that, whether they are good or bad, much thought has been spent in their selection, as any writer of books will realize, for

> None but an author knows an author's cares,
> Or Fancy's fondness for the child she bears.

Nor is the christening least important of the parental duties. Indeed, I have come to realize, as a better man has said, that a good name is almost as important in literature as in life. The present title, itself the

maxim I most often use for my own guidance in time of stress, is somewhat in contrast with those which ornament the pages of my prior efforts. Those efforts were directed mainly toward the establishment of a "frame of mind." This title suggests rather what is to be done with our "frame of mind" now that we have attained it.

On looking over the self-portraiture attempted in this introduction, I see that I have laid myself open to the comment that though I can steal the tools of others, it is not so easy to appropriate their power to handle them. This I cheerfully acknowledge, consoling myself with the old Scotch proverb, "They that mint at a gown of gold will always get a sleeve of it."

II

MANAGING THE MIND

So shall I spring with joy to grasp the helm,
Shall seize the sheet and sit the windward rail
And feel the flick of motion on my face;
Nor fear the cresting waves that overwhelm,
But crowd the very sky with spreading sail
And venture all for victory in the race.

Stephen Berrien Stanton

If we should put into learning how to manage our minds a small fraction of the time we put into learning how to sail a boat, we should all be practical philosophers. In this happy event, far from being foundered by the first stiff squall, we should proceed through life on an even keel, or at least on as even a keel as our circumstances should warrant. Instead of studying the chart for a haven every time the barometer dropped we should take pleasure in our mastery of the elements, and rather be looking for a storm to test our seamanship.

No one need learn to sail a boat un-

less he chooses, but everyone ought to learn something about running himself, for he is launched, according to the time-honored figure of speech, upon the sea of life. He may be wafted indefinitely on by light and favoring breezes, or he may, perchance, meet a hurricane sufficiently violent to baffle the expert, but it is likely that his experience will lie somewhere between these extremes. Is it not worth while, since we cannot step ashore, to put some time into a study of the ropes? How does it avail us to bemoan the fact that our boat is leaking, cranky or oversparred?

Is it not the more to our credit that we can learn to do with such material? In popular language, it is "up to us" to play the game, the more so when we realize that if we let go,

> The slack sail shifts from side to side,
> The boat, untrimmed, admits the tide,
> Borne down, adrift, at random tost,
> The oar breaks short, the rudder's lost.

A pre-publicational reviewer warns me that the verse I have inserted is in danger of causing terror to the timorous, but it is no part of my plan to furnish feather beds for those to fall upon who cannot stand against the common exigencies. I have no faith in the method, too much in vogue, of assuring the fearful one there is no danger. This only aggravates timidity. The man who recognizes the fact that life is full of dangers is more likely eventually to cultivate the needful courage than the one whose insistence for absolute safety is catered to by the reassurance of his family, his friends, and his medical adviser.

But to resume our place in the boat, which we seem to have left at the mercy of wind and tide, in spite of my statement that we could not step ashore,—there is this fundamental difference between running ourselves and sailing a boat: The landlubber is only too glad to have an old salt on

his weatherbeam who shall shout as occasion arises, "Drop your peak," "Let go your sheet," or "Put down your helm." When it comes to managing ourselves, pride forbids acceptance of another's admonition. Nor does the pertinence of his suggestion lessen our resentment. Indeed, if it be a member of our own family who arrogates to himself the duties of instructor in a branch of which we know he is himself not master, the fat is in the fire. The mere fact that he advises us to drop our peak only makes us want to hoist it as high as Haman and him higher yet. We may, however, accept from a book the useful admonition, bearing in mind the fact that it is some friend who needs it, rather than ourselves. Even if we cast the book aside, we may, without endangering our self-respect, resume its study in a calmer mood; we may even, on the quiet, for our own satisfaction, try a maxim or two that we

would have been too proud to test at the insistence of another.

Of course word-of-mouth instruction, if acceptable, would be more apt, just as, when the lee rail is under water, the shout of warning is better than the perusal of the "Seaman's Friend," yet I am assured by competent authority that the conscientious reader of that volume will know more about a boat than before he took it up. But it would not occur to the most optimistic that reading the book would make a sailor. Similarly, the treatises on practical philosophy to be useful must be not skimmed, but studied.

Philosophy is rather a large word to apply to the commonplace suggestions of such a book as this. Indeed, when minor ills are in question, the expression, "bring our philosophy to bear," reminds us of the inimitable Crothers, who somewhere speaks of using a sledge-hammer to drive a tack. For an immediate weapon, philosophy

is certainly unwieldy, not to say intangible. Hence the maxim, or other short saying, which shall carry the gist of the philosophy for the case in hand. These sayings, so they are pertinent, need neither be wise nor witty. Thus, suppose I find myself in the clutches of the "doubting folly," brought to a standstill by indecision which task to take up first. If I say to myself, "Run, molasses!" the admonition is a ready reminder of all the arguments that have been brought to bear on the faulty mental habit of indecision, namely, that it is better to take up the wrong task than to do neither; that other people have made mistakes, why should not I; that it is better to make a mistake, which in nine cases out of ten is less important than we think, than to lose our way in the maze of doubt. We can bring some such homely reminder to bear even if we fail to secure a handhold on philosophy. And if the reader can

be led to accept and use some of my reminders or, better yet, invent and use maxims of his own, the main object of this book will be achieved.

To give another illustration,—let us suppose one of our friends has the habit known as overinsistence, or, in every-day parlance, "chewing the rag," a not uncommon factor in promoting the mental unrest underlying nervous breakdown. The victim of this misfortune is so constituted that every subject he considers must be followed to its ultimate conclusion; every topic, however unimportant, must be threshed again lest a grain be overlooked. Once started on an argument, he must not only have the last word, but the argument must be carried on in the privacy of his chamber until the last ghost is laid. This mental sufferer may learn to leave the objectionable line of thought at the right-about by some such maxim as, "This junk is not worth sorting."

Let me warn him that the maxim is intended, like most of my suggestions, strictly for home consumption. Unless we are looking for trouble, it will be wise to avoid applying to the arguments of another the epithet "junk," whether sorted or unsorted, unless we are bigger than he or can run faster.

The maxims furnish what there is of action in this book. That they are not utterly valueless, though sometimes crude, is attested by their adoption by others who have ventured into the field of popular medical literature.

A word about the physical basis of the mind. The brain is the organ without which a man's thoughts could no more occur than could his digestion without an alimentary canal. You would doubtless be glad to know how nerve cells can produce thought. I would myself. I understand they do it by breaking down of higher into lower chemical complexes. I trust this satisfies your longing; for myself

I must confess I never could visualize the process, but such sentences no longer alarm me. I have come to realize that, like the electric van that thunders over the cross-walk, they do not go so fast as they make a noise!

But we can study, let us say, electricity without knowing just what it is; nor is it deemed rash to state that the generation of this force cannot be accomplished without physical means. Likewise, of the mind we can say the signs all point in one direction. When certain parts of the brain are lost, intellectual defects appear. From observations of this kind we conclude also that the various sensations are received in definite brain cells, while the motions stimulated by those sensations originate in others. The inevitable outcome of sensation is motion; it is by our motions that others measure our mental balance. So we can keep within our beat, our minds are within the normal, though our

thoughts wander far afield and cause much discomfort. It is our actions we are learning to control, as well as our thoughts, when we resolve to drop the

> . . . cumbrous cares that clog the mind,
> The self-inflicted worse than all combined,

to shoulder the needful burden only, and to "peg along."

With the memories somehow stored up in these cells come the "fancies fond and false philosophy" of Matthew Arnold, the beginning of the mental tribulations which may affect unfavorably not only our thoughts but our behavior. In other words, here we have the making of self-inflicted martyrdom, of over-strenuous insistence to accomplish ends, of anger, fear and shame, the results of which cause more nervous breakdown than any amount of plain hard work.

It may make the matter clearer to compare the nerve cells of the brain with the stars of the firmament. The brain contains certain large cells visi-

ble without high magnification; such are the cells presiding over motion. We may compare these with the stars which make the outlines of the well-known constellations. These stars are easily recognized, but through and beyond are gathered such hordes of others as to present, for example, in the Milky Way, an apparently homogeneous mass which may be resolved into individual stars, becoming more and more numerous as the strength of the telescope increases. These smaller stars would correspond with the brain cells which receive the sensations, general and special. To complete the analogy, let us imagine each, even of these invisible stars, connected with every other star by celestial wires, all storing up and comparing data and interchanging messages.

Suppose, in continuation of our comparison, the stern pursuit of Scorpio by the Centaur Sagittarius represents the concerted action of the

heavenly bodies; that the deft precision with which Aquarius pours the glistening contents of his jar into the waiting fauces of the Australian fish is due to the deliberate guidance of this vast assemblage, and that through its foresight, also

> With golden horns in full career
> The Bull beats down the barriers of the year.

In such event it would be no cause for wonder if the arrow of the Centaur should sometime go astray, if the worm should turn at last and nip the paw so long extended toward him, if the fish should quit his post to gambol with the sea-monster of Andromeda, or chase a meteor across the sky in defiance of the firmamental schedule! In short, we should not be surprised if the celestial disorder paralleled that produced by Ingoldsby's devils, who

> Kissed the Virgin and filled her with dread,
> Who popp'd the Scorpion into her bed;
> Who stole the arrows of Sagittarius,
> Who broke the pitcher of poor Aquarius,
> And who skimmed the Milky Way.

Within certain limits the vagaries of the human mind are likewise cause for no alarm. Even while striving for its control it need not astonish us to discover that silly impulse takes the place of sober thought—that intellectual will-o'-the-wisps lure us from our goal ideas; that while recognizing the futility of our obsessions and the selfishness of our emotions, we follow their insistent sway in spite of better judgment. It is surprising rather, considering the complexity of the guiding mechanism, that, on the whole, our thoughts and actions are so orderly.

The implication that the mind can take part in its own control may be disputed on the ground of the academic non-existence of free will. But the fact cannot be gainsaid, even though the theorist may be forced to the explanation of the pedagogue to whom the boy propounded the query:

"Why do you punish me if it was foreordained that I should sin?"

"Because," replied the master, as he rolled up his sleeves, "it was foreordained also that you should get the worst whaling you ever had in your life, *and here it is.*"

On looking over this chapter I fear the reader may justly complain that I have whirled him into the heavens from the surface of the sea; that I left him managing a boat and now ask him to manage the celestial spheres. Nor can I blame him if he hoist me by my own petard and say, "This junk is not worth sorting." In that event, if he "peg along" to the next chapter, it will be my consolation that he has assimilated the maxim, and my hope that he may on some occasion apply it likewise to some foolish fancies of his own. Furthermore, in answer to the question of managing the spheres I can truly say that learning to manage the mind is largely a matter of learning to leave it alone.

III

THE METHODS OF BACON AND FRANKLIN

There is always hope in the man who actually and earnestly *works*. In idleness alone there is perpetual despair.

Thomas Carlyle

I HOPE the reader will not assume, from my citing these strenuous workers, that I propose to make either a Bacon or a Franklin out of him. If his yearnings run to this length, he will have to consult some one whose philosophy is cast in a more heroic mold than mine. At the same time, even if we do not care to follow in the footsteps of such devotees of toil, it is always worth while to study the mental machinery of successful men, especially if they have not been afraid to let in the public to see the wheels go round. This Franklin did in his Autobiography to an amazing degree. Bacon did the same, but indirectly,

through our knowledge that he was himself the first to follow the advice he gave others regarding industry, mind management, and the regulation of conduct.

Tales of genius, by appealing to our sense of the marvellous, may be more attractive than the story of systematic endeavor, but the former may easily give rise to false ideals, ideals leading either to idle dreams, or to unwarranted discouragement over the fact that our equipment falls far short of genius. The earlier we learn that work is a more reliable attribute than genius, the sooner we shall lay a firm foundation for our own advancement. It is true that Bacon has been counted among the men of genius, but it is essentially to painstaking and unremitting toil that his high place in the land of letters and philosophy is due. The management of the mind he undertook, as he did everything else, somewhat on the lines of reducing

cord wood to kindling. He put his back into it and sawed wood.

A clue to the methods of this remarkable man may be obtained from his own observation: "A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time." Constitutionally delicate, with a seriousness beyond his years, he devoted himself, already in early life, to studies fitting those far older. At college he was impatient of the limits of the curriculum and "departed, carrying with him a profound contempt for the course of study pursued there, a fixed conviction that the system of academic education in England was radically vicious, a just scorn for the trifles on which the followers of Aristotle had wasted their powers, and no great reverence for Aristotle himself." (Macaulay.)

When a young courtier he made himself an authority on manners and customs, otherwise known as "Cere-

monies and Respects." Indeed, his conclusions have a rather pedantic sound when we consider his age, regarding, for example, the proper and expedient bearing of the individual toward those lower, as well as those higher, in the social scale, thus: "If we do not render respect to superiors, can we expect inferiors to render respect to us?"

In middle life, by assiduous effort, he made himself a finished speaker as well as a voluminous and effective writer. Nor did his final downfall interrupt his industry, for the works of his later life are perhaps his best.

As an illustration of his careful attention to detail, after commenting, in his essay "Of Travel," on the frequent use of a diary by the voyager at sea, where nothing is visible but sky and water, and the neglect to take notes on land, he enumerates the things there to be observed and noted. The list commences with courts of

princes and of justice, churches and monuments, walls and fortifications, and runs through a long list, to terminate with comedies, collections of jewels and robes, cabinets and rarities. He counsels changing one's lodging in foreign cities, the better to learn the ways of the people, and particularly advises cultivating the acquaintance of the secretaries and employees of ambassadors "for so in traveling in one country he shall suck the experience of many." He even instructs the traveler in the ethics of the return, thus: "And let his travel appear rather in his discourse than in his apparel or gesture; and in his discourse, let him be rather advised in his answers than forwards to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth not change his country manners for those of foreign parts, but only prick in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country."

Nor were such admonitions purely academic. He was himself untiring in the acquisition of knowledge of every variety, and in studying how best to apply it. In other words, he subordinated everything to the cultivation and management of his mind. He was thoroughly well aware that to be a continuous and effective worker and to preserve mental control, one must have a variety of interests. He did not deem it trivial to devote the same detailed study to the habits of plants that he did to the habits of men, thus, he says: "those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three: that is, burnet, wild thyme, and water-mints. Therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread."

In the garden, that no moment might be wasted, his secretary was at hand to jot down thoughts for future

use. His "Promus" contains not only weighty observations for future use, but anecdotes, to be on call when needed for his writings or his conversation. His pungent sayings represent no fireside philosophy, but the essence of an active life compressed and molded by a master hand. Nor was he satisfied when the work was done. It is said that his essays were ever by him for revision, one, indeed, being entirely rewritten for the last edition.

A few quotations from the essays will be here in place as bearing on the subjects with which we have to do. Thus, the following remarks from the essays "Of Revenge" are peculiarly applicable to the matter of harboring the grudge: "Revenge," he says, "is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong putteth

the law out of office. Certainly in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, saith, *It is the glory of a man to pass by an offense* . . . There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, honor, or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong merely out of ill nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other."

On the question of living in the past, he says: "That which is past is gone, and irrevocable; and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labor in past matters."

On the question of emotional poise,

the following observation is peculiarly apt when we remember that it was made during the period of his own fall from grace: "The virtue of prosperity is temperance; the virtue of adversity is fortitude; which in morals is the more heroical virtue."

On the management of the mind in general, he says: "A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one and destroy the other." This figure was doubtless drawn from the horticultural pursuits of which he was so fond. His knowledge of real life, and his vital interest in it serve here as elsewere to make his message ring true. The training of the mind, like the care of a garden, is surely not the work of a single day, but rather a matter of constant vigilance. And in the mind, as in the garden, the blossom and the fruit repay the toil. And, to further the comparison, a little attention bestowed in season is easier

and more effective than postponed labor.

It may be suggested that Bacon could afford to cultivate all his talents and accomplish what he did, because he was born to the purple and did not have to make his living. Upon this question the life of Benjamin Franklin lets much light, since it shows that prolonged schooling is not necessary either for worldly success, as everyone knows, or for success in the realms of literature and practical philosophy, and the cultivation of the arts that go to make the statesman. His school years, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, were cut short at the age of ten.

Fortunately, Franklin was not one of those who "are so close and reserved as they will not show their wares but by a dark light, and seem always to keep back somewhat." Whether on account of unusual humility or, perhaps, as he himself sug-

gests, because he was proud of his humility, he did not hesitate to lay bare, for him who runs to read, the methods by which he trained his own mind and shaped his own career, once having accepted the dictum "It is practice alone that brings the powers of the mind, as well as those of the body, to their perfection."

"It was about this time," he says, in his Autobiography, "I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom or company might lead me into."

For this purpose he made a list of thirteen desirable virtues, among them temperance, order, resolution, industry, sincerity, meditation and tranquillity. In a little book, which he always carried with him, a page was allotted to each of these virtues, and in this book he kept a daily score of

his conduct, paying special attention to one virtue one week, another the next, and so on through the list. The year's work embraced, then, four courses of thirteen weeks each.

When we are inclined to think that we have made a complete study of the management of our minds, we may perhaps come to realize that our trial has not been exhaustive, when we read the following. "After a while I went thro' one course only in a year, and afterwards only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me."

For our consolation when, after we have really tried, we find ourselves falling short, we may read Franklin's comment on his tardy acquisition of a certain virtue. Of this virtue, he says, "I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with

a faulty character in that respect, like the man who, in buying an ax of a smith, my neighbor, desired to have the whole of the surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel; he turned, while the smith pressed the broad face of the ax hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on, and at length would take his ax as it was, without further grinding. 'No,' said the smith; 'turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by and by; as yet, it is only speckled.' 'Yes,' says the man, *'but I think I like a speckled ax best.'*"

It would appear that, whereas Bacon, in the practical application of his philosophy, was merely developing his natural trend, Franklin was making himself over. He definitely states,

for example, that his efforts to eliminate the trivial from his conversation were directed towards a habit of "prattling, punning and joking," which he thought was making him acceptable to trifling company only.

Far from becoming the prig his efforts would suggest, he retained throughout enough of his natural self to make him a genial companion and a staunch friend. Although he planned from the outset to accumulate enough of this world's goods to place him above the reach of want, he never stifled the generosity which led him to loan money to impecunious friends at a time when he might easily have responded with the plea that he himself was poor. In short, the net result in Franklin's case was a very human product.

IV

WHAT ANYONE CAN DO

No one is free who commands not himself.

Epictetus

A CERTAIN amount of mental training is both desirable and easy, but unless we happen to feel the impulse to strive for perfection, as did Franklin, it is hardly advisable that his plan in its entirety be followed. This is especially true of the person who is already endowed with the New England Conscience. This individual, while cheerfully acknowledging himself the chief of sinners, is so intolerant of criticism that when his attention is called to the most trifling of his real shortcomings, he either flies into a rage or seeks the solitude of his chamber. It is to be feared that the good resolutions of such an one would be swamped at the outset

by the very elaborateness of the method. On the one hand, he would become too easily discouraged by the multiplicity of his faults, or, on the other, he would juggle with his conscience for the sake of lessening his score, only to be worried in turn by the realization that he had been dishonest with himself.

In point of fact, for the average individual, and particularly for the overconscientious, a little of Franklin's method will go a long way. For example, it may be practical, at the outset at least, to replace our vague resolutions by some definite plan allied to that of Franklin. Thus, we may find it useful to try keeping score for a time of one or two of our faulty habits in place of his thirteen. This will serve to fix our attention, and make it easier for us, when we take up the more elaborate habits, to continue the game without the pencil. By commencing in this way, we are following

the old admonition, "Proceed from the known to the unknown," itself a maxim we may sometimes find useful to help us bring our scattered wits to work upon the scheme of life. We might jot down, in the notebook we carry in our waistcoat pocket, the most glaring of our faulty nervous habits, and against it make a mark each time we succumb. If we are approximately honest in our score, we shall be astonished, in the first place, to see how many marks we shall accumulate, and later shall be agreeably surprised to see how rapidly the number lessens.

Let us suppose our attention has been called to the fact that we clear our throats much oftener than is needful. We decide the habit worth exterminating, not only in the way of general training, but because it detracts from the pleasure our society gives to others. So familiar have we become with the peculiar note we

utter in this connection that we are quite unconscious of the sound. But let us write down C. T. on the left-hand side at the top of a page in our little book. The chances are that a minute has not elapsed before we realize we have cleared our throat, necessitating a mark. It will not be at all surprising if in another three minutes we find we must make another mark, and if at the end of fifteen minutes we have made a round half dozen. By this time we begin to realize what an impression we have been making on our neighbors. Already a tendency to restrain the habit will have been established, and in the next fifteen minutes, for the first time in a dozen years, we shall only clear our throats once. The next day we start a fresh line, and are likely to surprise ourselves by an aggregate of only a dozen marks for the entire day, a number perhaps halved on the third day, and reduced to two or three on the fourth.

We now deem ourselves practically cured, and the next day neglect our score. At this point comes the danger of a relapse, and if we renew our score the day after, we are likely to find the marks increased to a dozen; and now commences the real and lasting improvement.

In a similar manner, we may practise our self-control on habits of drumming, tapping the foot, sniffing, pulling the whisker, "pushing the face," pulling out the watch every few minutes, and like simple habits, all easily lessened, sometimes even eradicated, by a little definitely applied attention.

Some of these habits can be cured more readily than others. Among the more difficult come those in which the nervous movement is made to relieve a sensation, for example, friction to relieve itching. If we can restrain this desire we shall have made a distinct advance in control of our nerves,

for we shall shortly find that the itching itself will lessen. In fact, after eliminating the obvious causes for this sensation, as the bite of the mosquito, we are left with a purely nervous phenomenon in which the mind is largely concerned. This is illustrated by the fact that as I dictate this sentence the right side of my nose begins to itch, a sensation which speedily jumps to my left ear. Experiment has convinced me that if I rub these parts the sensation will spread, but if I refrain, it will speedily disappear. To mention an immediate benefit of this training, it will help us to endure, without scratching, the very real and severe itching of ivy poisoning, thus preventing aggravation and extension of the malady.

It may be asked at this point what is the practical advantage, aside from such a trifling one as I have just mentioned, of lessening these habits? The advantage is two-fold: it involves the

pleasure and comfort of others and it involves our own nervous control. With the pleasure and comfort of others this book has only the most indirect concern; it is not a treatise on ethics, but an effort to lessen the wear and tear which tend to nervous breakdown. With regard to the effect of this control upon ourselves, it is safe to say that if a person went no further in the matter than to conquer the simple nervous habits I have mentioned, he would have acquired the power of lying absolutely still in bed at night in whatever position he assumed, and would find himself falling asleep in a quarter of the accustomed time, or if he did not sleep, would find himself resting quietly, and storing up energy for the next day's work, instead of fussing and fuming away the little stock he had to draw on. Furthermore, he would find the day's work itself performed in a manner so much more restful that

the alteration would surprise him. And we have not even touched upon the more serious of the faulty habits that wear upon the nervous system. These involve the mind and the emotions. Such are insistence that things be done our way, impatience at delay, annoyance at trifles, foolish fears, fret over the ordinary annoyances of our employment or family life, chronic discontent with the cuisine, dwelling on the past, insistently forecasting the future, and a score of others, whose analysis is less important than the question what we are to do about them.

Having once taken the enemy's outposts, we may with confidence attack his main position. In other words, having gained control over the simple habits we may turn our attention to these more serious ones. The first step is to see our faults, to realize their undesirability, and to fix upon a definite ideal toward which to strive.

When we take up such habits as fret, impatience, and living in the past, our score of failures for the day will be shorter at the outset, and it is likely to improve much more slowly than that of the simpler habits. Here the note-book will not suffice; we shall have need for all our philosophy, and especially for its epitome, the maxim.

When we can show a clean page for faults like these, it is not too much to say that we shall have given the go-by to nervous prostration and its ilk. We may get tired after hard work—this is legitimate and healthy; from this we shall recover in a longer or shorter, generally shorter, time; but the agitated unrest of the nervously broken-down we shall never know.

It is far from my purpose to advocate the attempt quite to change our nature. I should no more advise this than the plastic surgeon would counsel the change from pug to Roman

nose. I would not make the sour apple into a sweet apple, but reduce its objectionable acidity to "a pleasant tart." On this point Locke, in "Some Thoughts Concerning Education," says: "Everyone's natural genius should be carried as far as it could; but to attempt the putting another upon him will be but labor in vain; and what is so plastered on, will at best fit but untowardly, and have always hanging to it the ungracefulness of constraint and affectation."

The first objection opposed to such suggestions as are offered in this chapter is that to follow them will take a person's whole time. On this point I can only say that we shall take no more time, and shall probably get further, by giving the experiment a trial, than by sitting down and arguing about it. Franklin succeeded in carrying out even his elaborate method, day after day, for a term of years during which he was not only

obtaining a literary and scientific education rarely acquired in the regular curriculum, but was supporting himself and aiding others, laying the foundation for a material fortune, and establishing for himself a place among leaders in literature, science and statesmanship. The man who accomplishes things seems always to be the one who has plenty of time.

Surely some of us, though busy as bees in a bottle, are not accomplishing so much but that we might spare a thought, now and then, for a pencil-stroke that shall aid us in a matter not only bearing on our continued comfort and that of our friends, but is likely in the long run to prove a material asset, by prolonging our ability to carry on that very business from the pursuit of which we think we can not spare a "pig's wink." Let us "Stay a little, that we may make an end the sooner."

V

OVERINSISTENCE

He persists as if his life lay on't.
"All's Well that Ends Well."

It is proverbial that the man subject to minor ills shows more discontent than the possessor of a serious and incurable malady. This is doubtless because of his insistent desire to be perfectly well. In other words, it is the case of the fly in the ointment:

Life's little ills annoyed me when those little ills were few,
And the one fly in the ointment put me in a dreadful stew.
But experience has taught me the infrequent good to prize,
Now I'm glad to find some ointment in my little pot of flies.

Hence a maxim I have found useful: *Don't focus on the fly.*

Other people's vagaries are peculiarly ridiculous. I remember one day approaching a hotel in front of which was a coupé. I was startled by

hearing a high-pitched voice, which proceeded from the carriage, exclaiming, "Don't touch it! Don't touch it!" I hastened my steps anticipating trouble, but was relieved to hear the voice continue, "I want to open it myself." It turned out to be only a certain old gentleman who insists that no one else shall open the door before he alights. My first impulse was to say "absurd"; my second was to blush upon recalling similar insistences of my own, namely that the waiter allow me to pour my own coffee, light my own cigar, and prepare my own grapefruit.

I have known a traveler to go out of his way to avoid a certain hostelry, because dinner was there served at noon and supper at night. The whole of Europe had become involved, meantime, in the conflict that has reduced vast numbers of the well-to-do to a situation in which meal time is a negligible consideration in compari-

son with the question whether the meal occur at all, or, if it does, whether they will be there to eat it.

In this connection I am often asked what is the use of conforming to established custom so long as you can have custom modified in your favor—in other words, why not have things as you want them when you can, and postpone conforming until some time when there is no other alternative? This opens up the whole question of the value of mental training. There are two bearings of such training, one upon others, the other upon ourselves. With regard to its effect on others, the more we learn to accommodate ourselves without friction the more comfortable companions we become, and the more easy we are to get along with. This reason for learning to conform is not likely to appeal to those who ask the question. With regard to the effect on the individual, such training puts him, eventually, in

the way of far greater enjoyment than is afforded even by the pleasure of having his own way to-day. Moreover, no item is more important than serenity of mind in preparation for restful nights, comfortable old age, and immunity from nervous breakdown. Such serenity of mind is not compatible with overinsistence—unless, indeed, the gratification of that insistence is continuous and complete, a state of affairs hardly expected on this planet, even by the most exigent.

Nor are the advantages of mind-management purely passive. The result of habitual self-control is shown in times of stress, both in the prompt judgment and executive qualities of those who take command, and in the ready compliance of those whose place it is to obey. I know of no better illustration than the conduct of some two hundred and fifty inmates of a certain college building destroyed not long ago by fire. 'All were mustered

in the hall without excitement or mishap, and none disobeyed the orders of the captains that there be no return to the rooms for articles left behind.

Epictetus went so far with his training-out of insistence, that no position in which he was placed could cloud his happiness. Even in confinement he was happy. The following quotation from Higginson's Epictetus not only shows the extent to which this philosopher carried his theory of accommodation to circumstances, hence serenity, but it shows that this theory was not merely one of *laissez faire.* Moral courage also played a part in his philosophy: "I must die, but must I die groaning, too? I must be fettered, must I be lamenting, too? I must be exiled; and what hinders me then but that I may go smiling and cheerful and serene?' 'Betray a secret?' 'I will not betray it, for this is in my power." "Then I will fetter you." "What did you say, man?

Fetter me? You will fetter my leg, but not Zeus himself can get the better of my free will."

A word regarding the mechanism of insistence. I suppose that every movement we make, excepting such an automatic one as walking, is preceded by a mental picture. The definiteness of this picture must vary in different individuals, and the desire of making the act conform to the picture must also vary. This variation is doubtless the essential difference between the "easy going" man and the man "set in his ways." In the latter the picture is so vivid, his insistence on completing it so great, that the hiatus caused by leaving it uncompleted almost amounts to mental pain. The situation is the same regarding the whole future of this individual; what he plans must be performed regardless of the comfort of others, and sometimes of his own advantage.

It is a similar attitude that pro-

duces the fixed aversions, the difficulty of reconciling one's self to slights, criticisms, or even to certain smells or sounds, in other words, the obsession, which I have elsewhere defined as "An unduly insistent and compulsive thought, habit of mind, or tendency to action." I have learned of a lady, otherwise sensible, and in no way incapacitated, who has so great an aversion to a peach tree, that if the possessor of such a tree visits her, the chair and the family have to be disinfected and the doorknobs washed. Another lady not only cannot go through a street that has had tar upon it, but has gone so far as to burn the furniture used by the visitor who has passed through such a street. It is difficult to find the source of these particular aversions, but as a rule the development of such obsessions can be traced to some experience whose effect on the emotions becomes intensified as time goes on.

Simple and harmless habits sometimes drift into obsessions by mere continuance and by the empty feeling produced by their omission. Suppose one acquires the idle habit of twisting the loose nut on top of every hydrant he passes. If he is unable to discontinue this habit when his attention is called to it, the habit has become an obsession. In other words, the dividing line between the habit and the obsession comes at the point where we feel insistent need. The line had been passed in the case of the gentleman of whom I have heard who touched a certain tree on his way to the office. Failing to touch it one morning, he took a cab and returned to carry out the duty.

Excessive and prolonged grief sometimes results from the morbid insistence that, whatever happens to others, the lives of *our* friends shall conform to our expectations. When the Countess of Essex, after the death of a child, allowed her despair to in-

crease instead of diminish, and when it had become a matter of general comment that she was neglecting, on this account, her other private and public duties, Sir William Temple ventured to remonstrate in a letter, which has taken its place among the classic essays of the English language. In the course of the letter he says: "A friend makes me a feast, and sets before me all that his care or kindness could provide; but I set my heart upon one dish alone, and if that happen to be thrown down, I scorn all the rest; and although he send for another of the same, yet I rise from the table in a rage, and say my friend is my enemy, and has done me the greatest wrong in the world; have I reason, Madam, or good grace in what I do?"

Not that I should favor a correspondence so expressed to-day. Such encroachments upon the prerogative of the recipient would be likely to increase rather than lessen the morbid

attitude. Intolerance for suggestion is common among mental sufferers of this type. On investigating the case of a certain nervous invalid not long ago, I came to the conclusion that her sufferings resulted from her own intolerance for every unusual sensation. This view was confirmed by the fact that when I took the knee-jerk, she jumped as if it caused her extreme pain. I assured her that this was an everyday affair of which the average person takes no notice, and asked her to try to restrain the jump when I made the test upon the other knee. This suggestion produced a violent emotional outbreak and the statement that *if I had not told her to restrain it she would have done so of her own accord,* but now she couldn't—and she didn't. Then followed recriminations because I thought she did not try, the emphatic statement that neither I nor anyone else could know how hard she tried, and the like, her loss

of self-control increasing with argument. This attitude was increased by my efforts to stem the tide by pointing out that my opinion should be only a side issue, especially since she would probably never see me again. This statement I could make, by the way, with a clear conscience, for patients of this type rarely consult again the physician who does not "understand," in other words "coddle," them.

I have made up my mind that there is a class of so-called nervous invalids who really do not want to get well. Theoretically they crave mental and physical perfection, indeed they often protest they would gladly make any sacrifice in the world to attain it. But when it comes to the "show-down" they are unwilling, though perfectly able, to make the effort required for meeting the everyday responsibilities and performing the duties expected of the person in ordinary health. Invalids of this type make slaves of all

who are willing to cater to their fancy. Once the physician satisfies himself that a chronic invalid falls in this class, he may as well recognize the futility of all effort directed toward arousing her ambition. Physicians attempting to minister to mental needs of such patients will appreciate the feelings of the teacher the dream of whose life was to become a waitress in a first-class restaurant, for there she would have at least the fun of passing people something they wanted!

That the overinsistent parent may become tiresome even to the objects of his, or her, solicitude was shown by an experience recently told me by a colleague who was attempting to modify the training of an only child. The mother, it seemed, could never leave the child at school, but must be herself on hand in case the teacher needed assistance. The physician was carefully explaining to the father the error of this attitude on the part of

the mother, and urging that the latter stay at home and take care of *him,* upon which the father observed, "What have you got against *me?*"

Even the conjugal insistence that shudders at separation for a day, may itself become a factor in a longer separation based on incompatibility of temper. It is no disparagement of wives to add: A little absence, now and then, is relished by the best of men.

To recur to the matter of excessive grief—I have been urged to join a propaganda against wearing mourning. But this opens up quite another question. If, indeed, it could be established that this custom tended to foster such morbid prolongation of depression as that for which Sir William brought his friend to task, and if there were no compensating advantages, a reform might well be worth considering. I am by no means sure that this is the case. In fact, I can conjure up so many arguments,

pro and con, regarding the effect upon the mind, that this feature of the case seems to me quite negligible. If, again, it were a burdensome expense imposed upon those unable and unwilling to assume it, a questionable phase would be introduced. The case would be quite different, again, if the general custom conformed to that obtaining not long since and, so far as I know, to-day, on a small island off the Canadian coast, settled by the French long ago. When a death occurs in the family, each female member and the males, so far as they can, must dress in deepest mourning for at least a year, some going so far as to wear it forever. Even little children must be swathed in black, with black crepe veils. For one to show a bright and shining face is to place himself without the pale. No musical instrument is touched for a year. You are supposed to be "in mourning," with no hope of escape.

There is nothing comparable to this in New England, where, so far as I know, the demands of society are not so exigent that one is even looked upon askance if he fail to follow the custom of adopting mourning. This being the case, I should be inclined to let well enough alone, and allow each individual and each family to exercise unmolested choice. In any event, I should want to be very sure of my ground before taking up cudgels against long-established custom. The one who does so soon realizes the significance of the saying, "Nothing is so solid as froth." Judge Luke Poland, old-time congressman from Vermont, used to say, "You'll find, Squire, in the long run, that everybody knows more than anybody does."

In the matter of wardrobe, by the way, I am told that Judge Poland himself clung to the swallowtail and knee breeches long after they were in the general discard, showing that

in this respect, he was not entirely guided by the voice of the majority. But for him to err in this direction showed no disregard for the pleasure of others, as do those who follow Stevenson in his arraignment of the sartorial and allied demands of Society.

"One is delicate in eating," he says, "another in wine, a third in furniture or works of art or dress; and I, who care nothing for any of these refinements, who am perhaps a plain athletic creature and love exercise, beef, beer, flannel-shirts, and a camp bed, am yet called upon to assimilate all these other tastes and make these foreign occasions of expenditure my own. It may be cynical; I am sure I will be told it is selfish; but I will spend my money as I please and for my own intimate personal gratification, and should count myself a nincompoop indeed to lay out the color of a halfpenny on any fancied social decency or duty. I shall not wear

gloves unless my hands are cold, or unless I am born with a delight in them. Dress is my own affair, and that of one other in the world."

To which one answer is, that in following many of these conventions we only do our share toward the presentability and the pleasure of the society of which we form a part. It is to be hoped we don fine raiment for the opera not simply to gratify our vanity, but that we, as units, may not mar the scheme of decoration which is a desirable feature of the occasion.

There is something suggestive in the very elaborateness of explanation on the part of the dissenter from established custom. As regards the amenities, at least, no apology is needed for following the beaten track. For myself, I feel rather sorry than proud every time I fracture this variety of convention. At all events, I hardly see my way to join in a crusade against the custom of wearing

mourning, a custom already becoming, in the natural course of events, sufficiently elastic to be onerous to no one unless he make it so. Indeed, I am inclined to think that the very insistence to see society suddenly freed from this so-called shackle partakes of the obsession, and that the crusaders so obsessed should be reminded that

> No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest
> Till half mankind were like himself possessed.

If I should ever come to number this among my pet aversions, I hope I may by that time have cultivated enough complaisance to shoulder the aversion along with my other burdens, light and heavy, necessary and unnecessary, and "peg along."

Some obsessions are directly traceable to timidity. To shun the inside seat at the theatre generally means, in its incipiency, a fear of fire or fainting, but if indulged, the tendency becomes coercive without conscious

fear. The same is true of the dislike for elevators, tunnels and escalators. I know a person who has never yet used the telephone; he is unable to explain his aversion to doing so, but always manages, by one subterfuge or another, to avoid it. I fancy the origin of the trouble was a fear that he would become confused. Such obsessions justify the poet's plaint:

> How sad whene'er I have desire
> To get from here to thence
> To find directly in the way
> A barbèd wire fence.

The habit of dealing in a small way with money matters may drift into an obsession. There are plenty of men who spend money freely on the stable, but who would not dream of spending half a dollar for a cab. To use a more modern instance, a single "taxi" fare will wring a groan from the man who buys new tires for his limousine without a murmur. I have known a man of large affairs to insist

that the waiter go back to the desk to correct a mistake of three cents on a sizable bill, with the remark, "We business men have to be very particular." Indeed, I have known a wealthy man to quibble over a single cent in a much larger transaction. There are many who never think of buying paper for ordinary purposes, making use of the inside of envelopes, the backs of old letters, pamphlets, and the like, the wasting of which seems to them little short of criminal. A well-to-do lady of this type entered a store one day and stated that she never bought pins before, but always picked up old ones; there had been a funeral next door, however, and they had borrowed every one she had in the house. She would like, therefore, to buy a strip off a paper of pins. Some apparently do their telephoning at the expense of the bank. A certain depositor tells me that on looking for a chance at the

wire the other day, she found she had to wait for another lady to call up, by actual count, a dozen stores. At one time I had occasion to use a certain suburban train as a "commuter." It was the custom on that route, if a passenger left his ticket at home, to tender a dime—a fraction of a cent more than the cost of the fare—and ride on the ticket of his neighbor. One day I made this proposition to a fellow passenger, who surprised me by demurring, saying that the transaction would disarrange his bookkeeping!

It is fortunate for both publishers and authors that the obsession never to buy a book, though common, is not universal. A successful business man once told me that he was extremely anxious to read a certain novel. He had made every effort to do so for over a year, he said, but every time he asked for it at the Public Library it was out, and none of his friends happened to have a copy!

Of the obsession for eight hours' sleep I have spoken elsewhere, but the subject will perhaps bear a little further elaboration. The worrier on this point doubtless has in mind, as a basis for his fears, certain cases of prolonged insomnia with serious mental symptoms, perhaps with unfavorable termination. But in such cases the seriousness lies not so much in the loss of sleep as in the disorder causing it, for example, alcoholism or mania. The fact that, in such cases, sleep improves with convalescence leads to the conclusion that insomnia itself was at the root of the trouble. Similarly, we sometimes read of a person dying of hiccoughs, a statement that might well frighten the timorous victim of that harmless habit, until he learns that death was not due to the hiccough, but to the disease of which the hiccough was only a symptom.

By way of a reminder that good work can be accomplished with less

than eight hours' sleep, Franklin's daily schedule only allowed seven hours, and out of that seven he must have taken at least some moments to hop into bed and out again. Sir Edward Coke allowed even less, thus:

Sex horas somno totidemque legibus aequis—

And further, Gibbon said of Justinian: "The measure of his sleep was not less rigorous; after the repose of a single hour the body was awakened by the soul, and, to the astonishment of his chamberlains, Justinian walked or studied till the morning light. Such restless application prolonged his time for the acquisition of knowledge and the despatch of business."

In citing these cases I do not wish to be interpreted as denying the desirability of a good night's sleep. I cite them simply to show the possibility of getting on with much less than is generally thought essential. Such instances, exceptional though they

may be, certainly show us that we need give ourselves no uneasiness if we have missed a few of the desired hours. It is to be hoped that the memory of these cases will foster the philosophic attitude which in itself favors sleep, and will tend to lessen our worry about not sleeping, a worry which in itself keeps us awake.

Some men after losing half an hour's sleep feel uncomfortable all day. Others feel "logy" if they have slept an hour too much. In other words, our preconceived ideas greatly influence our feelings. I have no doubt that if a man should think, with Samson, "If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak," he would collapse after each visit to the barber. However this may be, for us to focus, after these considerations, on our exact hours of sleep, is to cultivate the kind of vision Pope had in mind in asking:

Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For the plain reason man is not a fly.

Life is too serious to be taken too seriously, even though we may not quite follow John Gay, who, in a moment of depression, wrote the verse that, by his own request, decorates his tombstone in Westminster Abbey:

Life is a jest and all things show it;
I thought so once and now I know it.

In the attempt to suppress overinsistence it will help us greatly if we can learn to turn our thoughts resolutely in another direction. In doing this we must, of course, bear in mind the danger that we may make an obsession of the new subject. A certain intensely religious lady went to church several times daily, to the neglect of her household duties. On being taken to a baseball game for diversion, she transferred her affections from the church to the diamond, and finally deemed her time wasted when the league was not doing busi-

ness. She learned to call the players by their first names, and now knows the batting average of every member of the major league.

It is a Poor Fish that cannot jump from the Frying-pan into the Fire.

The question may be raised whether firmness of purpose is not a virtue rather than a faulty mental habit, to which the answer is in the affirmative. This only shows, however, that like many another fault, insistence has a virtue at its core. Surely no habit of mind is more praiseworthy than that of following with grim determination the path to success, whether material or moral, nor should a principle be sacrificed for the sake of avoiding friction. Such determination our New England forefathers possessed in high degree and they were, perhaps, not always comfortable playmates (if they ever played) on account of inability to drop the habit when it was not called for. But when

their progeny exercise the inherited trait on such questions as who shall open the door of the carriage or who shall sugar the coffee, one is reminded of the remark of Caius Marius, regarding an illustrious ancestry: "When a descendant is dwarfed in comparison, it should be considered a shame rather than a boast." In this case the effective weapon of the parent has become in the hands of the child only a discomfort to his neighbors and a menace to himself.

In advising the modification of insistence, I always make a reservation in favor of one or two desirable obsessions, desirable mainly because they affect others as well as ourselves. Such are paying our bills, keeping our appointments, and reaching the railway station before the train starts. To take up the last one first, when my friend laughs at me for wishing to be in the station five minutes before train time, I tell him his habit

seems to me quite as unreasonable and fully as obsessive, namely, that of insisting on "killing" the additional five minutes at home, doing nothing in particular, simply for the privilege of rushing across the station after the departing train, if, indeed, he does not miss it altogether and disappoint someone who must meet him at the other end.

With regard to paying bills, I have nothing in common with the one who counsels "Let the other fellow worry." Even as regards the debtor, while I agree that the prompt payment of bills entails a loss of interest, nevertheless I am sure that, even leaving the Golden Rule out of the question, prompt payment of bills, in the long run, will prove for the payer not only a comfortable failing, but a business asset.

About keeping appointments, although I can appreciate the feelings of the man who, after waiting a half-

hour for his friend, complained, "Punctuality is the thief of time," yet I favor, in this instance, letting the New England Conscience have its way. Sometimes the other fellow is himself on time, but even if he is late, now is the chance for us to practise patience, and refrain from overinsistence that others be as particular as ourselves.

Again, there are certain professions and lines of business in which no amount of attention to detail can be out of place. Under the former head falls the modern surgical operation, under the latter, the labors of the publisher. Robert Sterling Yard says, "Publishers are often accused of being fussers. Why should they not be fussers? Think of how many individual books they have to fuss about!" He might have added, How many details in those books must be carried in mind, each of which has a bearing on the success of the enter-

prise, the neglect of some of which, indeed, would make the book, the author, and the publisher alike, the laughing stock of the reading community. Then there is the druggist. It would hardly be safe to counsel him to conduct his business in a free and easy way, and not bother to remember where he put the poison bottle!

Such exceptions only serve to emphasize, by comparison, the futility of the eternal fussing over trifles to which many of us are prone. In most affairs the successful man is the one who has the happy faculty of deciding right three out of every five questions, and of not letting the other two keep him awake even if he has decided them wrong. The insistence that all questions *must* be decided right, only defeats, as a rule, its own end. For the persistent fusser over trifles I recommend the inelegant but forceful maxim:

This rag is not worth chewing.

VI

APPROBATIVENESS

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks upon a blushing face
Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.

Cowper

AMONG the occasional letters written me by those who read to criticize rather than apply, I have recently received one from a lady who tells me I am wrong in attributing dread of society to exaggerated self-consciousness. She has the symptom, and is not self-conscious at all; this she knows, because she has studied herself carefully!

I fear the study was made from so near a viewpoint that the rest of the world was quite out of focus. The following remark of Samuel Johnson (in the *Rambler*) may here serve a good turn: "But the truth is that no man is much regarded by the rest of

the world. He that considers how little he dwells upon the condition of others will learn how little the attention of others is attracted by himself. While we see multitudes passing before us of whom, perhaps, not one appears to deserve our notice or excite our sympathy, we should remember that we, likewise, are lost in the same throng; that the eye which happens to glance upon us is turned in a moment on him that follows us, and that the utmost which we can reasonably hope or fear is to fill a vacant hour with prattle, and be forgotten."

To say nothing of ourselves, it is probable that of those who hold the centre of the stage to-day the majority will in time meet the finish of the noble Roman, whose statue the modern poet apostrophizes:

Famous once among thy fellows,
Honored thus in ageless stone,
Destined for august remembrance—
Write thine epitaph "Unknown."

Indeed, we may count ourselves fortunate if we do not discover that in some quarters at least, our status does not even attain the high level of indifference, as in the case of the unpopular clubman:

"I have been grossly insulted," he said to a fellow-member.

"How so?" inquired his friend.

"Mr. Blank offered me $100 to resign."

"Don't take it," was the response, "you can do better."

Not a few trades have flourished in times past, and some, perhaps, still flourish, on the knowledge of the operators that the average man is never tired of hearing about himself. Under this head I would include astrology, phrenology, palmistry, and the various methods of fortune telling. Phrenology, I fancy, is little practised now, but in my youth the visit of the phrenologist was of regular recurrence. I remember that the

pleasure of a shampoo, a ball game, or even a five-cent ice cream paled into nothingness compared with the sense of well-being that pervaded my whole system when the professor (I think for fifty cents) expounded my virtues, duly balanced by my faults. I was benevolent, but not to the point of prodigality; my bump of combativeness showed that I was aggressive, but this tendency was duly modified by my bump of caution; I was careful of my money, but not parsimonious, since my bump of benevolence kept me from being "close," and so on through the list.

He did not tell me what counteracted the influence of my bump of approbativeness. In point of fact, I fear that the counteracting bump of commonsense, if such a thing is recognized in the science, was sadly wanting in my case. And it was on this absence that the professor banked. The same desire for approbation that

made me swell with pride under his manipulation made me shrink into insignificance when some childish game placed me in the centre of a ring from which there was no escape until I had guessed the answer to twenty questions.

In this desire for universal approval, young people are apt to lose their perspective regarding the importance of other people's opinion. I think it was Henry Esmond who suddenly came to realize that he was often taking a hansom merely to make an impression on the driver of that vehicle. When the waiter in the restaurant assumes that the diner will order an expensive dish, he is figuring on the approbativeness of the patron, and the younger the patron, the more likely he is to fall in with the suggestion.

The self-conscious child should learn that if he can acquire the art of bearing with equanimity not only

criticism and ridicule, but undeserved blame and even insult, his reward will be a general approbation far excelling that attained by excellence in any branch of learning or athletics. It seems paradoxical to state that one can gain respect and affection while "making a fool of himself." But the world is not heartbroken if we do make fools of ourselves. On the contrary, nine out of ten are rather pleased to advance themselves a peg by lowering us. A celebrated writer and excellent judge of human nature has said, "For God's sake give me the young man who has brains enough to make a fool of himself!" The following quotation from the same writer shows that he thoroughly appreciated the difficulties of the youthful mind:

"A young man feels himself one too many in the world; his is a painful situation; he has no calling; no obvious utility; no ties but to his

parents, and these he is sure to disregard. I do not think that a proper allowance has been made for this true cause of suffering in youth; but by the mere fact of a prolonged existence, we outgrow either the fact or else the feeling. Either we become so callously accustomed to our own useless feeling in the world, or else—and this, thank God, in the majority of cases—we so collect about us the interest or the love of our fellows, so multiply our effective part in the affairs of life, that we need to entertain no longer the question of our right to be."

Regarding the question of popularity or unpopularity, the most unpopular man I know is the man who never makes a fool of himself, and who never makes a mistake—at least he never acknowledges that he does. One of the most popular, on the other hand, shows what ignorance he has at every turn, and rather avoids than

courts the opportunity to take precedence whether in learning or in skill.

We all desire to stand high in the estimation of others. Commonsense gradually teaches us properly to balance this desire with the commonplace realities of life. We may even finally go too far, like the man who said it was not worth while to dress for strangers, because they would never see him again, nor was it worth while to do so for his friends, because they saw him every day. But even this attitude is more restful than that of the overconscientious youth who suffers from "ingrowing sensitiveness."

The following will serve as an everyday illustration of the tribulations of oversensitive and introspective youth. The case was that of a young woman presented at a staff meeting of the Psychopathic Hospital. She was in the depths of despair over her own shortcomings. As an example of these shortcomings, I re-

member her description of her feelings at the Salem fire. It seemed that the depression which the situation demanded was modified in her case by a certain exaltation on viewing the extensive ruins. In other words, on analyzing her sensations she was horrified to detect an element of pleasure in the presence of the holocaust. She was asked if she did not realize that everyone possessed this conflicting set of emotions, and that the average normal individual, if he stops to think of it, will find that while watching a fire, however sorry he may be for the sufferers, he has also a sneaking desire to see the flames mount to the heavens. It was furthermore suggested to her that in watching a football game, the most tender-hearted will recognize the fact, strive as he may against it, that he possesses an undercurrent of the old Roman delight in seeing blood flow upon the arena. These suggestions she evidently thought were

merely offered for her consolation, and contained no element of truth. She had so long kept her feelings and thoughts to herself that she had come to think her mental processes altogether abnormal and peculiar. Apparently regretting that she had disclosed them as far as she had, she proceeded to deny that she had ever before experienced the faintest suspicion of such a conflict of emotions, and appeared determined, from that point on, for the sake of making a better impression on the Staff, to conceal the truth about herself.

This case illustrates the mingling of approbativeness with the other troublous imaginings of youth. Such mental conflicts form no small part of the discomfort common, in early life, to the self-centred. As we grow older, we gradually learn that others share in what we thought our own peculiar foibles. This leads us in turn more freely to acknowledge them. Along

with this comes a comparative indifference to the opinion of others, except in matters of importance. In other words, our desire to attain universal approbation lessens with advancing years.

The most important lesson to be drawn from this study, and the practical point to be emphasized, is that one can use his approbativeness for a lever to pry himself into a position of emotional equilibrium. What I mean is this. Suppose I am gifted with a morbid degree of self-study, and am by nature unduly anxious to make a favorable impression on everything and everybody in sight. To the realization of this dream I may devote my life in vain. But suppose I come to realize that the philosophical attitude will gain for me general approbation though my mental equipment may be mediocre, and that any gain I make in the effort to attain this attitude is a step in the direction of

the goal I covet. If I learn to keep my temper under every provocation, to control impatience, and modify insistence, to smile when criticized or insulted, and to join a laugh at my own expense, I may finally gain the respect even of the man who knew me when I was a boy, and that is "some" respect.

VII

FRET

Cas. I did not think you could have been so angry.
Bru. O, Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.
Cas. Of your philosophy you make no use,
If you give place to accidental evils.

Julius Cæsar

A FRIEND of mine has a high-spirited youngster for whose benefit he often repeats the admonition:

Dogs delight to bark and bite,
It is their nature to.

It has occurred to me on seeing him fume over a trifling delay to wonder whether he would acknowledge the corn if the youngster should some day cap his father's verse as follows:

Champ not thy bit, nor paw the ground,
That's what the horses do.

From which foolish rhyme I have evolved, for my own use, the commandment: *Champ not thy bit.* However decorative champing the bit and pawing the ground may be in the horse, when we do it ourselves the custom is neither æsthetic nor restful.

Nor does it get us anywhere. There is a great deal of talk about efficiency nowadays, but did it ever occur to you to wonder how many calories and how many foot-pounds we waste every time we become "hot under the collar." And it is all really wasted, for no iota of accomplishment was ever attributable to the state of mind of which Butler says:

> And that which does them greatest harm,
> Their spiritual gizzards are too warm.

If we could only get a bird's eye view of ourselves and thereby come to realize how trivial are the sources of our fret compared with the advantages we gain from those who fret us! This is particularly true in the home circle, in which the familiarity that dulls our appreciation of benefits only increases our intolerance for faults. The husband forgets that his better half has brought up his children, managed his household, mended his socks and nursed him through his ill-

ness, but becomes more and more impatient because she will use perfumery. Meantime she passes over the fact that he rescued her from poverty, from a family that irked her, or some worse fate, gives her a box at the opera and hooks her up behind. She only knows his table manners are execrable and that he doesn't try to mend them. Indeed, I believe the case is on record in which she wanted a divorce because his hair didn't match the furniture, and he declined to dye it!

If we really wanted to live comfortably instead of keeping ourselves and our environment constantly on edge, the most confirmed fretter among us could in time attain the attitude of the cheerful invalid who assured his nurse he liked the crumbs, for they kept him from skidding in the bed!

It is only the exceptional fretter that recognizes his own attitude, and even he can hardly stop fretting long

enough to listen to a suggestion, to say nothing of adopting it. The other day I was telling a patient some of the maxims I found useful in curbing impatience, and was advising him to assimilate them. After hearing me gravely through, he said I did not understand his case, he wasn't in the least impatient. In the course of the consultation he had occasion to use the telephone, and no sooner had he given the number than he was rapidly pumping the arm of the instrument up and down, impatiently demanding to know why the operator couldn't get the number at once! The mental healer who should attempt to reconcile this man to the bedful of crumbs, I fear would have his hands full.

He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer
The worst that men can breathe, and make his wrongs
His outsides, to wear them like his raiment, carelessly,
And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,
To bring it into danger.

Prominent among the innumerable things that fret me is the habit people have of tearing paper to bits and scattering it to the winds. I once went so far as to remonstrate with a man who was thus decorating the Public Garden with his correspondence. It happened in the autumn. "Why don't you focus on the falling leaves," he retorted, "and find fault because the Lord makes such a muss?" His argument did not quite go on all fours, but it served to remind me that my attitude also partook of the obsession, and that I, too, was making a nuisance of myself. Since that time, whenever I catch sight of an offending scrap, I say to myself, "Peg along, Fussy!" And sometimes it works. This would be a useful motto for some reader who thinks he doesn't need it. By its use I have brought myself to a state of mind in which I can even sometimes see without a

shudder an entire Sunday edition launched from an electric by one of those passengers who use the scenery for a waste-basket.

I have been asked by an argumentative person of the insistent type how the world can be built up by such a lowering of the ideals and by such acceptance of the improper. My only answer is that if I succeed in managing myself I am doing more toward world-building than by any amount of fussing about the inevitable.

The origin of our fret is sometimes really worthy, but we overdo it. There are people who almost go into a convulsion if they see a pin upon the floor. They can talk by the hour about the damage to the community of such articles out of place. At the bottom of this insistence is a kindly motive, but I venture to say their frame of mind has added more to the world's discomfort than would a peck of pins. And I suspect that this ap-

parent thoughtfulness has, like most of our motives, a selfish taint. Perhaps it would not disturb them very much if someone should swallow an anchor, so long as they were not connected with the mishap. Exaltation of the ego and overinsistence go hand in hand; in fact most of these faulty mental habits are so dovetailed that if we are subject to one we are likely to partake also of the remainder. This is a further reason for taking up mind-training as a whole.

While some people are polite to strangers and "take it out" on their intimates, others reverse the process and are quite affable among their friends but absolutely rude to those they do not know. In the latter class fall the uncomfortable travelers and the inconsiderate users of the telephone. Did you ever notice that half the people who call you by mistake say, in a petulant voice, "Ring off, please," or "I don't want you," or

even "Get off the line." The chances are that in this same unreasonable half fall the ones that, when *you* call *them* by mistake say, "Why don't you find out what you want before you bother everybody on the line," or something equally unpleasant. A certain passenger in the subway being roughly pushed one day by a lady (the men do it, too), stepped aside, removed his hat, and begged her pardon for obstructing her passage. She stopped, and like one suddenly awakened from a dream, exclaimed, "Why, what was I doing, and I was not even in a hurry." She had apparently become a victim of mob psychology, and had developed an impatience which was really quite fictitious. If she should move about some day among the guests in her own drawing-room as she was proceeding through the traveling public that day, she would be regarded as having suddenly lost her mind. All of which shows, not only

that fret and impatience are largely matters of external circumstances, but that anyone can control them if he tries. Then why not try it all the time, and finally replace a faulty habit of mind by a good one?

The contrast among things that fret people offers an interesting subject of study. One man can hardly think connectedly while the grate is being filled. Another would not mind if a coal chute was established in his study, but he cannot bear to hear a person clear his throat. I know plenty of people who cannot stand the tick of a timepiece, and who would not mind being stared in the face by 10.15 for the rest of their lives, whereas it would require all the philosophy I possess for me to tolerate a dead clock half an hour. Verily

> The world is full of fools,
> And he who would not see an ass,
> Must bide at home and bolt the door
> And break his looking glass.

VIII

FEAR

Be not too fond of peace,
Lest in pursuance of the goodly quarry,
Thou meetest a disappointment that distracts thee.

Thomas Ordway

A POSTMASTER recently told me of a lady who appeared at the window and asked if they sold stamps. On being told they did, she asked to see them. A sheet of stamps was placed before her, upon which she pointed to one in the centre and said, "I'd like that one."

I can only explain the occurrence by supposing the lady had a fear of contamination, so chose the stamp least likely to be infected. At all events her action was quite in accord with that of the many sufferers from these exaggerated fears known as phobias. Life for such individuals means a succession of shudders. For the person so afflicted external cir-

cumstances matter little. Thus, it was of a time and place in which real dangers existed that Mr. Obaldistone said "Of all the propensities which teach mankind to torment themselves, that of causeless fear is the most irritating, busy, painful and pitiable." The same observation applies to-day to persons enjoying practically perfect safety.

The cultivation of courage lies in the power of everyone, but many, instead of cultivating courage, demand constant reassurance. A lady, finding the statement in one of my books that anyone can wear low shoes and thin underwear, writes to know if I think she can do so. In other words, she is too timid to try so simple an experiment as this without a special guarantee of safety. Though I do not advocate sitting in cold storage without appropriate clothing, I am sure that more harm is done by always seeking warmth and comfort than by

moderate exposure to the elements. The cold bath, feared by many, is not recommended in the expectation that the sensitive will find the temperature agreeable, but because of the tonic after-effect, and the bracing pleasure of emergence from the quick, cold plunge.

The forms of fear that assail the constitutional coward are multitudinous and sometimes queer,

> As when a gryphon through the wilderness
> With wingéd course o'er hill or moory dale
> Pursues the Aramaspian.

The self-centred worrier fears that, by some trifling error, he has forfeited a friendship, where the philosopher would simply say, "It is not vital. If he likes me, everything I do will be right, and if he doesn't everything I do will be wrong."

I have known a mother who fears to feed her child lest he choke. I have known a wife to beg her husband, a stalwart specimen of physical health,

to cancel a business appointment and stay at home because the streets were slippery. I have known a man to forfeit his passage to Europe, besides throwing the whole party into confusion, because at the last minute he could not muster courage to cross the ocean, even on a modern liner in time of peace. I have heard of a couple who bid fair to be separated for life, because the wife, having crossed the ocean, does not dare return, and the husband will not venture to join her. The story is told (probably out of whole cloth) of a soldier who, on coming home from the trenches, was afraid to get into bed until the sheets were warmed. Even if the tale were true, it would be no more surprising than some of the contrasts in real life, for our fears are not always measured by the actuality of the danger, but more often by some motive peculiar to ourselves. I know a man who has more fear of a bumblebee than of a

rattlesnake, another who has more fear of being laughed at than either, and still another who is so fearful he will turn red that he eschews society and is rapidly becoming a hermit for the sake of gratifying his obsession to blush unseen and waste his sweetness on the desert air. To some, the most harmless of the wriggling world strikes terror. I have a friend, in many ways courageous, who can hardly read without a shudder the verse of Fletcher:

> Do not fear to put thy feet
> Naked in the river sweet;
> Think not leech or newt or toad
> Will bite thy foot, where thou hast trod.

When it comes to the fears of the hypochrondriac, no organ of the body is exempt from his anxious scrutiny. It is on these fears that the medical advertiser plays. More than one physically healthy man dares not step over his own curbstone for fear of some impending ill he cannot or will

not define. Such fearsome ones are prone to give every reason but the real one for not venturing forth to take the chances others do.

It is not always fear for himself that disturbs the constitutionally timid. There are men who can hardly start upon the day's work without telephoning back to satisfy themselves that they have not left the door unlocked, the furnace on draught, or the water running, or a match on the floor. Caution is a very worthy virtue, but if it interferes with the performance of our daily duties it becomes a crime. Even the gadabout who never stays in for fear of missing something has the better of her neighbor who never goes out for fear something will boil over. I have been told that a certain well-known divine was so anxious about his children's health that he used to wake them in the night to ask how they were feeling. Some men can work themselves into a fever of fret if they see a

banana peel on the sidewalk. If asked why not simply pitch it into the gutter and let it go at that, they draw so vivid a picture of the poor workingman who is to slip on the banana peel, break his leg and be laid up for an indefinite period, that the hearer is almost moved to tears.

While these imaginary dangers are occupying the minds of some of our introspective friends, Kitchner and the Kaiser are sending millions to certain destruction, and yet can "peg along." No more tender-hearted man than Abraham Lincoln ever lived, but he did not allow his solicitude for the soldier to disturb his mental balance, or make him let go the wheel. If everyone whose occupation endangered human life should abandon that occupation through dwelling on the possible dangers, the work of the world would be seriously menaced. This some of our oversensitive friends would readily allow, but of themselves

they must make an exception. Their proposition may be stated somewhat as follows: In order that the world's business may be carried on, someone must run the risk of injuring others. But I will not run any such risk. It is true that if everybody should take my view the world's business would come to a standstill and we should all go to the bow-wows, but it isn't my funeral and *I don't care.*

Solicitude for others may be synonymous with selfishness, as is shown when, after an accident, some tender-hearted but uninjured person goes into hysterics, and diverts attention from those who really need it.

Some worriers can work themselves into a state of trepidation over retrospective dangers—like the patient who called the doctor in the middle of the night to ask whether he ought to have eaten clams for supper! The fears of others focus on the future, as in the case of the man who suddenly

awoke during a lecture to hear that the world would come to an end in fifty million years. "What did you say?" he asked in terrified accents. "Fifty million years," was the calm reply. "My God!" he exclaimed, "I thought you said *fifteen* million," and he resumed his nap.

It certainly should be within the bounds of reason to expect even the most timorous to practise indifference to distant dangers. Nor is it so difficult as some think gradually to cultivate mental relaxation even when immediate danger threatens. In this, as in all forms of mental training, the first step is to establish the ideal. Montaigne says: "Nevertheless, eyther I flatter myselfe, or in this plight there is yet something that would faine keep life and soul together, namely in him whose life is free from feare of death, and from the threats, conclusions and consequences which physicke is ever buzzing in our heads."

IX

PLAYING THE MARTYR

Most of us have suffered from a certain sort of ladies who, by their perverse unselfishness, give more trouble than the selfish, who almost clamor for the unpopular dish and scramble for the worst seat.

Chesterton ("What is Wrong with the World")

THE next time you have occasion to consult the Century Dictionary look at the illustration of the *Aleuropus melanoleucus* of Thibet. His air of mild reproach and habitual resignation reminds me of a lady I once met who rejoiced in a state of perpetual martyrdom. Her manner further implied a quiet insistence that you be miserable also. Indeed, you were tempted to do so until you came to realize that, far from being miserable herself, she was really having the time of her life. To have been forced to accept a favor would have disap-

pointed her. To have been in a state of complete physical comfort would have made her really as unhappy as she looked. Just as a man with a defective voice is always trying it, so the martyr of this type, if he happen to have a lame leg, will insist on standing in the public conveyance, even when there is plenty of room on the seat.

The state of being abused is a very prevalent one. Even those who do not claim that they are themselves the objects of persecution are prone to feel that injustice is done their race, social class or sex.

Self-inflicted martyrdom, like the "delusion of persecution," means morbid exaltation of the ego, hence the chronic martyr may well ponder the observation of Charles Kingsbury: "If you want to be miserable, think about yourself, about what you want, what you like, what respect people ought to pay you, and what people think of you." Or that of

Charles Parkhurst: "A man who lives only by himself and for himself is apt to be corrupted by the company he keeps."

If we must focus on miseries, we shall do better to choose the miseries of somebody else. And even then, it is a waste of solicitude to focus on them too intently, unless we can do something to lighten them. All this is platitudinous, I know, but if we all acted on such platitudes, the world would be a very tidy place to live in.

"Don't eat nettles," someone has said, "only one animal does that." But constitutional martyrdom means eating nettles all the time, like the man of whom the poet wrote:

> He likes yours little, and his own still less;
> Thus always teasing others, always teased,
> His only pleasure is to be displeased.

I dare say we all know some elderly fledgling who, in early life, lacked the courage, or the initiative, to try her wings, but chose rather to stay at

home and live on the bounty of those she fancied she was caring for. All her life she has demanded sympathy, if not material assistance, because she too could have accomplished something in the world, if she hadn't sacrificed herself to her parents.

Even the burglar has his troubles, if one may judge by an amusing and instructive article in the *New York Sun,* giving the other fellow's point of view. This was the complaint of one of that fraternity regarding the frequency with which perfectly good business undertakings in his line are ruined because everybody in the house has to wake up when the baby cries. One really couldn't help sympathizing with the poor man, especially when, after annexing a fine diamond ring in one house he was startled into dropping it in the next.

The acme of self-inflicted martyrdom is shown by the so-called delusions of persecution. These are best

seen in the subjects of the mental disorder commonly known as paranoia. Whatever may be the exact diagnosis of the individual case, a matter too technical to interest us here, the paranoid condition is so often mentioned in the courts and in the daily press that it seems worth while briefly to answer the question so often asked, "What is paranoia?"

The victim of paranoia may be, and often is, in some directions, exceptionally bright. His keenness in argument may make the examiner use his best wits to hold his own, if indeed he succeed in doing so. The trouble with the paranoiac is that his reasoning processes, however brilliant, are distorted through his fixed, erroneous ideas regarding his relations to society. The erroneous idea may be, for example, that he is the victim of a conspiracy.

Let me illustrate. Here is a young man of excellent memory and acute

powers of observation. Some of his friends are ready to bear witness that he is mentally sound, others think he is peculiar. The casual observer sees nothing out of the way about him. In the course of a continued conversation it appears that he is firmly of the belief that some fraternal organization is working against him. If a stranger asks him the time, the question is symbolic of something connected with that organization. While having his shoes blacked one day at a seaside resort, someone recommended a certain hostelry. This seemed to him such a suspicious circumstance that he went to a different resort. There he was met by a man who also recommended a lodging place. This combination of circumstances absolutely settled the question that he was surrounded by a network of spies working in the interest of the fraternal organization. In the train two passengers, strangers to him, con-

versed in a low tone, and he thought they must be talking about him, especially since it chanced that one of them wore a necktie of a peculiar hue. On his attempting to find out directly from such people the meaning of their acts, they either show indifference or answer him evasively, a fact which only aggravates his suspicions. Asked how he can explain that a fraternal organization to which he does not belong should take such an interest in his proceedings, he frankly allows he cannot understand it, but he still thinks the evidence overwhelming. These thoughts occupy his mind to such a degree that for some time he has been incapable of pursuing his occupation, but spends his time in following up clues.

The term "systematic" has been applied to such delusions, meaning that the ideas are coherent and the reasoning perfectly logical, the mental twist being shown chiefly by the in-

correct premises from which the patient reasons. In other words, if he were really the object of persecution by a fraternal organization, all these things would be possible. So long as the injured party keeps his counsel and takes no step to free himself from his imaginary shackles no harm is done, except to himself. But the paranoiac is often a troublesome and even dangerous member of the community through his attempt to obtain redress in the courts, if not by violence. It seems to be a case, in his mind, of the world against the individual, which sometimes causes the belief that he has the right to avail himself of any weapon which comes to hand. And in seeking this redress the paranoiac is so constituted that it is difficult, if not impossible, for him to realize that those who have to decide against him may be actuated by worthy motives. He views with extreme disfavor those who do not help

him, and regards as malignant foes those who are obliged, by virtue of their office, to take part in curbing his activities.

The difficulty in adjudicating these cases lies in the fact that the patient's mind is so clear, aside from his delusions, that those to whom he has not divulged them can truthfully bear witness that he has never exhibited in their presence the least sign of mental unsoundness.

A gentleman complained to the police that the people in his boarding house annoyed him. His statements aroused the suspicions of the officer in charge, who referred him for examination to an alienist. The alienist reported that he was paranoid, but that it was not wise to take steps against him unless he committed some overt act or in some way made himself troublesome. The complainant promptly sued the police, the doctor, and a former colleague, whom he re-

garded as the source of his persecution, and whom he was sure he saw in hiding at the time of his examination by the doctor. He enlisted the sympathy of a lawyer who undertook his case, opening with a very effective plea, setting forth the humiliation to a sane man of being subjected to such an examination. The plaintiff testified in his own behalf, and made an excellent impression until it came to the cross-examination, when he allowed that he believed his former colleague to be at the head of the conspiracy, and that at least three independent fraternal organizations were in league against him. At this point the case was dismissed by the Court.

It is true that the ordinary "martyr" is not likely to drift into paranoia, for this disease is probably the result of an inherent tendency which is bound, sooner or later, to develop. At the same time, it seems wise that such well-established types of in-

sanity should be generally known, so that, for example, when an imaginative individual finds himself inclined to think that everyone is down on him, he may at least say to himself, "I must nip this tendency in the bud. Whatever I do, I will not become a paranoiac."

Upon the question of sharing technical knowledge with the public, there may be, and doubtless is, a division of opinion. The present trend, however, is so generally in favor of laying all medical matters open for inspection, that it is hardly worth while to argue upon the advisability of discussing one more detail. For myself, I do not share the fear that a knowledge of insanity will add to the anxiety of the worrier lest he become insane. On the contrary, I believe that knowledge of the real types of insanity is less likely to lead to apprehension than the vague and formless pictures of "madness" conjured by the ignorant. Con-

trary to the popular opinion, I think I am right in saying that insanity is comparatively rare among alienists. Their very familiarity with mental disturbances helps them to see themselves as others see them, and to keep their own faulty mental habits within bounds. Constant association with, and study of, those unable to keep their place in the world helps the observer to avoid some of the pitfalls in the way of mental balance and to "peg along." One should not be too deeply influenced by the saying, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." Ignorance is sometimes dangerous, too.

X

LIVING IN THE PRESENT

Enjoy the present and quite distrust the morrow. The wise gods keep in Caligian darkness the events of the future, and smile at mortals who would look beyond.

Horace

In managing our life, as in running an automobile, the future is more important than the past, and the present more important than either. Not that the philosopher, any more than the chauffeur, should quite ignore the road to come, or even the surroundings, but his immediate concern is with the road directly before him. If he cannot negotiate that, his journey is a failure, however accurately he may plan tomorrow's run, or remember that of yesterday.

I fancy that perfect spiritual comfort is only attainable by dropping the past entirely out of mind, and taking absolutely no thought for the

future. This is not quite feasible, excepting for the idiot, so that we can hardly expect perfect happiness on this planet. At the same time, it is within our power to modify our chronic discontent and to become approximately happy, hence useful, by neither morbidly focussing upon the unalterable past nor insistently forecasting the unknown future, remembering that

What's past and what's to come is strewed with husks
And formless ruin of oblivion.

Did you ever find yourself walking one way while you were looking another? If so, you were perhaps brought up with a round turn by running into something and hearing somebody say, "Look where you're going!" Many of us, so far as our minds go, are doing this all the time. We are apparently busying ourselves about the work of to-day, but our mental vision is upon things of the

past. The mistakes we have made, the bad luck that has pursued us, and the hard knocks we have received loom large. Some of us even go so far as to focus on a single misfortune, which is so prominent as to blot out everything else, both past and present. Some constitutionally unhappy people actually believe that if they had been sent to a different school, or if they had taken up another occupation, they would be to-day successful and happy. But the chances are that the discontent and the failure, if there has been failure, would have been present, just the same, if some fairy with power surpassing any fairy yet invented could grant their melancholy wish.

We have all heard of the smoker who was told by his friend that if he had never smoked he could have bought a house with the proceeds—to which he retorted, "Where is your house?" I never quite understood

where the fallacy came in, but it has occurred to me that one reason for the fact that the personal expenses are not materially increased by smoking, is that whereas a cigar by the fireside is sufficient entertainment for hours on end, the non-smoker is thrown more upon various external resources, which in the long run prove more expensive than the tobacco. Similarly, if the worrier about school or choice of occupation had gone to another school or taken up another profession, he might perhaps have found that what he gained in one way had been lost in another. In short, the whole question of what "might have been" is altogether problematical. Coupling this with the fact that even if we could solve the problem we should gain nothing by the solution, and adding thereto the fact that the backward gaze only puts us in the way of stumbling over something directly before us, it seems pertinent, when we

find ourselves casting more than an occasional glance into the past, to bring ourselves up with the shout, "Look where you are going!" To worry over the irrevocable past is about as sensible as to worry over the immutable laws of nature, for example, because water will not run uphill. All of which wisdom has been epitomized in the admonition, Do not cry over spilt milk.

Ask the average person who has lost his pocketbook what he is going to do next and his answer is quite likely to be, "If I hadn't lost my pocketbook I should have done so and so," and half our plans are laid on similar lines.

Mr. A., who has none too much time to catch his train, misses his gloves. On looking in the usual place he fails to find them, and asks his wife if she knows where they are. The chances are he receives some such reply as:

"You ought to have put them in that drawer," and unless Mr. A. is

very well trained he snaps out something like this:

"I didn't ask where they ought to be," and rushes for the train.

I called up a book store the other day to see if they had a certain volume I greatly wished, and which was out of print. The answer was, "We have had one of them in stock for months, but just sold it yesterday."

Over the telephone when you ask if Mr. So and So is in, you often get the answer, "He has just this minute stepped out."

"Can you tell me when he will be in? I am anxious to see him as soon as possible."

"If you had called just one minute earlier you would have caught him."

"Do you know when he will be back?"

"He generally leaves word, but today he neglected to."

"Do you know where I can find him?"

"Any other day but to-day you could have found him at his office, but to-day he said he was going out of town."

In a hurry one day to find a drug store on Tremont Street, I looked for Metcalf's, but found that Metcalf had moved. I then hurried down to City Hall Avenue, looking for Percival's on the corner, only to find that Percival had also disappeared. I then inquired in a store near by if there was not some druggist in the neighborhood. After considerable deliberation, the clerk replied:

"Well, let me see, there used to be a druggist right on the corner here next door, but he has gone."

"Yes, I know," said I, "but I want to know if there is not some other."

"Well, let me see, Metcalf used to have a store up on Tremont Street, but he is gone, too."

Nor is this tendency altogether a one-sided one, for it is not unusual for

the inquirer himself, on being told that a person has gone out, to ask, "When did he go?" A friend with whom I took a Southern trip has so often told the following story at my expense that I may as well utilize it. I was careful to wire ahead for accommodations, but at a certain stopping place the rooms were all occupied. My telegram, it seems, had given the wrong date. "Well, could we have had a room," he describes me as anxiously inquiring, "if the date had been correct?"

We often form so insistent a picture of what we *ought to have done* that it blurs our vision and paralyzes our energy. This is much as if the pilot, instead of avoiding the rocks in the course, should devote his time to wishing he had chosen another. This means energy worse than wasted, for it makes for the mental unrest that unfits us for the duties we have before us, for

> To mourn a mischief that is past and gone
> Is the next way to draw new mischief on.

To curb the undue prolongation of past emotions we must take a lesson of some of the lower animals. I was sitting, one day, by an open window at the top of the house, when a sparrow alighted upon the blind. The morsel was so tempting that the cat, apparently forgetting her surroundings, sprang to secure it, missing her prey, and only refraining from missing the house as well, by the margin of about one claw. From this slight hold she made a frantic effort, with every sign of distress, to scramble back. Once safely landed, with my assistance, she extended herself upon the sofa, and in a moment was purring away as comfortably as if nothing had happened. It is safe to say that a similar experience would have upset the average human being for at least twenty-four hours, with recurrent shudders for an indefinite period.

A common stumbling block in the way of living in the present is the "New England Conscience." The possessor of this unlucky gift is pursued by the fear that he has done wrong. He can never take comfort till he has made reparation for some trifling if not imaginary peccadillo. The lady of whom the following stories are told must have been a classical example of this malady. In the street car, one day, she sat by a gentleman who was reading the newspaper. A certain heading caught her eye, and she suddenly realized that she was reading over his shoulder. Overwhelmed with mortification she called his attention to the fact, and offered him a penny for the share of the news she had inadvertently appropriated! On another occasion she thoughtlessly plucked a dandelion on the Common—this necessitated her stepping on the grass, which disturbed her so much that she had to

ease her conscience by going to the State House to report herself as having been guilty of this offense.

A certain witness after leaving the stand remembered that he had made a misstatement regarding his relationship to another witness, a matter having no bearing on the question at issue in the case. On calling the lawyer's attention to the fact he was told that so long as it was immaterial he must give it no further thought. But the witness persisted that having made a misstatement it ought to be corrected, and it almost required physical restraint to prevent his interrupting the court by attempting to take the stand again on his own initiative.

Mental relaxation is impossible for a person whose mind is filled with remorse and anxiety on account of incidents like these. Such individuals should cultivate living in the present and learn to drop their scrupulous retrospection. They should realize that

it is wrong to make their own peace of mind paramount in affairs affecting the interest of others, that their querulous insistence is a hindrance in the conduct of affairs, in short that they should let a few trifling errors go, and "peg along."

Living in the future is not to be dismissed as lightly as living in the past. In fact, we must do some living in the future in order to lay our plans. Before starting out upon a journey we instinctively picture ourselves going through the various steps of that journey. Without this play of the imagination we should often be at a loss. Nevertheless, these mental pictures should not be so insistently imprinted that we cannot modify them. Nor should their details be so vivid as to blur our view of present duties. To recur to the analogy between running one's life and running the automobile, if you are to run the automo-

bile yourself you take lessons, you observe, and practise. Everything to do with its management has to do with the present. Similarly, you learn, or should learn, something about the immediate management of your mind. It is with a view to this phase of the subject that living in the future is taboo.

After you have learned to run your automobile, or have acquired a chauffeur and learned to run him (sometimes more difficult, I am told, than to run the machine), you have the future to consider. Having worn out the roads in your immediate vicinity, you plan, unless you are satisfied with the humdrum, more extensive journeys. Likewise in planning your life, you decide, perhaps, that you will stick to business until you are carried out of the office in your coffin, or, on the other hand, you make up your mind that you will gradually relinquish the details, and devote your extra hours to the outside pursuits which are to

keep you from flying off at a tangent when you retire. It is not such planning in its place, that I deplore. Those also are at fault who quite neglect it. But we are only studying, just now, the practical philosophy that will enable us to proceed about our immediate affairs without stress. Even when the future does not materialize according to our plan, if we have practised such philosophy as has been outlined, we shall have acquired the power to bear disappointment with comparative serenity, and lay our plan anew. Whether we decide to become a writer, a painter, a statesman, or a King of the Cannibal Islands, and the higher we aim the farther we shall doubtless get, all this can run along without interfering with the immediate management of the mind, so long as we refrain from forecasting too insistently the details of our picture.

Suppose, after such deliberation as

the case deserves, I have decided to embark upon a certain undertaking, if I allow my mind to stray, during business hours, into the fields of speculation as to the outcome of the undertaking, I am attempting two things at once, just as the player in a tournament only impedes his game by letting his mind wander from the shot in hand to the question of winning or losing the prize.

Our attitude toward the dentist is a good illustration of energy wasted on forebodings for the future. In this connection I cannot improve upon Annie Payson Call:

"The fatigue which results from an hour or more of this dentist tension is too well known to need description. Most of the nervous fatigue suffered from the dentist's work is in consequence of the unnecessary strain of expecting a hurt, and not from any actual pain inflicted. The result obtained by insisting upon making your-

self a dead weight in the chair, if you succeed only partially, will prove this. It will also be a preliminary means of getting well rid of the dentist fright—that peculiar dread which is so well known to most of us."

So well known indeed to some of us as to shut out the sunlight for weeks before the fatal date, the dread increasing steadily, till, by the time the chair is reached, a state of tension has been attained that precludes the possibility of letting ourselves "go dead." But one can drop all this by a little effort, and say to himself, "I will not cry till I am hurt." In fact he can not only acquire the power to become a dead weight in the chair, but will finally give no more thought to the dentist's appointment than to a date at the Golf Club. Just try this experiment instead of arguing about it.

If the philosophy of living in the present is applied merely to the pursuit of ease, injustice is done the

theme. To live in the present is quite as important when we work as when we play. In fact, the first requisite for effective work is to acquire the power to focus the attention on the duties immediately at hand, dropping regrets for past mistakes, and dismissing fears of future ones. In cultivating this power we make for usefulness, incidentally for comfort. Peace of mind is oftener the product of work than of play, and oftener that of either than of revery. Upon learning to work in this whole-hearted way, we soon come to realize how much of our former exhaustion was caused by trying to shoulder the whole day's work at once.

It would hardly be fair to leave out the best known apostle of the philosophy of living in the present. I refer to the Persian astronomer-poet, Omar Khayyám, who said,

> Fill the cup that clears
> *Today* of past regrets and future fears.

My only source of hesitation on this point is lest some too literal reader of the good Omar accuse me of extolling the wine cup above the heroic virtues. It is true that the juice of the grape plays a prominent part in the Quatrains of Omar; it is also true that the Rubáiyát is somewhat lacking in suggestion that the ease and pleasure of to-day should be qualified by an occasional thought for the comfort of others, not to say the welfare of the community. In excusing this omission it may perhaps be pertinent to remind ourselves that, just as Epicurus lived and wrote in a period during which Greece had so far fallen under the dominion of the Macedonian that patriotism seemed hopeless, and personal courage was at a discount, likewise Omar lived and wrote when his country was so completely under the sway of the Saracens that the history of Persia at that time is practically a blank. Philosophy to

bear existing conditions was doubtless, at that period, more to the point than were efforts to improve them. It must be remembered, too, that Omar really accomplished things, for example, the regulation of the calendar and the issuance of an algebra, showing that his ambition was not quite bounded by the delight of the tavern and the sunny bank.

No less practical and energetic a statesman than our own John Hay (in an address before the Omar Khayyám Club of London) described his emotions on first seeing Fitzgerald's translation of the Quatrains by quoting Keats:

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies,
> When a new planet swims into his ken.

And, furthermore, he continued: "The exquisite beauty, faultless form and singular grace of these amazing stanzas were not more wonderful than the depth and breadth of their profound philosophy, their knowledge of

life, their dauntless courage, their serene facing of the ultimate problems of life and death." If the hard-headed, albeit soft-hearted, statesman could read all this in the lines of the Rubáiyát we may safely assume that we have ourselves to blame if we cannot do the same. We may at least, with all due reference to the needs and duties of our time, and with due allowance for the "Weltschmerz" of his, permit ourselves to become somewhat infected by his philosophy, even though we may not altogether acquiesce in his devotion to the wine skin.

XI

WORK AND PLAY

Hiördis. How goes it with thee, my husband?
Gunnar. Ill, Hiördis; I cannot away with that deed of yesterday; it lies heavy on my heart.
Hiördis. Do as I do; get thee some work to busy thee.

Ibsen

HAVE you heard the story of the two frogs in the can of milk? It seems that the one who first gave up sank and was drowned. The other kept kicking till the butter came, upon which he jumped out. The moral is, keep busy.

I was on the point of saying that any occupation is better than continued idleness, when I was reminded of the danger of generalization by running across the remark of Prince Henry: "I am not yet of Percy's mind, the Hotspur of the North, he that kills me some six or seven Scots

at a breakfast, washes his hands and says to his wife, 'Fie upon this quiet life! I want work!' "

At all events, *almost* any kind of work (or play) is better than doing nothing. Nor shall I be altogether guided by the admonition of the strenuous Bacon: "Therefore measure not despatch by the times of sitting, but by the advancement of the business." It is precisely the obession to accomplish things, in and out of season, that keeps us from occupying ourselves in a reasonable manner. It is the besetting sin of the overinsistent that he "wants to know" just what advantage is to be gained by doing this or that. It is better to file away our letters or rearrange our bookcase than to walk up and down bemoaning our lot in the world, or fretting over something we can't help. I have advised more than one home-ridden nervous invalid to hire an office down town, and go to it regularly

for an hour a day, even if all he does when he gets there is "pigs in clover." Of course I recommend by preference some occupation that is useful, particularly if useful to others. A certain individual had all the advantages the world had to offer, excepting the frame of mind to enjoy them. He was particularly worried about his children. It struck me as very *à propos* when a friend advised him to divert his attention from their little handicaps by sending some poor boy to college.

It is not always feasible for the fusser to arrange for himself, out of whole cloth, a "steady job," but he can surely begin on some of the thousand and one interests waiting to be taken up, interests time and opportunity for which many long in vain. A friend of mine, an ardent lover of nature, was chained to the desk through his life. He used to tell me he would be perfectly happy if he

could only get a "day off" once a week for study in the fields. But when the nervous invalid, with plenty of time on his hands, is urged to take up the study of birds, flowers or trees, he simply says he is not interested. Of course he is not; no one is interested in anything until he knows something about it, and the way to know something about it is to go to work at it.

When Aristotle was asked where the Muses dwell, he answered, "In the minds of those who love work." The word "work" in this connection is not limited to the daily grind, but includes all forms of *doing*. Thomas à Kempis says: "To the same purpose, beware of Idleness; be constantly in Action, let Reading, or Writing, or Praying, or Meditating, or contriving somewhat for the Good of Others, employ your leisure Hours."

Whenever I hear a melancholy man complain, "What is there in life for

me?" I always envy the preacher who can, without prejudice, suggest that he might try the experiment of seeing what he can put into it for somebody else.

Work as an antidote for scrupulous imagining is no new suggestion. In Raleigh's Essays on Johnson we find the following:

"In his happy retreat at Streatham Johnson would sometimes tell stories of his experiences. Once he told the following tale: A person (said he) had for these last five weeks often called at my door, but would not leave his name or other message, but that he wished to speak with me. At last we met, and he told me that he was oppressed by scruples of conscience: I blamed him gently for not applying, as the rules of our church direct, to his parish priest or other discreet clergyman; when, after some compliments on his part, he told me that he was clerk to a very eminent trader, at

whose warehouse much business consisted in packing goods in order to go abroad: that he was often tempted to take paper and packthread enough for his own use, and that he had indeed done so so often, that he could recollect no time when he ever had bought any for himself. But probably (said I), your master was wholly indifferent with regard to such trivial emoluments; you had better ask for it at once, and so take your trifles with consent. Oh, Sir! replied the visitor, my master bid me have as much as I pleased, and was half angry when I talked to him about it. Then pray, Sir (said I) teize me no more about such airy nothings—and was going to be very angry, when I recollected that the fellow might be mad perhaps; so I asked him, When he left the counting house of an evening? At seven o'clock, Sir. And when do you go to bed, Sir? At twelve o'clock. Then (replied I) I have at least learned

thus much by my new acquaintance, that five hours of the four-and-twenty unemployed are enough for a man to go mad in; so I would advise you, Sir, to study algebra, if you are not an adept already in it; your head would get less *muddy,* and you will leave off tormenting your neighbors about paper and packthread, while we all live together in a world that is bursting with sin and sorrow.

A certain impecunious grumbler was told by a frugal friend that if he saved a few hundred dollars a year, he would have, at the age of fifty, twenty thousand dollars drawing interest. "What's twenty thousand dollars?" was the contemptuous rejoinder of the man who couldn't raise a nickel for an extra carfare. Similarly, the discontented worrier is prone to discount the benefits of occupation by the favorite maxim of the idle, "What's the use?" When we find ourselves drifting into this frame

of mind we must remember the melancholy character drawn by Overbury: "Unpleasing to all, as all to him; straggling thoughts are his content; they make him dreame waking, there is his pleasure. . . . He thinks businesse, but never does any; he is all contemplation, not action."

It wouldn't be a bad idea for some of us to go back to school again. There is many a six-footer, pulling the scales at over two hundred, who ought to be squeezed into a seat at the primary school he went to long ago, and made to sing again at the top of his voice:

Work while you work,
  Play while you play,
This is the way
  To be cheerful and gay.

It might mean something to him now, even if it didn't then. And when he had thoroughly assimilated the practical philosophy contained in this simple song, he might on his way to business take a try at the Lucia Sex-

tette instead of going over for the fortieth time the details of his day's work. His friends might think he was crazy, but he would be much more sane than he is to-day, and much better fitted for an effective day's work. It would clench the cure if the exercises at the store were started by five minutes' gymnastics, and if, after two hours' steady work, he had to take ten minutes recess in the open air. I wouldn't insist on his playing "Puss in the Corner," but a walk around the block would be better than nothing. These things he regards as reasonable for his children, who do not need them any more than he does, perhaps not so much, but *he* has no time for such silly interruptions! He chooses, instead, to take the chance of going to a sanitarium later, for a recess of six months.

Sir Walter Scott says, "I was not long, however, in making the grand discovery that, in order to enjoy lei-

sure, it is absolutely necessary it should be preceded by occupation." The obvious corollary of this discovery is that, in order to enjoy work it should be interrupted at proper intervals by play.

The distinction between work and play is not always to be sharply drawn. Most of us are obsessed to make hard work of work, but in the kindergarten many things are taught by play and, similarly, much of our work would be equally effective if made a game of. One can learn a list of names, or a page of history, just as easily by composing a simple mnemonic or a nonsense rhyme as by the humdrum method. By the time he has composed his rhyme he will find he has fixed his facts. Leverage makes a little strength go a great way.

Conversely, to get the most pleasure out of play a little work should be injected. To ramble in the fields without an object gives little pleasure, but

if the tired business man will launch himself into botany, even without prior leaning toward it, he will shortly come to feel keen pleasure in chasing the festive phanerogam up the fertile valley of the Naugatuck. This supplementary advice should not be forgotten by the "virtuous and faithful Heberden"

> whose skill
> Attempts no task it cannot well fulfill,
> Gives Melancholy up to Nature's care,
> And sends the patient into purer air.

The pleasure of skating soon palls if one is satisfied to skate round and round without an object. But if the skater takes a few lessons in the modern method, he will find the work greatly helps the play. Similarly, if one plays billiards no better to-day than he did ten years ago, he soon tires of knocking the balls about. But if he only take a half-dozen lessons from a professional, he will find himself practising for the fun of it, to say

nothing of taking infinitely more pleasure in a real game than he ever did before.

If any reader thinks the author is "talking through his hat," let him drop into the Arena some day next winter. The chances are he will see several so-called elderly men following this plan, at the risk of being accused by their colleagues of wasting their time. In point of fact, it is the colleagues who are mistaken in thinking they are making the most of their time and opportunities in going over, day after day, and all day, the same old details, half of which might just as well be entrusted to an assistant. To the man who insinuates that it takes very little to fill small minds, the obvious answer is, "Yes, your business alone seems to fill yours."

Fashion has much to do with these matters. If it were the prevailing style to live reasonably, the man who worked all the time would be called a

crank. But nowadays any excuse is enough to keep the average man from taking a vacation. One patient tells me that he would be glad to do so if he had a partner to carry on the work, and the next one says he would be glad to if he didn't have a partner who would think he was shirking!

It is the monotony that causes "brain fag." I dare say a man could work all day and every day if his work was sufficiently varied and interesting. If you had to saw wood all day you would deem it no waste of time to rest your back once in a while, indeed, if you didn't you could hardly be expected to last out. There is no reason why the more delicately adjusted brain should not be given the same chance as the torso. So

> come at least without delay—
> Forget base lucre for a day!
> And mindful of the fire
> That soon may light our funeral-pile,
> We'll play the fool a little while,
> And from ourselves retire.

XII

EMOTIONAL POISE

Quiet minds cannot be perplexed or frightened, but go on in fortune or misfortune at their own private pace, like a clock during a thunderstorm.

Stevenson

If we could take a bird's eye view of ourselves, perhaps the first thing to attract our attention would be our inability to control our emotions even under moderate stress. Many of us fret our way through the world somewhat after the fashion of a horse going through a swarm of flies. Indeed, not a few of us, when merely experiencing the ordinary discomforts incident to life on this planet, act as if we had broken into a hornet's nest.

In the majority of instances, this fretful frame of mind results not from the annoyances themselves so much as from our attitude toward them. Take, for example, the question of disagreeable noises. I am not

the first to call attention to the fact that noises in themselves do not disturb us so much as our mental attitude toward them. To cite an illustration: My friend X has occasion to sleep above a street corner around which automobiles often proceed upon their way to a garage. At the corner the driver blows his horn, and at the door of the garage, unless the watchman is at hand, the signal is repeated. The would-be sleeper tells me he found that, from the first, the sounding of the horn on rounding the corner did not disturb him in the least; if it awoke him, he easily resumed his slumbers. When, on the other hand, the horn sounds at the garage, the noise still annoys him extremely. Before he achieves the philosophic frame of mind toward this particular annoyance, he may have to say to himself, "Never touched me" a hundred times. And even then a toot of exceptional insistence will reproduce the less an-

gelic frame of mind in all its old intensity. Yet the sound of the horn is the same at the corner as at the garage door. He is complacent regarding the one because it seems reasonable; he is incensed at the other because it violates his idea of the proprieties.

Of course, certain sounds are in themselves annoying, perhaps injurious, as hammering on metal, the clatter of unprotected pipes carted over an uneven pavement, or the loose tailboard of a tipcart. But if we pause to analyze our frame of mind regarding nine noises out of the ten which fret us, such as crying of children, crackling of steam pipes, barking of dogs, howling of cats, piano practice and a thousand other common noises, we come to realize the degree of annoyance they cause us is proportional to our resentment. Even a Klaxon heard from the machine does not have quite the sound it does on the street. Some things depend on the point of view, as

the lawyer observed of expert testimony. "I have a little dog," he said. "If I hold him he will bite you, but if you hold him he will bite me."

It seems that there is an element of fashion in the question of self-control. Surely people do not faint as commonly as they did in my boyhood, when it was an everyday occurrence for some young lady to be ministered to for emotional collapse. The smelling salts were much more in evidence then than now. I am inclined also to think that weeping and allied emotional outbreaks are less common than they were in the period when Rob Roy said it was "nae mair ferlie to see a woman greet than to see a goose gang barefit." Similarly, it seems to me that the "towering rage" is less in fashion now than it was in "ye olden tyme." In other words, I believe there is, in this country at least, an increasing tendency to control the emotions. If this is true, in these

days of ready exchange, it is evidence of a widespread modification of manners and customs, ushered in with the advent of the new woman, who represents a revulsion from the Lydia Languish type. The question naturally arises, did the women formerly faint on purpose? Perhaps those did who were so gifted, but it was probably as a rule a case, not of the women fainting on purpose, but of *letting themselves faint.* Certainly in the realm of rage we can easily see that a violent outbreak does not mean a voluntary act, but rather giving way to a tendency we all possess, but over which we exercise control.

Giving up this sensitiveness, of which we are ashamed, involves giving up somewhat of the sensibility of which we are proud. Thus, suppose I am gifted with, or have acquired, so fine a color-sense that a certain wall-paper causes me to shudder. In this event I cannot rid myself of the dis-

comfort without sacrificing something of the color-sense. The same is true of the sound-sense, through which a discord causes pain, and the sense of propriety that makes a toothpick in public unendurable. In such dilemmas it is necessary to choose the horn. We cannot have our cake and eat it, too. In other words, if we really want to get well, we must sacrifice something dear to us.

That these repulsions are not physical is shown by such instances as that of a certain ornithologist with an intolerance for red. It seems he actually avoided people wearing this color. But when it came to his feathered friends, instead of finding the color of the scarlet tanager abhorrent, this bird was one of his favorite finds.

When our emotional poise is endangered by comments of the thoughtless or malicious, we shall do well to have in mind the observation of Ben Jonson ("To Fool or Knave"):

Thy praise or dispraise is to me alike,
One doth not stroke me, nor the other strike.

In advising the cultivation of emotional poise and of adaptability to circumstances there are, of course, certain limitations to be borne in mind. Epictetus, who said, "Chastise your passions, that they may not chastise you," and who taught, by precept and example, the philosophic attitude toward annoyance, warns against carrying the theory to the point of sacrificing one's self-respect. "The estimation of one's own worth lies with himself," says Epictetus, quoting, in illustration of his meaning, Agrippinus, who, when Florus was deliberating whether he should go to Nero's shows, and perform some part in them himself, bade him go. "But why do you not go then?" says Florus. "Because," replies Agrippinus, "I do not deliberate about it." The same philosopher commends the athlete who died rather than undergo

a humiliating operation, it being right that he should submerge the philosopher in the man, the man in this case being one who had been proclaimed champion in the Olympic games.

For the state of mind produced by unjust criticism, the following anecdote, told by Archdeacon Wilberforce, may be in place: A certain bishop was at one time deeply distressed by the persistent calumnies of a prominent layman. He wrote for advice to an eminent lawyer. The lawyer replied with a quotation from the Scriptures.

"Jesus stood before the governor, and when He was accused of the chief priest and elders He answered nothing. Insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly."

"Dear So and So," added the lawyer, "let the governor marvel."

The practice of emotional control is particularly difficult for the individual so comfortably placed in life that he has had his own way from in-

fancy. Such an one must, indeed, be well-poised if he can bear with equanimity the buffets of later life. If there is any form of insanity into which such a person can drift by simple inertia it is the form known as "manic-depressive." This form I have elsewhere described at length as an extreme degree of the "moods," whether hilarious or depressed, to which we are all subject. It is little likely that the child who is taught to keep within bounds his exuberance on the one hand, and his expressions of grief on the other, will drift into this form of mental disorder.

When an individual with incontrollable emotions has drifted into the state of agitated melancholy that characterizes the depressed form of "manic-depressive" his greatest fear is that he will become insane. He walks up and down wringing his hands, unable to attend to the simplest duty, or to think of anything but his

unhappy state. To his reiterated question, "Shall I go insane?" he receives, as a rule, the stereotyped answer, "Of course not," which he knows very well means nothing. Would not this be the wiser answer: "It depends on yourself; insanity means simply that one is so under the dominance of his morbid mental tendencies that he cannot attend to his duties. If you go on as you are, you will be insane; but if you control your emotions enough to attend to your affairs, even if you are blue, you will be no more insane than I am." This answer could not aggravate a condition which is already at its worst, and it might sometimes pave the way for the mental training which lessens the chances of another attack.

At all events, it behooves those of us who have not yet overstepped the line to keep our emotions within reasonable bounds and

Peg Along.

XIII

THE HYPOCHONDRIACAL DREDGER

It was an Oriental custom to illustrate the principles of truth by incidents from life, real or fictitious. Under which heading this tale falls, I leave the reader to decide.

"Is my smokestack on straight? And *do* you think my smoke smells just right? It smells sooty to me, and of course noncombustion of soot *must* injure the lining membrane of the smokestack."

"Nonsense, Fussy, everybody but you knows a dredger can't smell its own smoke."

The speakers were bringing to the surface, meantime, and depositing in adjacent scows, bucketfuls of Charles River bottom. This was some twenty years ago. The time had long passed when for five cents you could buy a fresh lobster on West Boston Bridge

and have it boiled on the spot, but the bridge was still wooden, and so low that if you looked over the rail on a still day you could see your face in the water. Even at high tide the Basin was navigated, except in the channel, only by rowboats, and by one high-sided, weatherbeaten sloop, once black. At low tide the channel itself was clogged, and the mudflats on the Cambridge side reached the backyard of Badger's Furniture Factory.

Fussy was built in South Boston. Her only glimpse of the outside world was obtained on her way to the Basin, and that day the fog permitted only a fleeting view of Battery Wharf and Craigie Bridge. Even had there been more to see, it is doubtful if Fussy would have seen it, for she was mainly occupied in apprehension lest she be grazed by other craft, an experience peculiarly distasteful to her. Then, too, her mind was so constituted that every time she rubbed a pier to star-

board she had to balance it by rubbing one to port, a somewhat engrossing occupation. Her real name was Susan B. Anthony, with curlycues, but she never could live up to that, so everybody just called her Fussy. Perhaps it was because her horizon was so limited that her thoughts were, perforce, directed inwards, or perhaps the attitude was dormant in her timbers, but nothing seemed to touch her vitally except her own sensations. The only interest she had in others was the question whether they were intending to insult, neglect, patronize, ridicule, or otherwise injure her. She was of the Dipper-Dredge family, a family made up of two of the oldest known to the arts, a fact early learned by Fussy, and never forgotten. Her working anatomy embodied little else than the dipper, the boom, two uprights, a couple of drums, a boiler and a donkey engine. But about this simple mechanism she had assembled the

most varied sensations and an incredible array of symptoms.

Her friend Maria, the Philosophical Dredger, was built at Bucksport, Maine. She was a Grappledredge, doubtless a lineal descendant of the original Grappledredge that excavated with Xerxes at Athos, all of which would have cut little figure with Maria if she had known it. She had blown her whistle in every fog, and weathered every gale that had visited the coast of Maine for decades. She once narrowly escaped being piled up on Nausset Beach, down Chatham way. Indeed, she had experienced enough by fire and water permanently to shake the nerve of any but the naturally well-balanced. From each experience she had emerged unfussed, and yet without the arrogance which might have been excused in one of such achievement. She spent no time in self-analysis, in the study of motives, or any other psychologic prob-

lem, but was content to do her day's work and take her night's rest, with a large tolerance, meantime, for those, like her friend Fussy, incapable of this simple adjustment of life's duties.

"Well, it smells sooty to me," persisted Fussy. "Anyway, whether it smells right or not it *feels* funny, or rather I can't seem to feel it at all. I am afraid my senses are becoming dulled."

"Why, Fussy," said Maria, as she hove herself half out of the water to deposit an unusually large clutcherful, "yesterday you worrited because you *did* feel your smoke."

"If I could only feel it to-day as I did yesterday," wailed Fussy, "I wouldn't care *how* it felt; *anything* would be better than this absence of sensation, this feeling that the smoke is going through my smokestack without my feeling it at all! It is absolutely uncanny. I wonder if this is the way it feels to die?"

"What extrawd'n'ry ideas you have, Fussy," interpolated Algernon. "You seem to be on the lookout for trouble all the time, don't you know."

Algernon was the dude dredger from London, a Suctiondredge, of metal throughout, and working noiselessly, except for the gentle purr of well-adjusted machinery running "smooth." With his polished nose buried in the silt he would grub up the food that only a dredger can assimilate, pass it through a long metal tube supported by buoys on the surface of the water, and deposit it on the other side of the Embankment wall at the projected site of the Institute of Technology.

Algernon was certainly a triumph of mechanical art. Every inch of his machinery glistened in the sunlight. Even his two hundred feet of intestine were well-groomed. Just why such an up-to-date dredger should

have left his native land was a question yet unsolved. Unkindly critics said it was because he choked on an umbrella-rib one day, threw in his reverse, and plugged the channel with perfectly good loam!

The fact that Algernon had sown his wild oats in this reckless manner or had perhaps been guilty of even greater breaches of decorum, Fussy was all too ready to overlook. Indeed, I blush to state that his hazy past only added a dash of spice to the romantic favor with which she viewed him. In fact Fussy had somewhere in her mechanism a very soft spot for the dude dredger from London, although she took a morbid pleasure in hiding her feelings under a forbidding exterior of knotty planking.

Not that Fussy realized how crude her aspect was. She sat too low to get a good view of herself in the water. It is quite probable that even if she could have gotten the clearest

view in the world she wouldn't have seen herself just as outsiders did. The mind has an angle of incidence of its own quite irrespective of the laws of light, a fact observed by Aesop some time ago. And as the timid hare of the fable, on seeing his whiskers in the water, turned, with dire result, to meet the hounds, perhaps Fussy's peep over the side would have revealed to her something resembling the lines of a clipper ship or an ocean-going yacht.

No one but her friend Maria knew of Fussy's social and amorous imaginings. Maria alone knew that the object of Fussy's apparently purposeless habit of creeping sidewise in defiance of wind and tide was to interpose her engine-house between Algernon and the garbage pail.

Algernon's remark was quite too much for Fussy, and she exclaimed with a pout which made everyone jump within hearing, "That's right,

nobody likes me, nobody wants me 'round. I've a good mind to stick my dipper in the mud and break it off—then perhaps someone will be sorry."

"Did it ever occur to you, Fussy," said Maria, "that other people had somethin' else on their minds besides decidin' whether they wanted you 'round or not? What Algy says reely has nothin' to do with you; he don't care any more abaout you than he does abaout the next stray dory that drifts through Harvard Bridge. And jest why should he? He is probably thinkin' more abaout how his tail looks, this minute, than he is abaout how you are feelin'."

This was a rather harsh speech for Maria, and after a time she resumed in a more conciliatory tone:

"What was the matter last night, Fussy, I thought you seemed a little oneasy?"

"Why, it began with my pulse," said Fussy, foregoing the pleasure of

harboring a grudge in the joy of airing a grievance. "You know it beats loud enough anyway to keep half the people awake in Back Bay, but last night it kept growing louder and louder, and faster and faster, and I heard a singing in my engine-room, and saw specks before my indicator. Then I got to thinking about the abrasion on the lip of my dipper, and I grew so hot I thought my boiler-head would fly out, then I felt something cold creep all the way up and down my keel. It is a wonder I slept at all—Don't I smell something septic?"

"Ain't this what you smell?" asked Maria, dexterously extricating a kitten from her clutcher.

"Well, perhaps it is," allowed Fussy with a disappointed air.

"All your lip wants is a little filin'," continued Maria, "and I guess the singin' in your engine-room was jest Bill Tucker."

Bill Tucker was the hardy tar who hove the coal, and, in times of stress, the lead, for Fussy's manœuvres. For these duties his seamanship was adequate though his instincts were really Alpine rather than nautical, since he was born in the Appalachian Chambers, Roxbury.

"And as for the specks before your indicator," continued Maria, "I'll bet a dory them was only June bugs."

"There, that reminds me," said Fussy, " I know I dropped a bug off my last load and it is about me somewhere—do you know whether the appendix is to port or starboard?"

"No, I don't," said Maria decidedly, "and what's more, I don't want to. What you need, Fussy is a little less interspection!"

"Intussusception!" exclaimed Fussy, in a panic, "Do you think I've got that?"

"You'd oughter take a lesson," responded Maria, "from a susceptible

old man dredger I onct knowed, that learnt himself how to cure his love fevers. He was always gettin' stuck on a new scow, and when she was towed out to sea he'd go into a decline. Finally he declined so's I begun to get worrited abaout him, but one day he chirked up and told me that he had got all over the scow business. He said that now jest as soon as one scow left him he began right off to think of another scow, and so he kept himself middlin' comfortable all the time. Now, Fussy, when you get to thinkin' of your innerds you jest start thinkin' of somethin' else—perhaps it wouldn't be quite safe in your case to think of some other innerd, neither, but why not try thinkin' of some bit of *outside* bric-a-brac, like that new delivery wagon of R. H. White's?"

"How *can* I think of anything else besides my inwards, as you call them, when *they* keep troubling me," objected Fussy.

"It's the other way round," rejoined Maria, "ef you stop thinkin' of 'em they'll quit botherin' you. You worritin' people don't seem to mind so much when you're reely ailin'. You don't care at all ef your donkey engine kicks out a cylinder head, and you're only jest proud of a bandaged beam or a varicose steampipe, but you fret yourself 'most to death abaout the ontangible and improbable. You remind me of the coastin' schooner that was afraid she'd marry an ocean liner and have twin propellers;— For Heaven's sake, what's the matter now, Fussy?"

Maria was startled into this inquiry by a spasmodic chugging which proceeded from Fussy's engine-room, from which emerged also Bill Tucker to look for external evidence of disorder. Finding nothing tangible, he returned, but the trouble persisted. Fussy's dipper would start smoothly enough on its downward course only

to come to a standstill, hover over the surface of the water, then rise with a jerk, only to come again to a standstill, the chug, meantime, becoming more and more insistent.

"Why," explained Fussy in a querulous tone, "I am not sure whether we are doing this work right or, in fact, whether we ought to be doing it at all. First I think it is none of my business, and let my dipper go, then it comes over me that perhaps I ought to be making it my business, and I can't seem to bring myself to let it go into the water—then I think I am foolish and let it go again, and the more I think of it the less I can decide."

"What's the use of decidin'," remarked Maria. "I think you do altogether too much decidin', Fussy. And you are too dead sot on havin' everythin' you do come out right. Ef you only do every other thing right you will accomplish more than ef you don't do nothin' at all, and that is

where you are goin' to land ef you don't look out. Keep a' dippin', that's my motto. And it keeps me out of a heap of trouble, too."

Whether as a result of this good advice or because Bill Tucker tightened a nut, Fussy was shortly working smoothly. A long silence followed, broken finally by Algernon, soliloquizing: "America has done very well in literature and statesmanship. Every one has heard of Josh Billings and Buffalo Bill. Indeed they think well of them on the other side, but when it comes to mechanics you must allow that England has the weather gauge."

"You remind me, Algy," interposed Maria, "of a new-fangled machine they towed down to Skulpin P'int one time from New York. He had a good deal to say abaout how much better they did things to New York than in the state o' Maine, and we never could rightly understand why he left New York at all, till we

found he'd a habit of kind er swallerin' himself when he struck hard bottom, and gittin' so mixed up he didn't know whether he was afloat or ashore, and that's why they shucked him off onto the Maine coast.

"An ocean-goin' tug onct told me," she continued, "abaout a friend o' his that put in his time towin' coal barges round Bologny harbor. He was so top-heavy over bein' built in England that he got a list to port they never could set straight. He was the most sot old Britisher you ever see. It most broke his heart to have to wear a sign that he was to let for so many francs a day. He never could seem rightly to sense the fact that a franc was abaout the same as a shillin', and when anybody told him et was, he'd jest squirt a stream o' bilge-water to lewart and say them bally languages got his goat—and he'd been in Bologny ever sence he could remember. I never could see why a ma-

chine should be so powerful proud of comin' from a country he ain't smart enough to stay in."

"Oh dear," said Fussy, hearing a low rumble in the distance, "there is a thunderstorm coming."

"Why, you aren't afraid of thunder, are you?" asked Algernon.

"Of course not," said Fussy indignantly, "but electricity has a peculiar effect on me. It makes my dipper cold and clammy, and it chokes up my pipes so that I can't even whistle."

"That ain't electricity," said Maria, "that's plain scairt to death. I had the same feelin' myself in the rollers off Nausset in the big storm, and there warn't enough electricity 'round to kill a shote. Try and fergit it, Fussy."

"Do you want me to believe there is no danger in a thunderstorm?" asked Fussy indignantly.

"Wal, no," said Maria, "I don't know's I do, but I calculate there's

more or less danger everywheres all the time. We'll never be jest safe, I s'pose, till we're on the scrap heap, but that's no reason for puttin' off livin' till we're dead. The only way to make livin' easy is to keep yer mind easy. And yer mind ain't nowheres near easy when you're scairt half to death; so I've kinder made up my mind ter cultivate a little kerridge instead er runnin' away every time, especially from things that kin run faster'n I kin."

"But you wouldn't want to take a chance of being killed, would you?"

"Wal, I don't know but I would when I couldn't help myself," said Maria, "you've got to take some chances. No one ever accomplished anythin' in this world without takin' some chances. And ef you're goin' to take 'em it's a waste of time to talk abaout 'em. Ef some of us would chew gravel more and the rag less, we'd accomplish jest as much, and I

b'lieve when we'd onct got used to it we'd have jest abaout as good a time."

"My word," observed Algernon, "that would make a jolly good motto, don't you know. Chew gravel! Rawther neat, eh? The idea is that when you are chewing gravel you cawn't be chewing rags, for you cawn't be chewing two things at the same time, can you now?"

"You're quick as a cat, ain't you Algy," said Maria. "I don't know as I ever see any one spryer to ketch an idee."

"Please don't make fun of Algernon," whispered Fussy. "He expressed it beautifully even if he didn't think of it first, and if you'd given him time I am sure he would have thought of it before you did. I believe you are jealous of him just because he is a Britisher, as you call it. Anyway, I don't chew the rag. I'd rather be accused of *anything* than chewing the rag. You know very well

that is the *one* thing I can't stand being accused of, and yet you are *always* telling me I do it. Or if you don't say it in so many words you refer to it in such a way that it is plain enough you mean me, and it is very *unkind* to imply a thing you won't say directly. Not that you *wouldn't* accuse me directly of it if you wanted to, but what I *mean* is that I wouldn't mind it so much if you *did,* but whether you accuse me of it directly or indirectly I don't do it *at all.* So you ought not to *accuse* me of it."

"All right," said Maria, "let it go at that. I find ef I use up my steam discussin' sech questions I don't have enough left to heist the clutcher."

And Algernon, outwardly preserving his habitual air of detachment from immediate surroundings, chuckled into his suction pipe.

"Well, anyway," said Fussy, "my smoke does feel funny, and my floor timbers are boggy, and my——"

At this point the super came alongside in a dory.

"How's she runnin', Bill?" he inquired.

"Same as ever," said Bill, "she seems to rattle some, but I don't see as she runs any different to what she did forty years ago."

"Did you hear that, Fussy?" asked Maria. "Now you'd better stop worritin' and try the gravel business a spell."

"Well, if I am all right," persisted Fussy, "I'd like to have him explain ——" but just then the whistle blew for six o'clock, and Fussy's steam was shut off. Silence fell on the Basin, unbroken save for an occasional grunt from Maria, a well-bred sniff from Algy, and a gentle croak from Fussy, which she was sure was abnormal. Soon nothing was heard but the gentle lapping of the waves, that seemed gleefully to continue the refrain:

Keep a' dippin'.

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