

to reduce its amount of work. Probably by taking a little thought we can do both; at any rate, there are few people who, to use the old saying, could not "make their head save their heels" if they tried. I remember sympathising with a delicate woman who had to get through the ordinary toil of a working-man's wife—toil which John Burns said he would not undertake for £100 a week, although he considers £500 a year sufficient for prince, primate, or premier. She said cheerfully, "Oh, I just do a little more thinking. If I have less strength than other women, I waste less, so the balance comes more even than you'd think." Unlike her more robust neighbours, she never stood gossiping, arms akimbo, in an icy draught for an hour at a stretch. When she had washed a floor she took care that scraper and doormat were at hand, and that husband and children used them. When she had cleaned a grate she did not immediately spill pea-soup over it, and on days when long-accumulated maternal experience warned her that her youngest born would probably make mud-pies, he was equipped in a pinafore which had already had the first bloom taken off its beauty.

Body and brain must play into one another's hands, not rob one another; and remember that body *must* be served first if brain is to act properly. Be warned in time by mental or physical inertia. If the body grudges any extra exertion—"counts every step," as people say; if the brain has no pleasure in mental exercise, there is something wrong with one or both, and the matter must be attended to without loss of time.

In this world of change, of anxiety, of loss and painful suspense, the one thing from which we shall derive most happiness is an active, willing brain, easily stimulated, open to interest at a thousand points, and giving the power to live, when necessary, a life of such outward dulness and monotony as would reduce an inactive mind to *ennui* and despair, or to a bovine sluggishness.

Quick and close observation is of use in many ways, more especially to women employed, as they usually are, at any rate for considerable periods of their lives, in teaching and generally caring for young children, and in nursing the sick; but ability to reproduce these observations accurately, and convey them to another person exactly, is equally needful, and requires careful direction of our mental powers. We are all so apt to confuse what we have *observed* and what we have—perhaps, mistakenly—*inferred*, and more than half unconsciously we state our inferences as facts. A nurse, for example, observes that a patient has had visitors, and has afterwards slept badly, and reports to the doctor that visitors are over-exciting. The doctor is, perhaps, too busy to inquire into the matter, and the unlucky patient is condemned to a *solitude à deux*, of which she is utterly weary, which increases her nervous irritation and retards her recovery; and

perhaps all the time the real cause of sleeplessness was indigestion from having eaten badly-cooked food, or hunger from not having eaten it. It must never be overlooked that powers of observation are of little use unless one knows what to observe, and require as much direction as any other faculty of the mind.

The utility of habits of order is too obvious to be controverted, and yet unless orderliness is imposed by some strict outward authority, how many people are found habitually tidy either in their persons, in their work, or in the arrangement of their possessions? How many of us rise to the old man-of-war ideal, "A place for everything, and everything in its place?" "A case for everything, and nothing in its case," would be a far better description of many bedrooms. Yet what incalculable worry and waste of time, what expense, what danger, often what unavailing regrets would be spared if we voluntarily cultivated this everyday virtue of tidiness.

For method, ordinary human nature has not even the lukewarm admiration that it has for orderliness. Method in domestic life is too often associated with all that is tiresome and ridiculous, and to enforce our plans on other people may often be irritating and absurd. Nevertheless, to choose and adopt methods suited to the ordinary course of our work is an immense saving of time and worry and conscious mental exertion. If we carry out our regular duties in one fixed way nothing is likely to be forgotten, nothing need be hurried over, and plenty of time and energy will be left to cope with demands on our attention which cannot possibly be reduced to system. To show the advantage of a fixed course, take such a simple matter as letter-writing: What is the first thing to be done? Obviously to address the envelope legibly and correctly, and the next is to write address and date on the sheet of paper, and put each letter as it is finished into its own envelope and close it up. What do people commonly do when writing three or four letters at one sitting? Write the letters, hastily scrawl addresses on the envelopes, mix all the sheets of paper and envelopes together, try to disentangle them, and then—at intervals—worry themselves and everyone near them for the rest of the day with fears that John will receive the communication intended for Mary; that they have omitted date and address in the note which most specially required them; or enclosed postage stamps with a formal invitation; or a cheque with a refusal to subscribe towards providing Patagonians with false teeth.

People often say, with proud self-depreciation, "I am very unbusiness-like in my ways." If, by business habits, they meant the sharp practice sometimes forced on tradesmen by fierce competition, or suggested by personal greed, so much the better; but they usually mean such desirable customs as

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