

acknowledging money by return of post, carefully reading important letters and answering them point by point without undue delay, obtaining and filing receipts, and keeping strict account of income and expenditure.

Keeping accounts will never become a pleasure, but there are strong and sufficient reasons for regarding the practice as a duty. One reason is the way in which money "slips away." Careless persons, who make no note of their expenses, are constantly worrying their equals and insulting their servants and dependents by asserting that they have lost money or had it stolen from them. It is a strange fact that those who keep careful accounts and balance them regularly rarely lose a penny, and still more seldom have one stolen from them. Accounts are a great check on all wasteful expenditure; even if we are morally certain that no eye but our own will read it, we shrink from recording in black and white a long list of selfish or frivolous purchases. Again, to look through our account book at the end of the year, or even after a longer lapse of time, is often instructive, and will, perhaps, not only show us where we might economise, but where we might safely be more generous. Of one thing I am sure: the account books of those who are generally stigmatised as "mean" would often be strange and enlightening documents to those who consider themselves generous because they are wasteful.

One reason why accounts are so unpopular is because the would-be accountants either write down every item in ink immediately, which results in blots and confusion, or they put their memory on the rack once a week, or even seldomer, and write down what they remember, sometimes "cooking," sometimes taking the gaps very seriously and clouding the domestic horizon for days with tales of an elusive twopence-halfpenny. The most practical way for purely private accounts is to make a pencil record of every item of receipt or expenditure, and then when at leisure to write down each detail under its proper heading, add up the whole, and make it balance. If it *won't*, frankly note the fact.

Of all mental habits, that of mental sincerity, of recognising the truth, however unpalatable it may be, is the one that needs most sedulous cultivation, and which is most far-reaching in its moral effects. "This, above all, To thine own self be true, And it must follow as the night the day Thou canst not then be false to anyone."

Discriminating receptivity is a little difficult to define, although we all know fairly well what it means. There are persons who, about the age of twenty, sometimes earlier, cease to be receptive. Their mind becomes almost impervious to new ideas, and even to new ways of applying the old ones. On the other hand, there are persons who are always learning, and never seem to have definitely and finally learnt the most indisputable facts or the most ordinary piece of routine.

After doing certain work for a short time punctually and to the satisfaction of all concerned, they next produce a belated boggle, and excuse themselves—though they scarcely think such praiseworthy conduct needs excuse, whatever its immediate result may be—on the grounds that they "were trying a new way." This kind of thing is as foolish as its opposite, and more exasperating. To be unable to learn may be a misfortune, to unlearn what has been well learnt is a crime. I once knew a woman servant who had lived for some time in the family of a high-class baker and confectioner, and had been thoroughly instructed in the art of making and baking bread. She then went into private service, and for some weeks her bread was the joy and boast of her mistress. Suddenly its quality changed; it became heavy, sour, ill-kneaded, ill-baked. On inquiry it appeared that the baker's apt pupil had been taking advice from the maid next door. She was remonstrated with on the folly of imagining that an untrained girl could know more of baking than a professional cook, and the bread for a time resumed its wholesome and satisfying nature. In the course of a few days the charwoman at the corner house was consulted, and gave advice which had such a crushing effect upon the loaves that the much-tried mistress decided that she had better find a less open-minded servant before her digestion was utterly ruined.

These, I think, are all mental habits that it is advisable to try and form, and that are within our reach if we perseveringly exert our power of will.

The American Nursing World.

Nothing is more needed in the nursing profession, says the *American Journal of Nursing*, than a full and complete history of nursing, reaching back into the obscure ages and coming down to our own time.

Such a book should be in every library, and every nurse to be graduated should be taught in outline something of the conditions out of which our present system has been evolved, that a more comprehensive knowledge of what has been may be understood, that plans may be more intelligently made and worked out for the improvement and development of nursing in the future.

Such a book, to be of real value, must be written by a nurse, and we are happy to be able to announce that already the work is commenced. For more than three years, to our personal knowledge, Miss M. A. Nutting, of the Johns Hopkins Hospital, has been collecting material for this work, and hopes that it may be ready for publication some time during the coming year.

Those nurses who have been privileged to hear Miss Nutting's talks on the history of nursing at Teachers College, and elsewhere, have some idea of the treat in store for the profession when her book is finished.

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