

foreign languages. If for these last lessons periodicals are chosen, the nurses will easily obtain a fair amount of general knowledge.

By instituting this longer course of training for private nurses, I trust that we shall acquire a body of able women to whose care by reason of their extensive technical knowledge, culture, and refinement, the public will confidently entrust their sick ones.

Jdle Thoughts of an Jdle Matron.

Charles V., after his abdication, is said to have had a passion for timepieces, and the difficulty he found in adjusting his clocks and watches drew from him the philosophical reflection as to the absurdity of his having attempted to make men think alike, when he could not even make two of his watches agree with one another.—*History of Charles V.*

Whether Charles ever really delivered himself of the above obvious truism, he might well have done so, without any particular effort of either wisdom or philosophy. It is a reflection that in some form or another must occur to anyone whose lot in life is to make a heterogenous conglomeration (Editor, excuse the many syllables) of human beings act together, let alone think alike. It is a good thing that human nature is a trifle stubborn on that point.

Poor Charles! one has sympathy with him. How to secure the uniformity that alone makes concerted action possible without destroying individuality and weakening character is a problem that has worried many and many a well-meaning autocrat. How to make people think alike—for unless they think alike they will only act alike with very half-hearted vigour.

The Vicar of Bray solved the question cheerfully, whole-heartedly, and without any difficulty whatever. He believed firmly in his daily bread and butter, and anything that assured it.

“And whatsoever King shall reign
Still I’ll be the Vicar of Bray, Sir.”

Would that this cheerful belief that whatever is in power is right, were commoner, or if the dictum that all laws, rules, and regulations promulgated by authority had an aroma of divinity about them were generally accepted, how easy would be the task of even the humblest ruler!

And when we come to work the matter out, why should we think? When the world is so full of people willing to take the burden of thought off our shoulders and decide all the questions that we are too busy to worry about, why disturb our ease? Take the world’s self-appointed teachers on trust, they will be very grateful to you, and will give you an unlimited

amount of good advice gratis. True, it may clash a bit. But you have only to pick out the parts that will pay you best, and there you are. Like the immortal Pickwick, shout with the crowd, and when there are two crowds shout with the largest. I will let you into the secret of happiness. It was discovered long, long ago, but the very character of the discoverers has caused them to keep it to themselves; they discovered it by accident, they retain it by accident. Never initiate anything, you will earn much affection and confidence from others because you will have no difficulty in believing or pretending to believe in what you are told. You will never rebel, you will never have doubts, you will always make for the clear and limpid waters. Poets call that state faith or contentment, and praise it as the highest virtue. One poet writes:—

“Look not thou on beauty’s charming,
Sit thou still when kings are arming,
Taste not when the wine cup glistens,
Speak not when the people listens,
Stop thine ear against the singer,
From the red gold keep thy finger—
Vacant heart and hand and eye,
Easy live and quiet die.”

Also a great American philosopher has said: “When a man gets perfectly contented, he and a clam are first cousins,” and when you reflect on what an excellent bivalve a clam is, how absolutely harmless in his blameless life, you will appreciate the compliment.

Cannot you fancy old Charles V. winding up his watches and clocks, and dreaming of continents crowded with puppets, who thought as he thought, acted as he told them to, dreamt even as he desired them to dream, and being happier in his dream realm than ever he was in the turbulent fighting and contradicting world he actually ruled. And that brings me back rather suddenly to my muttons—in other words, to the original idea with which I started. I have not yet abdicated my little and narrow realm, but I should like to hear from some Matron who has done so how one looks back on the time when one foolishly tried to set one’s small world right, if one is more worried over wasted opportunities, fights abandoned, efforts unmade, or whether one has a feeling that one was a bit of a fool to fight at all, and would have had a better time if one had drifted along with the tide! I wonder.

For ever and for ever hangs out the shield over the hostelry of life—gold one side, silver the other, and if you have the spirit of a mouse you must up and fight for the side you see; but alack and alas for the unfortunate who see both sides of the shield! Surely, then, it is better to turn one’s back on the fray and empty the food sacks of those who are fighting—and

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