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Under the Microscope.

When Margaret Halsey finished her course at the seminary, she fully intended to "devote her life," as she expressed it, to her brother Philip. Hitherto he had devoted his life to her. Their parents had died when she was very young. Philip as a boy had faced the problem of supporting his sister and himself, and by prodigious effort and heroic sacrifices had solved it. She had lacked for nothing.

In this struggle he had won his way to success. He had gained an honorable reputation in his profession. Moreover, he was recognized as a moral force in the community, a leader in every good work. Margaret was sure she could help him now. If she could not promote the reforms he believed in, if she could not mix his colors, she could at least help him to be comfortable.

But her home had been so long at school that she and her brother were practically strangers. As she came to know him in the familiar intercourse of every day, his methods and mannerisms first amused and then annoyed her. He was so "old-maidish" about the arrangements of furniture and the ordering of the household ways; he was so fussy about his food; he had such an irritating trick of pulling his beard! Margaret's nerves were kept continually on edge. She ended by persuading herself that she was very unhappy.

Then, as it befell, the grave and patient brother met with an accident that threatened his life. It was many hours before he returned to consciousness. His hand went feebly to his beard, and he tugged at it in the way that Margaret had always found so annoying. Now she shed tears of thankfulness at sight of the familiar motion.

That night a personal revelation came, when the physician drew her aside and said, "Your brother's recovery will depend so much on you, Miss Margaret, that I must speak plainly. He must not be disturbed or excited, and you have certain peculiarities which—"

"Peculiarities! I have?" stammered Margaret. "Trifling faults. We all have them. You are no exception. Your brother is too loving and large in his nature to notice them when in health, but now—"

"I understand. What are they, doctor?"
"You have a querulous habit of finding fault incessantly—surely you are conscious of it?—and a shrill voice which must be irritating to an invalid. You did not know it? Well, of course it is not usual to speak of these small defects, but it is essential that you should know and try to amend yours for Phillip's sake."

Contritely and with a humbler face Margaret turned to her duty. Now that she knew there were motes in her own eye, it would be easy to overlook her brother's shortcomings. What mattered his little foibles, anyway, as against his large mind and loving heart?

The Maltese Lace Industry.

The United States Consul at Malta mentions in a recent report that Maltese lace which until lately was little known in America, is now becoming as popular there as it has been for many years in Europe. While the art of lace making is dying out amongst the peasantry in many countries in Europe, it is not so in the Maltese islands. The greater part of the lace exported is made in the island of Gozo, which has a population of about 25,000, of whom 10,286 are women and girls. At least three-fourths of these are occupied with lace-making. The peasantry of the island of Malta are also more interested in the industry now than for many years past. As a result of the increasing demand, there is hardly a family among the poorer classes in the islands which does not produce lace. All of it is hand made, and it is doubtful if machinery will ever be introduced for the purpose, because the people have a deeply rooted aversion to labor saving machinery of all kinds. In many lines of industry the method in vogue years ago are employed today. The art of lace-making is handed down from family to family, and often a beautiful design is made by only one family. The recent impetus to trade has caused lace-making to be taught in the schools. In designs Malta copies from no one, although the workers are clever in carrying out special designs that may be ordered. During six months recently more lace was sent to America than 40 years ago. There are several firms that control the work of many families and supply them with the silk or cotton used in making the lace. Among the articles made are handkerchiefs, edging, parasol covers, pillow covers, collars, boleros, lamp shades, shawls, mantillas, and even whole skirts. Silk is the chief material used, but of late there has been a demand for cotton lace.—London Times.

The Art of Conversation.

It is not necessarily the person possessed of most brains, or wit, or learning, who is most successful in conversation. One can educate oneself in the habit of easy, graceful speech, and while clever observations and bright remarks win admiration and possibly the envy of less gifted talkers, after all the manner of one's conversation is, in ordinary social intercourse, hardly less important than the matter of it.

A common conversational fault is that of speaking too loudly and to rapidly. Most voices, one critic observes, could be advantageously lowered a whole octave and the enunciation greatly improved by deliberation. Especially is one liable to pitch one's voice disagreeably high, when one is interested in the subject and is speaking with animation. But when one stops to think of it, the low sweet voice, that 'excellent thing in woman,' is really more influential than harsher, strident tones.

It is a form of selfishness, not to say rudeness, to let one's eyes and thoughts wander from the speaker to whose conversation one is supposed to be listening. Even if the remarks may be not exactly interesting, one can always 'assume an interest if one has it not,' and the conversation must be dull indeed which one cannot, by giving it undivided attention, lead to brighter paths. 'If people do not amuse you,' says Sir John Lubbock, 'amuse them.' The art of conversation lies in knowing how to listen as well as how to talk. We can all think of people whose bright, friendly, interested manner leads one out to a fluency and conversational ease quite surprising to oneself; and of others whose look of 'I am listening from a painful sense of duty,' seals the fountain of one's words at once.

And then, the countless ways in which one can exercise the priceless quality of tact in conversation—the avoidance of pedantic words, or phrases, or references—making good, clear, simple, English serve as it always will; retraining from emphatic and uncalled-for expressions of opinion, and argument that threatens to become heated; never permitting oneself to play the school-mistress by promptly and correctly using a word that has just been pronounced incorrectly by some one else. Unselfishness, good nature, and the desire to give pleasure, add charm to the conversation of the most brilliant and clever talkers, and can be cultivated with great advantage by the majority of us who are not renowned for being either brilliant or learned.

What was Wanted.

"Do you believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures?"

The chairman of the committee appointed by the church to interrogate the clergyman to whom a call might be extended looked at that gentleman critically as he asked his first question.

"I do," was the firm reply.
There was a slight movement among the members of the committee. "Do you," asked the chairman, "believe in preaching the gospel without frills, or would you inject a little spice into your sermons—say, enough to get yourself into the papers?"

The clergyman did not talter.

"I believe," he replied, "in the simple gospel—without sensationalism."
"Then, as I understand it," said the chairman, "you believe in the old-fashioned theology and all its dogma. Every Sunday you would preach a couple of sermons on the Bible, without trying to attract attention, and on week days, instead of getting yourself interviewed by the reporters, you would doubtless spend your time visiting the sick."
"That's my whole idea," was the answer.

The chairman turned to his committee and held a brief consultation. Then once more facing the candidate he said:

"I'm sorry to say, sir that you won't do. We want a man who is right up-to-date."

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The Myth of Overstudy.

"There is no such thing as overstudy," says Dr. Shradly, in The New York Evening World. "That is to say, mental work, however hard, unaccompanied by worry or habits of self-indulgence, causes no deterioration of brain tissue.

"Protracted study did not shorten the life of Macaulay, keeping himself awake with bowls of tea night after night. It does not seem to have hurt Edison, who spent twenty hours a day over the phonograph in the months preceding its perfection. It did no harm to Heyne, the great German philologist, who for six months shortened his sleep allowance to two hours a night. It is not the normal strain imposed on the brain, however severe, that it breaks it down.

Dr. Shradly's statement is made with reference to the occasional cases of nervous collapse in school girls due to hysteria arising from physical causes. Its eminent common-sense makes it deserving of wider application.

"Overstudy" is the bugaboo of the weak willed and the lazy. It never frightens the youth of real talent. It has no terrors for the boy who is sitting up late to learn thoroughly the task set him and to absorb the little more than the required stint of knowledge in which lies success. The men who build bridges and make subways an engineering reality at which the world marvels, great architects, great sculptors, the lawyer who is equipping himself to win a case of national importance, the famous captains of finance—these know that the brain will respond to any strain put upon it.

They know that when subjected to the severest straining it yields its best returns of ideas that bring fame and fortune.

A Plagiarist.

The novelists who aspire toward absolute originality of plot might think, once in a while, of the sources from which certain masters drew their inspiration, and of the calmness with which those great workers picked up whatever would serve them at their trade. Charles Reade depended on the newspapers as the living record of life as it is. One day in the week he devoted to his scrap-books. Passing events seemed to him of vital importance, and the result of his collating appearance in novels whose "purpose" told.

In "Never Too Late to Mend" he exposed the cruelties practiced in the prisons, before the reform was successful; in "Hard Cash" he attacked the abuses of private lunatic asylums; in "Put Yourself in His Place" he opened on tradeunions. He was a modern crusader. One day he found in a newspaper certain strictures on this manner of work. His rage was instant and violent.

"Plagiarist!" he roared, crushing the paper. "Of course I am a plagiarist. Shakespeare was a plagiarist. Moliere was a plagiarist. We all plagiarize, all except those idiots who are too assinine to profit by the works of their superiors. Surely every blockhead out of a lunatic asylum (except those idiots) must know that since Homer's time all authors have parodied his incidents and paraphrased his sentiments. Moliere took his own where he found it. 'The thief of all thieves was the Warwickshire thief,' who stole right and left from everybody. But then he 'found things lead and left them gold.' That's the sort of thief I am!"

Campaign Funds in Britain.

Chamberlain has, says the New York Tribune, appealed for a campaign fund of £100,000 with which to complete the education of the English people in the economics of Imperialism, and will probably get it, for many capitalists, ship-owners, manufacturers, and bankers are among the heartiest supporters of retaliation and preference tariffs. This will be the first instalment. Cobden collected £400,000 for the Anti-Corn League, and Chamberlain will require an equal sum for undoing the work of the free trade champion.

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