

skirt of poppy-red sateen or silk, made in "accordion" pleats; and the pleated front is of the same, while the polonaise is of maize colour, with flowers of green and poppy-colour. The hat is of white straw, with poppy-coloured velvet and flowers. The last figure wears a waterproof "redingote," very full at the back, with a cape. This is made of a striped waterproof tweed. The hat is of grey straw, with a light grey feather, the trimmings being of dark grey velvet. The form of this hat is a kind of boat shape, very small and compact.

In the single figure illustration a simple, inexpensive dress of beige, tweed, or nun's cloth is shown, suitable to a schoolgirl or for an ordinary morning walking dress. The skirt is made with plouces, alternately deep and narrow, put on in narrow kiltings. It is remarkable that kiltings have returned to favour this spring, as if they were quite a new introduction, instead of having been in favour for some years.

There is but little novelty to chronicle in the way of bonnets. The crowns are flat, and open brims are more popular than they have been for some time, and there seems to exist a slight idea of bonnet-caps under them, which may increase as time goes on. Black lace bonnets appear to be much worn, and no coarse straws are to be seen; nothing but fine Dunstables or Tuscan. Very large hats are still in favour, but there is nothing decidedly new in them, save, perhaps, some with wide brims, which are most fancifully bent about in extravagant shapes. These can be studied in the shop windows, and need not be illustrated in our columns. Double brims are also a wonderful novelty—not only double, but trebled or quadrupled, each one successively projecting at the edge a little beyond the other.

There is no doubt that much difficulty is felt by all women of good taste who wear their hair in the present high style, in arranging it so as to avoid the extremely ugly back view which that style always presents. Some ladies try to get over this by turning the hair up over a pad, and thus forming some resemblance to the old chignon. This, in some measure, improves the appearance, but the curly fringe of hair just now being adopted at the nape of the neck has been a great improvement, and when the hair is naturally curly, produces a charming effect. I fancy that people in general are beginning to wake up to the fact that wearing the hair piled on the top of the head does not suit everyone, and has a decided tendency to age even young girls. Of course, for those to whom it is becoming, the matter is different, but the least extra thinness in the face or throat makes it very trying.

Ladies who wear caps have lately adopted coloured lace for them, either to match the dress or to contrast with it, lace of the same colour being used for the neck and cuffs. Black lace is worn by those who have grey hair, and brightly hued flowers or even feathers are placed in them. Morning capes are made of book muslin or of white net gathered into a smooth band of velvet.

Lace is used at the necks of dresses more than anything else, gathered in very full ruffles, or else turned over quite plainly. But many young ladies still discard all kinds of neck decoration, and wear the band of the dress *au naturel*, with no ornament save a row of beads, or a beaded cord round it, next to the throat.

It is a little difficult to make a selection of materials, the choice is so vast and so good. In silks the fancy for shot, and shot silks figured, spotted, and brocaded, is as great as ever, and in woollens there are several charming new materials, or improvements on old ones. Nun's cloth is much improved, and

appears under different names, both finer and firmer, and will be an excellent material for summer wear; beige, voilas, brochés, with spots woven in them, and chenille dots and spots, which appear as if fastened on; mousseline de laines, with lovely chintz patterns of coloured flowers on cream and coffee-hued grounds, and some thin woollens, which look as if embroidered in cross-stitch.

In cottons there is much novelty of all kinds both in colour and material, and it is only to be hoped that we shall be blessed with a summer rendering them suitable for wear.

One very useful thing, I see, is indigo-blue prints, with tiny white designs on them, made up simply and inexpensively; indeed, I hear more of these than of sateens, and there are many new patterns of them in small pompadour designs. Some of them have a border on the edge of the material, to be used to trim the dress with. Zephyrs are striped or spotted, or both together, stone-blue being apparently a favourite colour. Shot cottons and zephyrs are quite novel, but I do not know whether I am very much impressed by their beauty, nor with the tapestry patterns on cotton neither. There is a very pretty new embroidered sateen, and a twilled sateen in imitation of cashmere, which is also pretty.

Quantities of new ideas for "lawn tennis" costumes in cotton materials have been brought out, generally in stripes of small size, in different colours, running round the skirt. The latter is generally "accordion" pleated, with a very short upper skirt, and either a pointed or a banded bodice.

The new umbrella-cases are made of brightly-hued shot silks, and they are intended apparently to be carried in these always. Very fantastic handles are still worn, with rats, mice, and monkeys climbing about them.

Before I conclude a few words must be devoted to colours. Previously to the death of the Duke of Albany, and the consequent general and Court mourning, it seemed as if brown, in all its varieties and shades, were to prevail over everything, from bonnets and dresses to gloves and shoes. But now, black, and from that a transition to black, and lilac, and lavender, is more popular, and it bids fair to be followed by other colours combined with black later on. Now, it would be impossible to say that any shade is popular, for none appear to have pre-eminence.

No very bright shades are worn for gloves; they generally match the dress; and silk gloves are as much worn as kid for the morning, and are drawn up over the sleeves, as they were in the winter. Quantities of self-coloured thread stockings have been brought out in brown, grey, and drab, and there are also plaid, striped, and embroidered, with open lace-work fronts.

Shoes of Swede kid are also a novelty, and they will be much worn with black dresses, trimmed with coffee-coloured lace; but, as a rule, I do not think fanciful shoes will be much adopted by Englishwomen, whose taste in shoes is quiet and simple.



COMMON ERRORS IN DAILY LIFE.

By JAMES MASON.

VI.—ERRORS IN OBSERVATION.



ACCURATE observation is a great deal more important in everyday life than accurate scholarship. A girl may possess everything in the shape of book-learning, but if she have that alone, those who are uncultivated but observing will often make her feel very small indeed and cause her

to blush for her deficiencies. In a contest between eyes and no eyes, the way has always been that eyes have got the best of it.

It is the cultivation of the powers of observation that makes the greater part of the difference between people of the world—using that phrase in its best sense—and book-worms. There is nothing like looking at things for ourselves; what we gain in this way is fresher, more natural, more suited to our tastes, more in harmony with our individuality, and better adapted to our purposes than what we either read or have told us.

The notion that our powers of observation cannot be improved is a great mistake. All experience proves the contrary. Practice will be found to work wonders, and a girl who sets herself steadily to the cultivation of a keen eye and quick ear will soon arrive at that point at which she will see and hear, I do not say everything, but everything which is to her of the slightest consequence. It is interesting to observe how the faculty is cultivated amongst farmers, travellers, savages, and all who live near the heart of nature. A savage, for example, will distinguish marks of footsteps, indications of water, and possibilities of food where one of us would be as helpless and hopeless as a fish in a corn-field.

It is nonsense to think there is little worth observing. We are surrounded by millions of subjects of interest both in town and country. Life can never be long enough to exhaust them all, and the utmost we can do is to bring our faculties to bear on those which to us are of the greatest consequence.

But admitting all this, there are some errors of observation into which many of us fall, and the first is that of being too sure about the evidence of our senses.

Take seeing first. Seeing, you say, is believing. Not always. Our sight sometimes plays fantastic tricks, and no prudent person will confidently assert about anything, "I have seen, and there is an end of it." The eye is a most fertile source of mental illusions, and an account of these has always formed one of the most interesting pages of popular science.

Many errors in connection with sight arise from colour-blindness. This is an inability to distinguish certain colours, which recent investigations have proved to be much more frequent than was suspected.

The most common form of colour-blindness is that in which red is deficient. It was this kind with which Dalton, the famous chemist, was afflicted. "He was a strict Quaker, and when about to be presented at Court it was thought by his friends that it would be impossible to induce him to wear the scarlet robe in which custom demanded that a Doctor of Civil Law should appear. But it seemed to him like a harmless grey, and, finding it comfortable, he persisted for several days in wearing it about the streets of London, surmounted

by a broad-brimmed hat and with drab pantaloons peeping out beneath it."

One who was colour-blind in a remarkable degree has left on record that he did not know any green in the world; that a pink colour and a pale blue were perfectly alike; that he had often thought a full red and a full green a good match; that he was sometimes baffled in distinguishing a full purple from a deep blue; but that he knew light, dark, and middle yellows, and all degrees of blue except sky-blue.

Errors resulting from colour-blindness may easily prove serious. "The defect," says an American authority, "is a matter of grave importance in the case of seamen and of railroad engineers, and has lately attracted much attention in that connection all over the world. A green light at night marks the 'starboard'—right-hand side of a vessel—and a red light the 'port' side; while a red light on railways is the signal for danger. A colour-blind pilot or look-out has no means of knowing, on a stormy night, whether a vessel that he must pass is steering to the right hand or to the left; and a locomotive engineer, who cannot distinguish between red and green, does not know the difference between danger and safety to the hundreds of passengers whose lives are in his hands."

The defect, as we have said, is much more common than used to be supposed. "Of a large number of men examined in Europe and America, four or five per cent. have been found colour-blind. It is rather odd that women enjoy comparatively a singular immunity, and it has been suggested that, until a careful system of testing has been adopted, ladies who feel aggrieved that their sphere of usefulness is too much restricted might well inscribe this fact on their banners in an advance by land and sea on every position where signal lights are used."

Many errors of observation result from short sight, but these can always be corrected by the aid of spectacles, and no false notion of what is or is not becoming should prevent girls from availing themselves of these helps to clear vision. Those who, for fear of spoiling their looks, go peering about without glasses, do not know how much they miss. To the short-sighted, spectacles form the gate of entrance to a new world.

We may here notice another error. Because short-sighted people can see small objects with great distinctness, and are often able to read after middle age without glasses, there is a popular notion that short-sighted eyes are stronger than others. This is a dangerous delusion.

Some curious errors of sight originate in a singular property which belongs to the eye of becoming phosphorescent by pressure. This phosphorescence has been observed by all of us who have "seen stars" on receiving a sudden accidental blow on the eye or the head. In ill-health the phosphorescence often takes varied and alarming forms, several colours being frequently seen at once. "When we consider," says Sir David Brewster, "the variety of distinct forms which in a state of perfect health the mind can conjure up when looking into a burning fire or upon an irregularly-shaped surface, it is easy to conceive how the masses of coloured light which float before the eye may be moulded by the same power into those fantastic and natural shapes which so often haunt the couch of the invalid, even when the mind retains its energy, and is conscious of the illusion under which it labours."

The mind practises many deceptions on itself. The phantoms of the brain sometimes assume all the vividness of actual life, and many a story of the supernatural has no other basis than mistaken inferences drawn from the stuff that dreams are made of. Many people are either occasionally or habitually subject to

these spectral illusions. But whether they be cats and dogs, or deceased friends, or unknown ghosts, all are to be classed as unsubstantial errors of observation.

How little our eyes are to be trusted may also be gathered from the study of the many scientific optical deceptions which have bewildered mankind in all ages. Not a few of the operations of ancient magic, arranged with a view to puzzle the sight, were performed by means of mirrors of different kinds, and most of us know the secret of the ghost which so long attracted crowds to the now defunct Polytechnic.

To speak now of the sense of hearing, we find that neither is it to be always relied on. "There is no species of deception," says Sir David Brewster, "more irresistible in its effects than that which arises from the uncertainty with which we judge of the direction and distance of sounds." Many a legend of ghostly voices in old castles has had its origin in this uncertainty, coupled with the inclination that most people have to imagine and believe in the marvellous.

Some errors of observation in connection with the origin and direction of sounds mentioned by Dugald Stewart are very curious. He tells of his having seen a person who, by counterfeiting the gesticulations of a performer on the violin, while he imitated the music by his voice, riveted the eyes of the audience on the instrument, though every sound they heard proceeded from his own mouth. Another man, who imitated the whistling of the wind through a narrow chink, told Dugald Stewart that he had frequently practised this deception in the corner of a coffee-house, and that he seldom failed to see some of the company rise to examine the tightness of the windows, while others, more intent on their newspaper, contented themselves with putting on their hats and buttoning their coats.

The feats of ventriloquism succeed very much because our ears are so easily misled. By studying the modifications which sounds of all kinds undergo from distance, obstructions, and other causes, and by carefully observing the differences which exist between different voices, ventriloquists contrive to produce the most surprising effects, and to shake any confidence we may have remaining in our own powers of observation.

In connection with taste, it is an error to think that is more reliable than either sight or hearing. To illustrate this, we may quote a well-known experiment. A man's eyes are bandaged, and he is made to drink alternately of port and sherry; at first he has no difficulty in telling the one wine from the other, but after a few sips it becomes impossible for him to say which is which.

It is an error to suppose that the observations made by the sense of taste are in every one alike, and that what pleases one will please everybody. The same is to be said of the sense of smell. "In few things," remarks the late Mr. G. H. Lewes, "do human beings differ more widely than in their sense of smell. Not only is the acuteness of this sense markedly different in different men, but in twenty men having average susceptibility perhaps no two will be found to agree in considering the same odours agreeable."

"Musk is notoriously offensive to many persons; others do not like mignonette; some do not recognise any odour at all in a flower considered very odorous by others. The *Iris persica* was found by Turner to have a pleasant odour by forty out of fifty-four persons, a disagreeable odour by one, and very little scent by four others. Of thirty persons, twenty-three held the *Anemone nemorosa* agreeable in its perfume, and the other seven did not think that it smelled at all."

The smells that are generally disliked are probably just as numerous as the odours that

are generally enjoyed. Between the two, however, there is a wide debatable ground in regard to which the utmost diversity of opinion prevails.

Observations made by the sense of touch are often erroneous. Perhaps this arises from the skin not being everywhere equally susceptible to the same kind of impressions. The face, according to Mr. Lewes, "is more sensitive than the hand to temperature; the sole of the foot is more sensitive than the back to tickling; the tips of the fingers are more sensitive than the palm of the hand to pain, and less to tickling. In cold weather we see men beating their hands together or clapping their sides to stir a little warmth; but they never think of slapping their faces with this energy."

So much for some of the errors that lie in wait at the five gateways of knowledge: now for a few remarks of a more general nature. It is important not to fall into the error of observing with our senses only; we should observe also with our brains—indeed, the mind should be as active as the eyes and ears. That is the only way to have our observations deep and lasting enough. Without mental exertion they will be quite superficial and of very little practical value.

There is a wonderful difference between people in regard to the keenness and intensity of their observations, and one notices it particularly when they come to describe the incidents or scenes in which they have played a part. How vivid the pictures called up by those who have observed everything vividly, and how colourless and often contradictory are the descriptions of others whose observation is languid and unintellectual.

This error of vision without thought and without sympathy has been well illustrated by an American poet:—

"The one, with yawning made reply,
'What have we seen? not much have I;
Trees, meadows, mountains, groves, and
streams,
Blue sky, and clouds, and sunny gleams."

"The other, smiling, said the same,
But with face transfigured and eye of
flame:—
'Trees, meadows, mountains, groves, and
streams,
Blue sky, and clouds, and sunny gleams."

It is an error to deny facts merely because they do not harmonise with our own observations, as if nothing ever happened in the world outside the limits of our own narrow experience. Tales of travellers have often been met by a storm of sceptical derision on the part of the public for no other reason than this, and many examples could be given of men such as Bruce, the celebrated African explorer, deprived to a large extent of the praise that was their due by the thick-headedness of fireside criticism. Because statements sound wonderful it does not follow that they are untrue. What, for instance, would we say if the inhabitants of a tropical climate who had never seen snow or experienced frost laughed to scorn our accounts of frozen rivers bearing crowds of people, and of the water in the sky coming down in flakes like wool?

Another common error is to draw wrong inferences from our observations. A man sees a girl than whom his eyes never beheld any one more beautiful and graceful, and immediately he jumps to the conclusion that she is as good as she is fair, in which he is often much mistaken. A girl takes the light friendliness of a universally-courted man as an indication of heartfelt affection. And so with all of us. We see well enough, but we fail in our inferences. We suppose beauty to be more than skin deep; we think all who seem friendly are really so; we conclude that the well-dressed are always

rich, and think every man in dirty shoes must be a beggar. We infer that a man who knows the titles of books is equally familiar with their contents; believe that the face which smiles abroad can never scowl by the fireside, and take every will-o'-the-wisp to be a kindly light in a cottage window.

Yes, it is a great error to fancy things are always what they seem. Hazlitt tells that, when a boy, he lived within sight of a range of lofty hills, whose blue tops, blending with the setting sun, often tempted his longing eyes and wandering feet. They seemed to belong to a world of light and glory; but at last he put his project in execution, and, on a nearer approach, instead of glimmering air woven into fantastic shapes, found them huge lumpish masses of discoloured earth.

Those fall into error who fancy that the explanations given at the present day of our observations are certain to hold good for all time. We all know of the error committed by our forefathers when they thought that the earth was flat and the sun sank down to rest in the sea. So it may be with some of the observations of to-day, for science, we may be sure, has not yet discovered the why and wherefore of everything.

It is an error in observation not to be eager for the discovery of truth. Things are too often taken without anything like a proper examination. Our senses frequently are dazzled, and sometimes they are deceived, as when we are thrown out in our estimate of a lady's age by her dyeing her hair.

The next error is to suppose that we see anything more than we are educated to see. Just as we believe what we want to believe, so we see precisely what we look for and bring eyes to see. Notice how the artist's vision will detect colours and effects of light and shade where untrained eyes see only vague, shadowless forms.

Imagination also interferes with our powers of observation, as when in every bush the thief sees a police officer; and occasionally we ourselves place obstacles in the way of our noticing things rightly, like the man who held a farthing so close to his eye that he could not distinguish a sovereign a little way off.

It is an error in observation not to keep a sharp eye on oneself. We all know how the poet wished that some power would impart the gift of seeing ourselves as others see us, for

"It would from many a blunder free us,
And foolish notion."

The attitude of disinterested spectators in regard to our own thoughts and actions is what we ought to aim at. Self-love must be stifled, and we must acquire the habit of placing ourselves outside ourselves, cool and impartial, ready to blame and ready to praise, wherever blame and praise are due.

To understand human life some take to observing mankind, but the right rule is to observe ourselves. Leaving out of account a few accidents, all people are much alike, and she who would gain acquaintance with the thoughts, the motives, the feelings and the passions of her neighbours, must be rich in knowledge of her own heart. It is a study which, if it sometimes elevates us by the discovery of generous sentiments and noble impulses, will on the whole keep us pretty humble.

Observe, then, girls; observe, and go on observing. But, every rule having its exceptions, observation itself is sometimes an error. Blindness is occasionally golden just as silence is credited with being, and Oliver Wendell Holmes had good reason for exclaiming—

"Oh, what a precious book the one would be
That taught observers what they're not to
see!"

The kindly disposed will be very unobserving whenever they meet with personal peculiarities, indications of genteel poverty, and the thousand-and-one things which people, as a rule, do not wish to have noticed and commented upon; and when the skeleton stalks forth unbidden from some friend's cupboard she is capable of any meanness who would play the part of Peeping Molly instead of shutting her eyes and looking the other way.

THE GIRL'S OWN HOME.

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AN OLD-WORLD STORY.

BY FREDERIC E. WEATHERLY.

SHE sits in an old-world garden
In the depth of the shadows dim,
But her heart is away in the twilight
As she dreams, and dreams of him.

He sits with the magic moonlight
Alone in the chamber dim,

And he shapes his heart to a poem
To speak to her soul of him.

It is all an old-world story,
Things are not what they seem;
She is only a beautiful poem,
And he but a maiden's dream.