

DIANA.

BY PAUL BLAKE.

BESIDE the busy little brook
Which skirts that clump of cedars
Sits fair Diana with her book,
Most picturesque of readers.

By idle tales she sets no store,
Her passion is for knowledge;
She's reading up a treatise for
The tutor of her college.

She knows the structure of the eyes,
Can state the Great Bear's distance,
Can tell you where Coimbo lies,
Or gauge the wind's resistance.

She knows how fast the planets spin,
Can trace a comet's orbit;
She likes to plunge the litmus in
The acids which absorb it.

She drives half mad her brother Jack,
Who's fresh from Alma Mater,
With questions on the Zodiac,
Or Sanscrit forms of pater.

She's sorry ladies can't as yet
Join Christchurch, Caius, or Merton,
But means to ask papa to let
Her go next year to Girton.

HOW TO KEEP A COMMONPLACE BOOK.



COMMONPLACE books for bookworms!" "Not so; commonplace books, rather, Susan, for you and for everybody." Well said, Nanette, you always back me up. But let us have a talk about commonplace books, and Susan and all who think with her will most likely change their minds. The great object of reading is, or at any rate ought to be, self-improvement. We should use books as a means of culture, and it is therefore an important question how to get the largest possible amount of good out of them.

Nothing more easy, you say. Just read away, and remember everything you read. With all respect for you, Susan, I don't think much of that observation. *Could* you remember everything, and *would* you if you could? Memories are not like that famous tent we have all heard about, which, when it was taken out of the nutshell, was no more than the right size to hold the prince, but grew and grew till at last it sheltered all his army, though that army was as numerous as the sand on the seashore. No; we must have an aid to memory, and the best aid, say I, is a well-kept commonplace book.

Remembering everything, too, would be a misfortune, for a great deal of what we read we may as well forget. It may be quite useless to us, or may fail to harmonise with our individuality; and when that is the case, to be eager to keep it in mind is about as absurd as if we were to follow the example of the ostrich, and take to stuffing ourselves with stones and tenpenny nails. Here, again, the commonplace book steps in. We put in it exactly what suits us—just those things we wish to remember and want to refer to again.

But a commonplace book should contain more than mere references to books. We should store up in it references to personal history and observation. There will also be thoughts that strike us, thoughts that seem to have come flying through the air to find a home in our minds. Put these down. They

will, first of all, most likely be inserted in your journal, if you keep a journal, and entries should be transferred from time to time from your journal to your commonplace book.

"Divide your learning," remarks someone, "between your memory and your note-books." A commonplace book is an index to our intellectual life, and you know what the poet says—

"Index learning turns no student pale,
But holds the eel of science by the tail."

Neglecting a commonplace book, you give the go-by to an essential part of the art of reading and thinking.

To some, of course, a commonplace book will prove of greater utility than to others, and especially it will be of use to those happiest of people who have to work for their living. By its means we accumulate a store of information bearing on our occupations, and so gain more and more the mastery over what we have to do. Let governesses, teachers of music, art students, book-keepers, clerks, and girls in shops and warehouses only keep such a book with regularity for, let us say, a year, with special reference, if they like, to their own pursuits, and then say whether they have not now had pointed out to them one of the secrets of worldly success.

Every Sunday-school teacher also ought to keep a commonplace book. It was remarked some months back by a writer in this magazine of ours that "in nine cases out of ten those who fail in teaching are those who fail in preparing." Now, a great portion of the work of preparing consists in the accumulation of material, and everyone will acknowledge that that accumulation should be set about in the most orderly manner possible.

The question now arises, how is our commonplace book to be kept? It must have one leading feature—easy reference—and that is not so easy to obtain. A book without arrangement is a mass of learned lumber, interesting and amusing it may be to look over, but of no service when we really want anything.

There is not much chance of our getting a plan without some disadvantages, but amongst the many which have been advocated from time to time, the best, I think, is that recommended by the Rev. Dr. John Todd, the author of "The Student's Manual." Whether he invented it or not I do not know—most likely not. This commonplace book on Todd's principle I shall now describe. It is neither difficult to start nor to understand.

Buy first of all a book of blank paper, ruled, if you like, with faint blue lines. The number of pages should be either a few over 260, or a few over 520. The size of the page will depend much on taste, and a good deal also on the size of your handwriting. For this sort of work the smaller and neater that is the better.

Rule every page with a line a short distance from the top, and another line parallel to the left-hand margin, and just far enough away from it to admit of writing an ordinary-sized word between the margin and the line.

Then divide the pages amongst the letters of the alphabet. Suppose your book has two hundred and sixty pages, that will admit of giving ten pages to each letter.

Take the ten pages devoted to A and divide these amongst the five vowels *a, e, i, o, u*, two pages to each, the reason for which you will see presently. Place now at the top of pages 1 and 2 "A—*a*," on pages 3 and 4 "A—*e*," on pages 5 and 6 "A—*i*," on pages 7 and 8 "A—*o*," and on pages 9 and 10 "A—*u*." Three examples are given below, and these will show you better than any amount of writing exactly what is to be done.

Treat the next ten pages, those devoted to B, in precisely the same way: "B—*a*," "B—*e*," "B—*i*," "B—*o*," "B—*u*." Then deal with C, then with D, and so on to the end of the alphabet.

Your commonplace book is now ready for use. The rule under which all entries are made in it is this: Fix on a word under which the entry is to appear; take the first letter and the first vowel following the first letter, and place the entry on the page at the top of which that letter and vowel stand. The catchword is to go in the space ruled off to the left of the page.

A	a	A	e	A	i

Thus, supposing we had to enter "Music, a new theory of," &c., we would place it on the page headed by "M—*u*," entering the word music in the space ruled off, right under the capital M.

The following examples will perhaps make the matter still plainer:—

C.	i.
Cries	Street: "New Oysters, new!"—"Selections from the works of Thomas Ravenscroft (<i>Pam-melia</i>), p. 3.
Children	Among my few blessings, I have always reckoned this, that every child in the world loves me. Amongst grown men I question whether there are five upon earth who do.— <i>Landor</i> : "Letter to Southey, quoted in <i>Forster's Life of Landor</i> ," i. 452.
Criticism	A principle which underlies all Goethe's critical writings is that of expatiating on the good and the positive, and of passing over in silence the defective or the mistaken, as if it were a nonentity—a mere negation.
Cries	Street: The Common Cries of London Town. "Popular Music of the Olden Time."— <i>Chappell</i> (vol. i.), 219.
Children	Talking nonsense to: "Queen's English."— <i>Alford</i> , p. 334, <i>et seq.</i>
Chinese	Character: "Philosophy of History."— <i>Hegel</i> , p. 144 (Bohn's Ed.)

Our remaining examples should, of course, be entered under the letters printed in the margin in italics.

A—a. Arabia not a land of song. That Arabia is a land of song is an agreeable delusion.—"Arabia," *Palgrave*, i. 310.

A—e. Affectation, Thoughts on.—"Critical Essays," *Foster*, i. 34.

A—i. Amiability: Truly, better is amiability than beauty.—"Four Ancient Books of Wales," *Skene*, p. 574.

A—i. Animals, Folk-lore of.—"Popular Tales from the Norse," *Dasent*, intro., p. 58, *et seq.*

B—e. Bells: Not used by Mohammedans.—"Thousand and One Nights," *Lane*, i. 429.

B—e. Beauty: An indication of high birth.—"Danish Ballads," *Prior*, i. 258, 261.

"Tell me . . .

Of what so noble race you're born
To be so passing fair."

B—e. Beauty, Ideas of, in the Middle Ages.—"Ancient Danish Ballads," *Prior*, i. 255.

B—i. Bible, The Language of the. The language of our English Bible is not the language of 1611 (when it was translated), but the language which prevailed from time to time during the previous century. For the translators of the Authorised Version made use, when they could, of the version of the New Testament by Tyndale, of 1525.

B—o. Brother and Sister: Original meaning of *bhṛātṛ* seems to have been he who carries or assists; of *skusar*, she who pleases or consoles; *svasti* meaning in Sanscrit joy or happiness.

E—i. Epitaphs, Famous:

"Renowned Spenser, lie a little more nigh
To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie
A little nearer Spenser, to make room
For Shakespeare in your three-fold, four-
fold tomb."

Will. Basse, on Shakespeare.

F—o. Flowers, Folklore of: Honey-suckle—Charm against evil.—"Tales of the West Highlands," *J. F. Campbell*, iv. 417. Ivy—Charm against fairies, iv. p. 342.

L—i. Life: Shall I not everywhere enjoy the light of the sun and stars? and may I not seek and contemplate, in every corner of the earth, under the canopy of heaven, consoling and delightful truth?—*Dante*. Quoted by Longfellow. Tr. of "Inferno," p. 200.

L—i. Life: The life of a Christian man is nothing but a readiness to die and a remembrance of death.—*Latimer*.

S—o. Sorrow:

"Oh, there is never sorrow of heart
That shall lack a kindly end,
If but to God we turn and ask
Of Him to be our friend."

Wordsworth, "The Force of Prayer," p. 373.

T—u. Truth: All men wish to have truth on their side, but few to be on the side of truth.—"Aphorisms," *Whately*, p. 9.

W—o. Woman's reason: I have no other than a woman's reason—I think him so because I think him so.—*Shakespeare*, "Two Gentlemen of Verona," i. 2.

Y—o. Young, Characteristics of the: One of the discriminating characteristics of the young is that they are lovers of honour, and still more lovers of victory.—*Aristotle*, "Rhetoric."

Some letters, it will be found in practice, require more space than others, but the letters which are fullest will depend to a great extent on your own individuality. Everyone has some pet subjects, and these naturally will have most entries. As a rule, too, such letters as I, K, Q, X, Y, and Z will have rather an idle time of it, but all these things you are perhaps as well to discover for yourself.

In making your entries, a very important matter is the catchword. This should be the word representing the leading idea, the word, in fact, by which you would be most likely to refer to the entry again. For instance, if you were going to enter this article, it would go in a page devoted to *C—o*. "Commonplace Book, How to Keep a," *GIRL'S OWN PAPER*, vol. iii., p. 601. You would not think of placing it under "How"—of course not.

When two catchwords suggest themselves it is best to enter both in their respective places, giving the full entry in one case, and in the other only a cross-reference. Thus, in the above examples, we have an entry "Animals, Folklore of," and this should have a cross-reference, "Folklore of Animals—See Animals." The entry, "Birds, Folklore of"—if there were such an entry—should be treated in the same way, and "Brother and Sister" given above should have a cross-reference, "Sister and Brother—See Brother."

It is also a common plan to have a few general headings, for the purpose of grouping entries together, but the fewer of these general headings we have the better. Under the general heading of "Advice," for instance, we would place such a maxim of prudent counsel as—

"The mouse that always trusts to one poor
hole

Can never be a mouse of any soul."

Pope, "Wife of Bath," 298.

A commonplace book is one of use only to the owner, and should never be so much as seen by other people. I remember hearing an eminent author say that in his will he had ordered all his commonplace books to be burned, perhaps for this reason chiefly, but also from a charitable wish that a whole army of critics might find employment in discovering with what old bones his genius had been manured.

Make the entries in your commonplace books whenever it suits you best. The great point is, once having adopted a system to stick to it. It is not a bad plan when reading a book to make a little pencil mark in the margin over against those things which you think are worth entering, and when the book is finished, write up your commonplace book before returning the book to the library or replacing it on your shelves. Other entries you are better to make at once in your note-book, transferring them at intervals from that to your commonplace book.

When once an entry is made, do not think you have done with it for ever. Turn over your commonplace book frequently, and every day will be found to add to its value and suggestiveness. By such means as this, girls, we become more useful members of society, and enjoy what is best worth enjoying—a vigorous, intellectual life.

JAMES MASON.

WHEN I WAS A GIRL.

By FAIRLEIGH OWEN.



OFTEN wonder, looking back over the lapse of years, whether any of you who read this will be able to recall as many differences between these days and those of half a century, say, to come. It seems difficult to suppose so, for the introduction of railways has, of course, caused such marvellous changes in every way. Still, there is no knowing what the development of sciences, yet in their infancy (as so we are told) may do for the future. You may be sailing through the air in balloons, and conversing with absent friends by word of mouth across the Atlantic. None can tell.

But it is of minor matters I am thinking just now.

Say you want a light. You draw a match across the roughened side of a box; in a moment the candle, lamp, or gas is kindled, the match blown out, thrown away, and no more is thought about it. Nothing could be easier or quicker.

But fancy having to strike with a piece of flint upon a steel, shaped for your hand to hold, something like the handle of a small kettle. These you struck for some minutes, till the sparks which flew out fell upon a piece of tinder in a box below; then you puffed at the spark, holding to it a brimstone match till that ignited, and a flame was obtained. Then the lid of the little round tinder-box was popped down upon the tinder, and its smouldering sparks were quenched.

The tinder was made of a bit of old linen scorched for the purpose; the matches were thin strips of wood about four inches in length, pointed at each end, and dipped into yellow brimstone, which had a most repulsive smell in burning, and was apt to get down your throat and into your eyes, and set you coughing; while in unskilful hands the steel had a vicious habit of striking one's knuckles instead of the flint. Too often a draught from an opening door would extinguish the newly-lighted candle, when all the ceremony had to be gone through again.

Fancy all this, on a cold winter morning, before a light could be obtained.

But careful housewives, in order to obviate the necessity for "striking a light," were accustomed to burn a rushlight set in a contrivance especially adapted for it: a long tin cylinder pierced full of holes, whose ghostly shadow thrown upon walls and ceiling in the silent hours of the night will be among the familiar memories of my contemporaries when they were young.

I saw a tinder-box and steel the other day in a museum among the "curiosities," and I almost expected to see by their side the snuffers and snuffer-tray which were wont to hold the place of honour between the tall, silver candlesticks on every table. How