

the various gradations of a household, until all should co-operate in an intelligent spirit for the common good.

The objection urged against the introduction of high-class servants, or lady helps, that they will injure the poorer classes by increasing competition, and so make it more and more difficult for the latter to get those situations which they have hitherto obtained so easily but filled so inefficiently, is only a temporary one, and one which, besides indicating its own remedy, would do further good by introducing, to some extent, compulsory education. For so soon as poor or careless or selfish parents perceive that their daughters, if found incompetent for the work they undertake, will no longer be employed, because more excellent substitutes can be found, then they will eagerly avail themselves of every local training agency—such as the free Female Industrial Schools, &c.—in which, in addition to the normal branches of English education, domestic duties or housewifery shall be systematically taught.

If then girls will only set about this mission in a right spirit, they may be sure of both welcome and reward. Ladies who are the heads of households would quickly discern in them their most valuable auxiliaries, and the increase of order, for which they would feel themselves indebted to their superior intelligence, would soon find its expression in a more gracious form of converse than has been possible

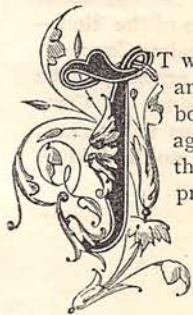
between mistresses and their servants. For all, profiting by the new arrangements, will find more time and inclination for friendly intercourse; and a lady may again, as in the olden times, find safe and pleasant pastime while sitting among her maidens—she in this way acquiring a deeper interest in them as members of her family, and they (unrepressed and unproved) admiring and imitating in her matters of greater moment to themselves than some fashion of dress or some prettiness of speech or demeanour.

It will be seen from the scope of the foregoing remarks, that their writer disapproves of educating women with any other view than that of fitting them for their own undoubted sphere—home—where woman's work remains, and will remain, as important in itself and as imperative in its requirements as ever.

Women will thus continue to recognise in men their natural guardians and protectors, and will yield to them the more public, the more exhausting, the more dangerous, and also the more lucrative employments; and they will carefully cherish those privileges and immunities which are their veritable "rights," by continuing to excel in those special branches of knowledge which tend to increase domestic happiness, seeing that, while they will find it difficult to attend to two different things at once and impossible to be in two places at the same time, yet they, as the very centre of the home-circle, will there assuredly find themselves to be the right persons in the right place. J. M<sup>C</sup>D.

## ON KEEPING A COMMONPLACE BOOK,

### AND HOW TO TURN IT TO PRACTICAL ACCOUNT.



IT would be idle at the present day to say anything in favour of books. Ever since books were, the greatest authors of all ages have given eloquent testimony to their inestimable value; they have been praised in prose and celebrated in song, have been collected and arrayed in splendid bindings, and sometimes confined up by bibliomaniacs as too precious to be put into the hands of mere readers; and they have, alas! been ruthlessly burnt and otherwise destroyed by barbarous conquerors. "Wondrous indeed is the virtue of a true book," says Carlyle; and he only echoes what many a thankful reader and scholar has said before him. Friends may change, and the dreams of youth fade away, but a man who seeks consolation in books will secure companions whose friendship will never fail him, and in whom he himself will find more and more to admire every day. Well might Southey write in the familiar lines—

"My days among the dead are passed;  
Around me I behold,  
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,  
The mighty minds of old:  
My never-failing friends are they,  
With whom I converse night and day."

It is not, however, with books in general that we have to deal now, but rather with one particular kind of book, which should contain within itself the essence of a good many others—that is to say, a *Commonplace Book*. The dictionary definition of it is a good one:—"A book in which things to be remembered are recorded and arranged under general heads." How many of the readers of this article keep such a book? Those who do will know its value without any explanation, and those who do not may, it is to be hoped, be tempted to commence such a volume at once. Let us see, then, what a *Commonplace Book* is. Every one who reads must from time to time be struck with certain special passages—a particular piece of prose, or more than ordinarily beautiful thought in verse, a reference or quotation, it may be—at all events, it is a something which causes the reader to pause for a moment and vaguely wish that the particular passage or thought should not be forgotten. But memory is treacherous, and as other ideas follow which we might also like to treasure, the author's words and thoughts very soon slip away from us. Or take another case. We are reading a newspaper, and come upon an article on some special subject of which we have long wished for fresh information. In one part there is a passage which contains an account of an invention

which strikes us as well worth remembrance. We read it, and trust to the chapter of accidents to remember it; or we put aside the newspaper for preservation, in which case it is usually lost; or we cut out the passage and pocket it, when a similar fate overtakes the extract. Or again, to come down to more homely matters, you notice in some paper or periodical a good recipe, some hint on household economy, or decorative art. You may remember it or you may not; at any rate, some method of insuring yourself against forgetfulness is desirable.

Now in all these cases, and in many more which might be mentioned, what is wanted is a *Commonplace Book*—that is to say, a good-sized volume wherein any extract which specially takes your fancy can be either copied or pasted, according to circumstances. Captain Cuttle's famous advice, "When found, make a note of," which forms the motto of a periodical *Commonplace Book*, is admirable advice, and it is astonishing what a valuable collection of extracts, hints, inventions, epigrams, and quotations of all kinds a person may gather in a very few years. Of course a certain discretion must be exercised. Many people, on first starting a *Commonplace Book*, commence to overstock it with all sorts of odds and ends of no particular importance. The volume thus becomes a lumber-room instead of a storehouse of valuables, and is of very little use. Each person, too, will act upon different principles of selection, extracting for various purposes, and with different aims; so that a *Commonplace Book* would reflect with fair accuracy the bent of a man's or a woman's mind, and the direction of its owner's tastes.

In keeping such a book, two things are essential if it is to be a success. In the first place, copy out your extract or paste it in directly you have decided it is worth preserving. If you put it off, the chances are that you will be unable to find the passage when you want it again, or it will be altogether forgotten. In the second place, your *Commonplace Book* should have a carefully compiled index, and each extract should be indexed under two different headings if

possible, for convenience of reference. This, too, should be done when the extract is put in. An index compiled in this way by degrees is easily made, and will probably be an accurate one; whereas if left to be done after the completion of the book, it is troublesome to make, and very likely to contain mistakes. There is no occasion to make it strictly alphabetical at first; a mere classification under each letter will be sufficient for some time, and a rearrangement can easily be made afterwards. It is a good plan to keep the index in a separate volume, for its length can never be accurately gauged, and it is also easier to rearrange. A reference under two heads—the author and the subject for instance, in the case of a quotation—is useful, because in one case you may remember that the author wrote on that subject, and in another you may recall the idea but forget the author. In any case an index is indispensable; in fact, without one you will probably spend more time in searching for your extract than it is worth when found.

It is almost unnecessary to dilate on the value of a *Commonplace Book* kept with discretion. There is hardly any pursuit in which a man or woman can be engaged that will not at times receive aid from such a volume. There are, no doubt, certain occupations—notably those connected with literature and art—which would benefit most by a *Commonplace Book*. But apart from its use, such a volume is a source of much pleasure to the possessor as well as to others, and the extracts made in youth will be read with a curious interest in after-life. We may conclude, then, by advising all our readers to keep such literary granaries, and by quoting old Fuller, who 200 years ago was lecturer at St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street. He says—and the last words would form a good motto for a volume of the kind—"I know some make a commonplace against *Commonplace Books*, and yet perchance will privately make use of what they publicly declaim against. A *Commonplace Book* contains many notions in garrison, whence the owner may draw an army into the field on competent warning."



### MARGUERITE.

WHISPER not of sunny faces  
 Ever glad with golden light,  
 Where moist tear-drops leave no traces,  
 Dimming never eyelids bright;  
 Tell me not of rosy blushes  
 Ever glowing on the cheek;  
 Neither sing of golden flushes—  
 Not of such things would I speak;  
 But of sun and shadow, sweet—  
 Thee, my little Marguerite!

Whisper not of sorrowing faces  
 Dulled with gloomy doubts and fears;  
 Hearts that droop in shadowed places,  
 Eyelids ever wet with tears.  
 Tell me not of pale rose-blossom,  
 Ever changeless, ever white;  
 Cold within's the icy bosom—  
 Sing not, then, of such to-night;  
 But of rain and sunshine, sweet—  
 Of thyself, my Marguerite!