

## HOW TO KEEP A JOURNAL.



one's daily life.

It is quite a mistake to think that memory will answer well enough, and that all the events of our lives can be carried in our heads. Set them down in black and white, for memories are fickle and the deepest impressions in a few years fade away. I have even noticed that many a sensation, which at the moment seemed as if it would last for ever, has become very dim after a week.

A journal is a convenient storehouse of personal experience. "But," you say, "my personal experience is not worth the storing. I am only a girl leading a quiet life, without adventures and without incidents—one to whom to-day is like every other day, and every other day like to-day." For all that keep a journal, and you will be surprised how much you will find worth setting down and worth reading over, too. Your journal, it is true, will not be one of sensational interest; but for this, like those happy nations who have no history, you may be thankful.

It is not a hard task, my dear. The chief difficulty lies not in the starting of the journal, but in the keeping of it up. But you are not clever, you object. Stuff and nonsense! we know better than that. Cleverness, however, is not requisite, for your journal is to be nothing more than a faithful record of what goes on in that little world of which you are the centre. Fine writing, ornamental flourishes, and philosophic flights are all out of place.

In its pages, for one thing, you should make mention of all the people you know. There will be the friends who are dear to you, the pleasant acquaintances you have met, and the people of interest who have crossed your path. Family gatherings should be noticed, and all the changes which year after year are altering your circle for the better or for the worse. You should record the letters you write under the dates when they were written; the preachers you have heard, and the concerts you have attended.

Your studies should also have a conspicuous place, so that turning to your journal you may ascertain at once when, for example, you began to learn French, or when you took your first lesson in singing, and what progress, rapid or slow, you have made in those lines of learning in which one day you mean to be proficient. The prizes and certificates you contend for should be included, and, as in a journal one is, as it were, talking to oneself, I hope you will never fail to mention your failures as well as your successes.

The places you visit should also be entered. You may chance never to see these a second time, so it is a good plan in every case to write on the spot a few lines of description for the purpose of at some future time reviving your recollection.

Our lives are greatly influenced by the accidents that befall us, and the circumstances into the midst of which we are thrown. These should always be recorded. But we must be cautious in doing this, or, at any rate, in indulging in prediction, lest we get into the habit of thinking every incident a revolution, and every trifle a catastrophe. There are some moments, no doubt, about which there can be no mistake—when sudden light breaks in upon the mind, and all things appear, and indeed are to us, quite new; but these are very rare, and it is not prudent to assume, even in a journal, that they have arrived.

What a host of other things remain to be included in your journal! There are the records of your little adventures, and, spite of what you have said, you know you have little adventures; your bright days of happiness; the books you have read, and what you have thought of them; the names of the books you have bought, and the magazines you have subscribed to; the clever sayings you have heard; the odd things you have seen; the romances in real life you have met with—and everyone meets with some—the strange ups and downs of this world of change, as these affect and interest yourself; the many good resolutions you have formed, and, alas! the many good resolutions you have broken.

Should you be anything of a naturalist, you will find an additional pleasure in recording all the phenomena of the circling year, and of posting up in your journal your notes from the book of nature. Human life must ever be of most interest; but birds and flowers and wind and rain have a charm of their own, and it is no proof of a superior intelligence to be above taking an interest in butterflies and beetles.

One common fault of journal-writing is a morbid self-consciousness. No fault could be worse, either in a journal or in anything else; but I am not afraid that you, who are always so natural, will fall into it. The journal you will keep will be one of incident and observation rather than one of reflection; it will not be so much a picture of your mind as a record of the events of your life. And such, to my thinking, is for most persons the most sensible form of journal.

The great interest of a journal of course begins after it has been kept for some time. We turn it up then to review our past life, and see our existence as an artistic whole. We observe what changes have come over us; how our surroundings have altered, and our friends, and our pursuits, and our likes and dislikes.

You think you will never change, do you? Wait a while, and, perhaps, as some one has put it, "you will then burn all you now worship and worship all you now think only good to burn." And as for other people, why our stars often prove but meteors, and the idols of our existence have a sad habit of getting cracked and sometimes even of bursting outright.

A journal reminds us of many a day-dream we have indulged in, and of many a speculation as to the future which has not been realised. It is prudent, by the way, to confine these speculations to one's journal. I know you think you will one day be a duchess, but don't speak about it, which makes you almost as ridiculous as the American who was so confident of being successful at the Presidential election, that he liberally distributed his carte-visite with the inscription, "Mr. So-and-so, Future President of the United States."

Every year you should make a point of going regularly over your journal, and taking note of all you have seen and done. This will enable you to lead a more orderly life in future; to see, sometimes in a remarkable manner, the connection between the present and the past; and to recognise, over and over again, the Hand which is leading us and the care that is protecting us every moment.

You may have noticed that those who keep

journals are, as a rule, good conversationists, and specially entertaining when they relate their own experiences. No doubt this comes from the act of writing. An incident which we have taken pains to narrate pithily with the pen can usually be repeated quite as pithily with the tongue. Journals are also very handy for letter-writers, especially for those who have a large friendly correspondence. There is no need for sitting down and biting one's pen for information: turn up your journal and there it is. The only awkward feature is that should your correspondence ever come to be collected for the purpose of writing your life, it may be found that you have sent the same thing and in much the same words to half-a-dozen different people. But, much as I admire you, this is not at all likely.

The book which it is best to use is one of the large diaries, of which so many are published at the beginning of every year. We should have one with three days to a page, which is a good allowance for most people. A great advantage possessed by this form of journal is that it admits of our entering engagements in advance, calls to be made, promises to be kept, and so on.

There are usually two or three pages of blank paper at the beginning of the diaries we speak of, and these may be easily and profitably filled up. It is a sensible plan to begin by setting down all those good resolutions by which we would regulate our lives. Almost everyone who is thoughtful has such good resolutions, though perhaps not reduced to writing, but the writing of them in this way brings them constantly under our notice and prevents their being hid away, as they are very apt to be, when most needed, in some dark corner of the memory.

After these resolutions should come a list of friends, and of all those people we would like to keep in mind, with their addresses. This should be succeeded by a list of birthday and other anniversaries.

Then should follow what may be called our general plans: books to be read, places to be visited, walks to be taken, subjects we propose to study; all things, in short, regarding which we have no date fixed.

Last of all should come any notes regarding the money we may have to spend during the year; how much may be allowed for this and how much for that, so that we may at no time be in danger of "outrunning the constable."

As the year goes on this portion of the journal will, no doubt, be subjected to alteration, for we will be modifying our resolutions, changing our circle, and completing our plans. With every new journal, of course, it should be entirely re-written.

A journal should be written up every day, no matter how tired or busy you may be. Make it a habit, and, custom being second nature, you will soon feel as uncomfortable if you go to bed without making the necessary entries as you would if, on getting up in the morning, you neglected to wash your face. "I shall write it up to-morrow," says the voice of laziness; that is the first step towards failure.

No doubt it is a labour, but don't shirk it. Let every day finish its own business; make that one of your good resolutions, and write up your journal every day and on the spot. A journal is valuable in proportion to the freshness of the impressions it records. With what keen feeling we remember, it may be years after this, this entry was penned with some loved voice still ringing in our ears, and that in some dear old home to which we return no more. When you and I, Nanette, came in from rambling in the forest, do you think I put off till to-morrow the wonderful things you said, and the glories of nature we saw? Not I.

Perhaps, however, you may be from home, when it would be inconvenient to carry a journal. Then carry a note-book and make

the entries in it, to be copied into your journal when you have the opportunity.

It has often been remarked that quiet times, when you have most leisure for writing, are just those when there is least to write about, and that in busy times, when there is plenty to say, you cannot spare a moment. Write, say I, let the times be what they may; but write most when you have least leisure, for then you are both seeing and hearing most.

Should a journal be kept in regular form—that is, should it read just like a book? Not at all; at least, not necessarily. Perhaps the more disjointed it is the better, because it is then most natural.

It certainly must not be in the grand style, as if you were a heroine, or in the formal style, as if you wrote for publication and kept one eye on the paper and another on posterity. Let it be nothing more than a quiet and honest record of your daily life, in which you strike no attitudes and aim at being nothing but yourself.

And when should this journal be started? To-day is always the best day; so open the book and make the first entry—"Read to-day an article in THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER on 'How to Keep a Journal,' and this is the result." Good Nanette! May you live to keep it for many a year!

JAMES MASON.

## THE WEDDINGS OF THE WORLD.

By A. H. WALL.

### A WEDDING IN CHINA.

"WHEN a son is born he sleeps upon a bed; he is clothed with rich robes, and plays with pearls; everyone obeys his princely voice. When a girl is born she is cast upon the ground, is wrapped in a cloth, and plays with a tile." Thus wrote Pan-hou-pan of her own sex, in her own country, China, adding, "She can be neither vicious nor virtuous; she has only to prepare the food, make the wine, and abstain from troubling her parents."

Pan-hou-pan wrote with neither regret nor indignation of this strange contrast. In her opinion it was both proper and wise to mark by neglect and indifference the inferiority of a creature born without a soul, even in the helpless days of its infancy. In her still popular works she is continually reminding women that they have no purpose in creation beyond that of being useful and pleasing to the superior sex. The birth of such a being as a woman was a thing to be ashamed of—a sure sign of heaven's disfavour, in the estimation of Pan-hou-pan, and in that of all her countrymen and women.

A modern well-known traveller, M. Huc, describing his adventures in China, says on one occasion when leaving Leang-chan, his Chinese companion, speaking of women being Christians, exclaimed laughingly, "Isn't that nonsense!" And being told that it was not, and that, moreover, certain Chinese women were Christians, he asked, with an air of being completely puzzled, "What can women become Christians for?"

"What for?" was the reply; "to save their souls—like the men."

"But," responded the astonished Chinaman, "they have no souls. You can't make Christians of them!"

"We endeavoured," says the author in question, "to remove the worthy Chinaman's scruples—to give him a few sounder ideas on

the subject of women's souls, but we are by no means sure that we succeeded. The very notion tickled his fancy so much that he laughed with all his might. 'Nevertheless,' said he, 'I will be sure to recollect what you have been telling me, and, when I get home again to my family, I will tell my wife that she has got a soul. She will be not a little astonished, I think.'"

But, despite his laughter, it is not improbable that in his secret heart he regarded this new view of Christianity with no little dread. It seemed to him, doubtless, a veritable serpent in the garden, so that when he got home he may have prayed heartily to his grotesque little wooden god that a knowledge of equality and consequent discontent and rebellion, might never beget evil within the doors of his own little domestic paradise. For the women of China, brought up in a slavish spirit of obedience and servile humility, are generally meek and gentle, patient, timid, and long suffering, deriving from ignorance a degree of content which, as a rule, is not altogether unproductive of happiness. John Chinaman would not have his women either wise or independent. They see no evil in being without



A CHINESE MUSICAL PARTY.

a soul; they have no rights, and they want no rights. He is content with women because they are content to regard the ministering to his luxurious comforts and enjoyments as their highest, grandest, and sole privilege. For that only are they born, bred, and educated. And, again, as a rule, the good-humoured, cheerful, chatty Chinese women, devoting themselves with all their might to parents, husbands, and sons, with a generous abnegation of self which is—dare I say?—worthy of a better and a nobler cause—is admirable. Even amongst the poorest you see them decent in their apparel, modest in their behaviour, assiduous in the pursuit of their heavy monotonous labours, on the water or in the garden, field, farm, or at the loom, and seldom without a pleasant word and smile. Sometimes they are fortunate enough to win gratitude, sometimes happy enough to create love, but, as a rule, I fear the predominant idea they awaken in their masters' minds is merely that cold emotionless one that when they have done their utmost in serving or pleasing, they have but done that duty for which no thanks are fairly due.

The Chinese girl who has poor parents leads the degraded life of a slave; no out-door labour is to long or too hard for her, no treatment too bad, no punishment too severe. If her parents are lowly but not so poor, she

is regarded as the household drudge, whom no kind of work can injure or degrade. In either case she stagnates in ignorance, unable either to read or write; but, strange to say, she does not grow either dull, brutal, or apathetic. A kind word moves her to tears, and to win her heartfelt gratitude is a very easy task. The daughter of wealth fares a little better. She is not so active, and, therefore, not perhaps so happy, but her domestic work is light, and she can read and write a little, and she has amusements. She is taught music and singing, and even what the poor crippled creature calls dancing. She goes to the theatre, receives occasional visitors, and now and then is taken to the temple in a sedan chair, or a kind of wheelbarrow with curtains. But she keeps to her own chamber, has her meals apart from her father and brother, devotes considerable time to her toilet and the growth and preservation of her long claw-like nails, and yawning and sighing over her almost purposeless indolent life, is frequently glad to stupefy herself with the opium pipe.

At length there comes a time when the girl may be married, a time for which she has been longing with all her heart. Amongst those whom the law of China compel to marry, and with one of their own rank, her charms are duly but indirectly magnified, and they all know that she will be the bride of the highest bidder. Her nose is beautifully short, her lips delightfully thick, no lashes disfigure her charming black eyes. The length of her finger-nails is surprising! If these fail to attract and no bidder appears, the disconsolate father says that she was a mistake, regrets that she was not drowned directly after her birth, as thousands of other female infants are every year, and mournfully contemplates the cost of her living.

If a good offer comes, and no more bidders are likely to appear, immediate preparations are made for the wedding. At last the girl will be somebody; she is delighted to find herself for once an object of general interest; it is a grand discovery when she finds that even a girl can make all the people about her glad and merry! Her spirits rise, life assumes a brighter aspect, she dreams day-dreams, sees herself honoured and respected as a house mother, her dignity asserted even by the law, which has hitherto recognised her rather as an object for punishment than protection. She will soon no longer be a mere useless piece of furniture or a domestic drudge; or, as a Chinese author says, she should be "a shadow and an echo in the house." She knows well enough that for a time she will but live her old life over again; that marriage will not give her a right to call anything her own; that she will stand in silence to serve at table and feed on the leavings of the men; and that outside her own inner room or rooms no living soul will acknowledge her authority. But she knows also that she will be the proud mother of boys, that she will have children to love her and to be cared for.

On the day of her wedding the house is early astir. There is the greatest zeal displayed for her adornment; her looks are anxiously watched, and the perfection of her toilet is an object of overwhelming importance. Her splendid silken robes flash, gleam, and glitter with jewels and gold; her long plaits of raven hair are adorned with flowers and precious stones. She totters on her poor cribbled feet into a kind of cage, a brilliant palanquin, where she sits in state like a queen on her throne, and is carefully inspected. Most carefully, for only consider! what a dreadful