

"To be sure, miss, I ask your pardon; but 'twas Mrs. Roseberry as made the remark when she called her the other day, and noticed Allie. I told her all you had done for the child, and the old lady looked pleased."

"She isn't an old lady," said Priscilla, colouring.

"By no means, miss; but my husband and me we've worked for her and Farmer Roseberry nigh upon twenty year, and a better master and mistress never drew breath, though they're uncommon stiff if one offends 'em. She told me to bring Allie up to Melton, and we're having a new frock made, bain't we Allie?"

"All over flowers, teacher," exclaimed the child.

Priscilla was obliged to hurry away, and she was thankful, for her heart seemed bursting with the emotion of grateful joy. When she was in the lane again, she actually broke out into song, as if emulating the birds warbling their evening hymns above her. "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," were the words on her lips and in her heart, as she almost flew homeward beneath the rose-crowned canopy.

And rose-crowned it certainly was, for the sky was now aflame with sunset glow, and when she re-entered the cottage parlour it seemed a little paradise of reflected light. Her mother was awaiting her anxiously, and her usually rapid needle lingered in her hand as she watched for her appearance. She had now to recount all Allie's history, and especially to answer inquiries as to who was to pay for her keep at Brookside, and journey to and from that place; for Mrs. Fieldburn was a thrifty dame, and feared lest Priscilla should have promised to defray expenses that she could not afford.

"It is a mission, dear mother," said Priscilla. "Good people give money to enable poor, sickly, starving city children to enjoy two or three weeks in the country, and kind friends, like you and Mrs. Snell, take care of them. Little Allie is only a unit among the hundreds sent this year."

"Oh, that's it! I wish I was rich!" sighed Mrs. Fieldburn.

"This has brought Mrs. Roseberry round," said Priscilla. "She was fond of Lucy when she lived with her. I should not be surprised if she were to call and make inquiries, for, you know, she is full of good works."

"Then she oughtn't to be so stiff," replied Mrs. Fieldburn, who was herself not unstarched.

And Mrs. Roseberry did call, professedly to ask about Allie. Priscilla was much amused at the effect of the two elder ladies, as they sat erect, opposite one another, in the small parlour; but she was, nevertheless, very nervous as to the result of the interview, and managed to keep the conversation as much as possible away from the old sores, to the new point of interest.

"I don't approve of girls leaving their country homes to go flaunting about in the great towns," said Mrs. Roseberry. "Plenty to do where you are born and bred."

"Yes, Mrs. Roseberry; but if there is no situation to be had at home, and one offers elsewhere, what is one to do?" asked Priscilla.

"I am sure Priscilla acted for the best," broke in her mother, drawing herself up.

"Nobody doubts that," returned Mrs. Roseberry; which was a great concession on that lady's part. "If there is no other result than the rescue of poor Lucy's child, her work has been blessed, and God's hand is visible in it. I shall be glad to let some poor child have the run of the farm every year, my dear," she added, looking at Priscilla.

"Oh! Mrs. Roseberry, how kind!" exclaimed Priscilla, tears filling her eyes, as

she rose impulsively, and went towards her old friend; but something checked her, and she sat down again.

The adieux between her mother and Mrs. Roseberry were less stiff than the greetings, and she hoped the ice was beginning to thaw. Money matters had caused the coolness, each family feeling aggrieved in some business transaction, and the womenkind had sided with their respective lords and masters. Besides, the Fieldburns considered that the Roseberrys had looked down upon them since their reverses, and so pride widened the breach.

(To be concluded.)

COMMON ERRORS IN DAILY LIFE.

By JAMES MASON.

V.—ERRORS IN THOUGHT.



Our way through life errors are encountered at every step, and we carry a considerable number as personal baggage in our own heads. The worst of them all are errors in thought, which form

the subject of the present article. They lead us farther astray, they make greater inroads on our happiness, and they do more injury to other people than any of the mistakes which we have hitherto considered. The world is ruled by thought, and our highest duty is to think well.

An ill-regulated mind, in which everything is in confusion, governed by no settled principles, and influenced by any motive that comes uppermost, is the worst possible possession. But clear ideas, fixed principles, and right motives are within reach of us all, and errors in thought may be corrected just like errors in speech and spelling. As easily? Well, perhaps not; but a great gain, you know, deserves a great effort.

It is an error to make light of the importance of improving our minds and regulating our thoughts. Mere strength is nothing when compared with intellect. In old stories it is always the giant, you remember, who is stupid, and some clever hop-o'-my-thumb who pockets all the gold and diamonds and carries off the king's daughter. Mind always triumphs, and, as the late Professor W. Stanley Jevons says, "If even such little creatures as ants had better brains than men, they would either destroy men or make them into slaves."

A common error is to neglect accumulating material for thought, as if it were possible to think without having something to think about. She whose mind is little better than a sheet of blank paper will never have any thoughts worth mentioning. Take pains, then, girls, to acquire ideas by means of reading and conversation and the diligent exercise of an observing eye. That is the only way to make a satisfactory start in the art of thinking.

An error that often stands in the way of our storing up ideas is that we neglect to cultivate the habit of attention. "The habit of steady and continuous attention," says Dr. Abercrombie, in his work on the "Intellectual

Powers," "or of properly directing the mind to any subject that is before it, so as fully to contemplate its elements and relations . . . is necessary for the due exercise of every other mental process, and is the foundation of all improvement of character, both intellectual and moral." In order to learn, we must attend, and, having learned, then comes the serious business of reflecting on the information we have thus made our own.

But the next error is that some accumulate material and never put it to any proper use. It is like opening a shop, filling it with goods, and furnishing it with yard measures, weights and scales, and everything necessary for doing a trade and making a fortune, and then locking the front door and sitting down to look out on the street. To employ with profit our store of ideas we must cultivate the habit of reflection. It may not be easy to acquire, but it gains strength by exercise, and no habit has a more important influence on the improvement of the general character. Without reflection the greatest knowledge is very little better than ignorance, and it has been rightly held that to awaken thought in any one is of a vast deal more consequence than to impart information.

No one, says one writer, can lay any claim to the position of a thinker who cannot take two and two and add them together and make five. In other words, we must bring together the ideas we already possess, and out of them construct new ones. That is the true end of all mental labour.

It is an error to think it disgraceful to doubt and to be ignorant. Some people cannot bring themselves to say, "I have not made up my mind," "I do not know," and so speak at random. But with life so short we must be satisfied with at best only a small allowance of knowledge, compared with the great feast that lies spread before us. We cannot know everything, and it is not necessary either. Be ashamed then of folly, of passion, of stupidity, but as for being put out at not knowing the trifle that any booby thinks we ought to have at the tip of our tongue, that is quite absurd.

At the same time it is an error not to know all that we ought to be acquainted with, all, for example, that concerns our occupation, our daily duties, and our future state. Over these topics we should possess perfect mastery.

The next error to be noticed is disbelief in the possibility of self-culture. Let those who hold this error read and re-read the following words of Dr. Channing, words the truth of which is every day made more plain:—"Of all the discoveries which men need to make the most important at the present moment is that of the self-forming power, treasured up in themselves. They little suspect its extent, as little as the savage apprehends the energy which the mind is created to exert on the material world. It transcends in importance all our power over outward nature. There is more of divinity in it than in the force which impels the outward universe, and yet how little we comprehend it! How it slumbers in most men, unsuspected, unused."

When in pursuit of knowledge it is an error to believe all we hear. Some minds are very readily caught with fluent speech and plausible nonsense, but one should be always on one's guard and give credit only to those of whose accuracy of statement and soundness of reasoning we have had experience. It is impossible to go through life without a great deal of the exercise of faith; but see that your faith be given to the right people. Few have lived long without discovering the uncertainty of human opinion and the readiness with which assertions are made by those who have absolutely no knowledge.

Another error in thought is indifference to truth. We make believe we are in search of

what is true, but shut our eyes when we see it, and really look for what is most pleasing; or we weary of investigation, and rather than take a little more trouble, accept and give a lodging in our minds to the most miserable blunders. Truth should be the beginning and end of all our inquiries, and the greatest pains should be taken to discriminate it from falsehood. No doubt "belief is a rock," but we want to plant our feet on the right sort of rock—the rock of undeniable fact.

It is an error to be afraid, as some are, of laying themselves open to the charge of inconsistency. You have changed your opinions. Good. That means that you are moving onwards, and a change of position has brought a new horizon and new points of view. The wisdom of to-day may well be superior to the wisdom of yesterday, and change deserves to be respected when it is the result, not of caprice, but of conviction.

It is an error not to have our minds well in hand. We see some people who do not so much possess ideas as they are possessed by them. Now we should rule ourselves by the principles of common sense. We have the ability, it has been truly observed, not only of tracing our powers, but of guiding and impelling them; not only of watching our passions, but of controlling them; not only of seeing our faculties grow, but of applying to them means and influences to aid their growth.

Out of this error often arises another. We come to have too deep an affection for our own opinions—grow infatuated about them in short. People of this way of thinking fancy that what is good for themselves must be equally good for all others, like the man who had a spring of mineral water on his estate, and not only drank of it himself, but made his servants take a glass every morning.

The next error in regard to thought which we shall notice is carelessness about the language in which thought is expressed. Whoever wishes to think rightly must first have mastered the science of words. A great deal of the bad reasoning of everyday life arises from the confused ideas people have as to the different meanings that may be attached to the same word. We may argue for days together without any satisfactory result, supposing no clear notion exists at starting as to the meaning of the terms we employ. It is a good rule, in arguing with anyone, to ascertain, before spending breath on the subject, that both of you attach the same signification to the same terms. Were this generally done, what endless controversies and meaningless gabble would the world have often been spared.

It is an error not to accept the conclusions of those who are wiser than ourselves. But whilst we should have a great deal of regard for authority of the right sort, as great an error is committed when we fail to have confidence in our own private judgment. I have a sneaking admiration for that girl who, when asked, "Do you think as we do?" replied, "No, I think for myself." There are circumstances in which to subordinate our minds to those of others is nothing but intellectual slavery. Fortunately, in this country everything is in favour of free thought and individual growth and action. That Eastern sultan would find no sympathy here who threatened to take off the head of the first man who made a reflection.

To expect to arrive at certainty in every subject we study is another error. "There are a hundred things," remarks Dr. Watts, "wherein we mortals, in this dark and imperfect state, must be content with probability; where our best light and reasonings will reach no farther." We must balance arguments then, as justly as we can, and act always in accordance with what, at any rate, appears to be the truth. "When there is

great strength of argument set before us," says another writer; "if we refuse to do what appears most fit for us until every little objection is removed, we shall never take one wise resolution as long as we live."

It is an error, however, when a matter is in every degree doubtful, to pronounce strongly either one way or another. People feel, perhaps, that they ought to take a side, and, when they have done so, argue warmly in its favour. But the best way is to suspend the judgment; and very many things, girls, would remain undecided till we no longer saw through a glass darkly if this were the general rule.

Another error is to puzzle over things which are of necessity inexplicable. There is a point in every inquiry beyond which we cannot go, and it is only waste of energy to attempt pushing one's way into the fields of the unknowable. The limits which have been set to human faculties ought to be observed, and reason, it has been well said, can never be better employed than in deciding when its operations must be stopped.

It is an error to think about mean things. The beauty of nature, the loveliness of truth and virtue, the wonders of sea and sky, and the value of life and time—to consider such subjects as these expands the mind, as much as the contemplation of those that are mean and trifling tends to contract it. An important lesson we have to learn, then, is to keep elevated in thought and sentiment, and to set our affections on nothing but what is good, and noble, and pure.

Not to make a proper use of the imagination is the next error in thought. There is a right exercise of this power, but it is very often misused. "The mind," says Dr. Abercrombie, "cannot be idle, and when it is not occupied by subjects of a useful kind, it will find a resource in those which are frivolous or hurtful—in mere visions, waking dreams, or fictions, in which the mind wanders from scene to scene, unrestrained by reason, probability, or truth. No habit can be more opposed to a healthy condition of the mental powers; and none ought to be more carefully guarded against by everyone who would cultivate the high acquirement of a well-regulated mind."

It is an error to cherish prejudices. Preferences are all very well, but with prejudices it is different. We should be able to give a reason for everything, and there is absolutely none for them. Everyone is very ready to complain of the prejudices of other people as if she had none of her own. It would be much better if she would leave off criticising others and look at home.

It is an error to allow the mind to become clouded by passion. When once pride, love, fear, avarice, or ambition takes hold of us, thinking as it ought to be conducted is at an end. The passions have been called the gales of life, and it is they that make the tempests in which thought is shipwrecked. The healthy mind is ever calm and cheerful. It is more; it is virtuous and pious.

It is an error to make much of purity of doctrine and little of purity of life. Life and thought should be in harmony, and she has her face turned in the wrong direction who says, "So long as one thinks rightly, it is no matter how she acts."

In all mental work it is an error not to take advantage of the labours of other people. We who come last are in some respects best off, and we ought to make use of our advantages, and not be like the man who began the study of astronomy, but, disdainful to avail himself of the labours of those who went before, died ere he had discovered that the earth went round the sun.

A common error is to fall into the habit of thinking the same things over and over in the same way. It is a great waste of time and

power. People who do this never make any progress worth speaking about, and anything more dreary than the monotony of their minds it would be hard to name, unless it be the monotony of their conversation. We must make it a rule to be moving on, thinking of new things, and forcing ourselves to put old things in new lights till that becomes a habit.

There is a danger, however, in our enthusiasm for learning, of making too great haste. That is a serious mistake. One may be in too great haste to be learned, just as it is possible to be in too great haste to be rich. The result is unsatisfactory in either case. It is impossible to gain the mastery of a subject by any other than leisurely work. "Nature," it has been well said, "commonly lodges her treasures and jewels in rocky ground. If the matter be knotty and the sense lies deep, the mind must stop and buckle to it with labour and thought and close contemplation, and not leave it until it has mastered the difficulty and got possession of the truth."

Another error is excessive mental exertion. Some are so much in earnest in pursuit of learning that they act just as if they were disembodied spirits. Now bodily health should be looked to as much as intellectual activity, and with rare exceptions a vigorous mind goes hand in hand with a sound constitution; when the one decays, so does the other. To fancy that thought needs no relaxation is a frequent blunder. What are you going to do this morning? Study. This forenoon? Study. This afternoon? Study. This evening? Just the same. That is not the way to make progress. After a certain time the mind loses its elasticity, and the progress made is not equal to the time consumed—or anything like it. The way to do more is often to do less. There is a prudent use of intellectual power, and when the mind is exhausted, to goad it on to further efforts is to pursue philosophy without acting like a philosopher. The health of the nervous system, it has been pointed out, is often ruined by excessive application without the sufferer in the least suspecting the cause.

How long should one study at once? That question everyone must answer for herself. Nature, if allowed fair play, will usually give warning when once the limit of prudence is reached. The only danger is that now and again we may confuse the voice of Nature with the accents of laziness.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EMIGRATION.

A WOULD-BE EMIGRANT and LADY CLARE.—All the particulars you need will be furnished you on application by letter to the Hon. Secretary, Women's Emigration Society, Carteret-street, Queen Anne's-gate, S.W. We do not think there is any opening at Sydney for governesses or teachers, but if you make up your minds to go up the country, there are plenty of openings. These are not for teaching alone, and no girl should go out without a thorough knowledge of housework and housekeeping, even to washing and ironing clothes; for in the colony the ladies know all this themselves, and want girls who will not only teach, but help them with the housework.

TWO POOR GIRLS.—The Canadian Government offers "assisted passages" at £3 a head for domestic servants, with a free railway pass to Toronto, during the spring and summer months. The form for assisted passages may be procured from the Canadian Government agent, Canadian Government Offices, 9, Victoria Chambers, London, S.W. These forms, letter "C," must be signed by a steamship agent—the offices of the Allan Line being at 17, Gracechurch-street, E.C.

E. S. and LONELY SCOTCH LASSIE.—If Canada did not agree with you, and you have your living to earn, you had better not return there, but settle down at home in Scotland and endeavour to make yourself happy and contented.

HOUSEKEEPING.

FERN LEAVES.—Keep the puddings in a drier place. No, we do not think there is any harm in the enjoy-