HOW TO KEEP A JOURNAL.

Some people are very sensitive on the subject of keeping a journal; should you ever hear at their lips, "such a thing," they look just as if a dog had bitten them. And yet it is a well-respected practice, and one indulged in by many men and women remarkable for their good sense. Indeed, I shall go farther and assert that the keeping of a journal in some form or other is a necessary duty if one would derive the utmost profit, material and spiritual, from one's daily life.

It is quite a mistake to think that memory will answer well enough, and that all the happenings 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 known 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 incident, and to what end is it to-day 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 writing about and worth looking 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 alone in your efforts. Staff and non-staff must 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 your 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 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 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 painting, and how 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 have collected 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 written. You may chance never to see these a second time, so it is a good plan in every case to write them down in a few lines of description for the purpose of 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 noted down; you must at least be careful 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 event a crisis for which we are scared to death. For 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 thrilling and very real, 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? The experiences the old, the new, the romances in real life you have met with—and everyone meets with some—the strange ups and downs of life, the change, as these affect and interest yourself; it is a small matter, perhaps, for you the many good resolutions you have formed, and, alas! the many bad resolutions you have broken.

Should you ever feel, as one French poet has felt, 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 be ever 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 these things."

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 always wondering if everyone is 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 best 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 how it has altered, 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 you will see. One has put it, "you will then burn all now worship, and worship all you now think only good to burn." And as for other people, why our stars often prove but meteorites, and the ideals 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 consented to swallow in a speculativ e conception 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 with much interest, but don't speak about it, which makes you almost as ridiculous as the American who was so confiding in being successful at the Presidential election, that he liberally distributed his carte-de-visite with the inscription, "Mr. So-and-so, Future President of the United States."

Every year is 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; it is remarkable, the 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 conversationalists, and specially entertaining when they relate their own experiences. No doubt this comes partly from the habit of sifting 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 keeping up the correspondence of 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 is a letter ready. A very useful 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 written the same two or three 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 to five pages, 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, and so on, to be kept, and entered. There are some or two or three pages of blank paper at the beginning of the diaries we speak of, and these may be easily and profitably used.

It is not necessary 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 lost 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 follow what may be called our general plans: books to be read, places to be visited, walls to be taken, subjects we propose to study; all things, in short, regarding which we have no date fixed.

In all these come some remarks 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 a position of having to ask someone to supply us with money.

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 comfortable if you go to bed without making the necessary entries as if you had been neglecting to wash your face. "I shall write it up to-morrow," says the voice of laziness; that is the first step towards failure.

And if it is not done, don't think it a shame. Let every day finish its own business; make that one of your good resolutions, and write your journal up 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, the evening was spent, the music was heard, the 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 the forest on the first day of our stay up 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 GIRL'S OWN PAPER.

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 you have 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 when you have leisure to repeat to your heart's content, 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 disjunct it is the better, because it is then most natural.

It certainly must not be in the grand style, as if you were writing for a newspaper or in the formal style, as if you wrote for a publication and kept one eye on the paper and another on posterity. Let it be nothing more than a quiet and personal account of the day’s events and your own feelings, in which you strike no attitudes and aim at being nothing but yourself.

And when should this journal be started? To-day, you say? To-day!—alas! to-day!—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 reason! Good Nanette! May you live to keep it for many a year!

JAMES MASON.

THE WEDDINGS OF THE WORLD.

By A. H. WAL. E.

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 milk-life, in which she 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 attend upon men."

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 is 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 very well-known traveller, M. Huc, describing his adventures in China, says on one occasion when leaving Liang-chuan, his Chinese companion, speaking of women being considered,

"Like her infant, you can tell her what is right or wrong, and she will be ready to do it."

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

"It is understood," 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 sluggish 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 sooner. John Chinaman could not have wives either wise or independent. They see no evil in being without regard 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, and in her heart 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 that the poor crippled creature calls dancing. She does not go to the theatre, receives occasional visitors, and now and then is taken to the temple in a sedan chair, a kind of wheelerbarrow with curtains. But she keeps to her feminine duties, from her marriage she may be married, a time for which she has been longing with all her heart. Amongst those whom the law of China compels to marry, and above her own rank, her charms are dutifully but indirectly magnified, and they all know that she will be the bride of the highest bidder. If she is unpleasantly short, her lips delightfully thin, her lashes disfigure her charming black eyes. The length of her finger-nails is surprising! If she is thin, a fat back no bidder appears; the discommodated father says that she was a mistake, regrets that she was not drowned directly after her baptism, as the girls 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 in the object of general attention, and her reputation as a wife and mother is guaranteed; she has assumed a great dignity asserted even by the law, which has hitherto recognized her only as a child and a servant; her marriage is considered 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 door 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 and tend and 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 her every action is a subject of regret or admiration. Her toilet is an object of overwhelming importance. Her splendid silver robes flash, gleam, and glitter with jewels and gold; her long plaits of raven hair are adorned with precious stones. She tatters on her poor cuffed feet into a kind of cage, a brilliant prison, where she sits in state like a queen on her throne, and is carefully inspected. Most carefully, for only consider what a dreadful