

BROKE OFF BAD HABIT

WOMAN TELLS HOW SHE OVERCAME PROCRASTINATION.

Strict Mental Drill Enabled Her to Learn Promptness and Intelligently Work to Accomplish Her Daily Tasks.

Of all my many bad habits, I think procrastination was the very worst. I used to put things off and quiet my conscience with the easy excuse that another time would answer every purpose, or that, if circumstances had been easier, I would have done it in time enough. I had a startling realization of the strength of this bad habit one day when serious consequences had resulted; so I determined then and there with all the force of my will that I would break it up and rout my enemy, foot and horse. Little did I dream of what was before me. I tried—God knows how I tried!—but the habit was victor more often than I, till at last one night after I had gone to bed almost in despair over my many defeats, like a flash came back to me the psychological basis of habit making: that our habits are paths running through our brain. With that thought in mind I began intelligently to combat my foe.

The rules I worked out for breaking my bad habits are these: Since good habits are as powerful as bad ones, I determined to replace my bad habit of procrastination by the good one of promptness. In fact, to let the old pathway disappear for lack of use and to develop a new one. That this new pathway might soon become strongly marked by much use, I made important engagements that must be carried out on the minute or not at all, plans in which an instant of delay would result so disastrously that I shuddered at the thought. I never allowed an exception. I set every ounce of will power I possessed against one slipback. If I said at night that I would get up the moment my watch said seven o'clock, I got up, even though the town clock had not yet struck the hour.

After a time, as I gained my victories, I devised all kinds of things as a test of my growing power of promptness; things that were not at all necessary, such as completing a book in a certain time, arriving on a specified corner at a definite moment, or reaching an appointment one minute before the appointed hour. Thus I practiced my new habit every possible opportunity. After many trials I observed that my will was having an easier time than before, until, in the course of a year and a half, promptness was so much second nature to me that I never thought of procrastination.—Lucia Bosley, in the American Magazine.

School Seats Deform Youth?

Dr. J. W. Sever, an English surgeon, urges that school desks should leave room enough for the knees, and should be low enough so that the elbow and forearm may rest comfortably on them without bending the back.

The slope of the desk theoretically should be about 30 degrees, but as that is too steep an angle to allow books and papers to rest on it, without sliding off, a compromise angle of from 12 degrees to 15 degrees has been selected.

The seat should be no wider than the width of the hip, for wider seats predispose to slouchy attitudes. It should be about two-thirds the length of the thigh. It may or may not slope very slightly backward, but this is of no great importance. Any great slope is distinctly bad.

The height from the floor should be such as to allow the feet to rest equally and comfortably on the floor. A seat of too great breadth, as well as one of too great depth, compels bad postures. The seat should have a back which supports the lumbar spine when sitting, at work, as well as at rest.

Smile Means Much.

"The smile is one of the greatest assets of the successful salesman or saleswoman," says the manager of a department store linen department. "It makes friends for the store as readily as do moderate prices and good goods."

"The ability to smile for eight hours a day is a trait hard to acquire and possessed by few store help. Yet it can be gained by constant practice—the watching of oneself and not permitting at any time the slightest indication of a frown."

"I recall my first purchase in a New York department store. I was directed to the counter where I could find the special article of my choice. I was met by a gruff 'What is it?' from the salesman. I recall I said, 'Nothing,' and I haven't been in that store since."

Too Good to Lose.

"Your husband is willing to allow you the custody of the automobile, the poodle, and the rubber plant, with liberal alimony, while he takes the children and the graphophone."

"Stop the divorce," sobbed the wife. "I'll never get another husband like that."

Ways of Women.

"Wimmen certainly ain't got no consistency."

"What's the matter, Mike?"

"Me wife chased me out wid a roll-inpin this morning, and then cried because I left home without kissing her good-by."

MR. DOLBY IMPOSED ON

WHY HE BROKE A SELFISH RESOLUTION.

Had Resolved to Play Part of Hog on a Crowded Street Car, Until Woman With Borrowed Baby Appeared.

Dolby likes babies. That is why he gave his seat to the good-looking young woman in the triangular brown hat. She carried a baby. If she had not been so incumbered she would have been condemned to strap hanging, so far as Dolby was concerned, for he vowed at the beginning of the trip that he was going to play the hog.

"I'm dead tired," he said to Mr. Bowler. "Thank heaven, I've found a seat. I am going to stick to it, too. Nothing short of an accident or a woman with a baby can rout me out till I get home."

Bowler said "Humph," as did several other passengers who overheard Dolby's selfish resolution. The young woman in the brown hat stood within hearing distance as Dolby thus declared himself, but she did not say "Humph." She merely thought it. Presently she edged down the car until she stood directly in front of Dolby. About that time the baby began to show off. He kicked at Dolby's hat, first with the left foot and then with the right, and then with both feet simultaneously, and said, "Oo-oo-oo," very plaintively.

Dolby looked up and met the baby's eye. The youngster's gaze embarrassed him somewhat, so he allowed his eyes to travel a little higher. That time he encountered an appealing glance from the young woman. Dolby became still more embarrassed; he sat still a few seconds longer.

"Madam," he said, "will you have this seat?"

"Thank you," sighed the young woman. "You are very kind."

It really was not worth while to tell Dolby that. He already had an exaggerated notion of his own magnanimity, so, to even things up, he retired to the back platform and picked a quarrel with the conductor. When he got tired of that he stepped inside the car again. Directly in front of him, but under different guardianship, sat the baby that had so ruthlessly assaulted the rim of his hat a few minutes before.

"Oo-oo-oo," cooed the baby.

"Hello," said Dolby. "Aren't you the kid that took liberties with my headgear a little while ago? How did you get down to this end of the car?"

The baby's reply was not exactly intelligible, so his mother supplemented it with a mere lucid explanation.

"He belongs here," she said. "The lady sent him back. She just borrowed him for a few minutes."

With one quick glance Dolby retreated to the platform, and there he stayed.

World's Largest Index.

On Beacon Hill, in Boston, under the golden dome of the statehouse, is one of the largest indexes in the world. In fact, the Russian public index is the only one known to be larger. More than 9,000,000 names, births, marriages and deaths in Massachusetts from 1943 make a complete record, showing not only where people were born and where they died, but also statistics which are vital in making up calculations. Before this time, says the National Magazine, the records were kept in the different towns, but now they are all concentrated in the statehouse in Boston. In a relatively small space all these records are preserved, and as births, marriages and deaths come in, different forms of cards are used, and a great variety of names, Grecian, Assyrian, Italian and others now mingle with good old New England names that have been on the records since the landing of the Mayflower.

Freezing an Easy Death.

Freezing to death, writes a medical authority, is preceded by a drowsiness which makes the end painless—the body actually feels warm and goes comfortably to sleep. Experiments have been made with animals to show just how freezing to death proceeds.

In one of these experiments, in which the animal was placed in a temperature of 125 to 150 degrees below zero, the breathing and heart beats at first were quickened, the organic heat of the body actually rising above normal.

This rising showed a sudden and an intense effort on the part of functions to preserve the body's temperature. Then the violent heart action gave out suddenly and death came when the temperature of the body dropped to 71 degrees.

High Price for Straightness.

One of the most difficult problems in practical mechanics is to make a straight edge. How difficult it is may be judged from an incident that occurred in the shop of a celebrated astronomical instrument maker.

A patron asked what would be the price of "a perfect straight edge of glass 36 inches long."

"It cannot be made perfect," said the instrument maker; "but it could probably be made with a limit of error amounting to only a fraction of a wave length of light."

"How much would that cost?"

"About forty thousand dollars."

It turned out that the customer wanted the straight edge for a scraper and that an error of one sixty-fourth of an inch would not bother him.

SOME FAMOUS BEST SELLERS

Often, Like "Innocents Abroad," They Have Been the First Books of the Authors.

Many best sellers have been the first books of their authors. Mark Twain, then an impecunious newspaper man with little more than a local reputation for journalistic practical jokes, persuaded the publishers of a western paper to pay his expenses on the widely exploited excursion of the Quaker City. The letters which were the result of this journey grew into the book "The Innocents Abroad" and the name of Mark Twain became an American household word.

Archibald Claverling Gunter, who had been a mining and civil engineer and a broker on the San Francisco exchange, possessed a manuscript that no established publisher could be induced to touch. So he issued it at his own expense and in a very short time the question of the hour became "Have you read 'Mr. Barnes of New York?'"

The pastor of a church in a small town on the Hudson river visited Chicago just after the great fire, saw in the catastrophe the background of a novel with a strong religious appeal, and in the course of a few months awoke to find himself famous as the author of "Barriers Burned Away."

An impetuous southern woman, the author of one or two books that had been lost in the turmoil of the great civil struggle, went to New York at the close of the war with the manuscript of a novel and a year or two later the traveler in southern states was progressing on land by St. Elmo coaches, on water by St. Elmo steamboats, staying in St. Elmo hotels, smoking St. Elmo cigars and drinking St. Elmo punch.

It was a very different matter with Frances Hodgson Burnett's "Little Lord Fauntleroy," says the Bookman. That book was the work, not of a novice, but of a writer who knew her metier, who had years before won a reputation for imagination and good workmanship and who had already produced eight books of conceded quality.

French Youth to Learn Chess.

A quaint petition has just been presented to the French Minister of Public Instruction. At the famous cafe de la Regence there meet daily and nightly groups of chess players who have formed themselves into an association known as the Chess Federation of the Cafe de la Regence. Here the most important class championships in Paris are decided. The committee of the association have just approached the minister with the request that a series of chess manuals, which they themselves have selected, shall be distributed with other books as prizes at the end of the school term to the pupils of the various lycées. The chess players are anxious that a knowledge of their favorite game should penetrate among the younger generation, conscious as they are of the importance of chess in building up character and forming the mind. The minister has granted the request, and France may expect to see grow up among them a generation of chess devotees, just as it is now nurturing a generation of football players.—Paris Correspondent London Globe.

Cracker Lunches.

New York city alone has nearly 750,000 children attending the public schools. What a splendid opportunity to provide this vast army of healthy youngsters with a wholesome and appetizing cracker lunch, done up in a neat package and still cheap enough to be within the reach of even the poorer parents.

One once saw one of these cracker lunches as got up by a large biscuit concern in Germany. The paper box contained six delicious crackers with a marmalade filling, and there was an ample compartment for a nice red apple or a couple of plums, which of course were added by the mother of the child. These school lunches, exclusive of the fruit, were sold at 5 pennings, or about 1½ cents.—Baker's Weekly.

The Air-Sacs of Pigeons.

The air-sacs of the pigeon constitute a system of interstices the value of which lies in their absence of weight and resistance.

Flying is possible only to a body of high mechanical efficiency divested of all superfluous material. The original reptiles, which by evolution became birds, were divested of superfluous material, and the body spaces thus obtained were filled with air-sacs. The body wall, adapting itself to the mechanical requirements, became a hollow cylinder serving as a support for the organs of movement the mobility of whose parts was assured by the surrounding air-sacs. The air cavities in the bones of other birds are similarly explained.—Harper's Weekly.

Her Specialty.

"I thought you said George had married a good manager."

"He did."

"I called on her yesterday and the house was in terrible disorder. It looked as if everything had been left to take care of itself."

"But you should see her managing George."

Superior.

"They're very superior people aren't they?"

"Very. They play nothing but grand opera records on their phonograph."

Concerning Box Wood.

The manufacturing of boxes and crates in the United States consumes one-tenth of our output of lumber every year. In some cases, says the American Forestry Magazine, the odor of a wood adds to the value of the article shipped in the package. Cigars in Spanish cedar boxes furnish an example. It is widely believed that butter is better if it touches no wood except ash, and a similar belief prevails regarding tea, which, it is said, should be shipped and kept in the Chinese wood in which the orientals pack it. The notion in regard to the tea might lose some of its popularity if it were generally known that the wood of which the tea boxes are made did not grow nearer China than several thousand miles. Some of it comes from Russia. The Chinese paste paper over the boxes, stamp them with Chinese characters, and fill them with tea for foreign markets.

Human Good-Will.

With all your exuberant good-will you haven't altogether got beyond the theory that the first cave-dweller bestowed on his neighbor the bone he himself didn't need, and established the pleasant relation of benefactor and beneficiary. It gave him such a warm feeling in his heart that he naturally wanted to make the relation permanent. First cave-dweller felt a little disappointed next day when second cave-dweller, instead of coming to him for another bone, preferred to take his pointed stick and go hunting on his own account. It seemed a little ungrateful in him, and first cave-dweller felt that it would be no more than right to arrange legislation in the cave so that it should not happen again. Christian charity is a beautiful thing, but sometimes it gets mixed up with these ideas of the cave-dwellers.—Samuel M. Crothers.

Calling New Jersey "Spain."

Referring to New Jersey as "Spain" came about in this way: Joseph Bonaparte, the eldest brother of Napoleon, came to America and occupied the place called Point Breeze, at Bordentown, N. J. He was ex-king of Spain, but, disclaiming his legal rank, he lived there for several years under the title of Comte de Survilleux, endeavoring himself to his neighbors by his liberality and graciousness of manners. He was chosen a member of many learned and philanthropic institutions, and in 1817, an act was passed by the legislature enabling him as an alien to hold real estate within the state. Ardent Republicans, as well as neighbors out of good-natured rivalry, for this reason called the state his kingdom of Spain.

Stranger Than Fiction.

Among the advertisements on the first page of an Austrian rural newspaper appears one tradesman's praise of the "beautiful fresh bread" he distributes, and another tradesman's acclaim of the "beautiful Cavendish bananas" he has for sale. After reading further and finding with relief that at least one individual deals in "beautiful art" in this day of post-postism, one is naturally led to wonder just when Lewis Carroll was exercising his imagination and when he was merely setting down faithfully what he had heard when he penned such poems of praise as that Alice in Wonderland lyric which concludes:

Soup of the evening.
Beautiful soup.

Machine Shapes Masts.

A machine has been built which will shape masts up to 100 feet in length and three feet in diameter. The timber is set up in the machine and revolved at a speed of 50 revolutions a minute, and it is shaped by a cutter head which is electrically driven at the rate of 700 revolutions a minute. This cutter head is mounted on a carriage, which is moved along the timber against a rail set to give the proper profile to the mast. Heretofore this work has been done by hand and required skilled workmen. At best it has been a slow and laborious task.

Life Made Beautiful.

"The part of life which we really live is short," said Seneca. "Exigua pars est." Perhaps it is true, as this wise old pagan has said. And yet it ought not to be true. All of life should and can be made beautiful. The best that is in us should not assert itself infrequently, but at all times. The time we spend in the effort to satisfy our greed, the time spent in envy of our neighbors, in anger, in any unworthy spirit whatever, is assuredly time spent ill. It is that part of life in which we really do not live at all.—Los Angeles Times.

Consequences.

Consequences are unputting. Our deeds carry their terrible consequences, quite apart from any fluctuations that are hardly ever confined to ourselves. And it is best for us to fix our minds on that certainty, instead of thinking what may be the elements of excuse for us. Sooner or later what we really believe will work its way into action, and what we think and what we do will one day be in accord. That is one great danger of unrestrained thought.

Delivering the New Suit.

Customer (telephoning tailor)—"You send out the clothes and if they're O. K. I will send you my check." Tailor—"Won't do it. You send me the check first and if it is O. K. I will send you the clothes."—Indice.

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