

he could not bring it to-night. But I will send Sam to get Melinda a doll from it," she added, as she saw the grieved, disappointed look on the girl's face.

However, before she could move to call Sam, Eliza had caught up a shawl lying on a chair nearby and was gone, the banging of the door testifying that she was already in the street. Down the snowy street Eliza trudged bravely, although her heart nearly leapt into her throat at every shadow she saw and every sound she heard. Much to her dismay, most of the lights had been extinguished and the greater part of her three miles walk to the station lay along the darkest places. The snow came down furiously and the wind howled and blew about her, almost dragging off her shawl, until she was fain to turn back, but then the thought of Melinda's disappointment would nerve her to struggle on.

When at last she reached the station, she found it closed and the station master gone. Bitterly disappointed, more for Melinda than for herself, she turned to retrace her steps. Then the idea came to her to go to the station master's house and arouse him. The kind hearted station master, though much surprised to see Eliza at such an hour, thought that Sam must be with her and so gave her a doll and allowed her to go without any questioning.

Somehow the way back seemed very unfamiliar and very, very long, but Eliza kept on until her feet refused to carry her farther. Then she sank down wearily upon the soft snow in the road. Everything swam before her eyes, the fence posts covered with snow, seemed "sheeted ghosts" and the whirling snow drifts seemed to assume the form of angels, such as she had seen in pictures. Too weary and too happy in this last idea to think, Eliza closed her eyes and slept, the doll still tightly clasped in her arms.

Deeply annoyed and much worried by

Eliza's abrupt departure, Mrs. Lowen had ascended the stairs to watch beside Melinda until Eliza returned. As the time passed on towards dawn Mrs. Lowen became more and more worried at Eliza's absence, for Melinda, who seemed to be sinking fast, began to mutter and talk restlessly, saying that she wanted Eliza. Once she turned to Mrs. Lowen and said, "Sing, Eliza," evidently mistaking her for Eliza. "What shall I sing?" asked Mrs. Lowen. "Something about angels," replied the child. Soft and full and tender the notes of the song fell upon the air and the child seemed wrapt in a vision, as if she saw the angels.

Outside it had stopped snowing, and the first faint rays of the dawn were beginning to steal along the horizon. The wind had died down and the world seemed to be waiting in silence the dawn of the day when the Prince of Peace is born again in the hearts of men. As Mrs. Lowen finished singing, Melinda suddenly sat up, crying out, "Eliza," and then, with a look of heavenly joy on her face, sank back dead.

As Mrs. Lowen bent over the little figure lying so still on the white bed, there was a ring at the bell, then the noise of feet and voices in the hall and in a moment two men, hats in hand, stood in the doorway. Mrs. Lowen never saw the men, for her horrified eyes were fixed on the figure of a girl clasped in the arms of one of the men—a girl to whose still bosom was clasped a doll. And the choir in the church across the way were singing their Christmas chant, "Glory be to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men."

It was the winter wild,
While the Heav'n-born child
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe to him,
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize;
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty
paramour.
—Milton.

On the Conduct of Life.

BY S. WEIR MITCHELL, M. D.

When last year I said I would this winter come hither and talk to you, I was not entirely wise. "Time like distance lends a double grace," and the task promised for a remote day seems always easy. So did this look to me. If I knew better your hopes, your fears, your lives, and your home surroundings, I should feel more at ease. I am, as it were, a stranger in a strange land, but still it is the realm of human nature of which I too am a citizen. You will pardon the failures of imperfect knowledge. I want to help you. Be sure of that, and any doubt I may have serves to intensify my sense of responsibility for the use I make of a great opportunity. But the man who does not bring hither some distrust of himself had better not be here at all.

It seemed to me as I thought over the matter that there were two primary things to keep in mind. First, that I am to talk to women, not men. Second, that these women are going hence to be teachers, clerks, phonographers, typewriters, trained nurses, and what not. A proportion, a large one I trust, will soon or late take up the natural profession of the woman, and with good success be that difficult thing the good wife and efficient mother. I mean to talk to you of the Conduct of Life.

The first use of the word "conduct" in this relation seems to have been made by John Dryden. Before we go further let us ask what the word "conduct" means. To do this we will question the dictionary, as to the verb "to conduct." Worcester says, "To lead, to manage, to regulate," and my ponderous long folio, Johnson, adds, "to show the way."

This helps us. Life is the thing you are to lead, manage, regulate, and through proper use of it to show others the way. Self-training, use, example; that is life. As children you are led by others, but thence onward life becomes an ever enlarging trust.

Yes, ever enlarging like a little brook. The old illustration tempts me. The stream of a human life! How from the brook of youth it becomes, by many additions, a river, able to be put to increasing uses, to turn mills, irrigate, carry ships, and reflect the

loveliness of great trees, and the sunrise, and the sunset. It goes to the sea only to live again in other forms; on the way it may become soiled; unwholesome, a source of ruin and death. It may cleanse itself again. Is the comparison strained, or too large? Not so indeed. This life trust is more and larger than any comparison will help us to fitly apprehend. So then we are to consider how you are to conduct your lives. What to put into them, what to keep out. How to make them efficient. How to ornament and enjoy them.

The conduct of life! When standing apart one regards the strange complexity of the mechanism of the body, how it remains automatically the same as to pulse, breath, and temperature from the equator to the pole, the wonder of it all comes over one with freshness of interest. If this or that thing goes awry, it is mysteriously set right. The body has acquired, as it was evolved through the ages, what I may call organic habits, the regulative conscience of the tissues. Its strange mechanisms record disaster and summon noiseless help or ring warning bells of pain. But when we consider its mind side and moral side, we learn that something called "will" comes into act a part and influence results. In its own sphere it is more or less the ruler of the intricate mechanism of mind. It can be trained to conduct the mental processes and to control and subdue unruly emotion, and thus keep a woman from being mobbed by her own feelings and becoming hysterical when most needed. Teach it to be masterful.

No wonder Wordsworth spoke of "the very pulse of the machine," or that Shakespeare, too, should speak of this complex as a machine. Now, when God made man and woman after his image, he made them male and female machines after their kind, and this it is still wise to recall. Therefore when talking of it to you, let me go back to the never-to-be-forgotten fact that you are women.

The women who try to ignore sex and to apply female education to standards of men are, as I see it, unwise, impolitic and unphysiological. If also education is made the excuse for not knowing, or for despising, what every woman should know what education is all wrong.

I mean that all American women should

know certain things. Life has with us "many ups and many downs" as folks say. I have seen rich women reduced to cook for themselves and others, and entirely ignorant of every element of domestic management. Neglect of this is one of the troubles as to the women's colleges and a really needless trouble. I would have every woman know how with economy to provide for the common wants of a home; to cook, sew, cut out garments, but I want to add to this something better. Any fitting education ought to give a woman such knowledge as explains, on a scientific basis, the range of domestic duties, making clear why this is the right and that the wrong way. No doubt that many of you learn the rule-of-thumb way in your homes, but it is often ill learned and without interest. I can see how all of it could be made easier and more pleasant by using science to interpret the rule-of-thumb, and by teaching so much of the rules of hygiene as apply to the proper care of a home, large or small. Make duties interesting and they become easy.

You may know how to boil a potato or a ham, but upon my word, it does seem to me that to know why you do it, and what happens when you do it, might make potato boiling or bread making an interesting affair. Imagine me telling a patient to do this or that, and having no knowledge as to why I give this advice. What do you think of a business so conducted?

Now and then I hear clever young women say they have no need of all this, that they are going to be this or that, and will never marry. If this were honest, I should not like it. Generally I say little, but smile inwardly, which is a prudent form of criticism.

Deep in every woman's heart should be modestly cherished this kindly and natural possibility of one day having a home to care for. I have no real fear that the tendency of women's colleges to live up to the man's standard of work will result in any widespread entertainment of the idea of marriage as a kind of domestic slavery. Some do so believe. My friend Charles Dudley Warner says, that in the collegiate life of women marriage is looked upon, not as a natural part of the life course, but as an elective. We may trust despotic nature as to that. Whether or not you marry, the chances are that most of you will soon or

late have for yourselves or others the cares I speak of. To be quite unfit for them often creates poverty or makes it harder, and gives rise to vast discomfort for those who rely on you. For some men or women not to be supplied with good food, means inefficiency; for children it means ill health. I have seen much real misery because of incompetent housekeeping. A very learned young woman once said to me, "why should I bother about cooking and housekeeping? I shall never marry." She did marry. They had but modest means. Her husband, a delicate scholar, consulted me some year or so later, as to his digestion. He was really ill because of bad cooking and she was unhappy about it. I believe that she learned at last what she ought to have known from girlhood.

It is interesting here to state the pains taken by the French to see that a woman is fitted for taking charge of a home. A young woman presenting herself for the higher courses of study at the Ecole Normale must first show that she understands sewing, cutting out garments, cooking, economy of a house, how to keep accounts of a household, the care of a nursery, and some knowledge of how to deal with the smaller surgical or medical necessities of childhood. When they are satisfied as to these points she is allowed to show whether she is sufficiently learned in the sciences to pass on through the Ecole Normale.

If to be able to keep house well made it needful not to be highly educated, the education might go; but it is not necessary unless women in the pride of knowledge, get above their more obvious duties. I could tell you queer stories about the distress caused by incompetent housekeeping. I do not know any better way to keep up perilous discomfort in a home than to feed it badly, nor any surer way to squander time than by gross absence of knowledge of how to do things rapidly, and at the same time well. Whether the work is done by the woman herself or she is to oversee the doing of it by another, these convictions still apply.

If the machine of life is to be kept in order for its best uses it is to be done by having reasonable habits as to diet, meal hours, sleep and exercise. To speak of these involves too much detail, and I understand that you are taught personal Hygiene. I find

time, therefore, only to emphasize a few hints. Get the amount of sleep you as an individual need. This varies. Eat at regular times, and eat slowly. Avoid increasing appetite for sweets. Beware of excess in tea or coffee.

There is much folly written about exercise. Some people must have it in large doses, and I know those who need no more of it than the day's round of incidental movement gives. There are people who can use the brain hard and exercise severely, others cannot exercise violently and still continue to tax the mind. I am more afraid of excesses in exercise, than of too small use of it. Try to get, daily, enough of all round muscle work to suit your own personal need, but beware of over-use of the bicycle. It is not difficult to strain the heart muscles, and that is a sad business, and quite too common. I know personally what is the temptation of the cycle, and I have known cases of heart strain in young women requiring months of rest to recover.

Let us presume that you have learned so to manage work, play and rest, as to secure health. It is the first essential. You are here to train the mind. It is, as I understand it, a general training, not always looking toward any especially selected future. No matter how competent your thought machinery may be, there are certain qualities which determine by their force and amount the extent to which the reason shall be available. The qualities which give to you, or to the scientific man the best results of thought in its varied forms, are equally essential in the domain of literature to the poet and the novelist. Not even great genius can do without talents. A foolish man has said that genius is only the power to take pains. That is nonsense, but if genius is, as I think it, always creatively original, ability to criticize its own product is essential, and industry to use the machinery of genius is always required.

It is worth while to pause here when speaking of industry to dwell a moment on the popular notion of how poetry is written, and what inspiration means. Of course, there are certain parts of all great poems, and certain small poems, which are written, so to speak off-hand, under the influence of a strong emotion acting upon the imagination. These times of exaltation however,

are somewhat rare, and almost all the great poems have been, in all probability, the product of inconceivable labor. Byron says he was sometimes two weeks over a couplet. Matthew Arnold tells us that writing good verse is the hardest labor a man can do. There is distinct evidence that Shakespeare must have enormously changed his plays, and Shelley, who is supposed to have written with greater ease than most men of genius, did in fact enormously alter his poems, I believe that if I had all the evidence, we should see that no great poem was ever finally submitted to the public, without having undergone a vast amount of critical change on the part of its author.

It may be interesting to know that poets cannot repeat with ease their own verse, without learning it as though it were the verse of another person. Wendell Holmes told me this was the case with him. It is so with the present speaker. The reason for it is that the poet has had in his mind so many versions of the poem.

Let us linger here. Among the things needed to utilize all forms of mental power, industry is first—that is, capacity for steady work. Learn to be intent. When you work let the subject before you be to you as if it were the most important thing on earth. Suppose this special bit of labor puzzles you, is too hard, drop it for a little; get up, move about and try it again. If the attention drifts and will not be anchored, read your problem aloud; for there are two ways to the mind, and sometimes, what goes in at the ear is understood, when what is seen is not comprehended. Queer that, but true. It is of use at times, to *write* out a problem. As a novelist, if I am in doubt as to a bit of talk, I often test the reality of my creation by reading it aloud; or if still dubious, I have it read to me by another; then I know.

There are people who cannot focus attention longer than a certain time. These can learn slowly to increase it. It is so with some invalids, and too often this fact is neglected in the studies of children. The industry of the minute is also a fine helpmate. You are waiting for someone or have a few minutes before a meal. Most folks waste these minutes; others recall a bit of lesson or write a note or a few lines of a letter. I like to observe what a very

busy man does with his stray minutes. They are the sawdust and chips of a life mill.

To be methodical in your work is well accounted. The habit of always putting this thing here and that thing there, and of working in definite, pre-arranged ways is invaluable. That is method. In everyday life it is the handmaid of that pretty, womanly grace, neatness. It saves time, and saves too, a world of temper-trying bother. Did you ever see an unmethodical man looking in a hurry for a railway ticket in his eleven pockets? The man of method always puts these tickets in one and the same pocket. Here you have us at an advantage; you have only one pocket but then it takes you a minute to find it.

To be industrious is one thing, to be energetically industrious is quite another; that is, to get out of industry by concentration and persistent will power that which otherwise is not to be had. Industry; energy, which gives backbone to industry; persistency, which gives permanence; these are our needs.

If also I say that I want you all to cultivate curiosity, do not be amazed. Curiosity has a long gamut, with low notes and very high notes.

You feel it faintly as you justify a sum, or get near to the solving of a mathematical problem. It walks with you through all your studies; but this and all these mental qualities are like officials and have duties not to be exceeded. Curiosity may take you into the sties of life to feed on your neighbor's private affairs. It may nobly report the gossip of the stars. It may desire to learn the embryology of a great poem, or to know how much of the personality of the man Shakespeare went to the making of Hamlet. Take care how you use this ever busy inquisitor.

There is a pretty story of Faraday, how when a man broke in on an experiment Faraday said: "Wait a moment. I am curious. I have asked God a question, I am waiting for the answer."

I have yet to say a word as to habit. What is a habit? The French word for a kind of coat is *habit*. We speak of a riding-habit, and Hamlet, of his father's dress, "in his habit—as he walked." Thus, too, mental and moral habits are the clothing of the

mind, things not natural. We make them by repetitions until they seem part of us. To change or drop them reminds, warns, surprises, disturbs, just as an unusual change of garments would disturb. Do certain things for years in one way, and you clothe the mind, in a habit; or, to change the illustration, you create a deep rut out of which the wheels of life do not turn, without a warning jar.

But as there are good and bad habit ruts—Take care! The habit of persistent industry leads at last to all tasks becoming pleasant, even the most monotonous clerk work, or typewriting; for this is the law of work. Do it long enough and you get to like it, you get to be proud of doing it well. In a word you become interested, and so it does not matter what you do, whether now or later, it will in the end, if you eagerly give to it energetic industry, become its own reward.

I find it a trifle hard to deal in due proportion with all the parts of the machine you conduct. I have as yet said no word about *accuracy*. Mental exactness is an essential part of certain studies like mathematics. The failure to be exact is there self detective. But in many studies and in life you may be guilty of much inaccuracy without the self-convicting disaster which arises in the mathematic problem. A continuous little leakage of failures to be exact in letters, talk, work, at last become serious, and then you lose a place, or fail of promotion, and wonder why.

Inaccurate people are often unjustly set down as untruthful; but want of power to state facts as they occurred has often had the same result as desire to misstate them. Think of the bother made by a historian who misquotes. One misquotation in a medical essay once cost me days of search in libraries. Now inaccuracy in speech is due to carelessness, indifference, or to imperfect memory, or to some combination of these. There are children who are distressed if they have told you they had ten marbles when they have eleven. Others do not care, and so of grown people. Cultivate accuracy in study and in talk. It is one of the mental foundations of morals.

And now just a few hints as to memory. A first rate memory is more a gift than an acquisition; but memory can be trained in

youth and long afterwards. All forms of careful study help it; and necessarily, as life differentiates your pursuits, memory gets technical training, and then we see what a tremendously efficient part it may become of the machine you conduct. I have small faith in short cuts to perfect memory. Attention is the best friend of memory. As in photography, so here the fixation of facts is to be had by long exposure, or by the intense sunlight of attentiveness. Make this a habit. Method has its memorial use, and so has the voluntary association of facts. I have no time to say more. Bind facts in bundles and fasten a date to them for a tag.

Dates are only hooks to hang facts on. Thus, for example, an important date is 1616. Shakespeare died in that year. So did Cervantes. Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, and Cromwell went to college—there is poetry, science and history. A great trainer of memory is to use time in short travel, or while dressing or undressing, to learn and repeat bits of the best verse, or the finest prose. The amazing thing is the way some people store away facts, and the ease with which they use the index of these accumulations.

Thus some of you may recall that singular form of technical memory which has enabled a man at the door of a great dining hall to always return to the guest on his exit, the hat which belonged to him, although often he has had to pick out the hat from at least four hundred. This was a form of technical memory. A more interesting and more largely valuable memory is that which belongs to a friend of mine. On one occasion, I read a long dramatic poem to an audience at Bar Harbor. The next day the lady in question met me, and remarked how pleased she was with one of the songs in that poem. I said, "Which one?" She then and there repeated the three or four verses of the song with absolute accuracy, having heard it but this once. She has been often a valuable source of quotations for me, because whenever I am in doubt, I ask her for a quotation which will fit a particular subject, and so far she has never failed me.

Some actors find that to write out a part forever fixes it in memory. Well-used, memory becomes not only valuable but a

source of joy, so that by middle age one acquires wealth on which he draws interest in its prettiest sense.

Most of what I have thus loosely put before you, relates to the best way to conduct the mental mechanisms of your life machine. But this is not all. We must look on life in other ways. There are moral qualities which help to give mental talents efficiency by giving them motives. The conduct of life involves contact with others. You are to feel, as well as to think; are to act and be acted on. Here we get on to the higher plane of duties. Let us take a text—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This seems plain but do you ever ask yourself *how* you shall love yourself? If it be a noble self-love it is well with you; for then you will be sure to deal as nobly with the many neighbors life brings to you. The neighbor of a minute, the neighbor of a life, the neighbors of your home and heart, the working father and the toiling mother. I like to think of these neighbors, for indeed if your unusual education causes discontent with home surroundings, makes duties dull, gives you too good an opinion of yourself, then indeed you are ignobly and wickedly loving yourself, and your neighbors will fare but ill.

You are here for what? To be educated. That is what a *High School* is for. There is a *Higher school*, a greater Master is over it. These two schools go on together. There will be in this school no earthly examination as to whether you have become cheerful, gentle, generous and charitable in word and act. No diploma says that you are modest, unselfish, serviceable, trying to make home happy, an example of how culture, hand in hand with goodness, may sweeten and purify life for you, and for all whom you love.

I am sure that mere gain in knowledge does not make character robust. Washington was a babe in learning compared to any High School graduate. Lincoln was hardly better, till he taught himself. It is character—character—the harmonious balance of moral qualities, which make for the truest success. But then these men went to school all their lives, and until the great Master said, "Well done."

Nor here can I fail to remind you again

that you are women, and that you will surely possess influence which will affect men who vote and think, or do not think. Here is where the life of education comes in. If you can make a home comfortable, and also raise its standards of right, elevate its tastes and patiently employ the vast half-used power of sex, the whole politics of this city and country would be made more wholesome.

And now I come upon thin ice. Let us go boldly, for that is best on thin ice. There are certain minor qualities which are invaluable in life. They are more effective than some larger ones. And now your pardon, but whether you are clerk, doctor, nurse, typewriter, teacher or wife, there is one characteristic which has angelic power to lesson all the friction of life. It is sweet temper. Not merely passive *good* temper, but sweet temper—two lumps, three. It is amazing what it will do in business, in the home, anywhere in life, and also how very rare it is. It leads me on to still thinner ice. "If," said a great lawyer to me, "I were asked what two minor things were the most valuable adjuncts for the young in any business, I should say clear handwriting and good manners."

Of course all of you write so as to cause no annoyance to those who read your themes; and of course we all have good manners. Admit that; therefore, conscious of our own virtue, we shall now speak only of our outside neighbors whom we intelligently desire to reform. Find me a reasonably able man or woman who has really sweet temper, patience, desire to please, interest in their work, and the pleasant ways summed up as good manners, and that person will in the race of life beat many a one of far higher mental endowments, who is wanting in these minor social moralities. I have known some men in my own profession whose success in life was absurdly greater than it should have been, because of their being high-minded gentlemen with the charm of really good manners. I have known men of far greater force and efficiency partially fail because they had not the qualities of which I speak.

If indeed you want to be made to feel the effect of bad manners, try to shop a little in the shops of this great city. The saleswoman will very likely not be absolutely rude,

but she will serve you in a half-hearted way. She is simply absolutely indifferent and without the faintest real interest in her business, or in your being suited. Naturally one goes away in disgust. Our salesmen are much less exasperatingly indifferent but both in the men and women of our shops, one misses the cheery personal interest of the average French saleswoman. This want of good manners is certainly increasing and is shown in other ways than in business.

Men are by degrees becoming less desirous of giving up seats in cars to women. This is because—either we are not thanked at all, or because the woman mumbles something, and is half shy of using outspoken good-mannerly words. All this is important because it leads to a decrease in the courtesy of men to the physically weaker sex, and lessens the feeling of kindly chivalry and respect which enables our women to feel free to travel alone and to rely at once on the honest help of the nearest man. That it all tends to lower the tone of the man is obvious.

I have tried to make you see how harmonious all the life of social and business contacts can be made by courtesy, that is good manners. I have insisted also on its mere commercial value. And observe that I am urging the cause of *good* manners. There is something higher attained by a limited number; manners which rise to the level of a fine art, and possess the mystery of charm, the magic of tact. It is always well to have an ideal.

Some of these outside people we are discussing may say to me: this is all very well, but *I* have lived among folks who work hard, whose lives are difficult. We have no time to think how we shall say or do this or that. Where should we find the teachers of manners? I was once asked this question by a man who from being uncouth, abrupt, careless of dress, became by observation and self-watchfulness a neat, well-mannered gentleman.

I see that President Eliot said lately at Wellesley, among other things with which I heartily agree, that men's colleges do not teach manners. I am not sure that they do not indirectly teach them. I am very sure that the great schools like St. Pauls do teach them, and most admirably well. Mr. Eliot

