



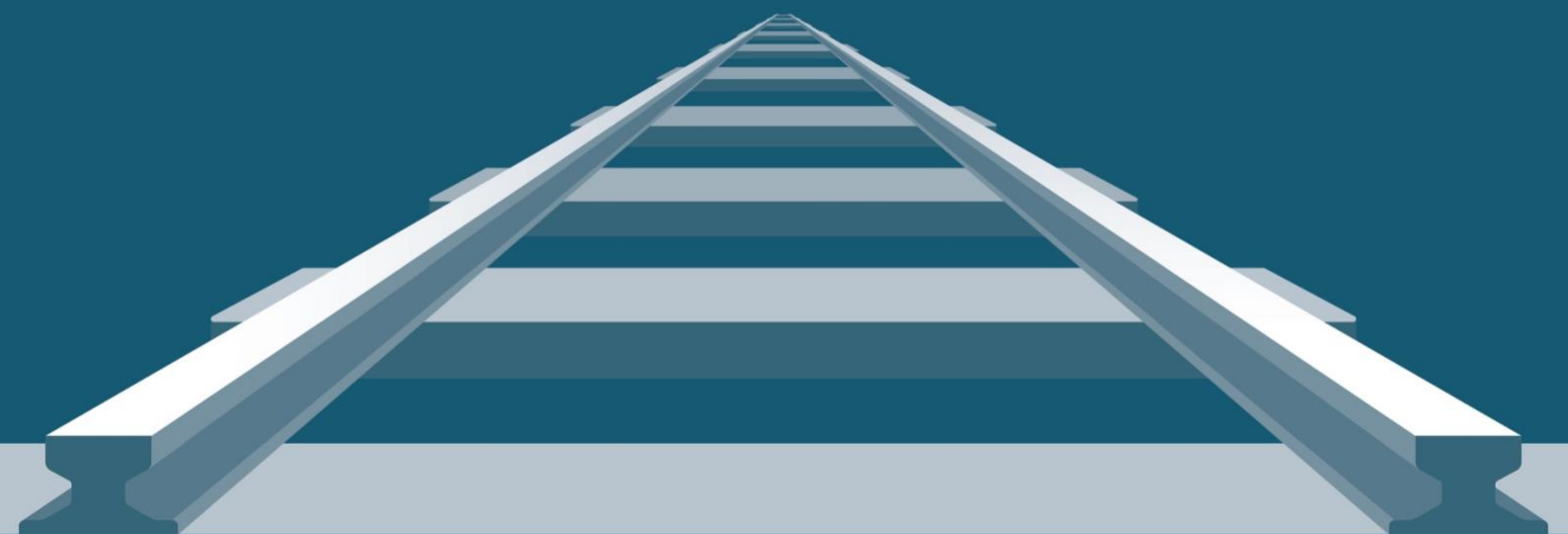
ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER

English curriculum

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# Key Stage 4: Nineteenth century non-fiction

Student anthology



“Reading is equivalent to thinking with someone else’s head instead of with one’s own.”

Arthur Schopenhauer

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## 1. Wear and Tear, or, Hints for the Overworked

*This is an extract from a short book published by an American doctor in 1871. Responding to what he sees as a new culture of overwork, the writer explains the differences between physical and mental work, with a particular interest in getting readers to pay attention to the strain that comes from mental work.*

I have called these Hints WEAR and TEAR, because this title clearly and briefly points out my meaning.

5 Wear is a natural and legitimate result of lawful use, and is what we all have to put up with as the result of years of activity of brain and body. Tear is another matter: it comes of hard or evil usage of body or engine, of putting things to wrong  
10 purposes, using a chisel for a screwdriver, a penknife for a gimlet\*. Long strain, or the sudden demand of strength from weakness, causes tear. Wear comes of use; tear of abuse.

[...]

15 In either form of work, physical or mental, the will acts to start the needed processes, and afterward is chiefly regulative. In the case of bodily labor, the spinal nerve centres are most largely called into action. Where mental or moral processes are involved, the active organs lie within the cranium.

20 As I said just now, when we talk of an overtaxed nervous system it is usually the brain we refer to, and not the spine; and the question therefore arises, Why is it that an excess of physical labor is better borne than a like excess of mental labor?

25 The simple answer is, that mental overwork is harder, because as a rule it is closet or counting-room or at least indoor work – sedentary, in a word. The man who is intensely using his brain is not collaterally employing any other organs, and  
30 the more intense his application the less locomotive does he become. On the other hand, however a man abuses his powers of motion in the way of work, he is at all events encouraging that collateral functional activity which mental labor discourages: he is quickening the heart, driving the  
35 blood through unused channels, hastening the breathing and increasing secretions of the skin – all excellent results, and, even if excessive, better than a too incomplete use of these functions.

[...]

40 When a man uses his muscles, after a time comes the feeling called fatigue – a sensation always referred to the muscles, and due most probably to the deposit in the tissues of certain substances formed during motor activity. Warned by this

45 weariness, the man takes rest – may indeed be forced to do so; but, unless I am mistaken, he who is intensely using the brain does not feel in the common use of it any sensation referable to the organ itself which warns him that he has taxed it  
50 enough. It is apt, like a well-bred creature, to get into a sort of exalted state under the stimulus of need, so that its owner feels amazed at the ease of its processes and at the sense of wide-awakefulness and power that accompanies them. It  
55 is only after very long misuse that the brain begins to have means of saying, “I have done enough;” and at this stage the warning comes too often in the shape of some one of the many symptoms which indicate that the organ is already talking with  
60 the tongue of disease.

Whenever I have closely questioned patients or men of studious habits as to this matter, I have found that most of them, when in health, recognized no such thing as fatigue in mental  
65 action, or else I learned that what they took for this was merely that physical sense of being tired, which arises from prolonged writing or constrained positions. The more, I fancy, any healthy student reflects on this matter the more clearly will he  
70 recognize this fact, that very often when his brain is at its clearest, he pauses only because his back is weary, his eyes aching, or his fingers tired.

The most important question, as to how a man shall know when he has sufficiently tasked his  
75 brain, demands a long answer than I can give it here [...] Many men are warned by some want of clearness or ease in their intellectual processes. Others are checked by a feeling of surfeit or disgust, which they obey or not as they are wise or  
80 unwise. Here, for example, is in substance the evidence of a very attentive student of his own mental mechanism, whom we have to thank for many charming products of his brain. Like most scholars, he can scarcely say that he ever has a  
85 sense of “brain-tire,” because cold hands and feet and a certain restlessness of the muscular system drive him to take exercise. Especially when working at night, he gets after a time a sense of disgust at the work he is doing.

### Glossary

\* gimlet – a hand tool for drilling small holes, mainly in wood, without splitting

This extract is from *Wear and Tear, or, Hints for the Overworked* (1871) by Silas Weir Mitchell and the full text can be found online at

<http://archive.org/details/weartearorhintsf1871mit>  
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## 2. Children in Prison, Oscar Wilde

*This is an extract from a pamphlet called Children in Prison and Other Cruelties of Prison Life, published in 1897 after Wilde's release from Reading prison. It is an attempt to uncover the scandal of children incarcerated in prisons.*

People nowadays do not understand what cruelty is. They regard it as a sort of terrible mediaeval passion, and connect it with the race of men like Eccelin da Romano\*, and others, to whom the deliberate infliction of pain gave a real madness of pleasure. But men of the stamp of Eccelin are merely abnormal types of perverted individualism. Ordinary cruelty is simply stupidity. It comes from the entire want of imagination. It is the result in our days of stereotyped systems, of hard-and-fast rules, of centralisation, of officialism, and of irresponsible authority. Wherever there is centralisation there is stupidity. What is inhuman in modern life is officialism. Authority is as destructive to those who exercise it as it is to those on whom it is exercised. It is the Prison Board, with the system that it carries out, that is the primary source of the cruelty that is exercised on a child in prison. The people who uphold the system have excellent intentions. Those who carry it out are humane in intention also. Responsibility is shifted on to the disciplinary regulations. It is supposed that because a thing is the rule it is right.

The present treatment of children is terrible, primarily from people not understanding the peculiar psychology of a child's nature. A child can understand a punishment inflicted by an individual, such as a parent or guardian, and bear it with a certain amount of acquiescence\*. What it cannot understand is a punishment inflicted by Society. It cannot realise what Society is. With grown people it is, of course, the reverse. Those of us who are either in prison or have been sent there, can understand, and do understand, what that collective force called Society means, and whatever we may think of its methods or claims, we can force ourselves to accept it. Punishment inflicted on us by an individual, on the other hand, is a thing that no grown person endures or is expected to endure.

The child consequently, being taken away from its parents by people whom it has never seen, and of whom it knows nothing, and finding itself in a lonely and unfamiliar cell, waited on by strange faces, and ordered about and punished by the

representatives of a system that it cannot understand, becomes an immediate prey to the first and most prominent emotion produced by modern prison life – the emotion of terror. The terror of a child in prison is quite limitless, I remember once in Reading, as I was going out to exercise, seeing in the dimly-lit cell, right opposite my own, a small boy. Two warders, not unkindly men, were talking to him, with some sternness apparently, or perhaps giving him some useful advice about his conduct. One was in the cell with him, the other was standing outside. The child's face was like a white wedge of sheer terror. There was in his eyes the mute appeal of a hunted animal. The next morning I heard him at breakfast-time crying, and calling to be let out. His cry was for his parents. From time to time I could hear the deep voice of the warder on duty warning him to keep quiet. Yet he was not even convicted of whatever little offence he had been charged with. He was simply on remand\*. That I knew by his wearing his own clothes, which seemed neat enough. He was, however, wearing prison socks and shoes. This showed that he was a very poor boy, whose own shoes, if he had any, were in a bad state. Justices and magistrates, an entirely ignorant class as a rule, often remand children for a week, and then perhaps remit whatever sentence they are entitled to pass. They call this "not sending a child to prison." It is, of course, a stupid view on their part. To a little child, whether he is in prison on remand or after conviction, is a subtlety of social position he cannot comprehend. To him the horrible thing is to be there at all. In the eyes of humanity it should be a horrible thing for him to be there at all.

This terror that seizes and dominates the child, as it seizes the grown man also, is of course intensified beyond power of expression by the solitary cellular...

### Glossary

Eccelin da Romano – a notoriously cruel Italian nobleman who died in 1259

acquiescence – reluctant acceptance without protest

remand – being detained before a trial

The full text is available at the British Library website: <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/children-in-prison-by-oscar-wilde>

### 3. Train travel

*This is an extract from a book called Diseases of Modern Life, published in 1872, which aimed to explain all of the health problems which came about with technological advances and changes within society. This section, from chapter 5 'Disease from Combination of Physical with Mental Strain', is about travelling by train.*

The introduction of the railway system tended greatly to facilitate the desire for possession of town and country house, and in this day we have, in all our large cities and towns, men who are leaving their chambers, their offices, their consulting-rooms every evening in great haste, that they may arrive at the train or other conveyance that will take them a journey of some miles to their homes. Again every morning the same men, usually in very great haste, leave their homes to return to business. If this double process of travel could be performed daily with deliberation, and without exposure to physical or mental shock, it would be free of danger, and perhaps, on the whole, conducive\* to health. For the man who can partly retire, and can pursue business as he lists, it is, I believe, conducive to health; but to the struggling man who is in the meshes of an active life, few processes are more destructive. The elements of danger are many. There is the annoyance which springs from danger of absence from business; there is the haste to return from home to business; there is the temptation to remain occupied to the last possible moment, and to risk an exceeding hurry in order to join the family circle at the appointed hour; there is the tendency to become irregular in the method of meals, to take a hasty breakfast, to work during the day on imperfect snatches of food, and late in the evening, when the stomach, like the rest of the body, is wearied, to compensate for previous deficiencies by eating an excessive meal. Lastly, there is the evil that some work, which might easily have been done during the hours sacrificed to travelling, is brought home to be completed at night, when the tired body should be seeking its natural repose.

I take care to specify these processes, because my experience tells me I can hardly overrate the objections that may be urged against them. They create a feverish inaptitude\* for real work; a wearied inaptitude for real play. They make life a constant labour, and they add to the necessities of labour a persistent unnecessary exertion. The

result is a premature decline of life, preceded by a series of diseased phenomena, which often, in what should be the hey-day of physical enjoyment, render existence a positive burden.

[...]

The effects of travelling, I mean the motion implied by a double daily journey and by the circumstances connected with it, add in a little time, intrinsically, to the evils which have been portrayed. The haste made to catch the train: the confusion, noise, and bustle of the railway station; the shriek of the engine; the start from and stoppage at various stations; the perpetual vibration communicated through the carriage to the body; the closeness of the carriage or the draught through it; the desire in the carriage to fill the time by reading, controversy, joking or games of chance; – these influences all contribute most materially to injure the life of the man who subjects himself to them, be he ever so strong, careful, and collected.

Many persons who have suffered from persistent railway travelling, have told me of one particular subjective symptom which deserves attention. They feel on seating themselves in the carriage a peculiar nervous restlessness and even faintness, which passes away so soon as the carriage is in motion, but which returns with so much increased intensity as the train stops, that actual giddiness or half unconsciousness, with desire to bend forward and find something for support, supervenes. This particular sign I note as of singular\* import. It tells of threatened organic change in the nervous matter; it is a forecast of paralytic seizure, and should never be allowed to pass without the correction of it which can only come from complete withdrawal from the cause; that is to say, from the motion and excitement of the railway life.

#### Glossary

\* conducive – making the outcome of a situation likely or possible \* inaptitude – lack of suitability or skill

\* singular – exceptionally good or remarkable

This extract is from Benjamin Ward Richardson's Diseases of Modern Life (1872) and the full text can be found online at

<https://archive.org/details/fatigue01drumgoog/page/n12>

#### 4. Hints about Timethrift

*This is an extract from a magazine article published in 1852. The Leisure Hour: A Family Journal of Instruction and Recreation was a general interest magazine produced by the Religious Tract Society.*

5 Here the author offers hints about how readers should use their 'free' (non-working) time.

It is a common remark that time flies, and ought to be improved. We fear, however, that few who make the observation are really aware how much it involves, and how far they themselves come short of it. Most persons do not rightly estimate the worth of the smaller fragments of their time. They have large ideas of what may be accomplished in years and months, but of the value of minutes, or even hours, they seem unconscious. Yet it is only by diligently seizing and employing these, that we can secure from waste the longer periods. Why is this truth so often and so strangely overlooked? Many people act as though it had never occurred to them that life is made up of days, and days of moments. They are, perhaps, not chargeable with gross indolence\*, or habitual neglect of duty. But in the intervals of needful occupation they loiter, dream, or trifle; and, at the close of the year, wondering they have done so little, and failed to accomplish so many of their plans, they complain of the shortness of time, the multiplicity of their engagements, or the peculiar hindrances they have sustained; in short, throw the blame on anything or anybody rather than themselves. Might not this not be prevented? We think it might, and will try to show wherein, as we suppose, the fault consists. Take one or two familiar cases.

A weary merchant who at seven o'clock has returned from his desk and counting-house in the city, to a comfortable villa at Brixton or Highgate, exclaims, as he throws himself upon his sofa:- "Well, I wish I had done with the drudgery\* of accounts; I have no time for self-improvement, or doing good to others; all my energies seem absorbed in money-getting." "Surely my dear," replies his wife, "you are not so badly off in this respect after all; you have several hours in the evening."

45 "Yes but what are they worth when one is tired and harassed with a day's fag\* at office? Those who can command all their time may accomplish almost what they will; but what can a man do who has only an hour or two at night, and part of that time taken up with meals and chit-chat?"

While this worthy man is thus complaining he might be reading to his wife a chapter in some interesting book; writing a letter to a friend;

55 performing if he have a talent that way, some little piece of handicraft skill; or giving his children some pleasant and familiar lesson, which would increase their stock of knowledge, and draw out more strongly their affections towards himself.

Take another illustration. A young wife and mother, 60 amiable and kind, but not particularly thoughtful, is really sorry that when her husband returns home in the evening, he should so often have to complain of the disorder of the house; of the perverseness of the two children, who seem to set parental authority at defiance; and of her own inability, 65 from family cares, to comply with his wishes for a little reading or music. Her sister, however, with three times as many children, and who, perhaps, if in that station of life, often lends a hand in the shop besides, manages to get through her day's work in half the time. This excites Lucy's astonishment, and prompts the query, "What can be the reason Jane, that with all you have upon your hands, you never seem in confusion, and manage reading, and many other things for which I never have the time. I wish you would teach me your secret."

"Really, Lucy," is the smiling answer, "I am no such prodigy\*. My secret is soon told. You can try it, if 80 you please, and with as much success. When I rise in the morning, knowing I have certain duties before me which must be done, I try to put these in the best order, and keep for the intervals of leisure which are sure to occur, those other matters which I should like to accomplish; such as reading, 85 writing, a call of charity, or a visit to a friend. By this means, and by taking that first which is most pressing, or best fits in with the space at command, I contrive to keep my children and household in order, and when the day's work is over, to enjoy a quiet evening with my husband."

The case of these sisters is, we apprehend, a common one.

#### Glossary

\* indolence – laziness

\* drudgery – hard, dull, or tiring work

\* fag – hard work

\* prodigy – a person with exceptional qualities or abilities

This extract is from "Hints about Timethrift" by author unknown in Volume 1 No. 15 of The Leisure Hour magazine (8th April 1852) and the full text of the article can be found online at

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.a0006340913?urlappend=%3Bseq=243>

## 5. The Uses of Fiction

*This is an extract from an article called “The Uses of Fiction”, published in 1870. The author considers how in reading fiction, we can learn more about the world in general, and how in reading about character behaviour we might change our own.*

This desire to know what other people say and do and think is universal. Every man and woman must necessarily have some sort of theory of the little world in which they move; and they cannot help wishing to know if other people see with the same eyes, and meet with the same facts. Every man knows that, outside of his own circle of acquaintances, there exists a great abstract thing which he calls the world, that has its opinions and habits, which are not the opinions and habits of any particular person he knows. He will do such and such an act in defiance of the opinions of Tom, or Jack, or Harry, whom he knows, and whose scruples he can combat or laugh over; but he will not do it in defiance of the world’s opinion, which he fears. Now no single man knows this great outside world. Every man knows his own section of it; and the only way in which you can arrive at some notion of the world and humanity in general is, by taking these several reports and comparing them. You listen to men of experience, and judge of their theories of life, accepting that which is most probable. You find that some great traveller has certain odd notions about the feminine character in general; or that some great author has very decided opinions about the selfishness of humanity; or that some great philanthropist\* has a no less decided opinion about its being unselfish and honest at the core; and all these various estimates modify each other, until you come to the conclusion that the logical deduction from them all would be an utter blank. [...]

However ineffectual, therefore, be the attempt of any single person to portray the world by 20 painting the portraits of his acquaintances, that limited circle is still of immense interest to us.

We meet with types of character and examples of conduct which we should not have met with in our own spheres; and are able to compare them, and select that which is most beautiful. One of the first uses of fiction is that it keeps awake a good ideal of life. In their own narrow spheres, men have a tendency to run in narrow grooves and become the victims of petty desires and mean theories.

Without that constant communion with other natures which enlarges the sympathies and widens the understanding, men are apt to settle down into

a sordid selfishness. Fiction steps in and shows the beauty of a healthier, active and beneficial life. It kindles new desires, awakens a little heroism to purify the tainted moral air, and lets a man see what, after all, ought to be the chief pleasures and the real aim of living. A man who loves fiction cannot be altogether a sneak. The multitude of honourable people he meets would shame him into better conduct. A man is known by the company he seeks; and your churlish\*, contemptible, avaricious\*, and mean-spirited man is not likely to court the society of these fictitious ladies and gentlemen, who would be constantly rebuking him by their unselfishness, their generosity, and kindly demeanour.

[...]

Nothing can be more natural than this tendency to construct imaginary scenes, with imaginary people in them. Novel-building is the involuntary action of the mind in sleep. When a man loses control of his imagination, it revels in all manner of fancy combinations of life, weaving-up his impressions of men and women, and his recollections of scenery, into kaleidoscopic stories of every possible form. And these have always the advantage of being more picturesque than ordinary life; for the simple reason that all the commonplace detail, which alternates with the rapid and brilliant actions of life, is omitted.

[...]

This, then, is one great use of novels – to give us wider and better conceptions of life and its possibilities; to keep before us an ideal which must have some beneficial effect on actual conduct; to prevent our forming false and narrow notions of human nature from the limited sphere in which we move.

### Glossary

\* philanthropist – a person who seeks to promote the welfare of others, particularly by donating money

\* churlish – rude and ill-mannered

\* avaricious – having or showing extreme greed for money/material gain

This extract is from “The Uses of Fiction”, in Tinsley’s Magazine, Vol. 6 (March 1870), pp. 180-5, and the full text can be found online at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=LRAaAQAIAAJ&dq=Tinsley%27s%27+Magazine.+6+%281870%29%3A&q=uses+fiction#v=snippet&q=uses%20fiction&f=false>

## 6. The Health of the Labourer

*This is an extract from a magazine article published in 1845. Punch was well known for poking fun at the upper classes, and particularly the politicians of the day. Conditions for labourers (poorer people doing manual, physical work often outdoors) were particularly harsh in this period.*

The great social difficulty that has beset us in the amelioration of the condition of the labourer, is at length solved. To the DUKE OF RICHMOND, we believe, is to be attributed the happy discovery.

5 Doubtless, when the full success of the plan is made manifest; when throughout the length and breadth of England, its wondrous agency is turning the huts of the labouring poor into abiding-places of substantial comfort – when it is calling smiles  
10 into the labourer’s cheek, and putting flesh upon his bones, and giving him the erect hearing and independent look of God’s primest work, – Man; then, we doubt it not, other claimants of the discovery will rise up, contesting with the Noble  
15 DUKE OF RICHMOND the originality of that stroke of philanthropic genius which has worked such blessed wonders. It has been so with the inventor of painting; with the discoverer of the motive principle of steam. Be it then our rewarding task at  
20 once to claim for RICHMOND his inalienable\* right to the gratitude of England’s labourers. He has discovered the infallible remedy for all their social ills. It is simply this: IT IS TO DRINK THEIR HEALTH.

MR. LANE tells us, that the Egyptian magicians  
25 enact their greatest wonders with merely a bowl of water. The DUKE OF RICHMOND performs his benevolent hocus-pocus with a glass of wine!

Oh, it is soothing to the soul, wearied and desponding from a contemplation of the crushing  
30 ills that press the very manhood out of thousands, to see a nobleman – philanthropic as PROMETHEUS\* – rise in a tavern hall; and with a voice melodious as ten silver trumpets, give – “THE HEALTH OF THE LABOURER!” There is no mistaking  
35 the look, the presence of the man. He is rapt, sublimated by the greatness of his mission; by the almost divine power of his discovery.

“THE HEALTH OF THE LABOURER!”

Magical are the syllables! What are they, in truth,  
40 but as the words of some spirit-compelling wizard – some political Prospero\* – that are no sooner dropt from the lips of the speaker than they arouse a swarm of genii – working vassals of benevolence! – and away they fly to carry on their wings a  
45 healing balm to thousands and thousands! So mighty is the necromancy of the toast, that when uttered, it is easy for imagination to behold a very cloud of Ariels\* rising from the Freemasons’

Tavern. East, west, north, and south they separate  
50 upon their glad mission. Some, carrying loaves – some, meat – some, kegs of nut-brown ale – some, new raiment, - and all of them alighting at the labourer’s fireless hearth, and calling cheerfulness and hope into his face, and making his gaunt wife  
55 and pallid little ones smile at the miracle of sudden plenty. What benevolent magic lies in that little sentence, “THE HEALTH OF THE LABOURER!” It is the “Open Sesame” to the heart of the country”.

And even when the labourer fails to receive the  
60 substantial sweetness of these fairy gifts, it is plain he is largely benefited, though all unconsciously, by the magical toast. Therefore, let him take heart. True it is, he may wither on seven shillings a week; but then, does not a Duke drink his health? and  
65 such condescension must more than double the miserable stipend.

Consider this, O labourer! It is possible that all day you have wanted food – at night you need shelter and firing. There are sullen thoughts clouding your  
70 brain; there is, too, a slow, withering heat at your vitals; night is coming on, and you know not where to lay your head. This, it must be owned, is an uncomfortable plight; nevertheless, you may shake off the misery like an ugly dream; for know, you  
75 have been toasted in a London tavern. Yes; at the Freemasons’ the DUKE OF RICHMOND has given – “THE HEALTH OF THE LABOURER!”

You are breaking stones in a Union yard.\* Let the  
80 thought of the toast touch your brain with music, and somehow try and hammer on the granite a grateful accompaniment to – “THE HEALTH OF THE LABOURER!”

### Glossary

\* inalienable – not transferable to another; not capable of being taken away or denied

\* Prometheus – mythological God who is sometimes credited with creating humankind, or with giving them fire (which enabled progress/civilisation)

\* Prospero – magical sorcerer from Shakespeare’s play *The Tempest*

\* Ariels – in Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, Ariel is Prospero’s spirit slave who carries out his magical works

\* Union yard – reference to the stone-breaking commonly done by men in Workhouses (where people unable to support themselves lived, often in bad conditions)

This extract is from “The Health of the Labourer” by author unknown in Volume 8 of *Punch* magazine (Jan-June 1845) and the full text of the article can be found online at  
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/iau.31858029795311?urlapend=%3Bseq=95>



## 7. Stimulants for Fine Ladies

*This is an extract from a magazine article published in 1871. The writer had written on this topic in the previous issue and a medical journal, The Lancet, had agreed with its findings. This article continues the argument that alcoholism is a problem among middle- and upper-class women. In the nineteenth century, women were often diagnosed by doctors as 'nervous', and prescribed alcohol.*

All honest and learned physicians will of course do what they can to restrain a vice which destroys health, and which is fed by a drug of which they are beginning to appreciate the true qualities, good and bad. And whatever evils may have resulted from too great reliance on its benign effects – and shall we say from ignorance of its complicated action? – medical men are not so responsible as some interested persons would have them for the abuse of alcohol in the nursery and school-room, and little, if at all, responsible for the convivial excess which seems now to be included among female rights to equality with men. [...]

Doctors did harm when they suggested wine or brandy as proper remedies for trifling or recurrent pain, but science is making amends by now declaring authoritatively in what minute doses, in what cases, and for what treatments, alcohol is safe. People “in society” will stare when they are told that the small, fat, “nervous” woman of the day is strictly limited for all good purposes to as much spirit as is contained in two glasses of average sherry, and that even this is only to be taken with food that will prevent too rapid absorption of the stimulant. Is there much hope that such a rule will be accepted, or that scientific assertion will stay for five minutes the excesses of midnight routs or the drams\* of an overworked fine lady, or check the private indulgence which can remove the restraints and soothe the scruples that inconveniently control the educated woman? Still, for the benefit of those who, safe themselves, may help their weaker sisters, it is well to repeat medical warnings. Many also who ignorantly increase their stimulant, not from vicious pleasure in the satisfaction it procures, but because they are already so devitalized\* by its use that they crave even ruinous help to bear their depression, may benefit by knowledge of their error. For confirmation of our words we refer them to their physician, who can enter into details that would be here out of place; but meantime we urgently assure them that stimulants can only assist natural powers and not create them, and that such a dose of wine as can make a woman lose the sense of

her actual weakness, and imagine she is strong and “jolly,” has in truth lessened her strength.

[...]

another singular result of alcoholic weakening is the involuntary reminiscence or revival of past impressions which may have cost years of patient self-conquest to obliterate. Excellent and charming as may be our womankind, we think they should very seriously avoid such undoing of what has been done for their improvement by training and social restraints. And granting that agreeable Mrs. A. or useful Lady B. has to drive, dance, ride, dine, and dress her best, flirting all the while her worst, we beg the backers of that flyer to believe that none of these works, except perhaps the last, will be really helped by a dram.

[...]

The prospect of more than collateral help from medical advisors is discouraging; but how will it be if we treat drinking in drawing-rooms, not merely as a vice injurious\* to health, but as a social crime? Much of it being secret, it will be hard to arraign\* the criminal without risk of error. Nothing is more variable than the effect of alcohol. Some women support with dignity what would madden others. One constitution will tolerate the dose that is poisonous to another. Circumstances, idiosyncrasy, the want of food or fresh air, the state of health or mind, the hour of the day, will alter the right and wrong of stimulation. Shall there be a medical inquisitor at every ball, an inspecting doctor in public places to measure the alcoholization of suspected fine ladies, to investigate Mrs. C.'s jollity, and to report if Lady D.'s manner is due to eau-de-cologne or fatigue?

[...]

We recommend the return to old-fashioned checks which were found potent in former periods of social disorder, and, if possible, the renewal of women's faith in the existence of their souls. Then perhaps they may better respect their bodies, and keep them in subjection more efficiently, than when they have no higher aim than to satisfy the doctor and please the world. Such fortifying of the will and exercise of the purer emotions as is procured by the practices of the Christian religion are probably the true remedies for that moral weakness and mental disorder which accompany narcotic paralysis, and in this assertion we are supported by persons of large experience. [...] Within the circle of home influences women are safest from the risks of drinking, and by the exercise of domestic affection and the practice of

100 domestic duties she will be helped to repel  
unhealthy craving. [...] The just authority of  
parents or husband should aid best her own desire  
for safety, and such right authority should  
prescribe as material helps for any who have been  
tempted to over- stimulation, rest and fresh air,  
rest and food, rest and keeping out of temptation.

**Glossary**

- \* dram – a small amount of alcohol, often a strong spirit
- \* devitalized – wisdom; showing good judgement
- \* injurious – tending to hurt or damage
- \* arraign – accuse somebody of a fault or crime

This extract is from 'Stimulants for Fine Ladies, The Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science, and Art, Volume 31, pp. 397-99 (1838) and the full text of this publication can be found online at <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=gUVTAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

## 8. Saint George and the Dragon

*This is an extract from an article called "Saint George and the Dragon", published in 1852. The author takes readers inside St George's Hospital in London. In this extract, the writer describes medical students watching an operation.*

At the most active corner of the most active lung of the great metropolis, stands a large building of the pseudo-classical style. Its vast monotonous white flank, exposed to the full roar of Piccadilly, gives no sign of life or animation; and if it were not for the inscription on its frieze, "supported by voluntary contributions," it might be taken for a workhouse, or for one of Nash's palaces\*. Will the reader be conducted through the labyrinths of Saint George's Hospital, and see something of the eternal fight that every day beholds between the good Saint George and the undying Dragon of Disease?

But let him not enter with the idea that there is anything repulsive in the contemplation of this congregation of human sufferers; but rather with a sense of the beneficence of an institution, which snatches poor helpless creatures from the depressing influences of noisome alleys, or the fever-jungles of pestilential courts, and opens to them here – in the free air, where a palace might be proud to plant itself – a home, with benevolence and charity as their friends and servitors. Neither must he look with a half-averted glance upon the scenes we have to show him; for their aim is to render the anguish of one sufferer subservient to the future ease of some succeeding sufferer; to make great Death himself pay tribute to the living.

[...]

Steadily and quietly the Operating Theatre is overflowed from the top benches, and the spectator looks down upon a hollow cone of human heads. The focus of this living mass is the operating table, on which, covered with a sheet, lies the anxious patient; and every now and then he sweeps with an anxious glance the sea of heads which surrounds him. Close to him is the surgeon; his white cuffs lightly turned up, examining carelessly a gleaming knife, and talking in whispers to his colleagues and assistants.

Slowly the bewildered countenance of the patient relaxes, – his eyes close, – he breathes peacefully, – he sleeps, under the beneficent influence of chloroform\*, like a two-years' old child. The sheet

is removed, and there lies a motionless, helpless, nerve-numbered life; an assistant pushes back the eyelid, and the fixed eye stares vacantly at the roof.

The student below us clutches the bars in front of him. It is his first operation; and he wishes he were far away; and wonders how the nurses can stand so calmly, waiting with the warm sponges.

There is a sudden movement forward of every head; and then a dead silence. The surgeon has broken into the house of life, and every eye converges towards his hands, – those hands that manipulate so calmly – those fingers that see, as it were where vision cannot penetrate, and which single out unerringly, amid the tangled network of the frame, the life-duct that they want. For a moment there is a painful pause; an instrument has to be changed, and the operator whispers to his assistant. "Something is going wrong," flashes in a moment through every mind. No! – the fingers proceed with a precision that reassures; the artery is tied; and the life that trembled upon the verge of eternity is called back, and secured by a loop of whipcord!

There is a buzz, and a general movement in the Theatre; the huge hollow cone of heads turns around, and becomes a cloud of white faces – no longer anxious. Some students vault over the backs of the seats; others swing up by the force of their arms; the whole human cone boils over the top benches, and pours out at the doors. Brown pulls Jones's hair playfully; whereupon Jones "bonnets" Robinson; and there is a universal "scrimmage" on the stairs. Can these be the same silent, grave-looking students we saw half-an-hour since? Yes! Who expects medical students to keep grave more than half-an-hour?

### Glossary

\* Nash's palaces – John Nash was a famous architect who created many of the most well-known buildings and monuments in London

\* pestilential – relating to or tending to cause infectious diseases

\* chloroform – a liquid anaesthetic

This extract is from "Saint George and the Dragon", by Andrew Wynter, in *Household Words*, Vol. 5, No. 107 (April 1852), pp. 77-80, and the full text can be found online at <http://www.djo.org.uk/household-words/volume-v/page-77.html>.

## 9. Extracts John Ruskin's Letters about Modern Travel

*These extracts are from personal letters the art critic and social commentator John Ruskin wrote to friends and family. Here he is concerned about how new modes of travel have disconnected us from the landscape and from our own bodies.*

To Dr John Brown

[...] I wish you would let me know why, of all things  
 5 in the world, you should differ with me  
 5 upon railroads; I am quite at a loss to conjecture  
 what can be said in their defence; granting that  
 their effect on natural scenery is trivial, that their  
 10 interference with the rest and character of rural life  
 is of no moment, and that sometimes the power of  
 rapid locomotion may be of much service to us or  
 save us from some bitter pain or accident which  
 our absence at the moment must have involved,  
 yet the general effect of them is to render all the  
 15 time that we pass in locomotion the same, except  
 in feverishness, as that passed at home, and to  
 enable us to get over ground which formerly  
 conveyed to us a thousand various ideas, and the  
 20 examination of which was fertile in lessons of the  
 most interesting kind, while we read a page of the  
 morning paper. One traveller is now the same as  
 another: it matters not whether you have eyes or  
 are asleep or blind, intelligent or dull, all that you  
 can know, at best, of the country you pass is its  
 25 geological structure and general clothing; your  
 study of humanity is limited to stokers\* and  
 policemen at the stations, and of animal life to the  
 various arrangements of black and brown dots on  
 chessboard-looking fields. I can safely say that my  
 30 only profitable travelling has been on foot, and that  
 I think it admits of much doubt whether not only  
 railroads but even carriages and horses, except for  
 rich people or conveyance of letters and  
 merchandise, be not inventions of the Evil one.  
 35 How much of the indolence\*, ill- health,  
 discomfort, thoughtlessness, selfishness, sin, and  
 misery of this life do you suppose may be  
 ultimately referable altogether to the invention of  
 those two articles alone, the carriage and the  
 40 bridle? I am not jesting. Think of it and tell me,  
 believing me always very gratefully yours,  
 AUTHOR OF "MODERN PAINTERS."

To his MOTHER

KESWICK, 1st August, 1867.

It was fine yesterday, and I took a light carriage,  
 and drove with Downs up Borrowdale, and 30  
 round under Honistar Crag to Buttermere—and  
 45 played a little while at the edge of the same stream  
 which I got scolded for dabbling in till I was too late  
 for dinner, when I was a boy. [...] We came home  
 through the Vale of Newlands. Both passes were  
 higher and grander than I expected; but driving a  
 50 long way through moors is duller than walking, for  
 at least in walking one has to look where one is  
 going, and that is amusing.

To his FATHER

HARRISTOWN, Thursday Morning [August 29 1861].

I hope you received the telegram rightly; it was  
 sent from Dublin a little after seven, with some  
 55 difficulty, Crawley having to return two miles to  
 another station across the town. I had what people  
 would call a beautiful passage—that is to say, an  
 entirely dull one—in huge steamer. I had no idea of  
 the disagreeableness of these large boats. Their  
 60 enormous fires vomiting volcanofuls of smoke  
 continually through two funnels nearly as big as  
 railway tunnels; the colossal power of the engines  
 making everything else subordinate to it, so that  
 the feeling is not of being in a boat at all, but on a  
 65 timber framework surrounding a fearful engine  
 which is crushing the sea—roaring and storming its  
 way along; the want of all healthy wave motion,  
 and the substitution for it merely of a continual  
 sense of giddiness, which makes one fancy one's  
 70 legs or head are failing somehow; the whole bow of  
 the boat planked over, not a deck, but a roof, so,  
 the top of which is forbidden to passengers, so that  
 one can't go near the head of the boat; the huge  
 saloons, and perpetual draught through all of them,  
 75 caused by boat's railway speed—make the whole  
 thing the most disagreeable floating contrivance  
 imaginable. It went over in four hours.

### Glossary

\* stoker – man who shovelled coal into the steam  
 engine's firebox to keep it running. Sometimes called  
 'fireman' or 'boilerman'.

\* indolence – laziness

These extracts are from Volumes 36 and 37 of The  
 Complete Works of John Ruskin. The full text of Ruskin's  
 letters can be found online at  
<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/depts/ruskinlib/Letters> on  
 pages 61-62, 532 and 382-3 respectively.

## 10. Observations on the Preservation of Health

*This is an extract from a book published in London in 1838. The writer aims to give readers common-sense advice about looking after their health in their everyday lives. The book is written for men.*

How many young men there are in this city, who, being engaged in sedentary\* occupations the greater part of the day, in banking-houses, merchants' counting-houses, or lawyers' offices, imperatively need much muscular exercise to preserve their bodies in health and strength, yet, in sheer ignorance, give up almost the only opportunity they have of taking such exercise; and instead of walking to and from their places of business, get into an omnibus, and ride, for the express purpose of avoiding a little fatigue: whereas their elder brethren, who have risen an hour before them, may be seen walking, thereby availing themselves of the advantage of exercise. Many of these same persons, breathing during the whole day confined and impure air, emerge therefrom, and, with admirable sagacity\*, proceed straightaway into the still more impure air of a theatre, or other crowded place!

If individuals of this class knew their own interests, they would fix their habitations at a short distance (two or three miles) from town; and would regard as an indispensable appendage to their dwellings a plot of garden-ground. These preliminaries arranged, they would be early risers; they would cultivate their gardens, and, whenever the state of the weather permitted, would call in to their aid no other instruments of locomotion\* than those with which nature has furnished them. If such a plan as this were pursued, they would be able to resist the unhealthy influences to which they are in their daily pursuits exposed; and a blooming cheek and cheerful eye would be more common phenomena in the city of London than they at present are.

But, though the persons composing this useful and respectable class are in general neglectful of exercise, there are every year not a few victims from among them to excessive muscular exertion. Most of them enjoy once a-year a vacation of a few weeks – a resting from the cares and toils of business: and, as if to make up for their long confinement, many of these young persons determine to make the most of their short period

of liberty, and set out on extensive pedestrian excursions. Ignorant or unmindful of the fact, that the muscles, for want of due exercise, become weak and incapable of powerful action; and that, to be beneficial, it is necessary that exercise should be proportioned to the strength of the organ – their object is, to accomplish the utmost of which their limbs are capable. Having heard that exercise is conducive to health, and knowing that, for the previous twelve months, they have had exceedingly little of it, they imagine their best plan is to take advantage of the present opportunity, and to lay up a stock of health for the twelve months to come. Unmindful of the monitions which their weary limbs afford, they march on to the end of their predetermined journey, consoling themselves for the pain they suffer by thinking that as it is caused by exercise, it will eventually promote their health. No opinion can be more mistaken: this excessive fatigue weakens the body to such a degree, as often to produce permanent debility\*, and lay the foundations of fatal disease

[...]

As closely connected with the subject of exercise, I shall append a few observations relating to those who lead sedentary lives.

Persons who are much occupied in writing, such as barristers, editors of newspapers, and those engaged in literary pursuits, will do well to have a high desk, at which they should stand to write whenever they are fatigued with sitting. This practice will be found extremely efficacious in preventing those desk-diseases which are incident to such occupations.

### Glossary

\*sedentary – characterised by sitting down or being inactive \* sagacity – wisdom; showing good judgement

\*locomotion – the act or power of moving from place to place

\*debility – physical weakness, especially as a result of illness

This extract is from J. H. Curtis, *Observations on the Preservation of Health in Infancy, Youth, Manhood and Age* (1838), pages 75-8, and the full text of the third edition can be found online at

<https://archive.org/details/b29339819>

## 11. London Air and London Streets

*This extract is from a magazine from 1856 called The Medical Times and Gazette. The writer aims to raise awareness of the pollution of the city and its lack of green spaces, and ways to reduce its negative effects.*

Man may be regarded as living at the bottom of an immense ocean of air, which, like the ocean of water, has its tides and currents, and is liable to vary in its properties through its power of dissolving or of being intermixed with substances with which it comes in contact, and the purity of which is restored partly by the influence of vegetation, and partly by its ceaseless circulation, whereby all foreign substances suspended in it are diluted and decomposed in the course of the incessant\* chemical and electric changes which take place in it. Of the various sources of impurity, the presence of man and animals may be considered as the most important, and it is that to which nature seems to have provided an antidote in the powers of the vegetable world. Plants, under light and sunshine, renovate the air with fresh streams of oxygen, and deprive it of the rank vapours with which animal bodies have contaminated it.

Two circumstances there must be, then, in all town air, which render it comparatively impure: the abundant presence of animals, and the absence of vegetation. Heaven forbid that grass should grow in our streets! If there were anything like a wise foresight or economy displayed in the laying out of streets, we should have large spaces reserved for shrubs and gardens, in order to promote freer circulation and greater purity of air, as well as for the comfort of the eye. Yet the tendencies of the changes which are taking place are quite in the opposite direction. The New Road, that extends from Kensington Gardens into the heart of the City, might have been a magnificent boulevard, with gardens, or at least a row of trees on each side. But the gardens which once existed in front of the houses are rapidly being built over, and broad, healthy avenue converted into a close and narrow street. The same kind of deterioration is taking place in all the suburban thoroughfares. May we add, that even Hyde Park is being changed for the worse? Broad gravel paths, or rather roads fenced in with rails, are being multiplied over it in every direction; huge strips of the "living turf" are being removed, and the staid and formal aspect of a

"trim garden" is being substituted for that natural wildness which was once the happy characteristic of this most important breathing space. We confess that we begrudge the loss of one particle of green vegetation, with its air-purifying powers, and still more the loss of that freedom of space and untutored beauty so refreshing to the brick-and-mortar-sated\* spirit. What if the people do trample on the turf, and wear it away? Let them enjoy this cheap luxury for their toil-worn feet. A broad gravel walk has no such charm in it.

It is not to be denied, however, that our houses must be packed closely, and that our green spaces must be few and far between; and we may then ask, whether nothing can be done to lessen the impurity and unpleasantness of London air? This question we think can easily be answered.

If the atmosphere has the property of being mixed with emanations\* from the substances over which it passes, it is not difficult to conceive what must be the effect of its traversing London streets in the summer time, covered as they are with a thick coating of animal matter, which is profusely watered, and exposed to the rays of the sun.

We ourselves never fail to remark, when returning in the summer-time from a country excursion, what a saddening, sickening, peculiarly depressing influence, both on mind and body, is produced by the emanations from the first great thoroughfare we enter. Nor, indeed, can it well be otherwise. Tons of water are daily thrown upon which they are thrown is covered with animal debris. Hence the air is loaded with fetid\* moisture, and every street in London is a marsh on a small scale.

### Glossary

\* incessant – constant, never-ending

\* sated – full of/supplied with more than is desired or can be managed

\* emanations – something given off from a source, in this case likely a smell \* fetid – smelling extremely unpleasant

This extract is from "London Air and London Streets" from the Medical Times and Gazette, Vol. 12 (April 5th, 1856), by unknown author, and the full text can be found online at

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044103088019?urlappend=%3Bseq=426>.

## 12. Letter on Corpulence

*This is an extract from a pamphlet published in 1863. The writer had successfully dieted – with medical guidance – to cure his corpulence (an old word for obesity). The pamphlet was addressed “to the public”, because Bantling wanted to help other people suffering from the condition by offering advice about his own cure.*

Any one so afflicted is often subject to public remark, and though in conscience he may care little about it, I am confident no man labouring under obesity can be quite insensible to the sneers and remarks of the cruel and injudicious in public assemblies, public vehicles, or the ordinary street traffic; nor to the annoyance of finding no adequate space in a public assembly if he should seek amusement or need refreshment, and therefore he naturally keeps away as much as possible from places where he is likely to be made the object of taunts and remarks of others. I am as regardless of public remark as most men, but I have felt these difficulties and therefore avoided such circumscribed accommodation and notice, and by that means have been deprived of many advantages to health and comfort.

Although no very great size or weight, still I could not stoop to tie my shoe, so to speak, nor attend to the little offices humanity requires without considerable pain and difficulty, which only the corpulent can understand; I have been compelled to go down stairs slowly backwards, to save the jar of increased weight upon the ancle\* and knee joints, and been obliged to puff and blow with every slight exertion, particularly that of going up stairs. I have spared no pains to remedy this by low living (moderation and light food was generally prescribed, but I had no direct bill of fare to know what was really intended), and that, consequently, brought the system into a low impoverished state, without decreasing corpulence, caused many obnoxious boils to appear, and two rather formidable carbuncles, for which I was ably operated upon and fed into increased obesity.

[...]

Oh! that the faculty would look deeper into and make themselves better acquainted with the crying evil of obesity – that dreadful tormenting parasite on health and comfort. Their fellow men might not descend into early premature graves, as I believe

many do, from what is termed apoplexy\*, and certainly would not, during their sojourn\* on earth, endure so much bodily and consequently mental infirmity.

Corpulence, though giving no actual pain, as it appears to me, must naturally press with undue violence upon the bodily viscera, driving one part upon another, and stopping the free action of all. I am sure it did in my particular case, and the result of my experience is briefly as follows:–

- I have not felt so well as now for the last twenty years.
- Have suffered no inconvenience whatever in the probational\* remedy.
- Am reduced many inches in bulk, and 35lbs. in weight in thirty-eight weeks.
- Come down stairs forward naturally, with perfect ease.
- Go up stairs and take ordinary exercise freely, without the slightest inconvenience.
- Can perform every necessary office for myself.
- The umbilical rupture is greatly ameliorated\*, and gives me no anxiety. My sight is restored – my hearing improved.
- My other bodily ailments are ameliorated; indeed, almost past into matter of history.

I have placed a thank-offering of £50 in the hands of my kind medical adviser for distribution amongst his favourite hospitals, after gladly paying his usual fees, and still remain under 40 overwhelming obligations for his care and attention, which I can never hope to repay. Most thankful to Almighty Providence for mercies received, and determined to press the case into public notice as a token of gratitude.

### Glossary

\* ancle – old-fashioned spelling of ‘ankle’

\* apoplexy – what we would today call a stroke

\* sojourn – short stay

\* probational – subject to testing, an experimental trial period  
\* ameliorated – improved, made better

This extract is from ‘Letter on Corpulence, addressed to the public’ by William Bantling (1863) and the full text of the third edition can be found online at <https://archive.org/details/letteroncorpulen00bant>

### 13. Hygiene for Girls

*This is an extract from a book published in America in 1883. The writer aims to educate young women about their health.*

#### Introduction

Health is not a thing of chance, but is governed by certain fixed laws. These laws are but imperfectly understood, and our knowledge of them is continually progressing. In the present state of medical science a comprehensive study of them is the labor of a life, and should therefore be undertaken only by those who are able and willing to devote their lives to the subject. Necessarily, such individuals constitute but a small portion of mankind. It is to them that all others must look for special instruction as to the preservation of health, and the most probable means of regaining it when it has been lost.

Yet, while the intricacies of the science of health must be left to those who make that science their province, some of the plainer and simpler laws relating thereto may be understood by any person of ordinary intelligence, at a very small expense of time. It is plainly the duty of every one who can, to acquire this elementary knowledge, as, if acted upon, it will certainly save a great deal of suffering, not only to the individual, but to those with whom the individual comes in contact, and will also greatly augment\* the power for work and enjoyment.

Especially it is desirable that girls should have this knowledge, since their future relations in life will associate them more nearly with the physical welfare of others, and their own present and future are attended with more danger from the deplorable effects of ignorance than in the case of their brothers. Many a woman whose childhood was bright with promise endures an after-life of misery because, through a false delicacy, she remained ignorant of her physical nature and requirements, although on all other subjects she may be well-informed; and so at length she goes to her grave mourning the hard fate that has made existence a burden, and perhaps wondering to what end she was born, when a little knowledge at the proper time would have shown her how to easily avoid those evils that have made her life a wretched failure. Most of the suffering in this world arises directly from ignorance, and much of it from ignorance that is criminal because unnecessary.

from *Chapter 1: Nerves and Nervousness*

As the nerves spring either from the brain or the spinal cord, and as the spinal cord itself comes directly from the brain, every part of the body is under the influence of the brain, through the means of the nerves. The nervous system has been aptly compared to the electric telegraph\*, with the brain for central office, the subtle\* nerve-force for the invisible current, and the nerves themselves for the conducting wires. But, as in a telegraph system there are many offices, each one having its own battery and connecting link whereby the operator is enabled either to put himself in connection with the entire line, or to send his own messages independently of the central office, so in the nervous system there are many stations or “nerve-centres,” as they are called, each of which is capable of communicating impulses received from the brain, or of originating its own impulses and causing acts with which the mind has nothing to do.

[...]

The terms “nerves” and “nervousness” are often misused and much misunderstood. It is not uncommon to hear people assert of certain others, or of themselves, that they “have no nerves,” and many even become indignant at the suggestion that they are in any degree nervous. The idea of such would seem to be that nerves are a hindrance to the cool command of one’s faculties, and that to be nervous is to be weak, fanciful, and silly. Yet we know that without nerves one would have no faculties to command, and that some kind and degree of nervous influence enters into every act of our lives. Indeed, we often hear a man of great coolness and self-command spoken of as “a man of nerve,” and one who displays a quick and eager energy in all things is frequently described as a nervous person. It is unfortunate that so much confusion exists in regard to these terms

#### Glossary

\* augment – increase, make something bigger by adding to it

\* electric telegraph – new technology which allowed the sending of telegrams via Morse code messages as electric signals transmitted long-distance through wires and cables

\* subtle – alternative spelling of ‘subtle’, meaning delicate, difficult to perceive, barely noticeable

This extract is from Irenaeus P. Davis, *Hygiene for Girls* (1883) and the full text can be found online at <https://archive.org/details/61410710R.nlm.nih.gov/page/n13>



## 14. Female Education from a Medical Point of View

*This is an extract from a lecture given by a Scottish doctor to what is now the Royal Society of Edinburgh, so his audience would have been professional male audience. The lectures concern how to educate young women in a way which protects their healthy development.*

If I had a school to construct on ideal principles, I should have it placed on the north side of a large space of ground. I should have it one storey only, and every class-room lofty, and with roof-lights to let in as much as possible of our scanty Scotch sunlight. I should have the walls of the class-rooms painted in light, cheerful, tasteful colours, to produce a cheering effect on the minds of the pupils. I should have a big, open fireplaces to cheer and to ventilate the rooms. I should have, as an essential adjunct\*, a great room, where gymnastics, romping\*, dancing, and play should all have full scope, when the weather did not admit of the girls going out.

There is one most unaccountable want in very many girls' schools in our cities. If boys need 10 play, fresh air, games, muscular development, I have no hesitation in saying that girls need them all to the extent applicable to their constitution and strength still more. [...] You cannot starve a girl's life of these things without doing her harm, any more than you can with impunity\* keep her on a short allowance of food. A girls' school without a playground, a gymnasium, or public park near, I look on as a garden without sunshine, or a boat with one oar. It is deficient and one-sided; it is a machine for production without sufficient provision for the renovation of wear and tear. Mind can't grow except by growth of brain; brain can't grow but through good food, fresh air, work, and rest, in proper proportion. The blood will not renew itself properly in youth but by brisk circulation, and this can only be got by exercise in the fresh air. The muscles won't grow and harden but by having plenty of good blood and exercise. The fat, that most essential concomitant of female adolescence, won't form in the proper way, except the blood is rich. Fat is to the body what fun is to the mind, an indication of spare power that is boiling over and available for future use. I don't mean an excessive amount of fat; I mean that amount that gives roundness, plumpness, and beauty. This little estimated substance is, with form, the great source of female beauty.

You have a splendidly educated girl according to the modern standard, with a physique that seems very fairly developed, just showing by certain subtle indications that the mental portion of the brain has been made too dominant. You have this girl prostrated in what seems the most mysterious way by hysteria\*, in one of its hundred forms. You can't actually say what is wrong, but you know that if she

had been brought up in the country, with moderate schooling, and four or five hours a-day in the open air, there would not have occurred anything of the kind. It may result from idleness just as it does from over-brain work, the one being as much contrary to the laws of nature as the other. It is an illustration of the fact that you may have effects produced by wrong methods of education that are not to be detected till they break out in actual disease. If the seeds of disease or the conditions that tend to it are laid by any system of training, it is nearly as bad as actual visible disease. sometimes it is said about the girls in a school, "Just look at them, are they not fairly healthy for town girls who are working hard?" But one of the dangers is that we may not be able to see the beginnings of evil, and only by sad experience afterwards find that they were there.

Now, if the education process for the female is to be just on the lines of that for the male, if the mould into which the brain of each is to fit is to be the same type – and there is no question of emasculating the male type – then, undoubtedly in the result, we must expect to find a change in the female type of mind. Very many competent observers say that this is actually very apparent in some of the school-girls of the present day. The unceasing grind at book-knowledge, from thirteen to twenty, has actually warped the woman's nature, and stunted some of her most characteristic qualities. She is, no doubt, cultured, but then she is unsympathetic; learned, but not self-denying. The nameless graces and charms of manner have not been evoked as much as they might have been. Softness is deficient. It takes much to alter the female type of mind, but a few generations of masculine education will go far to make some change. If the main aims and ambitions of many women are other than to be loved, admired, helped, and helpful, to be good wives and mothers with quiverfuls\* of children, to be self-sacrificing, and to be the centres of home life, then those women will have undergone a change from the present feminine type of mind.

### Glossary

- \* adjunct – a thing added to something else as an extra
- \* romping – playing roughly and energetically
- \* impunity – going unpunished, or freedom from consequences
- \* hysteria – an old-fashioned term for a psychological illness, usually diagnosed in women
- \* quiverfuls – a quiver is the container which holds an archer's arrows. The writer's image is drawn from the Bible

This extract is from Thomas Smith Clouston's *Female Education from a Medical Point of View: Being Two Lectures Delivered at the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh, November 1882* and the full text can be found online at <https://archive.org/details/b21900358/page/n1>

## 15. Intellectual Fatigue

*This is an extract from a book published in an English translation in 1904. The writer, a Professor who studies living organisms and the way their parts work, aims to explain the concept of fatigue (tiredness).*

Some people tell me that when they are greatly fatigued by brain work, they are subject to passing hallucinations, similar to those which are sometimes experienced toward the end of an exhausting walk. To some degree these open-eyed dreams are, I believe, produced in all slightly nervous subjects who have somewhat over-fatigued their brain. More especially in the evening, but sometimes also during the day if we are tired, our mind begins to wander in our reading, and visual images arise. These disappear, leaving only the memory of their passage, as soon as attention reawakens; and then for a little we are allowed to resume work. A fresh distraction supervenes, the same or another image appearing quite clearly; occasionally it is some one we know or a landscape we have seen. And this takes place when we are convinced that we are not asleep. In the morning when we are fresh and fit for work, such images hardly ever appear.

An able dramatic writer once told me that when he composes he has to shut himself up in his study, because he is obliged to make his characters continually talk aloud. He receives them as if on the stage, shakes hands with them, offers them a chair, follows them in every little gesture, laughs or cries with them as occasion demands. When he writes he always hears the voices of his actors, but faintly. If they become loud, he at once stops writing and goes for a walk. Experience has taught him that this is a premonitory\* symptom of fatigue, and that he must cease working if he does not wish to spend a sleepless night. When he was writing one of his dramas, the composition of which exhausted him greatly, he fell into such a morbid state that he not only heard his actors talk when he summoned them in order to write or revise the scenes, but he found that some of them would not be quiet again. He did not trouble himself much about this phenomenon, being convinced that it was simply the result of fatigue; he went off for a little holiday and the hallucinations completely disappeared.

All my investigations on fatigue are directed towards the comparison of muscular with cerebral\* fatigue, and later I shall have to speak at length on this subject. In the meantime I shall give a preliminary sketch of the more important phenomena of intellectual fatigue.

Fatigue, fasting, and all debilitating causes tend to render us more sensitive. After a long walk we become more irritable. The smallest troubles seem insupportable, and our impressionability is increased.

[...]

During the two or three years I have spent in collecting material for this work I have often questioned my colleagues and friends regarding the phenomena of fatigue. I addressed myself mainly to doctors and others who might be supposed to have experienced the symptoms of intellectual fatigue.

[...]

As long as we are in good health, we are little aware of intellectual fatigue; but as soon as ill health comes upon us, we find how exhausting brain work is. The source of thought and the power of attention are dried up, and the flow of ideas is sluggish. When we are recovering from illness even conversation fatigues us; we have occasionally to stop talking, and, taking our head between our hands, close our eyes in order to rest and gather strength to continue, and we find great difficulty in recalling a name or date which is perfectly familiar to us. The same thing happens with the brain as with the muscles. As long as they are vigorous, they are not fatigued by repeated efforts; but when they are weak, the signs of fatigue appear at once.

### Glossary

\* premonitory – giving warning that something bad is going to happen \* cerebral – relating to the brain

This extract is from Angelo Mosso, *Fatigue*, translated by Margaret Drummond and W. B. Drummond (1904) and the full text can be found online at <https://archive.org/details/fatigue01drumgoog/page/n12/mode/2up>

## 16. About Children's Clothing

*This is an 1890 extract from Ladies' Home Journal, an American magazine started in 1883. The regular 'Talks with the Doctor' column dealt with everyday issues of health and wellbeing. In this edition, it is about clothing toddlers.*

I noticed a dear little lad a few days ago – perhaps three years old – beautifully dressed as far as expensive and fancy clothes went, but I made up my mind that his mother ought to have a good  
5 “talking to,” – indeed his father too, for in my opinion every father should consider it his duty and privilege to look after the comfort and health of his little ones and to help his partner by suggestions.

But what vexed me was the condition of this poor baby's “underpinnings.” The little feet were in dainty slippers – then came little socks just above his ankles – then the little bare legs completely decorated with mosquito bites! Poor little fellow – how he suffered – and such unnecessary suffering  
15 too! But this is the least baneful of the effects of this barbarous fashion of dressing children.

Did you ever think that perhaps it is cold? Did you ever think that perhaps you are training up your child in the way he should go to reach bronchitis\*, indigestion, rheumatism\*, &c? And I want to include too, the bare arms and low neck fashions as cruel and barbarous. You say it is not cold? that you only dress the children so during the very warm weather, and then only in the hottest part of the  
20 day?

You may mean well – you may intend this, but either you forget or neglect, or else the nurse does, for I see them around in the early evening, and I have noticed them in the cool breeze that comes  
30 after a shower. Satisfy yourself. Select some secluded spot outdoors, and take off your boots and stockings and expose your bare limbs to the air – to your knees – not for a minute or so but for as long as your child stands it.

Then remember that no matter how delicate you may be, you are from two to ten times as strong as your three year old baby.

You say that only a few generations ago the children used to go exposed – necks and legs –  
40 much more than they do now? I believe it. One need only compare the death rate among children

now, with that of fifty years ago, to be convinced that some changes for the better are going on.

Now you may depend upon this – no child can  
45 afford this waste of heat.

The very same supply of nerve force which is drawn upon for breathing is drawn upon for 30 digestion. The same reservoir is tapped for circulating the blood, and we have this same nerve force for  
50 producing the animal heat.

Now don't you see that if we take too much of to-day's supply of this force to keep up the animal heat, we will surely run short with some of the other functions?

For instance, we have a large factory heated by steam from the same boiler which supplies steam for the engine which runs the machinery. Suppose on a cold day we open all the windows, and turn all the steam into the radiators for heating. What is the consequence? Why the engine stops for want  
60 of steam. What is the remedy?

We must get another and larger boiler – make more steam and leave the windows open!

In our baby's case, we can use the nerve force to keep up the necessary heart, and the department of digestion in his fearful and wonderful little establishment runs on short allowance, and then comes constipation (sometimes diarrhoea) and all sorts of trouble, and I firmly believe that every one  
65 of these “children ailments” have an effect in a greater or less degree upon the health and general comfort of the “grown up child.”

Better not mind the fashion. Let baby's stockings come away up over his knees and fasten to elastics  
75 from his waist.

### Glossary

\* bronchitis – a chest cold or disease of the lungs which causes coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath

\* rheumatism – any disease marked by swelling and pain in the joints, muscles, or tissues

This extract is from Volume 7, Issue 6 of Ladies' Home Journal (May 1890) and the full text can be found online at  
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.3901501234156?urlappend=%3Bseq=81>.

## 17. Death and Disease Behind the Counter

*This is an extract from a book published in 1884 called **Death and Disease Behind the Counter**, meaning the shop counter. The writer, Thomas Sutherst, is appalled by the conditions shop assistants have to cope with in their jobs, particularly as they tend to be young people, and he included statements from shop assistants in the book. This section is about the effects of having to stand up for long hours.*

The most exhausting incident, however, of shop work is the long, long, standing. I do not contend that it would be either possible or convenient for assistants to sit and discharge their duties, nor should I wish to see them do so, because to stand and walk about a shop cannot of itself be considered as a very arduous occupation, provided there were regular times set apart and kept sacred for rest and refreshment, and that the hours of standing were not so many. The view in which standing is regarded by shopkeepers themselves is plainly apparent from the solicitude\* they show for the comfort of their customers by providing seats for purchasers. It is undoubtedly more agreeable to sit and select what is required than to stand, but so far as there is an actual and pressing need of rest as between the assistants and the purchasers, it appears to me that the seats are at the wrong side of the counter. A little more solicitude in this direction for the young men and women behind the counter would, I am sure, not only be profitable to the employers, but would be appreciated substantially by considerate purchasers. The wasting fatigue resulting from standing scarcely needs any illustration, for almost everyone knows from experience that there are few more painful sensations than the feeling of complete exhaustion which prostrates the whole system after even a comparatively short period of standing. What then must be the state of those whose lot\* it is to stand for the lengthened periods already mentioned? We know that incessant walking for twenty-four hours was considered one of the most unbearable tortures to which witches in former times were subjected, for the purpose of compelling them to own their guilt, and that few of them could hold out for twelve hours. If this was regarded as a cruel torture at a period in the history of our country when we were less civilised, the advancement we

40 have made has availed little to the shop-assistant, who in these days is obliged to submit to the intolerable fatigue of standing for periods, varying according to the locality, from thirteen to seventeen hours a day. [...]

45 It is the wasting unbearable standing, the inadequate time for meals, and the vitiated atmosphere that do the mischief, causing a sense of dullness and monotony, without the gleam of a hope of relief before a very late hour. It is  
50 surprising they are unfit to do anything except go to bed exhausted in body and depressed in mind, when their only prospect is to be subjected on the morrow to the same wearying, pitiless round. [...] The rosy cheeks and round full face speedily  
55 become pale and emaciated\*. The features sharpen, and the complexion assumes a yellow, unhealthy tinge. The eyes part with their lustre and shew the ominous sinking and darkness. The expression loses its sparkling vivacity and becomes  
60 stolid and sad. The legs swell, the back aches, and innumerable internal complaints supervene. [...]

Ernest A. G., age 22, Clerkenwell, E.C. Grocer's assistant. [...] I was in very good health when first I  
65 started in business, but did not continue so long, being very unwell for about three months, and am now not nearly so strong as I used to be. I have often felt dead beat up with the long standing, and my poor legs have swollen much through it. My  
70 mind and body get thoroughly worn out, and I soon find my way to my bed when I leave the shop [...] I have known a great many bad effects from the long standing and long hours. Young fellows come up from the country looking the picture of health, and  
75 in about six months' time they fade away, looking more like corpses than healthy young men, what they were once. In fact all their spirit is knocked out of them.

### Glossary

- \* solicitude – care and concern
- \* lot – luck, situation or destiny
- \* emaciated – abnormally thin or weak

This extract is from Thomas Sutherst, *Death and Disease Behind the Counter* (1884) and the full text can be found online at <https://archive.org/details/b28058252>.

## 18. Anxiety

*This is an extract from an article published in an 1869 issue of Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, a publication which featured articles on a variety of topics. Here the writer tries to imagine what it's like to live with a nervous condition, or what we might think of as chronic anxiety.*

There are few persons, probably, who do not know what it is to awake in the early hours of the morning, when vitality is said to be at its lowest, with a load on mind and spirits, a sense of things going all wrong with us, a worry of other people's misdoings, a panic of self-mistrust, a horror of impending evil. One sting after another starts us broad awake. The real anxieties of the past day grow into the dimensions of despair, molehills swell into mountains, a feverish activity in self-tormenting raises a host of goblins out of our most trifling blunders. Memory recalls long-past mistakes, and sets them up in hideous enlargement: cheek-by-jowl with these bristle the words and deeds of yesterday, charged with a baleful\* significance, and pregnant with evil issues, which nothing but a prompt reversal can avert. Something must be done, and that instantly. If the post went out at four o'clock in the morning, if the household and the outer world were astir to act out the programme of undoing with which our disturbed fancy is so busily prolific, there is no knowing what spectacle we might not present, or how low our credit for discretion\* might sink, leaving the world with a different opinion of our discretion from what we trust to be its present estimate. But with this painful experience comes also the calming recollection that this morbid conscience has but a shortlived reign, and leaves little trace upon our actions. We settle it, perhaps, that something has disagreed with us, or we were over-tasked the day before, and the nervous system deranged. We lay aside the hours of fidgets as we do our dreams – nobody need be the wiser. We relapse into hope and complacency. There is no more question of undoing the past; we live in the present and work for the future as before.

It is well, however, to recall these restless, agitated, unreasonable moments (for we are not concerned here with the workings of true compunction\*), if we have ever experienced them, as they should teach us tenderness and forbearance towards a very trying class. For an *hour* our nerves had been

painfully excited:—there are people whose whole lives, or long periods of them, are passed in precisely the condition of thought and feeling we have described. We can laugh at ourselves when we emerge from this fantastical purgatory, but there are some who never emerge. As with the lotos-eaters\* it was always afternoon; as some men for the whole of the twenty-four hours take an easy after-dinner view of life; as some sanguine busy natures live always in “glad, confident morning,”—so are there some with whom it is always two or three or four hours after midnight, when the sky is at its darkest, and no ray of the dawning has yet showed itself. And these are the victims of their nerves—the unhappy people who cannot throw off the bugbears of the night by inhaling one draught of spring's delicious air, or by throwing themselves into their appointed work, or by seeking the invigorating society of their fellows—people who have for their daylight prompters the uneasy suggestions and misgivings which only visited our couch once and away, swarming and buzzing round our pillow through some special conjuration—prompters malignantly bent on their exposure, which can by no means be thrust aside by one gallant spring in the cheerful world of life and fact, but are perpetually betraying them into exhibitions of caprice, wilfulness, irresolution, fears, tremors, and what not, disturbing the general serenity; but which, if they annoy and exasperate others, are in truth infinitely more annoying and exasperating to themselves.

### Glossary

- \* baleful – threatening harm, menacing
- \* discretion – the quality of behaving in such a way as to avoid causing offence/revealing confidential information
- \* compunction – a feeling of guilt that follows or prevents the doing of something bad
- \* lotos-eaters – a reference to Greek mythology and Tennyson's 1832 poem; the lotos plant was a narcotic making eaters sleepy or dazed

This extract is from “Vapours, Fears, and Tremors” by Anne Mozley and the full text can be found online at

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/hvd.32044092714344?urlappend=%3Bseq=246>

## 19. An Apology for Idlers

*This extract is from an essay written by Robert Louis Stevenson, who is better known as the writer of Treasure Island and Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. Here, Stevenson argues that idling (or wasting time) is good for you.*

Extreme busyness, whether at school or college, kirk\* or market, is a symptom of deficient vitality; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. It is no good speaking to such folk: they cannot be idle, their nature is not generous enough; and they pass those hours in a sort of coma, which are not dedicated to furious moiling\* in the gold-mill. When they do not require to go to the office, when they are not hungry and have no mind to drink, the whole breathing world is a blank to them. If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. To see them, you would suppose there was nothing to look at and no one to speak with; you would imagine they were paralysed or alienated; and yet very possibly they are hard workers in their own way, and have good eyesight for a flaw in a deed or a turn of the market. They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. Before he was breeched\*, he might have clambered on the boxes; when he was twenty, he would have stared at the girls; but now the pipe is smoked out, the snuffbox empty, and my gentleman sits bolt upright upon a bench, with lamentable eyes. This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

But it is not only the person himself who suffers from his busy habits, but his wife and children, his friends and relations, and down to the very people he sits with in a railway carriage or an omnibus. Perpetual devotion to what a man calls his business, is only to be sustained by perpetual

neglect of many other things. And it is not by any means certain that a man's business is the most important thing he has to do. To an impartial estimate it will seem clear that many of the wisest, most virtuous, and most beneficent parts that are to be played upon the Theatre of Life are filled by gratuitous performers, and pass, among the world at large, as phases of idleness. For in that Theatre not only the walking gentlemen, singing chambermaids, and diligent fiddlers in the orchestra, but those who look on and clap their hands from the benches, do really play a part and fulfil important offices towards the general result. You are no doubt very dependent on the care of your lawyer and stockbroker, of the guards and signalmen who convey you rapidly from place to place, and the policemen who walk the streets for your protection; but is there not a thought of gratitude in your heart for certain other benefactors who set you smiling when they fall in your way, or season your dinner with good company? [...] There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. By being happy, we sow anonymous benefits upon the world, which remain unknown even to ourselves, or when they are disclosed, surprise nobody so much as the benefactor. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble, with so jolly an air that he set every one he passed into a good humour; one of these persons, who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money with this remark: "You see what sometimes comes of looking pleased." [...] Consequently, if a person cannot be happy without remaining idle, idle he should remain. It is a revolutionary precept\*; but thanks to hunger and the workhouse, one not easily to be abused; and within practical limits, it is one of the most incontestable truths in the whole Body of Morality. Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return.

### Glossary

\* kirk – Scottish word for church

\* moiling – working very hard

\* breeched – wearing breeches i.e. about 3 years old

\* precept – a general rule intended to guide behaviour or thought

This extract is from "An Apology for Idlers" by Robert Louis Stevenson and the full text can be found online, as part of Essays of Robert Louis Stevenson at <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/10761/pg10761-images.html>.

## 20. Causes of American Nervousness

*This is an extract from American Nervousness, written by a doctor, George Beard, and published in 1881. By nervousness, Beard means something closer to what we would call anxiety or stress. In this extract, he looks at different causes of nervousness.*

*Clocks and Watches. – Necessity of Punctuality.*

The perfection of clocks and the invention of watches have something to do with modern nervousness, since they compel us to be on time, and excite the habit of looking to see the exact moment, so as not to be late for trains or appointments. Before the general use of these instruments of precision in time, there was a wider margin for all appointments; a longer period was required and prepared for, especially in travelling – coaches of the olden period were not expected to start like steamers or trains, on the instant – men judged of the time by probabilities, by looking at the sun, and needed not, as a rule, to be nervous about the loss of a moment, and had incomparably fewer experiences wherein a delay of a few moments might destroy the hopes of a lifetime. A nervous man cannot take out his watch and look at it when the time for an appointment or train is near, without affecting his pulse, and the effect on that pulse, if we could but measure and weigh it, would be found to be correlate to a loss to the nervous system. Punctuality is a great thief of nervous force than is procrastination of time. We are under constant strain, mostly unconscious, oftentimes in sleeping as well as in waking hours, to get somewhere or do something at some definite moment. [...] There are those who prefer, or fancy they prefer, the sensations of movement and activity to the sensations of repose; but from the standpoint only of economy of nerve- force all of our civilization is a mistake; every mile of advance into the domain of ideas, brings a conflict that knows no rest, and all conquests are to be paid for, before delivery often, in blood and nerve and life. We cannot have civilization and have anything else, the price at which nature disposes of this luxury being all the rest of her domain.

*The Telegraph.*

The telegraph is a cause of nervousness the potency\* of which is little understood. Before the days of Morse and his rivals, merchants were far less worried than now, and less business was transacted in a given time; prices fluctuated far less rapidly, and the

fluctuations which now are transmitted instantaneously over the world were only known then by the low communication of sailing vessels or steamships; hence we might wait for weeks or months for a cargo of tea from China, trusting for profit to prices that should follow their arrival; whereas, now, prices at each port are known at once all over the globe. [...] Within but thirty years the telegraphs of the world have grown to half a million miles of line, and over a million miles of wire – or more than forty time the circuit of the globe. In the United States there were, in 1880, 170, 103 miles of line, and in that year 33,155,991 messages sent over them.

*Effect of Noise on the Nerves.*

[...] The noises that nature is constantly producing – the moans and roar of the wind, the rustling and trembling of the leaves and swaying of the branches, the roar of the sea and of waterfalls, the singing of birds, and even the cries of some wild animals – are mostly rhythmical to a greater or less degree, and always varying if not intermittent; [...] they are rarely distressing, often pleasing, sometimes delightful and inspiring. Even the loudest sounds in nature, the roll of thunder, the howling of storms, and the roar of a cataract like Niagara – save in the exceptional cases of idiosyncrasy – are the occasions not of pain but of pleasure, and to observe them at their best men will compass the globe.

Many of the appliances and accompaniments of civilization, on the other hand, are the causes of noises that are unrhythmical, unmelodious and therefore annoying, if not injurious\*; manufactures, locomotion, travel, housekeeping even, are noise-producing factors, and when all these elements are concentrated, as in great cities, they maintain through all the waking and some of the sleeping hours, an unintermittent vibration in the air that is more or less disagreeable to all.

**Glossary**

\* potency – the power of something to influence or make an impression \* injurious – causing or likely to cause damage or harm

This extract is from George Miller Beard's *American Nervousness, Its Causes and Consequences* (1881), and the full text can be found online at

## 21. Travels around Southern Ireland

*In this extract James Mahoney describes what he saw when he travelled around Southern Ireland during the Irish Potato Famine of 1847.*

I started from Cork, by the mail, for Skibbereen and saw little until we came to Clonakilty, where the coach stopped for breakfast; and here, for the first time, the horrors of the poverty became visible, in the vast number of famished poor, who flocked around the coach to beg alms: amongst them was a woman carrying in her arms the corpse of a fine child, and making the most distressing appeal to the passengers for aid to enable her to purchase a coffin and bury her dear little baby. This horrible spectacle induced me to make some inquiry about her, when I learned from the people of the hotel that each day brings dozens of such applicants into the town.

After leaving Clonakilty, each step that we took westward brought fresh evidence of the truth of the reports of the misery, as we either met a funeral or a coffin at every hundred yards, until we approached the country of the Shepperton Lakes.

Here, the distress became more striking, from the decrease of numbers at the funerals, none having more than eight or ten attendants, and many only two or three.

We next reached Skibbereen... We first proceeded to Bridgetown...and there I saw the dying, the living, and the dead, lying indiscriminately upon the same floor, without anything between them and the cold earth, save a few miserable rags upon them. To point to any particular house as a proof of this would be a waste of time, as all were in the same state; and, not a single house out of 500 could boast of being free from death and fever, though several could be pointed out with the dead lying close to the living for the space of three or four, even six days, without any effort being made to remove the bodies to a last resting place.

After leaving this abode of death, we proceeded to High-street, or Old Chapel-lane and there found one house, without door or window, filled with destitute people lying on the bare floor; and one, fine, tall, stout country lad, who had entered some hours previously to find shelter from the piercing cold, lay here dead amongst others likely soon to follow him. The appeals to the feelings and professional skill of my kind attendants here became truly heart-rending; and so distressed Dr. Donovan, that he begged me not to go into the house, and to avoid coming into contact with the people surrounding the doorway...

"A specimen of the in-door horrors of Scull may be seen in the annexed sketch of the hut of a poor man named Mullins, who lay dying in a corner upon a heap of straw, supplied by the Relief Committee\*, whilst his three wretched children crouched over a few embers of turf, as if to raise the last remaining spark of life. This poor man, it appears, had buried his wife some five days previously, and was, in all probability, on the eve of joining her, when he was found out by the untiring efforts of the Vicar, who, for a few short days, saved him from that which no kindness could ultimately avert. Our Artist assures us that the dimensions of the hut do not exceed ten feet square; adding that, to make the sketch, he was compelled to stand up to his ankles in the dirt and filth upon the floor. "

### **Glossary**

Relief Committee – a charitable organisation

This extract is part of a larger collection of eye-witness testimony about the devastating effects of the Irish Potato Famine of 1847. The full text can be found online at:

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/irishfamine.htm>



## 22. A Little Chat About Tea

*This 1852 article considers the importance and effects of tea-drinking on society. It is from The Leisure Hour, a general-interest periodical.*

Of all the varied productions of the vegetable kingdom, there is scarcely any one that has acquired so much importance as tea. What images of happiness does the very name array before our eyes! How many delightful hours does recall! To an Englishman's mind it is a word of enchantment. It speaks to him of quiet evenings, cheerful faces, buoyant spirits, and sober mirth. It stands before him all day like a beckoning angel, and cheers him through the toils and vexations of business by unfolding to his fancy a home where all are waiting to welcome him. The tea-table is an important element in the history of the nation. It gathers around it the expression of half our social life. If this article of furniture had only been gifted with the double facility of understanding everything uttered in its vicinity, and profiting by what it heard, how wise it would have grown! How many secrets have been whispered over it! how many plans have been laid upon it! to how many fair hopes has it ministered support, and to how many doubts has it given solution! What should we do without it? Tea is a benefactor to all. It is endowed with sovereign delicacy against the crowd of little assailants which make war on social enjoyment; it soothes the nervous, cheers the desponding, and enlivens the dull. Still more important effects may be traced up to this potent source. The plaintiff rejoicing in the verdict which has just been pronounced in his favour, little dreams how close a connexion exists between that powerful statement of fact and eloquent appeal which carried his cause, and a few cups of tea. But for this humble

helpmate the poet's imagination would often have drooped its wing, and the philosopher's have sunk overwhelmed in the midst of his gigantic labours.

40 All honour, then, to the "bubbling and loud-hissing urn." It is only an act of decent gratitude to recount its praises.

Tea is a universal favourite not only with ourselves but also with other nations. No other candidate for our goodwill can boast so many certificates of merit. We read on its ample testimonial the names of almost every people under heaven. Here is a common point of union for all the races of mankind. The Caucasian here shakes hands with the Malay\*, English, Dutch, Russian; the inhabitants of the hottest and the coldest climes alike attest its exhilarating virtues. This wondrous beverage seems actually endowed with the most opposite properties; it warms us in winter and refreshes us in summer; soothes and yet stimulates; fits us equally for action or repose. Born in the land of silk and cotton, it forms with them a truly illustrious trio; but though the youngest of the three, it is the greatest favourite, and is a welcome guest with millions to whom its associates are strangers.

### Glossary

\* indolence – laziness

\* Malay – person from Southeast Asia

This extract is from "A Little Chat About Tea" by author unknown in Volume 1 No. 1 of *The Leisure Hour* magazine (8<sup>th</sup> January 1852) and the full text can be found online at <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.a0006340913?urlappened=%3Bseq=38>.

### 23. Cats

*This 1893 article originally appeared in The Lady magazine, a weekly women's magazine mainly read by higher class women. This article discusses the look and behaviour of domesticated cats, with the author particularly impressed by her/his own cats.*

Never have cats held so important a position in the animal world as they do at the present time. In days gone by pussy's chief value consisted in her capabilities as a mouser, and so long as she accomplished her work satisfactorily that was all that was required of her. Nobody troubled as to the shortness of her face, the size of her ears, or the length of her tail.

Everyone was perfectly satisfied with her sober grey coat and four white feet. Her green eyes, too, we all took quite as a matter of course. But now a very different state of affairs exists. In many instances her propensity for mousing only composes one of her numberless characteristics, if, indeed, the most aristocratic specimens deign to catch a mouse at all.

The markings which are now produced in our cats are certainly wonderful. We have striped tabbies and spotted tabbies, the stripes and spots so clearly and regularly defined in the best cats that it seems difficult to believe that it is all Nature. The colours, too, are most beautiful – the rich orange, delicate chinchilla, dusky-looking smoke, vivid red, and last, but not least, blue – blue, or what the uninitiated would undoubtedly cover term slate, being one of the most fashionable shades among the pussies of the present day.

Cats can be trained to almost anything, if taught when they are young. We have a number of Persians, which sit with equanimity\* upon the top of our birdcages watching the canaries hopping merrily about from perch to perch, making no attempt to touch them, nor ever dreaming of inserting a velvet paw through the narrow wires, to the discomfiture of the fluttering inmates. They are left alone with the birds by the hour together, yet an overturned cage or a slaughtered canary is an

unheard-of catastrophe in our household.

Chickens, too, our cats fully realise are forbidden to figure in their *menu*. They ramble about at their own sweet will among numberless broods of the tiniest bantam\* chicks, yet one of the latter is never missing! and they quite seem to recognise the fact that a plump little mouse, or an unwary blue-bottle caught buzzing upon the window-pane, is their only legitimate prey.

Sometimes we hear of cats creating terrible havoc in the poultry-yard, killing chickens by the dozen, and making life a perfect martyrdom to the distracted mothers. The best way to cure pussy of this fatal habit is to take the dead chicken from her, pepper it well, and then fasten it round the delinquent's neck. Place her in a room, and leave her thus for an hour or two, to ruminate over her wrong-doings. It is ten to one if poor puss will ever err\* again. Once released from this somewhat severe, if necessary, punishment, she will make off, with tears in her eyes (whether from emotion or the pepper it is impossible to say), and for the future she will avoid the poultry department with strange persistency, and regard with distrust the fluffy little denizens\* of the chicken coops.

#### Glossary

\* equanimity – calmness and composure, even in spite of difficult circumstances

\* bantam – naturally smaller than the standard-size of fowl

\* err – to make a mistake or an error

\* denizens – inhabitant or resident of a particular place

This article is from the *Flintshire Observer Mining Journal and General Advertiser for the Counties of Flint and Denbigh* (2<sup>nd</sup> February 1893) where it was reprinted from *The Lady*. The full text can be found online at

<https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3751519/3751521/20/cats>

## 24. Royal Wedding

*This 1894 article details the wedding of Czar Nicholas II of Russia to Princess Alexandra, which took place in St Petersburg. Their wedding was brought forward because Nicholas's father died, making Nicholas ruler of Russia. This extract reports on people getting ready to watch the procession, and their reaction once the wedding has finished.*

MARRIAGE OF THE CZAR\* OF RUSSIA. BRILLIANT FUNCTION AT ST. PETERSBURG.

A Reuter's telegram from St. Petersburg says: – In spite of the dull, cold, grey weather and threatening sky the city, having put off all its morning, to-day wears an aspect of full festival.

5 Almost as soon as it was light the movement of the public began towards the centre of attraction, the Newski Prospect, the great Morskaiia Prospect, and the large square in front of the Winter Palace, along which the Imperial bride and bridegroom  
10 were to pass on their way to the church. Within the precincts of the palace by seven o'clock a crowd had gathered and every moment increased in number. There was a striking note of gaiety among the people, who seemed desirous of forgetting in  
15 the happy occasion of the present the prolonged mourning of the past week. The troops were already at their stations, forming loose lines through which a fair view of all that was passing could be gained. But very many people who  
20 brought benches, camp stools, and chairs, standing on which the soldiers. Then, amidst the crowd were vans and carriages on which seats could be had at a cheap rate. Elsewhere ladders were propped against houses with a spectator on every other  
25 rung. The greatest good humour was displayed on all hands, and many cries and laughter passed from group to group. In Russia the windows in winter are closed and sealed with felt, and few casements\* were to-day opened, but behind each could be  
30 seen be vies\* of onlookers. Happily, though the sky was lowering, the streets were dry. A few moments before the clocks chimed the

20 quarter after eleven the majestic strains of the Russian National Anthem suddenly broke forth.

35 Every head was uncovered by the time that a light open carriage, drawn by four white horses, drove past. In it was the Emperor Nicholas, in the brilliant uniform of the Hussars of the Guard. By his side was his Majesty's boyish brother the Grand Duke  
40 Michael, also in uniform. The cheering which arose was deafening. Every man shouted "Hurrah" at the top of his voice. The women and children joined in.  
[...]

The clocks had just struck half-past one, and at the same moment the booming of guns from the  
45 fortress announced that the ceremonies in the church were over, and that the marriage of the Emperor and Empress was an accomplished fact. Forty thousand poor people were to dine to-day at the Imperial expense. All schools and educational  
50 establishments were to be closed for three days, and the theatres re-open to-morrow. A TRIUMPHAL PROGRESS. ST. PETERSBURG, Four p.m.

The Emperor and his bride have just left Kasan Cathedral for the Antichkoff Palace, amid carillons\*  
55 from church towers and the thunder of saluting guns. Their drive to the famous church from the Winter Palace was a prolonged triumph. The people, swayed by intense emotion, cheered and  
60 cheered again as their young Sovereign and his wife drove through their midst, and they pressed so on the edge of the troops who lined the way that the Imperial carriage was almost brought to a standstill.

### Glossary

- \* Czar – ruler or Emperor (sometimes spelled Tsar)
- \* casements – windows
- \* be vies – large groups
- \* carillons – musical instruments made of many individual bells usually housed in the bell towers of churches

This article is from the *Weekly Mail* (1st December 1894). The full text can be found online at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3369740/3369752/105/>.

## 25. Is Dancing Frivolous?

*This 1893 article considers what dancing does to people, responding to the fact that it is now “dancing season.” The author is particularly concerned by the waltz, which was still a fairly new invention. Unlike previous dances, which kept dancers at arm’s length, the waltz was danced in ‘closed position’, with the dancers continually holding each other. Dancing was a topic of genuine moral concern in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, particularly for the church.*

Is Dancing frivolous? I suppose that ever since the grace of rhythmic step was discovered by the elementary Hindoo\* whilst his brother played a rapid beat on the Tom-Tom, that delicate and

5 tuneful instrument of antiquity, there were some grave and melancholy minds which asked the question and sighed in horror! We are in the midst of the dancing season; young hopefuls rise in the morning bleary-eyed and dull and come forth to

10 work with the most doleful gloom of countenance; and “dancing men,” men, I presume, who make a profession of dancing and take it in the evening as another man might take a hot whiskey – are tripping around nightly in one eternal hop. Those

15 who wish to compound with the fascinating pleasure do so by a weak adherence to Cinderellas\*; which class of dance takes its name, surely from the fact that after a violent struggle and a heated world of fair heroes, a lady looks at

20 the end much as the young victim of the dusty hearth noted in story, hair agog and costume in queer contortions. There are men who seldom pass a night in this season without a dance. They are not, as a rule, the most intellectual.

25 Those who dance have the most convincing arguments to prove their case. They always dance for exercise. And curiously enough they take their exercise, not to the dignified step of the minuet\* or the courtly elegance of the Roger de

30 Coverly\*; no it is to the frantic race of the voluptuous waltz, to the swelling harmonies of passionate music sobbed forth by the dolorous violin. At any time a waltz is a little too much for the nerves; it carries one a step further in any

35 emotion one may possess, as if it were a force sweeping us onward without our knowledge. But to dance to it with a beautiful girl and one’s arm tenderly clasping her waist – exercise, O thou weak Apologist! Why claim thy joy and then have no

40 courage to name it? Why not dance with thy fellows, with lamp-posts, with automata\*; or by thyself, flinging my legs in spider lightness to right and left? No: the moment the Waltz came in and pushed, shouldered, and sidled all other dances to

45 the wall, where they remain like antiquated survivals of the dreary past, the plea for exercise

had gone; it was excitement, wild, rapid, vehement that remained; and excitement prolonged so greatly that the dancer was left prostrate and

50 enervated\*, his feelings exhausted, his energy gone, his bodily fabric in a state of absolute collapse. Exercise! When I meet my young friend Light Toe on the morning after a dance and see his lassitude\* and find his beautiful mind obscured by

55 the density of an opaque thought, do you imagine I see in dancing the desire for athletic exercise which those Casuists\* would have us believe?

For my own part, I shall never believe so highly of human nature. I prefer dancing when it stands

60 confessed in all its innocent reality. Men like to dance because they like feminine society, because to dance with a lady is an aesthetic joy, because they like to excite themselves and feel the glow of an exhilarating emotion, because the beauty and

65 warmth and glow of the ball-room is ever delightful to the charmed sense, and because it leads them into paths which are too often closed, into the pleasures of intimate conversation and flirting, nay, why not also say of delicious moments in which the

70 lover proclaims his love (in evening dress) and is accepted by the blushing one, who an hour or two before had thought of rejecting him. [...] Dancing is a pleasurable excitement just as brandy is or the merry-go- round or a football match. It gives us

75 artificial vivacity and life; it rouses us from torpor\* and the dullness of dismal dreariness. It charms us out of ourselves and re-creates us.

### Glossary

- \* Hindoo – the author refers to an Indian man who
- 80 follows the Hindu religion
- \* Cinderellas – short for ‘Cinderella balls’, dances which finished at midnight
- \* minuet – a slow, stately ballroom dance popular in the
- 85 18<sup>th</sup> century
- \* Roger de Coverly – a popular English/Scottish country dance danced in a set with several couples participating
- \* automata – automated figures, think of a cross between a puppet and a robot
- \* enervated – lacking in energy, drained
- 90 \* lassitude – a state of physical or mental weariness; lack of energy
- \* Casuists – people who argue cleverly, but without a logical basis
- \* torpor – a state of physical or mental inactivity;
- 95 sluggishness

This article is from *South Wales Echo* (27th January 1893) by author unknown. The full text can be found online at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/4429736/4429738/5/>.

## 27. Hints for Letter-Writers

*This extract is from an 1856 article letter which presents a gentleman's opinions on the current state of letter-writing and offering advice about how to write letters well. It is from The Leisure Hour, a general-interest periodical.*

An eccentric old bachelor\* friend of ours used to say, that he never read letters which were spun out beyond a certain length, and that if any person sent him one which overstepped the prescribed limits, he made a point of stopping at the proper place, leaving the rest unread. This was certainly a summary\* mode of proceeding, and the account made his hearers laugh heartily; one of them intimating that he presumed the speaker had not many ladies among the number of his correspondence.

"I have not," he said in return; "but if I had, I should dispose of them much more quickly."

"How so?" inquired a lady; "would you burn their letters without reading?"

"Not so, madam," was the answer. "In most cases I would read the postscript only. I should thus, without trouble, arrive at the only important part of the letter. The majority of ladies do not remember what they are really writing about till they have concluded; then, just recollecting themselves, or perhaps asking the question in their own minds why they write at all, it is recalled to their memory, and there you have it. Besides, the letters of ladies are always of such an unreasonable length; not contented with the limits of the paper they have chosen to spoil, they cross and re-cross it, till it becomes one undistinguishable mass of illegible writing, only to be deciphered by one of themselves. I tell you, ladies and gentlemen," continued he, "I would have an act of parliament to restrict letters within a certain length, allowing ladies, however, to write twice as much as gentlemen; but after that piece of paper is filled, or the number of lines allotted to each is written, I would tax every additional word."

"What a barbarian!" exclaimed some of his lady hearers again; "why, you would neutralise the

benefit of the penny postage act\*, and put an end to friendly correspondence."

"By no means, ladies, by no means," said he, again; "you misunderstand me. I would only teach people when they write, to say what they think, and cut off all the unmeaning compliments and excuses with which too many letters are crammed from end to end; substituting really useful topics, and teaching them to speak on subjects which are alike pleasing to both the writer and the recipient of the epistle\*. I would limit the length of letters, in order to teach men and women to think before they write, as I would have them also think before they speak: we should not then be bored with those which compel us to wade through four dismal pages, vainly endeavouring to discover why they were written at all, only to find out all that was of the slightest consequence thrust into a scrap of paper at the last."

[...]

"When you wish to write a letter, think over what you have to say; finish one subject before you begin another, and in such a manner that you will not have to recur to it again; then, try to explain your whole meaning in as few words as possible. If you wish to speak onto subjects which have any reference or resemblance to each other, link them, by placing one immediately after the other, so that in like manner they may be joined in the mind of the reader; and, lastly, be sure to write legibly."

### Glossary

\* bachelor – unmarried man

\* summary – brief, done suddenly

\* penny postage act – in 1840 it became cheaper and easier to send a letter within the UK: this act meant that it cost just one penny

\* epistle – ancient and literary word for letter

This extract is from "Hints for Letter-Writers" by author unknown from Vol. 5 No. 238 of *The Leisure Hour* magazine (17th July 1856). The full text can be found online at

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nyp.33433081682910?urlappend=%3Bseq=458>.

## 28. The Nursery-Maid

*This 1845 article from the satirical magazine Punch comes from the series 'Punch's Guide to Servants'. This one is about the nursery-maid (a live-in servant who would look after a well-off family's children), offering nursery-maids guidance on what to expect in their role.*

When you go to a new place, your mistress will, perhaps, tell you the character of each child, that you may know how to manage their different tempers; but you will, of course, use your own  
 5 discretion. If one is pointed out as a high-spirited little fellow, you may be sure that he is fond of killing flies, tying toys to the dog's tail, striking you, and crying, as if you had struck him, when he hears his mamma coming. If you are told that one of the  
 10 dear boys has a turn for finding out how everything is made, and he must not be checked\*, as his papa intends him for a civil-engineer, you may be sure that the juvenile spirit of inquiry will be shown in pulling your work-box to pieces, unless you turn his  
 15 attention to the furniture, which he should be encouraged to dissect in preference to any of your property.

When you have a baby to take care of, some say you should be particular in its food; but if the child  
 20 cries you have no time for this, and you must stop its mouth with anything that comes handiest. Indiscriminate feeding is said to lay the foundation of diseases which remain with the child through life; but as you do not remain with the child so  
 25 long, this is not your business. A nurse who knows thoroughly what she is about will keep a little Godfrey's Cordial\*, or some other opiate, always at hand – but quite out of sight – to soothe the infant; for nothing is so distressing to the mother, or such  
 30 a nuisance to yourself, as to hear a child continually crying. When there is only one infant these soothing syrups must be cautiously applied, lest the necessity for a nurse should terminate altogether, and you are thrown out of your situation.

35 An infant sometimes requires example before it will take to its food, and, as it is very nice, you may well eat one half of it first, to encourage the infant to eat the other. Use sugar in children's food very sparingly, and, lest the infant be tempted to want  
 40 some of the sugar that is saved out of the quantity allowed, lose no time in locking it up out of sight in your own tea-caddy. If you wish to save your beer-

money, recollect that milk is heavy for children, unless mixed copiously\* with water. As nothing  
 45 ought to be wasted, you can drink what remains, instead of beer, at your dinner.

[...]

It is a very fine thing to encourage generosity in children, and you should therefore talk a great deal about the presents you have received on birth-days  
 50 and on other occasions from the little dears in the place where you last lived. This will of course give your mistress a hint as to what she ought to do. For the children will naturally ask to be allowed to make you presents, and the parents not liking to check the amiable feeling, and desirous of not  
 55 being thought shabby in comparison with your former employers, will no doubt give – through the hands of the children – what you may have occasion for.

60 If you have nephews and nieces you may supply them with many little articles of dress that are pronounced to be "past mending." If your mistress notices that the stock of children's things diminish, you can suggest that "things won't wear for ever,"  
 65 which often passes as an apology for a sensible diminution\* in the number of socks and pinafores. You may observe that Master So-and-so is such "a spirited little fellow, that he does wear his things out very fast," and your mistress will be satisfied if  
 70 she thinks her child's spirit has caused half his wardrobe to evaporate.

If you follow all these instructions to the letter you will make as good a Nursery-Maid as the best of them.

### Glossary

\* checked – stopped

\* Godfrey's Cordial – a 'soothing syrup' often given to babies, it was highly dangerous as it contained opium and could kill (this is why the author suggests 'caution')

\* diminution – reduction; getting smaller

\* copiously – in large quantities

This extract is from "Punch's Guide to Servants: The Nursery-Maid" by author unknown in Volume 9 of *Punch* magazine (1845) and the full text can be found online at <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc1.32106011982235?urlappend=%3Bseq=29>.

## 29. Reminiscences of the Christmas Vacation

*This 1898 article from a University magazine, hears the female student reflect on her Christmas holidays. In this extract, she details the activities of New Year's Day and the end of the holidays.*

However, by nightfall, I had accomplished something – I had been to watch all the little ragamuffins of the town eating their New Year's dinner, and it was indeed a sight to be  
 5 remembered. The accommodating way in which knives acted as forks, and grubby little fingers took the place of both, the whirlpools of gravy which resulted from the efforts of those who conscientiously, but clumsily, endeavoured to put  
 10 the above-named blunt instruments to their orthodox use, the enthusiasm of the noisy multitude who employed them as clappers, or in some cases as drum-sticks, converting the table into a huge drum, and thereby causing the  
 15 emission of sparkling fountains from the row of mugs arranged down the centre, till the formerly spotless tablecloth forcibly reminded one of the appearance which the surface of the earth must have presented immediately after the deluge\*, all  
 20 these, accompanied by cheering so vociferous\* that it completely drowned the sound of the band, made a powerful impression on my mind. Then too, an interesting scientific enquiry arose. – How could so much be put into so little? This problem was  
 25 afterwards solved to my satisfaction by one who has had experience in such matters, though perhaps the learned would cavil\* at the solution. "Hydraulic pressure!\*" was the brief and pithy explanation.  
 30 And now the holidays are over, and as I look back upon them, it seems to me that I have fulfilled

none of my intentions save those relating to amusement, such as visiting, dancing, etc. And even in dancing, I have not found the unmixed  
 35 pleasure which I so fondly anticipated. To be sure, a giddy waltz or an inspiring galop is very enjoyable, but when, as you are endeavouring to make your way without mishaps across a highly-polished floor to the refreshment-room, a  
 40 sprightly-looking young man invites you to take a roll, whilst later on another anxiously inquires if he may press you to a jelly, things begin to look a trifle alarming: moreover, the next morning everyone, except, of course, the dancer, is apt to be irritable  
 45 or gloomy, and the course of daily life does not run as smoothly as usual. On the whole, my holidays have not been what I intended, and next vacation I shall have to try some other plan: perhaps in the  
 50 meanwhile, I may be able to obtain some suggestions as to the best method of holiday making.

### Glossary

\* deluge – a great flood (here the Biblical flood which supposedly destroyed the Earth)

\* vociferous – loud and forceful

\* cavil – make annoying and unimportant objections

\* hydraulic pressure – the pressure caused by the movement of liquids (the author makes a joke, since hydraulics is a technology/applied science)

This extract is from "Reminiscences of the Christmas Vacation" by "F. E." in Vol. 7 No. 2 of *The Magazine of the University College of North Wales* (March 1898) and the full text can be found online at <https://journals.library.wales/view/2699558/2701141/19#?xywh=-1114%2C-76%2C4170%2C3209>.

### 30. On Honeymoons

This extract is from *The Mother's Companion* (1909), a book offering practical domestic advice to women written by Mrs Brereton. This extract concerns honeymoons and the problems they might cause to young married couples.

This may seem horribly business-like and unromantic, but it is only by facing the business side of marriage fairly and squarely, and mastering it, that there is any room left for romance.

5 Disappointment is the dragon which kills romance quicker than any other. And the girl who thinks only of the romance of marriage will grasp at the shadow and miss the substance.

10 It would be more than a boon\*, in many cases, if the conventional honeymoon could be dispensed with, or at least largely curtailed. It is an artificial beginning to married life, in which the things which are really going to count later on are obscured and thrust into the background, by the false standard of  
15 living and luxury to which the young couple abandon themselves during what ought to be a probationary\* period. No wonder their simple home-coming, to what perhaps is only a cottage or a flat, after their luxurious stay in expensive hotels,  
20 with earning and economising instead of spending and tipping, seems, to both wife and husband, rather in the nature of coming down to earth with a thud.

25 Instead of the flat or the cottage, in which the young couple are to make love live, being associated with all their first sacred joys, it is too often associated with a vivid impression of dullness, disillusion, and meanness, in comparison with their own paternal homes, much aggravated  
30 by the palatial scale of living of the previous weeks or months. The money lavished on an extravagant wedding ceremony and lengthy wedding tour, would often make all the difference to the comfort of the home later on when the first baby arrives;  
35 and the holiday itself would, if it could still be afforded, be much more beneficial to the young mother after a year or so of wedded life.

A reception at the house of the parents, immediately following the wedding ceremony, and, later on, an intimation\* of the date when the bride would first be at home to callers, in her new home, would ensure peace and privacy for the early days of wedded life; and the being alone with one's husband, the mutual pleasure of placing all the  
40 personal treasures in such order as shall make a house into a home, the beginning to housekeep for oneself, all this is novelty enough, without the excitement or fatigue of travel. By the time the husband returns to his everyday routine of work,  
45 each has made his or her particular den, or corner of the den, a familiar haven, and both have settled down to an intimacy which is never achieved until the normal life has begun.

50 There will of course be opportunity for outings and excursions, and for indulging whatever mutual hobbies were a delight before marriage; and if the lovers are hopelessly dull during the first short month, owing to the lack of extraneous entertainment, it augurs\* badly for the many  
55 months of mutual intercourse ahead. The time will probably all too soon arrive when wifeness develops into motherhood, and tête-à-têtes\* have to be more rare.

#### Glossary

\* boon – something helpful or beneficial

\* probationary – a process of testing out something new

\* intimation – an indication or hint

\* augurs – to predict or indicate something about the future

\* tête-à-têtes – intimate conversation between two people (French for 'head to head')

This extract is from the chapter "Preparation for Wifeness and Motherhood" in Mrs M. A. Cloudesley Brereton's book *The Mother's Companion* (London, 1909) and the full text can be found online at  
<https://archive.org/details/b21529206/page/132/mode/2up>.



### 31. Carrier Pigeons

*This 1879 letter in response to an article about carrier pigeons is from a doctor who uses pigeons as part of his daily work and seeks to bring these birds to the attention of more people.*

Sir, – With reference to your article of the 25<sup>th</sup>, upon the possible services which might be rendered mankind by the carrier pigeon, permit me to say that since I have been practising in the country I have made valuable use of the carrier or homing pigeon as an auxiliary\* to my practice. So easily are these winged “unqualified assistants” reared and trained that I am surprised they have not been brought into general use by the profession I belong to. My “modus operandi”\* is simply this. I take out half a dozen birds, massed together in a small basket with me on my rounds, and when I have seen my patient, no matter at what distance from home, I write my prescription on a small piece of tissue paper, and having wound it round the shank of the bird’s leg I gently throw the carrier up into the air. In a few minutes it reaches home, and, having been kept shut up fasting since the previous evening, without much delay it enters the trap-cage connected with its loft, where it is at once caught by my gardener or dispenser, who knows pretty well the time for its arrival, and relieves it of its despatches\*.

The medicine is immediately prepared and sent off by the messenger, who is thus saved several hours of waiting, and I am enabled to complete my morning round of visits. Should my patient be very ill, and I am desirous of having an early report of him or her next morning, I leave the bird to bring me the tidings. A short time since I took out with me six pairs of birds. I sent a pair of them off from each village I had occasion to visit, every other one bearing a prescription. Upon my return I found all the prescriptions arranged on my desk by my dispenser, who had already made up the

medicines. I should like to see a more intelligent interest taken in these winged messengers by the general public. There appears to be a settled belief in people’s mind that homing pigeons fly by faith, and not by sight. Each bird must be trained a few miles at a time, away from its home, to ensure its inevitable return to headquarters. A good bird can, of course, be trained to return to its loft from a distance of 500 miles, but it will steer its course, piloted by its wondrously beautiful eyes, from point to point, of course the most salient ones in the landscape, with which it has become familiarised in its training by successive stages. The pigeon would long since have been used for bringing messages from the sea, but there being no fixed objects to catch its eye, although eager to return home, it has not the courage to launch itself from the ship over the trackless ocean, and will hover round and round, and last probably “perish in the waters.”

– I am, Sir, your obedient servant, Cirencester, Sept. 26.

HARVEY J. PHILPOT, L.R.C.P.\*

#### **Glossary**

\* auxiliary – providing additional help or support, can be used to refer to soldiers

\* “modus operandi” – particular way of going about one’s task; a Latin phrase (literally “mode of working”) that has been adopted into English

\* despatches – written messages sent with speed, often from an officer in the army

\* L.R.C.P. – abbreviation for Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians (of England)

This letter is from *The Aberdare Times* (4<sup>th</sup> October 1879) where it was reprinted from the *Daily Telegraph*. The full text can be found online at <https://newspapers.library.wales/view/3025160/3025163/26/pigeons>.

### 32. A case of discipline

*Charles Shaw was born in August 1832 at Piccadilly Street, Tunstall, the sixth of eight children of Enoch Shaw, painter and gilder, and Anne Mawdesley. He attended a dame school run by Betty Wedgwood in Tunstall, then began work as a mould runner to an apprentice muffin maker, earning a shilling a week. When he was eight, he found himself a workhouse. Here he recounts witnessing a case of corporal punishment.*

Several persons came in whom we did not usually see. Then the governor came in. To us poor lads he was the incarnation of every dread power which a mortal could possess. He was to us the Bastile\* in its most repulsive embodiment. Personally, he may have been an amiable man, I don't know. He never gave one look or touch which led me to feel he was a man. He was only "the governor," and as such, in those days, when the New Poor Laws meant making a workhouse a dread and a horror to be avoided, he was perhaps only acting the part he felt to be due to his office.

His functions, and any outward compassion, were as wide asunder as the poles. He may have had compassion. He may have been inwardly tortured by the necessity for outward callousness. May Heaven forgive me if I do him any wrong, but word or act of kindness from him I never heard or saw towards myself or anyone else. Now, however, the governor was in the room, and his presence seemed to fill it with an awful shadow.

We were duly informed by him what was to take place, the bad qualities of the runaway were ponderously and slowly described, and we were exhorted in menacing tones to take warning by his "awful example." This homily\* was enough of itself to make us shiver, and shiver most of us did with fear of those present and fear of the sight we were about to witness. When the solemn harangue\* was finished, the poor boy was pushed into the room like a sheep for the slaughter. He had a wild, eager look. His eyes flashed, and searched the room and all present with rapid glances. His body was stripped down to his waist, and in the yellow and sickly candlelight of the room his heart could be seen beating rapidly against his poor thin ribs.

To punish such a boy as that, half nourished, and trembling with fear, was a monstrous cruelty. However, discipline was sacred, and could do no

wrong in a Bastile sixty years ago. The boy was lifted upon the table, and four of the biggest boys were called out to hold each a leg or an arm. The boy was laid flat on the table, his breeches well pushed down, so as to give as much play as possible for the birch rod. The lad struggled and screamed. Swish went the pickled birch on his back, administered by the schoolmaster, who was too flinty to show any emotion.

Thin red stripes were seen across the poor lad's back after the first stroke. They then increased in number and thickness as blow after blow fell on his back. Then there were seen tiny red tricklings following the course of the stripes, and ultimately his back was a red inflamed surface, contrasting strongly with the skin on his sides. How long the flogging went on I cannot say, but screaming became less and less piercing, and at last the boy was taken out, giving vent only to heavy sobs at intervals. If he was conscious, I should think only partially so. The common rumour was that he would have his back washed with salt water. Of this I don't know. I do know there had been cruelty enough.

A living horror, hateful in every aspect, had been put before the eyes of the boys present.

To see a poor lad with red rivulets running down his back and sides, as I see it all again even yet, among strangers, with the governor's awful presence, with the schoolmaster's fiercely gleaming eyes, away from father, mother and home; — all this when our late gracious Queen was a young queen.

#### **Glossary**

Bastile — a notorious French prison

75 homily — a story intended for religious teaching

harangue — a long rant

This text is taken from Chapter 14 of *When I Was a Child*, the autobiography of Charles Shaw a first-hand account of life as a child worker in the North Staffordshire

80 Potteries in the 1840s. The full text can be found online at

[http://www.thepotteries.org/focus/011\\_14.htm](http://www.thepotteries.org/focus/011_14.htm)

### 33. Lecture on Transportation

*This is a publicity notice for a lecture by John Brocksopp, a former convict from York who had returned to Britain after 14 years in a penal colony in Australia. 'Transportation' was the practice of sending criminals out of the country. It was almost a century old at the time of this lecture and had always been controversial.*

DARLINGTON – A most interesting and instructive Lecture was delivered on the Evening of Monday, August 21st, in the Trinity National School-Room, by a returned convict, on the Horrors of Transportation; being the result of his experience during a period of 15 years in the convict settlements of Great Britain. The lecturer was transported from the City of York, for harbouring certain men from pursuit of justice; he appeared in a convict's dress, and was assisted by sketches of places and scenes witnessed in the settlements. He gave an eloquent and lucid address, which evidently made a powerful impression upon the scholars, a great number of whom attended. – The Yorkshireman, 21st August.

LINCOLN. – On Tuesday Evening last, a lecture on transportation was delivered in the room of the Lincoln Mechanics' Institute, by John Brocksopp, who was transported from York in 1830. The room was crowded, and the details given were listened to with great interest.

Brocksopp's object was to dissipate\* the impression on the minds of the ignorant that transportation is a light matter; & truly the harrowing description given showed that transportation really is what Lord Stanley pronounced should be a punishment worse than death; it is slavery of the most dreadful kind. Brocksopp though not an educated man, seems to be well informed, gifted with keen perceptive powers and very accurate judgment. His untutored addresses are calculated to effect much good – as, having been an actual sufferer, he can better reach the conviction of persons whom it is desired to influence, and he should by all means be encouraged to diffuse his experience as widely as possible. – If Dr. Ullathorne's pamphlet with respect to the horrors of the penal settlement in Norfolk Island was also extensively

circulated, it would aid in the correction of a very erroneous\* idea, and in all probability deter many nom continuing in a career of crime. = Lincoln and Samford Mercury, 1st June.

#### Glossary

Dissipate –gradually disappear

Erroneous – wrong

This poster for a lecture was published in February 1849. The full text can be found online at <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/broadside-a-lecture-on-transportation>

