

HOUSEHOLD ORGANIZATION

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Household Organization by Mrs. Caddy

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MRS. CADDY

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BY

MRS. CADDY.

"From my tutor I learnt endurance of labour, and to want little, and to work with my own hands."—EMPEROR MARCUS AURELIUS.



LONDON :

CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.

1877.

268. b. 183.

PREFACE.

ONE fine August bank-holiday many thoughts, more or less connected with the day, prompted me to write this essay, so forcibly did it appear that people required help to make their lives easier and happier.

Since then there have been several bank-holidays; and though trade is depressed throughout the country, though financial panic has ruined thousands, yet the demand for beer, spirits, and tobacco is as great as ever; the hollow gaieties of life are as noisy as ever—perhaps the more so for being more hollow; still our most precious friends kill themselves with overwork—mental pulverization. If they eased their minds by employing their hands they might yet live, even though many could not, last autumn, afford to buy the breath of sea or

mountain air which would have strengthened them for the burdens of the new year. Those who were wise and who had capital invested it in health, that being likely to bring them in the best return.

We have had seven years of the highest national prosperity. Although fictitious, it gave us pleasure while it lasted, and we were able to enjoy all that life has to offer in its perfection. We may be going to pass through seven years of dearth, so we must husband our resources of health and wealth, instead of drawing upon them in the reckless way we have lately accustomed ourselves to do. Some years of scarcity may be a blessing to us all, if they lead us back from the habits of excess and idleness we have fallen into, and particularly the craving for excitement, whether in the form of literature, or by means of stimulants and cordials (absinthe).

A plain but short statement of our national losses will show the necessity of economizing the goods we still possess, financial as well as physical.

Independent of the stagnation of trade which

paralyzes every branch of our commerce, we have lately had losses through foreign loans more severe than any we have experienced during the present century.

Since the announcement by Turkey in October, 1875, that the interest on the Turkish debt would be reduced, there has been a great fall in foreign stocks. The debt of Turkey—roughly speaking, £200,000,000—has fallen, say, £125,000,000 in value. Egyptian securities, not including the floating debt, approximately estimated at £60,000,000, have fallen some £20,000,000 in value. In smaller stocks the fall has probably been some £20,000,000; and since the breaking out of the Eastern Question, Russian stocks, at an aggregate of about £165,000,000, have fallen 12 per cent., or a sum equal to more than £20,000,000 sterling.

Besides these calamities there have been in England, as shown by a recent return, 1,797 commercial failures, representing liabilities of £30,000,000 sterling, and it has been calculated that of the firms and persons occupied in business,

3 per cent. have been unable to meet their engagements.

These losses will account for less familiar faces being seen in the Park in the season, for the numerous houses unlet in fashionable quarters, for grouse-moors going almost begging; and, among many other significant facts, Tattersall, who generally has 150 applications for coachmen on his books, has now 150 coachmen applying to him for situations.

In our present abundance of money, through dearth of safe investments, many persons have purchased art treasures; which would be wise, but for the pain it always causes to part with things that have once adorned our homes, which makes this not a happy speculation.

It would be the part of a screech-owl to cry Woe! woe! and hoot triumphantly over the distresses of our country; but there seems so much of hope and promise in the fact of our meeting reverses of fortune with courage, that we cannot feel that a real disaster has overtaken us. We have in the case of France an example of how

a great nation can rise renewed in strength out of overwhelming troubles, and our trial is less severe than that of France.

It is not good for any people to sit down to eat and drink and rise up to play, any more than it is good for children to feed upon delicacies in lieu of simple fare. Persons suddenly reduced from affluence to comparative poverty may be glad of a few hints to show them how happiness and refinement are by no means incompatible with a smaller condition of fortune, with a shorter purse; for, after all, the purse is not the pleasure, it only helps us to procure it; our own taste and feeling must teach us what true pleasure is.

It may be demurred that some of the household improvements suggested in this book would be expensive to carry out—such, for instance, as the arrangement of the kitchen; and this is true: but looked at as an investment, they would yield large interest, and it might be prudent to invest under one's own eye, in one's own house, some of the capital we cannot afford to sink. If used in economizing wages, it will give us a profitable return.

We do not hesitate to lay out money in improvements on our farms. Why, then, need we fear to arrange our dwellings in accordance with principles of true economy, so that the ladies of our families may be able to co-operate with us in advancing the benefit of all? Every family might be its own Economical Housekeeping Company (Limited), comprising in itself its shareholders and board of directors, realizing cent. per cent. for its money, because £200 a year would go as far as £400.

If we save the money we now spend upon keeping servants to do out work for us, we shall have more to spend on our holidays, and so shall feel all the more refreshed by our respite from work.

Much is said in this book about superfluities, but although some passages may seem to give colour to such an idea, it is by no means wished to convey the recommendation that our homes and lives are to be bare of beauty. On the contrary, I hanker after profusion and love plenty, but wish them to be placed where they will not give more labour than pleasure, where they will not hamper our every movement at every moment, making us