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that we may



The best way to avoid this “lame and impotent conclusion,” is to fix a definite time every day for writing the diary, and not to allow oneself to be diverted to anything else at the appointed time. It is also good to restrain our inclination to write at great length at the commencement of the diary, so that we may be less likely to take a distaste to the work, and may be the better able to keep our resolution of making regular entries every day. In this way we shall give due importance in our chronicle to the successive events of our life, and find our diary a source of pleasure and of profit. When we are writing letters, we often find our ideas fail us, and are unable to think of anything to write about. In such a strait as this, a reference to our diary, if it has well been kept, is sure to suggest something that is likely to interest our friends, and we are saved from the necessity of sending off a meager letter not worth the price of its postage-stamp. A diary is also of great use to a student, as it enables him to take periodical retrospect's of his work.

Macaulay in his diary kept a record of the books he read. If we follow the same excellent practice, it will help us every now and then to look back and determine whether we have been wasting our time or not. A diary should also make us more accurate than we could otherwise be. It is surprising what imprecise statements men make sometimes about their own past experience.

A great safeguard against such inaccuracy is to have an account of what we actually saw and did, clearly recorded in black and white. In all these ways the keeping of a diary may be found to be profitable employment of one's leisure. It is also likely to be a source of pleasure in future years, when by its help we recall to mind some half-forgotten episode of the past, and in imagination live over again the happy days that are gone.

The diaries of eminent men, besides giving pleasure to their authors, are full of interest to the world generally. The lately published journal of Walter Scott enables us more thoroughly to understand and admire the character of the greatest of novelists. The diary of Pepys is not only delightful reading for an idle hour, but also is of great value to the historian from the flood of light it throws upon the days of Charles II.