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THE FRINGED AND CLOSED GENTIAN.

Two sisters dwell beside a brook,
Blue-Gentian was their name,—
All this was centuries ago,
Ere both were known to fame;
And God was good as beautiful,
The other proud and airy.
And in a wood, near by, there lived
A tricky little fairy.
It chanted upon an autumn day
This fairy-spied the two,
And feigning weariness, he begged
O them a sip of dew:
The one held up her tiny cup,
The fairy drank it lightly;
The other cried, "Begone, thou elf!"
And clutched her drop more tightly.
Then quoth the cunning sprite:
"This day
Shall bring ye forth renown.
Sweet maid, accept this fairy frings,
To deck thy azure gown;
But thou, rude, selfish one, now take
Thy last look on the sky,
For nevermore shalt thou or thine
Gaze into mortal eye!"
The days sped on: the sisters twain
Passed silently away,
But children's children, year by year,
The fairy will obey;
Some wear a fringe of matchless hue,
Rarer than costly laces,
While others fold their garments close,
And ever hide their faces.
—Mabel C. Dowd.

SEVERAL CRITICISMS.

We had occasion, some time ago, to allude to the fact that very few people, in public or in private, keep the rules of grammar in the same inviolate practice that a merchant preserves the multiplication table. Grammar is after all, very much a matter of arbitrary decision, and it happens very often that "points of controversy" remain unsettled for ages, simply because no one can tell what the best

speakers and writers" have decided to do in certain cases.

For example, it is plain enough that the word "none" is a contraction of the two words "no one." Of course, then "none" is in the singular number. Nevertheless, we can scarcely lay our hands upon a book that does not use the expression "none of these men have written a sentence, or a similar form, clearly removing the word from the distributive to the collective class of terms and giving it a plural signification.

Another class of phrases we find pointed out by the critics as pure "Southernisms." But a large number of these "Southernisms" we meet constantly in English magazines, reviews, and books, not in the form of colloquial phrases, merely, but in grave criticisms of literary works, and in scientific treatises. Let us name a few of them.

We are strongly inclined, in this Southern country, to make an adverb out of the adjective "mighty." We have heard not a few persons say that they were "mighty," "weak," and now and then this state of health is said to be "powerful weak." This is very amusing, doubtless, but, far from being peculiar to the South, or even to America, we can find this adverbial use of the word "mighty" in quite a number of the London periodicals. For instance, the *London Saturday Review* "which is nothing, if not critical," tells us in a recent number, that a certain book is "mighty little" better than the first production of its author. Between "mighty" and "little" there is as great a contrast as between the "powerful" and "weak" of the Southerner, so that the English writer is as much at fault as his American cousins.

"I have heard tell" is not a graceful expression, but in a grave work of science, recently published in London, the accomplished writer says: "Wonderful things, I have heard tell, were done by Quekett." So, also, in the same book, we find the phrase, "pretty strong muscles," which is precisely the same error; "p'etty" being transformed into an adverb and qualifying "strong." Indeed we seem to be growing tired of the old adverb, "very" and substitute a long list of words for it, probably for the sake of variety.

But the English man of science comes still closer to our Southern "peculiarities," and tells us that a certain skeleton of a mastodon "would pretty nearly fill the whole space." Here the adjective character of "pretty" is wholly lost, and it is employed to qualify another adverb. "At New Jersey," he tells us, a certain discovery was made, and quotes, in another place, the following, as a question current in England: "Whatever is the good of such an animal?"

We leave it to the reader to determine the grammatical status of "whatever" in this sentence, expressing our personal dislike to the use of the phrase, and assuring him that we could fill this page with similar quotations from the works of English authors, who

are among the very best representatives of English thought. The sum of the matter is, that there is a strong tendency toward the corruption of the English language, and that this tendency is not a development peculiar to Southern society, but may be found in every country in which the language is spoken. —Dr. H. P. Harrison.

MEETING ONE'S OWN INFLUENCES.

Good influences in youth are the angels of later years. They come back. They minister. They have the gold of heaven on their wings.

As Tennyson says, "I am a part of all that I have met." Mr. Longfellow sent a multitude of good influences, like song-birds, into the world. They returned in the autumn of life.

He loved the young. His pen sought their highest good. No child was repelled from his door.

Only the day he was taken sick when a little girl came asking for his autograph, he hastened to the door himself, and said that her smiling thanks were refreshing.

Often during the last winter of his life his health was so delicate that his friends objected to this hospitality, and plead with him to be more chary. But he replied earnestly, —

"Oh, I like to see my friends: it does me good. And I always think a child that comes to see me is a sincere friend."

Few accounts of the return of good influences to life are more beautiful than that which the poet gives of a scene under the old Cambridge chestnut tree where the blacksmith's shop used to be. It was written for children:

Cambridge was by no means thickly settled for many years after I came here, and the village was rather straggling, so that the smithy, was quite a prominent object in my daily walk to and from the college, especially, as often the children running down the court from their school would cluster round the doorway, their bright faces and attitudes as they stood, grouped under the chestnut tree, forming a strong contrast to the scene within, enhancing the picture and the lesson so that the song came to me. ("The Village Blacksmith.")

But after the school was moved down on to the street, as I was going home one morning, I heard you scholars singing my "Psalm of Life," and I remained uncovered, except for the shade of the chestnut tree, till the music ceased, feeling that it was Holy Ground.

"Holy Ground!" Yes, the place where the good influences of life meet us again is holy. They will all meet us on holy ground at last.

Many persons who seemingly have consumption have perfectly sound lungs, and their distress originates altogether from disordered kidneys and liver. Now there are thousands of remedies that will relieve kidney and liver diseases, but there is only one that can be depended upon for effecting a permanent cure, and that is Brown's Iron Bitters. Its efficacy has been satisfactorily proven in thousands of instances after all other remedies failed.

CHOICE THOUGHTS OF THE BEST AUTHORS.

Doing good is the only certainly happy action of a man's life.

The censure of those that are opposite to us is the nicest commendation that can be given us.

As they who, for every slight infirmity, take physic to repair their health, do rather impair it; so they who, for every trifle, are eager to vindicate their character, do rather weaken it.

To be happy, the passion must be cheerful and gay, not gloomy and melancholy. A propensity to hope and joy is real riches; one to fear and sorrow, real poverty.

A tender conscience is an inestimable blessing; that is, a conscience not only quick to discern what is evil, but instantly to shun it, as the eyelid closes itself against a mote.

It is very often more necessary to conceal contempt than resentment, the former being never forgiven, but the latter sometimes forgot.

To make others' wit appear more than one's own, is a good rule in conversation; a necessary one, to let others take notice of your wit, and never do it yourself.

Some men are as covetous as if they were to live forever; and others as profuse as if they were to die the next moment.

The certain way to be cheated, is to fancy one's self more cunning than others.

Where necessity ends, desire and curiosity begin; no sooner are we supplied with everything nature can command, than we sit down to contrive artificial appetites.

It is certain that either wise bearing or ignorant carriage is caught as men take diseases one of another; therefore, let them take heed of their company.

Nothing is so great an instance of ill manners as flattery. If you flatter all the company, you please none. If you flatter only one or two, you affront the rest.

A shrewd observer once said that in walking the streets of a slippery morning, one might see where the good natured people lived, by the ashes thrown on the ice before the doors.

There are a set of malicious, prattling, prudent gossips, both male and female, who murder character to kill time; and will rob a young fellow of his good name before he has years to know the value of it.

If you cannot be happy in one way be in another, and this facility of disposition wants but little aid from philosophy, for health and good humor are almost the whole affair. Many run about after felicity like an absent man hunting for his hat, while it is in his hand or on his head.

If Satan ever laughs it must be at hypocrites. They are the greatest dupes he has. They serve him better than any other, but receive no wages. Nay, what is still more extraordinary, they submit to great mortifications than the sincerest Christian.

Mr. S. A. Womble, Newbern, N. C., says, "I tried Brown's Iron Bitters and consider it an excellent tonic and appetizer."

FAME AND RECOGNITION.

Two gentlemen met in Washington last winter and passed a week together. They had been classmates at college; one was now an obscure farmer, the other is a well-known leader in national affairs, and had been a candidate for the Presidency.

After observing his friend carefully for some days, the farmer said, "I honestly believe that your fame is only an annoyance to you."

"Suppose, G——," was the reply, "you were to enter a street-car full of strangers, vulgar, gossiping folks, and that they should call out your name loudly, and state that you had an idiot brother and that you had been suspected of stealing in your youth, and that your son was going head-log to the dogs? Should you like it? Well, the country is only a big street-car, and fame in it is just such personal gossip from vulgar mouths."

This was a new and startling view of the subject to the farmer, which he took home to think over.

A poor invalid girl, confined for many years to a bed of suffering, wrote, out of a full heart, the poem "Nearer, my G-d, to thee!" Before she died, that cry of a human soul to its Maker was echoed all over the world. "I have heard it," a friend wrote to her, "in China and from the lips of Polynesian converts." Yet it was not until she was in her grave that even the name of the writer was known. If the gossip of the street-car represents fame, this echo of a true word is typical of recognition.

Every Sophomore at college dreams of becoming famous some day. Yet it is probable, if he is made of heroic stuff, that this noisy bruit, once gained, would be distasteful to him.

But every man who is given to a man's part to play has the consciousness that he has a word to speak, which perhaps his own friends or townsmen do not understand. When it is spoken, and the answer comes back to him from the great world, that he has been understood and has won recognition from his peers, one of the keenest, highest pleasures which life yields becomes his. Fame is the senseless echo of his own name; the other a harmony which tells him that he too has struck a chord in the divine song of humanity.

STUDY OF THE POETS.

Mr. Adams, in his address at Harvard, asserted that mental discipline might be acquired as effectively by the study of the modern languages, as by that of the ancient classics. John Bright is next to Mr. Gladstone, the most eloquent speaker in Parliament, and is noted for the English style. The Premier of course, is a master of Latin and Greek, and his style shows that he has been trained by his classical studies.

But Mr. Bright has had no university education, and no discipline from either ancient or modern languages. But

he has studied the English Bible, Pilgrim's Progress, the English and American poets, with great care, and made himself familiar with their finest passages. He once told an American gentleman that Mr. Longfellow is one of his favorite poets, and that he had given many evenings to reading his poems aloud, and committing them to memory. He ascribes his facility in the choice of words to his familiar acquaintance with the poets, and to his habit of reading aloud their passages.

Young people, therefore, need not think it indispensable to study the classics, or even the modern languages, in order to acquire a command of the English tongue. This may be done in an easier way, by a thorough study of the great English writers in prose and poetry. But it is better to understand the classics if one can; the classics are the foundation of a broad education.

SICKNESS IN FARMERS' FAMILIES.

A Massachusetts Health report gives this suggestive summary of the principal causes of sickness in families of farmers: 1. Overwork and exposure; the women being more frequently overworked. 2. Improper and improperly cooked food. 3. Damp location of dwellings. 4. Want of cleanliness about their houses, especially in reference to drains, privies, cellars and proximity to barn-yards and hog-pens. 5. Impure drinking water; largely due to the preceding cause. 6. Bed-rooms imperfectly ventilated, and on the ground floor, with the too general use of leather beds. 7. Insufficient recreation.

The friendship of a dog that can be relied upon is of more account than the friendship of a man who must be bought with gifts.

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