

vey our thought unimpaired. The relation between thought and expression is so close that one cannot be independent of the other; and this connection is so vital that, when an idea becomes extinct in a language, the word that expressed it withers and falls away, unless the word happen to find employment in expressing a new idea.

Clear thinking is, of course, the first step toward clear speaking, but inaccuracy in the use of language arises less from vagueness of thought than from a carelessness of speech, content to hit somewhere in the neighborhood, but never piercing the bull's-eye, of the thought. A crusade against the stupidity of thought that lies at the root of much stupidity of expression, is too hopelessly Quixotic to attempt. There is a fitness about a poor or infirm thought going badly clothed; but there are plenty of people who do think, and yet who express themselves in a manner so stumbling as to distort completely their meaning. Not realizing the beauty and richness of the language that is open to us, we yet insist on limiting ourselves to a certain class of rough Saxon words, making them do yeoman service, and forcing upon them a mass of work for which they are entirely unfitted, until under this burden they lose even their primitive strength.

An extreme development of the evil of careless speech is the indiscriminate use of extravagant adjectives, so common among school-girls, who, with smiling prodigality, expend the resources of the language upon mental trifles. The injustice to the listener from this inaccuracy of speech is obvious. However, this is slight beside the greater injustice done to the language itself, in which we have only a life interest, and which we must pass on to the generations following us. We have no right to abuse the language we have inherited, for the traces of our rough handling will surely endure.

*Louise Herrick.*

#### Family Records.

"THE family Bibles of past generations," Mr. Francis Galton has said in an English review, "served as registers of family events. Births, illness, marriages, and deaths were chronicled on their fly leaves, and those ponderous tomes fulfilled an important function in this incidental way. But they are now becoming generally replaced by more handy volumes, and the family register is disappearing with the old family Bible." Mr. Galton goes on to make a plea for an improved substitute for the fly-leaves usually found between the Old and New Testaments. As a special student of sociology, he knows the high importance to science of exact family records. The substitute which he wishes to see adopted generally is at once too costly and too complicated to be attempted by many. He notes that the disappearance of the family Bible almost exactly coincides with the invention of photography, and with the recognition of "the hereditary value of what are called life histories"; and he then suggests that the present seems to be a good time to urge the opening of a new form of family register. He advises the use of a thin quarto volume, solidly bound, and having leaves of tough paper. A pair of pages should be given to every member of the family. Down one side of each page may be placed a line of photographs, showing both the full

face and the profile, and taken at regular intervals from birth to death. In the opposite spaces the happenings of his life may be recorded. Thus every pair of facing pages would reveal the changes of countenance and the events in the life of one member of the family.

Surely this suggestion, or some modification of it, is worthy of adoption in American families, for in this country the young are constantly breaking away from the old homestead and striking out for themselves, and even whole families not infrequently make a complete transfer from the East to the West. Nowhere is there so much difficulty and confusion in gathering up the threads of family history as there is here. It would be well if some sort of family record were kept in every household. Mr. Galton's plan requires, at the beginning, nothing more than the purchase of a stout blank-book and the ruling of a few lines; or if even this is too much trouble, recourse may be had to the more elaborate "Family Record Album," containing a comprehensive system of blanks classified on a new plan. It has family pages for the names of the members of the family. It has genealogical pages for the descent of the family as far as it can be traced in a direct line. It has tabular pages, one for each person, for the setting down of all the leading particulars of his or her birth—parentage, time and place of birth, weight and height at birth and at various times, dates of vaccination, naming, walking, talking, learning to read, write, swim, etc., going to school or college, entering on trade, business or profession, marriage, residences, diseases, accidents, travels, and death. It has biographical pages for other special and personal details. It has heirloom pages, on which to keep the record of the interesting things about the house, and of their history, in so far as they have any. It has domestic economy pages for the record of the manner of living, house-rent, expenditure, and income, etc., from year to year. It has travel pages to record the incidents and dates of any sojourn away from home, of any member of the family, and it has miscellaneous pages for all the other manifold things to be thought of.

A convenient substitute for the formal family record is a family scrap-book. This would agreeably supplement the record, if there were one. By a family scrap-book is meant a book devoted solely to the collection of those printed paragraphs in which the name of the family appears. First of all in importance are the marriages and deaths; and if there is an English branch, there may also be birth notices to insert. Then there may be the chance newspaper paragraph announcing the taking of a prize at the county fair; or the description of the fire which burned half the house; or the report of the decision of the Supreme Court in that everlasting lawsuit. These may go in, side by side, with the inaccurate paragraph on your neat after-dinner speech, and that other on your wife's table at the church fair. A place may also be found for the few lines which remark on your son's departure for the village to enter college, and also for the straggling verses he sent home shortly after for insertion in the "poet's corner" of the local newspaper. If you travel by water, some newspaper is likely to print a list of the passengers, and even this deserves its place on the pages of the family scrap-book.

*Arthur Penn.*