regard them, what you will do with them and how you will keep them. If they be thought of as merely the results of an ephemeral fashion, they matter but little; and you will probably do what I have seen done several times—you will stick them on a wall with drawing-pins, and without order or much care, except to say to those who see them you have so many hundreds or thousands. The room selected is often the smoking-room, and thus they afford subjects for conversation. The wall may be covered with some material to make a pretty surface, and of a colour to relieve the monotony of the uncoloured cards; but otherwise they are not considered.

In Germany there are books (which, I believe, can also be obtained here) for putting them into as an album; and these are good as far as they go; but, personally I never like books—they take up too much room; and, as yet, I am able to take mine with me on my travels, and so I like to have them kept in some less bulky form. Last year I took my whole collection out to dinner with me one evening, and found when I arrived that my friends had been busy in planning for its preservation. They had selected as a present a delightful portfolio, with pockets and a power of prodigious expansion, as a suitable receptacle in which to keep it; and when the cards were installed therein, as they were immediately, it proved to be the very thing I wanted. I told you, you will remember, that my picture-cards had shown me the loving kindness of my friends.

The other way of keeping the collection, if you do not like any of these three, is to have those long letter-boxes, and give up a box to each country. You will soon learn that you must have plenty of elastic bands to hold your treasures together, and these should be thin, and very elastic, so that they come off and on easily, and do not damage the edges of the cards in doing so.

There is one benefit about this collection of picture-cards, and that is that the cards take up so little room that you need make no special arrangements for it, or go to much expense if you purchase specimens for yourself.

Having, I trust, informed you of everything I know about picture post-cards, I may proceed to tell you about the cards now illustrated, some of which are very interesting. The group of seven which forms the heading of this article are all of them wonderfully representative of their separate localities; and, should you be choosing them, *that* is what you should look for more than anything else.

The first, which is marked Fig. 1, of this group is a view of Oxford, forming one of an excellent series of photo-prints of various views. If you know Oxford you will recognise this as the High Street, taken just where it is most picturesque and full of interest. The next (Fig. 2) is also a photo-print, of the Castle of Goyen, one of the many castles in the mountains about Meran in the Tyrol. This was for a long time occupied by an English family, and is still used as a residence. The next (Fig. 3) is a view of Berne, including the cathedral spire and the last new bridge, and is a coloured print. The centre one is one of my most lovely Norwegian cards—a scene at the Voringvos Fall. The wildness and grandeur are well shown, and the colouring is exquisite.

The next (Fig. 5) is one of a series of caricature pictures of the various Swiss mountains, drawn by the well-known artist, Hansen of St. Gall. They were quite the rage when they came out two years ago; but to people who love the mountains they seemed an insult, in spite of their undoubted cleverness. The one in question, of "the Matterhorn laughing," seems a poor mockery in view of its sinister reputation and of the sad tragedies with which it is connected, beginning with that so graphically narrated by Mr. Whymper in his well-known book, in which four valuable lives were lost. This card is in colour, from a water-colour sketch, and the boldness of the touches is very evident in the reproduction.

To the next (Fig. 6) it is a far cry from Switzerland—to Egypt; and we find ourselves in a hot atmosphere by the side of the Nile, and with a group of palms in front of us. This view has a background of yellow sunset, and it is, I am afraid, of German origin, as they could not produce anything of the kind in Egypt. In Fig. 7 we have an engraved card, a view of the famous "Drei Zinnen" in the Dolomites — those three wonderful peaks which come into view after you leave Toblach and have passed the beautiful smooth Dürrensee and Monte Cristallo reflected in its green depths. Then the "Drei Zinnen" tower over you, and you feel you have really arrived in the Dolomites, with their wonderful and peculiar forms and brilliant colouring, *The Untrodden Peaks*, as described by Amelia B. Edwards in 1873. Very few of them remain so now, for in spite of their difficulties and dangers mountaineers of all nations, especially English, hurried to surmount them after the book had been written. There is a curious coincidence about two of these cards. Lord Francis Douglas was the first to climb the centre one of the "Zinnen" in 1863, and he afterwards perished in 1865 on the Matterhorn, represented on the card next but one (Fig. 5) to the last, in making the first ascent also. It is these incidental things that give a special interest to any collection of picture-cards; and the great tragedy that marked the first ascent of the Matterhorn will be remembered for many a year to come, both among the Swiss mountains and in English homes.

(*To be concluded.*)

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# THE LANGUAGE OF GIRLS.

By ELSA D'ESTERRE-KEELING, Author of "Old Maids and Young."

PART I.

AT HOME.

A PAPER on the subject of the language of girls at home must, the present writer premises, contain specimens of girls' language of a kind not so common as to lack all interest for those to whom the common is the dull, while equally they must be of a kind not so uncommon as to be displeasing to those to whom the uncommon is the undelighting. In other words, that species of girls' language at home which lies midway between the universal and the unique must be sampled.

On that assumption there is instanced in this paper nothing which the writer conceives to be unparalleled, from the story of the thing said by the least exalted damsel to the story of the thing said by the princess.

There is possibly not in every family, and yet there is indubitably in most families, one member of the Cassius type under the aspect of that Roman in which Julius Cæsar termed him "a great observer." This person takes stock of all that is going on, and now and again bursts out with some such alarming announcement as—the speaker was an Irish girl who addressed the assembled home-party—

"Fam'ly, we've all taken to saying *wuz* for 'was'!"

That sort of intimation is startling, but is probably productive of good.

Few again are the homes in which there is not an inmate to whom is given, or to whom might fitly be given, the title of "the grammarian." This person, when a girl, often conveys a rebuke in language which, if not courtly, is yet so picturesque as to be unforgetable. The following case seems one in point—

"To who did you send it?" was asked.

"*To-whoo!* Don't speak like an owl, Ethel!" was the prelude to the answer in which Ethel was duly told to WHOM the article referred to had been sent by the grammarian.

It's hardly in a body's power to keep at times from being sour, according to a famous poet. When the body is one of a home-party, woe betide the others when these times dawn. It was in sour vein that a maid Marion spoke thus—

"I don't pretend to be the pink of politeness, but at least I know what politeness is. Some people don't."

There is all but invariably sourness in self-deprecation. That is why sisters and brothers and all the others succumb to dismay when a speech is opened with the announcement, "I don't pretend," or "ONE of the things I do know," or "We can't—all of us—be geniuses," or when a request for information is ushered in with the words, "Perhaps you will *deign* to tell me."

There is a type of girl who is commonly said to make herself at home everywhere. The truth regarding her is that she behaves everywhere as she would behave in the home that is hers, and such agreeableness—or disagreeableness—as attaches to her so doing is intimately bound up with the character of that home. Such a girl said lately at the table of a learned lady with whom her acquaintance was but of some hours' duration—

"You say 'perfectly' where you should say 'absolutely.' *Yes, you do!*"

The closing asseveration was made in answer to a look in the face of the lady which said not "Do I?" but "I am not perfect, my little friend, and you are absolute."

There are persons who consider that such a girl should be pumped on at the Queen's pleasure—there was such a person at that table; other persons consider that pump-water would not remedy her case. Probably it would not. The mistake made by her is that she speaks without premeditation, as does the girl who evolves a bull. "What are you going to give Alice for a wedding present?" was said to such a girl. "A silver biscuit tin," was the answer.

Among members of the average contemporary English home, it is usual to affect great insensibility, a thing that is done often, but not always, with a large measure of success. Partings are a great strain on hearts that are

not made of stone, and an English girl living, whose education is in the process of being "finished" abroad, allows that she makes an owl of herself—this is her way of confessing to being overcome—when it comes to the gulpy moment—her phrase again—in parting from her mother to go back into exile.

The jest that sets the table in a roar is, an opinion prevails widely, more often evolved by the boys of the home-circle than by the girls. Be this as it may, whether boys or girls evolve it, it is commonly of a kind that is unprintable, not in the malign sense attaching to that adjective, but because the jests of boys and girls, with very few exceptions, are mainly comical by reason of accompanying gesture, thus in an interesting manner illustrating the etymological connection between these two words which fundamentally are one. Here may be quoted the observation of a German thinker.

"I have throughout my life found that the character of a person may be gathered from nothing more surely than from a jest which he —she—takes amiss."

The person who would not *give herself away* would do well to make a note of that.

Supposing a girl to ask of the head of her home what constitute the ingredients of pleasing talk, and supposing the answer to be: firstly truth, in the second place good sense, thirdly good humour, and in the fourth place wit—one can picture to oneself, without putting any very great pressure upon the imagination, her crestfallen look, and can imagine what would assuredly be her thought, that such conversation might be found pleasing elsewhere, but that no denizen of this world who had the least taste for the lively could group the constituents of pleasing talk thus—firstly truth and lastly wit.

Yet the Englishman who so grouped them —Sir William Temple—was a noted man of the world.

"Firstly truth." That being borne in mind, all exaggeration must be eschewed, however dear it be to the poetic mind. Hearken to the sneer of a witty Frenchwoman.

"There is always something trivial in truth to the poetic mind, whence the tendency in the south to speak of pigs as elephants."

"The south"—quotha! Pigs are spoken of as elephants in Britain north of Tweed. Among the persons who so speak of them are girls whose idea of making pleasing conversation runs directly counter to Sir William Temple's "Firstly truth."

Not that truth is always, or even often, absent from girls' talk. It is often present, and is sometimes the truth that cuts. This is especially noticeable in the case of the person whom a clever writer has called "the critic of the hearth." This person is quite terrible in the years which precede what the greatest writer of the world has termed "sweet and twenty." She is the girl who views an artwork from the standpoint—self-confessed—of them who know what they like, and who most frequently demonstrate that they know what they do not like. Said such a girl to her brother—

"I don't like the way you're painting now."

"What way am I painting now?" he asked.

"Oh, I don't know the proper name for it, but it's all blare where it's not blur."

"Thanks," said the painter, turned impressionist.

But he was not thankful. Home-truths seldom inspire thankfulness.

The girl is admittedly exceptional who in these Victorian days uses six words where her ancestress of Georgian days used three, but such a girl exists. In a case of which several persons know she says, "Can anyone give me the time?" for "What's o'clock?" and she does not reserve this fine language for use when visiting those of her friends whose seats are thrones, but utters it daily at the home breakfast-table.

This perhaps is the place in which to say that, by almost common consent of girls, there are words and phrases too fine for home-use. A young Englishwoman desires that there shall be set down here as such a word the adjective "poignant," and as such a phrase the invitation "Be seated."

The narrator's art is one in which many girls unknown to fame excel. These girls are the story-tellers of the home, and the best among them cleverly steer clear of all that sets a tale at a disadvantage, beginning with long-windedness. A long-winded tale seldom finds favour anywhere, and in the home-circle always provokes from boys, and sometimes from girls, the exclamation, "Come to the point!" It was candid but unwise of one Gladys to meet, as she did, that exclamation with the admission, "There's no point to come to." This is often the case, but the girl who looks for mercy from members of the home-circle would do well not to announce that the story in the process of narration by her is a pointless one.

In an age in which many letters are written, the morning mail comprehensibly supplies the staple of breakfast-table talk in many homes. Thus it was that a certain Edith said recently to her sister, "Oh, it's one of Aunt Julia's usual letters, full of Providence with a very big P."

The remark was not made *sotto voce*. The contemporary maiden is no whisperer.

A gentleman at the table-head smiled covertly. He was Aunt Julia's brother, and Edith called him Dad. Then he said gravely what resolved itself into a lament that old times are changed, old manners gone.

"Would you like us to be like Aunt Julia?" asked Edith at the end of the discourse.

"Yes—with a difference," said the person called Dad. He also specified what the difference was, but that is another story. This paper concerns itself with the language of girls.

In that language there is made manifest a strong tendency among girls to over-rate their own home-possessions, to which they sometimes give names calculated to surprise older persons.

"Of course a Tom-cat?" was the question put by an old lady to whom a young lady had shown a monster tabby.

"We call him a Thomas-cat," was the offended answer.

"That's surely rather—prideful," said the old lady.

And surely it was.

There is a language common in a certain type of English home of the hour which is highly sentimental. In it the phrase "the love" is in one case known to the writer of this paper used to denote the baby, as the most popular inmate of the house, while in another case it is used to denote the postman, as the most eagerly expected caller.

From the sentimental to the eerie is a great leap, but since the fact must be set down, it may as well be set down here that the frankness which distinguishes home-talk sometimes finds very eerie expression among girls. Take the following (the speaker was an Edinburgh girl)—"Not white flowers, if you love me! They are so coffiny."

A vein of censoriousness is not unknown among girls, and the strictures passed by them are often as wonderful as fearful. Said one Annie of her sister Jessie in the presence of this chronicler—"She's a chord of music stirred with a spoon."

Students of Shakespeare will remember that that poet abounds in what his annotators term "mixed metaphors." The aforesaid Annie was—still is—an earnest student of Shakespeare. Has, one cannot help speculating, that circumstance any connection with the extraordinarily mixed metaphor employed by her in diagnosing Jessie?

That brevity, which is asserted to be the soul of wit, is also sometimes productive of language which, while not kind, is still less academical. Sevilla complains that a cousin said to her, "You laugh like a muffin-bell."

The insult was not found the less hard to bear because it was execrably worded.

The gentlest of England's humorists, Charles Lamb, thought it questionable that the higher order of cherubim illuminati ever sneer. It is surely also questionable that they ever put French to such uses as that to which it was put in this literal translation of an English idiom which contained the comment of a Welsh girl on a visitor at her mother's house —"Elle est coupée pour une vieille fille."

The subject of that comment, which was overheard by her, made in French of Paris, which was not to her, as it was to Chaucer's prioress, "unknowe," the alarming communication that, despite the impression created by her, she was a wife and a mother.

Now, is it to be expected, some girl may here fairly ask, that girls with a sarcastic vein shall not indulge it because, according to Charles Lamb, it is questionable that the higher order of seraphim illuminati ever sneer? Indeed, it would not be just to set up so high a standard, but it is fair to ask that the quality of mercy shall be less strained than it is by girls of the kind that lay themselves open to the charge of having—in this like a dinner-bell—nothing in them but a tongue.

The quoting of poetry in the home-circle—as elsewhere—is less common than it used to be. When the present writer was a girl among girls, there was one girl who was famous for her quotations from the poets, and who one day gave dramatic expression to a vengeful mood in quoting from Scott as follows:—

"I have sworn this loch to stain
In the best blood that *soaks* thy vein."

All poets would be quoted, and yet most poets suffer the greatest wrongs at the hands of those who quote them. Scott has his infelicities, but he has not the phrase "the best blood that *soaks* thy vein."

The girl-quoter who would not see among the inmates of her home Laughter holding both his sides must seek to combine the correct with the poetic.

Having regard to the charge, "You've said that before"—one often levelled at one girl by another, and commonly met with hot denial—an excellent answer to it is supplied by Oliver Wendell Holmes, who writes—

"They must be poor creatures who do not repeat themselves in conversation."

A talent to make the best of things is all but invariably in girls, as in others, accompanied by what in green Erin is called "a pretty tongue," and the owner of that pretty thing is always at a premium in the home. Before velveteen was the only wear in London, East, a young gentlewoman of London, West, had a velveteen dress which with time grew woefully shabby. There was not the wherewithal for the purchase of a new one, and, seeing some members of her family eye sorrowfully her frock, from which the pile had vanished in patches here and there, she turned their grief to laughter by saying cheerfully—

"The effect is quite that of—*brocade*, isn't it?"

There is a common opinion that girls are not primarily logical, and certainly the distinctions drawn by some of them in talk are very arbitrary. Thus one Winnie was a year ago reminded that an elder sister, with whom she was known to be on excellent terms, was present during a discussion on the merits of

relations, who, the said Winnie averred, had no merits whatever, and were the bane of one's life. "Oh," was her loud answer to the whispered reminder, "I wasn't thinking of my sister. *I don't call a sister a relation.*"

This Winnie called "cousins" relations.

In a certain number of English homes there is a kind of language which the girls who do not speak it call "platform." Its distinguishing feature is magniloquence, the person who uses it being one who does not experience what an American thinker has called the difficulty of getting to a sufficient distance from one's house-mates when one begins to utter the big thoughts in big words.

This person preferably uses big words, among those used by her being "pusillanimous," which word is so seldom seen in print that few write it without putting the question, "Has it two l's or one?" while it is so little heard in speaking that several persons who live in a city of five million inhabitants declare that they have never heard it spoken save by this one girl-speaker of "platform."

The conventional use of certain words, among them the word "linen," used—it is now some years ago—to offend direfully a girl member of an Irish home. This girl never failed to meet her mother's allusions to table-linen, house-linen, body-linen, etc., with the words—

"*Shirting*, I suppose you mean." She had some knowledge of French, and could probably have translated the wise French dictum: "Il ne faut pas tout corriger."

It was, by the way, this Irish girl who put to her mother one day the question—"How shall I turn into the past 'The powers that be'? 'The powers that were' is dull. Can I say 'The powers that *be'd*'?"

Her mother thought that "the powers that *be'd*," while certainly not dull, was, under another aspect, so open to objection that it would scarcely be wise to substitute it for "the powers that were."

Bad pronunciations do not always but, it seems, sometimes run in families, and the following cases are probably not without parallel. In a midland English town a family largely composed of girls is making a strong effort to give the right pronunciation to the words "towards" and "interesting," and not to pronounce these words as an admired English writer would have us believe they are pronounced by the illiterate only, to wit, thus—to*wards*, inter*est*ing. The fact is that many persons by no means wholly ignorant have still to learn that the two words thus generally mispronounced should be pronounced with the stress on the first syllable.

In another English home a girl confesses to having come to see that a candid friend has told her the truth in telling her that she habitually voices surprise in the words, "The idear of it!" varied with "Rearly!" to a better pronunciation of which interjections she is going to give henceforth her serious attention.

An Irish girl of yore—her name is affixed to this article—discovered that she was guilty of certain mispronunciations not only in her everyday language, but in her language reserved for state occasions. Most Irish girls have a language reserved for state occasions. It is called English-English as opposed to Irish-English, and is more like English English than Push-too is, but for all that is not *very* like it. The aforesaid Irish girl would discover herself saying, "Prob'ly," "P'r'aps," and (for "Do you know?") "Juno." The state of mind induced by this discovery was one bordering upon that in which Shakespeare makes an unhappy man say, "Horrible! Horrible! Horrible!"

That girl at once set about reforming her pronunciation, and at present uses everyday the language formerly reserved for state occasions.

Happily most persons are able to say, "Do you know?" without murdering the Queen's English, a crime but by six degrees (or thereabouts) removed from regicide. What is largely needed, however, is a less sharply questioning mode of speech than that which at present is in vogue in homes in which the language spoken is English. Girls could do much in this matter, among them a girl who, while well-known to speak much in society, is said to put in her home only two questions daily, at the breakfast table asking "Any letters?" and on returning from her daily outing asking "Anyone been?" these question with the answers to them constituting, it would seem, the all of verbal intercourse that she cares to keep up with her home-mates. Strange!

A type of girl that her sisters describe as "by way of being superior" gives dire offence in the home by using there terms as unusual as they are correct. Such a girl will call the Moonlight Sonata the Sonata in C sharp minor. The proper comment on that is contained in a classical exclamation—

"Oh, this learning, what a thing it is!"

Most girls, as everyone knows, find it difficult to command an appreciative hearing in the home when they give utterance there to what has been called "high thinking." One Elizabeth as a girl pursued with enthusiasm the study of philology, and, slowly munching a ham-sandwich one day unwisely soliloquised aloud—

"I wonder what 'ham' comes from."

"From a pig," said a sister anear, adding vehemently—

"*Do* hurry up!"

To conclude: the figure of speech that by Tudors was called a "subduement" and that by Victorians is called a "snub" flourishes, it appears, in the homes of high and low alike. They err who think that princes and princesses do not tartly snub each other. It was a princess who said the other day to a prince—

"Don't think you'll come over—ME!"

The prince looked as small as a prince can look. The princess was put in a corner for speaking slang.

She was—is—a very young princess.

(*To be continued.*)

# QUESTION AND ANSWER.

### Girls' Employments.

Qualifications of an Inspector.—"*Now that so many occupations are open to girls, one hears occasional mention of 'Lady Inspectors,' Factory and other. I am anxious to obtain particulars of the necessary qualifications for such posts. Is there any examination, and, if so, in what subjects? What is the age limit, if any, and what are the approximate salaries? I am an experienced clerk, and should much like to obtain an occupation that is less sedentary and that is not so beset with applicants for every vacancy.*—Iris."

"Iris" writes such an excellent letter (which we should have liked to find space to quote in full) that we can hardly believe she will have much difficulty in obtaining congenial employment. Inspectors are of various kinds. The London County Council employs a few ladies as inspectors to see that the Infant Life Protection Act and Shop Hours Act are not infringed, and also to inspect artisans' dwellings in order to ascertain that the latter are in a thoroughly sanitary and habitable condition. Women are also employed by house-owning companies and private landlords in the capacity of rent-collectors, and for this work also there is a tendency to give a preference to women who understand the principles of domestic sanitation. Of sanitary inspectorships proper there are not very many at present, yet the number is yearly increased, and one by one the vestries of London—or, as they are now to be called, the boroughs—appoint trained women as inspectors. In Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, Nottingham, Glasgow, and other large towns women are also employed, but in some of these places they do not rank as inspectors proper, but are employed as health visitors under the medical officers of health, and obtain their experience and training in the course of their employment. In general, however, a girl—or, rather, woman (for the age limits are from twenty-five to forty)—who feels that she has strength and ability for this kind of work, would do wisely to study both at the Sanitary Institute, Margaret Street, W., and at the office of the National Health Society, 53, Berners Street, W., in order to pass the examination for sanitary inspectors conducted by the Sanitary Institute. But it is not by any means every girl who has the right natural qualifications for a factory inspector, sanitary inspector, rent-collector, or health visitor.

To begin with, strong health is necessary, together with the equable temper that usually accompanies it. Certain moral qualifications are likewise indispensable: these are, keen observation, a sound judgment, a sympathetic manner, a power of eliciting information from persons visited, and a capacity also for keeping silence in regard to official matters. There are numbers of brilliantly clever people who could pass the stiffest examination with ease, but would never make good officials, and it is therefore very necessary for a girl to consider whether she possesses the right temperament for the work before she spends time and money on training. Otherwise she will suffer the disappointment of never rising above a subordinate position. Supposing that "Iris" should decide to pursue the course of training we have mentioned, she should also begin to study privately the chief legislative measures affecting factories, workshops, shops, and the sanitary condition of houses in which work is carried on. Copies of these acts could be obtained from Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, East Harding Street, E.C.; and we would especially advise "Iris" to obtain from the same publishers the explanatory book on the Factory and Workshops Acts and Truck Acts, by Miss May Abraham and Mr. Llewelyn Davies. The salaries of sanitary inspectors range from £80 to £150 a year, £100 a year being now given by several vestries. Factory inspectors are usually appointed from the ranks of sanitary inspectors. The nomination rests with the Home Secretary. The candidate who is fortunate enough to have been nominated is examined by the Civil Service Commissioners, and must obtain their certificate of fitness before her appointment can take effect. In this examination the principal subject is factory and workshop legislation. The age limits are twenty-one to forty, and the salary begins at £200 and can be raised, as the inspector is promoted to the higher ranks, to £300 a year.

## "BETTER."

By SARAH DOUDNEY.

"BETTER this evening"—so the doctor said,
And with a parting smile he went away,
Leaving great peace around that little bed
Where I have watched so sadly day by day.

The mellow chime of old cathedral bells
Flows down the street and through the quiet lane,
A sweet familiar melody that tells
Of hope beyond these years of doubt and pain.

The gold of sunset floods the silent room;
A bird floats slowly through the amber sky;
A bunch of woodbine in its richest bloom
Brings back old sorrows with a fragrant sigh.

Oh, bells! oh, golden light, and flowery breath!
So it was ever with me in the past;
The soul's stern warfare waged with life and death,
And the sweet restfulness that came at last.

"Better this evening"—soon again to rise;
Dear child, whose patience was so calm and true!
A little sleep, and then your gentle eyes
Shall open brightly to the morning blue.

## THE LANGUAGE OF GIRLS.

By ELSA D'ESTERRE-KEELING, Author of "Old Maids and Young."

### PART II.

#### IN SOCIETY.

XANTHUS, the master of Æsop, is said to have asked a large company to dinner, and Æsop was ordered to provide the choicest dainties that money could procure.

The first course consisted of tongues cooked in different ways, and served with appropriate sauces.

The guests were much amused. The second course brought—tongues again. The third course—still tongues. The fourth—*TONGUES.*

"What means this, sirrah?" asked Xanthus furiously of his slave.

"Master, you gave me leave to choose," was answered. "What is there more choice than the tongue?"

"'More choice!'" repeated Xanthus, with a direful sneer, and added, "Give us to-morrow, sirrah, what you deem least choice. My guests will be the same. Provide for them, and look you do not anger me again."

The slave made obeisance, and provided for the guests of next day. He provided tongues.

The moral of the story is not far to seek. Speech may be very choice, and may not be choice at all. When it takes the form of—well, scandal-mongering, it is very vile. Happily, there are many persons of the opinion that scandal-mongering is less common nowadays than it was aforetime, the notion that it enlivens conversation being one that is steadily losing ground, and that most odious form of it whereby the speaker stops, as supposing the matter sufficiently understood, being so widely condemned that one is forced to believe that it will soon cease to be. Thus only the other day a girl, who, in a London drawing-room, uttered a slander that broke down on a "but, however," was utterly confounded by a woman's saying, "My dear, proceed, proceed!"

By very much less iniquitous than slander and yet truly deplorable is a recklessly censorious vein of comment that has come to be very common in contemporary society of a certain kind. The following colloquy gives a sample of it. A girl and a matron spoke, the girl speaking first.

"Who is that man over there?"

The matron named him, and added—

"Shall I introduce him to you?"

"No, thanks. We've been introduced, but I didn't catch his name. He's an awful *baw.*"

She meant *bore.*

The matron smiled. The man in question was her brother, and was not the type of man who would come off with flying colours from an encounter with a girl whose vocabulary included the word *baw.*

The very young person as an afternoon caller is sometimes highly diverting. She called some little time ago upon an aged lady whose Skye-terrier crawled about the floor, wheezing and sneezing.

"How old is it?" asked the young person.

"Thirteen," was the answer.

"Oh!" (A start—the young person was thirteen.) "It looks older than me, doesn't it? It looks as old as——"

Here a word was suppressed.

"How old does it look?" was asked.

"Well," (a gulp; then, bravely,) "every day of sixty."

The aged lady, who was every day of seventy, felt that she had been let down very gently.

There prevails largely an idea which, as well as the present writer has been able to make out, is totally without foundation on fact that the language of society in the English capital is by very much more epigrammatic than that of society anywhere else the three kingdoms over, not to omit the principality.

It was, however, in a town of mid-England that a cynic this year passed comment on an assembly which he watched from a door with ears pricked. His comment was—

"Small talk, tall talk, all talk!"

Having delivered himself of that epigram, the said cynic made his adieux to the hostess, his sister, and returned to the bachelor lodgings whither he had come.

The Scots capital is not generally regarded as the home of social wit, but it was at a society gathering in Edinburgh of some three years ago that a girl said to a man who has passed the saying on——

"I like to watch a company like this, and to classify the persons composing it."

"How do you classify them?" asked the man.

"Into persons speaking, persons spoken to, and persons spoken of," was the answer.

"You are witty," said the man.

"That's not wit," demurred the girl. "It's——"

"What is it?"

"It's sense."

That demurrer spoilt all, says the man, but he is mistaken. It revealed the girl in her entirety, the words which preceded it revealing her but in part.

To give next a sample of country wit. It was a girl having her birthplace and abiding-place in a Welsh village, who in the hearing of this chronicler met the question, "Has she a good accent?" the person referred to being another girl, with the answer, "Yes; I did not notice it."

For a parallel to that, one must hark back to the days in which Dr. Samuel Johnson at his wittiest and wisest said of a young gentlewoman that she must have been well dressed because he had not noticed anything that she wore.

That, by the way, persons may dress to look for a time what they are not, is a well-known fact. Equally well known is it, however, that those who in the long run are found guilty of masquerading, are mostly convicted out of their own mouths, as was the donkey that arrayed itself in a lion's skin and passed for a lion until it brayed.

Thus, in a London drawing-room, a girl whose dress was strikingly elegant, said recently, in deferring to her neighbour—

"It lays with you."

This variant of "It lies with you" caused the person addressed a shock for which he was the less prepared, that the beautiful dress of the girl speaking heightened her handsomeness to the point of making her look what in generous phrasing is termed queenly.

In democratic days such as these, there is a marked tendency to pay scant heed to the distinctions of rank, and it seems not wholly unlikely that we shall revert to the Miltonic use of the word "equals" to denote persons having the same age. Some hold that even respect to age is on the decline, as shown by the attitude taken up by the young person of the hour to the old person. This attitude sometimes prompts the putting of singular questions, as when a maiden aged seventeen asked lately the grandmother of a maiden of that age what "bike" she rode by preference.

It would be interesting to know which person on the whole suffers most in the case of a conversation which takes a turn humiliating to one and remorse-inspiring to the other. When the present writer was a girl, an old Cambrian said once to her in the course of a discussion—

"Ah, you don't know Welsh!"

"No," was the answer, followed by the query, "do you?"

"No," said the Cambrian brokenly.

Terrible moment for him, says someone.

It was certainly a terrible moment for the girl confronting him.

A very common girl-type in society of to-day is that supplied by the person who conceives it polite to imply that she attaches the first importance to a gift which is denied to herself.

"If only I could sing, I often think!" said such a girl last winter to a distinguished singer.

The distinguished singer answered quietly—

"I had rather be able to speak than sing."

"'Speak'! Why everyone speaks. Not everyone can sing."

"No, but birds can, and kettles can. As well as I can judge, hardly anyone can speak, and no *thing* can."

"*You* can," said the girl admiringly.

"Thank you," said the distinguished singer; "that is better than the plaudits that my song evoked."

In a pause of talking oneself, it is often a pleasure to listen to the talk of others. An old gentleman tells of a conversation carried on within his hearing at a London evening party. The talkers were a man and a maiden, who stood at a table on which were books. The man took up a book and read from it—

"'A woman whose ruling passion is not vanity is superior to any man of equal faculties.' What do you think of that?" he asked.

"It makes no sense," said the maiden.

"Amend it," said the man.

The maiden amended it.

"'A woman whose ruling passion is not vanity,'" she said, "'is superior to any man whose ruling passion is not vanity.' That makes sense," she added.

"RIGHT!" said the old gentleman.

An apt quotation, it is on all hands allowed, sets off speech, and so it does, but it does not make a base action noble and it may upon occasion make it unforgettable.

A kinswoman of the writer of this article was present at a garden-party at which a grave-faced gentleman placed himself before a dish of strawberries, and deliberately picked from it all the best and biggest, observing as he did so to a person beside him—

"It was well said by Bishop Boteler of the strawberry that doubtless God could have made a better berry, but doubtless He never did."

The quotation was apt, but it is not as an apt quoter that that strawberry-eater is remembered by the lady who was witness of his action.

A good story-teller, man or maid, is generally at a premium in society, and in this connection may be cited the counsel of a good story-teller. "If you are paying a visit and have only one good story to tell, tell it at going. There is a person living who has the reputation of having always a fund of good stories to tell because she tells one at leave-taking."

The person who is not too stupid to make a blunder, to use the phrase of Oliver Wendell Holmes, has never been absent from society, and is not absent from it now. In the likeness of a young girl she met the whispered question put to her by a cautious old gentleman to whom she offered a dainty, "Is it ice?" with the whispered answer, "Yes, very nice."

In the likeness of another young girl she replied a few years ago to the question, "Are you Conservative or Liberal?"

"I? Oh, I don't know. Papa, I think, is on the side of Lord Gladstone. Are you?"

"No, I'm on the side of Mr. Salisbury," was the tremulous answer.

The girl-hostess is sometimes clever enough to blunder. "When are you going?" she asked one of her guests in the not very long agone.

"Now, if you wish," was the stiff answer.

"Oh—er—I was simply thinking of a girl who'd like to join your party going home. Have I said something ghastly?"

The stiff person relaxed.

"Not at all," she replied with a smile that would no longer be kept back. "You only asked me when I was going. I shouldn't do so to everyone, you know. It's just a little—unusual."

Here two laughed merrily. So far good; but sometimes the form of cleverness which leads to blundering has rather disastrous results. Says Kingsley of a girl—

"Anything to turn attention from her; and in that nervous haste which makes people speak, and speak foolishly too, just because they ought to be silent, she said——"

What did she say?

Kingsley tells. It was a thing that would have been just as well left unsaid, as many things said by those not too stupid to make a blunder would, to say the truth of them, be just as well left unsaid.

The shy girl is comprehensibly not a society favourite, for people do not foregather in gala attire and in recreative mood to bring relish to the spectacle of tongue-tied maiden meditation; howbeit, in that society the suffrages of which are desired by the most aspiring, the most timorous and taciturn of maidens is preferred to those among her sisters who illustrate the difference which, according to a Queen Anne wit, exists between the impudent and the absurd. "The impudent," said Sir Richard Steele, "are those who are pressing though they know they are disagreeable, while the absurd are those who are importunate because they think they are acceptable."

Here it may be asked by some, Who are they who "know they are disagreeable"?

So often they are self-confessed that the thought lies near that no girl-reader of this paper will be unacquainted with the type of person who opens up intercourse with the numbing, if it should not be called brazen, communication, "I know I'm disagreeable." Of not quite the same type as is she, but quite equally disconcerting is the person, sometimes a girl, who draws attention to the obvious in the words, "I'm not clever," or who puts the embarrassing question, "Does this bore you?" in mid-recital of a story which she has herself divined is not interesting, though your expressing agreement of opinion with her by answering affirmatively her question would, the odds are, offend her mightily.

The person whom Sir Richard Steele dubs absurd is often conscious to agony of his own absurdity, and is really importunate not so much because thinking himself acceptable as because wishing himself acceptable. The great Russian novelist Turgenief has made such a person describe the curious way in which he is hailed by his friends.

"At sight of me they seem to assume an entirely different person, laugh unnaturally, and look not into my eyes nor at my feet, as many do, but full in my face, press my hand hurriedly, and as hurriedly say, 'Ah, how d'ye do?' or else, 'Why, you here, too?' and very soon withdraw, and actually stand for some time immovable anear, as if they were trying to recall something to their memory."

Here a dismayed person is made to describe the dismay with which the sight of him fills other persons, who are not unkind, still less unmannerly, but who look him full in the face to begin with, and who, undreaming that he sees through their artifice, prior to leaving him for someone more enjoyable, stand immovable anear, as if they were trying to recall something to their memory.

A word here on the subject of the self-excusing person. This person is not necessarily humble and meek, but is often essentially proud and fierce, as was the wolf that previous to devouring the lamb tried to make it believe that it had disturbed a stream of which its captor was wont to drink, and as was the fox that tried to prove to the cock that in making a breakfast of him he was acting as the would-be benefactor of mankind whose sweetest morning slumber chanticleer disturbed. The society case analogous to these is supplied by the case of her who says, as did a girl not long ago in a drawing-room of Mayfair—

"I'm awfully sorry for the ospreys, you know, but why do they grow such fascinating tips?"

That girl, you are to note, cast upon the ospreys the blame that attached to herself for wearing osprey tips.

In the case of those not endowed with fine social gifts, it is not always easy to make conversation with a person newly introduced without having recourse to a question which at one and the same time marks the person putting it as ignorant of grammar and lacking in good taste. The question is, "Who do you remind me of?" addressed to the new-comer, or, "Who does he—she—remind you of?" addressed to a third person. There are people who are veritably dreaded by other people for the simple reason that they cannot embark on conversation of whatsoever kind until they have settled in their own minds whom the persons newly introduced to them remind them of.

Less undelighting, while quite equally curious, is the phenomenon presented by those people, often maidens, who appear to be unable to originate the name of any object, while evidently knowing what it is, and who are equally, it would seem, unable to reply lucidly to any question, although they manifestly understand it. They suffer in a modified form from the disease termed by those who have given study to brain affections *aphasia*, whence the use by them of the expression, "Thingimy by Thingimbob," to denote a work the name of which is not Thingimy, and the author of which is not Thingimbob, and whence also on their part the vexatious reply which is broken off mid-way with the exclamation, "You understand what I mean!" the fact being that the speaker suddenly experiences not a reluctance but an inability to proceed.

The plain truth is that talking, as Mr. Tulliver said, is troublesome work, and the troublesomeness attaching to it is increased as certain topics pass more and more out of favour—the weather, for instance. There are persons who express a lively regret that the weather is no longer as much to the fore in conversation as it used to be. These persons deplore what should not be deplored. It is not that the weather is an unimportant subject that it seems so desirable that it should cease to be what it was in times past, a matter of daily and almost hourly discussion. Stress of weather, as all know, some three centuries ago changed the political face of Europe in dispersing a large fleet sent out from Spain, and some century later it gave a new political face to Europe in keeping captive a little fleet which was meant to have been sent out from England. Tremendous issues are involved in the weather, but chatter on the subject of it really profits nothing.

A question which is one of the most important in connection with social inter-course is that involved in a case which, as stated by a German writer, stands thus—

"It is easy to hide hate, less easy to hide love, least easy to hide indifference."

It is, some assert, of the necessity of things that she who goes much into society shall meet persons who have neither her hate nor her love, the feeling which she has for them being, if not exactly indifference, yet a thing little removed from it. To spare such persons the shock which they would experience if given to understand what is the feeling that they inspire is the desire, it is further main-tained, of every girl whose heart is not of pig-iron.

Good. But what about those girls who in intercourse with persons of their own sex conceive that indiscriminate kissing and use of the word "dear" convey an idea of general affectionateness calculated to diffuse happiness and ease?

They are egregiously mistaken.

Indifference it is not merely difficult to hide, it is impossible to hide it, and all efforts in that direction make it only the more manifest to those to whom it gives pain. It is, how-ever, luckily by no means necessary to feel indifference towards those to whom are given neither love nor hate. There are persons to whom it is impossible to feel indifference towards anyone. These persons are by more than a little lower than the angels, but yet, ideally speaking, stand so fully head and shoulders above other persons that in society as elsewhere all bow down before them, treating them as queens and kings.

That is their high reward.

So far nothing has been said of that important thing—listening.

"To listen," says Disraeli of one of his society heroines, "was among many talents perhaps her rarest." Taken from its context that sentence is so worded as to allow of two interpretations, one of them not so favourable to Zenobia as the author of *Endymion* would desire.

This is the place in which it would be suitable if it were possible to set forth clearly what constitutes listening in that sense in which it is not merely preserving silence while others speak, a great number of people, among them many girls, being of the extra-ordinary opinion that listening is merely that. So far from that being even a main part of it, listening in the best sense which attaches to it is the speaking with every part of the face but the lips, so that your listener proper is by turns set aghast and agloom by all that is said to her, and not only that, but is, with nice adjustment of interest in the talk going forward, set facially querying, commenting, assenting, denying, praising, condemning, pitying, congratulating.

The girl who can silently do all that is no mere mummer, but is dowered with what society, too much maligned as mercenary, really sets the highest value on—rich sympathies.

(*To be continued.*)

# FARCED OLIVES.

By "A. M. B."

ALTHOUGH there may be many people to whom recipes for serving olives in different forms will not appeal, for the taste is decidedly an acquired one, yet to a large number *any* new form of serving this delicious little fruit will be acceptable.

On account of the cleansing effect olives have upon the palate, they are placed upon the dinner-table in small fancy dishes for the guests to partake of between the courses, but more often they are dressed in some dainty way as savouries, and it is for this course that I shall give recipes. They may also rank among *hors d'œuvres*, in which case tiny china plates are used, each plate containing enough for one person.

Before giving the recipes I must say a few words about olives. Those imported into this country are the Spanish, which is the largest, and a little more bitter than any other; the French, which is exceedingly good, and the Italian, which by many is considered the best of all. All are pickled in their unripe state —brine or oil being employed for their preservation. If very salt, soak in cold water an hour and wipe quite dry before using. A bottle of olives costs from 6d. to 1s., and to have them in perfection they should be firm to the touch. If more are taken from the bottle than required, they can be put back again, but it is important to remember that unless *covered* in weak brine, they will lose their colour and become flabby. *Olives farcées* (stuffed olives) are also sold ready for the table, but of course the expense is rather more—1s. 6d. a small bottle.

The first dish shall be *Olive Croûtes*. The Spanish olive is most suitable for these. Take 5 olives, 5 small rounds of bread fried a pretty golden colour (small plain biscuits will do if more convenient), a few capers, 1 hard-boiled yolk, 1 oz. butter, juice of half a lemon, 1 tea-spoonful of anchovy essence or paste, cayenne pepper and salt.

The olives must be "turned," as the stoning of an olive is termed. To do this you will require a small sharp penknife. Pass the point of it slantingly into the fruit until the stone is reached, then peel round it until the stone comes out clean. It must be carefully done, as the fruit should resume its shape and remain unbroken after the stoning process. Mix the lemon juice, butter, egg, anchovy, etc., on a plate with a broad-bladed knife until the in-gredients are all incorporated; make a small paper bag of stout paper (the kind grocers use for wrapping up butter is best—note-paper will do if that is not procurable) the shape of a cone, leaving a tiny hole as a sort of funnel—put the mixture into this and force some of it into the olives. Now place each farced or stuffed olive on a round of bread fried lightly spread with anchovy paste or essence; all round the olive and on the top place the capers. A spot of the butter mixture forced between each caper gives the finishing touch: serve on a bed of cress temptingly arranged.

Real anchovies are an improvement; they should be passed through a hair sieve if used before being mixed with the other ingredients, and then instead of the capers take a thin slice or fillet of anchovy and roll round the olive. Shrimp or bloater paste may replace the anchovy.

*Olives farced with Sardines.*—Allow two or three to each person. For 6 olives take 3 sardines, 1½ oz. butter, 1 teaspoonful of tomato pulp or sauce, lemon juice, salt and cayenne to taste—just a dust of powdered mace. Skin and bone the sardines, pass through a sieve with tomato pulp, etc., turn the olives and farce as before with a paper cone. Have ready some nice white crisp celery finely shred, place on small *entrée* dish, sprinkle with vinegar and salad oil, salt and pepper, and then scatter finely-chopped parsley on the top. Arrange the olives tastefully on the bed of celery and use a little of the pale green part for decorating the top of each. When celery is not in season, lettuces, cucumbers, or other green-meat, may be used.

older than I am; so—as you know so well how to build a house—it would be only fair for you to help a little. So far I've done this all myself."

This was strictly true. So Mr. Sweet cleared his throat with a long "H-e-m-m-m!" In a coaxing way he soothed the ruffled feelings of his better half.

"Come, little canary, don't be vexed. I was only in fun. It isn't a half bad nest—indeed. As to my first nest, you understand, I had really very little to say to its making. My poor first wife was a capital builder—the most hard-working bird in the world—and as she never wished me to interfere, just for peace' sake, you understand, I let her have her own way entirely. Poor thing! She got me into terribly bad habits, I am afraid, by always wishing to relieve me of the work. But she often used to say that when a bird has so glorious a voice as mine, it would be a thousand pities to stop singing. And no fellow can sing and work at the same time. Yes, she used to admire my top trills so much, she always said. She never thought about work, so long as she listened to me. She quite spoilt me."

He sighed slightly. Mrs. Sweet felt ashamed of herself. All the same she was in a rage somehow, so cried out—

"Well, I do my best anyhow, and one can't do more. Very likely I am stupid. It is a pity you did not marry my sister, Mary Anne, instead. She is brisk enough."

Mr. Sweet shuddered delicately and winked one eye.

"Too brisk by half. No, my dear, I heard her scolding too often to wish her for a mate. She scolded your parents even. And what a bird for her bath! Why, she makes her poor husband, Jubilee Boy, take one on the bitterest winter mornings." Then considering he had depressed his meek partner too much, he went on in the voice of a fair-minded cage-holder, "It's like this; we all have our gifts as well as failings. Now, my pet, you certainly have a very good temper. Quite the Sweet family temper. Ha, ha! My dear first wife, being a German from Hamburg, was a good cage-wife, certainly, but—ahem!—she had an unfortunate craving for ashes. The instant the cage-door was opened, she would fly out to the coal-box, or get under the grate. Naturally, being all grey or black, the housemaid sometimes did not notice her. So——"

He puffed out his feathers dismally, and drooped his head.

"Alas! But I had my misfortunes, too. I was betrothed to my cousin Dick," chirped Mrs. Sweet, "and he got out into the wide outside, one day. We heard afterwards that the sparrows and other enemies assembled in troops and took him prisoner. They jeered at him first. Then—he was very brave—but they tore him to pieces."

"Ugh! Don't, you make my blood turn cold," said Mr. Sweet peevishly. "I mean it boils, my dear, boils! Oh, had I been in such a case I should have covered the roofs with sparrows' feathers, and died among slaughtered heaps, pecking to the last. Dick was half-bred, I believe—had some green feathers about him."

"He was a splendid warrior, and died like a hero!" indignantly retorted Mrs. Sweet, with her mouth full of moss. She had begun building again, not to waste more time. Mr. Sweet, in an absent way, took the moss from her and set to work, like a master-builder whose hod-man has just brought him a fresh load. He eyed the nest musingly, but quite as if so far it was due to his own toil.

Now let us not suppose the little bird was a hypocrite. No, only he had an imaginative mind. As to his horror on hearing of Cousin Dick's death, that was imagination again. He could call up the scene perfectly, having once been put out on a roof in his cage, when he felt like a criminal of olden time in a pillory, so flouted and jeered at had he been by a grinning crowd of beggars and vagrants—of sparrows, I mean. What songs of defiance he had sung at them, louder and louder, till his slave, fearing he would burst his throat with anger, hastily brought him into the parlour and peace. And as to fighting! Yes, he had so brave a little heart that he would face any odds, like a lion. But being a poet, a musician, he could not help telling everybody how brave he felt. So he was called a boaster.

After an hour of really good work, Mr. Sweet suddenly exclaimed—

"My dear, this is going to be the finest nest in the world! I must make a song about it. Now I've shown you how, you go on. Just listen to me."

So saying, up he sprang from perch to perch. On the topmost one he trilled forth his song of house-building. It began somewhat like this—

"Such a nest, nest, nest, never was seen!
So warm, round, cosy, neat; made by me and my sweet!
O sing, sing, sing, sing; there never has been
A prettier nest—a home more meet
For wee golden nestlings that cry, tweet, tweet!
O joy, joy, joy——"

"Now little boy, that will do," said a human voice. And the cage was suddenly wrapped in darkness and woolly folds. "You will grow hoarse if you sing so loud."

"Really, that girl is too attentive," uttered Mr. Sweet, with smothered surprise. "Wifie, what did you think of my song?"

"Lovely!" came in a reposeful grunt from the wearied little hen.

"Sleepy thing!" twittered Mr. Sweet in pity.

(*To be continued.*)

# THE LANGUAGE OF GIRLS.

By ELSA D'ESTERRE-KEELING, Author of "Old Maids and Young."

## PART III.

### IN THE STREETS.

FIRST to the memory comes the language of a Scotch Annie during a walk through poorest Edinburgh in pelting rain; the way leading us through off-streets of that region where the big names are the Cowgate, West Bow, Grassmarket. We were caught in a shower, and as we took shelter in a doorway, a girl passed us, footing it very softly by reason of her bare feet. The rain had wetted her face and hands and feet; the rest of her was covered, as was a bundle which she carried in her shawl, a dark drenched garment, matching her dark drenched skirt.

"Poor child!" said Annie.

"Child! Had she a child?"

"I meant the mother; she is herself little more than a child."

Now you are to know that Annie is little more than a child.

We lapsed into silence until among the motley wayfarers who passed, one again aroused our joint attention.

This time it was a little girl in a skimp frock, bareheaded and barefooted, and carrying in both hands a little can of milk into which the rain splashed, this adding vastly to the difficulty which the bearer of the can experienced in so holding it that its contents should not be spilled.

"Poor lammie!" said Annie, taking note of the troubleful little face of the milk-bearer.

"Poor child! Poor lammie!" The words have nothing to make them unforgettable unless it be the voice in which the girl-speaker of them uttered them. This Scotch girl's voice will not be described in its entirety, but in part it is described when it is said that it was thus much like butter-scotch that it was golden and sweet.

But Annie's companion was not exploring poorest Edinburgh to note only the talk of Annie of richest Edinburgh. What were the other girls thereabout saying? Frankly some of their language was very unpretty, and none of it was very pretty, but now and again it was pleasingly novel to one who was not of Caledonia. This was the case with "How are you?" turned into "How are y' keeping?" (a weary-faced girl addressed a weary-faced woman); and was the case with the speech, "Is it going to fair, d'ye think, James?" sung from a window by a girl to a lad passing, whose answer was a headshake expressive of his totally erroneous belief that it was not going "to fair." This lad kept eyes level, or he could not have failed to see that the sky was lightening.

A girl, before unseen by us, on a sudden sneezed at our backs. "I'm badly colded," was her answer in reply to our surprised glances. Her way of intimating that she had a bad cold was interesting, and the courtesy which prompted her explanation of having startled us was charming.

Next shall be told of the only Scotch girl that the present writer ever heard say "Toots!" We stood outside a Highland inn, a party of us—men, women, boys and girls. A little dog suddenly appeared on the scene, whereupon one of the women darted forward, caught it in her arms and covered it with kisses.

"English!" said the Toots-girl.

It was not the only time that she said "English." At the same spot somewhat later on the same day she was seen to point with her forefinger (yes, she was that sort of girl) to a window at which hung sponges and

flannels. As she did so the Toots-girl said again, "English!"

The land of the Toots-girl is that in which wit is called "wut," a form of the word by which it is blunted, this making it admirably denominate a species of wit, the primary quality of which is not an extremely fine edge. The following conversation will illustrate that statement. The speakers were a girl and a man—a daughter and father—in the leading street of a little Scotch town. Said the girl—

"We might spend a night at Glasgow on the way to Helensburgh."

"We shall not have much else to spend," replied her father.

Then it was that "Toots!" was said by the only Scotch girl that the present writer ever heard say "Toots!"

The difference between the language of girls in Scotland and England is naturally very great. Perhaps the most striking aspect which belongs to speech in the biggest of England's cities is that it illustrates the fact that the millions that make the population of that capital are of many and divers nationalities. The girl who not long since was at a London street-corner heard deploring the diffi*culty* which attends the keeping-up of social intercourse in London was self-proclaimedly Scotch; and the girl who talked of "med'cine" and "stren'th" (she sat behind this chronicler on a public vehicle one day) would have been proclaimed Irish by those mispronunciations had she not before been proclaimed of that nationality by her use of "been" for *bin* and of "two pence" for *tuppence*. There are things that that girl might learn from English speakers, and there are things that English speakers might learn from her. It is sometimes difficult to localise the English heard in London. This is not, however, the case when the vocabulary used includes such words as "depôt" and "cars."

It is what used to be called a "canon of good taste" not to make private persons the subject of public comment. So little does, however, a certain type of girl of the present conform to canons of good taste that nothing is more common than to hear her express herself on omnibus top and elsewhere in regard to private persons. Thus "Ethel's usual thing" was on Ethel's doorstep set forth as follows:—

"What is it like?" asked a matron going in to a maiden going out.

"Oh, just Ethel's usual thing—a crush of people and a crash of talk."

"Jack's girl" was thus described at a shop-window:—

"She isn't an atom pretty—rather common-looking, with small-pocked teeth. Who I am talking of? Jack's girl."

Sometimes, unknown to the speaker, the object of the comment or one nearly related to him, or her, is present. This was the case recently when the brother of a distinguished man who had given a lecture heard a person late of the great man's audience say—

"He's ugly, but he's a lovely man."

This American paradox was uttered in a public conveyance.

The young aunt is often a very diverting person. The following is a conversation which took place between her and an older person before a small house in a North London suburb:—

"What is the little girl's name?" the older person asked, the question having reference to a baby carried by its sixteen-year-old aunt.

"Well'm," was answered with embarrassment, "me and her mother wished to have her called Anto'nette after a young lady where my sister was in service; but my brother-in-law he said, 'Give her a good *workin' name*.' So we've called her Gladys."

Far be it from the present writer to imply that Gladys is a name suggesting idle hands; on the other part it really does not present itself to the average mind as "a good working name."

The mere word "auntie" is one connoting all things nice, among them a delicate precision in language. At times, however, the person so entitled carries precision just a thought too far. In the person of a girl some nineteen years old she was one Sunday evening a year hence a passenger in an omnibus plying between the city of London and the suburb of Hammersmith. On her lap was a little child who, taking note of the fact that a church bell was ringing, asked—

"Are the bells singing 'Gentle Jesus,' auntie?"

"No, dear," was answered.

"What are they singing?"

"They are not singing at all, dear, they are *ringing*."

A stickler for accuracy such as that carries precision just a thought too far. The first thing, says an old writer, is to speak aptly; the next thing is to speak handsomely. The little child who speaks of bells singing speaks aptly and speaks handsomely, whereas the adult who would permit her only to speak of them as ringing would have her language limited to the apt.

It is not easy for the girl-relation to strike always the right note in talk with little children, especially when the public eye—not to say the public ear—is on her. The questions of these little ones, who are untiring inquisitioners, are not always but are often difficult to answer. Thus when the child who stands with his nose flattened against the window of a tramcar asks what the dicky-bird is that hops before the gee-gees, the answer that may be safely given is cock-sparrow, because cock-sparrow finds a particular pleasure in hopping all but under the hoofs of the big quadruped that daily takes the air, as he does, in the public thoroughfares. It is, however, far less easy to answer the child who asks, as did a little Scotch lass once under similar circumstances in the hearing of the present writer, "Have birds eyelashes?" That the sight of cock-sparrow hopping in front of a tramcar should prompt such a question as that is so conceivably disconcerting as to supply a partial if not an entire excuse to the girl who replied, with a tartness which had connection with the circumstance that she knew some seven people to sit with ears pricked to catch her answer, "Sit down, Maggie, and don't speak foolishly."

If the truth may be said it is not speaking foolishly to ask if birds have eyelashes, and the person whose speculations take so interesting a form as did those of the little person who put this question is fairly entitled to preserve, if she elect to do so, the standing posture. Maggie sat down with a face of protest.

Girls north of Tweed use the word "foolish" too lavishly, even little girls err in this matter. The case of Tamsin is one in point.

Tamsin—the name is a form of Thompson, a surname given to her as one of her baptismal names, and the one by which she is called by her intimates—was walking one day with an older friend in the neighbourhood of the Scotch town of Peebles. Tamsin was hostess and was making conversation. This is the way she made it. One footing it behind her made a remark to his companion in which the word "valley" was heard with that marked distinctness that often invests one word in street-conversation. Said Tamsin to her companion—

"'Valley' is a pretty word, isn't it?"

"Very pretty," was answered.

Here a silence fell. Then Tamsin spoke again.

"So is 'primrose.'"

"Yes, 'primrose' is a pretty word, too," was the civil response.

Again a silence; then again a speech from Tamsin.

"'Greengage' is ugly."

Manifestly Tamsin had not a wide conversational range. Her older friend decided not to put her off this time with a mere assent.

"'Greengage' is not a pretty word," she said. "The French improve upon it."

"What is the French for greengage?" asked Tamsin.

"*Reine-claude*."

Tamsin eyed the sky. It was what the poet Browning has called "a scowl of cloud." Perhaps Tamsin connected the French name for greengage with rain-cloud. Be that as it may, she said severely—

"*Reine-claude*—that's foolish."

There are persons who can make head against a Scotch maiden in her censorious mood, and there are persons who cannot. Tamsin's older friend was of the persons who cannot. The walk was continued in silence.

Much might be written on the language of girls as shop-gazers. There are here given two authentic specimens of it. In the case of the first the girl addressed herself to a handsome collie, her companion. Patting him as she eyed the stock-in-trade of an *al fresco* salesman who was handling it after the manner of fishmongers, she said, "Compare your lot with the fishes, old fellow. No one ever pats *them* on the back till they're for sale."

In that was put in a nutshell the pitiful case of the fishes. That of the boas was put by another girl. This girl paused to look at furs exhibited in a shop-window. "It's so dreadfully sad," she said, "to think of furs, how they run about on boas and things only to be killed."

This was pity equivocally expressed, for furs do not run about on boas and things, and are not killed.

The language of shop-gazers of every age is to a large extent expletive, and any strangeness which may come to invest it has usually connection with pronunciation, as when a damsel of the London suburb of Lewisham apostrophised the contents of a milliner's shop-window in the words "I *si!*" a variant of "I say!" that makes the invocation sound very like "I sigh!" The damsel in question might comprehensibly have sighed for possession of one of the exhibits in that shop-window; the delightful fact is, however, that, while she herself was somewhat poorly clad, her face expressed no desire whatever to be possessed of the grandeur hung on pegs before her, but a perfect pleasure in the mere contemplation of it.

To the foreigner a perplexing feature of the language which he overhears in the streets of England is that in it many words are not used in the sense which primarily belongs to them. A native of Stockholm tells how he was pulled up short by hearing an Englishwoman discuss with another the merits of little swedes before a London greengrocer's stall. He discovered with no small surprise that these persons meant by little swedes not the youth of Sweden, but a vegetable bulb.

To the person who does not go about with stopped ears, a great part of the pleasure which appertains to a daily walk in one or other of the public parks of England's capital has connection with the scraps of conversation there overheard.

"D'you know"—the speaker was a youth who addressed himself to a maiden who sat with him on a bench in Kensington Gardens —"trees do not grow out of the earth, but into it."

"Who told you that?"

"Read it in a book. Seems a dismal sort of growth, doesn't it?"

"Awf'ly! Perhaps it isn't true."

Persons of that sort have a quite conventional standand of the dismal. Another sort, largely composed of girls, lacks the sense which is needed to bring appreciation to objects of transcendent grandeur and to find phrasing adapted to comment upon them. It was a girl of this latter class who startled a company assembled on a verandah which faced the west by saying, as she pointed at the sinking sun, which was a golden disc having about it a halo of white cloud, "I hate a sun that sets like a poached egg!"

That girl was guilty of three grave misdemeanours, for a celestial body should never be pointed at, it should never be visited with hate, and if likened to aught terrestrial the thing selected for that purpose should be something by much more exalted than a poached egg.

Very curious is the class of girls who having said the right thing as an afterthought substitute for it the wrong thing. Thus a girl, who was of a party grouped about the Albert Memorial in London, said to her companion, "It's very effective," adding, as she misconstrued the expression on the face of the person addressed, "I should say 'effectual.'"

That the language of girls in the streets is often grossly rude is unfortunately a fact with which everyone is familiar. There is a type of face that proclaims the owner of it a hoyden of the kind that elects to animadvert aloud on those she meets. The owner of this face is not necessarily bad-hearted, and it is not a bad plan to ask her help in a trifling matter, it may be only to direct one to the nearest post-office. The same plan often holds good in the case of a giggling girl. The present writer made these discoveries years ago, and thought they were peculiarly her own until she read a story which told that St. Gall, meeting a bear in a forest, asked him to bring him a bundle of wood and light a fire for him, which Bruin forthwith did, in the chronicler's cautious words, "to the best of his ability." No one should have much difficulty in believing that, for almost every bear one meets confirms the truth of it.

Cruelty to fellow-wayfarers is so dire a crime that the following true story is set down with a poignant regret. A young coloured man some little time ago asked a civil question of three young English girls who were going the same road with him. The trio paused with brows raised superciliously, then, vouchsafing the dark-skinned questioner no answer, broke into a tumultuous laugh. This was surely grievous conduct in the daughters of a country that sets so high a value on the part taken by it in the emancipation of the negroes.

It is not to be expected that the maiden self-styled 'Arriet, or, it may be, Sarah Rann, shall behave in the streets with the decorousness of maidens who are of the caste of Vere de Vere. A flower-seller's calling might seem to be one calculated to bring out all that was best in the girl following it, but a flower-seller is often a person who has what Shakespeare has made a sailor call "a tongue with a tang." On a day of February of last year a lady of Kensington found herself in the High Street of that London suburb. Women and men at the kerbstone were selling what they most of them called "lovely lilies," while some more accurate said, "lilies of the valley," not as there written, but as here written, "lilies OF the valley!" Others were selling mimosa, and yet others ivy. Few of them clamoured for custom, but some did, among them a girl who pressed her flowers on passers-by with the entreaty, "Don't be 'ard, sir!"—"Don't be 'ard, lady!"

So far, fair. But there were persons who had not the wherewithal to demonstrate that they were not hard. Of them was the gentlewoman referred to above. She passed the flower-seller, but not without bestowing a glance on her wares which said, "They are beautiful, and they are cheap, but I cannot make a purchase." The girl, who was so poor a physiognomist that she only read in the lady's face that she was not a purchaser-to-be, followed her with the remark made pertly—

"'Ave another stare, ma'am. No charge for stares!"

Let anyone compare a damsel of that sort with Nydia of *The Last Days of Pompeii*.

To pass a cluster of street-girls is often an action fraught with embarrassment in view of the markedly personal note which characterises their speech. Thus it is startling to hear oneself made the subject of the invocation, "Oh, my! look at 'ER!" the speech having reference to an article of apparel known to be pretty, and believed to be not gaudy. Equally surprising is it for a person, quiet of garb and gait, to provoke the question, "Ain't she uncommon?" from a trio of girls who, in dress and in demeanour, touch the outer limit of the peculiar, for they wear with linen working-aprons hats with a Tudor wealth of feathers, and, narrow as the footpath is, walk it three abreast, with arms encircling each other's waists and skirts that trail behind.

Sometimes the language of 'Arriet needs explanation. Even 'Arry does not always take her meaning at once.

"'Ow do you like this towk?" he was asked of her one day of last spring.

"'Ow much?" said he. It was his way of saying, "What do you mean by 'towk?'"

The girl saluted in the manner of Tommy Atkins. The gesture made evident that she referred to her headgear, which was what in Mayfair is called a *toque*. Her companion, nothing if not gallant, agreeably intimated that it pleased him only by one degree less than the young lady which it adorned.

In a paper on the language of girls in the streets the language of the facetious girl must not be ignored. This is she who threads her way through the traffic with the speech, "Don't let us run over the horses," and is the girl who at sight of a dappled horse says to her companion, "There's a piebald, dear. Don't think of its tail, and wish yourself something."

He who is interested in bulls may collect a store of them if, like the Prince of Denmark, he carry tablets about with him, and jot down all he hears in the streets. Said a maiden at a London house-front one day of last mid-August, "Ten to one they're not at home, or if they are, they're out."

The assumption thus paradoxically expressed was that the inmates of the said house were travelling abroad, or if still in London, were either actually out or were denying themselves to visitors. Sometimes the bull is of a less intricate character. "The awful thing about influenza," so ran the comment of a girl who was trundling a victim of the disease in a bath-chair through a London park, "is that one is always ill for months after one's well. I was so myself."

That girl was not tripped up for her phrasing, but once in a while a girl is. The following duologue (the speakers were a girl and a youth) took place in a public promenade a few weeks ago.

*She*: "I asked your brother to come in a letter."

*He*: "Perhaps if you had proposed a more usual mode of travelling——"

*She*: "Don't be silly, Herbert."

In that case the girl secured the last word. "Herbert" collapsed.

(*To be continued.*)

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# MORE ABOUT PEGGY.

By Mrs. GEORGE DE HORNE VAIZEY.

## CHAPTER XVII.

A WEEK after her return to Yew Hedge, Peggy was on her way to tea at the vicarage, when she was joined by Rob Darcy, who jumped over a wall at her approach and exhibited an extraordinary amount of surprise at seeing her, considering how long he had been on the outlook for just such an event.

"Where are you going, my pretty maid?" he demanded, and

"I'm going to the vicarage, sir," she said promptly with an accompaniment of old-fashioned curtsey which brought the twinkle into Rob's eyes.

However solemn he might be, he never could resist a smile at Peggy's saucy ways, and to-day indeed he did not appear solemn at all, but unusually beaming and radiant.

"Then I'll go with you, my pretty maid, for I've been asked too, in a breathless note from Mellicent with neither beginning nor ending, nor comma nor full stop. If anyone else had written in such a state of agitation I should have thought something thrilling had occurred, but Mellicent is guaranteed to go off her head on the slightest provocation. Probably it is nothing more exciting than a cake or a tea-cloth which is to be used for the first time. She said that I *must* come, whatever happened, for it was dreadfully important, but I have really not thought much about what it could be, for I am accustomed to receiving violent summonses which mean nothing at all. The first time I ran nearly half the way and arrived with a purple face and such a stitch in my side as nearly finished my mortal career, and she said, 'Oh, have you come? I didn't think you would. I want to show you my new hat!' Another time she was out, and had forgotten that she had asked me at all; but as she has asked you too, that will hardly be the case to-day."

Peggy threw back her head and regarded Rob with a curious scrutiny. "Methinks I perceive an air of unusual festivity in my venerable friend. It takes a great deal to rouse him to any sign of

# THE LANGUAGE OF GIRLS.

By ELSA D'ESTERRE-KEELING, Author of "Old Maids and Young."

## PART IV.

### ABROAD.

SOME sixty years ago, a famous Frenchman wrote, "*On peut ne pas aimer les Anglais; c'est impossible de ne pas les estimer:*" —*anglicè*, "One may not love the English; it is impossible not to esteem them."

The remark is here translated, because in the misrendering of an English girl lying beside the writer of this paper, the Frenchman is represented as saying: "One cannot love the English," as though he had said *on ne peut pas*, instead of *on peut ne pas*.

The dictum is interesting as illustrating one of the niceties of the French language, while it is perhaps still more interesting as showing what was some sixty years ago the feeling of so representative a Frenchman as was Lamartine in regard to the English, a term here used as it is used in France to denote all those who speak the English language.

With the lapse of time that feeling, it would seem, has been greatly modified, with the result that to-day some of the most representative men and women of France refuse alike their love and their respect to the English, in great part known to them only as trippers of the class which at its best does not know the English for *honnêteté*.

That word, which looks as if it meant merely honesty, so far from meaning merely that means honesty plus politeness, an exquisite French combination of rectitude and grace, to comprehend which, still more to illustrate which, is not given to the ordinary tripper.

Hence a case like this, which is recounted as set forth by the English girl who in it acted the part of the ordinary tripper.

This girl, on being asked with whose permission she treated a private property as a public thoroughfare, replied—

"I took French leave."

"Pardon me, mademoiselle," said coldly the lady in possession, "you took English leave."

The tripper laughed, but not so gaily as to hide that she experienced a feeling which was not unqualified mirth. The Frenchwoman relented.

"I believe you are a nice child," she said—the tripper was twenty and odd years old, but the Frenchwoman was thrice that age. "Take French leave, and—proceed."

The tripper "proceeded" in a state which she describes as "jolly ashamed."

A time was when an English humorist wrote, "The French have a gay way of treating everything that is great." It appears to be in imitation of this proceeding that a certain type of English person of to-day treats with levity everything that is serious, whence such paradoxical phrasing as "jolly ashamed." Unhappily the German spoke truth who declared that an imitator always rushes from the great to the enormous, from the strange to the impossible, and his compatriot, Kant, was equally right in maintaining that the English are bad at imitation, a censure which is perhaps a compliment in disguise. Could English girls be but brought to believe this, they would on the one part treat things serious seriously, and on the other part they would not—at all events in France—interlard their English with French words pronounced, they quite mistakenly imagine, in a French manner. The situations arising from that proceeding are sometimes of a comical nature. Thus a Frenchwoman not very long ago asked an English girl—

"What is the English for '*sang-froid?*'

"'*Sang-froid*' is English," was the reply.

"The thing is," replied the Frenchwoman, "but the word—even as you pronounce it—is surely French."

"Oh, well, yes, it's French—too," was the answer of John Bull's daughter.

The Frenchwoman woke echo with her laughter.

The young English-speaking person who refuses admiration to be it what it may in foreign lands is alike wonderful, whether her home be south or north of Tweed. It was the English capital in the case of the girl who termed Cannes "a villary sort of place," and it was the Scotch capital in the case of her who surprised a Genevan assembly who were discussing Brittany by saying, "What I, for my part, miss in Brittany are grand lofty mountains like the Grampians."

To speak within sight of the Alps, where they tower to the height of Mont Blanc, of the Grampians as "grand lofty mountains" is to go out of one's way to rouse contumelious laughter, and such was the laughter aroused by the speech of the Scottish maiden.

There is a type of German woman so common in these islands that it is matter for comprehensible surprise to find that she does not compose a major portion of the population of the home-country. None the less is it regrettable that an English girl temporarily residing in the Prussian capital should have allowed herself to voice openly her glee hereat in the words, "It has been such a pleasant surprise to me to find that all German women don't wear cotton gloves and cringe."

The kind of German woman to whom reference was thus made is somewhat unduly humble. As for the kind of gloves for which she shows a preference, it is possible to attach too much importance to a detail in dress.

In the same way it is possible to draw conclusions too sweeping from details in conduct. "She never cuts twine, and before lending you a book she covers it with newspaper," so an English girl said of a German girl to the present writer, adding, "Sort of girl one really can't know."

So greatly have ideas on mercy among the wise been modified since a great man of ancient Greece averred that the smallest misdemeanour no less than the greatest merited death that the odds are that there will not be found twenty thoughtful English persons to uphold this countrywoman of theirs in her implied assertion that a girl of another nationality, with necessarily another code of the fit, should—nay, must—be placed outside the pale of recognition as practising economy which takes the form of unknotting twine, and caution which takes the form of covering a book with newspaper.

The Germans, with whom it is a custom to regulate social matters by statute, have among their police injunctions one which dates back to the year 1612, and which will be found in the statute books of Frankfort-on-the-Maine. By it there is enjoined upon the residents in that town that no nation shall ridicule another on account of its language, costume or customs, the nation that infringes this law to be liable to punishment in the person of its discreditable representative.

A very good statute, that.

It may be conceded here that for one English girl who openly casts ridicule on German customs with the desire to be heard by Germans, nine such girls express themselves in contempt of the country in which they are for the time being sojourners in ignorance of the fact that the bell-like quality of their voices and the wide knowledge of their language renders their remarks to each other liable to be heard and understood by other persons near (and sometimes far). The pain thus inflicted is especially keen when the subject of discussion is the kindly if not always successful effort made by Germans to give to English visitors to their country viands dressed in the English manner.

"What did she give you in the way of food?" was asked of a London girl, the question having reference to a lady of Munich named by name some moments before.

"Oh, tepid beefsteaks blue in the middle, by way of being English," was the answer, addressed to the questioner, but heard by full a dozen other persons, among them a kinsman of the lady who had so lamentably failed in catering for the young Englishwoman.

It is not that English girls are always—or even often—of set purpose unamiable in their language when abroad. The following colloquy appears to me to illustrate that fact. The speakers were a German University professor and the daughter of an English University professor.

"How do you like Germany?" asked the German.

"Oh, very much! I love your quiet tinpot ways."

"'Tinpot ways?'" repeated the German scholar, and his face said further, "Interpret."

She interpreted and added—

"I haven't offended you, have I?"

"No, you have only surprised me," replied the German professor, who was fairly gasping.

Yet Germans are not easily surprised by English persons; still less often are they moved to loud laughter by them. That, however, sometimes happens, and in the deeming of this writer is a thing not to be censured in the case of a conversation taking such a turn as did the one given below.

"I so dislike German music."

The speaker was an English girl, who addressed a German officer.

"You prefer Italian?"

"No."

"Scandinavian?"

"No."

"French?"

"No."

The German here rightly concluded that the music preferred by his companion was English, and forthwith illustrated the truth of Kingsley's dictum that no one on earth can laugh like a German.

As often as not the person scandalised by the young Englishwoman abroad is a fellow Englishwoman. This happened last year in connection with an episode on a Rhine steamer, which recalls a story told by a fine English poet as illustrating the misapprehension of epithets.

"When I first looked on the Falls of the Clyde," says Coleridge, "I was unable to find a word to express my feelings. At last a man, a stranger to me, who arrived at the same time, said, 'How majestic!'

"It was the precise term, and I turned round, and was saying, 'Thank you, sir! that is the

exact word for it," when he added *eodem flatu*, 'Yes! how very pretty!'"

To supplement "majestic" with "very pretty" is to show a want of intellectual balance, but the admirer of the Clyde committed himself less grievously than did the admirer of the Rhine, who, in the person of one Ethel nearing that age which in law is recognised as adult, met the speech, "Isn't the river here lovely?" addressed to her under the shadow of the Lorelei, with an answer in the affirmative supplemented by a word which, as Mrs. Grundy reports the matter, "sounded like 'rippling.'" That word was one quite as little adapted to carry on the idea underlying "lovely," as "very pretty" is adapted to carry on that underlying "majestic."

It was a grievance with the Ethel who thus murdered English that few of her German intimates could pronounce her Christian name. These persons called her by a sibilant variation of Ethel which made the word strongly resemble the German name for long-ears (*Esel*). The lamentable truth is that there are full as many Germans who cannot pronounce the name Ethel as there are English persons who cannot pronounce the name Goethe. The Ethel under consideration here was herself one of the latter class, the name of the author of *Faust* as pronounced by her being Gerty. It is, however, only fair to her to say that, while she thus pronounced the name Goethe, she would not have thus written it. Also she would not have spelt with a final *r* the name which she pronounced *Heiner*, a pronunciation which would have fired the satirist in the poet who wrote, in his own characteristic vein of humour—

"The town of Düsseldorf is very beautiful, and, when afar from it one thinks of it and happens to have been born there, strange thoughts come crowding. I was born there, and my impulse this moment is to return home. And when I say home, I mean the Volkerstrasse and the house in which I was born. This house will once be very remarkable, and I have sent word to the old woman who is owner of it not to sell it for her life. For the whole edifice she would now get scarce as much as alone the donations will mount to which in time to come the high-born, green-veiled Englishwoman will give to the maid-servant who will show her the room in which I saw the light of day."

This conception of a daughter of Albion in no way harmonises with the pronunciation of the name Heine as *Heiner*.

While it cannot unhappily be denied that the young Englishwoman abroad expresses herself more often in depreciation of others than of herself, they wrong her who assert that she is self-endeared to the point of seeing no fault in herself.

"You speak German admirably," was said not long ago to an English girl who spoke German with rare ease and fluency.

"You are quite mistaken," she answered. "The actual fact is that after years spent in Germany I cannot say 'Ach!' still less 'Ach so!' 'Ja so!' as Germans do. We're fools at language."

It was a pity perhaps that she expressed herself so forcibly, and that she used the plural pronoun; still here was a distinctly self-depreciating speech made by an English girl.

The young Englishwoman in Italy still arrests attention as she did in the days when a peasant pulled up short, exclaiming, "Ah, poverina, n' ha che una gamba!" ("Ah, poor young lady, she has but one leg!"), the exclamation being called forth by the sight of a young Englishwoman riding on a side-saddle. That young Englishwoman belonged to the days of green veils, when Englishwomen would appear to have won all hearts abroad, as still some do, while other some do not. Of these other some is a young Englishwoman who exclaimed one day of last summer, as she stood, not alone, viewing an Italian landscape of extraordinary beauty set against a sky of the blue colour that among English painters Turner alone could approximately picture—

"All It'ly somehow looks to me exactly like a coloured print."

A thing like that would be better left unsaid, and strictures passed on Italy by persons who call that country "It'ly" would also be as well withheld.

So far there has been nothing said of the English girl who overrates foreign products. She is rare, but she exists. As one of a party discussing Tennyson at a house in Florence, she said, "After all, he is not to be compared with Dante, or even Shakespeare."

It is fitting that Dante should be honoured, and especially that he should be honoured in Florence, but it is not fitting thus to marshal him and Shakespeare.

The type of English girl who sees in all Italy a coloured print might be expected to bring relish to the more sober beauties of a Dutch landscape. The fact is, however, that, essentially captious as she is, Holland no more than Italy escapes her satire. Hence such a speech as this, made in reference to canals, a large number of which are certainly green-mantled—

"The whole of Holland is swimming in mint-sauce."

A speech like that gives denial to the assertion of a learned man, "It is quite easy not to say clever things." The girl who said that clever thing, and moreover said it in a company largely composed of Hollanders, would have found it very hard to refrain from saying it.

Repartee being a form of wit in which the Dutch do not excel, the young Englishwoman seldom comes off worst in her verbal encounters with the natives of Holland. Once in a while, however, she is nonplussed. This was the case in a conversation which took place between a London girl and a denizen of the Hague. These persons had been discussing the difference between the English and Dutch social code; the latter taking its character from the fact that the national ideal of the Dutch is, as has been pointed out, the "makklyk," to wit, the comfortable.

"Personally, I don't like your customs," said the English girl with some excess of candour, "and, anyway, in England they wouldn't do."

"Do what?" said the Dutchman.

An Englishman anear laughed, and the English girl collapsed.

Here it may be conceded that there are few things more difficult to the average native of these islands than to meet the incessant demand of foreigners for paraphrases of idiomatic English, while it is well-nigh impossible to the English-speaking person who hails from one or other of the Celtic border countries to preserve gravity in face of the ludicrous blunders made by foreigners whose knowledge of English is imperfect. Thus a Dutch painter was some two years ago asked by an Irish admirer of a picture by him in which a solemn subject was treated in a large and impressive manner—

"What are you painting this for?"

"A public house," was the answer of the man, who meant a public building.

The Irishwoman much offended him by bursting into laughter.

In that the mistake was merely diverting, but in some cases the mistakes of foreigners are such as to impart to their speech that charm to which a Latin writer has given the name of *curiosa felicitas*. Thus, what could be more happy than the phrasing of the following—a young Frenchwoman spoke—"A shop-window attacked my attention"; what could please more than a compliment conveyed in the words—again a Frenchwoman spoke—"The dispositions of your rooms are charming"; or how could a Swedish lady whose bonnet was chosen with nice regard to the colour of her hair be more delightfully described than she was by another Swedish lady in the words, "A fair lady in a fair bonnet"? To say, as does the average English girl, that such phrasing is "bad English" is to be guilty of what the renowned Mrs. Malaprop termed "a derangement of epitaphs," for the epithet "bad" is in no wise applicable to English at once so witty and so pretty.

Peculiar to no country, and certainly not peculiar to England, is the type of girl whose kindly desire is to help foreigners in speaking her language, but who, in acting as instructor, herself employs questionable phrasing. To such a girl was said by a German, the remark having reference to a new writer—

"He is a start-up."

"You should say upstart," came the correction.

"Shakespeare says start-up," demurred the German.

"Shakespeare's English is all wrong," said the countrywoman of Shakespeare.

"Brrrrrr!" said the German.

That use of "all wrong" was ill-advised. Ill-advised, too, was the use on the part of another English girl of the word "instead." Said this English girl to a Frenchwoman with whom she resided in Paris—

"We set out for church to attend a service, but were too late, so went to the *Bon Marché* instead."

"'Instead'?" repeated the Frenchwoman on a note of expostulation.

"You are just like my father," was answered. "He pulls me up all the time like that."

"And you do not mend?"

"Oh, yes, I—mend."

The word was repeated dubiously, the speaker not primarily attaching to it a figurative meaning, but rather one which called to mind the plying of a needle.

The Frenchwoman smiled. It is rarely that a Frenchwoman does not smile in conversation with a young Englishwoman. At times she is inwardly smiling when outwardly she is grave. This was the case with the Frenchwoman between whom and an English girl there took place the following dialogue, the Frenchwoman speaking first—

"I hope you can come to my reception, mademoiselle."

"I don't think I can, thank you."

"Don't you? Well, in case you find you can come——"

"Ah, I'm afraid you mustn't hope for that."

"'Hope' for that." These words it was that caused the Frenchwoman to be inwardly smiling while outwardly she was grave.

One likes to think that sometimes while others are laughing at England's daughters abroad, they are no less laughing at themselves, in that matter like one Edith who wailed at a Continental *table d'hôte*—

"The sugar is not sweet here, the salt is not salt, the——"

Here there was a pause.

"Go on," said a native of the country encouragingly.

"No, I won't," said the English girl, qualifying this speech by adding, "It's not that I can't think of other things."

"Of course not," was conceded. "Even I can think of some. The water is not wet."

"It is not as wet as in England," said the English girl; but they who assert that she said this gravely slander her. She said it with a laugh that would not be kept back.

(*To be continued.*)

# THE LANGUAGE OF GIRLS.

By ELSA D'ESTERRE-KEELING, Author of "Old Maids and Young."

## PART V.

### IN FRIENDSHIP.

THE attempts made to define friendship, and more particularly to set forth the difference between it and love, have been innumerable. According to one view, love is a hot spring and friendship is a cool spring. They who adopt this view are willing that friendship should score over love, for, while there is something to be said for both hot and cool springs, taking life all round, cool springs are indubitably more beneficial.

Yet another vexed question is that which concerns the difference between friendship as understood by men and as understood by women. Much has been written on that subject, the poet Coleridge among others having been quoted as expressing himself in regard to it. As what Coleridge is represented as having said of women applies rather to girls than to them, it is reproduced here :—

"A woman's friendship borders more closely on love than a man's. Men affect each other in the reflection of noble or friendly acts, whilst women ask fewer proofs and more signs and expressions of attachment."

"That remark," says the editor of Coleridge's *Table Talk*, "I find written by Mr. Coleridge on a page dyed red with an imprisoned rose-leaf."

He does not add that the writer of the remark acknowledged the source whence he had taken it, and which would appear to have been a German one, for it bears an amazing resemblance to what follows, being a passage which I take from the writings of the renowned German humorist, Jean Paul Richter :—

"Friendship among women is indeed rarer than among men, but, on the other hand, is more delicate. Ours does not border so closely upon love—inasmuch as we only affect each other in the reflection of noble acts—as does that of women, a woman demanding from her woman-friend (as from her lover) less the proofs than the expressions of attachment."

Few women, and fewer girls, will quarrel with that view of the matter, though many women and most girls have some pet theory of their own in regard to friendship. According to one girl who has communicated her views on the subject to the present writer, it has nothing to do with love, but is liking screwed to the sticking-place, the thing liked being a person in his or her totality, for reasons which will no more be set forth than would be the reasons for which Dr. Fell was—in his totality—disliked.

In connection with the statement made by Jean Paul Richter that men, unlike women, bring discrimination to bear upon affection, it is interesting to note that the author of the original of the renowned quatrain concerning Dr. Fell was not a woman, but a man. True, he was a Roman. If he had been a German, he might have been able to render account unto himself concerning his misliking, as did the German philosopher who wrote, "I have heard of nothing but what is good of such an one, yet I cannot affect him heartily, that is, I have no dependence on his taste, because he suffers two ornaments of dimensions exactly similar to hang together, the one two inches higher than the other."

That extraordinary passage from the writings of Lavater finds a pendant in a statement made recently by an English girl that she could not be "friends" with a person who wore a picture-hat on a bicycle. She herself wears a sailor-hat when using that means of locomotion, and there is much to be said in favour of her choice of head-gear, but she is lamentably at fault in drawing conclusions so sinister from an error of taste in dress as, apart from all other considerations, to withhold her friendship from the person guilty of it.

Here then may fairly be asked the question, Is friendship due to all? There are persons who hold that it is, and there are others who hold that it is not. Of these last was one who wrote a hundred years ago—

"Be not the fourth friend of him who has had three friends and lost them."

That counsel calls to mind the gentle dictum, "Circumstances alter cases."

"I've never kept a friend before," said a girl to a woman ten years ago.

"How many have you lost?" the woman asked.

"Millions!" was the startling answer.

Yet, after the lapse of a decade, that girl has kept that woman her friend.

She who confesses to having lost friends by millions, even supposing that phrase to stand for a number by very much less than that to which it is made to correspond by strict arithmeticians, has made the initial mistake of conferring the title of friend upon too many persons.

The Greek word for friendship, according to a learned English writer, is used of any temporary connection with the idea of affectionateness, is used by a master to his slave, by a guest to a fellow-guest, and as a general address on meeting.

The Englishman who sets that forth appears to be in ignorance of the fact that the word "friend" is used with precisely the same laxity in contemporary English. "By a friend she means anyone to whom she writes a letter," said some little time ago a Scotch girl of an English girl, bringing—one doubts not unconsciously—against a daughter of England the charge which years ago De Quincey brought against the men of Holland in writing, "By a friend a Dutchman means a correspondent."

Another Scotch girl, in the hearing of the present writer, pulled up a girl-companion for saying, "The room was full of my friends."

"You mean that it was full of afternoon callers," she said.

That was, as a matter of fact, what had been meant. The correction was made in the spirit of the sage of Walden who wrote, "I had three rooms in my house, one for solitude, two for friendship, and three for society."

Where more than two are seated there may indeed be an assemblage of friends, but in the case of a roomful the word "friends" is—the strong probability is—misapplied.

By many people the mere circumstance of regarding a person with goodwill is interpreted as friendship, but this is a wrong view of the matter, for a stranger may be regarded with goodwill, yet by reason of being a stranger he is not a friend. This truth is recognised in the East, whence the Persian proverb, "It is better to be in chains with friends than in a garden with strangers."

So little is it generally considered that the opposite to friend is stranger, the general opinion being that he who is not friend is foe, that a party of grown-up girls recently laughed aloud at the expense of a six-year-old boy who, being asked what a friend was, replied readily, "Somebody I know." This boy had named correctly the first essential in a friend.

A paper on the language of girls in friendship must contain mention of a type of girl who puts, with an embarrassing insistence, the question, "Will you be my friend?"

This girl is not always mad, though in one case known to this writer she suffers from dementia, and persons to whom she puts this question are advised by her family to answer unhesitatingly, "Yes," a prompt affirmative reply satisfying this lunatic, whereas the display of the faintest reluctance to contract at first speech of her a friendship with her entails distressing consequences.

Yet another type of girl not always mad is she who asks of the person who has aroused affection in her and in whom she would inspire affection to tell her exactly what the feeling is that she has inspired. As Bacon has pitilessly set a certain matter forth, "It is a true saying that love is ever rewarded either with the reciproque or with a secret and inward contempt."

Now how inform this girl that her affection is rewarded with a secret and inward contempt, as yet affection is in all those cases in which it is not rewarded with "the reciproque"?

Here a word on the interchange of confidences in friendship. There is such a thing—it is, indeed, very common—as a too-muchness in this matter. The person to whom everything may be told will, it has been wisely pointed out, see everything and will betray nothing. The danger attaching to telling everything to persons indiscriminately is that all those whose sight affection has not sharpened to the extent described are unworthy of full confidence.

What by the old is termed "young" friendship is a thing largely believed to be predestined to an early death. But young friendship sometimes attains to mature age. Of two girls of whom a third girl twenty years ago said, "They are like two eyes in one head—one never moves without the other," their contemporaries of to-day complain that they are still inseparable.

What may be called falling-in-friendship-at-first-sight is quite as common among girls of to-day as is falling-in-love-at-first-sight. The person fallen-in-friendship-with is less

often another girl than she is a woman, and the declaration of friendship made is not seldom of a character calculated to inspire the highest surprise. This was the case when, some seven months ago, a girl intimated to a woman with whom she had an acquaintance of some quarter-hour's duration—

"I have no friend in this gathering; you, at least, have one."

"Have I?" said the woman, and added, "Who is he?"

"He!" The word was echoed with a direful sneer; and the girl continued—"Your friend is—me."

The woman was not a stickler for grammar, and said, with a smile—

"You must take my friendship in return for yours."

Thus did that girl on a sudden find herself wi h a friend in that gathering.

That friendship should deal more in acts than in words is so generally allowed that it seems unnecessary in this place to deprecate that fervour which causes the language of girls in friendship to hold out a promise which is not always redeemed. To anticipate defection is fairly to merit reproach. Said a woman to a girl once, in the hearing of this writer—

"No protestations! Remember Peter's, 'Though I should die with Thee!'"

"Jesus loved Peter—even afterwards," was the reproachful answer.

On the other hand, to be very seriously deprecated is the traffic among girls of hectic phrases of the kind of "be a dear," "be an angel," used as prelude to the most banal request. The lack of mental balance which a partiality for such language betrays finds expression in many other ways, some of which are very amusing to the one who looks on and listens. Thus a girl at a London "At Home" of last season saluted at one and the same time two friends, giving to each a hand, the action in the case of the one being accompanied by the speech, "Darling, I thought you were never coming!" and in the case of the other by the speech, "Hullo, Tommy!" Both of the persons addressed were girls, and both were from that moment forth ignored.

The view of friendship according to which it is love rendered abiding is not likely to commend itself to those persons who, being momentarily transported by love, conceive themselves to have contracted friendship.

"I was her friend once, but I had to give her up," said to a woman recently a girl of another girl.

"Not so," replied the woman. "Say, rather, in that case that you were her lover. Lovers sometimes go back on love, but no friend ever goes back on friendship."

The girl reddened.

"Are friendship and love quite different things, do you think?" she asked.

"No," was answered. "Love has its zones; in the temperate zone it is friendship."

"I hate that word 'temperate'!" exclaimed the girl.

"That is because you are English," said the woman, who was French, and she added in the language of her country, "*Qui trop embrasse, mal étreint.*"

"I expect your view of friendship," said the girl, "is that it is——"

She paused. The Frenchwoman signified to her to go on.

"Love settling down," she said.

The Frenchwoman laughed, but did not say whether or not this was her view of friendship.

There is a well-known French proverb which avers "*Les petits cadeaux entretiennent l'amitié*" (little gifts keep friendship alive) and which is here quoted as meeting the objection raised by an English girl who says, "Friends' birthdays are a nuisance."

The friendship which is for every day and not for state occasions is not unknown among girls. It is a friendship similar to that which is recorded in one of the many fables of the lion and the ass. The lion, according to this fable, once took the ass out on business with him.

"Good day to you, friend," said another ass, addressing Long-Ears.

"Impudence!" was the furious answer.

"Hee-haw! What have I done? Are you less my friend because you are walking with a lion?" said slighted Long-Ears.

This case finds a parallel in that of two girls, both the daughters of a little Claus, between whom there exists a friendship that has heretofore not been annulled by the fact that when the daughter of the one little Claus in the company of a daughter of a big Claus meets the daughter of the other little Claus, she substitutes for her usual salutation, which is a kiss, a cut. It is lamentable to have to add that the slighted daughter of little Claus suffers without protest, in that matter showing less spirit than slighted Long-Ears.

She has even confessed to the daughter of a third little Claus, who upbraids her with her servility, that she likes "that sort of girl," being the sort that upon occasion substitutes a cut for a kiss. The person who concludes from that that perhaps, after all, eels do like being skinned alive, and like the persons who subject them to that process, makes the mistake of attributing to the brute creature morbid tendencies peculiar to human beings.

It is a moot question among girls, as among others, to what length candour may be carried in the language of friends. "Don't flatter yourself," says Oliver Wendell Holmes, "that friendship authorises you to say disagreeable things to your intimates." Unfortunately a great many people have either not read that counsel, or, having read it, do not follow it. Thus a girl said the other day to another girl, her intimate, "As we're on the subject of unpleasant truths, I don't mind telling you that I think you yourself are as snobbish as anyone I know."

The phrasing of that speech makes it seem probable that it was made in retaliation. For the rest, it may be assumed as positive that while the speaker, as she stated her case, did not mind telling the thing in question, the person to whom she told it did greatly mind hearing it. In fact, if at all possible, it seems in the highest degree desirable that remarks necessitating the prelude, "As we're on the subject of unpleasant truths," should be omitted from conversations among friends.

Dr. Johnson, who is justly often cited as a man who was at one and the same time a good friend and a valiant champion of the truth, has set it forth as his opinion that "friendship has no tendency to secure veracity." That is good Johnsonese as regards the wording of it, but as for the sentiment of it, it has a tang that makes it not at all relishable. The probability is that the great doctor wrote those words in a moody morning-hour contrasting with that happy night-time that found him—a glad and merry old man—laughing aloud in Fleet Street.

That friendship could exist without trust was unknown to the writer of this paper until assurance given her by a company of damsels that "lots of girls are friends who don't trust one another the millionth part of an inch."

"Not that one carries suspicion about with one all the time," explained one of these damsels, "but—well, one isn't crushed to powder by the discovery that a girl isn't what she tried to pass herself off as when you started being friends."

"Of course you then break off," said the astonished woman to whom this information was given.

"Dear, no! A friendship is not an engagement, and even an engagement——"

There was not there made a pause, but, as what followed concerned a trothplight and this paper concerns friendship, what followed is here omitted.

"So you go on as before," continued the woman, "and which feels most ashamed, the one who has justly mistrusted her friend, or the friend who has justly been mistrusted?"

"Why, of course the one who has been rightly mistrusted. The other has nothing to be ashamed about."

The woman quoted La Rochefoucauld. The passage she quoted was this—

"*Il est plus honteux de se défier de ses amis que d'en être trompé.*"

A silence fell on the damsels; then one of them said with a face that gave light—

"That's awf'ly fine!"

She was the girl who had herself a few moments before voiced the common if not very fine view of the relative blame attaching to the mistruster and the mistrusted. In the twinkling of an eye she had come to see that La Rochefoucauld's was the right view and hers the wrong, and by reason of a delightful candour natural to her, she straightway notified her change of front.

Of the excellence of old friends over new ones much has been said and written. The following rhyme was the production of a girl:—

"Old friends and old wines are best:
Also crustiest."

The jocose person has from of old had much to say on the language of girls in letters to their friends, and it sometimes undoubtedly lends itself to ridicule. There are girls living who adhere fondly to the letter-formulæ, "I sit down to write," "I take up my pen." A letter that opens thus holds out no great promise, yet it may be very brilliant, as were the letters of Lord Byron, who much affected a preparatory, "I take up my pen," "I sit down to write."

In the matter of letter-endings English girls are singularly conventional; less so are foreign girls, from letters written by whom are taken what follows. A long epistle over which the writer of it, a Swiss girl, comes to nod, is brought to a close with the words, "Excuse writting, I am slepping." A German girl to whom the word "truly" is invested with the beautiful significance that, apart from conventional usage, belongs to it, ends a letter that is athrob with love, with the words—

"*Ich bin wie immer,*
"Yours truly."

A daughter of Paris signs herself "Yours affectiously," using English which would not have been regarded as foreign in the days of Sir Francis Bacon.

The letter that comes from America is often racy of the soil, as when a girl intimates from New York, "It is most genuine of you to take all this trouble."

The dear vulgarian of Great Britain and Ireland still clings to the phrase, "Drop me a line, dear," in writing to her friends.

The haste that results in a bull results in this—

"Nothing but absence, darling, could have kept me away from you."

The writer of that had intended to write, "absence from town."

The exclamatory vein is much indulged in. Thus a letter of thanks in the possession of the present writer runs, "How awfully lovely of you!" That is the letter in its entirety. Another in its entirety runs, "Muchly obliged!" a combination of brevity and levity which it would seem impossible to surpass. Howbeit it is surpassed by the writer of a letter which—in its entirety—runs, "Ta!"

That the language of friendship may—nay, should—be informal nobody will deny, but some may fairly question whether informality may be carried to the point of substituting for a letter of thanks the one word, "Ta!"

(*To be concluded.*)

the poor miserable child play a magnificent game like that. What is to become of him?"

Dr. Gray's voice was now heard calling Ellen. He was not calling gently. She flung down her work and ran to him, casting a look at Roddie that promised vengeance. His mischief would be visited upon her, as she knew.

"Who's been in here?" shouted her father. "What is the meaning of this? I declare I can't leave my house a moment without having my things disturbed. There's not a corner safe from some meddler's fingers. I won't have my things in here touched. Who has been making this mess? What is the meaning of all these shavings?"

"It was Roddie," answered Ellen. "He's more tiresome than a dozen other children. I can't leave him a single moment but he's in mischief. He's got no notion of obedience, he's never still an instant, and I don't see in the least why we should have him here; it's perfectly ridiculous."

"It's enough that I consider it unsafe for him to be at home."

"No, father, it isn't enough—you have none of the bother, and all children have to get fever some time. Why couldn't you let him have it at home? It wouldn't matter if he did."

"That shows how little you know about it," returned the doctor. "I don't believe Roddie would get over an attack. Send him in to me—he shall smart for this. And, upon my word, I do believe he's been meddling with my instruments! Send him to me—send him to me at once."

Ellen stalked out of the surgery and into the dining-room, rejoicing to think that Roddie would for once receive his deserts, especially when she discovered that he had been amusing himself by sticking up a row of scissors in the table—through cloth and all—while she had been interviewing her father.

Having driven him in to his punishment, she angrily tore up the row of scissors.

"Oh, don't disturb the poor little beggar's game!" said Paul. "He's going to shoot peas through the holes as soon as his thrashing's over. He told me he was thinking hard of this new game, so that he wouldn't think so much about what was going to happen to him."

"Do try to be a little sensible," returned Ellen.

Meantime Roddie faced his grandfather with a show of courage. He looked up into the stormy face through round blue eyes that had not lost their baby look in spite of the six years in which they had been open to the world. The doctor glared back into the baby eyes.

"You've been meddling with my instruments. Tell me at once why you did it."

"I thought they would just do to make my boat. That's why, grandpapa."

"Indeed! And were you aware that I had forbidden you to touch one of them or come in here?"

"Yes, grandpapa."

"You were—and you dare to confess it!"

"You asked me," burst out Roddie.

"I did," said the doctor ironically. "I actually ventured to ask you! And pray, what would your father do to you if you disobeyed him?"

"I don't know," faltered Roddie.

"Neither do I," returned his grandfather. "Probably he'd pat you, and pet you—but that's not my way."

"I wouldn't unobey father," whimpered Roddie. "Neither I wouldn't, unless I forgot, like I forgot the same minute I thought how nicely they'd do to make my mast."

"Ha, a most convenient sort of memory, most convenient! I shall have to give a jog to that sort of memory. We'll see whether we can improve it with a sound swishing. Go out into the garden at once, and find me the longest and the strongest willow wand there, then I'll give your memory a lift. D'ye hear me?"

Roddie sucked in his lower lip and heaved a sigh, then he turned to obey. Dr. Gray's eyes twinkled as they followed the small figure going sturdily on its singular mission. "Fetch me one that will sting," he shouted after his grandson, and the boy looked round at him with reproach, but submission.

Roddie was gone some time, and the doctor thought his most convenient memory had been playing another trick. Truth to tell, he was not very sorry. For all his fine show of ferocity, the doctor disliked the duty of whipping little boys. Then he forgot all about it, and when, half an hour later, Roddie stole into the surgery and touched his arm, he was startled to see the small face so white.

"Hulloa! What's the matter?"

"It's the best I could find, grandpapa," whispered the boy, suddenly breaking down and sobbing. Dr. Gray found a long willow wand in his hand, and felt how the child trembled.

He pushed his chair back, and stared at Roddie. The boy was not acting, he really expected the threatened punishment, he was even now cowering as he awaited the first stroke of the wand he had found, conscientiously choosing the one that would hurt him most. Dr. Gray was astonished.

"Roddie," he said, "tell me, do you think you deserve a caning?"

Roddie stopped crying to give this question a fair amount of consideration.

"Don't you know that you are a regular nuisance to your aunt? Aren't you conscious of the fact that you are an uncommonly naughty boy? Don't you feel ashamed of your disobedience and other delinquencies? How shall you like it when we tell your father the sort of way you behave?"

"Oh, don't tell papa!" cried Roddie. "Oh, please, please don't tell papa!"

"Why? Would he thrash you?"

"No," sobbed Roddie, "but he'd be sorry with me. Oh, grandpapa, don't tell papa!"

"Then will you try to give your aunt less trouble in future?"

"Yes, I will," promised Roddie, "I will indeed."

"In that case," concluded his grandfather, "I think we may put this cane aside for the present—but we'll keep it handy for future occasions—and if you venture to disobey me again, I promise you a taste of it. It's a fine stinging cane, Roddie, so I advise you not to make its acquaintance. Now be off with you, your aunt wants you!"

The doctor felt guilty in suggesting this, but he wanted to be rid of the boy, and to forget the look in the round eyes.

*(To be continued.)*

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# THE LANGUAGE OF GIRLS.

By ELSA D'ESTERRE-KEELING, Author of "Old Maids and Young."

## PART VI.

### IN LOVE.

THERE was published some time ago in this country a book called "How Men Propose." The writer of this paper has never seen the work, and does not know if in it there was set forth the way in which maids receive proposals. Among strange stories circulated on this subject there are two barely credible. According to the one the "Yes" was supplemented by "rather!" and according to the other the "No" was followed by "not me!"

Do maids receive proposals in that way? Did, furthermore, ever a maid other than Maudie tell "the whole story" of the first proposal received by her, which story is here re-told?

You are to know that Maudie is aged nineteen and certain months, and that when her age was nineteen years only, she visited a friend who had a brother. That brother made it evident to Maudie that he admired her, and, of course—so says Maudie—she knew what was meant when he said—

"If ever I happen to find myself in the neighbourhood of your home, Miss Maudie, may I call on your parents?"

"Why, cert'nly, Mr. George," said Maudie.

Well, a week after that Maudie was back in her home; and she had not been back in her home a week when Mr. George chanced to find himself in the neighbourhood of her home, and called on her parents.

"What does this mean?" asked Maudie's father of her.

"Mr. George wants to marry me," said Maudie.

"And do you want to marry Mr. George?"

"Why, cert'nly no," said Maudie. "Would you and mother," she added, "wish me to?"

"By no means," said Maudie's father. "Your mother and I have no wish but for your happiness, and, though Mr. George is a good and prosperous young man, if you don't love him, Maudie, there is no more to be said."

"That was very noble of my father, was it not?" says Maudie.

What about Mr. George? says someone else.

Mr. George proposed to Maudie that same day. He did it in the usual way, says Maudie. (Query, what is the usual way?)

Maudie declined his proposal, and, if you care to know, she says, the exact words in which she did it, why, they were these—

"I'm very flattered, Mr. George, by your wishing to marry me, and I'm very sorry I'm not in love with you."

"Is there—is there anyone else you are in love with, Miss Maudie?" said Mr. George.

"Why, cert'nly no," said Maudie.

Mr. George asked no further questions, and also pressed his suit no further.

"That was very gentlemanly of him, was it not?" says Maudie.

He made his adieux, and she has not since heard of him; but everyone assures her that Mr. George will somehow—some time—find

himself in her neighbourhood again, and one or two persons, among them the present writer, have asked Maudie if she will mind his doing that.

"Why, cert'nly no," says Maudie.

He who concludes thence that the little comedy in which Maudie is playing the lady's part and Mr. George the lover's is one that is going to end with a marriage, as every true comedy does, is probably not mistaken.

What a German poet calls "*das verliebte Mondlicht*"—to wit, enamoured moonlight—is generally believed to favour lovers, and certain it is that many a pretty speech has been made under the moon. What follows is set down as heard by one who forthwith dropped behind. It was night, and the moon and all the stars were out; yet it was dark. Of this three wayfarers took note. They walked along the road that leads from Shottery to Wilmcote in the region called "Shakespeare's country." The one—a girl—complained of the absence of all lamps. To which the other—not a girl—replied—

"It is light enough for me. There are your eyes and the other stars."

A speech like that makes one understand why Shakespeare set alongside of one another "the lover and the poet." It is with deep regret that the present writer is forced to admit that she has heard no lass say to her lover as pretty a thing as that lover said to his lass. The case of the girl in Melbury Road is perhaps, however, exceptional. Set forth briefly it is this.

On a moonlight night of summer there walked in a road called Melbury Road, in a place called Kensington, a young maid and a young man. They walked hand in hand as brother and sister do in childhood, but as brother and sister never do in adult age; and they walked in silence until they reached the high road in which Melbury Road abuts, and there the young maid broke silence, saying—

"Darling, we'll go to Peter Robinson's to-morrow."

A speech like that made under the moon conveys a certain shock to the "chiel" taking notes, and there was such a "chiel" in the rear of those lovers.

It is not that such a speech contains aught that is seriously reprehensible; it is that the girl who thus expresses herself after having walked hand in hand with a youth in moonshine and in silence from a road's beginning to its end shows what a learned writer has called "a fatal insensibility to the ludicrous and bathetic."

"Silence," says Thomas de Quincey, in a passage in which he sharply ridicules a contemporary of his, "is a strange mode of social pleasure. I know not what Mr. Coleridge does when he sits with a young woman; for my part, I do 'mon possible' to entertain her, both with my wit and my wisdom, and am happy to hear her talk."

That is vastly kind. It is less kind when the writer adds, as he does forthwith, "I never think of tolerating silence for a moment." A passage like that shows how a mere Englishman may take a leaf out of the book of the Great Mogul, or might do so some eighty years ago, for the case is now somewhat different, to judge from a duologue—the speakers were a maid and a man—overheard some time ago in a London park. The man said—

"Are you never going to speak again, dear?"

The maid said—

"I have been trying to remember a thing I once heard said. It went somewhat like this, 'The mere desire to speak, if very strong, is speech of a kind, and sometimes is speech of the most eloquent kind.'"

"Do you mean by that," was asked by the man, "that you have been speaking to me?"

"Yes."

"And very eloquently?"

"Yes."

How would De Quincey have relished that? Would he have preferred unbroken chatter to a silence so interpreted?

The girl in love in inquiring mood is no doubt often perplexing to her lover. One Edward, now wedded to a Cynthia, tells how, when they were engaged, Cynthia more than once harried him with the question, "Dear, what was at the very, very beginning of it?" and how he all but caused her to break with him by one day replying that at the very, very beginning of it he judged to have been the psychological moment and a picture hat.

The levity of that answer much offended Cynthia.

There is a type of girl—she somehow makes you think of lettuce—much to be met in places noted for their beauty, such as the English lakes and the Scottish Highlands. She is generally one of two persons, and with wearisome iteration she says, as she eyes the landscape—

"Isn't it lovely?"

If the other person replies, as sometimes happens, several times running, "Yes, isn't it?" then all present say, "Wedding-trippers!"

This they do because it is a well-known fact that any girl who says to a man other than her lover or newly-wedded husband, with marked iteration, "Isn't it lovely?" in reference to a landscape, does not call forth with iteration equally marked the counter-question, "Yes, isn't it?"

It being borne in mind that the number of words in a complete English dictionary is some hundred-thousand, and that according to the calculations of those learned in language the number of words employed in ordinary conversation ranges from three thousand to five thousand, it is a very singular fact that lovers, who in fiction are lavish of speech, in real life are all but invariably very sparing of their words. Thus the girl who, in an English Great Western Railway train in the autumn of 1899, met every remark of her lover's with the question, "Do I?" was by no means a unique specimen of maidenkind, still less was she one displeasing to the person whom it was her main concern to please, and whom she manifestly delighted.

Next-of-kin to the "Do I?" girl under the aspect of conversationalist is the girl between whom and her lover there appear to be but two expletives, "Do!" (his) and "Don't!" (hers).

This purely interjectional mode of intercourse between lovers would almost justify the grouping of love with what a thoughtful writer terms "the explosive emotions." For the rest, quite the most extraordinary of limited-speech girls is she whose stock of words in conversation with her lover is composed of "Yes" and "Now." This girl in a major number of cases is, like John Gilpin, "of famous London town," a fact which is made evident in many and divers ways, among them her way of saying "No." Her mispronunciation of this common vocable irks many persons, but happily rarely displeases her lover, whose expression when she speaks is that which one conceives to have been worn by the lover to whom Shakespeare gives the words—

> "When you speak, sweet,
> I'd have you do it ever."

That preconceived notions are borne down by love in the case of maids as of men has often been seen. A maid said what follows—

"I thought, do you know, I never could love a man who wore Ringwood gloves and astrachan on his coat. Well" (here there was a lowering of the voice), "Hubert did the first time I saw him."

"And you're sure," was asked whimsically, "that you loved him then—that you didn't wait for him to remove the coat and gloves?"

"Oh, quite!"

There be some who assert that the confessional plays no longer the important part in courtship that it used to play when every lover told his lass all that he knew against himself, and in his turn was made her confessor. It seems, however, that interchangeable avowals are still made. What follows is set down as reported by the little bird.

"No"—the speaker was a girl, and she addressed her lover—"you are my first and only love, Jack; though, of course, like every other girl, I have had raves and *g. p's.*"

"What are 'raves'?" queried Jack.

"Oh, quite young things—schoolday things!"

"And '*g. p's.*'?"

"The letters stand for '*grandes passions*.'"

"And the 'thing'?"

"Well, I hardly know how to describe it. You may have a *g. p.* for anything or anyone. It's a sort of thing you work up, and it lasts till you fall in love—really in love."

"And then?"

"Then you laugh at it."

She laughed. Jack laughed too.

The language of girls in love is, in a general way, says one who professes to know, only in so far poetic as poetry is, according to a great poet's definition of it, "excited speech."

But the speech of girls in love is not always excited, or, at all events, the excitement in it is often of so modified a kind as to make one realise that a certain value attaches to the schoolgirl's phrase "mildly excited." For one Miranda who, like the heroine of Shakespeare's play, prattles something too wildly, nine Mirandas of to-day prattle very tamely. It is probably in recognition of this quality of their language that contemporary English has been enriched with the maidenly verbs "enthuse" and "effuse."

That the girl who is loving is not always primarily loving is no new discovery, the case of Annie being indeed a very common one. This is the case of Annie—

She was a vain loving girl. The words are put in that order because she was vain first and loving after. Thus she called one summer night from her bedroom to a woman whom she loved, "Good night! I forgot to kiss you, dear, and now I have cold-creamed my face." She had not forgotten to cold-cream her face.

One of the world's great writers has said that in a girl is loved the thing actual, in a youth the thing *in spe.* This statement throws all the light that can be thrown on a conversation which is credibly reported as having taken place in contemporary England, between two girls, one of whom was in love, while the other was fancy-free. Said the one fancy-free—

"I can't think what you love in him, for you have always said you admired clever men, and he is certainly not clever."

"No," said the girl who loved him; "but he's going to be."

According to one of the many views of love it is a nervous affection, persons suffering from which often say "no" when they mean "yes." This is especially unfortunate in the case of those who are not given a chance of reviewing their reply, like a damsel who at this present is deploring that she said "No" to one who forthwith desisted from his suit.

It is a feature of the girl in love in drama that she thinks aloud in reference to the object of her attachment. This is not common in real life, and some might think that it is not desirable that it should be. Of such was not a great theologian, who wrote, "What is it you love in him you love? Answer this

closely to yourself, pronounce it loudly, and you will know yourself and him."

It would be highly interesting to overhear the loud pronouncement on the part of the average Angelina concerning what, having examined herself closely, she finds herself to love in him she loves, to wit, the average Edwin. The regrettable fact is, however, that Angelina rarely so takes herself to task, still less does she think aloud. This is not that she never speaks of what she loves in him she loves. It is a cherished topic with her, and one to which she often reverts in conversation with the girl-friend of her bosom. Hence such communications as these, made, it is right to say, in every case by an Angelina of imperfect culture, hence the mutilation in them of the Queen's English. "I just adaw him in a Nawfolk jacket"; "his talk is portry"; "his face is not handsome, but so parful."

Happily a girl may be what an old romancer termed a famous queen—"a true lover," despite mispronunciation on her part of her native language. She may also be a true lover, and confound the word "limp" with "limpid," as did one Alice, who averred that what she loved in him she loved was "his limp brown eye." The brown eye of the person loved was "limpid."

That the language of girls in love is not always pre-eminently dignified is a thing that no one who has ever been in love will censure, but "to speak so babishly," as old Ussher would have phrased the matter, as did the Devonshire girl who, in parting lately from her lover, called to him from a railway-platform, "I wantsh letter every day!" is to bate too much self-respect. And here the question suggests itself, How can so foolish a girl as that be produced by the county in which the paraphrase for folly is "a pile of slop and coddle"?

Bold is the lover who hints a fault in his beloved, even though she herself leads up to his doing so, as did not long ago a girl who, stroking her shorn black head, said, "Is there anything, John, in me you would like different?" Her lover allowed that he held Solomon's view as to a woman's glory, this confession producing the tart counter-comment, "You should have lived a hundred years ago, when girls had yellow hair in clumps of curl like bunches of laburnum." John smiled; but even while he smiled he thought, so he himself avers, "Why did I hint a fault?"

A girl in love, it seems, does not always use academical English, but very often expresses herself in slang; if, however, in reference to an affection contracted by her a girl speaks of herself as "hard hit," it is safe to assume, say other girls, that she is not really in love.

It is also safe to assume that she is not really in love if a little thing loved by her does not in her estimation become a big thing, for love brings all things nearer to us, and makes them big, just as the moon is made big by being near to us. Some of us have been told that the stars are bigger; but none of us really believe that. We should not dream of saying, "Twinkle, twinkle, little moon"; but the first poem which we learn and the last which we forget is "Twinkle, twinkle, little star!" The stars are too far away from us for us to believe in their bigness. So people tell us that the object drawn near by love is really not so big at all, that others are bigger. That again we do not believe. At this moment there is living a girl who loves a moon, and who will not believe that any star is as big as it. And why should she? Thought is free.

Language, however, is best placed under control; and this girl, so far from acting upon that principle, goes about saying that her moon is bigger than all stars, that he is six-foot six in his stockings. He is not; and even if he were, that fact would not make him a moon bigger than all stars. It was to this girl that it was said by a woman of her friends, "You can't see clearly when your eyes are full of sunlight, and you can't see clearly when they are full of love. There is only one person who can do that, and that one person is not you."

"Who is that one person?" said the girl—verily a strange question!

To conclude, lest there be anyone who in the course of reading this paper has been scandalised by the revelations made in it, be it here said that the writer has in no case played the part of eavesdropper, the Agnes who whispers love having in every case been respected. There is, however, a girl very much to the fore in contemporary life who does not whisper love, and not to hear whose utterances it would be necessary to cover up one's ears. This girl's speeches have been made free use of, and in what follows there is given a colloquy which took place between such a girl and her lover on an omnibus-top on an autumn night in an English town.

"The 'orses"—the speaker was the girl—"is goin' very slow."

"You should say '*h*orses,' Minnie, and 'are.'"

Minnie went over the sentence again.

"The *h*orses," she said, "*h*are goin' very slow."

Minnie was evidently one of those persons who, when they aspirate at all, must aspirate to excess. Her lover, acting on the wise French maxim, *Il ne faut pas tout corriger*, did not tell her that she should not say "*h*are." He gracefully pursued the subject which she had opened up.

"They're goin' quicker now," he said; adding compunctiously, "I should say 'more quickly.'"

Minnie's face wore a look that said, "Oh, this learning, what a thing it is!" but while her look expressed itself thus choicely in a quotation from a classic poet, her feelings ran away with her, and ran away with all her h's, and what she said in spoken words was this—

"I do wish I was 'oldin' your 'and, 'Enry!"

And that wish was expressed by Minnie in no whisper, but in an excellent undaunted voice which would have delighted Martin Luther, who gives praise to a woman because her voice was such.

So much for the language of girls in love.

## GIRLS ON COMMITTEE.

"I am only one but I am one,
 I cannot do everything but I can do something.
 What I can do I ought to do
 And by the grace of God I will do."

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A YEAR or two ago when visiting the Old Castle Street Board Schools in Spitalfields, where the scholars number 1600—97 per cent. of whom are Jews, I was much struck and greatly pleased with a benevolent scheme instituted and carried out by the girls themselves, which if generally known would, I think, be adopted and enlarged upon by readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER with advantage to the whole population.

The scheme is this—a certain number of girls form a committee which meets at stated times out of school hours to transact business and to receive contributions from any of the scholars—a farthing or a halfpenny as the case may be, and for every such contribution a receipt is given; one girl selected by the whole school is treasurer and another is the secretary.

If there is any case of sickness or intense poverty among the children, be they Jew or Christian, and they come ragged or hungry to school, it is considered by the girl committee and investigated. If it is one that recommends itself, they decide upon how much money can be spared, and entrust it to two or three of the elder girls who go out marketing either for food, or medicine, or clothing material; if the last, they cut it out and make it up well and quickly, for it is perhaps a case of emergency. In any doubt or difficulty they consult the superintendent. This little society is flourishing and doing good in many directions.

Of course it would be easy to follow this scheme closely in every school, factory and workshop in the kingdom with the best possible results.

It might be extended to every village as well as to districts in towns if a few girls in each would form themselves into a committee, and give themselves trouble to work out the scheme. The advantages would be felt in many ways; they could supply a poor sick person with the nourishment ordered by the doctor; they could supply a poor girl going into service with suitable clothing, or they could send a sick child to the sea, or they could seek out some who have seen better days and who are too proud to ask help. There are a hundred ways in which these committees might help so as not to distress the recipient, and for themselves they would certainly realise the blessings of helping and giving.

I wish very much that readers of THE GIRL'S OWN PAPER would think the matter over and then start the committees.

A number of ladies in London have formed themselves into a league, for helping those whom they know to be incapable of work, but their plan is more complicated than the simple one adopted by the children in the Old Castle Street Board Schools.