

peace of a nation, and if the mere saying of "yes" or "no" is the turning point in human life, it certainly behooves all men to guard their speech as well as their conduct. Nor must it be taken for granted that speech is always expressed in verbal language, for there is often an eloquence in the glance of the eye, or an impression to be gained by the expression of the lips that carry a weight that no spoken language could convey.

I have no apology, therefore, to offer for referring to a peculiar character that we all meet every day, and who unconsciously brings himself into contempt, even if he does not make himself disliked. I refer to the man who sneers. There is no muscular action the lips are capable of that conveys as many meanings, and certainly none that conveys any meaning more odious. A sneer may be defined as the smile of defeat; the grin, of inferiority; the grimace, of envy; the facial evidence of ungenerous thoughts. Every definition will be the true one.

The clerk who is guilty of sneering is guilty of intentional wrong to his employer. A customer will excuse a mistake, or perhaps overlook a harsh word spoken under the influence of provocation or excitement, but there is that in the covert sneer that so arouses his contempt, that he never cares again to come in contact with it. I am in receipt of a letter from a lady protesting against the employment of clerks who are so ill-mannered as to gather together in groups and whisper, while throwing glances at those who are at the counter making purchases. She states that while she cannot knowingly charge the clerks with discussing anything about her, or her attire, she feels impressed that way, and the pleasure of her shopping trip is spoiled. It may be claimed that such customers are supersensitive, but whether they are or not, is not to be taken into the question. They visit the store for the purpose of purchasing supplies; they have been urged by the merchants to call there, and have a right to expect and demand the most courteous treatment. The heads of the firm, it is safe to say, would not be guilty of any such breach of decorum, nor is it likely that they would tolerate it if it came under their notice. The employee who is so thoughtless or rude in his manner as to cause pain or offence, works an injury to his employer that is often irreparable.

Even if the effect of a sneer was only such as to prove the sneerer contemptible by nature or instinct, and to set him down as a thing to be avoided, it would be bad enough, but this is not all. The man who will sneer will smirk. Those who will take advantage of a petty power they may possess, or of a fancied superiority to hurt the feelings of those they do not believe can hurt them in return, will cringe before those who occupy a more exalted position. They are sycophants, and bend the knee with fawning whenever they think they can gain anything by it, and are petty tyrants whenever clothed with a little brief authority.

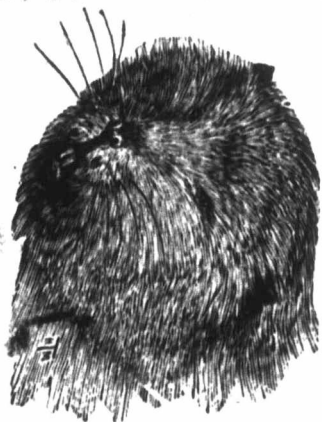
A sneer is never seen upon the lips of fair-minded men. It is impossible for a

strong, determined and able man to use such a weapon. It is the exclusive weapon of those who are more envious than ambitious, and who foolishly believe that they can add to their strength by an attempt to make others weak. A physiognomist needs no better index of character than the purposed sneer. Show him the person who believes it to be a weapon of offense and defense and he will pronounce that person to be weak, jealous, vindictive and treacherous. And the physiognomist will not be mistaken in his calculations one time in a hundred.

My learned friend Harry Helmcken takes the cake. This is not said in any figurative sense; it is purely literal. He went out to a bazaar at Mount Tolmie Thursday evening, in a fog so thick that it was found necessary to have men along the road to cut a way through for travelers. When he got out there, he, as usual, plunged heavily into the various games of "chance." Among these was a particularly fine four-storey wedding cake, built by Mrs. Brownlee, on an architectural design truly imposing. Our only Harry secured the cake. Now what his intentions with that cake are, no one knows, but some have hinted that it may be used very shortly.

PERE GRINATOR.

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