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"His" and some other Much Needed Words.

By RUTH CAMERON.



And yet I have one more suggestion.

I wish some generous philanthropist would present the English language with a synonym for the word "thing." I should be grateful to him all the days of my life. I cannot estimate how much time and trouble it would save, and I fancy anyone who has much occasion to express himself in writing would join me in thanking such a benefactor. The only synonyms which my thesaurus gives are "object" and "article." As you can readily see these cover about one-tenth of the meaning of "thing."

Of course, it must be partly because I do not know how to use it, but the English language certainly seems to me to be lamentably weak in several spots.

Indeed there can be no question but that it is weak and poor in comparison with some other languages. Japanese, for instance. A Japanese boy who was learning the English language could scarcely believe there was but one word for "I" in his language there were eight.

And not only does the English language lack synonyms, but there are many things for which it has no single word at all. For instance, what single word in the English language expresses "person one is talking with?"

"Person one is walking with" is also lacking. "Companion" has to weakly cover both these words.

I believe it is supposed to be an affectation to use semi-French words such as "ennui" and "fiance," but what is one to do when the English gives us no exact synonym? Of course, the Frenchman invented "ennui" and would naturally have a patent on the word, but he certainly didn't invent engaged couples, and I don't see why we shouldn't have a word of our own to take the place of the word "fiance." To be sure, betrothed means engaged, but I cannot imagine anyone introducing Mr. So-and-So as "my betrothed." And yet why shouldn't we? After all, it is our fault instead of the fault of the language this time, for "betrothed" is really a rather sweet word and might well take the place of "fiance" if we would only use our own instead of borrowing.

Again, I don't see why we shouldn't have a recognized contraction of "am not." Why not authorize "aint" (for use with the first person singular alone, of course) if no other bridge across the difficulty is possible.

But if I could have only a single word added to the English language it wouldn't be any of these, but one the lack of which has caused writers more difficulty than all the rest combined. Surely you can guess what it is. A singular for "they," that is a common pronoun meaning either he or she. I have heard "hisr" suggested for the possessive of such a word but I want nominative, possessive and objective. Think of the trouble these words would save us. Can't some noble benefactor confer a blessing upon the billion or so English speaking people by presenting the English language with this new word?

Ruth Cameron

LONDON GOSSIP.

LONDON, Dec. 23, 1913.

HEALTH OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.

Coming face to face with the Prince of Wales at Oxford a few days ago, I could not help being struck with the rather white and wasted appearance of his face. His eyes were dull and heavy, and he had lost much of that springy boyish walk that formerly characterized him. Indeed, it is not too much to say that he looked extremely ill, and probably the rest of the Christmas vacation will do him a considerable amount of good. His Royal Highness has never been over-strong, and there is more than a suspicion that he has been rather over-doing it lately; what with his studies and his frequent hurried dashes to town on social pleasure bent. Probably the Queen will have something to say to him on this subject.

THE KAISER AND THE CROWN PRINCE.

The Emperor William of Germany has lost no time in removing his eldest son from Danzig to Berlin. One day the announcement is made, the next day the Crown Prince is bidding farewell to his regiment before taking train to Berlin. Evidently it was a lightning decision, executed at lightning speed. There must have been some very special reason for this astonishing precipitancy. What is it? In Berlin they say that the Empress was responsible. She wanted to have her son near her, and particularly her grandchildren. It is a pretty story, but it will not do. The Crown Prince does not at like his appointment to the General Staff. He wanted to remain with his regiment, and was looking forward to the command of a brigade, which would have come to him in due course. It should be noted, too, that he has just taken a new lease of his villa at Danzig. The fact is that he has been hurried away to Berlin because the Kaiser feared another "blazing indiscretion" from this amazingly indiscreet young soldier. In the Zahren "affair" the Crown Prince does not like his ap- with Lieutenant Von Foerster, a kindred spirit, and against the populace. The attitude of the Reichstag—an institution he despises—has annoyed him extremely. It was feared that he would express his views on the matter, probably in a little "allocution" to his regiment. The result would have been disastrous.

MODERN MAGIC—PERHAPS.

Monsieur Benson has set a good many tongues wagging by his story of the revival of the black arts. Even in London he alleges that there are devils' kitchens where the votaries of occultism celebrate weird rites which fall very little short of those of the "Sabbat" and the "Black Mass." Three secret societies, safe-guarded

by fearful oaths on initiation, are said to be engaged in the propagation of the cult, and in the practice of all the medieval abracadabra of charms and incantations and satanic liturgies. From the preacher's point of view it is a sign the more of England's decadence—just as another preacher a night or two since found the decline and approaching fall of England in the fact that the Continental and Oriental residents in London and a few West End idlers were obsessed for the moment with a passion for the tango, and that the story of Salome and John the Baptist had been made the subject of a dance. All these things conceivably may be as deplorable as we are assured they are, but the pessimism of the minor prophets seems to be founded upon a curious misapprehension as to the part which occultism and tangoism and other diversions of the time play in the life of the community as a whole. I had occasion not very long since to make some inquiries as to the extent and character of the interest in black magic taken by the quaint crew of oddities who dabble in that kind of thing in London. It appeared that there were a number of people who took a harmless imaginative interest in the subject, and were given to weave for themselves weird stories compounded of medieval battles pretty much as imaginative children are. But the actual practitioners, so far as one could ascertain, consisted of a few lunatics and neurotics merely.

A CONSCIENTIOUS LADY WAR CORRESPONDENT.

I am informed that in consequence of the mutilations and other atrocities perpetrated by the Montenegrin army in the late war, Miss M. E. Durham, who described in the columns of two of England's greatest newspapers, the firing of the first shot in the Balkan War, has returned to the Montenegrin Government the gold decoration "For Merit" which she received from them in 1907. In taking this step she has not been influenced by hearsay reports, but entirely by the outrages that came under her personal notice.

THE IRON HAND OF KITCHENER.

London has received some pleasant news from Cairo. The question of transforming the Vakis administration into a Ministry in Egypt the other

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or day, was not achieved without some anxiety. Considerable opposition was shown in official Khedivial circles. There were rumours of a plot, and one of the prominent Egyptian ministers muttered dark things about a possible revolution. Lord Kitchener, however, is not a man to be easily impressed by such threats.

There was as a fact some kind of plot, but one of the accomplices confessed what was afoot. The plot such as it was, was cleverly timed to coincide with an important Mohammedan religious festival, when the native population is naturally inclined to be excited and unbalanced, and for some days the situation contained dangerous possibilities. The British army of occupation was kept prepared for any outbreak while the position remained so uncertain, but happily no outbreak came. The fact that so little support was forthcoming for the conspirators in Egypt and that the approval which had been anticipated from abroad, and notably from Constantinople, was withheld, had something to do with the collapse of the resistance. The whole episode has helped to strengthen British prestige in Egypt and the fact that 1,500 British bluejackets visited Cairo immediately afterwards and made a holiday tour of the Pyramids—which to the amazement of the onlookers they climbed—has helped to confirm the impression that the British Agency in Cairo cannot be trifled with or deceived.

A FAMOUS STAMP DEALER.

The retirement from business of W. H. Peckitt, the well-known London dealer in postage stamps, removes a familiar name from the philatelic world. The purchase of his collection by another London firm is, I understand, the biggest transaction in the history of stamp dealing. Not only does the collection contain some of the rarest and most interesting specimens extant, but its value is very high indeed, running, I am told, into six figures. To Scottish collectors it is interesting to note that part of the wonderful collection of the late Lord Crawford was acquired by Mr. Peckitt. Its special feature was the exceedingly valuable sets of the Italian States, such as Tuscany and Sicily, the issue of which ceased altogether on the consumption of Italian unity in the 'sixties. Most of these stamps are as unfamiliar to the present generation as some of the older issues of the Transvaal or the Orange River Colony before the war of 1899 will probably be twenty or thirty years hence.

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