

students, and so forth, of wearing the hat always a little on one side of the head. "That's so," was the rejoinder, "but anyway it makes them look smart. 'Taint like you Canucks, I know; you wear yours on the back of the head." And, rightly snubbed, I held my peace. Naturally enough in a new country comparatively little attention is paid to minor details of speech and manner both in schools and at home, but this neglect is, I think, rapidly passing away. No actor or actress of eminence in the United States but has given serious care to the elimination of those distressing local peculiarities which unfit them for anything but local characters. There is a standard of English speech, and it is an English standard—not an American, nor an Irish, nor a colonial one. If here and there the dialect or peculiarities of the individual crop up, that is the fault of the individual and not of the race.

I remember very well, in a vagabondish summer several years ago, looking for lodgings in London—I will spare you the Dickensian details—and very well I recollect choosing a fairly comfortable room on the second floor, well furnished, neat, and looking out upon the verdure of Regent Park. My landlady, after the usual preliminaries, disappeared into her underground burrow, and I was left alone with a little Cockney maid, pleasantly disposed enough and clean, though grimy (it is only in London that one can be both at the same time), and very nicely should we have got on together had I been able to understand her. But her extraordinary pronunciation, in which the vowels were all changed, defied me. All her "o's" were "e's," and all her "a's" "i's." She was the most finished specimen I ever met, and I don't know how many blunders as to meals, messages, and so forth I made, from my inability to understand her. On the other hand, I employed for several weeks, as *bonne* and sempstress, a middle-aged woman from the Gladstone Home, who spoke not only perfect English but also most excellent French. She was glad to come to me for six or seven shillings a week—think what she might command out here?

#### SONNET.

THE woods that summer loved are grey and bare,  
The sombre trees stretch up their arms on high  
In mute appeal against the leaden sky;  
A flurry faint of snow is in the air.  
All day the clouds have hung in heavy fold  
Above the valley where gray shadows steal,  
And I who sit and watch them seem to feel  
A touch of sadness as the day grows old.

But o'er my fancy comes a tender face,  
A dream of curls that float like sunlight golden,  
A subtle fragrance filling all the place,  
The whisper of a story that is olden,  
Till breaks the sun through dull December skies,  
And all the world is springtime in the deep blue of her eyes.

STUART LIVINGSTON.

#### THE IRISH DIFFICULTY.

WHAT do you think of Parnell now? Such is the question that has been put to the writer, and no doubt to many others, also, very often of late. He who has watched that statesman's political career with a sympathy born of a practical knowledge of the evils which it is the aim of Parnell's life to redress, has put the query fondly hoping that even in his dark hour of gloom Ireland's leader has not been deserted by all, save the querist. On the other hand, there are those who have asked the question with hearts closed to all explanation favourable to the object of their dislike; and though they exhibit an outward abhorrence that such monsters should be tolerated in civilized society, yet can scarcely conceal an inward rejoicing that the career of this troublesome Irish agitator has come to such an inglorious close—

For who would soar the solar height,  
To set in such a starless night?

Far from me be the thought of condoning the grievous crime of which Parnell has been convicted, but to my mind the real importance of the issue, brought so prominently before the British electorate by Mr. Gladstone's letter, does not depend so much upon an answer to the question, What do you think of Parnell? as upon an answer to the one, What do you think of Gladstone? That Parnell was culpable in betraying in such a gross and sinful manner the confidence of a friend who offered him the hospitality of his home, or at least in permitting himself to be the guilty dupe of a designing friend, is undeniable. Nothing can excuse crime, though extenuating circumstances there may be.

But apart from all this, is it a true principle of patriotism or Christianity to consign to eternal political darkness the unhappy transgressor of the moral law, even when the offence is the grievous one of adultery? To the Christian mind the story of her who was taken in the very act of sin will readily occur. Though her condemnation was impiously and boisterously demanded by the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees, the Author of all truth and purity sets at nought the clamour of their falsehood, and calmly calls upon the accuser who is without sin to cast the first stone. Not so Mr. Gladstone, when appealed to by accusers, in many

respects not more pure or sincere than the Pharisees of old. It is not with him "Go in peace and sin no more," but rather, "Depart from me, wretched sinner; henceforth there shall be no alliance between thee and mine; your presence is obnoxious, and any toleration of you would make my mission a nullity."

Such is the forlorn hope held out to one whom friend and foe alike acknowledge to be possessed of rare ability and unimpeachable political integrity. From so eminently a Christian nation as England one might more reasonably have expected the application of the parable of the unjust steward in the Gospel, who, though he had acted dishonestly, was commended in so far as he had done wisely. But the full results of the issue raised in this question do not end with the fact whether or no Mr. Parnell has been treated unjustly. There are crimes against the moral law other than a breach of the sixth commandment. Are those also to be visited with political banishment or some milder form of condemnation so that the punishment may fit the crime? It is the teaching of an eminent Christian saint that "without faith it is impossible to please God." And yet the alliance of one, at least, boastfully wanting in this essential virtue has not been so distasteful to a Christian electorate as to endanger at the polls the political party with which he has cast in his lot—a party, moreover, by whose support he has been enabled to break down the barrier that stopped his entrance to the Legislature. To the drunkard the gates of heaven are closed, but not the doors of the legislative chamber. Surely, if the admission is conceded, preferment on account of ability and worth in the sphere of their duty will not be denied.

It seems to me that the political leader who takes upon himself even in the hope of a present popularity the office of a censor of morals is drifting into waters that will become too deep and stormy for the safe navigation of the ship of State.

It is, I know, eminently desirable that great men, and more especially the great men of public life, should be good and pure; but are they to be made so by the fear that if convicted of wrong-doing in one particular, all merit, encouragement or hope of reward in all things else will be obliterated. I cannot think so. Rather would such a course tend more to the manufacture of the pious fraud than to the extinction of the designing scoundrel. In the case of the persistent and irreclaimable libertine the sober judgment of a sensible and virtuous people may be relied on to deny him public preferment. But is it a cardinal sin in a nation to sanction and support the public acts and even the leadership of one eminently entitled as a political counsellor and leader to its fullest confidence, because in an hour of passion, and under more than ordinary temptation, he sinned and sinned grievously?

The Irish people must not have thought so, because in the full light of the divorce court revelations their representatives and the popular press solemnly and decisively pronounced in favour of Parnell's continued leadership. Not until Mr. Gladstone signified, through Mr. Morley, that with the leadership of the Irish Nationalists in the hands of Mr. Parnell he (Gladstone) could not hope to lead the Liberal party to victory, was there the slightest murmur. Parnell's deposition, then, so far as Ireland's representatives are concerned, is not on moral but political grounds. With Mr. Gladstone and the English press the reverse is the case. They base their objections to his leadership on moral grounds alone; otherwise, apparently at least, he is *sans peur et sans reproche*. True the Roman Catholic bishops of Ireland have now declared that on moral grounds alone Parnell should be forced to retire. It is to be regretted that their pronouncement was not made at a time when it would be free from the suspicion of having been inspired by Mr. Gladstone's action, and when possibly it might have saved the Irish party from unseemly division.

I have ventured to put on paper the foregoing reflections made on my mind by the present rupture existing between Mr. Parnell and his former allies—the Liberal party—in the hope that you may find them worthy of a place in your columns; and in the further hope that some of your many able contributors may be induced to give to the public their views on, what appears to your humble correspondent, the important principle involved in the struggle. I do not write in the interest of Mr. Parnell in the stand he is now taking against a majority of his followers, though I do believe had they adhered to their first determination to stand by him both he and they would have triumphed. In the present state of affairs, with the powerful and daily accumulating forces against his leadership, support of him can only lead to disunion and the final disruption of the Irish party. Ireland, in her present condition, cannot bear the strain of the further delay that would be necessary to justify her course before the English people for retaining Parnell, with a majority of her representatives and the voice of her bishops against him.

K. W.

If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead either write things worth reading or do things worth writing.—*Franklin*.

No man shall ever be poor that goes to himself for what he wants; and that is the readiest way to riches.—*Seneca*.

A MAN born in a state of poverty never feels its keenest pangs; but he who has fallen from a life of luxury feels them with all their bitterness.—*James Ellis*.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### THE SAVING OF LIFE ON RAILROADS.

To the Editor of THE WEEK:

SIR,—From time immemorial the moths and flies have been so fascinated by the glare of the lamps that by night illuminate our streets and our homes, that they have assembled in mad aerial dances around those bright centres of attraction, until one after another approaching too near the source of the entrancing brilliance, they have singed and ruined the wonderful mechanism of their gauzy wings, or burned their highly-organized though frail bodies, and fallen in heaps upon the ground. The poetically gifted amongst us have found their pity quickened by this order of catastrophes, but what rejoicings should there not have been in the assemblies of the fitting creatures of the hour when first their syndicates heard that the electric light, with its vacuum and shield of glass, would give liberty for their fascinated onrush, while it saved them from themselves and all the destructions their tribes had grown so familiar with. The sluggard may go for wisdom to the ant, but the reckless wayfarer on our railroad tracks might find an effective warning in the drama of the flies, now being so essentially changed in its conditions. A writer in the London *Spectator*, quoting a well-known proverb, says: "Experience teaches, but no experience ever taught a crowd. It affects an individual now and then, and it teaches the teachable soul, which is all that can ever be hoped. Indeed, it is always a surprise to me how little experience does for the best of us," etc., which is only saying, in other words, that for all public movements the people need leaders, men of judgment and right feeling, who will show them the way out of the trouble of the hour. "Every man for himself" can never be the rule of civilized society. But if any of us wish to profit by the results of experience in railroad accidents, we should return to those comprehensive statistics lately quoted in the editorial columns of THE WEEK, with the hope for still further classification and illustration of the figures, by which we were informed that in 1889 the appalling number of 1,972 railroad employees were killed and 20,028 (twenty thousand of our fellow mortals!) injured in that one year on the railroads of the United States. During the same period 310 passengers were killed and 2,146 injured on the roads of our neighbours, and our editor adds: "When we compare the millions of passengers who have used the roads during the year with the comparatively small total number of employees, the contrast in the numbers of each class killed and wounded is startling and suggestive." The intrepid and self-denying mechanic who works the train is the conspicuous victim. "A contemporary contrasts the terrible slaughter with that of the battle of Waterloo, and adds: 'The figures above given by the Railway Commission represent an aggregate of suffering horrible to contemplate, and that finds no parallel, save in the carnage of a great battle.'" It is not for nothing that we repeat these figures. But we learn also that 3,541 persons who were neither employees nor passengers fell victims to the locomotive on United States' railroads in 1889, and that 4,135 of the same class were injured during the same time. To my thinking, this is the astonishing part of the whole return. The number killed in this class is by far the largest, and they are all people who should not have been on the track at all. The railroads were made for the trains to run on, not for pedestrians. It may be true enough that they often present the shortest road from one place to another, but if they are to be tramped over, they should plainly have sidewalks. All the "level-crossing accidents" are included in this batch of figures. Reform must be provided both for the action of the persistent trespasser and the reckless driver, and if these two classes are no longer permitted to immolate themselves, more than half the work of life-saving on the railroads will be accomplished. Let us stop and think. These are the figures that go near to doubling the Waterloo carnage! Surely, for once, the "Americans" and we are rowing in the same boat! The Canadian figures, which are certainly not quite so bad as the American, but bad enough, have been furnished to THE WEEK from Ottawa by Mr. Cross of the Railway Department. These also should be studied by all thoughtful Canadians, for all such must desire to understand this question of life and death for the people. The habits of the two peoples in the one connection are exceedingly similar, the Americans doubtless taking the palm for personal self-assertion. No people can give fuller effect to such tragedies in description, and yet none are so reckless in their practical management of the lines. Their own editor says: "What makes it the more sad is that much of the railway slaughter is not only preventable but criminal. But a small number of those killed lose their lives by accidents that might not have been prevented." Our editor of THE WEEK proposes, as alternative plans, a Government Commission to enquire into the whole question of the working of Canadian railroads—a plan the companies will be very foolish, if they should attempt to hinder—or a life-saving league to be formed by the people to press the reform upon the Government. From which it would seem to be clear that whatever plans are adopted, it is only the Government that in the end can help us out of our sore strait. Sir John Macdonald, as we all believe, in spite of the warpings of party, has brains and good feeling, and, in addition, the inestimable privilege of the power to largely give effect to the wisest suggestions that