

SIGN OF GRACE.

In 1843 the great mass of Scotchmen left the Established Church, and cast in their lot with the Free Church. Those who remained were called moderates, and were rather despised as lukewarm church members by their more decided brethren. In "Scenes and Stories from the North of Scotland" is an anecdote concerning a new minister in the parish of Alness, who resolved that he would act as if all church members were his parishioners, whether they would or not. One day he visited a Free Church elder, who was no friend of the moderates. The minister did his best to be affable and conciliatory, but his reception was cold, and, in fact, little more than civil. At length, without any special intention in the act, the minister drew his snuff box from his pocket, and invited the elder to make trial of its contents. A decided thaw set in immediately. "Oh, ye take snuff, do ye?" said the Free Kirk man, yielding to a gentle smile. "Oh, yes," said the visitor, somewhat afraid that the admission might lead him into trouble. "I take snuff; but what of that?" "Well," said the elder, "that's the first sign o' grace I've seen about ye." "Sign of grace! Why, how do you make out that snuff-taking is a sign of grace?" "Nothing easier," said the elder, with a knowing twinkle in his eye. "Don't you remember that in the ancient temple all the snufflers were of pure gold? That denotes the best of all qualities."

COURAGE.

WHAT is true courage? People do not half know. Two men facing each other, with six-shooters, calmly and steadily awaiting the signal to fire. Is that courage? Some think it is; but I do not. I would not do it. An orator, standing alone before a surging multitude, fearlessly uttering words which may goad them to fury—such words as "pants," for instance. That is courage: but how many think it? But fighting men and orators, in the matter of courage, are not the peers of gentle woman. Harry Earnliffe was engaged to marry a sweet girl who loved him for himself alone. She had one peculiarity among others, and this was a horrible superstition regarding the number thirteen. She would never sit down to a dinner table where covers were laid for thirteen. She would never sit down to a multiplication table that had "thirteen times" in it. She was just as superstitious as that. She was twenty-five years old, and had for years refused to be twenty-six; because twenty six is twice thirteen. One day Harry, who well knew of this peculiarity in his betrothed, came to her with dismay and hope struggling in his countenance. "Oh Gertrude! Gertie! Oh, my Trudy!" he exclaimed; "is your horror of the number thirteen as strong as ever? Speak darling! Is it? Is it?" "What has happened, Harry? Tell me!" she cried, her face blanching slightly as something within warned her not to answer the question. "My uncle has just died," said Harry, "and—and left me thirteen million dollars, and"—here hope struggled with dismay again—"and I didn't know but perhaps you would want to break off the engagement." She smiled like a June morning. "Harry," she said; "my own Harry. When *your* happiness is at stake I can not falter;" and as she took him in her arms hope ceased to struggle with dismay forever more. But self-abnegation exists even in children. "Willie!" said I to my little boy, "if you tear that book I shall whip you." The little fellow gazed at me with a quiet smile, opened the book, and tore out the pages six to eleven, inclusive. And Willie is but three years old. Courage! The yellow dog possesses it. The unthinker might say that the appearance of the yellow dog does not denote courage; but it does. It takes genuine courage for a yellow dog to make his appearance.—*Morris Waite, in Puck.*

HOW FAST DOES A TRAIN TRAVEL?

To average it is easy enough—so many miles from station to station, so many minutes running the distance; nothing can be easier. But this gives no clue to the speed at any portion of the journey, the laborious toiling uphill, the free running on the level, the flying down the incline. Last time we came out of the Box tunnel, a fellow-passenger informed us we were going sixty miles an hour. We were going fifteen. In about half an hour he again told us we were doing a mile a minute. So we were, and rather more, for we were going sixty-five miles an hour. It is curious what a charm there seems to be in this mile a minute, which is the rarest of speeds to run exactly. When the Midland engines are tried in the silence of the night, they are worked up to seventy-five miles an hour, and on the North-Eastern there is one engine at least which has accomplished eighty-six miles an hour; but, of course, no train is run at this rate from stop to stop. If we want speed we must try the Great Northern, and even on that, our fastest line, the average is but fifty-four, though the fifty-four is obtained by an alternation of spurts and slows varying with the gradient of the road. Second in point of general speed is the North-Western, and third is the Midland. Let us take our example of running from the Midland, so as to have something in reserve in case we are accused of exaggeration. Here is the run of the Glasgow up-mail between Leicester and Bedford on a certain

day last year, as checked by the watch. In this section of the line there are fifteen stations—Wigston, Glen, Kibworth, Langton, Market Harborough, etc., and working out the line between each, the rate of travelling between each came out at 34½, 50, 55, 66½, 72, 47½, 58, 72, 79½, 75, 78, 57, 52, 64, 63 miles an hour; total, 49½ miles, done in 52 minutes, 50 seconds, at an average of fifty-seven miles per hour. This is not given as a best on record; it is probably a common achievement, and is merely a sample of what is done in every-day work on what figures show to be the third fastest line in Britain.—*Leisure Hour.*

THE LANGUAGE OF THE SEA.

WHERE'er beneath the scudding clouds
The good ship braves the blast
That, roaring through the quivering shrouds,
Flies furious and fast—
Where Stars and Stripes and Union Jack,
To every sea-gull known,
Career along the ocean's track,
Our English holds its own.
Our English tongue to every shore
Flies onward, safe and free;
It creeps not on from door to door—
Its highway is the sea.

Oh, glorious days of old renown,
When England's ensign flew,
Nail'd to the mast, till mast fell down
Amid the dauntless crew—
Where Rodney, Howe and Nelson's name
Made England's glory great,
Till every English heart became
Invincible as fate.
God rest the souls of them that gave
Our ships a passage free,
Till English, borne by wind and wave,
Was known in every sea!

Our ships of oak are iron now,
But still our hearts are warm.
Our viking courage ne'er shall bow
In battle or in storm.
Let England's love of freedom teach
The tongue that freemen know,
Till every land shall learn the speech
That sets our hearts aglow.
Long may our Shakespeare's noble strain
Float widely, safe and free;
And long may England's speech remain
The language of the sea.

—*Walter W. Skeat, in the Academy.*

HOGARTH'S GREATEST WORK.

WE are now nearing his greatest work. In April, 1743, he had advertised the forthcoming engravings of the famous "Marriage à-la-Mode," and in the "Battle of the Pictures" he had given a hint of the same series by exhibiting one of them viciously assaulted by a copy of the "Aldobrandini Marriage." His announcement laid stress upon the fact that in these "modern occurrences in high life" care would be taken "that there may not be the least objection to the decency or elegance of the whole work, and that none of the characters represented shall be personal," an assurance which seems to imply that objections on these grounds had been taken to some of his former efforts. The plates, six in number, were issued in April, 1745, the subscription-ticket being the etching called "Characters and Caricaturas." In accordance with the artist's promise, they were "engrav'd by the best masters in Paris," G. Scotin executing plates i. and vi., B. Barron plates ii. and iii., and S. E. Ravenet plates iv. and v. Fifty years later (1795-1800) they were again reproduced in mezzotint by B. Earlom. For a description of this excellent social study the reader must go to the commentators; or, better still, to the paintings themselves, which, fortunately, have found a final asylum in the National Gallery. As in the case of the previous series, Hogarth, unwarned by experience, again resorted to an auction after his own fashion, in order to dispose of the original canvases. The bidding was to be by written tickets, and the highest bidder at noon on June 6, 1750, was to be the purchaser. Picture dealers were rigorously excluded. The result of these sagacious arrangements was disastrous, only one bidder, a Mr. Lane, of Hillingdon, near Uxbridge, putting in an appearance. The highest offer having been announced as £120, Mr. Lane made it guineas, at the same time magnanimously offering the artist some hours' delay to find a better purchaser. No one else presented himself, and Mr. Lane became the possessor of the artist's best work and the finest pictorial satire of the century for the modest sum of £126, which included "Carlo Maratti frames" that had cost Hogarth four guineas apiece. It may be added that the plates were described in Hudibrastic verse in 1746; that they prompted Dr. John Shebbeare's novel of "The Marriage Act" in 1754; and that they are credited by the authors with suggesting Colman and Garrick's farce of "The Clandestine Marriage" in 1766. Hogarth also meditated a companion series depicting "A Happy Marriage." But after some tentative essays he abandoned his project, doubtless because the subject presented too little scope for his peculiar qualities.—*The Dictionary of National Biography.*

THE MODERN GIRL.

THOSE wits of the virgin young, quickened to shrewdness by their budding senses—and however vividly—require enlightenment of the audible and visible before their sterner feelings can be heated to break them away from a blushful dread and force the mind to know. As much as the wilfully or naturally blunted, the intelligently honest have to learn by touch: only their understandings cannot meanwhile be so wholly obtuse as our society's matron, acting to please the tastes of the civilized man—a creature that is not clean-washed of the Turk in him—barbarously exacts. The signor aforesaid is puzzled to read the woman, who is after all in his language; but when it comes to reading the maiden, she appears as a phosphorescent hieroglyph to some speculative Egyptologist; and he insists upon distinct lines and characters; no variations, if he is to have sense of surety. Many a young girl is misread by the amount she seems to know of our construction, history and dealings, when it is not more than her sincere ripeness of nature that has gathered the facts of life profuse about her, and prompts her through one or other of the instincts, often vanity, to show them to be not entirely strange to her; or haply her filly nature is having a fling at the social harness of hypocrisy. If you (it is usually through the length of ears of your novelist that the privilege is yours) have overheard queer communications passing between girls—and you must act the traitor eavesdropper or Achilles masquerader to hear so clearly—these, be assured, are not specially the signs of their corruptness. Even the exceptionally cynical are chiefly to be accused of bad manners. Your moralist is a myopic preacher, when he stamps infamy on them, or on our later generation, for the kick they have at grandmother decorum, because you do not or cannot conceal from them the grinning skeleton behind it. Nesta once had dreams of her being loved: and she was to love in return, for a love that excused her for loving double, treble; as not her lover could love, she thought with grateful pride in the treasure she was to pour out at his feet; as only one or two (and they were women in the world had ever loved. Her notion of the passion was parasitic: man the tree, woman the bine: but the bine was flame to enwind and to soar, serpent to defend, immortal flowers to crown. The choice her parents had made for her in Dudley, behind the mystery she had scent of, nipped her dream, and prepared her to meet, as it were, the fireside of a November day instead of springing up and into the dawn's blue of full summer with swallows on wing.—*From One of Our Conquerors, by George Meredith.*

WOULD NOT FACE THE MUSIC.

MR. WALTER BESANT tells the following story of a disputed cab fare: "A friend of mine drove from Piccadilly to some place in the suburbs outside the radius. On getting down he tendered three shillings and sixpence for his fare—this was a little over the proper fare. The driver wanted five shillings. The passenger refused. 'I'd like to fight you for it,' said the driver. 'The very thing!' cried my friend, who had never in his life put on a boxing-glove, and was almost as ignorant as Mr. Pickwick even of the fighting attitude. 'The very thing! Capital! We'll have the fight in the back garden; my brother will look on, hold the stakes and see fair!' The cabman got down slowly. 'I was pleased,' continued the narrator, 'to discover that he appeared almost as much afraid as I was myself, perhaps—if that was possible—even more. He followed into the back garden, where there was a lovely little bit of turf, quite large enough for practical purposes. I placed my five shillings in my brother's hands, took off my coat and waistcoat and rolled up my sleeves, all with an appearance of cheerful alacrity. 'Now, my friend,' I said, 'I am ready as soon as you are.' The anxiety of the moment was, I confess, very great. But it decreased as I watched the man's face express successively all the emotions of bounce, surprise, doubt, hesitation, and abject cowardice. 'No,' he said, 'gimme the three and six; I know your tricks, both of you. I've been done this way before.' And so, grumbling and swearing, he drove away."

DURING the last two centuries the Lapps of Norway have been moving gradually southwards, preserving their uncivilized and nomadic mode of life in their new environment. Dr. Yngar Nielsen of Christiania has recently studied this interesting ethnological question (*Le Tour du Monde, Nouvelles Géog.*, p. 137). According to him, the southern limit of this people is now marked by the railway from Trondhjem to Ostersund, nearly along the 63rd parallel of north latitude. To the north of this line are found ancient tombs, places of worship, and names of Lappish origin. Here the Lapps of the present day, though nominally converted to Christianity, retain in secret some of their pagan customs, whereas farther south they are good Christians, and have changed even in type. About the year 1600 the southern limit of the Lapps was on the parallel of the northern extremity of the fiord of Trondheim; since then they have made several excursions southward, and have been repeatedly checked by the Norwegian Government. In 1890 they advanced as far as the plateaus of the Hardanger Fjeld. The Norwegians do not resort to violence, but defend their property by legal processes. The question of the Lapp invasion is, however, one that demands the serious attention of the Government.—*Scottish Geographical Magazine.*