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"A woman's rank lies in the fulness of her womanhood: therein alone she is royal."—GEORGE ELIOT.

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A Gossip.

"Yes, thank you, I will," replied Aunt Nell to our invitation to 'come in,' as she approached our room.

"The atmosphere is purer than it was when I passed an hour or so ago," she continued.

"What was the matter?" we asked in wide-eyed astonishment.

"You were taking part in the 'evil wrought by want of thought'; you were doing like the child who told her mamma every time 'Mr. Smith's hens wiped their feet on our grass'; in other words, gossiping."

"We didn't say any evil, Aunt," protested blue-eyed Constance, "we scarcely knew what to do with ourselves, so we began repeating funny things we had heard about people."

"That is the secret of it, the idle hour from 'the Orient to the drooping west. But now,'" continued Aunt, with one of the unexpected turns which often made the beauty of her conversation, "let's have a real gossip, while we are at it."

"You!" we exclaimed.

"Yes, I will help this once if you'll gossip my way. Now, each of you think. We intend to recall quotations relative to slander, gossip, or free use of the tongue. Grace, you may begin."

"All of us knows what the Bible says of the little member," responded Grace, and then there's the copy little Janette had yesterday, 'When will talkers refrain from evil-speaking? When listeners refrain from evil-hearing.' Hare is the author."

"A good beginning," said Aunt, "but you insist that I'm to quote more frequently as penalty for old age, so I will add one here, which suggests quite forcibly that we attend our own affairs, it is from an old Berkshire Ditty,

"Let's you and I go our own way,
And we'll let she go shes'n."

A burst of laughter followed, and deep in Aunt's heart she knew she gave the amusing couplet to make the girls feel they were having a good time.

"I'll take Shakespeare for my authority," said Constance, answering the nod from Aunt, "there's the wonderful,

"He that filches from me my good name
Robs me of that which not enriches him
But makes me poor indeed."

"Again he says:

"Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice,
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment."

"Yes, Shakespeare is ever a fertile field, and we'll take another line or two from him," said Aunt.

"What king so strong
Can tie the gall up in the slanderous tongue?"

"Now Lettie your turn."

"I'll go back to Chaucer," replied Lettie.

"The first virtue is to temper well thy tongue." And then isn't it Cato from whom we have: 'We cannot control the evil tongues of others, but a good life enables us to despise them.'

Up went Grace's hand. "Well, Grace?" remarked Aunt. "I read Burns during the summer, and I remember he says,

"Then gently scan thy brother man,
Still gentler sister women;

girl who is much given to talking, a funnel. Sir R. Steele says, "people are funnels of conversation who take in something merely to pass to others."

"There are many proverbs," continued Aunt, "referring to our subject, for instance, this Italian one, 'Hear, see, and say nothing, if you wish to live in peace. And that reminds me of Terence, who says 'He who indulges in Liberty of Speech, will hear things, in return, which he will not like.'"

"Oh, I remember a funny one from Byron," said Lettie.

"That abominable tittle-tattle,
The cud eschewed by human cattle."

"I'll refer to George Eliot for one that will fit in there," rejoined Grace. "There's folks nowadays know what happened afore they was born better nor they know their own business."

"I have an oft-quoted one from Scott," remarked Constance.

"Many a word at random spoken
May soothe or wound a heart that's broken."

"Which," pursued Aunt, "suits my quotation from Thompson,

"The whispered tale,
That, like the fabling Nile, no fountain
knows."

"We would do well to consider this gleanings from Socrates; 'Such as thy words are, such will thy affections be esteemed, and such will thy deeds as thy affections, and such thy life as thy deeds.' Now, I've an engagement, but you may make notes, and we will 'gossip' about them to-morrow."

"I know a few more," replied Grace, "and, dear Aunt, we thank you for a pleasant hour. I think we'll endeavor to stop gossiping."

"I'm sure we will," joined in the others.

"I hope so truly," returned Aunt, "but when people resolve to abandon idle talk, or Slauder as Spenser calls it, roses will appear before the thorns."

D. S.

Proper Mastication.

Proper mastication implies that the food be thoroughly chewed and mixed with the fluids of the mouth before being swallowed, and that these functions be performed without haste. Most people eat as though they were ignorant of the fact that the stomach has no teeth or means of ensalivating the food with which they fill it. The stomach is a most faithful servitor, and makes a long and earnest struggle to preserve its owner from the inevitable consequences of imposing upon it, functions which nature intended should be performed by the teeth and the salivary glands; but, like the indulgencies of a faithful mother or any other self-sacrificing friend, its services are only recognized when it is unable to respond to demands for them.

Most people, as they approach middle life, lose many of their back teeth, which are the principal implements of mastication, but they fail to bear in mind that they should take more time at their meals in order to prepare their food for swallowing. They should remember that nature makes no allowance for their infirmities in this respect, but will hold to them a strict account for any neglect to observe the rules of health.



MRS. AUSTIN SMITH'S COSTUME AT THE RACES.—(SKETCHED BY OUR ARTIST.)

Though both may gang a kennie wrong
To step aside is human."

"The schoolgirls," laughingly interrupted Constance, "call a