

the rash, uncalled-for, and unjust application of the same.

The extensive characterization of that occasion I shall never forget. The expressive epithets still ring in my ears! One person was "gawky," and another "mortal touchy"; this one used "too much soft soder," and that one was a "great swell;" some one else had "too much cheek," and his friend was "everlastingly kicking up a dust;" so and so was "terribly ramshackle," and "tother" one "went on" about her neighbors. (*Thinks I to myself*, "People who live in glass houses," etc.) The storekeeper has "the knack" of "bamboozling," and the milliner "takes the links out of" her customers. The teacher "yanks" the "young ones" round, and "licks" them over the "noddle"; while the preacher, or "sky pilot," "runs" the church, and he didn't spoil his discourse last Sunday by something he said just before closing, but he "slopped over." Aunt Polly didn't die, but she "kicked the bucket," "passed in her checks," and "went over to the majority." This thing was "too thin," and something else was "the worst kind." A certain lady didn't successfully reprove another for her knavery, but she "went for her bald head," gave her "hail columbia" or "down the banks," and "squelched" her for her "scrim shanking." I call to mind a few more expressions then used, and which I have since heard quite frequently, that I cannot yet persuade myself to repeat, even though I feel assured that in these it will be the same as in "any slathers" of other instances where only a little time and effort was required to overcome all prejudice.

At the expiration of twenty minutes or more Bessie remarked to her sister that she thought they had better "stir their stumps," and Katie being of the same mind they immediately "stirred," much to my relief. Confound Charlie, I say! My "dander" is up in less than a "jiffy" whenever I think how that youngster "fooled" me.

At the sacrifice of being called "green" and uncultivated, I must out with the truth that upon the ladies' departure I was actually pained and disgusted at the scorn which they manifested for what I had been wont to look upon as good, sensible, perspicuous, and elegant English; and the love which they had for dragging into their conversation what I, in my haste and ignorance, then called low, outlandish, and silly gibberish only fit for Billingsgate. But, having my attention subsequently directed more closely to this matter, I soon began to undergo a transformation and to grow refined myself.

I saw that the pulpit and the press, the learned and the rich, the gentlemen and the scholars, all used this mongrel English to a greater or less extent, so that quickly I boarded the car of progress, and at once those ladies began to rise in my estimation, while I with ever increasing sternness reproached myself for my dullness and lack of taste. There was a time in which, unsophisticated as I was, I actually expressed sorrow that subjects of dignity and importance should be degraded, as I thought, in this way. I called to mind a remark of one of our respected professors condemnatory of the use of slang; and my confidence in him, since he was a man of refined taste, tended to increase my disapprobation of stepping beyond the "English undefiled." But here we have another illustration of the fact that men of knowledge and culture are not infallible. Some minds are so conservative that they fight against all innovation. I have no doubt but that our professor's views on this subject have undergone a radical change, as he has since had a more ample demonstration than formerly of the inestimable value of what he once spoke against so strongly. True it is that our English classics are free from anything like the slang now in vogue; but let it not be forgotten that the human mind is progressive and that the great men who have made, literature so rich, so noble and so grand did not arrive at the acme of all excellence. How sad it would be were we brought to the boundary line of progress! We rejoice that sun-bathed heights still lure us to their golden summits.

Only a year has passed since that afternoon in my mother's parlor, and, having in full view the proverb respecting self-praise, I think I can say with all modesty that at least I have an average standing in polite circles for my ready and appropriate use of the most elegant "parlour's French;" and although I herein give little evidence of this development, it is on account of being desirous to avoid writing above the comprehension of the most illiterate, for were I to assume that elevated style which obtains in the higher grades of society, and which comes only through culture, my meaning would be, in a measure, hidden from the common herd—the very class I am desirous of influencing. Judging from the past we have ground for strong hope that the general progress will henceforth be so great that in a short time no one need stoop to what is merely commonplace. Quickly does refinement succeed vulgarity when the people place themselves in the attitude of learners!