

declaration, that "the pen is mightier than the sword," assented to throughout the civilized world? And can any man, whatever his native abilities, wield this mighty weapon effectively without knowing the force of those other weapons employed through it—which alone make the pen strong—the weapons of words? By combining the study of the technicalities of our language—which we call its grammar—with the study of its innate treasures, we shall never have complaints from our boys and girls that grammar is a detestable study, or that they perfectly hate it.—*Ex.*

KEEPING CHILDREN AFTER SCHOOL.

THIS is a very objectionable practice, not rendered any the better by the fact that it is so common. The Courts of one or more States have decided that it is illegal when done against parental instructions to the teacher, or, indeed, without clearly evidenced parental assent. State Superintendents have, in many cases, held it to be allowable, but that does not vindicate it. On all sides we hear or read complaints of parents against it. Most frequently these complaints are against that class of teachers who should be most exempt from this fault—primary teachers. The practice is a fashion. It has been in use so long, that with an immense number of teachers it has come to be regarded as a necessary thing. For all this, it never was anything but a very reprehensible practice, and as useless as it is blameworthy. If a little child fails to give attention, if he plays when he should be studying, if he whispers or makes any objectionable movement, down comes the penalty upon him—he must stay after school. We know of a teacher, not a thousand miles from where these lines are indited, who uses no other pun-

ishment. She has reduced keeping her children in to an "exact science." At least, the children have an exact knowledge of what the command to "stay after school" means, by the nature of the offence for which it is required. She has a schedule of prices, as it were, for the various school-room peccadilloes: whispering, so many minutes after school; shuffling the feet on the floor, so many minutes; failing in a recitation, so many more; and so on. The schedule has been read to the children so many times, that they know it even better than the teacher, and we think they generally employ the season of their penance watching the clock. They frequently remind her that "time's up," if she fails to notice the moment when, according to the schedule, the penitential period should be closed.

This seems to be making an absurdity of the practice of detaining children after school; but it is not certain that it is a bad thing. There is less harm done by making the fashion absurd—which may lead to its ultimate abolition—than there is by adhering to it with all the seriousness and solemnity with which men cling to a sacred rite. Better to give up the fashion altogether. We do not think that our children are in further need of confinement. Six hours a day in a close, ill-ventilated room, where every breath takes in a rank poison to lungs and blood, is about as much as the young system can bear. Probably many adhere to the "keeping in" practice from an idea that a certain class of offences must be punished, and they have no other convenient mode of punishment, since corporal punishment has been crowded out. But if a teacher has not the moral force to govern without punishments, or the pupils are not amenable to love and reason, it might be even better to resurrect the long-buried birch (never the ferule), than to resort to this