

YOUNG WOMEN AND SLANG.

Marion Harland says Slang is Silly, Slovenly and Often Vulgar.

SLANG PHRASES OF THE DAY AS USED BY OUR GIRLS—PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF CATCH-WORDS—A CRITIC'S SLANGY REVIEW OF SOME LITERARY MEN—BY-WORDS AS USED BY YOUNG WOMEN—THE HABIT OF SLANG CONTAGIOUS AND DEGRADING—IF SILENCE IS GOLDEN, SPEECH SILVER, SLANG MUST BE THE BRASSIEST OF PINCHBECK.

A party of refined, educated people who filled a country house last summer formed themselves by common consent into a "Society for the Suppression of Slang." The fines imposed—one penny for each and every infringement of the rule prohibiting the use of slang words or phrases—were dropped into a Foreign Missionary box belonging to a member. Much fun and more serious reflections ensued upon the workings of the constitution and by-laws. The most careful speakers were confounded at finding themselves convicted as transgressors, while college boys and graduates girls declared that bankruptcy stared them in the face before the close of the season. One merry youth, who ran up from the city on Saturday afternoons to spend Sundays in the mountain retreat, habitually tendered a quarter of a dollar to the treasurer on alighting from the carriage that had met him at the station, with the request that he might "be notified when the amount was used up."

Fater families was traveling abroad when the society was formed, and wrote home this dryly significant comment:

"With regard to the 'S. S. S.,' I have only to remark that the conversion of the world is now a mere question of time!"

The result of the establishment of similar organizations in other families and communities, with rigid enforcement of penalties, would astound members and lookers-on.

The ungrammatical structure of a sentence is a fault in him who composes it. Slang is lingual vice. College boys of both sexes, who are among the chiefest sinners in this matter, palliate it to their consciences by pleading that they find nothing in sower, every-day phrase so racy and apt as the catch-words to run like wild-fire or scarlet fever from hand to hand, from city to town all over the country. Some originate in comic stories or pointed anecdotes which please the popular fancy; others in wittier sayings that would seem to impartial listeners to have no germinating power, yet are as prolific as wire-grass and barley in the great common of the people's vernacular. We may borrow, in describing the majority of these parasites, from the negro preacher's delineation of Melchizedek: "Without father, without mother without no decent behavior at all." They come and go as fit and rise, and sink the lambent exaltations of a swamp. Those of this day will be incomprehensible to the generation following. We would need a glossary were those of our forefathers set before us in print.

Forty years ago I saw a young girl cover herself with confusion as with a garment by a careless reply to her escort on an evening walk, who asked if she were going to wear rubbers.

"I am not going to wear anything else!" fell gayly from her lips.

Had she been asked if she felt ashamed of the luckless saying, the chances are that she would have said: "Well, I do!"—another slang saying then in vogue.

These expressions, with "It does not matter," "O, K," and the half dozen others that were bandied into shreds and dropped for never absurdities, were foolish in inception and use, but few and unobjectionable by comparison with those that come in upon us like a muddy flood with each passing year. The French *mot d'engime* may be witty and serve a good turn to the speaker; each household has what the same convenient tongues styles *mots de famille*, born of jest and incident, dignified, sometimes, by usages and years into tradition, and ended with a pathetic value not their own. They are treasured and bequeathed with the battered nursery furniture we have not the heart to send off to the auction room. Popular slang, caught by our girls from school-mates and brothers, is silly, slovenly, and often vulgar. In its effects upon home and society conversation, it is pernicious to a degree we cannot overestimate.

I listened, the other day, with mingled pain and disgust, to the talk of a rich lawyer, thirty-five years old, who was noted in college for his proficiency in slang. On the present occasion he desired, I knew, to appear well to the associates of the hour, some of whom were distinguished in art, literature and science. To an elegant woman, who inquired if he had enjoyed his winter in Rome, he replied: "Well, I should relax my features?" To another who asked if he were an admirer of Chopin, he drawled: "Well, I guess!" He told a reviewer that Matthew Arnold "worked his name for all it was worth," a stock phrase he repeated four times in six sentences, notably in commenting upon Professor Corson's lectures on Browning; he thought Howells rather "fresh," and James decidedly fly, you know." The whole "kit and boozle of the literary cochalorms were too much given to tooting their own horns" to please

him. "Even Stevenson would be better if he were taken down a peg."

This detestable mess is more intelligible than the talk of two collegians across the table of a country hotel, in which one requested the other to rush the bovine" when he wanted the milk-pitcher, to "jerk the tinker" for the absent waitress, and asked if he had "doused the glim" before leaving their bedroom. Both alluded to the well-cooked and well-served meal as "grab."

Our Girl may not descend to such slimy depths of lingual latquity as the foregoing, but she is ingenious in the invention of a *patois* of her own, and quick to adopt what strikes her fancy in her brother's dialect. She is not above calling Schumann "perfectly mag," and Turner, "just too, too, utterly more so, you know," admonishes her teasing mate to "come off the roof!" "chestnuts!" cries at a twice-told tale, and takes the current innuendo "for all she's worth" into full favor. I even overheard one, not a week ago, remark facetiously to a girl friend: "You may wager your saccharine vitality" on such and such a point, and say of a visitor (masculine), that he had the cheek of a brass-faced monkey."

The intolerable jargon is neither wit nor humor. Least of all is it lady-like or refined. "Vulgarity" is not too strong a term for the illegitimate offspring of folly and indolence. In the last word is wrapped the secret of the villainous practice. What Mrs. R. W. Bellamy calls, in an admirable essay lately published—"Our Duty to our Mother-tongue"—is among the least-considered obligations in the calendar of our boys and our girls. It is easier to lay hold of a ready-made phrase that lies near the tongue than to formulate thought into correct and forcible words. Just as censure is cheaper than discriminating praise and ore dearer than dirt. A child should be taught with the forming of his earliest sentences that language is the vehicle of ideas, and that he honors the thing carried by neglect of that which bears it. Thought is to speech what the soul is to the body. Our Girl should dread to cast discredit upon her intellectual powers by lobbing what she thinks (which is what she is!) in second-hand rags, as much as she would shrink from debasing her clean body by apparel picked up in an old clothing store in Chatham and Baxter Street.

The habit of slang is so fearfully contagious, and so nearly incorrigible when fairly contracted, that one is amazed at the number and character of those who yield to it. The slovenly thing comes to the lips against the will of the speaker, who has flattered herself that she only uses it in the *deshabille* speech pardonable (in her estimation) when she is with her familiar friends. I am continually reminded of the fable of the naughty child from whose lips dropped toads and lizards, while I hearken to the "company" prattle of our pretty "society girl." She is on her promotion, and would fain express herself in neat and dainty terms that would commend her to the admiration of our auditors. In effect, the best she can do is to utter stilted platitudes, altogether inadequate to convey her meaning, and uncharacteristic of what may be her vivacious ideas. Thought is a wild thing, that requires long and patient drilling. Our Girl may be decorous of tongue while on her guard, although not fluent. She may not hope to emulate the brilliant woman at her side, who has thought it worth while to study conversation as one of the fine as well as useful arts, but she plods on reasonably well until she becomes animated and enthusiastic, when "out flies" not "a trope," but the slang which is the every-day habit of her speech. Bitter mortification to herself and those who love her is so frequently the result of the experience that wisdom might be bought by it.

Madam Recamier is reported to have assigned as the secret of her well-bred elegance of deportment, her rule of behaving when alone as if under the eyes of others. If our Girl would lay to her speech with her family and intimate friends the rule and plummet she essays to apply when conversing with comparative strangers, she would successfully overcome a habit which degrades her more than she dreams of. She ought not to feel it to be irksome to be compelled to abandon slipshod talk, but she does, and, by the very admission of the fact, announces her slavery to what soever reason condemns. She may be sprightly and graceful, have a sweet voice and clear articulation, but this one defect is a fly in the alabaster vase of ornament. When she yields to the trick of tongue unconsciously, the case is the more hopeless.

Cynosura did not mean to say to me yesterday that she was "all broken up" over Amelle Rives's "Virginia of Virginia," or that her brother was "quite gone on" a Baltimore belle. Nor did she know that she was guilty of the atrocious vulgarity of speaking of this attachment as a "mutual mash"—surely the most unpleasantly suggestive figure that ever received the stamp of the mysterious and iniquitous Conservatory of slang. But all these batrachians did slip through the ivory gates and rose-red portieres, and the imagination of the "mashed" flies still prevades my memory of the interview.

If "Silence be golden, and Speech silver," Slang must be the brassiest of pinchbeck, and the passage of such a coin should be treated as a social misdemeanor.

MARION HARLAND.

A SKILFUL VILLAIN.

HIS UNIQUE METHODS OF MURDER.

That the French are an ingenious people, especially in planning and executing strange and mysterious crimes, can not be gainsaid.

Even in the matter of brigandage they frequently outstrip the swarthy Italian, not perhaps in boldness and brutality, but, as the following will show, in point of caution and finesse they are vastly superior, almost completely baffling the efforts of a brilliant police to unravel the causes that led to the murder and robbery of many good citizens peacefully pursuing the vocations of honest men.

M. Flaudreau, merchant of Marseilles, left home on the morning of May 5, 1894, for Castellane. He had reached the last named place, attended to considerable mercantile business, and departed for home. He was never seen again alive.

His body was found two days later on the road between Castellane and Aups, and at first it was supposed that he must have fallen there and died in a fit, as no marks of violence could be found upon him. His pockets were rifled, however.

No sooner had the excitement of the mysterious death of the merchant begun to subside when three deaths resulted on the road in the same strange manner. No marks of ill-usage had been found upon any of them; but all had been robbed.

By this time public excitement was intense, and the Prefect at Digne bethought himself that immediate and effective steps were quite necessary, lest general condemnation should fall upon his official head.

At this interesting point of affairs the last named officer sent for a noted rogue-catcher named Bressart, who had won considerable renown in the Department of the Lower Alps.

Arriving, and being informed of the state of things, Bressart asked if most of the victims had not stopped at Castellane. Receiving an answer in the affirmative, the detective said:

"Then they must have put up at some inn there?"

"Yes," answered the Prefect, catching Bressart's meaning, the Maîtres-trate stated that the landlords had been narrowly watched, and no shadow of evidence rested against them.

"But," persisted the detective, "is there not some poison in this matter? Some inn keeper may administer the poison and then send an accomplice after the victim."

This supposition would not hold, as experienced physicians had examined the stomachs of the victims, but no trace of poison had been found.

Bressart was forthwith ordered to go at once to Castellane and secure such further information as the Sub-Prefect there could give.

Securing a suit of ordinary tradesman's clothing, and thus habited, the detective, mounting a horse, set out at once for his destination.

Arrived, Bressart pretended to set about doing some business, and visiting a woolen factory, examined some stuff. Here he learned that most of the people who came on business stopped at an inn kept by a man named Juan Fontaix, and there Bressart engaged lodgings.

After dark the detective called upon the sub-Prefect. From this official he learned that most of the dead men had come from Marseilles and that in that city the excitement was intense. Gendarmes had been sent out upon all the roads, and secret police had also been upon the watch. The last victim had fallen only four days before and the deed had been done fifteen minutes after the policeman had passed the spot. Further, he learned that the officials' suspicions rested to a more or less degree upon Juan Fontaix, as nearly all the murdered men had stopped at his inn, and he must have known something of their business.

Impressing absolute secrecy as to his presence, Bressart returned to his lodgings, and finally entered into a conversation with his best upon the subject of the mysterious deaths.

The innkeeper pronounced it wonderful, and assured the detective that it injured him more than he could tell.

"Mon Dieu!" muttered the host, "they will be suspecting me next, if they have not done so already."

Although when the murders were mentioned Fontaix blanched and trembled lest he should be apprehended for the crime, Bressart did not deem it advisable to follow up the suspicions of the sub-Prefect concerning the landlord.

Having spent the next day ostensibly engaged in business in the factories but in reality on the alert for any clue, Bressart became convinced no circumstantial evidence would answer. The culprit or culprits must be caught with the proof upon him or them.

Bressart, now having spent the second night at the inn, determined upon a very bold move. He had given an assumed name on his arrival, and stated that he was from Toulon; so, calling for his bill, he informed his host that he was off for home. Then he went to the fruit preserver's and told him the same story, stating that he must consult his partner before concluding any bargain. After that he called at the woolen factory and saw the business agent. His name was Louis Cazaubon, and he had come to Castellane about a year before. He seemed to the detective like a straightforward business man, and had previously discussed the murders with Bressart in an open and off-handed manner. To the agent Bressart stated

what he had told the others—that he must return to Toulon.

"If you have not the ready money with you we can give you credit," said the agent.

In reply, Bressart said that he had plenty of money, but was not fully prepared to pay the prices demanded. "Very well," answered Cazaubon; "I shall be happy to sell when you come again."

Thereupon the detective departed. When alone, Bressart became very thoughtful. It seemed strange that although he had told the agent that he had money, the latter had not bantered him.

Perhaps the agent wanted him to have money when he left. Anyhow, Bressart rode to an out-of-the-way place and left his horse, and then returned where he could watch the movements of Cazaubon.

In a few minutes the agent came out from the factory and walked away. His step seemed hurried and eager. Although the detective now fully suspected Cazaubon, he felt sure he was not the man who did the direct work of death. The plot must be deeper, or it would have been discovered before.

As Bressart could not follow with safety, he determined to wait and see if the agent returned.

In less than fifteen minutes Cazaubon returned. He walked with a sober and innocent air.

Waiting until the agent was seated at his desk Bressart returned to his horse. The detective now concluded that if the factory agent was really at the bottom of the crimes, he had already put his machinery in motion, and the next development would be upon the road. He examined his pistols and left the town, taking the road along the river toward Aups.

Having ridden about half an hour, Bressart, although a brave man, began to experience a slight sense of fear as he entered a dreary place of woods, and carefully kept his eyes about him. The mysterious way in which the murders had been done verzed so closely upon the marvelous that naturally a superstitious feeling was attached to it.

Having crossed a small cascade at St. Esprit he was descending a short, steep hillside, when he came upon a boy by the roadside engaged in whipping a mule. The youth was a slightly built young fellow, not more than 15 years of age, dressed in coarse garments, which were covered with meal.

Supposing the youth was a miller's boy, Bressart advanced, and as he did so saw a large sack upon the ground near where the mule stood.

"What's the matter, boy?" asked the detective as he drew nearer.

"This ugly beast has thrown ooth me and the sack of corn from his back," the boy answered.

"Are you hurt?" asked Bressart.

"My left shoulder is hurt and I cannot lift the sack. If monsieur will help me I will be grateful."

On closely scrutinizing the youth Bressart made two mental notes. The boy seemed altogether too keen to be a miller's apprentice, and if he was not mistaken he had seen the youth holding the mule with the very left hand that was hurt.

Leaping from his saddle Bressart moved toward the boy, being very careful to watch his every movement.

"Now, then," said the boy, "if you will take hold of that end we will put it on."

Taking hold of the other end, the youth dropped it saying it hurt his shoulder, and begged Bressart that he lift it on alone.

The latter expressed a willingness, and stooped down for that purpose, keeping his eye, however, in such a position that he could watch the boy with a sidelong glance.

As Bressart bent over and took hold of the sack he saw the boy put his hand in his bosom and take something out. As he did so the detective seized his wrist and held it upward. There was a sharp report like that of a percussion cap, and a tiny wreath of smoke came from the hand Bressart gripped.

The boy struggled to free himself, but in vain.

"I've found you, have I?" asked the detective, drawing his pistol and cocking it. "I am an officer of the Prefecture, and if you don't hand me your weapon I'll put a bullet through your brain."

The boy was frightened and trembled violently.

"It's only a tobacco pipe," he said as he handed it over.

Bressart took the weapon and examined it, at the same time keeping his eye on the boy. It looked like nothing more than an ordinary meerschaum pipe, colored from long use, only the amber mouthpiece was missing.

Not wishing to use further time on the examination Bressart turned attention to the boy, who stood trembling with fear.

Wishing to strike while the iron was hot, and to test the correctness of his former suspicions, he said: "So you are selling your soul to M. Louis Cazaubon?"

The boy started, and Bressart saw that his surmise was right, although the youth clumsily denied that he knew such an individual.

"Don't lie to me. Louis Cazaubon has been watched by me. He thought I was a tradesman. Confess everything to me, and I promise, since you are young, that your life will be saved."

The boy wavered, and the detective followed up his advantages, and, having made the youth understand that he could protect him from the vengeance of any one whom his confession might

criminate, and that as a mere boy he had everything to gain and nothing to lose, Bressart gained possession of the full facts bearing upon the mysterious murders.

The boy's name was Henry Dupin. He was born in Paris, but never knew who his parents were. He went to live with Cazaubon when quite young, and had been with him ever since. He said Cazaubon used to be a chemist, and it was in Paris that he invented the infernal machine, and they had since used it with fatal effect.

About two years previous they had left Paris together and spent nearly a year in traveling over the country murdering and robbing for a living. Finally they came to Castellane, where Cazaubon obtained his situation while the boy went into the employ of a miller. Cazaubon marked the victims that were to be robbed, and Dupin then did the work. Several articles were used in carrying out the plan, but the usual one was the same that had been tried upon the detective. The boy then explained the secret of the pipe.

Within was a pistol of the finest steel and of the most exquisite workmanship. The stem was the barrel and the lock was concealed within the bowl and covered with tobacco. A thin plate of metal protected the lock, and upon this the tobacco rested. A pressure of the thumb or finger discharged the weapon. The powder was of Cazaubon's own manufacture, and very powerful. For a wad a piece of felt was used; on the top of this was placed the missile which did the mischief.

The boy had two of them with him, concealed in the lining of his cap. The projectile, a tiny piece of fine steel, was no larger than a needle, with one end beaten down to a fine feather. This deadly missile was coated with a greenish yellow substance, which was the most virulent and speedy poison the chemist's art could concoct. The needle once within the circulation of the blood speedy death resulted.

The wound no eye could detect.

When the weapon was discharged it was the purpose of the boy, if possible, to strike the victim in the neck, and the unfortunate would fall, not knowing what had struck him.

Having obtained the confession from the boy, Bressart took him back to the Castellane and placed him in charge of the Sub-prefect. The detective then called upon Cazaubon, who was greatly surprised to see him.

Calling in a gendarme, the agent was securely handcuffed without much difficulty. When he learned that the boy had told, he swore he would kill him.

In due time Louis Cazaubon was tried and condemned to death. Before the villain was executed he confessed his crimes—told how many years he had worked to perfect his fatal instrument and produce the poison. He further acknowledged that the boy had been driven to help him through fear of his life.

So the miserable rascal was executed, and the boy, Henry Dupin, spent two years in confinement, and when set free commenced an honest life.—*Cincinnati Enquirer*.

The meeting of the stockholders of the Union Pacific at Omaha yesterday, which is to be followed by a meeting of the board of directors, to which Samuel Carr, Jr., of Boston, has been elected to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Vice-President and General Manager Potter, has set the gossips talking about the probabilities of the retirement of President Adams. It is stated that Mr. Adams has been trying for a year to arrange his affairs in such a shape as to permit his withdrawal, and if his resignation was handed to the board at their meeting it would not cause any surprise. Mr. Adams, on his last visit to Denver, was asked when he would return, and he said: "Never, if I can help it; at least as a railway man;" and it is believed that he is contemplating sending in his resignation at once. There was a rumor about the railway offices yesterday that he had already sent it in and that it would be made public at the meeting of the directors.—*Denver News*.

The Michigan Central Railroad is having built, what is said to be the largest locomotive engine in the world, at the Schenectady works. It is to be a ten-wheel engine, that is with six drivers and four unusually large trucks. The drivers are 68 inches high, and the cylinders 19 by 24 inches. The boiler is 58 inches in diameter, with 147 two-inch flues. This, the Pittsburgh Dispatch says, is intended to get over the road at the rate of ninety miles an hour on occasions. It would have to exhaust those great cylinders about how many times a minute to accomplish this? A trifle over 1800 times a minute, or thirty times a second. And this, if nothing else, will call forth from practical mechanics the incredulous remark that they'd like to see her do it.

A Texas judge has rendered a very curious decision concerning theft. The accused took \$10 from the prosecutor's pocket in the presence of a number of people. The prosecutor having offered to bet that amount, the accused took it forcibly and compelled an exhibition of the money. Then the money was demanded and the accused denied having it. The judge held that as the money was obtained without false pretext there was no theft. This appears to legalize highway robbery.