

WOMAN and HER WORK.

I wonder if there are any expressions, or even words, left in the English language which have not been twisted from their original meaning, and given some deeper, half hidden, and wholly objectionable signification? It seems to me that there are not, and one really grows heart-sick in the effort to speak intelligibly and yet steer clear of the numerous pitfalls with which modern smartness and modern vulgarity have surrounded what used to be the pleasant art of conversation.

I do not know whether it is better to be posted upon the subject; to possess as it were a mental dictionary of the double meaning which belongs to the simplest phrase, and thus be able at the expense of a soiled mind, to steer clear of the many traps that the unsuspecting fall into; or to go one's way in blessed ignorance of the consternation she is spreading broadcast amongst the better informed of her friends.

Which of us has escaped the sensation of being seated either in a crowded room, or at a table surrounded by several guests when some innocent young girl, or equally innocent man has made a remark which was simplicity itself, and yet to which there was attached a second meaning

and to keep the blessed safeguard of ignorance, which would at least prevent me from sharing the confusion of any other unfortunate who should chance to use a word with two meanings? and I knew I would feel far more comfortable if I were ignorant of their meaning, when such words were used and "where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise." Sometimes I wonder if everybody is the same, if there are no people in the world who can talk together intelligently, using their mother tongue as it was intended that they should and seeing no sinister meaning beneath the surface of any word? Surely there must be men and women in this world sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently refined to rise above such vulgarity, if we could only find them. But they are not easy to find, and the remedy for the double meaning plague is not easy to find either, so I suppose we must suffer from it until some reformer can be found with sufficient courage to start a purity of language movement and carry it to a triumphant issue.

Fashions for children seem prettier than ever and though they preserve a sort of family likeness to those of their mothers and elder sisters, still they are sufficiently different to avoid the appearance of being miniature copies of the grown up fashions. There is a certain permanence about the styles in children's clothes also, which is very satisfactory, they do not change as often or so rapidly as grown up fashions, and therefore they have a certain about them which is very refreshing in the midst of the vicissitudes by which the rest of us are surrounded.

The gowns with the little guimpe was to have never really gone out of fashion, since they were first evolved from the clever brain of some fashion designer, and nothing could possibly be prettier for small girls between the ages of four and twelve. The guimpe may be lace trimmed and as plain, or as elaborate as the child's mother wishes and whether the dress be of pretty inexpensive gingham, or the dainty flowered silk which is so popular for little girls' best dresses now, it is sure to be a success, as the guimpe gives an air of daintiness to every dress. For ordinary wear, the careful mother generally makes it of the plain tucked lawn, which can be bought so cheaply, and is so easily laundered and always comes back from the wash, looking like new.

There are not many variations possible with these little dresses, the only choice lying between a full blouse with a belt, or a straight plain bodice; sometimes there is a bertha frill around the neck cut to fit the neck, shaped in squares or points and made of some contrasting color, or of plain goods on figured or figured on plain. If the material is cloth the edge is often finished with white braid, and the sleeves, which are usually short puffs are finished with a band of the same color.

Fine plaids or checks are just as fashionable for children as for adults, and finely checked wool goods in either blue or

to choose from, and the piques are so soft, and pliable this season, and in such pretty colors that they are greatly used for little skirts and the refter jackets, which are prettier than ever with their wide collars and large pearl buttons.

Grass linen also figures largely in children's dresses this summer, and the trimmings are of narrow insertion in open work linen embroidery with a simple edging of the same for a neck frill, or else a frill made of a plain piece of the linen with a row of the insertion set on above a narrow hem. The guimpe waists of such dresses are of white lawn, or China silk, and the effect is very pretty. Often these little dresses are finished with a sun bonnet, or shirred hat, made of the same linen.



ALPACA AND SATIN RIBBONS.

For girls of over twelve the dress problem is more serious, since they are very apt to have decided opinions of their own upon the subject, besides expecting more of variety in their dresses and, unlike smaller children, they have not the happy faculty of looking well in almost everything they put on. The blouse waist is the most popular style of todice, and it may be plaited in box plaits, or gathered, and finished stock collar and belt, of flowered ribbon. A pretty frock of blue serge has a blouse bodice, bishop sleeves, and a double collar. The vest, cuffs and second collar are of white serge, which is a very effective finish, but open to the objection of soiling quickly; shot silk may be substituted for it with very good results however.

Another dainty little dress is of blue and white striped challie, trimmed with valenciennes lace, and blue satin ribbon, which forms a square yoke.

A dress of beige-colored alpaca has a plain bodice fastened diagonally in front, the V-shaped opening is marked by a band of white alpaca, and buttons fasten the lower part of the waist.

Skirts of novel gowns for girls in their teens are gored, measured from three to four yards around the bottom, and the coat and skirt style is quite as popular with them as with their elders. Serge is of course the most serviceable material for children's



EMBROIDERED LINEN AND SWISS GOWNS.

brown and white make pretty dresses for school wear. The belt and frill may be of plain blue or brown finished with white braid or the tiniest of pearl buttons. Skirts for young girls of twelve and thirteen, are made full and plain with a wide hem, and sometimes a few tucks around the bottom. Thin silky crepons, and both china and taffata silks are used for more dressy gowns, while for younger children white linen lawn with lace trimming makes the loveliest little slips for summer wear. Of course there are colored awns, gingham, and piques without end

wear, but alpaca is very extensively used this season.

Plaid silks make a very pretty contrast with plain wool dresses, and one of brown, has a shirred guimpe and collar of plaid silk.

Outing suits with jaunty coats are made of colored pique, as well as serge, and sailor suits of this material with plaited waists and wide collars of white linen, batiste, or the pique itself, trimmed with embroidery, will be worn by both small and large girls this summer.

Now that is absolutely all I know about children's fashions at present, and I do



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RIPANS

ONE GIVES RELIEF.

hope the news hints I have managed to glean laboriously from various sources will be of some use to anxious parents. I notice that there is not a word about boys, and I deeply regret the omission, but the fact is I could not find out anything about them beyond the fact that the very small ones still wear garments which are indistinguishable from those of little girls of the same age, and my personal observation shows me that mothers seem to have an insane fancy for making miniature men of these poor little creatures by putting them into trousers almost as soon as they can stand alone, thus making them look like poor little monkeys, and causing the spectator to involuntarily glance round for the accompanying hand organ. Indeed the age for shedding the petticoat and donning masculine guise is getting so much earlier all the time, that I fully expect before long the boy of the family instead of being "short coated" at three months old, will be short pantsed—But then of course I don't know much about children. ASTRA.

HOW TO CRACK A PECAN NUT.

Soak Them in Water First—Professionals in the Business.

Did the gentle reader ever attempt to crack a pecan nut?

It is safe to say that the gentle reader has made the attempt. It is just as safe to add that the attempt was a failure. The implement used may have been a regulation nut-cracker, or a hammer, or a boot heel, or a piece of brick-a-brac, or the combination of floor and chair rocker so much favored by bachelors who have never had the chance to learn the sacredness of carpets and floor polish. But whatever were the tools used the result was the same, ore and inevitable. The operator, instead of enjoying the whole sweet kernel, as he had fondly expected, gathered up mangled

fragments from the floor and his knees and other surrounding objects capable of furnishing a resting place and tried to imagine that he was really enjoying those tiny and unsatisfactory bits in spite of the fact that they lost themselves in his teeth and came to naught.

Then perhaps he went forth on to the street and passed fruit stands innumerable, on each of which he saw the pecan nut kernels in glasses heaped high and overflowing, each and every piece a full half of the nut's contents. Never a broken piece, never a fragment. If his heart was not filled with envy and with the desire of enquiry he was more than human.

They call science to their aid. There are in Chicago a considerable number of men and women, mostly Italians, who make a fair living by cracking pecan nuts. It is a recognized trade. They take orders regularly from the fruit stands and stores and supply them with cracked nuts. So far as possible they keep their methods in shadow—in shadow as dark as the inside of a cow. They crack them with hammers, but they get no such disheartening result as the amateur who essays the first attempt. They have no little pieces to pick up, but every kernel comes out in neat unbroken halves. That is because they know the pecan nut from Alpha and Omega. Tradition and the instruction of their elders have taught them certain things in nature which escape the average man, and they take advantage of the knowledge.

They soak the nuts over night in soft water.

The result is surprising—it must surprise even the nut itself. From a crabbed, uncertain thing, likely to fly off the handle at no provocation whatever and go all to pieces over a rebuff scarcely worth mentioning, it is changed into a perfect model of generosity, willing to give up all it has in the world for the pleasure of the first crack. Try it. Let the man who would serve nuts on his table, or regale his friends with them before an open fire, go and do as those who have studied the matter are accustomed to do. Let him gather up the rain that falls from heaven to crack nuts with, not attempt to soften them with profanity, as is usually done. It is better for his friends, his carpets, his fingers, and his eternal record. Besides, it is the right way.

GERMAN IDEAS ON DUELING.

A Lame Defence in Which Even Scripture is Quoted.

A significant contribution to the dueling question in Germany has been published in the official Militar-Wochenblatt. The writer divides his article into two sections, dealing respectively with the "idea of honor and the employment of the duel for its rehabilitation," and with the conflict between the practice and Christian principles. As to the first point, he argues that a distinction must be drawn between "external and internal" honor. The latter, which is a good conscience, can not be taken away; but the former, which is the recognition of one's personal worth by others, must be defended at all costs. It is by staking one's life for this honor, when impugned, that its rehabilitation is possible. The innocent man who falls in a duel has gone to his death, as it were, for the sake of his honor, while the guilty person has restored his honor externally and must settle the rest with his Maker. The author then proceeds to declare that the officers' corps possesses a peculiar sort of honor which is closely connected with its martial profession. In war the officer's duty is to lead his men into the jaws of death, and the fear of death which seizes even the bravest can only be overcome by holding fast in time of peace to the principle "death before dishonor." Herein lies the educational value of the duel for the officers. They may never fight one, but they know that they must be ready to do so in certain circumstances. "We are accustomed," he adds, "to retain well-tired methods and do not intend to sacrifice them to well-meant but false theories." The writer then quotes and expounds a large number of passages from the Bible, and by dint of twisting and turning proves to his own satisfaction that the practice is not forbidden by Christianity.

Ready-made Mortar.

Lighterage business about the harbor of New York has been considerably damaged by a new labor saving device in the building trade. It used to be that many lighters were employed in transferring from point to point the sand and lime that go to the making of mortar. A new concern, however, is now sending down scow loads of ready-mixed mortar from Cow Bay. This mortar, of three qualities, is ladled out into iron carts and sent to all parts of the city where building operations are going on, and the lighters are less and less employed for carrying the materials that go to the making of mortar.

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