

THE OBSERVER

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FIGHT FOR A "PRINCIPLE."

A landlord in Chicago demanded \$25 damages from a departing tenant; the tenant offered to pay \$11, and they went to court over the \$14 difference. Of their own funds the litigants have expended \$10,000 and at least \$1,000 of the people's money has been wasted in court expenses. One man is broken in health, and attributes his illness to the strain of numerous hearings. The valuable time that has been squandered is not estimated.

Similar cases have frequently dragged through courts. They clutter the machinery of justice and afford a spectacle of folly which raises a question as to the reasoning capability of the human species.

But all such conflicts can be explained. Those concerned have ready answer to justify their unyielding bitterness. Each will declare, "It is a matter of principle."

Now many offenses against common sense and humanity are committed in the name of principle.

For "principle" should often be read "prejudice," or rather, the most elemental promptings of the spirit of vengeance, of ridiculous rivalry.

A part of the religion of the inhabitants of certain sections of the world is revenge. For every injury suffered an equal injury must be inflicted. To step aside from the course of selfish reprisal is a surrender of self-respect.

Legal feuds are fed by the same kind of feeling.

The competitive instinct is a valuable one. Every person—and every nation needs it. It is a worthy thing to seek supremacy in legitimate fields and to maintain one's dignity and personal integrity. But it is to be observed that those most willing to fight for a "matter of principle" have, in general, the fewest and flimsiest of principles; those who believe that honor is best maintained by bloodshed hold dubious concepts of honor.

It is a sacred privilege to fight

for a principle, but first it is able to make sure that the principle is worth the fight and that there is not a superior principle to be served in not fighting.

TEACHING LOVE.

A course in the theory of love and marriage has been added to the curriculum of Goucher college, Maryland, with a spinster in charge of the lectures. The seniors are encouraged to ask any question that occurs to them concerning the great dynamic. The value of the course has been questioned because the professor has had no personal experience with marriage. We can conceive of no one better suited to lay down rules in this field. No poet, wife, divorcee, orientalist, man about town, biologist, psychologist—with experience—will attempt off-hand answers to queries concerning love, its nature, its workings and methods of enduring or of mastering it.

The ancient sage who classified the mystery of a man with a maid with the mysteries of an eagle in the air, the serpent on the rock and the ship at sea would be as much at loss for a solution of the chiefest of his riddles were he alive today. The snake's method of locomotion, the soaring feats of birds and the physics of a vessel under sail are fairly well explained. A man and a maid continue to create their own precedents.

Science is on the trail of love, and in laboratory and library the delving into its elements is carried on.

SCHOOLHOUSE SANITATION.

Forty of our states have taken some legal action toward the safeguarding of public school buildings, according to a bulletin recently issued by the national bureau of education.

"Probably nine-tenths," says the bulletin, "of the existing regulations of this sort has come within the past decade. Each state profits by the experience of forty-seven others. A law passed in one extreme of the country today is copied next month or next year by a state 2,000 or 3,000 miles distant."

Thirty-eight states have some legal provision regarding the school site, according to the bulletin. Nearly all of these provisions are state wide in their application and are mandatory in character.

These provisions include the proximity of "nuisances" availability of the site, and size of the site. Nineteen states have laws prohibiting the location of school buildings within a specified distance from places where liquor is sold, from gambling houses, houses of prostitution, and noisy or smoky factories.

Thirty of the states have sought to regulate the water supply of the public school. "The revolt against the common drinking cup," says the bulletin, "has come within the last five years. Kansas was the pioneer,

but other states followed rapidly, so that now half of the entire number have either a law or regulation regarding drinking cups."

Day the president announced his engagement he also announced he favored better home defense. Makes a difference when you've got a wife to look after.

Spring styles for men include wine colored evening dress with a lavender waistcoat. Fashion's edicts, however include no fall term in the penalty provided for violation.

PUZZLED THE POET

The Societies Formed to Study Browning's Works.

HE DIDN'T FEEL FLATTERED.

Thought it Peculiar That it Required Organized Effort to Understand His Genius—An Afternoon Tea and a Story About Tennyson.

In her book "Pleasures and Palaces" Princess Lazarovich-Hrebellanovich, formerly Eleanor Calhoun of California, who as a young woman won fame as an actress abroad, gives this story of her meeting with the poet Browning:

"The revealing charm of London lay not alone in making acquaintance with those who 'dwell in marble halls' (in England, be it said, they are not marble, but sculptured wood or sculptured stone and ancient tapestry), but in that vast universe of houses, big and small, whose lights glimmer softly through hazy atmosphere or blink morosely in the fog, where the aristocrats of genius also rove. On certain days, from gray and dull, the place suddenly brightened into a new enchantment, as into my picture there came along some poet or painter, some writer of novels or other great one whose name since childhood had made my heart flutter like the yellow poppies on the California hills.

In response to the invitation, "Won't you come in for a cup of tea with us on Wednesday afternoon?" I had gone to the house of a new acquaintance, finding in reality a crush of fashionables in her drawing room. She put me into a seat and introduced me to an old lady on my right and an old gentleman on my left, both of whom looked very bright and alive.

"Mrs. Bryan Weller Procter (Barry Cornwall), mother of Adelaide Procter; Mr. Browning—the poet, you know."

At the names my heart thumped. I was wedged in between them.

"I surely have a lucky star," I said, "to think of my good fortune in being placed just here!"

"Yes," piped the old lady merrily; "it's nice to like one's fellow sardines." Browning said:

"I am always glad to meet Americans; they are so appreciative, only in one way they're worse even than our people here. I think I may say that the thing that puzzles me most in the world is the Browning society, and America seems full of Browning societies."

"That shows how much you mean to America," I ventured. "But, yes," he answered dryly, "it isn't very flattering to think you can't be understood without the aid of organized effort." He was very sweet and laughed at himself.

I mentioned Tennyson. Old Mrs. Procter said: "Look sharp. He does not love Americans. I simply adore Lowell, and Tennyson is one of my dearest. I've tried in a hundred ways to have him meet Lowell, but he answers like a brute. I'll not give up, though. Lowell wrote me a poem on my birthday. I thought that would fetch Alfred, so I took it down to Haguenau, flitted it before his face.

"You shan't read it," I said. He grunted. I folded it up and stuffed it into my pocket and said, "I'm back to town." He pouted like a naughty child, seized my hand and growled: "You may read it!"

"Oh, no, never," I said. He finally insisted. "Well, since you beg me to, it begins like this: 'I know a girl, they say she is eighty.'" I paused. "Familiar?" snorted Alfred, never cracking a smile. The old lady chuckled. "But he's an angel all the same, they're both angels."

In the midst of our talk somebody began to play a long classical piece on the piano. Everybody said, "Sh!" Browning, who was in great vein, whispered, "I abominate piano players—murderers of conversation." It was cruel; the piano ran the whole gamut of its possibilities for half an hour. Mrs. Procter and Browning rolled their eyes at each other and at me as if in agony. At last it stopped. Browning applauded frantically, holding out his hands and looking back over his shoulder at us, while he began to say, "Thank God, it's over! I must tell you about the strangest experience I ever had. It was in France"—Just then the pianist began an encore. Browning almost growled: "What's she doing? You don't think she is going to—"

"Yes," I said, "you applauded so hard she had to begin again." "God forgive me!" he wailed. "Never again will I commit that error." The old lady choked with laughter, and Browning looked for the door.

Girls in Guatemala.

None of the maidens in Guatemala are allowed to go abroad from their homes without the company of a chap-

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iron, and a lover is only allowed to come and court his sweetheart through the heavily barred windows of her father's home. After they are married they pass along the streets in Indian file, the woman marching ahead, so that the husband can be in a position to prevent any flirtations.

A Fizzle.

"My speech fell flat." "You told me you had rehearsed it until you could say it either backward or forward." "I had. But I started it backward and couldn't switch."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Life is a campaign, not a battle, and has its defeats as well as its victories.—Platt.

BIBLE LANGUAGE.

A Revelation of Perfection and Terse-ness In Speech.

A correspondent called attention the other day to the language of the Bible in describing a windstorm, as an example of concise speech, as follows: "And the winds came from the four corners of the earth and fell upon the house, and it was not." He mentioned it as an evidence of the simplicity and directness of Bible language. And it is well to call attention to the words and sentences of this grand old book from time to time, for in all literature there is none other more beautiful of diction, more direct or even more poetical than these ancient writings found in the Bible.

Take the opening sentence of the Bible as an illustration, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." That is the whole story told in ten words. You cannot go farther back in time—"In the beginning"—that is all there is to be said upon the subject. A modern writer would probably consume a dozen pages trying to tell when the creation took place and then fall. But in this wonderful old book we have it stated so any one can understand it, and in the only way it could be properly stated—"In the beginning."

But one need not pick out isolated sentences or chapters. The whole book is a revelation of perfection in speech. The writings of Paul, for instance, can be taken as examples of perfect diction. The description of the shipwreck when he was making his way to Rome will stand for all time as the most thrilling narrative of a storm at sea. His appeals to the members of the various congregations with whom he corresponded may be accepted as the best writings we have upon teachings of the Nazarene. The poems or psalms of David, written hundreds of years prior to the time the New Testament was written, are still the choicest bits of sentiment and imagination that can be found, inspiring in their faith and beauty and enchanting in their eloquence.—Dayton News.

ELKS ATTENTION

The annual election of Officers for the ensuing year, will be held at the regular meeting of the Lodge on Thursday, March 2, 1916, at eight o'clock P. M. All members are requested to be present.

M. B. DONOHUE, Exalted Ruler.

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