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She looked, and the gates were opened wide,
And the keys of Peter were at her side,
And the glory had clothed her like a bride;
And the dome was alight. "Is this for me?
Ah, then once more I am Italy!"

As one in a dream she entered, weak;
But they kissed her on lip and chin and cheek;
And all were too glad for any to speak—
Wrapped in wonder that Rome should be
Safe in the arms of Italy.

"Wait a little!" she whispers low:
"The tide will come and the tide will go.
It will bring us Liberty in its flow:
Since we all gathered together be,
The rest shall be added to Italy."

She will put her crown upon her head;
She will smooth the silk of her bridal-bed;
She will go out proudly charioted.
Peace and plenty for her shall be,
Since Rome has been given to Italy!

HOWARD GLYNDON.

SPOTS.

IT is a melancholy thing to see so many spots on the face of the sun. True it is that we poor moles are unable of ourselves to distinguish these imperfections, and so long as the old God of Day gives us a fair portion of his beams, we grovel on and are satisfied; but I have no doubt that all the other suns are continually finding fault with our central luminary, and pointing fiery fingers of scorn at the spots on his red face, insinuating, perhaps, that he has imbibed too freely of the ambrosial ether, and may some day stagger on his rounds, thus reducing our system to a chaotic protoplasm, in which Professor Huxley alone will be saved in his ark of atoms harnessed to a comet's tail. Now and then, over the surface of the earth, an occasional telescope may be seen poised on the top of a lofty tower pointing toward the sky: through this instrument some purblind wiseacre gazes and murmurs sadly, "The spots on the sun are increasing in size: woe to the earth!" These mysterious words are repeated by the assistant in solemn tones to the few devotees who have climbed the mountain to gather wisdom, and who stand with trembling veneration to catch the oracular sayings of the star-gazer. "The spots on the sun are increasing in size," they moan: "woe to the earth!" and the funereal echo is caught up by the dwellers in the valley, who hasten to repeat the tidings in the nearest city; and thus in ever-increasing waves the cry rolls on, "Woe to the earth!" and all because of the spots.

Now, brethren, be reasonable. Spots are a law of our universe, and no good thing can exist without them. There is not a sky without its cloud, or a rose

without its thorns: neither is there a delicious little brook trout, freshly broiled, without those harrowing bones. From the sun down to the smallest sand-atom, we shall find spots if we look closely; and were it otherwise, we should go mad all together, the astronomers first of all, and the world would be a wilderness of howling lunatics: imperfect beings as we are, perfection would kill us. Let us, then, bow our heads and be thankful.

There is a little word which may be considered as belonging exclusively to the spot-doctrine: this is the expressive monosyllable "but." We love our friends, we think them very agreeable, but—; we admire Miss Smith, we think she is really beautiful, but—. This precious word is dear to us all, and with it we unconsciously give in our adherence to the spot-doctrine almost every hour of our lives. We hasten with joy to tell the bad news; we whisper the particulars of the last murder; we buy up the editions of the latest horror by the hundred; and we crowd to gaze upon the most desperate criminal with eager satisfaction. These are great spots upon humanity in general, and therefore humanity in general is deeply interested in them; but, leaving the wise men on the hill-tops to warn the world of danger, let us descend to the valleys and apply our humble microscopes to the individual spots around us, and especially those which are so small as to have escaped general observation.

How many of us have spots in our ears! What a vast army of deaf people could be gathered together in our land if Truth were the general-in-chief! Excluding entirely those whose infirmity is plainly perceptible, what ridiculous mistakes, what dangerous misunderstandings, are often the result of slight deafness, especially when unacknowledged! A young lady of my acquaintance once came home from a morning walk, and at the dinner-table remarked to her sister in a careless tone, "Oh, Ellen, I met Miss Jones in the street, and she asked me how you were, and if you had got over your lung difficulty."

"And what right had Miss Jones to speak in that way?" retorted Ellen with a flushed face.

"I think it a very natural remark," returned the younger sister, composedly eating her dinner.

"Natural! Meddlesome old maid! I am surprised that you did not resent such an insinuation."

"Well, Ellen, you know that is the general idea about you: I suppose Miss Jones only repeated what she had heard from others; and I assure you she asked the question from the kindest motives."

"Kind, indeed! One thing, however, is certain: Miss Jones never had any trouble of that kind to boast of herself."

"No," sighed the mother from the head of the table: "I wish I could say the same of my daughter."

"Mother, do you turn against me also? It was only a slight difficulty, and I got over it long ago: I think it very unkind to bring it up in this way again. I should like to know, sister Kate, if Miss Jones asked you the same question?"

"Yes, she did, and I told her that I never had any troubles of that kind, for I took good care not to force myself willfully into danger as you do."

"Katherine Munroe, I am ashamed of you as a sister!"

"Ellen, Ellen, be calm: what your sister says is perfectly true, and you will do well to remember it in future," said the mother.

Upon this a great storm arose, and thunders of angry words, with lightning from flashing eyes, filled the dining-room, all parties growing more belligerent as the battle went on, until there was a hasty retreat with the noise of violently closed doors, which betokened that the combatants had sought the solitude of their respective rooms to weep in secret.

The mother sought her eldest daughter, and gently remonstrated with her for such a display of temper: "You know, Ellen, the whole city was aware of our fears for you, and what more natural than that Miss Jones should speak of it?"

"Oh, mother," sobbed Ellen, "I never really cared for him in the least."

"*Him!* What do you mean, child?"

"My love difficulty, of course."

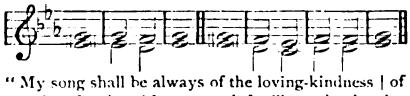
"*Lung*, you goose!—lung difficulty!" laughed the mother; and thus peace was restored, but not until the deep wounds made in a family quarrel had given severe pain.

And while we are on the subject of hearing, let us glance at that astonishing habit, peculiar to some people, of singing just so far out of tune as to send thrills of agony through musical listeners, and at the same time just so near the tune as to keep them continually hoping for better things. Let a man say honestly, "I cannot sing," and then, if it affords him any pleasure, let him howl out sounds without any attempt at melody, and although you may shudder, you feel at least that he is an honest sinner; but those base wretches who follow on behind a sweet melody, just half a tone flat, or boldly assault some pathetic air with shrill sharps, deserve condign punishment at the hands of an outraged community as disturbers of the public peace. Who among us has not heard some heaven-born song done to death by slow torture, and breathing out its last gasps a whole tone below the original key, while the brutal accompaniment pounded steadily along with the loud pedal down, ending in one grand flourish of empty octaves? Who has not heard some pious but unmusical worshiper devoutly singing the psalms and hymns on half a dozen different keys at the same time, beginning each line with fresh fervor and fresh discord, and dwelling on the painfully false final cadence with a falling inflection inimitable in its expiring anguish? How can we be religious at such a time as this without cotton-wool as a preservative? How can we possess our souls in patience when the melody of cultivated musicians and the harmonious notes of the organ, subdued to a low, sweet tone, thrilling through the church like celestial voices from afar, are marred by some uneducated "fools (behind us) rushing in where angels fear to tread"?

Our clergymen, also, are endowed with unfortunate ideas as to the value of time. By this I do not allude, as some might suppose, to the length of the sermon: I refer to time musically considered. They often sing with earnest devotion, but almost invariably they follow two words behind the choir, thus producing very much the effect that is obtained by children in stopping and unstopping their ears in rapid succession when the noise of conversation is loud in the room. It is of the first and greatest importance that a clergyman should be a good man, but being so does not necessarily make him musical: if Nature has not endowed him with a correct taste for music, if he has spots in his ears, then let him provide himself with "such assistance as he can obtain from persons skilled in music," that the worship may be worthy of Him who is surrounded by angelic "harpers harping with their harps" and singing a "new song before the throne."

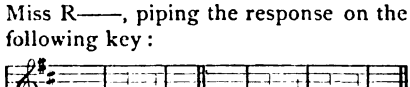
A clergyman once lived in our thriving city who was one of the best men ever vouchsafed to our fallen world: many were his virtues, and he had but one noticeable fault—an innocent vanity as to his musical abilities, which consisted of one of those mild tenor voices that require vigorous propping to keep them from falling flat, and a fair historical knowledge of music carefully gathered from books and dictionaries. This good man's hobby was congregational singing, and he commenced his reign by banishing a well-trained choir and appointing meetings for congregational practice, which at first were largely attended by the floating population, who in every city spend their time, like the Athenians of old, "in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." The young clergyman was delighted with his success, and with praiseworthy patience continued to explain the mysteries of sacred music, although his class melted away before his eyes, until at last it was reduced to a few devoted young ladies and their attendant knights, the latter strolling in toward the last, with secret thoughts of moonlight walks home

in their worldly minds. In this little band of sisters there was one for whom the pastor felt a profound admiration: fair she was and amiable, but, alas! her voice was uncertain, occasionally turning up on some very high note when least anticipated, but generally subdued to a wavering monotone about three tones below the required key. Miss R——, whose gentle breast was perhaps animated by a silent reciprocity as regards the admiration, persevered in constant attendance upon the class-meetings, and learned with great diligence all the lessons upon notes, time and cadences. Her theory was perfect and her patience indomitable: her only fault was that she had no voice, which by some of the unregenerate has been considered an impediment. One stormy Sunday evening we attended service at this church, and when the psalms were announced, the organ sounded forth one of those heavy Gregorian chants which, when uplifted by a thousand voices, rise into stern grandeur, thrilling and powerful, but when attempted by anything less than this produce an impression of a feeble man staggering and gasping under an enormous weight of ponderous notes, heavy with centuries and evidently composed for the giants who lived in the days before the Flood. The singing was antiphonal, and supposed to be congregational, but the worshipers were few, and the result was as follows. The pastor put on his glasses, cleared his throat and began on the first verse, sung in fair unison with the organ, although, as usual, half a word behind time:



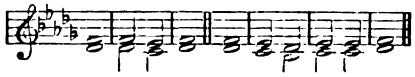
"My song shall be always of the loving-kindness | of the | Lord; with my mouth I will ever be showing thy truth from one gene- | ration | to an- | other."

Then followed the solitary voice of Miss R——, piping the response on the following key:



"For I have said, Mercy shall be set | up for | ever— thy truth shalt thou | establish | in the | heavens."

As if in sympathy with his ladylove, the pastor sang the next verse as follows:



"I have made a covenant | with my | chosen—I have sworn | unto David my | servant,"

in a tone so fearfully discordant with the organ that David must have turned in his grave with horror, and mourned for the choir of "trained instruments" and that "chief musician" of ancient fame to whose hand he could safely confide his inspired songs. So the duet went on through fifty verses of shaded discord, growing more and more intense in its agonizing wails, until at last the dismal Amen closed the exhibition and the congregational singing was over.

Brethren, whatever our faults may be, let us at least banish hypocrisy, and not stultify ourselves by asking for that "charming thing from *La Trovatore* or *Il Traviata*," nor praise the lady who has just finished the cavatina from *Semiramide* for that "sweet Scotch air, so full of pathos!" These little spots in our ears are not going to injure our fortunes or our happiness in this life, and in the next we shall lose all imperfections: it is only asked that we acknowledge their existence in ourselves and charitably excuse them in others. The mere acknowledgment will disarm criticism, and help will be freely offered from all sides, for the old world is kind in spite of her years, philosophers to the contrary notwithstanding.

Spots in our eyes are as common as motes, and the invention of glasses, with their nice adaptation to the various phases of near-sightedness, has taken away the reproach. We have no help for a slow tongue, no tonic for inert minds, and very inefficient aid for dull ears; but the eyes have keen servants to supply their failing powers and save their masters from ridicule; and that there is even grace in the delicate steel-rimmed orbs, and aristocracy in the gold-banded glasses, no observer of fashion can deny. Still, notwithstanding this, one variety of spots is obvious in the extraordinary combinations of

colors oftentimes seen in furniture and clothing, such as maroon-tinted curtains drooping over cherry carpets, or pink ribbons reposing against a Solferino dress. Who has not seen red-haired babies clothed in scarlet, and children with skin, hair and eyes all of the same pale yellow, attired from head to foot in nankeen? There is a certain type of wash-blonde that always appears in buff, and thereby produces an effect of green cheese; and, on the other hand, there is a certain class of brunettes devoted to light blue—a combination which results in mottled saffron, depressing to behold. Then come the color-blind, who describe a delicate pink robe and blush-roses as a "red dress trimmed with pink;" and if by any chance they are sent to match a shade of blue, they come home triumphantly with a deep pea-green. These are all "aggravating" people, and require to be dealt with sternly: show no mercy, but laugh them to scorn, and if they are young write out a manual of directions, such as, "No two shades of red assimilate," and "rose-color can be worn with green," and insist upon strict compliance. In this way much good can be done, and our optic nerves spared the combinations that now often endanger their health and well-being.

"The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things: behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" The inspired writer no doubt here alluded to those envious and malicious speakers who purposely try to set the world on fire, and glory in the conflagration: many and wicked are these incendiaries, and every city and village is full of the ruins of old friendships, the ashes of despoiled love and the smouldering coals of bitter hatreds produced by evil tongues. But leaving these well-known disorders, let us turn to the little spots which here, as everywhere, produce such amusing and annoying mistakes.

How many persons do we know who can never remember names, but stop in the middle of a story to search the ceiling for the names of the *dramatis personæ*, as though they were to be found written there in letters of fire! This failing, the whole family is called into requisition to discover the lost title, and "Mr. Smith" is suggested. "Oh no, my dear—how can you be so stupid? You know that Mr. Smith has gone to Europe." "Mr. Brown" is then proposed. "Brown! Of course not: he never goes to Saratoga." The youngest daughter timidly suggests "Mr. Jones." "How dull you all are! Have I not told you it was the gentleman we met at West Point last year—the one with gray whiskers and two children?" "Oh, I know — Mr. Robinson!" cries the wife, with a vague remembrance of a stout gentleman and two mischievous boys. "Nonsense, Matilda! Mr. Robinson is a bachelor and has red hair; but there is no use trying to tell a story to people who don't know anything;" and the angry Paterfamilias retires behind his newspaper, strangling the unfortunate story at its birth with grim ferocity. Now, when Materfamilias is blessed with one of these stubborn tongues, she triumphantly conquers the difficulty which vanquishes her husband, and gracefully tells you how "Mrs. What's-her-name met Somebody-or-other on the street this morning, and told them that Miss Jones had eloped with Mr. What-do-ye-call-em." In either case the audience is highly delighted with the anecdote.

A friend of mine once went to make a call: the servant opened the door and announced that the lady of the house was not at home. "I am very sorry not to see her," replied my friend: "tell her I called. I have no name." The same friend once startled a circle of visitors by declaring that nothing imparted "such an inviting appearance to a room as a cheerful fire in summer;" and at an evening party she distinguished herself by saying to the rector of the parish in a distinct voice, "Mr. Turkey, do take some more of the boned starkey."

During the war I took charge of a post-office in one of our huge sanitary fairs, and among my literary wares I was so fortunate as to procure a number

of autographs—among them, some of General John A. Dix. These last, embellished with the portrait of the venerable hero, hung outside of my window, and one day I overheard the following dialogue: "Who is this, father?" "That, my son?—oh, that is the great General Dix. When the war first broke out he gave utterance to the following sentiment, which has made his name famous wherever our noble language is spoken: 'If any man attempts to shoot up the American flag, *haul* him on the spot.'"

A curious defect in our mental organism is a certain slow apprehension of what is before us, a partial paralysis of our perceptive faculties, which, fortunately, only occurs at intervals, although it gives us while it lasts an appreciative taste of what idiocy must be. These singular spots in our minds come and go without any apparent reason, and are governed by no known rules of cause and effect, unless indeed they are the evil spirits of bygone centuries playing upon the strings of our nerves and paralyzing them with their bony fingers. Delirium and hysteria are the more conspicuous forms of this trouble, but, descending to its lighter manifestations, we find those occasional lapses of understanding which are sometimes supremely absurd. A gentleman of high intelligence was reading an account of the Prussian campaign of 1866, and chanced upon this sentence: "The Prussians were misled by a pretended guide, and suffered severe losses in consequence." After reading this phrase through several times, he laid down the paper and pondered a while: nothing coming of this meditation, he called out to his wife in the next room, "Mary, did you ever hear such a word as misled?" pronouncing it as though it rhymed with "drizzled." "No," she replied: "why do you ask?" "Because here is an account in the paper which says, 'The Prussians were misled by a pretended guide, and suffered severe losses in consequence,' and I cannot imagine what it means." "Nor I: how is it spelt?" "Why, *m-i-s-l-e-d*, of course." "*Mis-led*, John—*mis*-LED: where are your senses?"

I was playing whist one evening with some visitors, when the door opened and my aunt made her appearance, holding aloft a newspaper. "Young people, *can* you tell me what a bug-ler is?" she demanded in an earnest voice. "You mean bu*n*gler, don't you, aunt?" "No," she replied with emphasis. "I have read the same notice in this paper every evening for two weeks, and I cannot imagine what it means. Listen: 'Wanted immediately—Two good Buglers. Apply at Camp Lincoln.'" "Buglers, aunt — bu-glers," shouted the young people; and Aunt Jane retired into the shades of her apartment with dignity somewhat diminished.

These little lapses in our perceptive faculties are very curious, and give us, as it were, a glimpse into that unknown region of the brain where the soul hovers and the mind gives forth its mandates, sometimes controlling the body with iron hand, and sometimes trembling under the fiery rush of the undisciplined passions as they surge to and fro. When the mind reigns supreme all is calm within: the soul burns with a lambent flame, the reason works steadily, and all the perceptions play along the well-strung nerves with perfect precision. But, although we can understand the entire anarchy which is called insanity, we cannot explain all those strange vagaries, so slight that they merit only the title of peculiarities, and yet in themselves as decided symptoms of the state of the inner mind as the most raving lunacy.

Why is it that some persons will tell lies about the smallest trifles, apparently for no other motive than an inborn love of falsehood? Why is it that in others the mind works so slowly that hours after an amusing story has been related you are startled by a sudden laugh of appreciation, as though the point of the joke had just reached them? Who has not among his acquaintances some who cannot reason, although in other respects they are highly intelligent? Who has not noticed that many persons are

entirely incapable of appreciating the point of an argument, and literally do not know when they are beaten, but, triumphantly bringing up some assertion which has nothing to do with the subject in hand, will proclaim their victory with exultation, and, what is more astounding than all, will really believe in it?

"John is a much braver boy than his cousin Ned, husband."

"Oh no, my dear: I hardly think so. Don't you remember how he ran away from the cows?"

"But he is always very careful not to wet his feet, because he knows I do not like it; and *I* say he is a very good boy."

"Very likely, my dear, but he is not so brave as Ned, who saved his little sister from the mad dog, and who rides the most fiery horses with perfect fearlessness."

"Oh, husband, how can you say such things against John, when you know he can say the whole Catechism, and is, besides, the best scholar in his class, especially in geography?"

"I know it, my dear, and I am very glad of it. I only said that, as regards bravery, he did not equal his cousin Ned."

"Now, husband, I shall have to argue with you a little, you are always so obstinate. Did not Johnny come in immediately last night when I called him? and did not Ned absolutely refuse to obey his mother? Does not Johnny always put away his playthings before going to bed? and do you ever have to punish him as your brother is obliged to punish Ned? Answer me that, sir."

"Of course, of course, my dear, I acknowledge all that."

"I knew you would when I came to argue it with you, Mr. Smith, but I cannot imagine why you are so slow to see things as they are. Johnny is a far braver boy than Ned, and I hope I have proved it to you *now*." The husband gives it up, and exit wife, triumphant.

In addition to these phenomena, there is that startling sensation of a prior existence in remote ages, so often brought up to us by some trifling scene or event, when we feel that we are only re-living a duplicate life, with duplicate relations and friends to converse with, and duplicate houses and scenery around us—copies from the preceding originals of another world. Startling is the reality of these impressions, and we gaze about us with strange earnestness: the distant past seems present, and the present seems vaguely remote; and while we search our memories for clearer ideas, the recollection fades away, and no effort of will is able to reproduce it to our bewildered minds. The various theories which have been advanced to explain this mental problem seem wholly inadequate, from the learned doctrine of a double impression on the two lobes of the brain, down to the old wives' tale of the babies who dream over their whole future life during the first few days of their unconscious existence, and then remember portions of the dream as the reality comes along. But this mystery belongs to a vast field which stretches out before us, with its various phenomena of clairvoyance, trance and illumination, and their outward manifestations of magnetism, mesmerism and will-power. That these things are supernatural none but the credulous believe; but the laws which govern them are yet to be investigated, and possibly belong to those secrets of nature which are kept in store for the future man of genius, lest he be discouraged and sigh that there is nothing left to discover.

Are we then so spotted? Yes, brethren, we are. But for that reason we need not sit down and moan: let us be charitable to our neighbors' spots, and make merry over our own, and it will all be the same a hundred years hence.

CONSTANCE F. WOOLSON.