WANTED, A WORD.

Some years ago, long prior to his death, Horace Greeley offered a reward for a new word. The veteran journalist had become heartily weary of writing "him or her," and of speaking of a child where the sex was unknown, as "it." He wanted a new personal pronoun of common or no, or both genders. We believe that some attempts were made to claim the reward, and thus obviate one of the most annoying incongruities of our language. For instance, one proposition was to use as a compound for his or her the word "hersh." Another was to adopt the word "herm" for him or her, and others of like character were advanced. But most were lacking in euphony, few were susceptible of a case ending, and most of them were liable to be confounded. In writing, and writing with other words. C. C. Converse has lately suggested in the Celtic the word "thon," made from the words that and one, "that one," as a pronoun, singular number and common gender. He gives as an example of its use: "If Mr. or Mrs. A. comes to the Courthouse on Monday next, I will be there to meet thon"—instead of "him" or "her." At first glance, this appears to meet the demand; but Edgar A. Stevens, in the Current, points out that it will not do. Thon is very liable to be mistaken for thou in writing, and thus to lead to grave errors. Then it has no case ending. The objection of Mr. Stevens that its contraction obscures its origin we do not account weighty, for the word needed may as well be arbitrary as to have a basic root. He does not suggest an original substitute, and thus far Converse is entitled to the credit of having made a near approach to the thing desired. It must be found in perfection some day. As it now is, the complexity of words in speaking of both sexes disjunctively is very great and very annoying, and besides, the use of two pronouns with the disjunctive is destructive of all that is poetic in a sentence. Legislatures get over the difficulty by writing the laws in the masculine gender and then, by a sweeping statute, declaring that wherever in the law the masculine pronoun is used it shall be deemed to include the feminine. Stevens, however, does hold that it would be justifiable to adopt the French le, as it can be declined like the English pronoun he.