

"I assure you, it gave me no trouble. I am rather glad to be rid of the responsibility. Now, Lady Flora, please listen to me. High Cliffe has sold well—extraordinarily well. I did not depend upon it alone, as perhaps you know, so I am a rich man now."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Lady Flora, smiling faintly. She was a little surprised that the colonel should, at such a time, talk of nothing but his own affairs.

He went on, in a curiously changed voice, "You see what my position is—a solitary man, not young, whose life may be cut short at any moment. What is money to me? I should leave it, by will, to my young friends. If I wish to see them happy during my lifetime—Letty and your Percy, I mean—you would not deny me the pleasure, Lady Flora?"

"Make them happy! I don't understand," murmured Lady Flora Winstanley.

"Do you not? But it is perfectly simple. I am afraid I am telling you in a roundabout way," said the colonel. "In plain words, I have some spare cash at my bankers' after this sale—about fifteen thousand pounds, I think. I wish to settle it upon them."

By this time, Lady Flora was weeping unrestrainedly. "What is it? what is it?" said the colonel, in great distress. "I hope I have not vexed you."

"You have only surprised me," answered Lady Flora through her tears. "My dear colonel, you are a perfect baby still. You must know that this mad scheme of yours is impossible."

"Why is it mad?"

"Why is it mad?" Because no one else but yourself would think of it for a moment."

"Might not that be one reason for its being sane?" said the colonel, smiling. "But come! you and I are old friends, and I am sure, when you see how near this is to my heart, you will not oppose me. I have just one other piece of news to tell you about Letty; and then we will take Mr. Winstanley and Percy into our counsels." With that he told Lady Flora about the five thousand pounds—Letty's independent fortune—which, he said, he held in trust for her.

"It was paid over to me just before I left London," he said, "by a friend of hers who did not wish his name to appear."

"But," cried Lady Flora, in great surprise, "Letty must be a fairy changeling. Confess that this is a little fiction of yours, colonel. *You* are the friend."

"Indeed I am not," answered the colonel, smiling. "What I tell you is the simple truth. The money was paid over to me. It is as truly Letty's as if she had inherited it from her father. What her generous friend's motive was, I cannot of course pretend to say. Now, Lady Flora, shall we call Percy in?"

"But if I give my consent now——" she began.

"You will have our admiration and respect, as you always have had, and always will," said the colonel, bowing low over the hand she held out to him.

"Ah!" she said, with a deep sigh, "you can do whatever you like with us, colonel. Letty and my boy are happy in having such a friend. But I do not know, all the same——"

"Here is Percy," said the colonel. "I think I must leave him to plead his own cause. He will be more eloquent if he is alone with you."

END OF CHAPTER THE SEVENTEENTH.

## THE IMPRESSIONS OF A NOTICING EYE.

### II.—CHARACTERS IN HANDS.



UMBLES

"LET me tell your fortune now, my pretty lady," says the gipsy; "give me a bit of silver to cross your hand." "Allow me to hold your hand," says the drawing-room expert in palmistry—

"ah! here is the line of life—you will travel; you have artistic tastes; there is a surprise in store for you," &c. &c.—the likely fortune of all the fair hands that are trusted to his scrutiny. But greater than all these fancies are the real mysteries of hands.

They speak, not alone in the alphabet of the dumb, at which they play like whirligigs, but in the speech of talkers. The speaking hand is a sign of vivacity; the indolent man uses no member that he can leave quiet. Watch two Frenchmen going, talking, along the street. One keeps shaking his ten fingers out like stars, and patting the air soothingly, as if putting down imaginary

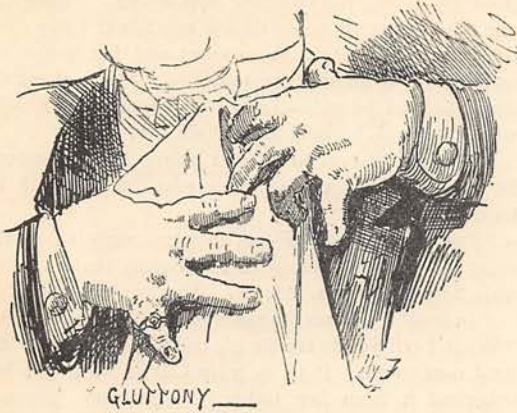
dogs; the other is threatening him frantically with clenched fists. Number Two is merely resenting that his new silk umbrella split villainously; and Number One is saying that silk umbrellas often do. Two Englishmen with such gestures would be arguing within an inch of blows—or a lawsuit—yet we, too, have our speech of the hands; it is a universal language. They



THE PARSIMONIOUS

go up in surprise; they clench unconsciously in anger; they go out in entreaty; they fold together in prayer.

No words are so natural to humanity, none so straight and quick from the heart, as this language of the hands.

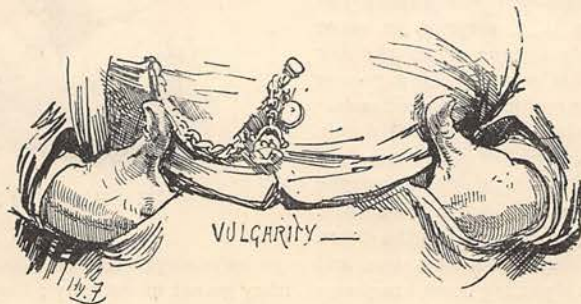


Our Oriental friends, who are of a more slow and dignified character, disapprove of the Western custom of taking hold of the precious person of an acquaintance, and shaking him for welcome. It may be more dignified to bow, but if frankness and activity be our characteristics, we like the trustful mystery of a hand-clasp. It is an index in itself. The formal and cold character offers straight fingers for an instant; the dull and apathetic lets us take hold of a hand like a dead fish; the energetic business man meets an old friend with a grip that brings the water into his eyes; the warm-hearted takes our hand and holds it. The nervous hand, with its affectionate swiftness, comes out most readily and longingly. And is there anything more natural to a reverent love than the kissing of the hand that has been bountiful in love to us? See how far we have gone among mysteries!

Character, habits, and age are the three things that are told by the hands. When he drew the character of Heep, the hypocrite—and, as schoolboys would say, “the sneak”—Dickens did not neglect this tell-tale:—“Oh! what a clammy hand his was! as ghostly to the touch as to the sight; I rubbed mine afterwards to warm it, and to rub his off. It was such an uncomfortable hand, that when I went to my room, it was still cold and wet upon my memory.” Even if it be not that of Heep, the hypocritically humble hand is apt to writhe and squeeze its bending fingers together.

The hand that little Jack Horner made sticky with his own pie in his own corner, undoubtedly became with big Jack Horner a thick-fingered puffy index of his partiality for pies and plums.

Little does the swaggerer who chinks his small change, and cocks his thumbs out of his pockets, imagine



that his thumbs and hands are as much his condemnation as the bragging seals and the chain that would anchor a ship.

The stingy man has a tight hand; his fingers keep fast hold of a sixpence, and his palm makes a careful hollow out of which it cannot roll, until he is quite sure he is obliged to part with it.

The rough and the refined hand are different with a difference like that of education in the man. The lowest extremity of roughness is the hand of brute violence—a colossal paw, of iron strength, huge with muscle, vein and sinew, but lacking all sensitiveness and flexibility—defiant in its attitudes—a human tool that has been turned into a weapon.

There are refined hands that are criminal also, but their character is the more hateful because no trace is made upon outward perfection, and their beauty is a lie. One reads in the well-cared for or, as we might say, the educated hand, not only its own refinement, but that of other generations—the ancestors who lived at leisure from bodily toil, whose muscles were not stretched by labour, whose fingers, little used, went slender to the tips, whose very finger-nails revealed easy times, by their oval shape, not pressed and worn into hard-worked diminutive half-circles.

Yet one likes the strong hand—morally strong even if it has never been tasked with physical labour; the man's hand that is not effeminate, the girl's hand that is not a pretty waxwork, but a part of a helpful



someone, who would be sweetly willing to do something for somebody else. Unless it be the weak hand of sickness, which is a most piteous sight, the hand of the weak character is not what any one cares to clasp. More and more in this world we want the hands that can do something. As Carlyle says, the first *doing* would be for many a revelation.

There is another poor hand that hopes to be like the aristocratic hand, and bases its claims—upon its gloves.

The gloves are never wanting, but they have always breaks and rubs, and corkscrews at the tips. Alas!—poor hand! it often tells sad tales.

We must not forget the mark of the highly-strung, impulsive, and sensitive temperament—the hand that will

not rest without playing unconsciously with little objects, and even wandering in search of them—perhaps

It is appalling to think of what those helpless little puff-balls have before them.

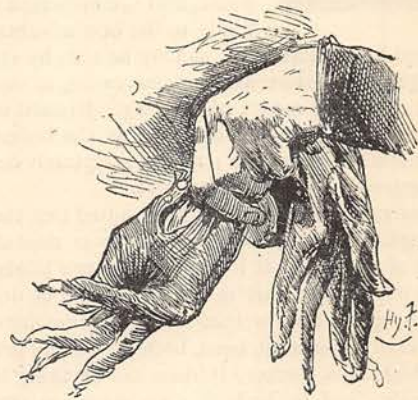
“ Oh, little hands, that, weak or strong,  
Have still to serve or rule so long,  
Have still so long to give or ask—  
I, who so much with book and pen  
Have toiled among my fellow-men,  
Am weary, thinking of your task ! ”



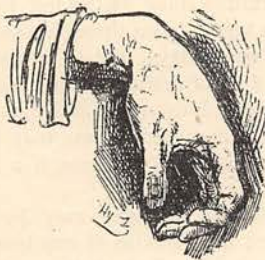
CRIME

absently taking hold of an open letter and dropping it in horror! This is quite different from the sign of awkwardness—the hands that don't know what to do with themselves.

Hands reveal habits, occupations, trades. A crop of them rises at the thought, like the show thrust up from a crowd in honour of a candidate after an election speech. There is the carpenter's, with the broad thumb, and those of the fraternity of flour, ingrained mealy, and white; the musician's, with the powerful wrist and the fingers delicate, sensitive, and agile to the last degree; the hand of the sempstress, with an honourable little bit of nutmeg-grater on the forefinger that works so hard; of the scientific man, who lectures to explain mysteries to lower mortals, and whose exactitude of touch is the image of his mental precision, while the nervous stretch of his fingers corresponds with his tension of mind.



SHABBY GENTEEL



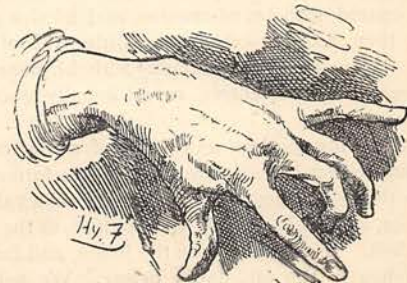
FEEBLE

The sleight-of-hand professor is a man of long fingers. A conjurer with a slow and chubby hand would betray the awful secrets of the plum-pudding that is taken from the depths of your best hat.

But besides character and trade, the hands tell the age. Soft and round, the baby's pair of puff-balls, with their fat wrists deeply ringed, appear as if they never can do anything in this world. Yet the girl's hand will become a treasure, and the boy's hand will battle with life and with his fellow-men for the mastery.

it, with an unconscious knack of caressing it in idle moments. Her dimples disappear, as the children gather to make a home circle; it is the hand of the woman now, with its very framework traceable.

Dimples, bones, and wrinkles mark the three stages of life's progress. With the wrinkled stage the steadiness of youth often remains in resolute characters. When the Duke of Wellington was a very old man, he could still fill a glass of water to the last possible drop, and hold it up steadily, brimful. The helpful



SCIENTIFIC

hands keep their youthful activity, too, far into the withering of age. And in nobly-loving natures there is a sort of immortality of youth; the warmth of affection has given more than a royal prerogative; the hand is beautiful always to the eyes that know it familiarly. The latter years only stamp it with the impress of a

longer past of tenderness, faithfulness, and bounty. It is not the "old" hand, but the "dear" hand, and it never grows older, but only more dear. He who doubts the truth of this last mystery, has not yet found out that hands, as well as hearts, have a peculiar place in our knowledge and love of one another.

### NICE DISHES AT LITTLE COST.



IN the present paper we intend simply to give the outline of a few dishes, not, perhaps, more appetising than many with which most people are familiar, but which will assist those who are anxious to avoid waste, and use up scraps of all kinds to the best advantage.

Tinned foods of all sorts, as may be seen by visiting any large grocery store, are daily increasing in number, as well as in the modes of cooking. Braised meats, for instance, are now as common as the boiled and roasted of a few years ago; and they certainly deserve more notice than can be given here.

At any rate, we may take it for granted that the prejudice against the use of tinned goods is now almost a thing of the past—at least, of the many kinds that play so important a part in the garnishing of dishes; for it is quite certain that these commodities are largely used in most kitchens, both public and private, where high-class cookery is done on anything like a large scale; and by *high-class* we mean not extravagant, but good, scientific cookery.

And, as a rule, where economy is practised in every detail, the better the cooks, and the more will the great utility of these preserved goods be appreciated.

*Macedoines* (mixed vegetables) deserve especial mention; no housekeeper who values appearances can afford to dispense with them, for it is almost impossible to enumerate their manifold uses. Being cooked, it must be borne in mind that they only need re-heating, *not* re-cooking. It will be found that their bright colours harmonise with almost any dish, but we may refer to mutton cutlets as a typical one for our purpose. We will assume that they have been nicely trimmed, egged, coated with bread-crumbs, and fried a golden brown, then finished off with a little frill of white paper. When garnished tastefully with the macedoines we have a nice hot entrée, or an equally good cold supper dish.

Or, supposing the legs and wings of a fowl or fowls are handy, either boiled or roasted; if the former, coat them with white sauce, and dot the vegetables about *in* the sauce, and make a little pile of them in the centre of the dish. If roasted, glaze the joints, and heap the macedoines in the middle as before. We will infer that the breasts of the poultry have been eaten, and any bones and trimmings will make delicious stock,

which will be found useful in concocting *croquettes*, *rissoles*, *kromeskies*, and the like. The three named all owe their foundation to a nice thick mince, so, if you have some good chicken stock, and any scraps of meat, mince it very finely, and add to it some ham or bacon, and a little tongue, if possible. Season pleasantly with herbs, salt, pepper, and a dash of lemon rind. It should be quite thick; if stock runs short, use a small quantity of good white sauce. The preparation must be quite cold before being moulded; if cork-shaped, and dipped in thick batter before frying, we have *kromeskies*; if made into balls or cakes, and egged and crumbed, then fried, we get *croquettes*; if enclosed in puff pastry, we have *rissoles*. Sometimes crushed vermicelli is used instead of bread-crumbs, and here, again, remnants come in.

We need hardly add that game of all kinds can be utilised in just the same way. The stock for the foundation should, naturally, be brown, and a little red currant jelly will improve it.

*Game Soups* are hardly as well known as they deserve to be in middle-class families, though they are very delicious. Supposing there is a dish in the larder containing the remains of a hare or pheasant, hardly presentable in its present form; just simmer it down in any gravy that may remain, to which some stock and fresh vegetables may be added to revive the flavour. When tender, pass through a sieve.

Few people, now-a-days, fail to acknowledge the convenience of a jar of extract of meat—perhaps even more useful for enriching soups and gravies than for making beef-tea; and game soups may be prepared from a very small quantity of game if a little of this extract be used.

*Boudinettes* (small sausages) may be made from almost anything; the remains of any kind of cooked fish being very suitable. Take half a pound, free from bone, and mince it small, then mix with it half its weight of mashed potatoes, and a little sauce, such as parsley, anchovy, or even plain melted butter; failing that, a spoonful or two of cream. Bind the mixture, when cool, with the yolks of one or two raw eggs, according to the quantity, and dip into the whites of the eggs, and browned bread-crumbs. Fry, and serve on pieces of fried bread. This would be a good way to use up boiled cod-fish and oyster sauce left over from dinner.

*Oyster Boudinettes* are real dainties, and here is a good method of making them:—Melt an ounce of