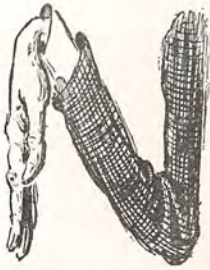


THE ART OF HAND-SHAKING.

"And here's a hand, my trusty frien',
And gie's a hand o' thine!"—AULD LANG SYNE.



NOTHING is more common than the practice of hand-shaking, and yet very few persons ever consider how much art there is, or there should be, in the custom.

So prevalent, indeed, is this mode of acknowledgment or greeting

between friend and friend, that probably not one person in ten thousand pauses for a moment to think of its significance. Nevertheless, there are not a few interesting characteristics in hand-shaking which it is the purpose of this paper to enumerate and describe.

The following are some of the more important of these:—

First: the firm, full-handed grasp, indicative of sincerity, heartiness, and true friendship. One can generally tell by the hand-shake the *quality* of the friendship. Burns has well apprehended this in the lines quoted at the beginning of the paper. A "trusty friend" is the friend most desired of all, and it is not possible to imagine the grip of the

hand of such a friend to be aught but sympathetic, hearty, and sincere.

There is an eloquence in this full-handed grasp far more thrilling than language; it is, so to speak, a kind of unspoken speech of the heart compressed into a graceful voluntary



THE "LACKADAISICAL."



"THERE IS AN ELOQUENCE IN THIS FULL-HANDED GRASP."

act, designed by Nature to be easy and simple, approved by the custom of many centuries, and adopted by all sterling men and women in greeting those whom they regard and esteem as friends.

Second: the demonstrative hand-shake, which must not by any means be regarded as next in interest and worthiness to that just described. One has always to beware of this kind of hand-shake, which may either grip like a vice, as expressive of great cordiality on the part of the "gripper," of which there may be some doubt, or it may so hold-fast and swing-about that one feels, for the moment, as if one's arm were converted into a pump-handle for the benefit of the effusive friend—anxious, perhaps, to *draw* something. It is significant of much of the pretentiousness of present-day social life that this form of hand-shaking is perhaps that most in vogue.

Thirdly: the lackadaisical hand-shake, suggestive not only of feebleness of physique,

but also of friendship. This form of hand-shaking is altogether devoid of art. It has not even the robustness of number two



“THE OBJECT OF HIS VISIT.”

to recommend it. Its chief characteristic is want of character. And yet, how common is this form! Who hasn't experienced it somewhere within the circle of acquaintanceship?

Fourthly: the lingering, trifling hand-shake. Beware of such a hand-shake. There is cunning and craft in it, and it generally belongs to an enemy. The effusive, demonstrative hand-shake may be sinister, but this is positively wicked. Avoid it as you would avoid the “fawning publican” smile of a Shylock! Happily, this form is very rare, but it may be met with. The writer remembers (with a shudder!) once “shaking hands” with an individual who brought apparently good introductory credentials with him. The hand-shake of the stranger was of this class—a soft velvety touch that somehow held the hand by a kind of fascination: a lingering, loth-to-let-you-off sort of shake that was as novel as it *wasn't* nice. After some talk—likewise of a loitering description—the stranger, rising to go, and again extending the obnoxious palm, ventured, while fascinating with his hand-shake, to elicit the loan of money which had been the object of his visit, and which object he tried literally to accomplish by the art of a species of palmistry.

Fifthly: the finger-shake. Who is not familiar with this form of insult? One, two, three, four fingers may be offered, but still they are only *fingers*! Many people (ladies are largely exempt) have adopted this

pernicious, impertinent form of hand-shaking, and that often without knowing it. There is only one effective way of curing the habit: decline the fingers, and without thanks.

A close study of the characters of those who try the finger dodge would, in most cases, discover them to be persons not remarkable for benevolence, not distinguished for courtesy or good-breeding, but well-known to be avaricious and close-fisted.

Lastly: the hand that never shakes a hand at all. Surely an inhuman hand this! It is only natural to suppose so; but, as a matter of fact, there are many otherwise excellent persons who never shake hands with any whom they may meet. Various idiosyncrasies have influenced them to withhold their hands: *i.e.*, vanity and self-conceit, moroseness and misanthropy; but such persons are for the most part what Professor Lombroso designates *mattoids*, or semi-lunatics, whose “idea” with respect to the matter of hand-shaking sometimes takes the most grotesque forms. One man, for instance, believed that all disease was contracted by hand-shaking, and that one of the great causes of epidemics could be traced to that general practice—a belief that is not altogether to be despised. In conclusion, it is amusing to imagine—if that were possible—how we would greet one another supposing that for one day only our hands were, by some extraordinary power, tied behind our backs. What an awkward predicament many persons would find themselves in! Only the man who owns the hand that never shakes a hand at all would enjoy it.

A. C.



“THE FINGER-SHAKE.”