

"BUSINESS FRIENDSHIPS."

"There is a sore evil that is done under the sun" of this Northern Hemisphere. Winter is the season of social intercourse and enjoyment; but that social intercourse partakes too much of the quality of our clear, cold, winter sunshine. The sunshine within seems to imbibe the character of the sunshine without,—light minus heat. The light of intellect is ever in the ascendancy, smart, brilliant, sparkling. Social intercourse has much *show* of cordiality, kindness, hospitality, joyousness, but it is the enjoyment of each for self—the desire to have light and to shine by it—not the warmth of love, which desires to see others enjoy—to make life a pleasure to those who have but little of their own wherewith to make it enjoyable. Would we could say that Canada is the solitary instance of this. She is not alone; but she is conspicuous. The reason is not far to seek. In a new country the compelling desire of men is to "get on," to "rise in life," as it is called. This is laudable enough, if it be the desire to broaden one's life—to radiate the good in it into the lives of others; not laudable, but devilish, if it be to rise above others by trampling them under foot, or trading on their weaknesses, faults and follies.

The struggle for existence in a climate like ours is necessarily severe. To rise to ease and comfort is a perfectly natural desire, strengthened greatly—nay, almost thrust upon us—by the terrible miseries poverty entails where the heat of summer and the intense cold of winter alike demand artificial means of protection. The temptation peculiarly ours is, therefore, to make everything subservient to this one great longing for success. Social intercourse is apt to be viewed only as a means to this end. We choose our friends or acquaintances with a view to it. We try to be brilliant in society that we may be admired and courted by those further advanced in the race for riches than we are. We sink personal likes and dislikes, because we "cannot afford them."

We want to get on—as Political aspirants. We join Political Clubs, Debating Societies, Young Men's Christian Associations, Church Literary Unions, &c., and put forth our best powers to shine at these, to sparkle with our own light, to draw attention to ourselves, rather than quietly and unostentatiously to permit the Divine Light of Truth to find entrance and exit through us that it may benefit others.

As Merchants or Traders we keep up appearances, aspire to mix on equal terms, in business and society, with those who have a solid basis to work upon, which is as yet to us only a fondly cherished dream, seeking through such intercourse to compel attention and success by *seeming* to have it. We make use of any or every means to this end. We join the most influential church, or, wiser perhaps in our day and generation, a less conspicuous one, in which we can more readily take a foremost place, and shine more rapidly and emphatically as lights of the religious world.

As young men, anxious for success in life we marry the wealthy Mr. —'s daughter, loving—not her, but the position and prospects to which she is the pathway. As young women, we marry the same wealthy gentleman's son, feeling perhaps some inward qualms of hidden contempt for him, but much respect and affection for the house, equipage, and social position which he carries in the hollow of that hand of his we so lovingly (?) clasp at the altar.

Nay, more—in so far as *credit* forms so large a part of the wealth we see around us in this country, we feel constrained, in the race for success, to choose such social connections only as will help us to acquire that Lamp of Aladdin. We *dare* not show even a slight acquaintanceship with those who are unsuccessful or obscure. We must cultivate those who enjoy credit, that we may rank with them, and inflate ourselves and our affairs with the same favouring breeze. Our sails once fairly spread and filled, we career along, compelled to keep our attention fixed on those alongside or ahead of us, oblivious of all that lag behind. We must crowd on as much sail as the foremost to be included in the race at all. Constantly and ever, in all the relations of life, we must keep our place, or—*forfeit it*.

If this is a true picture, and speaks to the experience of many among us, is it any wonder that social intercourse of all kinds is hollow and unsatisfactory—that real and enduring friendships are as few and far between as angels' visits among us? Is any real social feeling possible where each one's whole thought is bent on his own things and not on the things of others, except to his own use—when each is minding high things, and feels that he is condescending very much when he has anything at all to do with men of low estate? (We make them feel that too.)

If this is a sure way to rise in our own esteem, it is also a sure means to fall in the estimation of others—nay, to fall actually and commercially. For, though a man take care of his house, his firm, and his affairs with all the forces of his being, armed at all points, yet the moment there ariseth a stronger than he, equally well equipped for the battle of self, he will spoil his goods and bring to naught his wildest plans. Where are then all his superficial friendships? They are gone. They exist no longer. These friends loved, not *him* but *his*. That love still remains true to the *things* that it loved though transferred to the hands of that other.

It is truly a dreadful pass a nation has come to when such a spirit has attained its perfect work, and men seek to know their fellows socially only to be the better able to "gull" them and blind them to their sinister designs by the semblance of personal affection. Yet, strange to say, so deeply rooted is the belief of humanity in the *possibility* of disinterested affection, that even those who are utterly incapable of it themselves are prone to believe it *may* exist in others. Jones does not believe that Brown could love anybody else disinterestedly, yet Jones is sure that Brown has a sincere personal liking for *him*. Robinson he knows is a sneak and a toady, and more than that, a wily fellow, who "plays it on you" before you know where you are, gets you involved in his schemes, and generally contrives to get out himself, leaving you to fall into the pit he has dug; and yet, so persistent is this principle of human nature—this remnant of goodness and truth—that Jones really believes Robinson has a "sneaking kindness" for *him*—alone of all others—and would not, even if he could, take *him* in. Still, he has more confidence in his own ability to see through Robinson's "little games" than he has in his affection, till, by intelligently uniting these two forces of self-confidence, Robinson proves himself the

stronger man by playing both on his liking for him and his belief in his own extraordinary shrewdness, he "has him"—hard and fast in the mire.

It seems almost a pity that this innate confidence in the possibility of disinterested love—this feeble, yet never wholly slain longing for some one's love in which to trust fully—so persistently prevents selfishness from possessing her perfect work in the life of some man, just that we might see how utterly abhorrent a monster it produces.

But this God-given instinct—this yearning for love—never in this world wholly dies out of any man. No nation could long hold together if the bonds of friendship and mutual disinterested goodwill existed nowhere among its people. Love, friendship, kindness towards others is the one life-link along which communion with God is possible. Love is our very Life—the love of self—or, the love of others. He who loses this life of self—his selfhood—merging it in a life for others—shall find a new life springing up within him and reanimating his whole being,—a life that is properly his—life eternal. And the yearnings of that life—that love—for answering love and sympathy shall be fully satisfied for ever. Even in this world and the things of this world it shall rest on, and be sustained by, God—"God manifest in the flesh."

Cultivate friendship, then: seek social intercourse with men of high or low degree. There is some bond of union by which every man can reach his fellow-man. The dove of peace sent forth by us from the ark in which we have found shelter may roam for long o'er the troubled waters which form the inner nature, mental or spiritual, of a man who has brought this flood of evil on himself, yet sooner or later some resting place may be found, and the olive branch brought as a token, give us assurance of some sure ground on which we can meet while the flood evaporates in the consuming fire of a disinterested love.

Social intercourse is only thus rendered possible. Social life only begins when each feels assured that each esteems the other more than self, and strives to make his neighbour—not himself—show to advantage. Such a social circle of true friends is Heaven, whether in this world or the next. Try, strive, struggle to begin it here, secure at least of God's friendship and all-powerful aid; and it may be that He will grant, impossible though it may seem, that the love He enables you to give out to others may rouse such love in some fellow-man as shall make him your friend, who loves you better than self, because he has found in you something of that Divine-Humanity whose "Life was the Light of men" shining through what you have been to him. It may be that the friend you thus gain is one of the least of those whom He, the Divine Man, disdained not to call His brethren His friends, and therefore honours and blesses you with His

"FRIENDSHIP."

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF HAND-SHAKING.

(Concluded.)

Another hand-shaker whose method is intolerable, and with whom it is next to impossible to remain on friendly terms, is the one who offers you one finger instead of five, as much as to say I am either too pre-occupied in myself, or think too little of you, to give you my whole hand. With such a man the interchange of any but the barest and scantiest courtesy is rendered difficult. Friendship is wholly out of the question.

To give the left hand to the man who offers you his right, or to present the left hand for the purpose of a friendly greeting is a piece of discourtesy—sometimes intentional on the part of superiors in rank to their inferiors, and an act that no true gentleman will commit. There is no reason why it should be considered more discourteous, than it would be to kiss the left cheek instead of the right; but doubtless the custom that makes the right hand imperative in all sincere salutation dates from those early times when hand-shaking first began; and the hand that shook or was shaken in friendship was of necessity weaponless. The poor left hand, that one would think ought to be of as much value and strength as the right, just as the left foot or leg is as strong as the right foot or leg because they are both used equally, has fallen into disrepute as well as into comparative disuse, until it has become an accepted phrase to say of any proceeding that is inauspicious, artful, sly, or secretly malicious, that it is "sinister"—that is, left handed.

To shake hands without removing the glove is an act of discourtesy, which, if unintentional and thoughtless, requires an apology for the hurry or inadvertence which led to it. This idea would also seem to be an occult remnant of the old notion that the glove might conceal a weapon. Hence true courtesy and friendship required that the hand should be naked as a proof of good faith.

To be "hand and glove" with any one is a proverbial expression, of which the meaning is not obvious, though possibly it may signify such a degree of confidence, intimacy, and familiarity between the parties as to make it certain that the gloved hand is as free from an offensive weapon as the ungloved.

To refuse pointedly to shake hands with one who offers you the opportunity in a friendly manner amounts to a declaration of hostility. And after a quarrel—or act of open hostility—the acceptance of the hand offered is alike the sign and the ratification of peace.

The nations of continental Europe are scarcely so much addicted to hand-shaking as the English, while the English in this respect are far less demonstrative and apparently cordial than the Americans, who shake hands with one another from morning to night, if even the slightest excuse or opportunity arises. "Since my arrival in the United States," wrote the late Mr. Smith O'Brien, "I have been surrounded by crowds of well-wishers, whose greatest desire seemed to be to shake hands with me. In Ireland this practice does not prevail, but here it seems to be a universal custom." All travellers are equally struck with the undue prevalence of this custom, as they cannot fail to be after they have been a few days in the country. The stranger, if a man of any eminence or renown, is often introduced to forty or fifty people at a time, and to omit to shake hands with any one of them would be an act of disrespect. And even the Irish and German waiters at the great hotels expect you to shake hands with them, on your second arrival, if they happen to remember your face or name, or have received a gratuity at your hands for their previous services or attentions. And you must shake hands with the dirty as well as with the