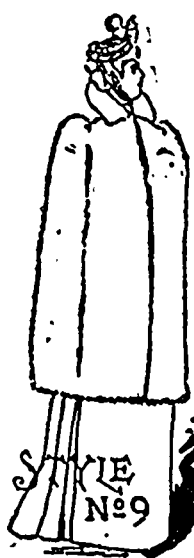


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[FOR THE CRITIC.]

SEMPER FIDELIS.

"Be thou faithful unto Death and I will give thee a crown of life."

Yes, until Death! When that is past,
When Heaven-home is gained at last,
Since all the light thy faith has won
Then shall thy days go calmly on,
All faithful still.

Oh most beloved! shrink not from strife
Which shall not mar that newer life;
And there, fulfillment's crown of all
Is this—thou never more canst fall!
Such is God's will.

MIGNON.

STRETCH IT A LITTLE

Trudging along the slippery street,
Two childlike figures, with aching feet
And hands benumbed by the biting cold,
Were rudely jostled by young and old,
Hurrying homeward at close of day,
Over the city's broad highway.

Nobody noticed or seemed to care
For the little, ragged, shivering pair;
Nobody saw how close they crept
Into the warmth of each gas jet
Which shined abroad its mellow light
From the gay shop-windows in the night.

"Come under my coat," said little Nell,
As tears ran down Joe's cheeks and fell
On her own thin fingers, stiff with cold,
"It's not very big, but I guess 'twill hold
Both you and me, if I only try
To stretch it a little. So don't cry."

The garment was small and tattered and thin,
But Joe was lovingly folded in
Close to the heart of Nell, who knew
That stretching the coat for the needs of two
Would double the warmth and halve the pain
Of the cutting wind and the icy rain.

"Stretch it a little," O girls and boys
In homes o'er flowing with comforts and joys;
See how far you can make them reach—
Your helpful deeds and your loving speech,
Pour gifts of service, and gifts of gold;
Let them stretch to households manifold.

HANDSHAKING.

The study of character, as indicated by handwriting, is largely pursued both for pleasure and for profit, experts claiming that the hidden nature of the most reserved man or woman will infallibly creep out through the finger ends and proclaim itself truly to the practised eye. The twist of an "a" or the cross of a "t" may indicate the soul of a saint or the instincts of a sinner, while in the lilliputian dotlet of an "i" may lurk a whole history of hypocrisy or honesty, kindness or cruelty. It may be so. It may be that, while the subject matter is absorbing the mind well trained by worldly wisdom to lie, the unsophisticated soul slips out in the unguarded formation of the infinite variety of curve and dash which we call handwriting. It seems, then, though the eye is the window of the soul, the hand is certainly the door from which it issues to the world, for none need be experts to recognize at once the character of man or woman when engaged in the grand old English greeting called handshaking.

The variety in handwriting may be infinite; but is it not so in handshaking? And as a means of unveiling hidden thoughts and feelings the latter test must surely be the best, for we may write in truth or falsehood and our handwriting remains the same, but if we greet with hypocrisy, our words following our wit, our hands grasp those we greet as our hearts alone command. Handshaking, therefore, whilst in general style it may serve to indicate the character, may also, by individual application, mark the true relation in which the factors stand.

Who has not felt the cold, metallic, avaricious grasp, devoid of warmth or feeling, with which your man of business welcomes you? Does not something creep out of his fingers telling you, while his voice says, "How do you do?" his heart says, "How much shall I make out of you?" Have we not all experienced the jerk of the man who simulates intense delight in the meeting, but involuntarily drops your paw as if he were afraid it would burn him? He probably owes you money, and his handshake tells you his delight in meeting you is a sham. On the other hand, though the experience is more rare, we most of us know how the grip of a friend whose heart is sincere sends a thrill through our own, and in that moment we feel he reads us as clearly and truly as we understand him. Then it is our turn to drop or retain his warm grasp as our instincts dictate. But our instincts alone are our rulers.

Again, everyone knows, or will know sooner or later, that hand shaking and love-making are inseparable. When love is in the soul does it not creep out at the finger-tips and tell its tale of gladness or woe quicker and more surely than by any other channel? Come, all you noble army of experts in handwriting, can you tell me, "Does my Phillis love me truly," though I show you a gross of her letters? And can I mistake that timid yet trustful pressure of her dainty palm as it meets mine and lingers awhile like a kiss, then drops gently away like a tear? Examples such as these prove that in shaking of hands individual relations are revealed and thoughts may be read. By a more general application this process may typify character and broad outline of soul. Old wise women tell us "a cold and a warm heart" are always accompanied. We venture to think that experience

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