

Letter of Recommendation

A letter of introduction is usually supposed to be a sure passport for the bearer to the favor of the person to whom it is addressed. But, according to the experience of Rubinstein, the pianist and composer, it is sometimes well to investigate the contents of such a letter.

When Rubinstein went to Vienna, in 1846, full of talent and hope, he took a dozen letters of introduction to prominent people in that city from the Russian Ambassador and his wife in Berlin. Vienna was the residence of Liszt, and one of the great musical centres of Europe, and young Rubinstein anticipated making many warm friends.

He made his calls, and left his letters at the houses of the people to whom they were addressed, and then waited for replies and invitations; but none came. After five or six letters had met this response of absolute silence he was utterly at a loss to understand the meaning of such treatment.

"I will see," he said, at last, "what is said about me in these letters."

Accordingly he opened one, and this is what he read:

"MY DEAR COUNTESS—To the position which we, the Ambassador and his wife, occupy, is attached the tedious duty of patronizing and recommending our various compatriots in order to satisfy their oftentimes clamorous requests. We, therefore, recommend to you the bearer of this, one Rubinstein."

The riddle was solved. The enraged pianist flung the remaining letters in the fire, and resolved to rely on his own unaided efforts to procure friends in the future.

Colors.

Science gives us interesting details about what the human eye has been, and what it may become.

The Vedas of India, which are the most ancient written documents, attest that in times most remote, but still recorded in history, only two colors were known—black and red.

A very long time elapsed before the eye could perceive the color yellow, and a still longer time before green could be distinguished; and it is remarkable that in the most ancient languages the term which designated yellow insensibly passed to the signification of green.

The Greeks had, according to the generally received opinion, the perception of colors very highly developed, and yet authors of a more recent date assure us that in the time of Alexander the Great the Greek painters knew but four colors, viz., white, black, red and yellow.

The words to designate blue and violet were wanting to the Greeks in the most ancient times of their history, they calling these colors gray and black.

It is thus that the colors in the rainbow were only distinguished gradually, and the great Aristotle knew only four of them. It is a well known fact that when the colors of the prism are photographed, there remains outside the limit of the blue and violet, in the spectrum, a distinct impression which our eyes do not recognize as a 'color.' Physiologists tell us that it is reasonable to suppose that, as the color organ becomes more highly developed, and even before the human eye becomes perfect, this outside band will evolve into a color perfectly discernible.

Spoon Lore.

In early times it was the fashion for all ladies and gentlemen to have their own spoons and spoon-cases, which they carried with them wherever they went. Two hundred years ago we find frequent mention in the newspapers of a "lost case, containing a knife, fork and silver spoon." The spoon was usually described as bearing the crest of the owner upon its handle, or a picture of the Blessed Virgin. The "apostle spoons" were a dozen of these silver implements, each containing an image of one of the apostles in relief upon its handles; sometimes with and sometimes without his name. If the name was omitted there was usually some emblem of the worthy supposed to be represented on the spoon. In case emblems were used instead of names, St. James would be attired as a pilgrim; St. Jude was usually pictured with a club, the emblem of his martyrdom, or with a boat, to show his occupation; St. Simon with a saw, because he was sawn asunder, and generally with an added oar, to show his earlier tastes.



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The use of these spoons as gifts from god-parents to god-children dates back nearly five hundred years. When the giver was too poor to present the whole twelve, he gave one spoon with the image of the patron saint after whom the child was named, or to whom he was dedicated, or who was the patron saint of the donor, not always in such cases an apostle. The images of the four evangelists were often thus used, the spoons being called "apostle spoons," although all were not apostles in the usual meaning of the word. Shakespeare, in Henry VIII., when Cranmer declares himself unworthy of being sponsor to the young princess, makes the king reply, "Come, come, my lord, you'd spare your spoons," in plain allusion to the gift expected on such oc-

casions. The earliest notice we find in print of this form of spoon is an entry on the book of the Stationers' Company, made in the year 1500. It is this entry: "A spoyn of the gyfte of Master Riginold Wolfe, all gylte, with the pycture of St. John," showing that "apostle spoons" were well-known at that early day.

Free Education.

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Gertie Girton (aged 8).—"William, I have been taught to consider it *infra dignitatem* to answer a question couched in ungrammatical language. If you care to ask me whither I am going, I shall be happy to tell you!"

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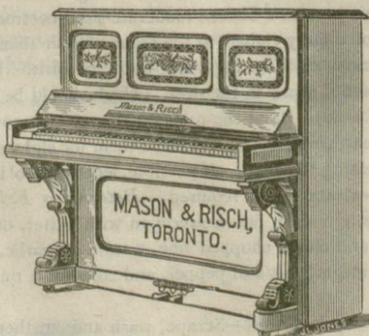
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