

THE ANTIDOTE

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SHAKING HANDS.

THERE must be very few who have not observed what a vast difference there is between people, in the way they carry out the ordinary part of salutation of shaking hands. Even the same person may vary his method according to the time and occasion, for there is a great deal of silent language expressed in a "shake." It may denote welcome, condolence, congratulation, and so forth, for each of which the pressure of a sympathetic friend speaks as plainly as words. But there are some, who either cannot, or do not care, to show sympathy, and whose hands never change in their dull monotony of their speech, if speech it can be called, which really signifies little or nothing.

Let us consider for a moment the different methods of this common form of greeting. There are men who, when they meet you, put out an open hand which encloses yours in a firm hearty grasp, accompanied by a good, but not rough, up and down shake, speaking plainly of the pleasure of seeing you, causing a feeling of gladness, though you may have been depressed previously. That is the honest friendly shake which you like to retain. Opposed to this is the hand of the man, which seems to find its way into yours in a niggardly fashion, and is withdrawn almost as soon as you take it, the clammy unclasped digits reminding you of a fish, and leaving as much warmth behind. Again there is the hand of him, who seizes yours in a vice which recalls the tortures of the historical thumbscrew, and after a steady, terrible grind, unrelieved by any shake he suddenly drops your crushed fingers, and you mentally thank heaven the ordeal is over. Then we have the man with such an exalted opinion of himself that he feels bound to patronize everyone else, and so thrusts out a couple of fingers towards you, as though he deemed it an honor for you to be noticed at all. If you have sufficient presence of mind poke out one of your fingers in return—the little one is best—when his cheap exclusiveness will be thoroughly disconcerted.

There is the warm hand and the cold hand, the moist hand and the dry hand; in fact we might fill a goodsized volume with the language of hands, but are forced to remember that our space is limited.

We must not, however, omit to say a word of the hands of those fair ones who enhance our joys and lighten our sorrows. You have doubtless all experienced the thrill of

delight when a dear little hand has been placed confidently in your own great paw, where it nestles for a brief happy moment and returns the gentle squeeze. Go to; we also, though our hairs be gray, have felt that sweet pressure, and can remember the days of our youth. Is it not always an honor to be allowed to take the hand of a pure good woman within our own? May we strive to be worthy of such and never bring disgrace upon the soft palm laid in ours.

In conclusion, we think the recent fashion of what we may call the square-elbows-over-hand-shake simply detestable. It is awkward in appearance and expresses neither warmth nor heartiness. It is not in that manner but with an honest, straightforward shake and clasp that the ANTIDOTE would welcome all its readers.

BULLS, IRISH AND ENGLISH.

IT is generally believed that for the solecism usually termed Bulls we are solely indebted to Ireland, and Miss Edgeworth's clever well-known essay on Irish Bulls is doubtless largely to be credited with the notion. It is almost impossible to name the term Bulls in the sense in question without reminding someone of the Irish Member, Sir Boyle Roche, and his famous remark about posterity,—“Why should we do any thing for posterity, for what in the name of goodness has posterity done for us?” Sir Boyle, hearing the roar of laughter which followed this blunder, but not being conscious that he had said anything out of the way, was rather puzzled, and fancied the House had misunderstood him. He therefore begged leave to explain, as he apprehended the gentlemen had mistaken his words. He assured the House that “by posterity he did not mean all our ancestors, but those who were to come immediately after them.” It is needless to say that serious business was suspended for fully half an hour after this explanation. Another of his sayings, in arguing for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland, was “It would surely be better, Mr. Speaker, to give up, not only a part, but, if necessary, even the whole of our constitution, to preserve the remainder.” Another was—“The best way to avoid danger is to meet it plump.”

A Dublin cabby being asked by his fare, “Tell me who lives in that fine house yonder,” is answered—“Sure, sir, 'tis Mr. Fitzgerald, but he's dead.” “When did he die?” asked the gentleman, scarcely able to control his laughter. “If he'd lived till to-morrow, he'd be dead three weeks.” To keep up the conversation he inquired. “What did he die of?” “Sure, sir, he died of a Thursday.”

A Kerry man who accompanied the writer and a party from Glengariff up Hungry Mountain in the summer of 1890, had a bad fall down one of the steep slopes; escaping with only a few slight bruises, he devoutly remarked on his way home, “Glory be to God that I wasn't walking back over the mountains a dead man.” The Irishman, however, has not a monopoly of Bulls. We read in one of the old English poets,—

“A painted vest Prince Voitigera had on,
Which from a naked Pict-his grandsire won.”