

The Shrug.

It has been said that the most eloquent thing in the world is silence, and nearly everyone will admit that this is, at least, nearly true. But silence, accompanied by a simple gesture—the shrug—is, if anything, just a little more eloquent. Many different races have their own characteristic shrugs, which for the most part determine some predominant trait in the race. The best known, I should say, is the Hebrew shrug. It is inseparable from selling, buying, or making a deal of some kind. Then, there are the imperious gestures of the Latin races which they use so freely in their speech. I don't know exactly how one would describe the Teutonic shrug, but there is no doubt that, at the present time, it can only be termed a shrug of dismay.

Britishers as a rule do not shrug, though often you may read in novels how the hero or heroine "gave a shrug of the shoulders." When the Britisher shrugs he expresses nothing. It is simply an action, nothing more. Since coming from France we have had abundant opportunities of studying the shrug as it is used by the people of this country. It is the most expressive thing that one could wish to see.

Tommy is not long in making the best of things when he arrives out here. Very soon he acquires a few words and phrases of the language, which enable him to get along pleasantly, though somewhat humorously in conversation. It is quite amusing to listen to Tommy and Madame. His French is limited, as also the Madame's English, and inevitably, despite the utmost exertions on both their parts, there is something which provides a stumbling block. It becomes impossible to go any further, and in answer to Tommy's last appeal, "You compree, Madam?" she is forced to answer, "No compree, Monsieur." Then she shrugs.

It is astonishing what different moods and emotions can be expressed by the simple little action. Sorrow, anger, disdain, contempt, and unbelief, can all be far more forcibly expressed than by mere words. Madame's sorrow when she can't understand Tommy's wants can be read very easily when she has at last to resort to the shrug. It seems to convey to you that she is the most unhappy being in the world, and that she would do almost anything to understand. There are few who cannot recall many instances when Madame was very "fashy," and the more "fashy" she became, the more eloquent she grew, until she reached the stage of her greatest wrath which she expressed by a shrug. Then she walked away. There was no great burst of eloquence in speech for a final summing up of her feelings. Words failed, and in their place she used the shrug. Then we knew just how "fashy" she was.

I am not of tender years, nor am I good looking, and therefore can not write of the shrug disdainful, from personal experience. Often, however, from a quiet seat in a corner of some estaminet or farmhouse kitchen have I seen it administered. There are always "knuts" in every regiment who do their best to carry on a flirtation with the hearts of Madame's daughters, and it is good to watch how they wither when Mademoiselle slowly turns away with a shrug, that implies all the scorn in her little body.

To express his contempt for anything, a Frenchman will shrug, and you will certainly know what he means. Also, if you tell him something, and he performs the same little ceremony, there is no doubt left in your mind but that he doesn't believe you.

Shrugging, like P.U.O. and other things, is contagious, and Tommy has caught it. Unknowingly to himself he has developed the art to quite an extent, so that any day you will see him use it.

What will be the effect of this shrug which Tommy has cultivated when he gets back home? Will it be as contagious to the folks back there? If the British nation develops a shrug let us sincerely hope that it will be the shrug of our French Allies.

Unnatural History.

THE BEACH: (Genus yappus). A nutty sapling. Noted for it's bark.

THE CROW-MER: A sly old bird. Nests in "windy" situations. (A case of "caws and effect").

THE TAFFYDIL: This rare plant flourishes in moist places. Kept away from moisture it rapidly droops. A great favourite with the ladies.

THE PAYMASTADON: Very rare. Good specimens, almost extinct.

THE OH SEA SERPENT: Despite the fact that it's existence is frequently denied we can give our personal assurance that it is very much alive. Dangerous at times. Anyone caught in it's coils is apt to be severely crushed.

THE CROC-A-CAR: To be found in M.T. places or close to a stream (of bad language).

THE BYESON: You can't Buffalo HIM.

THE MORRISEAL: When in good condition has a "flapper" on each side.

THE PICKLED PIPER: A bird of rare plumage. To be found amongst "reeds." Can be heard piping in some very "rum" places.

THE DONNELLYPHANT: Noted for it's large gold tusks.

THE QUARTERMELON: Plays the "juice" with you.

THE FOSTAMATO: Has a very delicate skin. If burst makes an awful mess of one.

THE MAJERAFPE: Carries chips in it's pouch. Noted for its wandering propensities.

THE ARGUEANA: The skull is much sought by billiard ball manufacturers.

THE BATMAN: Of nocturnal habits. Frequently "blind." Specimens can be preserved in spirits.

THE MOTORCYCLONE: This is easily recognisable. It being a slow moving disturbance of the atmosphere, accompanied by a loud whirring sound. Gives ample warning of approach, and emits quantities of blue smoke.

THE LIMBURNANA: Is much used in the kitchen for soups, etc. Unless properly "ripened" is very hard to "skin."

THE HAMILCHCOW: Very domesticated. If handled yields large quantities of milk.