

ON SHAKING HANDS.

The Defensive Reason Why the Right Was First Used.

Did you ever stop to think about the custom of shaking hands and wonder why it is that we always shake the right hand? Probably you have never thought about it at all or if you have you think that the only reason for using your right hand is that you were taught not to use your left one, says the Buffalo Courier. In reality this custom, now so common, is a very ancient one, and it originated in this way: In the days when people were not so peaceable as they now are and when each man settled his quarrels in his own way every man carried a sword or dagger to defend himself. This sword was worn on the left side, where the right hand could quickly grasp it for use in time of peril. Therefore when a man wished to show that he was friendly he extended his right hand, which would be clasped by the other's right hand if he, too, meant peace. Thus each could be sure that the other would not draw his sword. With the dawn of more peaceful times the custom lost its one time purpose, but it still retains its original meaning—to show friendship.

Atmosphere of Ceylon.

When visitors enter Horticultural hall, in Philadelphia, they pant. The heavy air, stagnant and warm and moist, oppresses their lungs. But the tropical plants in the hall would die without this kind of air, and a man said of it the other day: "It is very much like the air of Ceylon. Ceylon has just such a heat, and just such a crushing, prostrating humidity as this. Do you know that every European house out there has among its servants a clothes airer—a man whose sole duty it is to air and beat the clothes, which otherwise would become covered with a thick white coat of mildew in a few hours? I took a hundred and fifty dollar camera with me to Ceylon. The dealer had warranted the wood to be perfectly seasoned, but I had not been in the island a week before my camera had warped and fallen apart. The Ceylonese, in their horrible climate, are healthy because they eat no meat and drink only water."

Reverence For the Beard.

Former reverence for the beard is well illustrated by the story told of Sir Thomas More, who was beheaded for denying the supremacy of Henry VIII. His usual cheerfulness did not forsake him even on the scaffold, "Help me up," he said to one standing by; "for my coming down let me shift for myself." As he laid his head on the block he begged the executioner to wait a moment while he carefully placed his beard out of reach of the ax, for, he said, "it hath not committed treason," which reminds one of the story of Simon Lord Lovat, who the day before his execution on Tower hill bade the operator who shaved him be cautious not to cut his throat, as such an accident would cause disappointment to the gaping crowd on the morrow.

At a Quaker Wedding.

No clergyman is needed at a Quaker wedding because the happy principals perform the ceremony themselves. This is the formula repeated by the bridegroom at a recent wedding, "Friends, here in the presence of the Lord and in the divine presence I take this, my friend, Edith Mary Hanbury Aggs, to be my wife, promising in the fear of the Lord and with divine assistance to be her faithful and loving husband." The bride repeated a similar declaration, the certificate of marriage was signed by witnesses, short addresses from Scriptural texts were made, prayers were offered, and the ceremony was ended.

Japanese Fans.

Though the Japanese folded fan is a common object in this country, little is known of its manufacture. One of the largest factories is at Kioto, where an average of 3,000,000 fans yearly are turned out. Spain is the principal customer for the Kioto fans, Italy coming next in importance and then the United States and Mexico. The fans are not at all easy to manufacture, as eight different workmen are required to make a single frame, while before the fan is finished it has to pass through the hands of ten people.

Hard on the Father.

A little girl three years old who is very fond of music has a father who cannot distinguish one tune from another. However, she is always urging him to sing. He was trying his best to please her with a hymn one day and flattered himself that he was doing very well. Suddenly the little tyrant turned upon him and demanded: "Why don't you sing, daddy? You're only making a noise."

Not Keeping Up.

Mr. Upjohn—I wish you would tell Kathleen she cooks her steaks too much. Mrs. Upjohn—You are three girls late, John. The name of the present cook is Mollie.

Friends on an airship voyage should never fall out.—Chicago News.

On Skates in Holland.

The average Dutchman of the south of Holland, though he can skate very well, looks rather foolish on the ice. His short legs and wide breeches are admirable adjuncts to his nose, his thin cocked beard and the lumpishness of his expression. To be sure, this breadth makes him look important, but if he were less muscular it would be a sad hindrance to him in battling with the wind, which in winter is apt to make skating in one direction something of a trial. The Frieslander, however, is taller, better proportioned and in all respects a handsome fellow. The yellow beard he sometimes wears seems to put him at once on a footing of affinity with the other members of that respectable Anglo-Saxon family to which we ourselves belong, quite as much as his provincial speech and his blue eyes. He is a most masterful creature when once he has put on those quaint old fashioned skates of his, and thinks nothing of making a score of miles from one village to another before you and I are out of bed. As for the cold, what cares he for it? He knows he must rely on that lusty circulation of his to keep him from being benumbed, though he clothe ever so lightly, and seems more regardful of his head—which a sealskin cap takes care of—than of his well shaped body.

Boiled Down.

An amusing story is told of the editor of a go-ahead London evening newspaper, who, in the eternal rushing to press to get ahead of the opposition, was constantly impressing upon his reporters the necessity for condensing all news. A terrific boiler explosion had taken place on board a big ship lying at Portsmouth. "Get down there as hard as you can," he said to one of his men. "If you catch the 11:40 from London bridge, you'll be there soon after 2 and can just wire us something for the fifth edition, but boil it down." And the reporter went. Soon after 3 o'clock that afternoon they got a wire from him: "Terrific explosion. Man-o'-war. Boiler empty. Engineer full. Funeral tomorrow. No flowers."—London Tit-Bits.

A Primitive Postoffice.

Until a short time ago a very peculiar postoffice was used in Argyllshire, England. It was situated in the lonely hills between Drimmin and Barr, three miles from any habitation, and consisted of a simple slit in a rock, closed up by a nicely fitting stone. When any letters arrived at Drimmin for the district of Barr, they were conveyed to the rock by the first shepherd or crofter going so far. Having been dropped in and the slit reclosed, they were left until a shepherd or crofter from the other side happened to come along, when they were taken up and delivered at their destination. No letter was ever known to be lost at this primitive postoffice.

Got the Wrong Flag.

A retired naval officer took holy orders and became rector of a country church. His parishioners, wishing to give him a surprise, subscribed among themselves and bought a naval flag for the church tower. Directly the old gentleman saw it he flew into a violent rage and ordered it to be taken down at once. One of his parishioners asked him why he did not like it. "Allow that flag to fly on my church tower? Never! It's an insult! Do you know what that particular flag signifies, sir? It means, 'In distress; want a pilot!'"—London Standard.

A Cross Parent.

"Mother," said a little girl, looking up from her book, "what does 'transatlantic' mean?" "Oh, across the Atlantic, of course. Don't bother me." "Does 'trans' always mean across?" "I suppose it does. If you don't stop bothering me with your questions, you'll go to bed." "Then does 'transparent' mean a cross parent?" Ten minutes later that little girl was resting on her tiny couch.

Needed Time to Settle.

Landlord (to tenant)—Good morning, sir. Fine day, sir. Just called round to see if it would be convenient to settle your quarter's rent. "Do you know, landlord, that none of the doors in this house will shut?" "New house, sir. New house, you know, takes time to settle." "Ah, then, there's a pair of us. I'm a new tenant. It takes time for me to settle too. Good morning. Call again."

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The Jellyfish.

The bay of Naples abounds in meduse or jellyfish, often growing as large as two feet in diameter and weighing fifty and sixty pounds. Some of them shine at night with a greenish light and are known as "noctiluca" (night lanterns) by the natives. The jellyfish sometimes make migrations in great groups, sometimes so large and so thick as to impede the navigation of vessels, like the floating plants in the Sargasso sea of the tropics. These shoals of meduse, as they are called, may be so dense that a piece of timber plunged in among them will be held upright as if stuck in the mud, and ordinary rowboats cannot force their way through them. Their migrations have never been explained. They are irregular and occur at no particular season of the year and under no particular influences.

What Some Names Mean.

The following gives the meaning of the names of the principal highland clans in Scotland:
McIntosh, the son of the First.
McDonald, the son of Brown Eyes.
McDougall, the son of Black Eyes.
McDonnechy or Duncan, the son of Brown Head.
McGregor, the son of a Greek man.
McCuithbert, the son of the Arch Druid.
McKay, son of the Prophet.
Campbell, Crooked Mouth.
Cameron, Crooked Nose.
Stewart, His Stay or Support.

A Correction.

When President Blanco's administration in Venezuela was overturned, that official, who, report said, had accumulated great wealth while in office, went to Paris. He was strolling in a boulevard in the French capital when a passing pedestrian arrested the pace of his companion and said: "See that man? He stole \$3,000,000 when his government was overthrown." Quick as a flash Senor Blanco turned. "Beg pardon, sir," he said icily, "but it was \$5,000,000."

A schoolteacher in Frome, England, sent this to the father of one of his pupils: "I beg to inform you that in my opinion your son is suffering from myopia, and his case requires prompt attention." The next day the boy brought back this written request: "Mister, please knock it out of Jim, as I ain't got time."

The Samoan Language.

Speaking of the flexibility of the Samoan language, Mrs. Isobel Strong says that the little word "ta" means: I, we too, to beat with a stick, to play on a musical instrument, to prove, to tattoo, to open a vein, to wash clothing by beating and to turn a somersault.

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