

USE THE RIGHT HAND

A PREFERENCE THAT IS SHOWN IN NEARLY EVERYTHING WE DO.

In Mechanics, at Table and in Games It is the Rule—The Buttons on Our Clothing—Customs That Recognize the Superiority of the Right.

The other day, on offering to shake hands with a self possessed "young gentleman," I received from him the left hand for salutation, and his revered parent instantly remarked, "That is the wrong hand." Before I had well gotten out of my mind the thoughts stirred up by this expression, I saw a carpenter driving nails with his left hand in the most easy going fashion. There are left handed players in the baseball field, in the cricket field and in the tennis court, and it is curious to note the changes made in the disposition of the "field" in the first two cases and the evident discomfort of the other players in the third case. We may even see left handed gunners in the sporting clubs, but the bystanders instinctively draw back when one appears on the line, as if they were afraid that the weapon held in the left hand might shoot round the corner.

These things, and many others of like kind, are considered abnormalities, for men and women are supposed to be normally right handed and not left handed. There are, however, some marked inconsistencies, as, for instance, that we must hold our knife in the right hand and not eat with it, but with the fork held in our left, while a spoon must be held in the right hand, and the soup conveyed to the mouth by that, for every eye at the table would be turned on a person who ventured to use the spoon in the left hand.

The results of the prevalent right handedness of man are shown in many curious ways. If we look at dress, we find that a man's buttonholes are on the left, while the buttons are on the right. "A man in buttoning grasps the button in his right hand, pushes it through with his right thumb, holds the button-hole open with the left and pulls all straight with his right forefinger. Reverse the side and both hands at once seem equally helpless." Not very long ago the buttonholes and buttons of women's dress were on opposite sides to those of men. It may be so to a large extent even now, but I am told on very good authority that with the introduction of tailor made dresses the old rule is going out of vogue. If so, this last badge of masculine superiority is doomed, and the future man will have but little difficulty in donning the coat of the new woman. A man generally carries his loose cash in his right hand pocket in order that he may reach it with ease. His pocket handkerchief is placed in the right pocket of his "sack" coat if low down, in the left breast pocket if higher up for a similar reason. His railway ticket and nickels for car fare occupy a middle position on the right hand side, in order that they may be "handy." A soldier wears his sword on the left for convenience; the driver holds his reins in the left hand, while the right carries the whip as his weapon of offense.

The right hand is the seat of honor at banquets and ceremonies, and the phrase has come into use for the post of dignity in matters both sacred and secular. We hold out the right hand of fellowship, not so much perhaps from any sense of its superiority as because in days gone by it was found that if it was extended in greeting it could not be used to grasp the sword and thus give an unforeseen blow.

In the way of tools, screws are made to be turned by the right hand, and that useful article at picnics—a cork-screw—is fitted for dextral and not sinistral use. Clocks and watches run round from left to right, as the sun appears to do, although the earth, whose time they are keeping, is so perverse as to move from right to left.

In walking down the street we keep to the right hand, and that is the rule of the road in driving, as well as the way in which trains move along the track.

When we come to angry matters become mixed up. The Romans held that a lightning flash from left to right was propitious, while one from right to left was unfavorable. It may have been because, as the lightning was supposed to be hurled by Jove, from left to right would be the way in which it would be seen if the Deity had his face toward the suppliant, but if Jove turned his back on the watchers the lightning hurled by his right hand would move from right to left.

But why is there this difference in our hands at all? The truth is, our bodies are one sided. The heart is, after all, a very important item in a man. An injury to it is fatal. Hence even savage man found out that he had to defend it and devised the plan of covering the region of his body where it is located with a shield. Blows, therefore, were struck by the right arm, and soon right handedness followed. With frequent use in this way followed adaptability in other ways, and as each generation of the imitative genius followed not its own bent, but the practices of its predecessors, right handedness became the mark of the individuals, and, although there might be less necessity for striking blows with each generation, the right hand did not "forget its cunning." Civilization has adopted the principle as a law of polite society, and therefore to be right handed is right, to be left handed is wrong. I must cut my food, write my letters, greet my friends and do a thousand other things with my right hand. In the main, I must tell the truth, for that is right; but, according to a certain phrase of the code, I may tell an untruth if I qualify it by the phrase "over the left."

—Philadelphia Press.

Suggesting a Remedy.

New Woman—Husband, I need a change. The doctor said my life is too monotonous. I need excitement.

Husband—Try staying at home.—London Tit-Bits.

Patti and Her Price.

Of course in this matter of money and music no one needs to be told at this time of day that Mrs. Patti is far and away the best remunerated artiste in the world. Patti was the first prima donna who demanded in Paris a nightly salary of 10,000 francs. When it was conceded to her, her rivals preferred the same claims, so that, to keep her supremacy in the operatic market she persistently raised her price to 15,000 francs, which sum she received for each of the three concerts she gave in one week at the Eden theater. And yet Patti began modestly enough. When she made her debut in London in 1862, she was engaged for five years at a salary of £150 a month for the first year, £200 for the second, £250 for the third, £300 for the fourth and £400 for the fifth year, the lady to sing twice a week.

Until her marriage to the Marquis de Caux, Patti never received from Covent Garden more than £120 per night. Considering that the diva gets £800 per concert in London, and that an American contract recently gave her a minimum salary of £1,200 per night, plus expenses and half of all the gross receipts over £2,400, times have undoubtedly changed. During the last 10 or 12 years Mrs. Patti's annual average has been about £40,000. To the non-professional mind this may seem out of all proportion to the value given and received.—Chambers' Journal.

The Valleys of Madagascar.

No great faith is expressed by General Duchesne in the future of railways in Madagascar. "The road built by the French military engineers from Majunga to Andriba was," said the general in conversation with our Paris correspondent, "child's play compared with the difficulties of the country through which the French had to go at an almost running pace. I had taken with me officers of the engineers to survey the country for a military railway, but when they saw the difficulties they gave it up. It looks very easy on a map to go up the valleys, but Madagascar valleys are not like those of other countries. They shrink into gorges and are cut up by mountain ranges. The whole country is a maze, and yet the west road is comparatively easy when compared with the east one from Antananarivo to Tamatave. The latter defies description. I was taken down to Tamatave in a litter by active porters. I cannot make out how we came to our journey's end. Your porters take you through quagmires, tumble down sheer cliffs and push through tangled forests. They cling to the boughs of trees like monkeys and balance themselves on rocks. I am bound to agree with travelers' good opinion of the climate, once you are through the fever zone. I never felt better than on the plateau."—London News.

Anybody Fit For Anything.

In one of his letters to Motley, John Stuart Mill, that English friend of the United States, deploring "the fatal belief of your public that anybody is fit for anything." This optimistic conceit was no doubt developed by the practice of the earlier Americans, who turned their hands to anything, and, thanks to the bounty of a virgin continent, generally with good results. But progress has given rise to specialization, and the American, like the European, has become a specialist. He is learning to do one thing well.

Already the "fatal belief" deprecated by Mill has disappeared from business where it means ruin and bankruptcy, and from manufacturing and transportation where it means arson and murder. But it still survives in our administration of public affairs, where the evil consequences, though greater, are not so strongly felt, because they are less personal, less tangible and more widely diffused. I hesitate to say that anything is or could be worse than our unformed civil service, yet I suspect the baneful character of what Mill calls that "fatal belief" is most strikingly revealed in our administration of education.—Forum.

Tanning.

The most recent and expeditious process in tanning, according to The Revue Scientifique, consists in passing a current of hydrogen gas or a current of some gaseous compound of hydrogen containing a certain quantity of arsenic through the liquid in which the hides are immersed. The hydrogen is obtained either from the action of commercial sulphuric acid upon zinc or iron or from that of steam upon iron, the calculation being, in fact, that in this case the hydrogen obtained will contain a sufficient quantity of arsenic. The gas, collected under pressure in a gasometer, is introduced into the bottom of the tanning vat through a pipe provided with a series of apertures, and after bubbling up through the liquid it flows out through another pipe affixed to the cover of the vat. Vats of very large dimensions are employed, and the tanning proceeds very rapidly.

Humors of Examinations.

In dealing with immature minds, one should be careful to say what he means. A little boy in the course of his reading lesson came to the word "widow" and called it "window," a word more familiar to him. The teacher, who was acting as examiner, corrected the blunder, and then, wishing to improve the occasion, put the question, "What is the difference between 'widow' and 'window'?" The boy's answer began, "You can see through a window, but"—and then stopped. The amusement plainly visible on the teacher's face prevented this miniature Sam Weller from completing the contrast.—Blackwood's Magazine.

Friendship hath the skill and observation of the best physician, the diligence and vigilance of the best nurse, and the tenderness and patience of the best mother.—Lord Clarendon.

Jewelers in New South Wales receive \$22.80 a week, in Switzerland \$4.55, in Germany \$5.91 and in France \$5.24.

SUGAR MAKING IN CUBA.

The Crude Methods That Were in Use Twenty Years Ago.

Twenty years ago, in those times of slavery and high prices, but little attention was given to machinery or engineering. Planters were content to get what tonnage of cane they could from an acre of land.

The cane was brought to the sugar house, where the laborers slowly put it on the carrier, passing it to the mill, where it was rolled or ground between the rolls of a three roller mill to extract the juice, getting an extraction of 55 per cent out of a possible 85 or 88 per cent of the whole weight in the cane.

The cane was brought to the sugar house "train," which was a set of four or five kettles set in brickwork, having a strong fire under the smallest or "strike" kettle. The flames passed under and around all the kettles, the unconsumed gases escaping through a chimney. The combustion was so imperfect that at night flames could be seen many feet high, coming from the top of the chimney.

The largest of these kettles received the raw juice, and there it was limed and skimmed as the impurities rose. It was then ladled to the next kettle in succession, each time being thickened in density and reduced in bulk by evaporation until it arrived at the "strike" kettle, where a skilled attendant knew the exact point at which to stop the fire and ladle out the mass into the crystallizing pans, in which it was allowed to cool.

In a few days it was firm enough to be taken out, placed in hogsheds and allowed to drain in the storehouses, losing at least one-sixth in dripping molasses. The hogsheds were then repacked and placed on carts and drawn many miles to the railroad for shipment to the merchants' stores at the seacoast, where they were again allowed to drain, were repacked, reweighed and sold, thus piling up an expense account that made the profits look slim; but, as sugar was selling at a high rate, these expenses could be borne.—A. W. Colwell in Cassier's Magazine.

International Arbitration.

The real obstacle in the way of international arbitration is not so much a lack of efficacy in the method as the lack of a disposition to try it. The system of arbitration necessarily presupposes that nations desire an amicable adjustment of their differences. Such an adjustment may be prevented either by a willful opposition to it or by the adoption of a style of controversy that will render argument impracticable. Against such obstacles it is difficult to contend, since their direct tendency and effect is to bring about a collision before an arbitrator can intervene. It is obvious that arbitration can no more afford an absolute safeguard against such contingencies than can a system of municipal law absolutely prevent men from attempting to settle their differences by fighting in the street, if they desire thus to revert to primal conditions. Yet severe penalties, strictly enforced, may reduce such chances to a minimum, and it is conceivable that a scheme of international action might be devised so comprehensive as to render a resort to war exceedingly difficult and hazardous.—"The Possibilities of Permanent Arbitration" in Century.

Social Life Long Ago.

The stately dames of the court of Edward IV rose with the lark, dined at 11 a. m. and retired to rest at 8 in the evening. Henry VIII went back to 10 in the morning for dinner and had supper at 4. In Queen Bess' days her maids of honor began the day with a round of beef or red herring and a flagon of ale for breakfast at about 6:30 and dined at 11, and then went to the playhouse in the afternoon, not later than 2, sometimes as early as 12:30, according to the order of the play and the day.

One Correct Answer.

An amusing little story was told a good many years ago in connection with Governor Mattox of Vermont. At one time he was chairman of the committee appointed to examine candidates for admission to the bar of Caledonia county.

He reported that one of the candidates was, in his opinion, unqualified, having answered correctly but one of the questions put to him.

"Only one? Well, what was that?" asked the presiding judge.

"I asked him what a freehold estate is," replied Mattox.

"Important question," said the judge. "And what was his reply?"

"He made it without the least hesitation," said the chairman, with a twinkle in his eye. "Of course that fact is in his favor."

"Well, what did he say?" asked the judge, with some impatience.

"He said, 'I returned the chairman, "that he didn't know."—Youth's Companion.

Those Monotonous Sonnets.

She (gushing to the literary lion)—Oh, Mr. De Retre, I did so enjoy that last volume of yours—that "Little Book of Sonnets," you know.

He—Thank you. I am glad that you enjoyed them. But haven't you any helpful criticism for me?

She—Well, don't you think if you had made them different lengths they wouldn't have looked so monotonous?—New York Journal.

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