

CHARM OF MANNER

A gracious gift the two races—Irish and French—undoubtedly have in common is charm of manner (writes Miss Susan Gavan Duffy, in 'Donahoe's Magazine.') This charm, though it exists all along the line, is only to be found in perfection at the two extremes of society, for the vast middle class, naturally most in evidence, has not wholly escaped the taint of vulgarity and aggressiveness which has everywhere invaded model manners. But I hold that those quite delightful people, well-bred men and women of French or Irish birth, are as a rule so tactful, courteous and genial, that they are fitted without any special training to take their place in diplomatic circles; so certain are they to always say the right thing in the right way, to steer clear of embarrassing subjects, to conciliate and win over the people with whom they have dealings, and to make social-intercourse run on pneumatic tires. Indeed it seems to me, prejudiced woman that I am, that a French or Irish grandmother is a luxury no good old English family can afford to deny itself, as the sweetness and light she will have bequeathed to her descendants, will, without undermining the national character, add a piquancy and zest which will probably have been omitted in the pate of which they were originally formed. Let any one count up the brightest and most lovable of their English friends, trace back their descent a generation or two, and see if it does not lead to this sprightly grandmother. Just a modification of the universal axiom, *Cherchez la femme!*

ODDS AND ENDS

I want a hat, don't you know!' said a stylish young man.

'Yes, sir,' replied the hatter; 'what sort?'

'Oh, something to suit my head, don't you know!'

'Here, James,' cried the hatter, 'show this gentleman some soft felts!'

Mrs. Nexdore: 'A piano's a nice thing to have; so comforting. My daughter finds it so easy to kill time on—'

Mrs. Pepprey: Yes, but why does she torture it so?'

FAMILY FUN

The Prisoner Released.—Place a sixpence in the bottom of a glass, and over the latter put a half-crown. The puzzle is to remove the small coin from beneath the larger one, without touching either of the coins, or touching or upsetting the glass. To do this capital trick you must blow with considerable force down one side of the glass upon the edge of the half-crown. The sixpence will be expelled by the force of the air, and will fall upon the upper surface of the half-crown or upon the table. A little practice will render the performance of this feat very easy.

The Double Meaning.—Place a glass of any liquor upon the table, put a hat over it, and say: 'I will engage to drink the liquor under that hat, and yet I'll not touch the hat.' You then get under the table, and after giving three knocks, you make a noise with your mouth as if you were swallowing the liquor. Then getting from under the table, you say: 'Now, gentlemen, be pleased to look.' Some one, eager to see if you drank the liquor, will raise up the hat, when you instantly take the glass, and drink the contents, saying, 'Gentlemen, I have fulfilled my promise. You are all witnesses that I did not touch the hat.'

Pleasing Optical Appearance.—If a soap-bubble be blown up and set under a glass, so that the motion of the air may not affect it, as the water glides down the sides and the top grows thinner, several colors will successively appear at the top, and spread themselves from thence in rings down the sides of the bubble; till they vanish in the same order in which they appeared. At length a black spot appears at the top, and spreads till the bubble bursts.

The thinnest substance ever observed is the aqueous film of the soap bubble previous to its bursting; yet it is capable of reflecting a faint image of a candle, or the sun. Hence its thickness must correspond with what Sir Isaac Newton calls the 'beginning of black,' which appears in water at the thickness of the seven hundred and fifty thousandth part of an inch.

All Sorts

The consumption of tobacco in Great Britain has increased a little more than a third in fifteen years.

In 1900 there were 109 concerns in the United States manufacturing automobiles, with an investment of £1,000,000. In 1905 about £8,000,000 was the investments in plants.

The baby of the family was showing a group of admiring relatives how high he could kick. As he always used his right foot, one of the aunties asked him: 'Can't you kick with your other foot?' 'Course not,' was the answer; 'I've got to stand on that one.'

After Willie had put on his shoes in the morning he complained of their hurting his feet. His mother looked at his shoes and said, 'Why, Willie, you have them on the wrong feet.' Willie began to cry. 'Well, mamma, they're the only feet I've got,' he said.

Russia has just taken the delivery of the first of several hundred war automobiles ordered from a French concern. A Hotchkiss rapid-fire gun is mounted on a rear turret, and the gunners are screened and look through loopholes. Two steel rails are carried, which can be quickly unshipped and placed over a ditch.

A parvenu, noted for his violent temper, said to a painter: 'I want you to come to my house, for I have just bought a picture by Rubens. It is a rare one. That fool Dauber says it's a copy. A copy! If any man living dares to say it's a copy, I'll break every bone in his body. Now I want you to see it and give me your candid opinion.'

The United States has become the greatest coal-producing country of the world. The production of American coal in 1905 was 392,919,341 tons. In 1904 the production amounted to 351,816,398 tons. The year's tonnage increased 11.7 per cent. and the value 7.3 per cent. The total number of men and boys employed was 626,124, against 593,693 in 1904.

A statistical paper on India shows that in 1904 there were killed in that country by snakes and wild beasts 24,034 persons—21,880 by snake bites, 796 by tigers, 399 by leopards, and the rest by other animals. The number of cattle killed was 98,582. The other side of the account shows that 65,146 snakes and 16,121 wild animals were killed.

Some years ago a battery of artillery was at big gun practice at Bermuda. One of the guns (a 38-ton) was found to have a serious flaw. The officer in charge, not caring to risk half a dozen valuable lives, inquired: 'Sergeant, have we any time-expired men here?' 'Yes, sir,' answered the sergeant, 'John Jackson has just completed his time.' 'Well, then,' replied the thoughtful officer, 'John Jackson will fire the gun.' And John Jackson did fire the gun, happily with no fatal result.

Strikes increase in number every year in Germany. As shown by the published statistics, the average number of strikes for the years 1899 to 1903, inclusive, was 1242; in 1904 it rose to 1870, and in 1905 to 2057. Of much significance is the increasing number of lockouts, which show that combination among employers is also developing. The number of lockouts, which averaged only 42 for the period 1899-1903, rose in 1904 to 120, and in 1905 to 200. It is expected that the figures for 1906 will show a further increase.

The Mexican Government is seeking to develop the cultivation of bananas in that country. For some years past experiments have been made with a view of converting the fruit into a flour for food purposes. These experiments are said to have been successful, and it is intended to start two establishments on the Gulf coast in Mexico for the purpose of converting the banana into a flour, and of shipping the product to the United States. As the flour is exceedingly nutritious, it is anticipated that there will be no lack of demand for it.

Here is a story of Lord Kitchener's recent tour along the defences of the Indian frontier. He visited one place where a new fort had just been erected. When he got there, Kitchener was astonished to find that the fort had been so erected that it was easily commanded from a high hill close by. The officer who had been in charge of the erection, and who had selected the site, was present with the party, and Kitchener called him forward. Instead of the outburst that the staff expected, Kitchener merely held out his hand and said, 'I congratulate you, Colonel—! What a capital place for a fort! When do you commence to remove the hill?'