

Tucholsky Wagner Zola Scott
Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen
Weber Freiligrath Frey
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Kant Ernst Richthofen Frommel
Engels Fielding Hölderlin Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliasberg Eliot Zweig Ebner Eschenbach
Feuerbach Maximilian I. von Habsburg Fock Ewald Vergil
Goethe Elisabeth von Österreich London
Mendelssohn Balzac Shakespeare Rathenau Dostojewski Ganghofer
Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Doyle Gjellerup
Mommsen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff
Dach Thoma von Arnim Hägele Hanrieder Hauptmann Humboldt
Karrillon Reuter Verne Rousseau Hagen Hauff Baudelaire Gautier
Garschin Defoe Hebbel Hegel Kussmaul Herder
Damaschke Descartes Schopenhauer Bebel Proust
Wolfram von Eschenbach Darwin Dickens Grimm Jerome Rilke George
Bronner Campe Horváth Aristoteles Voltaire Federer Herodot
Bismarck Vigny Gengenbach Barlach Heine Grillparzer Georgy
Storm Casanova Lessing Langbein Gilm Gryphius
Chamberlain Schiller Lafontaine Iffland Sokrates
Brentano Strachwitz Claudius Schilling Kralik Bellamy Gerstäcker Raabe Gibbon Tschechow
Katharina II. von Rußland Löns Hesse Hoffmann Gogol Wilde Vulpus
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern Gleim Goedicke
Roth Heyse Klopstock Puschkin Homer Kleist Mörike Musil
Luxemburg La Roche Horaz Kraus
Machiavelli Kierkegaard Kraft Kraus
Navarra Aurel Musset Lamprecht Kind Kirchhoff Hugo Moltke
Nestroy Marie de France
Nietzsche Nansen Laotse Ipsen Liebknecht
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz Ringelntatz
von Ossietzky May vom Stein Lawrence Irving
Petalozzi Platon Pückler Michelangelo Knigge Kock Kafka
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The Ladies' Vase Polite Manual for Young Ladies

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THE
LADIES' VASE;
OR
POLITE MANUAL
FOR
YOUNG LADIES.
Original and Selected.
BY AN
AMERICAN LADY.
EIGHTH EDITION.

PREFACE.

So many volumes have already appeared before the public, similar in character to this little work, that it is with feelings of diffidence we bring our humble offering, especially when we consider the rich merit possessed by many of its predecessors. But our apology must be found in the fact that these publications are, from their size, and consequent expense, inaccessible to many of the class whose improvement they are so well adapted to promote. Considering the formation of female character and manners a matter of inestimable importance, especially at the present age, swayed as it is by moral [iv]rather than by physical force, we have carefully availed ourselves of the best advice of some of our most judicious writers on female education; and, by presenting our work in a cheaper form than any of this class which is now before the public, hope to render it attainable to all those for whom it is especially designed.

April 16, 1847.

Easily Decided,
Influence of Christianity on Woman,
Importance of Religion to Woman,

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LADIES' VASE.

POLITENESS.

Politeness, like every thing else in one's character and conduct, should be based on Christian principle. "Honor all men," says the apostle. This is the spring of good manners; it strikes at the very root of selfishness: it is the principle by which we render to all ranks and ages their due. A respect for your fellow-beings—a reverence for them as God's creatures and our brethren—will inspire that delicate regard for their rights and feelings, of which good manners is the sign.

If you have truth—not the truth of policy, but religious truth—your manners will be sincere. They will have earnestness, simplicity, and frankness—the best qualities of manners. They will be free from assumption, pretense, affectation, flattery, and obsequiousness, which are all incompatible with sincerity. If you have sincerity, you will choose to appear no other, nor better, than you are—to dwell in a true light.

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We have often insisted, that the Bible contains the only rules necessary in the study of politeness. Or, in other words, that those who are the real disciples of Christ, cannot fail to be truly polite. Thus, let the young woman who would possess genuine politeness, take her lessons, not in the school of a hollow, heartless world, but in the school of Jesus Christ. I know this counsel may be despised by the gay and fashionable; but it will be much easier to despise it, than to prove it to be incorrect.

"Always think of the good of the whole, rather than of your own individual convenience," says Mrs. Farrar, in her *Young Ladies' Friend*. A most excellent rule; and one to which we solicit your earnest attention. She who is thoroughly imbued with the Gospel spirit, will not fail to do so. It was what our Savior did continually; and

I have no doubt that his was the purest specimen of good manners, or genuine politeness, the world has ever witnessed; the politeness of Abraham himself not excepted.



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TRUE AND FALSE POLITENESS.

Every thing really valuable is sure to be counterfeited. This applies not only to money, medicine, religion, and virtue, but even to politeness. We see in society the truly polite and the falsely polite; and, although all cannot explain, all can feel the difference. While we respect the one, we despise the other. Men hate to be cheated. An attempt to deceive us, is an insult to our understandings and an affront to our morals. The pretender to politeness is a cheat. He tries to palm off the base for the genuine; and, although he may deceive the vulgar, he cannot overreach the cultivated. True politeness springs from right feelings; it is a good heart, manifesting itself in an agreeable life; it is a just regard for the rights and happiness of others in small things; it is the expression of true and generous sentiments in a graceful form of words; it regards neatness and propriety in dress, as something due to society, and avoids tawdriness in apparel, as offensive to good taste; it avoids selfishness in conduct and roughness in manners: hence, a polite person is called a *gentle* man. True politeness is the smoothness of a refined mind and the tact of a kind heart.

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Politeness is a word derived from the Greek word *polis*, which means a city—the inhabitants of which are supposed, by constant intercourse with each other, to be more refined in manners than the inhabitants of the country. From *polis*, comes our English word

polish, which signifies an effect produced by rubbing down roughnesses until the surface is smoothed and brightened: hence, we speak of polished minds and polished manners. Persons in good society rub against each other until their sharp points are worn down, and their intercourse becomes easy. The word *urbanity* comes from the Latin word *urbs*; that, also, means a city, and it signifies politeness, gentleness, polish, for a similar reason.

In mingling with our fellow-men, there is a constant necessity for little offices of mutual good will. An observing and generous-minded person notices what gives him offense, and what pleases him in the conduct of others; and he seeks at once to correct or cultivate similar things in himself. He acts upon the wise, Christian principle of doing to others as he would have them do to him. Hence, in dress and person, he is clean and neat; in speech, he is courteous; in behavior, conciliating; in the pursuit of his own interests, unobtrusive. No truly polite person appears to notice bodily defects or unavoidable imperfections in others; and, above all, he never sneers at religion, either in its doctrines, ordinances, or professors.

False politeness is but a clumsy imitation of all [11]this. It is selfish in its object, and superficial in its character. It is a slave to certain forms of speech, certain methods of action, and certain fashions of dress. It is insincere; praising where it sees no merit, and excusing sin where it beholds no repentance. It is the offspring of selfishness; perverting the golden rule by flattering stupidity and winking at vice, with the hope of being treated in the same way by the community. It is a bed of flowers, growing over a sepulchre, and drawing its life from the loathsome putrefaction within.

Yet, insincere and wrong as are the motives to false politeness, it is, after all, better than vulgarity. It is the cotton batting, that keeps the glass vases of society from dashing against each other "*Familiarity*," says the proverb, "*breeds contempt*;" and this is found true, whenever coarse minds with rude manners come in contact. Careless of the little decencies of society; selfish in selecting the best seat in the room, or the best dish at the table; unwashed in person, and slovenly in dress: what is this but an open proclamation of utter disregard for others? How soon contempt must follow!

Let the young polish their manners, not by attending to mere artificial rules, but by the cultivation of right feelings. Let them mingle with refined society as often as they can; and, by refined society, I do not mean those whom you find in the ball-room—in the theater—in the crowded party, or those—however wealthy, or richly dressed—you feel to be only artificially [12]polite; but I mean those who make you feel at ease in their society, while, at the same time, they elevate your aims and polish your manners. What a good style is to noble sentiments, politeness is to virtue.



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IMPORTANCE OF GOOD MANNERS.

There is something in the very constitution of human nature which inclines us to form a judgment of character from manners. It is always taken for granted, unless there is decisive evidence to the contrary, that the manners are the genuine expression of the feelings. And even where such evidence exists—that is, where we have every reason to believe that the external appearance does injustice to the moral dispositions; or, on the other hand, where the heart is too favorably represented by the manners—there is still a delusion practiced upon the mind, by what passes under the eye, which it is not easy to resist. You may take two individuals of precisely the same degree of intellectual and moral worth, and let the manners of the one be bland and attractive, and those of the other distant or awkward, and you will find that the former will pass through life

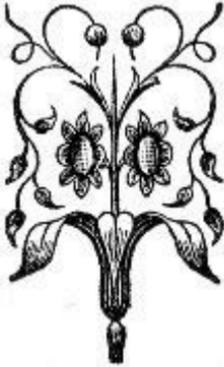
with far more ease and comfort than the latter; for, though good manners will never effectually conceal a bad heart, and are, in no case, any atonement for it, yet, taken in connection with amiable and virtuous dispositions, they naturally and necessarily gain upon the respect and goodwill of mankind.

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You will instantly perceive—if the preceding remarks be correct—that it is not only your interest to cultivate good manners, as you hereby recommend yourself to the favorable regards of others, but also your duty, as it increases, in no small degree, your means of usefulness. It will give you access to many persons, and give you an influence over those whom you could otherwise never approach; much less, whose feelings and purposes you could never hope, in any measure, to control.

"If I should point you to the finest model of female manners which it has ever been my privilege to observe," says a late writer, in a letter to his daughter, "and one which will compare with the most perfect models of this or any other age, I should repeat a venerated name—that of Mrs. Hannah More. It was my privilege, a few years ago, to make a visit to the residence of this distinguished female; a visit which I have ever since regarded as among the happiest incidents of my life. At that time, she numbered more than fourscore years, but the vigor of her intellect was scarcely impaired; and, from what she was, I could easily conceive what she had been when her sun was at its meridian. In her person, she was rather small, but was a specimen of admirable symmetry. In her manners, she united the dignity and refinement of the court, with the most exquisite urbanity and gentleness which the female character, in its loveliest forms, ever exhibited. She impressed me continually with a [15]sense of the high intellectual and moral qualities by which she was distinguished, but still left me as unconstrained as if I had been conversing with a beloved child. There was an air of graceful and unaffected ease; an instinctive regard to the most delicate proprieties of social intercourse; a readiness to communicate, and yet a desire to listen; the dignity of conscious merit, united with the humility of the devoted Christian: in short, there was such an assemblage of intellectual and moral excellences beaming forth in every

expression, and look, and attitude, that I could scarcely conceive of a more perfect exhibition of human character. I rejoice that it is the privilege of all to know Mrs. More through her works; and I can form no better wish for you than that you may imbibe her spirit, and walk in her footsteps."



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SELF-POSSESSION.

Self-possession is the first requisite to good manners; and, where it is wanting, there is generally a reason for it, in some wrong feeling or appreciation of things. Vanity, a love of display, an overweening desire to be admired, are great obstacles to self-possession; whereas, a well-disciplined and well-balanced character will generally lead to composure and self-command. In a very elegant assemblage, in a large drawing-room in a Southern city, I saw a young lady walk quietly and easily across the apartment to speak to a friend, who said to her: "I wanted very much to get to you, but I had not the courage to cross the room. How could you do it?—all alone, too, and with so many persons looking at you!" "I did not think of any body's looking at me," was the reply; and in that lay the secret of her self-possession. Very modest people believe themselves to be of too little consequence to be observed; but conceited ones, think every body must be looking at them. Inexperienced girls, who are not wanting in modesty, are apt to dread going into a crowded room, from an idea that every eye will [17]be turned upon them; but

after a while they find that nobody cares to look at them, and that the greater the crowd, the less they are observed.

Your enjoyment of a party depends far less on what you find there, than on what you carry with you. The vain, the ambitious, the designing, will be full of anxiety when they go, and of disappointment when they return. A short triumph will be followed by a deep mortification, and the selfishness of their aims defeats itself. If you go to see and to hear, and to make the best of whatever occurs, with a disposition to admire all that is beautiful, and to sympathize in the pleasures of others, you can hardly fail to spend the time pleasantly. The less you think of yourself and your claims to attention, the better. If you are much attended to, receive it modestly, and consider it as a happy accident; if you are little noticed, use your leisure in observing others.

The popular belle, who is the envy of her own sex and the admiration of the other, has her secret griefs and trials, and thinks she pays very dearly for her popularity; while the girl who is least attended to in crowded assemblies, is apt to think her's the only hard lot, and that there is unmixed happiness in being a reigning belle. She, alone, whose steady aim is to grow better and wiser every day of her life, can look with an equal eye on both extremes. If your views are elevated, and your feelings are ennobled and purified by communion with gifted spirits, and with the Father of spirits, you will look calmly on the [18]gayest scenes of life; you will attach very little importance to the transient popularity of a ball-room; your endeavor will be to bring home from every visit some new idea, some valuable piece of information, or some useful experience of life.



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GOOD COMPANY.

"Good company," says Duclos, "resembles a dispersed republic: the members of it are found in all classes. Independent of rank and station, it exists only among those who think and feel; among those who possess correct ideas and honorable sentiments." The higher classes, constantly occupied with the absorbing interests of wealth and ambition, formerly introduced into their magnificent saloons a grave and almost diplomatic stiffness of manners, of which the solemnity banished nature and freedom. The amusements of the lower classes, which rather resembled a toil than a recreation, present to the spectator a procedure irreconcilable to good taste.

There are, moreover, too many points of resemblance between the manners and education of the higher and lower classes, to admit of our finding the elements of good society in either of them. The lower orders are ignorant, from want of means of instruction; the higher, from indolence and perpetually increasing incapacity. It is besides not a little curious that, even in the bygone days of ceremonious manners, the higher classes, by whom they were practiced,