

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 Gleim Vulpius
Luther Heym Hofmannsthal Klee Hölty Morgenstern 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 Ringelnatz
Marx Lassalle Gorki Klett Leibniz
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The Etiquette of To-day

Edith B. Ordway

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PREFACE

The customs of social life need frequent restating and adaptation to new needs. They are customs because they are the best rules of conduct that have been garnered from the experiences of succeeding generations under common conditions.

To know them, to catch their spirit, and to follow them in an intelligent way, without slavish punctiliousness but with careful observance, make one skillful in the art of social intercourse, and at home in any society.

Etiquette will not take the place of character, nor of an accurate knowledge of human nature and the arts of practical life. Given these, however, it will unlock to any man or woman doors of success and profit and real happiness which, without it, would have remained forever closed.

E. B. O.

"We feel 'at home' wherever we know how to conduct ourselves."

T. L. Nichols

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"The secret of success in society is a certain heartiness and sympathy. A man who is not happy in the company cannot find any word in his memory that will fit the occasion. All his information is a little impertinent. A man who is happy there finds in every turn of the conversation equally lucky occasions for the introduction of that which he has to say. The favorites of society, and what it calls *whole souls*, are able men, and of more spirit than wit, who have no uncomfortable egoism, but who exactly fill the hour and the company, contented and contenting, at a marriage or a funeral, a ball or a jury, a water party or a shooting match."

Emerson.

THE ETIQUETTE OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

THE REWARDS OF ETIQUETTE

Society is a game which all men play. "Etiquette" is the name given the rules of the game. If you play it well, you win. If you play it ill, you lose. The prize is a certain sort of happiness without which no human being is ever quite satisfied.

Because the demand for social happiness is thus fundamental in human nature, the game has to be played quite seriously. If played seriously, it is perforce successful, even when the outward signs of triumph are lacking. Played seriously, it becomes a worthy part of the great enterprise of noble living, the science of which is called "Ethics." Therefore the best etiquette is that which is based upon the fundamental principles of ethics. [2]

The etiquette, as well as the ethics, of to-day may well be summed up in the one maxim known as the "Golden Rule": "Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you." Or in the philosophic statement of it, given by Kant: "Act so that the maxim of thy conduct shall be fit to be universal law."

A certain social sense is, therefore, the foundation upon which all concerted action rests; and this, permeating the character and winning conformity in the life, produces a social order which is at once the criterion of civilization and the source of its power.

Every social code presupposes the trained personality, that is, the individual who is intelligent enough and controlled enough to conform to the rules prescribed for the good of all. It is only in the common good that true individual good can be found. Therefore is it so essential that every man regard his brother's welfare as anxiously as his own, and permit himself to be curbed in his extravagances, limited in the indulgence of even legitimate desires, in order that he may not defraud another, or menace the general well-being.

Not only in social life, but in business, politics, and international relations, this principle of the common good as the ultimate goal, the supreme authority for conduct, holds good. To it society approaches, now by direct progress and [3] now by seeming reaction, but ever with a higher evaluation of justice. This is shown in the fulfillment of both small and large obligations.

Following the rules of courtesy, men give to each other that deference which each believes is his own due, and each receives in return twofold the deference that he sincerely gives. Men show, at home and abroad, the courtesy to women in general that they would wish shown to those of their family, and thereby the standard of respect for woman is so lifted that even the city street at night is a safe place for a woman to pass unaccosted, if it is necessary for her to go unattended.

Rigidly do we hold ourselves to the established rules of good breeding, endeavoring to make of ourselves all that Nature will permit; and we are surprised to find that Nature's own gentlemen and gentlewomen gather about us, and rare souls look to us for companionship, as finding in us kindred spirits.

No field so surely bears a like harvest as the one sown with the seeds of good-will and consideration for others.

Etiquette tells us how to accomplish what we desire,—to make clear the path to the goal of high companionship with many worthy minds,—and enables us to get out of social intercourse the honey that is hidden there. Without it, as social beings, we should be as [4] workmen without tools, architects without material, musicians without instruments.

After all, however, etiquette is only a tool, and should never be mistaken for the finished work itself. How you carry yourself at a reception is not a matter of so great moment, as is the fact that you went, and there exchanged certain worth-while thoughts with certain people. It is the people, the thoughts they gave you and you gave them, and the practical influence on your life of those people and those thoughts, which are of moment.

Just as, from a musicale, you must carry the music away in your soul, either in definite memories or in a refreshed and more joyous

frame of mind, or it is of no avail that you attended, so from social intercourse it is absolutely necessary that you carry away the inspiration of meeting others and the thoughts that they have given you, and garner from those help and guidance in your life, or the most elaborate of toilets, the most perfect of manners, and the most ceremonious of customs are of little worth.

The tool, however, becomes invaluable when the master desires to create. Therefore, if we wish to gain from social life the enjoyment and happiness and help which it should yield, we should become familiar with the practice of the best forms of etiquette, so that we [5] shall have skill and aptitude in their application.

The rewards of etiquette are, therefore, both spiritual and material. That fine poise of soul which restrains all selfish and unlovely tendencies, that clear insight which sees the individual as but a single unit in the composite of the human race, that high aspiration which culls only the best from the mingled elements of life,—all these come from a true and sincere adherence to the spirit of courteous observances, and each of these is its own reward.

On the other hand, human hearts open only to gentle influences, and all that it is in the power of human beings to bestow upon one another comes most readily and most lavishly to those who outrage no social instinct. To be highly and sincerely honored socially means to be well loved, and that must mean to be lovable. Wealth and family position are matters of chance as far as the individual is concerned, but good breeding is a matter of personal desire and effort. It makes for power and influence, and often literally commands the wealth and position which the accident of birth has refused. It is the necessary colleague of intellectual ability in winning the farthest heights of success, and makes the plains of mediocre attainment habitable and pleasant. [6]

CHAPTER II

PERSONALITY

The social world is a world of personalities. Each individual has a value and importance according to the sum total of his characteristics, physical, mental, and moral. Other and more external facts enter into his social position, but in the circle of his friends and acquaintances, in whatever grade of society he may move, his place is determined by his personality. Personality alone is the final test of a man's worth to society.

A man's worth to the business world as a doer, maker, or as any other executive, his worth to the state as an incorruptible official, his worth to his family as a devoted husband and father, his worth to literature or art as a thinker or maker,—these values are imprinted upon his personality, howbeit with almost imperceptible lines.

If a man would present a pleasing personality as his claim for recognition in society, he must not neglect his mental attitude, his appearance, [7] his manners, or his speech. They are all true expressions of his real self, and they, together with his deeds, are all that his fellow men have by which to appraise his real worth.

Character is the foundation of all true courtesy, for manners are but minor morals, as many a writer has shown. It is not the part of a book on etiquette to tell how to keep out of prison, or to explain that one should be honorable and should do no murder. No book or person, however, can inculcate etiquette without showing that the roots of all true courtesy lie deep in the spirit of unselfish consideration for others. To master this spirit until it becomes one's own is the best fitting one can have for social achievement. Such consideration is the touchstone by which all social customs are tried, to see whether they be worthy of perpetuation or not. It is the sure test of correct conduct under all circumstances, and can be so utilized in case of doubt.

A veneer of virtue long passes as currency in no society. It is necessary to have character in order to be respected. As etiquette is

founded upon certain simple virtues, it is necessary, at least, to affect the semblance of them. To be long effective they must be sincere, as a little experience shows.

Among the minor moral virtues which in [8] social life are of major importance are those of self-control, sincerity, and unselfishness.

There is no place for anger in social life. To give expression among a group of people to any strong feeling, no matter how justified it may be, is not courteous, because you may be inadvertently treading upon the beliefs or prejudices of some of your hearers. There are times when debate and the taking of sides on questions of common interest are in order, but that is not usually in the mixed society of men and women, who are supposedly dropping, for a time, the burdens of life for the sake of enjoyment and recreation.

Self-control is necessary not only in the constant curbing of anger and the more violent emotions, but in pushing into the background one's personal desires in order that one may do one's social duty. A bridesmaid may have assumed the obligations of that honor, and then found that, for personal reasons, they were distasteful to her. She should not, however, permit herself to fail in one iota of her duty. The always-remembered disappointment of the bride, or bridegroom, if either bridesmaid or best man should fail, at a time when life should be as full of happiness as it possibly could, should more than offset the pain of even difficult control on the part of the chosen friend, in order to carry out his or her obligations satisfactorily. [9]

In thousands of minor circumstances the need of absolute self-command for the sake of social virtues is evident. The man and woman who can so control themselves, and think only of others, win warm places in the hearts of their friends.

It is a dreary thing to be always sustaining a sham of any sort. Sincerity has its pleasure as well as its virtue. One should seek to be sincere, as perhaps no social virtue is of greater importance than this. The possibilities of development of character and of the betterment of social customs depend upon the exercise of this virtue. For that reason it is well to follow carefully the acknowledged rules of etiquette, in the hope and expectation of growing into the attitude of mind which will make them a natural expression of one's self.

"The little observances of social life," says Dr. T. L. Nichols in his book on "Social Life," "are more important than many people think them. The outward signs or expressions of any sentiment not only manifest it to others, but help to keep it active in ourselves. This is the use of all ceremony and ritualism in religion . . . and the same principle governs all social ceremonies and observances."

Without unselfishness and a fine consideration for others, the art of etiquette would be impossible. True etiquette learns no maxims [10] to practise mechanically. Rather, it learns all the maxims upon which it may have to draw, and practises them only as the considerate heart sees an opportunity and desires to embrace it.

Personal appearance is next to character in importance. The most important factors in this, with the average person, are not those that Nature alone is responsible for, but those that the individual himself is alone responsible for. Beauty is a pleasant thing, and not to be despised, although beauty alone is of little worth. The social conquests of history have not been confined to the possessors of beauty, and there have been many notable cases where decided plainness and even ugliness was the lot of one who nevertheless was a person of great charm.

One's figure and bearing count perhaps for most, as they give the first and distant impression, and are, as it were, the outlines of the picture.

Self-consciousness, for any reason and to even the slightest degree, is a great barrier to social intercourse and to mental freedom. It shows as often in a person's carriage as in his words or features. It should be broken down at all costs, and this can be done only by the person himself. It may be done, usually with comparative ease, by becoming and staying interested in something. Then awkwardness, and [11] a defiant attitude of spirit and body, will vanish. Haughtiness is usually the outward sign of a great inner self-consciousness. All of these traits, as well as their opposites, stamp themselves upon the bearing of the body, and reveal there the clearest manifestations of character.

Dress is almost as essential. By this is not meant a rigid adherence to fashion, — the stamp of a weak mind, — or even good taste, but an eye to the appropriate and fitting. First of all, dress should be sub-

ordinated to character, that is, it should be no more costly than the wearer can afford, and no more striking than modesty and good taste allow.

Good taste in dress means plain and simple styles, but material as elegant, serviceable, and pleasing as one's purse permits. It means also a few things well chosen and kept in good order, rather than many things more or less untidy; that one's wardrobe will be harmonious,—not a cheap, shabby garment to-day, and an expensive, showy one to-morrow. It means also that the wardrobe throughout, not only the external garments, is equally well chosen and well cared for.

One should not mix one's wardrobe. A coat of one suit and the skirt of another should not be worn together. A carriage parasol should not be used on a sunny promenade, nor an umbrella in a carriage, or open automobile. [12]

It is necessary to wear a dress appropriate to the occasion in order to be well dressed. No matter how excellent one's costume may be, if it does not suit the time and place it is absurd and incongruous. Some of the major rules for appropriate dress are as follows:

Full evening dress demands one's most elaborate gown, made of silk, satin, velvet, lace, or *crêpe-de-chine*, as costly as one's purse permits, with *décolleté* effects, gained by either actual cut or the use of lace and chiffon. One should wear delicate shoes, white or light-colored gloves, and appropriate jewels, of which it is not good taste to have too lavish a display.

As hostess at an afternoon reception or luncheon one may wear an elaborate gown of the richest materials, with either long sleeves and high neck, or elbow sleeves and slightly low neck. As guest one may wear a walking suit, with pretty blouse, white gloves, and decorative hat.

The usual dress for a formal breakfast is much the same as for a luncheon,—a pretty afternoon street costume, with a dainty blouse, gloves, and "picture" hat, which is not removed. In summer, a gown of light material, such as *organdie*, muslin, or other soft goods, dainty and somewhat elaborate, is in good taste. Hat and gloves are invariably worn with this gown if the affair is ceremonious.

For church wear, a quiet, rather simple street [13] dress, which does not proclaim that either money or time has been spent upon it to any notable extent, is by far the most appropriate. The suit should be becoming but inconspicuous.

Ball costume is conventionally gay and elaborate, the lightest of materials being used, especially by those who intend to take part in the dancing, and a dainty effect being sought. Any costly, rich-looking materials are used, and a wide range of fashion is permitted. The gown is cut short-sleeved and décolleté, and the dancing shoes are of satin or very fine kid. Jewels are worn but sparingly by young women in their first season in society. The costume of a débutante at her first ball is usually white.

At an informal dinner, any pretty gown may be worn, with special attention to the coiffure.

Black should never be worn at a wedding. If one does not care to lay it aside for the time being, one should not attend.

For men, the proper costume for an early morning breakfast is the black cutaway coat with gray trousers, and other details as for a formal breakfast. In summer a gray morning suit with fancy waistcoat, or white flannels or linen, with appropriate hat, shoes, and tie, is permissible.

At a formal breakfast men wear frock coats, fancy waistcoats, gray trousers, patent-leather shoes, large ties, high hats, and gray gloves.

Afternoon dress for formal functions between [14] noon and evening consists of a double-breasted black frock coat, or a black cutaway coat, with either light or dark waistcoat, gray trousers, patent-leather shoes, light four-in-hand tie, and light gloves.

Evening dress is the correct attire for all occasions after six o'clock. It consists of a black suit,—coat cut "swallow-tail," and waistcoat cut low and in the shape of a "U,"—with white lawn tie, patent-leather pumps, black silk stockings, white gloves, and no jewelry but shirt studs, cuff links, and an inconspicuous watch fob. A black overcoat of some stylish cut and a silk hat or crush or opera hat is also worn.