

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Byron Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Hall
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
London Descartes Cervantes Wells Hesse
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Doré Dante Pushkin Alcott
Swift Chekhov Newton



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Routledge's Manual of Etiquette

George Routledge

Imprint

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ROUTLEDGE'S MANUAL OF ETIQUETTE

ETIQUETTE FOR LADIES
ETIQUETTE FOR GENTLEMEN
BALL-ROOM COMPANION
COURTSHIP & MATRIMONY
HOW TO DRESS WELL
HOW TO CARVE
TOASTS AND SENTIMENTS

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

CONTENTS.

ETIQUETTE FOR LADIES.

- I. Introductions
- II. Letters of Introduction
- III. Visiting, Morning Calls, Cards
- IV. Conversation
- V. Notes of Invitation, &c.
- VI. The Promenade
- VII. Dress
- VIII. Morning and Evening Parties
- IX. The Dinner-table
- X. The Ball-room
- XI. Staying at a Friend's House — Breakfast, Luncheon, &c.
- XII. General Hints

ETIQUETTE FOR GENTLEMEN.

- I. Introductions
- II. Letters of Introduction
- III. Visiting, Morning Calls, Cards, &c.
- IV. Conversation
- V. Notes of Invitation, &c.
- VI. The Promenade
- VII. Dress
- VIII. Riding and Driving
- IX. Morning and Evening Parties
- X. The Dinner-table
- XI. The Ball-room
- XII. Staying at a Friend's House — Breakfast, Luncheon, &c.
- XIII. General Hints

* * * * *

BALL-ROOM GUIDE.

- I. How to organize a Ball
- II. Ball-room Toilette (Ladies)
" " (Gentlemen)
- III. Etiquette of the Ball-room
- IV. The Quadrille
- V. The Caledonians
- VI. The Lancers
- VII. The Double Lancers
- VIII. Coulon's Double Quadrille
- IX. The Polka
- X. The Cellarius
- XI. The Mazurka Quadrille
- XII. The Polka Mazurka
- XIII. The Redowa, or Redova
- XIV. The Schottische
- XV. The Varsoviana, or Varsovienne
- XVI. The Gorlitz
- XVII. The Valse à Trois Temps
- XVIII. The Valse à Deux Temps
- XIX. The New Valse
- XX. The Galop
- XXI. The Cotillon
- XXII. The Spanish Dance
- XXIII. The Tempête
- XXIV. Sir Roger de Coverley
- XXV. Glossary of Terms used in Dancing

* * * * *

ETIQUETTE OF COURTSHIP AND MATRIMONY.

I. – FIRST STEPS IN COURTSHIP.

Advice to both parties at the outset
Introduction to the Lady's Family

II. – ETIQUETTE OF COURTSHIP.

Restrictions imposed by Etiquette
What the Lady should observe in early Courtship
What the Suitor should observe
Etiquette as to Presents
The Proposal
Mode of Refusal when not approved
Conduct to be observed by a Rejected Suitor
Refusal by the Lady's Parents or Guardians

III. – ETIQUETTE OF AN ENGAGEMENT.

Demeanour of the Betrothed Pair
Should a Courtship be long or short?

IV. – PRELIMINARY ETIQUETTE OF A WEDDING.

Fixing the Day
How to be Married: by Banns, Licence, &c.
The Trousseau
Duties to be attended to by the Bridegroom
Who should be asked to the Wedding
Bridesmaids and Bridegroom's-men, Duties of

V. – ETIQUETTE OF A WEDDING.

Costume of Bride, Bridesmaids, and Bridegroom
Arrival at the Church

The Marriage Ceremonial
Registry of the Marriage
Return Home and Wedding Breakfast
Departure for the Honeymoon

VI. — ETIQUETTE AFTER THE WEDDING.

Wedding Cards: Modern Practice of "No Cards"
Reception and Return of Wedding Visits

VII.

Practical Advice to a Newly-married Couple

HOW TO DRESS WELL.

I. Introduction
II. Taste in Dress
III. Fashion in Dress
IV. Expense of Dress
V. Accessories
VI. A Few Words More

HOW TO CARVE.

Hints on the Dinner-table
Carving

FISH.

Turbot
Cod-Fish
Salmon, &c.

Mackerel

JOINTS.

Haunch of Venison or Mutton

Saddle of Mutton

Leg of Mutton

Shoulder of Mutton

Loin of Mutton

Neck of Mutton

Fore Quarter of Lamb

Sirloin of Beef

Ribs of Beef

Round of Beef

Aitch-bone of Beef

Rump or Buttock of Beef

Tongue

Calf's Head

Loin of Veal

Fillet of Veal

Breast of Veal

Knuckle of Veal

Shoulder and Neck of Veal

Leg or Hand of Pork

Spare-rib of Pork

Ham

Sucking Pig

POULTRY AND GAME.

Goose

Turkey

Fowl

Duck

Wild Duck

Pheasant

Grouse

Partridge

Woodcock or Snipe
Pigeons
Small Birds
Hare
Rabbit

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TOASTS AND SENTIMENTS.

Amatory
Bacchanalian
Comic
Conservative
Gastronomic
English
Irish
Scotch
Liberal
Literary
Loyal
Masonic
Military
Naval
Religious
Sentimental
Sporting
Miscellaneous
Latin

Routledge's Etiquette for Ladies.

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I.—INTRODUCTIONS.

To introduce persons who are mutually unknown is to undertake a serious responsibility, and to certify to each the respectability of the other. Never undertake this responsibility without in the first place asking yourself whether the persons are likely to be agreeable to each other; nor, in the second place, without ascertaining whether it will be acceptable to both parties to become acquainted.

Always introduce the gentleman to the lady—never the lady to the gentleman. The chivalry of etiquette assumes that the lady is invariably the superior in right of her sex, and that the gentleman is honoured in the introduction. This rule is to be observed even when the social rank of the gentleman is higher than that of the lady.

Where the sexes are the same, always present the inferior to the superior.

Never present a gentleman to a lady without first asking her permission to do so.

When you are introduced to a gentleman, never offer your hand. When introduced, persons limit their recognition of each other to a bow. On the Continent, ladies never shake hands with gentlemen unless under circumstances of great intimacy.

Never introduce morning visitors who happen to encounter each other in your drawing-room, unless they are persons whom you have already obtained permission to make known to each other. Visitors thus casually meeting in the house of a friend should converse with ease and freedom, as if they were acquainted. That they are both friends of the hostess is a sufficient guarantee of their

respectability. To be silent and stiff on such an occasion would show much-ignorance and ill-breeding.

Persons who have met at the house of a mutual friend, without being introduced, should not bow if they afterwards meet elsewhere. A bow implies acquaintance; and persons who have not been introduced are not acquainted.

If you are walking with one friend, and presently meet with, or are joined by, a third, do not commit the too frequent error of introducing them to each other. You have even less right to do so than if they encountered each other at your house during a morning call.

There are some exceptions to the etiquette of introductions. At a ball, or evening party where there is dancing, the mistress of the house may introduce any gentleman to any lady without first asking the lady's permission. But she should first ascertain whether the lady is willing to dance; and this out of consideration for the gentleman, who may otherwise be refused. No man likes to be refused the hand of a lady, though it be only for a quadrille.

A sister may present her brother, or a mother her son, without any kind of preliminary; but only when there is no inferiority on the part of her own family to that of the acquaintance.

Friends may introduce friends at the house of a mutual acquaintance; but, as a rule, it is better to be introduced by the mistress of the house. Such an introduction carries more authority with it.

Introductions at evening parties are now almost wholly dispensed with. Persons who meet at a friend's house are ostensibly upon an equality, and pay a bad compliment to the host by appearing suspicious and formal. Some old-fashioned country hosts yet persevere in introducing each new comer to all the assembled guests. It is a custom that cannot be too soon abolished, and one that places the last unfortunate visitor in a singularly awkward position. All that she can do is to make a semicircular courtesy, like a concert singer before an audience, and bear the general gaze with as much composure as possible.

If, when you enter a drawing-room, your name has been wrongly announced, or has passed unheard in the buzz of conversation,

make your way at once to the mistress of the house, if you are a stranger, and introduce yourself by name. This should be done with the greatest simplicity, and your rank made as little of as possible.

An introduction given at a ball for the mere purpose of conducting a lady through a dance does not give the gentleman any right to bow to her on a future occasion. If he commits this error, she may remember that she is not bound to see, or return, his salutation.

II. — LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.

Do not lightly give or promise letters of introduction. Always remember that when you give a letter of introduction you lay yourself under an obligation to the friend to whom it is addressed. If she lives in a great city, such as Paris or London, you in a measure compel her to undergo the penalty of escorting the stranger to some of those places of public entertainment in which the capital abounds. If your friend be a married lady, and the mistress of a house, you put her to the expense of inviting the stranger to her table. We cannot be too cautious how we tax the time and purse of a friend, or weigh too seriously the question of mutual advantage in the introduction. Always ask yourself whether the person introduced will be an acceptable acquaintance to the one to whom you present her; and whether the pleasure of knowing her will compensate for the time or money which it costs to entertain her. If the stranger is in any way unsuitable in habits or temperament, you inflict an annoyance on your friend instead of a pleasure. In questions of introduction never oblige one friend to the discomfort of another.

Those to whom letters of introduction have been given, should send them to the person to whom they are addressed, and enclose a card. Never deliver a letter of introduction in person. It places you in the most undignified position imaginable, and compels you to wait while it is being read, like a servant who has been told to wait for an answer. There is also another reason why you should not be yourself the bearer of your introduction; i.e., you compel the other person to receive you, whether she chooses or not. It may be that

she is sufficiently ill-bred to take no notice of the letter when sent, and in such case, if you presented yourself with it, she would most probably receive you with rudeness. It is, at all events, more polite on your part to give her the option, and, perhaps, more pleasant. If the receiver of the letter be a really well-bred person, she will call upon you or leave her card the next day, and you should return her attentions within the week.

If, on the other hand, a stranger sends you a letter of introduction and her card, you are bound by the laws of politeness and hospitality, not only to call upon her the next day, but to follow up that attention with others. If you are in a position to do so, the most correct proceeding is to invite her to dine with you. Should this not be within your power, you can probably escort her to some of the exhibitions, bazaars, or concerts of the season; any of which would be interesting to a foreigner or provincial visitor. In short, etiquette demands that you shall exert yourself to show kindness to the stranger, if only out of compliment to the friend who introduced her to you.

If you invite her to dine with you, it is a better compliment to ask some others to meet her than to dine with her *tête-à-tête*. You are thereby giving her an opportunity of making other acquaintances, and are assisting your friend in still farther promoting the purpose for which she gave her the introduction to yourself.

Be careful at the same time only to ask such persons as she will feel are at least her own social equals.

A letter of introduction should be given unsealed, not alone because your friend may wish to know what you have said of her, but also as a guarantee of your own good faith. As you should never give such a letter unless you can speak highly of the bearer, this rule of etiquette is easy to observe. By requesting your friend to fasten the envelope before forwarding the letter to its destination, you tacitly give her permission to inspect its contents.

Let your note-paper be of the best quality and the proper size. Albert or Queen's size is the best for these purposes.

It has been well said that "attention to the punctilios of politeness is a proof at once of self-respect, and of respect for your friend."

Though irksome at first, these trifles soon cease to be matters for memory, and become things of mere habit. To the thoroughly well-bred they are a second nature. Let no one neglect them who is desirous of pleasing in society; and, above all, let no one deem them unworthy of attention. They are precisely the trifles which do most to make social intercourse agreeable, and a knowledge of which distinguishes the gentlewoman from the *parvenue*.

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III. — VISITING. — MORNING CALLS. — CARDS.

A morning visit should be paid between the hours of two and four p.m., in winter, and two and five in summer. By observing this rule you avoid intruding before the luncheon is removed, and leave in sufficient time to allow the lady of the house an hour or two of leisure for her dinner toilette.

Be careful always to avoid luncheon hours when you pay morning visits. Some ladies dine with their children at half-past one, and are consequently unprepared for the early reception of visitors. When you have once ascertained this to be the case, be careful never again to intrude at the same hour.

A good memory for these trifles is one of the hall-marks of good breeding.

Visits of ceremony should be short. If even the conversation should have become animated, beware of letting your call exceed half-an-hour's length. It is always better to let your friends regret than desire your withdrawal.

On returning visits of ceremony you may, without impoliteness, leave your card at the door without going in. Do not fail, however, to inquire if the family be well.

Should there be daughters or sisters residing with the lady upon whom you call, you may turn down a corner of your card, to signify that the visit is paid to all. It is in better taste, however, to leave cards for each.

Unless when returning thanks for "kind inquiries," or announcing your arrival in, or departure from, town, it is not considered respectful to send round cards by a servant.

Leave-taking cards have P.P.C. (*pour prendre congé*) written in the corner. Some use P.D.A. (*pour dire adieu*).

It is not the fashion on the Continent for unmarried ladies to affix any equivalent to the English "Miss" to their visiting cards. *Emilie Dubois*, or *Kätchen Clauss*, is thought more simple and elegant than if preceded by *Mademoiselle* or *Fraülein*. Some English girls have of late adopted this good custom, and it would be well if it became general.

Autographic facsimiles for visiting cards are affectations in any persons but those who are personally remarkable for talent, and whose autographs, or facsimiles of them, would be prized as curiosities. A card bearing the autographic signature of Agnes Strickland or Mary Somerville, though only a lithographic facsimile, would have a certain interest; whereas the signature of Jane Smith would be not only valueless; but would make the owner ridiculous.

Visits of condolence are paid within the week after the event which occasions them. Personal visits of this kind are made by relations and very intimate friends only. Acquaintances should leave cards with narrow mourning borders.

On the first occasion when you are received by the family after the death of one of its members, it is etiquette to wear slight mourning.

Umbrellas should invariably be left in the hall.

Never take favourite dogs into a drawing-room when you make a morning call. Their feet may be dusty, or they may bark at the sight of strangers, or, being of too friendly a disposition, may take the liberty of lying on a lady's gown, or jumping on the sofas and easy chairs. Where your friend has a favourite cat already established before the fire, a battle may ensue, and one or other of the pets be seriously hurt. Besides, many persons have a constitutional antipathy to dogs, and others never allow their own to be seen in the sitting-rooms. For all or any of these reasons, a visitor has no right to inflict upon her friend the society of her dog as well as of herself.

Neither is it well for a mother to take young children with her when she pays morning visits; their presence, unless they are unusually well trained, can only be productive of anxiety to both yourself and your hostess. She, while striving to amuse them, or to appear interested in them, is secretly anxious for the fate of her album, or the ornaments on her *étagère*; while the mother is trembling lest her children should say or do something objectionable.

If other visitors are announced, and you have already remained as long as courtesy requires, wait till they are seated, and then rise from your chair, take leave of your hostess, and bow politely to the newly arrived guests. You will, perhaps, be urged to remain, but, having once risen, it is best to go. There is always a certain air of *gaucherie* in resuming your seat and repeating the ceremony of leave-taking.

If you have occasion to look at your watch during a call, ask permission to do so, and apologise for it on the plea of other appointments.

In receiving morning visitors, it is not necessary that the lady should lay aside the employment in which she may be engaged, particularly if it consists of light or ornamental needle-work. Politeness, however, requires that music, drawing, or any occupation which would completely engross the attention, be at once abandoned.

You need not advance to receive visitors when announced, unless they are persons to whom you are desirous of testifying particular attention. It is sufficient if a lady rises to receive her visitors, moves forward a single step to shake hands with them, and remains standing till they are seated.

When your visitors rise to take leave you should rise also, and remain standing till they have quite left the room. Do not accompany them to the door, but be careful to ring in good time, that the servant may be ready in the hall to let them out.

A lady should dress well, but not too richly, when she pays a morning visit. If she has a carriage at command, she may dress more elegantly than if she were on foot. The question of morning and afternoon dress will be found fully treated in Section VII.

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IV.—CONVERSATION.

There is no conversation so graceful, so varied, so sparkling, as that of an intellectual and cultivated woman. Excellence in this particular is, indeed, one of the attributes of the sex, and should be cultivated by every gentlewoman who aspires to please in general society.

In order to talk well, three conditions are indisputable, namely—tact, a good memory, and a fair education.

Remember that people take more interest in their own affairs than in anything else which you can name. If you wish your conversation to be thoroughly agreeable, lead a mother to talk of her children, a young lady of her last ball, an author of his forthcoming book, or an artist of his exhibition picture. Having furnished the topic, you need only listen; and you are sure to be thought not only agreeable, but thoroughly sensible and well-informed.

Be careful, however, on the other hand, not always to make a point of talking to persons upon general matters relating to their professions. To show an interest in their immediate concerns is flattering; but to converse with them too much about their own arts looks as if you thought them ignorant of other topics.

Remember in conversation that a voice "gentle and low" is, above all other extraneous acquirements, "an excellent thing in woman." There is a certain distinct but subdued tone of voice which is peculiar to only well-bred persons. A loud voice is both disagreeable and vulgar. It is better to err by the use of too low than too loud a tone.

Remember that all "slang" is vulgar. It has become of late unfortunately prevalent, and we know many ladies who pride themselves on the saucy *chique* with which they adopt certain Americanisms, and other cant phrases of the day. Such habits cannot be too severely reprehended. They lower the tone of society and the standard of thought. It is a great mistake to suppose that slang is in any way a substitute for wit.

The use of proverbs is equally vulgar in conversation; and puns, unless they rise to the rank of witticisms, are to be scrupulously avoided. A lady-punster is a most displeasing phenomenon, and we would advise no young woman, however witty she may be, to cultivate this kind of verbal talent.

Long arguments in general company, however entertaining to the disputants, are tiresome to the last degree to all others. You should always endeavour to prevent the conversation from dwelling too long upon one topic.

Religion is a topic which should never be introduced in society. It is the one subject on which persons are most likely to differ, and least able to preserve temper.

Never interrupt a person who is speaking. It has been aptly said that "if you interrupt a speaker in the middle of his sentence, you act almost as rudely as if, when walking with a companion, you were to thrust yourself before him, and stop his progress."

To listen well is almost as great an art as to talk well. It is not enough *only* to listen. You must endeavour to seem interested in the conversation of others.

It is considered extremely ill-bred when two persons whisper in society, or converse in a language with which all present are not familiar. If you have private matters to discuss, you should appoint a proper time and place to do so, without paying others the ill compliment of excluding them from your conversation.

If a foreigner be one of the guests at a small party, and does not understand English sufficiently to follow what is said, good breeding demands that the conversation shall be carried on in his own language. If at a dinner-party, the same rule applies to those at his end of the table.

If upon the entrance of a visitor you carry on the thread of a previous conversation, you should briefly recapitulate to him what has been said before he arrived.

Do not be *always* witty, even though you should be so happily gifted as to need the caution. To outshine others on every occasion is the surest road to unpopularity.