

CLASSICS TO GO



ETIQUETTE

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"THE RADIANCE OF A TRULY HAPPY BRIDE IS SO BEAUTIFYING THAT EVEN A PLAIN GIRL IS MADE PRETTY, AND A PRETTY ONE, DIVINE." [PAGE [373](#).]

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INTRODUCTION

MANNERS AND MORALS

By

Richard Duffy

Many who scoff at a book of etiquette would be shocked to hear the least expression of levity touching the Ten Commandments. But the Commandments do not always prevent such virtuous scoffers from dealings with their neighbor of which no gentleman could be capable and retain his claim to the title. Though it may require ingenuity to reconcile their actions with the Decalogue—the ingenuity is always forthcoming. There is no intention in this remark to intimate that there is any higher rule of life than the Ten Commandments; only it is illuminating as showing the relationship between manners and morals, which is too often overlooked. The polished gentleman of sentimental fiction has so long served as the type of smooth and conscienceless depravity that urbanity of demeanor inspires distrust in ruder minds. On the other hand, the blunt, unpolished hero of melodrama and romantic fiction has lifted brusqueness and pushfulness to a pedestal not wholly merited. Consequently, the kinship between conduct that keeps us within the law and conduct that makes civilized life worthy to be called such, deserves to be noted with emphasis. The Chinese sage, Confucius, could not tolerate the suggestion that virtue is in itself enough without

politeness, for he viewed them as inseparable and "saw courtesies as coming from the heart," maintaining that "when they are practised with all the heart, a moral elevation ensues."

People who ridicule etiquette as a mass of trivial and arbitrary conventions, "extremely troublesome to those who practise them and insupportable to everybody else," seem to forget the long, slow progress of social intercourse in the upward climb of man from the primeval state. Conventions were established from the first to regulate the rights of the individual and the tribe. They were and are the rules of the game of life and must be followed if we would "play the game." Ages before man felt the need of indigestion remedies, he ate his food solitary and furtive in some corner, hoping he would not be espied by any stronger and hungrier fellow. It was a long, long time before the habit of eating in common was acquired; and it is obvious that the practise could not have been taken up with safety until the individuals of the race knew enough about one another and about the food resources to be sure that there was food sufficient for all. When eating in common became the vogue, table manners made their appearance and they have been waging an uphill struggle ever since. The custom of raising the hat when meeting an acquaintance derives from the old rule that friendly knights in accosting each other should raise the visor for mutual recognition in amity. In the knightly years, it must be remembered, it was important to know whether one was meeting friend or foe. Meeting a foe meant fighting on the spot. Thus, it is evident that the conventions of courtesy not only tend to make the wheels of life run more smoothly, but also act as safeguards in human relationship. Imagine the Paris Peace Conference, or any of the later conferences in Europe, without the protective armor of diplomatic etiquette!

Nevertheless, to some the very word etiquette is an irritant. It implies a great pother about trifles, these conscientious objectors assure us, and trifles are unimportant. Trifles are unimportant, it is true, but then life is made up of trifles. To those who dislike the word, it suggests all that is finical and superfluous. It means a garish embroidery on the big scheme of life; a clog on the forward march of a strong and courageous nation. To such as these, the words etiquette and politeness connote weakness and timidity. Their notion of a really polite man is a dancing master or a man milliner. They were always willing to admit that the French were the politest nation in Europe and equally ready to assert that the French were the weakest and least valorous, until the war opened their eyes in amazement. Yet, that manners and fighting can go hand in hand appears in the following anecdote:

In the midst of the war, some French soldiers and some non-French of the Allied forces were receiving their rations in a village back of the lines. The non-French fighters belonged to an Army that supplied rations plentifully. They grabbed their allotments and stood about while hastily eating, uninterrupted by conversation or other concern. The French soldiers took their very meager portions of food, improvised a kind of table on the top of a flat rock, and having laid out the rations, including the small quantity of wine that formed part of the repast, sat down in comfort and began their meal amid a chatter of talk. One of the non-French soldiers, all of whom had finished their large supply of food before the French had begun eating, asked sardonically: "Why do you fellows make such a lot of fuss over the little bit of grub they give you to eat?" The Frenchman replied: "Well, we are making war for civilization, are we not? Very well, we are. Therefore, we eat in a civilized way."

To the French we owe the word *etiquette*, and it is amusing to discover its origin in the commonplace familiar warning—"Keep off the grass." It happened in the reign of Louis XIV, when the gardens of Versailles were being laid out, that the master gardener, an old Scotsman, was sorely tried because his newly seeded lawns were being continually trampled upon. To keep trespassers off, he put up warning signs or tickets—*etiquettes*—on which was indicated the path along which to pass. But the courtiers paid no attention to these directions and so the determined Scot complained to the King in such convincing manner that His Majesty issued an edict commanding everyone at Court to "keep within the *etiquettes*." Gradually the term came to cover all the rules for correct demeanor and deportment in court circles; and thus through the centuries it has grown into use to describe the conventions sanctioned for the purpose of smoothing personal contacts and developing tact and good manners in social intercourse. With the decline of feudal courts and the rise of empires of industry, much of the ceremony of life was discarded for plain and less formal dealing. Trousers and coats supplanted doublets and hose, and the change in costume was not more extreme than the change in social ideas. The court ceased to be the arbiter of manners, though the aristocracy of the land remained the high exemplar of good breeding.

Yet, even so courtly and materialistic a mind as Lord Chesterfield's acknowledged a connection between manners and morality, of which latter the courts of Europe seemed so sparing. In one of the famous "Letters to His Son" he writes: "Moral virtues are the foundation of society in general, and of friendship in particular; but attentions, manners, and graces, both adorn and strengthen them." Again he says: "Great merit, or great failings, will make you respected or despised; but trifles, little attentions, mere nothings, either done or reflected, will make you either liked or disliked, in

the general run of the world." For all the wisdom and brilliancy of his worldly knowledge, perhaps no other writer has done so much to bring disrepute on the "manners and graces" as Lord Chesterfield, and this, it is charged, because he debased them so heavily by considering them merely as the machinery of a successful career. To the moralists, the fact that the moral standards of society in Lord Chesterfield's day were very different from those of the present era rather adds to the odium that has become associated with his attitude. His severest critics, however, do concede that he is candid and outspoken, and many admit that his social strategy is widely practised even in these days.

But the aims of the world in which he moved were routed by the onrush of the ideals of democratic equality, fraternity, and liberty. With the prosperity of the newer shibboleths, the old-time notion of aristocracy, gentility, and high breeding became more and more a curio to be framed suitably in gold and kept in the glass case of an art museum. The crashing advance of the industrial age of gold thrust all courts and their sinuous graces aside for the unmistakable ledger balance of the counting-house. This new order of things had been a long time in process, when, in the first year of this century, a distinguished English social historian, the late The Right Honorable G.W.E. Russell, wrote: "Probably in all ages of history men have liked money, but a hundred years ago they did not talk about it in society.... Birth, breeding, rank, accomplishments, eminence in literature, eminence in art, eminence in public service—all these things still count for something in society. But when combined they are only as the dust of the balance when weighed against the all-prevalent power of money. The worship of the Golden Calf is the characteristic cult of modern society." In the Elizabethan Age of mighty glory, three hundred years before this was said, Ben Jonson had railed against money as "a thin

membrane of honor," groaning: "How hath all true reputation fallen since money began to have any!" Now the very fact that the debasing effect of money on the social organism has been so constantly reprehended, from Scriptural days onward, proves the instinctive yearning of mankind for a system of life regulated by good taste, high intelligence and sound affections. But, it remains true that, in the succession of great commercial epochs, coincident with the progress of modern science and invention, *almost* everything can be bought and sold, and so *almost* everything is rated by the standard of money.

Yet, this standard is precisely not the ultimate test of the Christianity on which we have been pluming ourselves through the centuries. Still, no one can get along without money; and few of us get along very well with what we have. At least we think so—because everybody else seems to think that way. We Americans are members of the nation which, materially, is the richest, most prosperous and most promising in the world. This idea is dinned into our heads continually by foreign observers, and publicly we "own the soft impeachment." Privately, each individual American seems driven with the decision that he must live up to the general conception of the nation as a whole. And he does, but in less strenuous moments he might profitably ponder the counsel of Gladstone to his countrymen: "Let us respect the ancient manners and recollect that, if the true soul of chivalry has died among us, with it all that is good in society has died. Let us cherish a sober mind; take for granted that in our best performances there are latent many errors which in their own time will come to light."

America, too, has her ancient manners to remember and respect; but, in the rapid assimilation of new peoples into her economic and social organism, more pressing concerns take up nearly all her time. The perfection of manners by

intensive cultivation of good taste, some believe, would be the greatest aid possible to the moralists who are alarmed over the decadence of the younger generation. Good taste may not make men or women really virtuous, but it will often save them from what theologians call "occasions of sin." We may note, too, that grossness in manners forms a large proportion of the offenses that fanatical reformers foam about. Besides grossness, there is also the meaner selfishness. Selfishness is at the polar remove from the worldly manners of the old school, according to which, as Dr. Pusey wrote, others were preferred to self, pain was given to no one, no one was neglected, deference was shown to the weak and the aged, and unconscious courtesy extended to all inferiors. Such was the "beauty" of the old manners, which he felt consisted in "acting upon Christian principle, and if in any case it became soulless, as apart from Christianity, the beautiful form was there, into which the real life might re-enter."

As a study of all that is admirable in American manners, and as a guide to behavior in the simplest as well as the most complex requirements of life day by day, whether we are at home or away from it, there can be no happier choice than the present volume. It is conceived in the belief that etiquette in its broader sense means the technique of human conduct under all circumstances in life. Yet all minutiae of correct manners are included and no detail is too small to be explained, from the selection of a visiting card to the mystery of eating corn on the cob. Matters of clothes for men and women are treated with the same fullness of information and accuracy of taste as are questions of the furnishing of their houses and the training of their minds to social intercourse. But there is no exaggeration of the minor details at the expense of the more important spirit of personal conduct and attitude of mind. To dwell on formal trivialities, the author holds, is like "measuring the letters of

the sign-boards by the roadside instead of profiting by the directions they offer." She would have us know also that "it is not the people who make small technical mistakes or even blunders, who are barred from the paths of good society, but those of sham and pretense whose veneered vulgarity at every step tramples the flowers in the gardens of cultivation." To her mind the structure of etiquette is comparable to that of a house, of which the foundation is ethics and the rest good taste, correct speech, quiet, unassuming behavior, and a proper pride of dignity.

To such as entertain the mistaken notion that politeness implies all give and little or no return, it is well to recall Coleridge's definition of a gentleman: "We feel the gentlemanly character present with us," he said, "whenever, under all circumstances of social intercourse, the trivial, not less than the important, through the whole detail of his manners and deportment, and with the ease of a habit, a person shows respect to others in such a way as at the same time implies, in his own feelings, and habitually, an assured anticipation of reciprocal respect from them to himself. In short, the gentlemanly character arises out of the feeling of equality acting as a habit, yet flexible to the varieties of rank, and modified without being disturbed or superseded by them." Definitions of a gentleman are numerous, and some of them famous; but we do not find such copiousness for choice in definitions of a lady. Perhaps it has been understood all along that the admirable and just characteristics of a gentleman should of necessity be those also of a lady, with the charm of womanhood combined. And, in these days, with the added responsibility of the vote.

Besides the significance of this volume as an indubitable authority on manners, it should be pointed out that as a social document, it is without precedent in American literature. In order that we may better realize the behavior

and environment of well-bred people, the distinguished author has introduced actual persons and places in fictional guise. They are the persons and the places of her own world; and whether we can or can not penetrate the incognito of the Worldlys, the Gildings, the Kindharts, the Oldnames, and the others, is of no importance. Fictionally, they are real enough for us to be interested and instructed in their way of living. That they happen to move in what is known as Society is incidental, for, as the author declares at the very outset: "Best Society is not a fellowship of the wealthy, nor does it seek to exclude those who are not of exalted birth; but it is an association of gentlefolk, of which good form in speech, charm of manner, knowledge of the social amenities, and instinctive consideration for the feelings of others, are the credentials by which society the world over recognizes its chosen members."

The immediate fact is that the characters of this book are thoroughbred Americans, representative of various sections of the country and free from the slightest tinge of snobbery. Not all of them are even well-to-do, in the postwar sense; and their devices of economy in household outlay, dress and entertainment are a revelation in the science of ways and means. There are parents, children, relatives and friends all passing before us in the pageant of life from the cradle to the grave. No circumstance, from an introduction to a wedding, is overlooked in this panorama and the spectator has beside him a cicerone in the person of the author who clears every doubt and answers every question. In course, the conviction grows upon him that etiquette is no flummery of poseurs "aping the manners of their betters," nor a code of snobs, who divide their time between licking the boots of those above them and kicking at those below, but a system of rules of conduct based on respect of self coupled with respect of others. Meanwhile, to guard against conceit in his

new knowledge, he may at odd moments recall Ben Jonson's lines:

gentility,

borrowed thing,

bones: And none of yours

"Nor stand so much on your

Which is an airy, and mere

From dead men's dust, and

Except you make, or hold it."

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS BEST SOCIETY?

"Society" is an ambiguous term; it may mean much or nothing. Every human being—unless dwelling alone in a cave—is a member of society of one sort or another, and therefore it is well to define what is to be understood by the term "Best Society" and why its authority is recognized. Best Society abroad is always the oldest aristocracy; composed not so much of persons of title, which may be new, as of those families and communities which have for the longest period of time known highest cultivation. Our own Best Society is represented by social groups which have had, since this is America, widest rather than longest association with old world cultivation. Cultivation is always the basic attribute of Best Society, much as we hear in this country of an "Aristocracy of wealth."

To the general public a long purse is synonymous with high position—a theory dear to the heart of the "yellow" press and eagerly fostered in the preposterous social functions of screen drama. It is true that Best Society is comparatively rich; it is true that the hostess of great wealth, who constantly and lavishly entertains, will shine, at least to the readers of the press, more brilliantly than her less affluent sister. Yet the latter, through her quality of birth, her poise, her inimitable distinction, is often the jewel of deeper water in the social crown of her time.

The most advertised commodity is not always intrinsically the best, but is sometimes merely the product of a company

with plenty of money to spend on advertising. In the same way, money brings certain people before the public—sometimes they are persons of "quality," quite as often the so-called "society leaders" featured in the public press do not belong to good society at all, in spite of their many published photographs and the energies of their press-agents. Or possibly they do belong to "smart" society; but if too much advertised, instead of being the "queens" they seem, they might more accurately be classified as the court jesters of to-day.

THE IMITATION AND THE GENUINE

New York, more than any city in the world, unless it be Paris, loves to be amused, thrilled and surprised all at the same time; and will accept with outstretched hand any one who can perform this astounding feat. Do not underestimate the ability that can achieve it: a scintillating wit, an arresting originality, a talent for entertaining that amounts to genius, and gold poured literally like rain, are the least requirements.

Puritan America on the other hand demanding, as a ticket of admission to her Best Society, the qualifications of birth, manners and cultivation, clasps her hands tight across her slim trim waist and announces severely that New York's "Best" is, in her opinion, very "bad" indeed. But this is because Puritan America, as well as the general public, mistakes the jester for the queen.

As a matter of fact, Best Society is not at all like a court with an especial queen or king, nor is it confined to any one place or group, but might better be described as an unlimited brotherhood which spreads over the entire surface of the globe, the members of which are invariably people of cultivation and worldly knowledge, who have not only perfect manners but a perfect manner. Manners are made

up of trivialities of deportment which can be easily learned if one does not happen to know them; manner is personality—the outward manifestation of one's innate character and attitude toward life. A gentleman, for instance, will never be ostentatious or overbearing any more than he will ever be servile, because these attributes never animate the impulses of a well-bred person. A man whose manners suggest the grotesque is invariably a person of imitation rather than of real position.

Etiquette must, if it is to be of more than trifling use, include ethics as well as manners. Certainly what one is, is of far greater importance than what one appears to be. A knowledge of etiquette is of course essential to one's decent behavior, just as clothing is essential to one's decent appearance; and precisely as one wears the latter without being self-conscious of having on shoes and perhaps gloves, one who has good manners is equally unself-conscious in the observance of etiquette, the precepts of which must be so thoroughly absorbed as to make their observance a matter of instinct rather than of conscious obedience.

Thus Best Society is not a fellowship of the wealthy, nor does it seek to exclude those who are not of exalted birth; but it *is* an association of gentle-folk, of which good form in speech, charm of manner, knowledge of the social amenities, and instinctive consideration for the feelings of others, are the credentials by which society the world over recognizes its chosen members.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTIONS

THE CORRECT FORM

The word "present" is preferable on formal occasions to the word "introduce." On informal occasions neither word is expressed, though understood, as will be shown below. The correct formal introduction is:

"Mrs. Jones, may I present Mr. Smith?"

or,

"Mr. Distinguished, may I present Mr. Young?"

The younger person is always presented to the older or more distinguished, but a gentleman is always presented to a lady, even though he is an old gentleman of great distinction and the lady a mere slip of a girl.

No lady is ever, except to the President of the United States, a cardinal, or a reigning sovereign, presented to a man. The correct introduction of either a man or woman:

To the President,

is,

"Mr. President, I have the honor to present Mrs. Jones, of
Chicago."

To a Cardinal,

is,

"Your Eminence, may I present Mrs. Jones?"

To a King:

Much formality of presenting names on lists is gone through beforehand; at the actual presentation an "accepted" name is repeated from functionary to equerry and nothing is said to the King or Queen except: "Mrs. Jones."

But a Foreign Ambassador is presented, "Mr. Ambassador, may I present you to Mrs. Jones."

Very few people in polite society are introduced by their formal titles. A hostess says, "Mrs. Jones, may I present the Duke of Overthere?" or "Lord Blank?"; never "his Grace" or "his Lordship." The Honorable is merely Mr. Lordson, or Mr. Holdoffice. A doctor, a judge, a bishop, are addressed and introduced by their titles. The clergy are usually Mister unless they formally hold the title of Doctor, or Dean, or Canon. A Catholic priest is "Father Kelly." A senator is always introduced as Senator, whether he is still in office or not. But the President of the United States, once he is out of office, is merely "Mr." and not "Ex-president."

THE PREVAILING INTRODUCTION AND INFLECTION

In the briefer form of introduction commonly used,

"Mrs. Worldly, Mrs. Norman,"

if the two names are said in the same tone of voice it is not apparent who is introduced to whom; but by accentuating the more important person's name, it can be made as clear as though the words "May I present" had been used.

The more important name is said with a slightly rising inflection, the secondary as a mere statement of fact. For instance, suppose you say, "Are you there?" and then "It is

raining!" Use the same inflection exactly and say, "Mrs. Worldly?"—"Mrs. Younger!"

Are you there?—It is raining!
Mrs. Worldly?—Mrs. Younger!

The unmarried lady is presented to the married one, unless the latter is very much the younger. As a matter of fact, in introducing two ladies to each other or one gentleman to another, no distinction is made. "Mrs. Smith; Mrs. Norman."
"Mr. Brown; Mr. Green."

The inflection is:

I think—it's going to rain!
Mrs. Smith—Mrs. Norman!

A man is also often introduced, "Mrs. Worldly? Mr. Norman!"
But to a very distinguished man, a mother would say:

"Mr. Edison—My daughter, Mary!"

To a young man, however, she should say, "Mr. Struthers, have you met my daughter?" If the daughter is married, she should have added, "My daughter, Mrs. Smartlington." The daughter's name is omitted because it is extremely bad taste (except in the South) to call her daughter "Miss Mary" to any one but a servant, and on the other hand she should not present a young man to "Mary." The young man can easily find out her name afterward.

OTHER FORMS OF INTRODUCTION

Other permissible forms of introduction are:

"Mrs. Jones, do you know Mrs. Norman?"

or,

"Mrs. Jones, you know Mrs. Robinson, don't you?" (on no account say "Do you not?" Best Society always says "don't you?")

or,

"Mrs. Robinson, have you met Mrs. Jones?"

or,

"Mrs. Jones, do you know my mother?"

or,

"This is my daughter Ellen, Mrs. Jones."

These are all good form, whether gentlemen are introduced to ladies, ladies to ladies, or gentlemen to gentlemen. In introducing a gentleman to a lady, you may ask Mr. Smith if he has met Mrs. Jones, but you must not ask Mrs. Jones if she has met Mr. Smith!

FORMS OF INTRODUCTIONS TO AVOID

Do not say: "Mr. Jones, shake hands with Mr. Smith," or "Mrs. Jones, I want to make you acquainted with Mrs. Smith." Never say: "make you acquainted with" and do not, in introducing one person to another, call one of them "my friend." You can say "my aunt," or "my sister," or "my cousin"—but to pick out a particular person as "my friend" is not only bad style but, unless you have only one friend, bad manners—as it implies Mrs. Smith is "my friend" and you are a stranger.

You may very properly say to Mr. Smith "I want you to meet Mrs. Jones," but this is not a form of introduction, nor is it to be said in Mrs. Jones' hearing. Upon leading Mr. Smith up to Mrs. Jones, you say "Mrs. Jones may I present Mr. Smith" or "Mrs. Jones; Mr. Smith." Under no circumstances whatsoever

say "Mr. Smith meet Mrs. Jones," or "Mrs. Jones meet Mr. Smith." Either wording is equally preposterous.

Do not repeat "Mrs. Jones? Mrs. Smith! Mrs. Smith? Mrs. Jones!" To say each name once is quite enough.

Most people of good taste very much dislike being asked their names. To say "What is your name?" is always abrupt and unflattering. If you want to know with whom you have been talking, you can generally find a third person later and ask "Who was the lady with the grey feather in her hat?" The next time you see her you can say "How do you do, Mrs. ——" (calling her by name).

WHEN TO SHAKE HANDS

When gentlemen are introduced to each other they always shake hands.

When a gentleman is introduced to a lady, she sometimes puts out her hand—especially if he is some one she has long heard about from friends in common, but to an entire stranger she generally merely bows her head slightly and says: "How do you do!" Strictly speaking, it is always her place to offer her hand or not as she chooses, but if he puts out his hand, it is rude on her part to ignore it. Nothing could be more ill-bred than to treat curtly any overture made in spontaneous friendliness. No thoroughbred lady would ever refuse to shake any hand that is honorable, not even the hand of a coal heaver at the risk of her fresh white glove.

Those who have been drawn into a conversation do not usually shake hands on parting. But there is no fixed rule. A lady sometimes shakes hands after talking with a casual stranger; at other times she does not offer her hand on parting from one who has been punctiliously presented to

her. She may find the former sympathetic and the latter very much the contrary.

Very few rules of etiquette are inelastic and none more so than the acceptance or rejection of the strangers you meet.

There is a wide distance between rudeness and reserve. You can be courteously polite and at the same time extremely aloof to a stranger who does not appeal to you, or you can be welcomingly friendly to another whom you like on sight. Individual temperament has also to be taken into consideration: one person is naturally austere, another genial. The latter shakes hands far more often than the former. As already said, it is unforgivably rude to refuse a proffered hand, but it is rarely necessary to offer your hand if you prefer not to.

WHAT TO SAY WHEN INTRODUCED

Best Society has only one phrase in acknowledgment of an introduction: "How do you do?" It literally accepts no other. When Mr. Bachelor says, "Mrs. Worldly, may I present Mr. Struthers?" Mrs. Worldly says, "How do you do?" Struthers bows, and says nothing. To sweetly echo "Mr. Struthers?" with a rising inflection on "—thers?" is not good form. Saccharine chirpings should be classed with crooked little fingers, high hand-shaking and other affectations. All affectations are bad form.

Persons of position do not say: "Charmed," or "Pleased to meet you," etc., but often the first remark is the beginning of a conversation. For instance,

Young Struthers is presented to Mrs. Worldly. She smiles and perhaps says, "I hear that you are going to be in New York all winter?" Struthers answers, "Yes, I am at the Columbia Law School," etc., or since he is much younger than she, he might answer, "Yes, Mrs. Worldly," especially if his answer

would otherwise be a curt yes or no. Otherwise he does not continue repeating her name.

TAKING LEAVE OF ONE YOU HAVE JUST MET

After an introduction, when you have talked for some time to a stranger whom you have found agreeable, and you then take leave, you say, "Good-by, I am very glad to have met you," or "Good-by, I hope I shall see you again soon"—or "some time." The other person answers, "Thank you," or perhaps adds, "I hope so, too." Usually "Thank you" is all that is necessary.

In taking leave of a group of strangers—it makes no difference whether you have been introduced to them or merely included in their conversation—you bow "good-by" to any who happen to be looking at you, but you do not attempt to attract the attention of those who are unaware that you are turning away.

INTRODUCING ONE PERSON TO A GROUP

This is never done on formal occasions when a great many persons are present. At a small luncheon, for instance, a hostess always introduces her guests to one another.

Let us suppose you are the hostess: your position is not necessarily near, but it is toward the door. Mrs. King is sitting quite close to you, Mrs. Lawrence also near. Miss Robinson and Miss Brown are much farther away.

Mrs. Jones enters. You go a few steps forward and shake hands with her, then stand aside as it were, for a second only, to see if Mrs. Jones goes to speak to any one. If she apparently knows no one, you say,

"Mrs. King, do you know Mrs. Jones?" Mrs. King being close at hand (usually but not necessarily) rises, shakes hands with Mrs. Jones and sits down again. If Mrs. King is an

elderly lady, and Mrs. Jones a young one, Mrs. King merely extends her hand and does not rise. Having said "Mrs. Jones" once, you do not repeat it immediately, but turning to the other lady sitting near you, you say, "Mrs. Lawrence," then you look across the room and continue, "Miss Robinson, Miss Brown—Mrs. Jones!" Mrs. Lawrence, if she is young, rises and shakes hands with Mrs. Jones, and the other two bow but do not rise.

At a very big luncheon you would introduce Mrs. Jones to Mrs. King and possibly to Mrs. Lawrence, so that Mrs. Jones might have some one to talk to. But if other guests come in at this moment, Mrs. Jones finds a place for herself and after a pause, falls naturally into conversation with those she is next to, without giving her name or asking theirs.

A friend's roof is supposed to be an introduction to those it shelters. In Best Society this is always recognized if the gathering is intimate, such as at a luncheon, dinner or house party; but it is not accepted at a ball or reception, or any "general" entertainment. People always talk to their neighbors at table whether introduced or not. It would be a breach of etiquette not to! But if Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Norman merely spoke to each other for a few moments, in the drawing-room, it is not necessary that they recognize each other afterwards.

NEW YORK'S BAD MANNERS

New York's bad manners are often condemned and often very deservedly. Even though the cause is carelessness rather than intentional indifference, the indifference is no less actual and the rudeness inexcusable.

It is by no means unheard of that after sitting at table next to the guest of honor, a New Yorker will meet her the next day with utter unrecognition. Not because the New Yorker

means to "cut" the stranger or feels the slightest unwillingness to continue the acquaintance, but because few New Yorkers possess enthusiasm enough to make an effort to remember all the new faces they come in contact with, but allow all those who are not especially "fixed" in their attention, to drift easily out of mind and recognition. It is mortifyingly true; no one is so ignorantly indifferent to everything outside his or her own personal concern as the socially fashionable New Yorker, unless it is the Londoner! The late Theodore Roosevelt was a brilliantly shining exception. And, of course, and happily, there are other men and women like him in this. But there are also enough of the snail-in-shell variety to give color to the very just resentment that those from other and more gracious cities hold against New Yorkers.

Everywhere else in the world (except London), the impulse of self-cultivation, if not the more generous ones of consideration and hospitality, induces people of good breeding to try and make the effort to find out what manner of mind, or experience, or talent, a stranger has; and to remember, at least out of courtesy, anyone for whose benefit a friend of theirs gave a dinner or luncheon. To fashionable New York, however, luncheon was at one-thirty; at three there is something else occupying the moment—that is all.

Nearly all people of the Atlantic Coast dislike general introductions, and present people to each other as little as possible. In the West, however, people do not feel comfortable in a room full of strangers. Whether or not to introduce people therefore becomes not merely a question of propriety, but of consideration for local custom.

NEVER INTRODUCE UNNECESSARILY

The question as to when introductions should be made, or not made, is one of the most elusive points in the entire range of social knowledge. "Whenever necessary to bridge an awkward situation," is a definition that is exact enough, but not very helpful or clear. The hostess who allows a guest to stand, awkward and unknown, in the middle of her drawing-room is no worse than she who pounces on every chance acquaintance and drags unwilling victims into forced recognition of each other, everywhere and on all occasions. The fundamental rule never to introduce unnecessarily brings up the question:

WHICH ARE THE NECESSARY OCCASIONS?

First, in order of importance, is the presentation of everyone to guests of honor, whether the "guests" are distinguished strangers for whom a dinner is given, or a bride and groom, or a débutante being introduced to society. It is the height of rudeness for anyone to go to an entertainment given in honor of some one and fail to "meet" him. (Even though one's memory is too feeble to remember him afterward!)

INTRODUCTIONS AT A DINNER

The host must always see that every gentleman either knows or is presented to the lady he is to "take in" to dinner, and also, if possible, to the one who is to sit at the other side of him. If the latter introduction is overlooked, people sitting next each other at table nearly always introduce themselves. A gentleman says, "How do you do, Mrs. Jones. I am Arthur Robinson." Or showing her his place card, "I have to introduce myself, this is my name." Or the lady says first, "I am Mrs. Hunter Jones." And the man answers, "How do you do, Mrs. Jones, my name is Titherington Smith."

It is not unusual, in New York, for those placed next each other to talk without introducing themselves—particularly if

each can read the name of the other on the place cards.

OTHER NECESSARY INTRODUCTIONS

Even in New York's most introductionless circles, people always introduce:

A small group of people who are to sit together anywhere.

Partners at dinner.

The guests at a house party.

Everyone at a small dinner or luncheon.

The four who are at the same bridge table.

Partners or fellow-players in any game.

At a dance, when an invitation has been asked for a stranger, the friend who vouched for him should personally present him to the hostess. "Mrs. Worldly, this is Mr. Robinson, whom you said I might bring." The hostess shakes hands and smiles and says: "I am very glad to see you, Mr. Robinson."

A guest in a box at the opera always introduces any gentleman who comes to speak to her, to her hostess, unless the latter is engrossed in conversation with a visitor of her own, or unless other people block the distance between so that an introduction would be forced and awkward.

A newly arriving visitor in a lady's drawing-room is not introduced to another who is taking leave. Nor is an animated conversation between two persons interrupted to introduce a third. Nor is any one ever led around a room and introduced right and left.

If two ladies or young girls are walking together and they meet a third who stops to speak to one of them, the other walks slowly on and does not stand awkwardly by and wait for an introduction. If the third is asked by the one she knows, to join them, the sauntering friend is overtaken and an introduction always made. The third, however, must not join them unless invited to do so.

At a very large dinner, people (excepting the gentlemen and ladies who are to sit next to each other at table) are not collectively introduced. After dinner, men in the smoking room or left at table always talk to their neighbors whether they have been introduced or not, and ladies in the drawing-room do the same. But unless they meet soon again, or have found each other so agreeable that they make an effort to continue the acquaintance, they become strangers again, equally whether they were introduced or not.

Some writers on etiquette speak of "correct introductions" that carry "obligations of future acquaintance," and "incorrect introductions," that seemingly obligate one to nothing.

Degrees of introduction are utterly unknown to best society. It makes not the slightest difference so far as any one's acceptance or rejection of another is concerned how an introduction is worded or, on occasions, whether an introduction takes place at all.

Fashionable people in very large cities take introductions lightly; they are veritable ships that pass in the night. They show their red or green signals—which are merely polite sentences and pleasant manners—and they pass on again.

When you are introduced to some one for the second time and the first occasion was without interest and long ago,

there is no reason why you should speak of the former meeting.

If some one presents you to Mrs. Smith for the second time on the same occasion, you smile and say "I have already met Mrs. Smith," but you say nothing if you met Mrs. Smith long ago and she showed no interest in you at that time.

Most rules are elastic and contract and expand according to circumstances. You do not remind Mrs. Smith of having met her before, but on meeting again any one who was brought to your own house, or one who showed you an especial courtesy you instinctively say, "I am so glad to see you again."

INCLUDING SOMEONE IN CONVERSATION WITHOUT AN INTRODUCTION

On occasions it happens that in talking to one person you want to include another in your conversation without making an introduction. For instance: suppose you are talking to a seedsman and a friend joins you in your garden. You greet your friend, and then include her by saying, "Mr. Smith is suggesting that I dig up these cannas and put in delphiniums." Whether your friend gives an opinion as to the change in color of your flower bed or not, she has been made part of your conversation.

This same maneuver of evading an introduction is also resorted to when you are not sure that an acquaintance will be agreeable to one or both of those whom an accidental circumstance has brought together.

INTRODUCTIONS UNNECESSARY

You must never introduce people to each other in public places unless you are certain beyond a doubt that the introduction will be agreeable to both. You cannot commit a greater social blunder than to introduce, to a person of