



If Emily Post Were a Leather Woman*

*with all due apologies

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Chapter I.² What Is Best Leather Society?

"LEATHER SOCIETY" is an ambiguous term; it may mean much or nothing. Every "leather person"—unless dwelling alone in a cave—is a member of Leather Society of one sort or another, and therefore it is well to define what is to be understood by the term "Best Leather Society" and why its authority is recognized. Our own Best Leather Society is represented by social groups that have had association with "old guard" cultivation. Cultivation is always the basic attribute of Best Leather Society.

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 "Leather Society leaders" featured in the public press do not belong to good Leather Society at all, in spite of their many published photographs and the energies of their press-agents. Or possibly they do belong to "smart" Leather 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

"Posers" in Leather Society love 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.

As a matter of fact, Best Leather 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 true leather person, 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

¹ With all due respect to Emily Post, this "leather" version of some of her writings is taken from the 1922 edition of her masterwork. This totally illegal and unauthorized "leather" version is intended to be a tongue-in-cheek educational tool for both Doms and submissives in the leather lifestyle. I have taken the liberty of re-writing (twisting) some of Ms. Post's passages to accommodate easier reading in the D/s realm. However, in many instances, the original text is left unchanged. For those who choose to compare these chapters to the original, you will find that much of the original text has been excised where I felt it was not pertinent to the D/s discussion. By all means, the reader is encouraged to read the original to gain insight on these timeless topics. Not only does it make for good reading, but Ms. Post's writings are just good fun. My sincerest apologies to the author and to those "purists" who feel that I have desecrated her work.

² Chapter numbers correspond to the original chapters of the 1922 edition. Not all chapters have been bastardized and, therefore, are not included in this collection.

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 Leather 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 Leather Society the world over recognizes its chosen members.

Chapter VII. Conversation

NEED OF RECIPROCIDTY

IDEAL conversation should be a matter of equal give and take, but too often it is all “take.” The voluble talker—or chatterer—rides his own hobby straight through the hours without giving anyone else, who might also like to say something, a chance to do other than exhaustedly await the turn that never comes. Once in a while—a very long while—one meets a brilliant person whose talk is a delight; or still more rarely a wit who manipulates every ordinary topic with the agility of a sleight-of-hand performer, to the ever increasing rapture of his listeners.

But as a rule the man who has been led to believe that he is a brilliant and interesting

talker has been led to make himself a rapacious pest. No conversation is possible between others whose ears are within reach of his ponderous voice; anecdotes, long-winded stories, dramatic and pathetic, stock his repertoire; but worst of all are his humorous yarns at which he laughs uproariously though every one else grows solemn and more solemn.

There is a simple rule, by which if one is a voluble chatterer (to be a good talker necessitates a good mind) one can at least refrain from being a pest or a bore. And the rule is merely, to stop and think.

“THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK”

Nearly all the faults or mistakes in conversation are caused by not thinking. For instance, a first rule for behavior in society is: “Try to do and say those things only which will be agreeable to others.” Yet how many people, who really know better, people who are perfectly capable of intelligent understanding if they didn’t let their brains remain asleep or locked tight, go night after night to dinner parties, day after day to other social gatherings, and absent-mindedly prate about this or that without ever taking the trouble to *think* what they are saying and to whom they are saying it! Would a young mother describe twenty or thirty cunning tricks and sayings of the baby to a bachelor who has been helplessly put beside her at dinner if she *thought*? She would know very well, alas! that not even a very dear friend would really care for more than a *hors d’oeuvre* of the subject, at the board of general conversation.

People who talk too easily are apt to talk too much, and at times imprudently, and those

with vivid imagination are often unreliable in their statements. On the other hand the “man of silence” who never speaks except when he has something “worth while” to say, is apt to wear well among his intimates, but is not likely to add much to the gaiety of a party.

Try not to repeat yourself; either by telling the same story again and again or by going back over details of your narrative that seemed especially to interest or amuse your hearer. Many things are of interest when briefly told and for the first time; *nothing* interests when too long dwelt upon; little interests that is told a second time. The exception is something very pleasant that you have heard about A. or more especially A.’s submissive, which having already told A. you can then tell B., and later C. in A.’s presence. Never do this as a habit, however, and never drag the incident into the conversation merely to flatter A., since if A. is a person of taste, he will be far more apt to resent than be pleased by flattery that borders on the fulsome.

Be careful not to let amiable discussion turn into contradiction and argument. The tactful person keeps his prejudices to himself and even when involved in a discussion says quietly "No. I don't think I agree with you" or "It seems to me thus and so." One who is well-bred never says "You are wrong!" or "Nothing of the kind!" If he finds another's opinion utterly opposed to his own, he switches to another subject for a pleasanter channel of conversation.

THE GIFT OF HUMOR

The joy of joys is the person of light but unmalicious humor. If you know any one who is gay, beguiling and amusing, you will, if you are wise, do everything you can to make him prefer your house and your table to any other; for where he is, the successful party is also. What he says is of no matter, it is the twist he gives to it, the intonation, the personality he puts into his quip or retort or observation that delights

When some one is talking to you, it is inconsiderate to keep repeating "What did you say?" Those who are deaf are often obliged to ask that a sentence be repeated. Otherwise their irrelevant answers would make them appear half-witted. But countless persons with perfectly good hearing say "What?" from force of habit and careless inattention.

his hearers, and in his case the ordinary rules do not apply.

Eugene Field could tell a group of people that it had rained to-day and would probably rain tomorrow, and make everyone burst into laughter—or tears if he chose—according to the way it was said. But the ordinary rest of us must, if we would be thought sympathetic, intelligent or agreeable, "go fishing."

GOING FISHING FOR TOPICS

The charming talker is neither more nor less than a fisherman. (Fisherwoman rather, since in America women make more effort to be agreeable than men do.) Sitting next to a stranger she wonders which "fly" she had better choose to interest him. She offers one topic; not much of a nibble. So she tries another or perhaps a third before he "rises" to the bait.

TACTLESS BLUNDERERS

Tactless people are also legion. The means-to-be-agreeable elderly man says to a *passée* acquaintance, "Twenty years ago you were the prettiest woman in town"; or in the pleasantest tone of voice to one whose only son has married. "Why is it, do you suppose, that young wives always dislike their mothers-in-law?"

If you have any ambition to be sought after in society you must not talk about the unattractiveness of old age to the elderly, about the joys of dancing and skating to the lame, or about the advantages of ancestry to the self-made. It is also dangerous, as well as needlessly unkind, to ridicule or criticize others, especially for what they

can't help. If a young woman's familiar or otherwise lax behavior deserves censure, a casual unflattering remark may not add to your own popularity if your listener is a relative, but you can at least, without being shamefaced, stand by your guns. On the other hand to say needlessly "What an ugly girl!" or "What a half-wit that boy is!" can be of no value except in drawing attention to your own tactlessness.

The young girl who admired her own facile adjectives said to a casual acquaintance: "How *can* you go about with that moth-eaten, squint-eyed, bag of a girl!" "Because," answered the youth whom she

had intended to dazzle, “the lady of your flattering epithets happens to be my sister.” It is scarcely necessary to say that one whose tactless remarks ride rough-shod

over the feelings of others, is not welcomed by many.

THE BORE

A bore is said to be “one who talks about himself when you want to talk about yourself!” which is superficially true enough, but a bore might more accurately be described as one who is interested in what does not interest you, and insists that you share his enthusiasm, in spite of your disinclination. To the bore life holds no dullness; every subject is of unending delight. A story told for the thousandth time has not lost its thrill; every tiresome detail is held up and turned about as a morsel of delectableness; to him each pea in a pod differs from another with the entrancing variety that artists find in tropical sunsets.

On the other hand, to be bored is a bad habit, and one only too easy to fall into. As a matter of fact, it is impossible, almost, to meet anyone who has not *something* of interest to tell you if you are but clever

enough yourself to find out what it is. There are certain always delightful people who refuse to be bored. Their attitude is that no subject need ever be utterly uninteresting, so long as it is discussed for the first time. Repetition alone is deadly dull. Besides, what is the matter with trying to be agreeable yourself? Not *too* agreeable. Alas! it is true: “Be polite to bores and so shall you have bores always round about you.” Furthermore, there is no reason why you should be bored when you can be otherwise. But if you find yourself sitting in the hedgerow with nothing but weeds, there is no reason for shutting your eyes and seeing nothing, instead of finding what beauty you may in the weeds. To put it cynically, life is too short to waste it in drawing blanks. Therefore, it is up to you to find as many pictures to put on your blank pages as possible.

DANGERS TO BE AVOIDED

In conversation the dangers are very much the same as those to be avoided in writing letters. Talk about things which you think will be agreeable to your hearer. Don't dilate on ills, misfortune, or other unpleasantnesses. The one in greatest danger of making enemies is the man or woman of brilliant wit. If sharp, wit is apt to produce a feeling of mistrust even while it stimulates. Furthermore the applause which follows every witty sally becomes in time breath to the nostrils, and perfectly well-intentioned people, who mean to say nothing unkind, in the flash of a second “see a point,” and in the next second, score it with no more power to resist than a drug addict can resist a dose put into his hand!

The mimic is a joy to his present company, but the eccentric mannerism of one is much easier to imitate than the charm of

another, and the subjects of the habitual mimic are all too apt to become his enemies. You need not, however, be dull because you refrain from the rank habit of a critical attitude, which like a weed will grow all over the place if you let it have half a chance. A very good resolve to make and keep, if you would also keep any friends you make, is never to speak of anyone without, in imagination, having them overhear what you say. One often hears the exclamation “I would say it to her face!” At least be very sure that this is true, and not a braggart's phrase and then—nine times out of ten think better of it and refrain. Preaching is all very well in a text-book, schoolroom or pulpit, but it has no place in society. Society is supposed to be a pleasant place; telling people disagreeable things to their faces or behind their backs is *not* a pleasant occupation.

Do not be too apparently clever if you would be popular. The cleverest woman is she who, in talking to a man, makes *him* seem

clever. This was Mme. Recamier's great charm.

A FEW MAXIMS FOR THOSE WHO TALK TOO MUCH—AND EASILY!

The faults of commission are far more serious than those of omission; regrets are seldom for what you left unsaid.

The chatterer reveals every corner of his shallow mind; one who keeps silent can not have his depth plumbed.

Don't pretend to know more than you do. To say you have read a book and then seemingly to understand nothing of what you have read, proves you a half-wit. Only the very small mind hesitates to say "I don't know."

Above all, stop and *think* what you are saying! This is really the first, last and only rule. If you "stop" you can't chatter or expound or flounder ceaselessly, and if you *think*, you will find a topic and a manner of presenting your topic so that your neighbor will be interested rather than long-suffering.

Remember also that the sympathetic (not apathetic) listener is the delight of delights. The person who looks glad to see you, who is seemingly eager for your news, or enthralled with your conversation; who looks at you with a kindling of the face, and gives you spontaneous and undivided attention, is the one to whom the palm for the art of conversation would undoubtedly be awarded.

Chapter IX.

One's Position in the Community

THE CHOICE

FIRST of all, it is necessary to decide what one's personal idea of position is, whether this word suggests merely a social one, comprising a large or an exclusive acquaintance and leadership in social gaiety, or position established upon the foundation of communal consequence, which may, or may not, include great social gaiety. In other words, you who are establishing yourself, either as a young husband or a stranger, would you, if you

could have your wish granted by a genie, choose to have the populace look upon you askance and in awe, because of your wealth and elegance, or would you wish to be loved, not as a power conferring favors which belong really to the first picture, but as a fellow-being with an understanding heart? The granting of either wish is not a bit beyond the possibilities of anyone. It is merely a question of depositing securities of value in the bank of life.

THE BANK OF LIFE

Life, whether social or business, is a bank in which you deposit certain funds of character, intellect and heart; or other funds of egotism, hard-heartedness and unconcern; or deposit—nothing! And the bank honors your deposit, and no more. In other words, you can draw nothing out but what you have put in.

he is a hollow puppet whether he is a millionaire or has scarcely a dime to bless himself with. In the same way, a woman's social position that is built on sham, vanity, and selfishness, is like one of the buildings at an exposition; effective at first sight, but bound when slightly weather-beaten to show stucco and glue.

If your community is to give you admiration and honor, it is merely necessary to be admirable and honorable. The more you put in, the more will be paid out to you. It is too trite to put on paper! But it is astonishing, isn't it, how many people who are depositing nothing whatever, expect to be paid in admiration and respect?

It would be very presumptuous to attempt to tell any man how to acquire the highest position in his community, especially as the answer is written in his heart, his intellect, his altruistic sympathy, and his ardent civic pride. A subject, however, that is not so serious or over-aweing, and which can perhaps have directions written for it, is the lesser ambition of acquiring a social position.

A man of really high position is always a great citizen first and above all. Otherwise

HOW TOTAL STRANGERS ACQUIRE SOCIAL STANDING

When new people move into a community, bringing letters of introduction to prominent citizens, they arrive with an already made position, which ranks in direct proportion to the standing of those who wrote the introductions. Since, however, no one but "persons of position"

are eligible to letters of importance, there would be no question of acquiring position—which they have—but merely of adding to their acquaintance.

As said in another chapter, people of position are people of position the world

over, and all the cities strung around the whole globe are like so many chapterhouses of a brotherhood, to which letters of introduction open the doors.

However, this is off the subject, which is to advise those who have no position, or letters, how to acquire the former. It is a long and slow road to travel, particularly long and slow for a man and his wife in a big city. In New York people could live in the same house for generations, and do, and not have their next door neighbor know them even by sight. But no other city, except London, is as unaware as that. When people move to a new city, or town, it is usually because of business. The husband at least makes business acquaintances, but the wife is left alone. The only thing for her to do is to join the church of her denomination, and become interested in some activity; not only as an opening wedge to acquaintanceships and possibly intimate friendships, but as an occupation and a respite from loneliness. Her social position is gained usually at a snail's pace—nor should she do anything to hurry it. If she is a real person, if she has qualities of mind and heart, if she has charming manners, sooner or later a certain position will come, and in proportion to her eligibility.

One of the ladies with whom she works in church, having gradually learned to like her, asks her to her house. Nothing may ever come of this, but another one also inviting her, may bring an introduction to a third, who takes a fancy to her. This third lady also invites her where she meets an acquaintance she has already made on one of the two former occasions, and this acquaintance in turn invites her. By the time she has met the same people several times, they gradually, one by one, offer to go and see her, or ask her to come and see them. One inviolable rule she must not forget: it is fatal to be pushing or presuming. She must remain dignified always, natural and sympathetic when anyone approaches her, but she should not herself approach any one more than half way. A smile, the more friendly the better, is never out of place, but after smiling, she should pass on! Never grin weakly, and ——— cling!

If she is asked to go to see a lady, it is quite right to go. But not again, until the lady has returned the visit, or asked her to her house. And if admitted when making a first visit, she should remember not to stay more than twenty minutes at most, since it is always wiser to make others sorry to have her leave than run the risk of having the hostess wonder why her visitor doesn't know enough to go!

THE ENTRANCE OF AN OUTSIDER

The outsider enters society by the same path, but it is steeper and longer because there is an outer gate of reputation called "They are not people of any position" which is difficult to unlatch. Nor is it ever unlatched to those who sit at the gate rattling at the bars, or plaintively peering in. The better, and the only way if she has not the key of birth, is through study to

make herself eligible. Meanwhile, charitable, or civic work, will give her interest and occupation as well as throw her with ladies of good breeding, by association with whom she can not fail to acquire some of those qualities of manner before which the gates of society always open.

WHEN POSITION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED

When her husband belongs to a club, or perhaps she does too, and the neighbors are friendly and those of social importance have called on her and asked her to their

houses, a newcomer does not have to stand so exactly on the chalk line of ceremony as in returning her first visits and sending out her first invitations.

After people have dined with each other several times, it is not at all important to consider whether an invitation is owed or paid several times over. She who is hospitably inclined can ask people half a dozen times to their once if she wants to, and they show their friendliness by coming. Nor need visits be paid in alternate order. Once she is really accepted by people she can be as friendly as she chooses.

When Mrs. Oldname calls on Mrs. Stranger the first time, the latter may do nothing but call in return; it would be the height of presumption to invite one of conspicuous prominence until she has first been invited by her. Nor may the Strangers ask the Oldnames to dine after being merely invited

to a tea. But when Mrs. Oldname asks Mrs. Stranger to lunch, the latter might then invite the former to dinner, after which, if they accept, the Strangers can continue to invite them on occasion, whether they are invited in turn or not; especially if the Strangers are continually entertaining, and the Oldnames are not. But on no account must the Strangers' parties be arranged solely for the benefit of any particular fashionables.

The Strangers can also invite to a party any children whom their own children know at school, and Mrs. Stranger can quite properly go to fetch her own children from a party to which their schoolmates invited them.

AN ELUSIVE POINT ESSENTIAL TO SOCIAL SUCCESS

The sense of whom to invite with whom is one of the most important, and elusive, points in social knowledge. The possession or lack of it is responsible more than anything else for the social success of one woman, and the failure of another. And as it is almost impossible, without advice, for any stranger anywhere to know which people like or dislike each other, the would-be hostess must either by means of natural talent or more likely by trained attention, read the signs of liking or prejudice much as a woodsman reads a message in every broken twig or turned leaf.

One who can read expression, perceives at a glance the difference between friendliness and polite aloofness. When a lady is unusually silent, strictly impersonal in conversation, and entirely unapproachable, something is not to her liking. The question is, what? Or usually, whom? The greatest blunder possible would be to ask her what the matter is. The cause of annoyance is probably that she finds someone distasteful and it should not be hard for one whose faculties are not asleep to discover the offender and if possible separate them, or at least never ask them together again.

Chapter XXIX.

The Fundamentals of Good Behavior

FAR more important than any mere dictum of etiquette is the fundamental code of honor, without strict observance of which no man, no matter how “polished,” can be considered a gentleman. The honor of a gentleman demands the inviolability of his

word, and the incorruptibility of his principles; he is the descendant of the knight, the crusader; he is the defender of the defenseless, and the champion of justice—or he is not a gentleman.

DECENCIES OF BEHAVIOR

A gentleman does not, and a man who aspires to be one must not, ever borrow money from a woman, nor should he, except in unexpected circumstances, borrow money from a man. Money borrowed without security is a debt of honor which must be paid without fail and promptly as possible. The debts incurred by a deceased parent, brother, sister, or grown child, are assumed by honorable men and women, as debts of honor.

A gentleman never takes advantage of a woman in a business dealing, nor of the poor or the helpless.

One who is not well off does not “sponge,” but pays his own way to the utmost of his ability.

One who is rich does not make a display of his money or his possessions. Only a vulgarian talks ceaselessly about how much this or that cost him.

A very well-bred man intensely dislikes the mention of money, and never speaks of it (out of business hours) if he can avoid it.

A gentleman never discusses his family affairs either in public or with acquaintances, nor does he speak more than casually about his wife. A man is a cad who tells anyone, no matter who, what his wife told him in confidence, or describes what she looks like in her bedroom. To impart details of her beauty is scarcely better than to publish her blemishes; to do either is unspeakable.

Nor does a gentleman ever criticise the behavior of a wife whose conduct is scandalous. What he says to her in the privacy of their own apartments is no one's affair but his own, but he must never treat her with disrespect before their children, or a servant, or any one.

A man of honor never seeks publicly to divorce his wife, no matter what he believes her conduct to have been; but for the protection of his own name, and that of the children, he allows her to get her freedom on other than criminal grounds. No matter who he may be, whether rich or poor, in high life or low, the man who publicly besmirches his wife's name, besmirches still more his own, and proves that he is not, was not, and never will be, a gentleman.

No gentleman goes to a lady's house if he is affected by alcohol. A gentleman seeing a young man who is not entirely himself in the presence of ladies, quietly induces the youth to depart. An older man addicted to the use of too much alcohol, need not be discussed, since he ceases to be asked to the houses of ladies.

A gentleman does not lose control of his temper. In fact, in his own self-control under difficult or dangerous circumstances, lies his chief ascendancy over others who impulsively betray every emotion which animates them. Exhibitions of anger, fear, hatred, embarrassment, ardor or hilarity, are all bad form in public. And bad form is merely an action which “jars” the sensibilities of others. A gentleman does not

show a letter written by a lady, unless perhaps to a very intimate friend if the letter is entirely impersonal and written by some one who is equally the friend of the one to whom it is shown. But the occasions when the letter of a woman may be shown properly by a man are so few that it is safest to make it a rule never to mention a woman's letter.

A gentleman does not bow to a lady from a club window; nor according to good form should ladies ever be discussed in a man's club!

A man whose social position is self-made is apt to be detected by his continual cataloguing of prominent names. Mr. Parvenu invariably interlards his conversation with, "When I was dining at the Bobo Gildings"; or even "at Lucy Gilding's," and quite often accentuates, in his ignorance, those of rather second-rate, though conspicuous position. "I was spending last week-end with the Richan Vulgars," or "My great friends, the Gotta Crusts." When a so-called gentleman insists on imparting information, interesting only to the Social Register, *shun him!*

The born gentleman avoids the mention of names exactly as he avoids the mention of what things cost; both are an abomination to his soul.

SIMPLICITY AND UNCONSCIOUSNESS OF SELF

These words have been literally sprinkled through the pages of this book, yet it is doubtful if they convey a clear idea of the attributes meant.

Unconsciousness of self is not so much unselfishness as it is the mental ability to extinguish all thought of one's self—exactly as one turns out the light.

A gentleman's manners are an integral part of him and are the same whether in his dressing-room or in a ballroom, whether in talking to Mrs. Worldly or to the laundress bringing in his clothes. He whose manners are only put on in company is a veneered gentleman, not a real one.

A man of breeding does not slap strangers on the back nor so much as lay his fingertips on a lady. Nor does he punctuate his conversation by pushing or nudging or patting people, nor take his conversation out of the drawing-room! Notwithstanding the advertisements in the most dignified magazines, a discussion of underwear and toilet articles and their merit or their use, is unpleasant in polite conversation.

All thoroughbred people are considerate of the feelings of others no matter what the station of the others may be. Thackeray's climber who "licks the boots of those above him and kicks the faces of those below him on the social ladder," is a very good illustration of what a gentleman is *not*.

A gentleman never takes advantage of another's helplessness or ignorance, and assumes that no gentleman will take advantage of him.

Simplicity is like it, in that it also has a quality of self-effacement, but it really means a love of the essential and of directness. Simple people put no trimmings on their phrases, nor on their manners; but remember, simplicity is not crudeness nor anything like it. On the contrary, simplicity of speech and manners means language in its purest, most limpid form, and manners of such perfection that they do not suggest "manner" at all.

THE INSTINCTS OF A LADY

The instincts of a lady are much the same as those of a gentleman. She is equally punctilious about her debts, equally averse

to pressing her advantage; especially if her adversary is helpless or poor.

As an unhappy wife, her dignity demands that she never show her disapproval of her husband, no matter how publicly he slights or outrages her. If she has been so unfortunate as to have married a man not a gentleman, to draw attention to his behavior would put herself on his level. If it comes actually to the point where she divorces him, she discusses her situation, naturally, with her parents or her brother

or whoever are her nearest and wisest relatives, but she shuns publicity and avoids discussing her affairs with any one outside of her immediate family. One can not too strongly censure the unspeakable vulgarity of the woman so unfortunate as to be obliged to go through divorce proceedings, who confides the private details of her life to reporters.

THE HALL-MARK OF THE CLIMBER

Nothing so blatantly proclaims a woman climber as the repetition of prominent names, the owners of which she must have struggled to know. Otherwise, why so eagerly boast of the achievement? Nobody cares whom she knows—nobody that is, but a climber like herself. To those who were born and who live, no matter how quietly, in the security of a perfectly good ledge above and away from the social ladder's rungs, the evidence of one frantically climbing and trying to vaunt her exalted position is merely ludicrous.

All thoroughbred women, and men, are considerate of others less fortunately placed, especially of those in their employ. One of the tests by which to distinguish between the woman of breeding and the

woman merely of wealth, is to notice the way she speaks to dependents. Queen Victoria's duchesses, those great ladies of grand manner, were the very ones who, on entering the house of a close friend, said "How do you do, Hawkins?" to a butler; and to a sister duchess's maid, "Good morning, Jenkins." A Maryland lady, still living on the estate granted to her family three generations before the Revolution, is quite as polite to her friends' servants as to her friends themselves. When you see a woman in silks and sables and diamonds speak to a little errand girl or a footman or a scullery maid as though they were the dirt under her feet, you may be sure of one thing; she hasn't come a very long way from the ground herself.

Chapter XXXV

The Kindergarten of Etiquette

Training a boy is exactly like training a puppy; a little heedless inattention and it is out of hand immediately; the great thing is not to let it acquire bad habits that must afterward be broken. Any boy can be taught

to be beautifully behaved with no effort greater than quiet patience and perseverance, whereas to break bad habits once they are acquired is a Herculean task.

TABLE TRICKS THAT MUST BE CORRECTED

To sit up straight and keep their hands in their laps when not occupied with eating, is very hard for a boys, but should be insisted upon in order to prevent a careless attitude that all too readily degenerates into flopping this way and that, and into fingering whatever is in reach. He must not be allowed to warm his hands on his plate, or drum on the table, or screw his napkin into a rope or make marks on the table-cloth. If

he shows talent as an artist, give him pencils or modeling wax in his playroom, but do not let him bite his slice of bread into the silhouette of an animal, or model figures in soft bread at the table. And do not allow him to construct a tent out of two forks, or an automobile chassis out of tumblers and knives. Food and table implements are not playthings, nor is the dining-room a playground.

TALKING AT TABLE

When Doms are present at table and a boy wants to say something, he must be taught to stop eating momentarily and look at his Master/Daddy, who at the first pause in the conversation will say, "What is it?" And the boy then has his say. If he wants merely to launch forth on a long subject of his own conversation, his Master/Daddy says, "Not now."

When boys are at table alone with their Master/Daddy, they should not only be

allowed to talk but unconsciously trained in table conversation as well as in table manners. Boys are all more or less little monkeys in that they imitate everything they see.

Boys should be taught from the time they are little not to talk about what they like and don't like.

QUIETNESS AT TABLE

Older boys should not be allowed to jerk out their chairs, to flop down sideways, to flick their napkins by one corner, to reach out for something, or begin to eat nuts, fruit or other table decorations. A boy as well as a grown person should sit down quietly in the center of his chair and draw it up to the table by holding the seat in either hand while momentarily lifting himself on

his feet. He must not "jump" or "rock" his chair into place at the table. In getting up from the table, again he must push his chair back quietly, using his hands on either side of the chair seat, and *not* by holding on to the table edge and giving himself, chair and all, a sudden shove! There should never be a sound made by the pushing in or out of chairs at table.

THE SPOILED BOY

The bad manners of American boys, which unfortunately are supposed by foreigners to be typical, are nearly always the result of their being given “star” parts by over-fond but equally over-foolish Master/Daddies. It is only necessary to bring to mind the most irritating and objectionable boy one knows, and the chances are that its Master/Daddy continually throws the spotlight on it by talking to it, and about it, and by calling attention to its looks or its cunning ways or even, possibly, its naughtiness.

It is humanly natural to make a fuss over little boys, particularly if they are pretty,

and it takes quite superhuman control for a young Master/Daddy not to “show off” her treasure, but to say instead, “Please do not pay any attention to her.” Some boys, who are especially free from self-consciousness, stand “stardom” better than others who are more readily spoiled; but in nine cases out of ten, the old-fashioned method that assigned boys to inconspicuous places in the background and decreed they might be seen but not heard, produced men and women of far greater charm than the modern method of encouraging public self-expression from infancy upward.

CHIEF VIRTUE: OBEDIENCE

No young human being, any more than a young dog, has the least claim to attractiveness unless it is trained to manners and obedience. The boy that whines, interrupts, fusses, fidgets, and does nothing that it is told to do, has not the least power of attraction for any one, even though it may have the features of an angel and be dressed like a picture. Another that may have no claim to beauty whatever, but that is sweet and nicely behaved, exerts charm over every one.

When possible, a boy should be taken away the instant it becomes disobedient. It soon learns that it can not “stay with Master/Daddy” unless it is well-behaved.

This means that it learns self-control in babyhood. Not only must boys obey, but they must *never* be allowed to “show off” or become pert, or to contradict or to answer back; and after having been told “no,” they must never be allowed by persistent nagging to win “yes.”

A boy that loses its temper, that teases, that is petulant and disobedient, and a nuisance to everybody, is merely a victim, poor little thing, of parents who have been too incompetent or negligent to train it to obedience. Moreover, that same boy when grown will be the first to resent and blame the Master/Daddy’s mistaken “spoiling” and lack of good sense.

THE BOY’S REPLY

In all monosyllabic replies a boy must not say “Yes” or “No” or “What?” A boy in answering a Dominate still uses the old-fashioned “Yes, sir,” “No, sir,” “I think so, sir,” “Yes, ma’am, ” or “No, ma’am, as appropriate. All boys should say, “What

did you say, Sir?” “No, Sir,” “Thank you, Sir,” etc.

They need not insert a name in a long sentence nor with “please,” or “thank you.” “Yes, please, Sir” or “No, thank you Sir,” is quite sufficient.

ETIQUETTE FOR BOYS

A boy always rises, relinquishes the best seat and walks last into a room, whereas these courtesies are shown to, and not observed by Doms (except to other Doms out of respect).

Chapter XXXVI. Every-Day Manners at Home

JUST as no chain is stronger than its weakest link, no manners can be expected to stand a strain beyond their daily test at home.

Those who are used to losing their temper in the bosom of their family will sooner or later lose it in public. Families which exert neither courtesy nor charm when alone, can no more deceive other people into believing that either attribute belongs to them than they could hope to make painted faces look like “real” complexions.

A Dominate should exact precisely the same behavior at home and every day, that she would like her submissives to display in public, and she herself, if she expects them to take good manners seriously, must show the same manners to them alone that she shows to “company.”

A really charming woman exerts her charm nowhere more than upon her submissive(s), and a noble nature through daily though unconscious example is of course the greatest influence for good that there is in the world. No preacher, no matter how saint-like his precept or golden his voice, can equal the home influence of admirable parents.

It is not merely in such matters as getting up when their Dominate or other Doms enter a room, answering civilly and having good table manners, but in forming habits of admirable living and thinking that a Dom's example makes or mars.

If submissives see temper uncontrolled, hear gossip, uncharitableness and suspicion of neighbors, witness arrogant sharp-dealing or lax honor, their own characters can scarcely escape perversion. In the same way others can not easily fail to be thoroughbred who have never seen or heard their Doms do or say an ignoble thing.

No submissive will ever accept a maxim that is preached but not followed by the preacher. It is a waste of breath for the Dom to order his submissives to keep their temper, to behave like gentlemen, or to be good sportsmen, if he does or is himself none of these things.

In the present day of rush and hurry, there is little time for “home” example. To the over-busy or gaily fashionable, “home” might as well be a railroad station, and members of a family passengers who see each other only for a few hurried minutes before taking trains in opposite directions. The days are gone when the family sat in the evening around the fire, or a “table with a lamp,” when it was customary to read aloud or to talk. Few people “talk well” in these days; fewer read aloud, and fewer still endure listening to any book literally word by word.

Railroad station reading is as much in vogue as railroad station bolting of meals. Magazines—“picture” ones—are all that the hurried have time for, and even those who profess to “love reading” dart tourist-fashion from page to page only pausing at attractive paragraphs; and family relationships are followed somewhat in the same way.

Any number of busy men scarcely know their submissives at all, and have not even stopped to realize that they seldom or never talk to them, never exert themselves to be sympathetic with them, or in the slightest degree to influence them. To growl “mornin’,” or “Don’t, Johnny,” or “Be quiet, Alice!” is very, very far from being “an influence” on your children’s morals, minds or manners.

THE OLD GRAY WRAPPER HABIT

How many times has one heard some one say: "I won't dress for dinner—no one is coming in." Or, "That old dress will do!" Old clothes! No manners! And what is the result? One wife more wonders why her husband neglects her! Curious how the habit of careless manners and the habit of old clothes go together. If you doubt it, put the question to yourself: "Who could possibly have the manners of a queen in a gray flannel wrapper? And how many women really lovely and good—especially good—commit esthetic suicide by letting themselves slide down to where they "feel natural" in an old gray flannel wrapper, not only actually but mentally.

The woman of charm in "company" is the woman of fastidiousness at home; she who dresses for her children and "prinks" for her husband's home-coming, is sure to greet them with greater charm than she who thinks whatever she happens to have on is "good enough." Any old thing good enough for those she loves most! Think of it!

A certain very lovely lady whose husband is quite as much her lover as in the days of his courtship, has never in twenty years allowed him to watch the progress of her toilet, because of her determination never to let him see her except at her prettiest. Needless to say, he never meets anything but "prettiest" manners either. No matter how "out of sorts" she may be feeling, his key in the door is a signal for her to "put aside everything that is annoying or depressing," with the result that wild horses couldn't drag his attention from her—all because neither she nor he has ever slumped into the gray flannel wrapper habit.

So many people save up all their troubles to pour on the one they most love, the idea being, seemingly, that no reserves are necessary between lovers. Nor need there be really. But why, when their house looks

out upon a garden that has charming vistas, must she insist on his looking into the clothes-yard and the ash-can?

She who complains incessantly that this is wrong, or that hurts, or any other thing worries or vexes her, so that his inevitable answer to her greeting is, "I'm so sorry, dear," or "That's too bad," or "Poor darling, it's a shame," is getting mentally into a gray flannel wrapper!

If something is seriously wrong, if she is really ill, that is different. But of the petty things that are only remembered in order to be told to gain sympathy—beware!

There is a big deposit of sympathy in the bank of love, but don't draw out little sums every hour or so—so that by and by, when perhaps you need it badly, it is all drawn out and you yourself don't know how or on what it was spent.

All that has been said to warn a wife from slovenly habits of mind or dress may be adapted to apply with equal force in suggesting a rule for husbands. A man should always remember that a woman's regard for him is founded on her impressions when seeing him at his best. Even granting that she has no great illusions about men in general, he at his best is at least an approximation to her ideal—and it is his chief duty never to fall below the standard he set for himself in making his most cogent appeal. Consequently he should continue through the years to be scrupulous about his personal appearance and his clothes, remembering the adage that the most successful marriages are those in which both parties to the contract succeed in "keeping up the illusion." It is of importance also that he refrain from burdening his wife with the cares and worries of his business day. Many writers insist that the wife should be ready to receive a complete consignment of all his troubles when the

husband comes home at the end of the day. It is a sounder practise for him to save her as much as possible from the trials of his business hours; and, incidentally, it is the best kind of mental training for him to put all business cares behind him as he closes the door of his office and goes home. When it is said that a husband should not fling all

the day's trifling annoyances into the lap of his wife without reflecting that she may have some cares of her own, there is no intention to indicate that a wife should not have a thorough understanding of her husband's affairs. Complete acquaintance and sympathy with his work is one of the foundation stones of the domestic edifice.

THE FAMILY AT TABLE

Whether "there is company" or whether the family is alone, the linen must be as spotless, the silver as clean, and the table as carefully set as though twenty were coming for dinner. Sloppy service is no more to be tolerated every day at home than at a dinner party, and in so far as etiquette is concerned, you should live in exactly the same way whether there is company or none. "Company manners" and "every-day manners" must be identical in service as well as family behavior. You may not be able to afford quantities of flowers in your house and on your table, or perhaps any, but there is no excuse for wilted flowers or an empty vase that merely accentuates your table's flowerlessness. There are plenty

of table ornaments that need no flowers. In the same way the compotiers can be filled with candies or conserves of the "everlasting" variety; silver-foiled chocolates or nougat, or gum drops or crystalized ginger or conserved fruits—will keep for months! But the table must be decorated and a certain form observed at the dinner hour; otherwise gray flannel wrapper habits become imminent. Letters, newspapers, books have no place at a dinner table. Reading at table is allowable at breakfast and when eating alone, but a man and his wife should no more read at lunch or dinner before each other or their children than they should allow their children to read before them.

THE TABLE NOT A PLACE FOR PRIVATE DISCUSSION

One very bad habit in many families is the discussion of all of their most intimate affairs at table—entirely forgetting whoever may be waiting on it; and nine times out of ten those serving in the dining-room see no harm (if they feel like it) in repeating what is said. Why should they? It scarcely occurs to them that they were "invisible" and that what was openly talked about at the table was supposed to be a secret!

Apart from the stupidity and imprudence of talking before witnesses, it is bad form to discuss one's private affairs before any one. And it should be unnecessary to add that a man and his wife who quarrel before their children or the servants, deprive the former of good breeding through inheritance, and publish to the latter that they do not belong to the "better class" through any

qualification except the possession of a bank account.

Furthermore, parents must never disagree before the children. It simply can't be! Nor can there be an appeal to one parent against the other by a child.

"Father told me to jump down the well!"
"Then you must do it, dear," is the mother's only possible comment. When the child has "jumped down the well," she may pull him out promptly, and she may in private tell her husband what she thinks about his issuing such orders and stand her own ground against them; but so long as parents are living under the same roof, that roof must shelter unity of opinion, so far as any witnesses are concerned.