

Graciousness in Our Meetings

The gift of graciousness — or perhaps it's an accomplishment rather than a gift — is the first requisite in introducing a speaker, thanking a speaker, extending "courtesies" at the close of an event.

Introducing a speaker, the gracious club woman knows that she has just one job to do — to make the audience eager to hear the speaker and to make the speaker eager to speak, or at least tolerably pleased with the prospect. She puts the spotlight on the speaker and is careful to keep out of it herself. The opposite of this is "Mrs. Glib," very assured, very conscious of herself. Introducing a speaker who is to give a talk on Switzerland, she may say: "I know what a treat is in store for us because of our trip to Europe last year, my husband and I enjoyed Switzerland more than any other country. I am sure Mr. Blank's camera caught the glow of the sun going down behind the snow-capped mountains, the roads spiralling up and up . . ." and so on. Perhaps this is not what Mr. Blank intends to talk about at all; and perhaps after what Mrs. Glib has said the audience will be disappointed at missing pictures of the sunsets and the winding roads. Anyway Mrs. Glib had not been asked to make a speech herself — just to set the stage for the speaker of the day. And she would have done this more effectively if she had said nothing about her trip to Europe, but had concentrated on the club's good fortune in having Mr. Blank to speak to them. She might have told something about the breadth of his experience, the specific purpose of his travels, any books he had written or films he had made, anything that would contribute to the impression of an interesting personality.

Among many observations of graciousness in club women, I remember a banquet where the entertainers were blind musicians. From the minute they arrived at the banquet hall there were women ready to be their guides and friends, serving them at the table, arranging a place for them to rest in the wings of the stage so they wouldn't have to stumble up the steps when their numbers were called.

I have another unforgettable picture. At an Institute meeting in a northerly settlement years ago, the programme had ended and the women were putting food on the table when the door was cautiously opened and a woman with four children stood outside. They were pitifully clothed and obviously hungry. Perhaps some of the Institute members knew them; anyway they lost no time in bringing them in, being as

friendly and casual as if there was nothing unusual in arriving at this hour, or in being so hungry that food disappeared as fast as it could be brought to them.

A considerable part of the significance of a club, and certainly its public image, depends first of all on the graciousness of its members.

—Ethel Chapman (Ontario H & C)

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"If I could have only two qualities on which to judge a boy's promise, I would choose curiosity and resolution, for only the resolute overcome obstacles to learning. The quest quotient has always excited me more than the intelligence quotient."

—Eugene S. Wilson—Dean of Admissions, Amherst College—in Reader's Digest.

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CHRISTMAS SONG

Above the weary waiting world
Asleep in chill despair,
There breaks a sound of joyous bells
Upon the frosted air.
And o'er the humblest rooftree, lo,
A star is dancing on the snow.

What makes the yellow star to dance
Upon the brink of night?
What makes the breaking dawn to glow
So magically bright, —
And all the earth to be renewed
With infinite beatitude.

The singing bells, the throbbing star,
The sunbeams on the snow,
And the awaking heart that leaps
New ecstasy to know, —
They all are dancing in the morn
Because a little child is born. — Bliss Carman

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"Let us not begin a certain thing
Or start to solve a riddle,
Unless we mean to see it through
And not stop in the middle."

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A NEW SPOON FOR CHRISTMAS

Miss Pearl Clark, sales representative for the commemorative spoons has announced the availability of a new spoon for Christmas. This is a coffee spoon, silver-plated and engraved with a charming "Noel" motif. Other new spoons include Canada with maple leaf, the peace tower, Canada's Northwest Territories and special portrait spoons. Order forms and a complete price list may be obtained by writing Miss S. Pearl Clark, 66 Rosedene Avenue, Hamilton, Ontario.

