

Book Reviews

By John Philip Morris

For over a year I have been bombarded through the mail with advertisements of Books of Etiquette. Where they got my name as a good prospect I cannot guess, although at that Chicago restaurant where I ate frog legs and artichokes and green corn and pie and had three forks left over at the finish, there was a man who insisted upon securing my name and address.

This epistolary deluge together with the Tribune's asking brazenly and boldly each day What is Wrong with the Picture and offering a dollar apiece for embarrassing moments at last gave me a behavior inferiority complex of such magnitude that put even soup into the realm of the inhibited.

So the propaganda succeeded, for really none of us are really perfect, etc. So having decided to invest in a Book of Etiquette, I naturally wanted the best. That, as Macbeth said, was the question. There seemed to be a wide choice. I knew, however, that Lord Chesterfield was out of date and Mrs. Vanderbilt, Mrs. Palmer, Becky Table Manners nor any of the Society Leaders I knew personally seemed to be in the ranks of the authors. So I had to choose by publishers. Seeing the hall marking words A DORAN BOOK on one volume I did purchase PERFECT BEHAVIOR by Donald Ogden Stewart.

Stewart I knew wrote spirit joys (jeu de esprits) for Vanity Fair, that magazine that circulated exclusively among the cultured and the etiquetted, and I felt instinctively that Stewart's book would have atmosphere at least. A Vanity Fairian, Doran and PERFECT BEHAVIOR. Not good nor correct nor satisfactory but absolute, superlative, ultimate PERFECT behavior.

Judging from the index the book covered a wide range of behaviors. How to behave at a wedding or in a train. Introduction, courtship, marriage. How to give at parties and how to act when one is given you. Behavior covering the whole social field from the cradle to the grave. Each chapter split up into correct sub-heads and every other word in quotes. And all this for a mere pittance. (A pittance at today's exchange rates is just \$1.90 in gold, though the publisher will take a check).

I took the book home, removed all the superfluous clothing that might hinder the thought waves from penetrating and plunged into etiquette. I read, I memorized, I digested. Then I went forth to conquer.

And yet—yea verily and yet—



IMPORTANCE OF BEING COMFORTABLE

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there must be some discrepancy between the aura of my soul and the impressions recorded by my mind, if you understand what I mean. Perhaps I could put it better by saying that the circle of the instructions could not be resolved into the square of the facts.

But let me explain by giving a concrete example. Mrs. J. P. M. and I decided to give a Halloween party according to the instructions, EXACTLY according to instructions. What was the result? Three of our guests were murdered by indignant neighbors, one was drowned, seventeen landed in hospitals and if you have ever wondered why it was that the Wilmette Police were called up to Winnetka to help out the local force on the 31st of October last it was to persuade our guests that the party was completely over. Our own personal Doctor's bill was larger than that of the caterer and if the courts ever move more quickly I may yet have to pay some of the million dollars in damage suits that have been filed against me. I am so used to attending inquests of our late guests that I long to join the morgue in another capacity. Besides I must not forget that the government is after me for sending obscene matter through the mails and our invitations were only copied word for word from those in PERFECT BEHAVIOR. We must have a most uncouth government.

There have been many other minor mishaps due to the social cult of Stewart. I endeavored to amuse my wealthy grandmother whom I have cherished for years in a Stewartian fashion. She promptly disinherited me and died before I could show her where it stood in the book.

No, PERFECT BEHAVIOR is not a safe Socrates for social seekers but it is like Mr. Stewart's other works, one of the funniest books that was ever written and in it, as in The PARODY OUTLINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY, Mr. Stewart joins humor with a fine understanding and together at times they almost amount to inspiration.

John Philip Morris.



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The store for Children

HOUSE-CLEANING SALE

The Coming Week will be eventful at The Store for Children. We must clean house, just as all thrifty people do. They say old Mr. WINTER may hang around until April this year. Let him; see if we care! Very attractive cold-weather apparel may still be found here, and we are clearing out the remainder at such low prices it would be easy to fool winds and storms coming before spring.

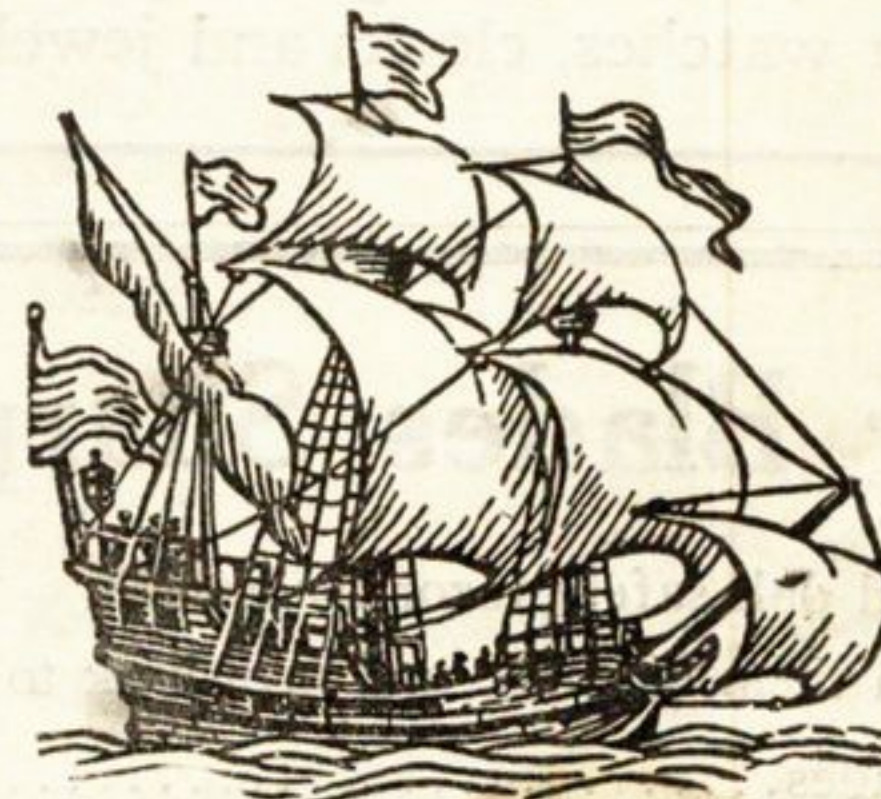
It is good to see happy young faces glow in the crisp out-of-doors at this time. Just be sure the kiddies are properly dressed. Sometimes they are hard on clothes, but you can now get more for your money than at most any other time. Take advantage of this house-cleaning sale.

An assortment of OVERCOATS will be closed out at \$4.95 and up.

Some very smart DRESSES may be had at about half original prices.

A big Table Full of MISCELLANEOUS BARGAINS will be a special attraction.

Nothing reasonable is to be carried over. These mid-winter bargains are of decidedly mutual advantage. They comprise many useful articles at sharp reductions. We must prepare for spring.



All Aboard for Kiddie Nook