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Sermon On Good Manners.

"Manners," says Emerson, "are the happy way of doing things. They are the adornment of life and impart beauty and charm to even the commonest actions. Two men, doing the same thing, may produce upon us the most opposite effects. The one, by the reason of his courtesy, may create a sense of pleasure and happiness, while the other, from want of courtesy, may cause us vexation and pain. Actions, not in themselves, very agreeable, are made by good manners to yield little annoyance. The refusal of one man, graciously and pleasantly given, is more agreeable than the acceptance of another, who is not genial and cheerful in the bestowment of his favors. There are two sets of people with whom I want a word or two at the outset of my remarks. One regards manners as nothing, the other regards them as everything. Those who undervalue manners? Young men often despise good manners and sneer at their exhibition. These marks of the true gentleman are to them the sign of an effeminate and cringing disposition. And they pride themselves on their boorishness. You know these young men. In some cases the boorishness is in the nature of the animal. When the leopard his spots these fellows will give up their bad manners. They are incapable of refinement. Do what you like with them and lecture them in floods of remonstrance and indignation it will do no good—they are inherently worse and you will labor in vain to teach them politeness and good manners. But sometimes it is vulgarity that is to be accounted for by false ideas. As I have hinted good manners are regarded by some as signs of weakness or effeminacy. What a mistake, young men! Good manners do not sacrifice manliness. They add grace and dignity to the character. Peter and Paul were not weak or effeminate men. They declared "the whole counsel of God" and preached the most unwelcome doctrines in the face of persecution. They took their lives in their hands as certainly as the bravest soldiers of the King. But they were gentlemen. Their epistles contain many evidences of a gracious and courteous spirit. I despise senility—I would not have you budge one iota, young men, in self-respect as in personal dignity. But this is not involved in the exercise of a genuine and uniform politeness; with respect for ourselves there may be combined, a considerate and kindly respect for others—a careful regard for their rights and feelings. Manners are not idle, but the fruit of a noble nature and of noble mind; (Temple's "Ideals of the King"). Be courteous, says the apostle. The word only occurs here in the bible and in the revised version it has been taken away. But the thing remains—the rule remains and is illustrated again and again in the example of the saints, both of the Old and New Testaments. Most notably is courtesy illustrated in Him who has been called "the first true gentleman that ever lived."

The root is not an imitator of Jesus. There is not in the story of the evangelists the record of one rude action or of one cold or wounding word. We cannot conceive our Saviour guilty of even such faults. Indignant he was with hypocrisy, and keen and searching were his denunciations of sin, but it was with the dignity of a founded justice, not the petulance of irritated temper. He was meek and gentle of heart. He did not strive nor cry nor was His voice heard in the streets. A bruised reed did He not break, nor quench the smoking flax. Holy, harmless, undefiled, He not only did no sin but acted always with gentleness and grace. Those who overvalue manners. But while some despise good manners—account them nothing, others make too much of them—account them everything. Good manners are exacted above morality.

"Sinful?" said the mother in Pundit's story, "My son, it is worse than sinful, it is vulgar. Etiquette occupies the highest seat in palaces, while morality has often been relegated to the lowest room. A breach of the seventh commandment can be overlooked and is overlooked, but a breach of good manners has no forgiveness—it is the 'unpardonable sin in high life.' Manners are good, but they are not the weightiest makers of the law. To place them above the decalogue is to place that which is secondary above that which is primary. These things ought ye to have done but not to have left the other undone." I desire to treat this subject, especially in connection with success in life. No young man who wishes to get on in life should fail to cultivate good manners. Many, no doubt, have succeeded very well without them, but they have done so with unnecessary labor. They have made difficulties for themselves and the same qualifications, accompanied by a refined and pleasing manner, would have achieved a far higher success.

Good manners as a civil behavior explain many a success which has astonished the world. While by their graciousness and readiness men of first rate abilities have made difficulties for themselves and rendered success an impossibility or less than it might have been; others of more moderate powers have pushed on and by the grace and sincerity of their manners made an easy triumph. Lord Chesterfield, to whom we appeal as a matter of course in an lecture on this subject, says that "the art of pleasing is the art of rising." "What a rare gift is that of manners," says Bulwer Lytton. "Better for a man to pursue them than wealth, beauty or even talent if it fall short of genius—they will soon more than supply them all." Give a boy address and accomplishments, says Emerson, and you give him the mastery of palaces and for times where he goes. He has not the trouble of entering or owning them; they solicit him to enter and possess. Civility hugs everything says Lady Mary Wortley Montague and costs nothing. Believe me, young men, your manners, vulgar or refined, gentle or coarse, are not trifles. Where you are in a profession or in a trade your prospects will be affected

by your address and deportment—they will help you if agreeable, they will hinder you if disagreeable. It is not enough to know your business you may know it thoroughly and work with the greatest industry. The man who gets on is not always the cleverest or most laborious, but more frequently the man who shows a disposition to please and be pleased—he gets ahead of the man who sulks and frowns and snarls.

An old woman, who kept a shop used to say that the most profitable article she had, that which paid her best, was politeness. It drew the very children to her better than sweeties. It is not surprising since good manners are so vital to success in life, that so little is done either in the home or in school for their cultivation? We give our children the best education possible—a complete curriculum at school and perhaps at college and send them out in the world—"certified barbarians." I think more attention should be given in school to good manners; they should at least, be rigorously enforced; in this respect we are far behind England. But parents should begin their cultivation. Good breeding ought to begin at the cradle. The youngest children should be trained in the "happy way of doing things" to make themselves pleasing.

This requires the cultivation of the affections. Good manners have also been defined as "benevolence in rituals." If a spirit of benevolence is encouraged there can never be much quibble with the manners. Bad manners have their root in selfishness. A sympathetic and kindly person never infringe, at least seriously, the rules of good behavior, and the way to cultivate benevolence is to practice benevolence—our actions make our character. In a recent drama the hero tried to conceal ravages, which vice had made. It was taken for his fall. But he tried to live in harmony with his changed aspect. He was to longer vicious. An enemy one day to expose him, as he thought, tore off his mask when he found the face itself had grown beautiful—his character was conformed to his life.

As to the particular actions which show good breeding it is not necessary that I should go into details. Let it suffice that I make one brief quotation: "A well-bred boy should know where to walk in a room, how to bow where it changes, he has to show her when people have to leave the room; to rise from his seat if any lady who is passing addresses him, to stand as long as she stands; to pick up anything a girl accidentally lets fall and return it to her; to see what his neighbors need at the table and to pass it if near him. Little things, do you say? Are you surprised they should find a place in a sermon? They are little things but these and the other small coin of civility which you may easily learn if you have not the ready discovery may prove in the commerce of life far more valuable than minted gold.

Manners are the appropriate ornament of a virtuous character. Rev. Sydney Smith said manners are the shadows of virtues. Well, they ought to be—they ought to be the expression of a soul in harmony with beauty and goodness. The regard men feel for one another—the love they feel should declare itself in those delicate attentions, those nameless and exquisite tendernesses which associate with the grand old name of gentleman." And when good manners have their foundation in a good heart—are not merely skin-deep but arise out of a cordial good will and manly deference; they will not be variable in their manifestation, but constant and uniform—not reserved, but the same always and to everybody. It was said of a great statesman (Canning): "He can never be a gentleman for more than three hours at a time."

There is no man I suppose but will fail occasionally in good manners. I have never seen the perfect gentleman. But to beat change in silently and to suffer provocation and harm without losing our amiability are easiest to him whose character is rooted in the faith of Jesus Christ. Christians would enhance the value of their example—the influence they have over the world, if they studied to add to their virtue—grace. And the highest style of man? We should not make it appear as if Christianity made less perfect men, in any respect, than the maxims of the world. The manners of the Christians should be pleasing always and to everybody. The church should be evil spoken of, but His Master to be evil spoken of. He declares the gospel. He gives a bad impression of religion.

In admonishing Christians one says: There is far too prevalent among us a rough unrefined conscientiousness; a rugged truthfulness, a bluff and almost rude honesty. Conscientiousness is good, but it need not be rough, truthfulness also, but it need not be rude, and honesty, but it need not be unkind. Conscientiousness, truthfulness, honesty are all essential elements in a sound mind, but God wants us to be more than sound-minded. He wants us to be loving-minded. "Let tender mercies be over all your works," that is the meaning of courtesy as used in the scriptures. One of the greatest drawbacks to good manners is that shyness which is more or less characteristic of all the northern or Teutonic nations. A Scotchman is thought to be stiff, reserved or proud when he is only shy—he has none of those ill qualities, but cannot do justice to the goodness of his heart. Beneath the ungraceful and chilling exterior are concealed those very qualities, perhaps which are only veiled by the masters of courtly forms.

It is positively amusing sometimes to watch the exhibition of this national characteristic. Two shy men came into a room and immediately they turn their heads away and pretend to be absorbed with pictures on the opposite walls as they enter a railway carriage and dive into the two remotest corners, peeping at each other, now and then over the rims of their newspapers. A Scotchman, going on a journey, invariably looks for an empty carriage, and having made himself comfortable there, inwardly hates the man who ventures into his solitude. In dining and tea rooms you have noticed how every new comer looks out for a seat most remote from his fellow-men.

It is not so with Frenchmen. They sit down where there is company. They are intensely social, more conversational and demonstrative and freer in their intercourse with each other in every respect.

Dr. Guthrie said: Ask a person at Rome to show you the road and he will always give you a civil and polite answer, but make the same inquiry at a person in this country and he will say very likely, "Follow your nose and you will come to it." This rudeness of the lower classes is according to Dr. Guthrie the fault of the upper classes. The farmers are unmanly because they are not treated by the latter with courtesy.

In France if a gentleman calls at a friend's house, he lifts his hat and bows politely to the servant who opens the door and calls her "mademoiselle." An employer will acknowledge his workman or work-woman on the street with the same courtesy he would do in the most intimate friend. And it is in this way that the lower classes have been trained in politeness. Sir Morell Mackenzie, who attended the late Emperor Frederick in his fatal illness, bore this testimony to his courtesy: His medical attendants and servants will always cherish the recollection of his grateful acknowledgment of services, which ordinary patients exact as a right. Dr. Chalmers delighted the poorest in his parish by his courteous salute. The love and admiration which Sydney Smith evoked from all classes has been attributed to the fact that he treated all classes, rich and poor, his servants and his friends, with the same consideration and courtesy.

Good manners should not be the monopoly of a class. There is no reason in the world why the humblest-artizans as well as artists—should not behave towards each other with courtesy, grace and kindness. There is scarcely a moment in your lives—in the home, the workshop, or the street—in which your usefulness might not be materially increased by the refinements of courtesy. It is common, says one, to depreciate gentlemanly qualities as trifles, but trifles make up the aggregate of human life. It is not so often the great acts of others, he continues, that we treasure up and remember as the petty civilities, slight neglects, microscopic rudenesses which men are guilty without thought, or from lack of insight or sympathy. There are some rules of courtesy to which I call your attention in closing. I have reserved them until now not because I regard them of less importance, but of more so, and because I wish you—whatever be the fate of what has gone before—to carry them away in your memories and hearts. They are the rules of that etiquette without which you and I will be shut out from the highest society of all—the society of Heaven—rules whose obedience in all their fulness and breadth, beauty and beneficence, will give us in a new nature—the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit. "He that would be greatest among you, let him be your servant." "Bear ye one another's burdens." "As I have washed your feet so wash ye one another's feet." "Let each esteem the other better than himself, and in honor prefer ye one another." "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

There are no idle formalities. The observance of these rules attests the second birth, and our kinship with the royal family of Heaven. It is sometimes said that civility costs nothing; and it is true, if by it is meant a mere external varnish, a thin wash, made up of grimaces and bows. But the civility of the gospel is not a mere thin wash, but a candid plea of courtesy, the indiscriminate fawning of a spaniel, the growl of an unctuous imposture, but a hearty wish to make others happy at our own cost; a manly deference without hypocrisy or obsequiousness. True courtesy is simply the application of the Golden Rule to all our social conduct or as one who happily defined it: "It is real kindness, kindly expressed." Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith. Hold up the mirror of God's word. What manner of men are ye? Be ye bear the family likeness? If ye are the children of God, divine blood will flow in your veins, and a divine grace and nobility characterize all your actions.

Pointed Paragraphs.
 To err is human and to lie about it is more so. Intellectual improvement is apt to warp a woman's shape. Even the pessimist is momentarily happy in his unhappiness. This would be a gloomy old world for cats if women could purr. Some music hath charms to hold a man if he is chained to the spot. Speaking of home rule, what's the matter with that of the first baby? "Fair and warmer" is the prediction the weather man lays up for a rainy day. Girls should never flirt in public until after they have a strange hold on the art. A string tied around a man's finger is merely a forget me knot. In matrimony one and one makes one, but in divorce one from one leaves two. Some men don't know they are beaten until long after other people have made the discovery. If the beauty of the average man's mind isn't more lovely than his face it is entitled to sympathy. There is no objection to a woman's having a great command of language if she knows when not to use it.

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 A new and important use for refined paraffine wax seems to have been discovered by a prominent resident of Ohio, living near Lancaster, who had two trees badly damaged by storm, one being a maple and the other an apple. In each case a large limb was broken down from the trunk, but still attached to it. The limbs were propped up and fastened securely with straps, very much as a broken leg might be fastened with splints, and then melted refined wax poured into and over all the cracks. The "surgical operation" was entirely successful. The paraffine prevented the escape of the sap, kept out the rain and moisture which would have rotted the trees, and the limbs seem thus far to be perfectly reattached to the trees.

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THE "NATURAL WAIST."

Narrow Waists Are Going Out of Fashion.

The man who are interested in woman's apparel, may be divided into three classes—those who make money out of it, those who spend money for it, and those who have no financial interests involved but who regard the female raiment with an esthetic or artistic eye.

Of course all men of rational mind and artistic sense belong to the latter class, whether they contribute to the wealth of dressmakers or not. It is very natural then, that the proceedings of the National Dressmakers' Association, which is now holding a convention in the Fine Arts building, is invested with wide popular interest, and that the present tendencies towards the graceful and simple draping of the natural figure, as revealed by the models displayed, is hailed by masculine humanity with delight.

This tendency is plainly disclosed in the evolution of the natural corset, which, of course, brings the natural waist. We are drifting gradually and delightfully toward the Greek models and ideas in woman's apparel. Even the costliest gowns are marvels of simplicity compared to the complex, profusely embellished creations of a few years ago. The curves of feminine beauty are brought out in graceful relief instead of being hidden under hideous mountains of flounces and ruffles.

The passing of the old-time coat of mail known as a corset was marked by one of the speakers who said: "Cranks can't kick about tight lacing any more. Women don't want to lace tight now because a natural waist—what would have been called a large waist two years ago—is the proper thing. The corsets are cut lower and allow the lungs full play. Instead of instruments of torture like the old high-front affairs, they have hygienic value. One style, for instance, has been pronounced by physicians the ideal corset." For the passing of this instrument of torture and the coming of the "natural waist" all mankind is truly thankful. It is doubtful if anyone of rational mind ever truly admired the tightly laced, wasp-waisted woman. Naturalness in manner and dress, has always stood for the highest attainment in female comeliness—and it always will.


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