

Leslie Eliza

The Ladies' Guide to True Politeness and Perfect Manners



Eliza Leslie
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*The Ladies' Guide to True Politeness and Perfect Manners / or, Miss Leslie's
Behaviour Book:*

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PREFACE

It is said that soon after the publication of Nicholas Nickleby, not fewer than six Yorkshire schoolmasters (or rather six principals of Yorkshire institutes) took journeys to London, with the express purpose of prosecuting Dickens for libels – "each one and severally" considering himself shown up to the world as Mr. Squeers of Dotheboys Hall.

Now, if Dickens had drawn as graphic a picture of Dothe*girls* Hall, we firmly believe that none of the lady principals of similar institutes would have committed themselves by evincing so little tact, and adopting such impolitic proceedings. They would wisely have held back from all appropriation of the obnoxious character, and passed it over unnoticed; as if it could not possibly have the slightest reference to *them*.

Therefore we wish that those of our fair readers whom certain hints in the following pages may awaken to the consciousness of a few habitual misbehavements, (of which they were not previously aware,) should pause, and reflect, before they allow themselves to "take umbrage too much." Let them keep in mind that the purpose of the writer is to amend, and not to offend; to improve her young countrywomen, and not to annoy them. It is with this view only that she has been induced to "set down in a note-book" such lapses from *les bienséances* as she has remarked during a long course of observation, and on a very diversified field.

She trusts that her readers will peruse this book in as friendly a spirit as it was written.

Eliza Leslie.

CHAPTER I.

SUGGESTIONS TO VISITERS

An amusing writer of the last century, justly complains of the want of definite words to express, distinctly and unmistakably, the different degrees of visits, with reference to their length. Whether the stay of the guest comprises ten minutes, an hour, an evening, a day, a week, or a month, still it goes under the vague and general term of a visit.

We propose, humourously, that if the stay of the guest exceeds a week, it should be called "a visitation." If it includes a dining, or a tea-drinking, or evening-spending, it may be termed "a visit;" while a mere call can be mentioned as "a vis."

The idea is a very convenient one, and we should like to see it carried out by general adoption. Meanwhile, we must, for the present, be contented with the old uncertain practice of saying only "visit" and "visiter." We think it our duty to explain that this chapter is designed for the benefit of such inexperienced females as may be about to engage in what we should like to call "a visitation."

To begin at the beginning: —

Do not *volunteer* a visit to a friend in the country, or in another town, unless you have had what is called "a standing invitation," with every reason to believe that it was sincerely and

cordially given. Many invitations are mere "words of course," without meaning or motive, designed only to make a show of politeness, and not intended to be taken literally, or ever acted upon. Even when convinced that your friend is really your friend, that she truly loves you, has invited you in all sincerity, and will be happy in your society, still, it is best to apprize her, duly, of the exact day and hour when she may expect you; always with the proviso that it is convenient to herself to receive you at that time, and desiring her to let you know, candidly, if it is not. However close your intimacy, an unexpected arrival may possibly produce inconvenience to your hostess; particularly if her family is numerous, or her bedchambers few. The case is somewhat different, where the house is large, and where there is no scarcity of apartments for guests, of servants to wait on them, or of money to furnish the means of entertaining them liberally. But even then, the time of arrival should be previously intimated, and observed as punctually as possible. Such are now the facilities of travelling, and the rapidity of transmitting intelligence, that there is no excuse for unexpected or ill-timed visits; and when unexpected, they are too frequently ill-timed. When attempted as "agreeable surprises," they are seldom very agreeable to the surprised. Also the improvement in manners has rendered these incursions old-fashioned and ungentle. Above all, never volunteer visits to families whose circumstances are so narrow that they can ill afford the expense of a guest.

Having received an invitation, reply to it immediately; and

do not keep your friends waiting, day after day, in uncertainty whether you mean to accept or decline it; causing them, perhaps, to delay asking other visitors till they have ascertained if you are to be expected or not.

Excuse yourself from accepting invitations from persons whom you do not like, and whose dispositions, habits, feelings, and opinions are in most things the reverse of your own. There can be no pleasure in daily and familiar intercourse where there is no congeniality. Such visits never end well; and they sometimes produce irreconcilable quarrels, or at least a lasting and ill-concealed coolness. Though for years you may have always met on decent terms, you may become positive enemies from living a short time under the same roof; and there is something dishonourable in laying yourself under obligations and receiving civilities from persons whom you secretly dislike, and in whose society you can have little or no enjoyment.

When you arrive, take occasion to mention how long you intend to stay; that your hostess may plan her arrangements accordingly. It is rude and inconsiderate to keep her in ignorance of the probable duration of your visit. And when the allotted time has expired, do not be persuaded to extend it farther, unless you are earnestly, and with undoubted sincerity invited to do so. It is much better that your friends should part with you reluctantly, than you should give them reason to wish your visit shorter. Even if it *has* been very pleasant on both sides, it may not continue so if prolonged too far. Take care of wearing out your welcome.

Besides, your room may be wanted for another guest.

On your first evening, enquire the hours of the house, that you may always be ready to comply with them. Rise early enough to be washed and dressed in time for breakfast; but if you are ready too early, remain in your own apartment, or walk about the garden, or go to the library till the cleaning and arranging of the sitting-room has been completed. Meanwhile, you can occupy yourself with a book, if you stay in your own room.

As soon as you quit your bed, take off the bedclothes, (each article separately,) and spread them widely over the chairs, turning the mattrass or bed as far down as it will go. This will give the bedding time to air; and in all houses it should be done every morning, the whole year round. Before you leave the room, raise the windows as high as they will go, (unless it should be raining, or snowing,) that the apartment may be well ventilated. Fortunate are those who have been accustomed to sleeping always with the sash more or less open, according to the weather, or the season. Their health will be much the better for the excellent practice of constantly admitting fresh air into their sleeping-room. See Dr. Franklin's essay on the "Art of Sleeping Well." Mr. Combe, who has written copiously on this subject, says it not only improves the health, but the complexion; and that ladies who follow this practice continue to look young long after those who sleep in close rooms have faded and shrivelled. Except in a very unhealthy climate, or in the neighbourhood of marshes, no external air can be so unwholesome, or productive of such baneful effects on the

constitution, as the same air breathed over and over again in a close room, and returning continually to the lungs, till before morning it becomes unfit to be breathed at all. Sleeping with the windows closed in a room newly painted has produced fatal diseases. To some lungs the vapour of white lead is poisonous. To none is it quite innocuous. Its dangerous properties may be neutralized by placing in newly-painted rooms, large tubs of water, into each of which has been mixed an ounce of vitriol. The tubs must be set near the walls, and the water and vitriol renewed every day. The introduction of zinc-paint promises to put that of white lead out of use; as zinc is quite as cheap, and not at all pernicious to health.

At sleeping hours the air of a bedroom should be perfectly free from all scents, either pleasant or otherwise. Many persons cannot sleep with flowers in their chamber, or with any sort of perfume. It is best not.

If when on a visit, you find that the chambermaid does not make your bed so that you can sleep comfortably, show her how to do it, (privately,) but say nothing to your hostess. There is but one way of making a bed properly; and yet it is surprising how little that way is known or remembered. First, shake up the bed high and evenly; turning it over, and see that the foot is not higher than the head. If there is a mattress above the bed, turn the mattress half up, and then half down, till you have shaken up the bed beneath. Next spread on the under-sheet, laying it well over the bolster to secure it from dragging down and getting under the

shoulders. However, to most beds now, there is a bolster-case. Then tuck in the under-sheet, well, at both sides, to prevent its getting loose and disordered in the night. For the same reason tuck in the upper-sheet, well, at the foot, leaving the sides loose. Tuck in the blankets at bottom, but not at the sides. Lay the counterpane smoothly over the whole. Turn it down at the top; and turn down the upper-sheet above it, so as to conceal the blankets entirely.

Should the chambermaid neglect your room, or be remiss in filling your pitchers, or in furnishing you with clean towels, speak to her on the subject when alone. She will hardly, for her own sake, inform her mistress that you have had occasion to find fault with her; unless she is very insolent or sulky, she will say she is sorry, and will promise to do better in future. Complaining to her mistress of these neglects will probably give offence to the lady, who may be of that wayward (though too common) disposition which will allow no one except herself, to find any deficiency in *her* servants. As mistresses are frequently very touchy on these points, your hostess may hint that your statement is incredible, and that "no one ever complained before." Above all things, avoid letting her know that you have found or felt insects in your bed; a circumstance that may chance sometimes to happen even in the best kept houses. In a warm climate, or in an old house, the utmost care and the most vigilant neatness cannot always prevent it. It may be caused by the bringing of baggage from boats, or ships, and by servants neglecting their own beds;

a too common practice with them, unless the mistress or her housekeeper compels them to be cleanly, and sees that they are so.

If you have proof positive that your bed is not free from these intolerable nuisances, confide this fact to the chambermaid only, and desire her to attend to it speedily. She will do so the more readily, if you promise her a reward in case of complete success. Enjoining her to manage this as quietly as possible, and to say nothing about it to any one, may spare you a scene with your hostess; who, though you have always regarded her as your warm friend, may, notwithstanding, become your enemy for life, in consequence of your having presumed to be incommoded in *her* house, where "nobody ever complained before." A well-bred, sensible, good-tempered woman will not, of course, take offence for such a cause; and will believe that there must have been good reason for the complaint, rather than suppose that her guest and her friend would mention so delicate a subject even to a servant, unless there was positive proof. And she will rightly think it was well to make it known, and have it immediately remedied. But all women who invite friends to visit them, are not sensible and good-tempered. Therefore, take care.

For similar reasons, should a servant purloin any article belonging to you, (and servants, considered quite honest, will sometimes pilfer from a visiter when they would not dare to do so from their mistress,) it is safest to pass it over, unless the article stolen is of consequence. You may find your hostess

very unwilling to believe that a servant of *hers* could possibly be dishonest; and much may be said, or evidently *thought*, that will be very painful to you, her guest.

Notwithstanding all that may be said to you about "feeling yourself perfectly at home," and "considering your friend's house as your own," be very careful not literally to do so. In fact, it is impossible you *should* with any propriety – particularly, if it is your first visit. You cannot possibly know the real character and disposition of any acquaintance, till after you have had some experience in living under the same roof. If you find your hostess all that you can desire, and that she is making your visit every way agreeable, be very grateful to her, and let her understand that you are exceedingly happy at her house; but avoid staying too long, or taxing her kindness too highly.

Avoid encroaching unreasonably upon her time. Expect her not to devote an undue portion of it to you. She will probably be engaged in the superintendence of household affairs, or in the care of her young children, for two or three hours after breakfast. So at these hours do not intrude upon her, – but amuse yourself with some occupation of your own, till you see that it is convenient to the family for you to join them in the sitting-room. In summer afternoons, retire for an hour or more, soon after dinner, to your own apartment, that you may give your friends an opportunity of taking their naps, and that you may do the same yourself. You will be brighter in the evening, from indulging in this practice; and less likely to feel sleepy, when you ought to be

wide awake, and ready to assist in entertaining your entertainers. A silent visiter, whether silent from dulness or indolence, or a habit of taciturnity, is never an agreeable one.

Yet, however pleasant the conversation, have sufficient self-denial to break off in seasonable time, so as not to keep the family up by continuing in the parlour till a late hour. Some of them may be tired and sleepy, though you are not. And between ten and eleven o'clock it is well to retire.

If you have shopping to do, and are acquainted with the town, you can be under no necessity of imposing on any lady of the family the task of accompanying you. To shop *for* others, or *with* others, is a most irksome fatigue. Even when a stranger in the place, you can easily, by enquiring of the family, learn where the best stores are to be found, and go to them by yourself.

While you are a guest at the house of a friend, do not pass too much of your time in visiting at *other* houses, unless she is with you. You have no right to avail yourself of the conveniences of eating and sleeping at her mansion, without giving her and her family the largest portion of your company.

While a guest yourself, it is taking an unwarrantable liberty to invite any of your friends or relatives to come there and spend a day or days.¹

Refrain from visiting any person with whom your hostess is at enmity, even if that person has been one of your own intimate friends. You will in all probability be regarded as "a spy in

¹ So it is to order the carriage without first asking permission of your hostess.

the camp." There is nothing so difficult as to observe a strict neutrality; and on hearing both sides, it is scarcely possible not to lean more to the one than to the other. The friend whose hospitality you are enjoying will soon begin to look coldly upon you, if she finds you seeking the society of her enemy; and she may evince that coldness whenever you come home from these visits. However unjust her suspicions, it is too probable she may begin to think that you are drawn in to make her, and her house, and family, subjects of conversation when visiting her adversary; therefore, she will cease to feel kindly toward you. If you understand, soon after your arrival, that there is no probability of a reconciliation, send at once a concise note to the lady with whom your hostess is at variance; express your regret at the circumstance, and excuse yourself from visiting her while you remain in your present residence. This note should be polite, short, and decisive, and so worded as to give no offence to either side; for, before sending, it is proper for you to show it, while yet unsealed, to the friend with whom you are staying. And then let the correspondence be carried no further. The lady to whom it is addressed, will, of course, return a polite answer; such as you may show to your hostess.

It is to be presumed, she will not be so lost to all delicacy and propriety, as to intrude herself into the house of her enemy for the purpose of visiting you. But, if she does, it is your place civilly to decline seeing her. A slight coolness, a mere offence on a point of etiquette, which, if let alone, would die out like a

tinder-spark, has been fanned, and blown into a flame by the go-betweening of a so-called *mutual friend*. We repeat, while you are a visiter at a house, hold no intercourse with any foe of that house. It is unkind and disrespectful to the family with whom you are staying, and very unsafe for yourself.

If you know that your friends are hurried with their sewing, or with preparations for company, offer to assist them, as far as you can. But if you are conscious of an incapacity to do such things well, it is better to excuse yourself by candidly saying so, than to attempt them and spoil them. At the same time, express your willingness to learn, if permitted. And you *may* learn, while staying at the house of a clever, notable friend, many things that you have hitherto had no opportunity of acquiring.

When called on by any of your own acquaintances, they will not expect you to ask them to stay to tea, or to dinner. That is the business of your hostess – not yours.

If you are a young lady that has beaux, remember that you have no right to encourage the over-frequency of their visits in any house that is not your home, or to devote much of your time and attention to flirtation with them. Above all, avoid introducing to the family of your entertainers, young men whom they are likely in any respect to disapprove. No stranger who has the feelings of a gentleman, will make a *second* visit to any house unless he is invited by the head of the family, and he will take care that his visits shall not begin too early, or continue too late. However delightful he may find the society of his lady-fair, he

has no right to incommode the family with whom she is staying, by prolonging his visits to an unseasonable hour. If he seems inclined to do so, there is nothing amiss in his fair-one herself hinting to him that it is past ten o'clock. Also, there should be "a temperance" even in his morning calls. It is rude in a young lady and gentleman to monopolize one of the parlours nearly all the forenoon – even if they are *really* courting – still more if they are only pretending to court; for instance, sitting close to each other, and whispering on subjects that might be discussed aloud before the whole house, and talked of across the room.

Young ladies noted for abounding in beaux, are generally rather inconvenient visitors; except in very spacious houses, and in gay, idle families. They should not take the liberty of inviting the said beaux to stay to dinner or to tea. Leave that civility to the head of the house, – without whose invitation no *gentleman* ought to remain.

It is proper for visitors to put out and pay for their own washing, ironing, &c. Therefore, carry among your baggage two clothes-bags; one to be taken away by the laundress, the other to receive your clothes in the interval. You may always hear of a washerwoman, by enquiring of the servants of the house.

On no consideration question the servants, or talk to them about the family, particularly if they are slaves.

Take with you a small writing-case, containing whatever stationery you may be likely to want during your visit; including post-office stamps. Thus you will spare yourself, and spare the

family, the inconvenience of applying to them whenever you have occasion for pen, ink, paper, &c. If you have no ink with you, the first time you go out, stop in at a stationer's store, and buy a small sixpenny bottle that will stand steadily alone, and answer the purpose of an inkstand. Also, take care to be well supplied with all sorts of sewing articles. There are young ladies who go from home on long visits, quite unprovided with even thimbles and scissors; depending all the time on borrowing. Many visitors, though very agreeable in great things, are exceedingly troublesome in little ones.

Take care not to slop your washing-stand, or to lay a piece of wet soap upon it. Spread your wet towels carefully on the towel-rail. See that your trunks are not placed so near the wall as to injure the paper or paint when the lid is thrown back.

If, when travelling, you are to stop but one night at the house of a friend, it is not necessary, for that one night, to have *all* your baggage carried up-stairs, particularly if your trunks are large or heavy. Before leaving home, put into your carpet-bag all the things you will require for that night; and then no other article of your baggage need be taken up to your chamber. They can be left down-stairs, in some safe and convenient place, which your hostess will designate. This will save much trouble, and preclude all the injury that may otherwise accrue to the banisters and staircase-wall, by the corners of trunks knocking against them. It is possible to put into a carpet-satchel (that can be carried in your own hand) a night-gown and night-cap, (tightly rolled,) with hair-

brush, combs, tooth-brush, &c. It is surprising how much these hand-satchels may be made to contain, when packed closely. No lady or gentleman should travel without one. In going from home for one night only, a satchel is, frequently, all that is requisite.

On concluding your visit, tell your entertainers that it has been pleasant, and express your gratitude for the kindness you have received from them, and your hope that they will give you an opportunity of returning their civilities. Give a parting gratuity to each of the servants – the sum being according to your means, and to the length of your visit. Give this to each servant *with your own hands*, going to them for the purpose. Do not tempt their integrity, by entrusting (for instance) to the chambermaid the fee intended for the cook. She may dishonestly keep it to herself, and make the cook believe that you were "so mean as to go away without leaving any thing at all for her." Such things have happened, as we know. Therefore, give all your fees in person.

After you get home, write very soon (within two or three days) to the friend at whose house you have been staying, tell her of your journey, &c., and allude to your visit as having been very agreeable.

The visit over, be of all things careful not to repeat any thing that has come to your knowledge in consequence, and which your entertainers would wish to remain unknown. While inmates of their house, you may have unavoidably become acquainted with some particulars of their way of living not generally known, and which, perhaps, would not raise them in public estimation,

if disclosed. Having been their guest, and partaken of their hospitality, you are bound in honour to keep silent on every topic that would injure them in the smallest degree, if repeated. Unhappily, there are ladies so lost to shame, as, after making a long visit, to retail for the amusement of their cronies, all sorts of invidious anecdotes concerning the family at whose house they have been staying; adding by way of corroboration – "I assure you this is all true, for I stayed five or six weeks at their house, and had a good chance of knowing." More shame then to tell it!

Whatever painful discoveries are made during a visit, should be kept as closely secret as if secrecy was enjoined by oath. It is not sufficient to refrain from "mentioning names." No clue should be given that could possibly enable the hearers even to hazard a guess.

CHAPTER II.

THE VISITED

Having invited a friend to pass a few days or weeks at your house, and expecting her at a certain time, send a carriage to meet her at the rail-road depôt or the steamboat wharf, and if her host or hostess goes in it, so much the better; but do not take the children along, crowding the vehicle, for the sake of giving them a ride. Arriving at your house, have her baggage taken at once to the apartment prepared for her, and when she goes upstairs, send a servant with her to unstrap her trunks. Then let her be left *alone* to arrange her dress. It is to be supposed that before her arrival, the mistress of the house has inspected the chamber of her guest, to see that all is right – that there are *two* pitchers full of fresh water on the stand, and three towels on the rail, (two fine and one coarse,) with a china mug for teeth-cleaning, and a tumbler to drink from; a slop jar of course, and a foot-bath. We conclude that in all genteel and well-furnished houses, none of these articles are wanting in every bedroom. On the mantel-piece a candle or lamp, with a box of lucifer matches beside it – the candle to be replaced by a new one every morning when the chambermaid arranges the room – or the lamp to be trimmed daily; so that the visiter may have a light at hand whenever she pleases, without ringing the bell and waiting till a servant brings

one up.

By-the-bye, when a guest is expected, see previously that the bells and locks of her room are in order; and if they are not, have them repaired.

If it is cold weather, let her find a good fire in her room; and the shutters open, that she may have sufficient light. Also an extra blanket, folded, and laid on the foot of the bed. If summer, let the sashes be raised, and the shutters bowed. The room should have an easy chair with a heavy foot-cushion before it, – a low chair also, to sit on when shoes and stockings are to be changed, and feet washed. In a spare chamber there should be both a matrass and a feather-bed, that your visitors may choose which they will have uppermost. Though you and all your own family may like to sleep hard, your guests may find it difficult to sleep at all on a matrass with a paillasse under it. To many constitutions hard sleeping is not only intolerable, but pernicious to health.

Let the centre-table be furnished with a writing-case well supplied with all that is necessary, the inkstand filled, and with *good black ink*; and some sheets of letter-paper and note-paper laid near it. Also, some books, such as you think your friend will like. Let her find, at least, one bureau vacant; *all* the drawers empty, so that she may be able to unpack her muslins, &c., and arrange them at once. The same with the wardrobe or commode, so that she may have space to hang up her dresses – the press-closet, likewise, should be for her use while she stays.

By giving up the spare bedroom *entirely* to your visiter you will

very much oblige her, and preclude the necessity of disturbing or interrupting her by coming in to get something out of drawers, closets, &c.

Every morning, after the chambermaid has done her duty, (the room of the visiter is the first to be put in order,) the hostess should go in to see that all is right. This done, no further inspection is necessary for that day. There are ladies who, when a friend is staying with them, are continually slipping into her chamber when she is out of it, to see if the guest has done nothing amiss – such as moving a chair to suit her own convenience, or opening a shutter to let in more light, at the possible risk of hastening imperceptibly the fading of the carpet. There are families who condemn themselves to a perpetual twilight, by living in the dimness of closed shutters, to the great injury of their eyes. And this is endured to retard awhile the fading of furniture too showy for comfort. We have seen staircase-windows kept always shut and bolted, (so that visitors had to grope their way in darkness,) lest the small portion of stair-carpet just beneath the window should fade before the rest.

It is not pleasant to be a guest in a house where you perceive that your hostess is continually and fretfully on the watch, lest some almost imperceptible injury should accrue to the furniture. We have known ladies who were always uneasy when their visitors sat down on a sofa or an ottoman, and could not forbear inviting them to change their seats and take chairs. We suppose the fear was that the more the damask-covered seats were used,

the sooner they would wear out. Let no visiter be so rash as to sit on a pier-divan with her back near a mirror. The danger is imminent – not only of breaking the glass by inadvertently leaning against it, but of certainly fretting its owner, with uneasiness, all the time. Children should be positively interdicted taking these precarious seats.

It is very kind and considerate to enquire of your guest if there is any dish, or article of food that she particularly likes, so that you may have it on the table while she stays; and also, if there is any thing peculiarly disagreeable to her, so that you may refrain from having it during her visit. A well-bred and sensible woman will not encroach upon your kindness, or take an undue advantage of it, in this respect or any other.

For such deficiencies as may be avoided or remedied, refrain from making the foolish apology that you consider her "no stranger" – and that you regard her "just as one of the family." If you invite her at all, it is your duty, for your own sake as well as hers, to treat her well in every thing. You will lose nothing by doing so.

If she desires to assist you in sewing, and has brought no work of her own, you may avail yourself of her offer, and employ her in moderation – but let it be in moderation only, and when sitting in the family circle. When alone in her own room, she, of course, would much rather read, write, or occupy herself in some way for her own benefit, or amusement. There are ladies who seem to expect that their guests should perform as much work as hired

seamstresses.

Let the children be strictly forbidden to run into the apartments of visitors. Interdict them from going thither, unless sent with a message; and then let them be made to understand that they are always to knock at the door, and not go in till desired to do so. Also, that they are not to play and make a noise in the neighbourhood of her room. And when she comes into the parlour, that they are not to jump on her lap, put their hands into her pockets, or rummage her work-basket, or rumple and soil her dress by clinging to it with their hands. Neither should they be permitted to amuse themselves by rattling on the lower keys when she is playing on the piano, or interrupt her by teasing her all the time to play "for them to dance." All this we have seen, and the mothers have never checked it. To permit children to ask visitors for pennies or sixpences is mean and contemptible. And, if money *is* given them by a guest, they should be made to return it immediately.

Enquire on the first evening, if your visitor is accustomed to taking any refreshment before she retires for the night. If she is, have something sent up to her room every night, unless your own family are in the same habit. Then let sufficient for all be brought into the parlour. These little repasts are very pleasant, especially at the close of a long winter evening, and after coming home from a place of public amusement.

To "welcome the coming – speed the parting guest" – is a good maxim. So when your visitor is about to leave you, make

all smooth and convenient for her departure. Let her be called up at an early hour, if she is to set out in the morning. Send a servant up to strap and bring down her trunks, as soon as she has announced that they are ready; and see that an early breakfast is prepared for her, and some of the family up and dressed to share it with her. Slip some cakes into her satchel for her to eat on the road, in case, by some chance, she should not reach the end of her journey at the usual hour. Have a carriage at the door in due time, and let some male member of the family accompany her to the starting-place and see her off, attending to her baggage and procuring her tickets.

CHAPTER III.

TEA VISITERS

When you have invited a friend to take tea with you, endeavour to render her visit as agreeable as you can; and try by all means *to make her comfortable*. See that your lamps are lighted at an early hour, particularly those of the entry and stair-case, those parts of the house always becoming dark as soon as the sun is down; and to persons coming in directly from the light of the open air, they always seem darker than they really are. Have the parlours lighted rather earlier than usual, that your guest, on her entrance, may be in no danger of running against the tables, or stumbling over chairs. In rooms heated by a furnace, or by any other invisible fire, it is still more necessary to have the lamps lighted early.

If there is a coal-grate, see that the fire is burning clear and brightly, that the bottom has been well-raked of cinders and ashes, and the hearth swept clean. A dull fire, half-choked with dead cinders, and an ashy hearth, give a slovenly and dreary aspect to the most elegantly furnished parlour. A sufficiently large grate (if the fire is well made up, and plenty of fresh coal put on about six o'clock) will generally require no further replenishing during the evening, unless the weather is unusually cold; and then more fuel should be added at eight or nine o'clock,

so as to make the room comfortable.

In summer evenings, let the window-sashes be kept up, or the slats of the venetian blinds turned open, so that your guest may find the atmosphere of the rooms cool and pleasant. There should always be fans (feather or palm-leaf) on the centre-tables.

The domestic that attends the door should be instructed to show the guest up-stairs, as soon as she arrives; conducting her to an unoccupied apartment, where she may take off her bonnet, and arrange her hair, or any part of her dress that may require change or improvement. The lady should then be left to herself. Nothing is polite that can possibly incommode or embarrass – therefore, it is a mistaken civility for the hostess, or some female member of the family to follow the visiter up-stairs, and remain with her all the time she is preparing for her appearance in the parlour. We have seen an inquisitive little girl permitted by her mother to accompany a guest to the dressing-table, and watch her all the while she was at the glass; even following her to the corner in which she changed her shoes; the child talking, and asking questions incessantly. This should not be. Let both mothers and children understand that, on all occasions, over-officiousness is not politeness, and that nothing troublesome and inconvenient is ever agreeable.

The toilet-table should be always furnished with a clean hair-brush, and a nice comb. We recommend those hair-brushes that have a mirror on the back, so as to afford the lady a glimpse of the back of her head and neck. Better still, as an appendage

to a dressing-table, is a regular hand-mirror, of sufficient size to allow a really *satisfactory* view. These hand-mirrors are very convenient, to be used in conjunction with the large dressing-glass. Their cost is but trifling. The toilet-pincushion should always have pins in it. A small work-box properly furnished with needles, scissors, thimble, and cotton-spools, ought also to find a place on the dressing-table, in case the visiter may have occasion to repair any accident that may have happened to her dress.

For want of proper attention to such things, in an ill-ordered, though perhaps a very showy establishment, we have known an *expected* visiter ushered first into a dark entry, then shown into a dark parlour with an ashy hearth, and the fire nearly out: then, after groping her way to a seat, obliged to wait till a small hand-lamp could be procured to light her dimly up a steep, sharp-turning stair-case; and then, by the same lamp, finding on the neglected dressing-table a broken comb, an old brush, and an empty pincushion, – or (quite as probably) nothing at all – not to mention two or three children coming to watch and stare at her. On returning to the parlour, the visiter would probably find the fire just then making up, and the lamp still unlighted, because it had first to be trimmed. Meanwhile, the guest commences her visit with an uncomfortable feeling of self-reproach for coming too early; all things denoting that she was not expected so soon. In such houses everybody comes too early. However late, there will be nothing in readiness.

The hostess should be in the parlour, prepared to receive her

visiter, and to give her at once a seat in the corner of a sofa, or in a fauteuil, or large comfortable chair; if a rocking-chair, a footstool is an indispensable appendage. By-the-bye, the dizzy and ungraceful practice of rocking in a rocking-chair is now discontinued by all genteel people, except when entirely alone. A lady should never be seen to rock in a chair, and the rocking of a gentleman looks silly. Rocking is only fit for a nurse putting a baby to sleep. When children get into a large rocking-chair, they usually rock it over backward, and fall out. These chairs are now seldom seen in a parlour. Handsome, stuffed easy chairs, that are moved on castors, are substituted – and of these, half a dozen of various forms are not considered too many.

Give your visiter a fan to cool herself, if the room is warm, or to shade her eyes from the glare of the fire or the light – for the latter purpose, a broad hand-screen is generally used, but a palm-leaf fan will do for both. In buying these fans, choose those whose handle is the firm natural stem, left remaining on the leaf. They are far better than those with handles of bamboo, which in a short time become loose and rickety.

There are many persons who, professing never to use a fan themselves, seem to think that nobody can by any chance require one; and therefore they selfishly keep nothing of the sort in their rooms.

If, in consequence of dining very late, you are in the custom of also taking tea at a late hour – or making but slight preparations for that repast – waive that custom when you expect a friend

whom you know to be in the practice of dining early, and who, perhaps, has walked far enough to feel fatigued, and to acquire an appetite. For her accommodation, order the tea earlier than usual, and let it be what is called "a *good* tea." If there is ample room at table, do not have the tea carried round, – particularly if you have but one servant to hand the whole. It is tedious, inconvenient, and unsatisfactory. There is no comfortable way of eating bread and butter, toast, or buttered cakes, except when seated at table. When handed round, there is always a risk of their greasing the dresses of the ladies – the greasing of fingers is inevitable – though that is of less consequence, now that the absurd practice of eating in gloves is wisely abolished among genteel people.

Still, if the company is too numerous for all to be commodiously seated at the usual family table, and if the table cannot be enlarged – it is better to have tea carried round by *two* servants, even if an extra one is hired for the occasion, than to crowd your guests uncomfortably. One person too many will cause inconvenience to all the rest, however the hostess may try to pass it off, by assuring the company that there is quite room enough, and that she has seen a still larger number seated round that very table. Everybody knows that "what's impossible a'n't true."

In setting a tea-table, see that there is not only enough, but *more than enough* of cups and saucers, plates, knives and forks, spoons, napkins, &c. Let the *extra* articles be placed near the lady of the house, – to be distributed, if wanted. We have known

families who had the means and the inclination to be hospitable, that never sat down to table without several spare *covers*, as the French call them, ready for accidental guests.

Unless you have domestics on whom you can implicitly rely, it is well to go into the eating-room about ten minutes before the announcement of tea, and to see that all is right; that the tea is strong and properly made, and the pot (which should be scalded twice) is not filled nearly to overflowing with a superabundance of water. The practice of drowning away all the flavour of the tea is strangely prevalent with servants; who are also very apt to neglect scalding the tea-pot; and who do not, or will not, remember that the kettle should be boiling hard at the moment the water is poured on the tea – otherwise the infusion will be insipid and tasteless, no matter how liberally the Chinese plant has been afforded.

If your cook is not *habitually* a good coffee-maker, the coffee will most probably be sent in cold, thick, and weak – for want of some previous supervision. Let it have that supervision.

We have heard of tea-tables (even in splendid establishments) being left entirely to the *mismanagement* of incompetent or negligent servants; so that when the company sat down, there was found a deficiency in some of the indispensable appendages; such as spoons, and even forks, and napkins – butter-knives forgotten, and (worse than all) *cooking-butter* served in mistake for the better sort. By-the-bye, the use of cooking-butter should be abolished in all genteel-houses. If the butter is not good enough

to eat on the surface of cold bread or on warm cakes, it is not good enough to eat in the inside of sweet cakes, or in pastry, or in any thing else; and is totally unfit to be mixed with vegetables or sauces. The use of butter is to make things taste well; if it makes them taste ill, let it be entirely omitted: for bad butter is not only unpalatable, but unwholesome. There are houses in which the money wasted on one useless bauble for the drawing-room would furnish the family with excellent fresh butter for a whole year – enough for all purposes.

We know, *by experience*, that it is possible to make very fine butter even in the State of New York, and to have it fresh in winter as in summer, though not so rich and yellow. Let the cows be well fed, well sheltered, and *kept fat* and clean – the dairy utensils always in perfect order – churning done twice or thrice every week – all the milk worked well out – and the butter will surely be good.

If cakes for tea have been made at home, and they have turned out failures, (as is often the case with home-made cakes where there is not much practice in baking them,) do not have them brought to table at all, but send to a shop and get others. It is rude to set before your guests what you know is unfit for them to eat. And heavy, tough, ill-baked things are discreditable to any house where the means of obtaining better are practicable.

In sending for cakes to a confectioner, do not *a second time* allow him to put you off with stale ones. This many confectioners are in the practice of doing, if it is passed over without notice.

Stale cakes should at once be sent back, (with a proper reproof,) and fresh ones required. Let the confectioner with whom you deal understand that he is *not* to palm off his stale cakes upon *you*, and that you will not keep them when sent. You will then find that fresh ones will generally be forthcoming. It is always well to send for cakes in the early part of the afternoon.

Have a pitcher of ice-water on the side-table, and a tumbler beside every plate – as most persons like to finish with a glass of water.

Do not, on sitting down to table, inform your guest that "you make no stranger of her," or that you fear she will not be able to "make out" at your plain table. These apologies are ungentle and foolish. If your circumstances will not allow you *on any consideration* to make a little improvement in your usual family-fare, your friend is, in all probability, aware of the fact, and will not wish or expect you to incur any inconvenient expense on her account. But if you are known to possess the means of living well, you ought to do so; and to consider a good, though not an extravagantly luxurious table as a necessary part of your expenditure. There is a vast difference between laudable economy and mean economy. The latter (whether it shows itself in bad food, bad fires, bad lights, bad servants) is never excused in persons who dress extravagantly, and live surrounded by costly furniture, and who are universally known to be wealthy, and fully able to afford comfort, as well as show.

If you invite a friend to tea, in whose own family there is

no gentlemen, or no man-servant, it is your duty previously to ascertain that you can provide her on that evening with an escort home; and in giving the invitation, you should tell her so, that she may know on what to depend. If you keep a carriage, it will be most kind to send her home in it.

Even if it is your rule to have the entry-lamp extinguished at a certain hour, let your servants understand that this rule must be dispensed with, as long as an evening-visiter remains in the house. Also, do not have the linen covers put on the furniture, and the house audibly shut up for the night, before she has gone. To do this is rude, because she cannot but receive it as a hint that she has staid too long.

If your visiter is obliged to go home with no other escort than your servant-man, apprize him, in time, that this duty will be expected of him; desiring that he takes care to be at hand before ten o'clock.

A lady that has no escort whose services she can command, ought not to make unexpected tea-visits. In many cases these visits produce more inconvenience than pleasure. If you wish to "take tea sociably" with a friend, inform her previously of your intention. She will then let you know if she is disengaged on that evening, or if it is in any way inconvenient to receive you; and she will herself appoint another time. Generally, it is best not to volunteer a tea-visit, but to wait till invited.

If you are engaged to take tea with an intimate friend, who assures you that you will see none but the family; and you

afterward receive an invitation to join a party to a place of public amusement, which you have long been desirous of visiting, you may retract your first engagement, provided you send an apology in due time, telling the exact truth, and telling it in polite terms. Your intimate friend will then take no offence, considering it perfectly natural that you should prefer the concert, the play, or the exhibition, to a quiet evening passed at her house with no other guests. But take care to let her know as early as possible.² And be careful not to disappoint her again in a similar manner.

If you are accustomed to taking coffee in the evening, and have an insuperable dislike to tea, it is best not to make an *unexpected* visit – or at least, if you go at all, go early – so as to allow ample time for the making of coffee – a much slower process than that of tea; particularly as there may chance to be no roasted coffee in the house. Much inconvenience has been caused by the "sociable visiting" of determined coffee-drinkers. It is very easy to make green or black tea at a short notice – but not coffee.

In inviting "a few friends," which means a small select company, endeavour to assort them suitably, so as not to bring together people who have no community of tastes, feelings, and ideas. If you mix the dull and stupid with the bright and animated, the cold and formal with the frank and lively, the professedly serious with the gay and cheerful, the light with the heavy, and above all, those who pride themselves on high birth (high birth

² Where the city-post is to be depended on, a note can always be sent in that way.

in America?) with those who boast of "belonging to the people," none of these "few friends" will enjoy each other's society; the evening will *not* go off agreeably, and you and the other members of your family will have the worst of it. The pleasantest people in the room will naturally congregate together, and the task of entertaining the unentertainable will devolve on yourself and your own people.

Still, it is difficult always to assort your company to your satisfaction and theirs. A very charming lady may have very dull or very silly sisters. An intelligent and refined daughter may be unfortunate in a coarse, ignorant mother, or a prosing, tiresome, purse-proud father. Some of the most delighted persons you may wish to invite, may be encumbered with relations totally incapable of adding any thing to the pleasure of the evening; – for instance, the numerous automatons, whom we must charitably believe are speechless merely from diffidence, and of whom we are told, that "if we only knew them," we should discover them, on intimate acquaintance, to be "quite intelligent people." Perhaps so. But we cannot help thinking that when a head is full of ideas, some of them will involuntarily ooze out and be manifest. Diffidence is very becoming to young people, and to those who are new to the world. But it is hardly credible that it should produce a painful taciturnity in persons who have passed from youth into maturity; and who have enjoyed the advantages of education and of living in good society. Still those who, as the French say, have "a great talent for silence," may redeem

themselves from suspicion of stupidity, by listening attentively and understandingly. A good talker is never displeased with a good hearer.

We have often met with young ladies from whom it was scarcely possible for one of their own sex to extract more than a few monosyllables at long intervals; those intervals being passed in dozing, rather than in hearing. And yet, if any thing in the shape of a beau presented itself, the tongues of these "dumb belles" were immediately loosened, and the wells of their minds commenced running as glibly as possible. To be sure, the talk amounted to nothing definite; but still they *did* talk, and often became quite lively in a few minutes. Great is the power of beaux!

To return to the tea-table. – Unless you are positively sure, when you have a visiter, that she drinks the same tea that is used in your own family, you should have both black and green on the table. Either sort is often extremely disagreeable to persons who take the other. Drinkers of green tea, for instance, have generally an unconquerable aversion to black, as tasting like hay, herbs, &c., and they find in it no refreshing or exhilarating property. In some, it produces nausea. Few, on the other hand, dislike the taste of *good* green tea, but they assign as a reason for not drinking it, that it is supposed from its enlivening qualities to affect the nerves. Judge Bushrod Washington, who always drank green, and avoided black, said that, "he took tea as a beverage, not as a medicine." And there are a vast number of sensible

people in the same category. If your guest is a votary of green tea, have it made for her, in time for the essence of the leaves to be well drawn forth. It is no compliment to give her green tea that is weak and washy. And do not, at your own table, be so rude as to lecture her upon the superior wholesomeness of black tea. For more than a century, green tea was universally drunk in every house, and there was then less talk of nervous diseases than during the reign of Souchong, – which, by-the-bye, is nearly exploded in the best European society.

In pouring out, do not fill the cups to the brim. Always send the cream and sugar round, that each person may use those articles according to their own taste. Also, send round a small pot of hot water, that those who like their tea weak may conveniently dilute it. If tea is handed, a servant should, at the last, carry round a water-pitcher and glasses.

Whether at dinner or tea, if yourself and family are in the habit of eating fast, (which, by the way, is a very bad and unwholesome one, and justly cited against us by our English cousins,) and you see that your visiter takes her food deliberately, endeavour (for that time at least) to check the rapidity of your own mastication, so as not to finish before she has done, and thus compel her to hurry herself uncomfortably, or be left alone while every one round her is sitting unoccupied and impatient. Or rather, let the family eat a little more than usual, or seem to do so, out of politeness to their guest.

When refreshments are brought in after tea, let them be

placed on the centre-table, and handed round from thence by the gentlemen to the ladies. If there are only four or five persons present, it may be more convenient for all to sit round the table – which should not be cleared till after all the visitors have gone, that the things may again be offered before the departure of the guests.

If a friend makes an afternoon call, and you wish her to stay and take tea, invite her to do so at once, as soon as she has sat down; and do not wait till she has risen to depart. If she consents to stay, there will then be ample time to make any additional preparation for tea that may be expedient; and she will also know, at once, that you have no engagement for the evening, and that she is not intruding on your time, or preventing you from going out. If you are intimate friends, and your guest is disposed to have a long chat, she will do well to ask you, at the beginning, if you are disengaged, or design going out that afternoon.

We knew a very sensible and agreeable lady in Philadelphia, who liking better to have company at home than to go out herself, made a rule of inviting every day, half a dozen friends (not more) to take tea with her – just as many as could sit round the table, "with ample room and verge enough." These friends she assorted judiciously. And therefore she never asked a whole family at once; those who were left out understanding that they would be invited another time. For instance, she would send a note for the father and mother only – to meet another father and mother or two. A few weeks after, a billet would come for the young people

only. But if there were *several* young people, some were delayed – thus – "I wish James and Eliza to take tea with me this evening, to meet so-and-so. Another time I promise myself the pleasure of Edward's company, and Mary's."

This distribution of invitations never gave offence.

Those who were honoured with the acquaintance of such a lady were not likely to be displeased at so sensible a mode of receiving them. These little tea-drinkings were always pleasant, and often delightful. The hostess was well qualified to make them so.

Though the refreshments were of the best kind, and in sufficient abundance, and the fires, lights, &c. all as they should be, there was no ostentatious display, and the ladies were dressed no more than if they were spending a quiet evening at home – party-finery being interdicted – also, such needle-work as required constant attention to every stitch.

If you have a friend who is in somewhat precarious health, and who is afraid of being out in the night air, or who lives in a distant part of the town, invite her to dinner, or to pass the day, rather than to tea. She will then be able to get home before twilight.

There is in Boston a very fashionable and very distinguished lady, who, since her return from Europe, has relinquished the custom of giving large parties; and now entertains her friends by, almost every day, having two or three to dine with her, – by invitation. These dinners are charming. The hour is according to the season – earlier in winter, later in summer – the guests

departing before dark, and the lady always having the evening to herself.

We know a gentleman in Philadelphia, who every Monday has a family-dinner at his house, for all his children and grandchildren, who there meet and enjoy themselves before the eyes of the father and mother – a friend or two being also invited. Nothing can be more pleasant than to see them all there together, none staying away, – for parents, children, sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, are all at peace, and all meeting in friendship – unhappily, a rare case, where there is a large connection, and considerable wealth.

We wish that social intercourse was more frequently conducted on the plan of the few examples above cited.

Should chance-visitors come in before the family have gone to tea, let them at once be invited to partake of that repast; which they will of course decline, if they have had tea already. In a well-provided house, there can be no difficulty in adding something to the family tea-table, which, in genteel life, should never be discreditably parsimonious.

It is a very mean practice, for the members of the family to slip out of the parlour, one by one at a time, and steal away into the eating-room, to avoid inviting their visiter to accompany them. The truth is always suspected by these separate exits, and the length of absence from the parlour – and is frequently betrayed by the rattle of china, and the pervading fumes of hot cakes. How much better to meet the inconvenience (and it cannot be a great

one) by decently conducting your accidental guest to the table, unless he says he has already taken tea, and will amuse himself with a book while the family are at theirs.

Casual evening visitors should avoid staying too late. Ten o'clock, in our country, is the usual time to depart, or at least to begin departing. If the visit is unduly prolonged, there may be evident signs of irrepressible drowsiness in the heads of the family, which, when perceived, will annoy the guest, who must then feel that he has stayed too long – and without being able to excuse himself with any approach to the elegance of William Spencer's apology to the charming Lady Anne Hamilton.

Too late I stay'd – forgive the crime;
Unheeded flew the hours,
For noiseless falls the foot of Time
That only treads on flowers.
Ah! who with clear account remarks
The ebbing of the glass,
When all its sands are diamond sparks,
That dazzle as they pass!

CHAPTER IV. THE ENTRÉE

A lady is said to have the *entrée* of her friend's room, when she is allowed or assumes the privilege of entering it familiarly at all times, and without any previous intimation – a privilege too often abused. In many cases, the visited person has never really granted this privilege, (and after growing wise by experience, she rarely will;) but the visiter, assuming that she herself must, under all circumstances, be welcome, carries her sociability so far as to become troublesome and inconvenient. Consequently, their friendship begins to abate in its warmth. No one likes to be annoyed, or be intruded on at all hours. So the visited begins to think of the adage, "My room is my castle," and the visiter finds that seeing a friend under all circumstances somewhat diminishes respect, and that "familiarity brings contempt."

There are few occasions on which it is well, on entering a house, to run directly to the chamber of your friend, and to bolt into her room without knocking; or the very instant *after* knocking, before she has time to desire you to enter, or to make the slightest arrangement for your reception. You may find her washing, or dressing, or in bed, or even engaged in repairing clothes, – or the room may be in great disorder, or the chambermaid in the act of cleaning it. No one likes unseasonable

interruptions, even from a very dear friend. That friend would be dearer still, if she had sufficient tact and consideration to refrain from causing these annoyances. Also, friendships are not always lasting – particularly those that become inordinately violent, and where both parties, by their excessive intimacy, put themselves too much into each other's power. Very mortifying disclosures are sometimes made after a quarrel, between two Hermias and Helenas, when recrimination begins to come, and mutual enmity takes the place of mutual kindness.

A familiar visit will always begin more pleasantly, if the visiter enquires of the servant at the door if the lady she wishes to see is at home, and then goes into the parlour, and stays there till she has sent her name, and ascertained that she can be received upstairs.³ Then (and not till then) let her go to her friend's room, and still remember to knock at the door before she enters. Let her have patience till her friend bids her come in, or has time to rise, cross the room, and come to open the door, if it is fastened.

It is extremely rude, on being admitted to a private apartment, to look curiously about, as if taking an inventory of all that is to be seen. We have known ladies whose eyes were all the time gazing round, and even slyly peering under tables, sofas, &c.; turning their heads to look after every person who chanced to be moving about the room, and giving particular attention to whatever seemed to be in disorder or out of place. Nay, we

³ If the visiter has been properly announced, a well-trained servant will, in all probability, run up before her, and open the room-door.

have known one who prided herself upon the gentility of her forefathers and foremothers, rise from her seat when her hostess opened a bureau-drawer, or a closet-door, and cross the room, to stand by and inspect the contents of said bureau or closet, while open – a practice very common with ill-taught *children*, but which certainly should be rebuked out of them long before they are grown up.

Make no remark upon the work in which you find your friend engaged. If she lays it aside, desire her not to quit it because of your presence; but propound no questions concerning it. Do not look over her books, and ask to borrow them. In short, meddle with nothing.

Some ladies never enter the room of an intimate friend without immediately exclaiming against its heat or its cold – seldom the latter, but very frequently the former, as it is rather fashionable to be always too warm; perhaps because it makes them seem younger. If they really are uncomfortably warm on a very cold day, we think it can only be from the glow produced by the exercise of walking. This glow must naturally subside in a few minutes, if they would sit down and wait with a little patience, or else avail themselves of the fan which ought to be at hand in every room. We have known ladies of this warm temperament, who had sufficient consideration always to carry a pocket-fan in winter as well as summer. This is far better than to break out instantly with a complaint of the heat of the room, or to run and throw up a window-sash, or fling open the door, at the

risk of giving cold to others. No intimacy can authorize these freedoms in a cold day, unless permission has first been asked, and sincerely granted.

If you are perfectly certain that you have really the entrée of your friend's room, and even if she has the same of yours, you have no right ever to extend that privilege to any other person who may chance to be with you when you go to see her. It is taking an unjustifiable liberty to intrude a stranger upon the privacy of her chamber. If another lady is with you, waive your privilege of entrée for that time, take your companion into the parlour, and send up the names of both, and do not say, "Oh! come up, come up – I am on no ceremony with her, and I am sure she will not *mind you*." And how can you be sure? Perhaps in reality, she *will* mind her very much, and be greatly discomfited, though too polite to appear so.

There are certain unoccupied females so over-friendly as to take the entrée of the whole house. These are, generally, ultra-neighbourly neighbours, who run in at all hours of the day and evening; ferret out the ladies of the family, wherever they may be – up-stairs or down; watch all their proceedings when engaged, like good housewives, in inspecting the attics, the store-rooms, the cellars, or the kitchens. Never for a moment do they seem to suppose that their hourly visits may perhaps be inconvenient or unseasonable; or too selfish to abate their frequency, even when they suspect them to be so, these inveterate sociablists make their incursions at all avenues. If they find that the front-door is

kept locked, they glide down the area-steps, and get in through the basement. Or else, they discover some back-entrance, by which they can slip in at "the postern-gate" – that is, alley-wise: – sociablists are not proud. At first, the sociablism will say, on making her third or fourth appearance for the day, "Who comes to see you oftener than I?" But after awhile even this faint shadow of an apology is omitted – or changed to "Nobody minds *me*." She is quite domesticated in your house – an absolute *habitué*. She sees all, hears all, knows all your concerns. Of course she does. Her talk *to* you is chiefly gossip, and therefore her talk *about* you is chiefly the same. She is *au-fait* of every thing concerning your table, for after she has had her dinner at her own home, she comes bolting into your dining-room and "sits by," and sees you eat yours. It is well if she does not begin with "a look in" upon you before breakfast. She finds out everybody that comes to your house; knows all your plans for going to this place or that; is well acquainted with every article that you wear; is present at the visits of all your friends, and hears all their conversation. Her own is usually "an infinite deal of nothing."

A sociablism is commonly what is called good-natured, or else you would not endure her at all – and you believe, for a time, that she really has an extraordinary liking for you. After awhile, you are undeceived. A coolness ensues, if not a quarrel, and you are glad to find that she carries her sociability to another market, and that a new friend is now suffering all that you have experienced. To avoid the danger of being overwhelmed by the

sociability of an idle neighbour, discourage the first indications of undue intimacy, by making your own visits rather few, and rather far between. A young lady of good sense, and of proper self-respect, will never be too lavish of her society; and if she has pleasant neighbours, will visit them always in moderation. And their friendship will last the longer.

CHAPTER V.

INTRODUCTIONS

Fashion, in its various unmeaning freaks, sometimes decrees that it is not "stylish to introduce strangers." But this is a whim that, whenever attempted, has neither become general nor lasted long. It has seldom been adopted by persons of good sense and good manners – and very rarely by that fortunate class whose elevated standing in society enables them to act as they please, in throwing aside the fetters of absurd conventionalities, and who can afford to do so.

Non-introduction has been found, in many instances, to produce both inconvenience and vexation. Persons who had long known each other by reputation, and who would have rejoiced in an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted, have met in society, without being aware of it till afterward; and the opportunity has never recurred. One of our most distinguished literary Americans was seated at a dinner-party next to an European lady equally distinguished in literature; but as there were no introductions, he was not aware of her presence till the party was over and the lady gone. The lady knew who the gentleman was, and would gladly have conversed with him; but as he did not speak, because he was not introduced, she had not courage to commence – though she might have done so with

perfect propriety, considering who *he* was, and who *she* was.

Still worse – from not knowing who are present, you may inadvertently fall upon a subject of conversation that, for private reasons, may be extremely irksome or painful to some of the company; for instance, in discussing a public character. Severe or mortifying remarks may unintentionally be made on the near relative, or on the intimate companion, of one whom you would on no account desire to offend. And in this way you may make enemies, where, under other circumstances, you would have made friends. In such cases, it is the duty of the hostess, or of any mutual acquaintance, immediately to introduce both parties, and thus prevent any further animadversions that, may be *mal-a-propos*, or in any way annoying. It is safest, when among strangers, to refrain from bitter animadversions on anybody.

In introducing a gentleman to a lady, address *her* first, as for instance – "Miss Smith, permit me to make you acquainted with Mr. Jones" – or, "Mrs. Farley, allow me to present Mr. Wilson" – that is, you must introduce the gentleman to the lady, rather than the lady to the gentleman. Also, if one lady is married and the other single, present the single lady to the matron, as – "Miss Thomson, let me introduce you to Mrs. Williams."⁴

In introducing a foreigner, it is proper to present him as "Mr. Howard from England" – "Mr. Dupont from France" – "Mr. Wenzel from Germany." If you know of what European city he

⁴ It is well to present a lady or gentleman from another city, as "Miss Ford of New York" – "Mrs. Stephens of Boston" – "Mr. Warren of New Orleans."

is a resident, it is better still, to say that he is "from London," – "Paris," – "Hamburg." Likewise, in introducing one of your own countrymen very recently returned from a distant part of the world, make him known as "Mr. Davis, just from China" – "Mr. Edwards, lately from Spain" – "Mr. Gordon, recently from South America." These slight specifications are easily made; and they afford, at once, an opening for conversation between the two strangers, as it will be perfectly natural to ask "the late arrived" something about the country he has last visited, or at least about his voyage.

When presenting a member of Congress, mention the State to which he belongs, as, "Mr. Hunter of Virginia" – "Mr. Chase of Ohio," &c. Recollect that both senators and gentlemen of the house of representatives are members of Congress – Congress including the two legislative bodies. In introducing a governor, designate the state he governs – as, "Governor Pennington of New Jersey." For the chief magistrate of the republic, say simply – "The President."

In introducing an officer, tell always to which service he belongs – as "Captain Turner of the Navy" – "Captain Anderson of the Army."

We regret the custom of continuing to give military titles to militia officers. Foreigners are justly diverted at finding *soi-disant* generals and colonels among men who fill very subordinate stations in civil life – men that, however respectable in their characters, may be deficient in the appearance, manners,

or education that should belong to a regular officer. This foolish practice can only be done away by the militia officers themselves (those that really are gentlemen – and there are many) magnanimously declining to be called generals, colonels, &c. except on parade occasions; and when actually engaged in militia duty. Let them omit these titles on their cards, and request that no letters be directed to them with such superscriptions; and that in introductions or in conversation they may be only addressed as plain Mr. It is still more absurd to continue these military titles long after they have ceased to hold the office, – and above all, to persist in them when travelling in foreign countries, tacitly permitting it to be supposed that they own commissions in the regular service.

English tourists (even when they know better) make this practice a handle for pretending, in their books, that the officers of the American army are so badly paid, or so eager to make additional money, that they exercise all sorts of trades, and engage in the humblest occupations to help themselves along. They tell of seeing a captain stitching coats, a major making shoes, a colonel driving a stage, and a general selling butter in market – sneeringly representing them as regular officers of the United States army. Is it true that we republicans have such a hankering after titles? If so, "reform it altogether." And let one of the first steps be to omit the "Esq." in directing a letter to an American citizen, for whom the title can have no meaning. In England it signifies the possessor of an estate in the country,

including the office of justice of peace. In America, it means a magistrate only; who may live in a city, and own not an inch of ground anywhere. But why should all manner of men, of all trades, and professions, expect to see an "Esq." after their name, when with reference to *them*, it can have no rational application?

An introduction should always be given in a distinct and audible voice, so that the name may be clearly understood. The purpose is defeated, if it is murmured over in so low a tone as to be unintelligible. And yet how often is this the case; for what reason it is difficult to divine. It is usual for the introducee to repeat the name of the introduced. This will prove that it has really been heard. For instance, if Mrs. Smith presents Miss Brook to Miss Miles, Miss Miles immediately says, "Miss Brook" – or better still – "Miss Brook, I am glad to meet you," or something similar. Miss Miles then begins a talk.

If you introduce yourself to a lady whom you wish to know, but who does not know *you*, address her by her name, express your desire to make her acquaintance, and then give her your card. Replying that it affords her pleasure to meet you, she will give you her hand, and commence a conversation, so as to put you quite at ease after your self-introduction.

In introducing members of your own family, always mention, audibly, the name. It is not sufficient to say "my father," or "my mother" – "my son," "my daughter" – "my brother," or "my sister." There may be more than one surname in the same family. But say, "my father, Mr. Warton," – "my daughter, Miss

Wood" – or "my daughter-in-law, Mrs. Wood" – "my sister, Miss Mary Ramsay" – "my brother, Mr. James Ramsay," &c. It is best in all these things to be explicit. The eldest daughter is usually introduced by her surname only – as "Miss Bradford" – her younger sisters, as "Miss Maria Bradford" – "Miss Harriet Bradford."

In presenting a clergyman, put the word "Reverend" before his name – unless he is a bishop, and then, of course, the word "Bishop" suffices. The head of a college-department introduce as "Professor" – and it is to them only that the title properly belongs, though arrogated by all sorts of public exhibitors, mesmerists and jugglers included.

Where the company is large, the ladies of the house should have tact enough to avoid introducing and placing together persons who cannot possibly assimilate, or take pleasure in each other's society. The dull, and the silly, will be far happier with their compeers. To a woman of talent, and a good conversationist, it is a cruelty to put her unnecessarily in contact with stupid, or unmeaning people. She is wasted and thrown away upon such as are neither amusing nor amusable. Neither is it well to bring together a gay, lively woman of the world, and a solemn, serious, repulsive dame, who is a contemner of the world and all its enjoyments. There can be no conversation that is mutually agreeable, between a real lady of true delicacy and refinement, and a so-called lady whose behaviour and talk are coarse and vulgar, – or between a woman of highly cultivated mind, and one

who is grossly ignorant of every thing connected with books, and who boasts of that ignorance. We have heard a lady of fashion say, "Thank God, I never read." The answer might well have been, "You need not tell us that."

In inviting but a small company, it is indispensable to the pleasure of all, that you ask none who are strikingly unsuitable to the rest – or whose presence will throw a damp on conversation. Especially avoid bringing into the same room, persons who are at notorious enmity with each other, even if, unhappily, they should be members of the same family. Those who are known as adversaries should be invited on different evenings.

Avoid giving invitations to bores. They will come without.

The word "bore" has an unpleasant and an inelegant sound. Still, we have not, as yet, found any substitute that so well expresses the meaning, – which, we opine, is a dull, tiresome man, or "a weariful woman," either inveterately silent, or inordinately talkative, but never saying any thing worth hearing, or worth remembering – people whom you receive unwillingly, and whom you take leave of with joy; and who, not having perception enough to know that their visits are always unwelcome, are the most sociable visitors imaginable, and the longest stayers.

In a conversation at Abbotsford, there chanced to be something said in reference to bores – those beings in whom "man delights not, nor woman neither." Sir Walter Scott asserted, humourously, that bores were always "good respectable people."

"Otherwise," said he "there could be no bores. For if they were also scoundrels or brutes, we would keep no measures with them, but at once kick them out the house, and shut the door in their faces."

When you wish an introduction to a stranger lady, apply to your hostess, or to some of the family, or to one of the guests that is acquainted with that lady: you will then be led up and presented to her. Do not expect the stranger to be brought to you; it is your place to go to her.

If you are requested by a female friend to introduce her to a distinguished gentleman, a public character, be not so ungenerous as to go *immediately* and conspicuously to inform him of the fact. But spare her delicacy, by deferring the ceremony for a while; and then take an opportunity of saying to him, "I shall be glad to make you acquainted with my friend Miss Morris. Come with me, and I will introduce you." When the introduction has thus taken place, you may with propriety leave them together to entertain each other for awhile; particularly if both parties are capable of doing so. And then, after a quarter of an hour's conversation, let the lady release the gentleman from further attendance, by bowing to him, and turning to some other acquaintance who may not be far off. She can leave *him* much more easily than he can leave *her*, and it will be better to do so in proper time, than to detain him too long. It is generally in his power to return to her before the close of the evening, and if he is pleased with her society, he will probably make an opportunity

of doing so.

If he is what is called a lion, consideration for the rest of the company should admonish her not to monopolize him. But lions usually know how to get away adroitly. By-the-bye, she must not talk to him of his professional celebrity, or ask him at once for his autograph.

We saw no less a person than Charles Dickens compelled, at a large party, to devote the whole evening to writing autographs for a multitude of young ladies – many of whom, not satisfied with obtaining one of his signatures for themselves, desired half a dozen others for "absent friends." All conversation ceased with the first requisition for an autograph. He had no chance of saying any thing. We were a little ashamed of our fair townswomen.

Should it fall to your lot to introduce any of the English nobility, take care (before hand) to inform yourself exactly what their titles really are. Americans are liable to make sad blunders in these things. It may be well to know that a duke is the highest title of British nobility, and that his wife is a duchess. His eldest son is a marquis as long as his father lives, on whose demise the marquis becomes a duke. The wife of a marquis is a marchioness. There are a few marquises whose fathers were not dukes. The younger sons are termed Lord Henry, Lord Charles, Lord John, &c. The daughters Lady Caroline, Lady Augusta, Lady Julia. The family name is generally quite different from the title. Thus, the name of the Duke of Richmond is Lenox – that of the Duke of Rutland, Manners. The family name of the Duke of

Norfolk (who ranks first of the English nobility) is Howard. The present Duke of Northumberland's name is Algernon Percy. Arthur Wellesley was that of the great Duke of Wellington. His eldest son was Marquis of Douro, and his second son Lord Charles Wellesley. The children of a marquis are called Lord Frederick, or Lord Henry, and Lady Louisa, or Lady Harriet.

The next title is viscount, as Viscount Palmerston. The next is earl, whose wife is a countess, and the children may be Lord Georges and Lady Marys.

After the viscounts come the barons, whose children are denominated the Honourable Miss, or Mr. John Singleton Copley, (whose father was Copley, the celebrated American painter,) is now Baron Lyndhurst. His eldest daughter is the Hon. Miss Copley. In common parlance, barons are always termed lords. Some few have two titles – as Lord Say and Sele – Lord Brougham and Vaux. After William the Fourth had suddenly dissolved the parliament that held out so long against passing the reform bill, and the king, appointing a new cabinet, had placed Lord Brougham at the head of the ministry, a ridiculous comic song came out at one of the minor theatres, implying that now his majesty has swept out the whole parliament, "he takes up his broom and valks," (Brougham and Vaux.)

When the widow of a nobleman marries a man who has no title, she always retains hers. Thus when the widow of the Earl of Mansfield married Colonel Greville, (a nephew of the Earl of Warwick,) – on their door-plate the names were – "The

Countess Dowager of Mansfield, and the Hon. Colonel Greville," – a rather long inscription. A nobleman's daughter marrying a commoner, retains her original title of Lady, but takes his surname – thus, Lady Charlotte Campbell, whose father was Duke of Argyle, became, on her marriage with Dr. Bury, a clergyman, Lady Charlotte Bury. It will be understood that if a nobleman's daughter marries a nobleman, her title merges in his – but if she marries a commoner, she retains what title she had originally – her husband, of course, obtaining no rank by his marriage.

The title of a baronet is Sir – as Sir Francis Burdett, Sir Walter Scott. His children are Mr. and Miss, without any "Hon." affixed to their names. Baronets are a grade below barons, but the title is hereditary, descending to the eldest son or next male heir. In directing to a baronet, put "Bart." after his name. A knight is also called Sir, as Sir Thomas Lawrence, Sir Edwin Landseer, &c.; but his title being only for life, dies with him.⁵ It is always conferred by the sovereign touching his shoulder with a sword, and saying, for instance, "Rise up, Sir Francis Chantry." In writing to a knight, put "Knt." The wives of both baronets and knights are called Lady. The wife of Sir John Franklin (who was knighted) is Lady Franklin – not Lady *Jane* Franklin, as has been erroneously supposed. She could not be Lady Jane unless her father was a nobleman.

⁵ Distinguished men of all professions, doctors, lawyers, artists, authors, and officers of the army and navy, frequently receive the honour of knighthood.

A nobleman always signs his title only, without designating his exact rank – the Duke of Athol signing himself "Athol" – the Duke of Bedford, "Bedford" – the Marquis of Granby, "Granby" – the Earl of Chesterfield, "Chesterfield," &c. The wives of peers give their Christian name with their title – as Isabella Buccleuch – Margaret Northampton – Elizabeth Derby, &c.

The English bishops are addressed in letters as the Lord Bishop of Rochester, the Lord Bishop of Bath and Wells. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who is Primate of England, – (Head of the English Church,) is called His Grace, or Your Grace. The bishops are all (by virtue of their office) members of the House of Peers or Lords. They sign their Christian name with the title of their bishopric, as John Durham – William Oxford.

All full noblemen have an hereditary seat in the House of Peers, which they take on attaining the age of twenty-one, and it continues while they live. Their younger sons, the Lord Johns and Lord Fredericks, can only have a seat in the House of Commons, and to that they must be elected, like the other members. Baronets, not being peers, must also be elected as commons.

Americans going to England would do well to look over a book of the British Peerage, so as to save themselves from making blunders, which are much ridiculed in a country where little allowance is made for republican habits and for republican ignorance of what appertains to monarchical institutions.⁶ It

⁶ It would be well if all the public offices at Washington were furnished with copies

would not be amiss even to know that a full coat of arms, including shield, supporters, crest, and scroll with a motto, belongs only to the chief of a noble family; and that the younger branches are entitled only to the crest, which is the head of the same animal that stands erect on each side of the shield as if to support it, such as stags, foxes, bears, vultures, &c. A baronet has a shield only, with a bloody or wounded hand over the top.

Our countrymen abroad sometimes excite ill-concealed mirth, by the lavish use they make of titles when they chance to find themselves among the nobility. They should learn that none but servants or people of the lower classes make constant use of the terms "my lord," and "my lady" – "your lordship," or "your ladyship" – "your grace," &c., in conversing with persons of rank. Formerly it was the custom, but it is long since obsolete, except, as we have said, from domestics or dependants. Address them simply as Lord Derby, or Lord Dunmore – Lady Wilton, Lady Mornington, &c.

CHAPTER VI.

CONDUCT IN THE STREET

When three ladies are walking together, it is better for one to keep a little in advance of the other two, than for all three to persist in maintaining one unbroken line. They cannot all join in conversation without talking across each other – a thing that, in-doors or out-of-doors, is awkward, inconvenient, ungentle, and should always be avoided. Also, three ladies walking abreast occupy too much of the pavement, and therefore incommode the other passengers. Three young *men* sometimes lounge along the pavement, arm in arm. Three young *gentlemen* never do so.

If you meet a lady with whom you have become but slightly acquainted, and had merely a little conversation, (for instance, at a party or a morning visit,) and who moves in a circle somewhat higher or more fashionable than your own, it is safest to wait till she recognises you. Let her not see in you a disposition to obtrude yourself on her notice.

It is not expected that all intimacies formed at watering-places shall continue after the parties have returned to their homes. A mutual bow when meeting in the street is sufficient. But there is no interchanging of visits, unless both ladies have, before parting, testified a desire to continue the acquaintance. In this case, the lady who is eldest, or palpably highest in station, makes the first

call. It is not customary for a young lady to make the first visit to a married lady.

When meeting them in the street, always speak first to your milliner, mantua-maker, seamstress, or to any one you have been in the practice of employing. To pass without notice any servant that you know, is rude and unfeeling, as they will attribute it to pride, not presuming to speak to you themselves, unless in reply. There are persons who having accepted, when in the country, much kindness from the country-people, are ashamed to recognise them when they come to town, on account of their rustic or unfashionable dress. This is a very vulgar, contemptible, and foolish pride; and is always seen through, and despised. There is no danger of plain country-people being mistaken for vulgar city-people. In our country, there is no reason for keeping aloof from any who are respectable in character and appearance. Those to be avoided are such as wear tawdry finery, paint their faces, and leer out of the corners of their eyes, *looking* disreputably, even if they are not disreputable in reality.

When a gentleman meets a lady with whom his acquaintance is very slight, (perhaps nothing more than a few words of talk at a party,) he allows her the option of continuing the acquaintance or not, at her pleasure; therefore, he waits till she recognises him, and till she evinces it by a bow, – he looking at her to give the opportunity. Thus, if she has no objection to numbering him among her acquaintances, she denotes it by bowing first. American ladies never curtsy in the street. If she has any

reason to disapprove of his character or habits, she is perfectly justifiable in "cutting" him, as it is termed. Let her bow very coldly the first time, and after that, not at all.

Young ladies should yield the wall to old ladies. Gentlemen do so to all ladies.

In some cities it is the custom for all gentlemen to give their arm to all ladies, when walking with them. In others, a gentleman's arm is neither offered nor taken, unless in the evening, on slippery pavements, or when the streets are very muddy. A lady only takes the arm of her husband, her affianced lover, or of her male relatives. In the country the custom is different. There, a gentleman, when walking with a lady, always gives her his arm; and is much offended when, on offering his arm, the lady refuses to take it. Still, if it is contrary to the custom of her place, she can explain it to him delicately, and he will at once see the propriety of her declining.

When a lady is walking between two gentlemen, she should divide her conversation as equally as practicable, or address most of it to him who is most of a stranger to her. He, with whom she is least on ceremony, will excuse her.

A gentleman on escorting a lady to her own home, must not leave her till he has rung the bell, and waited till the servant has come and opened the door, and till she is actually in the house. Men who know no better, think it sufficient to walk with her to the foot of the steps and there take their departure, leaving her to get in as she can. This we have seen – but not often, and the

offenders were not Americans.

If you stop a few minutes in the street to talk to an acquaintance, draw to one side of the pavement near the wall, so as not to impede the passengers – or you may turn and walk with her as far as the next corner. And never stop to talk in the middle of a crossing. To speak loudly in the street is exceedingly ungentle, and foolish, as what you say will be heard by all who pass by. To call across the way to an acquaintance, is very unlady-like. It is best to hasten over, and speak to her, if you have any thing of importance to say.

When a stranger offers to assist you across a brimming gutter, or over a puddle, or a glair of slippery ice, do not hesitate, or decline, as if you thought he was taking an unwarrantable liberty. He means nothing but civility. So accept it frankly, and thank him for it.

When you see persons slip down on the ice, do not laugh at them. There is no fun in being hurt, or in being mortified by a fall in the public street; and we know not how a *lady* can see any thing diverting in so painful a circumstance. It is more feminine, on witnessing such a sight, to utter an involuntary scream than a shout of laughter. And still more so, to stop and ascertain if the person that fell has been hurt.

If, on stopping an omnibus, you find that a dozen people are already seated in it, draw back, and refuse to add to the number; giving no heed to the assertion of the driver, that "there is plenty of room." The *passengers* will not say so, and you have no right to

crowd them all, even if you are willing to be crowded yourself – a thing that is extremely uncomfortable, and very injurious to your dress, which may, in consequence, be so squeezed and rumped as never to look well again. None of the omnibuses are large enough to accommodate even twelve grown people *comfortably*, and that number is the utmost the law permits. A child occupies more than half the space of a grown person, yet children are brought into omnibuses *ad libitum*. Ten grown persons are as many as can be really well seated in an omnibus – twelve are too many; and a *lady* will always regret making the thirteenth – and her want of consideration in doing so will cause her to be regarded with unfavourable eyes by the other passengers. It is better for her to go into a shop, and wait for the next omnibus, or even to walk home, unless it is actually raining.

Have your sixpence ready in your fingers a few minutes before you are to get out; and you may request any gentleman near you to hand it up to the driver. So many accidents have happened from the driver setting off before a lady was entirely out of the vehicle and safely landed in the street, that it is well to desire the gentleman not to hand up the sixpence till after you are fairly clear of the steps.

When expecting to ride in an omnibus, take care to have sufficient small change in your purse – that is, sixpences. We have seen, when a quarter-dollar has been handed up, and the driver was handing down the change, that it has fallen, and been scattered among the straw. There was no stopping to search for

it, and therefore the ride cost twenty-five cents instead of six: the driver, of course, finding the change himself, as soon as he got rid of all his passengers.

It is most imprudent to ride in an omnibus with much money in your purse. Pickpockets of genteel appearance are too frequently among the passengers. We know a gentleman who in this way lost a pocket-book containing eighty dollars; and various ladies have had their purses taken from them, by well-dressed passengers. If you are obliged to have money of any consequence about you, keep your hand all the time in that pocket.

If the driver allows a drunken man to come into an omnibus, the ladies will find it best to get out; at least those whose seats are near his. It is, however, the duty of the gentlemen to insist on such fellows being refused admittance where there are ladies.

No lady should venture to ride in an omnibus after dark, unless she is escorted by a gentleman whom she knows. She had better walk home, even under the protection of a servant. If alone in an omnibus at night, she is liable to meet with improper company, and perhaps be insulted.

CHAPTER VII.

SHOPPING

When you go out shopping, it is well to take with you some *written* cards, inscribed with your residence as well as your name. For this purpose to use engraved visiting-cards is an unnecessary expense. That there may be no mistake, let your shopping-cards contain not only your street and number, but the side of the way, and between what streets your house is situated. This minuteness is particularly useful in Philadelphia, where the plan and aspect of the streets is so similar. Much inconvenience, disappointment, and delay have resulted from parcels being left at wrong places. If you are staying at a hotel, give also the number of your chamber, otherwise the package may be carried in mistake to the apartment of some other lady; the servants always knowing the number of the rooms, but not always remembering the names of the occupants; usually speaking of the ladies and gentlemen as No. 25, No. 42, &c.

There is another advantage in having cards with you when you go out shopping: if you should chance to forget your reticule, or handkerchief, and leave it on the counter, the shopkeeper will know exactly by the card where to send it, or for whom to keep it till called for.

If you intend to purchase none but small articles, take but little

money in your purse, so that if you chance to lose it, the loss may not be great.⁷ When you buy articles of any consequence, they will always be sent home at your request – and (unless you keep a standing account at that store) desire the bill to be sent along; and sent at an hour when you will certainly be at hand to pay it. Be careful to take receipts for the payment; and keep the receipts on a file or wire. We have known instances when, from the clerk or storekeeper neglecting or delaying to cross out an account as soon as paid, the same bill was inadvertently sent twice over; and then by having the receipt to show, the necessity of *paying it twice over* was obviated. Look carefully at every item of the bill, and see that all is correct. Sometimes (though these oversights are of rare occurrence) the same article may accidentally be set down twice in the same bill. But this is easily rectified by taking the bill to the storekeeper, and showing it to him.

In subscribing for a magazine or newspaper, and paying in advance, (as you always should,) be especially careful of the receipts given to you at paying. So many persons are in the habit of allowing these accounts to run on for years, that if you neglect preserving your receipts, and cannot produce them afterward, you may be unintentionally classed among the delinquents, and have no means of proving satisfactorily that you have really paid.

Many ladies keep a day-book, in which they set down,

⁷ When circumstances render it expedient to carry much money out with you, divide it; putting half in one purse or pocket-book, and half in another, and put these portions into two pockets.

regularly, all the money they have expended on that day; adding up the whole every week. An excellent plan, and of great importance to every one who is mistress of a family.

In making purchases for other persons, have bills made out; and send the bills (receipted) with the articles purchased, as an evidence of the exact price of the things, and that they were paid for punctually. The friends that have commissioned you to buy them, should *immediately* repay you. Much inconvenience may be felt by a lady whose command of money is small, when a friend living in a distant place, and probably in opulent circumstances, neglects or postpones the payment of these sums. She should, at the beginning, send money amply sufficient to make these purchases. It is enough that you take the trouble of going to the stores, selecting the desired articles, and having them packed and sent off. She has no right to put you to the slightest pecuniary inconvenience. There have been instances, where articles thus bought for a lady in a far-off place, have not been paid for by that lady till after the lapse of many months. For such remissness there is no excuse. To go shopping for a friend is rarely a pleasant business. Besides its encroaching on your time, there is always a danger of the purchases proving unsatisfactory, or not suiting the taste of her for whom they are intended. Also, circumstances may prevent the articles reaching her as soon as expected. Whenever practicable, it is best to send all such packages by the Transportation Line – that charge to be paid by the owner, on delivery.

It is not well to trouble a gentleman with the care of a parcel, unless it is quite small, and he has to pass the door of the house at which it is to be delivered; or unless his residence is in the immediate neighbourhood.

When visiting the shops, if you do not intend to buy at that time, but are merely looking round to see varieties of articles before you determine on what to purchase, candidly say so to the persons standing at the counter. They will (particularly if they know you) be perfectly willing to show you such things as you desire to see, in the hope that you may return to their store and buy of them afterward. At the same time, avoid giving unnecessary trouble; and do not, from mere curiosity, desire such things to be brought to you as you have no intention of buying at all.

The practice that is called cheapening, or beating down the price, is now nearly obsolete. Most tradesmen have a fixed price for every thing, and will not abate.

It is but rarely that you will meet with articles of really good quality on very low terms, unless near the close of the season, when the storekeepers, anxious to get rid of their old stock, generally put down the prices of the goods that are left on hand; knowing that by the return of next season, these will be superseded by things of a newer fashion. Economical ladies, who are not resolutely determined on wearing none but articles of the very latest fashion, may thus supply themselves with excellent silks, lawns, &c. in August and September, at prices far below

what they would have given in May or June. And then they can lay them by till next summer. In the same way they can purchase merinoes, mousselines de laine, &c. in January, February, and March, much lower than in November and December. It is best always to buy rather too much than too little; and to have a piece left, rather than to get a scanty pattern, such as will barely hold out, leaving nothing for repairs or alterations. There is much advantage in getting an extra yard and a half, or two yards, and keeping it back for new sleeves. Unless you are small and slender, it is not well to buy a dress embroidered with a border pattern. They are always scanty in width, and have that look when made up. The skirts are never quite wide enough. A tall woman requires as full a skirt as a fat one; else her height will make her look lanky and narrow.

When bespeaking an article to be made purposely for you, ascertain from the maker what will be the cost, and then request him to write down the terms on a card, or a slip of paper, or on a leaf of your tablet. If he says he cannot tell how much it will be, or that he knows not what price to fix on it, or that he cannot decide till after it is finished, it will be safest and wisest for you to decline engaging it, till he *has* calculated the amount, or something very near it. Persist in this condition being a *sine qua non*. It is his place to know every thing connected with his business, and to be able to judge of his outlay, and his profits. If you do not insist on a satisfactory answer when making the bargain, you may in the end find yourself greatly overcharged,

(as we know by experience;) the price in the bill, after the article is made, and sent home, proving infinitely higher than you would have been willing to give if previously aware of it. In dealing with foreigners whose language is not yours, take especial care that there is a correct understanding on both sides.

When on a visit to a city with which you are not familiar, enquire where the best shops are to be found, and make memorandums of them in your tablets. This will spare your friends the trouble of accompanying you on your shopping expeditions. And if you have a small pocket-map of the town, there will be no danger of losing your way. Except to ladies whose chief delight is in seeing things connected with dress, to go shopping with a stranger is usually very tiresome. Also, the stranger will feel less constraint by going alone; and more at liberty to be guided by her own taste in selecting, and to consult her pecuniary convenience in regard to the price. It is only when you feel that you have reason for distrusting your own judgment, as to the quality and gentility of the articles, that it is well to be accompanied by a person of more experience. And then you will, most probably, be unwilling to fatigue her by going to as many shops as you would like to visit. In most cases, it is best to go shopping without any companion, except, perhaps, a member of your immediate family. Gentlemen consider it a very irksome task to go on shopping expeditions, and their ill-concealed impatience becomes equally irksome to you.

If you have given the salesman or saleswoman unusual trouble

in showing you articles which you find not to suit, make some compensation, by at least one or two small purchases before leaving the store; for instance, linen to lay by as a body-lining for a future dress, gloves, mits, a neck-ribbon, cotton spools, pins, needles, tape, black sewing-silk, &c., – things that will always come into use.

Remember that in all American stores, the rule of "first come, first served," is rigidly observed. Therefore, testify no impatience if a servant-girl, making a sixpenny purchase, is served before you – which she certainly will be, if her entrance has preceded yours.

There are still some ladies who think that one of the great arts of shopping, is to disparage the articles shown to them, to exclaim at the price, and to assert that at other places they can get exactly such things infinitely lower. When shopping, (as well as under all other circumstances,) it is best to adhere to the truth. If you really like the article, why not gratify the salesman by saying so. If you know that the price is in conformity to the usual rate, you need not attempt to get it lower, for you will seldom succeed – unless, indeed, on that day the tradesman is particularly anxious to sell, having a sum of money to make up, and being somewhat at a loss. Perhaps then, he may abate something; but if he does not himself propose the abatement, and if he is largely in business, and sure of plenty of custom, there will be little use in your urging it.

If you are a stranger in the city, (Philadelphia for instance,) do not always be exclaiming at the prices, and declaring that

you can buy the same articles much lower and much handsomer in New York, Boston, or Baltimore. For certain reasons, prices are different in different places. If an article is shown to you in Philadelphia as "something quite new," refrain from saying that it has been out of fashion these two years in New York. This may injure its sale with bystanders, chancing to hear you. You need only say "that it is very pretty, but you do not want it now."

It is strange, but no less strange than true, that though the distance between New York and Philadelphia is reduced to less than half a day's travel, it takes a year or more, for the New York fashions to get to Philadelphia, and many of them never arrive at all. There are certain dress-makers and milliners in the latter city, who, if you show them any thing quite fresh from New York, will habitually reply, "Oh! we made that, here in Philadelphia, a year or two ago." You need not believe them. Our American ladies derive all their ideas of costume from France; and as New York rejoices in the most extensive and the most speedy intercourse with that land of taste and elegance, the French fashions always get there first. The wonder is that so long a time elapses before they prevail in the other cities. We must say, however, that whatever is fantastic and extreme, is generally modified and softened down in Philadelphia. In provincial towns, and in remote new settlements, we often see a disposition to carry to the utmost a fashion already too showy or gaudy.

When you see on another lady a new article of dress that you admire, it is *not* ill-manners, (but rather the contrary,) to

tell her so. But unless you really desire to get one exactly like it for yourself, and are sincerely asking for information, it is considered very rude to enquire where she bought it, and what was the cost. And it is peculiarly vulgar to preface the enquiry by the foolish words – "If it is a fair question." The very doubt proves that you know the question to be a very unfair one. And so it is. We have never known that expression used except to introduce something rude and improper. Any lady who is asked an impertinent question, would be perfectly justifiable in saying, "Excuse me from answering" – and then immediately changing the conversation. Yet there are ladies who are always catechising others about their dress. You are not bound to give explicit answers to these, or any other questions concerning your personal affairs. Much mischief accrues in society, from some ladies being too inquisitive, and others too communicative.

It is really a great fatigue, both of body and mind, to go shopping with a very close economist, particularly if you know that she can well afford a sufficiently liberal expenditure. The length of time she will ponder over every thing before she can "make up her mind;" the ever-besetting fear that she may possibly have to give a few cents more in one store than in another; her long deliberation as to whether a smaller than the usual quantity may not be "made to do;" her predilection for bargain-seeking in streets far off, and ungenteel; the immense trouble she gives to the persons behind the counter, – all will induce you to forswear trying a second time the experiment of

attending on the progress of a shopper who sets out with the vain expectation of obtaining good articles at paltry prices.

In what are called "cheap shops," you will rarely find more than two or three things that are really cheap. If of bad quality, they are not *cheap*, but dear. Low-priced ribbons, for instance, are generally flimsy, tawdry, of ugly figures, and vulgar colours, – soon fading, and soon "getting into a string." Yet there are ladies who will walk two miles to hustle in the crowd they find squeezing toward the counter of the last new emporium of cheap ribbons; and, while waiting their turn, have nothing to look at around them but lots of trash, that if they bought they would be ashamed to wear. Coarse finery is trumpery.

On the other hand, for ladies of small means, it is not indispensable to their standing in society, that they should deal only at stores noted for selling *higher* than the usual price. It is a very poor boast; particularly when they cannot afford it.

Whatever may be the caprices of fashion, a lady of good taste (and we may add, good sense,) will not, in buying dresses, select those of large figures, and high glaring colours. There is something peculiarly ungentle and ungraceful in a white ground with large red flowers and green leaves wandering over it. Even if the fabric is brocade, it has a look of calico. Red and green is only beautiful in real flowers. In a lady's dress, it somehow looks unlady-like. A great variety of bright colours is only suited to a carpet. For a dress, two are quite sufficient. And then if one is blue, pink, scarlet, or orange, let it be contrasted with

brown, gray, olive, or some chaste and quiet tint that will set it off. Few silks are more becoming than those in which the figure is formed by a darker shade of the same colour as the ground. Silks of one colour only, trim the best – variegated trimming looks confused and ineffective. No colours are more ungentle, or in worse taste, than reddish lilacs, reddish purples, and reddish browns. The original tint of aronetta, or anatto, is the contempt of ladies; but by previously washing the article in strong, warm pot-ash water, before it is put into the solution of aronetta, you will obtain a beautiful bird-of-paradise colour, entirely free from all appearance of the unpopular powder.

Buy no silk that is stiff and hard, however thick and heavy it may seem. It will crack and split, and wear worse than a soft silk that appears much thinner. Venture on no satin that is not of excellent quality. A thin satin frays and ravel, and is not worth making up. For common wear, a soft, thick India silk is generally excellent. We have never seen a *good one* for less than a dollar a yard. The figured or embossed India silks are not worth buying, – wearing rough and fuzzy, and fraying all over. For a serviceable, long-lasting home dress, there is nothing equal to a very thick, soft, double-width India black satin, such as is called two yards wide, and sells at two dollars a yard. But they have become very scarce. Never use satin to cover cord. It ravel too much. Velvet and satin should be corded with substantial silk. If you cannot match the exact shade, let it be darker rather than lighter. A belt-ribbon should always be darker than the dress. Cord merino with

itself. A cording of silk will not wash.

If you cannot get lace that is tolerably fine, wear none at all, rather than have it coarse. We have seen lace called Brussels, so coarse that it looked as if made of cotton, though in truth it was of thread. There was no real beauty in it. Genuine Brussels lace is exquisitely fine.

Large showy ornaments, by way of jewellery, are exceedingly ungentle. They always tell their own story, of glass stones set in gilding, not gold. If you cannot obtain real jewels, never attempt sham ones. It requires no practised eye to detect them – particularly false diamonds.

Do not interfere with the shopping of other customers, (who may chance to stand near you at the counter,) by either praising or deprecating any of the articles they are looking at. Leave them to the exercise of their own judgment; unless they ask your opinion. And then give it in a low voice, and sincerely.

If you meet an acquaintance unexpectedly in a store, it is not well to engage in a long conversation with her, and thus detain persons behind the counter from waiting on other customers. Finish your purchase-making first, and then you will have leisure to step aside and converse. A store is not the place for social intercourse, and you may chance to say something there, that bystanders should not hear. "Greetings in the market-place" should always be short.

It is not admissible to try on kid gloves in a store. After buying a pair, ask for the glove-stretcher, (which they keep in all good

shops, for the convenience of customers,) and then stretch the gloves upon it, unless you have a glove-stretcher at home. This will render them easy to put on when you take them into wear. Glove-stretchers are to be bought at the variety stores; or ought to be. They will save many a new glove from tearing.

In buying stockings, whether silk or cotton, you will find it cheapest in the end, to get those of the best *English* manufacture, particularly those of fine quality. For winter, and to wear with boots, English stockings of unbleached cotton are very comfortable, feeling warmer than those that are perfectly white. It is to be lamented that all black stockings (even of silk) are painful and injurious to the feet, the copperas dye being poisonous.

In buying black mits, see that they are *really of silk*, otherwise they will stain your hands, and look brown and foxy. Much cotton is now substituted for silk; a way having been discovered of carding silk and cotton together, before the thread is spun. Linen also, is shamefully adulterated with cotton, and it is difficult for purchasers to discover the cheat before the article is washed. Linen is frequently injured in the piece by bad bleaching-salts; so that after the first washing, it drops into holes, such as are caused by vitriol. Of this we have had sad experience in several instances, when the linen was supposed to be of the best quality.

Always object to a parcel being put up in newspaper – as the printing-ink will rub off, and soil the article enclosed. If it is a little thing that you are going to take home in your own hand,

it will smear your gloves. All shopkeepers in good business can afford to buy proper wrapping-paper, and they generally do so. It is very cheap. See also that they do not wrap your purchase in so small a bit of paper as to squeeze and crush it.

If you go out with much money, (which is never advisable,) divide it into two portions, putting part in your pocket-book or porte-monnaie, and the remainder into your purse, so that if you lose it, or have your pocket picked, the loss may be less. Do not carry notes in your purse, but keep them in your pocket-book. Little gold dollars had best go into your porte-monnaie. If kept in your purse with small change, you will be very likely to lose them, or to mistake them for three-cent pieces if the light is bad.

Once, on embarking in a New York steamboat, we saw a gentleman having bought a penny paper, give the news-boy a gold eagle in mistake for a cent. The gentleman was instantly apprized of his error by a bystander, who had seen it; but the boy had already sprung upon the wharf and was lost in the crowd.

We knew an instance of a lady in New York giving a hundred-dollar note to a strawberry woman, instead of a note of one dollar. Neither note nor woman were seen or heard of more.

In getting change see that three-cent pieces are not given to you for five cents.

And now a few words to saleswomen. They have always, when commencing that vocation, two important qualities to cultivate (exclusive of cleverness in business) – civility, and patience. In these two requisites, few of our American young women are

deficient. Let them also learn activity in moving, and quickness in recollecting where all the articles called for are to be found, so as not to keep the customers waiting too long, while they, the sellers, are searching the shelves and boxes. Also, if a lady wishes to match something, (for instance, a piece of silk,) it is foolish and useless to bring her a piece that is not *exactly* like; trying to persuade her to take it, and calling it "as good a match as she is likely to get." Of course she will *not* take a piece that is only *tolerably* like, but not quite the same; for unless it matches exactly, it is no match at all. If a customer enquires for light blue ribbon it is absurd to bring her dark blue, saying "we have no light blue" – or to say "we have no pink, but we have scarlet – we have no lilac, but we have purple." Or still worse, to try to persuade the customer that deep crimson is a beautiful shade of scarlet; or worse than all, that those very unbecoming tints, called improperly rose-white and pearl-white, are really a pure dead white; when you know very well that they are no such thing. Both white and black are very difficult to match *precisely*.

Let the yard-measure be visible to the customers. In some shops the measure is at the back of the counter, hidden behind a glass case. This practice of measuring out of sight, sometimes gives rise to a suspicion that the measure is not true, as it is so easy to deceive where the brass nails that mark it are concealed from view of the customers.

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