

"The Complete Bachelor"

By the author of the "As Seen by Him" papers. D. Appleton & Co.

THE AUTHOR of this manual of manners for men has in times past filled many columns of a fashion-plate weekly with advice as to how a man should dress, etc., and, although in the present work he essays a broader field, he still lurks in anonymity and challenges identification. In enlarging his scope, however, he discloses his standpoint. Most books of this sort are written by men who have learned their manners as they learned dancing or ornate penmanship—by dint of hard work, much perseverance and persistent practise. Each one, having achieved his task to his own satisfaction, sets about to make easy the pathway for others, and finally produces a volume of parenthetic observations on what *not* to do, which is as valuable to the bucolic beau of Ballston, N. Y., as it is to the drug-clerk in Scranton, Penn., who has social aspirations. Most of these books are bought and read by men who have to be taught that one must not put his feet on the furniture (they generally add "in the presence of ladies"), and why one should not drink out of the finger-bowl; but "The Complete Bachelor" can be read for instruction and amusement by the *jeunesse dorée*, as it was undoubtedly written by one of them. The first proof of this is the style in which it is written. The construction of many of the sentences bears a close resemblance to English as she is wrote on the note-paper of many of our fashionable clubs for young men. In speaking of proper deportment in "a lift or elevator," the author says that when it "is fitted up as a drawing-room, such as is used in hotels and other semi-public buildings, a man removes his hat when the other sex is of the number of its passengers." It might be remarked that this rule is equally applicable to a man's conduct in a drawing-room, although it be furnished as simply and decorated as plainly as an elevator "such as is used in hotels." Again, he says with regard to an invitation to an "Assembly" or "Patriarchs'" ball:—"You may receive a note asking if you are free for that particular date, whether 'would you like to go to the Assembly?' etc.," or again, "you might simply receive a note with a ticket." No one but a "chappie" could possibly express himself in that way, and no one else would use the word "ticket," when he meant invitation, card or "voucher," as it is generally called.

To a "chappie" alone would many of the finer points conveyed by the author prove of advantage. To be "complete," a bachelor, when he assists a lady to enter a carriage or public conveyance, "opens the door of the vehicle for her, helps her in by a deft motion of the right arm, and with his left protects her skirts from any possible mud or dust on the wheel." Imagine an ignorant but willing bumpkin practising that "deft motion" with a tailor's dummy before a mirror for hours and then getting his first real experience with a buck-board or a cable car! Or when he makes a call, "his hostess will advance to meet him, and will extend to him her right hand with a somewhat stiff angular motion, and he should shake it with a quick nervous movement of his right." None but a "chappie" is accustomed to be met with that "stiff angular movement," and his embarrassment alone responds with the "quick nervous movement of the right," which is generally accompanied by tripping over the rug and dropping the hat. But yet a great deal in the book is addressed to the class who need instruction most, and terms in use among gentlemen are translated into their vernacular. A dress-coat is identified as a "swallow-tail" and a dining jacket is called a "Tuxedo coat," so that they may understand what is meant. They are cautioned that a frock-coat should not be worn at a picnic, that they should not ogle women, and that whenever they change their clothes, they should first empty all their pockets, each of which maxims is quite valuable in its way. They are introduced in detail to the mysteries of the bachelor's dress, his toilet, his duties as host, at the cotillon and in his club, and told how he should act as a diner-out, a guest and a sportsman. The ninth chapter deals with "The Bachelor's Wedding," which would reasonably seem to complete him, but with commendable foresight the author adds one more chapter, on "Funerals."

Through the whole book runs the vein of amusement that the reader shares with the author at the expense of his brother "chappies." He knows their foibles well and tickles them with page after page of etiquette to be observed when on board one's yacht, giving a coaching party, addressing the nobility or conversing with the Prince of Wales. He, for the most part, sets a standard and describes a mode of bachelor life that would demand an income sufficient to support a married man and his family in affluence. If the whole book is not a joke on the "chappies," one is tempted to wonder why it was written, when everything

that is between its covers can be summed up in the sentence:—
“To be a ‘complete bachelor,’ be ‘honest, truthful and polite;
have money, taste and tact.’”

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