

Bygone manners book shows changing times

Looking back, from page A1

Etiquette, Things Children Should Know, Correct Dress for Men, Flowers and Their Uses, and, last but not least, Table Manners.

Some of the rules of the past stemmed from common, ordinary consideration for others. But other suggestions in the book point up how many of the forms-for-form's-sake dictates have fallen by the wayside in a less formal time.

For example, the instances when a gentleman should remove his hat:

- When talking to a lady while standing on the street, on a porch or elsewhere.
- When entering a home.
- When entering a hotel or club elevator.
- When talking to his mother, wife or sister when they meet in the

open.

- When the flag of the United States is passing.

- When entering a theater or restaurant.

The final helpful hint is, when in doubt, take it off. "If this rule is followed there can be no mistake," adds the *Hostess' Friend*.

No surprise is the book's suggestion that children should be "seen and not heard." The contemporary democratization of family life is in sharp contrast to the rules for children in the 1920s. ("Never talk back to older people, especially to your mother and father. . . . Never whine or frown when spoken to by your elders. . . . Never argue with your elders. They know best.")

Some of the table manners for children have also gone by the wayside, especially the ones relating to entering the dining room after parents and elders, talking as

little as possible and remaining seated until everyone has finished eating.

Another of the 1920s rules may cause today's children to raise an eyebrow: "Never find fault with the meal. Remember your mother always tries to please and you should not hurt her feelings."

Perhaps the most quaint part of the book is the part dealing with dress for men. It is unlikely that many Bloomington males needed to know as much as they were advised by the *Hostess' Friend*. It contains a lengthy discussion about the difference between a tuxedo and dinner jacket. Under the heading of "Sport Clothes," the author launches into a discussion of coats with a half-belt across the back and suggests, "Knickerbockers that are smartest have a panel effect in the front, appearing practically the same width at the thigh point as at the knee. . . ."

"Table Manners" in general came under a heading separate from the hints for children. An early dropout from the 1920s code was the ban on eating chicken with the fingers. And there is, too, the stark reminder, "Never ask for a second helping except of bread and water."

In case the young housewife didn't know what to feed a sick person in the house, *Ye Hostess' Friend* contains some ideas. There are liquid, soft, light, diabetic and typhoid diets. But among the items suggestions about specific dishes, really sick persons might have found scalloped oysters, flaxseed lemonade or clam broth really too much to swallow.

Apart from the tips about conduct and what to feed the ailing, the book contains some mouth-watering recipes such as Ropa Vieja, Habanera, Chicken a la Marengo, Hamburger Cake and Grapenut Mousse.