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THE

GENTLEMAN AND LADY'S

BOOK OF POLITENESS

AND

PROPRIETY OF DEPORTMENT,

DEDICATED TO THE

YOUTH OF BOTH SEXES.

BY Mme. CELNART.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SIXTH PARIS EDITION,
ENLARGED AND IMPROVED.

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AND
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PREFACE.

The present work has had an extensive circulation in France, the country which we are accustomed to consider as the genial soil of politeness; and the publishers have thought it would be rendering a useful service on this side of the Atlantic to issue a translation of it.

Some foreign visitors in our country, whose own manners have not always given them a right to be censors of others, have very freely told us what we ought *not* to do; and it will be useful to know from respectable authority, what is done in polished society in Europe, and, of course, what we *ought to do*, in order to avoid all just censure. This object, we are confident, will be more effectually accomplished by the study of the principles and rules contained in the present volume, than by any other of the kind.

By persons who are deemed competent judges in such a case, this little work has been pronounced to be one of the most useful and practical works extant upon the numerous and delicate topics which are discussed in it. We are aware, that a man can no more acquire the ease and elegance of a finished gentleman, by any manual of this kind, than in the fine arts he could become a skilful painter or sculptor by studying books alone, without practice. It is, however, equally true, that the *principles* of Politeness may be studied, as well as the principles of the arts. At the same time, intercourse with polite society, in other words, *practice*, as in the case of the arts, must do the rest.

The reader will find in this volume some rules founded on customs and usages peculiar to France and other countries, where the Roman Catholic religion is established. But it was thought better to retain them in the work, than to mutilate it, by making such material alterations as would have been occasioned by expunging every thing of that description. In our liberal and tolerant country, these peculiarities will give offence to none; while to many, their novelty, at least, will be interesting.

THE TRANSLATOR.

Boston, May 6, 1833.

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PART I.

INTRODUCTION.

Of Propriety of Deportment, and its Advantages.

Propriety of deportment, or *bienséance*, is a happy union of the moral and the graceful; it should be considered in two points of view, and ought therefore to direct us in our important duties, as well as our more trifling enjoyments. When we regard it only under this last aspect, some contend that mere intercourse with the world gives a habit and taste for those modest and obliging observances which constitute true politeness; but this is an error. Propriety of deportment, is the valuable result of a knowledge of one's-self, and of respect for the rights of others; it is a feeling of the sacrifices which are imposed on self-esteem by our social relations; it is, in short, a sacred requirement of harmony and affection. But the usage of the world is merely the gloss, or rather the imitation of propriety: since instead of being like that, based upon sincerity, modesty and courtesy, it consists, in not being constant in anything, and in amusing itself by playing off its feelings and ridicule, against the defects and excellences of others, provided that this is done with grace, and is never carried so far as to wound the self-esteem of any one. Thanks to custom, it is sufficient in order to be recognised as amiable, that he who is the subject of a malicious pleasantry may laugh as well as the author of it. The usage of the world is therefore often nothing more than a skilful calculation of vanity, a futile game, a superficial observance of form, a false politeness which would lead to frivolity or perfidy, did not true politeness animate it with delicacy, reserve and benevolence. Would that custom had never been separated from this virtuous amiableness! We should then never see well-intentioned and good people suspicious of politeness; and when victims to the deceitful, justly exclaim with bitterness, *This is your man of politeness*; nor should we ever have made a distinction between the fixed principles of virtue, and what is fit and expedient. The love of good, in a word, virtue, is then the soul of politeness; the feeling of a just harmony between our interest and our social relations, is also indispensable to this agreeable quality. Excessive gaiety, extravagant joy, great depression, anger, love, jealousy, avarice, and generally all the passions, are too often dangerous shoals to propriety of deportment. Moderation in everything is so essential, that it is even a violation of propriety itself to affect too much the observance of it.

It is to propriety, its justice and attractions, that we owe all the charm, I might almost say, the being able to live in society. At once the effect and cause of civilization, it avails itself of the grand spring of the human mind, self-love, in order to purify and ennoble it; to substitute for pride and all those egotistical or offensive feelings which it generates, benevolence, with all the amiable and generous sentiments, which it inspires. In an assembly of truly polite people, all evil seems to be unknown; what is just, estimable, and good, or what we call fit or suitable, is felt on all sides; and actions, manners and language alike indicate

it. Now if we place in this select assembly, a person who is a stranger to the advantages of a polite education, he will at once be made sensible of the value of it, and will immediately desire to display the same urbanity by which he has himself been pleased.

If politeness is necessary in general, it is not less so in particular cases. Neither rank, talents, fortune, nor beauty, can dispense with this amenity of manners; nor can any thing inspire regard or love, without that graceful affability, that mild dignity, that elegant simplicity, which make the name of *Frenchman* synonymous with *amiable*, and make Paris dear, to whatever has understanding and taste. If all the world feels the truth of the verse which is now a proverb,

Cette grâce plus belle encors que la beauté,[1]

every one also is sensible, that grace in conferring a favor, affects us more than the favor itself, and that a kind smile, and an affectionate tone, penetrate the heart more deeply than the most brilliant elocution.

As to the technical part of politeness, or forms alone, the intercourse of society, and good advice, are undoubtedly useful; but the grand secret of never failing in propriety of deportment, is to have an intention of always doing what is right. With such a disposition of mind, exactness in observing what is proper, appears to all to possess a charm and influence; and then not only do mistakes become excusable, but they become even interesting from their thoughtlessness and naïveté. After the manner of St. Augustine, who used to say, *Love God, and then do what you wish*, we would say to those, just making their début in society, Be modest, benevolent, and do not distress yourself on account of the mistakes of your inexperience; a little attention, and the advice of a friend, will soon correct these trifling errors. Such a friend, I wish to be to you. In undertaking to revise, and almost entirely remodel, the *Manual of Good Society*, I have wished and have engaged to be useful to you. A more methodical arrangement of the work, more precise and varied details, in short, important applications to all conditions and circumstances of life, I venture to believe, will make this treatise worthy of its design.

CHAPTER I.

Of propriety of conduct in relation to religious duties.

We have said, that propriety ought to preside over the sublimest instructions of morality, as it also regulates the gayest movements of pleasure. We proceed first, therefore, to consider religious deportment.

SECTION I.

Of respectful deportment at Church.

Religious sentiment is the great, perhaps the only difference which we find between man and other animals. However it may absorb you by its depth, exalt you with delight, or withdraw from you in misfortune, this mysterious and sublime sentiment ought always to command your respect. Therefore, without objecting to particular differences of worship, never enter a church without submitting to the requirements of religion.[2] Observe silence, or at least speak seldom, and in a low voice; uncover yourself; advance with a slow and grave step; stop, at the same time making an inclination of your body, if any ceremony engages the assembly. Whether the church be Jewish, Catholic, or Protestant, recollect, that in this place men honor the Creator of the Universe; that here they seek consolation in their troubles, and pardon of their sins.

If you visit a church or any similar edifice, from curiosity, endeavor to do it out of the time of service. Contemplate silently the pictures, monuments, &c.; beware of imitating those vandals, who deface with their obscure and ephemeral names those monuments which are destined to endure for ages. Do not like them forget, that the only thing which you can expect is a smile of contempt from all enlightened friends of the arts. Do not wait till the keepers remind you of the remuneration due to their kindness in conducting you; offering it to them with your thanks on taking leave; and in order to this, be always provided with small change. The respect due to the place requires us to abstain from everything which resembles the cares of business.

I have thus far spoken only the language of toleration, and of religious worship in general, but I am now going to use that of faith and devotion. Let the neatness and modesty of your apparel, and your discreet and respectful deportment, show that you perceive what is due to the house of God. Incline your body on entering; take the holy water;[3] then advance by the shortest way, and without precipitation, to the place which you are to occupy; if possible, do not change it; neither put yourself in the passage, nor carry the chairs to a distance; take two together, to avoid turning your seat as circumstances may require in the course of the ceremony.[4]

If the services have commenced, place yourself in the rear, in order not to disturb those present by your coming. The same motive ought to prevent your going away before the end, except from pressing necessity.

If you are accompanied by a lady to whom you owe deference, advance and present to her the holy water; prepare two chairs for her, and place yourself near. In leaving church, clear the passage for her; carry her prayer-book, present her again with the holy water, and hold the door open to let her pass. Indeed, these two last marks of politeness should be shown indiscriminately by well-bred people to any who happen to be near them, in entering or leaving the church. Kind regards towards our neighbors are a worthy accompaniment of devotion.

If on a crowded occasion you have two chairs, it is well to offer one of them to those who have none; a man ought even to give up his own to a lady who might be standing. Every one knows that it is contrary to the sanctity of the place, to walk in a church as upon a public promenade; to convene there as in a private house; to cast on one side and the other looks of curiosity; to have a mien which displays uneasiness or weariness; to balance yourself upon the seat, or shake in an annoying manner that of the person before you; to carry with you dogs, packets, &c.

During the sermon, it is necessary to endeavor to make no noise, and to bow with profound respect every time the preacher pronounces the sacred name of Jesus Christ.[5]

Whether you give or withhold an offering to the mendicants of either sex, they should be answered by a kind salutation.

It is entirely contrary to religious propriety to press forward, in going to the altar; you ought to wait in silence your turn, without trying to supplant those before you; however, should you have any urgent motives, you can make them known with mildness and politeness. Disputes which arise with regard to this, are at the same time an absurdity and impiety.

When you take a place at the holy table, you should lay aside gloves, book, cane, &c. It is well for ladies to cover themselves with a veil half drawn; it is a mark of reverence as well as modesty.

SECTION II.

Of religious propriety in our intercourse with the world.

If it is a fundamental principle of propriety of conduct not to wound any one in his self-esteem, his tastes, or interests, much more is it necessary to respect his religious opinions. To make sport of faith, that powerful, deep and involuntary sentiment, before which the law yields; to deliver to the pain of doubting, hearts just become pious and tranquil; to awaken a spirit of fanaticism and religious excesses; to cause one's self to be considered by some as an imprudent, by others an unworthy person, and by all as an enemy to politeness and tolerance,—are the sad results of raillery against religious observances, raillery, too, almost always dictated by a desire of showing off one's wit.

These results take place without any exception; impious sarcasms in serious people constantly do injury; but they become still more revolting in the mouths of females, who, like angels, ought ever to show themselves lovely, pure, and free from passion; whom Bernardin Saint Pierre designates with much feeling

and justice the *pious sex*.

We ought not however to proscribe entirely delicate and happy allusions, or comparisons drawn from the sacred books, and made in a proper spirit. It is useless, I think, to adduce instances; suffice it to add, that rigor alone can reprove them, and that the occasion sometimes renders them very seasonable.

As to religious discussions, they above all demand the most reserve and care, since without our knowledge conscience frequently becomes in them auxiliary to pride. If then you are unable to command yourself; if you do not feel enough of logical power, enough of grace, or at least of exactness of elocution, to contend with success, avoid controversies; avoid them through fear of committing, in the eyes of weak people, that religion which you defend, and of exposing yourself to lasting ridicule. But, whatever be the skill which you exhibit in eluding the arguments of your adversary, whatever be your triumph, and although your disposition should urge you, never turn a serious discussion into jest; from that moment you would lose all your advantages, and, although overthrown, your antagonist will recover himself with this just reflection, that 'nothing is proved by a jest.'

Finally, while you manifest on every occasion a sincere and profound respect for religion, beware above all things of making a proclamation of your piety. Avoid talking with those in your parish, about your confessor, and your religious observances. If you do not distinguish yourself from the crowd, they will take you for a hypocrite, or a person of small mind. If you recommend yourself, on the contrary, by superior merit, they will think that you take pleasure in showing the contrast which exists between your exalted talents and your humble faith. Between ourselves, would they be in the wrong?

CHAPTER II.

Of propriety of conduct in relation to domestic duties.

Since we admit that there are duties of propriety relative to piety, there are also duties relative to filial piety, that other worship, that familiar veneration of the Deity, whom our parents represent on earth. The most sublime, the most touching marks of religion and of nature unite in commanding us to love and honor those from whom we have received life. We shall not offend our readers by supposing it requisite to insist upon the necessity of fulfilling a duty which is felt by all correct minds and all good hearts.

The custom has prevailed of addressing the father and mother in the second person.[6] This mark of great confidence, and affectionate freedom, ought never to degenerate into an offensive familiarity. We ought always to address them in a respectful and kind tone; to anticipate them in every thing; to ask their advice; to receive their reproofs with submission; to be silent with regard to the errors they may commit; to show them a lively gratitude on every occasion; in short, whatever advantage you have over them, be careful to conceal it, and consider them always your superiors, your benefactors and your guides.

Besides the daily marks of deference which we should show to our parents, there are other particular attentions for which our affection should seek every occasion. At certain periods, such as the new year, the birth day or day of baptism, we should offer them tender congratulations, or ingeniously devised presents. We are not allowed to dispense with these delicate attentions. If you have success in the sciences or arts, make appropriate presents to those from whom you have derived the benefits of your education.

If you are separated from your father and mother, write to them frequently; let your style be impressed with a devoted affection; repeat more particularly at the end of your letters the sentiments of respect and of love with which you should be inspired.

As to what your uncles, aunts, brothers, sisters, and cousins require of you, you will know what are the duties of propriety in that respect, if you feel how dear family ties are; you will show towards some a respectful, and towards the others a friendly politeness. They should claim on every occasion your first visits and your first attentions; you should identify yourself with them in all their prosperity or adversity; invite them above all others to fêtes and meetings at your house, unless when you assemble a party on a special occasion, at which they would be entire strangers. You should always take care to invite your relations by themselves from time to time, to prove that you have no intention of slighting them. You may be more intimate with some of your family, and give them particular proofs of affection; but in these meetings you will do well to abstain from every act of preference.

Without being at all wanting in cordiality, a little more ceremony should be used towards your relations by marriage, to whom you indeed owe as much respect as to your own relations.

CHAPTER III.

Of propriety of conduct in conjugal and domestic relations.

If any thing can render politeness ridiculous, and even odious, it is the disposition of certain persons, who in society are moderate, amiable, and gracious, but in private show themselves morose, rough and ill-natured. This fault, much too common, is one of the greatest inconsistencies of the human mind. You use all your exertions to please the world which you only see cursorily, and in which you have only power to procure a few moments of pleasure, and you neglect to be agreeable to your husband or wife, from whom you expect the happiness of a whole life. Perhaps it would be better to be continually capricious or harsh, for the contrast of your politeness in the drawing-room with your impoliteness at home makes you appear still more odious. Conjugal intimacy, it is true, dispenses with the etiquette established by politeness, but it does not dispense with attentions. In the presence of your wife or husband, you ought never to do those things which carry with them an idea of disgust, nor perform those duties of the toilet, which before any one but yourself offend decency and cleanliness.[7] One ought never to permit disorder in his wardrobe under the excuse that he is just up, or at his own house. To dress with neatness, and elegant simplicity is important, even at home.

The conversation of husband and wife cannot be elegant, and sustained in the same manner that it is in society; it would indeed be superlatively ridiculous that it should not have interruption or relaxation, but it should be free from all impoliteness and indelicacy. If at any time the society of your husband or wife causes you *ennui*, you ought neither to say so, nor give any suspicion of the cause by abruptly changing the conversation. In all discussions you should watch yourself attentively, lest domestic familiarity raise itself by degrees to the pitch of a quarrel. It is especially to females that this advice is addressed, and to the impressive words of Scripture, 'woman was not created for wrath,' we may add these, 'she was created for gentleness.'

To entertain with a politeness particularly affectionate the friends of a person with whom you are connected by marriage; to respect inviolably the letters which she writes or receives; to avoid prying into the secrets which she conceals from you through delicacy; never to act contrary to her inclinations, unless they are injurious to herself, and even in this case not to oppose her, but to endeavor to check them with address and kindness; to beware of confiding to strangers or to domestics the little vexations which she causes you; to dread like poison marks of contempt, coldness, suspicion, or reproaches; to apologize promptly and in an affectionate manner if you have allowed yourself to run into any ill humor; to receive her counsels with attention, and benevolence, and to execute them as quickly as possible—these are the obligations of propriety and love, to which husbands possessed of gentleness bind themselves, by the sanctity of the vows which they have taken before God. There is a still more rigorous duty for a new husband, and for well married persons; they must abstain in public from every mark of affection too conspicuous, and every exclusive attention. Married persons who, in society, place themselves continually near one another, and who converse and dance together, do not

escape the ridicule to which their feelings blind them. In society, we ought above every thing to avoid being personal; for a husband or a wife, is another self; and we must forget that *self*.

Mothers, in particular, spare no caresses towards your children, occupy yourselves entirely with them, unless perhaps you fear to render them proud, difficult and insupportable; if you fatigue people by having them always present, if you encourage or repeat their prattle and their sports; if, on the other hand, you treat them with severity before strangers, if you reprimand or punish them, be assured every one will consider you importunate as well as ridiculous.

Domestic propriety, which is at once a duty of justice, religion and humanity, is also a source of peace and pleasure. Servants treated with suitable regard, are attentive, zealous and grateful, and consequently every thing is done with propriety and affection. Who does not know the charm and value of this?

Duties of this class require that you should never command your domestics with hauteur and harshness. Every time that they render you a service, it claims an expression, a gesture, or at least a look of thankfulness; it requires that you should be still more affectionate towards the domestics of your acquaintances, and especially towards those of your friends, whom you ought always to treat kindly. As to your own domestics, you should carefully beware of addressing to them any confidential or even useless conversation, for fear of rendering them insolent or familiar; but propriety requires you to listen to them with kindness, and give them salutary advice when it is for their interest. It commands us also to show them indulgence frequently, in order to be able, when there is cause, to reprove them with firmness, without being obliged to have recourse to the false energy of anger.

The *ton* of domestics ordinarily announces that of their masters. Never suffer them to remain seated while answering distinguished persons who ask for you. Take care that they do it always in a civil and polite manner; let them lose no time, if there is occasion, in relieving your visitors of their overshoes, umbrellas, cloaks, &c.; let them go before, to save your visitors the trouble of opening and shutting the door. When an announcement is made, let them inform themselves respectfully of the name of the person, and pronounce it while holding open for them the door of your room. If you are not there, let them offer a seat, requesting the guests to wait a moment while they go to call you.

When visitors take leave, domestics ought to manifest a promptness in opening the outer door; they should hold the door by the handle, while you converse with the person whom you reconduct; they should present them respectfully with whatever garments they may have thrown off, and aid them in again putting them on; and should, if occasion requires, light them to the door, going slowly behind them.

Accustom your domestics never to appear before you too poorly, or too much dressed; never to sit in your presence, especially while waiting upon the table; not to enter into conversation; never to answer by signs, or in coarse terms.

It is only among the badly educated people of the small towns that they say, the 'maid,' the 'boy,' the 'domestic,' the 'servant;' and among the proud, ill-bred fashionables, who ape grandeur; the 'lackey,' the 'valet,' 'my people;' well-bred persons simply say, the 'nurse,' the 'cook,' the 'chamber-maid,' &c.

and what is still better, they designate their domestics by their christian names.

If you have ever met with those merciless housekeepers who give you a whole tariff of the commodities which they have been to market to purchase, attended by their maid; who entertain you constantly with the insults and unfaithfulness of their domestics; who fly into a passion before you on account of a glass broken, of which they require the value, and make you witness and judge of pert discussions occasioned by servants' mistakes; if you have had the misfortune to dine with such persons, and have seen them hand reluctantly to their sullen maid-servants one key after another, to arrange the dessert brought by them with a good supply of ill-humor; if you have seen them go to the cellar themselves, and when they have just left the table, to arrange in a surly manner the wine, sugar, and delicacies, tell me, poor guest, if, turning your head away with confusion and disgust, you have not an hundred times said to yourself, 'Oh! what living and disgusting models of upstarts or provincials.'

CHAPTER IV.

Of propriety as regards one's self.

Attention to one's person and reputation is also a duty. If vanity, pride, or prudery, have frequently given to these attentions the names of coquetry, ambition, or folly, this is a still stronger reason, why we should endeavor to clear up these points.

SECTION I.

Of the toilet.

Propriety requires that we should always be clothed in a cleanly and becoming manner, even in private, in leaving our bed, or in the presence of no one. It requires that our clothing be in keeping with our sex, fortune, profession, age, and form, as well as with the season, the different hours of the day and our different occupations.

Let us now descend to the particulars of these general rules.

The dress for a man on his first rising, is a cap of cotton, or silk and cotton, a morning gown, or a vest with sleeves; for a lady, a small muslin cap, (bonnet de percale,) a camisole or common robe. It is well that a half corset should precede the full corset, which last is used only when one is dressed; for it is bad taste for a lady not to be laced at all. The hair papers, which cannot be removed on rising (because the hair would not keep in curl till evening,) should be concealed under a bandeau of lace or of the hair. They should be removed as soon as may be. In this dress, we can receive only intimate friends or persons, who call upon urgent or indispensable business; even then we ought to offer some apology for it. To neglect to take off this morning dress as soon as possible, is to expose one's self to embarrassments often very painful, and to the appearance of a want of education. Moreover, it is well to impose upon yourself a rule to be dressed at some particular hour (the earliest possible,) since occupations will present themselves to hinder your being ready for the day; and you will easily acquire the habit of this. Such disorder of the toilet can be excused when it occurs rarely, or for a short time, as in such cases it seems evidently owing to a temporary embarrassment; but if it occur daily, or constantly; if it seems the result of negligence and slovenliness, it is unpardonable, particularly in ladies, whose dress seems less designed for clothing than ornament.

To suppose that great heat of weather will authorise this disorder of the toilet, and will permit us to go in slippers, or with our legs and arms bare, or to take nonchalant or improper attitudes, is an error of persons of a low class, or destitute of education. Even the weather of dog-days would not excuse this; and if we would remain thus dressed, we must give directions that we are not at home. On the other hand, to think that cold and rainy weather excuses like

liberties, is equally an error. You ought not to be in the habit of wearing large socks (this is addressed particularly to ladies,) as socks of list and similar materials; much less noisy shoes, such as wooden ones, galoches lined with fur, shoes with wooden soles, socks, &c.; this custom is in the worst taste. When you go to see any one, you cannot dispense with taking off your socks or clogs before you are introduced into the room. For to make a noise in walking is entirely at variance with good manners.

However pressed one may be, a lady of good breeding should not go out in a morning dress, neither with an apron nor cap, even if it is made of fine cloth and trimmed with ribbands; nor should a well-bred man show himself in the street in a waistcoat only, a jacket without sleeves, &c. We said before that the dress should be adapted to the different hours of the day. Ladies should make morning calls in an elegant and simple négligé, all the details of which we cannot give, on account of their multiplicity and the numerous modification of fashion. We shall only say that ladies generally should make these calls in the dress which they wear at home. Gentlemen may call in an outside coat, in boots and pantaloons, as when they are on their ordinary business. In short, this dress is proper for gentlemen's visits in the middle of the day. With regard to ladies, it is necessary for them when visiting at this time, to arrange their toilet with more care. Ceremonious visits, evening visits, and especially balls, require more attention to the dress of gentlemen, and a more brilliant costume for ladies. There are for the latter, head-dresses particularly designed for such occasions, and for no other, such as rich blond caps, ornamented with flowers, brilliant *berrets* and *toques*, appropriate to the drawing-room.

The nicest cloth, new and very fine linen, an elegant but plain waistcoat; a beautiful watch, to which is attached a single costly key, thin and well polished shoes, an entirely new hat, of a superior quality—this is a dress at once recherché and rigorously exact, for gentlemen of good taste and *ton*. One's profession requires very little modification of this costume; we should observe, however, that men of science (savans) and literary men and those in the profession of the law, should avoid having a fashionable or military costume, which is generally adopted by students, commercial men, and *exquisites*, for the sake of *ton* or for want of something to do.

Situation in the world determines among ladies, those differences, which though otherwise well marked, are becoming less so every day. Every one knows that whatever be the fortune of a young lady, her dress ought always, in form as well as ornaments, to exhibit less of a recherché appearance and should be less showy than that of married ladies. Costly cashmeres, very rich furs, and diamonds, as well as many other brilliant ornaments, are to be forbidden a young lady; and those who act in defiance of these rational marks of propriety make us believe that they are possessed of an unrestrained love of luxury, and deprive themselves of the pleasure of receiving these ornaments from the hand of the man of their choice.

All ladies cannot use indiscriminately the privilege which marriage confers upon them in this respect, and the toilet of those whose fortune is moderate should not pass the bounds of an elegant simplicity. Considerations of a more elevated nature, as of good domestic order, the dignity of a wife, and the duties of a mother, come in support of this law of propriety, for it concerns morality in all its branches.

We must beware of a shoal in this case; frequently a young lady of small

fortune, desiring to appear decently in any splendid assembly, makes sacrifices in order to embellish her modest attire. But these sacrifices are necessarily inadequate; a new and brilliant article of dress is placed by the side of a mean or old one. The toilet then wants harmony, which is the soul of elegance as well as of beauty. Moreover, whatever be the opulence which you enjoy, luxury encroaches so much upon it, that no riches are able to satisfy its demands; but fortunately propriety, always in accordance with reason, encourages by this maxim social and sensible women. Neither too high, nor too low; it is equally ridiculous either to pretend to be the most showy, or to display the meanest attire in an assembly.

The rules suitable to age resemble those which mediocrity of fortune imposes; for instance, old ladies ought to abstain from gaudy colors, recherché designs, too late fashions, and graceful ornaments, as feathers, flowers, and jewels. A lady in her decline dressed in her hair, and wearing a dress with short sleeves, adorned with collars, bracelets, &c. offends against propriety as much as against her interest and dignity.

The rigorous simplicity of the dress of men establishes but very little difference between that of young and old. The latter, however, ought to choose grave colors, not to follow the fashions too closely; to avoid garments too tight or too short, and not to have in view in their toilet any other object but ease and neatness. Unless the care of their health, or complete baldness, requires them to wear a wig,[8] it is more proper that old persons should show their white and noble heads. Old ladies, whom custom requires to conceal this respectable sign of a long life, should at least avoid hair too thick or too full of curls.

If they would not appear ridiculous and clothed in a manner disagreeable or offensive, ladies ought to adopt in summer light garments, and delicate colors, and in winter, furs, thick and warm fabrics, and deep colors. Men till lately were almost free from this obligation; they used to be constantly clothed in broadcloth in all seasons: but now, although this may form the basis of their toilet, they must select stuffs for winter or summer, as may be suitable. It is in good ton for gentlemen to wear a rich cloak; an outer garment over the coat (especially one of silk,) is left for men of a certain age. It only belongs to septuagenarians and ecclesiastics to wear doublets or wadded outer coats.

To finish our instructions relative to the toilet, it only remains for us to make a few observations.

It is superlatively ridiculous for a lady to go on foot, when dressed in her hair, or attired for the drawing-room or a ball. If one dwells in a provincial town where it is not customary to use carriages, they should go in a chair. Who does not perceive how laughable it is to see a lady who is clothed in satin lace, or velvet, laboriously travelling in the dust or mud.

Vary your toilet as much as possible, for fear that idlers and malignant wits, who are always a majority in the world, should amuse themselves by making your dress the description of your person.

Certain fashionables seek to gain a kind of reputation by the odd choice of their attire, and by their eagerness to seize upon the first caprices of the fashions. Propriety with difficulty tolerates these fancies of a spoiled child: but it applauds a woman of sense and taste, who is not in a hurry to follow the fashions and asks how long they will probably last before adopting them; finally, who selects and modifies them with success according to her size and

figure.

It would be extremely clownish to carry dirt into a decent house, especially if one makes a ceremonious visit; and, when there is much mud, or when we cannot walk with skill, it is proper to go in a carriage, or at least to put in requisition the services of a shoe-black at a short distance from the house.

SECTION II.

Of Reputation.

Among the cares which propriety obliges us to take of our person, to please is but an accessary circumstance; the principal end is to indicate by cleanliness, and the suitableness of apparel, that good order, a sense of what is right, and politeness in all things, direct our thoughts and actions. In this point of view, we see that a regard to reputation is the necessary consequence of the duties of propriety toward one's self.

To inspire esteem and consideration, is then the grand object of propriety of conduct; for without this treasure, the relations of society would be a humiliation and punishment. They are obtained by the accomplishment of our obligations of family and of our profession; by our probity and good manners; by our fortune and situation in society.

Consideration is not acquired by words; an article so precious demands a real value; it demands also the assistance of discretion. So that we must begin by fulfilling exactly our duties towards relations; but we must beware of making public those petty quarrels, and little differences of interest, of ill humor or opinion, which sometimes trouble families most closely united. These momentary clouds, soon dissipated by affection and confidence, would be engraven on the memory of others as a proof of your domestic discords, and in the end, of your faults.[9]

Probity, that powerful means of obtaining consideration, by its elevated and religious nature, is not within our investigation of the principles of politeness.

This is not the case with that consideration which is attached to purity of morals. The proof of probity is in probity itself; but, thanks to the delicate shades of reputation, in regard to chastity, there exists, independently of good conduct, a multitude of cares, and precautions, which, however minute and embarrassing at times, ought never to be neglected. Ladies, to whom the advice contained in this paragraph is particularly addressed, know how the shadow of suspicion withers and torments them. This shadow, it is necessary to avoid at all hazards, and on that account to submit to all the requirements of propriety.

Young married ladies are at liberty to visit by themselves their acquaintances, but they cannot present themselves in public without their husband, or an aged lady. They are at liberty however to walk with young married ladies or unmarried ones, while the latter should never walk alone with their companions. Neither should they show themselves except with a gentleman of their family, and then he should be a near relation or of respectable age.

Except in certain provincial towns, where there is a great strictness in

behavior, young married ladies receive the visits of gentlemen; they permit their company in promenades, without suffering the least injury to their reputation, provided it is always with men of good morals, and that they take care to avoid every appearance of coquetry. Young widows have equal liberty with married ladies.

A lady ought not to present herself alone in a library, or a museum, unless she goes there to study or work as an artist.

A lady ought to have a modest and measured gait; too great hurry injures the grace which ought to characterize her. She should not turn her head on one side and the other, especially in large towns, where this bad habit seems to be an invitation to the impertinent. If such persons address her in any flattering or insignificant terms, she should take good care not to answer them a word. If they persist, she should tell them in a brief and firm, though polite tone, that she desires to be left to herself. If a man follow her in silence, she should pretend not to perceive him, and at the same time hasten a little her step.

Towards the close of the day, a young lady would conduct herself in an unbecoming manner, if she should go alone; and if she passes the evening with any one, she ought to see that a domestic comes to accompany her, if not, to request the person whom she is visiting, to allow some one to do so. But however much this may be considered proper, and consequently an obligation, a married lady well educated will disregard it if circumstances prevent her being able, without trouble, to find a conductor.

If the master of the house wishes to accompany you himself, you must excuse yourself politely from giving him so much trouble, but finish however by accepting. On arriving at your house, you should offer him your thanks. In order to avoid these two inconveniences, it will be well to request your husband, or some one of your relations to come and wait upon you; you will in this way avoid still another inconvenience; in small towns, where malice is excited by ignorance and want of something to do, they frequently censure the most innocent acts; it is not uncommon to hear slanderous and silly gossips observe, that madame such-a-one goes to madame such-a-one's for the sake of returning with her husband. The seeds of such an imputation, once sown, quickly come to maturity.

The care of the reputation of ladies further demands that they should have a modest deportment; should abstain from forward manners, and free speeches.

CHAPTER V.

Of propriety, in regard to one's business or profession.

Besides general politeness, that ready money which is current with all, there is a polite deportment suited to every profession. Interest, custom, and the desire of particular esteem, the necessity of moderating the enthusiasm which almost constantly animates us,—are the motives which determine the different kinds of politeness that we are going to consider as regards shopkeepers, people in office, lawyers, physicians, artists, military men, and ecclesiastics. As all this politeness is mutual, we shall necessarily speak of the obligations imposed upon people who have intercourse with these different persons.

SECTION I.

Politeness of Shopkeepers and Customers.

Politeness in shopkeepers is a road to fortune, which the greater part of them are careful not to neglect, especially at Paris, where we find particularly the model of a well-bred shopkeeper. It is this model that we wish to hold up even to some Parisians, and to the retail dealers of the provincial towns, as well as to those who are unacquainted with trade, but are destined to that profession.

When a customer calls, the shopkeeper should salute him politely, without inquiring after his health, unless he be intimately acquainted with him. He then waits until the customer has made known his wishes, advances toward him, or brings forward a seat, then shows him, with great civility, the articles for which he has inquired. If the purchaser be difficult to suit, capricious, ridiculous, or even disdainful, the shopkeeper ought not to appear to perceive it; he may however in such cases, show a little coldness of manner.

The part which shopkeepers have to act is frequently painful, we must allow; there are some people who treat them like servants; there are some *capricious fashionables*, who go into a shop only to pass the time, to see the new fashions, and who, with this object make the shopkeeper open a hundred bundles, show heaps of goods, and finish by going out, saying in a disdainful tone that nothing suits them. There are some merciless purchasers who contend for a few cents with all the tenacity of avarice, obstinacy and pride; however, under all these vexations, the shopkeeper must show constant urbanity. He waits upon such imperious purchasers with readiness, but nevertheless in silence, for he must be convinced that the more complying we are to people of this sort, the more haughty and difficult they show themselves.

With *capricious fashionables*, his patience should never forsake him; and although he well knows what will be the result of their fatiguing call, he nevertheless should show them his goods, as if he thought they really intended to buy; for sometimes this tempts them to purchase. Even though his politeness should be all lost, he should still express his regret at not having been able to

suit the lady, and hope to be more fortunate another time; he should then conduct her politely to the door, which he should hold open until her carriage leaves it.

A shopkeeper who wishes to save time, words and vexation, who even feels the dignity of his profession, ought to sell at a fixed price, or if he does not announce that he sells in that mode, he ought at least to adopt it, and not to have what is called an *asking* price. If however he has to do with those gossips who think themselves cheated unless something is abated, or who design to impose sacrifices on the shopkeepers, it is necessary to carry on this ridiculous skirmishing politely, and to yield by degrees, without exhibiting any marks of displeasure at these endless debates. But the dealer of *bon ton* abstains from those lofty assurances, those laughable adjurations, declarations of loss, and of preference, as, *I lose all profit, it is because it is you*, and other foolish things, which make a lackey's office of a truly respectable profession.

The clerks should carry the articles purchased to the desk, whither they should politely conduct the purchaser; they then should make up the bundle which they should not deliver until the bill is settled, and the purchaser is ready to depart. If the latter is not on foot, the bundle should not be delivered until he is seated in the carriage, and the door is ready to be shut. If, on the contrary, the purchaser is not in a carriage, he must be asked whether he wishes to have the bundle carried home. This politeness is indispensable if the bundle is large, and especially if the purchaser is a lady.

It is further necessary that the person at the desk should offer small change for the balance of the purchase, and should apologise if he is obliged to give copper or heavy money; he ought to present a bill of the articles, and not show any ill-humor if the purchaser thinks proper to look over it.

There is one circumstance which tries the politeness of the most civil shopkeepers; it is when an assortment is wanted. It is indeed irksome enough to show a great quantity of goods, and give patterns of them, with the certainty almost that all you do will avail nothing. But it ought not to be forgotten, that like all other qualities, politeness has its trials, and that perhaps the person who has thus chanced to call at their shop, will be induced by this amenity of behavior, to continue always a customer.

We trust that the shopkeepers' clerks, in the recommendations which we are now about to give them, will not see any silly attempt to address them with smart sayings.

By enjoining upon them to avoid volubility—a disrespectful familiarity toward ladies—extravagant praises of their goods—an affected zeal in serving rich persons—an impolite tardiness, and disdainful inattention to people of a diffident manner—the ridiculous habit of wishing to make conversation—to urge people to buy whether they wish to or not—to stun them with the names of all the goods in the shop—by enjoining upon them to avoid these things, we intend less to join in than to preserve them from the reproaches of fault finders.

Every civility ought to be reciprocal, or nearly so. If the officious politeness of the shopkeeper does not require an equal return, he has at least a claim to civil treatment; and, finally, if this politeness proceed from interest, is this a reason why purchasers should add to the unpleasantness of his profession, and trouble themselves little at violating the laws of politeness? Many very respectable people allow themselves so many infractions on this point, that I

think it my duty to dwell upon it.

You should never say, *I want such a thing*, but, *have the goodness to show me*, or *show me, if you please, that article*, or use some other polite form of address. If they do not show you at first the articles you desire, and you are obliged to examine a great number, apologize to the shopkeeper for the trouble you give him. If, after all you cannot suit yourself, renew your apologies, when you go away.

If you make small purchases, say, *I ask your pardon*, or *I am sorry for having troubled you for so trifling a thing*. If you spend a considerable time in the selection of articles, apologize to the shopkeeper who waits for you to decide.

If the price seems to you too high, and that the shop has not fixed prices, ask an abatement in brief and civil terms, and without ever appearing to suspect the good faith of the shopkeeper. If he does not yield, do not enter into a contest with him, but go away, after telling him politely that you think you can obtain the article cheaper elsewhere, but if not, that you will give him the preference. If the clerk ends by asking whether you wish for any other article, answer always in a manner to encourage him that you will call again. We should never neglect to be agreeable. Thank him always when you go out.

SECTION II.

Politeness between Persons in Office and the Public.

This is not very conspicuous; nor can it be, since in this case, the desire of pleasing and the expectation of gain, have no influence. Besides, as we remain but a moment with these gentlemen, and as they have business with a great many people, the observances and forms of politeness would be misplaced. The following are points to be observed by them, and are by no means rigid; the greater therefore the reason for conforming to them.

A man in office is not obliged to rise and salute people, nor to offer them a seat; it is enough for him to receive them by an inclination of the head, and make a sign with the hand, to intimate to them to be seated. The business being finished, he salutes them on leaving, as before, and never conducts them back to the door. It would be ridiculous to be offended with these *bureaucratic* forms, and still more so, to wish to enter into conversation, to make inquiries concerning the health, &c. In proportion to their official habits, those in office ought to watch themselves with care in society.

SECTION III.

Politeness of Lawyers and their Clients.

Politeness is a very difficult thing for this respectable class, who see constantly before their eyes people always animated with a feeling which

renders them little amiable, namely, interest. Besides, being in the habit of refuting their adversaries, and being obliged to do it promptly, they acquire, in general, a kind of bluntness, a decisive tone, a spirit of contradiction, of which they ought to be distrustful in society, and also in their places of business. The familiar usage of common inquiries after the health is not customary between attorneys or advocates and their clients, unless they have before been acquainted with them. They are however bound to observe attentions which are not practised by persons in office. They rise to salute their clients, offer them a seat, and conduct them to the door when they take leave; they observe what is due to sex, rank, and age.

As to clients, they ought to conform to the ordinary rules of civility; they ought, moreover, not to exhibit any signs of impatience while they are waiting until they can be received. They should take care to be clear and precise in the narration of their business, and not to importune by vain repetitions or passionate declamations, the counsellor who is listening to them. They should also consider that his moments are precious, and should retire so soon as they shall have sufficiently instructed him in their business.

SECTION IV.

Politeness of Physicians and their Patients.

The observances adopted in the offices of lawyers, are likewise practised with consulting physicians; but sympathy should give to the tone or manner of the latter a more affectionate character. Patients well educated will beware of abusing it, and will keep to themselves all complaints which are useless towards a knowledge of their malady. They will answer the questions of the doctor in a clear, brief, and polite manner; and when these questions do not embrace the observations which they may have made on their own disorder, they will say so, at the same time observing some excuse like the following; *I ask your pardon; this observation is perhaps idle, but being myself ignorant, and wishing to omit nothing, I submit it to your good judgment*.

You ought to give frequent and heartfelt thanks to the physician who affords you his advice or attentions. The circumstance of his being unsuccessful does not exonerate you from these testimonies of gratitude; it renders them perhaps more obligatory, for delicacy requires that you should not appear tacitly to reproach him on account of his having been unfortunate in his efforts.

Being obliged to speak of different wants, and of different parts of the body, for which politeness has no appropriate language, the physician ought to avoid being obscure or gross, particularly when addressing ladies. A forgetfulness of these forms often renders insupportable even a meritorious and learned man.

Every one knows, with what delicate precautions a physician ought to speak before the patient and his family, of the nature of the illness and of the probable consequences when there exists any danger; in what guarded terms he should at last disclose to them a fatal termination, if unfortunately it has become inevitable. Every body knows, also, that however poignant may be the grief of parents, they ought never to let it appear in their conversations with the physician, that they regard him as the cause of their affliction.

SECTION V.

Politeness of Artists and Authors, and the Deference due to them.

Do artists come under the common rule, it will perhaps be said? and I shall ask, in my turn: Do they live like others,—these men, always absorbed in one strong and single conception, with which they, like the Creator, wish to animate matter?—who seek everywhere the secret of the beautiful which goads, infatuates, and evades them?—passionate, absorbed in thought, ingenuous, almost always strangers to calculation, to pleasure, and to the occupations of the world? No, they have a separate existence, one which the world does not comprehend, and which they ought to conceal from the world.

If, as we shall see hereafter, one should avoid speaking of his profession, and of his personal affairs, for a still stronger reason, an artist ought to be silent about his own labors, his success, and his hopes. People will accuse him of arrogance, of vanity, and perhaps even of madness; for enthusiasm is not included in, nor admitted into society, because there the ridiculous is feared above everything, *and from the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one step*. Let him, then, reserve only for his friends, for true friends of the arts, his noble and striking bursts of inspiration.

People are also generally prone to suspect artists of jealousy. In order to escape this accusation, and at the same time preserve the right of telling their thoughts, they ought to commend warmly what appears to them good, and criticise with much moderation and without any raillery what is defective.

These observations are addressed equally to authors, with this important addition. Besides the charge of arrogance, people are much disposed to accuse them of pedantry. Let them therefore be careful, and check constantly the desire of entering into conversation upon the interesting subjects with which they are continually occupied. Let them always be in fear of obtaining the name of a *bel esprit*, a name which calls up so many recollections of pedantry and affectation.

A graceful simplicity, a happy mixture of elevation and naïveté, should characterise authors and artists, but particularly female authors and artists. Ladies who handle the pen, the lyre, or the pencil, ought to be well persuaded that any vestige of prejudice raises against them, especially in provincial places, a multitude of unfavorable observations. And besides, so many half-instructed women have had so much the air and manners of upstarts, that this opinion is almost excusable. Now this prejudice lays it down as a rule, that every female author or artist may be known at first sight, by her oddities, her want of modesty, or her pedantic folly. Do away this unjust prejudice, my female friends: it will be both easy and pleasant; you will have only to follow the influence of an elevated soul, a pure taste; you will have but to remind yourselves that simplicity is the coquetry of genius.

But if people who cultivate literature and the arts ought to apply themselves without reluctance or ill-humor to all the requirements of society; if they ought to strip themselves of all pretension, and forget themselves, others should not forget them. Politeness requires that we converse with an author concerning his works; that we congratulate him on his success; that we bestow upon him

suitable and delicate praises. If any of his works are unknown to us, we should ask of him the loan of it with earnestness; we should read it with promptitude, and prove to him by our citations that we have a thorough acquaintance with it. If he makes us a present of any of his productions, we shall owe him a call, or at least a billet of thanks. Handsome compliments, and lively testimonials of acknowledgment, ought to fill up this visit or billet. Remember, also, that to please an artist, it is necessary to flatter at once his taste, his self-esteem, and his cultivation of the fine arts. Speak to him therefore like a connoisseur, or at least an admirer of music, or of painting. Ask the favor of seeing his pictures, or of hearing his symphonies. Contemplate the former a long time; listen to the latter with great attention; address to him lively congratulations mingled with thanks; then, by an adroit transition, put to him questions which prove your desire to be initiated into a knowledge of the arts.

When an artist or a writer obtains any honorable distinction, as a prize, a medal, dramatic success, or an academical title, his friends and acquaintances should lose no time in offering him their compliments. Those at a distance, may perform *this duty* of politeness by writing.

Not only authors by profession, but literary persons who publish a discourse, a little work, or a pamphlet, should send, in an envelope, a copy to their family, friends, professional brethren, authors who have addressed to them similar presents, to their intimate acquaintances, their superiors, and to those persons to whom they owe respect—according to the nature of the work, and to the people with whom they have relations of pleasure, or of business. It is an affectionate and very polite custom for the author to write with his own hand at the top of the first leaf or of the cover, some kind or respectful words, according to the person to whom it is addressed. These words, which are designed to make of the gift a remembrance or homage, are always written under the name of the person, and signed by the author. We will here speak of a dedication only to observe, that we cannot dedicate a work to any one, without having previously obtained his consent, either verbally or by writing. When it is to the king, queen, or princes, it is necessary to write to their secretary, to know their wish in this respect. As to any other person of dignity, we may write to him without any intermediate agency. If the members of the royal family have accepted the dedication, the author is generally allowed the honor of presenting his work to them.

SECTION VI.

Politeness of Military Men.

Military politeness has, as we know, some particular characteristics. Officers and soldiers do not uncover themselves on entering a church, if they are under arms; only, during the elevation of the host,[10] they raise the right hand to the front part of their helmet, cap, or shako.[11] When soldiers converse with their superiors, they constantly hold the edge of the hand to their forehead. On entering a drawing room, an officer lays down his sabre or his sword. It is not in good *ton* for a man to present himself before ladies, in the uniform of the national guard, unless some circumstance excuses or authorises this liberty.

In a citizen's dress, officers may wear a black cravat.

If we are acquainted with military men, in addressing them, we call them only *general*, or *captain*; but it would be uncivil to give them the title of an inferior grade thus we should not say *lieutenant*.

SECTION VII.

Politeness of Ecclesiastics and Females of Religious Orders; and the Deference due to them.[12]

A priest should be considered in two points of view; when he is exercising his holy office, and when he is taking part in the relations of society. In the first case, he is an object of special respect; and even the title to be given him, the words to be addressed to him, the attitude to be taken in speaking to him, are regulated by the liturgy. But, although the ecclesiastic be not now in society an object of religious veneration, he has, as the representative of God, or as a minister of the altar, a right to much respect and deference. Too light conversation, dancing and love songs, would be out of place in his presence.

Ecclesiastics have two shoals to avoid. Their custom of preaching a severe and sacred morality, and of catechising or censuring with authority the penitent, gives them sometime a dogmatical and rigid tone, a pedantry of morality altogether contrary to social affability. Sometimes, also, to guard against this result, which they feel to be almost inevitable, ecclesiastics, especially the more aged, indulge themselves in unsuitable pleasantries, which they would not dare to allow in men of the world. A mild gravity, a moderate gaiety, a noble and affectionate urbanity—these are the characteristics which ought to distinguish the ecclesiastic, in society.

PART II.

OF PROPRIETY OF DEPORTMENT IN REGARD TO OUR SOCIAL RELATIONS.

CHAPTER I.

Of Deportment in the Street.

Some readers will perhaps be surprised to see me commence a chapter with the duty we owe to persons passing the street; but if they reflect upon it, they will see that there are, even on this subject, a sufficient number of things proper to be mentioned.

When you are passing in the street, and see coming towards you a person of your acquaintance, whether a lady, a man raised to dignity, or an elderly person, you should offer them the *wall*, that is to say, the side next the houses.

If a carriage happen to stop in such a manner as to leave only a narrow passage between it and the houses, beware of elbowing and rudely crowding the passengers, with a view to getting by more expeditiously: wait your turn, and if any one of the persons before mentioned comes up, you should edge up to the wall, in order to give them the place. They also, as they pass, ought to bow politely to you.

If stormy weather has made it necessary to lay a plank across the gutters, which have become suddenly full of water, it is not proper to crowd before another, in order to pass over the frail bridge.

Further,—a young man of good breeding should promptly offer his hand to ladies, even if they are not acquaintances, when they pass such a place.

You must pay attention to your manner of walking, for fear of throwing mud around you, and spattering yourself as well as those who accompany you, or who walk behind you. Any person, particularly a lady, who walks in this improper manner, whatever her education may be in other respects, will always appear awkward and clumsy.

Every one knows that the Parisian ladies are celebrated for their skill in walking: we see them in white stockings and thin shoes, passing through long, dirty, and blocked up streets, gliding by careless persons, and by vehicles crossing each other in every direction, and yet return home after a walk of several hours, without soiling their clothes in the least.

To arrive at this astonishing result, which causes the wonder and vexation of provincial visitors on their first coming to Paris, we must be careful to put the foot on the middle of the paving stones, and never on the edges, for, in that case, one inevitably slips into the interstice between one pavement and another: we must begin by supporting the toe, before we do the heel; and even when the mud is quite deep, we must put down the heel but seldom. When the street

becomes less muddy, we can compensate ourselves for this fatigue, which, however, in the end, leaves us hardly sensible.

This manner of walking is strictly necessary when you offer your arm to any one. When tripping over the pavement, (as the saying is) a lady should gracefully raise her dress a little above her ancle. With the right hand she should hold together the folds of her gown, and draw them towards the right side. To raise the dress on both sides, and with both hands, is vulgar. This ungraceful practice can be tolerated only for a moment, when the mud is very deep.

It is an important thing in the streets of a large city to edge one's-self along; that is to avoid jostling and being jostled by those who are passing. A neglect of this attention, will make you appear not only awkward and ridiculous, but you will receive or give dangerous blows. One can edge along by turning sideways, contracting his arms, and watching with his eye the direction which it is best to take in order not to come in contact with the person who meets him. A little practice and care will soon make this duty familiar.

To make our way along, becomes more difficult when we have a packet or an umbrella to carry, especially if the latter is open. It is then necessary to lower or raise it, or to turn it on one side. If you neglect these precautions, you run the risk of striking it against those who are coming and going, or of seeing it twirled round, and of being thrown against a carriage, or against some one who will complain bitterly of your incivility and awkwardness.

If you have no umbrella, and find yourself overtaken by a sudden shower, and any person provided with one is going in the same direction, you may request them to shelter you; they should receive your request with much politeness, inform themselves of the place where you wish to stop, and offer to conduct you there, unless it is too much out of the way, or they be pressed for business; in this case, they should express their regret at not being able to accompany you so far as you wish.

What we are now about to say, proves that a person truly polite, will not wait for you to make this request, but will use every exertion to anticipate it: we must observe however, whether age, sex, or dress present no objection; for sometimes one would be treated with ill-humor and contempt; and if you are a lady, particularly arrived at a certain age, it would be extremely unpleasant to accost a person, who, on his part, ought never to offer this favor, nor any other to ladies, and whose air and immodest manners indicate at once his vulgarity. It would be equally out of place to address such a request to those of a very low class; but if such an one asks the favor of you, it is proper to receive it with politeness.

Another not uncommon point of propriety to be observed, consists in asking and pointing out the different streets. If you have occasion for this service, you speak politely, and say in a kind tone, *Madam*, or *Sir, where is such a street, if you please?* You should be careful to give this title to persons whom you address, even if they should be porters or hucksters. It is particularly to these that you should have recourse, for in addressing persons passing by, you are liable to meet those, who, as well as yourself, are strangers to the neighborhood, or to hinder those who are busy; it is moreover, impolite, to trouble shopkeepers in their places of business. The direction being given us, we should thank them, at the same time bowing. Parisians are justly celebrated for the politeness and complaisance with which they show the way to passengers, and you ought to

imitate them, every time that occasion offers. If you are a man, and a lady or distinguished person asks this favor of you, you should take off your hat while answering them.

There are some ill-mannered and malicious persons, who take pleasure in misleading strangers by wrong directions. It will be enough to mention such impertinence in order to despise it as we ought.

As to those young men who entertain a false idea that Parisian ladies are coquettes or forward in their manners, and besides, that everything is allowable in a large city, let them be assured that a man who dares (as often happens) to address improper compliments to ladies, to follow them, to listen to their conversation, or to finish a sentence which they have begun, is a model of rudeness, an object of aversion to ladies, and of contempt to gentlemen. A young man of good manners ought not to look at a lady too narrowly, or he will pass for an impertinent fellow, who, as the saying is, stares people full in the face, (*sous le nez*.)

It is especially when there are many persons assembled in one place that these boors play off their rude tricks; to which they give the name *hoaxes* for the multitude, at first because they are unperceived, and afterwards, because the least bad among them think that the crowd are out of the jurisdiction of propriety. This opinion, which obtains among some persons, is an error. Politeness becomes still more indispensable, in proportion to the assemblage. Why are crowds usually so disagreeable, and even dangerous? It is because they are composed of people without education, who rudely push against their neighbors, with their fist or elbow, who neglect to follow the movement of going and coming; who, on occasion of the slightest collision, raise loud complaints, and, by their lamentations, their cries, and continual trepidation, render insupportable a situation which, without this, would be but troublesome enough.

When we meet, in the street, a person of our acquaintance, we salute them by bowing and uncovering ourselves, if there is occasion. Sometimes it is not enough to give a simple salutation, but we must go to the person and inquire how they are, if we see them frequently. While we are speaking, if there is occasion, and it be a lady, or an aged and respectable man, we remain uncovered: it is for the latter, who see how troublesome this politeness is in winter, to insist that the person addressing them should put on his hat. It also belongs to the person who is the more important of the two, to take leave first. For example, in a meeting of this kind, a gentleman never leaves a lady until she takes leave of him; nor is a young lady allowed to leave first a married or elderly lady. During this interview, which should be very short, the speaker of least importance ought to take the lower part of the side-walk, in order to keep the person with whom he is conversing, from the neighborhood of the carriages. It would be supremely ridiculous to enter into a long conversation, and thus detain, against their will, the person accosted. If we have anything urgent to say to them, we may ask permission to accompany them. We will add, that at Paris, a young man ought to avoid approaching, and even saluting a young lady of his acquaintance, out of regard to the natural timidity of her sex.

If there is a stranger with the one whom we meet, we must be contented with saluting the latter without stopping, otherwise we put his companion in a disagreeable position. This civility becomes a rigorous duty if they are accompanied by a lady. Ancient gallantry required that in this last case, we not

only should not stop, but still more, that we should not salute an acquaintance, or friend who may pass; this is in order not to force her companion to salute an unknown person (for one should bow every time that the person bows with whom we are;) but this custom may be modified. If it is a friend, or young man, one may be content with making merely a motion; but if it be an elderly man, a distinguished character, or a lady, it is necessary to salute them, saying to the companion: *I take the liberty to salute Mr. or Madam N.*

If a person of your acquaintance is at a window, and you are thought to perceive them, you ought to address a salutation to them. But it is necessary to avoid speaking to them from the street, or of making signs to them, for this is a custom of bad *ton*.

To enter into a long conversation with common and low people, who make their door-step their parlor, is to be almost as ill bred as they themselves are.

CHAPTER II.

Of different Kinds of Visits.

Visits are a very important part of the social relations; they are not merely the simple means of communication established by necessity, since they have at once for their object, duty and pleasure, and they enter into almost all the acts of life.

There are many kinds of visits, but we shall confine ourselves to the principal ones; as for those which only occur under peculiar circumstances, the reader will find them mentioned in the course of this work. The first are the visits on new year's day; next, visits of friendship and of ceremony: we shall not speak of visits of business; what we have said in speaking of propriety in relation to different professions, will dispense with our entering into new details.

At the return of each new year, custom and duty require us to present ourselves to our relations first; afterwards to our patrons, our friends, and those who have done any kindness for us.

These visits are divided into several classes; those of the evening or afternoon, which are the most polite; of the morning, which are the most friendly and respectful; by cards, and presenting one's-self, and by cards without presenting one's-self; visits weekly, which are confined to acquaintances with whom we have not very close relations; monthly, which are less ceremonious, but however partake of coldness: it is at Paris more than any other place, that these visits are permitted; such calls demand much attention to the toilet; they should be as short as possible; a visit of quarter of an hour is long enough, and we should be careful to retire when other persons come in.

We should appear ridiculous to wish persons *a happy new year*, in ceremonious visits.

I shall not mention friendly calls, except to remind my readers, that almost all ceremony should be dispensed with. They are made at all hours, without preparation, without dressing; a too brilliant attire would be out of place, and if the engagements of the day carry you in such a costume at the house of a friend, you ought obligingly to make an explanation. Should you not find them at home, do not leave a card; such useless ceremony would astonish your friends. Merely remind the domestics to mention your calling, and do not leave your card, except the servants are absent; then the card should be rolled up, and put in the key-hole. It will be well to call again soon.

With a friend, or relation whom we treat as such, we do not keep an account of our visits. The one who has most leisure, calls upon him who has the least; but this privilege ought not to be abused: it is necessary to make our visits of friendship at suitable times.

On the contrary, a visit of ceremony should never be made without keeping an account of it, and we should even remember the intervals at which they are returned; for it is indispensably necessary to let a similar interval elapse. People in this way give you notice whether they wish to see you often or seldom. There are some persons whom one goes to see once in a month, others once a

fortnight, &c.; others, however, less frequently. In order not to omit visits, which are to be made, or to avoid making them from misinformation, when a preceding one has not been returned, persons who have an extensive acquaintance, will do well to keep a little memorandum for this purpose.

We cannot make ceremonious visits in a becoming manner, if we have any slight indisposition which may for the time affect our appearance, our voice—which may embarrass our thoughts, and render our company fatiguing; such for instance as a swelled face, a cold, a slight headache; in that case it would appear impolite and familiar. On the contrary, make visits of friendship under such circumstances, and then you will appear more amiable and zealous.

To take a suitable time, is as indispensable in visiting, as in any thing else.

One can attain this, by remembering the habits of the person he is going to see; by making your arrangements so as not to call at the time of taking meals, in moments of occupation, and when our friends are walking. This time necessarily varies; but as a general rule we must take care not to make ceremonious visits, either before the middle of the day, or after five o'clock. To do otherwise would, on the one hand, look like importunity, by presenting one's-self too early; and on the other, might interfere with arrangements that had been made for the evening.

After making one's toilet with care, visiters should furnish themselves with cards, that is with small pieces of card or pasteboard, upon which their name is printed or well written. Gentlemen ought simply to put their cards in their pocket, but ladies may carry them in a small elegant portfolio, called a *card case*. This they can hold in their hand, and it will contribute essentially (with an elegant handkerchief of embroidered battise,) to give them an air of good taste.

We shall here make a digression in relation to cards. It was not considered impolite, formerly, to take the cards of a cast off pack, cut them crosswise into three parts, and write one's name upon them; this, however, is now a subject of ridicule, and is only seen in provincial towns, where they sometimes also substitute for these cards small pieces of thick paper. Next to these cards come those made of thin pasteboard, smooth, gilt-edged, watered, and intended to have the name in writing. These are suitable for young gentlemen and young ladies; and they answer for half ceremonious visits. After these, come lithographic cards, then printed ones, and last those which are engraved. Some cards are figured in a rich manner, presenting every degree of expensive elegance. Every one will choose these according to his taste; but it is well to observe that cards ornamented with borders, and those of the color of the rose, and sky blue, are not suitable for men, nor for ladies of mature years, because they have an air of over-nicety.

The title is usually placed under the name, and, in large cities, the address, at the bottom of the card and in smaller letters. Mourning cards are surmounted with a black margin, half mourning ones are of a bright gray.

It is bad *ton* to keep the cards you have received around the frame of a looking glass; such an exposure shows that you wish to make a display of the names of distinguished visiters. At the beginning of a new year, or when from some cause or other which multiplies visiters at your house, (such as a funeral or a marriage,) you are obliged to return these numerous calls, it is not amiss to preserve the cards in a convenient place, and save yourself the trouble of writing a list; but if, during the year, your glass is always seen bristling with

smoke-dried cards, it will be attributed without doubt, to an ill-regulated self-esteem. But let us return to our visiters.

If the call is made in a carriage, the servant will ask if the lady you wish to see is at home. If persons call in a hired carriage, or on foot, they go themselves to ask the servants. Servants are considered as soldiers on duty; if they reply that the person has gone out, we should by no means urge the point, even if we were certain it was not the case; and if by chance we should see the person, we should appear not to have noticed it, but leave our card and retire. When the servant informs us that the lady or gentleman is unwell, engaged in business, or dining, we must act in a similar manner.

We should leave as many cards as there are persons we wish to see in the house; for example, one for the husband, another for his wife, another for the aunt, &c. When admitted, we should lay aside our over-shoes, umbrella, cloak, &c. in the ante-chamber, even ladies should lay aside their cloaks in the houses of distinguished persons. In the provincial towns they commonly keep them on. We then are announced by the servant, if it is the custom of the house, or at least we wait until (without announcing us,) he opens the door of the apartment.

In case of the absence of the servants, you ought not to enter immediately, but knock gently with the finger, and wait until some one opens the door or bids you come in. If he does neither, you open the door slowly and softly: should you find no one, do not go about and open other doors, or pass into an inner room, but retrace your steps immediately, return to the ante-room, and remain until some one comes to give you an introduction. If you are obliged to stay very long, you can leave your card on a piece of furniture or with the porter. This is a case of rare occurrence; but it is well to provide for it, in order not to be taken unawares. When admitted, a gentleman presents himself with his hat in his hand, and advancing towards the lady, salutes her gracefully and respectfully. As soon as he observes the lady is looking for a seat to offer him, he must lose no time in providing one for himself (commonly a chair) this he places towards the door by which he entered, and at some distance from the lady, to whom he should leave the upper part of the room. He ought by no means to sit, except she is seated; and holding his hat upon his knee must not balance himself or sink down in his chair, but preserve an easy, polite and becoming attitude. It would be familiar and bad *ton* to put down the hat or cane, before the gentleman, and particularly the lady of the house, has invited you to do it. Even then it is proper to refuse, and not to do it until asked two or three times. In putting down the hat, we should not do it carelessly, nor ought we to place it on a couch, for this is impolite. The couch, which in ancient times was regarded as a sanctuary, ought neither to be touched nor approached by a man. It is best to put the hat on a bracket or chandelier stand, &c. The lady of a house does not attempt to take the hats of gentlemen, except she wishes to treat them with familiarity, and this is seldom done in calls of pure ceremony.

These remarks will apply also to ladies. Within fifteen years past it has been their custom to lay aside their hats and shawls; but that supposes an intimacy, which would authorize their abstaining from it at the houses of those with whom they are not much acquainted; and, if they are invited to lay them aside, they should refuse. The short time devoted to a ceremonious visit, the necessity of consulting a glass in replacing the head-dress, and of being assisted in putting on the shawl, prevent ladies from accepting the invitation to lay them aside. If they are slightly familiar with the person they are visiting, and wish to be more

at ease, they should ask permission, which we should grant them, at the same time rising to assist them in taking off their hat and shawl. An arm-chair, or a piece of furniture at a distant part of the room should receive these articles; they should not be placed upon the couch, without the mistress of the house puts them there. At the house of a person we visit habitually, we can lay them aside without saying a word, and a lady can even adjust her hair and handkerchief, (ficher) before the glass, provided she occupies only a few moments in doing it.

If the person you call upon is preparing to go out, or to sit down at table, you ought, although he asks you to remain, to retire as soon as possible. The person visited so unseasonably, should, on her part, be careful to conceal her knowledge that the other wishes the visit ended quickly. We should always appear delighted to receive a visiter, and should he make a short visit, we must express to him our regret. Ceremonious visits should be short; if the conversation ceases without being again continued by the person you have come to see, if she gets up from her seat under any pretext whatever, custom requires you to make your salutation and withdraw.

If, before this tacit invitation to retire, other visiters are announced, you should adroitly leave them without saying anything. In case the master of the house, in waiting upon you to the door, should ask you to remain longer, you should briefly reply to him, that an indispensable engagement calls you, and you must entreat him with earnestness not to detain you. You should terminate your visit by briskly shutting the door.

If, on entering the room, you find strangers engaged in conversation, content yourself with the few words which the master or mistress of the house shall address to you; stop only a few moments, make a general salutation, and conduct yourself as in the preceding case. When you have happened to meet the strangers elsewhere, they may unite sometimes with the person you are visiting, to prevent your taking leave; reply in a polite and flattering manner, but still persist in retiring. If while you are present, a letter is brought to the person you are visiting, and she should lay it down without opening it, you must entreat her to read it; she will not do it, and this circumstance will warn you to shorten your visit.

When you make a half ceremonious call, and the person you are visiting, insists upon your stopping, it is proper to do so, but after a few minutes you should rise to go: if you are urged still further, and are taken by the hands and made to sit down as it were by force, to leave immediately would be impolite, but nevertheless you must, after a short interval, get up a third time, and then certainly retire. If, during your call, a member of the family enters the room, you need not on this account take leave, but content yourself by rising, and saluting the person. If a lady, you must not seat yourself until she sits down; if a gentleman, you can yield to the invitation made you to take your seat, while the other remains standing. If you make a visit with others, there are some points to be observed in relation to your companions. In going up the staircase, it is rigorously the custom to give precedence to those to whom you owe respect, and to yield to such persons the most convenient part of the stairs, which is that next the wall. Above all, do not forget this last caution if you accompany a lady; and a well-bred gentleman, at such a time, should offer his arm. When there are many persons, he should bestow this mark of respect on the oldest. If you meet any one on the staircase, place yourself on the side opposite to the

one he occupies. It would be vexatious and out of place to make an everlasting ceremony as to who should be announced first; the preference must be given to ladies; next to them, to age and rank. The time of taking leave should be also determined by ladies, or by aged persons, and those who are of consequence. It would be impolite to wish to retire before they gave the signal. We should add, that it is unsuitable for more than three or four to visit together. Persons of high ton are accompanied even to the ante-room by one or two servants, who receive them again when going out.

To carry children or dogs with one on a visit of ceremony, is altogether vulgar and provincial. Even in half-ceremonious visits, it is necessary to leave one's dog in the ante-room, as well as the nurse who holds the infant, for this circumstance alone excuses such a suite. As to animals, it is a thousand times better not to have them at all.

We justly reproach inhabitants of the province for lavishing salutations in meeting people, or in taking leave of them. This custom, which may make us contract a reservedness or too much familiarity, is extremely ridiculous. Is it not difficult to keep one's countenance, when we see a visiter salute every article of furniture, to turn and turn again twenty times as you conduct him, and pour forth at every pause a volley of salutations and adieus? Our readers will beware of this over politeness; they will salute the first time, at the moment they take leave, and again, when the person who conducts them back shall have stopped at the door. We have before said that when we do not find persons at home, or when we are afraid of disturbing them, we leave a card; but this is not what we call particularly *visits by card* (*visites par cartes*). In these last visits, it is not our object to see the persons, since we do not ask for them, and we confine ourselves to giving our card to the porter or domestic. This custom, which has been introduced necessarily among persons of very general acquaintance, and especially at times when every one ought to be visited, as on the new-year's day,—this custom so far is not ridiculous, but it becomes so by the great extent which has been given to it for some time past. This extent consists in making a visit without leaving our apartment; that is to say, merely by sending our card by a domestic, or indeed by means of an agency established for this purpose. The practice of visits by cards, seems to persons of good society the most impertinent and vulgar thing which can be imagined. Do not then permit it, except when the question is about returning visits made in this way; and do not use such retaliations, except to prevent these ill-advised visiters from thinking that you put yourself out to oblige them.

In works devoted to the instruction of the laws of propriety, we think only of fortune and affluence; we entirely forget people of a more modest condition, and when we find ourselves in connexion with them, we cry out against their impoliteness. It is an injustice, and in my opinion, a false calculation. An injustice, because true politeness pertains less to rank, than to uprightness and goodness of heart; a false calculation, for to refuse to initiate people into what renders the social relations easy and agreeable, is to prepare for ourselves collision and vexation, and to retard as much as is in our power, the practice of the forms of civilization.

Despising then this foolish disdain, we shall applaud the great care of persons not in affluence, who, having neither porter nor domestic, place at their door a slate furnished with a pencil, that in their absence visiters may write their names; for these visiters are seldom such as carry cards. We shall applaud the

benevolent care of persons whose staircase is not lighted, or whose apartment is in the upper stories, and who leave with the porter a candle which every one who arrives, takes, in order to ascend, and returns it again on descending. If any of our rich readers should be tempted to smile at the announcement of these precautions of the more humble citizens, we would remind them that they are entirely strangers to the spirit of politeness, of which these precautions are a striking example.

This digression naturally leads us to the second part of our task relative to visits, concerning the duties which politeness imposes as to receiving them, for it is not less important to receive people well, than to present ourselves well to them.

Before passing to this important subject, it would seem my duty to finish what remains for me to say concerning visits, by the mention of visits of audience, of congratulation, of condolence, and of repast; but except the first, to which I am going to devote a few words, details of all the others will be found in the chapters devoted to conversation, to formalities of repasts, of mourning, &c.

We should not merely call upon ministers, heads of the public administration, and very distinguished persons; we must beforehand request of them by writing a place of meeting and must specify the object of our visit. We must call upon them at the appointed hour; we must abstain from inquiring after their health, and observe strictly the obligations of decorum. These visits, which are the acme of ceremony, ought necessarily to be very short.

We shall see, in the chapter on *Epistolary Propriety*, what titles are proper to be given to these important personages. It is well to be furnished with a letter of admission, that in case of necessity we may show it to the servant.

CHAPTER III.

Of the Manner of Receiving Visitors.

To receive visitors with ease and elegance, and in such a manner that everything in you, and about you, shall partake of propriety and grace, to endeavor that people may always be satisfied when they leave you, and desirous to come again,—such are the obligations of the master, and especially of the mistress of a house.

Everything in the house, ought, as far as possible, to offer English *comfort*, and French grace. Perfect order, exquisite neatness and elegance which easily dispenses with being sumptuous, ought to mark the entrance of the house, the furniture and the dress of the lady.

In a house where affluence abounds, it is indispensable to have a drawing-room, for it is troublesome and in bad *ton* to receive visits in a lodging-room, at one's own dwelling. This may indeed do for a mere call; but it becomes almost ridiculous when, after dinner, it is necessary to pass into this room to take coffee, if you are receiving a small company, &c. This custom is not any longer adopted, except in the provincial towns and among persons who do not pride themselves on their good *ton*.

To receive company in a dining-room, is not allowed except among those persons who cannot bear the expense of furnishing a parlor or drawing-room. Simplicity, admitted into an apartment of this kind, suited to the smallness of their means, we cannot but approve, while we regret nevertheless, the disagreeable things to which such a residence subjects them. But we have, in this respect, an express warning to make to people who give themselves up to it unnecessarily, for it is altogether opposed to the received usages of good society to put yourselves in a situation which you cannot adorn, where you cannot place arm-chairs, a chimney-piece, a glass, a clock, and all things useful to persons who come to see you; where you are exposed to receiving twenty visits during dinner; of seeing as many interruptions during the setting of your table, since it is impossible to spread the cloth while strangers remain; finally, of making them witnesses of your domestic cares while removing the remains of a repast, the table-cloth, dishes, &c.

Young mothers of families who wish to have with them their children, (troublesome guests, in a drawing-room, as every one knows,) think that they may remain in the dining-room, and have strangers conducted into an adjacent apartment. That this may not be inconvenient, it is necessary to observe three things; first, that strangers be admitted into this apartment before seeing the mistress of the house, because they would not fail to create difficulties, by saying that they did not wish to disturb her; second, that the apartment be constantly warmed in winter; third, that in summer it should be furnished precisely as an occupied chamber, for nothing is worse than to conduct people into a room which seems to be to let.

Unless from absolute inability, you ought to light your staircase. If the practices of good domestic economy regulated by the cares of civilization, were more generally extended, a staircase not lighted would not often be found.

After having thus cast a rapid glance into the interior of the house, let us see in what manner it is necessary to receive visitors.

When we see any one enter, whether announced or not, we rise immediately, advance toward them, request them to sit down, avoiding however the old form of, '*Take the trouble to be seated*.' If it is a young man, we offer him an arm-chair, or a stuffed one; if an elderly man, we insist upon his accepting the arm-chair; if a lady, we beg her to be seated upon the ottoman. If the master of the house receives the visitors, he will take a chair and place himself at a little distance from them; if, on the contrary, it is the mistress of the house, and if she is intimate with the lady who visits her, she will place herself near her. If several ladies come at a time, we give this last place to the one most distinguished by rank. In winter, the most honorable places are those at the corner of the fire-place; in proportion as they place you in front of the fire, your seat is considered inferior in rank. Moreover, when it happens to be a respectable married lady, and one to whom we wish to do honor, we take her by the hand and conduct her to the corner of the fire-place. If this place is occupied by a young lady, she ought to rise and offer her seat to the other lady, taking for herself a chair in the middle of the circle.

A mistress of a house ought to watch anxiously that they experience no restraint before her; consequently, she will take care to present screens to the ladies seated in front of the fire; she will move under their feet tabourets, or what is better, pads, (coussins) but never foot-stoves. If she is alone with an intimate acquaintance, she will request her to take hers, but she will never extend this politeness to a gentleman.

If a door or window happens to be open in the room in summer time, we should ask of visitors, if it incommodes them.

If a lady who receives a half ceremonious visit is sewing, she ought to leave off immediately, and not resume it except at the request of the visitor. If they are on quite intimate terms, she ought herself to request permission to continue. If a person visits in an entirely ceremonious way, it would be very impolite to work even an instant. Moreover, even with friends, we should hardly be occupied with our work, but should seem to forget it on their account.

In proportion as the visitor is a stranger, the master or mistress of the house rises, and any persons who may be already there are obliged to do the same. Some of them then withdraw; in this case, if the master and the mistress of the house have with them any persons of their family, after having conducted as far as the door those who are going, they request one of their relations to take their place. If the case be otherwise, it is necessary to choose between the persons who remain and those who retire. If the latter are superior in rank, age or consideration, we must give them the preference, and *vice versa*. But however respectable the person be who departs, we may dispense with conducting them farther than the door of the room.

The manner in which we should usually re-conduct visitors is regulated in an invariable manner. If it is a lady who is to be accompanied, the master of the house takes her hand, passes it under his arm, and thus leads her as far as the bottom of the staircase, unless the steps be so narrow that two cannot go abreast. It is no longer the custom to give the hand to ladies, but to offer them the arm. This new custom does not at all change the ancient rule of propriety which requires that in descending a staircase, we should give the side next the wall to the lady whom we accompany; we commonly present to her the right

arm, provided however, that necessity does not oblige us, in order to avoid placing her next the balustrade, to offer the left. If she is to return in a carriage, we should politely hand her into it.

In the provincial towns, they conduct all or almost all visitors, as far as the street door, unless they are gentlemen and have visited a lady. She ought then to accompany them, as is always done in Paris, that is to say, as far as the door of the room, or the head of the stairs. Parisians add to this custom an agreeable civility; they hold the door open, and standing upon the threshold or edge of the staircase, follow with their eyes the visitor until he turns round to make the last salutation or adieu, or to request the host to return.

We no longer practice that frank and open hospitality of the provinces, by virtue of which, in the middle of winter, we request people to *refresh* themselves with some solid eatables. Such a proposal would now excite a smile. We do not make any such offer to visitors, but under these circumstances. First, during very hot weather, we invite them to take a glass of syrup, or of iced water. Second, if any one is reading, we offer him *eau sucrée*, that is, the little household article to which we have given that name. Third, we offer orange flower water to a lady who happens to be suddenly indisposed. Excepting these cases, we make no offer of this kind. If any one wishes to refresh himself, he requests the mistress of the house to allow him to ring the bell. After assent is given, he asks of the domestic who comes, whatever he desires.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Carriage of the Body.

The carriage of the body seems so simple, so common, and so easy a thing, that undoubtedly on seeing this title, many readers will think I design to send them back to *puerile* and *plain civility*. But if they will take the pains to reflect upon the numberless violations of propriety in the carriage of the body, of which they are daily witnesses; if they will call to the mind the many strange motions, ridiculous gestures, pretending attitudes, affected looks, and clownish movements; if they will recollect that the carriage of the body ought to be in perfect harmony with the situation, age, mind and sex, and a distinguishing trait of the physiognomy; if they will consider the unfavorable prejudices to which a disdainful, immodest, or vulgar deportment give rise, they will understand my anxiety in this respect.

It is without doubt impossible to notice all faults in the carriage of the body. This volume would not be sufficient for it; we must be satisfied therefore with designating the principal ones.

To look steadily at any one, especially if you are a lady and are speaking to a gentleman; to turn the head frequently on one side and the other during conversation; to balance yourself upon your chair; to bend forward; to strike your hands upon your knees; to hold one of your knees between your hands locked together; to cross your legs; to extend your feet on the andirons; to admire yourself with complacency in a glass; to adjust in an affected manner your cravat, hair, dress, handkerchief; to remain without gloves; to fold carefully your shawl, instead of throwing it with graceful negligence upon a table, &c.; to fret about a hat which you have just left off; to laugh immoderately; to place your hand upon the person with whom you are conversing; to take him by the buttons, the collar of his coat, the cuffs, the waist, &c.; to seize ladies by the waist, or to touch their person; to roll the eyes, or to raise them with affectation; to take snuff from the box of your neighbor, or to offer it to strangers, especially to ladies; to play continually with the seals of your watch, a chain, or a fan; to beat time with the feet and hands; to whirl round a chair on one leg; to shake with your feet the chair of your neighbor; to stroke your face; rub your hands continually; wink your eyes; shrug up your shoulders; stamp with your feet, &c.;—all these bad habits, of which we ought never to speak to people, among those who are witnesses of them, and are in the highest degree displeasing.

The carriage of the body is as expressive as the tone of voice, and perhaps more so, because it is more constant; it betrays to the observer all the shades of character, and we ought to be very careful of thus making a general confession, by affected manners, a pretending deportment, sneering ways, rough movements, a hard countenance, impertinent signs and looks, simpering smiles, clownish gestures, a nonchalant and effeminate posture, or a carriage of the body distinguished by prudery and stiffness.

Young ladies, and very young men little habituated to the world, ought to be on their guard against excessive timidity, for it not only paralyzes their powers, renders them awkward, and gives them an almost silly air, but it may even

cause them to be accused of pride, among people who do not know that embarrassment frequently takes the form of superciliousness. How often does it happen that timid persons do not salute you at all, answer in a low voice, or very ill, omit a thousand little duties of society, and fail in a numberless agreeable attentions, for want of courage? These attentions, and these duties, they discharge in *petto*, but who will thank them for it? A proper degree of confidence, but not degenerating into assurance, still less into boldness or familiarity, is then one of the most desirable qualities in the world. To obtain which, we most observe the *ton*, and the manners of polite and benevolent people, take them for our guides, and, under their direction, make continual efforts to conquer our timidity.

Propriety in the carriage of the body is especially indispensable to ladies. It is by this that, in a walk, a ball, or any assembly, people who cannot converse with them, judge of their merit and their good education. How many dancers move off, and how many persons sigh with pity, at the sight of a beautiful woman who has a mincing way, affects grace, inclines her head affectedly, and who seems to admire herself incessantly, and to invite others to admire her also. Who ever makes up his mind to enter into conversation with an immovable lady, and one who is formal and precise, lengthening out the body, pressing the lips, and carrying back the elbows as if they were fastened to her side?

The gait of a lady ought neither to be too quick nor too slow; the most easy and most convenient step is that which fatigues the least and pleases most. The body and the head should be erect without affectation and without haughtiness; the movements, especially those of the arms, easy and natural. The countenance should be pleasant and modest.

It is not in good *ton* for a lady to speak too quick or too loud. When seated, she ought neither to cross her legs, nor take a vulgar attitude. She should occupy her chair entirely, and appear neither too restless, nor too immovable. It is altogether out of place for her to throw her drapery around her in sitting down, or to spread out her dress for display, as upstarts do in order to avoid the least rumple.

But what is especially insupportable in this sex is, an inquiet, bold, and imperious air; for it is unnatural, and not allowable in any case. If a lady has cares, let her conceal them from the world, or not go into it. Whatever be her merit, let her not forget that she may be a man by the superiority of her mind and decision of character, but that externally she ought to be a woman! She ought to present herself as a being made to please, to love, and to seek a support; a being inferior to man, and near to angels. An affectionate, complying, and almost timid aspect, a tender solicitude for those who are about her, should be shown in her whole person. Her face should breathe hope, gentleness and satisfaction; dejection, anxiety, and ill-humor should be constantly banished.

Before leaving a subject so fruitful, I shall point out to my readers two examples of a bad position. The one is a *fashionable* with his head stiff, a borrowed air, his leg strained out, trembling lest he should disarrange the symmetry of his cravat, and lest he should pucker his pantaloons, his sleeve or the collar of his coat.

The other is an awkward person, with his feet drawn together and placed upon the round of the chair, his hands spread out upon his knees, his shoulders sunk, and his mouth half open. Between these two caricatures there are many

degrees which are ridiculous, but which we leave to the sagacity of our readers to appreciate. We come now to our instructions in respect to conversation. They are so important, that we think it our duty to divide them into two parts, namely; physical proprieties, and moral proprieties.

CHAPTER V.

Of Physical Proprieties in Conversation.

This first division will comprehend the physical care of the organs we use in conversation, our movements, the manner of listening, pronunciation, and purity of speech in a grammatical view.

SECTION I.

Physical Observances in Conversation.

Conversation is the principal, not to say the only means of pleasing, and making our way in the world. How does it happen then, that so many persons converse, without being troubled at the ridicule thrown upon themselves, and the *ennui* they occasion their hearers; without going into the inquiry, whether they have not some physical qualities which present more or less obstacles to the art of conversing well, or without thinking of the means of correcting them!

We shall point out some faults and the means of remedying them. It is essential in speaking, to be well on our guard not to protrude the tongue too near the edge of the lips. This bad habit has many great inconveniences: it occasions a kind of disagreeable hissing, produced by the immediate contact of this organ as it passes the teeth; and exposes us to throw out saliva.[13] When an unfortunate habit or too great a development of the tongue produces these accidents, we should take care to keep this unlucky organ out of the way on one side of the gums or the other. As to the fault which is opposite to this, that is, stammering, by reason of too small size of the tongue, we should practice when we are alone speaking distinctly. To declaim and to exercise ourselves upon the words which present the greatest difficulties, is a useful exercise.

There are some persons in whom the saliva is so abundant, that it makes their pronunciation thick; such persons should accustom themselves to swallow it before beginning to speak.

Politeness in accordance with health, requires that our teeth should be perfectly clean. A yellow and foul set of teeth, which emit an odor, will not suffer any one to be sensible to our grace or the eloquence of our language. Feelings of disgust are without appeal.

Some persons who have fine teeth, have the lamentable fault of showing them in speaking; this ridiculous vanity excites laughter, and besides, injures the physiognomy: it is not necessary to conceal the teeth to the utmost, but always without affectation. To use a tooth-pick while speaking, to carry the fingers to the gums, to hold a flower between the teeth, are habits of bad *ton*.

To open the mouth widely when one speaks, especially when making an exclamation of wonder or surprise; to draw the mouth on one side to give ourselves the air of an original; to contract it, in order to make it small; to laugh violently in an unmeaning and boisterous manner; to impart to the lips,

trembling and convulsive motions when any one relates or reads something sad or terrible; to force our breath into the face of the person we are conversing with—all these are shocking faults, and insupportable grimaces.

SECTION II.

Of Gestures.

To act a pantomine with every word, cannot be tolerated; extended or numerous gestures, which do not accord with the conversation; mysterious signs accompanying the announcement of the most simple thing; abrupt gestures, in friendly conversation; mincing gestures, in serious conversation; rapid movements of the person, sitting or standing, and who seems to be performing a sort of a dance—all these are equally great faults against propriety and good taste.

We should not absolutely condemn gestures, which, according to the Abbé Delille, give physiognomy to our conversation. Moderate action corresponding to our words, and by turns a little comic, lively, and graceful, are allowable, and even indispensable. The left hand must not move, but a significant and exact co-operation of the right hand, should never be wanting in conversation: but I must censure dialogists, who put their hand into their pockets or work-bags, who always rest them joined or crossed, without making any gesture. Such persons give themselves the air of automatons, while, on the other hand, excessive gesticulators, have the appearance of madmen.

Those persons who in conversing, violently seize hold of the arm of their chair; play with little objects which come under their hands; who amuse themselves by scratching or defacing furniture, turning their hat backwards and forwards, twisting and untwisting the strings of their bag, or the ends of their cravat, are, without doubt, ignorant how much opposed to politeness, are these degrees of familiarity, childishness and embarrassment. I will briefly add, that those who are witnesses of all these ridiculous actions, ought never to notice them, unless they wish to be still more ridiculous themselves.

SECTION III.

Of the Talent of Listening to Others.

To converse, is not to talk continually, as prattlers suppose; it is to listen and speak in our turn; we must not acquit ourselves the less well in the one than in the other. To do this, we should attend half of the time to the person who is addressing us, (on this account it is impolite to do any work while talking;) if they hesitate or are embarrassed, you should appear not to notice it, and in case you are a little acquainted, after a few moments, you should, in a very modest manner, supply the word which seems to have escaped them. If they are interrupted by any incident, when the cause of the interruption shall have ceased, you will not wait until they resume the conversation, but with a smile of

benevolence, and an engaging gesture, request them to proceed; *please to continue; you were just saying?*—If we are obliged in this manner, to palliate any such interruption, much more, ought we never to allow ourselves to be the cause of it. This is so rigorous a rule, that if, in the warmth of conversation, two persons commence speaking at once, both ought to stop immediately, when they perceive it, and each, while excusing themselves, to decline proceeding. It is proper for the one worthy of the most respect to resume the conversation.

If a person shall relate anything to you, who, without having any pleasantry, makes attempts at it; and without being affecting, endeavors to move you, however wearied you may be, appear pleased and assume an air of interest. If the narrator wanders into long digressions, have patience to let him extricate himself alone from the labyrinth of his story. If the history is interminable, be resigned, and do not appear less attentive. This condescension is especially to be observed, if you are listening to an elderly or respectable person. If the merciless story-teller is your equal or friend, you may say to him, in order to induce him to finish his narration, *and finally—*

Novices in the customs of the world, think they can abruptly interrupt a conversation which is begun, by asking to have some incidents, which they have not understood, explained, or by making the person who is telling the story repeat the names; this should not be done until after some consideration, and in the most polite manner. If the narrator pronounces badly; if you see that other hearers are in the same situation as yourself; if you foresee that for want of having followed him in his narration, you will not be able to reply with politeness, you can in this case, interrupt; but in some such manner as this; *I ask your pardon, Sir, I fear I have lost some part of your interesting conversation, will you be kind enough to repeat it*, &c. It is necessary also, to choose a favorable moment, as for instance, when the narrator pauses, hesitates for a word, or stops to take his handkerchief.

When a person relates to you a plain falsehood, the art of listening becomes embarrassing, for if you seem to believe it, you would pass for a fool, and if you appear to doubt it, you will pass for an uncivil person. An air of coldness, a slight attention, an expression like the following, *That is astonishing*, will extricate you honorably from your embarrassment; but when an event is narrated which is only extraordinary, or not improbable, your manner should be otherwise. Your countenance should express astonishment, and you should reply by a phrase of this kind; *If I did not know your strict regard for the truth, or if any person but you had told me this, I should have hardly believed it.* Under no circumstances should you interrupt him.

It happens sometimes that you foresee some incident in an interesting story; and the pleasure that you find in this; the desire of showing that you have guessed correctly, and the intention of proving how much you are interested, induce you to interrupt suddenly in this manner, *I see it, it is so, exactly*. An interruption of this kind, although well meant and natural, will offend old persons, who like to tell a story at full length, and will confound formal narrators, who will be in despair that a phrase is taken from them which they had intended for effect; these interruptions are only allowable among our intimate friends, or inferiors, for otherwise you will have an ill-humored answer to your *I see it*, &c. as with a triumphant air, *egad, but you can't see it*, &c. which is always embarrassing.

The worst kind of interruption of all others, is that which hauteur dictates. A

clever person seizing hold of a story which another is telling, and with the intention of making it more lively, becomes, notwithstanding his eloquence, a model of impertinence and vulgarity.

It is, doubtless, hard to see a fool spoil a good anecdote, of which he might have made something interesting; but if we should not be restrained by politeness from expressing our feelings, we ought to be by interest. Now hearers of delicacy will remain silent to the conclusion of the recital, and will address themselves with good feelings to the poor narrator who is injured in his rights.

Interruption is pardonable if it is made to prove or clear up a fact in favor of a person who is absent. When they accuse you, you can, according to strict rules, interrupt by an exclamation, but it is better to do it by a gesture.

There is often much art and grace in listening, while you gesticulate gently; for example, by counting upon the fingers; by making a gesture of surprise; by a motion of assent, or an exclamation. This is a tacit manner of saying, *ah, I recollect, you are right*, and charms the narrator without interrupting him.

In a lively, animated and friendly dialogue, we can interrupt each other by turns, in order to finish a sentence which is begun, or to improve an epithet; this contributes to vivacity in discourse, but it ought not, however, to be too often repeated.

There are many shoals to be avoided in listening, and which always betray inexperience in society. To say from time to time to the narrator, *Yes, yes*, by nodding the head, making motions with the hand, a custom of old persons, and which is a good representation of a pendulum; to keep the eyes fixed and the mouth gaping open; to have an air of an absent person or of one in a reverie; to point the finger at persons designated by the narrator; to gape without concealing by the hand or the handkerchief, which is by no means flattering to the speaker; to cast your eye frequently towards the clock—all these habits are offences against good *ton*.

SECTION IV.

Of Pronunciation.

Pronunciation is still more indispensable in conversation than elocution; for indeed before selecting our expressions, we must make them understood, and one can do this but imperfectly if he pronounces badly. From this fault arise forced repetitions, the loss of what is appropriate, fatigue, disgust, the impatience of the two persons speaking, and in fine, all the sad results of deafness. Should we not use every effort to rid ourselves of this?

The first, the greatest impediment to pronouncing well, is volubility. By speaking too fast, we speak confusedly, and utter inarticulate and unintelligible sounds, and this, without dispute, is of all the faults in pronunciation, the most insupportable. We know very well, that to speak too slowly, and as they say, to listen to our own words, is a caprice which seems to denote pride or nonchalance; and that in certain cases it is necessary to speak quickly; but we ought never to speak precipitately, even on subjects which require us to be brief. Besides the physical inconvenience, indistinctness has other moral

inconveniences: it supposes heedlessness, loquacity, or foolishness.

Next comes hesitancy, which is little less troublesome, for it fills the conversation with ridiculous and painful efforts. This defect which is sometimes owing to the organization, happens still more frequently from neglecting to think before we speak, from timidity, from some lively emotion which obliges us to stammer, or from a formal anxiety to make use of select terms. This last motive is almost an excess. With the intention of pleasing persons, you weary them by repetitions, by far-fetched mincing words, and in order to appear clever, you render yourself excessively annoying.

The habits acquired in childhood and in small towns, and a provincial accent, are frequently obstacles to good pronunciation; let us instance some examples of this. It is not uncommon to hear, even among those who are considered as correct speakers, in general, such a misuse of words as the following: *Me* for *I*, *Miss* for *Mrs.*, *set* for *sit*, *sat out* for *set out*, *expect*, (of a passed event;) *lay* for *lie*, *shew* for *showed*, *would* for *should*, *hadn't ought* for *ought not*, &c. As to accent, each province has its peculiarities. To discover it, to shun it, and to modify it by an opposite effort, are the means of avoiding these shoals; but however ridiculous we may appear in running upon them continually, we are a hundred times less so than those people who, like true pedagogues, stop you in the midst of an affecting recital, to repeat with a sardonic smile, a vulgar phrase, a word badly pronounced, or a wrong accent which happens to escape you.

Not only among persons of good society, should we condemn pedantry in pronunciation, but we ought, moreover, with Rousseau, to blame over-nicety of pronunciation or *purism*. He could not tolerate (and many others like him,) those people so particular in sounding every letter of a word.[14]

Besides a general accent, there is also a particular accent, which gives a shade to the words, when we express a sentiment. We feel all its delicacy and its charm, but we feel also that it ought to be in perfect harmony with the language; that it ought to be free from all affectation, and all exaggeration. To utter hard things in a tone of mildness; to display in a humble voice proud pretensions; to open a political discussion in a caressing tone; to recount an affair of pleasantry with a melancholy accent,—is ridiculous in the highest degree. It is no less so, to force the accent, to pervert it into irony; or to introduce into discourse, a sort of declamation or tone.

We cannot judge by the accent of a person who speaks too high or too low, but we decide, in the first case, that he is vulgar, and in the second, that he is disdainful.

SECTION V.

Of Correctness in Speaking.

'Surtout qu'en vos discours la langue révérée.'

In addressing this advice to readers, we shall beware of considering them as strangers to the rules of grammar; it is so shameful at the present day to be ignorant of one's own language, that it would not be less so, to suspect others of

not knowing it; but although we may not be deprived of this indispensable knowledge, it is still necessary carefully to beware of contracting bad habits in language; of using bad phrases, and even of using terms of which we know not the import; a little study and attention will afford a certain remedy to the embarrassment which we might experience.

Young people cannot too much guard against these faults, which show an education that has been little attended to. They will arrive at it by studying a good grammarian, and by paying attention to the sense of their words.

If, in the silence of the study, we have much trouble in rendering correctly a long sentence, how must it be in the world, when the earnestness of conversation prevents us from reflecting? To make long phrases, is to be willing to make mistakes in language; and if we take time to present these interminable sentences in a correct form, we only appear the more clumsy, or the more pretending, for conversation ought never to seem labored, and the expression and the thoughts ought to be of a simultaneous casting.

Avoid the pronouns *who*, *which*, particularly when they are interrogatives; for although the grammar does not absolutely condemn their frequency, yet as it is useless and disagreeable to the ear, we should endeavor to avoid it. Thus, instead of *who is it who did such a thing?—what is this thing that is here?* say, *who did such a thing?—what is this thing?*

Persons who are careful of their conversation, avoid, as faults of language, expressions which certainly do not deserve this title, but which injure the clearness, elegance, and harmony of conversation. Thus they will abstain from uniting those words which, being in conflict as to their meaning and pronunciation, make an ambiguity, except when written. They carefully beware of accumulating synonymes and epithets profusely, or at least, of forgetting with regard to these last, the laws of gradation; of multiplying adverbs, which burden and weaken discourse; they pay great attention to the requirements of euphony, and, in order to this, avoid bringing near to each other, words of similar sound, and of repeating similar words even of the same meaning, such as *at present we offer a present*, *it does a good deal of good*.

These scrupulous and privileged talkers are particularly careful of the connecting particles, for they know how much their omission injures euphony; how it causes persons who are little charitable, to believe that it is a covering, under which are adroitly concealed doubt or ignorance, and this opinion is not always a prejudice.

I had forgotten to say that our skilful talkers endeavor not to furnish, by fortuitous coincidences of words, opportunities for puns; that in the mode of their conversation, they avoid rhymes so unfortunate and even ridiculous in prose; that they dread repetitions of phrases, and axioms, as the repetitions of words; that by short and judicious pauses, they mark the punctuation in the spoken as in the written language; finally, that they endeavor to render their conversation clear, correct and elegant; but these talking-models would be in less danger of defeating their object, if they had less of the precise air of a pedagogue. So far from this, if a grammatical error escapes them, they quickly correct it, but with ease and gaiety. If they hear a gross grammatical error, they do not allow themselves even a smile, or a look which could indicate their feeling, or trouble the one guilty of the error.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Moral Observances in Conversation.

Goodness, moderation and decorum—these are the motto and the soul of moral propriety in conversation.

A solicitude to be always agreeable and obliging; of observing a proper medium in everything; of respecting the rights of others, even in the most trifling things; susceptibility for every thing which is connected with delicacy, piety, and modesty—all these qualities which belong to politeness, are included in these expressive words; *goodness*, *moderation*, *decorum*.

SECTION I.

Of Formal and Vulgar Usages.

In the first rank of customary formalities, we place those concerning information about the health. We shall, necessarily, have little to say on this head; there are, however, some little rules which are not to be neglected.

It is proper to vary the phraseology of these formal questions, as much as possible; and we must abstain from them entirely, towards a superior, or a person with whom we are but little acquainted, for such inquiries presuppose some degree of intimacy. In the last case, there is a method of manifesting our interest, without violating etiquette; it consists in making these inquiries of the domestics, or of other persons of the house, and of saying afterwards when introduced; 'I am happy Sir, to hear that you are in good health.'

Custom forbids a lady to make these inquiries of a gentleman, unless he is ill or very aged. To put a corrective upon this mark of regard, a lady who addresses a gentleman, should be earnest in her inquiries of the health of his family, however little intimacy she may have with them. Many persons ask this question mechanically, without waiting for the answer, or else hasten to reply, before they have received it. This is in bad *ton*. Inquiries about the health, it is true, are frequently unimportant, but they should appear to be dictated by attention and kindness. We must not however be deceived, but be careful not to mention a slight indisposition to persons who are strangers to us, because their interest can be only formal.

After we are informed of the health of the person we are visiting, it is proper to inquire of them in relation to the health of their families; but it would be wearisome to them, to make a long enumeration of the members who compose the family. We can put a general question, designating the most important members. In case of the absence of near relations, we ask the person we are visiting, if they have heard from them lately, if the news is favorable. They, on their part, ask the same of us.

When you are not on visits of great ceremony, at the time of taking leave, you are commonly desired to give the compliments and salutations of the

persons you are visiting to those with whom you live, then you should reply briefly, but give them assurances of your regard, and thank them.

Politeness infuses into visits of some little ceremony, a coloring of modesty, grace, and deference, which should be preserved with the greatest care.

In speaking, it is always proper to give the name of *Sir*, *Madam*, or *Miss*, and if the sentence is somewhat long, the title ought to be repeated. If the question is with regard to answering in the affirmative or negative, we ought never to say roughly *yes* or *no*.

If the person addressed has a title, or that which he has from his profession, we should give it him, as *Count*, *Doctor*, &c. In case we meet with many persons of the same profession, we can then distinguish them, adding their name to the title.

A lady will not say, my husband, except among intimates; in every other case, she should address him by his name, calling him *Mr.* It is equally good *ton* that except on occasions of ceremony, and while she is quite young, to designate him by his christian name.

But when one speaks to a gentleman of the lady to whom he is married, he should not say *your wife*, unless he is intimately acquainted, but *Mrs. such-a-one*, is the most proper. The rules of politeness in this respect, are the same in speaking of the husband.

When we speak of ourself and another person, whether he is absent or present, propriety requires us to mention ourselves last. Thus we should say *he and I*, *you and I*.

When you relate a personal occurrence, the circumstances connected with which are honorable to yourself, and a distinguished person had also a share in the honor, you should only mention him, and instead of the plural form, *we resolved*, *we did such a thing*, you should forget yourself, and say, *Mr. N. resolved, or did such a thing so and so*. Delicacy will dictate this degree of modesty to you, and your superior in his turn will proclaim at his own expense, your merit on the occasion.

We know that the word *false* is not to be found in the dictionary of politeness, and that when we are obliged to deny the assertion of any one, we employ apologetical forms. The most proper ones are such as the following: *I may be mistaken*, *I am undoubtedly mistaken, but,... Be so good as to excuse my mistake, but it seems to me,... I ask pardon, but I thought*, &c. Those persons are but ill-bred, who think to soften down a denial merely by expressions of doubt. They say, *if what you advance is true*, *if what madam says is positive*, &c. With these forms, they think they comply with the rules of politeness. It is incivility with affectation.

However persons may say invidiously that forms avail much in the world, I agree with them, but in quite another sense.

We should never ask a thing of any one without saying, *will you have the goodness*, *will you do me the favor*, *will you be so good*, &c.

In a circle, we should not pass before a lady; and should never present any thing by extending the arm over her, but we pass round behind, and present it. In case we cannot do it, we say, *I ask your pardon*, &c. To a question which we do not fully comprehend, we never answer, *Ha? What?* but, *Be so good as*, &c. *Pardon me, I did not understand.*

Never refuse with disdain a pinch of snuff, and rather than disoblige people, take one, even if you throw it away, after having pretended to take it. Beware of presenting to ladies, in balls or assemblies, a box of *sweet things*, under penalty of having the air of a caricature.

If you strike against any one in the least, ask pardon for it immediately. The other should at the same time answer you, *It is nothing, nothing at all*, &c., even if the blow should have been violent.

It is customary to employ the few moments of a visit of mere politeness, in looking at the portraits which adorn the fireplace, and even taking them down, if you are invited to do it. It would be the extreme of impoliteness, to say that they were flattered, or to pretend to recognize in the portrait of a young lady, the likeness of an elderly lady, or of one less favored by nature. It would moreover be improper to make long compliments; indirect, and ingenious praise, is all that is proper.

SECTION II.

Of Questions, and frequently recurring Expressions.

It is an axiom of propriety that we should never speak of ourselves, (except to intimate friends) and that we should converse with strangers about themselves, and everything which can interest them. Questions are therefore necessary, but they demand infinite delicacy and tact, in order neither to fatigue nor ever wound the feelings. If, instead of expressing a mild and heartfelt interest, you ask a dry question dictated by a cold curiosity; if you seem to pay no attention to the answers which you call forth; if you mal-adroitly take a commanding tone; if you prolong without bounds this kind of conversation; if, perceiving that you are embarrassed, and that you endeavor to save yourself by an evasive answer, instead of keeping silence, you witness the foolish regrets of your indiscretion; be assured that both your questions and yourself will be considered as a torment.

Madame Necker ingeniously observes that these favorite and frequently repeated terms with which we fill our conversation, serve, ordinarily as a mark of people's character. 'Thus,' says she, 'those who exceed the truth are in the habit of saying, *You may rely upon it, it is the truth*; long talkers say, *In a word, to be brief*; and the proud say, *Without boasting*,' &c. This striking observation is well founded, and consequently we ought to take good care not to let people into the secret of our peculiarities.

But, independently of this motive, it is necessary for us carefully to avoid frequently recurring words, as in time, habit multiplies them to an inconceivable degree. They embarrass and overwhelm our conversation, turn away the attention of those who listen to us, and render us importunate, and ridiculous, without our being able to perceive it.

If habitual terms, which on no other account are reprehensible, can become so troublesome, what results may these trite phrases, trivial expressions, and vulgar transitions produce, when they become frequent!

SECTION III.

Of Narrations, Analysis, and Digressions.

There are many conditions indispensable to the success of a narrative. These conditions are, first, novelty; the best stories weary when they are multiplied too much, because every one wishes to be an actor in his turn upon the stage of the world. So that, when you have anything excellent to relate, consult less your own desire to tell it, than the wishes of others to hear you. There are but too many people who discover the secret of wearying while telling very good things, on account of their too great eagerness to tell them.

The next thing is to take a suitable opportunity. Let your narration spring naturally from the conversation; let it explain a fact, or come in support of an opinion, but let it never appear to be introduced by the foolish pleasure of talking, or by a not less foolish desire of making a display of talent. Remember that the most meagre recitals, when they are àpropos, frequently please more than the best things in the world, when they are said out of time. And even endeavoring to monopolize the conversation is in bad *ton*, particularly for young persons and ladies, especially if it is but a few moments since they occupied the attention of the company. It is an agreeable and modest mark of propriety to request some one to relate an anecdote of the day, of which you have made mention, and the circumstances of which you desire to know. This is well suited to persons of distinguished talents. The person called upon, bows and excuses himself with a few words before acceding to your request.

It is of all importance that the language correspond to the different forms which the narration requires; that, under pretext of adorning our story, we do not wander into far-fetched comparisons, dull details, or interminable dialogues; that if we relate anything amusing or striking, we should observe the utmost seriousness, and finally, before commencing a recital of this kind, we keep in mind these lines of Lafontaine;

Il ne faut jamais dire aux gens,
  Ecoutez un bon mot, oyez une merveille,
Savez-vous si les écoutans
  En feront une estime à la vôtre pareille?

When, for want of observing this, as well as many other similar rules, narrators fail of the expected effect, and think to be able to tell it over again, and remarking on the comic part of the story, and laboring to repeat it thus;—*Do you not think this excellent, wonderful?* Alas! they only add to their own defeat, and to the ennui of their poor hearers.

If one relates an anecdote which you already know, permit him to finish it, and do not in any way draw off the attention of those who are listening. If your opinion is asked, give it frankly, and without wishing to appear better informed than the narrator himself. Still farther; if you happen to be in tête-à-tête with the same narrator, observe the same silence, and listen with an air of interest, and if he happens to impart to you what he related the preceding day, which he had from you yourself, you should appear to listen with equal interest, as if for the first time. Frequently, in the midst of a recital, the narrator, through

forgetfulness, hesitates, and thinks that he can recall it. Look at him attentively. If he is in doubt, declare that you are altogether ignorant of the subject in question. If his memory returns, request him to continue, at the same time saying; *I listen to you always with new pleasure*. This delicate politeness is particularly to be observed towards old persons.

When your narrations have had success, keep a modest countenance; leave others to point out the striking parts which have pleased them. The surest means of not having the approbation of others, in actions as well as other things, is to solicit it, whether it be by looks, or by words.

As every hearer is obliged to listen or understand without objecting, the consequence is, that we should *feel our ground* before speaking, and ask if such or such a thing is known to the company. When a story has been published in the newspapers, so that it is not entirely new, or seems borrowed from a compilation of *anas*, if we attribute it to some person of our acquaintance, (of course one that is absent,) an ineffable ridicule very properly stigmatizes the narrator.

We come now to what seems to me the most difficult part of conversation, and if you are not sure of being able to class your ideas with regularity, to express them with much clearness, and an easy elegance, do not have the temerity to wish to analyze a book, or a dramatic piece. You would be laying up for yourself a rude mortification, which would have an unfavorable influence on your *entrée* into society. You would be wrong, however, in concluding, that I condemn you to perpetual silence; I only wish to inspire you with a salutary diffidence, in order to preserve you from such a rude check, and to put it in your power some future day to answer, in this particular, the wishes of a distinguished and brilliant assembly.

Begin by putting down upon paper a hasty sketch of a short piece, as for instance a *vaudeville*, or a little comedy. You will do this until, being sure of the manner in which you would embrace the *ensemble*, and dispose of the details, you can produce it without embarrassment. When arrived at this point, abstain from these kinds of analysis, which though indeed more correct, seem labored. They have besides less freedom, appropriateness, and grace.

Know this, and remember it well, that every other preparation than thinking what you are about to say, will make you acquire two intolerable faults, affectation and stiffness.

To conclude, I give this advice only to those persons who, by a quick and penetrating perception, by a love of the fine arts, and by a peculiar readiness, find themselves able to speak properly of literary productions.

Those who are less engaged in these things, should content themselves with simply and briefly explaining a subject, and of mentioning the emotion they felt; with speaking of some brilliant passage, and adding that they do not pretend to pronounce judgment.

The first degree of digression is the parenthesis; provided it is short, natural, and seldom repeated; and that you take care to announce it always; and finally, in order not to abuse it, you should make a skilful use of it. The second degree of digression becomes more nice, for it includes those accessory reflections, those common but agreeable and well-settled expressions; those general or particular allusions, which are only to be used with a peculiar emphasis, which is to language what the italic character is to printing. This method of speaking in

italics may be striking and artless; but it often becomes obscure and trivial; the habit is dangerous, and one should use this difficult digression only before intimate friends.

We now come to the third degree, to what is properly called digression; most frequently it is involuntary. Often in a lively and animated dialogue, the impetus of conversation carries you, as well as the person with whom you are conversing, far from the point from which you started. If it is a question of pleasure or interest, return to your point by employing a polite turn, as, *Pray let us not lose sight of our business*. But if it is an affair of nothings succeeding nothings, let it flow on.

Voluntary digression, when it is not a mere work of loquacity, may be employed in serious discourse, as political, philosophical, or moral discussions; but it is important to treat it with infinite reserve, and care, and never to introduce a personal apology, or a domestic incident, altogether out of place, as those persons do, who, in narrating any event relative to an individual, recount his life, their connexion with him, or his whole family, and make the event of an hour remind us of ages.

Lawyers, literary people, military men, travellers, invalids and aged ladies, ought to have a prudent and continual distrust of the abuse of digressions.

SECTION IV.

Of Suppositions and Comparisons.

The two shoals to be avoided in this form of language are directly opposed to each other; the one is triviality, the other bombast.

The object of supposition, which is already antiquated, and sometimes too simple, is to increase the force of reasoning, and to carry conviction to the mind of the person who listens to you; comparison tends to make an image, or to place before us the object described. When both these qualities are regulated by reason, use, and taste, it is very well; but how seldom is this the case!

They are not so used, if, in the course of a discussion, you suppose a respectable person to supply the place of a madman, an ill-bred person, or a robber; or, if you suppose him to be in a situation disgraceful or even ridiculous. As, for example; *If you had been this bad person*; or, *Suppose, that you had committed this base act*; or, *that you should be laughed at*, &c.

They are also misplaced, whenever, being satisfied with avoiding disagreeable comparisons, we endeavor to mark out some one as contemptible, by comparing his exterior with that of some other person in the company. When we say; *This unfortunate man is of your size, sir; he has your traits, your physiognomy*, &c.

They are also misplaced, if used in the presence of people of a profession upon which the injurious comparisons fall, as when we say; *As quackish as a doctor*; *greedy as an attorney*; *loquacious as a lawyer*, &c.

Finally, politeness and taste cannot at all exist in comparisons, if they are common or trivial, as when we say, *black as the chimney-back*, *high as one's hand*, &c.; or, if they are in a turgid and pretending style, such as, *learned as*

the Muses, *fresh as the meadows*, &c.

SECTION V.

Of Discussions and Quotations.

Whatever be the subject of conversation, propose your opinion with modesty; defend it with sangfroid and a mild tone if you are opposed; yield with a good grace if you are wrong; yield also, although you are in the right, if the subject of discussion is of little importance, and especially if the one who opposes you is a lady, or an old person. Moreover, if love of truth or the desire of affording instruction force you to enter into a discussion, do it with address and politeness. If you do not bring over your opponent to your own opinion, you will at least gain his esteem.

But if you have to do with one of those people who, possessed with a mania of discussion, commence by contradicting before they hear, and who are always ready to sustain the contrary opinion, yield to him; you will have nothing to gain with him. Be assured that the spirit of contradiction can be conquered only by silence.

The insupportable pedantry of a cloud of quoters, without tact or talent, has justly, for a long time, thrown quotations into disrepute; but if they are well chosen, few, and short; if they are à-propos,

Qui fuit comme le temps, qui plaît comme les grâces;

if they are altogether new, and wielded by a person possessed of modesty, elegance, and taste, having a perfect knowledge of the world, quotations have much success and charm; but without these conditions, there is little safety; and in this matter there can be no mediocrity; you will either be a good model, or an insupportable pedant. Consider if you will rashly run this chance, especially on making your début in society, when young persons ought so carefully to avoid making a parade of a vain college erudition, and not seek the reputation of a savant by employing words borrowed from foreign languages, or scientific terms unknown in good society.

SECTION VI.

Of Pleasantry, Proverbs, Puns, and Bon Mots.

If society is not a school for exercising pedantry, neither is it an arena for the use of those perversely clever people, who think themselves furnished with a patent to insult with grace. Whatever may be the keenness of their sarcasms, the piquancy of their observations, or the smile which they excite in me, I do not the less refuse to allow to those caustic spirits the name of polite persons, or of good *ton*; for, in politeness there must be good feeling. But those who incessantly study to trouble and wound people, without taking any precaution

except to deprive them of the right or means of complaining; who are ready to catch at the least error, to exaggerate it, to clothe it in the most bitter language, to present it in the most ridiculous light; who meanly attack those who cannot answer them, or expose themselves every day for a sarcasm to sport with their own life and that of another in a duel—such people, what are they?—in truth, I dare not say.

One such picture, which, certainly is not highly colored, would render pleasantries always odious; but to indulge in pleasantry is not to resemble such mischievous persons, thank heaven, it is far otherwise; for mild, kind, and harmless pleasantry should be taken in good part even by those who are the subjects of it; it is a friendly, and sportive contest, in which severity, jealousy, and resentment should never appear; whenever you perceive the least trace of them, the pleasantry is at an end; desist, then, the moment they appear.

As to hoaxing, that caustic of fools; as to that silly gaiety, excited by the candor or politeness of people whom you falsely cause to believe the most foolish things, because they do not make known to you that they see through this pleasure of stupid fellows, I have nothing to say of them, except that I have too good an opinion of my reader to suppose that he does not despise them as I do.

Popular quotations and proverbs, as well as other quotations, require some care; and, except in familiar conversation, are altogether misplaced. If they are frequent, conversation becomes a tedious gossipping; if introduced without a short previous remark, one of two things will take place, they will either prevent the speaker from being understood, or they will give him the air of Sancho Panza. But the previous remark, however, need be but short; *as the proverb says*, *as the wisdom of nations has it*. A proverb well applied, and placed at the end of a phrase, frequently makes a very happy conclusion.

I only speak to censure; I entreat my readers not to suffer themselves to be the manufacturers of puns, and to despise this talent of fools and childish means to excite a passing laugh. Not that we cannot repeat in good company one of those rare political bon mots which are happy in every respect; nor that we ought to deprecate this kind of pleasantry before people who are fond of them, still less to tell them what they hear every day, *That is poor*; to have taste, does not authorize us to be impolite.

We must be much more severe upon another kind of équivoques; namely, those which offend modesty. Propriety allows you, and it even requires you not to listen to, but even to interrupt an ill-bred person who importunes you with those indecent witticisms which a man of good society ought always to avoid; they are those by aid of which we cover certain pleasantries with a veil so transparent, that they are the more observed. What pleasure can we find in causing ladies to blush, and in meriting the name of a man of bad society?

There are those who think that they may allow themselves every kind of pleasantry before certain persons; but a man of good *ton* ought to observe it wherever he is. We might quote more than one example of persons, who have lost politeness of manners and of language by assuming the habits and conversation of all kinds of society into which chance may have carried them. It requires but a moment to lose those delicate shades of character which constitute a man of the world, and which cost us so much labor to acquire.

It is a great error to suppose that we must always shine in conversation, and

that it is better to make ourselves admired by a lively and ready repartee, than to content ourselves sometimes with silence, or with an answer less brilliant than judicious.[15] We must not imagine that all traits of wit are in the class of politeness; a vain and triumphant air spoils a bon mot; moreover, when you repeat a thing of this kind of which you are the author, beware of saying so to your auditors.

SECTION VII.

Of Eulogiums, Complainings, Improprieties in general, and Prejudices.

One of the most improper things, is to praise to excess and unseasonably. Extravagant and misplaced eulogiums neither honor the one who bestows them, nor the persons who receive them.

An infallible method of giving a meritorious person the air of a fool, is to address him to his face and without disguise, to load him with exaggerated eulogiums; it is indeed not a little embarrassing to reply in such a case. If we remain silent, we appear to be inhaling the incense with complacency; if we repel it, we only seem to excite it the more. Thus we see, in such a case, and even among very clever persons too, those who reply by silly exclamations and by rude assertions. *You were laughing at me*, they say; this cannot be tolerated; it is to be supposed that the person who praises you is incapable of such an act. I think it would be better to say, *I did not know you were so kind* (or so good) *I should indeed think you were joking me*. Or else, we should say, *your partiality blinds you*.

Persons who are unacquainted with the world, commonly think that they cannot address a lady without first assailing her with compliments. This is a mistake, gentlemen, and I can with relation to this point, reveal to you what my sex prefers to these vulgar eulogiums.

It is in bad *ton* to overwhelm with insipid flattery all women that we meet, without distinction of age, rank or merit. These insipidities may indeed please some of light and frivolous minds, but will disgust a woman of good sense. Carry on with them a lively, piquant and varied conversation; and remember that they have a too active imagination, a too great versatility of disposition, to support conversation for a long time upon the same subject.

But is it then necessary to proscribe eulogiums entirely? Not at all—society has not yet arrived at that degree of philosophy; eulogiums are and will for a long time be a means of success; but they should be in the first place, true, or at least probable, in order not to have the appearance of outrageous insults; they should be indirect and delicate, that we may listen to them without being obliged to interrupt; and they should be tempered with a sort of judgment, the skilful use of which, is itself even a eulogium.

I repeat, as I have often said, let there be moderation in everything.

Should we not regard as gross and ridiculous language, that exaggeration which we frequently hear used in praise as well as in censure? It seems that true politeness in language consists principally in a certain moderation of expressions. It is much better to cause people to think more than we say, and

not outrage language, and run the risk of going beyond what we ought to say.

Under any circumstances, complaining has always a bad grace.

Banish from your complaints ill-nature and animosity; let your anger be only an expression of the wrong you have suffered, and not of that which you would cause; this is the surest means of gaining to your side persons who would perhaps be doubtful whether to favor your adversary or yourself.

Politeness is not less opposed to making excessive complaints to the first person you meet, than to the frequent and extravagant eulogiums which you bestow improperly upon those from whom you expect a favor in return.

By the word improprieties, we generally understand all violations of politeness. We, however, give to this word a particular and limited sense. It signifies a want of due regard to, and a forgetfulness of, the delicate attentions which seem to identify us with the situation of others. We will mention some examples of these particular violations of politeness. To accost sad people with a smiling face and sprightly manners, which prove to them the little interest which you take in their situation; to trouble by a whimsical and cross ill-humor, and by misanthropic declamations, the pleasure of contented persons; to exalt the advantages of beauty before aged ladies or those who are naturally unfortunate; to speak of the power that wealth bestows in the presence of people hardly arrived at mediocrity of fortune; to boast of one's strength or health before a valetudinarian, &c.

The sense which we here give to the term *prejudices* is still more limited than that which we have just given to the expression *improprieties*.

We do not mean to speak here of those erroneous judgments, acknowledged as such, which though undermined, and shaken, are still respected by that society which they torment. We wish only to admonish our fair readers of those unfriendly prejudices of nation against nation, city against city, and section against section; that malevolent disposition which with a Parisian makes the name *provincial*, synonymous with awkwardness and bad *ton*, and which, in the saloons of the Chausée d'Antin, allows no favor to persons lodging in the Marais; because the people of the Marais, provincials and Englishmen, do not consider it any fault to return prejudice for prejudice, and contempt for contempt.

CHAPTER VII.

Of Epistolary Composition.

Next to social communications by means of visits and conversation, are communications by means of letters and billets. It is not only absence, but a multiplicity of business, and a great number of relations which give a very great extension to this part of our social interests.

Our readers have too much judgment to think that we wish to give them lessons in style, or teach them how they should write letters of friendship, of congratulation, of condolence, of apology, of recommendations, of invitation, of complaint, or of censure. This enumeration alone, shows the impossibility of it. Some general reflections upon propriety in epistolary composition, and strict details of the forms and ceremonial parts of letters, will compose this important chapter.

SECTION I.

Of Propriety in Letter Writing.

If in conversation we ought to attend to propriety of language, its choice and graceful euphony, how much more is it necessary to endeavor to make our style in writing clear, precise, elegant, and appropriate to all subjects. Vivacity of discourse forces us frequently to sacrifice happy though tardy expressions to the necessity of avoiding hesitancy; but what is thus an obstacle in speaking, does not interfere with the use of the pen. We ought, therefore, to avoid repetitions, erasing, insertions, omissions, and confusion of ideas or labored construction. If we write a familiar letter to an equal or a friend, these blemishes may remain; but otherwise, we must commence our letter again.

The most exact observance of the rules of language is strictly necessary; a fault of orthography, or an incorrect expression, are not allowable, even in the least careful letter or the most unimportant billet. Even correction is not admissible; for, besides being a blemish to the letter, it betrays the ignorance or inattention of him who writes it. For these reasons, it is well to make a rough draft, if we are little accustomed to epistolary style, and if being very young, we cannot perfectly remember the rules of syntax, and the dictionary. Some persons, it is true, censure this precaution, which, say they, marks the style with affectation and stiffness. This censure does not seem to me well-founded. The loss of time which this method requires, is a more real inconvenience; and for this reason, and on account of the embarrassment with which we may be troubled, it is well to accustom ourselves to writing a letter *extempore* with neatness, elegance and correctness.

The choice of materials for writing, without being very essential, is yet necessary; to write on very coarse paper, is allowable only to the most indigent; to use gilt edged and perfumed paper for letters of business, would be

ridiculous. The selection of paper ought always to be in keeping with the person, the age, the sex, and the circumstances of the correspondents. Ornamented paper, of which we have just spoken; paper bordered with colored vignettes and embossed with ornaments in relief upon the edges; and paper slightly colored with delicate shades, are designed for young ladies, and those whose condition, taste, and dignity, presuppose habits of luxury and elegance. Many distinguished people, however, reasonably prefer simplicity in this thing, and make use of very beautiful paper, but yet without ornament.

People of business, heads of companies or establishments, and persons of distinction, with many titles, use paper printed at the top, that is to say, having the name of their residence, the three first figures of the date of the year, their address, and these words, *Mr.* ——, (here follow the titles) to *Mr.* ——.

It is extremely impolite to write a letter upon a single leaf of paper, even if it is a billet; it should be always double, even though we write only two or three lines. It is still more vulgar to use for an envelope, paper on which there are one or two words foreign to the letter itself, whether they be written or printed.

Billets, letters folded lengthwise, and half-envelopes, are little used. A folded letter, especially if written upon vellum paper, should be pressed at the folds by means of a paper-folder.

The rules of politeness ought moreover to decide as to the expense of postage. They require us to defray the expense of the letter if it is written to distinguished persons, or to those of whom we ask any favor; but it would be an incivility, and sometimes a want of delicacy, to do it when we write to a friend, an acquaintance, or to persons of little fortune, whose feelings we should fear to wound. We must therefore, in order to save them the expense as well as to avoid dissatisfaction, endeavor to make some excuse of business.

Letters for new year's day, and other holidays, are usually written beforehand, in order to arrive on the previous or very same day. This is particularly required towards relations; for friends and intimate acquaintances, the following week will do, and for other persons, any time within the month.

It is as indispensable to answer when you are written to, as when you are spoken to, and the indolence which so many correspondents allow in themselves, in this respect, is an incivility. And if after all they decide to answer, they begin by apologies so constantly renewed, that they become common-place. We must use much care that these excuses may not be ridiculous. Conciseness, and some new terms of expression, are, in this case, indispensable. The same observation is applicable in making use of reproving terms.

Letters supply the place of visits, as we have seen, in bestowing presents, or on occasions of marriages, funerals, &c.; to neglect to write in a similar case, is gross impoliteness.

Two persons should not write in the same letter, by one writing upon the first, and another upon the second leaf, except we are intimate with the correspondent. The same is applicable to postscripts. It is not allowable, except to familiar friends, to use expressions borrowed from foreign languages, as for instance the phrase of the Italians, *I kiss your hands*, &c. The language of men who write to ladies ought always to have a polish of respect, with which the latter might dispense in answering. Except on occasions of great ceremony, a lady ought not to address to a man such phrases as, *I have the honor to be*, &c.

while the latter should use the most respectful terms, as *Deign, madam, to allow me*; *allow me the honor of presenting you my respects*, &c.

You may use a lofty style towards persons to whom you owe respect; on easy, trifling, or even jesting style, towards a friend; and a courteous style towards ladies generally. You should not write in a trifling style to persons of a higher standing. It sometimes happens that a man of superior rank honors with his friendship a man of lower condition, and is pleased that the latter writes to him without ceremony. In this case we may use the privilege which is given us; but we must take care not to abuse it, and to make known from time to time that we are ready to confine ourselves within respectful bounds.

When you write upon any subject, consider it fully before putting it upon paper, and treat of each topic in order, that you may not be obliged to recur to any one again, after having spoken of another thing.

If you have many subjects to treat of in the same letter, commence with the most important; for if the person to whom you write is interrupted while reading it, he will be the more impatient to resume the reading, however little interesting he may find it.

It is useful and convenient to begin a new paragraph at every change of the subject.

After having written *Sir* or *Madam* at the top of the letter, we should not commence with one of these phrases; *Sir, madam —, your sister, has written me, that*. We should say, *I understand by a letter which madam —, your sister, has written me*.

Take care also, when writing to a person worthy of respect, not to make compliments to any one. But write to this third person whatever you wish him to know.

Titles of respect, as *Lordship*, *Majesty*, *Highness*, *Excellency*, *Honor*, *Madam*, &c. ought never to be abbreviated, either in writing to the persons themselves, or to any one who has acquaintance with them.

Figures are used only for sums and dates; numbers of men, days, weeks, &c. are to be written at length.

SECTION II.

Of the Interior and Exterior Form of Letters.

The interior form of a letter comprehends the titles and qualities of persons to whom it is proper to give them; the more or less courteous phrases which we use; the more or less respectful manner with which the commencement and body of the letter are to be arranged; and the more or less humble terms which we are to use for the signature, the address or the superscription.

The exterior form of a letter is what concerns the size of the paper; the blank that we should leave between the *vedette*, (or line containing only the name) and the first line; between the last line, the appellation, and signature; the manner of folding the letter, and the choice and mode of putting on the seal.

In addressing the pope, we say at the top of the letter, *Holy Father*, or *Most*

Holy Father; and instead of *You*, we should say, *Your Holiness*; to a prince cardinal, *My Lord*, and *Your Most Eminent Highness*.

To a cardinal, *My Lord*, and *Your Eminence*.

To an archbishop or bishop, *My Lord*, and *Your Grace*.

To an emperor or empress, we say, *Sire*, or *Madam*; and instead of *You*, we say, *Your Imperial Majesty*.

To a king we also say, *Sire*, and *Your Majesty*.

To a queen, *Madam*, and *Your Majesty*.

To the brother of a king, *Your Royal Highness*.

To an elector of the empire, *Your Electoral Highness*.

To a sovereign prince, *Your Most Serene Highness*.

To a prince, *Your Highness*.

To an ambassador or minister, *Your Excellency*.

To the chancellor of France, *My Lord*, and *Your Lordship*.

The title *Excellency* is not given to ladies.

Persons who have an exact knowledge of the language and usage of the court, know what is the most proper manner of expressing themselves. We will give some examples in which the different degrees of respect may be readily perceived.

'I have received the letter with which you have been pleased to honor me.'

'I have received the letter which you have done me the favor to write to me, which you have done me the honor to write to me, which you have taken the trouble to write to me.'

There are some persons who commence their letters with these words; *I have received yours of the 12th current*; this is a fault; we should say, *your letter*. The first is the style of those people who, being pressed with business, are obliged to make abbreviations; and we must, in the common customs of life, beware of imitating them in this respect. We may say the same in respect to persons who write at the top of their letters, '*I* have received *your honored letter* of such a date;' or, 'in answer to *your honored letter*;' or, '*I write you these few words*.' All these forms are objectionable.

We should never repeat in the first sentence of a letter, the names *My Lord*, *Sir*, or *Madam*, with which we began. But if we write to a prince, or even to a minister, we should after the first line use the words, *Your Majesty*, *Your Highness*, or *Your Excellency*, and repeat them from time to time, in the course of the letter, if it is of some length.

As to the conclusion of a letter, we should not say simply, *I am*, without adding some such phrase as these; *With the most profound respect*; *with profound respect*, *with the highest regard*, &c. To persons who have the title of *majesty*, *highness*, *eminence*, &c. we say, *I am your majesty's*, or *your highness's*, &c. *very humble*, &c.

The words *esteem* and *affection* are used only in letters to friends or acquaintance, because they are too familiar; but when accompanied by any words which relieve them, they do not offend one. As for example, we can say, *I am with profound respect, and the highest esteem*, &c.

The following forms may be used with elegance;

Accept, Sir, the assurances of high consideration; be pleased to accept the assurances, &c.

Letters of petition or request should be in folio, that is to say, upon a sheet of paper in its full size; the margin should be half the breadth of the page; the spaces and blanks which we ought to leave between the upper edge of the paper and the *vedette*,[16] and between the *vedette* and the first line, are very different, according to the degree of inferiority or superiority. The greater these spaces are, the more respect do they indicate. The first line ought always to begin below the middle of the page, when we write to a person to whom we owe much respect; but the second page should begin one line below the *vedette*. A blank space should always be left between the last words of the signature, and the lower edge of the paper. If there should not be sufficient room, it would be better to carry one or two lines over to the succeeding page, than to fail in this respect.

For a familiar letter, it has become fashionable to leave no margin at all. It is, however, in these letters only that margins can be useful, namely, in receiving a vertical line when all the paper is filled.

The date of a letter may be put at the beginning when we write to an equal; but in writing to a superior, it should be at the end, in order that the title at the head of the letter may be entirely alone. In letters of business, on the contrary, it is necessary to date at the top and on the first line, that persons may know conveniently, the chronological order of their communications.

The date is often necessary to the understanding of many passages of your letter, or to explain the sense of one which your correspondent may have received at the same time from another person.

In a simple billet, we put the date of the day, *Monday*, &c. It is well sometimes to add the hour.

Every letter to a superior ought to be folded in an envelope. It shows a want of respect to seal with a wafer; we must use sealing-wax. Men usually select red; but young ladies use gilt, rose, and other colors. Both use black wax when they are in mourning. Except in this last case, the color is immaterial, but not the size, for very large ones are in bad taste. The smaller and more glossy, the better *ton* they are. Although sealing-wax is preferable, still we must sometimes avoid using it; it is when we are afraid that the seal may be opened.

When the letter is closed with or without an envelope, we put only a single seal upon it; but if the letter is large, we use two. Moreover, if it contains important papers, it should have three seals or more, according to the nature of the envelope. If a person takes charge of a letter as a favor, it would be very impolite to put more than one seal upon it. If the letter should be folded in such a manner that by partly opening it at the end, its contents may be read, it would be equally impolite to put a little wax upon the edges. We can use this precaution only when the letter is sent by the post or by a domestic.

When we use no envelope, and the third page of the letter is all written upon, we should leave a small blank space where the seal is to be put; without this precaution, many very important words will be covered.

We should not seal a letter of respect with an antique device. It is more polite to use our coat of arms or cipher.

Persons of taste, who have no coat of arms, adopt a seal bearing some ingenious device, in keeping with their profession, sentiments, &c.

A letter which is to be shown, as a letter of introduction or recommendation, ought never to be sealed, since the bearer ought necessarily to know the contents. But to seal it without having first allowed the bearer to read it, would be very impolite. You should prove to the person recommended, that you have spared no pains to render him a service.

It is only conscripts, and peasants, who fold a letter like an apothecary's packet, who omit to press the wafer with a seal, or secure it by pricking it in every part with the point of a pin.

We never seal petitions which are to be presented to the king, and to the members of the royal family.

Some distinguished persons are flattered in writing to them, by our omitting to designate precisely their address. It is an error; we should indicate with exactness the town, and the province, state, &c. if there is more than one town of the same name. In a large city, it is well to write the name of the street and number, and the quarter of the city where the street is. People of business, abbreviate this by putting N and the number, or the number alone; this practice is more expeditious than polite.

We generally address a letter to one person only; but in certain cases we may address to two or more collectively.

It is well to add to the name, the title or profession, in order to prevent mistake. However, if circumstances have obliged any one of your acquaintance to act in an inferior situation, it would be a want of delicacy to join to his name that of his business.

When we write to the king, we put simply in the address, *To the King*. To foreign kings we say, *To his Catholic Majesty*, *his Britannic Majesty*, &c.

To persons who have the title of highness, we say, *To his Highness*, and then their quality or rank. To ministers and ambassadors, we say, *To his Excellency, the Minister*, or *Ambassador*. If a person has many titles, we select the highest, and omit the others.

In billets, we put the date at the top of the paper, and begin the letter about two inches below. The word *Sir* is put in the first line. We conclude with one of these phrases, *I am, Sir, yours*; *I am entirely yours*, &c. We do not write a billet to ladies, or to superiors, as this was introduced only to avoid ceremony.

The most familiar billets are written in the third person, contrary to the common practice. They contain very little, and begin thus, *Mr.* or *Madam N present their respects*, or *compliments, to Mr. Such-a-one, and request*, &c. After having made the request, we end with, *and he will oblige his humble servant*.

In this kind of billets, it is best not to use the pronoun *he* or *she*, for independently of the incivility, it might result in confusion. Sometimes it would be difficult to know whether the pronoun referred to the person who received the letter, or to the one who wrote it.

I shall conclude this chapter by an observation relative to friendly and familiar letters; not that I have the folly to pretend to regulate by any ceremonial, the sentiments of the heart; but there is in reality nothing more cold and ridiculous, than accumulations of epithets like these, *Your tender, sincere and constant friend*, &c.

CHAPTER VIII.

Additional Rules in respect to the Social Relations.

I include under this name, everything relating to friendly attentions, such as services, loans, presents, advice, and also things in relation to discretion, such as respect in conversation, letters, secrets, confidential communications, &c.

SECTION I.

Of an Obliging Deportment.

Polite persons are necessarily obliging. A smile is always on their lips, an earnestness in their countenance, when we ask a favor of them. They know that to render a service with a bad grace, is in reality not to render it. If they are obliged to refuse a favor, they do this with mildness and delicacy; they express such feeling regret, that they still inspire us with gratitude; in short, their conduct appears so perfectly natural, that it really seems that the opportunity which is offered them of obliging us, is obliging themselves; they refuse all our thanks, without affectation or effort.

This amiable character, a necessary attendant of perfect good breeding, is not always found with all its charms, in the world. There are besides, some obliging persons, who force us to extort their services, who feel of great consequence, who like to be supplicated and thanked to excess. Do not imitate them: they make us ungrateful in spite of ourselves, they make gratitude a pain and a burden. When one asks of you any favor, reply kindly, "I am at your service, and shall be very happy to render you any assistance in my power;" or else, with a sad manner, lament that there is such an obstacle, &c. Then examine the means of overcoming the obstacle, even if you should be assured beforehand that none exists.

Other persons, pretending to be polite, make protestations of their services and zeal, without taking the trouble to abide by their offers when an occasion is afforded them: so great is their trifling in this respect that they can be justly compared to those false heroes who are always talking of fighting, and who would be put to flight at the sight of a drawn sword. These indications of zeal are suspicious, when they are employed every moment and without any reason; a knowledge of the world teaches us to discern them, and to give them that degree of confidence which they merit. Sometimes we can congratulate persons, wish them well, and have the appearance of taking an interest in the recital which they are making of their affairs, without really feeling the least interest for them. We cannot always command our indifference in this respect, but we are obliged to spare them that constraint and ennui, which would infallibly be shown if we should manifest to them the coldness which they inspire. It belongs to those persons who know the world, not to confound this politeness, with the pretended zeal of the Don Quixottes of the drawing-room, of whom we have spoken above.

In order that a service may be completed, it is necessary that it should be done quickly, nothing being more disobliging than tardiness, and the alternative, which you place a person in, either of addressing to you new solicitations, or of suffering by your delay. Your tardy assistance may perhaps be prejudicial, for one would suffer a long time before resolving to importune you anew.

Make use then of despatch. If any circumstances prevent you from acting, inform the person, apologise, and promise to make reparation for your neglect. On his part, the person who is under the obligation to you, should be careful of using a single term of reproach and of accosting you with an air of dissatisfaction.

When any one who is visiting you has need of a shawl, a handkerchief, a hat, offer it with a complaisant zeal, resist the refusal which is made (and which propriety does not require) select the best you have, in short, urge the persons not to be in haste to return the articles. If it is very bad weather, and the occasion a proper one, offer an umbrella or your carriage. These things are returned the next day by a domestic, who is charged to thank the person for them. If the articles are linen, they should not be returned before they are washed.

When a lady has borrowed ornaments of another, as for instance, jewels, the latter should always offer to lend her more than are asked for: she ought also to keep a profound silence about the things which she has lent, and even abstain from wearing them for some time afterwards, in order that they may not be recognised. If any one, perceiving they were borrowed, should speak to the person of it, he would pass for an ill-bred man. If the borrower speaks to you of it, it is well to reply that nobody had recognised them. All this advice is minute, but what kind will you have? it concerns female self-esteem.

One species of borrowing which is of daily occurrence, and happens very often to the loss of the owners, is the borrowing of books. Persons are so wanting in delicacy on this subject, that those who have a passion for books, and who are very obliging in other respects, are forced to refuse making these troublesome loans. The case, however, is a very perplexing one; we cannot say, *I am not willing to lend you this work*; but if the borrower is a suspicious person, we can say we have occasion to use it, that we regret it very much, but that we will lend it to him in a few days. However, we do not lend it at all.

Well-bred persons do not make a bare request for a book; they wait until it is offered, and then they accept the offer hesitatingly; they find out the length of time they can keep it, and return it punctually at the appointed day. In order to prevent every accident, they cover it with cloth or paper, since the favor should render them more careful than the value of the book; they also take care not to turn down the leaves, or make marks, marginal notes, &c.

If any accident happens to a borrowed article, we must repair the loss immediately. I shall not speak of more important loans, which are out of the range of politeness.

SECTION II.

Of Presents.

In the eyes of persons of delicacy, presents are not of worth, except from the manner in which they are bestowed; in our advice, then, let us strive to give them this value.

Presents are offered first to relations and to friends; and they occur under different circumstances; on our arrival at a place from which we have been absent for a long time; when our intimate friends leave the town in which we reside; on our return from a journey, particularly to the capital; in remarkable and remote countries; on birth days, or days of baptism, or new year's day.

But this day is not the only occasion of exchanging presents in a family, it is also an occasion for recollecting services and civilities; of making our respects to ladies, to superiors whom we wish to honor. It moreover offers us a delicate means of succoring the unfortunate.

Secondly, at harvest time, if one owns land, in the hunting season, if one is a hunter, it is in good *ton* to send to our intimate friends, fine fruits, rare flowers, or some choice articles of game.

The most delicate presents are the productions of our own industry; a drawing, a piece of needle work, ornamental hair-work, &c. But such offerings, though invaluable among friends, are not used on occasions of ceremony.

Next to fitness of time for presents, comes fitness in the selection of them; generally, luxury and elegance ought to reign in the latter; but this rule has numerous exceptions: and although it would be out of place to offer things purely useful (to which certain incidents would give the appearance of charity) still we should be in an error to suppose that a present is suitable, which is brilliant alone. It must by all means be adapted to the taste, age, and professions of persons, and their connexions with us. Thus to superiors, you offer fruits, game, &c. to a student, books;[17] to a friend of the arts, music, or engravings; to young married ladies, delicate and graceful articles of the toilet, &c.

Presents should excite surprise and pleasure, therefore you ought to involve them in a mystery, and present them with an air of joyful kindness.

When you have made your offering, and thanks have been elicited, do not bring back the conversation to the same subject; be careful, particularly, of making your gift of consequence. On the contrary, when its merit has been extolled, when the persons who have received the present, have evinced a lively satisfaction, say that the gift receives all its value from their opinion of it.

However slight charm a present may have, or if even insignificant, we should be ill-bred not to manifest much pleasure in receiving it. It is besides, necessary, when an opportunity offers, to speak of it, not to fail of saying to the donor, how useful or agreeable his present is to you. In proportion as a long space of time has elapsed, this attention is the more amiable; it proves that you have preserved the object with care. And this reminds me, that we should never give away a present which we have received from another person, or at least that we should so arrange it, that it may never be known.

It is well to mingle with our manifestations of gratitude, some exceptions to the high value of the gift, but not to dwell a long time on the subject, or to exclaim about it with earnestness. Under some circumstances, these declamations may seem dictated by avarice and a want of delicacy; they are besides in bad taste at all times.

We often make a present to some one through his children or wife, especially on new year's day, when it is the custom to present at least

confectionary to the young families of one's acquaintance. At Paris, we make such presents to married ladies; in the provincial towns, we do not. Above all, when one has received a present of some value, he calls upon the person who gave it, or, if the distance is great, addresses to him a letter of thanks. Every one knows that custom requires us to make a remuneration of a proportionate value, to the domestic who is the bearer of the present.

SECTION III.

Of Advice.

Advice is a very good thing, it is true; it is however a thing which in society is the most displeasing. A giver of advice, who is incessantly repeating, *If I was in your place, I should do so and so*, repels every one by his pride and indiscretion. Such an impertinent person should know, that he ought not to give advice without he is asked, and that the number of those who ask it is very limited: we are not, however, speaking here of gratifications of vanity, but of that advice, the kindness and affection of which, gives it a claim to our attention. It is necessary to use much reserve and care, because otherwise you would seem to have a tone of superiority which would array the self-esteem of your friend against your wisest counsels. Of the forms of modesty, no one in this place is superfluous: we may say, "It is possible that I am mistaken, I should be far from having the courage to enquire of you," &c.

If a person makes any objections, do not say, *You do not understand me*, but, *I have not expressed myself properly*.

SECTION IV.

Of Discretion.

The duties of discretion are so sensibly felt by persons of good breeding, that they do not violate them except through forgetfulness. It will be enough then to make an enumeration of them, without intending to point out their necessity.

Discretion requires in the first place, respect with regard to conversation. If, when we enter the house of any one, we hear persons talking in an earnest manner, we step more heavily, in order to give notice to those who are engaged in the conversation. If, in an assembly, two persons retire by themselves to speak of business, we should be careful not to approach them, nor speak to them until they have separated.

People who have lived a little in the world, know how essential it is not to mingle with curiosity in the business of persons whom we visit; nor are they ignorant what conduct is to be observed in case we surprise persons by an unexpected call; but young persons may not know, and I beg them to give their attention to it.

When we see a person occupied, we retire, or at least make signs of it; if they should detain us, we step aside, and appear to be examining a picture, or looking out of the window, in order to prove that we take no notice of what engages them. But the desire to find for ourselves some such occupation, ought not to lead us to turn over the leaves of books placed upon the chimney-piece or elsewhere; to run over a pamphlet; or to handle visiting cards, or letters, even though it be only to read the superscription. If the person visited should be opening a closet or drawers, it would be rude curiosity to approach in order to see what was contained there. If, among a number of valuable things, they take one to show you, be satisfied with looking at that alone, without appearing to think of the others.

If, before the person visited comes in, we should see another visitor, who, to pass the time, should take a journal or a book from his pocket, it would be extremely impolite to read over his shoulder, and equally uncivil to read what a person is writing.

It is not allowable to take down the books from a library; but we may, and we even ought to read the titles, in order to praise the good taste which has been shown in the choice of the works.

If it happens that any one exhibits to a circle some rare and valuable object, do not be in haste to ask for it, or to take it by reaching out your hand; wait modestly until it comes to you; do not examine it too long when you have it, and if by chance any ill-bred person requests it before you have seen it, do not detain it; it is better to suffer this small privation than to pass for a badly educated virtuoso.

However insignificant the boasted object may be, never criticise it; if your opinion is asked, answer a few words of praise; if the thing is really curious, abstain from exaggerated compliments.

To violate the secresy of letters, under any pretext whatever, is so base and odious, that I dare not say a word about it; I think, I ought to say, that it is also very reprehensible to endeavor to read any part of a letter folded in such a manner as to be partly open at the ends; and when a certain passage in a letter concerning yourself is handed you to read, you should put your finger below it in order not to read anything more; and if you are allowed to add anything in a letter, have the discretion not to cast your eyes over the rest, and be expeditious so as to avoid the suspicion that you take advantage of the circumstance.

Politeness is also opposed, in certain cases, to a too great haste to know anything relating to ourselves. For example, if a person brings you a letter, you should not be in a hurry to open it, but see whether the letter concerns the bearer at all, or only yourself. In the first case, you should open it, and read it while he is present; in the other case, you should lay it aside.

Politeness does not, however, impose such restraints upon curiosity in small things, and leave us free in important ones. Thus, we shall not say that we ought religiously to keep a secret, and that confidence received is a sacred deposit; but we shall say to persons who have curiosity to know any private circumstance, that they ought to be filled with shame if they do not desist all importunity as soon as they hear the word, *it is a secret*.

CHAPTER IX.

Of Travelling.

This chapter, although only accessory, and but remotely connected with the social relations, should be added here; as we do not wish to make any voluntary omission, and, besides, if in travelling, the duties of politeness are less numerous, they are not, therefore, less obligatory.

Persons about to travel, ought to make visits of taking leave among their acquaintances, of whom they should ask if they have any commands for them. It would be indiscreet, unless in case of perfect intimacy, to accept this offer, or to ask them to take charge of such or such a thing, especially if it is a packet; if persons are very intimate, we may request them to let us hear of their arrival.

Before their departure, the names of passengers are entered in the order of their numbers, at the public coach offices. After this, each one takes the place assigned him. Politeness, however, requires that a man should offer his seat to a lady who is less well accommodated; for it would be improper that he should be seated upon the back seat, while she should be seated upon the front one. Some persons cannot bear the motion of a coach when they ride backwards; and this manner of riding incommodes them extremely. Polite travellers will take pleasure in relieving them from this trouble. Ladies, on their part, ought not to require too much, nor put to too severe a test the complaisance of gentlemen. The latter, however, should at every stopping place, attentively help them alight, by offering the hand, and directing their feet on the step of the coach. The same thing is necessary in assisting them to get in again. It would appear badly, to take advantage of one's superiority of rank, to consult his own convenience alone. It is necessary on the contrary, for him to have great care not to incommode any one, and to show every civility to his fellow travellers.

Politeness in travelling is not so rigorous as in society; it only requires that we should not incommode our companions; that we should be agreeable to them; that we should politely answer their questions; but it leaves us free to read, sleep, look about, or observe silence, &c.

A traveller would be uncivil if he should open or shut the windows of the coach without consulting the people who are with him; or, if he should, without offering to them, take any light and delicate food, as fruits, cakes, or confectionary, but which they do not generally accept; and he would appear disagreeable, if, knowing the route, he should not point out the beautiful sites, and satisfy any questions concerning them; finally, he would deserve the name of an imprudent prater, if he should converse with his fellow travellers as with intimate acquaintances.

On our return, we should carry or send the commissions which we have received. Partial acquaintances, to whom we have offered only by writing, to take their commands, should not expect a visit on our return; this right belongs only to relations, friends, or intimate acquaintances.

Finally, all those for whom you have executed any commissions, owe you a visit of thanks as soon as it can be done.

If you travel on horseback, in distinguished company, give them the right,

and keep a little behind, regulating yourself by the progress of your companions. There is one exception to this rule; it is when one of the two horses is skittish, so that it is absolutely necessary that the other should pass on first, that this one may follow.

If you happen to be on the windward side, so that you throw dust upon your companion, you should change your position. When we pass by trees, the branches of which are about the height of the shoulders, the one who goes first ought to take care that the branches, in going back to their former situation, should not strike with violence against the person who follows.

If you are passing a large stream, a small river, or a muddy pool, by fording, it is polite to go first; but if we have not taken precautions, and fall in the rear, we ought to keep at a distance, so that the horse's feet may not spatter the water or mud upon the gentleman before us. If your companion gallops his horse, you should never pass him, nor make your horse caper, unless he signifies that it is agreeable to him.

PART III.

OF PROPRIETY IN RELATION TO PLEASURES.

CHAPTER I.

Of Entertainments.

Politeness ought, as we have seen, to direct and embellish all the circumstances of life; but it is, if possible, still more necessary in relation to pleasures, which, without it, would have no attraction.

Without intending to adopt the epigrammatic style, I will say that dining is almost an event, so many points of propriety have the master of the house and his guests to observe.

When we intend giving an entertainment, we begin by selecting such guests as may enjoy themselves together, or at least tolerate one another. If it is to be composed of gentlemen, there should be no lady present, except the lady of the house. The dinner being determined upon, we give out two or three days beforehand, verbal or written invitations. During the carnival or other season of gaiety, it is necessary to do it at least five days in advance, on account of the numerous engagements.

When we receive a written invitation, we must answer immediately whether we accept or not, although silence may be considered equivalent to an acceptance. In the latter case, we should give a plausible reason of our declining, and do it with politeness. When the invitation is verbal, we must avoid being urged; for nothing is more foolish and disobliging; we ought either to accept or refuse in a frank and friendly manner, offering some reasonable motive for declining, to which we should not again refer. It is not allowable to be urged, except when we are requested to dine with someone whom we have seen only at the house of a third person, or when we are invited on a visit or other similar occasion. In the former case, if we accept, we should first leave a card in order to open the acquaintance.

Having once accepted, we cannot break our engagement, unless for a most urgent cause.

An invitation ought to specify exactly the hour of meeting, and you should arrive precisely at that hour. The table should be ready, and the mistress of the house in the drawing-room, to receive the guests. When they are all assembled, a domestic announces that the dinner is served up; at this signal we rise immediately, and wait until the master of the house requests us to pass into the dining-room, whither he conducts us, by going before.

It is quite common for the lady of the house to act as guide, while he offers his hand to the lady of most distinction. The guests also give their arms to ladies, whom they conduct as far as the table, and to the place which they are

to occupy. Take care, if you are not the principal guest, not to offer your hand to the handsomest or most distinguished lady; for it is a great impoliteness.

Having arrived at the table, each guest respectfully salutes the lady whom he conducts, and who in turn bows also. It is one of the first and most difficult things properly to arrange the guests, and to place them in such a manner that the conversation may always be general during the entertainment; we should as much as possible avoid putting next one another, two persons of the same profession; for it would necessarily result in an *aside* conversation, which would injure the general conversation, and consequently the gaiety of the occasion. The two most distinguished gentlemen are placed next the mistress of the house; the two most distinguished ladies next the master of the house; the right hand is especially the place of honor. If the number of gentlemen is nearly equal to that of the ladies, we should take care to intermingle them; we should separate husbands from their wives, and remove near relations as far from one another as possible, because being always together, they ought not to converse among themselves in a general party.

The younger guests, or those of less distinction, are placed at the lower end of the table.

In order to be able to watch the course of the dinner, and to see that nothing is wanting to their guests, the master and mistress of the house usually seat themselves in the centre of the table, opposite each other. As soon as the guests are seated, the lady of the house serves in plates, from a pile at her left hand, the soup which she sends round, beginning with her neighbors at the right and left, and continuing in the order of their distinction. These first plates usually pass twice, for every one endeavors to make his neighbor accept whatever is sent him.

The master of the house carves or causes to be carved by some expert guests, the large pieces, in order afterwards to do the honors himself. If you have no skill in carving meats, you should not attempt it; and never discharge this duty except when your good offices are solicited by him; neither can we refuse from his hand anything sent us.

A master of a house ought never to pride himself upon what appears on his table, nor confuse himself with apologies for the bad cheer which he offers you; it is much better for him to observe silence in this respect, and leave it to his guests to pronounce eulogiums on the dinner; neither is it in good *ton* to urge guests to eat nor to load their plate against their will.

I will now give a few words of advice to guests; puerile it may be, but which it is well to listen to, and observe. It is ridiculous to make a display of your napkin; to attach it with pins upon your bosom, or to pass it through your buttonhole; to use a fork in eating soup; to ask for *meat* instead of *beef*; for *poultry* instead of saying chicken, or turkey; to turn up your cuffs while carving; to take bread, even when it is within your reach, instead of calling upon the servant; to cut with a knife your bread, which should be broken by your hand; and to pour your coffee into the saucer to cool.

Guests of the house of a distinguished personage are accompanied each by his own servant, who takes his place behind his chair. They should not address him during the entertainment, still less reprimand him. Before placing themselves at the table, they ought to direct him to serve the other guests also, and to retire as soon as the table is cleared, because the domestics of the house

ought to eat by themselves.

During the first course, each one helps himself at his pleasure to whatever he drinks; but, in the second course, when the master of the house passes round choice wine, it would be uncivil to refuse it. We are not obliged, however, to accept a second glass.

When at the end of the second course, the cloth is removed, the guests may assist in turning off that part of it which is before them, and contribute to the arrangement of the dessert plates which happen to be near, but without attempting to alter the disposition of them. From the time that the dessert appears on the table, the duties of the master of the house diminish, as do also his rights.

If a gentleman is seated by the side of a lady or elderly person, politeness requires him to save them all trouble of pouring out for themselves to drink, of procuring anything to eat, and of obtaining whatever they are in want of at the table. He ought to be eager to offer them what he thinks to be most to their taste.

It would be impolite to monopolize a conversation which ought to be general. If the company is large, we should converse with our neighbors, raising the voice only enough to make ourselves understood.

Custom allows ladies at the end of an entertainment to dip their fingers into a glass of water, and to wipe them with their napkin; it allows them also to rinse the mouth, using their plate for this purpose; but, in my opinion, custom sanctions it in vain.

It is for the mistress of the house to give the signal to leave the table; all the guests then rise, and, offering their arms to the ladies, wait upon them to the drawing-room, where coffee and *liqueurs* are prepared. We do not take coffee at the table, except at unceremonious dinners. In leaving the table, the master of the house ought to go last. Politeness requires us to remain at least an hour in the drawing-room after dinner; and, if we can dispose of an entire evening, it would be well to devote it to the person who has entertained us.

We should not leave the table before the end of the entertainment, unless from urgent necessity. If it is a married lady, she requests some one to accompany her; if a young lady, she goes with her mother.

The question whether it is proper, or not, to sing at table, depends now upon the *ton* of the master of the house. We do not sing at the houses of people of fashion and the high classes of society; but we may do it at the social tables of citizens. In this case, we may repeat what has been said and proved a thousand times how ridiculous it is to be urged when we know how to sing, or to insist upon hearing a person sing who has an invincible timidity.

After dinner, we converse, have music, or more frequently, prepare the tables for games. In the course of the soirée, the mistress of the house sends round upon a waiter *eau sucrée* or refreshing syrups. During the week which follows the entertainment, each guest owes a visit to the person who has invited them. We usually converse at this time, of the dinner, of the pleasure we have enjoyed, and of the persons whom we met there. This visit has received the cant name of the *visite de digestion*.

CHAPTER II.

Of Promenades, Parties, and Amusements.

The paragraphs contained in this chapter concern the most common relations of society. Complaisance and attentions ought therefore to embellish and adorn these relations with all the delicate shades of politeness.

SECTION I.

Of Promenades.

A young man who walks with an elderly person, undoubtedly knows that his companion has not the same strength and agility as himself; he ought therefore to regulate his pace by that of the old person. The same precaution should be observed when we accompany a person of distinction to whom we owe respect. Decorum requires that a gentleman should offer his arm to a lady who walks with him; and politeness requires him to ask permission to carry anything which she may have in her hand, as a bag, a book, or a parasol (if the sun does not shine;) in case of a refusal, he ought to insist upon it.

If there are more ladies than gentlemen, we should offer our arm to the oldest, and to a married lady rather than to an unmarried one. If we are accompanied by two ladies, we cannot dispense with offering our arm to each of them.

Place your company upon that side which seems to them most convenient, and beware of opposing their tastes or desires. When occasion presents itself, offer seats to your companions to rest themselves, and do not urge them to rise until they manifest a wish to continue their walk. If they accept your invitation to sit down, and it happens that there are not a sufficient number of seats, then the ladies should sit, and the gentlemen remain standing.

In a large public garden, chairs are seldom wanting; if it is necessary to go for some to the place where they are kept, this is the business of the gentlemen, who ought to take care not to place them before persons already seated, for this would be an incivility. When payment for the seats is called for, one gentleman of the company pays for the whole. It would be impolite to offer to reimburse him.

There is also a rule of politeness to be observed with regard to those whom we meet in walking. We ought to offend neither their eyes nor their ears. We must take care not to attract their attention by immoderate laughter, nor allow ourselves liberties which we cannot take in a private garden. To sing and skip about in walking, would expose us to the hootings of the multitude, and to unpleasant things for which we could only accuse our own folly.

If you are in a public promenade, converse upon general topics, which can offend no one, in order that your remarks may not be wrongly interpreted by persons who happen to hear them. Beware on the other hand, of listening to the

conversation of those who are not of your party.

If you give your arm to a lady in the street, she ought to be next the wall. And if by chance, you are obliged to cross over, you should then change the arm. This deference is likewise due to all who are entitled to our respect. Two gentlemen do not take one another's arms in the street, unless they are young persons and intimate friends.

We never go in advance of the lady whom we accompany, and if she stops, we do so likewise, and remain with her in looking at whatever attracts her attention. If a mendicant comes up to ask alms, we immediately draw out our purse to satisfy his wants, so that the lady with whom we are walking may not be importuned by him.

If we walk in a private garden, and the company is numerous, we may separate, and form distinct groups. If the master of the house or any person of consideration, invite you to walk up and down the alleys, take care to give them the right, it being the most honorable side. At the end of each alley, and when you must retrace your steps, turn inside towards the other person, and not outward, as you would thus present your back to him. If you happen to be with two persons who are your superiors, do not place yourself in the middle, for that is the place of honor; the right, is the second, and the left the third place.

Be careful also of the choice of places if you take an airing in a coach, and yield the first seats to ladies and distinguished persons. The one of most consequence gets in first, and places himself at the right of the back seat; the left of the same seat is occupied next; then, the third person seats himself on the front seat, facing the one in the first place; the fourth person takes the remaining seat, facing the one in the second place. If there is no servant, it is proper for the gentlemen to open the door, arrange the packets, &c.

In a cabriolet or chaise, the right side is for the one who drives when there are only two persons. If there are three, the driver sits in the middle, even although he may be very inferior to his companions. I may add, that it is not customary for a lady to go alone in a hired cabriolet, since she would then be in the company of the driver only.

SECTION II.

Of Parties and Amusements.

We shall have but few things to say upon the manner of conducting one's-self in a party, for we should only repeat the advice we have already given as respects propriety in the carriage of the person, in visits, and in conversation.

If a gentleman enters a drawing-room where there are more than ten persons, he should salute all generally, by a very respectful inclination of the head, and present his respects first to the lady of the house, but converse at first only with her husband; gentlemen usually stand in groups, while the ladies sitting, answer the salutation by a similar one; we should remark that the ladies do not rise, except in saluting one of their own sex.

However distinguished a person may be, we do not allow conversation to be disturbed by their coming. They listen for a few moments while observing what

persons are present, then mingle in the conversation, without pretending at all to monopolize it. When conversation is not general, nor the subject sufficiently interesting to occupy the whole company, they break up into different groups. Each one converses with one or more of his neighbors on his right and left. We should, if we wish to speak to any one, avoid leaning upon the person who happens to be between. A gentleman ought not to lean upon the arm of a lady's chair, but he may, while standing, support himself by the back of it, in order to converse with the lady half turned towards him.

It would be extremely impolite to converse in a loud voice with any one upon private subjects, to make use of allegories and particular allusions which are understood only by the person with whom you are conversing and yourself. It would be equally out of place to converse in a foreign language, with any one who might be able to speak it.

It is not proper to withdraw in the midst of any conversation, but to wait until the subject in which you are engaged shall be finished; you then salute only the person with whom you have been talking, and depart without taking leave of any one, not even the gentleman and lady of the house.

The mind has need of recreations; it cannot be always occupied. Hence the custom of passing a few moments in those family and social parties, where we take part in the various amusements and games which have been invented to relax and divert the mind.

It is useless to observe here that we do not mean to speak of those scandalous establishments in which are frequently swallowed up the resources of families, and where a person, led by an unhappy passion, may consume in one evening, enough to furnish an annual support for fifty orphans; we design to speak only of those innocent games, in which we are ambitious only of the glory of a triumph. To propose to play a deep game would be to expose ourselves to contempt. For, those who composed the assembly, would imagine that he who makes this request, has no other object in view but to enrich himself at the expense of others, and that he is accustomed to frequent those abominable houses of which we have just spoken.

We should have a bad opinion of a player who, when he gained, should show excessive joy, and if he lost, should betray the least chagrin; for he ought to remember that it is only for amusement that he plays.

Conduct yourself without letting escape the least word of dissatisfaction, and be pleasant even if you are unfortunate.

When you leave off playing, converse with your adversary, and not seem to avoid him, but especially never speak to him of his good luck in playing, unless it be with a frank gaiety, for otherwise you would seem to be inspired with anger.

Play with fairness, and do not endeavor to see the hand of your adversary in order to profit by it; pay attention to your game, and not hold conversation with others. This inattention would render you necessarily insupportable to those who play with you.

If any play is contested, we should not discuss it with warmth, but refer to disinterested persons, explaining to them with calmness and politeness the point in dispute.

In playing, we must always preserve an even temper; neither should we devote too much time to it, for then this amusement would become irksome,

and would soon be changed to a fatiguing occupation.

When the mistress of the house has prepared the tables for playing, she takes as many cards as each game requires players, and presents them to the persons present, beginning with the one whom she wishes especially to honor. To accept a card, is considered an engagement to play. The distribution of the players requires all the attention of the mistress of the house, for there are some persons not to be desired for partners. There are, besides, bad players, persons who being little accustomed to playing, stop a long time to think, bite their lips, strike their feet together under the table, drum upon the table with their fingers; pretend that such a person being near brings them bad luck, and request out of their turn to shuffle the cards, in order to change the luck, &c.

The mistress of the house experiences, besides the embarrassment of arranging these unlucky players, sufficient trouble in keeping from the same table, those who have any antipathy to one another.

When we commence playing, we salute, by an inclination of the head, the persons with whom we play, as we deal to them the first card. Gentlemen should collect the cards at the end of each hand, shuffle, and present them to the lady who is to deal.

We may, without impropriety, ask of any one if he plays such a game, even if he plays well; and we may ask those invited to play, whom they desire as partners. The most honorable set, namely, that in which the mistress of the house plays, can never be refused, unless we are unacquainted with playing.

SECTION III.

Little Sports and Games of Society.

Those sports, called innocent, generally please young persons of both sexes, because they excite an interest, while they require an exercise of the memory and of the mind. It is necessary, however, in this, as in everything else, to manifest attention, delicacy, and propriety. We ought not to endeavor to be noticed for our too great vivacity or freedom. We should be satisfied with showing our talent at playing in our turn, and taking part in the common gaiety, without pretension or too great zeal. We should especially avoid throwing out any vindictive remarks, bestowing misplaced compliments, or imposing forfeits which would cause mortification.

A young gentleman ought never to seize a young lady by the body, catch hold of her ribband or bouquet, nor pay exclusive attention to the same person. He should be agreeable and pleasant towards all.

The selection of different games belongs to the ladies. The person who receives the company, should be careful to vary them; and when she perceives that any game loses its interest, she should propose another.

There are almost always persons in society who wish to take the lead, and give the *ton*; it is a caprice or fault which should be avoided. We may modestly propose any amusement, and ask the opinion of others in regard to it; but never pretend to dictate, nor even urge having our own proposal accepted. If it does not please generally, we should be silent, and resign ourselves with a good grace

to the decisions of the majority.

In these little sports, the penalties which are imposed, too often consist in embracing the ladies of the company; but as they cannot refuse, since you follow the rule of the game, take care to do it with such propriety, that modesty may not be offended.

Never prescribe any forfeiture which can wound the feelings of any one of the company.

CHAPTER III.

Of Balls, Concerts, and Public Shows.

These amusements presuppose a fortune, and good *ton*; the practice of society, therefore, and consequently a forgetfulness of the precepts of politeness in respect to them, would be truly preposterous.

SECTION I.

Of Balls.

I was going to say, let us begin with private balls; but I recollect that this denomination is no longer fashionable. We do not say, *a ball at Madam such a one's*, but an evening party (*soirée*). Nevertheless, when we wish to give a dance, we give the invitations a week beforehand, that the ladies may have time to prepare articles for their toilet.

If it is to be a simple evening party, in which we may wear a summer walking dress, the mistress of the house gives verbal invitations and does not omit to apprise her friends of this circumstance, or they might appear in unsuitable dresses. If, on the contrary, the soirée is to be in reality a ball, the invitations are written, or what is better, printed, and expressed in the third person.

A room appropriated for dresses, and furnished with cloak pins to hang up the shawls and other garments of the ladies, is almost indispensable. Domestics should be there also to aid them in taking off and putting on their outside garments.

We are not obliged to go exactly at the appointed hour; it is even fashionable to go an hour later. Married ladies are accompanied by their husbands, unmarried ones, by their mother or by a *chaperon*. These last ladies place themselves behind the dancers; the master of the house goes before one and another, procures seats for them, and then mingles again among the gentlemen who are standing, and who form groups or walk about the room.

The toilet of all the assembly should be made with great care. A gentleman who should appear in a riding-coat and boots, would pass for a person of bad *ton*.

When you are sure of a place in the dance, you go up to a lady, and ask her if she will *do you the honor* to dance with you. If she answers that she is engaged, invite her for the next dance, and take care not to address yourself afterwards to any ladies next to her, for these not being able to refuse you, would feel hurt at being invited after another. Never wait until the signal is given to take a partner, for nothing is more impolite than to invite a lady hastily, and when the dancers are already in their places; it can be allowed only when the set is incomplete.

A lady cannot refuse the invitation of a gentleman to dance, unless she has

already accepted that of another, for she would be guilty of an incivility which might occasion trouble; she would besides seem to show contempt for him whom she refused, and would expose herself to receive an ill compliment from him.

Married or young ladies cannot leave a ball-room or any other party alone. The former should be accompanied by one or two other married ladies, and the latter by their mother, or by a lady to represent her.

We should avoid talking too much; it would occasion remarks and have a bad appearance to whisper continually in the ear of our partner.

The master of the house should see that all the ladies dance; he should take notice of those who seem to serve as *drapery* to the walls of the ball-room, or *wall-flowers*, as the familiar expression is, and should see that they are invited to dance. He must do this wholly unperceived, in order not to wound the self-esteem of the unfortunate ladies.

Gentlemen whom the master of the house requests to dance with these ladies, should be ready to accede to his wish, and even appear pleased at dancing with a person thus recommended to their notice.

Ladies who dance much, ought to be very careful not to boast before those who dance but little or not at all, of the great number of dances for which they are engaged in advance. They should also, without being perceived, recommend to these less fortunate ladies, gentlemen of their acquaintance.

In giving the hand for ladies' chain or any figures, those dancing should wear a smile, and accompany it with a polite inclination of the head, in the manner of a salutation. At the end of the dance, the gentleman re-conducts the lady to her place, bows and thanks her for the honor which she has conferred. She also curtsies in silence, smiling with a gracious air.

In these assemblies, we ought to conduct ourselves with reserve and politeness towards all present, although they may be unknown to us.

Persons who have no ear for music, that is to say, a false one, ought to refrain from dancing.

Never hazard taking part in a quadrille unless you know how to dance tolerably. If you are a novice or but little skilled, you would bring disorder into the midst of pleasure. Being once engaged to take part in the dance, if the figures are not familiar, be careful not to advance first. You can in this way govern your steps by those who go before you. Beware also of taking your place in a set of dancers more skilful than yourself.

When an unpractised dancer makes a mistake, we may apprise him of his error; but it would be very impolite to have the air of giving him a lesson.

Dance with grace and modesty; neither affect to make a parade of your knowledge; refrain from great leaps and ridiculous jumps which would attract the attention of all towards you.

In a private ball or party, it is proper to show still more reserve, and not to manifest more preference for one lady than another; we should dance with all indiscriminately, but we may, moreover, invite the same lady more than once.

In public balls, a gentleman offers his partner refreshments, which she very seldom accepts, unless she is much acquainted with him. But in private parties, the persons who receive the company, send round cake and other refreshments, of which each one helps himself as he pleases. Near the end of the evening, in a

well regulated ball, it is customary to have a supper, when the gentlemen stand behind the ladies who are seated.

In a soirée without great preparation, we may dispense with a supper, but refreshments are necessary; and not to have them would be the greatest impoliteness.

The waltz is a dance of quite too loose a character, and unmarried ladies should refrain from it in public and private; very young married ladies, however, may be allowed to waltz in private balls, if it is very seldom, and with persons of their acquaintance. It is indispensable for them to acquit themselves with dignity and decency.

I have spoken of *public balls*, in contradistinction to private ones, and I might also have mentioned *balls by subscription*, for, in regard to the public balls of Paris and other large cities, we have nothing to advise our readers but to shun them. As to masked balls, it is an amusement altogether to be condemned, except those of the Opera. Neither should we appear there except in a domino.

We should retire *incognito*, not to disturb the master and mistress of the house; we should make them during the week, a visit of thanks, at which we may converse of the pleasure of the ball and of the good selection of the company.

SECTION II.

Of Concerts.

The proprieties in deportment which concerts require, are little different from those which are recognized in every other assembly or in public exhibitions; for concerts partake of the one and the other, according as they are public or private. In private concerts, the ladies occupy the front seats, and the gentlemen are generally in groups behind, or at the side of them. One should observe the most profound silence, and refrain from beating time, humming the airs, applauding, or making ridiculous gestures of admiration. Very often a dancing soirée succeeds a concert, and billets of invitation distributed two or three days beforehand should give notice of it to the persons invited.

When a lady is going to perform, it is good *ton* for a gentleman to stand behind the chair of the performer, and turn over the leaves attentively, if he knows how to read music.

We ought also after an invitation to a concert, to return a visit of thanks.

SECTION III.

Of Public Shows or Spectacles.

One would be deceived if he imagined that there exist no rules of propriety to be observed in public places, where persons assemble together, and at theatrical exhibitions. There are some general attentions which we should

manifest to those persons whom we meet there. It would be impolite to jostle continually, and in an importunate manner, those near whom we are placed, to step upon the dress of a lady, or run against those who are moving at a moderate pace.

If you go with a party to a theatrical entertainment, one of the gentlemen should carry the tickets to the door-keeper, in older to avoid any embarrassment to ladies on entering; and when the box is open, they should place them in the front row, according to their age, or the consideration they deserve. Young persons should occupy the seats behind, and avoid leaning over too much, to the incommoding of those who are seated in front of them.

Gentlemen should address themselves to the attendants at the boxes, make them a compensation, and place under their care their hats, the cloaks and other articles of dress of the ladies; but we must not hang them over the boxes, whether it is a pocket-handkerchief, a tippet, or a shawl, &c.[18] Nor ought a person to turn his back to the stage; for in that case, he exposes himself to the derision of the pit, and to hear disagreeable remarks. Then the eyes of all would be fixed upon you; your imprudence would excite a disturbance, which would be troublesome to the audience.

When a spectator of kind feelings is affected at the sight of the misfortunes which the heroes of the play suffer, or has his sympathy touched by the virtues which are displayed, nothing can be more annoying to him, than to have constantly at his side, a morose critic, who, without mercy, finds fault with the finest parts of the performance, who sees nothing to his taste, and changes into a place of fatigue and ennui, resorts consecrated to amusement and pleasure. It is, moreover, almost as ridiculous to place no bounds to our applause.

When ladies enter a box where a gentleman is seated in front of them, propriety requires that he should offer his seat, notwithstanding they are strangers to him, and he should insist upon their taking it, even after they have once refused.

If the heat incommodes you, do not open the door of the box, without the consent of those who occupy it.

Be very reserved at the theatre, in order not to trouble those who are near you, and maintain a profound silence when the actors are on the stage, so as not to interrupt the attention of persons who take an interest in the spectacle.

It is improper to pass too positive and severe a judgment on the performance, or the playing of the actors, whether to make a eulogium, or to find fault with them. One may meet persons of a contrary opinion, and engage himself in a controversy which it is prudent to avoid.

Between the acts, gentlemen should ask the ladies if it is agreeable to them to walk in the entries, the saloon, or to take refreshments. They should also ask them if they wish for a journal of the theatre or play bill, or an opera glass; and if bouquets are sold at the door of the theatre, it would be proper and gallant to present them with one.

As soon as you have arrived at the outer door of the theatre, if in a carriage, you must take care to have your party all ready at the very moment the carriage drives up. It is necessary to do the same thing, if you send a porter to get a hired coach.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Duties of Hospitality.

Those of my readers who from habit, or instinct, fear the least appearance of constraint, and perhaps even in this work have found lessons of politeness too strict, and have thought that civilization has augmented them beyond measure, will without doubt apply the same remark to the present chapter. But what in reality are these slight duties of modern hospitality, in comparison to the rigorous ones of ancient times?

When a billet of announcement has informed you, as is customary, that a preceding invitation on your part will bring guests to your house, you must begin and carefully arrange the apartment you intend for them. They should have a good bed, a bureau, a fire in the winter, and everything which can contribute to their comfort; a wash basin, water, glass tumblers, a bottle of cologne, a sugar bowl filled, or rather a glass of water prepared, several napkins, and everything which will contribute to neatness, or elegance, ought to be placed in the apartment.

These preliminaries being arranged, a little before the appointed hour, we must go and wait upon our guests; a domestic should go with you to bring their baggage to the house. You should embrace your friends and congratulate them; express the pleasure you enjoy in receiving them, inquire kindly about the incidents of their journey, and conduct them in an earnest manner, and introduce them, by requesting them to make your house their home; this finishes the second series of the duties of hospitality.

The third class of obligations, is assiduity to your guests; because otherwise, it would seem to them, that their presence was troublesome.

To you belongs the care of kindly offering to their view everything in your house, in the city or in the country, which is interesting; of making parties in honor of them, as dinner parties of their friends, or such as it is presumed will please them; these are obligations of hospitality which you cannot omit. When visitors show any intention of leaving you, you ought affectionately to endeavor to retain them; nevertheless, if their resolution seems immovable, you send to engage their seats at the coach office; you offer them delicate refreshment, and accompany them thither; then, taking leave of them, renew your invitations for another visit, and your regret at not having been able to succeed better in retaining them.

To do the honors of one's own house, it is necessary to have tact, address, knowledge of the world, and a great evenness of temper, and much affability. It is necessary to forget one's-self, in order to be occupied with others, but without hurry, or affectation; to encourage timid persons, and put them at their ease; to enter into conversation, directing it with address rather than sustaining it ourselves.

The mistress of a house ought to be obliging, of an equal temper, and attentive in accommodating herself to the particular tastes of every one, especially to appear delighted that they are with her, and make themselves perfectly at home.

Guests, on their part, should show themselves contented and grateful for the reception that is given them. They should, on departing, give a generous remuneration to the domestics, and immediately after arriving at home, write to the persons who have entertained them a letter of cordial thanks.

The duties of hospitality are of frequent recurrence, fatiguing and troublesome, but they are an indispensable obligation. To omit them, is to be willing to pass for a person of no education, and no delicacy, and in short it is to place people in a most embarrassing and painful situation.

PART IV.

OF PROPRIETY AS REGARDS OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES.

CHAPTER I.

Of Marriage and Baptism.

These two subjects have peculiar right to the precepts of politeness; for the first is the closest of the social relations, and both furnish occasions for the most brilliant fêtes.

SECTION I.

Of Marriage.[19]

We usually make a profound secret of the preliminaries of marriage, because, in case of its being broken off, we are afraid of malicious interpretations; but, after the first words are exchanged, it is necessary to make it known in confidence to a few intimate friends, and those to whom we are under obligations. Afterwards, we give intelligence of it by letter to our relations.

A young man who solicits a lady in marriage, should be extremely devoted and respectful; he should appear a stranger to all the details of business which the two families discuss; he converses with his intended particularly of their future arrangements, her tastes, the selection of a residence, furniture, bridal presents, &c. Avoiding all misplaced familiarity, he calls her *Miss* until returning from church, on the day of marriage; he accompanies her in all assemblies, and shows himself a devoted suitor.

When the banns of matrimony have been published, it is customary at Paris for a bouquet-maker to come to adorn the bride, presenting her with a bouquet. This attention requires a remuneration.

The marriage is declared in two ways. We invite three or four days beforehand persons of our acquaintance to assist in the nuptial benediction, and we specify precisely the time and place where the ceremony will be performed. As to the legal act, which is performed by civil authority, we invite only witnesses and near relations.

If a person is invited to assist at the repast or fête which follows the marriage, we make express mention of it at the bottom of the letters of invitation.[20]

We simply communicate the fact of the marriage to those who have been

invited neither to the nuptial ceremony, nor to the entertainment. Propriety requires that the person invited to the marriage ceremony should come, or send an excuse if it is impossible to be present. A simple letter of announcement to uninvited persons, requires only a visit or two; the first of which is made by card.

Presents are usually the preliminaries of a marriage: those which the gentleman makes his intended wife, are called *wedding presents*; they consist of different articles of the toilet, a set of diamonds, &c. Some persons content themselves with sending a purse containing a sum of money in gold, for the purchase of these things: the young lady then spends it as she thinks proper. The married gentleman is moreover to make a present to each of the brothers and sisters of his intended.

The young lady, on her part, gives some present to her bridemaid: she often presents her with a dress or some ornament, and she receives in her turn from the other, a girdle, gloves, and a bouquet of orange flowers. Since we have spoken of marriage presents, we will add that at Paris the married lady must receive a gift from her sisters and cousins, and that in the provincial towns, on the contrary, she must offer them some token.

We will now pass to the ceremony: after the celebration of the legal act, which may be some days previous, the married couple, followed by their parents, commonly go to the church in the carriages which conducted them to the office where the legal act was performed; for at Paris, whatever situation in life the parties may be in, they never go on foot. The married lady goes in one carriage with her relations and the bridemaid; the gentleman in another carriage with his father and mother, or his nearest relatives.

The acquaintances of the two married persons, repair to the church at the appointed hour; the friends of the gentleman place themselves on the right, those of the lady on the left hand, on seats prepared beforehand.

The marriage train then advances in the following order; the lady gives her hand to her father, or to one who represents him; then comes the gentleman with his mother, or the lady who represents her, and afterwards the members of the two families follow in couples.

When the couple and their relations approach the altar, each of the persons present bows to them in silence; the relations place themselves in the same order as the acquaintances, and before the latter, in the front row, which should be reserved for them. The couple to be married are placed in the middle. Although it is polite always to present the right hand to the lady whom we conduct, or to give her the right when we are next her, yet the bridegroom takes the right of the bride, because, in this act, which is at once religious and civil, man ought to preserve the prerogative which the law both human and divine have conferred upon him; besides, as the bridegroom is to place the nuptial ring on the finger of the bride, it is more convenient for him to be upon the right hand than the left.

When the clergyman puts the questions to them, each should consult their relations by a respectful sign of the head, before answering the decisive *yes*.

The veil is held over the head of the bride by two children whose parents we wish to compliment. The business of the bridemaid who has presided at the toilet of the bride, is to designate their places at the religious ceremony in church; and afterwards, at the ball, is to supply the place of the bride, who can

take no active part; it is usually one of her sisters or a most intimate friend who is chosen for this purpose.

The groomsman, for there should be one or even more, looks well to the list of those invited to the ceremony, to see what persons are absent, because it is the custom of married persons not to make the marriage visit to any one who has been guilty of this impoliteness.

The married gentleman must give presents to the attendants at the church, the poor, &c.

After the nuptial benediction, the married couple again salute the assembly, and then receive the compliments of each one. There are some families in a more humble situation, where the married lady is embraced by all at the marriage ceremony; in those in a higher station in life, she embraces only her father, her mother, and her new relations.

The new husband gives his hand to his wife when returning from the church; nevertheless at dinner he should be placed between his mother and his mother-in-law, while his wife is to be seated between her father and father-in-law.

In case there is a supper, the married couple sit next each other.

The married lady opens the ball with the most distinguished person in the assembly; she retires privately, accompanied by her mother, and one or more near relations whom they wish to compliment.

The newly married couple make marriage visits in the course of a fortnight, in a carriage, and in full dress. They should make these visits alone. They leave their cards for those with whom they do not wish to be intimate.

Such are the received usages in the capital. In the provinces, many of the old and common customs are preserved, as the gift of a laced shirt bosom to the husband by his wife; wedding favors or ribbands for the wife, ribbands of two colors with which they decorate the young persons in the marriage suite, &c.

SECTION II.

Of Baptism.[21]

We must invite several months beforehand the godfather and godmother of the child that is to be baptized. If the ties of blood have given you a right to this onerous duty, you cannot dispense with it. If not, you can seek a specious excuse.

When one has consented to hold the infant at the baptismal font, he should perform this duty in a becoming manner, and according to his own condition and that of the parents of the child.

A present should be given to the mother, and this present usually consists of confectionary. We must also give one to the godmother, a pair of white gloves and comfits; if she is a young person, she commonly receives a bouquet of white flowers in addition. If the godfather wishes to show her any attention, he can add to the presents an elegant and valuable object, such as a fan; but in that case it is good *ton* for the godmother to send in return some rich and tasteful

present. She also has the honor of giving to the child a cap, and often a baptismal robe. To her also belongs the duty of putting the first dress on the child.

The attendant and the nurse have also a present.

The officers of the church, and the poor, should each receive a gratuity proportionate to their condition. We simply put a piece of money into the hands of the humbler persons; but we present the clergyman with a box of presents in which is enclosed a piece of gold or silver.

Persons of a very high class in order to free their friends from these expenses, send their domestics to present their children at the baptismal font. This is a most unbecoming custom; it seems to consider this holy consecration as a slavish ceremony, and destroys at its source the sentiment of respect and affection, that a godson or daughter should inspire in those who have adopted them before God.

At whatever hour the ceremony is appointed, we go to the church in a carriage at the expense of the godfather. He and the godmother pass in first; then comes the infant borne by its nurse or a matron; then the father, who accompanies the other invited persons.

It is the custom in many houses to give, after returning from the baptism, an elegant entertainment, of which the godfather and godmother receive all the honor. Above all, they should give their godchild new year's gifts while it is a child, and manifest their affection during the whole of its life.

CHAPTER II.

Of Duties toward the Unfortunate.

Propriety, the guide of all our relations, cannot remain a stranger to the unfortunate; that which takes possession of all our sentiments, cannot forget to pity. It is in this light that it is peculiarly touching, that it is almost religious, since it even contributes to bind closer this first, this powerful tie of humanity.

SECTION I.

Of Duties toward the Sick, Infirm, and Unfortunate.

When any one of your acquaintance is ill, you should regularly send a domestic, to inquire after their health, every day, or every other day, according to the virulence and nature of the disease. If there is immediate danger, we should send to inquire even twice a day. From time to time, you should send to know whether the sick person can see any one, because in that case you must go and testify in person, all your interest. You should continue to obtain information about their health until their recovery or death.

Our visits to the sick should be very short, silent, and reserved. We should address to them words of interest in a low voice, and speak softly to the member of the family who takes charge of them. We ask him who is his physician, what is the treatment; we urge every motive of consolation and hope; we ought hardly to reply to the questions the person in attendance asks, with regard to our own health, or business, and we retire reiterating the proofs of our interest. If the person is convalescent or only indisposed, you address a thousand questions concerning their complaints; you sympathize with them, praise their patience, and describe to them the pleasant image of returning health. You must be on your guard not to say that you find their features much changed, that their recovery may be slow, &c.

To speak these truths is very mal-apropos, and with reason; you would pass for having an unfeeling heart, or, rather, a limited understanding.

When sufferings and troubles assume a virulent aspect, and resist all the efforts of medical skill, they are infirmities indeed, and a silence the most absolute and rigorous with respect to them, should be observed.

Not only ought you never to speak to an infirm person of his misfortune, but you should also carefully avoid mentioning any person who is afflicted in the same way, and of thus alluding indirectly to his own case.

The only occasion when this is allowed, is where you can make it appear to him that the comforts of which he is deprived are not so permanent but that you have experienced similar inconveniences from the same cause. Thus to a lame person, you might say that you yourself are fatigued with walking, that your own legs are not firm, &c. If the infirmity is not too visible, and the poor subject speaks to you of it, assure him earnestly that you should not have observed it. If

he complains to you, offer him motives of consolation, and take care that you change the subject of conversation before he does, for you might make him think that you are importuning him about his malady. Finally, do all in your power to comfort him. If he is afflicted with imperfect sight, place objects near him, but without affectation, and without having the air of making him think that he requires your assistance, neither permit him to thank you. If he is troubled with deafness, you must not speak unreasonably loud; bring back the attention of the unfortunate person to the subject of your conversation by skilful and delicate transitions, and not abruptly say to him, *We were speaking of such a thing*. This is much trouble, perhaps you will say. Trouble to console people! Why, you take more to please them!

Persons who are reduced in circumstances, keep up in their misfortune (at least in society) their habits of opulence; and to manage with such persons requires not a little skill.

If they invite you to their frugal repasts, if they offer you any presents, let not the fear of occasioning them expense, induce you to refuse with warmth, and with obstinacy; you would wound them deeply. Accept them, and seek an opportunity of repaying with interest, these proofs of their politeness. Do not speak to them first of their sad situation; but if they introduce the subject themselves, receive their confidence with a respectful and affectionate attention. Show how much you are affected with that which grieves them, and without forgetting discretion, endeavor, in appearance at least, to render them confidence for confidence.

SECTION II.

Of Funerals and Mourning.

When we lose any one of our family, we should give intelligence of it to all persons who have had relations of business or friendship with the deceased. This letter of *announcement* usually contains an invitation to assist at the service and burial.

On receiving this invitation, we should go to the house of the deceased, and follow the body as far as the church. We are excused from accompanying it to the burying-ground, unless it be a relation, a friend, or a superior. If we go as far as the burying-ground, we must give the first carriages to the relations or most intimate friends of the deceased. We should walk with the head uncovered, silently, and with a sad and thoughtful mien. Relations ought not, from considerations of propriety, to give themselves up too much to their grief. You will owe a visit to persons who have invited you, if you have not been able to accept their invitation. If you have attended the ceremony, then they are the ones that owe the visit.

At an interment or funeral service, the members of the family are entitled to the first places; they are nearest to the coffin, whether in the procession, or in the church. The nearest relations go in a full mourning dress. It is not customary at Paris for women to follow the procession; and, nowhere do they go quite to the grave, unless they are of a low class. A widower or a widow, a father or mother, are not present at the interment, or funeral service of those whom they

have lost. The first are presumed not to be able to support the afflicting ceremony; the second ought not to show this mark of deference.

There are two kinds of mourning, the full and the half mourning. The full mourning is worn for a father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, husband, wife, brother and sister. It is divided into three periods.[22] For the first six weeks, we wear only woollen garments; in the six weeks following, we wear silk, and the three last months, we mingle white with the black.

Half mourning is worn for uncles, aunts, cousins, and second cousins. The first fortnight we wear black silk, and the last week, white mixed with black.

Custom requires that a woman should wear mourning for her husband a year and six weeks, while that of a widower is only six months. This difference, which may appear singular, is founded upon reasons of convenience and social relations.

In the three first months of mourning for her husband, a woman wears only woollen garments; the six first weeks, her head dress and neck-kerchief are black crape or gauze; in the six following weeks, they are white crape or linen. The next six months, she dresses in black silk; in winter, gros de Naples; in summer, taffetas. Head dress, white crape. The three last months, she wears black and white, and the six last weeks, white only.

The mourning on the death of a wife, is a black cloth coat without buttons,[23] dark shoes, woollen hose, black buckles, and a sword-knot of crape, if the person carries one. At the end of six weeks, we may wear a black coat with buttons, black silk hose, silver buckles, and a black ribband upon the sword. The half mourning of the three last months is a black coat, a sword and silver buckles, white silk stockings, and a sword-knot of black and white.

It is altogether contrary to propriety to select for yourself at the shops the articles of mourning, to have them made in your presence, or to make them yourself; and, for a fortnight at least, and sometimes even for the six first weeks, ladies ought not to sew, even while receiving their relations and intimate friends, so much are they supposed to be depressed by their affliction.

During forty days we do not leave the house, except to go to church; it would be very improper to visit, dine out, or go to any assembly during the first mourning. When this time has expired, we make visits of mourning, and go out a little more, but we cannot yet appear in public promenades, at spectacles or balls; we cannot sing, even at home. It is only at the time of half mourning that we resume by degrees our former habits of life.

For ten days at least, after the death of a very near relation, it would be very reprehensible for people whose profession recalls ideas of pleasure, as musicians, or dancing masters, to return to their employment.

In full mourning, we should wear neither curls nor perfumes. To be present at a funeral, or even to look at one passing, are forbidden at this time. Attending a funeral service, other than that of a relation, is equally prohibited. Excepting during this period, it is impolite not to attend when invited to the funeral service of your acquaintances. You should appear there in mourning. At the funeral service, as well as at the interment, the male relatives go first, and then those invited; the female relatives go next, and are followed by other ladies.

If we marry a person who is in mourning, we put on black the day after our marriage; the time preceding is reckoned as if the mourning had been worn. On the contrary, if we ourselves are married again at a time when the death of a

relation by our former marriage requires this sombre dress, we leave it off immediately, since our new union annuls the former alliance.

Visits which are paid to persons in mourning, are called visits of condolence. In making them, we observe silence, and never inquire about their health; this would be out of place. A gentleman offers them his hand, a lady embraces them, even though they are but slightly acquainted. We refrain from conversing on too gay or personal subjects.

If we are at a distance, we testify by letter our sympathy in the misfortune which afflicts them. Their grief cannot excuse them from answering us, but it is not immediately necessary.

With this subject, we shall conclude our treatise of politeness; hoping that, having arrived at this point, our readers may say, 'Without any doubt the work is full and methodical;' we shall not dare to flatter ourselves with more, but this is enough, for it is being sure that our labor has been useful.

We trust then that we have rendered an essential service to youth, in making them acquainted with these rules, which have become so necessary; in truth, politeness, on which at the present day we pride ourselves, is a virtue which we ought never to renounce, since it gives to the intercourse of life, that sweetness, pleasure, elegance and charm which can be truly felt only by those who possess it. As the intellectual Madam Lambert has said, 'Politeness is the desire of pleasing those with whom we are obliged to live, and in a manner causing all around us to be satisfied with us; superiors, with our respect; equals, with our esteem; and inferiors, with our kindness.'

Footnotes

1. That grace, which is more beautiful than beauty itself.—*T.*
2. The directions which here follow, are obviously intended for those who profess the Catholic religion; but most of them are also applicable to other denominations of Christians.—*T.*
3. This refers to the usage in Catholic churches, in which the consecrated or holy water is kept in a vase, appropriated to the purpose, near the entrance and in other parts of the church.—*T.*
4. These directions are more particularly applicable to Catholic churches in foreign countries, where it is not the general custom, as in the United States, to have pews. The whole floor is an open area, and supplied with chairs; each person, during service takes two, one of which he sits in, and places the other before him to kneel upon. This custom of using chairs, however, is not universal even in Europe; and the author observes, in a note, that it were to be wished that in all parts of France they would adopt the custom observed at Havre, Dieppe, and other cities of Normandy, where, instead of having chairs, the churches are furnished throughout with fixed seats or benches, by which means the service is conducted with much more order and decorum.—*T.*
5. This latter direction is more particularly applicable to Catholic usage.—*T.*
6. This is an allusion to the idiom of the French language, and is inapplicable in English.—*T.*
7. As washing the feet, cutting the nails, &c.
8. Young people who become bald, should not hesitate to have recourse to wigs. Nothing more saddens the appearance, than those bald skulls, which seem always to invite the observations of the anatomist.
9. As to the means of obtaining consideration, in performing the duties appertaining to our station in life, see the following chapters.
10. This has reference, of course, to Catholic countries only.
11. A kind of military cap.
12. These remarks have particular reference to Catholic countries and forms, but may many of them be applied to other denominations.
13. When this accident happens to any one, you must appear not to perceive it.
14. The examples in the original, are the final letters of the words, *tabac*, *sang*, *estomac*. In English, some persons are as scrupulous in the distinct pronunciation of every letter in such words as *extra-ordinary*, *Wed-nes-day*, &c.—*T.*
15. That a reply may be truly pleasing, it is necessary that he who makes it has a right so to do, and that we may quote it without doing him any wrong; otherwise, we should laugh at the reply, and despise the author of it. There are replies which are pleasing in the mouth of a military man, but which would be ridiculous in the mouth of a civil magistrate. A young lady may make lively and brilliant repartees, which would be insupportable in a woman in the decline of life; as the latter might make such as would be unsuitable in a young lady.
16. See page 137.
17. It is not polite, when the presents are pamphlets, to offer those of which you have cut the leaves.
18. In some of the theatres in Paris, this is however allowed.—*T.*
19. The greater part of the marriage ceremonies here described, are according to the usages of Catholic countries, but some of them are applicable to our own; and it has been thought that it would be interesting to American readers to retain the whole as in the original.—*T.*
20. These letters are usually duplicates, for the invitation should appear to be given by the parents of both the future couple.

21. Most of the observances which follow, as well as those in the section on marriage, have more particular reference to the forms of the Catholic and Episcopal churches.—*T.*

22. Several of the particulars which follow, are not observed in this country.—*T.*

23. It is not the custom among us to dispense with buttons.—*T.*

Transcriber's Notes

Inconsistent hyphenation retained as originally printed (à-propos/àpropos, fire-place/fireplace, re-conduct/reconduct)

Inconsistent and archaic spelling retained as originally printed (visitor/visiter, every thing/ everything, ancle, accessary, bridemaid, inquiet, pantomine, secrecy, synonyme)

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