## THE BLUE BOOK OF ETIQUETTE FOR WOMEN: A GUIDE TO CONDUCT AND DRESS ON ALL OCCASIONS

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The Blue Book of Etiquette for Women: A Guide to Conduct and Dress on All Occasions by Mrs. Charles Harcourt

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### PREFACE.

I believe that it is considered — particularly among writers of the feminine sex — the part of proper modesty to preface a volume with an apology for having written it. I am not disposed to follow this fashion. Whether or not I have acquitted myself creditably I leave to the decision of the reviewer and the reader, and surely the subject calls for no excuse. Although it has been treated times innumerable, there would seem to be always room for an addition to the literature of Good Form.

Five hundred years ago, the great Dutch scholar, Erasmus, wrote an essay "On Behaviour at Meals," and judging from some of his admonitions, the needs of his times in this respect were greater than those of ours. He assures the reader that "it is very rude to blow your nose on the table-cloth," or "to wipe your fingers on your neighbour's coat." The aspirant to good behaviour is urged not to " give dogs bones to crack under the table, or feed the cat, or encourage animals to jump on the table," and above all things, not to lick his plate. Our manners are on a higher plane, but still a writer of the present decade considers it necessary to warn her male reader against taking his jack-knife to the fruit at a formal dinner, the presumption being that on ordinary occasions that article will

be a welcome addition to the paraphernalia of the table.

Believing that all commendable conventionalities are more or less directly traceable to some altruistic or utilitarian principle, I have endeavored to present the fundamental features of Good Form by combining ethics with etiquette.

My chief thought and effort has been to help some of the very many girls who have not had the benefit of proper home training or sufficient experience. "Society," in the restricted sense of the word, I have not considered at all. Its peculiar usages — largely the outcome of caprice — are constantly changing and do not affect the large mass of well-bred and sensible persons who form the representative class of Americans.

My old friend, Sidney Poindexter Beauregard, of Sumter, South Carolina, describes himself as "a horse broker an' a locus preacher." Pressed by the puzzled stranger for an explanation, he elucidates thus: "A horse broker am a man what breaks horses an' mules - dat my sec'lar occupation. De locus preacher - dat my Sabbath offishusness - an' de signification am dis -- de reg'lar preacher, him 'bliged to stick to 'um tex', but de locus preacher, he 'lowed to ramble." In the following pages I have exercised the privilege of the "locus preacher." If I have not altogether lost sight of my text at times, I have certainly rambled to a great distance from it, as, for instance, in the chapter on "The Young Wife." But these little excursions into the field of homely philosophy will, I