

**LESSONS ON MANNERS
FOR SCHOOL
AND HOME USE**

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Lessons on Manners for School and Home Use by Edith E. Wiggin

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"A beautiful behavior is the finest of the fine arts." — EMERSON.

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LESSONS ON MANNERS.

INTRODUCTION.

It is true that good manners, like good morals, are best taught by the teacher's example. It is also true that definite lessons, in which the subject can be considered in its appropriate divisions, are of no little value if we would have our children attain to "that finest of the fine arts, a beautiful behavior."

Such lessons should be as familiar and conversational as possible. They ought to be talks rather than lectures; and the children should be encouraged to do a large part of the talking. Children that come from homes where good manners are taught and practised, will be glad to repeat the precepts of politeness learned in the home circle; and those less favored will not want to be behind in this hitherto unstudied branch. We must remember that many children hear no mention of politeness outside the school-room, and are uncouth and rude, not so much because they choose to be, as because they do not know how to be otherwise.

I have used in my own schools of different grades a series of simple lessons, varying both matter and method according to the age and capacity of scholars. The good results have been marked, not only in the

school-room, but at home and in public places; and years afterwards scholars have expressed their grateful appreciation of this instruction and its value to them in every-day life. I have thought that the publication of these outline lessons might be a help to other teachers also, in the way of offering suggestions and saving time in preparing lessons for their own classes.

For some classes the lessons as arranged in this little book may be too long, for others too short. They are outlines merely, to be filled in and supplemented by each teacher, adding to, taking from, and varying them at her discretion.

It may seem unnecessary to touch upon such simple things as some that are spoken of. The teacher, perhaps, cannot remember when these axioms were not familiar to her; but let her put questions to the children concerning them, and she will find in many schools that to half the pupils she is talking in an unknown tongue. Matters are mentioned which do not concern them now so much as they will a few years later; as, for instance, conduct at places of amusement and in company; but in these things, as in their school studies, boys and girls are learning now for the future.

My plan would be to have a familiar talk with the children one day, drawing from them, as far as it can be done, the rules of behavior which the teacher wishes to impress upon them. When she can illustrate a point by a story, the impression will be deep-

ened. It is well also to speak of acts which have come under the teacher's eye in the school-room, on the play-ground, or on the way to school, and let the children decide whether these were polite or impolite, and why. This will make the whole matter more real to them, and, if they are encouraged to furnish illustrations, they will open their eyes and find them in their own little worlds. We want our children in school, from the youngest to the oldest, to notice a breach of politeness as quickly as an error in recitation. A little girl of five from a wretched family, who had proved an apt scholar in the branch under consideration, one day performed some trifling service for an awkward little new scholar. I shall never forget her look and tone of amazement as she turned to her teacher with, "Why! he didn't say 'Thank you,'"

At the time of the next exercise, I would have the children reproduce from an outline placed upon the blackboard the precepts deduced from the previous talk, not insisting upon any form of words, but encouraging them to use their own. This will be also a good oral exercise in language. If the scholars are old enough, this oral review can be put upon paper, either at this time or for a composition exercise another day. Nothing except practising the precepts will so fix these in their minds.

If the teacher thinks best, a copy of this manual may be placed in the hands of each scholar, and the lesson prepared like other lessons, from the printed