ETIQUETTE, SOCIAL ETHICS, AND THE COURTESIES OF SOCIETY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649021994

Etiquette, Social Ethics, and the Courtesies of Society by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

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AND THE

COURTESIES OF SOCIETY.

"The observances of Etiquette are nowhere more to be desired than in the domestic circle."

LONDON:

WM. S. ORR AND CO., AMEN CORNER.

DUBLIN : J. MCGLASHAN, SACKVILLE STREET.

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INTRODUCTION.

A NEW WORK ON EXECUTIVE! What does it contain? Much, my friend; it professes to analyze those traditionary laws which, although blended, are yet separate, and bear expressly on such usages as exercise a great influence on the right ordering of society.

Concerning such laws, it is equally my privilege and my pleasure to speak. Although occasionally varying, like the shifting hues which diversify the gorgeous plumage of many an exotic bird, they are intrinsically the same. Change they will in matters of small import, because fashions ever vary. A visiting card may be at one time large, at another small; now simple, and anon elaborately embossed. Trifling changes may take place in modes of introduction and other minor particulars; but all observances of essential consequence bear on them the impress of duration.

Something higher, too, has been attempted in these essays, than merely the explanation of conventional usages; they are designed to show how much domestic happiness depends on a due regard to the little politenesses of life,—how much real misery is occasioned by

their neglect.

The furtherance of whatever is amiable and considerate in youth, by occasional references to a higher source of action, has also been kept in view; and perhaps it will be impossible to close this brief introduction to a volume on Etiquette more appropriately than in the words of the inspired penman, who enjoins all Christians, whether rich in years, or just starting with eager steps in the race of life, whether of high degree, or among the lowly of the earth, to "be pittiful," and to "be courteous."

The public demand for this work having exceeded the most sanguine expectations of the Publishers, another edition has been called for, and is now issued with such alterations and improvements as were thought necessary.

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ETIQUETTE.

CHAPTER I.

DEFINITION OF ETIQUETTE-LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION, AND DINNER PARTIES.

ETIQUETTE may be defined as a code of laws that binds society together,—which, viewless as the wind, yet exercises a vast influence on the happiness of mankind. Imagine not that you can be favourably received without some acquaintance with the details of etiquette, nor regard it as a matter of no importance. Etiquette was instituted during the days of chivalry; and, although modified as years passed on, yet, when upheld by sincerity, good sense, and good taste, it is an important element of social existence.

First, then, with regard to Letters of Introduction. Let it be assumed that you are come to reside in a new neighbourhood-a stranger; and that friends, feeling for a stranger's loneliness, have obtained for you letters of introduction which may prove either valuable or agreeable. This, of course, involves considerable responsibility on the part of your friends, and requires that you should be found, in every respect, deserving their confidence.

If the letters thus given are on business, deliver them without delay. If they are intended as friendly introductions, send them in an envelope with your eard. Be careful not to act otherwise, lest you place yourself, and the gentleman or lady to whom they are addressed, in an unpleasant predicament.

Imagine the awkwardness of taking such persons unprepared! You, as a perfect stranger, call upon strangers in ignorance of their social habits; interrupted in some employment, the letter may be somewhat coolly received. You, meanwhile, wait like a culprit while the letter is being read, looking somewhat foolish,