

two, he exclaimed joyfully, "Now I have two daughters."

Yet Philippe had his doubts about the change in "Berthe's" life. Work in Marseille was difficult to find, and it was ill paid. Her character was weak. He was poor and his friends were all poor. . . .

Suddenly, in the midst of new creative activity, Philippe was stricken with typhoid fever. Meningitis developed; and after suffering atrociously, he passed away in a *maison de santé*, with his old mother and Marguerite Audoux by his death-bed.

AMY WELLINGTON.

## Being a Gentleman

*A Renaissance Courtesy Book; Galatea of Manners and Behaviours; by Giovanni della Casa. With an Introduction by J. E. Spingarn. Boston: The Merrymount Press. Price \$3.00.*

**B** EING a gentleman always has been and probably always will be a difficult business, especially for those who are not gentlemen. And even for those who are, it is perhaps at best only a *carrière ouverte aux talents*, a mere opportunity to become the vastly more polished agreeable and humane creature which the perfect gentleman is, according to the best authorities.

One of the best authorities always has been, and in its present well printed form always will be, the *Galatea* of the Archbishop of Benevento, first printed at Venice in 1558, and at London done excellently in English by Robert Peterson of Lincoln's Inn in 1576. And the first reflection upon reading the volume is the comforting one that three centuries and more have not made the task of manners and behaviours more difficult, that at any rate it is no harder to be a gentleman now than it was then.

The amazing thing about the book is its absolute contemporaneousness. Giovanni della Casa could dine out to-night in New York and find himself perfectly at ease. If the talk at dinner came upon the great war, the Archbishop would be interested when someone complained of the disillusion the year had wrought, and asserted that the world had apparently relapsed into a barbarity which we all believed it had outgrown. He, with his Renaissance memories, might offer the comment that you cannot outgrow a thing which has never existed, and that barbarism has always been tempered with gentleness, sophistication and urbanity; he might, but for the fact that it would be bad manners, for proof point to the copy of his book lying on the drawing-room table, and ask whether any reader had felt transported to a savage age.

The *Galatea* is less concerned than are modern books of etiquette with the technical and concrete details of good manners. These are indeed dealt with briefly, and the newspaper writer might possibly clip a quarter-column of quaint and unimportant instances of "queer customs." But the greater part of the philosophic discourse concerns itself not with mere rules as to how to feed prettily, but with the graces and charms of manners, with things, in short, beyond that necessary minimum of breeding which is supposed to be everyone's. Of course even in these regions the recommendations of the author are obvious (could one with self-respect admit that any recommendations as to how to be a gentleman are other than obvious?), but they make amazingly good reading and seem as fresh, in their applicability to one's friends, as they could ever have seemed.

his rareness which gives value to his kindly, humorous, tolerant urbanity. The Archbishop would scarcely care to say a thing was wrong, he prefers to call it in bad taste:

"Neither in sporte nor in earnest must a man speake anything against God or his Saintes, however witty or pleasant so ever the matter may be. Neither must he talk of any filthy matter, albeit a man would take a pleasure to hear it; for it ill becomes an honest gentleman to seeke to please, but in things that are honest."

It is submitted that no one ever set manners above morals more agreeably. The conviction grows upon one while reading that there is no modern social problem with which a gentleman of Renaissance Italy could not easily cope.

"It ill becomes a man," he says, "when hee is in company to be sad, musing, and full of contemplation, and albeit it may be suffered perchance in them that have long beaten their brains in these Mathematical studies which are called (as I take it) the Liberall Arts: yet without doubt it may not be borne in other men. For, even these studious fellows, at such times, when they be so ful of their Muses: should be much wiser to get themselves alone." The parenthetical clause "as I take it" is, from the point of view of style, as delicate and snobbish an avoidance of classification of oneself as "literary" as any amateur writer of the very highest social position could accomplish to-day.

One of the most famous modern definitions of a gentleman is Mr. Oliver Herford's, "a man who never hurts anyone's feelings—unintentionally." With this the Archbishop would agree, as far as it went. But he would think that Mr. Herford's "nature's" gentleman was only doing half his duty. He would say that while he appreciates and praises those merits of the heart which are intrinsic in the perfect gentleman, he thinks no wrong of the sophistication which avowedly aims at pleasing. Indeed, the essence of his philosophy is merely that good manners should consciously be used to make the world a pleasanter place.

Some of our own questions as to exactly what does make it a pleasanter place are evidently world-old. It is with a kind of terrified fascination that a modern sufferer from the tellers of stories reads the Archbishop's pages in which he deals with these pests. A great part of the book is devoted to suggesting how one may talk agreeably and in good taste. That good talk was, on the whole, the thing which chiefly made life pleasant in those Italian Renaissance days is so much to be gathered from these rambling quaint pages that it fairly makes one envious. By comparison our modern social scheme of pleasure seems so Oriental; instead of amusing ourselves, we seek other people and things to amuse us. We do not even try to talk well; we go to the play and let someone like George M. Cohan talk for us, and even sometimes think he does it well.

The pleasure to be found in the *Galatea* resides not only in its matter but in its manner, in the excellent phrasing of Robert Peterson of Lincoln's Inn *Gentlemen*. No more pleasant serviceable maxim to take on one's social way could be found than this concerning jesters, that they "must bite the hearer like a sheepe but not like a dogge. For if it pinch, as the bite of a dogge, it shall be no more a jeste but a wrong."

The Archbishop would have known what to say to the "simple-lifers." His faith is in civilization, his belief in taste and his hope in manners. "If man go backe," he says, "to those fashions and manners our first fathers did use, the world then by little and little would come so about that we should feede upon acorns again."

When the war is over and we start to reconstruct the world afresh the Archbishop will not be bad reading.

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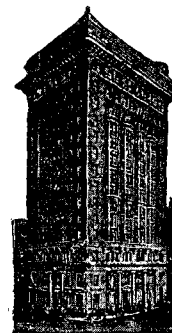
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