

Good Manners

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ONE of the most palatable, if not most nutrient, fruits of civilization is good manners. I do not know that politeness or courtesy was in the mind of Moses when he wrote the Ten Commandments. But the man who does not use profane or vulgar language, who does not indulge in mean or slanderous gossip, who honors his parents, who respects his neighbors' privacy and property, has the foundation of good manners. Cornelius Nepos, the Roman biographer who was a friend of that polished gentleman, Cicero, said that the success of a man's career depends upon his manners—*mores cuique sui fingunt fortunam*. One of the great English champions of courtesy was William of Wykeham, who six hundred years ago founded the famous Public School or College of Winchester. An interesting account of the respect which is paid to custom or manners at Winchester will be found on another page. Every schoolboy—at least every English schoolboy—knows that Wykeham's motto was, "Manners makyth man."

It cannot be said that good manners have yet become a marked characteristic of the American people. We are, on the whole, honest, efficient, philanthropic, and willing to help in a crisis; but we are inclined to ignore the value of finenesses of behavior. We seem to think that nicety of manners is a superficial quality almost indicative of weakness. Consider some of the phrases that are current in our daily life. There are "road hogs" among our automobilists and "end-seat hogs" in the open cars of our trolley systems. Botanists tell us that our wild flowers are being irretrievably destroyed by greedy picnickers and landscapists that our scenery is being ruined by greedy advertisers.

The trouble that some American tourists have been making in France is due, not to contempt for the French, but to contempt for good manners. An American will sacrifice his life for the French, but he will not sacrifice the amusement he gets from making clownish fun of their depreciated franc. The other day a clubmate of mine, in protesting against a piece of thoughtless *gaucherie* on the part of a fellow-member, said he really thought the first qualification for membership in a club of gentlemen is that a candidate should be house-broken. If

American travelers in France could be house-broken of their habits of "joshing," it would save some international irritations. Every "100 per cent" American who is insistent that we ought to have no foreign entangling alliances, either judicial or financial, because Washington warned us against them, ought to be equally insistent upon the observance of international good manners, because Washington urged their importance. Mr. Charles Moore, of the Library of Congress, has just published through the Houghton Mifflin Company a charming facsimile and variorum edition of Washington's "Rules of Civility and Decent Behavior." The sixty-fourth rule is this:

Break not a Jest where none take pleasure in mirth. Laugh not aloud, nor at all without Occasion, deride no mans Misfortune, tho' there seem to be Some cause.

American tourists might profitably commit this rule to memory.

All that can be said in defense of American bad manners is that we are no more vulgar abroad than we are at home. A moving-picture actor dies whose claim to popular admiration is that he was extremely handsome and made several hundred thousand dollars a year out of his supposed beauty, and a mob of curiosity seekers riot over his coffin, in their pushing and struggling for a place of vantage, so that the police have to be called in. There is nothing immoral in this. It is the simple result of bad manners.

Among the rights of man is not included the right to elbow and shove other people and step on their toes. Thomas Jefferson is the patron saint of democratic equality. But, while he bitterly fought against aristocratic despotism, he never advocated the abolition of good manners. He was a democrat in politics, but an aristocrat in personal relations. One of the most instructive paragraphs in the recently published "Life and Letters of Thomas Jefferson," by the Englishman, Francis W. Hirst, is the following:

His manners, wrote his grandson, were of the polished school of the Colonial government—courteous and considerate to all, never violating any of those minor conventional observances which constitute the well-bred gentleman. When Randolph [Jefferson's grandson]

as a lad was out riding with Jefferson, they met a negro, who bowed. Jefferson returned the bow. Randolph did not. "Turning to me, he asked: 'Do you permit a negro to be more of a gentleman than yourself?'" Once during his Presidency he was returning on horseback from Charlottesville with a company of friends whom he had invited to dinner. Most of them were ahead of him. When Jefferson reached a stream over which there was no bridge, a man standing there asked to be taken up behind and carried over. After they had crossed Jefferson's companion asked the man why he had allowed the other horsemen to go by without asking them for this favor. He replied: "From their looks I did not like to ask them. The old gentleman looked as if he would do it and I asked him." He was much surprised to learn that he had ridden behind the President of the United States.

These observations on the value of good manners have been suggested by thinking upon the life and death of another great American democrat and great American gentleman—President Eliot, of Harvard. Much has been said about the profound influence he exercised upon American education. No doubt his place in history will be that of one of the foremost educators of his time. He made many valuable and original contributions to the science and art of teaching. But so far as I am concerned his greatest influence was in the field of manners. I knew him only slightly, I met him in his own home only once, and I heard him speak not more than half a dozen times. But it seems to me that the most significant tribute to his character is that of an educational colleague, Dr. Hunt, Professor Emeritus of English at Princeton: "Never have I seen a more signal example of what Matthew Arnold would call 'urbanity,' a more courtly and gracious illustration of the gentleman and scholar."

But Dr. Eliot's high learning and high bearing did not destroy his human sympathy. He was an uncondescending friend of the fishermen of the Maine coast where he had his summer home. His life and works show that a man may be a reformer without self-righteousness, a scholar without pedantry, may be dignified without being pompous, and may possess a sense of humor without being farcical. He was, in a word, an exemplar of good manners. Those who despair of good breeding in this country may take hope when they consider that Charles William Eliot was an American through and through.

A Parliament of Youth

The Meaning of the Y. M. C. A. Conference at Helsingfors

Special Correspondence by FRANK B. LENZ



From Scotland

I WATCHED them arrive. They came from nearly every country under heaven. They came by air, by rail, and by land to Helsingfors, the beautiful capital of Finland. The white-turbaned Christian leader from India, Mr. K. T. Paul, created a sensation by flying from Stockholm. Delegates from Constantinople flew over from Reval, the near-by capital of Estonia. The Chinese delegation came by way of Russia. A special ship carried the American delegates from New York. Twenty American boys came in from Lapland, where they had been vacationing.

The Scotch came in their kilts and bare knees, the Chinese in flowing silk gowns, the Indians in turbans, the Egyptians in red fezes, and the Negroes from America and Africa with shining black faces. Never before had the people of Finland seen such color exhibited in human form. They marveled. They stared. They followed with open mouths. They lined up in front of the

meeting-places and waited for hours to catch glimpses of these strangers.

As I write these lines more than fifteen hundred young men and boys from fifty-two nations are in session at the most remarkable international gathering of the whole summer. The oldest and largest Christian international organization, the World's Alliance of the Y. M. C. A., is holding its nineteenth World Conference here August 1-6. The first World Conference was held in 1855. Eighteen Conferences in all have been held. The nineteenth was planned for Helsingfors in 1913, but was forbidden by the Czar of Russia. This is the first World Conference since the war, and it is being held in a free country that has a republican form of government, prohibition, woman suffrage, and the world's greatest runners!

THE delegates have come from all parts of the globe to discuss and take action on the leading problems facing the youth of to-day. Youth is in revolt. Youth is bewildered, and the Y. M. C. A. is learning why. For two years serious studies have been carried on in Asia, North America, Europe, South America, and parts of Africa to determine what young men and boys are thinking in regard to the problems of nationality, race, sex, home, vocation, and sports. The general subject of the Conference is "Youth Facing the Christian Way of Life in a Changing World." The dominant and unique idea and plan is that youth is actually speaking for itself on a world scale.

Six cultures are represented at the Conference: the Teutonic, the Anglo-Saxon, the Scandinavian, the Slavic, the Oriental, and the Negroid. More than thirty languages are spoken, yet I found three languages only being used as the official means of communication—English, French, and German.

A strong group of well-known leaders are in attendance. Among these are Lord Radstock, of England; Prince Oscar Bernadotte, brother of King Gustav of Sweden; the Metropolitan of the Greek Orthodox Church, of Corfu, Greece; General Chiekel, of the Polish army; Judge Adrian Lyon and Mr. Fred W. Ramsey, of the United States; Judge Fahani, of Cairo; Canon E. S. Woods, of Cambridge; Dr. John R. Mott, newly elected Chairman of the



and Egypt

World's Committee of the Y. M. C. A. as well as General Secretary of the American National Council; Colonel Badelsu, head of the National School of Physical Education of Rumania; Professor R. Dyboski, head of the English Department of the University of Krakow; Archbishop Söderblom, of Upsala; Mr. K. T. Paul, outstanding Christian leader of India; and Dr. Herman E. C. Liu, of the National Y. M. C. A. of China.

DEMOCRACY is at work at Helsingfors. This is one of the features of the gathering. I have just named a list of outstanding speakers, but these men have been listening more than they have been talking. The genius of the Conference is in the method of arriving at conclusions. The entire Conference is divided into fifty smaller groups, with a chairman, interpreter, and secretary for each. A variety of races and nations are represented in each group. Every one of