

So finally, when all is mature, we have the yellow pollen lying around the column in the staminal enclosure, and the violet is ready and waiting for her insect visitors. We can imagine that at this supreme moment the flower is freshest, her colour brightest, her scent strongest, and her honey sweetest. And her wiles succeed; the insect is attracted, he settles on the drooping stem and passes over to the upper petal; he does not even notice the barricade of the sepals which checked the little flies. Directed by the "honey guides" he probes about to find the honey so carefully hidden in the most inaccessible spot. As he dives down into the pouch with his proboscis his head perforce presses on the bird-head knob, the kink in the column gives, the staminal box is forced open, and out falls the yellow pollen covering the searching insect. But he does not mind, for he has found the honey and is well content, and away he flies carrying the pollen with him. Pleased with his success he alights on the next similar flower, and again directed by the honey-guides he probes for honey. Again his head presses the knob, necessarily smearing it, at the same time, with some of the golden grains which he has brought with him; again the kink gives, and a shower of pollen rains out, and he is once more sprinkled. And so the day passes. Flower after flower attracts the insect by colour, form, and scent; yields up her honey, receiving in exchange a smearing of

another's pollen, and sends on her own pollen to do the same kind office for a neighbour. By these means her seeds get fertilised, for the pollen grains lying on the knob of the column grow out each into a long minute tube, which finds its way right down the green column, past the kink, into the ball-like case of unripe seeds, and there touches and fertilises every tiny seed.

But all this, the little ears of the sepals, the attractive colour and scent of the petals, the pouch guarding the honey of the stamens, the careful treasuring up of the pollen in the inner box, so that there shall be no waste and no objectless scattering, the curious lid of this box, and the spring in the column which opens it, is but a part of the great cunning of the violet. She shows her clever foresight yet more clearly after her purple flowers have faded, and in a very quiet, unobtrusive, deep way. It is in the late summer that she begins new preparations; it seems as if experience has taught her that all these arrangements may fail, in fact that they frequently do fail, and from no fault of her own; for instance, if no insect comes to visit her, in spite of her allurements, then all her elaborate care is thrown away. But she has no mind to allow her race to diminish if she can prevent it, and so her cleverness helps her once more. She produces, deep down by her roots among her leaves, tiny flowers which have no colour, no scent, and no honey, and which never open to the light of day. These little green, bud-like

flowers are almost always overlooked by those who do not specially know of them, so small and insignificant are they, and yet they are more to be depended on to produce fruitful seed and propagate their kind, than are their showy predecessors. Inside the green buds are the essential organs, the stamens and the unripe seeds; the purple petals are now seen to be not a necessity any more than the beautiful bridal dress we spoke of earlier. This time the violet trusts to no outside agency, but keeps the whole of the arrangements within her own control. The pollen grains of the wee stamens develop little tubes *in situ*, and so reach the seeds lying below them, fertilise them, and thus reproduction is necessarily secured. Probably the offspring resulting from this self-fertilisation are not as strong and vigorous as those derived from parents less closely allied, but that is a secondary consideration even if it could be proved to be true. The violet is one of those clever beings who manage to have two strings to their bow; one may not be as good as the other, but both cannot fail her, and offspring are at any rate secured.

Now that the full wiliness of the violet has been exposed, it must be obvious that to liken her, as Hood did, to a nun, whose very profession is self-obliteration, retirement and self-sacrifice, was a very far-fetched comparison; and that, in reality, prudent worldly-wisdom is the key-note of the violet's character.

THE GUEST AND GUEST-CHAMBER, AND ETIQUETTE BETWEEN GUESTS.

By S. F. A. CAULFEILD.



To be thoroughly well-bred, and consequently an agreeable hostess, it is essential that you should mentally exchange places with your guest, and endeavour to realise how you would feel if in his or her place, and how you would like your hostess to act. To do this in a satisfactory way you must not suppose yourself to retain all your own individual tastes, nor that you retain possession of your youth and health. You must imagine yourself at their age, young or old, and in, it may be, a less robust condition, remembering all the various circumstances of their home-life. It is not often that you entertain absolute strangers, and thus you must be more or less acquainted with their habits and tastes. In any case, much must be obvious at even a first glance to a person with ordinary powers of discrimination. Make due use of any such power which you possess if you ever play the rôle of hostess. Much delicacy of feeling and the utmost tact are essential in one on whom so much of the comfort of others must depend.

But, even without endeavouring to exchange your identity and special individuality of character with your guest, just as you are, consider how little you would like to be forced to take your recreation in things that give you no pleasure, able and strong as you may be to take part in them. How tiresome to be obliged to play tennis when you might wish to take a ride or long drive and pay visits, when a walking expedition with some

of the juniors would have been more congenial. To be obliged to go to some dull dinner-party when you would have preferred a game of billiards, or a little music at home with those not enlisted to fill a vacant place. I say "forced" and "obliged," because the least degree of preference betrayed on the part of the hostess as to the disposition and pairing-off of her guests must be carefully noted by them, and her slightest fancy gratified, a rule that must ever be held as that of "the Medes and Persians."

If on the contrary, however, you, as the entertainer, only remember that you have the enjoyment for a brief season in your hands of persons older and less robust than yourself, and whose tastes in any case may differ from your own, how careful you should be to represent and prove your house to be essentially "Liberty Hall" to them. Beware of pressing upon them the most agreeable plans for the day as regarded from your own point of view. Try to divine theirs lest they, for courtesy sake, should accept suggestions that must only prove a weariness and worry to them. Your first thought should be the personally-agreeable entertainment of each, and to ensure their absolute freedom. That they should be deprived of the liberty of choice because loth to appear ungracious in the light of a so-called "spoil-sport," and thus to lose the benefit of the brief relaxation from professional work or home-duties, would be to a kindly hostess a subject of regret. Be thoughtful before inviting your friends to provide suitable entertainment for each, making them to feel, beyond all possible mistake, that they are absolutely free, and that in availing themselves of that freedom they are pleasing you in the surest way.

Are your guests persons of small means, obliged to walk or have recourse to an omnibus, then driving will be a treat to them. Do they live in a city, then the garden will prove

a charming refreshment. Are they advanced in life, then quiet vegetation rather than a round of gaieties will be the more congenial. Are they young and strong, but without the means to enjoy much of society, then give them as much of it as may be within your power.

It is usual to announce at breakfast, when all are assembled, the programme you have arranged for the day's entertainment for the benefit of any who might like to avail themselves of some part of it. At the same time invite all present to make their own choice for morning or afternoon.

You may have a garden-party, a cricket or tennis-match, or a meet to see, and possibly you may be able to place horses or "trap" at their disposal. Or you may have shopping to do in the country town, or visits to pay, and you should offer places for two or three in your carriage. In case of your being accompanied in your visitings you may offer to take in one of your guests, and the rest may take a ten minutes' drive (if the horses be fresh) and return for you. Perhaps you are to have a tennis-party and tea in your own grounds, for which you and most of your guests will reserve your strength. In any case, invite them to make their own plans and leave them to talk them over in your absence. Some may prefer a quiet day in the home domain, book in hand, or with a friend who seeks repose; and unless it be evident that the hostess desires your companionship on any expedition, or that you should assist in the entertainment of your fellow-guests, you need not feel any scruple in availing yourself of the liberty accorded you, and may say that you would like to spend a morning or afternoon in the garden.

The hours of the household should be clearly indicated to every incoming visitor, and the housemaid should be made to understand her duties to them all. When the trunks are taken up to the guest-rooms, she should

unstrap them and see that they do not open towards the wall, as this obliges the tired traveller to turn them round. It should be placed on a trunk-stand or else on the seats of two chairs. The maid should offer to unpack the contents and to dress the visitor for dinner. The hour for every meal should be named, and the length of time allowed between the sounding of the dressing and the dinner gong. She should also inquire at what hour the visitor desires to be called in the morning. On ascertaining this, she should bring in the early tea and the hot water punctually, lay the tray on a small table by the bed, open the shutters, or turn the Venetian blinds, and draw back the curtains; empty, rinse, and dry the basin, and prepare the bath if desired. The question of the latter should be settled over-night, for some prefer it before going to bed, and others in the morning, and some like it warmer than others. If a bath be taken, a rough bath-sheet must be provided in addition to a Turkish towel, a good-sized huckaback, and a thin face-towel.

The supply of matches must be kept up, and a box of night-lights replenished as required; a saucer containing a little water, and a light placed in it, should be left on the wash-stand every night. There should be a hand candle-stick ready for use also, as the tall ones cannot be carried about the room. The soap should be likewise remembered, and must be a new cake, which has never been used. When the maid goes into the bed-chamber to call the guest in the morning, she should take away the skirt of the day dress, to shake out the dust and brush off any sprinklings of mud; and sew on any braid which may have become detached and dangerous, and when she brings back the skirt, she must not forget to return the out-door shoes or boots, which the visitor should always remember to place outside her door at night. As hostess, give directions that ladies' shoes and boots be cleaned with the specially provided composition sold by shoe-makers for kid leather. On no account allow ordinary blacking, suitable for the thick leather of men's shoes, to be applied to those of women. Always provide a bottle of the proper composition for the benefit of your guests, as well as for yourself. I make a special notice of this, because I have often heard exclamations from aggrieved and indignant visitors, little complimentary to the housemaid, who was so ignorant as to have destroyed her best shoes by the use of common blacking.

A small can of hot water must be taken to the guest-chamber before the time for dressing for dinner; and if it be cold weather, the fire should then be lit, and if dark, the blinds drawn, and the gas or tall candles lighted, and any slops must be emptied; which latter should be done again before bed-time.

Every guest-chamber should be supplied with a writing-table, pens, ink, and stationery, as well as with a Bible, with large clear print. There should, likewise, be a stoppered decanter of daily changed drinking-water, and a tumbler; also a small tin of biscuits.

Some people object to linen, some to calico sheets, and as a matter of mere personal preference and fancy, I should give a calico under-sheet, and a linen upper one; and the pillow-cases always of linen. When the housemaid pays her last visit at night, or still better, when she attends on the visitor's arrival, to unfasten her trunk, she should inquire how many blankets are desired, and arrange the bed accordingly; and if cold or damp weather, should place a hot bottle (carefully secured from leakage, and covered in a flannel bag) in the bed.

And now, before giving my readers a few hints on the subject of etiquette amongst fellow-visitors, and that between them and their entertainer, I would draw special attention

to an excellent rule that obtains in some houses, and from which I have myself experienced the greatest comfort. Luncheon should be served at one o'clock, and the hostess should rise not later than at two o'clock, and announce to her guests that she is about to retire for an hour, and that she invites them to do the same—to rest, or write letters in their own rooms, and that at three o'clock they could meet again, and carry out any plans arranged for the afternoon; and that the carriage or horses would be at the door at that hour. That brief season of perfect quiet will always be found invaluable, and complete relaxation from all constraint and all conversation is as desirable for the entertainer as for her visitors.

And now, as regards any etiquette between the guests, or between them and their hostess, reciprocally, I may add a few words of information (at least to some) and advice to all.

It is possible that friends of your own, unknown to your hostess, may be in your neighbourhood, and they and you would wish to meet. Your position in this case would be a delicate one; for nothing could be in worse taste than to intrude any strangers on your hosts; more especially were your friends residents in the neighbourhood. However agreeable, and although in the same condition in life, it might be undesirable for those whose hospitality you were enjoying, to widen the sphere of their acquaintances; and yet they would feel it painful and ungracious to tell you so. Thus extreme delicacy and tact should be observed. As far as my judgment may be accepted in the matter, as one who has made the subject of etiquette a study, I would recommend you to seek a favourable opportunity for calling on your friend; but by no means to invite her to return your visit. If you were to ask the leave of your hostess to receive her, how could she refuse you? And could she do less than give her afternoon tea; and, if coming from any distance to have the horses put up and fed; and the coachman would require refreshment too. In any case, however, it seems to me that, while you may take an opportunity of calling on your friend, it would be scarcely discreet to invite her to pay you a visit in another person's house, to whom she was a stranger. Were she your sister, the case would be different, especially if not a resident neighbour. In that case, you might name her near vicinity to you; and that, with the leave of your hostess, you would walk over to see her, before leaving; or, if driving in that direction, you would ask her kindly to drop you somewhere within easy reach, if she would name the hour when you could be picked up again, *en route* to home. In all probability you would then receive an invitation for her to call, and so obtain a second interview. But such matters need to be very delicately managed, so as not to presume on your hosts' hospitality, nor force their hands.

Sometimes, when there is a large party of guests, it may escape the memory of the lady of the house to introduce all the visitors to one another, who are staying with her. In this case, always remember that they may address each other without *gêne*, as the character of those whose hospitality you are accepting should be a perfectly sufficient guarantee and safeguard that they are, in every respect, suitable acquaintances for you. Of course, a young unmarried girl should not be forward, but rather wait till spoken to by those who are older than herself, and more or less becomingly reserved with the men of the party. Speaking low, and moving about in a quiet, dignified, yet unobtrusive way, she should be always ready and watchful to perform any little kindly act of attention to her fellow-guests: and above all, to her hostess, to whom

she should offer her small services, as occasion may present itself. But specially let her beware of running into the other extreme, and appear to assume the prerogative of "doing the honours of the house." I have been shocked to see girls running about from one visitor to another, and acting as if they were the "daughters of the house," under their mother's directions. If asked to play, do not make an excuse; but, if nervous, choose an easy little piece, and endeavour to play it with taste and expression; and if asked to sing, and you have learnt to do so, do not say you "have a sore throat," or that you "are out of practice," for if you have a sore throat, you should have kept your room; and when invited out for your pleasure, you should have made it your business to practise what you could easily perform, that you might make some little graceful return for the attention shown you.

And now a word of advice to the lady who has opened her house to her friends. Remember that you have invited them chiefly as a kindness and compliment to them, and a pleasure to yourself in the second place. Their comfort and recreation should be your chief object; therefore, do not give them the smallest cause to suspect that you wished to make use of them; and that you invited them to enlist their accomplishments in your service, rather than to obtain the pleasure of their personal society. Thus, if a guest should ask to be excused from playing, singing, or reciting, do not repeat your request; make it cordially, and as if you really meant it, in the first instance, and if refused, never repeat it.

There is much more to which the attention of a young hostess should be directed; but I will restrict my counsels to one more important point, viz., to the subject of their children and their dogs.

Do not take the opportunity of leaving the drawing-room when your children have been brought in, as they should not be committed to the charge of a guest, for of course order would have to be maintained, and the safety of the little ones ensured, as well as of the objects of a delicate character within the reach of their little reckless hands. Some children are too well-trained to need any coercion, but when unruly the poor guest is to be pitied. I have seen her watch chain roughly pulled till it was broken, in spite of all remonstrance; and I have myself been greatly annoyed by ill-behaved and noisy children, who rushed about the room, knocking over a small table, upsetting and breaking a vase full of flowers, and fighting with each other, while the baby, attracted by the blazing fire, made for the grate the moment I let go my hold of its skirt. Half an hour of such responsibility was a time to be remembered, and taught me to remain in my room till the whole party assembled for dinner.

As to the annoyance sometimes occasioned by dogs, in a drawing or dining-room, it is nearly as great as that by ill-trained children, when permitted to molest your visitors. Of course, "there are dogs and dogs," and it is not very often that I have felt myself a victim to that of my hosts'. But I have had sufficient unpleasant experience to make me represent the matter to my readers.

I have known a huge dog to rush at a lady visitor, and place his two paws on her shoulders, so that the brute's face was close to hers. Imagine the agitation such a reception produced, especially as the animal sprang forward with an angry growl. But it is not now of savagery in dogs that I complain at present. It is the annoyance caused at table. They beset the luckless guest, who cannot dismiss them from the room, for contributions from her plate; destroy her dress with the saliva

from their mouths, and paw her to attract attention, tearing any lace upon it with their claws. If not a very large dog, it may jump on her lap, or elect to lie on the outspread skirt of her dress, if it mean to be friendly, which all dogs are not. In all such cases a guest is helpless, and it is the duty of her hostess to attend to her comfort. "Love me, love my dog," is a time-honoured axiom; and, to a certain point, it is certainly expressive of a great truth, of very wide application. But

in its literal sense, it is certainly an exaggeration of the truth. Kindliness and love are not synonymous terms.

And now, having given the young hostess a last and important item of advice, I add a parting word to the guest. Do not enter the breakfast-room in the morning before the lady of the house has appeared. It is always a subject of annoyance to her. Remain in your room, or go into the garden. It is not even expedient to go to the drawing-room before

breakfast, as the maids may still be occupied there. I had a lesson myself, in early youth, which caused me much distress. The breakfast was very late, and I ventured to enter the drawing-room. The housemaid was still there, and speaking with someone; and what was my dismay, when I looked back from the middle of the room, to see my elderly hostess in considerable *déshabillé* without wig or cap, hiding from my intrusive presence behind the door!

SOME OBJECTIONABLE WEDDING CUSTOMS.

By AN OLD LADY.

It does seem strange that neither civilisation, good sense, nor propriety have been able to banish several of the objectionable practices which are made to accompany our marriage ceremonials. It is true we have managed to get rid of some of the boisterous "horse-play" which our ancestors indulged in at such times, and the uproarious drinking-bouts, with which the festivity was too frequently disgraced, are no longer indulged in. There is however still room for improvement, and we trust that before long four of what seem to us to be most unpleasant customs will also be abandoned, and if possible forgotten, as they have nothing whatever to recommend them, possessing neither antiquity of origin, poetical import, nor pleasant results. They are the following: "Throwing the slipper," "throwing rice," the substitution of boy-pages in the place of bridesmaids and fancy costumes.

With regard to the first of these, "throwing the slipper," the practice, as now carried out, is not ancient, and seems to be a modern rendering of the curious old German custom of the bride's throwing away her left shoe as she drove off with her husband. There was of course a scramble for this remembrance of the lady. We do not know what was the exact meaning of the ceremony? Throwing a slipper at, or rather after, the carriage which bears away the bride and bridegroom is probably not more than a century and a half old. As practised at present, it is not only objectionable, but dangerous. We have frequently seen both the bride and bridegroom struck in the face by a badly, or possibly a well-aimed shot. Now surely for the wedding guests as a parting favour to send the bride on her "honeymoon" with a contused wound on her face, or the bridegroom with a black-eye, is a brutal proceeding and a disgrace to a civilised community! This is however not the worst that can result from the stupid practice, for we have heard it related that many years back upon a wedding party leaving Holland House, a slipper which was thrown struck one of the horses, which so frightened the animal that he "bolted," the carriage was upset and the bride killed! That such accidents should happen is not remarkable, but that such a senseless, unmeaning and dangerous custom should still survive is remarkable!

Throwing rice at weddings is quite a modern custom, and does not date back more than forty years. It is a silly, unmeaning, disagreeable and dirty practice. It is unmeaning, because in England, at any rate, we have no poetical associations connected with rice! It is disagreeable, because for a bride and bridegroom to drive away with their hair and eyes full of fine rice-dust, and the grain finding its way down the back and causing annoyance and discomfort can only be amusing to the silly vulgar people who throw the rice. There is no single argument to be advanced in favour of retaining this senseless custom. At

the weddings of the higher classes rice-throwing is seldom seen; and it is left chiefly for the vulgar and foolish to enjoy the nasty practice. In the East End of London the grocers' shops close to churches sell halfpenny and farthing packets of rice ready packed for emergencies, and these are bought up by 'Arry and 'Arriett directly they catch sight of a wedding-party. Indeed, viciousness and jealousy seem chiefly to occupy the mind of the purchaser—not well-wishing or the innocent indulgence in a poetically significant or ancient custom. We remember, on one occasion, in the East End some rice was thrown in the eye of the poor unfortunate bridegroom, with the result that he had to spend his honeymoon in a hospital. It is a well-known fact that there are in uncooked rice many animals so minute as only to be seen under the microscope; what a nasty trick then it is to throw such upon the persons, usually so carefully dressed, of a bride and bridegroom.

We deeply regret the introduction of "boy-pages" in wedding ceremonials. It is quite a new feature, and we cannot help thinking it an objectionable one. The bridesmaids are an ancient, a poetical, and a beautiful institution, and to replace them by boys dressed up in theatrical costumes is bad taste and a complete misunderstanding of the meaning of this portion of the ceremony.

The old-fashioned idea was, that the bridesmaids were the bride's youthful companions or relatives, who dressed her for the wedding; and the writer, when she was a girl, several times took part in such scenes. The selected bridesmaids met together at the house of the bride-elect some days beforehand, and formed a kind of committee of taste, offering suggestions and hints. As the writer was supposed to possess some skill in hair-dressing, to her was entrusted the coiffure of the bride, and fixing on the wreath. We should never have thought of allowing anyone to offer a hand in this, to us, most serious office, and the modern notion of the bride being assisted in her toilette by a servant would have seemed to us an insult to her dearest friends. Of course, we accompanied her to church as the representatives of her maidenhood, and her confidential friends or relatives. Sometimes a girl is very nervous when she is the principal upon such a solemn and serious occasion, and the presence of her most attached female friends are a support to her. Now to exchange all this for boys! boys dressed up too. Oh how unmeaning! Surely boys are quite out of place in such a scene!

We have an intense objection to any theatrical costumes introduced at weddings, yet, unfortunately, this practice is far too common now. We read of "pages" (those boy bridesmaids) dressed in the costume of "Charles II.!" Children dressed in "Kate Greenaways" costume, very pretty costumes no doubt, but a wedding is not a fancy-dress ball or a stage play, and all these things give

an air of unreality to it. Surely, if ever in their lives, a man and woman are in serious earnest, it is on their wedding-day. They are making the most solemn vows before God, and giving the most solemn pledge to one another; and any theatrical display, any "dressing up" in imitation of a past day, any "boy pages," got up in effeminate costumes must be singularly out of place. Even the bridesmaids should be modestly, though becomingly attired. Fortunately, the dress of the bride has not undergone much change, and we hope it never may; and we do sincerely trust that good taste and propriety may assert themselves, and that "boy-pages" and "fancy costumes" at weddings may be abolished; if people like to dress themselves up in a ridiculous manner and "make objects of themselves" they can do so, but let it not be in the House of God when two human beings are making most solemn vows upon which the blessing of the Almighty is being earnestly invoked.

Let it should be thought that we want to do away with all old and curious customs at weddings, we say at once that there are, on the contrary, many which we should like to see revived. The strewing flowers in the path of the bride and bridegroom, as they leave the church, is a charming old custom, now well-nigh given up. Another is the presentation of slips of rosemary; the meaning of this custom is that, as rosemary was also used for funerals, the pair were to live together until one deposited the rosemary on the bier of the other, an emblem of a union, only to end in the grave as the marriage service says, "until death us do part."

The presentation of white gloves is also a pretty custom and dates from very remote antiquity. The writer remembers the custom in Norfolk half a century back.

In some parts of England in the middle ages, the bride was crowned with a garland of wheat upon leaving church. We suggest the revival of this in place of the "rice-throwing," not of course as a substitute for the "bridal wreath."

Garlands were also presented at weddings, which were subsequently hung up in the church. In some parts of Germany this custom still obtains. We have seen some of these garlands which date a long way back.

Now as all of these customs are poetical and thoroughly unobjectionable, it is strange that they should have been abandoned for "slipper throwing," "rice throwing," "boy-bridesmaids," "fancy costumes," and other ostentatious displays of dress or jewellery at weddings. Let us never forget that solemn and beautiful passage introduced into the marriage service:

"Whose adorning—let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."