

of harm, and breaking it might prevent the harm?"

"Harm to oneself?"

"Why, no, I didn't mean that. Harm to another—a helpless person, for instance, knowing nothing about all this."

"I wish you would ask somebody else," said Emmie. "I cannot think what has put the idea into your head. It looks as if someone had told you a story of something real of the kind."

"Perhaps somebody has. O it does not matter, Em. I was merely curious to know how the question would strike you."

"Deep in metaphysics?" asked Harry's voice from behind, and he came close. "What a pair of grave faces!"

(To be continued.)

GOOD BREEDING IN DAILY CONVERSE.



RESPONDING to the wishes of many of those to whom we might very justly apply the honourable title of "Nature's Nobility," yet who, from the force of various circumstances, have not had the opportunity of learning the more or less arbitrary and conventional usages of the highest classes of society, I have entered into the question of many minor rules of "etiquette" in former articles. It is now my desire to supplement these by a few friendly hints to my youthful readers in reference to that good feeling and ever-present desire to please others, without which none of these usages could possibly suffice

to render them essentially well-bred. The rules with which I have endeavoured to supply them—albeit, as I remarked, resting on the best foundation, and owing their origin to the most courteous and amiable of feelings—must ever be regarded as part and parcel of the beautiful garments only that should clothe a living figure. I have known persons whose politeness of manner and elegance, or dignity, of bearing were patent to the least appreciative, and who had so well learnt all the little *convenances* of high society that they were carried out to the letter instinctively, yet who had never sought to look into the origin or needs-be of any one of them. They repeated their lessons as mere parrots, lacking the sympathetic feeling that should have originated such little acts of courtesy. So far, they might be likened to those "whited sepulchres" which "appeared beautiful outward, but within" there was no corresponding loveliness.

And now I come to that feeling which, as the heart and soul, should be found the motive principle—guiding the hands and the feet, inspiring the tongue and expression of the countenance, influencing even the style of the dress, and leading to the study and cultivation of "whatsoever things are lovely and of good report." The poor girl plying her fingers hour after hour in a dressmaker's or seamstress's work-room, the shop-assistant, the domestic servant, or the young clerk at a

desk for the best part of the day, have little opportunity for the demonstration of any knowledge of the rules of "Polite Society." Afternoon visiting and "Dinners in Society" make no demands on their consideration; although neatness, cleanliness, and unselfishness may be marked features in their conduct, when snatching a hasty meal alone, or with a companion in private, in the short intervals of rest from their daily toil. After a somewhat different fashion—necessitated by the circumstances of their position in life—these young people may nevertheless show themselves well bred in the higher sense of the term—that sense to which I now desire to draw their attention.

In the first place, let us consider the use of that "little member" which St. Peter likens to a fire in its tremendous power for evil, if not for good, and to the helm of a great ship, which, small as it is comparatively, can move about so large a body, and direct for safety or destruction all the souls that sail therein. This wonderful instrument is employed by millions of the human race who have never reflected on the responsibility confided to them with it. Indeed, amongst the carefully-instructed in all the branches of a superior education how little attention is paid to the necessity laid on all to watch over this unruly member! Even amongst those who are not only educated but God-fearing, far too little conscience is made of the obligation to pray continually, "Lord, set a watch upon my words and keep the door of my lips."

How often we have heard people boasting that they "always speak their mind." Believe me, this is no "feather in your cap;" under certain circumstances a "fool's cap" would suit you better, for not knowing when to hold your tongue, and when, by comparison, if "speech be silver," "silence is gold." To be truthful it is not incumbent on you to be unkindly, unforbearing, unrestrained, injudicious, and sometimes even brutal. There are many truths best left untold, as even the law-courts will inform you if the "law of kindness" and the obligations of Christianity suffice not to teach you. For the laws of your country on this point inform you that even truths spoken "against thy neighbour" are libels, because detracting from that

"——— good name

. . . which not enriches you,
And leaves him poor indeed!"

There are those who are guilty of telling untruths when it serves their purpose, who are numbered amongst these boastful yet reckless "speakers of their mind," and it is no criterion of sincerity nor of truthfulness of character to intrude your opinion upon others unasked. The old copybook adage tells you that, "If you have nothing agreeable to say, say nothing." Time enough to do so when, by the Divine command, your tongue may be set loose, or "the very stones would cry out," and that is when the authority of the Holy Scriptures is called in question, sacred things are spoken of lightly, the Divinity of your Incarnate God and Saviour is denied, or evil-speaking of others is indulged in. Even in this latter case, silence on your part would tell its own tale with sufficient significance were the defamers too old for your spoken reproofs.

The duty of speaking gently, and that in a double sense—saying gracious and kindly things, studying to make the "soft answer that turneth away wrath," thinking first before making unguarded remarks to persons before whom so to speak would be a want of tact. And "gently" also in another sense—moderating the voice, not bawling like a crier of huxter's wares in the streets, but speaking quietly and distinctly; more than this, never speaking across anyone. Change your place if

you desire to converse with a person divided from you by a third party. The reason for this is obvious—because you would either prevent that third party from attempting to converse with anyone else, or from hearing a word they said, if they did. Besides which, it would bring your face in too close proximity to theirs, and your breath would be blown into their face—a possibility always to be carefully avoided. It is equally ill-bred to hand anything across them, or to pass in front of them, between them and any one else with whom they were conversing. If obliged so to do, always ask to be excused, and pass behind them if possible another time.

The practice of saying, "I beg your pardon" is no evidence of good breeding, nor any compensation for the annoyance of requiring a person to repeat what has been said, just because you have not been attending, and have allowed your thoughts to stray away, and then did not use your brains to guess what you lost from the few words you may have heard, and their context to what had passed before. Young people are much in the habit of using this phrase, and seem to imagine that all the requirements of good breeding are thus satisfied. They are mistaken. Nothing could excuse inattention; and that perpetually recurring and hurriedly spoken "Beg your pardon" becomes exceedingly tiresome to everyone who hears it. Some allowance is made for little schoolgirls who have not yet learnt better manners, but it would stamp persons of mature age as vulgar people.

I think that I have already spoken on the subject of what is called "slang." By many this term is not understood in a sufficiently comprehensive sense. It does not merely convey the idea of low and coarse expressions, but any unmeaning and un-English ones: words employed in a perfectly wrong sense, and intended to mean what a reference to a dictionary would show that they did not mean. For example, the slang use of the words "awful," "jolly," "thundering," and "a oner."

I confess to be but little familiar with the lingo made up of misapplied words, and must only leave those better acquainted with it to distinguish these silly departures from genuine English for themselves.

Still, on the subject of the use of the tongue, I must draw attention to the intrusive manner in which a certain impetuosity of character—if not of vanity and self-sufficiency—leads people to talk-down others who may have been trying to edge in, so to say, some little remark for a considerable time. Quite taken up with their own ideas, and delighting in hearing their own voice, they go on persistently with their own bow-wow, until the patient third party subsides into the background in despair. It is thoroughly ill-bred so to do. Keep your ears open for the first word uttered, and if you have commenced to speak, stop-short at once. If asked to continue what you were going to say, make a little bow and smile, and say, "After you"; but if pressed to speak first, at once comply. It is a matter of politeness to do what you are desired, and not to give people the trouble of repeating their request. Then, so soon as you have made your remark and the answer given (if any were needed), remember that you inquire about your neighbour's observation, so politely held back to give yours precedence.

Supposing that you do not agree with the speaker, at least never contradict. You may say, "Do you think so? I thought so and so, because," &c. In this way a free interchange of thought may be exchanged, and at the conclusion, if still of differing opinions, you might say, "It may be so; perhaps you know best; but I do not see it myself," or some such observation. In suggesting such a winding-up, I do not include a difference of

opinion on the main doctrines of Christianity, such as might be disputed by a "Freethinker," when you would be almost denying your faith in making such a reply. Short of this, always bear in mind any disparity of years between you and your companion, any distinction of class, or of your relative positions in life. It is quite odious to hear little "green girls"—to borrow an epithet from Shakespeare—volunteering their opinions and laying down the law with most intrusive audacity in the presence of persons who have learnt very much more than they, if not in a high school or female college, at least in that very efficient school of a longer life's experience and far greater knowledge of the world. One is reminded of the squeaky crow of some little half-fledged bantling when we hear the crude opinions of some little girl, scarcely out of her teens, pronounced with the emphasis and assurance of a Solomon. When such remarks as these meet no reply, they may be sure that it is no sign that they have refuted the dissentient opinion, but they are deemed unworthy of the trouble that a refutation would cost the listener. "Apt to hear, slow to speak," is an admonition but little regarded. Lay it to heart, my dear young friends, if you have not done so before. It is a joke amongst men that an assemblage of women (of course, not of the highest society) is distinguished by the fact that they all talk together, not one of them listening to any one else! Endeavour to wipe out such a stigma. What is called "maiden modesty" is a beautiful feature in a girl's character, and this modesty is exhibited in a very prominent manner in reference to the use made of this same little member—the tongue. I do not wish it to be inferred that girls are to say nothing: far from it; but that their way of speaking, the language employed, the style of manner, and the readiness evinced to defer to the opinion of others—while suspending their own judgment and restraining all hasty ebullitions of feeling—these are matters of great importance, and I earnestly commend them to your consideration.

The article entitled "The Art of Conversing Agreeably" has given many hints in reference to the use of the tongue, and I must refer the reader to it, rather than repeat myself, to the wearying of others.

The guiding of the hands and feet has already been a subject of consideration in one or more of the articles I have written (with reference to good manners), but I have not yet alluded to the influence upon the countenance of kindly feeling, sweet temper, and openness of disposition. As you can distinguish one flower from another respectively by their external appearance, and know their individual properties, scents, and uses uninvestigated, by their forms and the hues, so the expression of the eyes and the mouth should be a truthful index of the mind and heart by which they are animated. I do not recommend the practice of frequently looking at, and thinking much of, your own face; but I do say that a good lesson worth the learning might often be taught to our girls were a glass held for one moment before a cross, ill-tempered, sulky countenance, and that the owner could realise the destructive effect of an evil nature upon what, it may be, had been created attractive by the Divine Hand of Him "who hath made everything beautiful in His time."

And here, perhaps, some slight digression may be excused from the primary subject of good breeding in our converse with each other, because touching on the point of expression of countenance tempts me to enlarge a little on the influences for good or evil of the whole of our external appearance and condition. Some of God's works, once "very good," suffer from a heritage of disease, which sin alone has entailed upon our race, and over and above this a personal indulgence in sin by

ourselves may have marred His work in our own appearance. We have no right to spoil it, and we sin in so doing. The mere habit of stooping, for instance, injures the spine, and future usefulness is thereby lessened. The practice of reading by a bad light, or straining the eyes by small print or very fine work, is just as reprehensible, or studying too soon after meals, thus impairing the digestive powers, over-walking, remaining in damp clothing and in damp shoes, and so inviting an attack of almost any description of fever and other disease—all this is simply wicked, and if you became a helpless cripple, distorted in form with rheumatism, or seamed with unsightly scars, with a permanent redness in the nose, or bleared and useless eyes, it would be a heritage of sin to you, because you did all that lay in your own power to mar God's work and hinder your future usefulness.

From speaking of the expression of the countenance—as coming within the jurisdiction of the rules of good breeding—I have so far a little exceeded the limits of my subject, but I trust not beyond those of my readers' kind indulgence. Their attention ought to be directed to the fact that carelessness of the well-being of the body, and of its seemly appearance too, is a sin. It shows base ingratitude to the Great Maker of so wonderful a piece of animate mechanism, by which we may carry out all our wishes, filling our own lives and those of others with happiness, and enabling us to perform all those works of duty and benevolence which are essential evidences of a living faith.

Think nothing you say or do, nor your personal habits, nor even the expression of your countenance, a matter of trifling importance. Never make light of those apparently trivial things that enhance the value or multiply the number of those "talents" committed to your care, or placed within the limits of your acquirement, thereby augmenting your influence amongst those around you by the attractiveness of your manners and the seemliness of your whole appearance. Think for a moment. What influence for good would an awkward, slouching, shambling girl, with an expression like an ox or a pug-dog—glum and morose—a loud voice, a short manner, blurring out any crude thought that suggested itself in language embellished with "slang" expressions—what influence do you think such a girl would be likely to have amongst others—refined or unrefined? Ever remember that "ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." When you make use of anything which is merely a loan, you take especial care of it; for it would be a robbery of the lender to render it less valuable than it was when borrowed. Think of yourself thus. Your voice, tongue, eyes, and ears; all your organs, limbs, and general appearance (apart from your intellectual powers), all are "talents" lent to you, to be traded with in the service of the lender. And, believe me, "good breeding"—which demands the careful management of all these "talents," as essential in a merely worldly point of view—that "good breeding" is to be regarded as a very powerful medium, obtaining for you an amount of influence amongst your own immediate surroundings, and that circle of society into which you may be introduced, of the strength and extent of which you are probably little aware.

And now a word or two on the subject of the style of address suitable in speaking to your parents. Of late years there has been a sad falling off in this respect. The "rendering to all their due"—bearing in mind that "the powers that be are ordained of God"—appears to be strangely overlooked. For instance, short answers in monosyllables to your parents are most unseemly. "Yes," "no," and so forth, are rude styles of speech, and

doubly so addressed to those who are over or above you in social position. "Yes, father," or "Yes, papa," is the style suitable to your relative positions; and so also in reference to your mother. See, in my article on "The Art of Letter Writing," what I said respecting the unseemliness of signing yourself "Yours affectionately," instead of "Your affectionate daughter."

To you, my young friends, who are domestic servants I must also give a word of advice. Never speak to, or of, your mistress as "Mrs. —." It is a great piece of familiarity and impertinence. It is an assumption of equality with her own family, friends, and equals, and so far from exalting yourself by so doing, you are only showing yourself ignorant of good manners, and that you were, to all appearance, "dragged up," as I have heard the idea expressed. Say "Ma'am" and "Sir," and do not think that you have lowered yourself in so doing; quite the contrary. They will respect you the more when they see that you are not ashamed of that honourable position in life, called domestic labour, which God's wise providence has assigned you. Again, in addressing single ladies, never say "Miss"; say "Ma'am" (if you be in the situation of a domestic servant). You would not say "Yes, Mr.," if addressing a gentleman, young or old; you would say "Sir." Thus, on occasions when you should say "Sir," you should say "Ma'am." To children yet in the schoolroom, you may say "Master —," or "Miss," and "Miss —," but never after a young lady is out in society. In shops they very properly say "Madam."

Lastly, I am aware that an idea prevails amongst some young people that to be well-bred in speech and manner is often to be insincere. I acknowledge that such a fancy took possession of my own mind at one time. In the fulness of my heart, I once had begun to give an account of the illness of one dear to me, in answer to an inquiry made by a friend met in the street. At the first pause I perceived that to not one word I had said had this friend listened, and without a single expression of sympathy I received a smiling shake of the hand, and the interview was over. My feelings were wounded; I denounced the polite inquiries as false-hearted, and the smiles as an odious varnish, and I determined nevermore to inquire for any one myself, lest I should be suspected of insincerity and hollow-heartedness, unless, indeed, my anxiety were very great and could not be concealed. But I now see that if we be kindly to all, "tender-hearted," ready to "rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep," if we be "pitiful and courteous"—which are duties included amongst all other Christian obligations—we shall inquire after the welfare of those absent who are dear to the friends we meet, and this in all sincerity, and with more or less feeling of sympathy. Assuredly these little acts of kindness and respectful consideration for others are amongst those items included in "Whatsoever things are lovely and of good report."

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