

TABLE MANNERS.

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GOOD manners at the table are of the greatest importance, for one can, at a glance, discern whether a person has been trained to eat well, *i. e.*, to hold the knife and fork properly, to eat without the slightest sound of the lips, to drink quietly, and not as a horse or cow drinks; to use the napkin rightly; to make no noise with any of the implements of the table, and last, but not least, to eat slowly and masticate the food thoroughly. All these points should be most carefully taught to children, and then they will always feel at ease at the grandest tables in the land. There is no position where the innate refinement of a person is more fully exhibited than at the table; and nowhere, that those who have not been trained in table etiquette feel more keenly their deficiencies.

The knife should never be used to carry food to the mouth, but only to cut it up into small mouthfuls, then place it upon the plate at one side and take the fork in the right hand and eat all the food with it. Sometimes a bit of bread can be held in the left hand, and employed to push the food upon the fork. But adults do not need such assistance, yet for children it comes into good play. Be careful to keep the mouth shut closely while masticating the food. It is the opening of the lips which causes the smacking which is so disgusting, and reminds one of the eating of animals in the pig-sty. Chew your food well, but do it silently, and be careful to take small mouthfuls.

The knife can be used to cut the meat finely, as large pieces of meat are not healthful if swallowed as the dog swallows them. At many tables, two, three, or more knives and forks are placed on the table, the knives at the right hand of the plate, the forks at the left. A knife and fork for each course, so that there need be no replacing of them after the breakfast or dinner is served. The smaller ones, which are for game, dessert, or for hot cakes at breakfast, can be tucked under the edges of the plate, and the large ones for the meat and vegetables are placed outside of them. Be very careful not to clatter your knives or forks about your plates, but use

them without noise. When passing the plate for a second helping, lay them together at one side of the plate.

Soup is always served for the first course, and it should be eaten with dessert spoons, and taken from the tips of them, without any sound of the lips, and not sucked in the mouth audibly from the side of the spoon. Never ask to be helped to soup a second time. The hostess may ask you to take a second plate, but you will politely decline. Fish chowder which is served in soup plates is said to be the exception which proves this rule, and when eating of that it is correct to take a second plateful, if desired.

Drink sparingly while eating. It is far better for the digestion not to drink tea or coffee until the meal is finished. Drink gently, and do not pour it down your throat like water turned out of a pitcher.

When seating yourself at the table, unfold your napkin and lay it across your lap in such a manner that it will not slide off upon the floor. Do not tuck it into your neck like a child's bib. For an old person, however, it is well to attach the napkin to a napkin hook and slip it into the vest, or dress button-holes, to protect their garments. Or, sew a broad tape at two places on the napkin and pass it over the head. When the soup is eaten, wipe the mouth carefully with the napkin, and use it to wipe the hands after meals.

Finger-bowls are not a general institution, and yet they seem to be quite as needful as the napkin, for the fingers are also liable to become a little soiled in eating. They can be had quite cheaply, and should be half filled with water and placed upon the side table, or butler's tray, with the dessert, bread and cheese, etc. They are passed to each person when the dessert is placed upon the table. A leaf or two of sweet verbena, an orange flower or a small slice of lemon is usually put into each bowl, to rub upon the fingers. The slice of lemon is most commonly used. The finger-tips are slightly dipped into the bowl, the lemon juice is squeezed upon them, and then they are dried softly upon the napkin. At dinner parties and luncheons they are in-

dispensable. The mouth is never wetted from the finger-bowl in society, but in one's own home, where the finger-bowls are used for the children, there is no breach of etiquette in washing the child's mouth at the same time that its fingers are cleansed; while for adults the finger-bowls will also be found most useful, as many a housekeeper rises from the table with fingers that would be greatly benefited by a dip into one of these pretty glass bowls.

No noise should be made at the table, such as drumming on the cloth with the handle of spoon or fork, or hitting the chair with the feet, or in any way disturbing the harmony of meals. Yet no one would desire that meals should be eaten in silence. The old maxim says that "chatted food is half digested," and like most old saws it is full of wisdom, and pleasing conversation is of the greatest benefit to digestion, and will prevent dyspepsia. A dinner eaten in sullen silence, or accompanied by the bitter sauce of fault finding, can never be of the service to the brain, blood, bones, nerves, muscles, etc., that a dinner eaten amid

"Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
Nods and becks, and wreathed smiles,"

such as Milton tells us accompany mirth and good humor.

Therefore, study, my fair friends, to make the conversation of our tables jolly and mirthful. Strive to keep from it all things that would distress or annoy your husbands, and beg of them not to relate any occurrences that would startle or disquiet yourselves. If there is any fault-finding to be made with the cookery, it had better be passed over till later in the day. If there is any ill news to communicate, let the table not be the place for its announcement.

Another old proverb states that "a man's body and his mind are like a jerkin and a jerkin's lining, rumple the one and you rumple the other." So we must take care that the brain receives no shock while the stomach is receiving food, else we shall surely suffer acutely.

It is an excellent plan for a family to have an understanding that each member shall relate something he or she may have learned that day. Some pleasant incident, or some anecdote connected with history, science or art. Or, if nothing better can be obtained,

let each child repeat some item of news, or of events from the daily, or even weekly newspaper.

So parents can educate both themselves and their children at the table, and while table etiquette is strictly maintained, the mind can be fed as well as the body.

In many families there is no waitress, then everything should be placed upon the table before the family are called, and the dessert can be put upon a little table at your right. Always make your eldest daughter set the table, and do it neatly. Lay the cloth straight, and put the salt cellar and the butter plate, with the tumbler or cup, at the right hand of each person. Have crocheted macramé twine mats to keep the table cloth from being soiled, and at the head and foot of the table, place a napkin corner-wise to the center, or straight, as one prefers. This will prove a great saving of table cloths, and the napkin can be renewed often. Then tell her to look carefully over the table to see that not one thing is omitted. Look at your place and see that there are enough cups and saucers placed neatly at the left hand, for breakfast or tea, and that the sugar bowl is well filled, and the cream and milk pitcher are prepared for use. Have a stand of metal at the right hand, to hold the coffee or tea pots and the water pot, and a spoon cup should be placed beside the sugar bowl, with the teaspoons and sugar spoon in it. Also see that a carving knife, fork and steel are laid beyond the plates at your husband's seat, and have these plates well heated and all the food as hot as possible. It is a decided annoyance to have this child or that one asked to leave the table to procure needed appliances that ought to have been upon it. No child should be permitted to rise from its chair without asking: "May I be excused?"

The more visitors you have at your table the better it will be for your children, as they ought to learn something agreeable or pleasing from each guest.

Many of us only eat to live, yet while we eat we should all make the best of living, and not make our children ask that most prominent question of the day: "Is life worth the living?"

"Is not the life more than meat?" asked He who was wiser than any one who ever lived on earth.—*Exchange*.