

SOCIAL LIFE.



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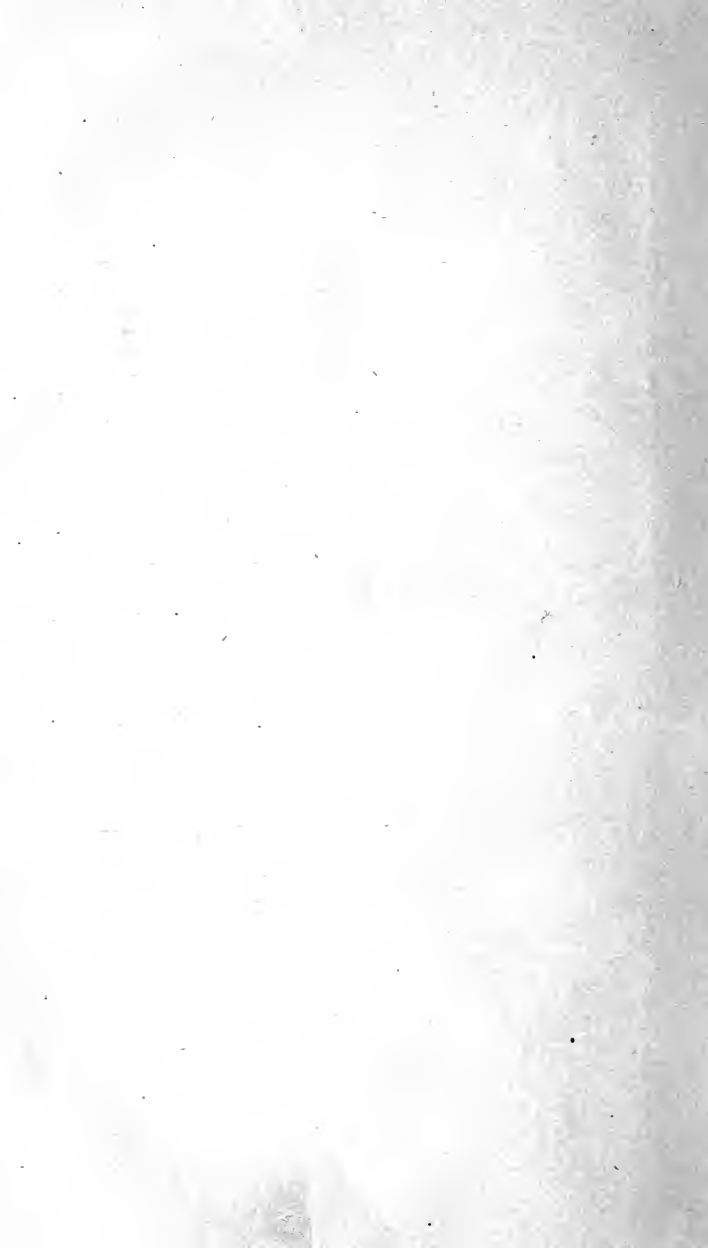
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SOCIAL LIFE.

METROPOLITAN
CULTURE SERIES.



SOCIAL LIFE.



FIRST EDITION.

NEW YORK:
THE BUTTERICK PUBLISHING COMPANY [LIMITED].
1889.

“As learning, honor and virtue are absolutely necessary to gain you the esteem and admiration of mankind, politeness and good breeding are equally necessary to make you welcome and agreeable in conversation and common life.”

CHESTERFIELD.

“Great talents, such as honor, virtue, learning and arts, are above the generality of the world, who neither possess them, themselves, nor judge of them rightly in others. But all people are judges of the lesser talents, such as civility, affability, and an obliging, agreeable address and manner, because they feel the good effects of them as making society easy and pleasing.”

IDEM.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE publication of the present work was suggested to us in the first instance by a widely expressed desire on the part of many readers of the *Delineator* to obtain in convenient form the whole of the series of letters on "Social Life" which have appeared in that magazine. The idea seemed a good one, inasmuch as these letters alone, issued in consecutive shape, would form a compendious book of reference in that department of social law whereof they treat. We have therefore reprinted *in toto* the twenty-three original letters from the aunt to her niece, together with an equal number of interesting letters from the niece to the aunt, thus arranging the whole volume in the form of a genial and chatty correspondence. The matter contained in the book does not in any way trench upon the ground covered by the kindred work, *Good Manners*; for while the latter is a complete encyclopædia of the abstract rules and formulas of

etiquette, "Social Life" treats of those errors of deportment into which young men and young women are apt to fall when uninstructed in the art of true politeness, and contrasts forcibly and instructively the manners of the crude and unrefined with those of the polished and well-bred. All the varied relations of life are treated, broadly, yet with careful attention to every detail; and the reader will find a peculiar charm in the vivid manner in which the lessons are brought before him, as though happening to real people in real life. As we lay this little work before the public it is with the hope that it may meet with the same kindly approval accorded its predecessors, and that it may accomplish the object for which it was prepared—to instruct those who wish to learn.

THE BUTTERICK PUBLISHING CO.

[*Limited*].





SOCIAL LIFE.

FIRST LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

So many changes have come into my life since I wrote you last that I begin to think Sweet Phantasy has taken possession of me and translated me to her enchanted kingdom, or that the Spring flowers have brought back in their beautiful rainbow-tinted buds the fairy people of my childhood's days and scattered them everywhere about me. The old saying that troubles or joys never come singly, has been fully verified with me ; hitherto my life has been a trio of capital T's—Trials, Troubles and Tribulations ; and now the joys have come like a shower of golden sunshine, fairly bewildering me with happiness.

But I must cease these effusions and relate to you facts, which you must by this time be anxious to hear. The first link in fortune's chain came in the form of a generous bequest from my godmother ; and what a vista of happiness this opens to me and to my dear invalid father, who, owing to our distressingly limited means, has been unable

to obtain the treatment needful for his cure. Now as soon as we can make all necessary arrangements we will leave this loved but lonely old home (I for the first time in all my twenty years of existence) and seek first to bring the tinge of health back into father's pale cheeks, after which we will tour a little and see something of the world, as father puts it, before my wedding day. Yes, the fairy tale still grows. I have seen my Prince Charming, and he is everything he should be—engaging, graceful and tender in manner, dignified in appearance, well read and liberal of mind and manly always. The happiness that has come into my life with his love is perfect; so can you wonder I feel as if fairy fingers were weaving a spell about my life which I fear to dissipate?

This fairy tale often brings to my mind what a dear, kind friend of my father used to say to me whenever he found me looking disconsolate on account of the troubles that were mine to bear: "Little woman," he said, "there is a bright future ahead for you; your blackest cloud is here. But you know the old saying—'it is darkest before the dawn.' It may seem a dreary time to you now, but your cloud has not only a silver lining but a broad golden edge, and you will be dazzled by its brightness some day, by the sudden bursting of the light of happiness upon you. So keep your courage up, for your time to be happy will come." Thinking of these words has frequently buoyed my courage when it seemed almost entirely gone, and I cannot express to you, my dear aunt, how thankful for them I have often felt. From them also I have learned that kind words are never lost and are oftentimes miraculous in their power to comfort.

Well, I am philosophizing again, instead of narrating my tale of romance; but the truth of my kind friend's prophecy has been so strangely verified that I could not help mentioning his words to you. My betrothed, strange to say, is the eldest son of a much esteemed college companion of my father. The two friends lost sight of each other after their respective marriages, but late events will re-unite the two families; and what pleasure such a meeting will be to those who have been so long parted.

I need scarcely tell you after all this that my life in future is to be very different in a social sense from what it has been. Only one thing troubles me much, and it is that the seclusion in which I have lived has wholly unfitted me for the social sphere in which my marriage will place me. Had father not been a man of culture and of fine literary tastes, my education would have suffered much from our mode of life; but his devotion to me in this direction and our close companionship have made me conversant with many of the best authors, and father says I am better read than most young women of my age. However, my ignorance of social customs must be overcome, and I ask you to help me in this direction, as I know you are an authority on such matters. Will you kindly make me acquainted with the first duties required of me, for I am anxious to avoid making mistakes that would prove painful to those I love, and upon which I should look back with blushes of shame in years to come.

Your Loving

NIECE.

SECOND LETTER.

A SOCIAL ERROR.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

Your letter was a great surprise and a great pleasure to me ; and I sincerely congratulate you on your accession to fortune and your engagement to one so worthy and so well endowed by nature and education to make and keep you happy. That the possession of wealth brings its responsibilities you will soon discover—indeed, you have done so already, and fear that the quiet and uneventful life you have hitherto led has scarcely fitted you for the place you are to occupy in the future. But do not be distressed, for it is about customs only that you need enlightenment, good manners have come to you by inheritance and association ; and I shall be most happy to be of service in acquainting you with the rules by which people of refinement live in large cities, where by the nature of things, social etiquette is more observed and more necessary than in the freer life of the country.

A knowledge of the best formulas for giving and receiving hospitalities, courtesies and civilities is essential to every one who wishes to give outward evidence of refinement and good breeding. Natural instinct and

kindliness of heart will prevent one from doing that which would hurt the feelings of another, but the written and unwritten laws that govern society can be acquired only through the understanding—from the teachings of others or by observation and experience.

So for your benefit, my dear niece, I will, to make it more interesting to you, relate certain social occurrences that have happened to me or come within my knowledge since my marriage, giving you their formalities or informalities just as they were.

That I had much to learn and many mortifications to endure you may be assured. My earlier years were spent remote from cultivated society, and my youth was passed at a boarding school, where I was educated in books and taught how to enter and leave a room, how to dance a cotillon, a minuet, Sir Roger de Coverley and a few other fancy and more or less stately measures. Of other matters, too, I was not wholly ignorant, but never had there come to me an opportunity for learning in what manner to meet thoroughly trained people or what to do with them, for them or about them. Such was my condition at the time of my engagement to your Uncle John—an only son of rich and cultured parents.

Having met me while leisurely travelling your uncle for a time saw only my best social accomplishments; he did not once suspect that I was wholly destitute of that knowledge which is so necessary to meet the requirements of life in society—requirements which, though they seem complex to the uninitiated, are as easy and pleasurable in their fulfilment as is a quadrille to those familiar with its figures. To be ignorant and to be aware of it is several steps on the road to improvement, but I was

wholly unconscious that I had not already acquired all those accomplishments which nature and experience had to bestow.

When I recall that first appearance in society after all my anticipations of rosé-hued happiness, a choking sensation still rises in my throat. It did not require many days as a guest of my future mother-in-law to discover how entirely unfit I was for the position I had promised to fill. This was a terrible blow to the sensitive pride of both of us. I knew that she must blame her son for his hasty emotions, as, indeed, she afterward called this love affair; but fortunately she liked me personally and found in me no obstinate ignorance (which, by-the-by, is to others the most insufferable of all mental conditions), and so she kindly initiated me into as many approved customs and formalities as was possible during a month's residence in her family.

I have heard persons declare, "If they cannot accept me as I am, they may leave me alone." This, however, is not a truthful expression of their sentiments; they are not willing to be relinquished, nor does the spirit of such language spring from a nobility of sentiment or a hope of acquiring and a desire to live by the best standards for the conduct of life.

Kindliness of heart seldom goes far astray in its purposes, but I soon learned in dealing with circles or groups of people that the sweetest and most unselfish intentions will not always counteract the effect of an awkward method, which is painfully embarrassing both to the bestower and the recipient of courtesies. This assertion is the formulated essence of what I learned during that valuable but most trying and unhappy of

visits to the family of my betrothed. I am sure my dear hostess spared her son all she could of the pain which a less tender and less wise mother might have inflicted upon so ill-judging a young man. The latter type would, perhaps, have said to him: "The girl is underbred; she is personified ignorance; she doesn't know even how to receive an invitation to an ordinary party, much less a formal dinner. Break this foolish engagement, my son, for both your sakes."

In truth, I was not even aware of what was expected of a young girl even at a family dinner. I did not know that on such an occasion it is bad form for a girl to express a particular desire, the discourtesy of which a careful training would have made plain. The hostess is the only person who can or ought to arrange partners for a dinner of ceremony or even for one that is *en famille*.

To me this social wisdom was unknown, and, of course, I made myself absurd by insisting in an aside to John's mother that I must not be taken in to dinner by a strange man, for was I not engaged to her son? I almost wept, and my appetite failed me. I did not feel as if I were being loyal to my future husband, nor indeed, that he was quite true to me when he offered his arm—which I fancied was mine wholly—to his aunt—his mother's sister. He placed her at his right hand, for since his father's death he always took the head of the table. It was the night of my arrival, and this sweet old dame, having called quite incidentally, had been pressed to remain and dine. It was a mark of honor and respect to be escorted to the table by such a noted and charming gentleman as my companion, but being unfamiliar with the wise and polished customs of good society, I fully

believed, and with keen agony, too, that my relation to the family was being intentionally ignored, or, at best, only coolly admitted, and that probably this was the commencement of an intentional rupture between John and myself.

Poor John! He was hurt, disappointed and ashamed of my unresponsiveness when addressed, as well as at my silence at other times. Nobody even suspected that it was simply a profound ignorance that troubled me. John looked at me with pain in his eyes, and his disappointment reached even to his voice, because I really was *gauche* and apparently sulky. I had anticipated being placed at his side as it seemed my right to be, and I had arranged in my own mind just how by several methods the family should be made to know the depth of my attachment to their John and my great pride and happiness in his devotion to me. Can you imagine, my dear niece, any more undignified spectacle than two infatuated young persons, who have already testified to their regard for each other by announcing their determination to spend their lives together, foolishly cooing as an emphasis to so solemn a compact—and that, too, before some disinterested spectators?

At that period of my experience—I will not say of my life, because I was old enough even then to have known better had some one instructed me—I fully believed that lovers should always sit next each other. I had with no disapproving taste gazed at such pairs while they held each other's hands in public and considered these displays as altogether proper and belonging to the betrothal period. I had known that young men had asked young women for their "company," and

that this request signified "when I visit you I hope I may see you alone"; and I knew also that such requests were no longer in good taste. But that a betrothed pair must dance together, sit together, walk together and never be other than what, in some localities, is called "a couple" seemed to me only the correct public acknowledgment of their tender relationship, and that anything less devoted could not be wholly faithful.

To be sure, John had always treated me as if I were a royal princess, he my vassal, and his allegiance had been offered and maintained in the most dignified fashion; but now that we had begun a more intimate association in the presence of his family, my preconceived idea of such relationship led me to expect that his regard for me would naturally be in a state of constant manifestation or expression, and that no opportunity for announcing his preference for my companionship would be lost. And yet by his conduct at the very first dinner in his mother's house, where I supposed a son could do whatever he chose, he tranquilly passed me by and bestowed the most distinguished civilities upon his aunt. I was nearly frantic with pain, and it was only through a proportionate pride that I managed to control my anger and resentment. Happily, few women with character are without this rock of support, although upon this same rock they too often wreck themselves. I fortunately escaped the latter fate and lived to learn that the proprieties are based upon a nobler and firmer foundation than even the most decided personal preferences.

How long that dinner seemed to me! Everybody, except myself and John, became nervously merry as if

trying to conceal something. They laughed and chatted to hide my *borne* manner and John's hurt. Had it not been for the dear old aunt, whose eyes looked into mine with an incisiveness that was given to them by her tender, earnest soul, I should have fled to my desolate old home in the country by the first morning train. As we rose from the table she said to John, "Take me to the alcove and bring your *fiancée*." When we had joined her she said to John, "Now leave us; this young girl looks worn and tired, and she is in a strange house, with an unfamiliar atmosphere."

She took my hand in her shapely and lady-like but trembling fingers and said: "I think I understand; times and customs have changed greatly in our circle since I was a girl, while doubtless they have scarcely moved where you have been. They may have less of nature now, but recently established customs contain more wisdom, grace and noble significance."

Just here I burst into tears and laid my burning face in her lap to deaden the sound of my sobbing. I felt the moving of her soft hand over my hair, but she was silent for awhile to give me time to think. Then she said with a sweet quaver in her voice: "Human love does but cheapen its expressions by making them spectacular. And beside, dear, the aged always receive the first courtesy among all well-bred people. You have youth now, but when age comes you will appreciate the beauty of this custom. Gladly would I have exchanged places with you at the table to-night, but in the circumstances I could not do so. Then, too, had you sat beside John the attention of the family and our guest would have been focused upon both of you, and your sensitiveness would

have suffered from it after a while, don't you think so?"

I kissed her, but answered nothing. She rose and joined the family, and John came to me. All I could say was, "I begin to understand that in the world where you have lived the social laws are not based upon selfishness, and I will try to commit its statutes to memory and reduce them to practice if you will assist and guide me."

"Was it a misunderstanding of ceremonials, dear, only that?" he asked, in a relieved voice.

"No," said I, "it was an utter ignorance of the world's best methods of managing itself, in which formalities I ought to have been instructed at home."

After that the burden of making me acquainted with social etiquette, by whose laws unpleasant things are made less difficult to endure and perform, and all agreeable occurrences become like easy rhythms that almost sing themselves, fell upon his mother, and if she was not always as considerate as her oldest sister, she was untiring and watchful, while I proved an apt, because a zealous, pupil.

How much effort and pain it cost me to overcome the aversion and win for myself the good will of John's sisters after that first evening of silly misconduct, I should be unwilling to tell you even if it were possible, but that I did induce them at last to love, trust and respect me you doubtless know.

To my own boys when they are old enough to understand, I shall say with an earnestness that is inspired by distressing reminiscence: "If you ever suspect yourselves of being in love with one whom you have known only upon an ocean steamer or in hotel life, for the poor girl's

sake, as well as for your own, pray wait until you know her in her home or as a guest in your family. If a visit of this kind be difficult to arrange, get some judicious friend of the same social status as yourself to invite her for a prolonged hospitality before you ask her to marry you. Be sure that you have the opportunity of seeing her under the crucial test of domestic social life amid surroundings with which you are familiar. If she falls below your expectations, then you can judge her by her adaptability and weigh her virtues against her inexperience.

As for my daughters, they shall be instructed in the forms and conventionalities of good society that their mother learned only by sore experience. Only by such early teaching can they hope to escape the tormenting pitfalls into which their mother so innocently fell, and where she might have spoiled her life but for the kind patience and forbearance of judicious friends.

The forms of etiquette, however, must not be considered an end in themselves, but simply a means for the performance of the sacred duties we owe those about us ; but yours, my dear niece, is not the nature that will hesitate to choose between the moral and the seemingly fitting when the two appear to conflict, so upon this thought I need not dwell.

An easy familiarity with etiquette is to the active member of society what sea-faring knowledge is to the navigator. The latter saves the ship from dashing upon perilous rocks, and the former is a compass by which to direct one's course through a sea of trouble into tranquil currents and by pleasant places.

AUNTIE.

THIRD LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

What a welcome letter was yours, and what a field of possibilities it opened to me, who am so deficient in all that pertains to social manners and customs. Its perusal both discouraged and encouraged me—discouraged because there is so much to learn that I doubt whether I shall ever become familiar with the exacting laws of social life; and encouraged by the thought that you, too, struggled with difficulties as great as mine, and have attained social eminence. I mean to emulate your noble example, and make the family of my *fiancé* as proud and as fond of me as Uncle John's family is of you.

I am glad you have taken the kindly way of relating your own struggles in conquering social faults, to help me to attain a clear and certain perception of what is needful in my new life, for a knowledge of the efforts and successes of those we love have a far more stimulating influence over our lives than the most arduous endeavors on our part to grasp, after our own fashion or understanding, the laws that should govern our relations with those among whom our lot in life is cast. And, too, it is so much more satisfying to have a thoroughly experienced guide, for then we are certain the laws

have been correctly interpreted and are enabled to climb the social ladder without meeting with discouraging stumbles or falls.

You see, you have made me begin to think seriously on a subject to which I have never given much thought. I feel that I am starting out in the world with a woman's years and a child's knowledge of the world's customs, and I must seek for my own defects in what you tell me is considered good-breeding, perfection in which I am now anxious to attain as much for my own self-respect as to please the new friends I am about to make.

Well, this is altogether an egotistical letter, which I could scarcely write to any other than my dearest friend. Very shortly father and I will start upon our travels, and with a man of culture and refined manners, such as he is, I will not be so deplorably at sea in regard to some of the nice things of life as I should be were he less fastidious and less well-read.

I will be all impatience until I receive your next letter, every word of which I will be ready to devour with the greediness of one hungry for knowledge. I want to know, so much, how you acquainted your friends of your engagement, and how you conducted yourself after the announcement was made. I am so afraid of seeming too happy, but I am indeed so happy that it is almost impossible to prevent my feelings showing in my face; yet I suppose one's features must be controlled as well as the manners educated, so I will put myself to the study while awaiting your letter.

Your Loving

NIECE.

FOURTH LETTER.

REGARDING ENGAGEMENTS.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

Well, to continue my reminiscences. At the expiration of my month's visit among John's kinspeople—and the time spent with them was very enlightening, but also very humiliating—I returned home and began to prepare for my marriage, which was to take place the following autumn. In our thinly populated country it was customary—indeed, almost a social law—that engaged persons should keep their betrothal a profound secret. To deny an engagement of marriage was but a social falsehood easily condoned; to speak to a young man or woman in a congratulatory fashion was deemed an impertinence and was resented accordingly.

The friendly custom that elsewhere prevailed of writing notes of congratulation and good wishes to engaged persons of one's acquaintance, and, perhaps, sending flowers to the lady, had not yet been adopted in our vicinity. I had read of such formulas in society novels, but they did not reach me as practical facts any more than did diamond necklaces and sleeveless toilettes. A formal note to an acquaintance announcing that I was

engaged to be married would, I felt sure, be considered boastful, if not indelicate. Of course, to dear and intimate friends, to whom letters and not notes are written, such a confidence was frequently made; but it was understood to be unspeakably sacred.

An official announcement of an engagement is often made at a formal dinner at which the chief members of both families are present; and when the fact is communicated by such guests to others it is considered official. However, a personal note from the persons most interested is esteemed a friendly attention. You can, perhaps, imagine my confusion when your Uncle John's relatives and acquaintances came to call upon me, having been asked verbally or by note to perform this courtesy. His mother had written to me as to a daughter, and his sisters as to a friend of their brother. His uncle, who had been his guardian and had been consulted, had sent me a bracelet before seeing me. I felt altogether that John had been indiscreet, and that maybe I might be called upon to restrain a rather too free speech about family affairs after we were married, which I may as well mention now I never did.

A well considered engagement in good society is esteemed as sacred as a marriage, and the breaking of such a compact as unpleasant and, perhaps, as dishonorable as a separation after marriage. After a month of attentions from John's town friends and acquaintances, and having become convinced that a secret engagement was not considered good form, I began to wonder how I should properly manage my few country friends in this matter.

Whenever I have learned a better method about any of

the affairs of life, I have made it a law with myself to adopt or apply it unflinchingly, well knowing that time and intelligence will combine to approve my action. Of course, I could not appeal to my frail father for assistance, although he was always ready to help me in matters to which he had given his attention; therefore, I confessed my perplexities to John's aunt, who had become my unailing source of knowledge and my strength.

"How would you like me to follow you home a week or two hence?" she inquired at parting.

"Above all things such a visit would be a joy and a help to me," I answered. "But it is a lonely old house, with simplicity as its only household deity."

"All the better; I shall enjoy the tranquillity, and, perhaps, I may be able to advise you about your *trousseau* and your wedding. A lonely girl must be in want of a worldly-wise head now and then."

And so it was settled.

She advised me to write immediately to the wife of our clergyman or to any other matronly friend and make known my engagement, with the request that it be mentioned to all who, in her opinion, felt sufficiently interested in me to care about it. The wise old lady said it would be better to have it known before she visited me, so that a stranger would not be charged with introducing a social innovation.

And so my approaching marriage was announced; and similar methods are now adopted in all thinly settled parts of the country by such families as prefer to follow the habits of the best bred city people, among whom an engagement is never kept secret for any considerable time. Near and dear friends add much to the gladness

of such events by giving dinners, suppers and simple and significant gifts to the engaged pair, and hearty expressions of good-will greet them everywhere.

When the two live remote from each other it is considered in good taste for the engaged man to entertain at a supper or dinner a party of his male friends; to one of them, a married man, he imparts the news, and it is kept secret until this friend announces it in the form of a toast. Responses naturally take the form of congratulations.

By one method or another an engagement should always be officially made known, slyness, prevarications or mystery about so solemn a compact being considered both undignified and indelicate. Where I had lived I had observed that lovers, while stoutly denying an engagement of marriage, quite frequently treated each other, even in the presence of strangers, with far more familiarity and caressing attention than is customary between married people of good manners. In regard to this, John's aunt said, and I am now convinced she was right, that all public manifestations of love really cheapen and vulgarize the purest and finest of its emotions.

With conflicting feelings I entered the country church the first Sunday after my return home. I could not refuse to be present, because it was my custom to attend regularly, and my motive might be misunderstood if I absented myself at this time. Besides, if I were to assist at improving the social customs of our little community, I knew I must not allow my courage to fail me. If my mental fibre had been exceptionably fine I would have perceived, without especial and minute explanations, the wisdom of the usages or formalities that had long pre-

veiled among cultured town folk, but it was not, and I write to you just as if your recognition of unspoken things were about as quick and no quicker than my own at your age. I trust you will forgive me if I am mistaken in your requirements, and you will accept the affection which prompts me to explain, as clearly as I am able, just how I acquired certain better habits than those which I had seen practised in the town where I was born and reared.

I remember a pretty and sweet girl, younger than myself, who appealed to me in her perplexities about little usages that did not seem quite fine.

"Ought I to thank the young man who escorts me home from evening church?" she asked.

"No," said I, "he is the one who is honored."

"Should I invite him to enter the house at that hour?"

"Not if it is late, and not at all unless some of your family can be present."

I was able to answer these questions because thus much instruction my accomplished father had given me about the ways of the outer world. He told me, however, that a married man should always be thanked for such attention, and a message acknowledging the courtesy of his escort should always be sent his wife. The young inquirer opened wide her innocent eyes at this change in the form of parting, but she was quick to perceive its wisdom.

After this little digression we will return to the church and my subsequent doings. To keep my eyelids down, I knew, was tantamount to admission that I felt ashamed of myself, and to look frankly ahead would, maybe, be construed into a feeling of vanity; but as I preferred to be

considered proud rather than ashamed, I carried myself, except in color, just as if I had not been promised in marriage, and it was not very long before my state of mind seemed to be understood and my conduct approved. As a consequence many hitherto denied or secret engagements were made known within the next month, and an added dignity was thenceforth given the formalities of betrothal. The relation of parents to their children was thus recognized and honored, and the approval, or, at least, the permission of the parents or guardians was properly besought. The blessing of the father and the mother is one of the most sacred consecrations of an engagement, and promises will not be lightly made if such sanction is considered needful.

Aunt Edith, as she begged me to call her, arrived after a fortnight, and although she was as fragile as she was wise and sweet, her presence became a benediction to our house. And, besides, she was much to me personally. She made it possible for John to visit us by acting as chaperon to a motherless girl. Hotel accommodations were not to be had in our neighborhood, but he was thus enabled to come and spend a week or more with us, as he had leisure from a somewhat exacting profession. Among our neighbors his visits to us, without the presence of an elderly or married lady in the house, would have excited comment but no censure, so unsophisticated were they; but in John's family such a disregard of ceremony would have been pronounced indelicate, or, at least, inconsiderate. They would have held me in lighter esteem had I been careless of those proprieties and approved usages which are sanctioned in the best society all over the civilized world.

I had learned that a young girl should hold her society and her hospitality as a privilege to be valued by a young man who visits her, and that she should never thank him for coming to see her, as less self-respecting or perhaps I should say, as less self-venerating girls sometimes do. I had much of the care of the household still upon my hands, and I did not choose to lay it aside at the moment when a practical application of my experience was likely to add to the comfort of its increased numbers. And, besides, I naturally desired to appear at my best, having exhibited myself at my very worst amidst unfamiliar surroundings.

Did I look as fresh and as pretty as I could in my clean print frocks and white aprons in the morning?

John said I was never so pretty.

Did I leave crimping pins or curl papers in my hair until I arranged my toilet later in the day?

By no means. Nor was I ever guilty of such a fault, for my father would not have permitted it. It is a strange freak on the part of a woman that causes her to imagine that the one man before whom she prefers to look her best, forgets after she has dressed herself for his especial admiration the hideousness of her appearance in curl papers, crimping pins or disordered hair.

I have heard young men say—and you know they are much more candid with their matronly friends than with their girlish acquaintances—that the disagreeable picture of a young woman while she is going through the mechanism of becoming a fascinating creature is always more vivid than the pretty picture that results from the operation. Crimps or waves certainly soften the outlines of most features, but if such accessories to beauty must be

purchased by ugliness at the breakfast-table, pray trust to smoothly-brushed tresses to do what they can to give you womanly charms.

And so John made several visits to us during the summer, and that we enjoyed each other's society very much I need not tell you. We drove together, sometimes accompanied by Aunt Edith and sometimes alone, etiquette having been arranged as a guard against bad form and not as a fetter. Had we been in town and our engagement generally known we could have rode or driven together without a chaperon and not been unpleasantly criticised or pronounced lacking in respect for *les convenances* or the *petites morales* of good society.

AUNTIE.

FIFTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

Your letter came just in time to relieve me of much embarrassment, and also to prevent me making a most grievous error in social etiquette in regard to the announcement of my engagement to my friends and acquaintances. I was so anxious to act properly in the matter, so as to avoid slighting any one, yet I did not know exactly how or to whom the important communication should be made. Now, however, all my doubts have been removed by your kind and timely information.

I had thought that, perhaps, I would not make my engagement known until after our return from abroad, but I can now see how unwise this would have been, and shall, in consequence, make no further delay in informing every one I know of my betrothal. Although the wedding day is a year off, there are so many things I must learn before it comes, that I shall have to ask you numberless questions, which I am certain you will answer in the same kindly way in which you have begun

Before returning to my dear old home I shall devote my attention to many things that are very important and that would cause me much anxiety should I delay attending to them until after my return. One of them is the collec-

tion and arrangement of my *trousseau*, about which I am much at a loss. If you will give me some ideas on this subject you will greatly help me. I should like much to know about the marking of my linen, and also if I should provide myself with a supply of household linen.

The style of my wedding gown, too, I will (if I may) leave to your better taste and judgment, as I have little knowledge of what fashion demands for such occasions. I should like, however, a trained gown, if permissible, for to me that is the ideal robe for a bride; besides, I am rather tall and—forgive my vanity, dear aunt—I think I would look just lovely with a train. I remember how surprised Harry and papa were when one day I appeared before them in an old gown of mamma's which I came upon while looking through some trunks; and their looks of admiration would have satisfied the vanity of a girl much more exacting than I. So you must not be surprised if, at times, my self-esteem will force itself into notice, for I am largely dependent for all ideas regarding myself upon the openly expressed flattery of two dear people who view me only through rose-colored spectacles.

I shall have to give considerable thought to the necessary preparations for my wedding-day so as to be thoroughly acquainted with all details. These are some of the things I would like to know: to whom it is necessary to send invitations; who should arrange for the carriages and other *et cæteras*; should I have bridesmaids, and if so, how many; what, if any, presents would be in best taste to give them; and lastly in what manner shall I announce my marriage to friends too distant to attend the ceremony? I do not wish to have a showy wedding, for anything savoring of display would be

equally distasteful to me and to the refined taste of my *fiancé*.

I have asked many questions, yet I fear not all that the subject demands; but you have been so very kind and know so well how to instruct one in everything needful to know (far more than I should ever think to ask), that I feel certain you will inform me even on matters which have not yet come under my notice.

Your Loving

NIECE.

SIXTH LETTER.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

To tell how swiftly the summer sped by us would signify little to you at present; when the month before your own wedding arrives and passes you will understand. Of course, all my country friends were to be called upon—this every bride is expected to do before her cards are sent out; but these visits were always brief, sometimes so brief that they gave me more pain than satisfaction. But courtesy demanded them, and, moreover, they were significant that the intended marriage would not sever friendships or terminate acquaintances. The girl with delicate feelings will be certain to visit all in a lower grade of life who have been accustomed to friendliness or kindness from her; and she will ask them verbally to the church ceremonial, and send them portions of the wedding favors, such as cake or bon-bons.

Many matters were also being attended to at this time in my own household. My *lingerie* was being made at home, and my personal supervision was frequently required. Many articles had been made by my own hands long before my engagement, and without a thought

to a possible marriage, so much valuable time was saved. It is no longer customary to provide an immense quantity of underclothing, enough to last two or three years being quite sufficient; a greater quantity is a vexatious care, and oftentimes a positive loss, because neither linen, cotton nor silk vestments improve with time. Cambric and percale for summer and stouter cottons for winter wear, with flannels and merinoes for a change of season, are needful in proper quantities; but linens, even when I was a girl, my father wisely refused me as unwholesome textures. Silk undergarments are worn by those who like them, and delicately colored *crépe* woollens or gauzes are daintily made up for summer. I had also three pretty white cashmere night-gowns in readiness for possible illness. Cashmere is not used so much nowadays, white veiling, with cashmere lace edgings, taking its place and invariably giving better satisfaction.

All my garments were marked with my maiden name. Sets of table and bed linen were embroidered with flosses, the patterns being my family cypher or my own monogram.

In all social and practical affairs dear Aunt Edith was wisdom, economy and good taste most happily combined. She was, too, as quick to accept novel or girlish hints from me as I was to gratefully take from her that intelligence which is only found in a larger and more cosmopolitan life than I was then familiar with. How blessed the fortune of a young girl who has a mother or a near and dear friend or relative to advise her! I suppose I appreciated such a blessing more fully because I had been so long without it.

About this time I received a letter from a friend who

had lived several years in a distant city. He and I had been comrades when children, and the friendship had been continued after we had grown up and become "gentleman and lady."

This reminds me to say that in good society such terms are seldom heard in ordinary speech, but are applied as explanations of character. To say that a man is a gentleman or a woman is a lady expresses positive qualities of refinement and intelligence. Ordinarily in cultivated circles one hears only of girls and young men; older people are mentioned as men and women. Among the less cultivated class the words gentleman and lady are used in such a promiscuous fashion that they frequently sound grotesque.

After this straying, I will tell you of the pain I felt at the contents of this letter. My old playfellow was coming home, and he was unequivocally explicit in his desire to visit me. The intimation which the letter contained could not be misunderstood. He did not know of my engagement. Of course, I replied at once, and, ignoring his implied motive for coming, said I should be glad to see him again, but that I was too much occupied to contribute much to his pleasure during this visit. I mentioned the month of my marriage and hoped he would be present. I can imagine how much perplexity an inexperienced and conscientious girl must feel when a man whom she respects offers to her marked attention that she cannot accept because her interest in another is involved, and yet, maybe, the interest is not sufficiently marked to enable her to speak of it with candor. The only course open is to be kindly sincere.

This little occurrence more than reconciled me to the

custom of announcing engagements. Not that I was a belle, with reason to anticipate particular and significant civilities; but the fact that I was known to be engaged spared all of us young people from misunderstanding such marks of friendliness as were offered and could with propriety be received.

To go back to material things. My wedding dress had been worn by my mother both at her marriage and also when I was christened, which ceremonials occurred the first in the same church and the second in the same room where I was to stand on my bridal day. It was made of the variety of silk which is said to "stand alone." I should not have chosen so weighty a fabric had a new dress been purchased, but at that date and even now it is considered quite the thing for a bride to array herself in an ancestral toilette. Fashion now permits the use of any white fabric that is ladylike, and for youthful brides the less stately the material the more elegant it is considered. *Crêpe de Chine*, India mulls, silk tissues, and also cashmeres and other woollens, are among the fashionable bridal fabrics. Satins are traditional, and, of course, in order, and so is *poult de soie*, *faille Française*, poplin and velvet. But good taste does not demand a costly or elaborate wedding gown; elegance and simplicity skilfully combined give the greatest satisfaction to refined tastes.

Orange blossoms were *de rigueur* in the days of my youth, but they are no longer especially significant; white myrtle, lilies-of-the-valley, white roses, lilacs, jessamines, etc., are equally appropriate. A train is considered essential, perhaps because it is dignified and ceremonious. Certainly the bride desires it when she wears white.

A simple and inexpensive travelling dress of service-

able wool goods, a handsomer one of fine wool that afterward served for church-going, walking and driving, a dinner and dancing toilette, and a costume for luncheons and visiting completed my outfit, except, of course, some breakfast dresses, now called tea-gowns. The finest travelling dress was worn when leaving home, but it was replaced by the simpler dress at the first opportunity. This number of costumes is quite sufficient for a young wife of to-day, unless she be a devotee to fashionable pleasures; for such there are neither limits nor rules. If a girl already has a fair quantity of garments she need not supply herself with so many new ones. Individual taste and circumstances should regulate these matters, always remembering that excesses are bad form.

When the contracting parties belong to the same social set, it is usual for them to consult each other in regard to the ushers. Four or six, according to the number of expected guests, are customary. The best man may be married or single, and is generally the groom's dearest friend. If there are no bridesmaids, it is not uncommon to invite two young married men to serve with the ushers; but if there are to be bridesmaids, there should be as many as there are ushers. The best man arranges for the carriages, secures the clergyman and the organist, and, in consultation with the bride, arranges the selections to be played. He also attends to the railway tickets and secures accommodations along the route it is proposed to follow. But all these *et cæteras* are strictly confidential. Indeed, it is not considered good form to inquire of those who must needs know where the honeymoon is to be spent.

My father procured from John a list of such friends as

he desired to invite to the wedding, and, adding them to a list of our own, ordered the required number of cards to be engraved and sent with envelopes.

In a city the engraver is the best person to consult about the wording of an invitation, as the formula varies with fashion. My father also ordered cards to be engraved announcing the marriage of his daughter; these were to send to friends who lived at such a distance that to invite them to the wedding would have been an absurdity. The shape of the card was not unlike that of note paper; and the formula, which is the same to-day, was as follows:

Mr. Edwin Holden Brown

announces the marriage of his daughter

Albertina Louise

to

Mr. John William Hunting.

Rosendale, Maine.

Thursday, October ninth, 1870.

The name of the father, the daughter and the groom are engraved in larger script than the other parts. In the envelope with this announcement, which, of course, was not mailed until the day after the wedding, was the card of

Mr. and Mrs. John William Hunting.

*Mondays
in November.*

1001 E. 55th Street.

Few things in social formulas will more readily give a

proper place to a person than the style of card used, and certainly a floridness of fashion upon so serious a subject as the announcement of a marriage would be in very bad taste. All these necessary details were completed a month before the date of my marriage.

In some parts of the country it has been the custom for the groom to order the cards and meet all the expenses of their production and issue, but this habit is falling into disuse. The groom, however, presents the clergyman with such fee as his circumstances warrant or judgment approves, and he also defrays the cost of his carriage. That is all he is supposed to pay, unless he desires to present souvenirs to the bridesmaids and ushers. Now and then some heiress begs the pleasure of providing wedding toilettes for her maids, but such a thing is exceptional. It is usual for the maids to consult the bride as to the colors for their costumes, and etiquette directs that she present them with suitable bouquets, and provide wedding favors for the ushers.

At full-dress weddings the bride invariably wears white, unless she is a widow, in which case any evening color is appropriate. The bridesmaids' toilettes are of walking length, and they wear hats or bonnets or short veils of illusion fastened to place by flowers. The bodice may be high or low in the neck, but an opening only at the throat is most admired. At a day wedding gentlemen wear frock or cutaway coats; evening dress is never assumed until after sunset. Gloves may be worn or not, as desired. These essentials I desire to impress upon your mind, because they are among those approved customs of good society a violation of which is accepted as proof of unfamiliarity with accepted usages.

I must not forget the story of my own last weeks at home and how they were spent. My father had all the sweetness and patience of a saint, and all that generosity which a tender man feels for a daughter upon whom the supreme event of her life is falling. To make the occasion as beautiful as his position and fortune would allow he considered as much a pleasure as a duty. Had I been about to marry a struggling man—one whose feet were not yet firmly established in prosperity—he would have ordained a quiet, informal wedding in a simple house or travelling costume, and whatever money he might otherwise have expended for a bridal celebration and for raiment befitting a costly wedding he would have presented to his daughter to meet later needs. Nothing gives a more disagreeable impression than a showy wedding and paltry surroundings immediately after it. Begin the new life which opens at the altar, my dear niece, in all sincerity. The impression of a wedding lingers in the memory and follows a wedded pair for many a year. If it be less luxurious than the wealth of the home which organizes it would lead one to expect, then all the better for the pair who prefer to start at the foot of the hill of fortune and climb upward rather than be married in the sunshine of its summit and pass directly downward into the shadow of obscurity.

Aunt Edith and I passed a busy and a happy August and September. Each day brought its special duties, and while our fingers were employed we found opportunity for sweet converse, and little by little I gained from her finer and juster ideas in regard to life and its purposes, as well as a more correct taste and an acuter sense of the proprieties. Among other things, I had supposed

that to be well dressed I must also be perfumed. She taught me that only such faint aromas as might be gathered by garments from delicate sachets hung up in a wardrobe or placed in the dressing-cases with the linen were considered refined. Perfumes that are pleasurable to one person may be almost unendurable to another; consequently, it is neither considerate nor polite to use them. A frequent bath and fresh raiment are far preferable to the costliest fragrance.

Aunt Edith also cured me of the bad habit of calling my men acquaintances by their christian names. With friends such an address is allowable, except when speaking to or of them in the presence of strangers, when they should be treated with the respect to which they are entitled. This was not an easy process, the custom having been long established; but I did it, and in such a manner that I hope and believe I gave no offence. Neither use the first name of a man nor permit him to use yours. A dignified form of address will not in the least intimate a want of esteem or a lack of the true spirit of *camaraderie*. It expresses a mutual respect, which adds to rather than takes from the pleasures of friendliness between young men and women. It keeps familiarity at bay, and such vulgarity cannot be too carefully avoided. Not that caution in this latter respect was especially required by me; but Aunt Edith had occasion to observe evidences of it in others who came to see me during her visit, and she had a tender desire to cure a fault that marred so seriously the many excellent features of social life in the country and destroyed the elevating and ennobling influence of mutual friendship between young people. To succeed without provoking unfavorable com-

ments or wounding the feelings of any person, one must be careful to avoid any claim to the title of reformer. The more imperative the need for reform in matters of social etiquette the more delicately must one proceed in endeavoring to right them.

AUNTIE.

SEVENTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

I am rapidly learning from you my social duties and the manner in which they should be performed. You have already taught me much, but I know there is still a great deal more to learn, and questions occur to me in such astonishingly large numbers that I scarcely know which to ask first, and fear to tire your patience long before the end is reached.

In regard to my engagement, I have followed your advice to the letter; and I assure you it gave me very great pleasure to receive the kind wishes and hearty good-will of my country friends. Had I followed my way instead of yours how much happiness I should have lost; for then I never should have known how much I was really beloved by the kind and simple people who live around us.

Now, dear aunt, there are some more things about which I “want to know.” How long before the wedding day should invitations to the wedding be sent out? And are there any visits to be made afterwards? It is the custom here to give only verbal invitations—indeed, even these are considered unnecessary when the marriage is to take place in church. I have not as yet decided whether to be married at home or in church, but I would

like to know just how a wedding should be conducted in either place, so as to be prepared for any change that may have to be made through unforeseen causes.

Tell me, also, about setting out for the church and what is usual on arriving there; what the usher's duties are; what the bridesmaids and the maid of honor are expected to do; and if they should enter with the bride or not. Do you not think that the old custom of everybody kissing the bride should be abolished? Perhaps it is in your social circle, but here in the country it is still in force, and while it is poetical and romantic to read about, I fear it must be very embarrassing to the bride, who would, I should think, prefer that such a demonstration were omitted. Should a reception be held at the bride's home after the ceremony, and, if so, should refreshments be served to the guests? At what time should the bride take leave of her guests to start on her wedding journey?

I know you will consider all these questions of sufficient importance to be answered fully, so I look forward to a most interesting letter from you. We are very desirous to start soon upon our travels, but I have so many duties still to perform that I fear it will be some weeks before we leave. I am arranging a very simple wardrobe to take with me, as I wish to be as free as possible from care, so that I can see and enjoy to the full the places and scenes I have known hitherto only in books. I feel that every step I take in the Old World will be full of interest and enjoyment to me, so you can see I am enjoying much pleasure by anticipation.

Your Loving

NIECE.

EIGHTH LETTER.

THE WEDDING.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

As I did not answer all your questions in my last letter I will commence this by telling you what happened in similar circumstances in my case. Only my relatives and some very intimate friends sent wedding presents to me before receiving invitations to the wedding. Practical gifts may be received from friends, but it is considered indelicate for a mere acquaintance to offer to a bride any gift except it be complimentary to her æsthetic tastes. Purely ornamental gifts are acceptable if they are not too costly or too elaborate, but the practice of sending presents to mere acquaintances is gradually falling into disuse.

Gifts to a bride are marked with her maiden name. Those intended for the groom are usually sent to the bride, but in most instances are unmarked. Linen that is purchased after marriage by the husband or presented by his family should bear the family name, monogram or crest. Girl friends are likely to send as presents specimens of their own handiwork ; this has long been a custom, and at this time the work-tables of my companions

contributed liberally; to-day these offerings remain the dearest of my possessions.

All the articles that were sent or presented to me solely because I was soon to become a wife were placed in a room by themselves, with the donor's card attached to each, and the door leading to it was opened only to a few dear friends. The only gift that was publicly displayed was a silver tankard that has been handed down as a wedding gift through several generations of our family, and the names of its successive possessors, with the dates of the marriage of each, were engraved upon its broad bottom. The head of one of the Georges embellishes the lid, and the crooked and mailed arm of a cavalier serves as a handle. As it was a family record no invidious comparison between this gift and another could be made. My father had taught me that gifts were not to be prized alone for their intrinsic value, but according to the sincerity and loyalty of the love that prompted their bestowal; therefore, the treasures were locked up and kept sacred.

Were it not for the coming of gifts and the consequent thrill of gladness which these proofs of affection always stir in a young person's heart, how dreary to many would be the time between the sending out of the wedding invitations and the day of the ceremony! Especially blank would have been the days to one without mother and sisters to lift from her all the cares and duties of the coming event. Making visits is out of the question, and only a few dear and intimate friends are permitted to call. This inflexible social custom is doubtless one of the last lingering relics of the barbaric ages, and, curiously enough, it seems to hold its own most firmly with those

who are most intelligent, and who most abhor superstitions.

Of course, I did not go out at all after the cards had been sent out, but I was busy as hostess and as supervisor of a thousand and one little matters that hereafter would be given in charge of a housekeeper. The wedding cake, which is no longer *de rigueur* but yet a pleasant concession to the past, was made at home, as was the bride's loaf, in which, according to a pretty custom and by my father's especial desire, a ring was baked. This cake I made entirely with my own hands, as it was a family tradition that the brides of our line had always prepared it unaided. And such a custom ought not, and surely will not, be wholly dropped, even though the caterers readily produce the like.

The following questions, my dear niece, often arise apropos of household comforts and delicacies, and satisfactory answers are yet to be made: "Why should a man desert the ready-made clothing shop and apply to a private tailor, a woman indulge in fine individual tastes and leave ready-made gowns in scorn, and both express a preference for restaurant foods and confectioner's wares just as soon as fortune smiles broadly enough for such luxuries to be indulged in?" Pray, my dear niece, be not thus vulgar; instead, maintain a womanly pride in serving certain delicate foods of your own compounding. In luxurious and even ultra-fashionable homes just now there is a strong current setting in favor of high art in cookery, and no hands are considered too delicate to manipulate especial dainties. The helping hand is always the beautiful one, and after marriage you may be sure that your husband will admire yours, if he be the

man of good judgment I think he is. You must not be induced to believe that this sort of work will injure your hands. A lack of ready skill at home is not creditable to a woman, and for her who boasts her ignorance instead of deploring and striving to remedy it as speedily as possible there are no words too strong to express contempt for her spirit or pity for her fault. With this sentiment in mind, and with such a respect for skilled products and especially for wedding feasts as my father and I had, you may be sure that the two weeks of seclusion between bidding guests to my marriage and the eventful day hastened onward rapidly. Far from making any attempt to "kill time," we found ourselves fully employed in making the most of it.

Three days before the wedding John came from the city, accompanied by his best man; and, besides arranging with the clergyman, the organist and the sexton, and selecting the carriage at the livery, the two men assisted with their hands and by suggestions to decorate the church with evergreens, into which fresh flowers were thrust or tied the morning of the ceremony. An arch of wires concealed by foliage and flowers spanned the centre aisle at the point where the seats reserved for invited guests began, all other parts of the church being open to the public.

*At very large weddings, where every seat will be required by the party, small cards of admission, stating the name of the church and the hour of the ceremony, are sent with the invitations. This is to prevent a crush. The formalities of weddings vary from decade to decade only in minor details, such as the kinds of flowers the bride is to wear, whether the maid of honor shall be a

little girl or a grown-up maiden, whether there shall be train bearers and, if so, whether they are to be girls or boys. If pages are preferred it must be decided whether they shall wear the historic court dress of doublet and hose or the national costume of the bride's ancestry. Likewise, if girls are to bear the train, the style of their attire may be historic, national or in accordance with the styles of to-day. All these matters are left to your own judgment, but pray remember that ostentation is plebeian, indelicate and unpleasant to behold. A little individuality, however, if kept within the limits of artistic refinement and not allowed to degenerate to mere eccentricity, is allowable and provides an agreeable variation to the conventional wedding.

The marriage ceremonial has become so matter of fact from the frequency of its occurrence, that a halo of effective ornamentation thrown about the service adds a notable charm to its memory. The plain gold wedding-ring should be tried on before its inner lettering is engraved, unless one of your rings has served the maker as a sample. The best man has the custody of this fetter. The third finger of the left-hand glove should be ripped down the inner seam to permit the adjustment of the ring.

Be sure you arrive at the altar at the appointed time; it is a bad omen to be late. "To be punctual suggests that I am in haste to marry," is a common excuse for unpleasant delays, but this is too frivolous to be considered. Bridesmaids sometimes meet at the church, but oftener at the home of the bride. The maid of honor gives the finishing touches to the bride's toilette, or, at least, goes through the form. She fastens a knot of narrow ribbon

or a *boutonnière*, or, perhaps, both, upon the left lapel of the best man's coat and bestows the same attention upon each usher.

The ushers should be at the church at least half an hour before the ceremony, and as the guests arrive those unknown to the ushers are asked if they are friends of the bride or groom. If the groom's guests, they are seated on the left-hand side of the church, the bride's friends being on the opposite side. The usher offers his right arm to each lady as she enters the church, and if she has an escort the latter follows up the aisle. As each lady is seated her escort seats himself beside her, the usher bows slightly to them and returns to the entrance to continue his services. The groom and best man arrive in one carriage, the bridesmaids follow, and lastly the father and mother of the bride, the bride herself and her maid of honor—usually in one carriage, which arrangement provides a chaperon for the maid of honor when the bride and best man shall have exchanged places after the ceremony. Pray remember this last formality, my dear niece, because it is considered a delicate and essential one in well-bred circles.

The mother (whose place was filled in my case by Aunt Edith) is immediately escorted to the front of the church and seated nearest the wedding party. Sometimes a friend or kinsman waits at the church entrance to offer his services to the mother, and thus all the ushers are left free for a processional march to the altar. Following them at distances previously determined upon come the bridesmaids in pairs, then the maid of honor alone, and lastly the bride and her father with the pages, if there be any. The groom and best man, having come

forward from the vestry, stand in front of the chancel rail, the former facing the incoming party. When the bridal party arrive at the end of this rail the groom steps forward, and, taking the bride's hand, both kneel for a moment in prayer, while the ushers at the right and the maid at the left bow their heads. The father stands a little back at the left of the bride, but so near that when the clergyman requires her hand of him he can easily reach it and lay it in that of the divine. This duty being over the father steps back to the side of his wife to be in readiness to follow the bridal pair from the church.

The ceremony completed, the clergyman shakes hands and congratulates the pair, the wedding march thrills through the air, and the maid of honor precedes the novices from the church, sometimes scattering in their path the roses from her bouquet. The father and mother follow the bride, then the bridesmaids and finally the ushers. It is no longer considered a delicate attention to kiss the bride while she is in the church, and in consequence she is spared much embarrassment. Neither is her veil lifted and drawn back as was formerly customary. Affection is held too sacred for public display. While the clergyman is offering his congratulations the best man passes out of the church by the side door so as to be in readiness to conduct the pair to their carriage. The ushers attend to the bridesmaids' carriages, and the party is soon at home and in readiness to receive friendly greetings. The bride and groom stand at the front end of the drawing-room, and the maids are grouped about them, while the parents of the pair are at each side. The ushers busy themselves in presenting the guests, and

if an usher does not know the person he is about to present, he inquires "what name?" and repeats it distinctly to the pair, because all the friends of one of them are not likely to be familiarly known to the other. He then escorts the guest to the heads of the two united families, where the same ceremonial of presentation takes place. Of course, only a moment is allowed for congratulation.

After all the guests have been presented, the ushers escort them to the refreshment room, and if service there is not abundant they assist in looking after their comfort. If served before one P. M. this refreshment is called a breakfast, but the *menu* is the same for all day. After all the guests have partaken of the hospitality, the heads of the two families and the bridal party repair to the supper, breakfast or refreshment room and are served. The bride cuts her loaf of cake into as many portions as there are maids, and one is chosen by each and laid upon another plate to be subdivided by herself. The maid who secures the ring is formally congratulated, and much merriment follows.

From this group the maid of honor and the wedded pair quietly retire to make ready for the wedding journey. In the meantime all guests, except members of the bridal party, will have departed, and the bride goes forth from her home as bravely and as smilingly as she may, composure at this trying moment being in excellent taste. Deep emotions are seldom exhibited, but they will doubtless find expression by a quiver of the lips or by an unusual pallor. The parting with my father was painful—how painful we only know; but I spared him as much as possible by leaving him with a smile on my

countenance. Rice was thrown after and over us, and merry faces gave our departure the best of good omens.

When a marriage takes place at home—which, however, is becoming more rare each year—the mother often enters the room leaning upon the arm of the groom, and the bride comes in with her father. Sometimes the pair present themselves alone, while not infrequently an altar is improvised and laden with flowers; in that case the procession may be arranged the same as at church, except that the groom with his best man is at the head. At such a wedding the mother is given a place at the left of the entrance, quite near the altar, and is attended by a kinsman or friend until joined by her husband.

Of course, if the wedding ceremony is not one in which the bride is to be given away, the father joins the mother as soon as he has placed his daughter by the side of her future husband. The latter formality is also observed at church when the service does not require that some one bestow the hand of the bride.

At the first opportunity all evidences of a recent wedding, such as hand bouquets, corsage flowers, etc., were removed, and I donned a lady-like travelling suit that had no longer the gloss of newness, this serving to aid us in escaping the observation of fellow-travellers. Still the indiscretion of an unfamiliar fondness almost always betrays a bride and groom to the good-natured scrutiny of those about them. A little natural or acquired dignity exhibited by the husband and a modest repression of the overflow of affection on the part of the bride is, however, all that is required.

Bear in mind that a pure and abiding love will always shrink from making itself the cynosure of strange and curious eyes. Your Uncle John and I were absent a month; and then, after a brief visit to my father, I entered my new residence. As soon as we were comfortably settled, "at home" cards for four afternoons in December were sent out. These were directed to John's friends and also to my own, but, of course, mine were mostly remote and not likely to be present; nevertheless, cards served for a remembrance, as well as an assurance of my desire to retain their regard, and also furnished them with my new address.

The interval between our arrival in town and our receptions, which were held from four until seven o'clock, was made charming by family gatherings. Mere acquaintances never call until formally requested. The tranquillity and leisure thus afforded a wife who desires to properly adjust herself to a novel social position in a strange circle cannot be too highly valued nor the etiquette of it too strictly insisted upon.

Of course, I committed errors in form, so different were town from country customs, and they annoyed me more than they did John, who laughingly corrected me whenever Aunt Edith failed to do so.

In truth, I suffered more than annoyance in consequence of these mistakes; it was an actual pain that was wholly out of proportion to the triviality of my blunders—a misfortune to which all sensitive young people are exposed, especially if they are overburdened with vanity. I may have been both, because I suffered keenly, and these minutiae of prevailing social formalities are written thus in detail to prevent your suffering similar discomforts. It is

easy to be a graceful hostess when one knows how to meet every possible exigency, but all the graciousness of the sweetest spirit is wasted by mistakes in its expression, How I dreaded my receptions! But I must reserve my account of them for another letter.

AUNTIE.

NINTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

A wedding like that described in your last letter must be an impressive and beautiful sight ; and it is certainly one entirely unfamiliar to me, as, in the country, weddings are rarely arranged on so lavish a scale.

In your last letter you promised to give me an account of your first receptions, and I am all impatience to hear about them. I suppose after the wedding, receptions are of first importance, and I should like much to hear of your first experiences in this respect. Please tell me everything, which includes an account of the preparations you made for your guests both in regard to the decorations of your reception-rooms and the arrangement of your feast, if feast there were. I want to know, too, with true feminine curiosity, what you wore on that important occasion, and whether you received alone or were assisted by your husband and his relatives.

I hope you will give me some of your impressions of the strange people you met, and also if you managed to pass successfully through so trying an ordeal. I do not make friends very readily, and this I fear will be against my becoming a success as a hostess ; but I shall endeavor to overcome some of my reserve, for I sup-

pose in order to become a favorite socially one must cultivate an affable manner and the power to apparently obliterate all thoughts of self. When a woman feels she is continually in danger of committing social errors, how can she become unconscious of herself? The only way, I suppose, is to correct the faults, or, at least, to forget all about them by allowing pleasanter thoughts to crowd them out, if possible. As the secret of success is constancy of purpose, I am resolved to be constant in my endeavor to correct all shortcomings.

There are a few more questions I would like to ask, and they are in relation to cards for receptions. Is it necessary to send cards for such occasions, and are gentlemen invited to any or all events of the kind? The etiquette regarding the use of cards is rather puzzling to me, and I hope you will kindly give me a full explanation on this score in your next letter.

Your Loving

NIECE.

TENTH LETTER.

RECEPTIONS.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

You remind me that I promised to give you an account of my first reception. At first, of course, I found the exactions of city life somewhat difficult, but after I understood their significance I wondered that my intelligence had not made the need of certain social laws plain to me; but it did not, and yet I believe I was endowed with at least average discernment. From the fact that my own mind failed to inform me what I was expected to do, you will not deem it an impertinence in your kinswoman if she suspects your mental equipments of having served you no better. Of course, I depended upon your Uncle John's family to select my new acquaintances, reserving to myself—at least so I intended—the right of choosing from them my friends. This was the wise resolution of a tranquil moment, but what young woman, unless she possess unusual prudence, adheres firmly to such determinations? Impulse rather than instinct too often controls the young.

To a strict enforcement of social etiquette a woman owes more, perhaps, than she does to moral training upon her first entrance into a strange and alluring circle of

acquaintances. The social laws, if strictly obeyed, make undesirable intimacies almost impossible to her; and who does not remember the pain of terminating an intimacy inconsiderately, or, at least, mistakenly, entered upon?

If the formula for paying and receiving visits is strictly followed during the early period of married life, or, indeed, after any change of residence, good opportunities will occur for carefully selecting those who can become permanently the nearest and dearest by ties of sympathy and mutual intellectual helpfulness. If for no other reason, etiquette should be studiously observed because it is one of woman's chief safeguards, behind which she may establish herself and feel secure from unpleasant criticisms. This restraint upon young and warm impulses may not be agreeable, but it is far easier to endure than the consequences of a mistaken choice of intimates. I will tell you later on how this wisdom came to me; in the meantime I will endeavor to describe the dread with which my wedding receptions inspired me. Not that I doubted the friendliness of all whom my husband's family had selected as my guests; but knowing the value attached to the favorable opinion of such persons, I had a nervous fear that I might fall short of their expectations; that I might blunder in speech or, perhaps, fail in degrees of cordiality when welcoming them to my new home. Here I will allude to a defect in regard to which you have doubtless already been instructed.

I believe—in social intercourse, at least—that self-consciousness is the root of all evil and very often the source of one's impulses to do wrong, though love of money is accredited with this offensive lower power. At any rate, if you accept this as a truth, my dear girl, you

will be more likely to pass safely through your first and, indeed, all your hospitalities. As to material matters, which are no less essential, it is, first of all, necessary for you to estimate the number of your guests ; still anything like exactness of calculation is quite impossible, and a hostess must be prepared for possibilities, as invitations for general receptions do not demand responses.

Ostentation in floral decorations or in refreshments when attempted by a young wife is considered vulgar. Tea, coffee and chocolate are always prepared, and in winter *bouillon* and in summer lemonade can be replenished as required, so that regarding these supplies no anxiety need be felt when competent attendants are at hand. *Bouillon* may be preserved at least a week in winter time.

At my first reception the table was spread in the dining-room and contained all available wedding presents and a few fresh flowers. A half-dozen really fresh roses or other blossoms (do not place more than a single variety on the table at once) are far more effective and refined than masses of blossoms that have lost the first exquisiteness of their beauty. Small fancy cakes arranged in low glass bowls or upon pretty plates of glass, silver or china, also olives and confections in tiny trays or fanciful dishes, supplied the desired color and were ornamental. Sandwiches and fancy breads were daintily arranged at the last moment in baskets or upon *casseroles*, and an extra supply was kept out of sight. Chicken and lobster salad and crab or salmon were placed at each end of the table, and the liquids were upon side tables with the cups, saucers and glasses. Candied fruits, and water and cream ices are frequently furnished when one has an

elaborate table. Napkins heaped in an orderly fashion beside piles of plates and spoons or forks were upon each side of the large table and on the sideboard. Such a supply as this is sufficient for a handsome and even a sumptuous reception.

If the invitations include a good portion of those who attended the wedding, the refreshments may be more simple. Tea and chocolate or coffee, with sandwiches or thinly sliced and buttered bread, small cakes, etc., are passed by a domestic to the guests soon after their entrance; but in my case a high tea as described was preferred by my husband, who desired to be generously hospitable. His mother and one of his sisters helped me to receive the guests, while another sister and a cousin assisted in the dining-room. Besides my own bouquet the only cut flowers were those sent me during the morning; and to these I turned my eyes as if they were consciously eloquent and really trustworthy assurances that as a wife I was to be kindly received among strange but pleasant people. The other flowers were growing plants, palms, geraniums, begonias, etc., all of which would bloom or, at least, continue to freshen with their graceful foliage our new home during the entire winter and spare us the expense of purchasing new plants for the following three receptions. The ices were made up in individual forms and opened as required, and the confectioner afterward took back all that had not been disturbed. A carpet was laid from the front door to the curb an hour before the time mentioned upon the cards, and in case of inclement weather an awning was to be placed across this space.

My toilette was made fully half an hour before the arrival of the earliest guest, and I had surveyed every-

thing and given my last direction to the extra attendants. By my side, but less composed and more anxious than I, stood my husband. He did not, because he could not, know just how much forethought I had bestowed upon the details of this my first reception, but he soon learned that a woman could attend to all the necessary details and at the same time not forget those lesser matters which contribute to the success of a party or reception. What I did not know or even think about was the significance of certain greetings that I was to receive.

My lady guests were directed to my own pretty chamber to lay aside their wraps, and the men used John's room. They came down stairs together, and as John introduced them each lady offered me her hand; if the person being presented was elderly or especially distinguished, he reversed the order of introduction. Afterward the men were introduced, and they were most kind and even cordial, but I noticed their congratulations were invariably for my husband. After being introduced the guests passed on to speak to my new kinspeople, some of whom stood near by; soon after they drifted, as by a natural attraction, toward the refreshment room, looking as they went upon the appointments of our new home. There was a time when this observance of the belongings of a house would have been considered ill-mannered, but as house furniture and hangings are included among the finer arts, such a scrutiny is now esteemed rather a complimentary attention than otherwise.

One thing impressed me, and it never fails to recur whenever I am in a company that is gathered by daylight, and it is that the men, who are always arrayed in morning costumes, are at a disadvantage, because women are per-

mitted by custom to array themselves in as elegant attire as they choose, only stopping short of evening toilettes. Of course, the women retained their bonnets, which were dressy; and their gloves were of evening tints, while the men were neatly but soberly dressed and gloved. As a bride I was dressed in my bridal robes, omitting only my veil, and I carried a bouquet of colored flowers. All who receive cards make a special effort to be present at the first receptions of a young wife, for it suggests welcome; and to attend the last one, if one remains only a few minutes, intimates to the hostess that she has made an agreeable impression which it will be pleasant to deepen.

My first daylight party was largely attended, and I tried to be happy with its brilliancy and its suggestions, but was really miserable. I strove to comfort myself with the belief that my husband was properly appreciated and liked even by a people who did not and, perhaps, could not congratulate his wife. The meaning and fine suggestiveness of this formality did not occur to me at the time. I was pained without knowing clearly why, and I was foolish enough to show my unhappiness in my face. It was, as I said, only a lack of knowledge of the wise ways of the world into which I had stepped. Yes, dear, it was solely by lack of consideration that I was made wretched. The meaning of certain social usages or formalities which brought this sense of injury upon me had not been sought by my immature brain, and I was too proud to be frank about it.

After the last guest had departed I took a woman's refuge in a burst of tears, at which John was much distressed and insisted that I was over-weary, and he was sure I was hungry and that he had been thoughtless of

my comfort, at which reflection he looked abjectly miserable. Then he brightened up to tell me what a social success I had already become, so perfectly had everything been arranged; and that I had lacked nothing but a genuine cheerfulness, which he had noticed had waned until I was pallid and drooping. He insisted that he was the only one to be blamed, because he had not reflected how tired I must have become with the details of a first reception, etc., etc.

After my sobbing was quieted a little I said: "Oh, but John, you were congratulated and I not at all; and your mother shook her head at me whenever I invited any of our new acquaintances to visit me again." John laughed and replied: "But, my dear, will you not leave it to your guests' own pleasure and judgment to decide whether they continue their acquaintance with us? You invited them to make your house a visiting center and to partake of your hospitality, and now do you mean to lasso them by exacting a promise to continue to do so? If they have good taste they will not need pressing to accept a privilege already formally offered them. I am sure my mother did not mean to be severely disapproving; she only intended to hint to you that she considered it quite unnecessary to urge good fortune upon your visitors. Custom does not demand a reiteration of welcome; and, besides, in a city one's circle may become too large and quite unmanageable after a few years if the multitude are welcomed too urgently."

"Don't laugh at me," I begged, drying my tears. "I see it now and can comprehend the wisdom of an etiquette that makes verbal invitation not only needless but indelicate. How did you come to marry so ignorant a

girl?" "By reiterating my invitation to you; for you partially declined me the first time, you know you did." This badinage brought sunshine, but not peace. I was still unsettled, and John saw it and continued: "Having wanted you as a wife and overcome all obstacles to your hand, I consider that congratulations were all my due, and really I don't see any reason why you or any other woman should be congratulated for having bestowed a favor upon a man. It is the winner and not the giver who is to be congratulated. Even though the woman should now and then get the best of the arrangement, it would be very discourteous to congratulate her upon her success. Certainly such language to a bride would not be chivalric even if it were just. Did not each guest wish for you every possible good fortune and happiness? and you will certainly need them when you come to know more of your husband's unlovable qualities." How strange that I had not thought of this before! But people do not think, and especially is this true of girls; how much unpleasantness and sometimes even the wrecking of their lives would they escape if they inquired closely into the meaning of things! No social form is without significance, and you, my dear niece, should try to find it out.

The next day I began my new book of addresses and arranged my visiting list alphabetically, according to the cards which my guests had left in the hall. Wives, whose husbands could not be present and were not likely to attend the following receptions, left cards for their husbands and also for their grown sons. Daughters left the cards of their absent mothers, while if any were unable to be present on account of being in mourning, their cards

were left by some member of the family. And thus for the first time I began to see that kind intimations and even cordial assurances might be conveyed by a card. Being a stranger to most of my guests it was considerate of them to turn the upper right-hand corner of cards left in person, but those of absentees were left unfolded. Of course, I should not have remembered all who were present, and I felt the delicacy of this custom which prevails in strictness only when the hostess is a stranger. Little by little I was learning the value of *les convenances*. Etiquette is felt to be a wall that will keep in the distance unpleasant persons and disagreeable occurrences provided one understands how to use it; but for those between whom the barriers are broken down by mutual tastes, sympathies and conditions it has no significance at all. It is a dead letter after one says to another: "You have ceased to be a mere acquaintance; you are now my friend, and the inner circle where ceremony is needless is yours henceforth." This intimate relationship is not to be hastily established by a young wife, nor, indeed, by any one; and she should not make friendships unadvised.

My other receptions were a joy to me, because there could be no mistake as to intention, and whatever blunders there were I was unconscious of; and I learned by a glance at my husband's face when a new face approached whether I was to be reserved or cordial, gracious and dignified or simply automatic. In a world where matches are sometimes made elsewhere than in Heaven it not infrequently happens that one-half of a family is charmingly agreeable and wholly worthy, while the other half is—well, not fascinating; and yet as a whole family must

they be invited and not as separate persons. Distinctions can only be made by finely graded warmth of manner; and this process of receiving is a study and, to the successful woman of society, becomes a fine art.

AUNTIE.

ELEVENTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

This letter is written on shipboard, for, preparations at last completed, we commenced our journeying four days ago. Father begins to look better already, the delicious sea breezes proving a most invigorating tonic ; and as for myself—I cannot express my delight at the new experiences which this voyage has opened up to me. Such glorious sunsets, such delicious air, and the wildest, maddest, merriest waves ! How grand it all is.

I haven't been at all ill and spend my time chiefly walking on deck in company with pleasant people, and speculating about the occupations and habits of the individuals who make up our little world. I never before knew what a source of amusement and entertainment lies in the study of the manners and peculiarities of men and women. It is remarkable to me what a feeling of respect and love a woman who is truly a gentlewoman in mind and manner inspires in those about her ; and how instinctively one honors the man who can honestly claim "the grand old name of gentleman." There are numerous little meannesses to which so many men and women stoop, thus marring natures which, freed from them, would be truly noble. Of course, one's training has

much to do with eradicating or exaggerating these unworthy trifles ; but with a persistent will to rid ourselves of them, what a splendid victory may be achieved, resulting in an exalted, purified self.

When thrown into close communion with people of all kinds and dispositions, as one is of necessity on an ocean steamer, it is impossible not to moralize a little, and I hope, dear aunt, you will forgive me if I have bored you.

But I must write now on those matters about which I am so eager to learn all there is to know. I have heard much talk while on the steamer about "At Home" days, and would like to know how they are observed and how you arranged your days.

Before sailing I omitted to supply myself with cards bearing my name, and I have felt greatly the uncomfortable position in which this forgetfulness or rather ignorance on my part has placed me ; but I shall get them just as soon as I arrive at a place where they can be procured. Will you kindly tell me how I should have them engraved ?

I have also heard a great deal of talk about "Afternoon Teas," which I imagine must be charming affairs, with bright, chatty people to meet and entertain one another. I have decided that "afternoon teas" shall be a feature of my social life, so please tell me all about them—how one is expected to be attired ; what is required of the hostess, how and where the tea is served, and what are the requisites of the tea-table. Are the guests announced, and do they exchange greetings with the hostess and each other in any prescribed way ? I think I would make a better hostess than guest—even my short time on shipboard tells me this ; but I must practice entering and

leaving a room, which I find very difficult to do well. I become so self-conscious, but this I mean to overcome. If you will assist me on these points with your sound advice you will add largely to the fund of gratitude already held in store for you by

Your Loving

NIECE.

TWELFTH LETTER.

VISITING.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

You touched in your last letter on several very important points, especially regarding “at home” days, and I shall take great pleasure in explaining them to you. A woman who means to lead a useful life and who lives within easy visiting distance of her friends cannot afford to have her busy hours broken in upon by persons who wish to be amused by her or to monopolize her busy moments with their own chatter. You will not, I am sure, judge the occupied and earnest woman as being indifferent to society. On the contrary, the more deeply she is plunged into serious endeavors, whether mental or material, the more she craves the sympathy and interest of her fellows; and yet she cannot afford to devote much time to such gratification.

To make intercourse with her friends not only possible but agreeable, she conscientiously fixes upon one afternoon in each week during certain months, or arranges to receive visitors once a month during the entire season. On these occasions those who really desire to talk with her will be sure to find her at liberty. It happened not

long ago in a country town that a lady who had put an "at home" day on her visiting card and had mentioned the day and hours to such of her acquaintances as she casually met, was being criticised as if she had committed a sin, or, what is sometimes considered worse, a social blunder. A dear old lady who had been listening and to whom "at homes" once a week were unknown events, thought the matter over a while and then remarked in her sweet, womanly voice, "Had such a practice been general during my early life I should have fewer disappointments to remember; and how many charming hours I have lost by going to the house of a friend while she was trying to visit me!"

Pray do not, my dear niece, shrink from adopting any novel social arrangement, if it be a good one, for it will be a saving of time and labor. It is the prevailing habit of some natures to cavil, or, at least, to be captious whenever an innovation is made upon long-established usages no matter how excellent it may be. If you live in a town where neighbors are few and those few live far apart, there is all the more reason why a certain day should be set for calling. A neighborly craving for social sympathy is a wholesome sensation. It is a dreary afternoon that is spent in trying to make a round of visits even upon those whom one really wants to see, and it is a wicked waste of precious time, not to mention the insincerity, to call upon persons whom one is glad to learn are absent from home or too deeply engrossed to receive visitors. I have said more upon this point than would have been necessary had your young life been spent in busy towns where an at-home day has long been an established custom.

Have your cards engraved in clear, unornamented

script of moderate size. "Miss" should always be prefixed to a young lady's name just as "Mrs." is to a married lady's and "Mr." before a man's name. If you were the eldest of a family of sisters instead of an only child, you would, as now, do as you choose about inserting your christian name upon the card. If you had a younger sister and she was in society, I would not advise the use of your baptismal name upon your cards, but would merely prefix the "Miss." Your address should be engraved on the lower right-hand corner of the card, and opposite it the days and hours when you will be at home. The cards should be of moderate size and fine texture, and some of them may bear simply your name, and will be useful while you are away from home, your temporary address being written on them.

Aunt Edith explained all this to me, who was at the time unsophisticated in the usages of the world of society. The day I had determined upon as my "at home" was unknown to most of my new acquaintances until I returned the visit which they had made at my receptions. Calls upon brides are counted formal visits, and must be so recognized.

My first experience in paying city visits was a pleasant surprise, and I enjoyed very much the attentions of my husband's friends. Of course, I knew that the friendliness was due entirely to him, but by this time I was wise enough to understand that such kindness was all that I could reasonably expect from them at that time. I, however, resolved to make these pleasant strangers my debtors later on when I could be of some appreciable social value in this new circle.

First of all was the almost universal little table, spread

with a dainty tea-cloth and placed near the door; on it were china cups, a water and a sugar bowl, a cream jug and a tea-caddy. Sometimes even the caddy was of china. Underneath the table was a shelf on which were placed two sorts of light refreshments. One might be cut cake or sugar wafers, and the other thinly sliced and daintily buttered bread folded over to turn the butter inside it and thus spare the gloves of guests. Little fringed napkins lay in a pile between these plates, and one was passed to each guest with her tea. The bronze, brass or copper kettle of hot water was brought in about half-past four or five o'clock, according to the season, and set over a spirit lamp. The hostess placed the tea in the pretty tea-pot and when the water bubbled it was poured over it.

The hostess, if she had not a retinue of servants—and few had in those days—not only poured the tea into the cups herself, but carried on the conversation meanwhile. Each cup was set upon a pretty table-tray by the side of a small sugar-bowl and a cream jug, and the hostess offered it to her guests soon after greetings were gone through with. If she had a daughter, or a young girl was receiving with her, the tea was taken from the hostess' hand by her and carried to each guest. The plates of cake and bread and a napkin were then offered. The talk flowed cheerily on, each new-comer receiving the chief attention for the time being. Sometimes—but it was not by any means usual—a maid or man servant brought in a large tray containing soup or cups of tea and sugar, cream, wafers and buttered bread, and offered them to the guests. But this arrangement precludes the charm of personal hospitality, as well as the use of the pretty tea-table

and its ornamental appointments, to say nothing of the musical chink of cups and spoons and the low singing of the kettle over the lamp.

Whichever method of serving tea was in process, no interruption was noticeable in the talk, which seldom descended to personalities, or, when it did, was not permitted to remain there. Nor was it left to drift into domestic affairs, unless they were of general interest to the entire company. During such short visits, which were seldom longer than a quarter of an hour and frequently even more brief, the conversation was so skilfully managed even though introductions were rarely made, that no one felt as if he or she were left out of the pervading interest. The names of guests were mentioned by the hostess when appealing to their opinions or, perhaps, by saying, "I suspect Mrs. So-and-So of being able to direct us, or to explain to us," etc., etc.

There are many ways by which the conversation may be made general as you will learn by studying the art of entertaining. I was fascinated by the exquisite grace and graciousness of the various hostesses whom I met during this my first season of visiting among accomplished, polished women. You can imagine how much more complacent women may be who, having expected visitors, are mentally prepared to meet them. The rooms were made bright by a few cut flowers or plants, the pretty toilette of the hostess and the appointments of the tea-table. These customs and arrangements prevail to-day even more universally than at that time, and you may take the hints I furnish and apply them to the life about you, modifying them, of course, as your own tastes and necessities suggest.

Sometimes a servant announces a guest by name as he or she enters the drawing-room or parlor, and thus the assembled company are made aware of the personality of all who enter. This is a trying moment to those who are timid and unfamiliar with society, but the unpleasantness soon wears away, as I know from experience. Unconsciousness of self makes elegance of manner easy of attainment; think of what pleasant thing you can say to your hostess—in fact, think of anything but your own person and all will be well with you. As you enter a room full of strangers offer your hand for greeting and express the hope that your hostess is well. Do not offer any excuses if you have been tardy in repaying a call, but say you are sorry not to have seen your hostess sooner and thus make the loss of an earlier visit your own misfortune; but let this regret be concluded speedily. To give your reason, except it be illness or absence from home, is uninteresting, as well as a time-consuming personality which I beg you to avoid if you hope to be a social favorite. Speak to whoever is near you when the hostess' attention is diverted, for there is always plenty of material at hand out of which sociality can be made. Do not outstay those who enter after you, nor go away so soon after a later arrival as to disturb her reception.

After a cup of tea take leave of your hostess briefly, and bow especially to whomsoever is assisting her; then bow in a general way to the company and retire with your face to the room if the hostess is near the door. If she is remote from it at the time this style of departure is not easy, but upon reaching the door turn and bow again to the company. Be sure, dear niece, to enter and leave with a cheerful face, talk only on agreeable subjects,

relate no calamitous incident and make no worn-out comment upon the weather; but carry so much sunshine and pleasant interest in others with you that your departure will be a regret to every one with whom you have spoken.

To be entertaining to those who happen to be near you gives pleasure to your hostess, and she at first admires you in proportion to the aid you have been to her in brightening the hours, and afterward she loves and values you according to the motive that prompted you to add to the charm of her hospitality. Never invite your hostess to visit you. That you called upon her is the most eloquent of requests that she continue an acquaintance already begun—indeed, it is the only way by which society says to its circle “Come again.” Of course, if you desire her to visit you at some particular time you may tender the invitation.

You do not send in a card on a lady’s receiving day, because you are expected and, of course, known to your hostess; but you must not, my dear niece, forget to leave a card with your own “at home” day upon it in the hall. A tray is always there to receive it. This card is for the hostess’ convenience, and she refers to it and records your day and hour for visiting in her visiting book, where she already has your address. Being a stranger I left mine and also two of my husband’s cards, one for the hostess and one for the host. When I again called, my husband not being with me, as he seldom is during the day, I did not leave my own, but his cards as before.

For ladies to whom I was indebted and who had the same “at home” days as myself, I left my own card when I could and two of my husband’s, with the left-hand ends of all three folded over, which explained that

I left them myself. Had they been sent by messenger they would not have been folded. To fold them neatly lay the smallest cards on top, make the left ends even and turn them all over at once. Any slovenliness in such matters is vulgar. I watched ladies who were accustomed to the graces of the drawing-room and learned how they received their guests, how visitors took leave; and the charming composure of it all gave me a lesson that I took care to follow. I noticed that the hostess rose to receive and part with each visitor; but she only went to the parlor entrance with those who were elderly, with strangers or those in delicate health. She did not rise to take leave of young girls, nor after my first visit was I escorted to the drawing-room door.

Little by little I began to see the reasons for etiquette. Among the mistakes I had always been making was the inconsiderateness of paying calls whenever it suited my caprice or convenience, quite forgetful of the pain which a kindly woman must always feel in refusing to see a visitor or the equally discomfiting acquiescence when duties are pressing. Another common error of mine was the habit of saying to a departing guest, "Come again." This invitation, except it be given with a date or a special purpose, is indelicate. It is simply a reiteration of what your card announces and what your visit indicated. Pray remember this.

AUNTIE.

THIRTEENTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT—:

We came directly to Germany and are now very comfortably and happily settled in Berlin. I am working hard trying to acquire the language, which I greatly admire, and it is my chief ambition to be able to read at least a few of the notable German works in the original. You see I am combining study with pleasure, so that I may return to my home a better and more enlightened woman than I left it.

I was quite sorry when we sighted land, for I enjoyed the voyage immensely; but all my regrets have vanished in the keen pleasure I have experienced since my arrival here. The people are so genial, so hospitable and so clever, and everything is so novel to me. I have made some very charming acquaintances, among whom are two old friends of my father's who are really an acquisition, they are so entertaining and so well-informed regarding all the points of interest. Both have travelled much and are thoroughly amiable, and father has become quite merry under their influence. To them we are indebted for many social enjoyments; and how thankful I feel now that I have your letters to guide me in matters about which I should certainly have blundered.

I find that here they have what is called a "Kaffee Klatsch," which takes the place of the English and American afternoon tea. Coffee is served instead of tea, and with it a certain kind of cake called "coffee cake," which is very agreeable.

I scarcely know what information to ask you for this time ; my head is so full of all sorts of things and my time so completely occupied that I have not planned out my list of queries, without which I am certain you will think I have not written you half a letter. Yes, I have a question to ask and one I am thankful not to have forgotten, for it is of something I much want to know. I understand that I am about to receive an invitation to pay a visit of some weeks at the home of a lady of prominent social position with whom I have become quite friendly. We were introduced by one of the gentlemen I have mentioned, and liked each other from the first. She is so sweet in manner, and has such winning, graceful ways, that to me she is simply irresistible. How I should like to possess her charm of manner ; perhaps she will teach me the secret.

Now when the invitation comes I should like to know the most graceful way of accepting it, for I certainly wish to accept. Father will, in the mean time, go with his physician to Schwalbach, and I shall be free to do as I choose. Please inform me on this and any other point that may occur to you as especially suited to my wants.

Your Devoted

NIECE.

FOURTEENTH LETTER.

RECEIVING GUESTS.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

Your query regarding the proper form of accepting an invitation to make a visit of length suggests to me an episode of my own early married life which will, I think, prove both instructive and interesting to you.

It is a wise plan, if a young wife can afford the luxury of hospitality, to invite one or two agreeable guests to stay awhile with her in her new home. Even if she has to economize at some other time, or if her invitations must be limited to one friend at a time, she will be amply repaid. This bit of advice or, rather, suggestion, is given in the hope that you may some time profit by it, as I did, and as one at least of my guests did even more than myself.

Your uncle and I talked the matter over and decided to invite a pretty cousin of his from a Western city, and also a schoolmate and neighbor of mine, to come to us for a fortnight and enjoy with us our new home. The cousin, I was told, was the motherless daughter of an active business man and possessed excellent mental capacity. She was described as unusually attractive in

appearance, wealthy and generous. Your uncle, however, had reasons for suspecting that a little polishing in speech, a little subduing of manners and a more practical knowledge of that "graceful graciousness" so well known to the French people by the name of *savoir faire*, would greatly increase the young girl's attractiveness.

"But I have not yet gained enough of this desirable elegance to be able to impart the wisdom of experience, as you are too well aware," I said with more impetuosity than good breeding permitted.

"You have no reason for self-reproach," my husband answered gravely but most kindly; "and who can be blamed for ignorance about matters they have never been called upon to deal with? The latest approved town customs are like its fashions; they drift countryward a season or two late. When I first saw you there was no demand for one set of formalities which it is necessary you should now apply practically.

"Of course, for my own part, I prefer a *tête-à-tête* with you, but it is generous to give social pleasure to our friends. Indeed, I think I once heard you say it was not wise for two persons to be always alone together, because they were likely to reflect each other's moods; and you were right. If truly attached to each other, their minds become too much of the same type, and their thoughts are likely to run in the same channels. They see everything from the same standpoint and have no new or original views of interesting questions, either public or private.

"And besides, dear wife, have you not discovered that to be able to teach others one must be learned? One will carefully guard against social blunders if he have

blunderers to guide him. Not that I any longer fear for you; your days for making serious mistakes have long passed I know; nor could you ever have committed a social fault that was serious enough to sigh over in secret, had you but once suspected that there were laws and customs of which you knew nothing. It is ignorance and innocence that feel most keenly the stings of social mistakes. The formalities of life, you may be sure, are as gracious in their interpretation as they are wise in their applications, and little trippings are the result of ignorance of usages. It isn't from wilfulness or selfishness nor yet from vulgar tastes that blunders are most likely to spring. It is, as I said, because a girl doesn't know that she is in danger; and this grave fact you have the fine tact to teach your guests."

All this was impressed on my mind and helped me to brave that first winter's ordeals. My experience in a large and strange circle of people proved beyond a doubt that my carefully bred husband had confidence in the capacity of his wife to become a polished member of society, and I determined that he should not be disappointed. Writing as I do with an open heart, it is a proof of my affection and an earnest determination to spare you the humility of learning the world's best ways by stumbling and painful experiences.

Your uncle had already met the sweet and pretty girl whom he proposed I should bring from the country for her first city visit. He had frequently mentioned her as one quite capable of becoming a polished woman, as she was now one of the noblest of girls. Of course, this praise of my friend was a most delicate compliment to me, and I very properly appreciated it; for I have yet to

meet a man with keener instincts and clearer judgment of womanly women than your Uncle John.

Winter was fast approaching, and the invitations were sent at once for the tenth of December. A fine consideration, rather than any knowledge of strict etiquette, impelled my friend Helen to accept promptly and most gratefully, although, as she afterward explained, this unexpected pleasure made her look aghast at her simple and even slender wardrobe. She also explained that if she had not known that her city friend was well aware of the limitation as well as the rusticity of her country-made attire, she would out of regard for her hostess have declined with equal promptness.

The rich city girl accepted conditionally, which you know is ill-bred to a measureless degree. She said there was a grand ball in prospect, but its occurrence was not quite certain. It would soon be decided, and if it was not to occur she would come at the time stated. If the ball was arranged, she would be with us a fortnight later, and most charmed was she at the prospect of getting a glimpse of metropolitan society.

"I am glad you are anxious to have me visit you," she wrote in conclusion.

"But I am not anxious," exclaimed your uncle, with more petulance than I had ever before seen him display. "The girl has less breeding than I suspected. I will telegraph her immediately that we shall not expect her."

Now was my time for a remonstrance, for I well knew that a part of my husband's indignation sprang from a comparison of the sweet, unselfish simplicity of the reply of my country-bred friend with the arrogant selfishness of the city miss.

"Anxiety indeed!" your uncle interrupted when I tried to soothe him. "Anxiety! Do I not hear persons who ought to know the value of words use the same egotistic term, as if one could be anxious about the visit of anybody, except it were a physician or a creditor! If a friend is kind enough to offer hospitalities, only a braggart of the most offensive sort could say that she or he was anxiously desired. I have no patience with such consummate vanity."

"No, indeed, you haven't," I answered; "but then, John, did you not intimate that in teaching we should be learning? and this girl will give us an opportunity."

Your uncle laughed and his temper vanished instantly. "True; but this is a sort of tuition you never needed, and I trust I have not been in dire want of it myself."

"All the more to be grateful for, and the less to be vain about," I said more frankly than considerately; but my reply did not hurt my husband in the least. We had entered into so perfect an understanding with each other that neither of us were any longer afraid to sound the depths of such differences as always lie at the bottom of character. We knew that the moral and the purpose of each was the same, but the methods of their expression and the roads which led to results were distinctly different in certain matters.

"You are right," he replied, "but all the same I shall telegraph to say that later on we are likely to be engaged. This will determine her, for I shall also say that if there is still doubt about her acceptance, our plans are such that we must ask another to take her place." This proposal I acceded to. It was due to ourselves not to allow

our plans to be disarranged for the pleasure of this apparently uninstructed young woman.

By this time I began to feel apprehensive about the comfort of my own young friend, should she, with all her sweet unfamiliarity with the world's ways, be brought into daily contact with so unpleasant a type of civilization as our other guest promised to be. We shared this anxiety, but I comforted your uncle by suggesting that it was more than likely his cousin's breeding was a case of ignorance or, perhaps, of arrested development; especially as she, too, was motherless, and her father was an enthusiastic money-getter in an atmosphere where business strife is almost a madness. This thought helped your uncle, and being motherless myself, it helped me.

When your uncle came home at evening he laughingly gave me a dispatch which read :

" You refuse to let me eat my cake and keep it too ; therefore, expect me promptly. "
KATE."

" She is bright of mind, if not polished in manner," he said, still laughing. " I suspect my young wife will have her hands full with this untoward occidental. If she doesn't sing the songs of the cowboy, I shall be only too grateful. We cannot escape her now, but you are not to excuse in her the least want of courtesy in anything or toward anybody. Pray remember and be exacting."

" But," said I, " who is to express the religion of hospitality while I am breaking in this wild creature? I do not propose to become a mistress of deportment to beginners. You must take the lower class in hand, and I will manage the more advanced country girl."

And so we laughed and bantered each other, but deep

down in our hearts both felt a little apprehensive. "If she were sensitive and ignorant, I could pity and help her," I said to myself; "but the bravado of the girl who, to use an expression of her own that afterward became quite familiar to our own ears, 'gave herself away' by her telegram!" She proved to us that she knew more than she applied of good social usages. "Is she selfish or only inconsiderate?" was the question we often asked ourselves; but until she arrived this question could not be answered.

I had two guest rooms, one large and one small. How was I to place the girls? One of them would bring many gowns and require much space. The other would have few belongings, and, besides, would choose the smaller of the two apartments, because it was her nature to prefer another before herself. On the other hand, the Western girl might suspect that we were anxious to please her if we gave her the better chamber; and it was quite certain that she would be amazed, if we expressed too high a regard for a country maiden of simple manners and without finger-rings and tea-gowns. Perhaps she would show her surprise in a manner that could not be mistaken by the other guest.

Before John I laid my perplexity, but he failed to help me, and I resorted to dear Aunt Edith. I was rather glad there was one question in etiquette my city-bred husband could not answer.

Aunt Edith arranged it instantly. The eldest should have the choicest room in this land of equality in birth. Pray do not imagine that I believe there is such a thing as equality in persons. Each of us makes his own place, be it high or low, but birth is alike for all. Was it Victor

Hugo who said "There is nothing in any country that one should bow to but genius, and nothing but goodness to kneel to?" I think it was he, and he was right.

Was it because I was young that I had not thought of settling the question this way? Perhaps so. Your uncle was much older; but then he is a man, and the question of precedence belongs mostly to women.

When I told the decision to my husband he laughed merrily and said: "If anything can keep in check the arrogance—or, perhaps, it is only an excess of vital force—in our Western cousin, it will be a knowledge of the reason why she was given the finest guest-room—her age demanded it! What fun!" And so it was settled that Kate, being almost three months older than Helen, should have the choice room.

And now came plans for the diversion of our guests, which must also include a recognition of certain of our own social obligations. We had received several invitations to dinner, which we had thus far declined; for I had not until now returned all the visits that had been paid me as a bride, and I had been too much engrossed in this imperative duty and too weary with those small frictions of housekeeping that a beginner cannot evade, if she expects to be mistress of the situation and get the machinery of domestic affairs in perfect running order. The presence of these young girls in the house would be an excellent reason for especially inviting my husband's bachelor friends; for these latter seldom renew the pleasant "chumminess" of former times with a newly married man, unless they are sure of a welcome from the wife.

Then, too, I desired to give dinners, as was the time-

honored custom, though of course, on a much larger plan, in my mother-in-law's house; and with these young guests to divert attention from possible *gaucheries* on my part, I felt courage enough to undertake little entertainments. Then there would be theatre parties or an opera or two within the range of our hospitalities. I was wise enough to invite a matron for the first dinner, and John's mother was selected. Not that I preferred her, but it was a courtesy to my husband, and he was gratified, for he must have known that I preferred Aunt Edith, who was less critical and was always ready with valuable suggestions.

My mother-in-law was one to find fault after a mistake had been committed, but Aunt Edith tenderly watched and made the blunder impossible. Pray remember the difference between these two women, and follow the best beloved one; so shall your life surely be a blessing.

John's mother, who was justice and exactness incarnated, was an agreeable woman to those for whom she felt no responsibility; she was, therefore, justly popular, and certainly she was handsome. I have always believed that your uncle's trust in her integrity and his admiration for her person and for her fine manners far exceeded his affection, but I may have been mistaken. For myself, her approval was tranquilizing. If she smiled I knew I was right in matters of taste and propriety. She had not been consulted about our selection of visitors, because we felt an unspoken certainty that she would advise us to invite only young girls with established positions and perfected manners. She only shook her worldly-wise head when she heard about them, and said she hoped

somebody would get joy of the hospitality; but all the same she cordially accepted the dinner invitation, as did her two daughters.

The date of my first great and memorable dinner was fixed for the second evening after the arrival of our girl visitors.

AUNTE.

FIFTEENTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

The expected invitation mentioned in my last was given verbally and I accepted in the same way. It was worded in so gracious and charming a manner that I received the impression of conferring a great favor in accepting; but I am possessed of sufficient good sense to know that I am the person honored. There is something very sweet and flattering about an invitation so given—something that puts the guest so pleasantly at ease with herself and stimulates her to put forth her best efforts to please. I must confess I am rather susceptible to flattery of this kind, it is so novel to me; and my kind friend by her graciousness taught me a lesson that will be remembered when I have to enact the part of hostess.

When I told her of my engagement, how pleasant it was to hear her good wishes for my happiness; but she said she could not help feeling a little disappointed that I was not free to marry some one of her young friends and so stay near her always. We are having delightful times, sight-seeing and shopping and going to the theatre or opera in the evening. The Germans are a music-loving people, to be sure.

Well, I must turn for awhile from my pleasures and

ask a few questions, at which you will not be surprised. You mentioned in your last letter that you would tell me about your first dinner-party. My friend is about to give a dinner in my honor, and I would like to know what is required of me on such an occasion. In the choice of a gown I shall have my kind friend's assistance, but, as you know, it will be my first dinner-party, and I am anxious above everything to bear myself well and do credit to my hostess.

I feel an almost personal interest in the doings of your two young friends, Helen and Kate, and shall read with pleasure whatever you write me about them. I am afraid the "bonny Kate" will hold my sympathies, for I always feel sincerely for those generous, impulsive girls who suffer so keenly for any indiscretion or discourtesy their impulsiveness or thoughtlessness may lead them to commit. Though I am given to impulsive actions myself—and in that fact, perhaps, lies the reason for my sympathy—I have tried hard to compel myself to think a little before I act; and hard as was the task at first, I have conquered fairly well.

After my hostess's dinner-party I will undoubtedly be invited out to some extent, as she has a large circle of acquaintances; so I would like to know how to accept and how decline such invitations, for, of course, I may be obliged to decline some.

Now tell me, dear aunt, in your delightful way how you made your dinner-party a success, how Helen and Kate were gowned and how they behaved on that occasion. Kate, I suppose, distinguished herself, but I hope she did nothing to pain you or that she would afterward regret. Can you in your narration tell me how you man-

aged in grouping your guests? Were they arranged in couples? Such is the custom here for all table parties, and I think it a pretty and enjoyable one, especially if the partner be agreeable. I would like you to give me particular instructions how to enter and leave the dining-room; I am afraid in this respect I am seriously at fault.

To-morrow or next day we are going to make a trip to Frankfort, Goethe's beautiful home. I am getting along famously with my German and am beginning to speak the language with considerable fluency. I am congratulated on all sides on the successful results of my study and am in consequence greatly delighted.

Your Loving

NIECE.

SIXTEENTH LETTER.

DINNER-GIVING.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

As promised in my last letter, I will give you an account of my first dinner-party; and I shall endeavor so to word it that it will answer all your very sensible questions on this point.

You can scarcely realize how much careful thought was given to the selection of our first dinner guests until the same burden has fallen upon your shoulders. To make sure that she knows "who is who" among her acquaintances, and to estimate the effect each person will have in maintaining the social equilibrium by enlivening or restraining other guests, should be the first problems of the young hostess; and very delicate ones they are. Besides, not until she is certain that neither her table nor her guests will groan with imperfectly cooked food, can a considerate hostess feel entirely at ease while presiding at her feast. Yet, despite all misgivings, she must appear as tranquil as a harvest moon and as unconcerned as if she were at meat with a veteran dinner-giver in whom she had no especial interest.

To the attainment of this placid demeanor I had

schooled myself, but in vain. Experience is the only tranquillizer a wife can have at such times, and some sweet but weary souls are never at peace when invited guests sit at their board. This unrest is often partially the fault of the husband, who not only fails to accord his wife proper encouragement, but, on the contrary, exhibits by his tone or facial expression his adverse criticism of the slightest mistake or defect in service or cuisine. At such times each should help the other, and kindly, considerate hosts are always forbearing.

Should you meet a young man who with ease and frequency exhibits his talent for fault-finding, avoid him; he has a narrow nature and a small mind. Husbands would be more chary of their unpleasant looks at table if they realized that all beholders whose regard is worth winning are far more annoyed at the frown of the host than the blunder of the hostess. This little sermon may be considered in parenthesis, my dear niece, but you need not hold it lightly on that account.

My dinner invitations were out ten days in advance, and the responses were immediate, as etiquette rigorously demands. Unfortunately two declined—one on account of illness in the family, which 'twas feared might continue, and the other because he had reason to believe he would be called from the city. Neither, you observe, was positive he could not be with us; but for dinner parties the least uncertainty should prompt an immediate positive declination to permit the hostess to fill the vacant place at table.

Dinner tables, as you know, have exact limitations, and only a fixed number can be accommodated, Crowded tables are vulgar, an odd number is awkward,

and a vacant seat is depressing. Eight is the most charming of sets at table ; but because there were three from John's mother's house and four of our own family, we made the party twelve, inviting five other guests. One of these was *fiancé* to John's eldest sister.

All the guests having been secured, the *menu* was next considered and the following courses decided upon :

Oysters on Shells.

Clear Soup.

Lobster Chops, with French Dressed Cresses.

Fillet of Beef, with Mushrooms and French Potatoes.

Squabs.

Italian Cream, with Macaroons.

Fruit, Confections.

Coffee and Tea.

The squabs were cut in half, broiled and laid on crisp points of fried hominy to be eaten with dressed lettuce.

This *menu* will doubtless be considered limited by epicures ; but we had determined to be a law unto ourselves, and Aunt Edith gave her approval. John's mother said we might have served Roman punch between the lobster and meat or between the meat and game, and that we should have had celery with grated cheese or sweetbread patties, or, perhaps, *pâté de fois gras* and wafers ; but I only smiled and inquired if she were hungry, her fault-finding having been made after all our unfamiliar guests had departed. She laughed, and John said afterward that I was a courageous little woman, from which remark I judged he approved.

But this is anticipating the experiences which I propose to recite for your guidance. Perhaps you would like to

know the formula of my invitations, which were written, although had I at that time intended to become a regular dinner-giver, as I now am, I should have had a formal card engraved, to be filled in as required with the names of intended guests and the date of the dinner. In either case, however, the wording is the same. Fashion has not changed the verbal formula of invitations for many a year, and doubtless it will always remain substantially the same, for no language can be more appropriate than

“ Mr. and Mrs. John Smith request the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brown’s company at dinner Tuesday evening, December 10th, at 7.30 o’clock.

November 30th, 1887.

750 North Street.

The responses are always written in the same person as the invitation, thus :

“ Mr. and Mrs. Charles Brown accept with pleasure (regret that an unavoidable occurrence or a previous engagement compels them to decline) Mr. and Mrs. John Smith’s kind invitation to dinner on December 10th.

December 1st, 1887.

21 Herbert Street.”

Had the season of gayety been at its height, I should have issued my invitations at least two weeks before the date of the dinner, in order to secure those whom I most desired.

The day and hour named brought Helen, I having driven to the station to meet her. How fair and happy she looked, and how wide-eyed and charmed she was with the unfamiliar stir of the streets ! We had luncheon at once, and it was long past midday before I conducted

her to her chamber. She was delighted with my home, and, happily, one's guests are now permitted to mention their gratification with their surroundings. Once on a time, not long ago, silence was *de rigueur*, and if any pretty object was seen at all, the fact was kept secret; for to remark upon the appointments of a house was considered an indiscretion, if not a positive mark of ill-breeding.

When Helen saw the smaller chamber opening from her own and also into the hall she begged me, as I knew she would, to allow her to take the simpler room. I gave it to her, explaining that I had only offered her a choice because I knew which she would select. I plainly told her that her youth gave her no right to the best chamber. She promised to grow older as rapidly as time permitted, and then we settled ourselves in comfortable chairs for a rest and a chat. She found her trunk unstrapped and waiting for the key, and, as she preferred to take out her own belongings, I did not press the assistance of my maid upon her; partly because she was accustomed to helping herself, and partly because I was certain if John's cousin brought no maid of her own—which was not at all unlikely—my own attendant was sure to be kept busy.

The train on which Kate was to arrive was due at six o'clock, and John was to meet her, as her face was unknown to me and the hour was after dark. At half-past six John returned alone and explained that his cousin had not come. He said, "I feel no anxiety. Doubtless it suited her convenience to arrive later; and if so, she must take care of herself." He had done his full duty as host until further notification.

We had finished dinner when the occidental maiden entered alone and in none too pleasant a humor.

"I would have been frightened," said she, "to find no one at the station to meet me, but Dick Thomson, an awfully nice fellow who is on his way to somewhere and had just time to catch his train, put me into a carriage and gave your number to the driver. I took his train instead of the one mentioned, because it was pleasant to have his company, and he is just splendid."

"You didn't telegraph your change of plans, and I went to meet you as agreed," said John.

"Yes, but I thought you would surely come to the next train also if you were very anxious to see me."

"But I was not anxious," replied John. "I would, however, have been pleased had I found you—but, Kate, you have not dined?"

"No, indeed; and I am very hungry."

"I regret that we have just had dinner," I explained; "but we really did not know what to expect."

"You'll get used to me after a while. I am never in time unless I feel especially so disposed; it is one of my distinctive characteristics, which papa says isn't nice; but I don't see why I haven't a right to be individual. He is decidedly so, and it runs in the blood."

The girl was superbly handsome in a physical sense, and she must have had an instinct which told her just how to dress. It was a constant pleasure to look at her when her face was animated, so rosy and fair and brimming with health was it. Her hair was not fine, but it was luxuriant and of a warm chestnut brown. Her teeth were like large pearls, and her rich lips were pretty when she smiled. But when she laughed the untamed

rush of sound was anything but silvery, soft or delicately toned. And her voice—my dear niece, nothing tells the true story of lack of refinement so promptly as an untrained voice and its want of modulation. Kate's voice rankled in our ears and tormented our nerves. What could we do with her voice? My husband had heard it before, but then they were in different and less refined surroundings, and the setting of life makes an immense difference in one's perceptions of qualities.

We ordered food for her—the best we could offer in the circumstances; and if the girl felt a lack of homage to her beauty and of appreciation of herself as an heiress and an important individual in her own home, she had the wisdom to conceal her chagrin. That she felt some humiliation was apparent, when she said a week later: "How much less significant a person is when away from her own natural belongings than when set upon her own shrine! It is an excellent method for discovering one's real value. It hurt my vanity not a little, but I am glad to have been enabled to take account of my personal stock."

This admission gave me courage to do what seemed needful for this young creature, and it more than compensated us for what we had endured.

The first real vexation on her account came on her second day with us. She had written to a young man with whom she was acquainted and told him she would be in town, and he called to see her immediately. He was not sufficiently familiar with the usages of good society to send his card to the hostess of his friend, consequently she saw him without my knowledge, not even mentioning his presence as she went to the reception-

room. This was owing to her ignorance of the proprieties and not to any disrespect toward her hostess, for we soon learned that she really desired her conduct to be *comme il faut* in all social matters. Imagine my surprise when, at an hour when I supposed her to be resting in her room, she opened my chamber door without knocking and said, "I have a friend down-stairs, a splendid fellow, rich and handsome; I've asked him to stay to your dinner-party. I'm sure you'll like him, he is so nice." I sprang to my feet in dismay; "But he can't stay to dinner. The table is laid for just twelve. You must recall the invitation." "Can't you make room for him somewhere? It's an awful pity not to have him remain. I think he will take me to drive to-morrow." "No, Kate; it is impossible. Beside, he is not dressed for a dinner, even if there were a place for him. It would humiliate him to be present where ladies were in full toilette and the gentlemen in evening dress; indeed, it would be an unkindness to detain him."

She looked at me in a dazed way for fully a minute, and new ideas seemed to be dawning upon her. Then she said, "Oh!" I went on: "Girls do not go out driving alone with men, at least exclusive, high-bred girls do not. I am sorry to present limitations to your pleasures, but you may drive with us whenever you like. If your young friend calls upon your Cousin John or upon myself we shall give him a formal invitation to dine with us during your visit here. In no other way, however, is it possible to offer courtesies to him in a refined and proper manner, and you would not wish to offer him any other kind of hospitalities, would you? As your friends and your hosts, it is proper that he call upon us."

Slowly she turned and went down to her visitor. What she said I do not know, but he did not call again. I referred to him before she returned to her home, and she replied quietly: "It is all right. I have learned some useful lessons from you since I came here, and I am grateful for them. A man that doesn't want to understand better things and is put out of temper because he is given a hint in good manners, had best remain in his own social circle. I have no desire to know people who are not better versed in the proprieties than I was when I came here. What a selfish, ill-mannered young person I was, to be sure!"

This was after she had been months with us; for her father had written to ask us to place her in a fitting home for the winter, and we kept her in our own and learned to love her as she grew gentle, refined and considerate.

But to return to the dinner. Helen and Kate looked over the diagram of the dinner-table that was to be placed in the gentlemen's dressing-room, and both girls were surprised to see that John was to escort his own mother to the table.

"How strange!" said Kate. "Hasn't Aunt Bess had her day, and is she always to take the lead? And I see my name is written at the right of the man you said was nice but didn't talk."

"Older women are given first consideration by high-bred young persons," I replied, "and the eldest lady is always most honored at a dinner, if there is a noticeable difference in the ages of one's female guests. In this instance it is your aunt who is first. I place your name by that of the quiet man because you have conversation enough for both, and to Helen, who is timid, I gave a

brilliant talker. It is a proper discrimination of talents and qualities. Listeners are as needful at a dinner-table as talkers. The appreciative man and woman are as charming as the wit or the *raconteur*, as I have learned from my own brief experience. I shall go in with the *fiancé* of your cousin, because there is not among my guests a married or elderly lady to receive this honor."

"And she isn't to sit at table by the side of the man to whom she is engaged? I wouldn't like that," exclaimed Kate. "You would if you saw an excellent reason why you shouldn't sit by him," I replied. "We feel too deeply the sacredness of such a relation to make our regard for each other a matter of flippant speech and curious or jesting observation." Again the dazed look came into Kate's face, and she answered slowly: "You are right, cousin. I never thought of that."

And so the dinner hour came; and my two pretty girls were introduced to their elders, and the gentlemen were each presented to them, the party being small enough to permit of individual presentations. You know, my dear niece, when parties are very large and formal, each gentleman, having learned from the diagram of the dinner-table where he is to sit and whom he is to escort to table, asks one of the hosts to present him to the lady, if he is not already acquainted. This arrangement spares the host and hostess much care and is agreeable to every one.

The latest guest arrived and entered the drawing-room at least five minutes before a servant opened the doors leading to the dining-room and bowed to the host, who immediately offered his arm to the most honored lady

and led the way. Pairs followed, and the hostess entered last, attended by the gentleman on whom this privilege was bestowed. "How charming and orderly! How like an easy dance to fine music it all was!" exclaimed Kate, when every lady had gone home. Of course, at the time I was very nervous and anxious, but I succeeded in repressing all evidences of care.

Dear Helen was prettily attired in her modest square-necked dress of white wash-lace and wore pink roses, while Kate was regal in crimson silk. The refined graciousness of the company held Kate's exuberance in check, and she was a superb social success. Being a girl to take not only the coloring but the keynote of her surroundings, she was all that we could desire. We were very proud of our girl guests.

When I rose to leave the table the gentlemen rose also, and I saw their eyes follow the girls in unstinted admiration. Kate was conscious of having given pleasure, and her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled as we ladies sat together chatting of impersonal affairs; but Helen was silently thinking of her varied experiences at this her first ceremonious dinner. From the setting of the table and the grouping of the little glass water-pitchers, which even then were coming into fashion, to the fancy plates of olives, confections, etc., that imparted brightness to the table, not one of the details had escaped her observation. She saw how each gentleman had drawn back the lady's chair after she had risen to leave the dining-room, and how dexterously he had pushed it toward her with care for her dress, as she first stood in front of her place, thus making it easy for her to be properly seated; and even how he had found the

covers assigned to them upon their entrance—all this she knew and could teach her brothers when she returned home, so much was she impressed with the ease by which elegance is attained when one has learned its lessons

AUNTIE.

SEVENTEENTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

Your letter came in time to be of great assistance to me, and I learned from it many things I should never even have thought to ask about. I was also much relieved, for I should otherwise have been compelled to seek the advice of my hostess, which, of course, I would rather avoid, although I would consult her sooner than make blunders that might be painful to her.

The dinner-party was a most brilliant affair, socially and otherwise, and I had the pleasure of meeting on the occasion some quite well-known people. All preparations were carried on in such a way as to produce no apparent change from the quiet, systematic routine of other days; indeed, I began to imagine that all idea of the dinner had been abandoned until my hostess asked me as a favor to her to wear for that evening a certain white gown, which she greatly admired. Naturally I was amazed at the apparent indifference she displayed; but I said not a word, waiting patiently for developments. I had an idea that preparations for such an event called for much planning and much additional labor, and could scarcely be convinced to the contrary.

My gown was of silk *crêpe*, and was quite without trim-

ming. My hostess said the very simplicity of it pleased her and suited me to perfection, and she would not permit me to wear a single jewel. The only ornaments she allowed were a bunch of delicate blush roses at the belt and one rose in my hair, which she placed herself.

My entertainer I already considered very charming and womanly, but on this occasion she showed me what it is to be a graceful, delightful hostess. The whole evening was a great pleasure to me, and when the last guest had gone she was kind enough to compliment me on the charming impression I had made upon her friends. So I have scored at least one success, dear aunt.

Please tell me more about Uncle John's "immaturities." I was so delighted with their success at your dinner-party. I am gradually learning the etiquette observed by people here, which does not differ much from that you describe to me. However, there are, I think, some trifling differences, so I would like you to give me all further help you can in making me acquainted with your ways, for you know I expect to return some time before my marriage. I should like especially to know the rules for making various kinds of "duty" calls.

I am much annoyed by the fact that I have received an invitation to an evening party, which I may be obliged to decline. Now I do not wish to decline at once, for perhaps later I may find it possible to go; but you have told me that etiquette requires an immediate reply to such invitations, and that I should not accept when there is a doubt of my being unable to attend. If I accept now, which I wish to do so much, could I not, if necessary, decline later on in a way that would not offend or incon-

venience? I depend on you entirely to assist me in this dilemma.

Are there laws of etiquette to be observed in dancing? I suppose there must be, although I am totally ignorant of them; and if not asking too much in one letter, I would greatly like you to enlighten me on this subject also. You gave dancing parties, I suppose, during the season of which you write; and I should like to know how you arranged for them, and how the two girls acted at their first formal dance.

Your Loving

NIECE.

EIGHTEENTH LETTER.

CALLS AFTER HOSPITALITIES.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

So you think it a little hard that, because there is a bare possibility of being unable to be present at a party at which the number of guests is limited, *étiquette* should demand that we promptly decline the invitation? It is not always agreeable for the invited to comply with this inflexible law, but the person giving the entertainment is to be first considered; if she offers what she hopes will be a pleasure to you, your selfishness should not lead you to abuse her kindness. Of course, for large formal receptions conditional acceptances are permissible.

As a hostess, you can generally avoid the unpleasantness of a vacant place at a formal breakfast, luncheon or dinner. If a re-arrangement of chairs cannot be made, the telegraph and messenger service are at hand, and by all right-minded persons it is considered a mark of especial confidence to be selected by the hostess as one who will appreciate her embarrassing position and consent to complete the broken number at her entertainment. Favors of this kind are seldom asked, except of most intimate friends or of acquaintances who have been guests at

a previous entertainment of a similar kind. The note conveying an invitation to take the place another was expected to fill is written something after this style :

“ My dear Mrs. Brown :

“ One of my dinner guests must fail me Friday evening. Will you, if disengaged, do me the kindness to take the vacant chair ? You know I will gladly return this favor if you will give me an opportunity. We dine at 7.30. Mr. and Mrs. A., Mr. R., Miss D., and others to the number of ten, some of whom you are sure to know, are to be present.

“ Sincerely yours,

“ KATHARINE REED.”

The note will, of course, be varied according to the relations of the two persons. To omit mentioning some or all the guests, when the obligation is wholly on the side of the hostess, would be a discourtesy. In formal invitations mention is made of no one, unless the entertainment be given for the purpose of honoring some person in particular, in which case the conditions are altered.

Since it was decided that Kate should remain with us the entire winter, we fixed upon an afternoon and evening for receiving callers and mentioned our plan to our dinner guests, who would, of course, pay their respects within a week. Only one failed to make a dinner call at the appointed time, and he sent a note of explanation and a box of flowers for me ; but I more than half suspected that he trusted to my woman's intuition to share them with Helen, whom he seemed to have greatly admired. It is not in the least obligatory upon dinner guests to send flowers to a hostess, nor is it customary, but it is a pretty attention, especially if she be an elderly woman.

I pinned the blush roses upon Helen's gray cashmere bodice, and gave a bunch of carnations to Kate; for myself I wear flowers only when they are gifts from my husband or some woman friend. The blossoms, however, served to make our pretty drawing-room brighter and more fragrant on that first at-home night.

The entrance of callers gave a turn to our thoughts. The visitors were two gentlemen, one of whom had been a dinner guest. After greeting me and giving opportunity for his companion to be presented to the young girls and to enter into conversation with them, he said: "It is most agreeable to recall my evening at your dinner-table. It was a charming picture of brightness, as well as as an evening of clever talk. You have my thanks for a real pleasure."

I replied that he was most kind or he could not have been so easily gratified, or something to that effect. Such conventional expressions, varied, of course, in form with individuals and circumstances, are all the reference to the former entertainment that is expected at such a time.

While this interchange of compliments was taking place, I heard Kate say to our other guest: "Yonder sofa is a pleasant place to sit for a chat. Shall we take it?"

I trusted to John to see that we were spared a conspicuous exhibition of the wayward manners of this thoughtless girl, and I conveyed my meaning to him by a look. At the same time I relieved him of any care he might feel about Helen's entertainment by saying to her: "Will you not join us? I am about to ask our guest if he will not tell us something about his Summer in the mountains."

Kate had never before seen the man with whom she now proposed a *tête-à-tête*, although the fact that he was our guest, had it occurred to her, might have assured her he was a gentleman. But she was not one of the hosts, nor had this guest been given into her charge to be entertained. She did not seem to know, moreover, that to invite a man to accompany her beyond the conversational reach of the family was a deep breach of the proprieties. But, as I said, I trusted to the wit of your Uncle John to save her from being judged too harshly, and he said promptly: "Yes, Kate, that is a very pleasant corner; shall we three occupy it until another visitor arrives?"

Kate's face glowed. She saw her blunder, and I suspect in that moment of confusion and shame she recalled many a solitary talk that she had arranged in a like manner, instead of leaving such plans for the man's mind and then accepting or rejecting a *conversation à deux*, according to propriety. The indecorum of the act was rendered even more glaring in this instance, inasmuch as she thus assumed that our visitor intended to pass an entire evening with us and would have made it extremely awkward for him to take his leave after a ceremonious call. It is not easy for a young man to excuse himself from a *tête-à-tête* to which a young girl has herself invited him. If other persons join them, he is able to escape more easily, but in any case it is a bold or else a very uninstructed young girl who thus contrives opportunities for bestowing her individual attention upon a man who is at most only an acquaintance.

It was, perhaps, but ten minutes, though it seemed to me a full half hour, before two other guests entered, and as

John came forward to greet them I asked him to bring up Kate and present her. In this way the difficulty was bridged over and our embarrassment lessened, and though we never referred to the matter afterward, you may be sure the *faux pas* was not repeated. This lesson of lady-like reserve and dignity was emphasized unintentionally by the man himself, who almost immediately took leave of me and then of her by saying he had an engagement which made his early departure as imperative as it was unpleasant.

I said we never afterward referred to this evidence of Kate's lack of breeding, nor did we; but she said, with a spirited toss of her head and a quiver of her nostrils, as she was about to retire that night: "I never wish to lay my eyes upon Mr. — again, nor can he wish to see me. But there is a world full of other men, and one more or less doesn't count." It was an untutored girl's way of trying to philosophize about an unpleasantness which could not be mended, though it might be avoided in the future. No one inquired her reason for cutting off from her social future so agreeable a person, for even Helen, an unworldly recluse from most social happenings, thoroughly understood the situation. But we were all very sure she would see him again, even as we were satisfied she would at the first opportunity make him understand that she had already rectified her deportment, at least in that one respect.

We did not have refreshments on such evenings, though had the night been extremely inclement I should have ordered tea and coffee and wafers to be passed on a tray; and had it been unusually warm glasses of lemonade and simple cakes, such as macaroons and wafers,

would have been served. These little attentions are not in the order of social custom, and when extended they simply express a considerate hospitality that adapts itself to temporary conditions.

Our evening at-homes were arranged for the convenience of those of our friends who, like my husband, were prevented by their business from enjoying the pleasures of society at any other time. These social meetings and interchanges of thoughts and courtesies between men and women, after the duties of the day are over, are the most delightful and often the most profitable hours of our lives, for they serve to nurture the refinement and geniality of our nature, which, especially with men, is apt to be neglected amid the cares of business.

Our next experience with my two girls was at a dinner given by John's mother; this was followed by a dance at which the party was increased by others who received what is called an "after-dinner invitation." Few dining-rooms will accommodate more than twenty-four persons, and this is a very large dinner company. Many hosts are able to invite twelve, but the dinner of true delight has no more than eight persons. John's mother could gather sixteen about her ample board, but even this number would have made but a small dancing party. She therefore asked about twenty persons to join us at nine o'clock in an informal way, and nearly every one accepted.

This party was to be a trying ordeal to our girls, or our "immaturities" as John laughingly called them to their faces.

"I did not think I was immature before I came to visit you," Kate answered with spirit; "but I suppose I was

and still am according to a super-refined standard. However, don't grow discouraged about me, for I hope to like the best customs when I know them better. I suppose I am to permit no man to dance twice with me, even though he waltzes like an angel, and all the others hobble and promenade upon the train of my best dress. If such is the accepted usage, it shall be obeyed. How is it to be? Shall I have one or two dances with the same partner? I know you won't say to me 'as many as you like, my child, only have a good time,' as my father would if I could ask him."

"This dance is quite an informal affair," I replied; "it is what is called a 'small and early,' which means that guests come at the hour appointed and go home before midnight. There will be time for only a few quadrilles and waltzes, and if a girl desires popularity she will dance but once with any man. By this plan she will become acquainted with nearly all of them. At a large ball two dances with one partner are admissible, but no more. A third dance would be significant of a regard between two persons, and, even if this were felt, it might make an undesirable impression on the minds of others. At a small party like this, a single dance with you is all the pleasure any man can expect. Your first partner will be selected by your hostess, not only because you are a stranger, but because you and Helen on this occasion are guests of honor."

"If she only knew what conduct her niece was capable of, how she would shudder, poor deluded woman! Do tell me, Helen, how you manage to avoid bad behavior. You always seem to do the proper thing, while I, poor unfortunate, am a source of constant distress to my dear friends."

“In the first place, I am too timid to attempt anything original or spontaneous, and I am cautious when on strange ground. When I come to doubtful places I do not choose my own way, but watch wiser ones and act as they do. That is how I escape noticeable trippings.”

“Oh! the wisdom of babes and the craft of silent girls! I shall take lessons with both eyes and ears, as well as with my wits—if I have any. When a girl has been used to chattering in the open fields, it isn't easy to modulate her voice to the compact limits of a drawing-room, and your city people make but little allowance for the country girl's inability to forget in a moment the wonted freedom of her former life. One cannot learn in a day to touch a conventional or even an endurable conversational keynote. But am I not now very nearly in harmony with civilized folk?” she inquired, with a quiver of the lip and something like a break in her voice.

“Certainly you are,” said John. “Local conditions and habits influence all of us, and you will soon be as subdued in manner and as quiet of speech and laughter as our contracted dwellings and sensitive eyes and ears demand. You have nothing to be troubled about.”

“Perhaps not, but you have had and may still have. You will believe me when I say that I shall try to reach whatever standards you fix for me—indeed, I trust you will be immensely proud of me ere long. My impulsiveness, which has never before been put under restraint, makes me thoughtless, but I will make every effort to control it, and I will succeed, too, in time. I am just beginning to understand how generous it was of you to ask me to visit you.”

She was silent for a moment and then continued :

“I thought when I accepted your hospitality that I was conferring a favor—in fact, I supposed you were anxious to receive me, to exhibit me and to have a personage on hand who would make your drawing-room a social center. Yes, that is just what I thought, and it is more than likely I said as much in my note. Did I?”

John laughed. “You did mention something about our anxiety to have you visit us, but we have entirely forgotten our former distress in the real pleasure you have become to us,” said your big-hearted, jesting uncle, with less truth than genuine kindness, though Kate afterward became to us all and more than he then said she already was.

In my next letter I will tell you of the girls’ first dance in the city. It was also my first one as a wife, so that I, too, was what John called an “immaturity.”

AUNTIE.

NINETEENTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

The visit at my friend's beautiful home has come to a close, and I took my leave with the sense of having enjoyed every moment of my stay. I have joined father at Frankfort, where we now are. My friend was to have accompanied me, but she was unexpectedly called away from home, and so will join us a little later.

I am quite in love with this quaint old city, so grandly situated on the bridge-spanned Main. On one side are lofty mountains dotted here and there with picturesque old castles, and on the other the famous Bergstrasse and the Odenwald with its many points of historic interest, some of which date back to the time of the ancient Romans. A large park encircles the old city, separating it from the newer portion; and the Kaiserstrasse, with its great width and lofty and substantial buildings, reminds me strongly of the Broadway we passed along on our way to the steamer.

We spent a most enjoyable day visiting the celebrated Palm Garden, one of the chief attractions of the city. It is a huge palace of iron and glass, in which grows a forest of palms, comprising specimens of every known variety of that tree. In the grounds surrounding the

structure are exquisite ferneries, fountains, rippling cascades, artificial lakes, rustic bowers, and rockeries overgrown with mosses. Seats are scattered everywhere, so that one may sit and enjoy the beauties of the place at leisure ; and admission is perfectly free to all sorts and conditions of people.

Attached to the Palm Garden is a large building, in which, twice a day all the year round, free concerts are given, and where refreshments are served at all times of the day to suit the purse and the taste of the visitors. This building is really a large restaurant, but it contains also an extremely interesting museum. The zoölogical gardens are very fine, and our visit there was most enjoyable and interesting.

I fear, dear aunt, this letter will remind you a little of a guide book, but I know you have never been to Frankfort, and I hope you are interested in our doings.

In my next I will tell you something of our hotel life here and how we have learned from our own experience and also from the experience of some of our acquaintances how to live best at hotels. Your accounts of Helen and Kate interest me intensely. Please tell me in your next letter how the "immaturities" gowned themselves for the great occasion. I have a feeling that Kate was most astoundingly arrayed ; and that the sweet Helen was simplicity and daintiness itself in her attire.

Your Loving

NIECE.

TWENTIETH LETTER.

A DINNER AND DANCE.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

You are quite correct in your estimate of the character of my two girl guests. It was a curious study to note the effect produced upon them by the dinner given in their honor. Its manner of expression was plainly governed by the temperament and character of each. It was evident that the *naïve* nature of the one could enjoy the simplest of refined hospitalities, while the other, having been reared in luxury, measured these matters by their cost and elaborateness.

This radical difference between them was manifested first in the selection of their toilettes. Helen came to my room and, finding me alone, said in her sweet, thoughtful way: "I wish my only dinner dress could more fitly express my appreciation of your mother's kindness to us girls, but you know how impossible it is for me to get a new one. However, if Kate is magnificent my simple white cashmere may pass unnoticed."

"My dear," I answered, "you will always look like a gentlewoman's daughter and a sweet, refined girl. Of course, it is the duty of a guest to express proper appre-

ciation of a formal courtesy by wearing fitting attire, but your dress is quite suitable. I shall be proud of you, and so will John and his family. I feel more anxiety about Kate, for I fear she will be overdressed, and that is much more to be deplored than simplicity of attire."

With a genuine desire to please us and to show her appreciation of our attentions, Kate had said nothing of her preparations for this occasion. Imagine our surprise, therefore, when, as we came down in full dress at seven o'clock upon the evening of the dinner, she appeared before us in a brocaded train of pale-blue and dull-gold, over a petticoat of white satin elaborately flowered with *ronde point* lace, across which fluttered humming-birds with bronzed and glittering bosoms. She wore diamonds in her hair and about her bared throat and arms.

No girl with a knowledge of the proprieties could have been persuaded to wear this magnificent attire, which was far too stately for a young woman; but Kate's education in this regard was sadly deficient. She did not know that brocades can only be appropriately worn by matrons and elderly women—indeed, she had lived where mothers were not in what she called society, but remained at home to make way for their daughters. She had not learned that in a higher and finer civilization than she had yet entered, it is the older women who make, guide and rule society and who wear the richest raiment.

We were compelled to pronounce her toilette handsome, but fortunately the question of its suitability did not then arise. Had I known of it earlier, I should, out of consideration for her own feelings, have begged her to substitute one more befitting her age. John, man-like, could not wholly conceal his annoyance but relieved his

mind in part by praising Helen's appearance. Her square-cut but modest bodice was under-edged with illusion, and a frame of wired Valenciennes lace stood in Medici fashion at the sides and back of her beautiful throat, making a pretty framing for her head. A bunch of fresh pink roses was fastened high up on the left side of her corsage, and a single rose was caught in her hair. Her dress was of dancing length and without elaboration, but it had the finest graces of form and was draped in elegant folds.

"And have you no admiration for me and mine?" inquired Kate of her cousin.

"For you, oh yes, but your toilette takes my breath away. I must get accustomed to it before I can speak of it composedly."

"I wonder if you are laughing at me," she answered, with a quick suspicion of his meaning.

"My lord, the carriage waits!" Helen cried, with comical theatrical intonations. With a fine, quick sympathy she perceived the hurt that must come to Kate a little later, and hoped to defer it by thus diverting our attention.

We reached our dressing-room in time to shake out our draperies, look ourselves over and study the diagram of the table to see who was to be the *vis-à-vis* and who the escort of each. We descended about ten minutes before the hour named for dinner. It is customary to allow at least five minutes for the necessary introductions, and we were right in thinking that upon this occasion some moments would be required by our hostess for steadying her nerves in the presence of a young girl whose array was in such bad taste. She looked a reproach at her

niece and a keener one at me, and John saw the glance. Presently I heard him say to his mother in an undertone, "Kate is your niece and my cousin; and we only are blamable for her ostentation and vulgarity." I knew this was said to protect me, his country wife, and you may be sure I was grateful.

Whether Kate suspected the meaning of these glances or whether she felt hurt that she was not complimented upon the splendor of her costume, certain it was something had taken from her manner its usual spirit and sparkle, and for the first half-hour she sat as if she were only a handsomely dressed automaton. Even our hostess pitied her at last, and she must also have forgiven her for thus posing as an Oriental Princess, for she smiled and beamed on her from her remote place at table until life came back to the girl's face. Helen, being of a sensitive nature, felt Kate's trouble keenly, but she always hid her emotions so well that only those who knew her intimately would suspect her distress.

Happily the evening was but partly spent at the table, and it was not then the general custom for the men to remain in the dining-room for a talk and a smoke after the women had retired. The hostess gave a rising bow to Kate, because she was the most honored guest, and John whispered to the girl to stand, as I had forgotten to mention that to her would be given the signal for leaving the table. As we rose the chair of each lady was drawn back by her escort, and we stood in our places until our hostess passed through the nearest door, which John held open. The guests then followed in the reverse order of their entrance, each lady carrying a bouquet, which the butler had lifted from the center ornament of flowers and

laid by her place. He had been instructed where to begin in the distribution of the bouquets so that each lady should carry the color selected for her by the hostess. When all were supplied there was only a center group of flowers and foliage remaining. This custom, like many other pretty usages, waxes and wanes with the variations of taste, but it is never wholly out of fashion. Nowadays bouquets tied with ribbon are laid by each plate that has not a *boutonnière*, and a pin so slender as not to injure the most delicate textures is run through the tinfoil wrappers of the flowers.

In the drawing-room tea and coffee were served earlier than usual, for the guests soon began to arrive for the dance. Now it was that Kate appeared at her best. The conflict of feelings through which she had passed in the early part of the evening had not been without its effects. She seemed conscious that her *prestige* must be regained, and the charm and grace of her movements and her dignity of manner almost atoned for her overwhelming style of dress.

As the especial guests of the occasion, etiquette demanded that our girls should be first sought as partners. Each gentleman, therefore, upon entering the room, was at once presented to them by the hostess. The pleasure of a dance was requested; in granting it the card was handed him, and the gentleman wrote his name in the first vacant space. As the girls were not previously acquainted with the gentlemen, the selection of a certain waltz, lancers or cotillion was not in order. After the list was filled, such men as could not find a place on the programme—which for such small parties is always written—expressed their regrets as courtesy demanded.

After having danced once with each of the two young strangers, it was but proper that a young man should mention that he regretted generosity forbade him the pleasure of another dance, or something of that import; for, even had his partner been willing to give him another turn in a waltz, she could not according to *les convenances*.

It was a fine stroke of policy on the part of Kate, when, as she was taking leave and thanking her hostess for the pleasure she had received, she mentioned that certain of her dancing men were perfect, and that but for a lately acquired regard for *les petites morales* she should have been dancing with three of them in rotation as long as the music lasted.

“And your regard will deepen, because such rules must be a permanent law of your social life, dear Kate,” replied her aunt, softened by a sense of the girl’s possibilities. She went on to say something that many a worldly woman believes to be wise and true, but which it would grieve me to know that you would accept as your rule of life. It was this: “No matter what you feel inclined to do or what you crave, always do that which is expected of you and you will avoid blunders.” Had she only said, “The best part of the people of this world expect you to do the right thing, and if you do not disappoint them you will be safe from ungraceful and unbecoming mistakes,” I should have respected her more profoundly, and so would Kate. Happily, Helen did not hear this dictum of worldly expediency, but John did, and though he said nothing, I am confident his sense of what is fine in character was quite alien to certain of his mother’s standards.

Before the guests departed John came to us and said that an evening had been begged for a dinner and theatre party by an acquaintance of his, a young man who made a handsome home for his orphaned sister, and for a widowed relative who chaperoned the young girl while at home, though he himself was her attendant in society. He was a generous, high-spirited man, though conscious of his lack of fine breeding. "I would have declined for you at once," said John, "but I believe if refined society has any mission beyond that of amusing itself, it is to be an example to those who have had little opportunity for familiarizing themselves with its usages."

I did not forget how it was that I had acquired certain much-needed polishings; therefore, I entered into John's spirit of generosity and, accepting the invitation, thereupon named an evening. We were asked to dine at six, but at John's hint that it would be easier to meet our host and his sister at the theatre and go home with them for a little supper, this plan was adopted, with warm thanks for the suggestion.

Of this party I will tell you in my next letter; and I will close this one by mentioning that, though Kate remained with us through the gay season and became a favored belle in society, the costume of that evening was not worn again, although it doubtless became a dress of ceremony years afterward.

AUNTIE.

TWENTY-FIRST LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

Before speaking further of our journeyings, I will try to give you some idea of how we live here. We are stopping at a large hotel that is much frequented by Americans and is managed on the plan of the leading hotels in New York.

Hotel life, however, is very different in European from that in American cities. The usual custom is to engage rooms by the day. * Breakfast is *à la carte*, and dinner at *table d'hôte* at a fixed price. In addition, we have to pay for attendance and other et-cæteras.

The system of fees is, I think, one of the greatest annoyances of European travel. At every turn you are expected to give an indefinite sum for real or imaginary services rendered, but you must do as everybody else does in this respect if you would travel comfortably and secure good attendance. Experience has taught us never to fee a hotel servant until the moment of departure. At first father was accustomed to do so immediately on arrival, but we soon found that this method secured us little or no attention ; for the servant who is feed in this way considers that he has no further gratuity to expect

and devotes his especial attention to those guests whose favors are to come.

The best way to see this beautiful city, or, indeed, any large European town, is to engage an open carriage which is comfortable and cheap, but we have learned that it is a mistake to hire a vehicle save through the hotel, unless, of course, a bargain is made with the driver before starting; for although there is a fixed tariff of charges, he will always take advantage of a stranger, as will his kind the world over.

Speaking of hotels—the other day we visited the Hotel zum Schwanen and were admitted to the room in which the Peace Conference concluding the Franco-Prussian war was held.

Frankfort is truly a cosmopolitan city, and numerous wealthy Americans are permanent residents here. Invalids find the city quite convenient to various health resorts, and the pleasure-seeker is amused by the many places of interest and entertainment with which the city abounds.

Father, by the-by, has spoken of giving an opera party, but I do not care to essay it until my friend joins us, as she will act as chaperon for us. And this reminds me that I do not know just what is expected of me nor what I should expect of my guests, on such an occasion; and as you have promised in your last to give me an account of a similar party at which Helen and Kate were guests, I hope you will render your narrative applicable to the wants of my peculiar case. Tell me whether I ought to arrange for a supper or any amusement after the play. I have attended such affairs, but had nothing to do but enjoy myself, and gave little thought as to the proper

manner of conducting them. I will not make any arrangements for the party until I hear from you as I wish first to become perfectly *au fait* on the subject.

Your Loving

NIECE.

TWENTY-SECOND LETTER.

THEATRE PARTY, SUPPER AND DANCE.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

A theatre or opera party is one of the few social events in which etiquette has been so perfected that improvement is well-nigh impossible; and though the one I have promised to describe to you happened some years ago there has been so little variation in the established usages that the recital of my experience at that time will be none the less useful for your guidance.

As a matter of course, I was to be chaperon at this entertainment, and it was my first experience in this dignified and responsible office. Except in a few very exclusive circles, chaperonage was not so strictly observed a dozen years ago as at present, and in my effort to do honor to my novel position, I suspect that I rather overdid the matter. The needless solemnity of my countenance was highly amusing to my husband, but I am sure I shall enlist your sympathy when I say that, in addition to Kate, with whose propensities you are already acquainted, there were four young men in the party, particular friends of the host, whose knowledge of the authority of a chaperon seemed to extend no further than the name.

In spite of Kate's resolve to be elegant and reserved in her manners and to pay the most careful attention to all the *convenances*, she no sooner found herself among some young people who were as reckless regarding their behavior as she had been before leaving home, than she fell back into her former freedom and familiarity with strangers, and that, too, with an ease born only of established habit. I was vexed and disappointed, and John was half angry and half amused, but Helen was amazed and grieved.

This, however, is anticipating. Our host sent theatre tickets by mail to all his guests, for, mindful of the uncertain elements in the party, John had advised orchestra seats instead of boxes, in order that any loss of dignity might be rendered less conspicuous. The party met at the theatre, and general introductions only were made to the chaperon in the foyer. Between the acts our host and Kate were none too quiet, and I had the chagrin of seeing several opera glasses turned in our direction. The hostess, a young girl with an attractive face and charming toilette, ate bon-bons, snatched a programme from one acquaintance and tossed it to another, and conducted herself generally in a boisterous manner.

Of course, it was exceedingly unpleasant for a chaperon to witness this conduct and feel powerless to suppress it. In my chagrin I quietly effected a rearrangement of seats, which moderated but did not quell the disturbance. Of the play I can recall nothing with distinctness; I only remember registering a vow that a goodly number of years should elapse before I would again consent to be a chaperon, and that nothing should ever induce me to go to a theatre party with unrefined

persons—a resolution that I have broken many and many a time without regret; for your Uncle John has quite unsettled my views about exclusiveness and reserve toward such as have been less fortunate in their social education.

The omnibus was waiting to receive us as we left the theatre, and a tendency to “pair off” was repressed by a little delicate manœuvring. I stood by the door of the vehicle and superintended the seating of the party, giving preference to the sister of our host, who was followed by my husband. The others I arranged in such a manner as to break the combinations that had been planned. Our host entered last, following me.

Upon entering the home of our host we at once repaired to the robing room, where his sister presented her girl acquaintances and her married friend. The latter proved to be even coarser in her address than the unmarried members of the party. She spoke to her younger friends about their “beaux,” and asked one girl if a certain man was “paying steady attentions to her.” Other remarks scarcely more agreeable were made, and as I descended to the parlor in advance of the group I heard the same untrained voice say. “Isn’t that chaperon stuck up! I never want my girls chaperoned by such an airy piece when they’re big enough to have beaux.”

The author of these remarks was an example of a familiar type—a rich, self-made woman, too conceited to realize that she had made blunders in her construction. How she happened to be invited to a party given by a young man who claimed to be seeking the *entrée* to refined society was at first a mystery, but we afterward

learned she was the young wife of our host's senior partner.

Upon entering the drawing-room I took my place at the side of the host, and as he seemed at a loss to know just what he was expected to do, I called his sister to me and asked him to present his friends to both of us. If he sometimes reversed the process and presented me to them, his blunders should be ascribed not so much to ignorance as to inexperience. His diligent study of books upon etiquette was very well in its way, but it is only association with well-bred people that will insure ease of manner and correct deportment.

After the introductions were over the host offered me his arm, and we led the way to the supper room. The men followed, choosing their companions according to the diagram of the table which had been left in their dressing-room. Our hostess came in last with my husband. Our married guest and one or two others were disposed to carry out other plans than a compulsory falling into prearranged lines for a march to the supper room, but they did not care to go to the length of openly expressed dissatisfaction.

As we entered the supper room two or three feminine voices exclaimed "Let's sit here," but their owners were persuaded to refer to their cards and occupy the places allotted them. Indeed, the party seemed duly impressed with the improvement upon the usual disorder caused by the shouting of half frantic directions by the host.

The supper had been ordered from an excellent caterer and was served by his trained men in so formal and orderly a manner that the process diverted the limited mind of the least refined of our guests and caused her to

remain silent most of the time. Anecdotes were related by our host, who possessed some talent as a *raconteur*. and his example was followed by others about the table. Flecks of fun sparkled here and there, until at last the supper was over and the strains of music in the hall summoned us to the dance. The opening quadrille was led by our host with Helen ; for I am ashamed to admit that my vexation still prevented me from performing the part that would have fallen to me. It is the recent converts who are the most ardent, and the young learners who are the most intolerant of ignorance. This is the reason, not the excuse, for conduct which I now look back upon with regret. And yet, I maintain to-day that a person is not excusable for showing an utter disregard of nice and refined usages because the early part of his or her life was passed outside the pale of cultivated society. Books are too abundant, good manners are not practised solely in seclusion, and the graces of life are wholly strange to no one.

During the dance not the slightest attention was shown me as the chaperon of the occasion, but really I was glad to escape from conversation.

We all prepared for home on the stroke of two, though a few objected to going so soon. I asked the other wife in the party if she would kindly look after those girls whom she knew very well, and she replied, with a toss of her head : " Oh, they know how to take care of themselves. They're used to it."

" Pray forget this lady's bad manners, and forgive my brother for subjecting you to such rudeness," begged the young hostess as soon as she could speak without being overheard. " And how can I thank you," she added

with a quiver of her lips, "for giving me a glimpse of those quiet formalities and bright conversations that are doubtless easy and habitual to the people with whom you are familiar? I wish some one would teach me how to be entertaining."

My heart was touched by her simple words, but weary from the annoyances of the evening, and still smarting from the last thrust of our Amazonian friend, I fear my reply would have been confined to some observation about the avoidance of personalities, etc., had not Helen, with a keener appreciation of her feelings, touched her arm and said: "I, too, am just learning to estimate at their true value the charms of refined associations. Perhaps we can help each other."

I left them in conversation; but I must not close this letter, my dear niece, without telling you how fond I afterward became of our young hostess. It was not long before both she and her brother graced the society in which we moved, and so complete had been their transformation that some time afterward, with our hearty approval, Helen honored the man by accepting his offer of marriage.

AUNTIE.

TWENTY-THIRD LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

I was much relieved and pleased at receiving an answer so soon, for father was anxious to arrange the opera party as soon as possible so as to include certain friends who were about to leave the city, and your letter enabled me to proceed confidently and with a light heart.

Boxes were secured at the opera house for our guests, some of whom were very old friends, while others were people to whom we were socially indebted. I am thankful to say that all seemed to thoroughly enjoy the evening, and nothing happened to mar our pleasure, the party being composed entirely of cultivated people, who were musical critics as well. The opera rendered that evening was "Lohengrin," and I need scarcely tell you that the music was a great treat to me, even though my taste is so uncultivated that I could not appreciate it to the full. After the opera we entertained our guests at supper at the hotel, and during the repast music and literature were the subjects chiefly discussed. Dancing was omitted from our evening's programme, as there were but few young people present; but nevertheless, I am proud to say the evening was a success.

I am looking forward to the approaching holiday season with the pleasantest anticipations, which are, however, slightly mingled with doubts in regard to the giving and receiving of gifts, since I am ignorant of the received etiquette in such matters. I know what my own taste would dictate, but I would greatly prefer to receive some definite knowledge about these things from you, for I recall how faulty were my ideas regarding many other matters upon which you have enlightened me. For gifts I prefer books, but of course, all one's gifts cannot be books; and then, too, it is quite as difficult to make a suitable selection of books for presents as of any other articles, unless the tastes of the recipients be fully known to the giver.

Would fancy articles and ornaments made by my own hands be proper gifts? For myself I always value most highly those gifts which are made especially for me, as they always seem such a delicate expression of love and good wishes. However, auntie, these are only my ideas, and I am by no means certain they would be considered correct according to the recognized rules.

I would also like to know what kind of gifts are proper to make to the servants in a hotel or in the house of a friend where one is being entertained. In the hotels here the servants regard a present of money more highly than other gifts that would be, perhaps, of greater value; and possibly the reason is that the choice made for them is not always what they need, while if money be given they are enabled not only to gratify their own tastes, but to make presents to their relatives and friends as well.

My kind friend has most cordially invited father and

myself to spend the holiday season at her home, and we have accepted.

I have of late wondered not a little how you spent your first holidays as a wife—whether you entertained at your own home or were entertained by some of Uncle John's relatives, and whether Helen and Kate were still with you. I do want to hear more about those two dear girls; indeed I have become in fancy so attached to both that I hope you will continue writing about them, at least until they are both happily settled in pleasant homes of their own.

Your Loving

NIECE.

TWENTY-FOURTH LETTER.

GIFTS AND GIFT-GIVING.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

Festivities abound during the holiday season, and people who value family ties and enjoy pleasant reunions with their kindred usually select this time for such gatherings. Sentiments significant of the Christmas season should influence all persons to acts of friendliness and affection toward those who are allied to them in any way, quite regardless of social levels.

I desire especially to impress this upon you, my dear niece, because there is a strong tendency to use this occasion for the display of unsuitable generosity and for placing influential persons under obligations by sending them handsome gifts. It is, in fact, a species of social bribery. Even simple presents at this time, when bestowed outside the circle of one's kindred and intimate friends and, of course, of one's charities, are in bad taste. Such gifts only enlarge a circle of retaliation, and rob the season of its proper elements.

A cynical friend, who believed she knew why gifts were bestowed upon her at Christmas, remarked to me not long ago: "My only method of self-preservation is to

return the presents to their senders. My influence cannot be purchased by a barbaric afghan or an embroidered crazy-quilt, but I should like to feel certain of a few grains of unselfish affection from somebody. Because I happen to be rich, all my speaking acquaintances are trying to establish an exchange of presents with me that shall result to their advantage. I cannot return social services or even make money payments for all the gifts that reach me and for which I really have no desire. It is true custom permits me to return teas for a visit, but such an equivalent would only increase the craftiness of my tormentors. I am really beginning to loathe the season." This woman, who had been made bitter and suspicious by many evidences of selfishness, was so overwhelmed by Christmas gifts which had no reasonable excuse for their bestowal that she sent each back with a note of thanks, mentioning its prettiness or its artistic merits.

Of course, this is an extreme case, but it is not uncommon to hear one say, "I had sixty gifts at Christmas and they were very costly; how many did you receive?" Such boasting and such competition are vulgar, and I hope, my dear niece, you will use your influence against it by limiting your gifts to simple tokens of good-will. The chosen few will be honored by articles that are the work of your own hands, while others will receive a note of good wishes or a visiting card with a carefully chosen couplet or other quotation written in liquid gold across the top—anything, in fact, that expresses the sentiment of the season and not a fixed sum of money. This little preface to the story of the first Christmas after my marriage will not seem out of place after you have looked

into the methods by which this day is made subservient to fashionable parades.

Helen left us the day before Christmas to spend the holidays with her family, and before leaving she thanked John and me for our hospitality with a warmth that was ample proof of her sincerity; and a few days afterward she expressed by letter the pleasure the visit had given her. She had worked with Kate and me during our leisure mornings upon little gifts for members of her family, and I am sure the joy she anticipated in witnessing the delight of her brothers and sisters when they saw how lovingly she had remembered them during her absence made parting with us almost easy.

Kate's fingers had not been trained to skilled work, nor her eyes to the perception of artistic effects. She seemed to know nothing of Christmas gifts that were not sent in a pretty box from the jeweller, the silversmith or some other tradesman. To make them simply tokens of friendly interest was estimating such things from a higher standpoint than she had hitherto taken. "Last year," said she, one day shortly before Christmas, "I received this diamond bracelet from a man friend and my gold comb from his wife. I felt obliged after this to invite them to a fine dinner, which they ate with such greed and such uncouth behavior that even my primitive notions were shocked. This year I must send them a present, but what shall it be?"

"Perhaps a book on refined manners would be the kindest of gifts," said Helen. "I've seen the time when I would have been glad to be presented with directions about the ways of refined people in the big world, and I would now if it came from the right person."

"You and my friends are altogether different," said Kate.

"I should hope so," I replied. "If you ask my advice I would suggest a note of remembrance, with repeated thanks for last year's Christmas gifts, which they doubtless felt were paid for by your social attentions. Write your letter now, date it Christmas morning and post it then with other presents. I am sure they will interpret the courtesy of your friendly remembrance as you wish they should, whereas if you sent them a gift they would feel called upon to send you one in return."

"But they would send something worth having, and if they are happy in making presents, why should I not give them the pleasure? You see I am attacking you with your own weapons."

"There are two very good reasons why you should not. In the first place you recognized in their present to you a social motive, and you cannot believe that such a reason for lavish expenditure is a worthy one. Besides, you ought not to encourage them in such unrefined practices. By sending a costly gift you would only make yourself a participant in their vulgarity. A delicately worded letter, on the other hand, will express the real meaning of Christmas, and they will doubtless profit by it. Or, if you prefer, send them a book that will be interesting and elevating to persons of their intellectual level. Remember, too, that a gracefully bestowed present carries with it a value that cannot be measured or forgotten, while a clumsy manner of presentation spoils the most exquisite of gifts. A pretty manner, a memorable word, an appreciative or happy reminder of something pleasant or tender in the past will

transform a trifling object into something that is above price."

A quick mind like Kate's is sure to improve when a clear light is thrown upon confused ideas. She had no reply ready, and for some minutes silence reigned between us. Then she said thoughtfully: "To return a present of equal value with the one received is equivalent to saying, 'I desire to cancel my obligation,' is it not?"

"Yes, Kate."

"And if I should send a present to one with whom I had quarrelled, it would be indelicate, would it not?"

"That depends upon the circumstances. The who and the what of an unpleasantness make all the difference in the world. If the offended person appreciates the peace and good-will of the hour, and if the gift is a simple one that signifies personal effort and a kindly spirit, Christmas consecrates its bestowal. It must not be a purchasable present, though a man may send flowers or a book; nor should it represent any noticeable moneyed value, else it may seem like an attempt to purchase a reconciliation."

"But suppose one doesn't wish to restore companionship, but only to remove feelings of bitterness and injured sensibilities?"

"In that case," I replied, "it would be better to send a Christmas-note sweetly worded in the spirit of the time. Things are sometimes impotent, but fitting words always carry balm."

This was the substance of our talk, and the years that have since gone by have not changed, but rather deepened, my convictions in regard to the meaning of Christmas gifts and the opportunity the day offers us for mak-

ing happy our kinspeople and friends. I wrote this conversation in my diary—a young wife usually keeps one until children gather about her knees, and then she tries to impress on their minds the thoughts she once had leisure to commit to paper.

Kate persisted, however, in a fond leaning toward purchased presents, though she did her best with her needle ; and I could not but be gratified when I found in my room on Christmas morning a pretty Davenport filled with all sorts of fine stationery with my address delicately engraved in blue, a box of sealing wax, a small silver inkstand, blue quills, and also a silver candlestick, a box of suitable desk candles and a match-box. Accompanying this present was a note telling me that she had, while with us, received more of those things which money cannot buy than she could ever enumerate, and that the spirit of Christmas had been about her ever since she came under our roof. Such a recognition of what your uncle and I had been enabled to do gave me courage to believe that I could conduct my life in such a way that it would not be wholly without elevating influences, and this, my dear niece, is a consciousness that brings true strength and helps us over those rough places that are sometimes met even in the smoothest paths.

I should have hurt and even wronged Kate had I not permitted her to express her love and gratitude by some means which she could compass. Later on, however, we were to receive a more gratifying compensation in watching her superb social and moral development. Even as early as Christmas time her improvement was very marked. She began to notice and correct little defects in her manners, blunders in her speech and want of con-

sideration for the pleasure of others, and she also corrected her tendency to the conspicuous in the color and style of her dress. Her voice, which was naturally rich, assumed the conversational keynote of a lady and became so charming in its modulations that its sweetness was noticed even by strangers. Had she been suddenly placed in the midst of her old acquaintances after three months' association with cultured people, she would doubtless have been pronounced affected and insincere; for it is not uncommon among coarse-mannered people to accuse one who shows more cultivation than they of being pretentious. "Trying to be fine," is the expression sometimes used in referring to a self-improving girl, and were it not for the tone in which this is spoken, it would really be a compliment. A brave and conscientious young person is not so much wounded as encouraged by such a reproach.

According to the universal custom we all dined with the head of the family; but on Christmas Eve a supper was arranged at our house, and kindred both near and remote consecrated our new home to simple hospitalities. We had a Christmas tree lighted with candles. It had been announced that those of the guests who chose might make this tree the bearer of their gifts to other guests, and Kate and I had much delight in arranging everything that was sent in for the evening. A cousin, big, merry and witty, disguised under a hairy mask and a sprinkling of cotton, acted as the agent of Santa Claus and distributed the gifts.

"Are we not to have any young men?" Kate had inquired.

"Oh, the young men have all the rest of the year for

their own," replied your uncle ; "but on this occasion we shall have to excuse all of them except our own kin."

There was, however, one young man, a relative of John on that side of the family of which Kate was not a member, and she had quite enough to do to amuse him. He was conscientiously agreeable, and, as some men are apt to do, he exaggerated his talent in that direction. It was an open secret that his interest in the other sex was centered elsewhere, though his devotion had not yet been discovered by its object, and it was quite evident that he felt himself an exile from paradise.

Had Kate been less susceptible to drollery she might have desired his immediate return to the object of his affection, but as it was, she devoted herself to the poor fellow with a mischievous assiduity that won an aside of thanks from John but was quite differently interpreted by the young man himself, who warned our heart-free Kate again and again in the most palpable manner that his choice was already irrevocably made. He doubtless supposed he was being honorably frank, and she accepted his statements as evidences of a harmless egotism that was extremely amusing. She plied him with sympathetic questions and easily drew from him a statement of his emotions, purposes and hopes, which were so ridiculously conceited that she could hardly restrain her laughter. When Kate related this incident to John and myself after the company had gone, she exclaimed : "That sort of man couldn't have been produced anywhere but in your super-refined society. He is the fruit of an excessive—what shall I call it, Cousin John ?"

"Silliness, Kate, the fruit of silliness," I answered promptly for my husband. "Before my marriage I was

wroth at being placed anywhere but by my lover's side, as if real affection couldn't live if separated a moment from its object. One rarely meets with a silly man, and among well-trained girls such foolish expressions of personal preference as mine seldom occur. I wasn't coarse, as you may, perhaps, suspect; I was only ignorant, and so is that poor fellow."

This, however, was but a single episode of our Christmas eve. I must tell you of some of the fruit the Christmas tree bore. One of the first gifts announced by our Santa Claus was the deed of a pretty little house from John's mother to her daughter, whose marriage had been long waiting for a prosperous moment. The girl's surprise and joy were unbounded. I had not suspected my mother-in-law of so much sentiment and tenderness, but what cannot Christmas do? "This is the time for gladness," were all the words this apparently worldly woman said to her children. Aunt Edith's gift to the same girl was money for house furnishing. Her *fiancé*, who had been invited to our gathering as a matter of courtesy, had, of course, been dutiful to his own kindred, and was unaware of his good fortune until the following day.

Kate and I had purchased droll toys, funny little mechanical odds and ends, to which we tied the names of our guests, and the laughter which their bestowal occasioned leavened the solemnity of the occasion with the right proportion of merriment.

My father had been brought to us for the holiday week, though the anticipated pleasure of having him with us was not unmixed with apprehension on account of his failing health. He said he longed to leave his blessing upon his daughter's home at this sacred hour, and he

willingly endured the pain and fatigue of the long journey, knowing so well that we would love to look back upon his presence at the time when he should be no longer with us. Remember, my dear niece, that it is only in the past that our treasures are safely hidden. Of these we are sure, but the future is always doubtful.

Our servants were invited into the room at the distribution of gifts from the tree, and you may be sure they received their share. An appreciative gentlewoman always remembers her domestics at Christmas time, even if she is obliged to curtail her generosity to equals in order to do so. But such presents must always be in keeping with the position and tastes of the recipient. No truly kind or thoughtful woman will bestow upon a domestic fancy articles of her own of which she has wearied. As a guest it was especially incumbent upon Kate to remember the servants in her preparations for Christmas, and she had purchased pretty aprons, gloves or shawls for each of the maids. When they had been distributed the roguish young woman put the candor of the love-smitten youth to a final test by asking if he could have suspected her of being so sensible in her choice of gifts to domestics. "No, indeed," he replied; "I wouldn't have thought it." Kate laughed and answered, "Nor would I a month ago."

AUNTIE.

TWENTY-FIFTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

Our stay at Frankfort is drawing to a close, which I should regret exceedingly were it not that we are to go directly to my friend's house, where I think I told you we are to spend the holidays. I am glad we will not have to pass the joyous season at a hotel, which would be inexpressibly dreary.

A few days since we visited the home of Goethe and were admitted to the study in which the great author thought and worked; and I felt as though treading sacred ground. The house is on a street called Hirschgraben, and is a long, low structure, two stories high, with "Goethe" cut in stone above the door. It is kept in repair by a society of scientists who hold meetings there. The study is a large, square room, fitted up with quaint-looking furniture, which belonged to its famous occupant. Goethe's statue is in the middle of a pretty square surrounded with trees and facing the old theatre.

After seeing Schiller's monument and the Soldiers' monument erected in 1870, we visited the Rothschild museum, to which we were admitted by cards obtained at the banking-house of the firm of that name. In this

museum is a rare and costly collection of articles of vertu in gold, silver, ivory, china, jewelry, etc. Here are masterpieces of the antique goldsmiths' art; wonderful specimens of carving in ivory and wood; rare pictures in Limoges *émail*; historic crucifixes and altar furniture, costly jewels in settings of former centuries, crowns that have been worn by many of Europe's sovereigns, and many other objects of artistic or historic interest that would take me days to tell you of.

We made one more visit of interest which I must not forget to mention. This was to the Römer Halle, on the Römerberg, a large square in the oldest part of the city. Most of the old German monarchs were crowned in this building, in a large hall on the first floor of which is a life-size portrait of every king and emperor who has ruled over Germany. These pictures were most interesting, the likenesses of some of the earlier princes being remarkable for a savage ferocity of countenance that is positively appalling.

Your letter, dear aunt, gave me much needful information in regard to Christmas customs, and I was glad to learn that my ideas about Christmas gifts are so nearly the same as yours. I have been making some pretty pieces of fancy-work and am happy to know that they will make proper gifts to friends for whom I have especial regard. But while I found your letter fully instructive in its account of Christmas customs, it told me nothing about New Year's Day, so I must look for another long letter from you on this subject.

I was so glad to hear of Kate's improvement, but how could she do otherwise than improve when she had so

wise a preceptress. Please tell me about some of Kate's love affairs, for I am convinced she was just the kind of girl to have a host of admirers.

Your Loving

NIECE.

TWENTY-SIXTH LETTER.

ROOF CIVILITIES, AND FAMILIAR CORRESPONDENCE.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

The manner of observing New Year's Day is quite different now from what it was at the time of which I have been writing. The custom then prevailed of receiving calls from all male acquaintances, a prolonged process that is no longer practised in large cities. Only relatives and intimate friends are expected nowadays. In small towns and country places, where one's circle is not large, the courtesies of New Year's Day are too agreeable to be relinquished, for every one feels the charm of interchanging sincere good wishes upon the initial day of the year.

Never spread an elaborate table on such an occasion. Hot *bouillon* and sandwiches, coffee and cake, or, perhaps, a salad or creamed oysters, are sufficient. The table should be tastefully arranged in one corner or at the end of the parlor, but if there is a small room opening off the parlor it may be utilized to advantage. When a young lady receives on New Year's Day, she should be chaperoned by a friend older than herself ; if other friends of her own age are present, better entertainment can be

afforded the visitors and some of the responsibilities of serving refreshments, etc., can be divided.

I shall not attempt to tell you how Kate and I spent the day, as there was little that would interest you in our experiences with the number of men who offered congratulations and good wishes to us. Many of them were presented to me by John for the first time; for it is customary, wherever New Year's calls are received, for a man to spend the first New Year's Day after his marriage at his own home and receive visitors with his wife. It is his opportunity for making his acquaintances and friends known to her—at least, such of them as do not care to go into society.

It was after New Year's and its delightful interchange of courtesies that I learned quite incidentally about some of Kate's methods of amusing herself, and also something of her undisciplined temper. She had a large correspondence, but I had not manifested any curiosity as to its nature, although I had a right to do so since her father placed her under my care. It is discourteous to read the address upon an out-going letter and ill-mannered to scrutinize an incoming one addressed to another person; and it had not occurred to me to ask about her letters, so young was I and so unfamiliar with that supervision which it was my duty to assume, at least in a mild form. But a new sense of my responsibility came over me one morning as she sat with an open letter in her hands and a look of perplexity upon her usually happy face.

"What is it, Kate, that troubles you?" said I. "If I can help you in any way, pray tell me at once."

She was startled and confused at first, but after a moment's silence, she replied, with a reserve that

amounted to equivocation: "It is nothing—at least, not much, and you needn't trouble about it; though I am not sure but according to your city ways a girl has no right to keep secrets from her chaperon. I appreciate the supervision you have exercised over me—for the most part, and I thank you very much for it; but about my letters I am sure I can get on without protection and even without watching."

Her eyes flashed as she pronounced that last offensive word and awaited the effect of the ill-concealed sting; but in spite of my indignation and wounded feelings I steadied my voice to say: "Pardon the glance I took at your face; it was quite unintentional. I will leave you alone with your letter and the unfortunate state of mind it has brought you." I was walking toward the door as I said this, and it closed upon the last word.

Kate had a quick temper which she had never been taught to restrain. Up to the very dawn of womanhood, as I afterward learned, she had said whatever relieved her feelings when she was annoyed, provided strangers were beyond hearing. Fine courtesies she had not considered necessary for daily domestic use. She did not know that cultured people with any pretence to self-respect never quarrel when they are offended, and she doubtless saw no reason why she should not indulge in an outburst of anger when she felt like it. Besides, as is frequently the case with ill-bred girls, she was proud of her temper and deemed it an evidence of force of character never to apologize even when she knew herself to be wrong. She considered it a triumph over weaker minds to compel submission to her haughtiness. Such girls sometimes withhold an exchange of ordinary civilities with persons

whom they meet daily and, perhaps, hourly. They do not, of course, suspect that by such action they are insulting themselves and lowering the tone and quality of their own lives. When a person announces that he has not spoken to another for some time, you may be certain, my dear niece, that there was a grave defect in his early training and that the noblest manliness is yet to be cultivated in his character. I do not refer to business relations, which are sometimes so strained that even the coldest salutation would only aggravate an unpleasantness, but rather to family and social feuds. Whatever may be one's private feelings, good breeding demands politeness of speech and an observance of the outward forms of courtesy, if only as a mark of self-respect. This is the meaning of that beautiful French motto "*noblesse oblige*": "I must be kind and just and generous because I owe it to my own soul. I must not wrong the nature God has given me by evading the claims of my fellow-beings upon me."

Poor Kate, with no mother to guide her mind into ways of sweetness and wisdom, was doomed to pass over many rough places in pain, because she had not been instructed how to make life's journey easy. After I went to my room, the hours passed slowly, until luncheon time found us seated together at the table exchanging commonplace remarks with cold civility. The miserable pride of the girl forbade any reference to the fact that this was the first morning of our acquaintance we had not passed together. The color came and went in her face, and her pretence of eating was an ill-disguised failure. During the meal my courtesy was impressive and, possibly, also oppressive, though I did not wish to afflict her. I was

confident that time and an atmosphere of kindness with which retaliation could not mingle would warm, soften and change her mental habits, and I was not mistaken. My only fear was that my husband might return before the feeling of constraint between us should be dispelled. I had never concealed anything from him since our marriage, and I did not care to begin at that time. If he should discover that his wife had been insulted, I knew he would undoubtedly recall his invitation to Kate to spend the winter with us.

With this disagreeable prospect before me, I lingered at the luncheon table, mentioning a book review in a morning paper, a racy musical criticism, etc., just as I would converse with a stranger whom I was entertaining. It was not the dear and intimate talk of familiar friends. The deference I paid her replies was courteous but distant, and when we rose I said I was sorry it rained and went directly to my room. The house was so quiet that afternoon I could plainly hear her as she walked up and down her chamber. I knew she was suffering, but it would have been both undignified and wrong for me to make inquiries. Had she not said she was capable of caring for herself?

It must have been five o'clock—and John would be home by six—when she knocked at my door. "Come in," said I cheerily, and she entered, her eyes red and swollen with weeping.

I did not look up at once but said, "Take that easy chair. What a dreary day it is! See how far I have got on with my *point coupé*." There was silence, and I still refrained from looking into her face, because I knew she felt she was at bay. I neither refused to speak to her as

her earlier associates might have done, nor was I in the least lacking in "roof civilities," as the French call domestic politeness. I had not given her the least ground for offence, and when she accused me indirectly of watching her correspondence, I had explained the matter as well as possible and had at once removed my gaze, being careful not to repeat what she was pleased to accept as an offence. I had tried to be uncommonly attentive to her when we were compelled to meet. All this I thought of while waiting for her to speak. The sting of her insulting words was still smarting in my ears, and bitter feelings arose at the thought of this sorry return for my kindnesses. But I bethought myself of her lack of early training and her warm-hearted, impetuous nature, and determined once more to be charitable.

At length, after what seemed a long time, she said, "Have I been rude beyond forgiveness?"

"That were almost impossible, dear Kate; the habits of true friendliness are not easily broken. You have wounded yourself, and I am more sorry for you than I can express. I knew you would recover soonest in solitude."

"And you are not angry with me?"

"I tried to say that when I mentioned the injury you had done yourself."

"I am so glad," she cried, and the clouds seemed to clear away from her face. "And now I will tell you what it was that troubled me. Two young men have taken it into their heads that because I have corresponded with them I am willing to have them come and see me, and they both propose to visit me at once. I am vexed at the idiots."

“And not with yourself? You say they have taken it into their heads; are you sure you are not responsible for the wish?”

“Oh, cousin! Can you suspect me of inviting them after the lesson I received soon after my arrival here? No; I did not mention their coming at all.”

“Did you not say you would like to see them?”

“I dare say I wrote something pleasant which they may have misinterpreted, but I did not mean it.”

“Forgive me for saying so, but had I been more observant of your letters I might by advising you have prevented your present perplexity. Having been taught that the slightest curiosity about the letters of others is the height of rudeness, I did not show even a friendly interest in yours. No man writes for two pair of eyes when his letters are addressed to a young woman; and a man will seldom correspond with a young unmarried woman, if he believes she writes habitually to another of his sex. That is understood, and the girl who deceives him is held to be wanting in honor, delicacy and self-respect. Your cousin John and your beloved Aunt Edith will corroborate what I have said, provided we ask them without first confessing what you have already done. In that case, John, because you are his guest, would not use such severe language as if you were under the roof of another person; and Aunt Edith, dear soul! would doubtless pity you and say you hadn't been properly taught and didn't know you were doing anybody a wrong.”

“Nor did I. Believe me, cousin, I did not think of it as an indelicacy, much less a wrong. I knew that young men had several correspondents at one time, and I thought I had as much right as they.”

“And so you have, but two wrongs do not make a right. If your correspondents understood that *camaraderie* was to be the only motive on either side, and if you were frank to each about your other postal friends, the mischief would not be so great, provided, my dear, you were strictly impersonal in your subjects, which men seldom are, and women never—at least, so it is said. If you were my sister, I should feel at liberty to inquire how many young men you write to regularly.”

“I wish you were; oh, I do wish you were! I write to four, besides occasionals.”

“Four! Do you care especially for any one of them now, or do you think you may come to be especially interested later?”

“No, cousin, no. I might, perhaps, had I remained satisfied with my old standards, but not now; and I have determined that my correspondence with them, except by casual note, shall be terminated at once. Forgive me for falling back into my old habit of being unjust to others because I happened to be vexed with myself.” Of course, I forgave her and kissed her heartily.

Then she said: “But there is one man of whom I have never spoken to you. He now and then sends me a good book or a note calling my attention to some exceptionally excellent article in a magazine or review, or making an inquiry after my health. If he should ask me to correspond with him, I am sure our letters would be quite different from the others.”

“A girl is entirely free to send regular letters to one man whom she regards, when she would only degrade herself by writing at fixed intervals to several. Maturity of mind and something impersonal to say form the only

justification for letter writing between men and women. Such familiarity is not good form, even when it is not mischievous to either of them. And then, too, between marriageable men and women, the request of the man for the honor and pleasure of a correspondence is understood to mean a future betrothal, provided what each learns of the other's mental equipments, tastes and convictions is satisfying."

Let this little episode be a lesson to you, my dear niece; and if you have no need for its application, as I trust you may not, it will help you to understand girls who have ill-regulated habits of mind and temper, and you may be of use to your friends through this experience of Kate's.

AUNTIE.

TWENTY-SEVENTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

Your narration of the embarrassing position in which Kate was placed through her two correspondents interested me greatly, and I must confess I was somewhat amused as well, although convinced that the situation must have been a serious one to her at the time. I have known girls of my own acquaintance to act quite as unwisely as Kate in this respect, girls, too, who were watched over by a mother's care, but who managed to conceal from older and wiser people the foolish course they were pursuing. In every instance the correspondence and "flirting," as they called it, were started in a spirit of pure fun and love of mischief, but a time of embarrassment was sure to come, and few, if any, of these girls could withdraw with credit, simply because they knew not how and were ashamed to ask aid of their mother or some married friend.

In the country where we lived young girls were exceedingly careless about this, and, of course, the young men were not slow to follow where too often the girls took the lead. I have on several occasions positively known that letters written in this promiscuous fashion were read by others beside the person to whom they were addressed and were the cause of much unhappiness later on when

some of these innocently foolish maidens became wives. Many a girl pursues this unwise course because she has never been properly instructed at home, where her mother, overburdened with household cares, gives little time to advising her growing daughters or gaining their confidence ; and I have found since my entrance into the social world that if a woman is not wholly self-respecting she rarely commands the full respect of others.

I am delighted at the prospect of spending the Christmas-tide in Germany, where so much thought is given and so much preparation made for the glad season. In my next letter I will tell you something of how the day is celebrated here.

We have not yet decided upon our course after the holidays, but I think very likely we will go to Paris. The two friends whom father met here not long since are now stopping in the French capital, and they have written him to join them there ; and as his health has improved so much of late, I think he will accede to his friends' wishes, even if we only remain a short time. We have made so long a stay at Frankfort because of the change the climate has wrought in father's health, that we shall be compelled, I fear, to curtail the list of interesting places we had intended to visit.

I am all impatience, my dear aunt, to hear how Kate extricated herself from the dilemma into which her thoughtless letter-writing brought her ; for I must confess that, if by any chance I were placed in a similar position, I should be totally at a loss how to recede from it without considerable loss of dignity to myself and bitter feeling on the part of the gentlemen concerned.

Your Loving

NIECE.

TWENTY-EIGHTH LETTER.

LETTER - WRITING.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

As you very sensibly remark, the position in which Kate found herself with regard to the two men who had written to her was unpleasant in the extreme. Both lived at a distance from the city, so that the expenses of travelling would be added to those of theatres, carriages, flowers and other attentions which would properly be expected by a girl of Kate's position. Merely from financial considerations, therefore, it was plain that neither of them ought to be permitted to visit my protégée under the impression that she was other than indifferent to him ; but how to arrange this was a problem that perplexed me much. I could not mention the matter to John, for I knew that in his eyes Kate's offence would be well-nigh unpardonable ; besides, a woman has no right to confide the secret of another person even to her husband. I resolved, therefore, to see Kate through the consequences of her correspondence without outside assistance, and although the task proved by no means an agreeable one, the matter was settled at last with much diplomacy and not a little candor.

The time was so short that the letters would have to be answered by telegraph ; but as each of us had passed a miserable day, the subject was dropped by mutual consent until the following afternoon, when Kate referred to it. Her first suggestion was indicative of the summary manner with which she had been accustomed to deal with young men. She proposed to telegraph simply the words, "Don't come, I cannot welcome you."

"Isn't that rather abrupt?" I ventured.

"Oh, it will serve him right; he's a man, and nothing hurts men."

"Don't you suppose such a message would hurt your cousin John?"

"Oh! he is different from most men."

"No; he is not different from other good and honorable men, and even if all of them are not reverent to women, is that any reason why you should be equally insincere? Does it justify you in writing hypocrisies to them or in wantonly wounding their feelings?"

Kate's eyes admitted the truth of this, and I continued, "Now if I were in your place, Kate, I should think out some kindly objection to the visits of these men and afterwards undeceive them in such a way as to avoid wounding their vanity any more than is actually necessary. Why not telegraph, 'Don't leave home solely for a visit to me until you have received a letter dated to-day?'"

"Why do you say 'solely?'" Did not both men write that they would come to the city within a fortnight to see me?"

"It may spare your pride, in case you discover there was more than one motive for so long a journey."

“What a peacock I am! It did not occur to me that I might not be their only attraction. But if you should see their letters you would not think my conceited inference unnatural. Will you look at them?”

“No, Kate; I am too near your own age to judge wisely of the significance of their letters. Besides, they were written to a girl who is known to be motherless and at a distance from her father, and they were intended for her eyes only. In the circumstances it would be dishonorable to show them to another. Had you informed them that you were under my chaperonage, it would be proper for me to read their letters—indeed, I might insist upon doing so even without your consent, although you know such an assumption of authority would be impossible to me. A gentlewoman never claims confidences as a right, though she may welcome them when offered as a courtesy.”

As a result of this conference a similar dispatch was sent to each man, and then followed the unpleasant duty of composing an explanatory letter. Of course, a girl's reserve must be respected, so I asked no questions; but I suspect Kate had never before planned a serious letter in which every sentence must be couched in terms of self-respect and every word carefully weighed. The letter when written was submitted to me. After the conventional introduction it read somewhat as follows:

“Our correspondence was begun without consideration and has been continued merely as a diversion, doubtless because we felt unwilling to snap the threads of our pleasant acquaintance. It has assumed, however, an unforeseen importance in view of your proposed visit to me. It would be wrong for me to permit you to take so long a journey solely on my account, without first reminding

you that the conventions of social life in the city make the attentions of gentlemen to me more formal than heretofore; so a renewal of our old-time *camaraderie* is out of the question. I am visiting the family of a kinsman, where I am cared for with the utmost tenderness and consideration, and where everything possible is done for my improvement intellectually and socially. I am just beginning to realize how much I lacked of the graces of self-restraint and how many faults of manner and infelicities of speech I had unconsciously acquired. I hope you will pardon the style of my correspondence, which, I am sure, has been much to my discredit. Should you come to the city, my host will call upon you, and my hostess will be pleased by a visit from you, which I shall gladly share with her.

“Sincerely yours,

“KATE BLANK.”

One should have known Kate a long time to fully understand how much stubborn, unreasoning pride must perforce have been crushed before she could write such a letter as this. That what she wrote would raise her in the estimation of a manly man I felt assured, but if her acquaintances were of a different stamp they would be likely to say: “Well, there’s no more amusement to be had of that girl, and, as for marrying me, after this flight into ceremonious elegance, she would scorn the thought. My chances are gone, and, perhaps, I am well out of a bit of folly.” This and even coarser things might be said, and, perhaps, each would re-read her old letters to confirm himself in the belief that a gay and merry girl had been spoiled by over-refinement.

We talked of such possibilities, and Kate accepted them bravely as part of a deserved punishment. Her other two correspondents she decided to dismiss as delicately as possible after the receipt of further letters, terminating her postal acquaintance with them with the

exception of an occasional note that might have some fitting reason for its sending.

The days passed rapidly, and Midwinter festivities occupied much of our time. Kate became more and more dear to us and more charming to society at large. Indeed, she began to impart to others her newly acquired refinement, and in the sister of our late theatre host the improvement was especially noticeable, although she was ignorant from what source a finer and more gracious manner was being communicated to her. A most winsome characteristic of fine breeding is that it dispenses itself throughout a circle of acquaintances without the consciousness of instructor or pupil.

It was nearly a fortnight before the first response came to Kate's letters. Her cheeks blazed and her eyes flashed as she gave it to me, saying, "He is not worthy of the respect I showed him."

"True, my dear Kate," I answered, as I hurriedly scanned the lines, "nor did I ever suspect he was. The respect which you expressed was shown to yourself. Anything that such a man as the writer of this letter can think or say is far below the level upon which you placed yourself when you sent a candid reply to his offer of a visit from him. Pray forget him; he is not worthy even of your remembrance."

This was difficult advice for Kate to follow, for a woman's wounded pride is sometimes harder to heal than a heart-break. Kate's hurt, however, had the wholesome tonic of anger applied to it, and she soon recovered. The substance of the letter was that the writer was grateful for the amusement Kate's letters had furnished him, and that as he was compelled to be in the city on

business he hoped the pleasure of her acquaintance would not be wholly denied him by those friends into whose fetters she had so completely locked herself.

The other correspondent was wounded, but he was a gentleman, and he took upon himself the blame for anything that was inconsiderate in their interchange of letters. He had hoped, he said, that their acquaintance and correspondence might lead to a very different result, but as he could not fail to read his doom in Kate's last letter, his visit to the metropolis was indefinitely postponed. He concluded by expressing a sincere hope that Kate would be well and happy in whatever place in life she chose for herself, being convinced that she was capable of adorning the highest as well as the least alluring destiny.

This letter appealed to the better part of Kate's nature and obliterated every trace of the wound inflicted by the other. Indeed, the remembrance of her cruel thoughtlessness conferred a sweet seriousness upon her words and manner, and from a blunder suitably atoned for she gained the finest and sweetest of her social graces. Not having anything now to blush for or even to conceal, she began acquiring, day by day, the happy and perfect poise that is characteristic of a true gentlewoman. The sting in the first letter reminded her how she, too, had wantonly inflicted suffering, while the manly tone of the other communication made her deeply ashamed of her own unworthy conduct; and she determined that it should no longer be said of her amusements, as the frogs in the fable replied to their tormentors, "It may be fun for you, but it is death to us."

It is impossible that the habits of a lifetime, even when

as brief as Kate's, should be at once uprooted and replaced by others. She was obliged to undergo a self-discipline that was by no means agreeable or easy for a girl whose wishes had hitherto been her sole guide. One day, as we were conversing of her approaching return home, she said: "I have heard of self-sacrificing women who have studied for years in order to properly equip themselves to reach into lower lives and lift them from their inferior conditions, and I hope my experience this winter will enable me to raise the standards of some at least of my girl acquaintances. - I know I can never again hold my conduct or my words in such light esteem as I once did, and yet, dear cousin, I never so thoroughly enjoyed the pleasures which belong to my age as I do now. I suspect my sensations are not unlike those of the skilled musician when he recalls his first rude attempts at harmony."

The past is wholly past, my dear niece, when we have once learned a purer and sweeter cadence for the expression of our thoughts and wishes.

AUNTIE.

TWENTY-NINTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

Never have I spent such a merry Christmas as the one just past, nor have I ever been so fully impressed with the true meaning of the day. Everything about us pertaining to the sacred season has a tendency to elevate the feelings and fill the heart with gladness, and the very air seems to bear to us the ancient benediction of peace and good-will to men.

Many of the older members of the party joined our hostess in dressing the tree, which is a notable feature of the day here, even with the poorest people; and among its pretty decorations is usually a little manger containing a wax figure representing the Christ-Child, which is placed at the foot of the tree and serves to impress the children deeply when the beautiful story is being told them.

Christmas morning dawned bright and clear, and Nature had clad herself in purest white, as if for the occasion. It is a custom for the children of the poor to go about on Christmas morning singing carols to their richer neighbors, who give them presents of clothing and also sweetmeats and toys appropriate to their age. After attending church we spent the day in feasting, sleighing,

skating and general merry-making; and in the evening we all gathered with the children in the drawing-room, which was purposely darkened while the tree was being lighted. When all were assembled, suddenly from without came the carol,

“*Alle Jahre wieder,
Kommt das Christus-Kind.*”

(Every year again comes the Christ-Child.) The song stirred the sentiment that was in every one's breast, and it diverted for a time the attention of the young people; soon, however, the excitement under which the small folks had been living for some days past, and their curiosity to know what the “*Christ-Kindchen*” was going to bring them, became once more apparent, and we sang with them the sweet Christmas song :

“*O du fröhliche, O du selige,
Gnadenbringende Weihnachts Zeit.*”

While we were still singing a little bell tinkled in the next room, the singing suddenly ceased, and the children in joyous expectancy rushed to the doors, which were quickly thrown open, and we were dazzled for a moment by the brilliance of the many lighted candles. The children were at first a little bewildered and awed as they listened to the Christmas story so sweetly told them by our gracious hostess; but they were soon lost in admiration for the beautiful tree. All voices united in singing “*Glory to God on High,*” in German, after which came the distribution of the gifts. Every servant in the house was admitted at this part of the festivities, and besides

receiving gifts of money they were presented with many articles of utility and a goodly supply of comfortable clothing. Private theatricals and a dance followed the distribution of the presents, and then came a supper.

The Christmas festivities still continue. The sleighing is excellent and we make up sleighing parties almost every day or evening.

Well, in the midst of all these pleasant happenings I have not forgotten the story you have been writing for me in your letters of the perplexities into which Kate's promiscuous correspondence brought her. I feel much admiration for the courage she displayed in writing to the two men as she did ; and I am much interested to know if her friend called upon her and you as he proposed doing in his answer to her letter.

Father has decided to go to Paris at the termination of our visit here, which will be at the end of another week. When next I write you I will probably date my letter from that city, unless we should chance to make a short stop-over somewhere on the way. This is not likely, however, if father's strength proves equal to making the journey without interruption, as I think it will.

Your Loving

NIECE.

THIRTIETH LETTER.

A PARTIE CARRÉE.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

The one of Kate's correspondents who had expressed his intention of coming to the city adhered to his resolution, and upon his arrival he sent a card to her and one to your Uncle John. Kate's indignation was roused afresh at this, which seemed to her an added insult. In her hasty judgment she saw only the man as he was, without asking whether he were to blame for his ignorance of refined usages. She did not feel the least compassion for him on account of the methods of thought and conduct he had inherited and imbibed from his surroundings. Even had she done so, however, it could hardly be expected that she would hold herself responsible for the correction of a young man's faulty mind and manners. Your uncle, on the other hand, has always believed that everything which occurs in our lives has a significance which it is our duty to discover and fulfil. After our marriage we adopted as our rule of conduct a resolution left upon record by one who was worthier and wiser than ourselves. I trust you, too, will adopt it and pass it on to your companions. It is, "I will do what good

I can as I pass along, for I shall not come this way again."

Regarding the late unpleasantness between Kate and her correspondent I had merely said that the two were old acquaintances, but that Kate had outgrown a taste for his society. I also mentioned that he had written to her announcing his intended visit to the city, and that Kate had replied that if a card was sent us on his arrival, her cousin might call upon him. I added: "I presume some social attentions from us will be of value to him, a real mission to the stranger, from which the young fellow may get more good than he is able to return. Of course, we cannot expect much assistance from Kate. She is too much annoyed at what she calls his impertinence in sending his card to you. But so rapid has been her improvement that it is impossible to estimate the effect which even meeting her at a dinner may have upon the manners and the ways of thought of the young man."

John shared my interest in the matter and accordingly took an early opportunity of calling upon the man. He found him an energetic, clear-headed, handsome fellow, full of business enthusiasm and with keen faculties that were alert to grasp every better or larger estimate of current affairs that came in his way. My husband was really charmed with his wide-eyed eagerness to be improved by what he saw and heard. At the same time he could not but smile at the epigrammatic terseness, not to say slanginess, of his speech. His attitudes were not those of a man of refinement, though his faults in this direction were merely blunders that could be easily corrected.

Many men are uniformly careless of their attitudes when with their own sex, yet are careful to pose properly

in the presence of women. Such an indulgence of bad manners, however, is apt to result in neglect of conventionalities at the proper moment, and men, my dear niece, are more disturbed at small social blunders than most women. One is always able to determine what a man's training has been by his method of sitting, standing, holding his hands, etc. The safest plan is never to permit one's-self to assume an ungainly position in the presence of others; an elegant attitude will then become habitual and be assumed unconsciously in all circumstances.

Our guest did not mistake the hour for dinner mentioned in the note of invitation, but he doubtless wished to be friendly and so came nearly an hour before he was expected. Your uncle had not yet returned from business, but he came in shortly afterward and went directly to his dressing-room. Neither Kate nor I was ready to receive the man, so he had abundant leisure to ponder upon the fact that a too early attendance at a dinner is almost as grave a fault as being too late. Most people do not realize that the dinner hour is always inflexible and that this gathering is the least movable of the day's feasts. Our visitor had forgotten, too, that in places where ceremony is enjoined, evening dress is *de rigueur* at dinner for both men and women. It is, indeed, an expression of mutual respect for each member of a well-ordered family to freshen his toilette for this meeting of the entire household. An invitation to a dinner, even if it be *en famille*, implies evening dress. If a man have none, he must decline the hospitality and give as his reason that he has no dinner dress. His host or hostess will then excuse this informality of toilette, unless it be a

ceremonious occasion, in which case the guest prefers to decline rather than to appear wanting in respect for *les convenances*.

In most places outside large cities the dinner hour is fixed at shortly after midday, and morning dress is correct; but at tea or supper, which usually takes place by gas or lamp light, full dress is expected. There is, however, one important exception to this rule. In most households where the service is not large, the dinner on Sunday occurs shortly after midday, and the tea or supper at night. In such families Sunday evening is often the most hospitable of all days to intimate friends, to whom one says, "Drop in for supper any Sunday night"; and on such informal occasions the social conventions in regard to evening dress are remitted for both men and women.

Kate's correspondent treated our week-day dinner invitation as if it had been a Sunday-night supper in the most worldly of households. My husband was in evening attire and I in demi-toilette, while Kate was in dinner dress, cut square at the throat and with elbow sleeves. Her dress was simply a pale-blue cashmere with a single pink rose in the corsage, but she entered the drawing-room with a queenly step and manner that gave her costume an air of sumptuousness which was by no means unnoticed even by our familiar selves, while in the eyes of our guest the exquisite grace of the girl, her superb dignity and her delicate and charming appearance, all so different from her once gorgeous dash, evidently produced a most impressive picture. He was so much embarrassed that we pitied him, but with Kate it was only a part of her revenge, and she enjoyed it to the fullest. The *bonhomie*,

of which my husband had told me and of which I saw glimpses at once, vanished from the moment Kate swept into the room. She had always called him by his first name, and even this had been abbreviated and familiarized, but when she addressed him as Mr. Blank, his old style of "How d'ye do, Kate," died off his tongue, and he only said, "I'm well, thanks."

Dinner was at once announced, and your uncle gave Kate his arm, while I asked our guest if I should take his—an added touch of ceremony that would have been omitted had this not been "lesson night" as John expressed it while we were coming down-stairs. Besides, the poor fellow, in his embarrassment, had thrust both hands deep into the side pockets of his business coat, so that in giving his arm to me the hands became visible once more. This was not the style of man, however, to lose his head for very long, and we had not reached the table before he inquired, "Is there a ball or anything particular going on to-night?"

"Not that I am aware of, Mr. Blank."

"Your husband's fixin's is what we use for that sort of thing out our way, and I didn't know but we were to have a dance after dinner."

"My husband always wears evening dress when we have a guest at dinner—indeed, he does when we are alone, if he is not too tired."

"Oh! that's the proper thing, is it? We only wear such coats and ties at dances and weddings."

We were soon at the table, and the man surprised me by showing that he knew how to move my chair and place it properly before taking his seat at my right. As it was a *partie carrée*, he sat opposite Kate. Between

counting the forks, knives and spoons at each side of his plate and looking at his *vis à vis*, whose face was turned toward her cousin, our guest was intensely amusing to me. All his observing faculties were alert. He did not lift a fork until he saw that I used the little outer one to eat oysters from their shells. This observance was so furtive that had I not been closely noting his manner it would have escaped me. He ate like a well-bred man, making no noise. When the soup came he followed my example in selecting the larger of the two spoons, and when he saw that I held mine in my hand an instant, as I was in no haste to eat, he pretended to be interested in a bowl of ferns that stood in the center of the table, until I had tasted my soup. He saw that I dipped the spoon from me and partook of its contents from the side of its bowl rather than from its tip, and then by closely imitating me he avoided a *faux pas*. It was most interesting to see how eager he was to do everything the proper way.

After a little while Kate relented, asked agreeable questions and was altogether courteous to him, but he must have been a duller or a more audacious man than we had thought him, to have ventured the slightest personality or even familiarity of speech with our magnificent Kate. She talked of travel, of books and of recent events both social and political, and she did it in such a clear-headed but not opinionated way that even we were surprised. You will find, my dear niece, that there are few persons whose brains are so bare of furnishings that they cannot tell you something you had not before heard and that you did not suspect them of knowing. This lesson is humiliating unless one learns it early in life and

keeps it fresh in mind by frequent appeals for wisdom to unrecognized sources.

Occasionally our guest would toss off a droll, slangy sentence at which we laughed ; but if he were to remain with us for any length of time we should, as we grew better acquainted, have felt it an act of friendly duty to tell him that educated persons are expected to converse in pure English and not in a provincial dialect. There was no need of this, however, for he was keen enough to perceive that his style of conversation was quite different from our own ; indeed, his exuberant adjectives and his unfamiliar but effective epigrams became less and less frequent as we neared the end of our dinner.

As usual, coffee was to be served in the drawing-room. When I rose from the table our guest omitted to draw back my chair, as he saw your uncle do for Kate. When he became aware that he had omitted a customary courtesy, his face grew red with mortification. John looked at him an instant to see if, as was also his duty as attendant upon the hostess, he was about to open the door leading from the room or to draw the portière and stand by its side until I had passed out ; but the look explained nothing, and his host had to perform this service for him.

While the men were smoking, Kate and I were left alone for a few moments, and it was evident from her manner that she felt a painful sense of responsibility for the blunders of the man she had introduced to our home. "Never mind, Kate," said I, putting my arm about her ; "you wouldn't have noticed it a few months ago, and our guest will not blunder a second time. I like him. He is worth attention. His faults are only those of manner and can easily be corrected. Now that I have seen him,

I'm sure he didn't mean to be rude to you in his letter ; it was because he was unfamiliar with so delicate a subject."

It was not long before the pair had finished smoking and returned to the drawing-room. The first reserve of the young man was wearing off, and he began to feel enough at ease to seat himself in a light reception chair and tilt it so that only two of its delicate legs rested on the floor. He swayed to and fro in the chair as he talked and listened alternately and slowly sipped his coffee. "This is first-rate coffee and an awfully jolly way of drinking it," he was saying, when suddenly the chair snapped. He jumped and spilled the contents of his cup. The chair was not quite a wreck. In his embarrassment the poor fellow said, "We don't have this kind of seat out our way"; and Kate, forgetting politeness in her anger, promptly retorted, "We don't writhe in chairs our way; chairs are made for repose and not for exercise."

How the poor fellow reddened! Both John and I insisted that the accident was a trifle to be forgotten at once, but he continued to examine the frail object with critical eyes, saying to himself as if no one could hear him "after this, I'll know enough to use all four legs of a chair at the same time. I wish I could fix the pretty thing, but it beats me."

We endeavored to divert his mind from the unhappy incident, as was the duty of a host, but the next day, much to my annoyance, a new chair was sent me, and with it a note of thanks for a pleasant evening. The latter attention was quite proper, because his stay in town was too brief for him to make an after-dinner call; but the

note was written upon fancy-colored paper with a picture in the upper corner! Kate was disgusted with the pea-green letter-paper, but I inquired, "Did you never use just such unrefined stationery?"

"Yes, indeed, I did," she slowly replied.

"Did you not do even more? Did you not perfume the paper with musk or patchouly?"

"Yes, but I have repented and reformed."

"So would this young man if he had enjoyed your advantages. He does the best he knows. Had he been acquainted with the correct formula, he wouldn't have sent this new chair, but his thought was proper; he only missed the acceptable way for making amends. An apology was all that was required. It would be a relief to the minds of mischief-makers among parlor chairs, if this were not a rigid custom. It is easier to break frail chairs than rigid usages, as you will learn if you try to perform this feat in any well-ordered social circle."

He was gone and with him our kindest wishes. Kate's mind was relieved of the burden of unpleasant anticipation, and a few days later she said to us over our coffee: "My acquaintance received several valuable lessons in decorum from you while he was here, but he has not gained as much from them as I have from mine, partly because I am placed where I can put some of mine into practice, while he cannot, if he remains where he is. You have taught me that resentment is ignoble as well as ungracious, and that in helping a person who is less fortunately placed than myself I can receive in pleasure as much or even more than I have bestowed in benefits. I shall try to pass this lesson on whenever I have opportunity. Please believe, my dear cousins, that I am grateful for

the lessons I am getting, even though I cannot yet fully comprehend all that such considerateness to the undeserving means."

"When you are wise enough to know just who are and who are not deserving, the meaning of all will be plain to you, Cousin Kate, but you and I will not then be living this life," replied your Uncle John.

AUNTIE.

THIRTY-FIRST LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

We arrived in Paris yesterday after an exceedingly pleasant and interesting journey. We were obliged to stop over a few hours in Cologne, "Der Stadt mit dem ewigen Dom" (the city with the eternal cathedral), as the town-folk call it, and so we made a visit to the magnificent Gothic edifice for which the old town is famous. It is necessary to traverse a maze of narrow and not over-clean streets in order to reach the "Dom Platz," and the huge structure bursts upon the spectator suddenly, fairly taking away the breath with its vastness, of which the ordinary beholder can form no adequate conception. I wish I could fully describe to you the grandeur of this cathedral, with its two giant towers that seem to fairly touch the sky, and its numerous other towers, which display the most exquisite sculpture, terminating at the top in great floral crosses, to which we could look up only with great difficulty.

My first impressions on entering the cathedral will never be effaced from my memory while I live. The solemn stillness speaks to the heart more impressively than if countless tongues were engaged in solemn service; and one feels an indescribable awe and over-

whelming sense of the holiness of the place. The bright sunshine is softened to a sombre twilight as it enters in many-colored shafts through the richly painted windows, the effect increasing the solemn majesty of the interior. The lofty, vaulted ceiling is upheld by groups of pillars, fourteen of which support the choir gallery situated behind the magnificent high altar, of which the artistic simplicity adds wonderfully to the impressiveness. Seven chapels surround this gallery, and our guide, a most intelligent man, pointed out to us the one in which lies buried Archbishop Konrad von Hochstaden, who in 1248 laid the corner-stone of the cathedral.

Our guide also gave us an interesting history of the edifice, which is so closely identified with the history of the German Empire that it may be said to present a perfect picture of its struggles and successes upon its time-worn walls. It grew with the First German Empire, and after the fall it stood for years neglected. With the establishment of the new German Empire it rose to its present grandeur. I could have spent many days in studying the architecture of the great pile and in enjoying its perfect peacefulness, but, as you know, our time was decidedly limited.

You will readily believe that the change from Cologne to Paris was a very abrupt one both in the sights to be seen and the feelings they inspired. I will tell you in my next of my impressions of the city; I cannot do so yet, for I have seen so little of it. In the meantime I will look for a letter from you telling me of Kate's progress in her social education. I need not tell you that I am deeply interested in your account of

her gradual elevation to the higher plane of perfect refinement, and I await your letters with the utmost eagerness.

Your Loving
NIECE.

THIRTY-SECOND LETTER.

UNSPOKEN PREFERENCES.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

I could not help feeling some curiosity about the young man whom Kate had said she regarded as a true friend, because he showed his appreciation of her better qualities by occasionally sending her a copy of a recent publication, or a note calling attention to some book which he hoped would gratify her as it had him. Whenever the subject of the book or its treatment was above her grasp, the hint that she would care for it was, of course, a most delicate tribute to her natural possibilities. Of the personality of this unseen man the girl said not a word, but I gathered from some chance expression that he was living far less remote than her other visitor, and that he was a man of considerable leisure. He could, if he wished, see Kate very easily, and his persistent but impersonal reminders of his interest in her seemed a strange way of showing friendliness. Curious, too, was his continued absence from a city toward which "foot-free" men of means naturally gravitate at least once during the Winter season of music and social gayeties. Kate rarely mentioned him except incidentally or when

some communication arrived from him. Since her late experience she was no longer disposed to be mysterious regarding the postman, so I began to suspect that the reason she said so little about Richard Eldred was because she was gratified more than she cared to say by his delicate attentions.

Her silence was not reserve, nor was it an excess of sensitiveness. It was, doubtless, a form of that unpleasant mental habit which in certain circles is the only means of self-preservation. In coarse-mannered persons it is a "mind-your-own-business" style of meeting and repelling intrusiveness and idle curiosity. There had probably been a time when Kate would not have thought it ungentlewomanly—she would have said "unlady-like"—to use such an expression to any one who questioned her about matters or persons of whom she did not choose to talk. Of course, such a style of repelling impertinence was no longer possible to her, and in her present surroundings nothing of the kind was needed. Although I wished much to help her, I was not quite certain whether she needed my aid, and so was obliged to wait in silence.

From the eagerness with which Kate read whatever this man posted to her and the impatience she expressed at any delay in procuring the authors he recommended, I was certain she felt no common regard for one whose interest was in her better and higher self, and was not increased by her prospective fortune nor diminished because he had known her when she was wanting in fine manners and wore gorgeous toilettes at inappropriate times. He had doubtless discovered that beneath her rather pronounced manners and showy exterior Kate had rare possibilities of refinement, and that he did not relin-

quish his interest in her was equally to her credit and to his honor. Judging from his choice of reading, he was a man of unusual culture, and I did not doubt that he loved her for what she was capable of becoming rather than for what she was, and that he kept himself aloof from her, fearing that he might foolishly betray his regard for one whose lavishness in dress and whose familiarity of speech with her many men acquaintances were evidences of a crudeness that was quite foreign to his ideals of womanly reserve. To ask a woman with such manners to marry him was as impossible for her sake as for his own. He was unwilling to subject her to the criticisms and misjudgments to which she would be exposed among people of refinement.

You will pardon me, my dear niece, for having anticipated what would more naturally be told at a later stage of my narrative, but we shall be able to study this man's conduct to better advantage in the light of what afterward took place. That this was the true explanation of his present attitude toward Kate I had already conjectured, and my suspicion was confirmed by the man himself after she had promised to be his wife, and while he was becoming daily better acquainted with the transformations that had been wrought in her external life. Her truth, her purity of intention, the rare excellence of her natural gifts, he had never doubted.

As was natural with a girl of Kate's temperament, and with her habit of continually "winding somebody round her finger," she missed the excitement of her correspondence and the amusement of planning caustic retorts to her admirers. She craved a personal and special interest in something or somebody. Not but that she received

much homage and most flattering attentions from the men who visited us, but they were stately courtesies and without that accentuation which had been lavished upon her when she was called Kate, Kit or Kitty by those men whom she in turn addressed as Bob, Tom or Dick. Having once tasted the flavor of that sort of popularity, she hoped for something in her new life that could take its place. The novelty of city life was wearing off, and so was the mental alertness which was at first required in order that she might conform to prevailing tastes and customs; even the satisfaction she felt in bettered habits was becoming monotonous, and monotony was both unusual and distasteful to Kate.

To be sure, she had turned a deaf ear to two suitors for her hand, and she had not only refrained from laughing at them, but was even inclined to keep such matters a profound secret, although John, as her guardian for the time being, was very properly made aware that such hopes were entertained. In fact, one proposal did not reach Kate directly, for your uncle said to her one day that if she did not manage to become less fascinating he would shift his authority to the shoulders of some older and less sympathetic person, adding to his compliment that so-and-so had begged permission to address her as a suitor. Kate refused to be subjected to such a proposal, and the young man received a timely discouragement.

Afterward Kate said to me: "Not long ago I couldn't have been persuaded to miss hearing that young man's wooing and should have enjoyed refusing him, but this desire has passed, and I imagine I must be rapidly getting on toward a respectable maturity. Before I came here I had the pleasure of refusing five men, which isn't

very many, considering that I am not a bad-looking girl and have a rich father. Every young man whom I wished to see at my feet dropped there except one. Had he asked me to marry him, it is possible I might have been persuaded ; but then he isn't the sort of man to fall on his knees and swear to no end of emotions and rubbish that he is incapable of feeling or to make a thousand promises he has no intention of keeping." After a moment's silence she added, " And now there is little probability that I shall ever see him again."

Not being utterly lacking in discernment, I was not long in identifying the person who thus held Kate's interest with the man who wished her to share with him the enjoyment of books and elevated thoughts. And yet, believing as I do that even a mother has no right to invade a young girl's reserve or pry into her secret preferences, I said nothing. If a girl can be open-minded and confidential with her mother or with an older sister or friend, it is best that she have no secrets from them, but temperaments sometimes differ so widely even in the same family that perfect frankness between its members is impossible, though love be strong and loyalty perfect. One person cannot receive a confidence without being dictatorial in giving advice, one cannot keep a secret, another is over-anxious, and still another is unsympathetic.

These various defects are largely due to radical peculiarities of temperament ; they are mental deformities, and as such call for pity, and not for blame. Not many people, however, are wholly free from one or another of these qualities that are undesirable in a confidential adviser ; and so few even of these, my dear niece, are

able to appreciate and sympathize with the peculiar needs which you or I may have that we shall be wise if, while giving of the best our hearts hold to those who turn to us for friendly encouragement, we, for our own part, school ourselves to meet the inevitable single-handed, with courage if it be misfortune and with generosity if it be happiness.

As I looked at Kate's face after her last sentence, I said to myself: "With all her faults she has the courage of silence, and how few girls are thus gifted! If she ever has a skeleton that belongs in her own closet, she is not the sort of girl to exhibit it in public. If it is wholly hers, she will never share it with her dearest friend. She will count the bright days and leave the dark days unrecorded, and this is a grand quality in girls and women."

We had noticed Kate's effort to conceal a feeling of apathy or *ennui* as the Lenten season advanced, and when your uncle proposed a short visit to the city of Washington, the plan was received with enthusiasm. John had friends in that city, and several territorial officials were sure to give Kate a pleasant variation in her experiences. We were likely to be asked to little dinners in Washington, and perhaps quiet luncheons would be made for Kate and me; we, therefore, carried, as Kate said, "toilettes for any fate."

Shortly after our arrival we made a visit to the houses of Congress, which was then in session. In the gallery of the Senate Chamber, to which John had secured tickets for us, I saw a distinguished-looking young man study Kate's face a long time unobserved by her. When his eyes turned slowly and, as it appeared, reluctantly away

from her, they met mine, and he left his seat at once and disappeared from the house.

The next evening we were engaged for an informal and almost *en famille* dinner at the home of a college friend of your uncle. We were the last to arrive and were almost immediately taken to the dining-room, Kate being offered the arm of our host's brother, while I walked in with the host. There was an odd young man—a Mr. Eldred—in the party, who was rather hurriedly introduced to me because he was to sit at my left. Kate was placed at the host's left, thus bringing her almost face to face with Mr. Eldred. They had not seen each other clearly in the dim light of the drawing-room, but as they recognized one another across the pansies, Kate blushed crimson, and Mr. Eldred blanched as if he were a fainting girl. Happily the stir of seating ourselves concealed this little pantomime, which would have escaped me also had I not been watching the two with considerable interest. "And you are not strangers?" said our host with graceful gallantry. "I am glad of that. Had I known of it earlier my brother would have been less honored."

"I had the good fortune to meet your guest while I was travelling, and her father's hospitality was most gratefully received. That she has not quite forgotten me I am again fortunate."

This well-bred manner of recognizing Kate was very gratifying to her, as I could see plainly in the expression of her face. The words were so tranquilly said that there was no opportunity for self-consciousness or embarrassment. She simply replied, "Thank you, Mr. Eldred, I am sure my father received as much pleasure as he

gave while you were in our rather unconventional part of the world."

Curiously enough, she had struck at once the key-note of all the differences that had lain like a stretch of impassable desert between them.

Our host drew Kate out, and she talked in a clear, finely modulated voice, choosing fitting and simple words for her replies. I noticed the eagerness of Mr. Eldred's attention to her. I saw his eyes wander from the crown of her shapely head and its coils of rich hair carefully coiffed in coronet fashion, as was then proper, to her moderately low-cut white India mull toilette, which had a single pale-pink rose for ornament. Her only jewelry was a band of single pearls—heir-looms—clasped about her pretty wrists.

While she was removing her gloves, Mr. Eldred improved his opportunity of observing her left hand, upon which had there been a ring, he might have felt that his painful discreetness and reserve had been all unnecessary. Perhaps I did not tell you that when Kate first came to us she was, as John said to me, literally clothed in finger-rings. Some of these she had called trophies; but if she wished me to ask for an explanation she was disappointed. Her hands were unusually symmetrical and white, with well-kept, rosy finger-nails. Indeed, so pretty and graceful were they that rings did not add to their attractiveness. After she had been with us a short time we persuaded her to leave off the rings. I do not say that a single ring is improper upon the hand of a girl who is not engaged, but I insist that more than one is in bad taste. Mr. Eldred looked pleased that no significant circlet spoiled Kate's hand for him. He afterward told

me that the next greatest delight to seeing no engagement ring upon Kate's finger was felt when he missed her former jewels, of which she had always displayed a costly assortment.

I think Kate dreaded a termination of the dinner, because there was danger of a *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Eldred. She knew that he must remember her as an unpolished girl, and she feared the change in her dress and manner would recall it too vividly to his mind. She might have trusted to his delicacy, as she afterwards learned to do.

We returned to the drawing-room, and the men followed very soon ; then conversation became general, our host devoting himself particularly to Kate, because she was the only "stranger within his gates." He evidently did not suspect that any but the slightest acquaintance had existed between this girl and his friend.

Mr. Eldred said to me in Kate's presence that if he could serve us in any way he should be only too glad. I thanked him. He then asked if he might call upon us at our hotel the following morning to inquire if we would like a drive. Your uncle was about to tell him that we should be busy taking Kate about to places of interest, but I anticipated him and accepted Mr. Eldred's proposal with promptness. Of course, my husband was amazed and a trifle disconcerted, but as soon as we were alone I explained my apparent indelicacy and was rewarded by being pronounced a modern Minerva. Months afterward our host and his wife understood what it was that gave such alacrity to my cordial acceptance of Richard Eldred's courtesy.

AUNTIE.

THIRTY-THIRD LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

Before writing you further of the sights we have seen and the places of interest we have visited in Paris, I will ask you some questions which were suggested to me by your last letter, and regarding which I feel rather anxious. Kate's meeting with Mr. Eldred was extremely interesting, and I think I can enter fully into her feelings in such circumstances and can understand the motives which prompted her to act as she did. What a wonderful change must have taken place in her demeanor since he last saw her as a pretty, untrained, hoydenish girl.

In your letter you mentioned a visit to Washington with Kate and Uncle John, and I should like you very much to explain to me wherein the social customs and usages of that city differ from those of others. I do not think I have told you we have already planned our wedding trip, and that it will consist of an extended tour through the Southern and Western States. I am glad of this because I know little of my own country, save what I have learned from books. Then, too, it will be so pleasant to be able to compare our large cities and the picturesque scenery of the West with the towns and sights I

have seen abroad. I have often heard Europeans speak of the grandeur and beauty of American scenery, and have felt quite ashamed that I, an American, knew nothing whatever about the places they mentioned. During our wedding tour we will visit Washington, and I am under the impression, from what I have heard, that social customs are different there from what they are elsewhere in America.

Will you kindly tell me what is expected from guests at public and private receptions, and at dinners, luncheons, etc., and what is the etiquette there for calls? I would also like to know on whom it is imperative to call, and how visits to the White House are made. As my *fiancé* has numerous friends and acquaintances in Washington, I expect to receive many invitations and am anxious to be acquainted with every needful detail, that I may avoid all blunders. Of course, my travels and the social advantages I have enjoyed of late have given me much confidence in myself, and have obliterated much of the self-consciousness and reserve, regarding which I wrote you on a former occasion as causing me not a little annoyance and discomfort.

Please tell me everything important about your first visit to the capital, and also how the evident attachment between Kate and Mr. Eldred progressed. I am certain they were suited to each other and would have made a very happy marriage. I hope very much they did marry eventually. I have ordered my wedding-gown and several dinner and reception gowns, and think you will like them; papa says they all suit me, but then you know he is not critical.

I shall look forward to your next letter with some impatience, as it will, I feel sure, contain much information that will be valuable to me.

Your Loving
NIECE.

THIRTY-FOURTH LETTER.

SOCIETY AND POLITICS.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

The social etiquette of Washington does differ in important respects from that of all other parts of the United States. It may best be characterized as a political etiquette, for its formulas have to be adapted to a periodic change in the residents, a large proportion of whom are officials, who reside in the city only during their term of office. Political position, and not social or intellectual superiority is the open sesame to Washington society. There is an element of propriety in this, however, for it is the office and not the person that is honored. Besides, where the elements of society are constantly changing, there is little opportunity for the proper estimate and recognition of personal qualities, and social distinction must perforce be referred to some other basis.

So far from leading to a lax observance of social usages, the fact that so many members of society are "birds of passage" is the chief reason why etiquette in Washington rules with a rod of iron. The neglect of a prescribed courtesy by an official's family materially lessens his chances for re-election; in fact, to retain his

political position, he must distribute his social favors with so lavish a hand that practically no well-dressed person shall be excluded from his parlors. This is the open secret of Washington society, this is the reason why people without social position at home are so much charmed with it. With the exception of the President and the members of his cabinet, there is no official upon whose wife and daughter one may not feel at liberty to call and to expect in return a potent bit of pasteboard engraved with their reception days. The President and his wife have public receptions which all the world may attend and be honored with a presentation. On application to the local representative one can also obtain a card of invitation to the President's private place.

Out of consideration for Kate, we called and left cards upon the wives of several prominent officials, and reception cards were directly thereafter left with us. In two instances the ladies of the family found us in. Both of them were aware that Kate's father was a man whose large fortune gave him sway over many men who were indifferent in politics and would not be apt to vote intelligently. It was policy, therefore, for them to gain Kate's good-will. There were so many officials from our own political center that our influence was less important. Of course, your uncle and I were included in all the hospitalities offered our *protégée*, but we accepted such conventional attentions with reserve. We left cards as a matter of duty upon our own representatives, but self-respect forbade us to go further than to make a brief call during the regular receiving hours. We did not choose to dine with strangers, in spite of the custom that prevails in the democratic capital. A person of delicacy never accepts

all the hospitality he can get, and we were also deterred by the knowledge that the continued bringing of strangers to her table in the hope of retaining political popularity is an almost intolerable burden to the wife of an official.

You will conclude from what I have already written, my dear niece, that the ordinary etiquette of calling is reversed in Washington. The choice of accepting or ignoring a stranger is left to the older resident, whose decision is final, without regard to the merits of the case.

Kate appeared somewhat discomposed the morning following the dinner at which we had met her friend Mr. Eldred. Her cheeks had a concentrated bloom, and her eyes an unusual glow. She was disposed to silence and had a preoccupied manner.

“What makes you so handsome this morning, Cousin Kate?” your uncle inquired after our breakfast was over, and we were alone together. Kate blushed deeply, although she was not usually disconcerted by a compliment, and after a moment of confusion she said frankly, “Oh! you know what it is, Cousin John. You have been told, and you might be kind enough not to embarrass me any more than you can help.”

John didn't know, because for the moment he had forgotten our talk the night before. He was too delicate and considerate to trifle in speech with so serious a matter as a girl's unconfessed feelings toward the man she had chosen above all others. There are some things that may not be lightly mentioned to a young girl, and the name of him in whom she is likely to feel a solemn interest is one of them.

When Mr. Eldred's cards were brought up—one for each of us, as was *de rigueur* in the best society even at

that time—Kate turned toward the window and stood in perfect silence until she heard him enter and receive our greetings. Then she turned, and though her color was still somewhat heightened, her manner was composed, perfect in dignity, yet cordially gracious. Not a year ago she would have called out, “Good morning, Dick. What’s happened that you are on hand so early?” or, “Hello, Dick. Isn’t it a jolly day for tramping?” Her present language, it is needless to say, was quite different from what Mr. Eldred had been wont to hear from her. The effect of her words upon him he afterward compared to that of a Beethoven sonata after one has been listening to an air from the opera bouffé. It did not require any remarkable insight to see the future of this pair reflected in the eyes of both.

A drive was proposed, from which John considerably excused himself. A party of four would naturally separate into pairs while visiting the public buildings, and he instinctively felt that Kate had not yet mastered herself so completely that she would willingly be left *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Eldred. Your uncle and I were in such perfect accord that I understood what he meant by excusing himself; on other occasions I knew he would be one of our party. I mention this bit of considerateness for your admiration, my dear niece, because too few men are gifted with quick, incisive perceptions about such delicate matters, and when they are, they do not always treat them with the deference they deserve.

We passed the morning together, and Mr. Eldred was our guest for luncheon. He dined elsewhere and came for us afterward to go to the White House for a special presentation, which had been arranged for a small party

at nine o'clock. The gentlemen were in evening dress, but we were in visiting toilettes. We left our heavy wraps with the custodian of the hall, though at a ceremonious reception this convenience would have been impossible. We were promptly in the "Blue Room" at the hour mentioned, and were seated before the President and his wife entered together. We all rose and were presented by your uncle's college friend, who was an important official—I first, then Kate, then your uncle and last, Mr. Eldred. We were each taken by the hand by the President and then by his wife. To grasp the President's hand or that of his wife would be bad form, as it is thought proper that the salutation should come from the superior. This is the reason why so much complaint is made by high officials in America about the fatigue of prolonged hand-shaking. The American chief magistrate is compelled by the spirit of the republic to give a vigorous, democratic hand-shake to a *chiffonnier* or a boot-black, if he present himself on a public reception day.

It was interesting to watch Mr. Eldred's face, while Kate, with elegant composure, was conversing with the President's wife a little later in the evening. Pride, pleasure and surprise were *en evidence* to me, and to one at least of the others, a noted English novelist, now dead, who was present that night and doubtless on the watch for romantic materials. This teller of love stories said to me, while looking at Kate, "She is pretty, charming and *fiancée*."

"No, not *fiancée*," I answered promptly.

"Oh, but I see it in the young man's expression, and I know that look when it comes over a face," was his cool and decided response.

It is the woman or the girl whose eyes and lips are said to be tell-tales, but Anthony Trollope had a vision that sometimes saw deep into the soul of another man, and he often found his face to be as transparent as a woman's. It is no discredit, my dear niece, to have it known that you are possessed of a worthy emotion, but it is wise to conceal our most sacred sentiments from public curiosity. In this instance, however, I could hardly blame Mr. Eldred for being off guard.

At one of the pleasant afternoon receptions which we attended toward the close of our short visit, we made the acquaintance of Miss Eldred, who without our knowledge had been summoned to join her brother. We had received cards to a cabinet lady's at-home through Mr. Eldred, who was a friend of the hostess. Upon entering we gave our cards, as is customary, to the servant at the door, and they were passed to another servant, who loudly announced each name, as he read it from the card, at the open doorway of the drawing-room. By one of those blunders, which so frequently occur and which needlessly discompose some people, Kate was announced for me and I for Kate. Miss Eldred, who was receiving with our hostess, grasped my hand warmly, saying, "I am glad to meet one of whom my brother thinks so highly and whom he has mentioned so often to us."

A crowd was behind us, and I was forced forward to leave Kate to enact the part of matron, but there were so many pushing their way toward the hostess that there was nothing for her to do or say, and she walked on without even hearing the name of the young lady with whom she clasped hands. Awkward as this misplacement might have been, and it often occurs at crowded places, it was

a kindness to Kate, who would have wondered what sort of an account Mr. Eldred had given of her to this elegant sister. By this mistake she had passed her first interview unconsciously, and I did not mention it until afterward. Let me advise you, my dear niece, if a *contretemps* occurs in a crowd, never to talk it over until at a distance. Had I spoken then, the incident would have disturbed Kate, and would, perhaps, have caused her to lose for the time the equilibrium she had taken such pains to acquire. I talked of the flowers, the notables, the pretty visiting gowns, etc., until, just as Kate was asking, "Shall we not go on to another house?" Miss Eldred approached us and said: "Pray do not go quite yet. I have left my post of duty to have a pleasant word with you." She was looking at me, but quickly added, "with both of you," as fine breeding demanded. I at once explained the mistake that had been made, and introduced Kate and Miss Eldred to each other. Of course, Kate saw no significance in this presentation, because she had not heard Miss Eldred's first salutation to me, but the other girl felt it, and she looked her gratitude for my silence.

To tell the truth—and it hurt my vanity a little at the time—I saw that Miss Eldred was glad that Kate was Kate and that I was her chaperon, because my *protégée* was far more beautiful than your aunt, and charms of face are gifts that no one can or ought to undervalue. Miss Eldred evidently did not, and she herself was handsome.

It did not at first occur to Kate that this was Richard Eldred's sister, and when it did a lovely color overspread her face, and she seemed quite as *ingénue* as if she had never been a heartless coquette. Miss Eldred was less emphatic in her expressions of regard for Kate than she

had been to me, and her composure gave Kate an opportunity to recover her self-possession.

Miss Eldred asked me on what day and at what hour we would be disengaged, that she and her hostess might give themselves the pleasure of paying their respects. A time was fixed, and we passed a pleasant quarter of an hour together—the limit of conversation at a Washington reception. We accepted an invitation to luncheon the next day, as our absence from home was too limited to permit of arranging a formal dinner for us. If I had not detected an ulterior motive in this invitation, I should have made one woman's social burdens less by declining to be her guest even for this midday bread-breaking. Do not think, my dear niece, that I have forgotten that it is as gracious to receive as to give hospitality; but the social burdens of the American capital are beyond weighing, and while good form bade me accept a courtesy from this strange hostess, an equally excellent and even kinder form would have allowed me to decline. Mr. Eldred had excused himself, although as this was an informal luncheon he might very properly have been present. At a strictly formal luncheon ladies only sit at table in Washington or elsewhere.

What our hostess or Miss Eldred may have written to Mr. Eldred's mother that evening, I do not know, but if it was a description of Kate and her manners, her toilette and her conversation, it could have contained only praise. She was all that I could desire—dignified, gracious and graceful.

The second day after the luncheon I received a note from Mr. Eldred's widowed mother, asking us to make her a visit while *en route* for New York and to leave my

guest with her for an indefinite time, should she be willing to give an infirm woman that much gratification. She wrote that she was not unacquainted with Kate through her son and also through a late letter from her daughter. She added that the young lady could do no kinder deed than to permit a mother to express pleasure in such society as gratified her children. This sentence it was that won Kate's heart. Of course, had she been a *fiancée* of Mr. Eldred, *les convenances* would have compelled the mother to invite her to make a visit, but the delicacy of this request was, as she afterward said to me, one more of many needed lessons in fine manners and perfect formalities.

I accepted for Kate, and as was proper, she added a note of thanks, saying that after a week or so she would be glad to pass a few days with Mrs. Eldred. She also inquired the exact time when it would be agreeable to receive her.

This was Kate's first visit since she had been with us, and I could not but compare this graceful note with the rude and almost boisterous manner in which she had heralded her coming to our home. About this visit to the mother and sisters of the man whom Kate most regarded, I will tell you in another letter.

AUNTIE.

THIRTY-FIFTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

In my last letter I promised to give you some account of what we have been doing and seeing here; but there is so much to relate that I scarcely know just where to begin. Soon after our arrival we found there were a number of Americans stopping at our hotel, some of whom were known to father and his friends; so that we all became acquainted with slight ceremony and have formed quite a merry party. Among our new friends were two ladies, mother and daughter, from New York, who have been especially kind in their attentions to me, and we have really grown quite intimate. As they have visited Paris frequently they are thoroughly well acquainted with the city and its ways, and have introduced me to some very nice people. There is an exquisite refinement about these Parisians that, I think, is to be found in the actions and manners of no other people in the world. Their simplest salutations are like caresses, and their address always flattering, always graceful, yet withal ceremonious to a degree.

As you know Paris, my dear aunt, I will not weary you with descriptions of the places we have visited, although tempted to do so. We have seen, I think, almost every-

thing of interest—Napoleon's tomb and the principal churches, the National Library, the museums, the Jardin des Plantes, Père la Chaise, Versailles, the Louvre, the Luxembourg, and the Palais Royal; and we have taken almost daily drives through the Champs Elysees to the Bois. I have done a great amount of shopping and have secured some fine bits of bric-à-brac, jewelry and lace.

The other day I took my first ride on top of an omnibus and enjoyed the novelty very much. It seemed so strange to be compelled to go to a station or *bureau*, as it is called, before we could get on or off instead of stopping anywhere we wished. However, I think this system of purchasing tickets for one's destination and securing seats according to the numbers on the tickets has much in its favor, for you are certain to ride in comfort, no overcrowding being permitted.

We have seen about everything worth seeing in the theatres, which, by-the-way, seem very poorly ventilated. To see Bernhardt, Coquelin and Hading on their native heath, as it were, has been a great treat to me. I have improved much in my French, in which, especially as to accent, I needed considerable correction, and can now speak with some pleasure to myself and to those about me.

Now let me thank you for your last very kind letter, which gave me much information and advice that will be of lasting advantage to me. The story of Kate's life grows more and more interesting with each chapter, and I await with anything but patience the arrival of the next. By-the-bye, if it will not encroach too much upon the interesting story you are now relating, will you kindly give me some advice in your next letter about writing

letters and notes to mere acquaintances. I have had but little need for such correspondence as yet, but have had so many requests to continue certain acquaintanceships, that a knowledge of the etiquette of such writing is, I fancy, to be desired.

Our stay in Paris is drawing to a close, although we have not decided where to go next. Father's health is so much improved that he is now restless and eager to get home.

Your Loving

NIECE.

THIRTY-SIXTH LETTER.

PREPARATIONS FOR A VISIT.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

I wish particularly to call your attention to the note of invitation which Kate received from Mrs. Eldred, for I consider it a model of tact and consideration, and at the same time a good text for a short sermon on the forms of polite society. Owing to the peculiar circumstances of the case, the least suggestion of distance or coldness on the part of Mrs. Eldred would have prompted a courteous refusal from Kate. This condition was very gracefully avoided by omitting the customary formal invitation in the third person and writing instead a cordial, friendly note. She thus delicately intimated that she already felt on terms of intimacy with her prospective guest and included her in the circle of her special friends.

Of course, there are cases in which the third person should be used in addressing an intimate friend, as, for instance, when others are included in the invitation whom one knows not so well. In such cases good form insists that all be placed upon the same plane of civility, which renders the use of the third person obligatory. One does not often, however, request an extended visit from a

mere acquaintance, so such invitations will usually be something like Mrs. Eldred's to Kate, which read as follows :

“ MY DEAR MISS BLANK :—

“ Thank you for considering my wish to see you under my own roof, where I am sure we shall become good friends. If it suits your convenience I shall be pleased to meet you at the railway station on Wednesday, April 5th. Pray inform me upon what train you will arrive, and if you can, I beg you to arrange to stay with us at least ten days. My daughter has told me many pleasant things of you. Until the above date I shall be in pleasant anticipation of your arrival.

“ Cordially yours,

“ ANNA LOUISE ELDRED.”

The full name is signed to all friendly letters, while initials are used in business communications. If the writer is unknown to her correspondent she should prefix to her initials “ (Mrs.) ” or “ (Miss), ” as the case may be. In writing to a domestic or a social inferior, however, the brackets may be omitted, and in the case of a married woman the initials will be those of her husband ; these, too, may be omitted, if preferred, and the signature be simply “ Mrs. Brown. ”

The number and street of Mrs. Eldred's residence, and also the date, were written at the top of the paper, and the envelope was sealed with wax and stamped with the family motto. It was clearly superscribed, Kate's name being written just above the center of the envelope, with “ To ” over the beginning of it. Had the letter been directed to a hotel, “ For ” would have been substituted for “ To. ” In the lower left-hand corner of the envelope Mrs. Eldred's initials, A. L. E., were written. This

fashion of an outer semi-signature was in use even at that date, although then, as now, it was adopted only by those who were fastidiously correct. The form, however, deserves to become general, for it is not only convenient but significant. In the case of a woman writing to a man, whoever looks over his incoming letters is delicately informed that his correspondent makes no secret of addressing him by pen. Moreover, as initials are inscribed only on the wrappers of friendly notes and letters, they are regarded by secretaries and clerks with the same respect that is shown when "personal" is written in the upper left corner. The latter formality is not a pleasant one for an open-minded woman to observe when writing to a man acquaintance, and it is but fair to suppose that men sometimes dislike to receive notes the secret nature of whose contents is so conspicuously announced. Another reason given for this pretty and frank custom of placing one's initials on the envelope, is that if one has an extended correspondence a glance will determine which letters should receive earliest attention.

Much interest has been manifested of late in the matter of personal mottoes or legends for sealing letters. When a crest has been in the possession of the family for generations it can be used in this way, even in democratic America, without being deemed ostentatious. A selected motto, however, expressing the character, the spirit or the purpose of its possessor is usually the most satisfactory. Kate gave considerable study to the subject of seals, and later on her letters all bore the impress "*Surgo ut prossim*" (I rise to do good).

Reverting to the repeated invitation of Mrs. Eldred, I must tell you that its sentiment and its delicate courtesy

were never forgotten by Kate, and in one way or another it has prompted many a gracious act on her part. To Mrs. Eldred she replied at once, mentioning the hour when the train would arrive. She thanked her hostess for considering her safety and comfort, but said she could easily make her way by a livery carriage to Mrs. Eldred's residence in case it should not be perfectly convenient for her hostess to meet her. Had there been need for it, John or I would have gone with Kate or have sent an attendant, but the journey was only of a few hours' duration, and there were no changes to be made *en route*.

Kate took with her a dancing and a dinner toilette, because her visit was to extend until a few days after Easter. She also had her riding-habit. Her travelling dress was to serve for the promenade and for a visiting costume. Her cashmere breakfast-robe would now be called a tea-gown, though it was less elaborate than many recent styles in these garments and at that time was not worn after midday.

I have frequently heard young women and even matrons say, when unable to compass a wardrobe that would do honor to a friend's hospitality, "If she cares more for my clothes than for my company, I prefer to remain at home;" or, "If I am not better than fashionable toilettes can make me, she should not have invited me." There are two sides from which to view this matter, but the spirit of each should be alike generous and considerate. If you are invited to spend a few days or weeks under the roof of an acquaintance, self-respect and respect for your entertainer should take counsel together before you accept or decline the courtesy.

Doubtless your prospective hostess is quite aware of your inability to array yourself in handsome gowns, and if she be not there is no reason for blushing should you decline her invitation and add the true reason for it. You would only feel discomfort as a guest in a house with the elegance of which your appearance would not agree. I would not encourage excesses of fashion or a superfluity of toilettes, but certainly shabby dresses, soiled ribbons, worn shoes and old-fashioned bonnets are quite as undesirable.

If circumstances deny you the possession of fitting attire you have always the liberty of declining an invitation. Should your would-be hostess delicately suggest that she is aware you are without the appointments of a perfect visiting wardrobe but that she desires your company arrayed as you find it convenient, there is still an opportunity for reconsidering your refusal. If a girl is musical or exceptionally pretty, or if she has conversational charms, she requires far less personal adornment to make her a presentable guest than if she were unattractive in these respects. You will do well, therefore, my dear niece, if ever you are in such a predicament, to make a calm estimate of your personal attractions before giving your final decision.

Kate, as you know by this time, was not an accomplished girl, but she was handsome and a ready conversationalist. The most charming of her recent acquirements was her low, distinct and perfectly modulated voice. She had avoided the extremes of carelessness and affectation of speech, and I am sure this was one thing that led Mr. Richard Eldred to admire a girl who less than a year ago laughed and talked in a high alto, flattened her

vowels, chopped her g's and shifted her r's from their proper place. "Voices tell the story of character and breeding, when faces and raiment are misleading," a student of human nature wrote to his daughter. He added, "The physiognomist, the phrenologist, and the palmist have eyes, but my ears never have deceived me. The voice may be only a cultivated one and wholly a work of social art, but the spirit that prompted its possessor to make herself agreeable to those about her is the same inspiration that creates a beautiful something which we call 'loving-kindness.'"

How many girls, my dear niece, misrepresent themselves to everybody and blight their own opportunities for social advancement by a carelessness of speech which suggests a want of education and of natural intelligence. To gain due credit for being educated one's education must be accentuated by culture. Education and cultivation are by no means the same. "One is the sowing, and the other is the harvesting of knowledge," said Kate, after she had worked out in her own life the distinction.

By telling you this girl's story I am trying to show you how it is that the uninstructed girl often makes blunders that prove fatal to her happiness, when, had she improved every opportunity of self-help, her life would have had many more sunny days. Remember that not even the least of those habits or acquirements that make a young girl more graceful and interesting is without its fruit. It may not be observed to-day or to-morrow, but in the perfecting of character the value of each small accessory is appreciated. Graces of speech and manner are the essence of social etiquette.

These observations about invitations and toilettes and other matters have already filled my letter, and I must leave an account of Kate's visit to Mrs. Eldred, with its pleasant formalities, until my next.

AUNTIE.

THIRTY-SEVENTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

Since I wrote you last we have visited Brussels—Little Paris, as it is frequently called—and from there came on to Antwerp, where we now are. At Brussels we stopped at the Grand Hotel Britannique, which is prettily situated near the royal palace, the park and the boulevards. English and American tourists largely frequent this hotel, and we met there some of our Frankfort acquaintances, which proved a very agreeable surprise; and as they had spent some time in Brussels, they were of assistance to us in many ways. I regretted much that we could not remain in Brussels longer, but you see we must make the best of the short time now left us if we would visit the several other towns we have planned to see before we start for home.

On leaving Brussels we came at once to Antwerp, a journey of only twenty-seven miles. The old part of the city is most interesting, and the queer, old-fashioned architecture which prevails contrasts strangely with the costly modern structures of the new city. One of the chief attractions is the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which has a spire over four hundred feet high, and in it are the four celebrated paintings by Rubens, the

“Descent from the Cross,” “The Elevation of the Cross,” “The Assumption of the Holy Virgin” and “The Resurrection.” To have seen these pictures alone, would I think have satisfied me for my trip to Europe.

I must tell you of a singular coincidence which befell me not long since. You, perhaps, remember my mentioning in one of my recent letters that we met at our hotel in Paris an American lady and her daughter with whom we became very friendly. I soon found that the daughter was engaged to be married, and I told her of my betrothal; but it so happened that neither of us mentioned the name of her *fiancé*. In our correspondence since our parting, however, we have had occasion to speak of them by name, and we were at first not a little puzzled to find that both men had the same name. On further investigation we find the gentlemen are cousins. We were both, I am ashamed to say, considerably annoyed at the circumstance until the mystery was finally unravelled by my friend's *fiancé* arriving in Paris and affording the needful explanation. I wrote to Harry about it, not, however, until all doubt had been removed; and I was fully punished for my want of faith by the evident distress which my doubts caused him.

However, everything is now fully understood; and I am beginning to look for another letter from you, which you promised should contain an account of Kate's visit to Mrs. Eldred. My new friends, who are soon to be connections by marriage, are very desirous of having the two weddings take place at the same time and in the same place, but I do not yet know whether such an arrange-

ment would be what I should wish. I think I will leave it for future consideration.

Your Loving

NIECE.

THIRTY-EIGHTH LETTER.

VISITS OF LENGTH.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

As I told you, Kate carried with her to Mrs. Eldred's such toilettes as she would be likely to require for a dinner, a dance and a drive. A girl's visit is often spoiled by her thoughtless omission of garments she may need, although, as the disappointment is chiefly her own, it is not so discourteous as to bring an excess of luggage, or to be ostentatious in the variety of one's toilettes. If a young girl is accustomed to a maid, her hostess should include her in the invitation, or else mention that her accommodations are so limited that she must ask her guests to come unattended, and to accept the services of one of her people. If the hostess is unaware that her guest is used to attendance, it is proper to mention the fact in the note of acceptance. Most girls; however, nowadays can, if necessary, get along without assistance of this kind.

A girl who is to make a visit or take a long journey should carry in a compact form her toilet articles, such as brushes, combs, hair-pins, sleeping nets, manicure instruments, a sponge in an oil-silk pocket, liquid blacking,

glove and shoe buttoners, cologne, and such simple cosmetics as sun and wind burns demand. She should also have a box or bag containing needles, thimble, scissors, buttons, linen threads and silks for mending gowns and gloves. A handy little box fastened with a leather strap may now be purchased; it is called a "going-away box" and contains many convenient articles in a small space. But this had not been invented in Kate's time, so she was obliged to arrange a substitute. While a hostess is pleased to lend her guest whatever she may require, it only adds to her cares, and she should be bothered as little as possible. A tag with one's full name and the destination plainly written or printed upon it should be placed on the trunk; the owner's own initials or her surname is usually painted upon a trunk as an additional precaution against loss. Kate carried a travelling bag, an umbrella and a wrap.

She was met at the station by the daughter of her hostess, who saw that her baggage was cared for. The hostess seldom goes to a train in person to meet a guest. From her invitation Kate had inferred that Mrs. Eldred would come in person, but after a little reflection she saw that it would have been undignified for a matron to meet a young girl at a railway station, provided another member of her family was available. Had this been Kate's second visit, it would have been proper if only the carriage had been sent for her. An older woman, familiar with the route, would not expect even this, but would engage a conveyance of her own. In the country, however, where public conveyances are not always in waiting, some provision on the part of the host is expected.

At the door of the house Kate was met by Mrs. El-

dred, who welcomed her with a smile and kindly inquiries. She was then conducted to a reception-room, where she threw off her outer wraps and was at once served with a cup of tea. By this time her trunks had been placed in her room and the straps unbuckled. A daughter of the house then led the way to the room assigned, carrying Kate's wraps. Had the guest been a matron, or had there been no younger person to attend her, the hostess would have performed this service.

In houses where there are many guests and the hour of arrival is a time for many engagements, a guest is shown at once to her room by an attendant, and a cup of tea brought to her there; after dressing, the hostess will be found in the drawing-room. This style of receiving visitors, however, is only practised in very large establishments.

In her room Kate was requested to make herself entirely at home, and to ask for whatever she required for her comfort, and also for assistance should she need it. She was told the dinner, breakfast and luncheon hours, and that she would be awakened in time for dressing in the morning. Then she was left alone to remove her bonnet and open her trunk at her leisure. It is not well to remain long in a guest's room after a journey. She requires freedom from social restraints and an opportunity for composing her mind, and for arranging those of her belongings which will at once be required.

Kate had already been instructed in the importance of punctuality at dinner, and she was dressed and in the parlor a half hour before it was announced. Had she been down five minutes before the hour it would have been sufficient, but, as I told you in a former letter, this

five minutes before dinner is *de rigueur* with a guest. Her half hour was devoted to her hostess, and it proved a charming one. Girls make a great mistake when they neglect an opportunity of conversing with a cultivated elderly woman; besides, to give a secondary place to a hostess is decidedly indelicate.

Mr. Eldred placed Kate at his right that evening at table, and also afterwards, provided there were no other guests present; should other ladies arrive, this place of honor is given to the latest comer. Such ceremonials seem exacting, but they almost arrange themselves after one is familiar with them. Not one escaped Kate's notice; they confirmed the lessons she had learned while with us, and convinced her that good form is the same everywhere.

Mrs. Eldred, as became a hostess, inquired if there were persons, objects or places in the neighborhood of special interest to her, adding that it would be a real pleasure to them to make her visit as useful as she hoped it would be agreeable. Kate replied that she had a schoolfellow whom she would like to call upon, and there was one young man, a friend of her father, whom it would be uncivil not to acquaint with her presence in town. Mrs. Eldred at once proposed that both her friends be invited to dine with them, whenever it suited her guest. Kate expressed her gratitude and wisely added: "You can understand, dear Mrs. Eldred, that being aware of my own meagre opportunities for learning the ways of city life before my visit to my cousins, I am unwilling to subject my old friends to the chances of blundering which fell in my way. There was a time when we all needed much instructing, polishing and toning. If I may, I will

call upon my school friend and send my card with yours to the young man."

"You are a considerate girl, and there are too few such," replied her hostess, with a smile of approval.

"I thank you, Mrs. Eldred, but I was not always thoughtful, nor am I now; but I wish to be kind. Pray do not permit my presence to interrupt your ordinary routine of life; I should be sorry to know you were planning to entertain me. I came to see you and to enjoy your home, and I require nothing else to make me happy."

Mr. Richard Eldred was reserved but attentive while Kate was his mother's guest, and he carefully abstained from voicing his admiration of her. Delicacy forbade him to speak of his regard while she was where she could not feel at liberty to refuse his attentions. He proffered his services, brought her flowers, asked her to ride and to drive, etc., but always with his mother or one of his sisters. Whatever was arranged for her that Kate felt certain was not out of the order of their customary enjoyments, she was at once enthusiastic about; but such suggestions for her pleasure as were elaborate or expensive she protested against, though in some matters she was obliged to permit her new friends to have their way.

Near the close of her visit Mr. Eldred announced that he was compelled to go to the metropolis, but should be absent but a very brief time. He mentioned that he should call upon us and would carry any message Kate should send. He did not tell her, however, that he wished to consult us regarding his hope of winning Kate for his wife, and to inquire about the most satisfactory method

of seeking her father's approval; but such, in fact, was his errand.

Kate made her first serious social blunder during her absence from us by sealing the letter she sent us by Mr. Eldred. To close a letter sent by a friend hints that the bearer otherwise might read its contents, and is, of course, an insult. Mr. Eldred, if he observed it—and he must have done so, because Kate's seal was a large one—doubtless knew that Kate meant no offence, and he probably suspected that she had not been taught the strict etiquette of letter-writing. If a letter is sent by a messenger or by one who is below yourself in position, it may quite properly be sealed. Kate blushed when the subject of closed letters was casually mentioned one afternoon, and she afterwards told me that she recalled her own mistake, and resolved that it should not occur again.

Kate was asked to prolong her visit at the end of the ten days for which she had been invited, but good taste prevailed, and she left her new friends with regret, and while they still desired her presence. It is a dangerous experiment to outstay the time for which one is invited. The invitation to remain longer is always extended, if only as a matter of form, and though it may be sincere, it is usually wise to decline. Mrs. Eldred did not press Kate to remain, believing that it is as kind to speed the parting guest as to welcome the coming one. Before her departure Kate gave a fee to the maid who had attended to her room, and also to the table waiter, taking care, however, to do this unobserved by the family.

Mr. Eldred and his sister saw Kate safely seated in the railway coach with a dainty luncheon in a box prepared by her hostess—a little attention that is customary for a

lady who is travelling alone. He asked Kate if he might give himself the pleasure of calling upon her at an early date, and his sister claimed an immediate report of her safe arrival home, both of which requests were granted as a matter of course. The morning after Kate's arrival at our home, she wrote a letter of thanks to Mrs. Eldred for her many kindnesses, with pleasant remembrances to each member of her household. The writing of such a letter is *de rigueur*, and it must always be sent to the hostess herself. It requires no answer, although the daughter of the hostess may reply when the late guest is a young girl. If the hostess has been especially kind, it is a pretty and an almost universal custom in these days for a youthful visitor to send her, within the year, some trifle made by her own hands. One of the reasons for this custom is that it is a graceful apology on the part of a young girl for her inability to return the hospitality of her elders.

AUNTIE.

THIRTY-NINTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

Since my last letter to you we have been travelling through Holland, which, with its uniform surface, the peculiar network of canals with which it is intersected in every direction, and the rich green fields affording pasturage to numerous herds of fine cattle, presents an appearance so strangely different from that of any other country we have visited. The peasant women dress rather picturesquely, but nearly all of them are clad alike, in black and white. They wear high white caps and a great deal of jewelry, especially odd-looking "ear-covers" of gold or silver, which extend out on their cheeks, giving them a singular appearance.

Our first visit was to Rotterdam, which is called "the most beautiful commercial city in Europe," and the title is well deserved; for the city has magnificent docks, great basins and numerous bridges, and the rivers are crowded with steamers and sailing crafts, while everywhere, even among the warehouses along the river banks, grow huge trees that brighten with their foliage the otherwise sombre colors of the town.

Being informed at our hotel that a good view of the city could be obtained from the tower of the Church of

St. Lawrence or, as it is called in Rotterdam, the "Groote Kerk" (Great Church), we mounted a winding staircase of over three hundred steps to the top of the tower and were amply repaid for the exertion by the panorama that met our view. The tower is a remarkable looking structure, but the church itself is not in the least imposing; the interior especially would be rather bare and unattractive but for the number of marble slabs which mark the resting-places of celebrated Dutch admirals. The Groote Kerk possesses a magnificent organ, said to have about five thousand pipes, some of which are gigantic; and we had the pleasure of hearing some excellent music performed upon it.

In going to the docks we passed within sight and hearing of the large catch-basins, which are constantly opening and closing. Here we saw ocean steamers in every possible position, crowded about by all sorts of craft; and the shrill whistles of the railroad locomotives and tug boats, the clanging of bells on the steamers and the hum of work on the wharves combine in a cheerful confusion that would stir the most lethargic nature into activity.

Returning from the docks along the Willemsplain—one of the chief thoroughfares—we visited two neighboring institutions, the Seemann's Huis (Sailor's House), and the building of the Royal Netherland Yachting Club, in which we saw the museum belonging to the club and their valuable collection of instruments, books, pictures and everything of note that has been discovered in maritime science during the past several hundred years. A short walk brought us to the beautifully laid out park, in which are pretty lakes and pavilions and a statue of the poet Tollens.

This city, by the way, contains fewer statues than any other place we have yet visited. Beside the statue just referred to there is a monument erected to the memory of Count Hogendorp, who lived a number of years in America, and a bronze statue of Gerrit Geritzs, better known as "Erasmus of Rotterdam," whom the citizens are proud to speak of as a fellow-citizen. The Erasmus statue is in the Great Market, which is in reality a bridge crossing one of the canals, its name being due to the fact that upon the bridge is daily held a regular market at which all sorts of edibles are sold. We also visited the Botanical Gardens, the Archives and the Zoölogical Gardens; but we were especially delighted with the Boymans Museum, where we saw some of the master works of Rembrandt, Jacob Ruisdael, Eckhout, the two Van der Veldes, Bol, Hals, and other celebrated painters.

Leaving Rotterdam we went directly to Amsterdam, and of this city we obtained a good view from the Hoogsluis, the largest bridge in the place. Like Rotterdam Amsterdam is divided in every direction by canals, which we were told, are crossed by three hundred bridges. The National Museum, called Trippenhuis, and the Crystal Palace, where concerts are given day and evening, were the only places we visited, for our stay was very brief.

From Amsterdam we set out for a short tour to Switzerland, where we are now. I will give you some account of our travels in this interesting country in my next, as I wish to hurry this letter off that I may the sooner receive one from you in return regarding the ripening intimacy between Kate and Mr. Eldred, and how it terminated—in their happy marriage, I hope.

Your description of Mr. Eldred is so charming that I wish you would give me a detailed description of his bearing and behavior as the intended husband of our dear Kate.

Your loving

NIECE.

FORTIETH LETTER.

VISITS OF LENGTH.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

I need hardly tell you that Kate was very happy during her engagement with Mr. Eldred; and after its announcement early in the summer she went to her father, very properly preferring that the marriage should take place at his house. Of course, it would have been more agreeable both to us and to her had she arranged to have the wedding upon this side of the continent, especially as here was to be her future home. Kate did not, however, for a moment contemplate either evading her obligations to her parent or disregarding aught of the strict etiquette of a ceremonious wedding.

Unusual indeed must be the circumstances that would warrant a girl in choosing any other place than her own immediate home for the performance of this sacred rite; and any eccentricity on her part regarding the mode, time or place of performing the ceremony is very apt to deprive the occasion of much of its proper solemnity. Of course, we were all loth to lose her so soon; but we knew she was acting properly, when, having arranged for her *trousseau*, she immediately joined her father, and

spent with him the last days of her girlhood. Some girls would have thought only of the fact that such a course would deprive them for a time of a lover's society and would have gratified their own inclinations; but in this case etiquette and duty both demanded the same thing—a generous consideration of the feelings of others.

To be sure, circumstances may be such that this rule cannot be always followed, in which case custom gracefully yields. Impulsive girls are too apt to forget that in pleasing themselves they are often grieving their parents by discourtesies which they afterward remember only with unavailing regrets. Unselfishness brings long afterwards much pleasure in the sweet memory a daughter has of the kindly acts she has performed for those she left at home on her wedding-day. No one so fully realizes how precious such recollections are as the daughter who remembers too late many a filial duty unperformed.

It was during the two months intervening between Kate's visit to Mrs. Eldred and her departure for her Western home that she saw much of the man she was to marry, and realized from seeing him both in and out of society, that his finely polished manner and courtly habits detracted nothing from his manliness of speech or strength of character. What we call good and bad breeding are merely the result of training and self-discipline, or the lack of them. If a child is cured of some awkward bodily habit by much discipline no one would for an instant say the reformation had made him unmanly; and no more can it be said of mental discipline.

There is unfortunately a mistaken idea with some that

a man to whom graceful courtesies are habitual must be wanting in strong mental qualities if he unfailingly practises the elegancies. Do not, my dear niece, make this ungenerous error; for the man who from childhood has been trained to a perfect observance of the rules of etiquette would find it more difficult to perform an ungraceful act naturally than an untrained person would to act the part of a courtly gentleman. Good manners to one perfectly familiar with their rules are like the music of a graceful dance to a proficient dancer; they lead one unconsciously to the proper performance of every pleasant duty of social life.

Should you ever have the training of sons and daughters, be careful how you teach them to despise the proper rules of dress, or to consider that courteous speech and graceful manner betoken only weakness of character or insincerity of heart.

Kate noticed many apparently trifling things in the deportment of her *fiancé* which had hitherto escaped her notice in other men. When another caller entered the room he arose and remained standing until the new arrival was seated; he also stood when the guest departed, provided he did not end his call first, which, of course, he always had done when visiting her previous to the public announcement of their engagement. After that it was his privilege to remain after the departure of the last guest. She also noticed that he showed no displeasure or annoyance when she was unable in company to show him special attention; that he did not ask her to wear an engagement ring until their betrothal had been made public; and that he consulted her preference in selecting the gem for this ring. She saw, also, that he

wrote to his intimate friends announcing his betrothal, and that all his friends promptly sent congratulatory notes that included kind messages to herself. This announcement was made to his friends before their engagement was made known to mere acquaintances.

When they appeared together on the street they were always accompanied by his sister, who was visiting us, or by myself or some other friend. Kate observed that he never walked between the two ladies, but on the outside, unless it were after dark, or he were taking them through a crowd, in which case he offered each an arm; and she learned that a woman never takes a man's arm in the day-time unless she really requires assistance.

If, while walking with ladies, he passed an acquaintance of his own, or any one who bowed to the ladies of his party, he always lifted his hat with the hand that was farthest from the ladies he was accompanying; and Kate incidentally observed that when he was not attending other ladies and met one with whom he desired to speak and shake hands, he raised his hat with the left hand and gave the lady his right at the same time, but never loitered to talk with her, asking her permission, instead, to go a short distance with her while conversing. Of course, if the communication was of importance it could not properly be made on the street—a gentleman would call or write. Only to women are street conversations allowable, for the reason that it is not the proper thing for them to call upon gentlemen.

About this time Mr. Eldred sent flowers to a young lady whose engagement had just been announced to him by a note from herself; and as he had often been a guest at her father's house this recognition of her regard

for his friendship was good form. Her note was brief, but to the purpose. She wrote :

" My dear Mr. Eldred :

" I am sure you will join my other friends in warm wishes for my happiness when you know that at no distant day I expect to be married to (or to marry) Mr. Charles Eliot Blank.

" Sincerely yours,

" ADELAIDE KIPP BROOKS."

The writer's address was engraved at the top of her note paper, and though her words were well chosen she might have used any other language that conveyed her meaning. Some people use the recent form "to marry," as expressing equality, in preference to the old style "to be married"; but I always prefer the time-honored expressions when serious matters are concerned. There was no reason in this case why Mr. Eldred should not have expressed his congratulations in person, but this method is less often selected by men who are themselves engaged. Sending a note with the flowers is an old and pretty custom, whether the sender be a friend of the man or of the woman who is to be married.

Kate discovered that unless a betrothal is personally announced, it cannot with propriety be recognized as a fact, except the announcement be made by an incidental verbal congratulation; and it cannot be mentioned, even in this informal way, until it has been publicly announced. It is also bad form to make inquiries of the family of either party regarding an engagement. If it is voluntarily mentioned by one who is nearly related to either, of course one should express interest in the young people

and in their future, but curiosity on the subject is vulgar; and jesting with the betrothed about their engagement is in especially bad taste—almost as bad as to mention the cost of an engagement ring or speculate with its possessor on its value.

When Mr. Eldred called to pass an evening with Kate, she noticed that he left his hat and overcoat in the hall, but during a brief call he always carried his hat and wore his overcoat unbuttoned. He sent in his name instead of his card after the servant knew his face and could announce him by name; and he invariably asked to see the ladies, although since their engagement I seldom went to the parlor at such times, as I knew Mr. Eldred did not expect to see me, merely asking for me as a matter of form and leaving a friendly message for me on departing. Good manners required such attention from him to the hostess of his *fiancée*.

Mr. Eldred was attentive to elderly women and even to children, and was deferential to men older than himself. He talked neither politics nor religious dogmas with strangers or at table. He did not discuss a subject with one person in the presence of others who knew nothing about it, unless he was at liberty to explain it to all; he did not speak of himself or of his doings unless questioned, or unless the matter was of general interest; and he avoided personalities of all kinds.

A polished gentleman is neither prolix nor curt in his descriptions or his explanations. If he has apologies to make they are brief, dignified and to the purpose, and his excuses neither blame himself to the point of humiliation nor accuse another of being at fault.

Now, do not imagine, my dear niece, that Mr. Eldred

must have been an extraordinary being, because by so doing you would suggest your disbelief in the higher possibilities of self-discipline. If you look about amongst your own acquaintances, doubtless you will discover several men whose manners and dignity are so elegant but so quiet that you hitherto accepted them as a matter of course, just as you have their height or their appearance. We would quickly notice a rudeness or criticise a mistake, when well-bred, easy carriage would pass unnoticed, unless, indeed, contrasted with flagrant ill-breeding.

I will not tell you of Kate's wedding, at which your uncle and myself were present. Although many of the pretty observances that we are used to in the East were wanting, still you must remember that in those days life in the Western States made such heavy demands on the time and energies of the people that they had little of either to devote to the practice of *les convenances*. Kate's friends were not lacking in true kindness and love for her, though some were inclined to resent the innovations she introduced at her wedding, but which they have all since learned to hold at their true value.

The home-coming of the newly married pair was not unlike that of John and myself, although their larger financial resources made their entertainments somewhat more sumptuous; but neither of them desired to be ostentatious, and this fact suggests that often it is not from a vulgar desire for display but because of the over-abundant wealth so often possessed in our Western world that the habit of excessive money spending has fixed itself upon many persons. Of course, personal vanity has something to do with it, but not always, as is proven by the quick

change that often takes place in the lives of those, who, having attained wealth, begin to look for a better state where nobility of character and high mental attainments are more sought than even riches.

AUNTIE.

FORTY-FIRST LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

Of the grandeur of the scenery of Switzerland I have heard and read much, but the most vivid imagination could scarce approach the reality. We chose a rather circuitous route to Zurich, as we wished to make short visits to several important places on the way, among them being Utrecht, Aix-la-Chapelle, Baden-Baden, Heidelberg, Stuttgart and Munich. At Munich we visited the library, the English Garden, the Botanical Gardens, the colossal statue of Bavaria, and the wonderful Glyptothek and Pinakothek, where are exhibited many admirable specimens of the works of renowned sculptors and painters from the earliest ages to the present time. The colossal statue of Donatello in the hall of modern statuary brought Hawthorne's beautiful tale of "The Marble Faun" most vividly to my mind. I regretted much that we could only make a short stay in Munich, for I found the place most interesting.

But to return to Switzerland. Zurich is most delightfully situated on a lake, in full view of the Rigi Mountains. We made a tour of the lake both by land and by water, and I really think it is one of the most beautiful pieces of water I have ever seen.

From Zurich we went to Lucerne, where we saw the two famous covered bridges over the Reuss River, with their historic paintings. There are so many places of interest in and around this old town that we were obliged to miss many of them on account of our limited time ; but we did visit the Glacier garden, the Wasser Thurm (Water Tower), the old Roman Watch Tower, and one of Thorwaldsen's masterpieces—the Lion Monument. To obtain a good view of the lake our guide took us to the stone bulwark of the Schweizerhof Quay, the walls of which are washed by the waves of the lake. On our right we saw Mount Pilatus with its zigzag top, on the left the lofty Rigi, and almost opposite the famous villa Tribschen, once the summer residence of Richard Wagner.

On leaving Lucerne we went to Interlaken. This trip was really the most delightful of all. We joined a party who were going the same way ; so instead of taking the regular tourist route by the Brunig Pass, we went by the way of the Jochen Pass, and Engstlenalp to Meiringen. We crossed the lake and took a carriage, or rather a sort of omnibus, called *eilwagen*, for Engelberg. For a couple of hours our road lay through forests of monster nut trees, which shut off all view of anything beyond the limits of the path, save an occasional glimpse of the blue sky through the overarching boughs of the trees. Once in a while, too, an opening in the forest permitted a view of the lake or of the snow-capped Titlis. At Staus we stopped long enough to visit the Winkelried Monument and a church with immense pillars of black marble. Resuming our journey, we passed through a romantic valley and on to the beautiful village of Wolfenschiessen,

which Schiller has rendered immortal by his "William Tell." The roads are very good along the mountain passes, and travelling is consequently quite safe. Our ride took us through a dark, cool forest; on one side rose the immense wall of mountains, and on the other rushed the river Aar, while across the ravine might be seen the tops of the Schwarzhorn, Tannenfluh and Graustock. Then we came to a turn called the Bûhel, where the scenery is truly awful in its grandeur. In every direction the huge mountains of snow seem to touch the sky, the vast glaciers glitter in the sun, while far below lies the peaceful little Alps village of Engelberg and the great Benediktinerabtei, or Monastery of the Benedictines.

Engelberg seems a little world by itself, so hemmed in is it by the mountains; it is a very popular summer resort, and from it excursions are made to the neighboring glaciers and mountains. With a guide we climbed to the Gerschni and then ascended the Monk's Wall; it was a hard climb, but we were amply repaid by the magnificent prospect.

Our next journey took us to Lake Geneva. We made a delightful tour of the lake, and visited the famous Chateau de Chillon, immortalized by Rousseau in his "La Nouvelle Heloise," and we also saw Byron's little "Isle of Three Trees," which is assuredly a most diminutive bit of land.

Well, I think I have given you enough of description for one letter, so I will bring it to a close. I have been delighted, I assure you, with the story of Kate's wedding, and all that preceded it, and I only regret that the narrative is ended. By-the-bye, you have not written me for

some time regarding Helen. I should like to know if her romance was as interesting as Kate's. Will you tell me about her in your next letter?

Your loving

NIECE.

FORTY-SECOND LETTER.

IN THE COUNTRY.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

I am not surprised that you are anxious to hear from me concerning dear Helen, and, but that I desired you to have the benefit of an unbroken narration of Kate's gradual acquirement of a higher refinement, I should have turned back to tell you of Helen, whose very nature rendered her incapable of being as brusque, as inconsiderate and as hoydenish as was Kate when first she came to us. Few of us are ready to make sufficient allowance for those who are born into unrefined surroundings, but who possess every means of self-indulgence; whose circumstances seldom or never call upon them to make personal sacrifices, and who, when they give, do so lavishly and impulsively out of an abundance so large that the bestowals are scarcely missed.

Such people are truly deserving of our charity, for they acquire a reputation for generosity when their bounties are simply momentary impulses, which cost them no deprivation or effort and yield them none of those rewards which self-sacrifice, wisely and worthily made, brings by enriching the character. These people are

rather to be pitied, because they have never experienced the true joy of sharing the sweetness of genuine sympathy. When Kate learned the better way she was quick to practise it, as doubtless would many another whom we sometimes inconsiderately condemn.

Helen's life had always been one of practical helpfulness and generosity, and when she was unable to give of her possessions, she bestowed of her kindness. She shared what she possessed with her brothers and sisters, and also with those whom she called her friends. Economies, most elevating in their effects—because sacrifice for those dear to her was a pleasure—had become habitual with her. Her deft fingers could turn and freshen a ribbon and then bunch it into a graceful knot that would brighten a worn gown or a faded bonnet. She could re-cut and re-make a jacket, adding, perhaps, a new binding, and the result would be a garment almost as good as new, and giving her the real happiness of knowing that she was helping to lighten the family expenses, without the recognition of her clever economies becoming a humiliation either to her half-invalid father or to her always anxious but courageous mother. Instead of bemoaning her fate because such economies were necessary, she was proud to know that she could compel untoward circumstances to submit to her energy and industry.

And these were but a few of her gifts and graces, no one of which had ever adorned the really unselfish nature of our rich cousin. Had Kate been reared in a similar domestic atmosphere very likely she would have been equally courageous and faithful, if not by nature equally delicate in her expressions of sympathy for others, or so

richly endowed with diverse talents that could be made available for self-help. It is doubtful if she could have aided those about her so practically and wisely as Helen did, although I am sure she would have greatly desired to do so.

I think I wrote you in one of my early letters of a young man who gave a theatre party for his pretty young sister, which I was asked to chaperone. I remember that my experience on that occasion was far from satisfactory, for during the evening Kate slipped back into her earlier faults of manner and speech. Helen, however, was on that occasion the same lovely girl that she has always been.

Our young host and his sister were soon afterwards included in certain of our social festivities, as I may have mentioned, and in a more refined atmosphere than they had hitherto known they grew in social graces until I had no misgivings about introducing them even to your Uncle John's mother, who, as you may have guessed, was outwardly a true patrician, but at heart was a worldly woman who was ever mindful of the fact that she still had a marriageable daughter, whom it was her chief desire to see mistress of a handsome establishment and a well-supplied purse. I had this fact clearly in mind when I asked permission to present to her Mr. Albert Goold, a man, I explained, who was rising in business and had already been exceptionally successful. She acquiesced most graciously, and soon afterward expressed her admiration for his manly appearance and the beauty of his sister; this I knew at once meant that she would invite them to call, and also that she would mention to the sister the days on which she received. She added that

she liked to have such a young man as Mr. Goold drop in late if he could not escape business early in the afternoon.

I had learned to know these little social observances, which she always arranged so that they fell inside the lines of the strictest etiquette and yet were usually potential with young people whom she favored. How I longed to reproduce this scene for some one who could appreciate it while it was fresh in my memory, so gracious were her words and so persuasive her manner. Had she been conferring the greatest possible honor her graciousness could not have been more complete nor her suggestion to the sister more gratifying to a young girl. Of course, I was silent for dear John and Aunt Edith's sakes, but being young then and keenly appreciative of social tactics, I was sorely tempted to re-enact the little scene for my own and others' amusement; but love restrained me.

Just here I wish to call your attention to this tendency on the part of most young persons who have a keen perception of the ridiculous or theatrical in society. They reproduce conduct and conversations with exaggerated effects that are so amusing to their audiences that mimicry becomes a most pernicious practice, destroying alike the dignity of their conversation and the kindliness of their nature, and causing the loss of many a friend. Do not, my dear niece, be tempted by the laughter and applause of others to acquire this habit of tongue and gesture which soon sours the temper and calls down upon a woman the distrust and sometimes even the fear of her companions.

To return to my narrative. Mr. Goold was duly grate-

ful to John's mother for including his sister's name in her visiting list; and in a way he was pleased that she had invited him to accompany her, although as we afterwards learned, he was too much preoccupied in a certain quarter to be very appreciative on his own account, except for the fact that his hostess was akin to us and in the set where, at some future time, he might again meet Helen. He had asked after her health several times when calling on us, but this mention of her did not then seem to me significant. I now recall thinking that as he knew few of our friends, the number of persons whom he could inquire after was so limited that, if he showed any interest at all in our circle, he must needs ask, first of all, for Helen, because she was the only one now no longer with us. Late in the spring he said to me in a confused sort of way: "I am about to make a business journey in the neighborhood of where your friend Miss Helen Blank resides. Do you think she would consider it an impertinence if I paid her a call of respect and inquiry?"

"Certainly not an impertinence, Mr. Goold, but she might feel embarrassed when remembering the luxury of your home (I did not say refined elegance) and comparing it with the extreme simplicity and even plainness of her own. Not that Helen possesses any foolish ideas regarding her own simple style of living, but she might very naturally think that such a call could give you little pleasure. Helen is as practical as she is beautiful, and she leads a busy life. If you wish, when I write I will mention your proposed courtesy, so that she may decline it through me if she prefers to remain in your memory *en fête* as you have seen her?"

"Certainly," he replied, but he immediately added,

"I shall be more sadly disappointed than I can tell if she refuse to see me. Indeed, I think my business journey would not be undertaken in the face of such an adverse condition."

As he spoke his face changed color in a decidedly tell-tale fashion.

"Indeed!" was all I could say for a moment; and then I decided it would be both wise and kind to reiterate my former proposition, which I did, without adding, however, that in writing to Helen regarding the matter I should advise her to see him. It was almost summer, and I knew that Helen's commonplace but picturesque home was now at its best, with its ungraceful outlines and homely surroundings softened by the magic of the fresh spring foliage and the flowers of May-time. Helen never overlooked the potent influence of fresh flowers, and I knew that the quince trees were in bloom and the lilacs bending gracefully to the south wind to lend a charm of romance to the scene.

In my letters I had told the girl how much we liked Mr. Goold's sister, and that the polish of fine manner was as perceptible in his own conduct as if he had enjoyed it for years. I did not add that John's mother was especially hospitable to him and had mentioned to me the ingratitude of her daughter who could not be brought to appreciate maternal efforts in her behalf. This significant speech was not difficult to comprehend even without explanatory remarks, so closely did it follow upon a word of comment upon this rising young man and his large business enterprises. Her easily pardonable vexation and her confidence to me I have never mentioned before, and I only speak of them now to show you,

my dear niece, that nothing had effaced from Mr. Goold's mind the deep impression which the sweet face, quiet manners and modest attire of Helen, my dearest girl friend, had made upon him. He was not a conceited man; indeed, so perfect a confidence had grown up between himself and John and me that he often asked to be informed regarding social proprieties, confessing each time: "You know without telling that I have not been accustomed to as much refinement as would have been good for me, so please be generous with your abundance, and I will be as lavish with what I receive to some other unfortunate fellow."

I wrote to Helen, mentioning in a casual way Mr. Goold's desire to call upon her if he should be near enough to make it convenient. I admit the pardonable deception practised in this method of communicating the young man's intention, but I did not feel that I had a right to forestall his purpose by dropping even the remotest hint of the real meaning of his journey. It was his affair, and at present he needed no aid from me. He might require help later on and then—would it be disloyal to John's mother and show a lack of sympathy with her earnest desires if I aided Mr. Goold in his suit for Helen?

This question was soon after answered, for John's sister confided to us that her heart was inalienably given to a young man who had still another year to spend at a university; but she said her mother was so impatient to see her well settled in life that she had not as yet thought it wise to tell her of her attachment. She was not yet engaged, she said, but that made no difference. John and I both agreed with her that as her mother's tempera-

ment was such as to demand the pleasant things of life at once and was fretted and impatient whenever compelled to wait for the fulfilment of her desires, it would be best to remain silent on the subject.

Did I tell your Uncle John what Mr. Goold said to me of Helen? Of course not. It was not my own secret, so I could not share it even with my husband. Wives often thus divulge secrets to their husbands which they have no right to betray, excusing the bad faith by the well-worn saying, "My husband and I are one." It is needless to say that the expression is inapplicable to the case in point, and that the action is inexcusable.

A letter soon came from Helen, deprecating Mr. Goold's proposition to call upon her, as she said she was sure he would be both amazed and disappointed by an acquaintance with her plain surroundings; but she did not forbid his visit. In fact, she added: "If Mr. Goold should persist in coming to see us after you have told him how meagre our country home and living is (and I trust to your kindness to do this for me frankly and unmistakably) he must put up with his reception as patiently as he can. I hope, too, that you will assure him that, while I regret our lack of elegancies and even of not a few of those luxuries which very likely he esteems the comforts of life, I am not in the least ashamed of my home and am proud of our family."

When I told Mr. Goold that Helen had not refused to see him, but regretted that she was unable to promise such hospitality as he was used to, his eyes proved to me that he heard only the first part of my speech and was oblivious to the rest. The moment I finished speaking, he said, "I shall go to-morrow."

“But I would not, Mr. Goold,” said I; “so speedy a following up of my announcement of your proposed visit might startle Helen and possibly make your call less satisfactory than you desire. Eager men often lose much that is possible to the more considerate and patient. Girls who are worth knowing are not charmed by abruptness in so serious an affair as the forming of a—a friendship.”

“Friendship isn’t the word for it.”

“No? Then, Mr. Goold, all the more earnestly do I beg you not to let her know of your intentions until you have really made her acquaintance. You hardly know her. She possesses a tranquil spirit, and she weighs well the possible results upon her family of everything she is about to do. A man may by energy and promptness compel fortune within his grasp, but a woman’s heart, if it be worth possessing, isn’t won that way.”

“No? I did not so understand women. Pray do not think me conceited or an egotist, but I had imagined, from observing the girls I met before I knew you, that they were easy enough to win; in fact, I had suspected one or two of them of trying to show me that I was at least not disagreeable to them.”

“Forget them if you choose and as you have a right to do,” I replied, “but do not make the error of taking acquiescence for granted in Helen’s case. You couldn’t well make a more serious blunder. What time shall I mention as the date of your business journey?”

We both laughed at this fictitious name for his wooing visit, and he said: “Oh, let it be as soon as possible; and tell me the day, and I’ll be there to the moment.” I did so, and he went ten days later—to be sure with some misgivings.

In my next letter—this one being a needful preliminary to the wooing of Helen—I will relate to you its etiquette or ceremonials. The girl was stricter in her exactions of all the graces that belong to a courtship than she might have been had she been rich. Her pride stood in place of position; her reserve instead of money. More than all did the earnest fellow find those obstacles difficult which a poor but proud girl who is devoted to the interests of her family may place in her own way, as well as in that of a rich wooer. Had he been a poor but capable man his path would have been much smoother.

AUNTIE.

FORTY-THIRD LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT:—

Shortly after the date of my last letter we took our departure from picturesque Switzerland, and are now in London, where our travels will end, as we must soon sail for home to make arrangements for my wedding. It would be utterly impossible for me to write down all my impressions of this great old city, where so much history has been made. The very names of the places possess a sort of fascination and bring vividly to the mind the dramatic events of by-gone years. When we visited the Tower I experienced a decidedly “creepy” sensation, and my nervousness was no whit diminished by the appearance of the grim looking warders, or Beefeaters as they are called, with their doublets and headgear like those worn by the Yeomen of the Guard in the time of Henry VIII. It seemed to me as though the spirits of many of those whose sad histories made a strong impression upon my girlhood’s fancy verily haunted the gloomy old Tower; and even after we had examined the magnificent crown jewels and the numerous old-time relics with which the place abounds, the feeling of oppression had not entirely disappeared.

Our visit to Westminster Abbey—“England’s Temple

of Fame"—was productive of sensations of an entirely different sort—of admiration for the grand old buildings, and of reverence for the illustrious dead who sleep within the Abbey walls.

We visited also St. Paul's Cathedral, the National Gallery,—where there are many masterpieces of the Spanish and Dutch schools and where I became acquainted for the first time with the remarkable works of J. M. W. Turner—the British Museum, the Temple and the Temple Church—in short, dear aunt, we saw everything that had any interest for us, including the Houses of Parliament during an interesting debate, father having some influential friends who procured tickets for us. We drove, too, in Hyde Park and explored Kensington and Chelsea, where live—and have lived—so many of England's famous men. Certainly my visit to London will always be remembered as one of the most interesting of my life. To walk in its streets alone is a liberal education.

In my next letter I will have more to tell you about our doings in London, where, by the way, we have received many social attentions.

Your mention regarding the growing friendship between Helen and Mr. Goold interests me greatly, and I hope to hear from you of its further development, for that it subsequently ripened into a stronger attachment I have no doubt.

Your Loving

NIECE.

FORTY-FOURTH LETTER.

A COUNTRY WOOING.

MY DEAR NIECE:—

There was so marked a difference between the manner of the wooing of Helen by Albert Goold and your Uncle John's attentions to me, that I will describe the former to you. In the first place Helen had no fortune, while I, as you may know, had a modest income when your uncle married me; but my life had been more secluded, and I knew far less than your uncle about the many formalities of the social world. Being motherless, and having lived so long with an invalid father, I had few opportunities of gaining a practical insight into the more intricate methods of society or even of witnessing many of its most graceful and gracious amenities. Helen was naturally delicate in speech and manner, but she possessed a pride which, while not haughty, strengthened her self-respect and rendered her watchful that her poverty should not bring her any but the most reverent and dignified treatment. Especially was her pride on the alert when this rich young man came a-wooing.

Helen held in higher esteem the plain but refined and high-thinking manners of her own family than she did

the wealth so prodigally displayed by Mr. Goold. But he had mended wonderfully in social matters, although Helen was not prepared for the decided change that had taken place. She had only met him once, and then while he was giving a most extravagant entertainment; an error which he had made, however, not from any ostentatious motives, but from a mistaken idea of what constituted open-handed hospitality. This error on the side of excess is a common one with many wealthy people, "who do not know that they do not know," and who would really as soon be thought parsimonious as vulgarly lavish, but do not know exactly where the former ends and the latter begins. "An instinct of suitableness is seldom to be depended upon by women and never by men," is the calmly delivered opinion of a close observer of the social world of to-day.

Mr. Goold arrived in the village near which Helen resided about midday, being thus thrown upon his own resources for the balance of the long, warm afternoon. In town he could have called any time between three and five P. M. In the country, however, where dinner is usually served at midday and tea or supper at about half-past five, and where most young women assume some part of the household cares, it is customary among young men to postpone their visits until shortly after tea, unless a special invitation has been extended. Hours for calling upon ladies cannot be fixed by any universal rule, for the reason that customs differ with the locality, and often occupation or distance compels social rules to bend to their requirements. I had written to Helen that I thought Mr. Goold would be in her vicinity within a few days. I could, of course, have been more explicit had I

felt at liberty to interfere with the drift of affairs; but I deemed it neither expedient nor well-bred to influence in any way so serious a matter as the formation of a young girl's sentiment with regard to a young man who I was assured honestly loved her.

When Mr. Goold alighted at the gate of Helen's home he was decidedly nervous; for he was in love, while Helen had not as yet given the sentiment a thought. She only regretted to think that he would find little to charm or attract him in her homely surroundings, though, as I said before, she was not in the least ashamed either of her home or her family. The young man was quick to notice whatever there was of the beautiful or picturesque in the rambling old country house; partly because, in his present mood, he naturally saw nothing but what was pleasing in all that concerned the girl he hoped to make his wife, and partly because this self-respecting family possessed a refinement which made itself visible even in their surroundings and prompted them to practise, with an extremely limited purse, an orderly and careful thrift in their household arrangements. This spirit showed itself in every particular of the really charming home; the well-kept walks, the neat lawn, the taste with which flowers and vines were arranged and cared for, all plainly told that, although these people had not the means to compel pleasant environments, they had yet both the will and the intelligence to win them by gentle means from the rugged material at their command.

But the prettiest and pleasantest sight to his eager glance was Helen, clad in a print gown as artistically adjusted as if it were the work of a professional *modiste*;

and she wore about her throat and hands, but not so close as to conceal their beauty, ruffles of hand-crimped white mull—a pretty fancy of her own. A small brother of Heler answered the knocker—a door-bell being too modern a convenience for their old-fashioned house—and Mr. Goold asked to see the ladies. Had Helen been a princess and he her subject, their meeting could not have been more dignified and courteous. Helen's mother entered the room with her daughter and was presented with a grace and ease that greatly impressed the young man. He shook hands with Helen first, because he was acquainted with her alone as the ladies entered the room; but afterward he would always greet first the more elderly lady. This he told me afterward he had learned while with us; before that he treated all married or elderly women as persons of secondary importance, who had passed their day of social consideration—a most lamentable and discourteous error.

He found both mother and daughter as much at their ease as if they had received him in the midst of all the luxury of a costly drawing-room instead of in their neat little parlor, with its plain furniture and simple decorations. After inquiries about mutual friends, the conversation turned upon the country and its beauty, upon newly published books and upon the doings of the busy world which seemed so far from this tranquil spot. No personal topic, however, was broached. When Helen's father entered the room, Mr. Goold was introduced to him by the mother, as was proper. Many a young girl would have performed the introduction herself, and she would, perhaps, have forgotten that the younger man should be presented to the older, even though he was a

stranger in the house. Age is always honored with precedence by well-bred people.

It is an unchallenged truth that, "A gentlewoman can do anything she chooses," but this only means that a gentlewoman is sure to choose only what is strictly in keeping with propriety; and this characteristic was at once recognized in Helen by her visitor. He revered and adored her for her candor, her dignity and her domestic grace as she sat by her lame father, with her hand in his and now and then addressing to him some loving speech that should interest him in the conversation and lead him to speak concerning some topic on which his knowledge and opinions were most interesting. When her small brothers came into the room they, too, were introduced by their mother, and she performed this duty with a sweet and gentle considerateness of their immature but sensitive feelings of self-respect which is too often forgotten. Many a boisterous boy who is an *enfant terrible* in company would be quiet if not gentlemanly in behavior if treated with politeness. He is ignored or contemptuously thrust aside whenever visitors are present, and his reprisals are often both swift and disagreeable.

In this case there was no opportunity for that *tête-à-tête* which is too often arranged on some pretence or other for a pair of young people by the parents or friends. This petty manœuvre is always detected by the man, and it cannot but lessen the self-respect of any young girl whose acquaintance with her guest is so brief that in order to see each other alone, a diplomatic evasion or downright deceit is needful. This fact gave Mr. Goold both pleasure and regret—a paradoxical state of mind more easily imagined than expressed. His early training had led

him to believe that a courtship should mean "a solitude of two," and he could not but wish that it could be so in his case; but since he had been enabled to observe a finer class of women, his good sense told him that to win a girl like Helen he must prove both his mental and moral standards and his social qualifications.

He was surprised at her evasion of a most natural opportunity for a *tête-à-tête* when other and more elderly visitors called to spend a social evening with her parents. But when he reflected upon the subject later his respect for Helen deepened, and he acknowledged to himself that to her dignified reserve, which she had placed as a barrier between them, was due his own calmness of judgment, which prevented his asking her father's permission there and then to make his daughter his wife if she were willing. Having thought of this charming girl for months in the character of a possible wife, it would have been easy and even natural for him to have suddenly plunged into this most vital question without properly considering that so unfamiliar a proposal would either have been at once rejected or, perhaps, so coldly received that his chances of ultimate success would have been seriously lessened.

Loving daughters are not thoughtlessly bestowed by fond fathers and mothers, and a consideration of their feelings is the part of the wise and prudent wooer. Worldly as this world is, there are still many parents and daughters to whom a plethoric bank account and an exceptionally prosperous business are not the first and most important recommendations of a young man's suit. Character, temper, talents and health, if properly balanced, ensure a suitable position and maintenance for a wife. Mr. Goold

knew that he could assure his future wife comfort and plenty, and he was also glad, as every chivalrous man should be, that he also possessed the means to procure her personal luxury and social distinction. He was well assured that the young girl's graces of mind and person far outweighed in value all the fortune he could bring her, and when he saw her in her own simple home he felt that she was farther off than when he first met her, seemingly as happily situated as the rest of his young friends at his first theatre party.

One thing at first surprised and baffled him. I should have stated that he had grown nearly to manhood before he went to a city to live, and also that he did not belong to the best circles of the country folk; and he had a belief that strict etiquette is intended for cities alone and not at all for the country, which was to him a place of freedom from all social formalities. So when Helen refused his invitation to drive alone with him on the following day, he was quite surprised. She did not refuse in an explanatory manner until she chanced to think that he had a right to suppose she could accept, because two years before she would not have hesitated to say that she would be pleased to accompany him. She had learned a few of the more reserved and satisfactory customs of cultivated women during her visits to me, and her delicate mind approved of them at once. She saw then that a man regards most sincerely the girl who is not too eager to be alone in his society, for she wins his respect by maintaining her own. Helen saw in his face the pain and disappointment her answer had given her caller, and she said, as if in continuation of her refusal, "My mother has a great many cares, and there are countless wearing

duties not to be neglected in a large family like ours, where there are no skilled servants, and I could scarcely enjoy the drive when I recalled her pale, patient face."

She did not say this as a suggestion or a hint to him that he should also invite her mother, but to prove to him that she did not mean to be unkind or unsocial with him. He, however, while he saw a gleam of hope through her explanation, blushed deeply at his own thoughtless selfishness. He then remembered, too, that he ought first to have asked her mother's permission for the favor of Helen's society, even had he not included her in the proposed drive, which formality, by-the-by, was one with which he had as yet not the least acquaintance. The other usage he already knew belonged to the best town customs, and in his alert mind he perceived that he had offered Helen an indignity in addressing her with a freedom of manner that he would scarce have assumed had she been in town with me. He was too manly to be other than frank, and he said at once :

"Can you pardon me? You must know or, at least, have more than suspected that my life has not been passed where the best social formalities are in habitual use; but believe me, I feel but the profoundest respect whenever addressing you. If you can pardon this inadvertence or, to be candid, this ignorance of mine, which shall not, I assure you, be repeated, you will do so by allowing me to ask your mother to drive with me to-morrow at any hour she may name, and if she approves, can you go?"

Such frankness was irresistible, and though it was etiquette for Mr. Goold to take his leave sooner than callers who had come later. Helen spared him from being

guilty of a discourtesy in this respect by asking her mother's pardon for interrupting the neighborly talk and inquiring of her whether she could accompany her on a drive with Mr. Goold the next day. Her reply was: "I will think about it, and let you know before Mr. Goold says 'Good night.'" This, of course, compelled their earlier guest to outstay the later arrivals, which, naturally, he was only too glad to do. I mention this little episode, my dear niece, because it illustrates one of the few justifiable exceptions to the general rule of calling. An announced engagement between the parties constitutes another such exception, and there can be but few more possible. In a little while Helen's mother accepted the invitation to drive, and a few moments later Mr. Goold took his leave.

The drive was as charming to the mother as to the daughter, and to Mr. Goold it brought unfeigned delight, for he discovered that day that elegance of manner and nobility of thought and desire may be found unaccompanied by fashionable attire and costly surroundings. He was invited to tea, or supper as it should be called, after the drive, and the simple food, delicately prepared and served in an orderly manner, put to shame his own overabundant and rather misruled table at home. His sister had not as yet learned to appreciate the charm of dignified service at table, so his domestic affairs were mostly in the hands of imperfectly trained servants. "More than ever," said he to me after his return from Helen's home, "do I long to make that charming girl the mistress of my home and the inspiration of my life."

So reserved, however, and so unconscious of his admiration was she, that he had only proceeded so far in his

wooing as to ask her permission to send her certain new books of which they had spoken. To his impetuous temper and energetic habits, this deliberate manner of winning his way was not a little chafing, but later on he did not regret it. It taught him to properly value the merits of a good and modest woman, and he became through her influence, higher and more delicate in his mental perceptions.

And one of the sweetest recollections of his life will ever remain the remembrance of the second and last evening of his first visit, spent with Helen on the quaint, vine-covered porch at her home. So peaceful and so happy seemed all around that evening that he could almost fancy he had been visited with a dream of fair Arcadia. How many homes would be veritable Arcadias if their dwellers did but possess the true spirit that the name suggests!

AUNTIE.

FORTY-FIFTH LETTER.

MY DEAR AUNT :—

This will probably be my last letter to you before we return home, which will be in a very short time. One could spend years in London and yet find some new object or place of interest which had not yet been visited. We have, however, made the very best possible use of our time.

I like shopping in London very much, for it is so different from other European cities; and I have purchased a number of little presents to take home for some of my small friends, who will value such a remembrance from me very much, especially as I am going away from them immediately after my marriage.

Among other things during these last few days we took a river steamer to Kew and thoroughly enjoyed the beautiful gardens, and also went to Oxford, taking Eton and Windsor on the way.

I hope your next letter will reach me before we sail for home, as I am so much interested in the story of Helen and Mr. Goold and am anxious to hear the end of it. How very different Mr. Goold was from Mr. Eldred, and yet with the sweet gentle influence of such a girl as Helen, I am certain the nobility of character that was

naturally inherent in the man was fully and finely developed, so that his social career became as successful and pleasant as his business life had been. Helen possessed a great advantage over Kate in having a wise and loving mother to help and guide her over doubtful places, and to teach her by precept and by the example of her own sweet life what a good and true gentlewoman should be.

When I return home I will acquaint you with the progress of the arrangements for my wedding. How I wish you could be with me during these last days of my girlhood. However, I know your life is a busy one and your cares many, so that such a pleasure will be denied me. I must thank you very much for the help you have been in imparting to me the knowledge I so sadly lacked regarding social customs and manners, and also for the kindly interesting way in which you taught me so many useful lessons. Though my travels have done much toward improving my manners by giving me ease in addressing people, developing my powers of conversation and making me more liberal in thought, still there are many matters about which I would still be ignorant and regarding which I would have made many serious errors even in my social life here, had it not been for your timely and trustworthy instruction. Hoping soon to see you face to face, I am, dear aunt,

Your loving

FORTY-SIXTH LETTER.

A COUNTRY WOOING—CONCLUDED.

MY DEAR NIECE :—

MR. GOOLD was naturally impetuous, but he strove hard to be reasonable in his attentions to Helen. He often sent her books, and he believed himself to have been favored with an inspiration when it occurred to him to take a vivid interest in her garden and send her numerous potted plants and bulbs. He dared not send her cut flowers, lest she too soon suspect the meaning of his attentions; and as he had never heard that rooted verbenas, tulips, bulbs and geraniums in jars could be construed as an expression of love, he felt that his presents were most judiciously chosen.

“I hope I am not blundering,” he said to me once; “I do not wish to be one of those men whom I have heard mentioned as good husbands with bad manners; but even if I were, I am convinced your lovely friend would be able to correct my manners, if I could but persuade her to undertake the task. For although she has been brought up in the country like myself, she seems to possess a natural aptitude for every social elegance, while I know that in her presence I appear as awkward as I feel.”

Perhaps I did not reassure him as much as I might, because his mind was just then in a process of social growth. His attitude both of speech and conduct toward Helen was winning, as all experienced women know; but as he was not aware of it, he naturally strove the harder to cultivate himself in all those refinements that had been neglected in his boyhood.

Of course, Helen knew the meaning of his persistent though delicate attentions; and she liked the young man more for his reserve, for she was thus enabled to contemplate at leisure the probability of an offer of marriage from him and to calmly consider how she ought to act.

Her character was so delicately honorable, that, had she been unpleasantly impressed by Mr. Goold's personality or character, or had she objected seriously to the position in life in which a marriage with him would place her, she would at once have asked her father to write him that, while she appreciated his thoughtful consideration of her tastes and his generosity in gratifying them, she would be better pleased if his kindnesses were discontinued.

Her self-respect as well as her respect for the feelings of others would have prompted her to decline his attentions had they been distasteful to her, even though they were courtesies perfectly allowable between mere friends; for she knew, as every girl should, that a man is not likely to pay marked attention to a young woman for whom he feels only simple friendship. A natural instinct in every high-minded girl tells of this fact, even if she has lacked maternal instruction in such matters; although in Helen's case, in spite of the homely nature of her surroundings,

her mother had bestowed upon her all the most refined suggestions and admonitions that seemed fitting to her own gentle, well-bred mind.

In this respect Helen's early education differed from Mr. Goold's, for although his youth had been passed in even more contracted circumstances than hers, he had left his home in early manhood fully imbued with the idea that true gentility is the accompaniment only of wealth, and unrefined speech and conduct are the necessary concomitants of poverty. He did not realize that in the low standards of the poor and not in their want of worldly goods is to be found the reason that lack of wealth is so often attended with lack of breeding; and he did not then know, what his experience afterwards taught him, that purse-proud vulgarity is by no means an uncommon evil. As his knowledge of the world widened, he recognized the falsity of his theory, but he had not, even yet, acquired a mode of living fully in accord with his enlightened ideas. That he sincerely wished to know the best was to me, however, a sufficient assurance that he would in time overcome the difficulties in his path.

As I told you in a former letter, he had sought the best society that was open to him and had dropped his former associates. For this he was often sneered at, and many unpleasant remarks came to his knowledge, for it is not unusual with those who are unfamiliar with refined sentiments and amusements to feel personally injured if one who has hitherto been of their number endeavors to lift himself to a higher social level by seeking to learn nobler things. Open contempt for his newly acquired refinement met him at every turn among his old associates; but with

the expansion of his mental and social capacity came a proper contempt for such petty malice, which made breaking from his old companions an easy and welcome task.

Mr. Goold had not been exempt from such unpleasantness, and when he and his sister held quite aloof from their former associates it was said that they were ambitious to know people above them, and that they were vain enough to aspire to society to which they were not born. And why should they not do so? If a man has the wisdom to select a more attractive grade in life, and the ability to fit himself for it, has he not as clear a right to such a change as he has to select a new and more commodious residence and move into it? Such an ambition is given many unpleasant names by the man's whilom ill-bred associates, although many of them would do likewise if they had the courage and the gifts needed to enter a higher circle—higher, because its members are better bred and more carefully educated; more interested in literature than in scandal, in progress than in dissipation, and in things mental than in things material.

Our young friend had discovered that there were no exact levels in life, and he was thankful that he had found this out before it was too late to make a change. When a young man or woman, my dear niece, have gone too far down a social declivity, it is very difficult to turn and make headway on the upward grade. Mr. Goold would gladly have elevated his early associates along with himself, but partly through fear of ridicule, partly through timidity or indolence, they refused even to be aided toward a better social condition.

He, however, had only to recognize the inferiority of

the customs and ideals of the class into which he had drifted when he first came to the city, to immediately turn his back upon it. He could not at first perceive its true status, until he caught glimpses of something better with which to contrast it. He always craved the best in his associates just as he aimed at the highest in business integrity; and such men are sure of satisfactory results, for though their best may not be reached easily or speedily, it is always attained at last by earnest striving.

A girl's heart would be far safer in the keeping of a man of this stamp than of one whose manners are faultless only from early discipline, but who has no objective point of excellence in his life and no sincere regard for goodness in his heart. Of the still lower grade of man let me remind you of Tennyson's words in "Locksley Hall:"

"As the husband so the wife is, thou art mated to a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee
down."

A girl should consider well the varying qualities, characteristics, manners and conversation of the young men she meets, and keep in mind an idea of what seems to her best and fittest, that she may make no fatal blunder in marriage. She should not consider the perfection of a young man's deportment nor the charm of his external appearance before she notes the spirit that prompts his actions and his speech. The man who displays an earnest endeavor to refine his life and at the same time evinces a generous spirit and wholesome sentiment, should not be rejected or scorned because he has not yet reached the goal for which he is striving.

This is the substance of what I wrote Helen after she informed me that her parents were considering a request from Mr. Goold for permission to seek her hand in marriage. He had referred them to your Uncle John (of course, by permission) as to his standing, and he had the instinctive good taste to include her mother in making his request; he had also written her parents afterwards that unhappily he had no reason to believe that the young lady took any especial interest in him, and he begged permission to continue his visits, in the hope that in time he might win her favor. He also asked that she be not informed of his hopes, the request proving how little he knew of girls or parents, either, for it was not at all likely to be heeded.

However, his ingenuousness was by no means against his success. He said he was not familiar with established usages in such matters, being in the respect of his financial position, a self-made man; but that he hoped under the influence of a refined wife to develop both the sentiment and the polish becoming a cultivated gentleman. His earnestness combined with his candor appealed most strongly to those he addressed; indeed, Helen's parents were more deeply touched by his self-depreciation than they would have been by a more worldly and polished appeal. Had he been unconscious of his slightly awkward bearing, or been self-assertive and presuming, as are many men who have lacked proper training in their youth and have risen suddenly into recognized prosperity, he would have been offensive to them. His manner was refined and delicate even though it lacked a fashionable polish—a want that never offends the discerning.

All self-respecting young women dislike flippant conversation and too great ease of manner. Considerateness charms, and respectful courtesies win them. Familiarity is especially offensive to a girl with refined sensibilities, while courteous reverence for woman and her belongings is not only becoming in a man toward all of her sex, but it goes far toward winning for him their especial regard. Gentlemen of the past recognized this subtle secret of wooing and winning women, and if the spirit of irreverence is on the increase in society as it is in religion, all the worse for both the men and women of to-day. If young men could appreciate how much it costs the parents, and especially, the mother, of a lovable daughter to give her for life and death into the care of a stranger, or if they considered that by such relinquishment the home that had been brightened and beautified by the daughter's sweetness, grace and tender helpfulness would thenceforth be desolated, more considerateness would enter into the formalities of what is lightly called "asking consent."

After making proper inquiries about Mr. Goold, Helen's father was convinced that he had no right to withhold his approval. There are egotistic, or, perhaps, conceited young men who hold it a derogation of their dignity to be inquired about by the father of marriageable girls. They consider their own representations of themselves a sufficient guarantee of their reputable qualities; beware of this sort of man. He may be all that he claims, but a conceited man usually makes a disagreeable husband. Do not, however, my dear niece, confound self-respect with conceit; for while they are such decidedly different characteristics, they sometimes find rather similar modes of expression.

Having obtained the father's permission to visit his daughter, Mr. Goold lost no time in taking advantage of it. He first inquired by letter if his visits would be agreeable to the family. (He was careful, you will notice, to ignore none of the family, although he especially included Helen by implication.) Such a letter was *de rigueur*, and he was perfectly correct in addressing it to Helen's father; for who is better fitted than a father to judge whether his daughter is willing to receive so important a guest as a suitor for her hand? Mr. Goold soon received the assurance that they would be pleased to receive him at his convenience, and you may be sure he called at the earliest opportunity, having first sent a box of cut flowers. This gift was by no means customary in those days, but he hoped that the blossoms might say for him what he dared not as yet say for himself. He engaged a room at a hotel in the town, and spent several days in the neighborhood, calling, dining by invitation, driving, and otherwise pleasantly spending much of his time in Helen's society; but during their pleasant drives they were always accompanied by some member of the family.

He found courage to say to Helen, on taking leave, that he hoped he had made some advance in her respect and esteem; she freely admitted that he had, and added: "Not that I ever disliked you, Mr. Goold, but you know friendships that are best worth cultivating do not mature quickly." He took this as a delicately-worded expression of her regard and urged his suit no farther at that time; but her words gave him courage and prompted him to show her even greater respect and consideration.

Mr. Goold asked Helen if he might write to her with hope of a reply, and she consented. His letters were re-

spectful, and their contents were impersonal and largely descriptive of events, books and pictures. In the last his tastes were improving daily, and he was already an enthusiast in music, the sentiment of which he felt deeply. Helen was no more developed in these respects than himself, and in this fact lay a common bond of interest; and it was no small gratification to Mr. Goold that she trusted to his judgment in such matters, because he had better opportunities for expanding and refining his artistic taste. It is in the maturing of such an acquaintance that culture in its best sense is appreciated and acquired.

It was not until Christmas-tide and during his third visit that he asked Helen to be his wife. She knew by intuition that he would make this request at his next visit, and in one of her letters to him she enclosed a note from her mother to his sister, inviting her to make a Christmas visit at their plain home. The note was gladly received and the tender of hospitality accepted with joy, for so intimate and dear was the relation between brother and sister that he had made her a confidante of all his hopes and fears, and she felt assured from this invitation that should he propose to Helen he would be accepted.

The young man was deeply grateful for this delicate act on the part of Helen's mother, which in reality left him his freedom, and provided an easy method by which he might in case his mind had changed withdraw his attentions from her daughter by declining the invitation on his sister's behalf on one of the many social grounds which are so convenient in such cases; at the same time she was protecting the girl from a continued wooing should her second thoughts or a more extended acquaintance on her part prove less favorable to her lover; for she

could thus have easily transferred their relations to a basis of mere friendship.

But his thoughts were far different, and it seemed that he had never before looked forward so eagerly to the Christmas season. The invitation was accepted, and fortunately the two girls liked each other from the first, a fact which gave him greater confidence in the eventual acceptance of his suit. Of course, my dear niece, it is needless to repeat all the details of this Christmas gathering; suffice it to say that it was a happy one for all concerned, although you can readily understand that there was some pain mingled with the pleasure of Helen's father and mother when they thought of the break that must come sooner or later in their happy home circle.

"Can we not spend this day here a year hence as husband and wife?" were the words in which Albert Goold asked Helen directly to marry him. There was none of the wild and impassioned language of romance; his regard was too deep and sincere for that. Helen gave him her hand and smiled as he kissed first it and then her lips; he then led her at once to her mother who sat in the next room, and said: "Your daughter has consented to marry me. Henceforth you are also my mother. Will you not kiss me as a son?" He spoke as gracefully and acted as naturally as if he had been bred to the best refinement all his life, so educating is a noble passion.

It was while the lilacs were in bloom the following spring that John and myself, with a few of Helen's kinspeople, and Miss Goold as bridesmaid, witnessed the simple wedding, for which Helen's home was prettily decorated within with sweet apple blossoms, and made

beautiful without by all the glories of the spring-time.

Helen had visited us in the winter, and we had assisted and advised her regarding her *trousseau*. Her engagement ring, at her request, was of plain gold, and was again used at her marriage. She said, with true womanly delicacy, that a costly gem upon the hand of a poor girl in a plain country home was both incongruous and in bad taste. Many a young man, to gratify the ostentatious caprice of his *fiancée*, presents her with a costly engagement ring not suited to their condition in life, and thereby renders necessary economies after marriage that cause love, in the words of the old proverb, "to fly out at the window." A hoop of gold at first and the jewel afterward is far more appropriate, unless the girl is rich. Helen's idea was perfectly correct; and although Mr. Goold grumbled a little, because he thought nothing too fine or too costly for the girl whom he had won, he soon saw the propriety of her action and honored her the more for the refinement of her perceptions.

He took her to his city home later in the year, and I am sure you will not be surprised to learn that she adorned it, and by her gentle presence and example aided her husband in becoming a polished and high-minded gentleman; and afterwards when he became a man of note and of recognized position in the world, he did not hesitate to say that he owed all to the early influence of a noble wife upon his unformed character.

What one high-principled woman has done, my dear, another may do, if she sets her life to the high endeavor.

And now, I draw this letter to a close—the last, perhaps, that I shall write to you before your return home to

prepare for your own wedding ; and with the hope that the letters I have lately written to you regarding the finer elegancies of social life may have accomplished their purpose, I will say, for the present, good-bye.

AUNTIE.



INVITATIONS AND REPLIES.

“How answer you that?”

—*Shakspeare.*

CARDS.

AT HOME CARD.—No. 1.

Mrs. James Wilson

Tea at Five o'clock.

555½ Fifth Avenue.

Thursdays in January.

AT HOME CARD.—No. 2.

Mrs. Charles Munroe

At Home

Tuesdays.

60 Pearl Street.

INVITATION TO BREAKFAST.

Mr. & Mrs. Brown-Bennett

request the pleasure of

Mr. Walter Smith's Company

At Breakfast

on Wednesday, December Tenth, at Twelve o'clock.

13 *Arlington Street.*

R. S. V. P.

ACCEPTANCE.

Mr. Walter Smith accepts with pleasure the polite invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Brown-Bennett for breakfast on Wednesday, December Tenth, at Twelve o'clock.

121 *Linden Avenue.*

REGRETS.

Mr. Walter Smith regrets that a death in the family prevents his acceptance of the polite invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Brown-Bennett for Wednesday, December Tenth.

21 Linden Avenue.

INVITATION TO A LUNCHEON.—NO. 1.

Mrs. Brown-Bennett

requests the pleasure of your company

At Luncheon

on Wednesday, December Tenth, at half-past One o'clock,

to meet

Miss Gordon.

13 *Arlington Street.*

ACCEPTANCE.

Miss Mabel Smith accepts with pleasure the polite invitation of Mrs. Brown-Bennett to meet Miss Gordon at luncheon on Wednesday, December Tenth, at half-past One o'clock.

363 *Leigh Street.*

REGRETS.

Miss Mabel Smith regrets that a previous invitation prevents her acceptance of Mrs. Brown-Bennett's polite invitation for Wednesday, December Tenth.

363 Leigh Street.

INVITATION TO A LUNCHEON.—NO. 2.

Miss Gray

requests the pleasure of

Miss Olive Alexander's Company

At Luncheon

on Tuesday, December Ninth, at Two o'clock.

23 Marion Terrace.

ACCEPTANCE.

Miss Olive Alexander accepts with pleasure the polite invitation of Miss Gray for luncheon on Tuesday, December Ninth, at Two o'clock.

32 Regent Street.

REGRETS.

Miss Olive Alexander regrets that, as she is leaving town on Monday, she is unable to accept the polite invitation of Miss Gray for December Ninth.

32 Regent Street.

INVITATION TO A LUNCHEON.—NO. 3.

Mr. & Mrs. Lester Brown

request the pleasure of

Mr. Gray's Company

to meet

the President of the United States

At Luncheon

on Thursday, December Eleventh, at half-past One o'clock.

19 K Street.

ACCEPTANCE.

Mr. Gray accepts with pleasure the polite invitation of Mr. & Mrs. Lester Brown to meet the President of the United States at luncheon on Thursday, December Eleventh, at half-past One o'clock.

22 Nevada Street.

REGRETS.

Mr. Gray thanks Mr. & Mrs. Lester Brown for their polite invitation for luncheon on Thursday, to meet the President of the United States, but illness prevents his acceptance of it.

22 Nevada Street.

INVITATION TO A DINNER.—FORMAL.

Mr. & Mrs. James Allen

request the pleasure of

Mr. & Mrs. Leslie's Company

At Dinner

December Tenth, at Eight o'clock.—

17 Washington Street.

ACCEPTANCE.

Mr. & Mrs. Leslie accept with pleasure the polite invitation of Mr. & Mrs. James Allen for dinner on December Tenth, at Eight o'clock.

92 St. George's Terrace.

REGRETS.

Mr. & Mrs. Leslie thank Mr. & Mrs. James Allen for the polite invitation to dinner, but regret that a previous engagement prevents their acceptance of it.

92 St. George's Terrace.

INVITATION TO A DINNER.—INFORMAL.

My dear Miss Allen :

Will you dine informally with us on Wednesday, December Tenth, at half-past Seven ?

Yours cordially,

Elinor Gray.

*101 Union Street,
Monday.*

ACCEPTANCE.

My dear Mrs. Gray :

It gives me great pleasure to accept your polite invitation for dinner on Wednesday, the Tenth, at half-past Seven o'clock.

Yours cordially,

Alice Allen.

*22 Maryland Avenue,
Monday.*

REGRETS.

My dear Mrs. Gray :

Thank you very much for your invitation for Wednesday, the Tenth, but owing to another engagement I can only say how much I regret that I cannot be with you.

*Yours cordially,
Alice Allen.*

22 Maryland Avenue.

INVITATION TO A DANCE.—NO. 1.

Mr. & Mrs. James Besant

request the pleasure of your company

on Wednesday Evening, December Tenth, at Nine o'clock.

Dancing.

201 Main Street.

ACCEPTANCE.

Mr. Walter Johnson presents his compliments to Mr. & Mrs. James Besant, and accepts with pleasure their kind invitation for Wednesday, December Tenth.

*81 Olive Street,
Thursday.*

REGRETS.

Mr. Walter Johnson presents his compliments to Mr. & Mrs. Walter Besant, and regrets his inability to accept their kind invitation for Wednesday, December Tenth.

*81 Olive Street,
Thursday.*

INVITATION TO A DANCE.—NO. 2.

Mrs. John Anderson

requests the pleasure of the company of

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Blank

on Wednesday Evening, December Tenth, at Nine o'clock.

Dancing.
99 Mulberry Place.

The favor of an answer
is requested.

ACCEPTANCE.

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Blank accept with pleasure the
polite invitation of Mrs. John Anderson for Wednesday
Evening, December Tenth, at Nine o'clock.

198 Broad Street.

REGRETS.

Mr. & Mrs. Frank Blank regret that a previous engagement prevents their acceptance of Mrs. John Anderson's polite invitation for Wednesday Evening.

198 Broad Street.

INVITATION TO A DANCE.—NO. 3.

Mrs. James Wilson

At Home,

Thursday Evening, December Eleventh, at Nine o'clock.

Cotillon at Ten.

88 Cedar Avenue.

R. S. V. P.

ACCEPTANCE.

Miss Johnson accepts with pleasure the polite invitation of Mrs. Wilson for Thursday Evening, December Eleventh, at Nine o'clock.

7 Elm Street.

REGRETS.

Miss Johnson thanks Mrs. Wilson for her polite invitation for Thursday Evening, December Eleventh, but regrets that a previous engagement prevents her accepting it.

7 Elm Street.

INVITATION TO A DANCE.—INFORMAL.

14 Belvidere Terrace,
Monday.

My dear Miss Gray :

May we not have the pleasure of your presence Friday Evening at an informal dance? My sister Maud has just arrived, and we are anxious that, during the few days she will be with us, she should if possible meet many of her old friends.

With a hope that you will be able to say "yes," I am,

Very cordially yours,

Alice Brown.

ACCEPTANCE.

13 Albemarle Street,
Tuesday.

My dear Mrs. Brown:

It gives me much pleasure to accept your kind invitation for Friday Evening. It will seem like a renewal of old times to meet Maud, and I appreciate your thoughtfulness in thinking of our friendship. With kindly remembrance to Maud and yourself, I am

*Very sincerely,
Elinor Gray.*

REGRETS.

13 Albemarle Street,
Tuesday.

My dear Mrs. Brown:

Thank you very much for thinking of me when Maud reached town, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to be at the dance, but by the doctor's orders I am confined to my room, and only know of the outside world when friends remember how hard is an invalid's life. If Maud would come to me it would give me much pleasure. Give my love to the dear girl, and believe me,

*Faithfully yours,
Elinor Gray.*

INVITATION TO A WHIST PARTY.

Mr. & Mrs. Paul White

request the pleasure of

Mr. & Mrs. Reed's Company

on Wednesday, the Tenth of December, at Nine o'clock.

Cards.

22 Belvidere Terrace.

ACCEPTANCE.

Mr. & Mrs. Reed accept with pleasure the polite invitation of Mr. & Mrs. Paul White for Wednesday, the Tenth of December, at Nine o'clock.

11 St. Mary's Place.

REGRETS.

Mr. & Mrs. Reed regret their inability to accept the polite invitation of Mr. & Mrs. Paul White for December the Tenth.

11 *St. Mary's Place.*

INVITATION TO A COMING OUT.—NO. 1.

Mr. & Mrs. Albert Barrett

request the pleasure of presenting their second daughter,

Miss Mabel,

to

Mr. & Mrs. Walter West,

on Thursday, December Tenth, at Nine o'clock.

Cotillon at Eleven.

82 North Street.

ACCEPTANCE.

Mr. & Mrs. Walter West accept with pleasure the polite invitation of Mr. & Mrs. Albert Barrett for Thursday, December Tenth, at Nine o'clock.

5 Albemarle Avenue.

REGRETS.

Mr. & Mrs. Walter West regret their inability to accept the polite invitation of Mr. & Mrs. Albert Barrett for Thursday, December Tenth, at Nine o'clock.

5 Albemarle Avenue.

INVITATION TO A COMING OUT.—NO. 2.

Mrs. James Wilson

requests the pleasure of presenting her daughter,

Miss Ethel,

to

Mrs. John Gilbert,

At Luncheon, Wednesday, December Tenth, at Two o'clock.

13 Fairmount Avenue.

ACCEPTANCE.

Mrs. John Gilbert accepts with pleasure Mrs. Wilson's invitation for Luncheon on Wednesday, December Tenth, at Two o'clock.

175 N Street.

REGRETS.

Mrs. John Gilbert regrets that illness prevents her acceptance of the kind invitation of Mrs. Wilson for Luncheon on February Tenth.

175 N Street.

INVITATION TO A SMALL AND EARLY.

Mrs. John Morris,

Miss Morris,

*Wednesday, December Tenth,
from Five until Twelve o'clock.*

*Dancing.
444 Madison Avenue.*

*The favor of an answer
is requested.*

ACCEPTANCE.

*Mr. & Mrs. James Tilden accept with pleasure Mrs.
John Morris' polite invitation for Wednesday, December
Tenth.*

121 South Street.

REGRETS.

Mr. & Mrs. James Tilden regret that absence from the city prevents their acceptance of the polite invitation of Mrs. John Morris for Wednesday, December Tenth.

121 South Street.

INVITATION TO A DRIVE.

Dear Miss White :

If the weather is pleasant on Wednesday and you have no other engagement, will you not drive with me? You will be giving great pleasure to

Yours faithfully,

Edward Gray.

19 Chelsea Avenue,

Monday.

ACCEPTANCE.

Dear Mr. Gray :

I shall be delighted to go driving with you on Wednesday, at Four o'clock. With all good wishes, I am.

Very cordially,

Emilie White.

421 Ninth Street,

Monday.

REGRETS.

Dear Mr. Gray:

Thank you very much for your kind invitation, which unfortunately I am unable to accept.

Yours sincerely,

Emilie White.

421 Ninth Street,

Monday.

INVITATION TO A THEATRE PARTY.—INFORMAL.

Wednesday.

My dear Miss White:

Mr. Black has asked me to chaperon and form a theatre party for him. I join with him in hoping that you will be able to go; we are to see Mr. Irving and Miss Terry in "Macbeth," on Friday next. Our party will be twenty-four, and the stages will collect their precious burdens in regular rotation. I hope that you will not be engaged for that evening, but will send your acceptance at once to

Your friend,

Helen Carr.

ACCEPTANCE.

89 Cedar Avenue,

Wednesday.

My dear Mrs. Carr:

It will give me great pleasure to accept the kind invitation I have just received from you and Mr. Black. It is very pleasant to have two friends think of one. I shall be awaiting you then on Friday evening, and am, dear Mrs. Carr,

Yours cordially,

Lillie White.

REGRETS.

89 Cedar Avenue,

Wednesday.

My dear Mrs. Carr:

Pray tender my regrets to Mr. Black and thank him for his kindness; a former engagement prevents my accepting yours for Friday. I am really very sorry, but you, I am sure, appreciate the honor involved in keeping one's word. With kindly remembrance to Mr. Carr and much love for yourself, I am,

Very faithfully yours,

Lillie White.

CHRISTMAS INVITATION.—INFORMAL.

The Cedars,

December 7, 1889.

My dear Mr. Brown :

The country is most charming—the snow has made sleighing possible and the ice is just fit for skating. Will you not come to us on Wednesday the Seventeenth, and remain until the Twenty-sixth? Mr. Brown wishes to be remembered kindly, and hopes that the Christmastide will find you with us.

*Very cordially,
Alice Brown-Bennett.*

ACCEPTANCE.

14 Albemarle Street,
December 8, 1889.

My dear Mrs. Brown-Bennett :

It gives me great pleasure to accept your kind invitation for the Seventeenth until the Twenty-sixth of December. I shall come on the train you have marked on the time-table. Give my regards to Mr. Bennett and warn him that he must look to his laurels as a skater.

With all thanks for your courtesy, I am, dear Mrs. Bennett,

*Yours faithfully,
Algernon Brown.*

REGRETS.

14 Albemarle Street,
December 8, 1889.

My dear Mrs. Brown-Bennett :

I regret very much that I cannot accept your kind invitation, but a previous engagement for the first four days and the fact that the others are always spent at home, explain the why and wherefore. Pray remember me to Mr. Bennett, and believe me, with a keen appreciation of your kindness,

*Yours cordially,
Algernon Brown.*

INVITATION TO A WEDDING.—NO. I.

Mr. & Mrs. James Rice

*request the pleasure of your company
at the wedding reception of their daughter,*

Winifred Grace

and

Mr. William A. Sharman,

Thursday Evening, June Ninth, from Nine until Eleven o'clock.

55½ Sixth Street.

CEREMONY CARD.

Ceremony at half-past Eight o'clock.

INVITATION TO A WEDDING.—NO. 2.

Mr. & Mrs. James Rice

*request the honor of your presence
at the marriage of their daughter,*

Miss Winifred Grace Rice,

to

Mr. William A. Sharman,

on Wednesday, May Sixth, at Twelve o'clock.

St. Luke's Church.

CHURCH CARD.

Please present this card at

St. Luke's Church,

Wednesday, May Sixth.

RECEPTION CARD.

At Home

after the ceremony.

23 St. Mark's Place.

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT.—NO. 1.

Mr. & Mrs. James Lawrence

announce the marriage of their daughter

Helena

to

Mr. John Pratt,

on Wednesday, December the Tenth,

at Baltimore, Maryland.

At Home

after January First,

at 333 Linden Avenue.

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT.—NO. 2.

Mr. William A. Sharman,

Miss Winifred Grace Rice,

Married

Wednesday, May Sixth, 1880.

New York.

INVITATION TO A MUSICALE.

Mrs. Charles Lander Smith

At Home

Wednesday, December Tenth, from Four until Seven o'clock.

200½ Chestnut Street.

Music.

INVITATION TO A CAUDLE PARTY.

Mr. & Mrs. John Kendal

request the pleasure of your company

on Wednesday afternoon, December Tenth, at Three o'clock.

Candle

23 Fifth Avenue.

No presents are expected.

INVITATION TO A SILVER WEDDING.

1864

1889

Mr. & Mrs. Walters

request the pleasure of your company

on Wednesday, December Tenth, at Eight o'clock.

Silver Wedding.

James Walters.

Alice Jones.

22 Morris Avenue.

INVITATION TO A GARDEN PARTY.

Mr. & Mrs. Rodney A. Ward

request the pleasure of

Mrs. and Miss Rogers' Company

on Thursday, August Sixth, at Three o'clock.

Garden Party.

Idlewild.

INVITATION TO A COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT.

525 Elm Street,
June 25, 1889.

Dear Miss Brown :

Our college commencement will be on Wednesday next, and I hope you will do me the honor of being present. At best they are not very lively affairs, but I can promise you a view of the different halls and the library, which I am sure you will find of interest. Trusting to see you, I am,

*Very faithfully,
Edgar Smith.*

REGRETS.

10 St. Mark's Place,
June 25, 1889.

Dear Mr. Smith :

Owing to illness I am unable to accept your kind invitation for Wednesday next, which I regret very much, for I am very interested in the subject selected for your paper. With all good wishes for your success, not only at this time, but in the future, I am,

*Very cordially,
Anita Brown.*

INVITATION TO A PRIVATE VIEW.

*Union Club,
February 4, 1889.*

Dear Miss Montague :

The private view of the Water Color Society is set for next Saturday. May I not have the pleasure of taking you to see the pictures, good, bad or indifferent? If I may, I will call for you at half after eight o'clock. Hoping you will say "yes," I am,

*Very cordially,
Frank Osborn.*

ACCEPTANCE.

*10 St. James' Place,
February 4, 1889.*

Dear Mr. Osborn :

It gives me great pleasure to accept your kind invitation for Saturday. I shall be awaiting you at half-past eight o'clock, and am sure I shall enjoy both the pictures and your criticism of them.

*Very cordially,
Elizabeth Montague.*

REGRETS.

10 St. James' Place,
February 4, 1889.

Dear Mr. Osborn:

A previous engagement prevents my acceptance of your kind invitation for Saturday. Thanking you very much for your thought of me, I am,

*Very cordially,
Elizabeth Montague.*

NOTE WITH CHRISTMAS GIFT.

100½ Fifth Avenue,
Christmas, 1889.

Dear Miss Edgerton:

I hope you will like this little vinaigrette which comes as my messenger at this festive season. It has no value save that it came from the Exposition and was carved by some Florentine silver worker. With all hopes for a happy time, I am,

*Yours cordially,
Arthur Walters.*

REPLY.

100½ Madison Avenue,
Christmas, 1889.

Dear Mr. Walters:

Thank you very much for the vinaigrette and more for the remembrance of me when you were among all that wonderful old silver. We expect you this evening, to see the Christmas tree lighted, and to receive whatever Kriss Kringle may have in his bag for a considerate friend.

*Very cordially,
Florence Edgerton.*

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