

HINTS ON
ETIQUETTE
AND THE USES OF SOCIETY



WITH A GLANCE AT BAD HABITS

HINTS ON ETIQUETTE

Hints on Etiquette, etc., was first published in 1834 by Messrs. Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman.

This edition published in 2005 by Summersdale Publishers Ltd.

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Summersdale Publishers Ltd
46 West Street
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1RP
UK

www.summersdale.com

Printed and bound in Great Britain

ISBN 1 84024 456 9

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Hints on Etiquette &c., &c.

Etiquette is the barrier which society draws around itself as a protection against offences the 'law' cannot touch – a shield against the intrusion of the impertinent, the improper, and the vulgar – a guard against those obtuse persons who, having neither talent nor delicacy, would be continually thrusting themselves into the society of men to whom their presence might (from the difference of feeling and habit) be offensive, and even insupportable.

Many unthinking persons consider the observance of Etiquette to be nonsensical and unfriendly, as consisting of unmeaning forms, practised only by the *silly* and the idle; an opinion which arises from their not having reflected on the *reasons* that have caused certain rules to be established, indispensable to the well-being of society, and without which, indeed, it would inevitably fall to pieces, and be destroyed.

Much misconstruction and unpleasant feeling arises, especially in country towns, from not knowing what is '*expected*', or necessary to be done on certain occasions, resulting sometimes from the prevalence of local customs, with which the world in general are not supposed to be acquainted.



Besides, in a mercantile country like England, people are continually rising in the world.

Shopkeepers become merchants, and mechanics manufacturers; with the possession of wealth they acquire a taste for the luxuries of life, expensive furniture, and gorgeous plate; also numberless superfluities, with the use of which they are only imperfectly acquainted. But although their capacities for enjoyment increase, it rarely occurs that the polish of their manners keeps pace with the rapidity of their advancement: such persons are often painfully reminded that wealth alone is insufficient to protect them from the mortifications a limited acquaintance with society will entail upon the ambitious. Pride often deters people from seeking the advice of the experienced, when the opportunity of receiving it is presented. It is to be hoped that the following remarks will furnish a guide through the intricacies of conventional usage, without risk to the sensitive, or the humiliation of *publicly* proclaiming the deficiencies of an imperfect education.

In all cases, the observances of the Metropolis (as the seat of refinement) should be received as the standard of good breeding.



Introductions

Never ‘introduce’ people to each other, without a previous understanding that it will be agreeable to both.

There are many reasons why people ought never to be introduced to the acquaintance of each other, without the consent of each party previously obtained. A man may suit the taste, and be agreeable enough to *one*, without being equally so to the *rest* of his friends – nay, as it often happens, decidedly unpleasant; a stupid person may be delighted with the society of a man of learning or talent,

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to whom in return such an acquaintance may prove an annoyance and a clog, as one incapable of offering an interchange of thought, or an idea worth listening to.

But if you should find an agreeable person in private society, who seems desirous of making your acquaintance, there cannot be an objection to your meeting his advances half way, although the ceremony of an 'introduction' may not have taken place; his presence in your friend's house being a sufficient guarantee for his respectability, as of course if he were an improper person he would not be there.

Should you, whilst walking with your friend, meet an acquaintance, never introduce them.

In making 'introductions,' take care to present the person of the lower rank to him of the higher; that is, the commoner should be presented to the peer, not the peer to the commoner; Dr. A. to Lord B., not Lord B. to Dr. A. Observe the same