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Manners- the You That Shows

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Dishcloth handclaps and languid looks were as much a part of the equipment of an 1890 miss as the friendly, outdoor kind of courtesy is a part of the modern college women—and just as essential.

Though the years have passed and no one looks aghast at the smart young woman who fails to "crook" her little finger at the proper angle while sipping tea, manners have remained as important as ever.

Correct manners are important to the college woman both socially and during school hours.

Ideas of faculty members have been collected by Gladys Hultz Meads, of the Department of Chemistry, and combined with her own to give the "three R's" of living harmoniously in college and in later life.

The details of a recent date can absorb two or three students for hours but how embarrassed they make the surrounding people feel when they are unable to move out of hearing distance. Such personal matters should be discussed in private so as not to risk embarrassing others, say those interviewed.

Voices can make or break a promising friendship by both quality and loudness. On the street or in any group it is important to speak in a low, pleasing voice. A harsh, loud quality gives the wrong impression.

A St. Bernard dog is one of the friendliest of animals but its size sometimes causes this friendliness to backfire. Similarly, a friendly person is welcome, but when he bursts into the room and into the conversation, figuratively wagging his tail in joyful anticipation, his hearers are apt to regard him with annoyance if not downright displeasure. It is as rude for the newcomer to ask what has been said as it is for the others to continue talking without bringing him up to date, and yet the others may not care to discuss the subject with him. To avoid this situation it is best for the newcomer to be silent until he is invited to join in the conversation. This maxim can be used profitably in the classroom, also, where the too-eager student is the bane of many a professor's existence.

In any group there are always various ideas on smoking. It has become such a general practice that more and more people are accepting it without reservation. It is well to think about why one smokes: for pleasure, for poise or for some other reason. No matter what the reason is for smoking, it should be as unobtrusive as possible. Be sure, too, that no one in the group objects. There are still many people to whom smoking is offensive.

Few students realize what impressions spectators may receive from couples on the dance floor. If the couple could see a reflection of themselves, they'd realize that taking time out to think about dancing manners can do much to improve them.

Professional dancing schools emphasize the position of the couple while dancing and use the one that looks best from the sidelines. Dancing before a mirror helps to develop graceful, natural dancing.

Boredom or at least looking bored has no place at dances but intimate conversations on the dance floor are also out. Save them for a place where there aren't so many people milling about.

Don't forget the chaperones in the rush. Their friendship may be invaluable in making a way through college. This is especially true if they are professors.

The second set of manners belong to the home whether it is actually a home or a dormitory, a sorority house or a rented hall. Sincere and spontaneous introductions are one of the best ways of creating good feeling. There is always a certain amount of tension between two people who have not been introduced. A few words of introduction plus some information about each will start the conversational ball rolling. Graceful introductions which do not leave the strangers grasping at straws to make conversation, are an art worth cultivating.

Since much entertaining includes some sort of a meal, table manners are constantly under observation. These table manners should include a few ideas on conversation. If a person knows he is a poor impromptu conversationalist, he should prepare for any situation. Keep up with all the current happenings and the latest movies and books. This is easily done by reading the daily paper and a weekly news magazine.

If a special guest is to be present, a little reading about his work will make conversation with him easier and more enjoyable.

As certain foods become harder to get and costlier, no one should be guilty of wasting food. The old childhood threat of "no dessert unless you clean up your plate" cannot exactly be applied here but a similar mental restriction should be enforced. If refusing anything would seriously disappoint the hostess, take small portions of food rather than risk leaving something.

Time is precious. Keeping others waiting is impolite but not appearing for appointments with busy faculty members is inexcusable.

Finally the faculty and others would like to remind students to knock before entering a room when the door is closed, whether a sign requests it or not. This should be remembered in the home, too, since doors are usually closed for privacy, which should be respected.

Mrs. Meads gives this thought to all women who are interested in putting their best foot forward. "Having nice social presence is largely a matter of kindliness and unselfishness. If we feel kindly enough, we wish others to be comfortable and will do nothing to upset them. Don't be gushy, however, anymore than perfunctory:"

Joan Kilty reports that faculty members believe kindness and unselfishness underlie social and classroom courtesy.