

Manners the Morals of the Heart.

BY MRS. C. M. CONDON.

In the Victorian era, among the items in the bills rendered from Ladies' schools, was always one set down to "Deportment." Great stress was laid upon training and instruction in this subject, which embraced table manners; behaviour at church, on the street, and other places of public resort. It also prescribed the different forms of salutation according to the rank, age or position of the person saluted; the correct method of entering and leaving a room; also the art of entering and alighting gracefully from a carriage, to which was frequently added equestrian practice and etiquette at a good riding school. Special pains were taken with the different *curtsies*, made by the ladies, from the simpler forms, up to the three sweeping reverences made to Her Majesty on presentation at Court.

Sometimes with narrow-minded people, there was an unbending adherence to rules that degenerated into an ungraceful formality; but, on the whole, this careful training in the minutiae of social convention fully justified itself.

The mother of our late beloved Queen, the Duchess of Kent, was the careful trainer of the young Princess in a high-bred courtesy, at once simple and sincere.

At her coronation Victoria beautifully exemplified her exquisite courtesy. Lord Rolles, a very aged peer, when about to swear fealty to the Sovereign, stumbled on the steps of the dais; instantly the young Queen rose and extended a helping hand to the feeble old man, involuntarily shewing that respect for old age which was a strong point in the teaching of the day.

There was, undoubtedly, at times undue repression of youthful spirits, and when out of range of the eyes of authority nature asserted itself, and manners might not then be so commendable. But no greater tribute can be paid to the training, as a whole, than the delightful manners of some of the best specimens of those whose parents paid for this item of "Deportment."

One who loves children cannot but be glad that they have so much freedom and scope for expression of their individuality; ~~we~~ cannot but regret when freedom degenerates into a license that ignores the just claims of age and authority to respect and courtesy. It is to be feared that the present age is not strong in reverence, and the gentle manners that spring from that great quality. Many causes contribute to this; the rush and hurry

of daily life, the keen competition, the insatiable curiosity to which nothing is sacred, especially if its objects are raised somewhat above the level, either in rank or fortune.

Even the press, unmindful of its high mission, as the guide of public opinion, sometimes sets a bad example, by indulging in reckless statement, attacking personal character, and dragging into unseemly publicity incidents which have no real bearing on the point at issue, simply to mortify and wound an opponent. Criticism is necessary, but it gains in point and effectiveness when it disdains personalities and deals only with the merits of the question, in a spirit of fairness and good will.

But laying aside the consideration of those merely conventional rules, necessary to the smooth working of social intercourse, let us see what are the principles that will always secure good manners if reduced to practice. We may as well place, first, a profound reverence for man as man, made in the image of the Creator, a reverence quite irrespective of all accidents of birth or fortune. If parents, teachers and all who are in authority will heartily recognize this supreme fact, it will revolutionize manners and elevate the whole tone of society. Then there must be recognition of the fact that every one has a right, not dependent upon our moods and feelings, to fair and civil treatment.

How many parents and teachers, to the great detriment of the children, make sickness, pressure of business, and every disagreeable happening, an excuse for ungente behaviour, and even for positive discourtesy.

How greatly children, even babies, suffer in this uncongenial atmosphere is well known to the sympathetic observer. As the practice of this infraction of the rules of good manners is generally confined to children and inferiors, it is as mean as it is immoral. A great aid to agreeable manners will be found in that intelligent sympathy which springs from the head as well as the heart, and finds in the limitations of the individual, nay, even in his very depravity, such a strong appeal for help, that self sinks out of sight, and the morals of a generous heart shows itself in perfect manners.

The refinement and grace of Elizabeth Fry won insensibly upon the hardened criminals of Newgate, and influenced them to listen to her prayers and preaching; for who could be obdurate in a presence so sweet and genial?

Another help to good manners will be secured by the determination to cultivate, as a matter of duty,