

## PRACTICAL PAPERS.

## DISCOURTESIES IN THE SHOP.

Perhaps nowhere do peculiarities of character creep more plainly into view than in the every day occupation of shopping. Business this is to some—to others, pleasure; but, however regarded in itself, it often becomes a social affair. Yet, did you never hear a lady say with a sort of nervous desperation, "Oh! I cannot bear to go a-shopping with Mrs. So-and-so?" What is the trouble?

In the first place, probably Mrs. So-and-so has little, if any, idea of what she wants. She is "going a-shopping"—perhaps she will look for a dress. But she doesn't know whether she wants silk or woolen, black or blue. And she sits down at the counter, and calls for one article after another, with a vagueness that confuses the most intelligent clerk, and with an indecision which is wearisome and vexatious to her friend.

Now, there are times and circumstances when a certain amount of indecision while shopping is expected and justifiable. For example, about Christmas shopkeepers expect the public to wander through their premises, uncertain what to buy—to examine the pretty things displayed, and purchase when suited. It is perfectly understood that goods in many large shops in the city are on exhibition; and a very little penetration enables the public to assume a courteous attitude in these cases. But it is a very different matter for Mrs. So-and-so when she does not know what she wants, or knows she does not want anything, to pull over pile after pile of goods, and ask for "more," without the least consideration. Still more discourteous is it when she assumes a supercilious bearing towards the long-suffering clerk, and imperatively demands to be served. The tone of voice, quite as much as the words spoken, is an index to the character, and sometimes "shoppers" seem altogether unaware how unpleasantly conspicuous they make themselves.

Only a few drops of oil on the busy wheels of life, and how quickly the friction vanishes! Politeness in asking for what you desire is usually responded to by prompt and willing attention. And supposing it is the business of the clerk to serve you, why not express your thanks when you have made extra trouble, or he has taken special pains to suit you, particularly if, after all, no purchase is made?

Did you ever see a thoughtless shopper turn from the motley pile with which the counter has been strewn, without a word of appreciation for attention, and then watch the clerk carefully smoothing the rumpled goods and replacing them on the shelves? Did you ever wonder what he was thinking about, the while?

It was an old-time discourtesy—that of disparaging goods—or Solomon would not have spoken of buyers "boasting," after they had reiterated, "It is naught, it is naught." This custom is beneath an honest, honorable purchaser.

What an irresistible propensity there is to see with one's fingers, as it were. Half the grown people in the world are like children, in that they look—and touch, no matter how delicate the article exhibited; and they need like the two-year-old baby the perpetual reminder, "Don't touch!" What would be thought of a visitor in a private parlor, who, on pretence of seeing, should handle and displace the bronzes, vases, and fragile ornaments, scatter the engravings on the table, and leave the library shelves in confusing disarray? Is no courtesy due to shopkeepers who spend time, skill and taste in attractive displays?

But the discourtesy of the shop is by no means all on one side of the counter. While the proprietor himself, if present, is naturally attentive to his patrons, and clerks receive special training in this direction, buyers sometimes experience neglect which quickly sends them to the door. "Nothing of the kind," is the laconic answer, when evidently the clerk intends to spare himself the trouble of looking.

Many of our readers may remember the test which Alexander T. Stewart is said to have applied to a new clerk, to whom he was personally unknown. Plainly dressed, he made his appearance at the counter, and asked to see some cotton cloth. He was hard to suit; and when he took a piece of goods to examine in a lighter place, the clerk exclaimed: "Hold on, old man, none of that. You can buy goods here at the

counter if you want them." "You had better step down to the cashier's desk and get what is owing to you," was the quiet response.

More really discourteous than any lack of attention is an officiousness which borders on impertinence. You scarcely step over the threshold when you are pounced upon by some clerk who demands, "What shall I show you?" If you chance to want to make a little general survey, before completing your decision for purchases, you soon have an uncomfortable consciousness of being *pursued*. You stop a moment to look at an article, spread out for general inspection, which attracts your eye. Instantly, before you have had time to discover one of its excellencies, there bursts forth a torrent—the "best," "cheapest," "most fashionable," "none to be found elsewhere," "only so much left." "Will you have a dress pattern?" "How many yards do you require?"—all in a breath. It makes you turn away abruptly. But pause again and you are attacked in a similar way.

And then, even when you have decided just what you want, it is surprising how many clerks know so much better than you do what are your needs and tastes.

"Do you wish to buy a dress?" demanded one of these officious clerks, not long ago, as two ladies entered a large Broadway store. "I want"—and one of them mentioned definitely the material, color and style she desired. "This way," was the brief response; and presently he exhibited goods of the proper material, but totally different in style and color. The lady simply saying that was not what she wanted, turned to leave the shop; but the clerk detained her, opening other pieces, one after another, and volubly praising them. "But I asked for plain black," said the lady; "have you that?" "This is much more fashionable," was the rude response; "any lady of taste would prefer it."

Clerks of such a stamp would soon drive every customer from a shop. Buyers should be most considerate about causing needless trouble at the counter; but sellers have no possible right to insist upon goods being purchased, or to show displeasure, much less anger, when articles they offer for sale are not desired. —*M. M., in N.Y. Christian Union.*

## TO MOTHERS.

Knowing that there are many mothers who have little time to read, and cannot afford to buy many books, we propose to give such practical hints and suggestions as can be used by the busiest mothers—or, in other words, to have a talk with them, for we hope, if any are willing to act on these suggestions, they will keep us informed of results.

Before going farther, however, it will be necessary to settle a few principles, so that we shall comprehend one another, and have, as it were, a platform upon which to stand.

First, then, the mother is never to be a drudge, using up her health, her time, and her energies, in such a way that she cannot minister to the spiritual nature of her child.

By the word "drudge," we mean not only the toil of washing, cooking, cleaning, and sewing, which occupies the time of so many mothers, but the worse drudgery of dress, fashion, leading in society, amusements, novel reading, etc., which so absorbs hundreds of mothers that their children are left almost entirely to the care of servants until they are old enough to go to school.

Secondly. You must forever put away the idea that anybody can teach children, and remember that it requires much more ability and culture to guide accurately the formation of the human mind than to listen to recitations from books.

When God committed an immortal being to your care, He never intended that you should shirk the responsibility, but that while you live your soul should be closely in communion with the soul of your child, at least during the earliest years of its life, and, if need be, give to others the care of the food, clothing, etc.

Thirdly. If you are not fitted, by nature or education, for the great work of cultivating the mind of your child, it should be your first duty to prepare yourself for this God-appointed task. You will need constantly to bear in mind that He will never lay upon you a work which He will not help you to do rightly and wisely.

Fourthly. That while you recognize the pressing

needs of the body—its food, clothing, fresh air, and exercise, you dare not for a moment forget the vastly greater needs of the intellectual, moral, and religious nature of your child, and that what you do, or neglect to do, will tell upon him throughout eternity.

Think of the hundreds of children everywhere, whose hands and minds are left idle, except for the work which Satan supplies, while the mothers can only find time to deck their bodies with silk, velvet, and lace.

Feeling, then, that we recognize the great principles by which we must be controlled in the work of educating little children, let us consider how this can best be done.

As you sit with your baby in your arms, you, no doubt, often wonder how you can show him what you think, or find out what he thinks, since you cannot talk with him.

Of course, you remember that there are five avenues or senses through which you can go to a child and convey intelligence of the wonderful world into which he has just come. But did it ever occur to you that you are entirely responsible for the proper cultivation of these senses, and for the sort of intelligence which he receives through them?

He opens his eyes to look at you, and you fancy you can see into his soul, and you hope he can see into yours, and know how much you love him, and how much you desire his love; but to secure this, you must convey through this open door intelligence of yourself which shall win his love.

After you have drawn him to yourself, you can, through all the avenues by which you entered, convey to him such intelligence of the works of God about him, that you shall win his love to God as certainly and as clearly as the love you won to yourself.

This, of course, you consider as the great end of all education, and when you give your child up most of the time to others something is sure to go wrong; the child's life is marred, the result not attained, and who is to blame for a life of sin? Certainly not the child.

Leaving you now to ponder these things, I shall at another time speak of the kinds of intelligence conveyed through the senses, and the best methods of doing it.—*E. M. Coe, in Church Union.*

## NUTRITION IN FRUIT.

R. F. Kedzie, of Lansing, Mich., furnishes some facts and deductions from analyses, showing the relative nutritive value of fruit as compared with other foods. Taking the average of the more common large and small fruits they contain from four-fifths to nine-tenths water. They do not rank high for repairing and building up of the human body. An egg, weighing a little over an ounce and a half, and containing seventy-seven grains of albuminous matter, is equivalent, in nutritive value, to seventeen ounces of heart cherries, twenty-two ounces of grapes, 30 ounces of strawberries, forty ounces of apples, and four pounds of pears. Heart cherries contain only three-fourths water, and have nearly double the nutritive value of strawberries, which have more than nine-tenths water. These, we may remark, are the result of analyses; but in actual use the case may be different, as some foods are more readily assimilated than others, and those which contain little nutriment in themselves may strongly promote the digestion of other substances. In one respect, fruit possesses a power of preventing disease, when regularly eaten, which gives it great value. Residents of new settled portions of the country, when they can have a regular supply of well-ripened fruit, are rarely attacked with malarial diseases which so often prevail in those regions.

I THINK when God makes his presence felt through us, we are like the burning bush; Moses never took any heed what sort of a bush it was—he only saw the brightness of the Lord.

THERE are hours in life when the most trifling cross takes the form of a calamity. Our tempers are like an opera glass, which makes the object small or great according to the end you look through.—*Souvestre.*

WHAT is Presbyterianism? is often asked. In the last number of the "Southern Presbyterian Review," Dr. Peck, Moderator of the Southern General Assembly, gives Dr. Thornwell's definition of Presbyterianism as the "only satisfactory one," viz:—"Presbyterianism is the government of the Church by Parliamentary assemblies, composed of two classes of presbyters, and of Presbyters only, and so arranged as to realize the visible unity of the whole Church."