

the Czar in January. Acting, therefore, as she would have done at home, without any hesitation she took a cluster from the vase and laid it upon the golden plate before her. Shortly, however, she observed that when the grapes were offered to the other guests each one took a golden knife, which was upon the vase, and cut off one, two, or, at the most, three grapes. Even the Emperor did not exceed the latter number. Evidently white grapes were regarded in St. Petersburg at that season as an elegant luxury, and were to be tasted—as Lord Bacon said some books ought to be—not eaten. Nevertheless there lay the bunch of grapes upon the young lady's plate, the too unfortunate evidence of her dereliction of etiquette. It can be easily imagined how excessively she was annoyed at her mistake. Indeed, she afterward remarked, when telling the story, that she never in all her life contemplated any thing half so disagreeable as that bunch of grapes was to her under the circumstances. Yet it was a very natural mistake—one that most any American would have made—but we venture to say, that, though it was an awkward incident, it did not even excite a smile at the expense of the beautiful representative—for she was very beautiful—of republican America, on the countenances of the refined *habitués* of the imperial court.

Mr. Marshall used to relate an amusing case of ignorance to which he was witness at Washington. It took place at the White House during dinner, or rather at the close of it. When the finger-glasses were put on, a member of Congress from that part of the country where De Tocqueville says there is plenty of population but no society, who had never seen one before, observing that the glass placed before him contained a little water and slice of lemon, supposed that it was lemonade, and immediately drank it up. Shortly after the servant, noticing that the member's glass had no water in it, removed it, and placed another properly filled in its stead. The contents of this were promptly disposed of also. The waiter soon furnished a third glass. But this was too much for the philosophy of the worthy member, so stopping the waiter, he said to him, "Take it to that gentleman over there; he's only had one." The colored gentleman, who had "acquired" during his service at the White House, and had "seen life," was much amused.

A question of etiquette drew from Napoleon one of those witty speeches for which he was celebrated. After the establishment of the imperial nobility with which Napoleon surrounded his throne, the Emperor gave a grand ball. For certain reasons he was present only a very short time. Late in the evening, when the company were requested to enter the banquet-hall, a struggle took place between the newly-elevated ladies in regard to priority. The contest becoming warm, the doors of the banquet-room were kept closed, and the master of ceremonies retired to consult the Emperor with respect to the matter. "Announce as his Majesty's commands," said Napoleon, "that the *eldest* enter first, and that the others follow in proportion to their *age*." It will readily be conceived that there was little contention after the announcement. Indeed, if the noble ladies had not feared to offend his Majesty, and perhaps, with French quickness, appreciated the *esprit* of the Emperor, probably this would have dispensed with the banquet altogether. Among the *ancien régime*, the old nobility of France, such a scene could not have occurred. Etiquette was carried to the utmost extent by the Bourbons. Indeed so important was it considered that, during the reign of Louis XVI., one lady of the court, who had particular charge of matters of form and propriety, was called "Madame Etiquette." It was disregard of Madame that brought much trouble upon poor Marie Antoinette. But the *ancien régime* of France were chivalric; with them *noblesse oblige* was a rule, and they may be pardoned an over-love of form. In Louis XIV.'s reign Marly was considered delightful, because there etiquette was relaxed. An invitation to Marly was a thing to be coveted, an honor which was greatly appreciated by all who were high enough in favor to obtain it. "Pardon, Sire, the rain of Marly can not wet any one," was the polite and complimentary reply of a

gentleman whom the King requested to be covered during a slight shower when they were walking in the garden together. Court etiquette is often oppressive, and it is not surprising that monarchs and the nobility should gladly seek some favored spot where they may be in a measure released from its trammels.

Etiquette is near akin to courtesy, which we know was born of chivalry. If chivalry possessed no other merit it certainly had that of refining the manners of the world. Before the days of chivalry politeness was but little understood, and particular politeness to woman was hardly known. The strongest "took the wall" of his neighbor. Chivalry, however, taught that generosity is a virtue, and that strength must waive its rights. When the horse of De Grantmesnil, at the tournament of Ashby, swerved in his course, Ivanhoe declined to take the advantage which this accident afforded him; and "De Grantmesnil acknowledged himself vanquished, as much by the courtesy as by the skill of his opponent." The principle is seen now in a gentleman's giving the wall to the lady, and in doffing his beaver in salutation. Only the poor is unacquainted with these ordinary customs. The extremity to which such politeness is carried in our country—which makes it the paradise of women—may be observed any day in the railroad cars, where an old gentleman is often seen to stand up for a mile in order to give a seat to a young lady, who very likely is more able to stand than he is. We wish that some of our fair country-women, who are the prettiest and most pleasant women in the world, knew that etiquette requires of them to show some sense of the politeness of which they are so often the subjects in the public conveyances by at least a smile of appreciation. Rudeness and awkwardness are apt to shade into each other; they produce something of the same effect. To have a lady neglect to recognize a politeness which costs you something, and to have a gentleman tug at his well-fitting glove to get it off in order to shake hands with you, when he ought to know that when gloved he ought to shake hands with his gloves on, are equally annoying. The continual iteration of the word, Sir, in conversation is a habit unfortunately too common in our country, and which should be amended. In really refined society it is never heard. In England it is deemed servile. It is singular that many do not observe peculiarities, never distinguish in appellations, nor see an especial fitness in certain expressions. You constantly hear people say, a flock of geese (meaning wild geese) for a *line* of geese, a flock of deer for a *herd* of deer, a flock of partridges for a *covey* of partridges, a flock of larks for a *bevy* of larks, a lot of girls for a *bevy* of ladies. Exactness of expression, where the language may be understood, should always be adhered to. We should say, a *whist pack*, and a *euchre deck*; but we should avoid scientific and technical expressions, which convey no meaning to very many in general society.

We have said that etiquette is arbitrary. Yet, in some points, it will be found to be based upon reason and good taste. For instance, upon entering a room at a party the gentleman should offer his right arm to the lady, in order that she may have her right hand free, and also be able to display her drapery to the most advantage. Upon taking leave the lady should not take the gentleman's arm, so that both may have their right hands free in case the hostess should offer to shake hands on parting. When the farewell is made the lady should take the gentleman's arm to retire. In going up stairs the gentleman should always precede the lady; in going down stairs the lady should lead. Shaking hands is so universal in our country that it has grown into a mere form, and means very little. In England a gentleman will bow to one to whom he would not give his hand. The latter is considered private and due only to a friend, and is extended only as a sign of regard, or through especial courtesy. In our country to refuse the hand is considered rude, and both ladies and gentlemen shake hands at all times and in all places. But, because shaking hands is an American custom, it is not wrong or a violation of proper etiquette. Our country is as much entitled to its own customs as any other nation; and