

sary and advisable to do so. We could all of us, probably, cite many instances of the same kind. Mrs. A. and Mr. B. being both interested in a certain school, Mrs. A. went to see Mr. B. to discuss with him some point in the management of it. Suddenly Mr. B. caught sight of an open letter lying on the table in front of him, and he took it up and looked mechanically through it while she spoke. The result was that, although he was in reality more than willing to meet Mrs. A.'s wishes about the school, his manner, quite unintentionally, produced a feeling of unreasoning resentment in her, and she was far more angry with him for agreeing inattentively with her views than she would have been if he had differed from them after listening to her attentively and courteously. All this means an absolutely unnecessary expenditure of energy. Mrs. A., being given the wrong bias at the beginning of the interview, was then annoyed with herself for being annoyed with Mr. B.; the irritation in her manner communicated itself to his, according to a law of nature as definitely ascertained as that of the propagation of the waves in the ether, and the question they had met to discuss was settled with an incalculable amount of friction, which might have been entirely avoided. It arose purely from Mr. B.'s defective training in manners. He had probably been taught as a definite precept of conduct in his youth, obeyed ever since quite unconsciously, without a separate effort of will or intention, to get up when a lady entered his room, and not to sit down with his back to her afterwards; but it would have been well for him if he had also been taught not morally to turn his back upon her by reading a letter while she was speaking to him of something else. This is one of the most exasperating and most prevalent forms of bad manners, and it reappears in an infinite variety of snapes.

Mrs. E. went one day to see Mrs. F., who is renowned for the rare gifts of her mind, heart and intelligence. Mrs. E. was prepared to be impressed by her, to admire her, to be guided by her. But, behold! during the whole of their interview, in which, indeed Mrs. F.'s utterances were all they were expected to be, she entirely impaired the effect of them by looking at herself in the glass all the time she was speaking. And somehow, however unreasonably, that trifling manifestation outweighed in the mind of her hearer all the brilliancy and charm of her talk, and those few moments of intercourse, so eagerly anticipated, remained in the mind of Mrs. E. as an acute disillusion. Mrs. F. would probably much have regretted this result, if she had known it, for even brilliant and superior people, I imagine, would prefer not to produce an impression of disillusion; and in this case, as in most others, it might quite well have been avoided. Mrs. F. ought to have been taught sometimes, as everyone should be taught, not to look at her own reflection at the wrong moment; to be able to pass a stray and unexpected glass without looking in it, and, especially, never to watch herself in one while talking to other people. It is not wicked, of course, to look in the glass at the wrong moment. It is merely absurd. But why should we be even absurd if it can be avoided? There is no reason why people should be either ridiculous or unpleasing in their social relations, if they could only be taught, at an age when they are still teachable, to curb the indiscretions of their outward manifestations; if only an onlooker were allowed on occasion to cry "*Casse cou!*" as in the French game of our youth, when a blunderer whose eyes were bound was about to stumble over some unseen obstacle. I once heard a boy of nineteen, in conversation with a listener of more than twice his age, preface a quotation by saying: "As