

MARCH 16, 1911

**"Manners Makyth Man."**  
IV.

"Neither a Bore nor a Boor, but a Cultivated Gentleman."

I am indebted to a very dear friend of mine, the mother of sons of whom any Canadian parent might well be proud, for permission to quote freely from a letter which I was privileged to read in the course of a conversation upon the topic which has headed my last three articles, "Manners Makyth Man." The letter was written by an elder brother to a younger, the former having crowned a successful career at our public schools and university, by holding more than one prominent position; the latter, after also successfully competing for three scholarships, having just entered upon university life in one of the large cities of the Dominion.

Naturally, my use of this letter has to be very restricted, and so must be my words of commendation, lest I should invade the privacy and betray the identity of these fine young specimens of Canadian manhood, but I believe that my quotations will not be without their significance, as showing the brighter side of the shield, as it were; as giving proof of what home influence and a wise use of the educational advantages our country offers, and of what a bounteous harvest may be expected from good seed sown in good soil. The letter begins:

"Dear —: To-night, the first free night I have had for weeks and weeks, I am going to write you about your University Course—about both your work and your general life there. First, about your University life, apart from your work:

"You have already made a start, so that it is useless for me to give you any advice about your conduct on entering. Had I written you earlier, I should have warned you to lie low and say nothing for some time. You are now entering a society of 2,000 students, hardly any of whom know you, and hardly any of whom you know. Your reputation with them is therefore in your own hands; see that it is a good one! Men at the University haven't so much admiration for a brilliant man as they have for a man of strong character; a decent man, who is white through and through; a man who is straight, clean and manly; a man who says little, but is ready to do his share and more, without talk, when it comes to action; a man who has every other man sized up in his own mind, but who never, on any condition, says an unkind, ungenerous or unthinking thing about another man; a man who works hard, and has the force of will to stick to it, in spite of blandishments or temptations; a man who always sets his face against any proposal which is the least bit crooked or tricky or underhand; a man who assumes no airs, social or intellectual; a man who knows his own mind, and minds his own business; a man who is companionable, accommodating and 'clubbable'; a man who is always ready to help a chum either in his Latin prose, or in a fight with the police; a man who is absolutely sincere, in word and deed, and who never tries to run with the hares and hunt with the hounds; a man who never exaggerates, and who is always inclined to understate rather than overstate his case; a man who always does the decent thing; a man who puts on no side; a man who is a sport, and a clean one; a man who plays the game, first, last and all the time. That is the sort of man I want your 2,000 companions to find in my brother.

In my day at Varsity, the most popular man was H. J., yet I never knew him to do anything to seek popularity. He was a Y. M. C. A. man among students who were by no means in love with the Y. M. C. A.

He had more money than the vast majority of us, yet he spent less than most. He never preached to the other fellows, yet I never heard him swear or tell a smutty story; he never soiled his own lips with them. He never smoked, as far as I can remember, and certainly he never drank anything. He was friends with everyone, with men of all parties and classes, and I don't think anyone ever heard him say a word against a soul. He had little to say, but he was always ready for fun. As a freshman he laid low, and did what he was told, without any back talk, and, with the best of humor; as a sophomore, he treated freshmen with more consideration than any sophomore had ever treated him; as a senior, he saw to it that the sophomores of that day acted fairly towards those below him. He was one of the most silent men in the University, and when he spoke he never raised his voice. If the conversation was getting awkward or undesirable, he would in his quiet way turn it into a better channel. If the conduct or character of some man was being discussed, he was the first to suggest a favorable explanation or a charitable view. Of course, he was a sport—a great footballer, as well as an association player, a hockey player and a baseball player. A quarter-back of the First Fifteen, he was naturally an idol of the whole university, but his popularity existed long before he became quarter-back. On the football field he never played for his own glory, but always for the glory of his side. He would pass the ball to a man in a better position, even though he had a chance to make a brilliant run. He worked hard for the Athletic Association—work that is laborious, but not showy. He was content to do the work and let the other fellow have the honor. In spite of his prominence on the football field and in various student societies, he was perhaps the most modest man in our class. He did no spouting at meetings, though he would work like a Trojan at committee meetings. He seemed to have a poorer opinion of himself than anybody else had of him. In spite of his quietness, no one would ever have mistaken him for 'a stick.' He was full of fun—innocent, irresponsible, bubbling humor. When it came to a political fight, he'd fight hard for his party,

but he'd never say or do an ungenerous thing against the other side. Above all, he was absolutely straight and trustworthy in every detail; he played the game from start to finish.

"That was H. J., and, as far as possible, I should like to see you the H. J. of your generation. You may never play on the first team, but then, there is nothing to stop you from being as straight and decent as he was; nothing to prevent you being as completely master of yourself; nothing to stand in the way of your playing the game in as true a sportsmanlike manner. Model yourself on H. J. as I have pictured him here, and you will make a huge success of the social side of your University life.

"To get down to details, I should advise you to keep your mouth shut as tightly as you can for the first term or so. I don't mean that you should be a recluse or unsociable. Go into everything, but let the other fellows do the gassing. You lie low and take their measure. If you're given a job to do, do it, but don't talk about it. Don't try to make yourself a hail-fellow-well-met. Don't swear. Don't swap stories. Don't be generous with confidences. In your first year you have no idea who will be your best friends in your fourth. But never do or say anything which will prevent you being the best of friends with any man in the University. My own advice to you would be not to smoke. That is largely on account of your health. Until the development of your upper chest is more satisfactory, you would be extremely foolish to smoke, and no one would think better of you for smoking. But, if you like, have cigarettes in your room for your friends.

"One other point of a general character: If you are entertained, either by Professors or by the parents of your fellow students, or by people you may meet in Toronto, make it a rule to observe all your social duties. If you are invited anywhere to dinner, or to a party, call the following Sunday afternoon without fail. This is a rule neglected by so many young fellows that the one who observes it at once is recognized as a gentleman. If you go out with the G's to spend a weekend or Thanksgiving Day, write a note to your hostess the day after your return, thanking her for her

kindness and hospitality. That is a rule which no gentleman ever neglects. Further, make it your practice always to pick out and associate with the nicest people. I don't want you to be a snob; but, after all, breeding does count, and people who are always meeting gentlemen become gentlemen themselves; while those who are always meeting ordinary people, become ordinary. So choose your friends, when you do choose, from among the men of good family. In that way you will meet the other people of good family, and your connection will be far better than it otherwise would be. And, from the first, when you are meeting nobody, seize on the Professor who is the most cultured, and make him your model. Choose an Oxford man; it may be Prof. D. or Mr. B., or Mr. W., or Mr. S., or Mr. M.—the very best type of Oxford man with whom you come in contact—and do your very best to acquire his refinement of thought and manner. You are still in the imitative stage; your character is still in process of formation; see to it that you develop into the best possible man and the most cultured gentleman. The street urchins can easily beat you at slang; drop all efforts to rival them; try, rather, to rival those to whom slang is an abomination, and with whom culture counts for everything.

"And here let me say that the great secret of gentlemanliness is unselfishness. The true gentleman is the man who is always thinking of others. Cultivate this. Always think how you can add to the comfort or pleasure of those with whom you come in contact. You will then give up your seat to a lady or an older man in a street car; you will turn the conversation at dinner to subjects which interest the other diners; you will encourage people to talk about themselves, rather than about you; you will think more of passing them the salt than of getting them to pass you the salt; you will notice that they are tired or worried or indisposed; you will be generous in action and accommodating in discussion; you will acquire the priceless faculty of always putting other people at their ease. In a word, you will never be a bore or a boor. You will always be a gentleman. That is the greatest secret of life—Unselfishness."

H. A. B.



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