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GOOD MANNERS

There is, perhaps, no other one thing that keeps boys and girls from advancing in life more than a lack of good manners. A person may have a good heart, mean ever so well, but if he has an offensive manner and a repulsive personality everybody avoids him. People are so constituted that they love sunshine, pleasant sights and sounds, and naturally they turn from and avoid anything which jars upon the sensibilities and offends a refined taste.

We may state that good clothes do not change the real individual, but we all know that a well-dressed person, especially among strangers, meets with a better reception than does a person who is slovenly dressed. It is an undeniable fact that a man walks with more evidence of self-respect and with better grace with a good coat on his back than does a man who has a bad one.

Every one of our students realize the increased self-respect which comes from having on clean, well-pressed and proper fitting clothes. It gives one a sense of power which shows in the performance of every duty, a consciousness that you are as presentable as others, and renders one correspondingly more manly. The same with regard to our young women. It is not necessary that her clothes be made of expensive materials, but it is necessary that they fit properly and become her. In other words, if one expects to be received among good people it is absolutely essential that he or she pays attention to the matter of personal appearance. You must believe in yourself. You may succeed when others do not believe in you, but you will positively never succeed when you do not believe in yourself. One of the very first requisites to maintain self-respect is a desire to present a good appearance.

How can our students hope to attain even a fair degree of advancement in life, in character building, in winning success, without control of personal habits? A strong boy or girl will never allow the lower elements of nature to usurp the place of the higher; make servants of their passions and govern them mentally and physically. One who has not himself in his own power is quite likely to commit some serious breach and thus lower himself in the estimation of all.

Education strives to produce the faculty of self-control. When does a person feel more at ease with himself than when he has passed through a sudden and strong temptation to do wrong—a strong provocation to lose self-control—without falling, or speaking a word, or in undisturbed good humor? There are very few people—none whom we know—but who have in the chain of their character one or more links at fault. They may be weak in truthfulness, politeness, trustworthiness, temper, chastity, temperance, courage, industry, honesty (such as taking other people's little belongings) as well as in other things.

To a well-balanced lady or gentleman it is necessary to hold all faculties under control, subjecting them to discipline until they obey their will. It is said that a man has no more right to say an incivil thing than to act one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to injure him physically.

In every walk of life a young person should study politeness, cultivate neatness in personal appearance, and so conduct himself that his manners are a reflection of a gentle and honorable soul. We see the influence of good manners everywhere. The person with pleasing manners, will in every department of life, make rings all around those who show coarseness and appear ill-bred. Good manners—courtesy—often prove the foundation of a fortune. Acquire courteous habits; make it your business, for it may count heavily in your favor. How many men and women have failed because they have been discourteous! How many on the other hand, have climbed to great heights in power and reputation because they paid attention to the civilities of life.

True courtesy, after all, must spring from the heart. There is something in human nature which loves kindness and despises selfishness. Does not everyone love a broad mind and kindly heart? The person who is always studying his own advantage, always looking for the main chance, will never elicit our full love or respect, or our highest admiration. The world has no use for the persons who live only for themselves. It gives its love and adulation to the chivalrous and kind.

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