



Don't.



I.

*At Table.**

DON'T, as an invited guest, be late to dinner.

This is a wrong to your host, to other guests, and to the dinner.

Don't be late at the domestic table, as this is a wrong to your family, and is not calculated to promote harmony and good feeling.

* The greater number of these directions apply to all occasions and to all persons, but some have reference to special times, others to guests only or to hosts only.

Don't seat yourself until the ladies are seated, or, at a dinner-party, until your host or hostess gives the signal. Don't introduce, if you introduce at all, after the company is seated.

Don't sit a foot off from the table, or sit jammed up against it.

Don't tuck your napkin under your chin, or spread it upon your breast. Bibs and tuckers are for the nursery. Don't spread your napkin over your lap; let it fall over your knee.

Don't serve gentlemen guests at your table before *all* the ladies are served, including those who are members of your own household.

Don't eat soup from the end of the spoon, but from the side. Don't gurgle, or draw in

your breath, or make other noises when eating soup. Don't ask for a second service of soup.

Don't bend over your plate, or drop your head to get each mouthful. Keep an upright attitude as nearly as you can without being stiff.

Don't bite your bread. Break it off. Don't break your bread into your soup.

Don't eat with your knife. Never put your knife into your mouth. (Is this advice unnecessary? Go into any restaurant and observe.) Don't load up the fork with food with your knife, and then cart it, as it were, to your mouth. Take up on the fork what it can easily carry, and no more.

Don't use a steel knife with fish. A silver knife is now placed by the side of each plate for the fish course.

Don't handle fork or knife awkwardly. Let the handles of both knife and fork rest in the palm of the hand. How to handle knife and fork well can be acquired only by observation and practice. Don't stab with the fork, or handle it as if it were a dagger. Always carry food to the mouth with an inward curve of the fork or spoon.

Don't eat fast, or gorge. Take always plenty of time. Haste is vulgar.

Don't fill your mouth with too much food, and don't masticate audibly. Eat gently and quietly and easily.

Don't put your knife into the butter, into the salt-cellar, or into any dish.

Don't spread out your elbows when you are cutting your meat. Keep your elbows close to your side.

Don't, when you drink, elevate your glass as if you were going to stand it inverted on your nose, as some do. Bring the glass perpendicularly to the lips, and then lift it to a slight angle. Do this easily.

Don't eat vegetables with a spoon. Eat them with a fork. The rule is not to eat anything with a spoon that can be eaten with a fork. Even ices are now often eaten with a fork.

Don't devour the last mouthful of soup, the last fragment of bread, the last morsel of food. It is not expected that your plate should be sent away cleansed by your gastronomic exertions.

Don't leave your knife and fork on your plate when you send it for a second supply.*

* This rule is disputed. One of my critics affirms that the best English usage is exactly the contrary. I have before me directions written by Lord Cholmondeley, a leader

Don't reject bits of bone, or other substances, by spitting them back into the plate. Qui-

of fashion in London a generation or two ago, in which he says, "Be sure never to send your knife and fork when you send your plate to be served a second time." This was written, it is true, a long time ago, but is it likely that English custom can now be directly reversed? The logic of the question proves the correctness of the rule. It is not at all easy to place food on a plate already occupied by a knife and fork, and hence to send a plate thus encumbered is to put an obstacle in the way of your host, or whoever acts as carver—and it is a law of politeness to always incommode one's self rather than incommode others. It is asked, What shall one do with his knife and fork? The handles of knives and forks are now always loaded, hence they can rest on the table without the blades or tines touching the cloth; or one may, with a little skill, hold his knife and fork in his hands without awkwardness. If one can not manage to do this, then here is a compromise: let the fork remain on the plate, as that alone would be a very slight obstruction, while the sender could without awkwardness retain the knife, one article being easier to manage than two.

etly eject them upon your fork, holding it to your lips, and then place them on the plate. Fruit-stones may be removed by the fingers.

Don't stretch across another's plate in order to reach anything.

Don't apply to your neighbor to pass articles when the servant is at hand.

Don't finger articles; don't play with your napkin, or your goblet, or your fork, or with anything.

Don't mop your face or beard with your napkin. Draw it across your lips neatly.

Don't turn your back to one person for the purpose of talking to another; don't talk across the one seated next to you.

Don't forget that the lady sitting at your side has the first claim upon your attention. A

lady at your side should not be neglected, whether you have been introduced to her or not.

Don't talk when your mouth is full—never, in fact, have your mouth full. It is more healthful and in better taste to eat by small morsels.

Don't be embarrassed. Endeavor to be self-possessed and at ease; to accomplish which, try and not be self-conscious. Remember that self-respect is as much a virtue as respect for others.

Don't drop your knife or fork; but, if you do, don't be disconcerted. Quietly ask the servant for another, and give the incident no further heed. Don't be disquieted at accidents or blunders of any kind, but let all mishaps pass off without comment and with philosophical indifference.

Don't throw yourself loungingly back in your chair. The Romans lounged at table, but modern civilization does not permit it.

Don't rest your elbows on the table; don't lean on the table.

Don't use a toothpick at table, unless it is necessary; in that case, cover your mouth with one hand while you remove the obstruction that troubles you.

Don't eat onions or garlic, unless you are dining alone, and intend to remain alone some hours thereafter. One should not wish to carry with him unpleasant evidences of what he has been eating or drinking.

Don't press food upon a guest. This once was thought necessary, and it was also considered polite for a guest to continue accepting, or to signify by a particular sign that

he had enough.* To worry a guest with ceaseless importunities is now considered in the worst possible taste.

Don't, as guest, fold your napkin when you have finished. Place the napkin loosely on the table.

Don't fail, at dinner, to rise when the ladies leave the table. Remain standing until they have left the room, and then reseal yourself, if you intend to remain for cigars.

* McMaster tells us that the Prince of Broglie, "who traveled in our country in 1782, relates, in one of his letters, that he was invited to dine with the lady of Robert Morris; that he went; that he was repeatedly asked to have his cup refilled; that he consented; and that, when he had swallowed the twelfth cup of tea, his neighbor whispered in his ear and told him when he had had enough of the water diet he should place his spoon across his cup, else the hostess would go on urging him to drink tea till the crack of doom."

Don't make a pronounced attempt at correctness of manner; don't be vulgar, but don't, on the other hand, show that you are trying hard not to be vulgar. It is better to make mistakes than to be obviously struggling not to make them.

Don't drink too much wine.

Don't thank host or hostess for your dinner.

Express pleasure in the entertainment, when you depart—that is all.

Don't come to breakfast in *deshabille*. A lady's morning toilet should be simple, but fresh and tasteful, and her hair *not* in curl-papers. A gentleman should wear his morning suit, and never his dressing-gown. There are men who sit at table in their shirt-sleeves. This is very vulgar.

Don't, as hostess, follow the English fashion

and omit napkins at breakfast. The hardihood with which an Englishman attacks coffee and eggs without a napkin may excite our wonder, but how can the practice be defended? Is it anything less than disgusting?

Don't drink from your saucer. While you must avoid this vulgarity, don't take notice of it, or of any mistake of the kind, when committed by others. It is related that at the table of an English prince a rustic guest poured his tea into his saucer, much to the visible amusement of the court ladies and gentlemen present. Whereupon the prince quietly poured his own tea into his saucer, thereby rebuking his ill-mannered court, and putting his guest in countenance.

Don't carry your spoon in your tea or coffee cup; this habit is the cause frequently of one upsetting the cup. Let the spoon lie in the saucer.

Don't smear a slice of bread with butter; break it into small pieces, and then butter.

Don't break an egg into a cup or glass, but eat it always from the shell.*

Don't read newspaper or book or letters at table, if others are seated with you.

Don't decorate your shirt-front with egg or coffee drippings, and don't ornament your coat-lapels with grease-spots. A little care will prevent these accidents. Few things are more distasteful than to see a gentleman

* This rule is not generally observed with us, but it is universal in England, where an egg beaten up in a glass is considered an unpleasant mess. Refined usage here accords with the English.

bearing upon his apparel ocular evidence of having breakfasted or dined.

Don't rise from the table until the meal is finished.

Many rules of the table seem to some persons very arbitrary, no doubt, but they are the result of the mature experience of society, and, however trivial they may appear to be, there is always some good reason for them. The object of a code is to exclude or prevent everything that is disagreeable, and to establish the best method of doing that which is to be done. It is not necessary to point out that a dinner served and eaten in disregard of all rules would be a savage carousal; this being true, it ought to be seen that, if rules in any degree elevate the act of eating, then a code of rules generally observed lifts eating to a still higher plane, and makes it a fine art.



II.

In Dress and Personal Habits.

Don't neglect personal cleanliness—which is more neglected than careless observers suppose.

Don't wear soiled linen. Be scrupulously particular on this point.

Don't be untidy in anything. Neatness is one of the most important of the minor morals.

Don't neglect the details of the toilet. Many persons, neat in other particulars, carry blackened finger-nails. This is disgusting.

Don't neglect the small hairs that project from the nostrils and grow about the apertures of the ears—small matters of the toilet often overlooked.

Don't cleanse your ears, or your nose, or trim and clean your finger-nails, in public. Cleanliness and neatness in all things pertaining to the person are indispensable, but toilet offices are proper in the privacy of one's apartment only.

Don't use hair-dye. The color is not like nature, and deceives no one.*

* Hair and beard dyed black produce a singular effect. They seem to coarsen and vulgarize the lines of the face. Any one who has ever seen an elderly gentleman suddenly abandon his dye, and appear with his gray locks in all their natural beauty, will realize what we mean—for he has seen what appeared to him a rather coarse and sensuous face all at once changed into one of refinement and character.

Don't use hair-oil or pomades. This habit was once quite general, but it is now considered vulgar, and it is certainly not cleanly.

Don't wear apparel with decided colors or with pronounced patterns. Don't—we address here the male reader—wear anything that is *pretty*. What have men to do with pretty things? Select quiet colors and unobtrusive patterns, and adopt no style of cutting that belittles the figure. It is right enough that men's apparel should be becoming, that it should be graceful, and that it should lend dignity to the figure; but it should never be ornamental, capricious, or pretty.

Don't wear fancy-colored shirts, or embroidered shirt-fronts. Spotted or otherwise decorated shirts are fashionable in summer, but

the taste is questionable. White, plain linen is always in better taste.

Don't wear evening dress in the morning, or on any occasion before six o'clock dinner.

Don't wear black broadcloth in the morning; or, at least, don't wear black broadcloth trousers except for evening dress.

Don't wear your hat cocked over your eye, or thrust back upon your head. One method is rowdyish, the other rustic.

Don't go with your boots unpolished; but don't have the polishing done in the public highways. A gentleman perched on a high curb-stone chair, within view of all passers-by, while he is having executed this finishing touch to his toilet, presents a picture more unique than dignified.

Don't wear trinkets, shirt-pins, finger-rings, or anything that is solely ornamental. One may wear shirt-studs, a scarf-pin, a watch-chain and a seal, because these articles are useful; but the plainer they are the better.

Don't be a "swell" or a "dude," or whatever the fop of the period may be called.

Don't wear dressing-gown and slippers anywhere out of your bedroom. To appear at table or in any company in this garb is the very soul of vulgarity. It is equally vulgar to sit at table or appear in company in one's shirt-sleeves.

Don't walk with a slouching, slovenly gait. Walk erectly and firmly, not stiffly; walk with ease, but still with dignity. Don't bend out the knees, nor walk in-toed, nor drag your feet along; walk in a large, easy, sim-

ple manner, without affectation but not negligently.

Don't carry your hands in your pockets.

Don't thrust your thumbs into the arm-holes of your waistcoat.

Don't chew or nurse your toothpick in public—or anywhere else. Don't use a toothpick, except for a moment, to remove some obstacle; and don't have the habit of sucking your teeth.

Don't chew tobacco. It is a bad and ungentelemanly habit. The neatest tobacco-chewer can not wholly prevent the odor of tobacco from affecting his breath and clinging to his apparel, and the "places that know him" are always redolent of the weed. If one *must* chew, let him be particular where he expectorates. He should not discharge to-

bacco-juice in public vehicles, on the sidewalk, or in any place where it will be offensive.

Don't expectorate. Men in good health do not need to expectorate; with them continual expectoration is simply the result of habit. Men with bronchial or lung diseases are compelled to expectorate, but no one should discharge matter of the kind in public places except into vessels provided to receive it. Spitting upon the floor anywhere is inexcusable. One should not even spit upon the sidewalk, but go to the gutter for the purpose. One must not spit into the fire-place nor upon the carpet, and hence the English rule is for him to spit in his handkerchief—but this is not a pleasant alternative. On some occasions no other may offer.

Don't whistle in the street, in public vehicles, at public assemblies, or anywhere where it may annoy. Mem.: don't whistle at all.*

Don't laugh boisterously. Laugh heartily when the occasion calls for it, but the loud guffaw is not necessary to heartiness.

Don't have the habit of smiling or "grinning" at nothing. Smile or laugh when there is occasion to do either, but at other times keep your mouth shut and your manner com-

* Among the current nuisances, whistling is peculiarly obnoxious to some people. An anecdote is in circulation to the effect that a distinguished journalist and his son were in an omnibus, into which entered a man whistling loudly. Presently the journalist turned to his son and exclaimed in a loud voice, "Who is that lady whistling?" "It is not a lady, papa, it is a gentleman," answered the boy. "Oh, no, my son," was the reply, still in a loud voice, "that is impossible; no gentleman ever whistles in an omnibus." The whistler was silenced—it is to be hoped forever.

posed. People who laugh at everything are commonly capable of nothing.

Don't blow your nose in the presence of others if you can possibly avoid it. Above all things, don't blow your nose with your fingers. Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes declares that, in all the discussions and differences of opinion as to what constitutes a gentleman, all disputants unite in excluding the man who blows his nose with his fingers.

Don't gape, or hiccough, or sneeze in company. When there is an inclination to hiccough or sneeze, hold your breath for a moment and resist the desire, and you will find that it will pass off.

Don't have the habit of letting your lip drop and your mouth remain open. "Shut your mouth," is the advice of a *savant*, who has

written a book on the subject. Breathe through your nostrils and not through your mouth; sleep with your mouth closed; keep it closed except when you open it for a purpose. An open mouth indicates feebleness of character, while the habit affects the teeth and the general health.

Don't keep carrying your hands to your face, pulling your whiskers, adjusting your hair, or otherwise fingering yourself. Keep your hands quiet and under control.

Don't be over-familiar. Don't strike your friends on the back, nudge them in the side, or give other physical manifestation of your pleasure. Don't indulge in these familiarities, or submit to them from others.

Don't bolt, without notice, into any one's private apartment. Respect always the pri-

vacy of your friends, however intimate you may be with them.

Don't wear your hat in a strictly private office.

This is no more justifiable than wearing a hat in a drawing-room.

Don't carry a lighted cigar into a private office or into a salesroom. (See *Smoking*, under "In Public.")

Don't pick up letters, accounts, or anything of a private character that is lying on another's desk. Don't look over a person's shoulder when he is reading or writing.

Don't twirl a chair or other object while talking or listening to any one. This trick is very annoying and very common.

Don't beat a tattoo with your foot in company or anywhere, to the annoyance of others.

Don't drum with your fingers on chair,

table, or window-pane. Don't hum a tune. The instinct for making noises is a survival of savagery.

Don't be servile toward superiors, or arrogant toward inferiors. Maintain your dignity and self-respect in one case, and exhibit a regard for the feelings of people, whatever their station may be, in the other.

Don't go into the presence of ladies with your breath redolent of wine or spirits, or your beard rank with the odor of tobacco. Smokers should be careful to wash the mustache and beard after smoking.

Don't drink wine or spirits in the morning, or often at other times than at dinner. Don't frequent bar-rooms. Tippling is not only vulgar and disreputable, but injurious to health.



III.

In the Drawing-Room.

DON'T, however brief your call, wear overcoat or overshoes into the drawing-room. If you are making a short call, carry your hat and cane in your hand, but never an umbrella.

Don't attempt to shake hands with everybody present. If hostess or host offers a hand, take it; a bow is sufficient for the rest.

Don't, in any case, offer to shake hands with a lady. The initiative must always come from her. By the same principle don't offer