

*Flattery*

room. That will strengthen your own integrity of mind and encourage her to let nothing mar the disposition which gives you so much pleasure.

Such sincerity of praise is inspired by the very best that is in us, and is diametrically opposed, in intention and in result, to those obsequious, fulsome words and attentions which fill us with false hopes and encourage us by deceitful representations.

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MY LADY  
TEAZLE

XIX

"HERE comes Lady Teazle! Excuse me; walk on and I will follow," and my incomprehensible friend disappeared suddenly into a shop which a moment before she had no thought of entering. Soon afterwards I heard her quick footsteps behind me, and with a smile she replied to my astonished look, "The morning is too lovely to be spoiled."

"Who is this Mrs. Teazle?" I questioned.

"She bears another name in the blue book," was the answer. "Teazle is her pseudonym. No, not after Sheridan. Did you ever visit a cloth factory? Nothing has ever been invented that is so effectual as the field teazle for raising a nap on cloth.

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### *My Lady Teazle*

After an interview with Lady Teazle my temper is as rough as this chevriot jacket. Where is the good of it? For my part, I like to rub people the right way!"

Where, indeed, is the good of it? Do the beatitudes include "Blessed is she who telleth unpleasant truths"? or "Blessed is she who vexeth her neighbour without a cause"? Is there any virtue in disconcerting one's acquaintances, irritating and wounding one's own familiar friends?

True good breeding prefers smoothing people the right way. It is content to call a bonnet becoming, without adding, "So much more becoming than the one you wore last season!" If your profile is poor, it can see something beautiful in your full face. If your dinner is cold, it can admire your flowers. If it cannot truthfully praise your book, it can at least thank you cordially for your presentation copy. It is inter-

### *My Lady Teazle*

ested but never inquisitive, it is equally free from familiarity and haughtiness; it makes no exactions, and calls for no apologies.

It has been said that there is no greater evidence of crudity than a belief that a declaration of an honest opinion is always in order, and that silence is deceit. Courtesy need never mean insincerity; the attempt to make things pleasant does not involve deception; there is no incompatibility between truthfulness and consideration for the feelings of others.

Emerson said that it was much easier for Thoreau to say *no* than *yes*; and Robert Louis Stevenson, commenting on the expression, declares that while it is a useful accomplishment to be able to say *no*, it is the essence of amiability to prefer to say *yes* when it is possible.

Nobody ever had so many enemies as Disraeli, whose most power-

### *My Lady Teazle*

ful weapon was sarcasm, and Carlyle, of whom Miss Fox said that after talking with him she wondered whether anybody ever did any good in the world, was not a lovable man. As Dr. John Brown, however, walked along the street, with smiles and nods, his presence was felt like a passing sunbeam. No house he visited but the humblest servant knew him, and for each there was a word of recognition. His was indeed a reconciling spirit.

In a trolley car one day, each entrance and exit of the passengers was accompanied by an irritating squeak of the door. A workingman rose, took a little oil-can from his pocket and deliberately oiled the slide. As he slowly capped the can he gave a smiling apology to the crowded car: "I always carry it round, because I find such a lot of things, everywhere, that squeak."

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### WHAT'S IN A NAME

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**Y**OU are named Elizabeth and called Betsy, or Gertrude and called Tutie, or the stately Margaret and called Peg? And it annoys you? You think you would be better natured if you were called by your right name? One of the loveliest women I know has no other name than "Number Five." As far as poetry and distinction go she might as well be a convict or a ditch-digger; and yet she decided early in life that such a thing as a name should not mar her disposition.

She is older than you schoolgirls, and yet her face is one that age can never cheat of its charm. Her lips are not exactly ruby, nor her mouth the shape of Cupid's bow, but she has

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### *What's in a Name*

such a fine, sweet voice that the moment she speaks all faces turn towards her. Its secret cannot be told, but it makes friends of everybody. In a general laugh you can hear through all that sweet caressing voice; not because it is more penetrating or louder than the rest, for it is soft and low; but it is so different from the others, there is so much more life—the life of sweet womanhood—dissolved in it. She never laughs, however, when giving way to her sense of the ridiculous might wound the feelings of others.

Her eyes are so bright that she sees at once when a discussion tends to become personal, and heads off the threatening antagonists. She sees when a subject has been knocking about long enough, and dexterously shifts the talk to another track. She sees as well as anybody the ridiculous element in a silly speech, or the absurdity of an ex-

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### *What's in a Name*

travagant one, but she sees too whatever is bright and good in it and brings that forward. Your eyes may be younger, dear girls, but tell me, can they see as far as that?

Number Five is just the person for a confidante. Everybody wants to be her friend. The shy become quite easy in her presence. With her own sex she is always helpful and sympathizing, tender, charitable, sharing their griefs as well as their pleasures. Men, young or old, find in her the same sweet, sincere, unaffected friend. Her generous nature always comes to the relief of the depreciated or abused. "You must not talk so," she sometimes has to say, "you misunderstand the case"; and the very slanderer is glad when she comes to the rescue. For after all, girls, people like you a great deal better if you uphold what you think is right, rather than if you meekly acquiesce in all that is said.

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### *What's in a Name*

Lastly, her promises are always sacredly fulfilled. If you should ask any one if she had met him at an appointed time, he would be likely to reply with astonishment, "Of course she did; why, she *said* she would!" Do you ask who is this Number Five, so fascinating, so wise, so full of knowledge? She is the creation of Oliver Wendell Holmes, and she is, Betsy, Tutie, Peg, the woman you may each become if you will.

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### TAKING OFFENSE

XXI

**S**IR ROGER DE COVERLEY, in his walks about London, once had occasion to inquire which was the way to St. Anne's Lane; upon which the person he spoke to, instead of answering his question, called him a "young Popish cur," and asked him who had made Anne a saint? The boy, being in some confusion, inquired of the next he met the way to Anne's Lane; but was called a "prick-eared cur" for his pains, and, instead of being shown the way was told Anne had been a saint before he was born, and would be one after he was hanged. Upon this he inquired no more, but, going into every lane, asked "what they called it?"

Thus railed the kindly Addison at persons who not only take offense

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### Taking Offense

but seem to court it, as if a sensitive plant, shrinking from every touch and making the passer-by feel guilty for his unwitting contact, should grow rankest along the highway and crowd the haunts of men.

Every word is capable of degradation, and in recent years "sensitive" has met its fate. It no longer expresses the poetic sensibility of a Keats or a Raphael; to the thinking person it signifies, rather, ignorance, selfishness and conceit. These are strong terms; but the malady is grievous.

"We can make ourselves miserable to any extent with *perhapses*," writes Ruskin; and *perhapses* are the principal diet of the persons who take offense.

"I saw your friend Miss White at a reception yesterday," one well-dressed girl said to another; "but she did not seem to remember me, so I did not speak." "Indeed?" replied

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### Taking Offense

the other; "that is just what she said of you."

So two persons with mutual likings and interests were guilty of marked rudeness to each other, and to their common friend.

"Did you notice how Mary Case put her parasol before her face as she passed, so she could not see me on the porch?" complained a girl to her brother, oblivious of the fact that the afternoon sun was pouring directly into her friend's near-sighted eyes.

"The minister has not called here this summer. Of course he need not if he does not choose to. I can go to some other church." Thus innocent remarks are built into contrary meanings; absent-minded friends are harshly judged; hurt feelings and aching secrets and disguised jealousies are fondled and fostered until the poor, self-tortured soul thinks it is mightily abused, and prides itself on its own tragic susceptibility.

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### *Taking Offense*

All for want of a little common sense—a little of that high quality of imagination which enables a person to put herself in the place of another. How quickly then would we exclaim: "I know you did not dream of my presence"—"I remembered that you were in great sorrow"—"I understood that your dinner-table was small and your social indebtedness large"—"I never doubted but the report was false."

Friendship requires concession, excuse and great charity. What we need is to put off our foolish suspicions, our irritating sensitiveness, our readiness to take offense; to refrain from calling out, "Here is a nerve laid bare; touch it and see it quiver;" to be too proud to parade even the hurt we cannot sometimes but feel. Dumas, when somebody taunted him with having a black father, replied, "My grandfather was a monkey;" and Balzac's unailing

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advice was "Laugh in your sleeve at those who calumniate you." It is by such hardness, rather than by moping and brooding, that success and happiness are achieved.

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## THE GRACE OF EXPLANATION

XXII

**T**HE next thing to war is a great railroad strike, when men and women, furious from hunger and maddened by the words of ignorant or unscrupulous leaders, attempt to better their condition by resort to armed force and the destruction of property. It was in the midst of such turbulence a few years ago that a slender, dark-haired gentleman hurried down the steps of Armour Institute in Chicago to a company of ruthless workmen who were overturning locomotives, burning cars and tearing up the tracks. Curious onlookers, fearing for the man's life, watched him as he talked to the strikers and, to their astonishment, saw a score of them turn from their nefarious work and follow the newcomer into the building.

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## *The Grace of Explanation*

Dr. Gunsaulus, for it was he, uttered no words of condemnation. He told the men that he had heard their shouts of execration against the rich, and he simply wanted to show them one plan the rich had for helping the poor. Using all his eloquence of persuasion, he led his followers into the institute, of which he is president, and there showed them how young people of their own class were being taught carpentry, blacksmithing, printing, dressmaking, millinery, cooking, all the profitable trades for both sexes, together with sufficient bookkeeping to fit them for the business and competition of the world. The hard faces softened, and in words straight from convinced hearts the men assured Dr. Gunsaulus that they had never imagined there was such a school in the world. They could feel nothing but respect and honour for a capitalist who gave so generously and intelligently for the uplifting of the poor.

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### *The Grace of Explanation*

A near-sighted girl who had been introduced to a college student met him soon after and failed to recognize him. The young man had lifted his hat and was deeply hurt at the imagined slight. Hearing of the fact through a friend, the offender lost no time in sending an explanation of her apparent rudeness. A flush of surprise came over the sensitive boy's face as he said, "She has made me her friend for life."

These incidents emphasize the old French proverb that all being explained all is pardoned, and open one's eyes anew to the reciprocal qualities needful to social harmony. Only those edges dovetail in which the points of one side are met by the indentures of the other, and the person who scorns to offer a reasonable explanation is like an ignorant carpenter who attempts to fit point to point and hollow to hollow.

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### CULTIVATING THE INTUITION

XXIII

**T**HEOLOGIANS tell us that conscience is not a reasoning faculty, that the judgment maps out the situation in all its phases while conscience declares the unerring alternative, "do it," or "do it not." What conscience is to the spiritual nature, intuition is to the social nature. It is a God-given faculty which may be clouded by neglect or deadened by disobedience to its decrees; or it may, by prompt acceptance of its dictates, grow into the genius of our lives.

A young woman came to me the other day with a little confidence and a little deduction therefrom. The deduction had come with the convincing force of experience, quite apart from the poetic pleasure she had taken in Browning's earlier wording of it,

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