

THE ART OF POLITE CONVERSATION.

Amongst the poor "apologies are often, as in all classes, veiled reproof. I was walking," says Miss Loane, "one day with a friend, and rather absorbed in what she was telling me, when I noticed a former patient, a most disreputable old vagabond, taking off his hat to me. Of course, I responded to the salutation, and thought that was the end of the matter. The next time I visited his wife, a 'chronic,' he said: 'I hope you didn't mind me speaking to you in the street the other day, mum?'"

"Certainly not," I replied, with perhaps an unconscious touch of patronage in my voice, 'I hope you will always speak to me wherever I am.'

"Well-ll-ll, mum, its a long time since I learnt manners, and I can't say that the twopence extry was paid, not *reg'lar*, but I do seem to remember that when people is acquainted it's for the female to move first."

"Few things do more to sweeten the lives of the poor," says the writer, "than the generally diffused sense of humor. Every misfortune may be laughed at, provided only that it is one's own. I was told of a lady visitor to a hospital who found a patient convulsed with laughter, and asked the reason of his mirth.

'They's given me a track, ma'am,' he gasped.

'Yes.'

'It's a track against dancing.'

'Well?'

'Both my legs is cut off,' and again he laughed like a schoolboy."

One could wish, indeed, that a sense of humour were more often present in the donor of tracts. I can call to mind one charming and benevolent old lady who excited much subsequent merriment by the selection of the tract she bestowed on the daughter of a Church dignitary, who with her mother was paying an afternoon call. "She told me," said the recipient, subsequently, "in the course of our visit, eyeing my hat disapprovingly, that if we had been meant to wear feathers they would have grown on us, and before we left she gave me a tract on swearing."

THE POINT OF VIEW.

Miss Loane's experience of the poor is that they are "extremely tenacious of the few forms of politeness with which they are acquainted, and often understand its essentials. . . . People are too apt to think that chivalry is confined to the upper classes. The encrusted forms of it may be, that is all. I saw a man and his wife, a shabby, miserable looking couple, pushing a cart along a suburban road. They came to a part where it had not yet been 'made,' heavy wagons had passed over it, and it was rather worse than a ploughed field. 'Git out of the dirt!' said the man, and his wife walked on what did duty for a pavement, while he struggled with the cart alone. Could Bayard have done more?"

Most nurses who have had experience of district midwifery could tell of men who after fetching them to attend upon the patient, absenting themselves from the one room, which probably meant walking about the street, have offered as a matter of course to see the nurse home again, involving perhaps a walk of a mile each way, though it may have been three o'clock in the morning, and the man had to be off to work at six, getting what sleep he could before that time.

STATE SPREAD TABLES.

The suggestion that the State shall provide dinners for school children finds no favour with Miss Loane, who thinks that "ignorant mothers would be left in the same or an increasing state of ignorance; lazy mothers would become yet more idle; the extravagance of Saturday and Sunday meals would be increased, and yet more money would be spent on tawdry finery; the righteous discontent of those mothers at present hindered from cooking by their wretched stoves would die away; worse than all, industrious mothers set free from cooking for their children, would seek paid employment in increasing numbers. This would lower the wages of spinsters and widows, and ultimately lower the wages of men, while the immediate results would be disastrous to their necessarily neglected family."

A DAY WITH A DISTRICT NURSE.

The chapter giving the details of a day's experience during a round with a district nurse will give the uninitiated considerable insight into such work. It contains many amusing reminiscences, not the least of which is the last. "The other day a petty officer, whose wife I had nursed during his absence abroad, said to me fervently, 'you're just a fallen angel, mum; that's what you are.'"

THE TRIALS OF A DISTRICT NURSE.

Many nurses will enter into Miss Loane's feelings on the subject of landladies. With all their excellencies, and some of them have many, they are a trying race at the best. Neither can one ever tell in what curious ways their dignity may be outraged; the point of view of landlady and lodger is so entirely dissimilar. Perhaps one of the greatest trials of the nurse fresh from the spick and span wards of a hospital, is the standard of cleanliness which the average landlady sets before her. I know a nurse who, on her only day of comparative leisure, was remedying obvious defects by dusting her sitting-room, when the daughter of the house brought up her tea. The girl retired to her mother in tears. The mother came up in a state of wrathful indignation to explain to the nurse the "hurtfulness" of such proceedings. The burden of her grievance seemed to be that the clergy who lived opposite would see dusting going on on Sunday, and think *they* were doing it, and that they were "no class."

Space fails us to refer to the book at greater length, but readers of this journal may rest assured that, if they procure it, they will not find a dull page.

M. B.

The International Sanitary Convention.

Surgeon-General Wyman was the principal speaker at the opening of the International Sanitary Convention of American Republics at Washington, to which a large number of sanitary experts have gone as delegates. He enlarged upon the necessity for the Governments of all nations to make questions of sanitation their especial care. In his opinion the matter should be dealt with in something like a uniform manner by conferences of the representatives of the nations. International sanitation, in short, should be made a corollary of international peace.

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