

## THE ENTRANCE INTO SOCIETY.

The desire of pleasing is, of course, the basis of social connexion. Persons who enter society with the intention of producing an effect, and of being distinguished, however clever they may be, are never agreeable. They are always tiresome, and often ridiculous. Persons, who enter life with such pretensions, have no opportunity for improving themselves and profiting by experience. They are not in a proper state to observe: indeed, they look only for the effect which they produce, and with that they are not often gratified. They thrust themselves into all conversations, indulge in continual anecdotes, which are varied only by dull disquisitions, listen to others with impatience and heedlessness, and are angry that they seem to be attending to themselves. Such men go through scenes of pleasure, enjoying nothing. They are equally disagreeable to themselves and others. Young men should, therefore, content themselves with being natural. Let them present themselves with a modest assurance: let them observe, hear, and examine, and before long they will rival their models.

The quality which a young man should most affect in intercourse with gentlemen, is a decent modesty: but he must avoid all bashfulness or timidity. His flights must not go too far; but, so far as they go, let them be marked by perfect assurance.

Among persons who are much your seniors behave with the utmost respectful deference. As they find themselves sliding out of importance they may be easily conciliated by a little respect.

By far the most important thing to be attended to, is ease of manner. Grace may be added afterwards, or be omitted altogether: it is of much less moment than is commonly believed. Perfect propriety and entire ease are sufficient qualifications for standing in society, and abundant prerequisites for distinction.

There is the most delicate shade of difference between civility and intrusiveness, familiarity and common-place, pleasantry and sharpness, the natural and the rude, gaiety and carelessness; hence the inconveniences of society, and the errors of its members. To define well in conduct these distinctions, is the great art of a man of the world. It is easy to know what to do; the difficulty is to know what to avoid.

Long usage a sort of moral magnetism, a tact acquired by frequent and long associating with others alone give those qualities which keep one always from error, and entitle him to the name of a thorough gentleman.

A young man upon first entering into society should select those persons who are most celebrated for the propriety and elegance of their manners. He should frequent their company and imitate their conduct. There is a disposition inherent, in all, which has been noticed by Horace and by Dr. Johnson, to imitate faults, because they are more readily observed and more easily followed. There are, also, many foibles of manner and many refinements of affectation, which sit agreeably upon one man, which if adopted by another would become unpleasant. There are even some excellences of deportment which would not suit another whose character is different. For successful imitation in anything, good sense is indispensable. It is requisite correctly to appreciate the natural differences between your model and yourself, and to introduce such modifications in the copy as may be consistent with it.

Let not any man imagine, that he shall easily acquire these qualities which will constitute him a gentleman. It is necessary not only to exert the highest degree of art, but to attain also that higher accomplishment of concealing art. The serene and elevated dignity which mark that character, are the result of untiring and arduous effort.