



Small Points On

TABLE ETIQUETTE



DELICACY of manner at table stamps both man and woman, for one can, at a glance, discern whether a person has been well trained to eat well - i.e. to hold the knife and fork properly, to eat without the slightest sound of the lips, to drink quietly, to use the napkin rightly, to make no noise with any of the implements of the table, and last, but not least, to eat slowly and masticate the food thoroughly. All these points should be most carefully taught to children, and then they will always feel at their ease at the grandest tables in the land. There is no position where the innate refinement of a person is more fully exhibited than at the table, and nowhere that those who have not been trained in table etiquette feel more keenly their deficiencies.

When seating yourself at the table, unfold your napkin and lay it across your lap in such a manner that it will not slide off upon the floor. A gentleman should place it across his right knee. Do not tuck it into your neck, like a child's bib.

Be very careful not to clatter your knives and forks upon your plates, but use them without noise.

Drink sparingly while eating. It is far better for the digestion not to drink coffee or tea until the meal is finished. Drink gently and do not pour it down your throat like water turned out of a pitcher.

The knife should never be used to carry food to the mouth, but only to cut it up into small mouthfuls; then place it upon the plate at one side, and take the fork in the right hand, and eat all the food with it.

When both have been used finally, they should be laid diagonally across the plate, with both handles toward the right hand; this is understood by well-trained waiters to be the signal for removing them, together with the plate.

Be careful to keep the mouth shut closely while masticating the food. It is the opening of the lips which causes the smacking which seems very disgusting. Chew your food well, but do it silently, and be careful to take small mouthfuls.

It is not considered good taste to mix food on the same plate. Salt must be left on the side of the plate and never on the tablecloth.

One's teeth are not to be picked at the table. But if it is impossible to hinder it, it should be done behind the napkin.

If, to conclude, one seats one's self properly at the table and takes reason into account, one will do tolerably well. One must not pull one's chair too closely to the table, for the natural result of that is the inability to use one's fork and knife without inconveniencing one's neighbors; the elbows are to be held well in and close to one's side, which cannot be done if the chair is too near the board. One must not lie or lean along the table, nor rest one's arms upon it.

Finally, when rising from your chair, leave it where it stands.

