

V A N I T Y F A I R

August, 1915

ETIQUETTE—IN THE MOVIES

Canons of Social Behavior
on the Film

By Frederick Lewis Allen

AN evening in a motion-picture theatre will teach us many moral lessons. For instance: that all men in dress suits are villains, and that all girls in sun-bonnets are saints. It will also teach us many equally impressive lessons in etiquette.

But we cannot all go to the movies; and so, for the benefit of those who are removed from their uplifting influence, I have prepared a table of the social laws which the Edisons and Lubins and Kalem and Laskys and Pathés are just now insisting on.

GENERAL SOCIAL BEHAVIOR AND APPEARANCE

Nothing could be more absurd than the notion that a well-bred man always takes his hat off in the house. In the movies, it is *de rigueur* to keep it on. A gentleman, on the film, can be known by the way in which he shakes hands with a lady. Seizing the lady's fingers between his forefinger and thumb, he should raise them to the height of his shoulder, squeeze them gently, and then let them go. In the matter of dress, certain things must be remembered. An eye-glass on a black ribbon, for instance, is the mark of a duke. Do not cultivate a goatee unless you are a foreign nobleman. It may be mentioned, in passing, that Chicago clothes still find favor among the aristocracy of Europe. If you are an artist, long hair and a flowing black tie is essential. The feminine note is important here.

In general, it may be said that the hair should be brushed directly back, *en brosse*, but allowed to fall in a fetching wopse over the eye at times of great stress. Remember that it is obligatory for a gentleman to shave the neck.



Artist



Saint

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

Great latitude of behavior is allowed the guests at an afternoon tea. The chief thing to bear in mind is the necessity of showing nothing beyond a momentary surprise if you discover two guests (a lady and a gentleman) quarreling, or making violent love to each other.

If one guest picks another's pocket, on no account pay any attention to it, no matter how obviously the thing is done.

It is considered a delicate attention for ladies in society to accompany their departing guests down to the sidewalk in low-neck dresses, and to put them into their motor cars.

The most fashionable form of evening entertainment is a dancing performance by a feminine guest, clad in an oriental gown, calculated to cause the censor a moment of indecision. This lady should prance, gesticulate, and spin round with tremendous rapidity.

OldMagazineArticles.com

Etiquette in the Movies

*A lady, dancing,
as the movies like
to depict her*



A guest should show his appreciation of the sheer velocity of her dancing by nodding enthusiastically to his neighbors on both sides, and by active clapping—his hands should be held quite high—once in every five seconds.

At the theatre, lean very far out of the box in which you are sitting and applaud continuously in the same enthusiastic way.

At a dance, a knowledge of the two-step and the old waltz is quite sufficient. If you must try to one-step, make no attempt at rhythm; the chief object of the dance is to keep the body perfectly rigid and to bob up and down out of time with everybody else in the room.

SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS

There are two great principles to be observed in interior decoration. First, see that no wall spaces are left without elaborate and florid decoration, and see that each room contains at least four pieces of statuary. No fashionable drawing-room should be without a bronze Apollo and a marble Venus.

There is an odd fashion, just at present, of growing palm trees in the gardens of British country estates, in clever imitation of a scene in California. There is also a new style of landscape architecture in vogue in Bohemia, Hungary, Russia and Montenegro which is making these countries look more and more like Arizona every day. And such is the appearance of the best houses at Monte Carlo and the palaces at Versailles that one could almost swear that his eyes deceived him, and that he was in Greenwich, Connecticut.

WHAT YOUNG LADIES SHOULD REMEMBER

A young girl of social position is expected to spend most of her spare time sitting in front of her dressing-table mirror with a boudoir cap on her head. When the inspection of her own face in the mirror palls on her, she may amuse herself by gazing at a picture—with an ornamental gold frame—representing a young man in a wing collar and a rented dress suit. The photograph should bear some authentic autograph as "Yours, Elmer E. Jones."

If a girl is in need of funds, her correct procedure is to plunge into her father's office, wave a check for One Thousand Dollars before his eyes, and hug him until he signs it out of sheer embarrassment.

A NOTE OF CHIROGRAPHY

It is essential to cultivate a vertical Spense-rrian handwriting. Public characters should remember always to sign their official titles to all correspondence; thus, if Mr. Henry A. Blivvins is a member of the United States Senate, he should always sign himself, even if writing a love letter to his wife, "Yours, Senator Blivvins."

MEN'S CLUBS

In men's clubs life always proceeds at a break-neck pace. It is customary for a member to come bustling in, to sit down, to turn the pages of a magazine for seven seconds, to pass the time of day with some boisterous friends for ten seconds, to watch a frantic game of cards for an instant, and then to proceed to his evening's whiskey, leaving in a state of complete intoxication at the end of a minute and nineteen seconds. Hence the term, "fast life."

ETIQUETTE OF PURSUIT AND FLIGHT

A large part of life consists in running away from people, either on foot or in a taxicab, or in joining the pursuit of a common enemy.

If you are running away, always stop when you reach a street corner or the top of a hill; look wildly about in every direction; turn around and make sure that your pursuers have not lost sight of you, before you dig off again at top speed.

Pursuers should also stop at every corner, point out their victim to each other, and beckon to all bystanders to join in the chase.

THE GOLDEN RULE OF THE MOVIES

Whatever other slips you may make in your social conduct, remember that the one thing which you should especially cultivate is velocity. Walk at least ten miles an hour, even if this gives you an odd gait.

Be prepared to eat a full meal in thirty seconds. Learn to dress for any social function in one minute.

Whatever you are doing,—whether you are at a garden party or flirting on the beach,—see

Etiquette in the Movies

that your hands are constantly in motion and that the expressions chase themselves across your face with lightning rapidity. On the films, the one cardinal sin is repose.

CRIME, IN THE MOVIES

By Frank Wright Tuttle

IN the movies, the child who will later develop into a dangerous criminal must be sent, at least twice a day, to the little grog-shop around the corner. When the child returns with its brimming pailful, its father will invariably welcome it with a few hearty swings and uppercuts.

Watch that child!

If it runs to its mother and cries, the child will later be president of a society for the prevention of Upper-cutting Fathers. If, however, it makes a horrid face and shakes its little fist at father's back, the child will be a criminal. He—it is old enough now to be a *he*—is next seen picking pockets with a friend. It's a short step now to CRIME. He will soon enter a dark room through a window, with his flashlight turned on his own face—doubtless to frighten the heroine, who has just darkened the room by blowing fiercely at an electric bulb. He is now a criminal, and can enter any of the more lucrative and refined branches of his trade, such as blackmailing, arson, murder, or even editing a magazine about the movies.

Sketches by Irma Campbell

V A N I T Y
F A I R