

Being Gentleman Lost Art Today

THE art of being a gentleman has been rudely shoved into the background of modern living.

The desire to live and dress informally is not objectionable as long as it is decent and does not intrude upon the rights of others. Civilization developed the concept of ladies and gentlemen, but even primitive tribes have codes of proper conduct.

Nowadays you might have to inquire several times before you find someone who can even define a gentleman. Years ago, the late Herbert M. Peck, gentleman, church and civic worker, and well known Oklahoma City attorney, in that order, passed along a definition of a true gentleman which he had clipped from The Baltimore Sun about 1908. It was written by John Walter Wayland.

"The true gentleman," Wayland wrote, "is the man whose conduct proceeds from good will and an acute sense of propriety, and whose self-control is equal to all emergencies;

"Who does not make the poor man conscious of his poverty, the obscure man of his obscurity, or any man of his inferiority or deformity; who is himself humbled if necessity compel him to humble another;

"Who does not flatter wealth, cringe before power, or boast of his own possessions or achievements; who speaks with frankness, but always with sincerity and sympathy, and whose deed follows his word;

"Who thinks of the rights and feelings of others rather than his own; who appears well in any company, and who is at home what he seems to be abroad—a man with whom

honor is sacred and virtue safe."

Undoubtedly, there are many men today, both young and old, who would aspire to measure up to that definition. By their nature, they tend to fade into the background in contrast to the loud and vulgar, the lewd and the nude, the profane and the violent who crowd into every possible scene to force their coarseness upon an almost defenseless public.

Under the banner of liberty, such people violate rights of others while proclaiming that their own rights are sacred and must not be encroached upon. Federal courts have upheld many of these claims with a puzzling assortment of rulings concerning decency, education, pornography, movies, television, literature, recreation facilities, and working

conditions.

Defiant postures of protest by young people often may be regarded as mere infantile efforts to attract attention, but when individuals carry these traits over into mature years, they are limiting their usefulness to society and restricting their own success and pleasure in living to baser levels of life.

Obviously, not all youngsters have been motivated to try to succeed, or trained to use their talents and energies for worthwhile purpose. Many of them do not want to become ladies and gentlemen. The choice of squalor or refinement is theirs to make. But it is asking too much for them to recognize that civilized people have rights, also, which deserve as much respect as the rights of the uncouth?

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Dear Ferdie -

"What a wonderful tribute to Daddy", was my reaction to your column on Wednesday. And all of us who loved him are happy to see his ideals re-expressed. Thank you -

The fact is, I have meant to write you several times this summer - thanking you for expressing ideas I hold dear, too. It's a real joy to have you on the editorial page - because I know so well (+ agree most often!) ^{with} your point of view! It is a moderate, Christian position, (in my opinion) + one too seldom seen on the

editorial pages of our newspapers, today.

If I may try to express how I feel — (& I think I may speak for others, too; how many is unknown.) — it's this way: There is no such thing as "objective reporting," because each individual has his own unique, God-given ~~the~~ individuality; & also because each of us has developed extremely subjective point-of-view through his early training & life-experiences. We — as human beings — are by nature & training incapable of being completely objective.

As a result, I like to read the editorials of people whose biases I know (& respect), such

as the syndicated columnist
Bresel, Paul Harvey, Evans &
Novak, James Kilpatrick, etc.,
etc. — (Incidentally, I do
miss Hayakawa's weekly
articles which the Oklahoman
used to run!); because
I can make allowance for
the recognized bias of the various
writers in assessing the
viewpoint expressed.

Again — my deepest apprecia-
tion for your editorial. Please
remember me to Margaret
Harrison — & other friends at Qubco.

With deep affection,

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