Courtesy

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To Its Employees

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**Courtesy**

**COM**MON courtesy is the business of every man who meets the public, in any capacity, be it ever so humble.

**Cour**tesy becomes a part of his trade, to be applied in the face of resistance, the same as it is a part of a carpenter's trade to apply a jack-plane on cross-grained wood, knots and even an occasional nail head.

The man at the ticket window, the local agent, the gateman, the conductor, the trainman, or any man whose business it is to come in individual contact with the public, if he becomes skillful in his work, must learn to restrain himself from often doing that which is every man's natural instinct to do in meeting discourteous, impatient and unreasonable people.

If he is unable to do this he is unsuited by nature for his job, just as some men are unfitted by nature to learn the handling of tools,—he must, in his own interest, find another job where he does not come in contact with the public.
In handling the public we must all take the public as it is, and not as it should be.

Those of us who come in contact with the public can do much towards educating it by example of what the public should be.

We can never make the public better by imitating it.

The average mechanic does the best he can with the material delivered to him and he does not destroy that which resists him. An experienced carpenter, for instance, does not get mad and throw his tools out of the window when he strikes cross-grained wood,—he simply reverses the action of his tool.

It is only the boy amateur who flies into a rage at resistance and pounds up that which he is attempting.

Any man who comes in contact with the public will meet a lot of mean people.

Nearly all people are mean at some time.

But,—

Few people are mean at all times.
The people who are mean in the morning are frequently kind enough at night.

Doctors say that the reason people are more irritable in the morning, or after they have been sleeping, is that their blood pressure is low, their circulation is not normal.

People who are unreasonable or who give way to their temper in the morning are frequently sorry for it by night.

Temper and irritability in the case of most people are the results of defective nerves rather than unkindness of heart.

The man at the ticket window, the local agent, the gateman, the conductor and the trainman who is able to keep his temper and his voice low, and maintain himself with calmness, has a powerful weapon in his own defense and with which to administer real punishment to his offenders.

The man whose business it is to meet the public, who resists impatience with patience, and temper with calmness, is gaining the respect and sympathy of every witness to
the situation, and the offender will regret his act in his first reasoning moment.

In this country, where all are created free and equal, it is the first instinct to harshly resent any word of temper or impatience. It is considered a denial of one man's equality with another.

All men are equal as they meet as the patrons of the railroads, the theatre, the hotel or any public or semi-public institution.

But,—

When it becomes the business of one man to meet these same men in an official capacity, then that man becomes superior over the many by reason of his authority,—it becomes his business, his trade, to meet the public, individually and collectively, and handle them efficiently, with the least possible friction and the most dispatch,—with the least resistance to his authority.

This requires that he look above the weaknesses of individuals in the crowd and meet discourtesy with courtesy, unreasonableness with reason, impatience with patience.
The prosperity of every institution patronized by the public is absolutely dependent upon the good will of the individuals who comprise the public.

The increasing prosperity of an institution depends absolutely upon the good will of an increasing number of individuals, and these individuals include the impatient, the discourteous and the unreasonable along with the patient, the courteous and the reasonable, all of which go to make up a composite,—the public.

In a railroad, for instance, the man at the ticket window, the local agent, the gateman, the conductor, and the trainman are the only point of contact between the public and those who manage the property for the thousands of stockholders who own it.

Every man has ambition enough.

Every man in every position wants to mount higher, but merely wanting does not get him higher.

It is his performance of the immediate job that gets him higher.

Our colleges today are turning out a great many "Civil Engineers" but
we find there is a much greater demand for "Civil Conductors."

Any man, in any position, who can suppress himself and return the good will of the institution that employs him for the ill will of that part of the public who will display it, is surely making his own prosperity; making of himself a manager of men rather than just a man among men,—all by the working out of a very simple, natural law.

The man who comes in contact with the public in any capacity has opportunities for advancement over that of the man above him in a private office. His acts are a matter of observance on the part of the public; he has a natural opportunity for advertising his ability to the public that the man in the private office has not. The very man whose impatience he returns with patience may be the one to figuratively take him by the hand and lift him to a better job.

Returning good for evil is not just a religious law, it is a natural law,—it is returning efficiency for deficiency.