

# ETIQUETTE

*by Emily Post*

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## **Chapter XXIV – Funerals**

AT no time does solemnity so possess our souls as when we stand deserted at the brink of darkness into which our loved one has gone. And the last place in the world where we would look for comfort at such a time is in the seeming artificiality of etiquette; yet it is in the moment of deepest sorrow that etiquette performs its most vital and real service.

All set rules for social observance have for their object the smoothing of personal contacts, and in nothing is smoothness so necessary as in observing the solemn rites accorded our dead.

It is the time-worn servitor, Etiquette, who draws the shades, who muffles the bell, who keeps the house quiet, who hushes voices and footsteps and sudden noises; who stands between well-meaning and importunate outsiders and the retirement of the bereaved; who decrees that the last rites shall be performed smoothly and with beauty and gravity, so that the poignancy of grief may in so far as possible be assuaged.

### FIRST DETAILS

As soon as death occurs, some one (the trained nurse usually) draws the blinds in the sick-room and tells a servant to draw all the blinds of the house.

If they are not already present, the first act of some one at the bedside is to telephone or telegraph the immediate members of the family, the clergyman and the sexton of the church to which the family belong, and possibly one or two closest friends, whose competence and sympathy can be counted on—as there are many things which must be done for the stricken family as well as for the deceased. (The sexton of nearly every Protestant church is also undertaker. If he is not, then an outside funeral director is sent for.)

If the illness has been a long one, it may be that the family has become attached to the trained nurse and no one is better fitted than she to turn her ministrations from the one whom she can no longer help, to those who have now very real need of just such care as she can give.

If the death was sudden, or the nurse unsympathetic or for other reasons unavailable, then a relative or a near friend of practical sympathy is the ideal attendant in charge.

### CONSIDERATION FOR THE FAMILY

Persons under the shock of genuine affliction are not only upset mentally but are all unbalanced physically. No matter how calm and controlled they seemingly may be, no one can under such circumstances be normal. Their disturbed circulation makes them cold, their distress makes them unstrung, sleepless. Persons they normally like, they often turn from. No one should ever be forced upon those in grief, and all over-emotional people, no matter how near or dear, should be barred absolutely. Although the knowledge that their friends love them and sorrow for them is a great solace, the nearest afflicted must be protected from any one or anything which is likely to overstrain nerves already at the threatening point, and none have the right to feel hurt if they are told they can neither be of use nor be received. At such a time, to some people companionship is a comfort, others shrink from dearest friends. One who is by choice or accident selected to come in contact with those in new affliction should, like a trained nurse, banish all consciousness of self; otherwise he or she will be of no service—and service is the only gift of value that can be offered.

### FIRST AID TO THE BEREAVED

First of all, the ones in sorrow should be urged if possible to sit in a sunny room and where there is an open fire. If they feel unequal to going to the table, a very little food should be taken to them on a tray. A cup of tea or coffee or bouillon, a little thin toast, a poached egg, milk if they like it hot, or milk toast. Cold milk is bad for one who is already over-chilled. The cook may suggest something that appeals usually to their taste—but very little should be offered at a time, for although the stomach may be empty, the palate rejects the thought of food, and digestion is never in best order.

It sounds paradoxical to say that those in sorrow should be protected from all contacts, and yet that they must be constantly asked about arrangements and given little time to remain utterly undisturbed. They must think of people they want sent for, and they must decide the details of the funeral; when they would like it held, and whether in church or at the house, whether they want special music or flowers ordered, and where the interment is to be. 1

### ON DUTY AT DOOR

A friend or a servant is always stationed in the hall to open the door, receive notes and cards, and to take messages. In a big house the butler in his day clothes should answer the bell, with the parlor-maid to assist him, until a footman can procure a black livery and take his or her place. A parlor-maid or waitress at the door should wear either a black or gray dress, with her plainest white apron, collar and cuffs.

### MEMBER OF FAMILY IN CHARGE

A close friend or male member of the family should be—if not at the door—as near the front hall as possible to see the countless people with whom details have to be arranged, to admit to a member of the family anyone they may want to see, and to give news to, or take messages from, others.

As people come to the house to enquire and offer their services, he gives them commissions the occasion requires. The first friend who hurries to the house (in answer to the telephone message

which announced the death) is asked to break the news to an invalid connection of the family, or he may be sent to the florist to order the bell hung, or to the station to meet a child arriving from school.

### NOTICE TO PAPERS

The sexton (or other funeral director) sends the notices to the daily papers announcing the death, and the time and place of the funeral. The form is generally selected by a member of the family from among those appearing in that day's newspapers. These notices are paid for by the sexton and put on his bill.

With the exception of the telephone messages or telegrams to relatives and very intimate friends, no other notices are sent out. Only those persons who are expected to go to the house at once have messages sent to them; all others are supposed to read the notice in the papers. When the notice reads "funeral private" and neither place nor time is given, very intimate friends are supposed to ask for these details at the house; others understand they are not expected.

### HANGING THE BELL

As a rule the funeral director hangs crepe streamers on the bell; white ones for a child, black and white for a young person, or black for an older person. This signifies to the passerby that it is a house of mourning so that the bell will not be rung unnecessarily nor long.

If they prefer, the family sometimes orders a florist to hang a bunch of violets or other purple flowers on black ribbon streamers, for a grown person; or white violets, white carnations—any white flower without leaves—on the black ribbon for a young woman or man; or white flowers on white gauze or ribbon for a child.

### CHECKING EXPENSES IN ADVANCE

It is curious that long association with the sadness of death seems to have deprived an occasional funeral director of all sense of moderation. Whether the temptation of "good business" gradually undermines his character—knowing as he does that bereaved families ask no questions—or whether his profession is merely devoid of taste, he will, if not checked, bring the most ornate and expensive casket in his establishment; he will perform every rite that his professional ingenuity for expenditure can devise; he will employ every attendant he has; he will order vehicles numerous enough for the cortège of a president; he will even, if thrown in contact with a bewildered chief-mourner, secure a pledge for the erection of an elaborate mausoleum.

Some one, therefore, who has the family's interest at heart and knows their taste and purse, should go personally to the establishment of the undertaker, and not only select the coffin, but go carefully into the specification of all other details, so that everything necessary may be arranged for, and unnecessary items omitted.

This does not imply that a family that prefers a very elaborate funeral should not be allowed to have one; but the great majority of people have moderate, rather than unlimited means, and it is

not unheard of that a small estate is seriously depleted by vulgarly lavish and entirely inappropriate funeral expenses. One would be a poor sort who for the sake of friends would not willingly endure a little troublesome inquiry, rather than witness a display of splurge and bad taste and realize at the same time that the friends who might have been protected will be deluged with bills which it cannot but embarrass them to pay.

### HONORARY PALLBEARERS

The member of the family who is in charge will ask either when they come to the house, or by telephone or telegraph if they are at a distance, six or eight men who are close friends of the deceased to be the pallbearers. When a man has been prominent in public life, he may have twelve or more from among his political or business associates as well as his lifelong social friends. Near relatives are never chosen, as their place is with the women of the family. For a young woman, her own friends or those of her family are chosen. It is a service that may not under any circumstances except serious ill-health, be refused.

The one in charge will tell the pallbearers where they are to meet. It used to be customary for them to go to the house on the morning of the funeral and drive to the church behind the hearse, but as everything tending to a conspicuous procession is being gradually done away with, it is often preferred to have them wait in the vestibule of the church.

Honorary pallbearers serve only at church funerals. They do not carry the coffin for the reason that, being unaccustomed to bearing such a burden, one of them might possibly stumble, or at least give an impression of uncertainty or awkwardness that might detract from the solemnity of the occasion. The sexton's assistants are trained for this service, so as to prevent in so far as is humanly possible a blundering occurrence.

### MOURNING FOR FUNERAL

Among those who come to the house there is sure to be a woman friend of the family whose taste and method of expenditure is similar to theirs. She looks through the clothes they have, to see if there is not a black dress or suit that can be used, and makes a list of only the necessary articles which will have to be procured.

All dressmaking establishments give precedence to mourning orders and will fill a commission within twenty-four hours. These first things are made invariably without bothering the wearer with fitting. Alterations, if required, are made later.

Or the mourning departments of the big stores and specialty shops are always willing to send a selection on approval, so that a choice can be made by the family in the privacy of their own rooms. Nearly always acquaintances who are themselves in mourning offer to lend crepe veils, toques and wraps, so that the garments which must be bought at first may be as few as possible. Most women have a plain black suit, or dress, the trimming of which can quickly be replaced with crepe by a maid or a friend.

Most men are of standard size and can go to a clothier and buy a ready-made black suit. Otherwise they must borrow, or wear what they have, as no tailor can make a suit in twenty-four hours.

#### “SITTING UP” NO LONGER CUSTOMARY

Unless the deceased was a prelate or personage whose lying-in-state is a public ceremony, or unless it is the especial wish of the relatives, the solemn vigil through long nights by the side of the coffin is no longer essential as a mark of veneration or love for the departed.

Nor is the soulless body dressed in elaborate trappings of farewell grandeur. Everything to-day is done to avoid unnecessary evidence of the change that has taken place. In case of a very small funeral the person who has passed away is sometimes left lying in bed in night clothes, or on a sofa in a wrapper, with flowers, but no set pieces, about the room, so that an invalid or other sensitive bereft one may say farewell without ever seeing the all too definite finality of a coffin. In any event the last attentions are paid in accordance with the wish of those most nearly concerned.

#### EXTRA WORK FOR SERVANTS

Kindness of heart is latent in all of us, and servants, even if they have not been long with a family, rise to the emergency of such a time as that of a funeral, which always puts additional work upon them and often leaves them to manage under their own initiative. The house is always full of people, family and intimate friends occupy all available accommodation, but it is a rare household which does not give sympathy as generously below stairs as above; and he or she would be thought very heartless by their companions who did not willingly and helpfully assume a just share of the temporary tax on energy, time and consideration.

#### CHURCH FUNERAL

The church funeral is the more trying, in that the family have to leave the seclusion of their house and face a congregation. On the other hand, many who find solemnity only in a church service with the added beauty of choir and organ, prefer to take their heartrending farewell in the House of God.

#### ARRANGING AND RECORDING FLOWERS

An hour before the time for the service, if the family is Protestant, one or two woman friends go to the church to arrange the flowers which are placed about the chancel. Unless they have had unusual practise in such arrangement they should, if possible, have the assistance of a florist, as effective grouping and fastening of heavy wreaths and sprays is apt to overtax the ingenuity of novices, no matter how perfect their usual taste may be.

Whoever takes charge of the flowers must be sure to collect carefully all the notes and cards. They should always take extra pencils in case the points break, and write on the outside of each envelope a description of the flowers that the card was sent with.

“Spray of Easter lilies and palm branches tied with white ribbon.”

“Wreath of laurel leaves and gardenias.”

“Long sheaf of pink roses and white lilacs.”

These descriptions will afterwards help identify and recall the flowers when notes of thanks are sent.

As the appointed time for the funeral draws near, the organ plays softly, the congregation gradually fills the church. The first pews on either side of the center aisle are left empty.

### THE PROCESSIONAL

At the appointed time the funeral procession forms in the vestibule. If there is to be a choral service the minister and the choir enter the church from the rear, and precede the funeral cortège. Directly after the choir and clergy come the pallbearers, two by two, then the coffin covered with flowers and then the family—the chief mourner comes first, leaning upon the arm of her closest male relative. Usually each man is escort for a woman, but two women or two men may walk together according to the division of the family. If the deceased is one of four sons where there is no daughter, the mother and father walk immediately behind the body of their child, followed by the two elder sons and behind them the younger, with the nearest woman relative. If there is a grandmother, she walks with the eldest son and the younger two follow together. If it is a family of daughters who are following their father, the eldest daughter may walk with her mother, or the mother may walk with her brother, or a son-in-law. Although the arrangement of the procession is thus fixed, those in affliction should be placed next to the one whose nearness may be of most comfort to them. A younger child who is calm and soothing would better be next to his mother than an older who is of more nervous temperament.

At the funeral of a woman, her husband sometimes walks alone, but usually with his mother or his daughter. A very few intimate friends walk at the rear of the family, followed by the servants of the household. At the chancel the choir take their accustomed places, the minister stands at the foot of the chancel steps, the honorary pallbearers take their places in the front pews on the left, and the coffin is set upon a stand previously placed there for the purpose. The bearers of the coffin walk quietly around to inconspicuous stations on a side aisle. The family occupy the front pews on the right, the rest of the procession fill vacant places on either side. The service is then read.

### THE RECESSIONAL

Upon the conclusion of the service, the procession moves out in the same order as it came in excepting that the choir remain in their places and the honorary pallbearers go first. Outside the church, the coffin is put into the hearse, the family getting into carriages or motors waiting immediately behind, and the flowers are put into a covered vehicle. (It is very vulgar to fill open landaus with displayed floral offerings and parade through the streets.)

## FEW GO TO THE BURIAL

If the burial is in the churchyard or otherwise within walking distance, the congregation naturally follows the family to the graveside. Otherwise, the general congregation no longer expects, nor wishes, to go to the interment which (excepting at a funeral of public importance) is witnessed only by the immediate family and the most intimate friends, who are asked if they “care to go.” The long line of carriages that used to stand at the church ready to be filled with a long file of mere acquaintances is a barbarous thing of the past.

## HOUSE FUNERAL

Many people prefer a house funeral—it is simpler, more private, and obviates the necessity for those in sorrow to face people. The nearest relatives may stay apart in an adjoining room or even upon the upper floor, where they can hear the service but remain in unseen seclusion.

Ladies keep their wraps on. Gentlemen wear their overcoats or carry them on their arms and hold their hats in their hands.

## MUSIC

To many people there is lack of solemnity in a service outside of a church and lacking the accompaniment of the organ. It is almost impossible to introduce orchestral music that does not sound either dangerously suggestive of the gaiety of entertainment or else thin and flat. A quartet or choral singing is beautiful and appropriate, if available, otherwise there is usually no music at a house funeral.

## HOUSE ARRANGEMENT

Some authorities say that only the flowers sent by very close friends should be shown at a house funeral, and that it is ostentatious to make a display. But when people, or societies, have been kind enough to send flowers, it would certainly be wanting in appreciation, to say the least, to relegate their offerings to the back yard—or wherever it is that the cavilers would have them hid!

In a small house where flowers would be overpowering, it is customary to insert in the death notice: “It is requested that no flowers be sent,” or “Kindly omit flowers.”

Arrangement for the service is usually made in the drawing-room, and the coffin is placed in front of the mantel, or between the windows, but always at a distance from the door, usually on stands brought by the funeral director, who also brings enough camp chairs to fill the room without crowding. A friend, or a member of the family, collects the cards and arranges the flowers behind and at the side and against the stands of the coffin. If there is to be a blanket or pall of smilax or other leaves with or without flowers, fastened to a frame, or sewed on thin material and made into a covering, it is always ordered by the family. Otherwise, the wreaths to be placed on the coffin are chosen from among those sent by the family.

## THE SERVICE

As friends arrive, they are shown to the room where the ceremony is to be held, but they take their own places. A room must be apportioned to the minister in which to put on his vestments. At the hour set for the funeral the immediate family, if they feel like being present, take their places in the front row of chairs. The women wear small hats or toques and long crepe veils over their faces, so that their countenances may be hidden. The minister takes his stand at the head of the coffin and reads the service.

At its conclusion the coffin is carried out to the hearse, which, followed by a small number of carriages, proceeds to the cemetery.

It is very rare nowadays for any but a small group of relatives and intimate men friends to go to the cemetery, and it is not thought unloving or slighting of the dead for no women at all to be at the graveside. If any women are to be present and the interment is to be in the ground, some one should order the grave lined with boughs and green branches—to lessen the impression of bare earth.

## DISTANT COUNTRY FUNERAL

In the country where relatives and friends arrive by train, carriages or motors must be provided to convey them to the house or church or cemetery. If the clergyman has no conveyance of his own, he must always be sent for, and if the funeral is in a house, a room must be set apart for him in which to change his clothes.

It is unusual for a family to provide a “special car.” Sometimes the hour of the funeral is announced in the papers as taking place on the arrival of a certain train, but everyone who attends is expected to pay his own railway fare and make, if necessary, his own arrangements for lunch.

Only when the country place where the funeral is held is at a distance from town and a long drive from the railway station, a light repast of bouillon, rolls and tea and sandwiches may be spread on the dining-room table. Otherwise refreshments are never offered—except to those of the family, of course, who are staying in the house.

## HOUSE RESTORED TO ORDER

While the funeral cortège is still at the cemetery, some one who is in charge at home must see that the mourning emblem is taken off the bell, that the windows are opened, the house aired from the excessive odor of flowers, and the blinds pulled up. Any furniture that has been displaced should be put back where it belongs, and unless the day is too hot a fire should be lighted in the library or principal bedroom to make a little more cheerful the sad home-coming of the family. It is also well to prepare a little hot tea or broth, and it should be brought them upon their return without their being asked if they would care for it. Those who are in great distress want no food, but if it is handed to them, they will mechanically take it, and something warm to start digestion and stimulate impaired circulation is what they most need.

## MOURNING

A generation or two ago the regulations for mourning were definitely prescribed, definite periods according to the precise degree of relationship of the mourner. One's real feelings, whether of grief or comparative indifference, had nothing to do with the outward manifestation one was obliged, in decency, to show. The tendency to-day is toward sincerity. People do not put on black for aunts, uncles and cousins unless there is a deep tie of affection as well as of blood.

Many persons to-day do not believe in going into mourning at all. There are some who believe, as do the races of the East, that great love should be expressed in rejoicing in the re-birth of a beloved spirit instead of selfishly mourning their own earthly loss. But many who object to manifestations of grief, find themselves impelled to wear mourning when their sorrow comes and the number of those who do not put on black is still comparatively small.

## PROTECTION OF MOURNING

If you see acquaintances of yours in deepest mourning, it does not occur to you to go up to them and babble trivial topics or ask them to a dance or dinner. If you pass close to them, irresistible sympathy compels you merely to stop and press their hand and pass on. A widow, or mother, in the newness of her long veil, has her hard path made as little difficult as possible by everyone with whom she comes in contact, no matter on what errand she may be bent. A clerk in a store will try to wait on her as quickly and as attentively as possible. Acquaintances avoid stopping her with long conversation that could not but torture and distress her. She meets small kindnesses at every turn, which save unnecessary jars to supersensitive nerves.

Once in a great while, a tactless person may have no better sense than to ask her abruptly for whom she is in mourning! Such people would not hesitate to walk over the graves in a cemetery! And fortunately, such encounters are few.

Since many people, however, dislike long mourning veils and all crepe generally, it is absolutely correct to omit both if preferred, and to wear an untrimmed coat and hat of plainest black with or without a veil.

## A WORD OF ECONOMY

In the first days of stress, people sometimes give away every colored article they possess and not until later are they aware of the effort necessary, to say nothing of the expense, of getting an entire new wardrobe. Therefore it is well to remember:

Dresses and suits can be dyed without ripping. Any number of fabrics—all woolens, soft silks, canton crepe, georgette and chiffon, dye perfectly. Buttonholes have sometimes to be re-worked, snaps or hooks and eyes changed to black, a bit of trimming taken off or covered with dull braid, silk or crepe, and the clothes look every bit as well as though newly ordered.

Straw hats can be painted with an easily applied stain sold in every drug and department store for the purpose. If you cannot trim hats yourself, a milliner can easily imitate, or, if necessary, simplify the general outline of the trimming as it was, and a seamstress can easily cover dyed

trimmings on dresses with crepe or dull silk. Also tan shoes—nearly all footwear made of leather—can be dyed black and made to look like new by any first class shoemaker.

## MOURNING MATERIALS

Lustreless silks, such as crepe de chine, georgette, chiffon, grosgrain, peau de soie, dull finish charmeuse and taffeta, and all plain woolen materials, are suitable for deepest mourning. Uncut velvet is as deep mourning as crepe, but cut velvet is not mourning at all! Nor is satin or lace. The only lace permissible is a plain or hemstitched net known as “footing.”

Fancy weaves in stockings are not mourning, nor is bright jet or silver. A very perplexing decree is that clothes entirely of white are deepest mourning but the addition of a black belt or hat or gloves produces second mourning.

Patent leather and satin shoes are not mourning.

People in second mourning wear all combinations of black and white as well as clothes of gray and mauve. Many of the laws for materials seem arbitrary, and people interpret them with greater freedom than they used to, but never under any circumstances can one who is not entirely in colors wear satin embroidered in silver or trimmed with jet and lace! With the exception of wearing a small string of pearls and a single ring, especially if it is an engagement ring, jewelry with deepest mourning is never in good taste.

## WHEN A VEIL IS NOT WORN

Nor should a woman ever wear a crepe veil to the theater or restaurant, or any public place of amusement. On the other hand, people left long to themselves and their own thoughts grow easily morbid, and the opera or concert or an interesting play may exert a beneficial relaxation. Gay restaurants with thumping strident musical accompaniment or entertainments of the cabaret variety, need scarcely be commented upon. But to go to a matinee with a close friend or relative is becoming more and more usual—and the picture theaters where one may sit in the obscurity and be diverted by the story on the silver screen which, requiring no mental effort, often diverts a sad mind for an hour or so, is an undeniable blessing. An observer would have to be much at a loss for material who could find anything to criticise in seeing a family together under such circumstances.

One generally leaves off a long veil, however, for such an occasion and drives bareheaded, if it be evening, or substitutes a short black face veil over one's hat on entering and leaving a building in the daytime.

## MOURNING FOR COUNTRY WEAR

Except for church, crepe veils and clothes heavily trimmed with crepe are not appropriate in the country—ever! Mourning clothes for the summer consist of plain black serge or tweed, silk or

cotton material, all black with white organdy collar and cuffs, and a veil-less hat with a brim. Or one may dress entirely in dull materials of white.

### A WIDOW'S MOURNING

A widow used never to wear any but woolen materials, made as plain as possible, with deep-hemmed turn-back cuffs and collar of white organdy. On the street she wore a small crepe bonnet with a little cap-border of white crepe or organdy and a long veil of crepe or nun's veiling to the bottom edge of her skirt, over her face as well as down her back. At the end of three months the front veil was put back from over her face, but the long veil was worn two years at least, and frequently for life. These details are identical with those prescribed to-day excepting that she may wear lustreless silks as well as wool, the duration of mourning may be shorter, and she need never wear her veil over her face except at the funeral unless she chooses.

A widow of mature years who follows old-fashioned conventions wears deep mourning with crepe veil two years, black the third year and second mourning the fourth. But shorter periods of mourning are becoming more and more the custom and many consider three or even two years conventional.

### THE VERY YOUNG WIDOW

The young widow should wear deep crepe for a year and then lighter mourning for six months and second mourning for six months longer. There is nothing more utterly captivating than a sweet young face under a widow's veil, and it is not to be wondered at that her own loneliness and need of sympathy, combined with all that is appealing to sympathy in a man, results in the healing of her heart. She should, however, never remain in mourning for her first husband after she has decided she can be consoled by a second.

There is no reason why a woman (or a man) should not find such consolation, but she should keep the intruding attraction away from her thoughts until the year of respect is up, after which she is free to put on colors and make happier plans.

### MOURNING WORN BY A MOTHER

A mother who has lost a grown child wears the same mourning as that prescribed for a widow excepting the white cap ruche. Some mothers wear mourning for their children always, others do not believe in being long in black for a spirit that was young, and, for babies or very young children, wear colorless clothes of white or gray or mauve.

### A DAUGHTER OR SISTER

A daughter or sister wears a long veil over her face at the funeral. The length of the veil may be to her waist or to the hem of her skirt, and it is worn for from three months to a year, according to

her age and feelings. An older woman wears deep black for her parents, sisters and brothers for a year, and then lightens her mourning during the second year. A young girl, if she is out in society or in college, may wear a long veil for her parents or her betrothed, if she wants to, or she wears a thin net veil edged with crepe and the corners falling a short way down her back—or none at all.

Very young girls of from fourteen to eighteen wear black for three months and then six months of black and white. They never wear veils of any sort, nor are their clothes trimmed in crepe. Children from eight to fourteen wear black and white and gray for six months for a parent, brother, sister or grandparent. Young children are rarely put into mourning, though their clothes are often selected to avoid vivid color. They usually wear white with no black except a hair ribbon for the girls and a necktie for the boys. Very little children in black are too pitiful.

### EXTREME FASHION INAPPROPRIATE

Fancy clothes in mourning are always offenses against good taste, because as the word implies, a person is in mourning. To have the impression of “fashion” dominant is contrary to the purpose of somber dress; it is a costume for the spirit, a covering for the visible body of one whose soul seeks the background. Nothing can be in worse taste than crepe which is gathered and ruched and puffed and pleated and made into waterfalls, and imitation ostrich feathers as a garnishing for a hat. The more absolutely plain, the more appropriate and dignified is the mourning dress. A “long veil” is a shade pulled down—a protection—it should never be a flaunting arrangement to arrest the amazed attention of the passerby.

The necessity for dignity can not be overemphasized.

### BAD TASTE IN MOURNING

Mourning observances are all matters of fixed form, and any deviation from precise convention is interpreted by the world at large as signifying want of proper feeling.

How often has one heard said of a young woman who was perhaps merely ignorant of the effect of her inappropriate clothes or unconventional behavior: “Look at her! And her dear father scarcely cold in his grave!” Or “Little she seems to have cared for her mother—and such a lovely one she had, too.” Such remarks are as thoughtless as are the actions of the daughter, but they point to an undeniable condition. Better far not wear mourning at all, saying you do not believe in it, than allow your unseemly conduct to indicate indifference to the memory of a really beloved parent; better that a young widow should go out in scarlet and yellow on the day after her husband’s funeral than wear weeds which attract attention on account of their flaunting bad taste and flippancy. One may not, one must not, one can not wear the very last cry of exaggerated fashion in crepe, nor may one be boisterous or flippant or sloppy in manner, without giving the impression to all beholders that one’s spirit is posturing, tripping, or dancing on the grave of sacred memory.

This may seem exaggerated, but if you examine the expressions, you will find that they are essentially true.

Draw the picture for yourself: A slim figure, if you like, held in the posture of the caterpillar slouch, a long length of stocking so thin as to give the effect of shaded skin above high-heeled slippers with sparkling buckles of bright jet, a short skirt, a scrappy, thin, low-necked, short-sleeved blouse through which white underclothing shows various edgings of lace and ribbons, and on top of this, a painted face under a long crepe veil! Yet the wearer of this costume may in nothing but appearance resemble the unmentionable class of women she suggests; as a matter of fact she is very likely a perfectly decent young person and really sad at heart, and her clothes and “make up” not different from countless others who pass unnoticed because their colored clothing suggests no mockery of solemnity.

## MOURNING WEAR FOR MEN

The necessity of business and affairs which has made withdrawal into seclusion impossible, has also made it customary for the majority of men to go into mourning by the simple expedient of putting a black band on their hat or on the left sleeve of their usual clothes and wearing only white instead of colored linen.

A man never under any circumstances wears crepe. The band on his hat is of very fine cloth and varies in width according to the degree of mourning from two and a half inches to within half an inch of the top of a high hat. On other hats the width is fixed at about two and a half or three inches. The sleeve band, from three and a half to four and a half inches in width, is of dull broadcloth on overcoats or winter clothing, and of serge on summer clothes. The sleeve band of mourning is sensible for many reasons, the first being that of economy. Men’s clothes do not come successfully from the encounter with dye vats, nor lend themselves to “alterations,” and an entire new wardrobe is an unwarranted burden to most.

Except for the one black suit bought for the funeral and kept for Sunday church, or other special occasion, only wealthy men or widowers go to the very considerable expense of getting a new wardrobe. Widowers—especially if they are elderly—always go into black (which includes very dark gray mixtures) with a deep black band on the hat, and of course, black ties and socks and shoes and gloves.

## CONVENTIONS OF MOURNING FOR MEN

Although the etiquette is less exacting, the standards of social observance are much the same for a man as for a woman. A widower should not be seen at any general entertainment, such as a dance, or in a box at the opera, for a year; a son for six months; a brother for three—at least! The length of time a father stays in mourning for a child is more a matter of his own inclination.

## MOURNING LIVERY

Coachmen and chauffeurs wear black liveries in town. In the country they wear gray or even their ordinary whipcord with a black band on the left sleeve. 85

The house footman is always put into a black livery with dull buttons and a black and white striped waistcoat. Maids are not put into mourning with the exception of a lady’s maid or nurse

who, through many years of service, has “become one of the family,” and who personally desires to wear mourning as though for a relative of her own.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SYMPATHY

In the case of a very prominent person where messages of condolence, many of them impersonal, mount into the thousands, the sending of engraved cards to strangers is proper, such

as:

**Mr. W. Ide Bonds**  
**wishes gratefully to acknowledge**  
**your kind expression of sympathy**

or

*Senator and Mrs. Michigan*  
*wish to express their appreciation of*  
*Miss Millicent Gilding's*  
*sympathy in their recent bereavement*

Under no circumstances should such cards be sent to intimate friends, or to those who have sent flowers or written personal letters.

When some one with real sympathy in his heart has taken the trouble to select and send flowers, or has gone to the house and offered what service he might, or has in a spirit of genuine regard, written a personal letter, the receipt of words composed by a stationer and dispatched by a professional secretary is exactly as though his outstretched hand had been pushed aside.

A family in mourning is in retirement from all social activities. There is no excuse on the score of their “having no time.” Also no one expects a long letter, nor does any one look for an early reply. A personal word on a visiting card is all any one asks for. The envelope may be addressed by some one else.

It takes but a moment to write “Thank you,” or “Thank you for all sympathy,” or “Thank you for your kind offers and sympathy.” Or, on a sheet of letter paper:

“Thank you, dear Mrs. Smith, for your beautiful flowers and your kind sympathy.”

Or:

“Your flowers were so beautiful! Thank you for them and for your loving message.”

Or:

“Thank you for your sweet letter. I know you meant it and I appreciate it.”

Many, many such notes can be written in a day. If the list is overlong, or the one who received the flowers and messages is in reality so prostrated that she (or he) is unable to perform the task of writing, then some member of her immediate family can write for her:

“Mother (or father) is too ill to write and asks me to thank you for your beautiful flowers and kind message.”

Most people find a sad comfort as well as pain, in the reading and replying to letters and cards, but they should not sit at it too long; it is apt to increase rather than assuage their grief. Therefore, no one expects more than a word—but that word should be seemingly personal.

### OBLIGATIONS OF PRESENCE AT FUNERALS

Upon reading the death notice of a mere acquaintance you may leave your card at the house, if you feel so inclined, or you may merely send your card.

Upon the death of an intimate acquaintance or friend you should go at once to the house, write, “With sympathy” on your card and leave it at the door. Or you should write a letter to the family; in either case, you send flowers addressed to the nearest relative. On the card accompanying the flowers, you write, “With sympathy,” “With deepest sympathy,” or “With heartfelt sympathy,” or “With love and sympathy.” If there is a notice in the papers “requesting no flowers be sent,” you send them only if you are a very intimate friend.

Or if you prefer, send a few flowers with a note, immediately after the funeral, to the member of the family who is particularly your friend.

If the notice says “funeral private” you do not go unless you have received a message from the family that you are expected, or unless you are such an intimate friend that you know you are expected without being asked. Where a general notice is published in the paper, it is proper and fitting that you should show sympathy by going to the funeral, even though you had little more than a visiting acquaintance with the family. You should not leave cards nor go to a funeral of a person with whom you have not in any way been associated or to whose house you have never been asked.

But it is heartless and delinquent if you do not go to the funeral of one with whom you were associated in business or other interests, or to whose house you were often invited, or where you are a friend of the immediate members of the family.

You should wear black clothes if you have them, or if not, the darkest, the least conspicuous you possess. Enter the church as quietly as possible, and as there are no ushers at a funeral, seat yourself where you approximately belong. Only a very intimate friend should take a position far up on the center aisle. If you are merely an acquaintance you should sit inconspicuously in the

rear somewhere, unless the funeral is very small and the church big, in which case you may sit on the end seat of the center aisle toward the back.