

The Crane Classics

# Adventures in Common Sense

*By*  
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## THE NEW NOBILITY

THERE will always be a nobility and a commons. Democracy does not operate to level all people to one grade. It creates distinctions as sharp as those of the old world systems. There will be as great a difference between a noble and a vulgar person under democracy as there is between a duke and a stable boy in the artificial class scheme of England. There will be more; for often in European society the real character of the stable boy is not far removed from that of the duke.

In the real gradations of nobility rank is of no significance. A lady who is a leader in the smart set may be low and common, and the lady who runs the typewriter may be high and gentle.

As a rule, extreme wealth which creates idleness produces vulgarity, causing narrowness, pride, and selfishness; and extreme poverty has the same effect, as it stunts, imbrutes and clogs life. Beyond this, one's circumstances mean little or nothing in cultural value.

Real nobility may be known by these marks:

A certain fine cleanliness of mind. An ignoring and an unconsciousness of the body and its ap-

petites. Moderation in eating and drinking. Perfect control over the sex instinct. The body must be got out of the way, else one always gives an impression of grossness that is offensive.

Genuine humility of spirit. Not servility, but a noble indifference to praise and honors. To want high office, to want to be noticed, admired, and envied, is to be, to a degree, coarse natured.

To push one's self, to advertise, to scheme for prominence, may be good business, but it is not noble. This does not apply to the advertisement of one's goods which he has for sale, but to one's self.

All vanity, boasting, talking of self and of one's own achievements or money, a loud tone of voice, the habit of breaking in upon the conversation of others, too much prominence of the pronoun I, these are low.

The real nobility never dress strikingly. The woman who wears a garment that attracts attention because of its startlingness shows a streak of commonness. The height of good dressing is to be unobserved, said Beau Brummel.

A fondness for jewelry and perfumes is a mark of a lack of refinement.

Real nobleness is indicated by a taste for simplicity, a quietness in speech, in manner, in one's furniture and house. All display, whether in a Fifth avenue mansion or a Bowery necktie, is coarse.

Luxury is an unfailing mark of a low nature,

particularly when it is accompanied by extravagance and debts.

The noble mind respects itself, and will not be imposed upon. It is unafraid, but not bullying.

Nobleness is shown by courtesy, by an unfailing regard for the feelings of others, by an inborn gentleness and modesty; just as coarseness of nature is shown by the opposite kind of thing.

Testing yourself and others by these standards, you will be surprised at the number of genuinely noble people you know. You find them everywhere; one may be selling newspapers at the street corner, one may work in your kitchen, one may be a millionaire, one a poor man.

The most striking presentation I have ever seen of the kind of an aristocrat democracy stands for is in Forbes-Robertson's "Passing of the Third Floor Back."