Also, no women of any sort shall eat in the private rooms. If anyone violates this rule, he shall pay the assessed penalty, namely, sixpence. . . .

Also, no one shall form the habit of talking too loudly at table. Whoever after he has been warned about this by the prior shall have offended by speaking too loudly, provided this is established afterwards by testimony of several fellows to the prior, shall be held to the usual house penalty, namely two quarts of wine.

The penalty for transgression of statutes which do not fall under an oath is twopence, if the offenders are not reported by someone, or if they were, the penalty becomes sixpence in the case of fines. I understand “not reported” to mean that, if before the matter has come to the attention of the prior, the offender accuses himself to the prior or has told the clerk to write down twopence against him for such an offence, for it is not enough to say to the fellows, “I accuse myself.”


How the Student Should Behave

John of Garland

Thirteenth century

Learn how to entertain at table, to provide food and the sauces that go with the various dishes, and to serve seasonable wine in modest quantity. Once again I touch critically on manners in polite society so that my readers may become more genteel. According to good custom you should place the sauce on the right, the
service plate on the left; you should have the servant take the first course to him who sits at the head of the table. Take hold of the base of a goblet so that unsightly finger marks may not show on the side. Polite diners pause over their cup, but gluttons, who live like mules and weevils, empty it with one draught. Pour wine properly with both hands so as not to spill any. Always serve two pieces of bread. Have several well-dressed servants in readiness to bring clean towels and to supply the wants of the guests. Lest I should seem to be in charge of the cooks like Nebuzaradan, I shall not go into the art of preparing fine dishes. Carve the meats which are not to be served in the broth, and skilfully take off the wings of fowl while they are hot. He who takes a walk or a brief nap after dinner preserves his health. If you wish to regain your strength as a convalescent, and keep your health when you are well, drink moderately. All Epicureans live impure lives; they lose their eyesight; they are rude, unclean, and are doomed to die a sudden death.

The sage of Miletus set down these rules of polite behaviour for which we should be grateful. Regulate your household soberly; do your civic duties cheerfully; have a word of greeting for strangers as for friends; do your utmost to avoid altercations with irate associates; with a smile and a witticism cover up the faults of others; be faultless at table, glad even to entertain your enemies; bear your misfortunes with fortitude and do not let your head be turned by good fortune. Make an effort to follow these seven rules of courtliness. May you be decked out with them, you who declare yourself to be a scholar; unless you have such urbanities you are taken for a rustic.

Even though you be a Socrates, if you have rude manners, you are a ditch-digger. Avoid these seven rusticities
which are signalled by Thales, the sage. Light-minded talk is unseemly at table; so is presumption and constant contention. It is rude to be ungrateful or cruel towards the poor. It is reprehensible to be haughty towards your dear friends; if you reject good advice, you are a fool; and you lack the light of reason if you fly in the face of God. These good precepts are not hidden away but are written in the public theatre. Avoid these things lest you be consigned behind the gates of hell.

You will be courteous if you perform the following works of mercy: if at night you give beds to the poor, if you heal the sick, if you clothe the freezing, give food to the beggar, console the afflicted, and offer drink to the thirsty.

Regard as models of deportment the graven images of the churches, which you should carry in your mind as living and indelible pictures. Cherish again the violets of civility without blemish so that, when your blindness has vanished, the eyes of your soul may have no wasting disease. Be not a fornicator, O student, a robber, a murderer, a deceitful merchant, a champion at dice. In the choirstalls a cleric should chant without noise and commotion. I advocate that the ordinary layman, who does not sing, be kept out of the choir. A student, who is a churchman, is expected to follow good custom, to be willing to serve, to fee the notary who has drawn up a charter for him, to gladden the giver. Do not constantly urge your horse on with the spur, which should be used only on rare occasions. Give your horse the reins when he mounts an incline; fearing a serious accident, avoid crossing swollen rivers, or the Rhine. If a bridge is not safe, you should dismount and let the horse pick his way over the smooth parts. Mount gently on the left stirrup. Select beautiful equestrian trappings suitable to your clerical station. Ride erect unless you are bent by age. If
you are of the elect you should have a rich saddle cloth. The cross should be exalted, the voice be raised in prayer, Christ should be worshipped, the foot should be taken out of the stirrup. The horseman will descend from his horse and say his prayers; no matter how far he then will travel, he will ride in safety. He who wishes to serve should be quick, not go to sleep, and not give way to anger against his lord. Avoid drunkards, those who indulge in secret sin, those who like to beat and strike, those who love lewdness, evil games, and quarrels. Passing a cemetery, if you are well-bred, and if you hope for salvation, you pause to pray that the dead may rest in peace. Have nothing to do with the prostitute, but love your wife; all wives should be honoured but especially those who are distinguished by virtue. A person who is well should not recline at table in the fashion of the ancients. When you walk after dinner keep on frequented streets. Avoid insincere speeches. Unless you wish to be considered a fool learn to keep your mouth shut in season. Stand and sit upright, do not scratch yourself.

I must speak about medical matters and drugs, but Phoebus shows that they are harmful if taken too often. In order that a man be kept entirely healthy this chapter is added so that the mind may be purified and the body strengthened. Nutmeg may be taken as well as cloves, musk may be given, fennel may be eaten by anybody; they expel gas from the stomach and thus, along with the triple compartments of the brain, they comfort the cerebellum. By means of cooked pears you can take away fevers with marvellous results. Pliris is good for weak and melancholy men. The thin flux (usia) is cured by means of diapendia. Ygia is good for rheumatics, anathasia for flux of the bowels. Give diaciminum and sweet wine to those who have indigestion. Justinum and
goad’s blood dissolve stone in the bladder. Diaprunis makes you immune to fevers; when given to patients who have fasted, a decoction with prunes from Damascus allays fevers. A sane diet is essential to a life of happiness; thus you will be strong and vigorous when health, the aim of the physician, is yours.

Exhibit a good deportment in deeds, and in words; learn the custom of the country in which you happen to be. Do not be noisy, rash in your actions, odious because of your insulting words, wrathful about little annoyances. You should never despair if you suffer on account of sin; you will bear all the bitterness of poverty, knowing that you are an heir of the eternal Prince. Be peaceful among peaceful citizens, be like a rich patron among the poor. You should disassociate yourself from the rich, for, a celibate on earth, you will dwell with Christ, the celibate, in heaven. Hasten to help a needy friend, give him money if you can. Be a good debtor and hasten to pay your debts lest you be condemned by your burden of sin and by the peasant bewailing his losses. You should take good care of your horse, give him enough water, clean straw when he is worn out, and enough of the kind of food he likes to eat. There are more such precepts for him who wishes to know all the rules of politeness; as such, make it your ambition, by careful study, to learn them.