

The enemies being  
treated with  
consideration during  
the



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The poor urchin, who shares his loaf of bread with another, stands out as an example of the truest and most unselfish hospitality. Among primitive people, all over the world, the virtue of hospitality was regarded with greater reverence and practiced with stricter observance than in modern times.

They would receive strangers in their houses, give them food and shelter, and speed them upon their travels with such help as was in their power to give. A traveler who was not suspected of unworthy motives, if he reached a village at nightfall, would have no hesitation in going to the house of the headman, secure in the belief that a welcome would be waiting for him. Even an enemy, if he were once to cross the threshold and ask for shelter in the name of hospitality, would be treated as well as his host could treat him and might rest assured that, in case of discovery, his life would be as safe as in his own house, so long as he remained under that roof. The Arabs particularly are famous for their generous hospitality, and many stories are told of the bitterest enemies being treated with consideration during the times they have chanced to spend beneath their opponent's roof. In the present day, especially in towns, hospitality is practiced more sparingly, and the spirit it engenders is less frequently found.

This is due not so much to a decline in generosity as to a change of conditions. The number of hotels and lodging houses is generally sufficient to give accommodation to strangers, and there is therefore no longer any need for travelers to invade the privacy of strangers' houses and disturb their domestic arrangements. Nevertheless most men delight in honouring their friends and relatives by inviting them to their homes, for long periods if they live far apart, or for a few hours if they inhabit the same town or village. In

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this way man, who is essentially sociable by nature, satisfies his desire for companionship, cheers his leisure hours, brightens his mind by stimulating conversation, and binds himself by a closer bond of love to the friends in whose company he takes delight.