

## BE KIND, FOR EVERYONE YOU MEET IS FIGHTING A HARD BATTLE.

~*The Homely Virtues* by Rev. John Watson, "Courtesy," Page 168, Hodder & Stoughton, London (1903).

(Ian MacLaren is the pen name of the noted Scottish writer, Rev. John Watson.)

### 168      HOMELY VIRTUES

that we cannot even see the things of others. So far as we break the bonds of self and project ourselves into the life of our brother man, we are bound to be courteous, because we shall now be interested in what is dear to him. This man also has a family and a business; this man also has had sicknesses and trials. Imagine! We must not therefore talk without ceasing about our children, our interests, our afflictions, our life. This man also has a church, and a creed, and opinions of his own, and a history. Remarkable! We must not, therefore, assume that our kind of religion, and our traditional views, and our favourite notions, and our particular set make the whole round world. This man beside us also has a **hard fight** with an unfavouring

### COURTESY      169

world, with strong temptations, with doubts and fears, with wounds of the past which have skinned over, but which smart when they are touched. It is a fact, however surprising. And when this occurs to us we are moved to deal kindly with him, to bid him be of good cheer, to let him understand that we are also fighting a battle; we are bound not to irritate him, nor press hardly upon him nor help his lower self. We must feel as a brother towards the man beside us, and say to him the things that we should like to have said to us, and treat him as we should desire to be treated when our hands are hanging down and our hearts are heavy. And this is the very essence of courtesy.

Just because the machinery of life is so