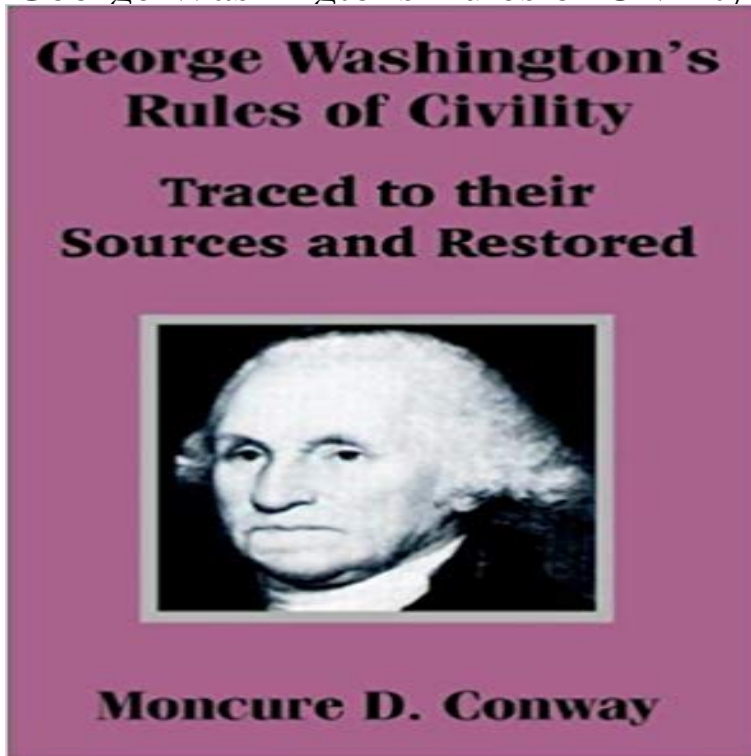


George Washington's Rules of Civility



Among the manuscript books of George Washington, preserved in the State Archives at Washington City, the earliest bears the date, written in it by himself, 1745. Washington was born February 11, 1731 O.S., so that while writing in this book he was either near the close of his fourteenth, or in his fifteenth year. It is entitled *Forms of Writing*, has thirty folio pages, and the contents, all in his boyish handwriting, are sufficiently curious. Amidst copied forms of exchange, bonds, receipts, sales, and similar exercises, occasionally, in ornate penmanship, there are poetic selections, among them lines of a religious tone on True Happiness. But the great interest of the book centers in the pages headed: *Rules of Civility and Decent Behaviour in Company and Conversation*. The book had been gnawed at the bottom by Mount Vernon mice, before it reached the State Archives, and nine of the 110 Rules have thus suffered; the sense of several being lost. The Rules possess so much historic interest that it seems surprising that none of Washington's biographers or editors should have given them to the world. Washington Irving, in his *Life of Washington*, excites interest in them by a tribute, but does not quote even one. Moncure Daniel Conway (1832-1907) was an American clergyman, author, and magazine editor. He was born of slave-holding, strict, and fanatical Methodist parents near Falmouth, Virginia in 1832. While still in his teens and under his parents influence, he became a circuit-riding Methodist minister who ardently advocated slavery. At the age of twenty-one, much against his family's wishes, however, he entered Harvard Divinity School, where he saw something of Emerson and met most of the leaders of the Concord and Cambridge intellectual groups, and where he graduated in 1854. He came out of Harvard an outspoken abolitionist, and when he returned home,

the neighbors drove him away with violence because he had befriended a fugitive slave. In 1863 Conway sailed for England to lecture on behalf of the North in the Civil War. He remained there until 1884, returned to America afterwards, and resided again in England from 1892-1897. He died in Paris in 1907.

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