

The following form is used as a prompt response:

MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM BENTLEY
Accept with pleasure
Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Renfrew's invitation to dinner
At seven o'clock, Tuesday evening,
January 20th.

A response should express a feeling of disappointment as follows:

MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM BENTLEY
Request that a previous engagement
[or illness, or some misfortune,]
Prevents the acceptance of
Mr. and Mrs. Renfrew's invitation
For Tuesday, January 20th.

The degree of intimacy of the acquaintance regulates, to a certain extent, the form of the reply. Regret is always presumed to be genuine.

Guests should arrive punctually from five to ten minutes before the dinner-hour, the hostess in all probability not being able to receive them earlier. Later than this does not allow proper time for introductions, and the arrangement of escorts.

If the guests know one another, cards can be handed on a tray by a servant at the door. He selects the one with his own, and a lady's name, and after greeting the hostess, seeks his partner, and awaits the announcement of dinner. If the guests are unacquainted, the hostess suggests to each gentleman his partner, presents him, and tells him whether his place at table is at the right or left of the hostess.

Cards, either plain or ornamental, according to the taste or the ceremoniousness of the dinner, are laid at each lady's and gentleman's plate, with their names upon them. The *menu* card is usually hidden beneath it.