

to clothe a Hebe, destined for a fountain, which he had made without draperies. All these circumstances have had the result that the attraction of woman has remained secondary in the preoccupations of man; that attraction, when it received satisfaction, was able not to become morbid and painful. The species of cruelty which is developed in the too ardent desire is the true principle of inequalities of the legislation and of habits, through which the secret fury of the male in defiance to the female is manifested. It does not exist in the sensibility of the American. It seems that this relative diminution in the importance given to sensual life has modified very lightly, but modified all the same, the difference in the aspect between the two sexes.

I remember that at Cambridge, when visiting the "Hasty Pudding," one of the clubs where the students of Harvard have private theatricals, I had occasion to examine the photographs where those young men were represented in the roles and in the costumes of women. The similitude was astonishing, almost indentity, between their portraits and those of their sisters or their cousins, of those big girls without much chest, with sloping shoulders and straight figure, who have followed the classes of suppleness and of high kicking, who can throw their feet as high as their heads and fall from their own height without hurting themselves. It seems as if the type of man, in refining itself in the sense of nervous vigor, had lost his primitive heaviness, and that on the other hand the type of woman strong, energetic and trained, had acquired a more decided grace, more assertive, less voluptuous and delicately masculine. These are but indications, but which help one to understand the better what makes not the whole of the nation but its undercurrent, the animalism of the race.

And however luxurious, artificial and overdone be the social life, it is that race which gives it its foundation, and, to take a more exact comparison, the threads of the cloth which the embroideries will later flower.

That apotheosis of woman, which is the so original feature of "society" in America, is first and above all the apotheosis of the young girl. These words, so simple, are still two words to be explained, for it is probable that on all the points—reserving, let it be understood, that of honor—they express exactly the opposite in the United States to what they do in France. What first strikes the traveller who has heard so much of the young American girls, is the absolute impossibility of distinguishing them from the young married women. The fact, so much commented upon, that they can come and go alone as they please, would not suffice to establish the confusion. The identity goes farther. They have the same jewels, the same toilets, the same liberty of speech and laughter, the same books to read, the same manner, the same beauty already fully developed, and thanks to the invention of the "chaperon," there is not a theatre or restaurant party to which they cannot go, alone naturally, and at the invitation of any gentleman of their acquaintance.

The quality of that official surveillance may be measured from another fact, that the young lady for whom the bachelor gives the party chooses herself the chaperon. The younger the chaperon is the more she is appreciated. The young widow and the "grass widow"—the woman separated, divorced or simply isolated temporarily from her husband—fills the ideal conditions of the part. You might just as well say that the young girls whom you see at Delmonico's in the company of three young men and the said chaperon, or who go and take tea at the rooms of another young man, are as free as though they had no one to look after them than themselves. It is that habit of acting for themselves without control which is manifested in the singular assurance of their countenances.

"We must amuse ourselves before marriage," said one of them gayly to me. "Does one know what will come after?"

The divorce cases, of which the newspapers publish the details from time to time that the young person had as much good sense as beauty. For my part, after having closely investigated the human conditions here and in Europe, I think that for a young man of twenty-five years the best chances of happiness are to be an Englishman of good family, concluding his studies at Oxford, and for a young girl to be born American, with a father who has made his money in mines, railways or land speculation, and to arrive with good sponsors in the society of New York or Washington.

At first sight that absolute liberty gives all the young girls an identic appearance. It is after them that authors, not one of whom has given himself the trouble to come over here, have composed for the stage and in romances the type classical with us, of the American woman. Our people have built her up in the simplest fashion,

with very bad manners and a certain naivete, and there stands the doll. However, it is but a doll, and the two elements of which it has been made are equally false.

The young American woman, when you see her among us, may appear to you badly brought up, because we compare her to the conventional type of young woman among us, which, between parentheses, is not very exact. Seen either at home and quite closely, one understands that liberty of manner can be associated alike with the worst and the best of educations. After a very short time you can distinguish among them, and very clearly, those who are fast, as they say, and those who are not—the one who likes to excite interest, to call forth the desire of man, and the one with whom moral and less still physical familiarity is impossible.

As to naivete, when we apply that term to young girls, we Frenchmen, we always take for granted that there is but one question to them in the world—that is love. We admit that it is the essential of their existence, as that of the existence of all women. We ask ourselves what they dream of it, what they know of it, and our measure of their innocence—of their virginity of soul, if you prefer it—is entirely in the answer. It is implicitly understood that their knowledge of the realities of life is in accordance with that unique revelation.

The same measure is not applicable to the American girl. For her, as for the American man, that question of love is habitually relegated to the background. To know whether she will be married according to the dictates of her heart, if she will live a romance or if she will not, does not, as a rule play any great part in her imagination. Even for those who seem the most occupied in pleasing, and who make abuse of physical coquetry—the species is rarer than the French think, more common than the Americans acknowledge—that intercourse with man represents, nine times out of ten, a fact of social life. It is means of assuring the triumphs of amour propre, to become what the newspapers call "prominent people in society," by the abundance of adorers.

That coquetry is not so dangerous for them as it would be elsewhere, on the one side because of the reserve of the youths, and on the other on account of their profound knowledge of masculine character. So young have they commenced to live in intimacy with men that they are with them as the children of a circus rider are with the horses. One of them, talking to me about a mutual acquaintance—a married Spanish woman living at Rome and very unhappy—said to me:—"She does not know how to manage her husband . . ." and then she proceeded to tell me how the rival of that woman had set about to seduce and keep the faithless husband. The kind of knowing innocence which such reflections conveyed is not very intelligible to us. A young French diplomat who has lived here several years, and whom I told of this conversation in order to know its exact value, defined his own impression, which is very severe, with this saying:—

"They have a kind of chaste depravity."

He added in proof of his epigram anecdotes concerning the engagements and the betrothals:—

"I have known many young girls engaged to young men, whom they had no intention of marrying. They liked them, to be engaged to them, but they would not have suited them as husbands. I have known others who for months hid a serious engagement, in order the longer to retain the homage which is withdrawn from an 'engaged girl.' The engagement among those girls in nine cases out of ten is what the motherhood is to the woman. She dissimulates it until the very last moment, when it is no longer possible to conceal it."

I, for my own part, however, do not see in these small things, which I have grounds to believe true, any proof of duplicity or perversity. It means that that young American woman is, above all things, a person of will, trained by nature, and by education to keep herself under constant control. "What is the matter with you?" was asked one of them by a compatriot of mine on his way to the Chicago Exhibition and who had been delayed in New York. He had sat next to the young lady at two different dinners on previous nights, his neighbor striking him as being extremely different from the other times.

"I am rather nervous," she replied. "Some one came to see me at five o'clock and behaved in a way that I do not like. I shall be compelled to stop my flirtation with him; it is a great pity . . . he is so bright a fellow"

Why is the young married woman in the United States less courted than the young girl? This is the first question which offers it-