

## Will the War Make Man a Brute to Women?



Madame Valentine de St. Point.

*The Brilliant Parisian Poetess, Madame de St. Point, Argues That the Brave Soldier Will Be Changed by War Into a More Chivalrous Worshipper of the Gentle Sex*

By Madame de St. Point

The Distinguished Parisian Poetess and Grandniece of the Great Lamartine.

WILL this war introduce an element of greater violence and brutality into the relations of men and women? This is a question that thoughtful women who view the great conflict from the anxious standpoint of the non-combatant are asking themselves. Many possible reasons have been advanced why we may expect the soldiers of all countries to return from their deadly struggle with primitive habits.

The war has thrown everything into confusion—customs, manners, life in the streets and in the home. All philosophic, moral and material conceptions have been transformed by the terrible months in which men have acquired again their ancestral brutality which had been hidden from sight in the long period of peace.

Throughout all Europe and beyond the borders there has been an unleashing of brutal forces. The conception of love could not escape from fatal transformations. Love rules all human beings. Every one has a horror of solitude and often seeks during his whole life the being susceptible of completing it. Some never find it and live in a state of unhappiness that makeshifts never succeed in satisfying.

All our people have been affected by the war, which has caused separations made all the more agonizing by the fear that death may render them permanent.

### Love Had Grown Too Tame Before the War.

The warlike fever of the warriors and the fever of devotion among the women in the rest of the country do not bring them forgetfulness, but only help them by activity to make the separation less agonizing.

But memory lives on one side and on the other.

Before the war the luxuries of civilized life and the security of peace had carried love to a maximum of sensual refinement. No fear of separation, no uncertainty of the morrow lent keenness to sentiment. Love began to seem too bourgeois, too calm, for beings even a little romantic, whom a commonplace and assured daily existence could not satisfy. Hence this eagerness of the people of great centres, where the extremes of civilization flourish, for the quest of the unknown, a quest all the more agonizing because it is impossible to satisfy and becomes more so as each step forward is taken.

It was thus that after one crisis and another we resorted to luxurious days where we consumed hashish or kief from India, held fantastic Oriental fetes, and even sank to the cocaine orgies of Montmartre.

What did all that mean but the need of enlivening at any cost the commonplace existence, of giving to love hitherto confined to sensuality, the mystery, the chimerical quality that the daily contact of human beings, who are never separated, does not favor? Familiarity is the most certain destroyer of the ideal.

The war recalled to life all these seekers of chimeras, all these erring pilgrims of love. Tragic separations made a cruel awakening. For long months men and women have been leading a separate life. The thread of custom is broken. What will become of love?

Our men are leading the most brutal life conceivable in the midst of bloodshed and face to face with death. Luxuries and even the most elementary comforts are absent. How will these men, who have become in a sense, primitive brutes, understand love?

Are they going to bring back the violence and the brutality of men of the savage age who satisfied their needs in accidental encounters?

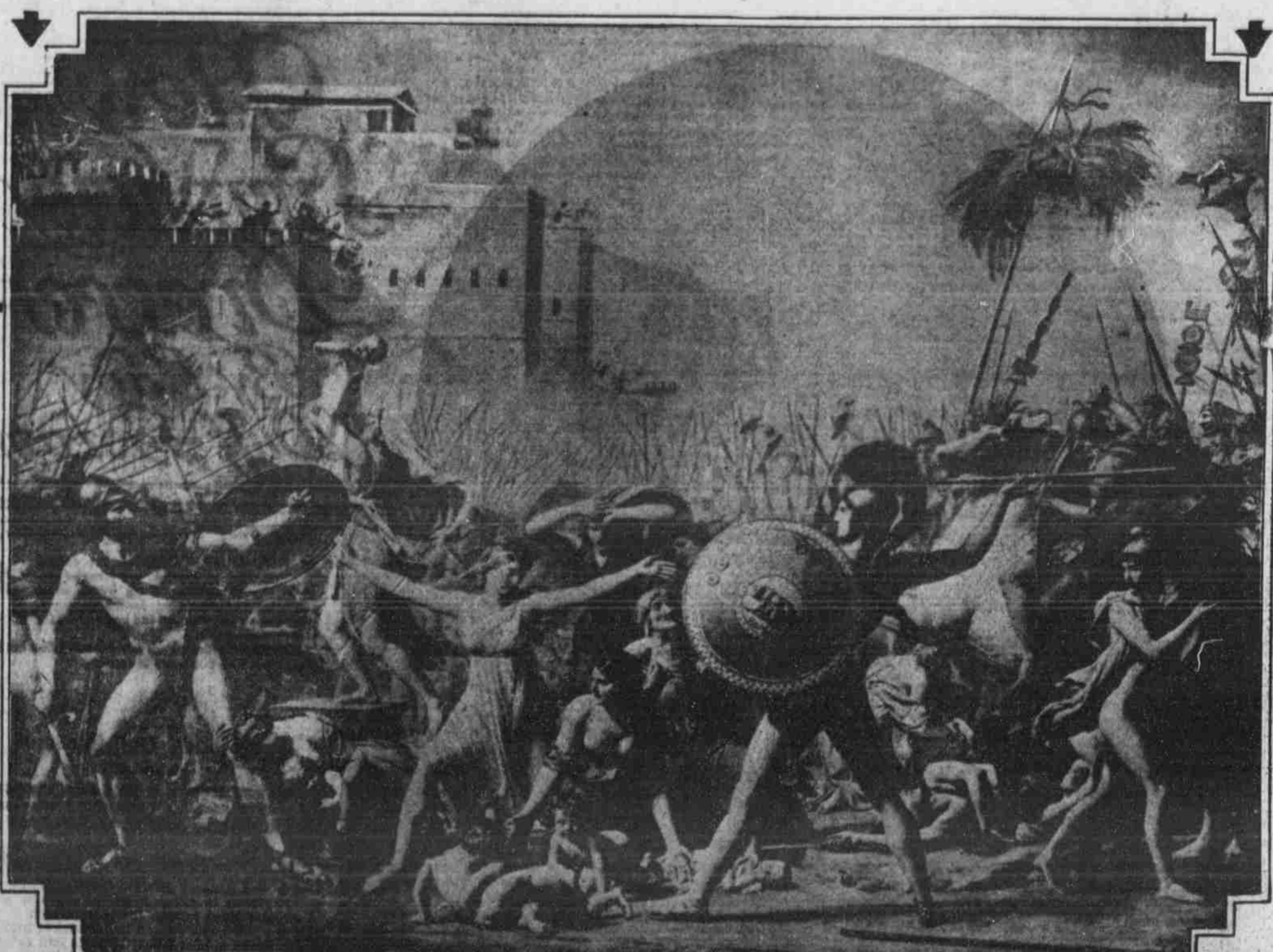
We should be tempted to think so, if we believed that violence is the stivistic act of the conqueror. But this act belongs to the seeds of war, it has nothing to do with love.

Throughout history we find that when cities are captured the women are considered the most precious booty which the conqueror appropriates for himself. That is not right, it is the act of a brute, for the violence of the strong against the weak should not be tolerated by a moral being.

Such deeds are contrary to all that humanity has sought to realize in its struggle to be superior to the animal. They are also among the innumerable horrifying deeds of war. Art has perpetuated many historic abductions which were, by the way, as often the cause as the effect of wars.

There is a particularly famous episode known as "The Rape of the Sabine Women." The conquering, irresistible Roman, finding themselves in need of women, ruthlessly seized the wives and daughters of the peaceful Sabines. What could have been a more red-handed act of savagery than this? But the conquering Romans quickly fell under the influence of their foreign wives and became devoted husbands, while the women were proud to be the mothers of the rising generation of Romans. Not only were they happy with their Roman conquerors, but when their kinsmen attempted a war of revenge they acted as peacemakers between the two.

Soldiers capable in the intoxication of victory of imposing their desires upon women will usually return again when they are sober to their ideal, even to the most chimerical ideal. Just as the soldier often does not know that he is killing in battle, so he may be unconscious of what he is doing in the midst of victory. Once the primitive and stivistic instincts of man are let loose, his conscience ceases to watch over him to a sense. It is thus that the gentlest of men, who in the tranquility of home cannot hear the slight of blood, may become in the heat of battle, a demon of destruction. And it is thus also that the most ideal lover



### "THE SABINE WOMEN"

"The Romans Seized the Sabine Women with Red-handed Violence, But Some Became Devoted Husbands, and Their New Wives Prevented a War Between Their Present Husbands and Former Nation." From the Noted Painting by J. L. David.

knight, in daily contact with youths incapable of brutal acts, and bound to shun all wrongdoing in order to be worthy of knighthood, women inspired sentimental love and under their influence art grew up and flourished.

It was the period of courts of love and contests of poetry as well as of tournaments of arms, in which love was enthroned and the lady, like a queen, rewarded the most skillful.

During the absence of the warriors the troubadours sang the deeds of war which they had transformed into poetry. With their recitals they created the legends which are the foundation of our art and literature.

When the warriors came back the courts of love took another aspect. The knights who had to strive against the prestige of the pages and poets softened their manners. The tournaments of poetry were succeeded by the tournaments of arms. They were epic struggles, but at one, as at the other, the stake was always the same—the heart of the lady. The recompense received from her hand was also the same—a scarf, a belt embroidered by her, or some other present cherished preciously like a relic. This great epoch gave birth to the romantic legends of chivalry through the ideal love of woman.

### The Conditions of Ancient Chivalry Now Returning.

Whether she was the lady of the knight or the lady of the page and the troubadour, woman, far from being their prey, was the unrivalled and romantic queen around whom everything gravitated and to whom were dedicated the stories of deeds like the "Song of Roland," "The History of King Arthur," "The Romance of the Rose," as well as stories of love like "Tristan and Isolde."

Ideal love of the sentimental pages, ideal love of the fierce warriors, that was the love of that age of long wars and long separations.

How will it be to-morrow? If a superficial mind thinks that modern soldiers on their return must give to love the brutality they have learned on fields of battle, a deeper mind will think differently. We know since the time of Hercules that warriors love the tendernesses of Omphale. In spite of all our refinements, the manifestations of love before the war were above all physical. Now, through separation, woman has ceased to be a tangible reality to become an ideal. The ideal is always that which one does not possess.

To-day the war is too near to the women, they take too large a part in it, through caring for the wounded and working for the soldiers, to permit them to become the centre of an artistic elite, as in the days of chivalry. When their warriors were far away, the ladies of olden days had all their time to themselves; the women of to-day, thanks to modern science, are in some degree in constant relation with the soldiers. If they do not guide the minds of youth towards art as in medieval times it is because every male to-day is either a soldier or a future one. They prepare the soldiers of to-morrow and replace in nearly every occupation of life those who have gone. Their role is still preponderant. Brought back to a more real existence by the cares which have fallen upon them, women have ceased to be the

frivolous creatures they were before the war.

For the absent soldiers, woman has become in a sense an idol. She strives to be in harmony with her new role which gives her a royalty still more incontestable than that which pleasure gave her. By the gravity of her present task, she attains the same position of the ideal lover that the ladies of olden times attained through the amiable leisure of chivalry. She will always be the idol.

These predictions for the future are not only based on a study of the past and on the fatality of the ebb and flow of tendencies and the repetition of actions and reactions. They are supported by present occurrences.

Isolated by the war, many of our soldiers who have no wives, no fiancées, no woman friends, suffered from their moral isolation worse than from the most material privations. Therefore we thought of providing "godmothers" (marraines) for them.

Now what is the present "marraine" but the "lady" of the old knight. She no longer offers to the warrior a scarf or some piece of lace which would not fit well with the present costume of the soldier, but in an age when habit has made material comfort necessary, the "marraine" sends to her godson everything which can soften for him his physical sufferings and by her constant thoughts of him which she expresses in letters which are eagerly awaited she gives him moral support, which renders less bitter the daily battle.

A fashionable journal has charmingly and cleverly thought of organizing an association called the "Flirt." To the kindness of the "marraines" the "flirtuses" add the humorous spirit which mingles laughter with the best kind of sentiment. Thus it is a little of the wit of Paris which goes towards the exiled ones of the city of luxuries.

The "flirtuses" and the "marraines" are sisters. They are really the "lady" of the knight under different names. They represent the same thing—the ideal. The woman of to-day belonging to these organizations who personally knows neither her godson nor her "flirt"



"KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR MAID" In Mediaeval Times, When Physical Force Was Most Supreme, the Conquering Man Often Fell a Captive to the Weakest Woman, a Truth Illustrated by the Beautiful Old Story of King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid." From the Painting by Sir Edward Burne-Jones.

correspondent, who has never seen him, whose sentiment is attached to nothing material, is she not even more ideal than the lady of ancient chivalry parted for unknown years from her knight?

Every soldier to whom a woman has given this sentiment will preserve it as the most precious thing during the months, perhaps years, of loneliness and suffering. He cannot when he comes back become again a creature entirely sensual. Weary of the materialism of war he will certainly strive to conform his life to the ideal which he has cherished during his darkest hours.

Each of our soldiers will have gone through the terrible war with an ideal woman in his mind. For that reason when peace comes, respect of woman and yearning for the ideal in love will reign in our old Europe.



"THE KNIGHT ERRANT," BY BURNE-JONES "Though War Was Then Man's Chief Occupation, His Secret Dream Was to Rescue the Maiden in Distress" Says Madame de St. Point.

may sometimes in the intoxication of victory become the most instinctive brute.

These shocking deeds of war cannot be even a slight indication of what will be the conception of love when these same men return to their homes.

To foresee the future it is sufficient to look again at the past, for the same tide returns and the same actions produce the same reactions.

This great and long war compels us inevitably to recall our greatest warlike epoch—the Middle Ages. How did love appear to the knights who passed all their lives at war? It is evident that the amorous adventures of the wayside did not satisfy their romantic souls.

In that epoch of great separations and improbable returns, women represented all beauty, all luxury and all repose. She haunted the mind of the knight errant in his hours of weariness.

In a distant castle she represented all that was stable, that harmonious equilibrium of which those bora for action dream eternally without being able to live their dream. While they were fighting, the lady of their thoughts grouped around her all those who are not men of action, but creatures of the dream—poets and singers, troubadours and minstrels.

While the warriors fought the battles that were to form the great Christian states, the women created around their courts where the first intellectual refinements were known, forerunners of our western civilization.

The women remained at the castle with the young people, the future knights who served their apprenticeship by acting as pages. Observant of their duties and respectful of the honor of the absent