

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF AMERICA.

THE SIN OF FALSE CHIVALRY.

AMERICA is the land where women demand and receive more from men and give less in exchange than anywhere else on the planet. They first turn the bulk of the male population into money-slaves for their especial benefit and then despise them for being slaves. Generations of men with strangely perverted ideas of chivalry have been at great pains to teach the women here that their proper rôle is to stand on pedestals and smilingly receive men's homage; and it must be admitted that the women have learned the lesson well. European women study to be pleasing; American women only try to shine. In Europe a bride is proud to bring her husband as dower a substantial sum that enables him to bear the added burden and gives him material aid at the time in his career when he most needs it. In America a husband is content to take his life partner with no adornment save her personal charms, and take her, too, despite a trio of defects so common as to be almost national characteristics. These are:

1. Her inability or unwillingness to help her husband.
2. Her sense of superiority over her husband.
3. Her general discontent with existing conditions.

It should be said that the above is mainly true of women who live in cities; the choicest flowers of American womanhood being hidden away in the country towns.



PHYSICAL SUPERIORITY OF THE AMERICAN WOMAN TO THE AMERICAN MAN.

First, I maintain, there is a lamentable lack of disposition among American city women to make good helpmates for their husbands. It is not that they are unwilling to exert themselves or that they lack capacity, for both in body and mind they are the most richly endowed women in the world; but their whole early training has been wrong. It has been impressed upon them from childhood that a husband is a glorious institution created solely for loving, honouring and protecting them, it being well understood that the little word 'to obey' has long since become obsolete in the marriage ceremony. As young ladies they have been told so often that they are clever, pretty, vivacious, tactful, accomplished, coquettish or 'cunning,' told this year after year by well-meaning but misguided men, that they have finally come to regard man's normal and natural position in relation to themselves as one of suppliant posture and adoration. And the men, victims of their own unwisdom, do nothing to disabuse the women's minds of these unwholesome notions until some fine day the marital ship runs hard on one of the inevitable rocks or quicksands, and then, alas, there comes a rude awakening!

To be perfectly honest now, ladies, what do you do to help your husbands in the struggle for existence that is at all proportionate to what they do for you? Remember, I am speaking of the women who live in cities, their number forming probably one-half of our entire population. There are thousands and thousands of you who live comfortably in boarding houses, at least quite as comfortably as your husbands, and do practically nothing toward lifting the common burden beyond occasional repairs in clothing. In the main you lead idle lives, don't you? There are many other thousands of you who live in flats or private houses, where your cares are limited to 'overseeing' things and managing the servants. Your husbands every day do twice as much as this before their lunch! I do not forget the children and the care in their bringing up that devolves upon the mother, but modern educational science has done much to lessen this responsibility, so that to-day there are thousands of city homes where the children are brought up, one may say, almost without mothers, the real hard work being done by bottles, nurses, kindergartens, governesses, schools, and colleges. You know perfectly well that this is so, and your husbands who pay the bills know it also! Even were the wife's duties as arduous as her husband's their burdens would still be unequal, since he must be familiar with all that transpires in her sphere, from the baby's new tooth up to the discharging of the cook, while she remains in darkest Africa as regards his business.

Who ever heard of an American city woman being informed about her husband's business except as to the approximate number of dollars it brings in annually? The husband slaves six days a week at his office, comes home

worried and worn, harassed by the killing strain to 'keep up appearances,' and although it is largely to satisfy his wife's desires and ambitions that he goes this pace, it never occurs either to him or to her to take counsel together touching his prospects or perplexities. It is not even thought fitting she should have any precise ideas or knowledge about his daily toil. She knows he is a doctor, a writer, or a bishop; that he trades in stocks, flour, or ribbons; she can tell you the location of his office and whether his typewriter is pretty, and that is all she cares to know about the mystery of his down-town life.

What a contrast here with the attitude of European women toward their husbands! Nothing is more common among middle-class people in Paris than for the wife, be-



THE WIFE ORDERS HER LITTLE LUNCHES AT SOME SWELL CAFE.

attending to her home and children, not only to advise with her husband in every detail of his business, often showing herself the guiding spirit, but to go daily to the shop when he goes, to stand at the counter or desk as he stands, and to share hour by hour the work he does. American women are fully content to share the profits! It is fair to say that American men, through these same false ideas of chivalry and social pride, would, however hard pressed, be the first to protest against their wives assisting them in any such practical way, and are for the most part distinctly averse to them engaging in teaching, type-writing, dressmaking, or any honourable employment. It might, forsooth, give sneering neighbours a chance to whisper: 'Mrs So-and-So has to work.' And what of it, I say? Why, in the name of common sense, should Mrs So-and-So not work? Sooner, however, than have that happen, the average American husband would fall in business—or do worse!

'I don't mind working in single harness, but I won't work in double—not for any man living.' That was a remark I heard a young lady make who holds a position in a New York office, where she has shown herself possessed of fine business abilities. As long as she remains unmarried she will do as much work every day as the average man and show herself none the worse for it. But as soon as she becomes the wife of some devoted American, then her hands will drop listlessly at her sides and he must take the oars for both and row away as best he can. Poor fellow, he may break his back, but he will never murmur! Thousands of unmarried American women have this idea and regard their daily tasks as an unpleasant necessity which must bridge over the time until they shall have found a husband to work for them. If American men were as clever as is said, they would utilize in their own schemes some of the fine business brain lying idle in their wives' heads!



WHILE THE HUSBAND GORBLES A BUFFET LUNCH.

My second point is that a wide tendency exists among American women to consider themselves superior to the men, this being especially true in the better middle class. And the humiliating part of it is that in a large number of instances this opinion is justified—they are the men's superiors! Take New York women, for instance; look at them streaming along Twenty-third street in the shopping hours or strolling on Fifth Avenue. Are they not splendid creatures physically—clear-eyed, strong-limbed, well-groomed? True, one remarks an extra development of the bust, and an undue widening of the hips; but that is largely their own fault, being the result of idleness and over-feeding. Compared with them, American men make a poor showing indeed, being for the most part round-shouldered, big-waisted, sharp featured, prematurely bent and bald, slovenly in dress and bearing, plainly a dyspeptic and apo-

plectic lot. No wonder the women hold their heads high as they weep past proudly!

Nor are the American women of the upper and upper middle classes less superior to the men in refinement and polite accomplishments than in physical perfection. The finest modern advantages have been showered upon them, and they have been 'polished' and 'educated' far beyond the poor attainments of the masculines, who read only the newspapers, know nothing but the dry details of their business, have no ideals beyond the making of money, are absolutely deficient in the arts of conversation, have no esprit save what they get from smoking car 'drummers' or comic journals; in short, are absolutely unfitted to be the companions of these goddess women, whom they nevertheless marry. And that is the worst of it! That is the chief reason why American women are so widely discontented! They look down upon their husbands; they are the victims of too much culture; they have been given lofty and beautiful ideals which they cannot realize; they are like the poor South Sea Islanders, who, having heard the praises of Demonicos dinner-sung until their mouths water, are left to fill their stomachs with raw turtle.

In this painful comparison the raw turtle stands for the hustling, money-grubbing, woman-ridden American husband! It also stands for many other illusions tenderly nourished in the American maiden's breast only to be dispelled with advancing years. It is no kindness, but sheer cruelty to give our girls a keen appreciation of the beautiful, the artistic, and then make them live in selfish and unlovely surroundings. Why tell them that American women are created to stand on pedestals when it is false? Why fill their minds with visions of soulful, high-minded men, when they are fated to pass their lives with money-grubbers? This is false chivalry, unworthy of American men! Pity the unfortunate daughters who come back from study abroad, having breathed deeply the glorious artless atmosphere of Paris and Rome, only to 'settle down' in a mean little Harlem flat, whose walls are decorated with newspaper chromos. Pity the women in whom have been developed spiritual and poetic natures stranded suddenly, starving in the midst of a desert of commonplace surroundings, with no hope or chance of satisfying the yearnings that consume them! Almost better never to have emancipated them from the condition where they were happy chewing gum in Chicago and on state occasions singing: 'Oh, Fair Doves! Oh, Fair Doves!'

What wonder, then, if American women are discontented, for to them come frequently such sad contrasts between the pictures of life drawn to them as girls, and the pitiful realization known by them as women. What wonder if they often grow embittered, resentful, reckless, or if some fiercer natures, feeling they have not had their deserts, burst into warring discontent and let ambition drive them on with no heed to the means.

It is this restless, dissatisfied spirit that is driving American women to-day to usurp men's functions in all lines, from running the government down to the wearing of starched shirts. And this they do rather from restlessness and fretfulness than for any real desire for further 'rights.' Do they not know in their hearts that they have long ago secured from men all their rights and more, taking with shrewd discrimination the privileges and pleasures of their husbands' or fathers' stations in life while shirking the responsibilities? Why are women all over the country cultivating a taste for that most unwomanly game of poker, except to show the men that they, too, can play the bluff. Why are women in our nice restaurants calling daily for cocktails and whiskeys, served in tongs, if you please, and in quantities to shame their grandmothers? Surely they do not like the stuff! Why are they betting on the races, professing deep interest in sports they never understand, affecting a slangy style of talk, smoking cigarettes, strutting about in mannish clothes, and pushing themselves forward in such unbecoming pursuits as newspaper work and reforming the alums? They are doing these things as fads, because they have nothing else to do, and because they know there are sound reasons against their doing them. I know a wealthy girl who, almost alone in a crowd of men, followed the lectures and quizzes at the law school and finally took her degree simply because someone told her she couldn't understand so dry a subject.

'I'll show you if I can't,' she said, and that reply voices the end-of-the-century attitude of numberless women in American cities.

'Please take me through Chinatown,' said a lovely woman of my acquaintance.

I explained to her that Chinatown was a vile place, with nothing to recommend it but commonplace vice and un-common odours.

'I don't care,' she persisted, 'I want to see Chinatown, and if you don't take me, I'll go anyhow.'

I said she was a lovely woman, so it ended in my taking her, and she made brave pretence of enjoying it, as she fished slimy mysteries out of a bowl with chopsticks and swallowed them, and then sat in a reeking room with black bugs crawling over the board walls and watched a poor white girl named Annie smoking herself to death with opium. Annie was the wife of a bloated Chinaman.

What but sheer perversity, growing out of this widespread discontent, can tempt women when travelling to insist on entering the smoking car? Yes, and smoking there, for I have it on the authority of a New York Central conductor that this is not an unheard-of occurrence on their most respectable line.

'The other day,' he said, 'a well-dressed, nice-looking girl went forward to the smoker and proceeded to light a cigarette. I asked her to leave the car—she refused. What could I do? Nothing; and the girl had her way, while the men stared. Another case, not very long before, was that of an elderly woman who also claimed her right to sit in the smoking car and puff away at a pipe. But the most remarkable case in my experience happened on the midnight train coming down from Albany, when a young woman on being remonstrated with by a gentleman for smoking, rose to her feet, threw down her cigarette, and squaring one in the attitude of a boxer, landed a good left-hander on the side of the gentleman's head. This she followed—give you my word of honour she did—by lifting her skirt very slightly and shooting out a rapid kick that caught the man squarely in the stomach and sent him sprawling. Having asserted herself thus, the lady took out her cigarette case, lighted a second cigarette and was left unmolested, you may be sure, for the rest of her journey.'

I admit that there are extreme cases, but a few years ago they would have been impossible cases. These smoking