

car women are marching in the vanguard of the female army of discontent!

This discontent among city women taints all classes, from the lowest to the highest. In the absence of consecrated social leaders such as Europe possesses, each woman here considers herself as good as each other woman, and feels that fate has been unjust in giving to others more than she has received. The whole servant girl problem grows out of this inherent dissatisfaction. The girls who find themselves doing what is called "menial" labour are leaders of the women whom they serve. See how quick they are, once the day's work is finished, to leave the house of servitude and flout themselves about the city in gowns and cloaks, in ribbons and jewellery, which, if lacking in the real quality of those worn by their mistresses, are at least the very best imitations their scant means can procure. There is a similar struggle going on in the breasts of type-writers, shop-girls, chorus girls, and all who earn their daily bread. They are generally discontented!

What is thus true of city women in the working classes is true of those most highly placed. It is true of all who come between. In this country there is no respect for classes, our glorious republican principles making every woman feel herself a potential Mrs Vanderbilt. The social history of our cities is so full of sudden changes, where people have jumped from nothing to everything, that there is no woman so poor but feels that she may some day have her palace on Fifth avenue. Mrs Maloney, reflecting on all this in her parlour in Sbantytown, realizes vaguely that it is incumbent upon her in her present lowly surroundings to prepare herself for possible glory to come. She looks longingly through her parlour windows, sees the rooks chewing the leaves of the geraniums and never moves, for it is not fitting that a prospective lady should be seen rushing out of the house in a calico wrapper to drive a goat off the front piazza. Perish a thousand geraniums rather than let Mrs Maloney violate a rule of etiquette!

As already hinted, one of the most serious effects of this general discontent on the part of women is their frequent attitude of condescension towards their husbands. The men of America worship the women, which is a fatal mistake, and are in return not infrequently despised by the women, which is manifestly unjust. Let us suppose that a woman of culture has married a man without culture for the sake of the money he can bring her. To begin with,

dence of the divorce courts, as blazoned forth day after day in our unclean newspapers, leaves no doubt on this point. The testimony of that sewer of iniquity, the personal column in the *New York Herald*, shows a condition of wide demoralization.

I myself, on one occasion, as an experiment growing out of a wager, inserted a personal in this curious column, stating in accordance with the prescribed formula that 'a prosperous bachelor of thirty desired to make the acquaintance of a charming lady a few years younger—object matrimony.' I received within three days no less than fifty answers to this modest request, many of them, as I took pains to verify, coming from women who have every right to call themselves respectable, and are so considered. Of the fifty there were certainly ten of this class, in this number being included two young ladies living in good homes, three married women, one school teacher, one widow, one literary woman and, strangest of all, a mother and her daughter, who both answered the advertisement each without the knowledge of the other. Having eliminated the forty applicants whose motives were apparent and who therefore became uninteresting, I spent some time in studying the respectable ten, trying to discover what had led them into so strange an indiscretion. In every case there was the same story—an idle life, a discontented mind and a longing after something away from the commonplace, something having in it a dash of romance and idealism. And these unfortunate women could find no better way of pursuing their chimeras than by risking their good names in the hands of an entire stranger.

This craving for admiration among women, this deep conviction that man's homage is their just due, this superficial culture and feeling of superiority is making it more and more difficult every year for young men to marry city girls. Such girls are too exacting, too indifferent to the value of money, too little disposed to content themselves with simple pleasures. A European girl of the middle class will be as happy as a child if her sweetheart sends her a little bunch of violets for which he spent perhaps a franc. It is the kind thought she thinks of, not the price. Here a girl of the same class, if she has flowers at all, must have the best—roses at several dollars a dozen, something that gives plain evidence of having cost money. When an American girl accepts an invitation for the evening she expects to be taken to the theatre, to have the

My tastes are extravagant, far beyond what I could earn; and yet without lovely things about me I should rather die. So what can I do? How can I decide? I am miserable with worrying, I am discontented, unhappy. Marriage seems impossible, home life is impossible, honest work is impossible, and what is there left?

An everyday example of the craving for admiration engendered in our city women by the pedestal habit is to be found in their loud and extravagant dress on the street. One cannot walk through the fashionable thoroughfares of a pleasant afternoon without seeing numbers of women apparelled in such a flaunting of colours and unseemly display of silks and velvets as would make a European gentleman doubt their being respectable women, which they nevertheless are. Hundreds of them may be seen any day



GOOD TASTE BY THE PARISIENNE.

on Twenty-third Street wearing white gloves, diamond earrings, a load of ribbons and feathers on the hats showing three or four glaring colours, with cloaks and skirts of rich brocades or velvets which should never be seen outside the carriage or the drawing-room, and in general presenting themselves in such garish costumes as European ladies would scarcely dare to wear in the evening and certainly never in broad daylight.

The great reason why French women are infinitely better dressed than women of America is because each one makes it her business to study her own advantages and defects and dresses with a view to bringing out the one and concealing the other. She knows what is becoming to her individually and adopts it regardless of prevailing fashions, which American women follow slavishly. On the street the French woman dresses quietly, simply, with few colours and those of deep tints, the only women in Paris who appear in the streets as American ladies do being the fashionable *eccentriques* or *demi-mondaines*. This is not complimentary to New York women, but it is the plain truth. The fashions imported from Paris by New York women are not fashions of French women of the *bonne il faut* class, but exaggerations of these, garish creations for the foreign market.

The rampant spirit of discontent also leads American city women into extravagant habits. This is seen in the way they let their handsome gowns trail along the sidewalks, although the habit is ruinous to their skirts as well as most uncleanly. They do not care; when the bottoms are frayed they will send them to the dressmaker and their husbands will pay the bills. The same spirit is discovered when one watches them luncheon in swarms at expensive restaurants,



THE LADIES WHO DRINK COCKTAILS IN CUPS.

she should despise herself for having been a party to such a sordid bargain. Furthermore, if the man hates Wagner and medieval cathedrals and likes 'My Posal' is a Bowery Girl, the fault is largely hers. For it must be borne in mind that if American men are lacking in culture, it is because they have no time or strength for acquiring it, their lives and energies being exhausted in procuring culture for their wives and daughters. The courses in art, the trips abroad, the aesthetic homes, the music, the languages, the whole modish combination of unpractical things that tend to make our best women shine at the expense of the men—who furnish these? who slave to pay for these? who but the unenlightened husbands and brothers? By what principle of justice do the women of a land thus presume to taro the men into pack horses? Even if false ideas of chivalry make the men content to play such servile rôles, do not the women themselves see that this disparity in the attainments of the two sexes can result in nothing but mutual untebtedness? The husbands are outclassed in culture by their wives, the wives are too good for their husbands, and what then? Shall marriage be abolished, and if not, how bridge the breach that is thus widening in many households?

These causes are producing untold evil in our national life. They are inducing hundreds of wealthy women to show their discontent by abandoning their country entirely and living abroad, where men cultivate the arts and graces and see something else worth while in life than the piling of gold upon gold. They are responsible for that strange and unpatriotic tendency so widely noted now in this land, and never noted in any other, which drives not a few American women to prefer foreigners for husbands rather than men of their own country. They are leading large numbers of discontented wives yearning after some shadowy ideal—women who are idle in their lives, over-fed and bored to death—into carrying their reckless pursuit of the unattainable even to the point of indulging in chance flirtations or worse. The revolting evil-

most expensive seats, and afterwards to be offered a supper served in good style at a place of maximum charges. There is no romancing about this, but sober, serious reality, as hundreds of hard-working young men have learned to their cost. The girls do not care so much for the things themselves, as for the evidence of devotion which, in their minds, must be accompanied by the spending of money. How different in Paris, where an evening's pleasure is within reach of the most slender purse. A stroll along the boulevards, an hour in front of a café watching the throng, some *bocks* to drink, some little cakes at a *patisserie*, a ride in a carriage for two francs—and the girl is so grateful, so free from that odious pedestal posing!

And the young women themselves of our cities, from the very training they have received and their knowledge of the world, are in many instances left undecided what course they shall pursue in regard to marriage. They know from the experience of others and from their own observation that without money their married lives will be full of aggravation and disappointment. On the other hand, their womanly instincts bid them heed the voice of real disinterested love. They would fain have love and have money also; but the combination is a difficult one to make. A most beautiful and accomplished young woman from the West, whom I know intimately, made frank confessions to me once of her embarrassments in this matter.

'I love a young artist,' she said, 'with all my heart, and he loves me. But he has no money. An old broker down town, worth two or three millions, is infatuated with me, but I abominate him. Both men want me to marry them. If I marry the broker I shall be wretched because I despise him; if I marry the artist I shall be wretched because I despise being poor; so as far as I can see, I am sure to be wretched either way. On the other hand, I cannot go back to the humdrum life of my family, for that would kill me with its monotony. I crave the free existence of a great city, and yet staying here I must find some way to live.



BAD TASTE IN STREET COSTUME OF SOME AMERICAN LADIES.

where they spend a dollar and a half or two dollars of their husbands' money for a comfortable meal, while these same husbands meantime are perched on some high stool down town bolting a piece of pie and a glass of milk which cost perhaps a quarter.

One may sum up the whole question by saying that American women ought to be the finest women in the world, for they have the choicest natural endowment and the most splendid opportunities. But they have suffered sorely through this unfortunate determination of the men to glorify them, and been harmed by the sin of false