

LETTERS TO WOMEN IN LOVE.

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London, on the other hand, is all planned for the man. Even the hansom cab is a masculine invention which entirely overlooks skirts. The shop windows abound with leather articles, toilet articles, colonial articles, all for men.

But Paris? It is meant for the man and the woman together, and to the exclusion of the rest of the world. For the French, love, sentimental companionship, is not a luxury. Like the red wine they drink it is a necessity for all classes. The French workman designates his sweetheart as "the one with whom I can talk." . . . his comrade, some one he needs in his daily life.

And what is thus openly expressed by the artisan has become, it would seem, the *raison d'être* of Paris. What are the saloons which have made French society famous? They are nothing more than the reunion of men and women who can "talk together." The woman's lunch and the "stag" dinner are unknown in France. Even at the professional banquet, which a doctor or a lawyer offers to his colleagues, the women of his family appear, to help him receive his guests.

My dear, have we not seen men in France exercise their talents even in the

"do things." Even the way the poor women dress their hair is a lesson to the New Englander who has too long looked upon the "crowning glory" as a nest of vipers.

And since you have seen how simply the French girl dresses, how satisfied she is with little before her marriage, and how this marriage appears to her as the only destiny for a woman, have you not come nearer than ever before to regretting that you were Mademoiselle—not Madame?

But this I don't, for the moment, press. On the contrary, it would seem as though there were something in the atmosphere of Paris which was separating you, in thought at least, and only temporarily, I hope, from America and American ways, from the informality and sans gene of our people, from us, from me—from Reggie.

Am I right?
You are American to the very marrow of your bones. You could not be happy in a country which, however much you might admire its traditions and be attracted by its culture, must for ever remain to you a foreign country, that is strange, alien, different, "queer."

IX.

To the same:

I have your short note telling me that Reggie has arrived in Paris!

He did not come to see me, nor even write me, before sailing. He was afraid that I would dissuade him from such a definite move. Now it is done I make no comment. I shall wait until hearing



"Not that you were really disagreeable to him."

most womanly realms? What, since time immemorial, have been more especially designated as feminine pursuits than cooking and dressmaking? Yet, in Paris, who are the best cooks? Men, all of them. Who are the best dressmakers? All of them men!

Don't think I am straying away from my subject. You are my subject, and I am convinced that the atmosphere of Paris is favourable to my wishes regarding you.

Montesquieu said two hundred years ago:

"When one has been a woman in Paris, one is never satisfied to be a woman anywhere else!"

Why?
Because the women of France are cherished until they are twenty, courted until they are fifty, and revered in their declining years. Thus, to be in Paris without someone to protect you, to make love to you or to adore you, is enough to make you long for . . . even for Reggie.

VIII.

To the same:

You can't imagine how I enjoy even the foreign postmark on your letters. I turn them over and study them sometimes before slipping my paper-knife along the edges of the envelope to take out the transparent sheets of paper, too few, alas, and written over on one side only. Fortunately I can read between the lines, and I know Paris well. As a rule we Americans have the feeling of: "Oh, how wonderful Paris would be if it were not for the French!"

But you seem to be an exception to this rule. You are full of enthusiasm over the manner in which French people

more in detail from you before expressing my opinion one way or the other.

Perhaps Reggie has done the wisest thing in the world—perhaps he most foolish. In a courtship the same act may appear glorious or ignoble, depending entirely upon how the woman courted takes it.

X.

To the same:

Your second letter has come, and I see that poor Reggie has made a dreadful mistake!

In Italy, after an anonymous sort of fashion, you longed for somebody, for an amoureux, someone to make love to you, someone to complete, with a personal romance, the wonderfully picturesque setting which surrounded you.

In Paris you felt first that it was a natural desire, then that it was a conventional necessity to be married. It was this transition from the national to the conventional wherein poor Reggie's chances perished.

But have they quite perished? Is it as hopeless for him as you think?

All of a sudden you have adopted the Latin idea of a woman submissive to man, a man who is lord and master, and who asks neither advice nor criticism, but approval only. Which approval, if his wife, mother, sister, or sweetheart fail to give, he finds elsewhere.

Why this change?
Could Reggie be prepared for it?

You say that he seems like a girl. He doesn't know how to order people around, he hesitates about an hour, it seems to you, over the menu when it is handed to him in a restaurant, and finally he gives it to you, as if you could arrange the dinner for his guests!

Small things, all of them, but very irritating.

And what you hate, too, is to see Reggie so badly served and so cheated! Not speaking French, he never discusses the price of anything. He simply holds out his hand full of coin, and lets the menials fall upon it. Then, occasionally, there is an awful revulsion, in his Ameri-

Don't let outside influences affect too much the true course of your feelings. Don't let your inclination for Reggie be thus, by some superficial thing, transformed into a positive revulsion. Don't feel that you are responsible for Reggie just because he cares for you.

Be more simple!
At your age things decide themselves.



"Then, occasionally, there is an awful revulsion in his American mind."

can mind, against this grandiose system, and you catch sight of him, when you have regained the carriage, lingering in some unpleasant dispute.

Then Reggie insists upon wearing a straw hat, and there isn't a self-respecting Frenchman of the world who would think of wearing a straw hat in Paris before the Grand Prix has been run. This, too, is only a detail. But, for a woman, the great passion which we call love is nothing more than a collection of details—a series of small, trifling things which, appealing to our taste, seducing it, meeting with our sentimental approval, determine the attraction love is.

Dear friend, don't be hard on Reggie.

You need take no heart-rending decisions. As a woman grows older and her chances of happiness diminish, there is something irrevocable in whatever she determines to do. It is as though time had put a mortgage upon every act she attempts.

While youth is still yours, let there be something lovely in the spontaneity of your choice! Don't be hampered, Beatrice, by worldly considerations. If you love Reggie ever so little, let him see it. This confidence, if you place it in him, will act as magic upon his powers to please you.

No, you say?
You like him better when he is melan-



"Your father is deep in the old-book question."