

AS SEEN THROUGH WOMAN'S EYES.

Why Well Shaped Feet are Rare.

There is scarcely a beautiful foot to found among the women of to-day.

The high heels, the exaggerated curve at the ball of the foot, the stiff heel stays, and the pointed toes, have distorted the foot in a painful and ugly manner.

The ankles are mis-shapen. In some cases the bones are enlarged until they bulge out so that every bone is perceptible. The weight of the body thrown upon the toes has caused them to spread out. Crowded into pointed toes they stick up in clusters of knotty corns.

The foot should be as shapely as the hand. Footwear should fit as a glove fits the hand. The perfect foot is slender with an arched instep and toes that lie smoothly and easily.

The first step towards acquiring a pretty foot is to wear shoes that fit it comfortably. The next is to take exercise that will render the toes strong and supple. Begin by spreading out the toes to the utmost extent, then hold four toes still, and attempt to move the remaining one. Every toe should be distinct and able to move separately. Every nail should keep its shape, just as finger nails do. The big toe should be straighter and shorter than the next one, and the arch should be shapely and pliant.

The feminine foot of to-day renders a graceful carriage an impossibility, and all because Dame Fashion has decreed that a short, high-heeled, pointed toe shoe is the correct thing in dressy footgear, forgetting that there never was a human foot built that way.

To Clean Light Kid Gloves.

Provide a saucer of skim milk, some good yellow soap, and a piece of flannel. Spread the gloves on a clean towel, smoothing out the creases. Dip the flannel in the milk and rub a little soap on it. With this rub the gloves working downwards from the wrists. You will need to rinse the flannel often. When all the dirt is removed lay the gloves, without rinsing, on a clean, dry towel, pulling them as nearly the right shape as possible. When dry they should be soft and glossy. White gloves that have got beyond cleaning can be painted over with saffron water two or three times and transformed into tan. Let them get thoroughly dry between each application, and don't make them very wet. To prepare the saffron water, boil a little saffron in water for a few minutes and let it stand several hours before using.

The Every-day Frenchwoman.

The enormous difference between Frenchwomen and the women of their own country must strike all English people who live long in France. French girl babies seem to be born with quite different qualities from English ones, and certainly their up bringing is conducted on entirely opposing lines.

The free and healthy life of English girls in the school girl age is quite unknown in France, excepting among a few very advanced families, who bring up their children in the English mode. These are decidedly in the minority, and although it is on the one hand distinctly chic to be English, yet on the other the words "so English" convey to French minds exactly the same as the words "very French" convey to us, so that the generality of people look upon children, especially girls, who have been brought up in the English way as those who have already partaken of good and evil.

Apart from her religion, the chief thought and aim of every French woman is the care and settlement in life of her daughters. They must so be brought up as to adorn the station in life in which they will marry; they must be saved for, watched over, sheltered, and guarded, very much as a trainer watches over a prospective Derby winner. And, let me tell you, it is no light matter to bring up a girl in the French way. On the contrary, indeed, it is a most arduous, self-sacrificing and wearisome undertaking.

Until she is about seven years old the little French girl is utterly spoilt.

ed. She is humored, petted, and given way to; she is fed most injudiciously, and, to our ideas, she is started badly. I have known a French grandmother say to a child unfortunately cursed with a very delicate digestion: "Eat not much breakfast, my little one, because I am going to take thee out this afternoon, and I shall take thee to a pastrycook's."

Then comes the period of education, which lasts till she is seventeen or eighteen, and in many cases is continued in part until mademoiselle is married. During the whole of that time a French girl of the upper and middle classes is never left alone for a single moment. Until she is married a young French lady never sets foot outside her house unaccompanied, and in many instances she occupies a bedroom which opens out of her mother's, and she is not even allowed to have the door of communication closed by day or by night. She is never trusted, and therefore she is taught nothing of honour or of fending for herself, everything is done for her. She does not receive or reply to her offers of marriage, or even of partners for the dance.

The educational system of France for girls is one of repression, and I am not sure whether it is not better than ours, for it is certainly admirable in its results. Some girls, as in England, are educated at home under governesses and masters, while in Paris and other large cities the girls of a family have a governess not to teach them but to conduct them to various cours at which they receive instruction. A less smart, but more general way, is to send girls either as boarders or as day girls to the convents, which are to be found in every town in France.

In convents girls are taught more carefully and well, in a somewhat limited manner. The good sisters are in all cases ladies by birth, speaking pure and perfect French, and they keep watch over their charges by day and by night with a devotion which is as admirable as it is wonderful. Even in their games girls are not left to themselves, but a sister keeps watch and ward to see that none are hurt and that the play does not become too boisterous. Should one pupil, generally an English girl, I am afraid, prove herself too rough, she is promptly punished, and several offences of this kind generally lead to the game being taboo, for French authority believes firmly in preventive measures as being the best. The result of this meddling is that while her English sister is cycling, playing tennis or cricket, or climbing trees with her brothers, the French girl is very soft, and cries for the smallest hurt or for the mildest rebuke.

The inherent love of gambling so deeply planted in the French heart is made use of even in the schools, for each week several grades of tickets are issued to the pupils. The first is the billet d'honneur, then comes the billet rose, then the billet blanc. To have no billet is a humiliation and a disgrace, and it is no uncommon thing in the middle-sized classes to have a dozen girls sobbing and howling at once on a Saturday morning when the distribution takes place. At the same time, the corresponding advantages of working for a billet are very great, for most parents give a douceur for a billet d'honneur, and a still greater honour and glory attaches to the girl who has worked herself on to the tableau d'honneur at the end of the term. Then by the time a girl has passed through the mill and reached the upper classes she is tired out of any naughty tricks she may have started with, she is a self-possessed young lady who has learned to tread the right path because the other one has been made so intensely disagreeable to her.

But if the French girl has not been taught by the good Sisters to be athletic, she has been trained to have charming manners, to have a modest, quiet bearing, and to look to her parents on all occasions. She seldom goes wrong, because she is guided in every relation of life by those who are older and wiser than herself. Then she has been taught many things which would make our English girls stare with astonishment. She can sew, darn, and mend in the most beautiful way. She can act, too, even

from the very youngest age, and is encouraged to do so during the whole time that she is at school, though it is true that, as art takes no place in France (socially speaking, that is), the power is never of much use to her afterwards.

So far as I have seen, ladies in France do not work, and are not encouraged to do so. All Frenchwomen are blessed with splendid business qualities, and the various charitable undertakings that are arranged by the women of the leisured classes are admirably conceived, managed, and carried out. Every parish has its committee of ladies for such works, including those who are very rich and influential, and those who are poor and of small account. All is fish that comes to the net of the great lady deeply interested in good works who is Dame-Presidente of her parish. She takes advantage of all, rich and poor, high and low, faithful and heretic alike.

It would be hard to tell how Frenchwomen amuse themselves. Personally, I have never heard any amateur music in France that was worthy of mention; but all Frenchwomen dance exquisitely, some of them swim very well, and most of them love some form or other of gambling. I have never yet heard of any real Frenchwoman, at least outside of the artistic class, who took any form of exercise from choice, unless one can count a game of very mild croquet, or still more mild tennis, in which she never attempts to take a ball unless it actually comes begging to be taken, which does not often happen. A few women cycle, wearing a charming costume for the purpose—yes, knickers and all the rest—in which the rider does the greatest amount of posing and the smallest amount of cycling that is possible. She is always ready to go to a party, a race-meeting, a theatre, a concert, or a charity function of any description. Moreover, she is al-

ways ready to go to church, and will undertake almost any amount of church work, such as the care of some particular chapel or altar.

The average Frenchwoman seldom travels, or has any desire to do so, but she will, even long after she is married, put herself to infinite pains to acquire a foreign language of which she will never be likely to make any use. She is rigid in matters of etiquette, and punctilious in everything relating to family life in general and to mourning in particular. I have known a family go into deep mourning, regular weeds in fact, for a great-uncle whom they had never seen. This meant six months' absolute cessation from all society, and the wearing of a long erape veil over the face during the whole of that time.

Whether it is from her natural ability, her having passed through such a careful educational mill, or both, I know not, but a Frenchwoman is usually clever, devoted—always devoted to something—fascinating, housewifely, and extraordinarily patient in her domestic relations. And although Monsieur is always pushed well to the front and Madame seems at first sight to take the second place, she has both her little fat hands as full of power as they will hold. She is altogether unlike her English sister, with her golf clubs, her bicycle, her shooting, and her fishing, her walking stick and her cigarette. And yet, she is but another edition of the most fresh and the most varying romance that the world has ever seen.

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