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HER ETERNAL YOUTH

Spirit That Created Flapper Will Not Surrender to Elders, Though Skirts Are Lengthened— How a Sub-Deb. Puts It

KNEES may be covered, but the young spirit is here to stay. Youthful insurgents are busily refuting the assertions from Paris that the flapper is passing out with the abbreviated skirt. Dictators of fashions and of morals appear, in fact, to know very little about the habits, ideals and aspirations of the young person between eighteen and twenty-four. That these dictators should think that with the passing of the short skirt and bobbed hair this eager young army of self-determination which has been gradually throwing off the hampering mantle of dependence and parental dominance will be content to be relegated to the ranks of the negligible female of thirty years ago is proof, it is said, of their limited knowledge of the situation.

"Never," cry in unison the emancipated army. That the weapons of this twentieth century legion are in large part youth and determination adds strength to the cause. The joyous members argue that their detractors are handicapped by years and compromise. With eyes fixed on the sun, the onrushing host gives small credence to prophesies of failure.

From the flippant young thing to the more serious-minded young person who eagerly builds herself a career after she has finished her college course there seems to be a spirit of independence and of fearlessness that has nothing whatever to do with a new fashion in hair arrangement or an increased length of skirt. Both her admirers and her maligners admit that she has given the exponents of self-expression a tremendous boost. There is nothing secretive about the modern girl. The planks in her platform are frankness, common sense and comfort. She refuses to wear uncomfortable clothes because her grandmother considers them ladylike. When conventions interfere with comfort, conventions must go, asserts the flapper. Her teachers and professors give her credit for sense and decision. They tell you she is neither bad, nor is she different from the young of other years.

Her Struggle for "Freedom."

One of the emancipated ones, with a Knickerbocker grandmother and much family opposition behind her "adventure into the open," in telling of her struggle for freedom, said:

"I worked during the war, of course—every one did. And I decided then that never again would I be content to sit at home and do nothing but go to parties. It was hard work at first to get my people to understand how I felt about it. But I finally succeeded. I've been here two years. Now I want a better job. I want more money and I think I'm worth it. Jobs are awfully hard to get, though. I do not want my

friends to help me if I can manage to get a better position without their assistance.

"Several of my friends have gone to work because they were so bored at home. One of them is a saleswoman in a smart costume shop. She's been having lots of fun with some of the snobbish friends of her rich family connections. These snobbish ones haven't got used to the 'working girl' idea yet.

"No, I don't think I shall give up working when I marry. It seems to me that you understand the 'tired business man' much better when you have been a 'tired business woman.' It's not very easy being at a desk all day. I certainly wouldn't expect my husband to take me to late parties every night, which seems to be what wives who have never worked do expect.

"It's perfectly true that manners have gone out with a certain crowd. Now, when a boy has consideration and a rather formal nice manner, the younger set put him down as a 'sissy.' These days a man grabs you at a dance without saying a word, whirls you almost off your feet, then drops you still without a word and goes on to another girl. If a girl doesn't appear to like that abrupt way of doing things, the boys think she's 'queer.'"

Spirit of Younger Generation.

To many of those of flapper age the bare knees, Shelley hair and extreme manners of some of their contemporaries are as ridiculous as these hallmarks of the new freedom are to the older generation. According to one college girl, the flapper is the girl who is just a little younger, who belongs to a younger set. To the girl one year out of college, the graduate is a flapper. To the proud senior of a preparatory school the girl just entering is a flapper.

"Yes," said the secretary of one of the college women's clubs in New York City, "we refer to the new arrivals here, the girls who have just graduated, as flappers. And they in turn call the freshmen at college flappers. There doesn't seem to be any exact definition for the species. No girl admits being a flapper. It seems to me it would be better if the older people tried to understand the spirit of the younger generation before they criticised them so freely. Has there been such a change after all? I read some of my aunt's love letters the other day and I must say that I don't think the so-called young flapper today has anything on auntie.

"There were much franker thoughts expressed in those letters than I have been allowed to believe the older generation ever had. That seems to be the criticism of the modern girl—that she is immodestly frank.

"There have always been girls who were just a step ahead of the times—girls who were loud, a little overdressed and a good bit over-mannered. You find those girls today. But I think they are very much in the minority. Most of the girls as they leave college

and come to this club have some idea what they want to do. They all want to work. If they find they can't get a job unless they know stenography, they buckle down and learn it. Stenography is one thing they hate. But nine jobs out of ten offered to girls just starting out in the business world today require stenography. And of course some professions are still practically closed to women. I wanted to study engineering but I found that none of the college courses in that subject were open to women."

It remained for the sub-deb to ignore the existence of the flapper. One of them who had just graduated from a well-known preparatory school and enters Smith College next fall said that the word was never used in her set.

"Just a Magazine Word."

"We think of it as just a magazine word," said this modern exponent of emancipated thought. "We never call each other flappers. In fact, the girls I know resent being put in that class. And they aren't prudes either. They are just as eager for a good time and a free life as any set of girls. Some of them are planning to work when they finish college, but I don't think 50 per cent. of the girls who enter college have any definite plans for a career. That comes later. Many of them go to work when they graduate because they live in small towns and do not want to go home and settle down.

"No, I don't think the girls today think less about getting married than they ever did. They are shy in expressing their views some times, or indifferent, but most of them have it in the back of their minds just the same."

But whether the young girl today just entering her teens, is a flapper or not, hers is the inquiring mind which is not to be satisfied with ready-made formulas, either in fashions or morals What has been good enough for her parents is not always good enough for her. At least she must decide whether it is. That the arbiters of fashion would wipe her aggressive silhouette entirely off the canvas is of small interest to her. After all, she tells you, skirts may go down and morals may go up in the minds of the public, but she will continue to arrange both her skirts and her morals so that they will neither interfere with her comfort nor outrage her common sense. The young mind appears to be canny and the young spirit above the contemplation of bare knees. This young spirit is busy building its future; it is leaving less important matters to the older generation.