

FLAPPER

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The Modern Riddle

By MYRTLE HEILEMAN, in *The Forest Park Review*

(Note: Miss Heileman's parents run a newspaper in Forest Park, Ill. So many queries were received concerning the attitude of the newspaper toward flappers, that her folks delegated to Myrtle the task of elucidating the public. Following is the result. We think she wins. Don't you?)

Topics of the day—or rather the topic of the day—is the modern girl, commonly known to the multitude as the flapper. She is one of the biggest sensations since the Chicago fire, and by the looks of things, some people are having as hard a time trying to adjust themselves to this new "article" as they did to the incident of the cow and the lamp.

The flapper isn't the terrible, wicked thing she's supposed to be. It's only the people who have had their good times who are too cowardly to acknowledge that they have had them and too narrow-minded to want anything new who criticize the modern young woman. They say "What was good enough for us should be good enough for everyone." Aren't they rather like the Chinese, who will not tolerate new railroads, new conveniences? Of course there is a limit to everything, but the real honest-to-goodness flapper knows where to stop.

Analyze her dress. It's the most sensible thing since Eve. She wears rolled sox and why shouldn't she? They are extremely cool and comfortable. Her toddle pumps are fairly low-heeled and she doesn't try to squeeze into a Cinderella. Her skirts are short because it's the fashion. (The world will have to admit that even our grandmothers were ardent followers of fashion.) Her bobbed hair is cool, sensible and sanitary, and it has nothing to do with her brain. While the critics are at it, why don't they say something about the haircuts the young men are wearing. There is a twinkle in her eye and she has a saucy cocksureness. And why shouldn't she have them? Is she expected to go around in mourning, look upon dancing and going to parties and receiving compliments from admiring sheiks as evils? She hasn't one-third the foolish notions that some older people try to shove into her brain.

She does respect her parents and she obeys them just as well as her grandmother did hers, but she has common sense and she knows when it's time to use her own judgment and exercise her own authority.

Cosmetics also seem to be a subject taken into the discussion. It's perfectly all right to use them to a certain extent. Did you ever know a girl who, when she found a way to make herself more attractive, didn't use it?

And the flapper isn't anything new. Eve was a flapper, only she didn't have so much common sense as the modern girl.

Dear old Cleopatra was a flapper, and she used exactly the same methods as we have today to vamp Anthony, Caesar, and all the rest that strolled the Appian way. There are pages and pages in history that tell of her sprinkling cinnamon in her hair, of chewing certain leaves to sweeten her breath, of importing rare perfumes, and riding in wondrous chariots. Well, the American flapper washes her hair in lemon juice, chews spearmint to sweeten her breath, buys her perfume at Field's, and rides in upholstered limousines.

Joan of Arc was a flapper. Oh, yes, she was! She was pure and divine, and so are our feminine generation, but Joan, the little dear, knew what she wanted to do. She wanted to wear armor and ride a charging steed as much as any girl nowadays wants to wear knickers and ride in a flashy roadster. She wanted to lead an army of men, and she did it. She was a flapper.

Recently several authorities (masculine species) have declared that woman is the cause of all evil, that it is she who leads man into crime. If this is so, it looks rather shady for the men. They ought to be able to walk a block without holding mother's hand, and if they can't, they should be put in the infant class. However, perhaps they aren't always led.

Florence Nightingale was a flapper of her time. During the Crimean war she gave up her home life and entered the ranks as a nurse. She just couldn't stand to be anything but up and doing, and so, like her, our modern girl went "Over there" during the recent war to give service.

There are flappers in every age. There could be pages and pages telling about all of them. Most of the great women belonged to that class, more or less, and all of them had the "I will," the "Go to it" spirit that Miss America displays today.

We couldn't go on without it, so if you're crushing the flapper, remember that you're crushing that spirit.