

What French Women Think of Americans.



BOBBIE Burns' prayer has been answered for us Yanks. L'Œuvre, a Paris daily newspaper, is the power which has given the *soldat Americain* a view of himself as *Mademoiselle Française* sees him.

"Who would you choose for a husband, a Frenchman or an American? And what are the qualities and faults which justify your preference?", L'Œuvre asked its feminine readers.

The answers poured in so that L'Œuvre had to send out the distress signal to stop the deluge. When the investigation was thus cut short the vote stood: for Frenchmen, 192—for Americans, 63. So, in spite of it would seem that we the language bar (or because of it?), stand ace high with one fourth of the French girls, if these figures are typical.

These Are for Us.

"Ah! the Americans can be proud", said L'Œuvre, "for they are praised for the finest of masculine qualities, for their honesty." Here are some of the qualities of the Yank as revealed in these letters from Mademoiselle:

"I will marry an American, because he is loyal and frank. It is in his nature. He is healthy, morally and physically. The Frenchman, on the other hand, is naturally deceiving, often toward men, always toward women and particularly toward his wife."

"The Americans have revealed masculine honesty to French girls."

"I prefer the American character, loyal and sincere, to the French and Italian and the men of the latin races who always believe themselves obliged to be false to women."

"This fine sentiment of masculine camaraderie which reposes on frankness and which American girls appreciate so much, the French girls do not know. The Frenchman is too foppish and too boastful to be sincere in his relations with women. The 'French comrade' is a specimen unknown. It's a pity." (*That from one who signs herself — "A girl who has travelled a great deal."*)

"I am only a working girl. I know better how to sew than to write letters. But just the same I have the right to answer your two questions. My answer I'll give at the top of my voice, throwing my scissors in air: Hurrah for the Americans! The one I know is as frank as gold. He is always laughing. I am the happiest of Parisian modistes while waiting to be the happiest of women in marrying my dear George Robinson!"

Lucky George Robinson!

One teacher submitted L'Œuvre's questions to her class of girls. Of the

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18 girls, 12 preferred Americans. The qualities they liked were frankness, good naturedness and lack of self conceit. One of them, 17 years of age, wrote, "Americans are too charming comrades, too respectful of women not to be good husbands."

These for Frenchmen.

So far, très bien. But the great majority, you remember, preferred a Frenchman for their husband. Here are some of the letters giving their point of view:

"I will marry a Frenchman because, above all, I want to remain French. Elsewhere, I find the Americans much less elegant than the Frenchmen and not so good looking. And then, all these faces without moustaches, all the same, they make no impression on me."

"Really, do you find these big tortoise shell glasses and gold teeth pretty! Ah! how much more I prefer an amiable Frenchman, gentle and distinguished and even delicate in his appetite. We have boarded an American soldier last summer who had a disconcerting appetite. He easily ate half a turkey with the dressing and all the rest. And then one fine day, he left without even saying good-bye."

"I will marry a Frenchman because I wish to remain French and I wish to be happy. Marriage is a lottery where one has not much chance of gaining the prize of happiness even among men with whom we are acquainted. What would it be with an American, that is to say with a man who is neither of our race nor of our mentality!"

"The American is cold, master of himself. He decides rapidly. The Frenchman is light, frivolous, has a will power less accentuated and has the great fault of being conceited. But he is the more tender and loving. For we women with whom sentiment dominates, the Frenchman will be the preferred. And then, he is French!"

"The men from all latitudes resemble each other, a little more conceited here, a little franker there, everywhere selfish and prompt to make declarations which they forget. So, from men of equal faults I prefer the Frenchman whose spirit at least is a precious remedy against the enemy. Long live the French spirit! That quality is the quality of our race.

"And then if the Frenchmen are not superior to other men, at least, in marrying one of them I will not abandon my dear and beautiful France which is for me the first country of the world."

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(From a student of philosophy.)

Madame Louise Faure-Favier, who conducted the investigation for L'Œuvre, adds: "We must admit that no one could put it better. This young philosopher has expressed the sentiments of us all."

But the investigation did not end there. The *poilu* had become interested. There were those that were "surprised and indignant" to learn that a French girl should prefer an American to them!

The girls reproached them with being deceitful wretches. And the *poilu's* reply, "If we lie to you, it is because you are always false to us."

The *Poilu's* View,

One *poilu* took the matter in humorous vein. Here is what he wrote:

"The reading of the letters exalting the merits of the American as a husband gave me a cold shiver. A barber being close I rushed to his chair and had him shave off my moustache which had become odious to my eyes. Then requisitioned the dentist to fill my mouth with gold teeth, none of which, however, I had need of. Next, I hastened to the oculist and chose the largest and roundest tortoise shell glasses I could find.

"Then I could breathe freely. I am ugly, madame, but I am very happy; very happy at the thought that in this state at least I will run no risk of marrying one of these girls who love so much the Frenchman."

Others were more bitter, as this letter from a group of young officers:

"We have fought four years in the war only to discover today that the Americans in six months have shown our girls that which is 'masculine honesty and loyalty'! That phrase, I must confess, overwhelmed us. Surely, we were wrong to have been at the Marne and at Verdun while the Americans were gaining the dollars which permit them today to win hearts so well."

