

end in producing either the most painful timidity and dulness or the most silly affectation and apishness.

Then again, as to what is called eccentricity of manners; it is only observable, in many cases, because general manners are so stupidly unnatural and unreasonable—so far out of the true golden mean themselves. The most of conventionalisms may be of a character to simplify and facilitate intercourse, in which cases they should be observed; but when they become senseless and burdensome, a sensibly well-bred person will lead the way in emancipating society from their injurious restraints. A course like this shows a true refinement, while an opposite one is of the very essence of vulgarity, and constitutes only a shoddy gentility. This branch of our subject is too wide to admit of illustration within reasonable limits.

As to eccentricity of conduct, it would certainly be wrong if society had preserved its own true centre of gravity in all cases, which it has not. Now, where doings are inconsistent with sense and justice, economy and earnest religion, it becomes not only allowable for us to deviate from the general practice, but it is our imperative duty to do so. As a general thing it may be said, that a sensible person will adopt the costume of his day and country. It would be ridiculous in any one of us to attract attention by dressing in an oriental style, or precisely in that which obtained when our forefathers settled in America. But when a person has sufficient sense and taste to see the needlessly expensive, burdensome, or utterly unsymmetrical character of any particular mode or style of dressing, and especially its unhealthiness, for either themselves or their children, they may not only reject or modify it, but the laws of a truly artistic taste, to say nothing about morality, require that person to do it. God is no enemy to beauty, nor are we declaring against it; but then, all the works of the Creator show that simplicity and symmetry—not gaudiness and distortion—are elements of beauty. How much handsomer some ladies would be than they now are, if they followed the above canon with regard to adornment!

The habits of society, as a general thing, in North America, are flagrantly and wickedly extravagant; and he who slavishly follows the fashionable world with regard to dress, equipage,