

by take pleasure in your flowers and your lawn and see the kids playing and hear them laughing?"

Of course I always went duly through the orthodox historical and social explanations. I pointed out that it was only in comparatively late times—only since that very recent event the French Revolution or the beginning of our life as a nation—that isolated houses in the fields would have been safe; that up to that time people were obliged to huddle together inside the walls of a town at night as a safeguard against having their throats cut; that an age-old habit of apprehension and precaution leaves ineradicable marks on life; and that it still seems entirely natural for French people to conceal their gardens behind ten-foot stone walls with broken bottles on top, although for generations the community life has been as peaceful as that of any drowsy New England village. But, having given this academic explanation, I went on to hazard a guess that age-old habits of fear leave behind them more than material marks, like stone walls and broken bottles. They shape and form human minds into tastes and preferences and prejudices, the uncourageous origin of which the owners of the minds are far from divining.

"You know," I said to our boy from home, "they can't understand our open villages with no fences or walls, with everybody's flowers open to everybody's view, with our pretty girls showing their fresh summer dresses and bright, sweet faces to the chance passerby as well as to the selected few who have the countersign to enter.