

IT is no wonder that the Europeans call the Americans—and, to a lesser degree, the Canadians when they know us at home—a wastefully extravagant people; for they see us chiefly in our hotels. Now, if there be a wasteful institution in the world, it is a good hotel run on “the American plan.” I have just been staying in one at Atlantic City, which, for some occult reason, classed itself in my mind with another hotel in which I lived once in Rome. Both hotels were admirably run and patronised by a very fine sort of people. As nearly as possible, I should say that they were on the same level. Yet the American hotel cost me nearly twice as much as the Italian. Nor was the reason far to seek. It was not in the cost of food; for heavy taxation makes that higher in Italy. Service at Atlantic City is coloured, good, and cheap—the best hotel service on this continent, and no more expensive than that in Rome. The hotels were very much alike in furnishings, roomy public salons and smoking-rooms, and the like. The difference lay in the bills-of-fare.

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WHILE talking of this point one morning at breakfast at Atlantic City, I counted the items on our menu card. They ran to seventy-seven. Not all of them were necessarily ready in advance, and so wasted if not called for; but quite a few of them were. This menu, remember, was table d’hôte, and not merely a restaurant card to be ordered from. Now the Rome hotel had no menu. At breakfast, you got tea or coffee or chocolate and rolls—the European breakfast. Of course, this comparison is hardly fair; but the dinner contrast is. At Atlantic City, there was enough on the menu for ten distinct dinners; at Rome, there was only one which was served, item by item, without question, to all the guests. But it was enough. In fact, it was a banquet. However, there was only one soup, one sort of fish, one entree, one roast, one fowl possibly, two desserts served together. Everybody had identically the same dinner. He could not pick and choose. Yet, so well was it chosen and prepared, that everybody was delighted.

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THUS it becomes evident at a glance why the American hotel must charge double its mate in Rome. It cooks an immense amount of food to go to waste. Then the American system encourages wastefulness in ordering. People order three dishes when their appetites will only accommodate the contents of one; but they devote the space to “tastes” from all three. Thus they waste at least as much food as they eat. The frugal European, with bitter poverty all about him, calls this wasteful. And he does not like to pay for it even when money is not much of an object with him. Moreover, he thinks that that is no way to treat a Christian stomach. He employs expensive experts in the high art of catering to the human appetite; and these experts send in him a succession of dishes which should follow each other. They do not leave it to his chance whim, which may so easily lead to over-loading and satiety—and dyspepsia—but they reduce dining to a science. One dish prepares the way for the next. Thus the European gets a more intelligently chosen dinner for half the money.

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THERE are other things that I would like to see American hotel-keepers learn from Europe. For instance, the richly carpeted bedroom floor might well be replaced by the highly polished hardwood floor of the European hotel. A few rugs supply all the softness and warmth that is needed. Then there is the long upper sheet which folds half-way back over the bed-quilts, thus insuring that the quilts and blankets which other people have used shall never by any accident get anywhere near your face. They are already learning to use the two small beds for a double-bedded room instead of one large one. As for the American people, they must learn to “tip” systematically and conscientiously before they will enjoy the benefits of that method of paying personal servants and so cease to grumble at the “annoyance” of it. At present, the servants will not trust them to “tip” fairly as they are leaving the hotel, for the good reason that they are not to be trusted. They do not realise that the “tip” is a

debt of honour. The consequence is that the average American waiter now tries to compel an early “tip” by neglect, instead of trying to earn a good one at parting by assiduous service. But the Americans are learning even this. At the hotel I have just been staying at, they have a regular clientele; and there is no pressure for “tips” from the servants. They trust the patrons of the house to do the decent thing.

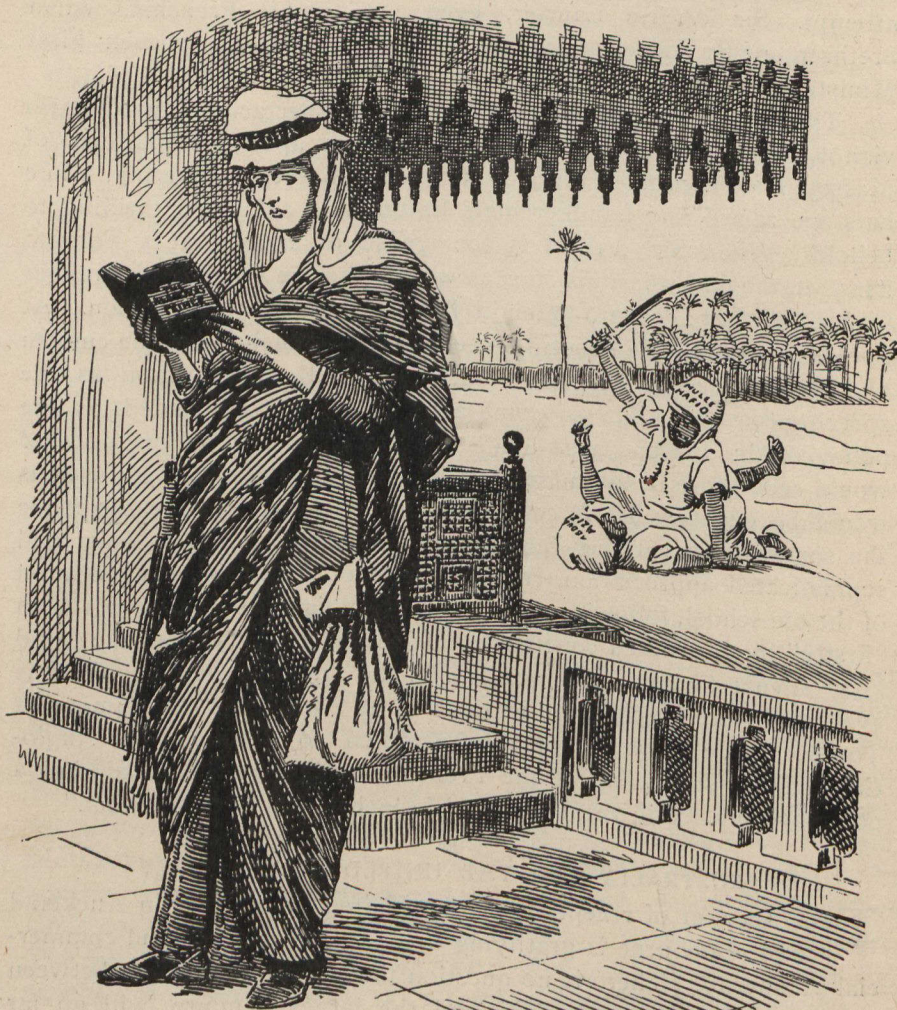
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THE expensiveness of our hotels keeps many Europeans of moderate means from visiting this continent. A Vienna gentleman who travelled freely in Europe said to me once: “I would like very much to see America, but I cannot afford it. Why, I am told that the American hotels charge from 25 to 50 francs a day.” We were then dining in a Paris “pension” where for six francs a day, we were getting better “luncheons” and dinners than most three or four-dollar hotels on this continent put up. Just the other day, an Englishman blew into the golf club to which I happen to belong, and we got talking as golfers will. He had been travelling for three years in all parts of the world, chiefly playing golf. “At home,” he said, “I am in easy circumstances; on the continent (of Europe) I am a prince; in America, I am a pauper.” Now he did not mean to be flattering to this continent. He meant that we are wasteful. I wonder if it pays us.

N’IMPORTE

A SUCCESSFUL ART SHOW

WHEN it is considered that at least four hundred thousand people visited the Art Gallery at the Toronto Exhibition this year, a strong desire on the part of the public to gain some knowledge of good pictures is plainly in evidence. The attendance and interest are strong arguments in favour of a permanent civic gallery. The directors of the Exhibition were much pleased with the careful selection and the excellent distribution made by the Hanging Committee, which consisted of Mr. Wyly Grier, president of the O. S. A., Mr. G. A. Reid, president of the R. C. A., and Messrs. Gagen and Manly. In order to show this pleasure in a tangible way, the directors purchased eleven pictures. Two of these were bought from the Exhibition funds and will hang on the walls of the City Hall, while the other nine were bought by the directors individually. The two chosen for the City Hall are “Spring Morning,” by W. E. Atkinson, A.R.C.A., West Toronto, and “Sunset After Rain,” by A. M. Fleming, O.S.A., Chatham. The other nine were selected from the work shown by Messrs. Reid, Gagen, Brigden, Cutts, and Martin, Miss Caroline Farncomb and Miss Beatrice Hagarty.



Linley Sambourne 1900

Dame Europa: “Of course, as they’re fighting outside the school premises, I look the other way. But—if I may use the expression—I back the winner.”—Punch.
The fight for sovereignty in Morocco is being watched in Europe with quiet but intense interest.