

The lady of a baronial hall deemed it an insult to be addressed in language of gallantry. She disdained the attentions of the most potent prince, if his addresses were not honorable. Nor would she bestow her love upon one of whom she was not proud. She would not marry a coward or a braggart, even if he were the owner of ten thousand acres. She was as tender and compassionate as she was heroic. We read of few divorces in the Feudal ages, separations or desertions. These belong to the improvements of our day.

But what caused this veneration, unknown in ancient or modern times. It was based on the noble qualities and domestic virtues which their lives engendered. They were always employed in what were imperative duties; they gloried in their unsullied names. Their characters were above suspicion. They were discreet, self-relying and free from excitements; though the Feudal castle was not dull. It was full of strangers, minstrels, bards, pedlars and priests. They could gratify their social wants and attain friendships, and although they knew nothing of fashionable life, they laid the foundation of that courtly grace and dignity of manner which some of the later day women try to imitate. But how could we compare their lives with the fashionable women of the present? And, although various courts of Europe are conducted with propriety, the state of society there is well described in "Ouida's Moths." And bringing the lines from London and Paris to New York, what a contrast are the lives of the 400 fools; for high breeding never asserts itself. It takes its place naturally and tacitly, led by a snob who tries to saddle himself onto some far off aristocracy. They are a fair specimen of the Roman women with the exception of running about Europe hunting up husbands for their daughters. Like good traders, we are judges of old ware, and despise anything new more than a Howard would. Mrs. M—— has outstripped them all in securing a Collona for her daughter. Life has a good thing where an American girl returns from Europe, and another expresses surprise at her coming back unengaged. She replies that all the cheap dukes were gone. And nothing less would satisfy her. They go about pushing themselves into society, who have only the advantages of rank. For the Americans who have sprung from the poor emigrating classes of Europe are willing to buy up any impetuous lord, that they may pose as "My Lady." Of course these people are not respected by the best of European society—the elegant and benevolent. Even the light, fashionable set that receive them on account of their money are laughing at them in their sleeves. How can they help it when one of their number scours the city of New York with an unprincipled divorced rake to get married, and finds that no respectable clergyman would perform the ceremony. They were obliged to be united by a civil magistrate, and it answered their purpose just as well. It was not the rite she evidently cared for, it was to be called "Your Grace." And they were a well matched pair. As to family, he was no better than she. His great ancestor had nothing to recommend him but his fearlessness, which he evinced in appropriating the public funds, as well as on the battle field. And in his greatest victories the laurels were shared by the gallant Prince Eugene.

His rise from a humble position was attributable to the influence of a lewd woman, his sister, a mistress of the Duke of York. From the time of "Old Sarah," his wife, who ruled him as she did her mistress, the queen, they have been a

self-asserting domineering lot. It is a name as unsavory as that of Cumming to the house of Stuart, from which the reigning family derives the crown.

As soon as some vulgar man becomes a millionaire, his daughters are sent to a fashionable school, his sons to college. They get ladies' maids for the girls, with whom they know not what to do, as an English girl said, who had engaged herself to one of them in that capacity. Then they start for Europe, and if they do not form one of the colonies in the various cities, return, aping their manners and style of living. The boys affect the tone and appearance of an English swell, but unlike Sothern's English fool, L—— D——, it is impossible to make them gentlemen. The women do not give up visions of rank, and in every way try to imitate in miniature, and do remarkably well for amateurs.

Some who wish to make a handle out of this "Baccarat" scandal should come here, where, in our provincial cities, those who follow in the wake of fashion, allow gambling in their houses. It is hard to tell whether Europe is contaminating us or we are contaminating them. As far as England is concerned with her ideas of blue blood, one would think there was danger of its paling before long with its marriages among second-class actresses and Americans, although English ladies are chary of such alliances, and the better class of nobility.

Some of our best women married into English families in days gone by, when there were still some of the old colonial dignity left among the few families that remained. But in the fast, pert manners of this age one will occasionally meet Baltimore and Albany ladies who, like Miss Van V—— inherit the stately grace and winning charm of their grandmothers.

After the Revolution and the withdrawal of the refined Tory element, society underwent a change in manners and feelings toward the British; and forty years ago, we made a poor showing to strangers from abroad. We were certainly subjects for comment, both in our tastes and manner of living. The people had devoted themselves to trade exclusively, and the influx of French refugees had not been advantageous to us. Like all new and ignorant people, we were very indignant at the truths related of us by Dickens and others. But D—— did not spare his own country any more than ours. And it was amusing, years later, to hear those who had attacked him relating to his "Notes on America," laud him on his return to read to us. I heard G. W. C. place him above every other author, living or dead; and I felt like arising in my seat to argue the case, when comparing "Scott's women" disparagingly with Dickens' for naturalness, and held up Dickens' Dora as a sample of womanhood. He did not remember that Scott described women of other days, and I believe there are some noble women now, who could rival Jenny Deans in love and heroism. I believe he was right in giving Dickens the credit (of) for "Dora's" naturalness, for she is a perfect specimen of the fools of the present day.

When steamboat communication facilitated travel, the bitterness toward England began to disappear, and we began to see that it was possible to learn something new from the civilized countries of Europe, and commenced to imitate them as we had taken tone and color from our French visitors. And although we have learned some polite usages, we have also learned much that is morally bad.

Forty years ago respectable families, rich and poor, spent