

him to have it cut, but it seemed to grow in the night back to its poetic profusion.

In what does this noble disregard for appearances which permeates our middle class men originate? Our climate, as some suggest, or discouragement at not being all millionaires? It more likely comes from an absence with us of the military training that abroad goes so far toward licking young men into shape.

I shall never forget the surprise on the face of a French statesman to whom I once expressed my sympathy for his country, laboring under the burden of so vast a standing army. He answered: "The financial burden is doubtless great; but you have others. Witness your pension expenditures; while with us the money drawn from the people is used in such a way as to be of inestimable value to them. We take the young hobbledehoy farm-hand or mechanic, ignorant, mannerless, uncleanly as he may be, and turn him out at the end of three years with his regiment, self-respecting and well-mannered, with habits of cleanliness and obedience, having acquired a bearing and a love of order that will cling to him and serve him all his life. We do not go so far," he added, "as our English neighbors in drilling men into superb manikins of 'form' and carriage. Our authorities do not consider it necessary. But we reclaim them from the slovenliness of their native village, and make them tidy and mannerly citizens."

These remarks came to mind the other day as I watched a group of New England youths lounging on the steps of the village store, or sitting in rows on a neighboring fence, until I longed to try if even a judicious arrangement of tacks, "business-side up," on these favorite seats would infuse any energy into their movements. I came to the conclusion that my French acquaintance was about right,

for the only trim-looking men I saw were either veterans of our war or youths belonging to the local militia. And nowhere can you see finer specimens of humanity than West Point turns out yearly.

But if any one doubts what kind of man slouching youths develop into, let him look when he travels at the hopeless appearance of our farmhouses throughout the land. Surely our rural population is not so much poorer than in other countries. Yet compare the dreary homes of even our well-to-do farmers with the smiling, well-kept hamlets one sees in England or on the Continent.

If ours were an old and bankrupt nation, this air of discouragement and decay could not be greater. One looks in vain for some sign of American dash and enterprise in the appearance of our men and their homes. During a journey of over 4,000 miles, made last spring as the guest of a gentleman who knows our country thoroughly, we were all impressed most painfully with this abject air. Never in all those days did we see a fruit-tree trained on some sunny southern wall, a smiling flower garden, or carefully clipped hedge. Hardly even the necessary vegetables are grown. My host told me that throughout the West and South they prefer canned food. It is less trouble.

If you wish to form an idea of the extent to which slouch prevails in our country, make the experiment of trying to start a "village improvement society," and experience, as others have done, the apathy and ill-will of the inhabitants. Go about among them and try to rouse some of their local pride to your aid.

In the town near where I pass my summers, a large stone, fallen from a passing dray, lay for days in the middle of the principal street, until I paid some boys to remove it. No one cared, and the dull-eyed inhabitants