

WHERE IS THE PERFECT WOMAN?

A Man's Idea and Ideals



THE plain answer to the query that heads this article is that there isn't and can't be such a thing as a perfect woman. Poets say there is, and bachelors in love think so, but we know better. Yet every man has at the back of his mind an ideal type to which his sweetheart, or his wife, or his female acquaintances have to live up; and every woman has at the back of her heart a picture of what she would like to be. Every man and woman has a right to his or her own ideal, and it would be as presumptuous as silly for a magazine writer to try to make a composite photograph of all these ideal types. Nor can he expect mankind to adopt his own particular fancy as the type of woman to be adored. And that is the root of the matter. Eugenics is all nonsense, because we cannot agree (thank heavens!) on what is the perfect type of man or woman at which we aim.

Nevertheless it is interesting to speculate on what types of beauty there are in women for men to worship and other women to sneer at, and how those types can attain their fullest possible development. This article, therefore, is a modest speculation—made with a nervous pen and a downcast eye, in imminent dread of a box on the ear from ladies of a type of beauty not sufficiently praised.

Let Beauty Be Natural.
All the same, you and I will agree, I hope, on one point; that a woman who has to rouge and powder herself, brighten her eyes and deform her shape to make a pretty picture is not worth our admiration; that she may make that pretty picture, but that it is less the picture of a woman than of a doll; and that true beauty is the expression of a healthy mind in a healthy body. Now, this does not mean a body and mind all bumps and muscles. Nothing is more ugly than a woman with an anatomic and parenchymatous labels stuck all over her. A beautiful woman is graceful and gracious, a harmonious personality expressing itself harmoniously. Her body is lightly poised, her head car-

ries itself airily, she breathes easily, she moves as if on wings, her every gesture is a poem. You could not say what it is in her that attracts you—the hair, or the setting of the eyes, or the graceful lines of the swelling shape—the whole woman charms. But perhaps one realizes that the great secret is a spiritual one, and that no one who has not a healthy, harmonious interior life can have a healthy, harmonious body. So that one asks oneself: Can women generally be really beautiful today, while life is one long hustle and nervous strain? It may be doubted. Women are beautiful in certain ways and at certain times, but, as a rule, the nervous tension of our time shows itself in their faces and the jerky, ungraceful movements of their limbs.

Beauty Has Depth.
And that is why all the common systems of physical culture are of little avail—they train the body to express something that is not there. Beauty is not skin deep; it is the shining out of a beautiful soul. Physical exercises may develop the muscles, but, if you are ugly and discordant in yourself, and in your life, the muscular development will be at the expense of your nerve force. Who has not met men (and women) with huge biceps and quite without spring and initiative? Pump-bell exercises and all the rest of it will not hurt a strong woman, but they will wreck a weak one. And the golden rule in this matter, as in the matter of diet, is to take your exercise (and your meals) regularly, because you like to, and avoid thinking over-much about your muscles and your stomach. The finest kinds of physical culture are those which are such good fun you never think about the good they are doing you. Such are sports like football, tennis, hockey; such are swimming, walking, running, jumping, rowing and dancing. And the best of all—for women, at least—is dancing. Football is for men; not all women can stand the tax of constant swimming, while most other forms of exercise

over-develop certain parts of the body and leave the others under-developed. And almost always women exercise wrongly; they move jerkily and without rhythm, they use their limbs in a cramped, ugly way. Dancing is a sovereign cure for all that; and by dancing I mean the expressive, rhythmic movement invented by Isadora Duncan, so charmingly exemplified by Maud Allan, and nicknamed in England the "Classical" dance. For the open-air dance in summer—and the open-air dance is of course infinitely more health-giving than a ballroom dance—little more need be worn than one quite short and quite loose-fitting garment, and if the open-air dancing-place be sufficiently secluded, not even this garment is necessary. Until we let sun and air play upon our bodies for many hours a day they will remain sickly in color and flabby in substance. (The air-bath on the beach is of greater value than the water-bath in the surf.) And the air and sun have a better effect on us when we are exercising than when we are at rest. The naked body in motion breathes in life at every pore. Rhythmic exercise in the open air! Open air not only for the face and hands, but the whole starved body! When shall we be sufficiently moral to face the possibility of that?

Charm of the Eyes.
Poets have always understood that beauty is spiritual, but they have understood it stupidly. They have sung of the magic of a woman's eye. That is all nonsense. The eye in itself has no magic, whether the possessor of it be a mesmerist or the girl you love. Try the experiment of fixing a mask on the face of the latter (if she will let you). The eyes will look out brightly, but they will have no particular expression and no glamour. The mesmerist or the lover looks at you with his whole face (yes! and if he is properly trained, with his whole mind and body); the eyes simply serve to fix your attention. But the setting of the eye is expressive beyond all other features.

Whether the eyes are wide apart or close together, set straight across or at an angle, deep in the face, flush with it, or outstanding, whether cut round or oval, whether with lids that are plain blank or delicately worked at the hinges, whether with meager brows or great, fierce arches—curved or pointed, whether with rudimentary lashes or lashes long and caressing; all this it is that decides the fashion of a woman's face and paints her soul for you. And that is why the mask may safely leave the mouth and nose and these two orbs of glittering stuff uncovered, so long as the setting of the eye be hidden. The jointings of the eye-socket! There is much magic in them. Those alluring little creases that wink and twinkle; that soft, serene arch downward of the upper lid. Until the crows'-feet begin to show there, all the charm of a woman's face lurks in the caverns of her eyes.

Eyes of Perfect Women.
And, taken in relation with its setting, the color of the eye, yes! that is magical. Shut your own eyes and think of all the eyes of women you have seen. Eyes of tender blue, eyes of steadfast gray, mysterious eyes changing from green to brown, passionate eyes of flaming black! You will find it hard to think of the color of the eyes apart from the color of the hair and the cheek. Blue eyes and gray with blonde hair and the red-and-white complexion of the North; black eyes with midnight tresses and the swarthy, olive tan of Italy and Spain. But the women of Vienna—Tentons, fostered by a Southern sun—have got, without the aid of the hairdresser, a crown of golden tresses over their dark, flashing eyes. Who shall say which is the more beautiful? The perfect woman will have long, glossy, wavy hair, and so she will not be used to wearing heavy hats that kill the growth and spoil the color of it. And a large, light hat held on with pins is equally a torture for hair and scalp when the wind blows and tugs

at it. The perfect woman would wear no other head-covering than a cap or a shawl (and the grisettes of Paris and the maidens of Castile know how to adorn themselves). Nor will the perfect woman wear false hair or fasten her coiffure tightly to her scalp; she will be too proud and too wise; from the one and the other practice come headaches and a fading of the hair. A woman that cannot let her hair hang loosely about her can never look truly beautiful.

Noses of Many Kinds.
What of the nose, that symbol of the will? The nose long and straight, or with a dominant curve in it, or short and piquantly tilted, which is the more to be desired? The high, straight bridge is by many thought a beauty, and yet I have known some charming women whose bridge was a drooping valley between the eyes. And health will give to any nose a certain comeliness, will lend a strong curve to the nostrils and set them palpitating. But not all poets and lovers have been brave enough to sing the praises of the nose. They have kept their soft epithets for the mouth of woman. And their greatest pleasure is to liken it to a rose. The reason for the devotion is obvious; and perhaps in savage lands, where a rubbing of noses is more esteemed than roselbud kisses, the nobler feature gets its due share of song. To my mind the mouth has been much overdone. It should be heard, and not seen; and how one tires of those postcard beauties with their eternal grin and a dentist's museum glaring behind it! The mouth should be modest and retiring, subservient to the more significant features above it. Its prime function is to take sustenance in and let words out, and it should be discreet in both particulars. Even in the matter of smiling, it should follow dutifully the expression of the eye caverns. Who does not know the heifid feeling one has when a woman's lips smile and the rest of the face is dull?

Contour of the Face.
Of the teeth, I have little to say—except that they should be small and regular, and well preserved. Wherefore, rich foods should be taken sparingly; plenty of hard things should be eaten and the mouth frequently cleansed. But the grand panacea of health in this, as in other particulars, is regular habits and a vigorous, rhythmic life in the open air. The chin of woman should be small and rounded rather than large and square, not retreating, but with a comeliness; plenty of hard things should be

She should smile with her eyes—that is to say, with the tender play of lines round about them.

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TEN MINUTES WITH THE FUNNY MEN

SOME of the QUIPS and JESTS FROM PENS of the NEWSPAPER HUMORISTS.

Terse Tales From Humorous Pens

WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR.
Authors with enough real sense of humor to tell good stories on themselves are rare, but Luther Munday, journalist and world-wanderer, has that quality. In his volume of exciting memoirs, "A Chronicle of Friendships," he tells us himself the following yarn: "Wilson Barrett wheeled a barrow at a shilling a day, saved up his money and bought Shakespeare. This I told to Arthur Cecil, whose comment was: 'Splendid fellow; but what a pity he bought Shakespeare.'"
"From time to time, after the manner of weaklings, I fancied myself a little at writing sonnets, notwithstanding the fact that I had had one snubbing from Yates, the editor of the World. Twenty years have passed, said I, and I may have improved; so I sent up to Sir James Knowles this time my sonnet called 'Why Do I Live?' His reply was: 'You live, dear Munday, because you sent your poem by post and did not bring it yourself.'—Chicago News.

A PERSONAL QUESTION.
At Denver a few weeks ago a colored woman presented herself at a registration booth with the intention of enrolling and casting her first vote in the ensuing election.
She gave her name, her address and her age, and then the clerk of registration asked this question: "What party do you affiliate with?"
The woman's eyes popped out.
"Does I have to answer that question?" she demanded.
"That is the law," he told her.
"Then you let scratch my name offen dem books," she said. "Ef I got to tell his name I don't want to vote. Why, he ain't got his divorce yet!"
And out she stalked.—Saturday Evening Post.

WE WIN.
A Cincinnati man who was trying to "boost" his city was talking to a friend from New York. The conversation turned on the police department.
"Well," said the man from the Queen City, "you can't deny that our police department is all right. Why look here," he urged, getting more enthusiastic, "there was a murder committed here a few days ago, and four hours afterwards the police knew all about it!"
"Oh," drawled the man from the East, "that's nothing. There was a murder committed in New York a few days

Quips and Flings

"What got you into trouble with this policeman?" demanded the New York Judge.
"Just trying to ask him a civil question, your honor," said the visitor, "nothing more."
"What was that question?"
"I just asked him when the next official murder would be dragged off."
"You say that eminent dramatic producer treated you with scorn?"
"Yes, replied the author. 'He didn't even read my play.'"
"What makes you so sure of that?"
"Xenobia—Oh, that's all right, I bought you from him for two shillings.—Punch.

Mrs. Tinkle—They say that Mrs. Neuch is becoming more proper every day.
Mrs. Neuch—Oh, that's all right, I bought you from him for two shillings.—Punch.

Mrs. A—Well, if it isn't Mrs. B. What a stranger you are! Why, it's quite five years since I saw you.
Mrs. B—Yes, why haven't you been to see me?
Mrs. A—Oh, dear, you know how bad the weather's been.—Pathfinder.

Bobbie—My dance, I think?
Madge—I'm sorry. It's Duncan's dance.
Bobbie—Oh, that's all right, I bought you from him for two shillings.—Punch.

An Albany dispatch announces, in the little bigger Brother—It's saying "No, thank you," when you want to holler "Gimme."—Judge.

Jack—Now that your engagement is broken, are you going to make Blanche send back your letters?
Harry—You bet I am. I worked hard

Among the Poets of the Daily Press

THE SPICE OF IT.
City folks to the country go.
When they're having their vacations;
Where the milk cows low and the roosters crow.
And they set out man-size rations.
They leave off starch, padded clothes,
And they roam the hills and valleys;
And they call it great, and they say they hate
To go back to the streets and alleys.

Country folks to the city lie
In their recreative leisure;
Where for half the night there are
Lanes of light.
With the lure of life and pleasure.
They put on clothes they swelter in,
And they go while they've cash to go on.
And going away they wish they could stay
Right there—and so forth and so on.

"Went to a farm," town folks enthuse,
"For rest from the hurly-burly."
Say the farm folks: "Well, we've been for a spell
Where they don't get up so early."
Each could have got more rest, of course,
Staying at home, but that's not it;
They wanted things strange, they wanted a change,
And couldn't rest till they got it.
—Baltimore American.

PROGRESS TOWARD NATURE.
Woman surely is progressing;
No one doubts that in the least;
Where the sagest guests are pressing
She presides at wisdom's feast.

Here the uplift and the leaping—
This again no one denies—
Where mankind is only creeping,
Here the voice that bids him rise.
E'en her gowns bespeak advancement.
Back to nature, as they say,
And the men gaze in entrancement,
Seeing fashion's trend that way.

For with skimpiness so striking,
Minus neck and train and sleeve,
Woman's gowns are surely hiking
Back to the vogues of Mother Eve.
—New York Times.

DISPROVED.
Who was the idiot to bring in
That senseless superstition,

Among the Poets of the Daily Press

"That ever should the best man win
In any competition?
It fails the moment it's applied.
Just put it to the test, man!
The bridegroom always wins the bride,
And never is the best man!"
—George B. Morewood, in Judge.

POETS WITH POWER.
"Twinkle, twinkle, little star," the poet said, and lo!
Way above the earth so far the stars
a-twinkling go.
—San Francisco Call.

"Blow, blow, thou winter wind," the third one gave command,
And every winter now we hear it
blow to beat the band.
—Boston Transcript.

"Thou, too, sail on, O ship of state,"
a poet once did sing;
And ever since the ship of state's been
doing that same thing.
—Yonkers Statesman.

AT SINGAPORE AND TIMBUCTOO.
When I lived at Singapore,
It was something of a bore
To receive the bulky Begums who came
trundling to my door;
They kept getting into tangles
With their bingle-bongle-bangles,
And the tiger used to bite them as he
sat upon the floor.

When I lived in Timbuctoo,
Almost every one I knew
Used to play upon the sackbut, singing
toodle-doodle-doo.
And they made ecstatic ballads,
With their bingle-bongle-bangles,
Made of chlorey and hickory and other
things that grew.
—Laura E. Richards.

CUTTING.
Nellie—They say mustaches are coming back.
Mamie—Do you care?
Nellie—Certainly. I think most men
look much more handsome and knightly
with them.
Mamie—Well, of course, I suppose
you know. I was too young to take
notice when they went out of style.
—Chicago Record-Herald.