

to it that the others are at least brief—here is the whole duty of the presiding officer. Strictly to limit the number of the speakers, and to choose them judiciously, that their several styles of speaking may contrast agreeably—this is the part of the committee. If the speakers, one and all, happen also to possess the real secret of after-dinner speaking, as hereinbefore set forth,—if they have

each something they want to say, which the diners wish to hear,—then, and then only, will the feast linger in the memories of all present as a complete and satisfying work of art. The precepts to be followed before this consummate result can be achieved may be trifles, each of them; but, as Michelangelo said, "Trifles make perfection—and perfection is not a trifle."

## CLUB AND SALON. I.

BY AMELIA GERE MASON,  
Author of "Women of the French Salons."

IT is not too much to say that the entire present generation of women is going to school. Infancy cultivates its mind in the kindergarten, while the woman of threescore seeks consolation and diversion in clubs or a university course, instead of resigning herself to seclusion and prayers, or the chimney-corner and knitting, after the manner of her ancestors. Even our amusements carry instruction in solution. Childhood takes in knowledge through its toys and games; the débutante discusses Plato or Henry Irving in the intervals of the waltz; youth and maturity alike find their pleasure in papers, talks, plays, music, and recitations. In these social menus everything is included, from a Greek drama or an Oriental faith to Wagner and the latest theory of economics. We have Browning at breakfast, Ibsen or Maeterlinck at luncheon, and the new Utopia at dinner; while Homer classes and Dante classes alternate with lectures on the Impressionists or the Decadents. In this rage for knowledge, science and philosophy are not forgotten. Fashion ranges the field from occultism to agnosticism, from the qualities of a microbe to the origin of man. To-day it searches the problems of this world, to-morrow the mysteries of the next. There is nothing too large or too abstruse for the eager, questioning spirit that seeks to know all things, or at least to skim the surface of all things.

Nor is this energetic pursuit of intelligence confined to towns or cities. Go into the remote village or hamlet, and you will find the inevitable club, where the merits of the last novel, the love-affairs of Swift, the political situation, the silver question, the Armenian

troubles, and the state of the universe generally, are canvassed by a circle of women as freely, and with as keen a zest, as the virtues and shortcomings of their neighbors were talked over by their grandmothers—possibly may be still by a few of their benighted contemporaries.

In its extent this mania for things of the intellect is phenomenal. One might imagine that we were rapidly becoming a generation of pedants. Perhaps we are saved from it by the perpetual change that gives nothing time to crystallize. The central points of all this movement are the women's clubs of which the social element is a conspicuous feature, and we take our learning so comfortably diluted and pleasantly varied that it ceases to be formidable, though on the side of learning it may leave much to be desired.

But it is notably in this mingling of literature and life that women have always found their greatest intellectual influence, and the club is not likely to prove an exception. The rapidity of its growth is equaled only by the extent of its range. Of women's clubs there is literally no end, and they are yet in their vigorous youth. We have literary clubs, and art clubs, and musical clubs; clubs for science, and clubs for philanthropy; parliamentary clubs, and suffrage clubs, and anti-suffrage clubs—clubs of every variety and every grade, from the luncheon club, with its dilettante menu, and the more pretentious chartered club, that aims at mastering a scheme of the world, to the simple working-girls' club, which is content with something less: and all in the sacred name of culture. They multiply, federate, hold conventions,



organize congresses, and really form a vast educational system that is fast changing old ideals and opening possibilities of which no prophetic eye can see the end. That they have marvelously raised the average standard of intelligence cannot be questioned, nor that they have brought out a large number of able and interesting women who have generously taken upon themselves not only their own share of the work of the world, but a great deal more.

One can hardly overrate the value of an institution which has given light and an upward impulse to so many lives, and changed the complexion of society so distinctly for the better. But it may be worth while to ask if the women of to-day, with their splendid initiative and boundless aspirations, are not going a little too fast, getting entangled in too much machinery, losing their individuality in masses, assuming more responsibility than they can well carry. Why is it that lines too deep for harmonious thought are so early writing themselves on the strong, tense, mobile, and delicate faces of American women? Why is it that the pure joy of life seems to be lost in the restless and insatiable passion for multitudes, so often thinly disguised as love for knowledge, which is not seldom little more than the shell and husk of things? Is the pursuit of culture degenerating into a pursuit of clubs, and are we taking for ourselves new task-masters more pitiless than the old? "The emancipation of woman is fast becoming her slavery," said one who was caught in the whirl of the social machinery and could find no point of repose. We pride ourselves on our liberty; but the true value of liberty is to leave people free from a pressure that prevents their fullest growth. What do we gain if we simply exchange one tyranny for another? Apart from the fact that the finest flowers of culture do not spring from a soil that is constantly turned, any more than they do from a soil that is not turned at all, it is a question of human limitations, of living so as to continue to live, of growing so as to continue to grow. Nor is it simply a matter of individuals. Societies, too, exhaust themselves; and those which reach an exaggerated growth in a day are apt to perish in a day. It is not the first time in the history of the world that there has been a brilliant reign of intelligence among women, though perhaps there was never one so widely spread as now. Why have they ended in more or less violent reactions? We may not be able

to answer the question satisfactorily, but it gives us food for reflection.

THE most remarkable, though by no means the only, precedent we have for a social organization planned by women on a basis of the intellect was the French literary salon of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These women had relatively as much intelligence as we have, and more power. It must be taken into consideration that they were remote from us by race, religion, and political régime, as well as by several generations of time, and that their spirit, aims, and methods were as unlike ours as their points of view. But that which they did on traditional lines and a small scale we are doing on new lines and a very large scale. Their intellectual life found its outlet in the salon, as ours does in the club. These equally represent the active influence of women in their respective ages. Both have resulted in a mania for knowledge, a change of ideals, a radical revolution in social life, and an unprecedented increase in the authority of women. As they have certain tendencies and dangers in common, it may be of interest to trace a few points of resemblance and contrast between them; also to glance at the elements which have gone into the club and are making it so considerable a factor in American life.

The salon, like the club, was founded and led by clever women in the interests of culture, both literary and social; but, unlike the club, it was devoted to bringing into relief the talents of men. The difference, so far as manners are concerned, is a fundamental one. It would never have occurred to the women of that age to band together for self-improvement. If they had given the matter a thought, it would not have seemed to them likely to come in that way; still less would it have occurred to them that this mode of doing things could be of any service in bettering the world or their own position. Rousseau, who wrote so many fine phrases about liberty, and left women none at all, not even the small privilege of protesting against injustice, said that they were "made to please men"; and it is safe to say that the Frenchwomen had no scheme of life apart from men until they were ready to go into seclusion for prayer and penance and preparation for the next world. They accepted the fact that men had the ordering of affairs, and that they could make their own influence felt only by acting through them. "What is the difference whether women rule, or the rulers are guided by



women?" said Aristotle. "If the power is in their hands, the result is the same." It was simply a question of the best way of ruling the rulers. In this case the rulers were of a race that has not only a great liking for women in the concrete, but a great admiration for woman in the abstract. So long as her gifts are consecrated to his interest and pleasure, the Frenchman never objects to them—indeed, he is disposed to pay much homage to them. In the interest of some one else, or even in her own, it is another matter. They might be inconvenient. But in this new kingdom of the salon he was quite willing to accord her the supremacy, since she gave him the place of honor, and furnished an effective background for his talents without too much parading her own. He had only to shine and be applauded. What more could he desire?

Naturally, under such conditions, among the first of her arts was that of making things agreeable. If she had any fine moral lessons to inculcate, she gave them in the form of sugared pills that were pleasant to take. In her category of virtues the social ones were uppermost; but they were the means to an end, and this end must not be lost sight of. Her special mission was to correct coarse manners and bad morals, as well as to secure due recognition for talent; but she went about it in her own way. It may be said that, as a rule, the Frenchwoman is much less interested in *what* is done than in *how* it is done. In the early days of the salons she concerned herself little, if at all, with theories and grave social problems; but she did concern herself very much with questions of taste and manners, the refinements of language and literature, the subtleties of sentiment, the dignity of converse between men and women. Nor did she bring to these questions an untrained mind. If she did not make so much of a business of improving it as we do, she did not neglect private study and the reading of the best books, which, though few, were undiluted. "It gives dull colors to the mind to have no taste for solid reading," said Mme. de Sévigné, who delighted in Montaigne and Pascal, Tacitus and Vergil, with various other classics which are not exactly the food for frivolity. These women did not always spell correctly, and would have declined altogether to write a paper on the "Science of Government" or the "Philosophy of Confucius,"—subjects which the school-girls of to-day feel quite competent to treat,—but they showed surprising clearness and penetration in their

criticisms of literature and manners. The coteries which formed an audience for Corneille, sympathized with the exalted thought of Pascal and Arnauld, helped to modify and polish the maxims of La Rochefoucauld, as those which, a century or so later, discussed the tragedies of Voltaire or the philosophy of Rousseau with men of genius who would have had small patience with platitudes, needed no lowering of levels to suit their taste or comprehension. They were held firmly to fine literary ideals. All they asked was simplicity of statement, and this was made a fashion, to the lasting benefit of French literature.

It is true that the movement of the salon was in the direction of a brilliant social as well as a brilliant intellectual life; but to fuse such varied materials, to unite men of action and men of letters, nobles and philosophers, statesmen and poets, people within the pale and people outside of it, in a harmonious society, presided over by women who set up new standards and new codes of manners, meant more than intelligence, more than social charm. It involved diplomacy of a high order, which implies flexibility, penetration, and the subtler qualities of the intellect, as well as tact, sympathy, and knowledge of men. This was notably an outgrowth of the salon, where women owed much of their influence to a quick perception of the fine shades of temperament, genius, interest, and passion through which the world is swayed. The result of such training was a mind singularly lucid, great administrative ability, and a character full of the intangible quality that we call charm. If it was a trifle weak as to moral fiber, this may be largely laid to the standards of the time, which were not ours. Mme. du Deffand put the philosophy of her age and race into an epigram when she said that "the virtues are superior to the sentiments, but not so agreeable." Both temperament and education led these women toward Hellenic ideals. The latter-day woman is inclined to look upon their methods as trivial and their attitude as humiliating; but, whatever we may think of their point of view, we must admit their masterly ability in making vital changes for the better, and attaining a position of influence which we have hardly yet secured for ourselves. They did much more than form society, create a code of manners, and set the fashions, which we are apt to look upon as their special province. They refined the language, stimulated talent, gave fresh life to literature, exacted a new respect for



women, and held political as well as social and academic honors in their hands.

If they sometimes dipped into affairs of state in support of their friends, and with a too incidental reference to the interests of the state, I am not sure that even the men of our own time are absolutely free from a personal tinge of the same sort, without the saving grace of altruism. At all events, in the pursuit of a better order of things, they took the pleasant path round the mountain rather than the doubtful and untrodden path over it, which, since they could not go over it if they tried, was, to my thinking, the wiser way.

BUT other times, other conditions and other methods. It was a long step from these fine ladies in rouge and ruffles to the earnest American women of high aims and simpler lives who, less than thirty years ago, began seriously to group themselves in clubs for mutual help and mental culture. The difference is equally marked, now that these gatherings are numbered by thousands. It is more vital than a variation in manners, as it lies in the character of the two races.

The club had no prestige of a class behind it, and concerned itself little with traditions. It was a far more radical departure from the old order than the salon, which, though it established a new social basis, did it through delicate compromises that left the aristocratic spirit intact. It was only in its later days that the iconoclasts invaded it, to some extent, and made it a sort of hotbed for the propagation of democratic theories which seemed quite harmless until, one day, a spark set them ablaze, and the generation that had played with them was swept to destruction. The club was democratic from the foundation. It did not revolve round men of letters, or men of any class. There was no man, or influence of man, behind it—no man in the vista. It does not aim to bring into relief the talents of men, but the talents of women who had come, perhaps, to wish a little glory of another kind. There was no longer an outlet for their activities in the salon, which belonged neither to the genius of the age nor the genius of the race. The Anglo-Saxon man is not preëminently a social being, and though he has not been entirely neglected in the matter of vanity or personal susceptibility, he has rather less of either than his Gallic compeers. Nor is he so amenable, either by temperament or training, to the delicate arts that make social life agreeable. Half a century or so ago, the

American, in whose chivalrous regard for women we take so much pride, was in the habit of saying many fine things about them in what he was pleased to call the sphere God had assigned them; indeed, he went so far as to offer a great deal of theoretical incense to them as household divinities, with special and very human limitations as to privileges. But he frowned distinctly upon any intellectual tastes or aspirations. His attitude was tersely and modestly expressed in Tennyson's couplet:

She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

This master of diverse knowledge would have smiled at the notion of finding either profit or amusement in meeting women for the purpose of conversation on the plane of the intellect. The few rare exceptions only emphasize this fact. "A woman, if she have the misfortune of knowing anything, should conceal it as well as she can," said Jane Austen. We are far from that time; but men of affairs even now find literary talks in the drawing-room tiresome, and persistently stay away. Thoughts, too, had become a commodity with a market value, and men of letters no longer found their pleasure or interest in wasting them on limited coteries. They preferred sending them out to a larger audience, at so much a page, while they smoked and chatted more at their ease among themselves at their clubs. Whether they did not find women inspiring,—which, under such conditions, is quite possible,—or did not care to be inspired in that way, the rôle of inspirer was clearly ended. The few efforts to take up the fallen scepter of the salon proved futile in intellectual prestige, though they may have served to while away some pleasant hours. A society based upon wealth without the traditions of culture is apt to smother in accessories the delicacy of insight and the *esprit* which were the life of the salons. On the other hand, those who pose as apostles of plain living and high thinking make the mistake of ignoring the imagination altogether, and too often serve their feasts of reason without any sauces at all, even of a literary sort, which fact should probably be laid to the account of the race that takes its diversion as seriously as its work. After all, one cannot say "let us have *esprit*," and have it, any more than one can say, "Let us have charm," and put it on like a garment. Neither comes in that way.

But the women of forty or fifty years ago



lacked much more than a social outlet for their talents and aspirations. They had no outlet of any sort beyond charity and the fireside. The Frenchwomen had little, if any, more real freedom, possibly not so much in some directions: but rank brought them deference and consideration; the age of chivalry had put them on a pedestal. It may have been a bit theoretical, but an illusory power is better than none at all, as it has a certain prestige. If they were queens without a very substantial kingdom, they had, at least, the privileges, as well as the responsibilities, of high positions, and shone with something more than reflected glory. Then their talents were too valuable to be ignored, as they were the best of purveyors to Gallic ambitions. The Roman Church, too, was far-seeing when it provided an outlet for their surplus energies and emotions. If they had no fireside of their own, or the world pressed heavily upon them, they could retire from it, and hope for places of influence, even of power, in some of the various religious orders. In any case, there were peace and a dignified refuge. But it is a noteworthy fact that the Reformation left to women all the sacrifices of their religion, and none of its outward honors or consolations. If the philosophers had no message of freedom for them, still less was it found on Puritan soil. "Women are frail, impatient, feeble, and foolish," said John Knox, who was far from being a model of patience himself, and seems to have been singularly swayed by these weak, inconsequent creatures, above whom he asserts that man is placed "as God is above the angels." Milton has left us in no doubt as to his position regarding them:

My author and dispenser, what thou bidst  
Unargued I obey: so God ordains;  
God is thy law, thou mine; to know no more  
Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.

Such was the Puritan gospel of liberty as applied to women. John Knox and Milton joined in the chorus that glorified their vassalage, while Calvin added a cordial refrain, with a prudent reservation as to queens and princesses.

It is needless to dwell upon this phase of a past the ideals of which are as dead to us as the goddesses of Greece and the heroines of the Nibelungenlied. It has been sufficiently emphasized already, and concerns us here only as it shows us the spirit under which our grandmothers were born and bred. It cannot be denied that they were a wise, strong race, rearing thinkers and statesmen

who have left few worthy successors, though they did not spend much time in discussing the best methods of training children, were better versed in domestic than social economics, and doubtless had misty ideas about Buddhism and the ultimate destiny of Woman. It may be superfluous, also, to say that many of them had occasion to think little of their restrictions, and would have resented the suggestion that they had any which were not good for them, if not positively desirable. Limitations, even hardships, do not necessarily imply misery. People are curiously flexible, and get a sort of happiness from trying to fit themselves to conditions which, though unpleasant, are inevitable. Then, conditions are not always hard, because they have unlimited possibilities in that direction. One may even wear a chain and ball quite comfortably so long as one stands still, or if the chain be a silken one and the ball cast in pleasant places. The difficulty is that one does not always wish to stand still; nor is it always possible, whatever the inclination may be. The march of events is irresistible, and one is often forced to a change of position to escape being trampled upon. Besides, in a society that is based upon the right of people to do as they choose within certain very flexible limits, one half is not likely to continue to do, without a protest, what the other half says it ought to do when it is compelled to take its full share of burdens and rather more than its full share of sacrifices, without any choice as to cakes and ale. These daughters of liberty held no longer the places of honor accorded to rank, and were not only without visible dignities of any kind, except as the palest of satellites, but were largely, if not altogether, excluded from the intellectual life of their husbands. They were told to be content with the dignity of maternity, while they were virtually shut out from the things that consecrate maternity. It was under such conditions that the woman's club was born. Men had already set up clubs of their own, and women had no choice but to do the same thing, or drift into the hopeless position of their respectable Athenian sisters of the classic age, who lived in fashionable but ignorant seclusion, while their brilliant husbands sought more congenial companionship elsewhere.

But women did not plan a club for amusement, as men have usually done: they planned it for mental improvement. It was not without a prophecy of the coming time that the characters of our grandmothers were trained in so severe a school. They were the reverse



of pleasure-loving, and took even their diversions seriously. The central point of their lives was an inexorable sense of duty. Its twin trait was energy. With a radical change of ideals their daughters did not lose these traits. A religious devotion to one set of aims was simply transferred to another. The road to their new Utopia was knowledge. All things would come in its train—culture, independence, happiness, the power to help a suffering world. It was this leaven of Puritan traditions which gave the club an element that was not found in the salon. The American woman may lack a little of that elusive quality, half sensibility, half wit, which makes so much of the Frenchwoman's charm; she may lack, too, her perfection of tact, her inborn genius for form and measure: but she has what the Frenchwoman has not—something that belongs to a race in which the ethical overshadows the artistic. It is devotion to principles rather than to persons, to essentials rather than to forms. Her pursuit of knowledge may often be superficial, from the immensity of the field she lays out for herself; but her aims are serious, and lead her toward moral and sociological questions, rather than sentiments and tastes.

The woman's club is not a school of manners, and concerns itself little with the fine art of living. It claims to instruct, not to amuse—or, rather, it seeks amusement in that way; and it is more interested in doing things than in the modes of doing them. It does not rely upon diplomacy to gain its ends, but upon the wisdom and justice of the ends, appealing to the reason instead of the imagination. It also deals more with masses than with individuals. No doubt, the necessity of going outside the realm of personal feeling in

managing public or semi-public affairs helps to give the poise and self-command which go far toward offsetting the intensity of temperament that has always made the discussion of vital questions so perilous in gatherings of women, though we have occasion enough to know that wisdom and sanity do not invariably preside at gatherings of men, even supposably wise ones. The qualities fostered by the club are energy, earnestness, independence, versatility, and—not exactly intellectual conscience, which implies traditional standards, but a sense of intellectual duty that is not quite the same thing. All this is remote from the spirit of the salon, with its social codes and conventions, its graceful amenities, its sparkling wit, its play of sentiment, its diplomatic reserves, and its clear intelligence working through endless private channels toward a new order of things. It points to the club, not as a conservator of social traditions, or a creator of social standards, or a tribunal of criticism, but as a literary and political training-school, a maker of citizens with a broader outlook into the world of affairs, a powerful engine of moral force. Perhaps its greatest direct value at present lies in this moral force, which is the outgrowth of centuries of sternly moral heritage, and runs not only through philanthropic channels, but through all the avenues of life.

Of scarcely less importance are the impulse and direction the club has given to the administrative talents of women—talents which mark their special strength, and are far too valuable to be ignored at a time when all the wisdom of the world is needed, in private as well as in public affairs, to guide it safely through its threatening storms.

(To be concluded in the next number.)

## TO THE OTTAWA.

BY W. WILFRED CAMPBELL.

OUT of the northern wastes, lands of winter and death,  
Regions of ruin and age, spaces of solitude lost,  
You wash and thunder and sweep, and dream and sparkle and creep,  
Turbulent, luminous, large, scion of thunder and frost.

Down past woodland and waste, lone as the haunting of even,  
Of shriveled and wind-moaning night, when winter hath wizened the world—  
Down past hamlet and town, by marshes, by forests that frown,  
Brimming their desolate banks, your tides to the ocean are hurled.



possible, that Don Quixote was no more ideal than Sancho Panza. He is as simply and merely a crack-brained gentleman of La Mancha as Sancho is a fat-witted peasant, and one is scarcely more fantastic than the other. Cervantes is at the greatest pains to find them both out to the last detail of their actuality, and his fullness in this is what leaves the artist very little to add. I fancy this is what would make him most difficult to illustrate, not to say impossible, if the artist attempted to illustrate him "imaginatively." But this, above all, is just what Señor Vierge does not try to do. So far as he goes, he illustrates him literally, and the conditions of his art seem to blame, rather than he, where he falls short. He puts into graphic terms as much as he can of what Cervantes has already put into verbal terms.

It is only a tenth, a hundredth, a thousandth part of the original; but this is the difference between the literary and the pictorial arts. If you wish to see the Manchegan landscapes and interiors and people, not as you see them in Cervantes, but as Cervantes saw them in La Mancha, here you have a very fair chance of doing so. Probably you will not like seeing them so at first, for the manifold associations of our life supply the atmosphere through which we view literature, and we cannot put these from us without a certain discomfort, a certain wound. Still, if we could it might be well; and unless we do so we shall not get the good of Señor Vierge's pictures, which shine, not to say glare, with the intense light of reality, with nothing to soften it but the haze of heat which seems to beat up in them under the unsparing rays of the Manchegan sun.

## CLUB AND SALON.

BY AMELIA GERE MASON,  
Author of "Women of the French Salons."

IN TWO PARTS. PART II.



UT it is of the intellectual and social value of the club that I wish more especially to speak here. It is often asked by thoughtful foreigners why American women, who are free to pursue

any career they like, with ample privileges of education and the universal reign of the literary club, have produced no writers of the first order, measured even by the standards of their own sex. One finds many clever ones, and a few able ones, but no Jane Austen, no George Eliot, no Mme. de Staël, no Mrs. Browning. This may be partly due to the fact that we have not yet passed the period of going to school. It is possible that another generation, reared in the stimulating atmosphere of this, may give us some rare flower of genius, if its mental force be not weakened by the general pouring-in process, or dissipated in the modern tendency toward limitless expansion and dilution. But club life in itself is not directly favorable to creative genius. The qualities of the imagination never flourish in crowds, though a certain

order of talent does flourish there—a talent that brings quicker returns and more immediate consideration, at far less cost. The salon made brilliant and versatile women who were noted for conversation and diplomacy; it made charming women who ruled men and affairs through rare gifts of administration, tempered with intelligent sympathy and tact; it made executive women, and finely critical women, and masterful women, who left a strong and lasting impression upon the national life: but, though they lived in the main intellectual current of their time, stimulated and inspired its leaders, and had much to do with its direction, they seldom made a serious effort in literature themselves. The few who have left a name in letters only illustrate the fact that individual genius is a flower of another growth. Mme. de Staël would have been a great woman under any conditions; but we owe all of her best work in literature to her exile from the social life of Paris, where her thoughts had no time to crystallize. The gift of Mme. de Sévigné was nearly allied to a conversational one, but her mind was matured and deepened during years of seclusion under the lonely



skies of Brittany. Mme. de la Fayette left the world of the salons early, to find her literary inspiration in the solitude of ill health and the stimulating friendship of La Rochefoucauld. Mme. du Châtelet, whose talent was of another color, wrote on philosophy and translated Newton, not in the breezy air of the salons, but in the tranquil shades of Cirey and the less tranquil society of Voltaire. There were other women who wrote, though they usually chose to hide a light which was not a very brilliant one, and to shine in other ways. It may be that it was the salon which made these women possible, as it created an intellectual atmosphere in which thought blossomed into intense and vivid life; but its direct tendency was to foster in women talents of a quite different sort from creative ones. It developed to a high degree, however, the fine discrimination and critical sense which led Rousseau to say that "a point of morals would not be better discussed in a society of philosophers than in that of a pretty woman of Paris."

The clubs have hardly lived long enough to justify a final judgment as to their outcome; but the best writers of our own time have not been, as a rule, actively identified with them, though a few, whose minds were already formed in another school, have had much to do in founding and leading them. The many able women who have given their time and talents to the clubs have oftener merged their literary gifts, if they had them, into work of another sort, not less valuable in its way, but less tangible and less individual. It is the work of the general, who plans, organizes, sifts values, adapts means to definite ends, but who lives too much in the swift current of affairs to give heed to the voice of the imagination, or to master the art of literary form which alone makes for thought a permanent abiding-place.

But if the clubs do not produce great creative writers,—who, after all, are born, not made,—they furnish a multitude of ready ones, and an army of readers who are likely to have a dominant voice in the taste of the next generation. The result is certain to be—indeed, is already—a voluminous literature. The quantity of a thing, however, does not insure its fine quality; oftener the reverse. Naturally, the question of standards becomes one of grave importance, unless we are ready to accept the rule of the average, which more than offsets the rise of the lowest by the fall of the highest, with an ultimate tendency downward. We grow in the

direction of our ideals, and these are measured by the height of our standards. That many of the clubs have exalted ideals, and are doing a great deal of valuable work, is not a matter of doubt. It is equally certain that some of them work with a zeal that is not according to knowledge, through lack of capable leaders, and through a fallacy, nowhere so fatal as in art and letters, that the wish to do a thing is equivalent to a talent for doing it.

There is no doubt that American women read and discuss books enough. It may be that we read too many. One may devour books as one does bonbons, and with little more profit. Nor is there any doubt that we write papers enough and hear talks enough on every imaginable subject, from the antediluvians to the Cuban question. To whatever all this mental activity may lead, it does not always lead to culture, even of the mind, and I take the word, unqualified, to include much more. It does lead to a broad diffusion of intelligence, but there is an essential difference between intelligence and culture. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is quite possible, in running after the one, to run away from the other. The woman who belongs to ten or twelve clubs in order to be "up-to-date," and to learn enough of all sorts of things to be able to talk about them, may find her social compensation and a harmless way of amusing herself, if she likes that sort of amusement; but if she aims at mental culture, that is another affair. It is not a matter of facts and phrases and formulas that one goes in search of, but an inward growth, the result of long and loving companionship with the best thought of the world, which is not at all the same thing as a fitting acquaintance with a multitude of subjects, or the ability to talk glib platitudes about the latest fads in art or science or literature. Such companionship is found to only a limited extent in gatherings of any sort; but stimulus and inspiration may be found there, and here lies the true intellectual value of the club. To thoughtful and sincere women, who have a certain amount of training and natural gifts of assimilation, with small facilities for contact with the thinking world, it is a priceless boon. But to narrow and untrained intellects that like to flit from one thing to another, content with a flying glimpse and a telling point or two which will go far toward making them seem wise to the uninitiated, there are large possibilities in the way of what we may call imitation culture. It is simply another out-



let for the ambition of the *parvenue* who puts on costly clothes and rare jewels in the comfortable assurance that "fine feathers make fine birds."

It will, I think, be conceded that the special distinction of the American woman does not lie in her intellect or her learning. Brilliant gifts and attainments, to a certain point, may indeed be exceptionally frequent; but they have often been equaled, if not exceeded, in the past. It lies, rather, in her talent for utilizing knowledge and adapting it to visible ends. To a combination of many talents has been added one to make them all available. It is essentially a talent for "arriving," in other words, a talent for success, either with or without intellectual ability of a high order, and consists largely in a keen insight as to serviceable values, with a marked facility for catching salient points and using them to the best advantage. The result is that no women in the world have so much versatility, or make a little knowledge go so far.

On the social side this talent is invaluable, and it is one of their most piquant charms, when the sharp corners of provincialism are rubbed off. On the intellectual side, however, though it gives an adaptable quality to genuine scholarship, it drifts easily into superficiality and affectation. I do not mean to say that the club is responsible for the fact that a hundred charlatans follow in the wake of every real talent, as a hundred *Tartufes* in the wake of every saint—when saints are in fashion; but it is responsible when it takes a bit of colored glass for a gem. It is sure, also, to suffer from the pretension of those who ill represent it. The salon, which made things of the intellect a fashion, received its worst blow in the house of its friends. *Madelon*, in "Les Précieuses Ridicules," looked upon life as a failure if she chanced to miss the last romance, or portrait, or madrigal, or sonnet; and *Cathos* declared that she should die of shame if any one asked her about something new which she had not seen. The pen of Molière sketched the crude copy of a fine thing in colors too vivid to be mistaken, and henceforth the copy stood for the thing. The world had its indiscriminating laugh at the salons; good taste blushed at the company in which it found itself; and the interests of intelligent women were put back for a generation. It was not the first time that a good cause has suffered from its too zealous followers, nor is it likely to be the last. The world moves in circles, even if there be a

spiral tendency upward, as the optimists amiably assure us.

Doubtless we fancy ourselves much wiser than those seventeenth-century *précieuses* whose imitators did them so much harm. Certainly we put more seriousness into our pretensions. But we have our own little faults and affectations, though they are not precisely the same. We do not devote ourselves to portraits, or sonnets, or madrigals. We do not moralize in maxims, good or bad, nor do we pretend to be sentimental; indeed, we pretend not to be, if we are. Sentiment is out of fashion. The modern *Philaminte* may look with chilling pity upon her belated sister who has the courage to like Tennyson and Mrs. Browning, when she ought to prefer Ibsen and the symbolists; but she is not likely to faint at a common word, or dismiss her cook for a solecism. Our foibles are of quite another sort. Instead of painting little pictures on a small canvas, we take a very large canvas and pad our pictures to fit it. We do not map out the passions on a *carte du tendre*, or give our valuable time to the discussion of a high-flown Platonism which cradles a woman in rose-leaves, while her lover waits for her a dozen years or so because it is vulgar to marry; but we map out the fields of the intellect, extending from protoplasm to the fixed stars, and undertake to traverse the whole as confidently as we start for a morning walk. If we cannot get over the ground fast enough, we can take an electric train and catch flying glimpses sufficient to give us a pleasant consciousness of being "up-to-date."

Such vast aims are, no doubt, praiseworthy, and reflect great credit on the clubs which have demonstrated so clearly the expansive quality of the feminine mind; but they are also fatiguing, and suggest the possibility that these same clubs are pushing us a little too fast and too far. One is often forced to the conclusion that we should do more if we did not try to do quite so much. It is very well to follow Emerson's advice to "hitch your wagon to a star"; but he never proposed hitching it to all the constellations at once. When I hear the Greek poets, the Italian painters, the English novelists, and the German masters disposed of at a symposium in a single afternoon, as I did not long ago, I wonder if the rare quality of mental distinction which made the glory of the Immortals will exist at all in the future; whether we shall not build tents for our thoughts instead of temples; whether, indeed, the finest flavor of thought will not be as hopelessly lost as the



perfume of the flowers that are scattered in indiscriminate heaps along the highways to show their quantity.

Nor is there less danger in attempting too large things than too many things. It is certainly courageous for a woman who knows little of history, less of philosophy, and nothing at all about the art of writing, to undertake the Herculean task of preparing a paper on "The Pagan Philosophers and their Schools." With the best efforts, she will have only a few outlines of facts and second-hand opinions, which might have a certain value if either she or her audience proposed to fill them out. But this is precisely what the modern woman who wishes to know a little of everything has no time to do, even if she have the inclination. There is to be a similar outline of Greek literature the next week, one of the Middle Ages the week after, and so on to the end of the season, when she has a fine collection of skeletons, with no flesh and blood on any of them, if, indeed, the skeletons themselves have not vanished into thin air. The Forty Immortals would shrink with dismay from the magnitude of such a scheme. The worst of it is that one comes to have a false sense of perspective, and to judge works of the intellect by their size instead of their quality—like the pretentious but ignorant woman who gravely remarked, after hearing a brilliant talk from a brilliant man on Irish wit, that she "did not find it very improving." There is, too, the natural result of calling things by the wrong names, and mistaking the thinnest of veneering for culture.

It is by no means necessary, or even desirable, that every woman belonging to a club should be a *savante*; indeed, considering the number of the clubs, I am not sure that this would not bring about a more deplorable state of affairs than if there were none at all. It may even be better for the average woman to know a little about many things than all about one thing, if she has a certain discrimination as to values, and the fine sense of proportion which is the result of more or less mental training. But it is desirable that each one should have at least a little knowledge of what she undertakes to write or talk about. Why a woman who might have something to say concerning certain phases of our colonial life should be asked to write a paper on Greek art, of which she has not even read, much less thought, or one who is more or less familiar with various pleasant corners of English literature should be called upon to entertain her hearers on the Italian Renaissance, of which she knows nothing whatever, is one

of the mysteries of the new era. "I am so glad to see you," said one woman to a friend whom she met on the street. "I have a paper to write on the symbolists. You know all about such things. What are the symbolists, anyway?" We are told that when the blind lead the blind, both are likely to come to grief.

A still more serious danger lies in the endless multiplication of clubs, which offers an irresistible temptation to those who like to cull a little here, and a little there, without too exacting effort in any direction. They may all be valuable in themselves, but because it is good to belong to one or two active clubs of different aims, it does not follow that it is good to belong to a dozen; and I know of a woman who claims with pride that she belongs to twenty-two! "Moderation is the charm of life," said Jean Paul, and one sees with regret how little of that sort of charm there is left; indeed, I am not sure that it has not ceased to be considered a charm. We may find a note of warning in the later days of the great salons. The social life of the eighteenth century reads like a page of our own, with its whirl of *conversazioni*, its talks on science, its experiments in chemistry, physiology, psychology, its mania for discussing literature, art, and philosophy. The literary salons had blossomed into great centers of intellectual brilliancy, of which all this life was the natural pendant. It was the fashion then, as now, for women to concern themselves with affairs of state; to talk of the rights of man, though they had less to say than we have about the rights of woman; to dream of a social millennium, which they were doomed to wade through rivers of blood without reaching. They too invaded the secrets of the laboratory, and even the surgeon's domain. We hear of a young countess who carried a skeleton in her trunk when she went on a journey, "as one might carry a book to read," in order to study anatomy. These women, like ourselves, aimed to know a little of everything. They too were fired with the passion for intelligence and the passion for multitudes. With the craving for novelties came the ever-growing need of a stronger spice to make them palatable. In this carnival of the mind they lost their faith and simplicity, loved with their brains instead of their hearts, forgot their natural duties, and found natural ties irksome. Longing for rest without the power to rest, they suffered from maladies of the nerves, and were devoured with the ennui of exhaustion. Life lost its equilibrium, and the



result was inevitable. The reaction from the restlessness of an intellect that is not fed from inner sources, but finds its stimulus and theater alike in the world, was toward an exaggeration of the sensibilities. "If I could become calm, I should believe myself on a wheel," said one whose brilliancy had dazzled a generation. This fatal "too much" was not the least of the causes that lost to women the empire they had won. All movements are measured, in the end, by a standard of common sense, and reactions are in proportion to the deviation from a just mean. The revolution which brought liberty to men, or at least shifted the burdens to some one else, deprived women of what they had. They were forbidden to organize, and sent back to the fireside and cradles. The republic swept away from them the last vestige of political power, and gave them nothing in the place of their lost social kingdom. They were forced to speak with hushed voices in hidden coteries. Of these there were always a few, but their prestige was gone. "There is one thing which is not French," said Napoleon; "it is that a woman can do as she pleases." And he proceeded straightway to give point to his theory by exiling the ablest woman in France and silencing all the rest.

We are apt to take high moral ground on the frivolity of these women, and to pride ourselves on our superiority because we have such a serious way of amusing ourselves—so serious, indeed, that we forget there can be anything so questionable as frivolity about it. To be sure, the clubs are free from many of the faults of the salons. They do not put social conventions in the place of principles, nor substitute an esthetic conscience for an ethical one; nor do they drift at all in the direction of moral laxity. A movement of the intellect, too, which has its roots in the character is more likely to last than one that hangs on the suffrage of those it was meant to please and glorify. But we have the same mental unrest, the same thirst for excitement, the same feverish activity, the same indisposition to stay at home with our thoughts. A fever of the intellect may be preferable to a fever of the senses, and less harmful as an epidemic, but it tends equally toward exhaustion and disintegration. It is not so much a question of morals as a question of balance. The modern fashion, however, of doing everything, even to thinking, in masses, is not altogether due to a fever of the intellect, any more than it was a hundred years ago. Much of it is doubtless due to a

genuine love of knowledge, much of it to a haunting desire to be doing something in the outside world, though the thing done be possibly not at all worth the doing; but a great deal of it is due to a sort of hyperæsthesia of the social sentiment, or the mental restlessness that betrays a lack of poise and depth in the character. We call it the spirit of the age—the innocent phantom which has to bear the burden of most of our sins, and is gathering so resistless a force that the strongest and wisest are swept along, despite themselves, in its accelerating course. But the spirit of the age is only the sum of individual forces. It needs only a sufficient number of wise counter-forces to temper and modify it.

A WORD as to another phase of the club. We have seen that the salons broke through the exclusive lines of rank, and created a society based largely upon standards of the intellect, with a meeting-point of good manners. The woman's club has done a similar work toward preventing the crystallization of American society on the basis of wealth. Its standards are professedly of the mind, though they are flexible enough to include a wide range of ability, aspiration, and small distinctions of various sorts. It would be too much to say that these elements are fused into anything like a homogeneous society; but they have a recognized point of contact that suffices for literary or charitable aims, though not altogether for social ones, which demand the larger contact of personal sympathies, and a certain community of language that comes within the province of manners. The salons, however, were wise enough to establish and maintain the social equilibrium between men and women, while the clubs seem to be rapidly destroying it. Outside of a limited dinner-giving, amusement-loving circle, it is undeniable that our social life is centering largely in clubs composed exclusively of women, whose tastes are diverging more and more from those of men, and in the functions growing out of them. To these we may add a few receptions with a sprinkling of men, and an endless procession of teas and luncheons with no men at all. Private entertaining of a general character, with its varying flavor of individuality, seems likely, with many other pleasant things, to become a memory. If these clubs grew out of a state of affairs in which women were virtually excluded from the intellectual life of men, we are fast drifting toward the reverse condition, in which men will have no



part in the intellectual, and very little in the social, life of women.

Whether this marked separation of interests beyond a reasonable point be for the good of either men or women, is a matter of grave doubt. It is certain that women who are brought into frequent contact with the minds of men think more clearly and definitely, look at things in a larger way, and do a finer quality of intellectual work, than those who have been limited mainly to the companionship of their own sex. Societies of women are apt to fail in breadth through too much attention to technicalities out of season, to sacrifice the greater good to personal prejudices, to emphasize a little brief authority, to grow hard rather than strong, to become carping and critical without the clearness of vision that gives a rational basis for criticism. Nor does the fact that a great many women are superior to these limitations, and that men are not invariably free from them, affect the general drift of things. On the other side, it is equally true that men have done the greatest work under the influence of able women, from the days of Pericles and the great Greeks who found a fresh inspiration in the salon of Aspasia, to the brilliant men of modern times, too numerous to cite here, who have not failed to acknowledge their debt to feminine judgment and criticism. Men, too, are naturally averse to the trammels of form, and, left to themselves, rapidly lose the refinement and courtesy that came in with the social reign of women. While the best of each is drawn out through social contact on the plane of the intellect, the worst is accentuated by separation.

Then, aside from the fact that a large part of the happiness of the world depends upon a certain degree of harmony in the tastes of men and women, which is not likely to exist if they have utterly divergent points of social interest, men are an incontestable factor in all our plans for bettering matters, themselves included. We cannot fairly claim to constitute more than half of the human family, and, if we do not make some social compromise, we may share the fate of the Princess Ida, and see all of our fine schemes melt away like the fabric of a dream. We are not yet ready to establish an order of intellectual vestals, though drifting in that direction; and, since the women's clubs do really constitute a distinct social life, why not make them more effective on that side? Why leave all these possibilities of power in the hands of those who make a business of amusing themselves? It is a fashion to rail at society as frivolous; but it is precisely

what we make it, and it is ruled by women. If it tends to grow rapid, and luxurious, and commercial, and artificial, we have only to plan something as attractive on a finer and more natural basis. And where do we find a better starting-point than in connection with the women's clubs? To be sure, men do not, as a rule, find them interesting; indeed, they vote them a trifle dull, but that may be because they have no vital part in them. Then, the fault may lie a little in the women themselves. There is clearly a flaw somewhere in our methods or our ideals. In trying to avoid the frivolities of society, we may fall into the equally fatal error of failing to make better things attractive, and so permit the busy men of to-day to slip away altogether from the influence of what they are pleased to call our finer moral and esthetic sense—to say nothing of what we lose ourselves. It may be deplorable, but it is still a fact, that truth is doubly captivating when served with the piquant sauces that make even error dangerously fascinating. We have to deal with people as they are, not as we think they ought to be.

I am not disposed to quote the Frenchwomen of a century or so ago as models. But there are many points we might take from them in the art of making a social life on intellectual lines agreeable, as well as a vital force. When women who are neither young nor beautiful dominate an age of brilliant men through intellect and tact, it does no harm to study their methods a little in an age when women of equal talent, superior education, and finer moral aims succeed to only a limited extent in doing more than stimulate one another—a good thing to do, but not final. Those women, too, had old distinctions to reconcile, and a powerful court for a rival. They had one advantage, as they made a cult of *esprit*, which is a gift of their race, while we make a cult of knowledge, which may be more substantial, but is less luminous, and not so available socially. Besides, knowledge is a thing to be acquired and not caviar to mediocrity, which is apt to use it crudely, and with pretension. "Let your studies flow into your manners, and your readings show themselves in your virtues," said Mme. de Lambert. I am sorry to say that the typical Frenchwoman of a hundred years ago did not always take so exalted a view of her duties; but even as a matter of taste she had too delicate a sense of proportion to merge the woman in the intellect. She scattered about her the flavor of knowledge rather than the knowledge itself; which is not so easy, as



one does not have the real flavor of knowledge without the essence of it, and something more. Rare natural gifts have a distinction of their own, but in ordinary life what one *is* counts for more than what one *knows*, and the secret of attraction lies rather in the sum of the qualities which we call character than in the acquirements. A woman may be familiar with Sanskrit, and calculate the distance of the fixed stars, without being interesting, or even admirable, as a woman. The main point is to preserve one's symmetry, and one's center of gravity; then, the more knowledge the better. It may be that the flaw in our ideals lies just here, and that in the too exclusive pursuit of certain things fine in themselves, we neglect other things equally if not more vital.

No doubt the Frenchwoman did much that she ought not to have done, and left undone much that she ought to have done, just as we do, though the things were not precisely the same; we know, too, that the time came when she did lose her poise, and with it her power. But with all her faults, in the days of her glory she never forgot her point of view. She was rarely aggressive, and, without being too conscious of herself or her aims, it was a part of her esthetic creed to call out the best in

others. With consummate tact, she crowned her serious gifts with the gracious ways and gentle amenities that disarmed antagonism and diffused everywhere a breath of sweetness. She carried with her, too, the sunshine that springs from an inexhaustible gaiety of heart, and this was one source of her un-failing charm. Perhaps it was partly why the literary salon retained its prestige for nearly two hundred years, and, in spite of its errors, was brilliant and amusing, as well as an intellectual force, to the end.

It is far from my intention to repeat the old cry that other days were better days, and other ways better ways, than ours. We have a life of our own, and do not wish to copy one that is dead, or to put on manners that do not fit us. But the essentials of human nature are eternally the same, and in bringing new forces to bear upon it we may do well sometimes to consult the wisdom of the past, to ponder the secret of its failures as of its successes. It is not a matter of depreciating our aims or our ways, but of getting the most out of them, perhaps through some subtle touch that we have missed; also of preserving our sanity and equilibrium in this new order of things, which tends always to grow more complex and more bewildering.

## THE ROSE.

BY GEORGE E. WOODBERRY.

O LOVE'S star over Eden,  
 How pale and faint thou art!  
 Now lost, now seen above,  
 Thy white rays point and dart.  
 O tender o'er her move,  
 Shine out and take my part!  
 I have sent her the rose of love,  
 And shut in the rose is my heart.

The fireflies glitter and rush  
 In the dark of the summer mead;  
 Pale on the hawthorn bush,  
 Bright on the larkspur seed;  
 And long is heaven aflush  
 To give my rose God-speed;  
 If she breathe a kiss, it will blush;  
 If she bruise a leaf, it will bleed.

O bright star over Eden,  
 All beautiful thou art;  
 To-day, in the rose, the rose,  
 For my love I have periled my heart;  
 Now ere the dying glows  
 From the placid isles depart,  
 The rose-bathed planet knows  
 It is hers, my rose, my heart!