

"You will need papers," said Laurent.

He was a man of few words; his heart was full, but he could only speak of details. Adrien was thankful that it was so.

"That is true," he said, briskly. "What can we do? To ask for papers for the supposed Ange would excite suspicion."

"I can manage," said the old man.

"Before the arrival of yourself and Monseigneur your father, we had thought that it might be necessary to send Ange to Paris, and I procured papers for him then. They were not used, so I have them still."

"Thank God!" cried Adrien. "Then I can start to-night. There is not an hour to lose. Mother dear, it cannot be helped. I must be gone before Joseph finds out that I am well again.

Bichette can carry me some leagues to-night."

"Monseigneur will require food and wine, so think of that, wife, and make your preparations; he will start as soon as it is dark."

The poor woman rose and went heavily about her work, while the two men talked together low and anxiously over their plans.

(To be continued.)

FRENCH GIRLS AND THEIR MOTHERS.

It is a common mistake to attribute to national types of character much which is really attributable to national systems of training. We observe and admire certain traits in certain races, and ticket them as national peculiarities, quite alien to any other race, thus setting aside many a pleasant feature by which our own character might be modified or improved. Of course this in no way means that the real basis of character can be remodelled by outward influences, but shades and tints of temperament may be grafted with advantage.

Only the most conservative of Britons can deny that the British temperament, grave, solid, "taking even its pleasures sadly," would be all the better for the engraftment of a little French brightness, self-abandon, and transparency. You say those qualities are essentially French, belong to the soil, and are foreign to our nature; yet they must be regarded as the fruits of French training rather than as types of national character.

We teach suppression of feeling and emotion, even regarding it as the essence of good breeding to be able to control all outward evidence of love, hatred, joy, and sorrow. The French mother, upon whom almost all training of children devolves, teaches her little ones that manifestation of feeling is natural; she rather encourages them never to conceal their impressions, striving to guide their impulses to a correct and graceful form of expression, instead of a suppression or control of them.

French children inherit impulsive natures; they are taught by example and precept to develop that nature; taught also that, if correctly expressed, and for worthy objects, it adds to their charms, and is a source of joy and pleasure to others. The reserve and dignity of the Teuton girl is almost unintelligible to the French mind.

It has been aptly remarked that "the French child-nature is all outside." No mask is ever worn; characteristics have not to be dug for; no study is required to learn either vices or virtues; they lie open to the eyes of the mother. How this simplifies the guidance and training of a child. They are seen exactly as they are, the good and bad in full distinctness.

The French mother's knowledge of her daughters is peculiarly intimate. They are not banished to nurseries, as the exigencies of English social life seem to necessitate. In France there are no nurseries; and though the children do not pay visits or go to parties with the mother, indoors their life is exactly alike, open to visitors, participating in the conversation, in constant contact with grown-up people. We cannot wonder that the daughter is often a copy of her mother; throughout France, in chateaux and cottages, in "hotels" and workmen's lodgings, the girl-children echo their mothers with more or less exactitude.

The Frenchwoman has this indisputable merit, devotion to her girls, and a desire to keep

them pure. Travellers often fall into the mistake of believing Frenchwomen frivolous and careless as regards their daughters' steadiness and modesty. No greater mistake could be made, unless it were to take the evil mothers of our own great city as a fair sample of English matrons. The Second Empire undoubtedly brought into prominence and increased the number of "fast" women, who delighted in every form of rowdiness and extravagant dressing, and whose children, precocious, over-dressed, as seen in the Tuileries gardens, maligned the healthy girlhood of France. Such women always were in the minority, and a reaction against them seriously set in some time ago, threatening the extinction of the type. The tendency of the great majority of French women is towards duty, faith, and goodness, distinguished by more demonstration than among other European women. The girls follow the same rule, and present, though preserving individuality, their national predisposition towards simplicity and virtue.

One point upon which French home life puts on a character quite its own, not to be imitated, is the astonishing power some children exercise over their parents; even daughters become tyrants, before whose vigorous will mothers bow submissively. "Spoiling" has reached a development in France unknown anywhere else, descending sometimes to folly and imbecility. A whole company have been annoyed or inconvenienced rather than a child's whim or caprice should be thwarted, and important engagements broken because a child objected to her parents' absence. Such cases, however true, are exceptions: the reality is usually the other way, and French girls prove exceptionally docile. They live in such close intimacy with their parents that the tie between them becomes too strong to allow of disobedience or insubordination.

In some cases home training gives place to the convent school, which possesses advantages some parents are keenly alive to. The convent-bred girl learns more book knowledge, is better educated in literature and art, and acquires habits of obedience and discipline; but she is less prepared for the world than the home-bred girl who has picked up the faculty of conversation, ease of manners, and some experience of human nature. Of course this is a general, not absolute, rule, and much depends upon the girls' characters and temperaments.

French girls have always a great amount of religious feeling, and the convent life appeals to this side of their nature; but it does not suffer in the pure simple life of the home. The services of her church impress her deeply, and many a girl dates the formation of her plans in life, the frank acceptance of her life's duties and pains, from her "first communion," an epoch marking time in all impressionable French lives. Many an old woman talks of it

as "le grand jour de ma vie," and goes over it with her grandchildren as touchingly as if it were but yesterday, the emotional and picturesque side of the ceremony not blinding her to the religious side.

Frenchwomen, as a rule, are sensational, but not sentimental. They have none of the indolence and unfitness for the practical things of life which sentimentalism engenders. Excitable, imaginative, they certainly are, but also good-tempered, active, and laborious. Their defects are rather in want of order, an almost contemptuous dislike to any new experience or methods diverging from those of their mothers, a need for amusement, or rather for distraction. The children partake of the same faults, or have the faults in an infantile way. They throw about and are careless with their toys, leave the clothes about, forget to close doors, love to rise late, and are difficult to train in methodical expenditure of time. Among the poorer classes these faults are not so evident. Poverty is a hard school, and teaches many virtues.

Of their mothers French girls learn one thing—to dress well: that is, to make the best of what they have and are; but it is a mistake to think that all Frenchwomen dress well. The highest type of dressing is to be found in France, and we are apt to think good dressing a national characteristic; but in the French Departments there are to be found as many ordinary-dressed people as in any other country. In this point, as in so many others, mothers transmit, by example, precept, and hereditary right, the art of assimilating what is correct, simple, and good in dress. They are keenly alive to the degree in which a woman augments her charm and influence by a well-calculated use of carefully-selected ornament.

Yet with all these qualifications, which we think might be so beneficially grafted upon the sterner British character, the French girl still fails to reach the standard of intelligence and sterling qualities we find in the Teuton girlhood. A writer who has thoroughly studied French life and character, tells us:—"The average result of girl-making in France is to produce a somewhat ignorant, very prejudiced, charming young woman, susceptible of strong emotion and strong love, curious to see for herself what life is, eager to please and to win admiration and affection, but controlled, in nine cases out of ten, by deeply-rooted religious faith and a profound conviction of duty." If the function of woman is to create joy and pleasantness, to adorn life, and to transmit that function to her daughters, then the French system of training girls would be the wisest and best; but a woman has nobler tasks than that. She has among them to train sons, and fit them to fill their place in the world, and for this task the system of French training is wholly inadequate.

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