America's New Influence on European Life: People Over There Sure to ... 

America's New Influence on European Life
People Over There Sure to Imitate Us, Says a Briton, But They Won't Play Baseball or Eat Our Breakfast Bacon

By FRANK DILNOT.

E UROPE is in the midst of political events which will change the course of history, but in the new era there will be changes not only in Governmental methods, but in the life of every nation. Among the new factors in European life will be the American influence, which comes with the whole pattern of characteristics from America. There will be no revolutionary change, I think, but a gradual and natural change in the spirit, material and physical customs of America will make a deep mark.

Utilisation of American soldiers have taken the stamp of American personality to Europe. For years to come America must be considered as one of the great suppliers to a war-stricken world. It will be the creative part for America herself; to the peoples of the other countries it will mean a new stage of existence, with all manner of alterations in outlook, in methods, and, possibly, in some extent, in taste.

I saw the other day an article dealing with the new-found preference of European women for American husbands. It is not that they have fallen in love with khaki, for they had plenty of that before America entered the war. What has happened is that the new type of manhood has struck the imagination and touched the feelings of the women. Of course, the sheer novelty of these men has something to do with it, but that is only a preliminary.

Surveying the American soldiers as they went off, sturdily upright citizens drawn from every class of life, I was impressed by the difference between them and the European young men. America is undoubtedly developing a race of its own through a variety of reeling conditions, where the climate, food, political conditions, and material well-being each have an influence. These young men, on the whole, were taller than the Europeans, not so thick set, heavier in the face and eye, with thinner hips and a quick nervousness all over them. They were Americans.

At close quarters they lacked some of the characteristics of the English and French soldiers. They were not so cultured and direct in speech. They were also less accustomed to formality, too used to the ameliorating word, and had altogether less respect for convention, as we understand it in Europe. They were also less polite. Altogether, with their omissions and their qualities, they were of a type which is already strong in Europe in some distinct race. Withal, they had the essentials of strength and manliness above everything else. This is the world of the women of the world have never failed to appreciate such qualities. No wonder that feminine Europe has fallen in love with the American soldier. All this, however, is but a indication of coming events.

The question has been on the other side spreading the message of American. Their work is now to be carried on in other directions and by another medium. For years to come the discontented colony, which includes practically all of them, for the neutrals in some directions as badly as the belligerents, must be supplied with food from America, and, above all things, materials, raw, manufactured, and manufactured. They need to build up factories, construct bridges and railroads, to make a fresh destroyed city, the city of the great fabric of industrial life.

American material, American brains, American labour, cannot be taken to Europe tens of thousands of American equipped with the qualities which are so essential to the making of every section of life American influence will be felt. It will be welcomed not with polite complacency as hitherto, but with a thankful fervor which will of itself spread deep and wide all kinds of external American influence. If there is so much excellent and well-founded discussion as to the similarity in fundamentals of the great democracies that one to sometimes inclined to over- look the marked differences in the small things of life; and, after all, it is the small things that make up the principal part of the existence of most people. It is all very well for the highways to tell us about the emotions, national and international. In other words, the untrammeled use of unusual sentences to meet unusual emergencies, the sparkling verbal humor. All these, and many other things which go to the kernel of a language, will make themselves felt not only in France and England, but all over the European countries, and in every place where the new and powerful influence of America as a nation penetrates.

The Americans are probably the best- versed nation in the world, in the sense that they are more careful and precise and sometimes more elaborate than any other people. The ordinary men in the streets of New York, for example, are dressed with a precision which is not equalled in any great city in Europe, a fact which may arise from material prosperity, but which also indicates a habit of mind, a confidence, perhaps even a touch of assertiveness. But there it is. No one from Europe can fail to realize it immediately on arrival. Americans carry this habit with them to Europe. They do not always dress in the same way as we do, but they dress extremely well, and from an American point of view. Hitherto Paris has been the home of ladies’ fashion in the world, London the centre of men’s fashion and it is an interesting speculation whether America may not leave an impression on the dress of people abroad. One influence goes with another where nations are concerned.

While Europe will probably not be immediately enthusiastic over American dress, it is almost certain that ‘‘American phases’’ will assert themselves in the minds of European fashion makers. Fashion is a snobbish thing. It may well be that in the coming years we shall hear much more of the Americans, of certain American articles of attire, and that Fifth Avenue firms and others will create for them haberdashers, in the special varieties of coats, or hats, or bootmaker’s shoes. Perhaps, within a period of months, there may be descriptions in Paris and London on customers’ bills: ‘‘The latest from Fifth Avenue.’’

America is a wonderfully sober, great passion. Climate has a good deal to do with it. Habit grape, and, of the insidious cocktails, there is less danger. The true atmosphere of Europe, the different method of life, and the effect of association will or will not make some change in the popular American array of invasion in the years to come. On the whole, it is probable that the Americans will experience an influence in a greater degree than they will be influenced. It may be that that prohibition, firmly established in many States of the Union, will provide an influence in a similar condition abroad. I have frequently heard prohibitionists cited as examples in discussions on the liquor question in America. However, every example will have treble weight in the future.

The thing England could most advantageously copy, and that is the practice of having men as bartenders. The practice in America is to hinder the bar is a survival which has many advantages.

While, in my honest amusements, I see it forecasted that one may look for the permanent establishment of American baseball in Europe. I doubt it. It is a game peculiarly suited to the American temperament, but there is such a variety of wares and pastimes enjoyed, especially among our out-door people like the British, that I cannot see American baseball supplanting cricket, for example. Cricket has a subtle charm not to be known, unless those who have not played it or been brought up to it from boyhood.

As far as the theatre is concerned, there will probably be a greater number than ever for the American play, always a great love of the French, the American plays in the theatre themselves there is little or nothing for Europe to learn. The best known in Europe as the most comfortable in many ways than the best New York theatres. The lounges, buffets, tea-rooms, and other conveniences and con- veniences are sadly missed by a stranger in New York. Perhaps the response to the many good things America is sending us we may be able to provide a hint or two for ourselves.

Europe will very likely get new dishes added to its dietary through close association with the United States. Why cannot we have the delicious breakfast bacon for breakfast that you have here! Why are we not just bacon and eggs? Corned beef is almost unknown in European restaurants. Many Europeans full in the belief that if you have the morning’s meat you can’t have a Corned beef hash will begin to appear on bills of fare. I should not be surprised to see it at the next Congress.

We might beg of you not to introduce your breakfast bacon, because that is one thing that would not be appreciated by the many delicacies unknown to us on the other side and a wide field in which bacon breakfast becomes an insignificant joke, and there will be fresh delights of the table opened to all kinds of new American influence touches its height.