

# 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.

New York Correspondent of The London Daily Chronicle.

EUROPE is in the midst of political and social transformation. In the new era there will be changes not only in Governmental methods, but in the habits of individuals. Among the new factors in European life will be the increasing assimilation of characteristics from America. There will be no revolutionary change, I think, but a growing development in which the mental and physical customs of America will make a deep mark.

Millions of American soldiers have taken the stamp of American personality to Europe. For years to come America must be the source of assistance and supplies to a war-stricken world. It will be an educative 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 to 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 newness of these men has something to do with it, but that is only a preliminary.

Surveying the American soldiers as they went off, stalwart young 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 reacting conditions, where the climate, food, political tendencies, and material well-being each have an influence. These young men, on the whole, were taller than the Europeans, not so thick set, keener in the face and eye, with thinner hips and a quick nervousness all over them.

They were more serious, too. At close quarters they lacked some of the characteristics of the English and French soldiers. They were abrupt and direct in speech. They were also less accustomed to formality, less used to the ameliorating word, and had altogether less respect for convention, as we understand it in Europe. They were also more individual. Altogether, with their omissions and their qualities, they were of a type which is as strange in Europe as some distinct race. Withal, they had the essentials of strength and manliness above everything else. The gentle 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 an indication of coming events.

The men in khaki have been on the other side spreading the message of America. Their work is now to be carried on in other directions and by another medium. For years to come the dismantled countries of Europe—and that includes practically all of them, for the neutrals are in some directions as badly off as the belligerents—will require vast supplies of food from America, and, above all things, materials, raw, manufactured, and semi-manufactured, to build up factories, construct bridges and railroads, to make afresh destroyed cities, and, indeed, to rebuild the whole fabric of industrial life.

American material, American brains, American leadership, will take in train to Europe tens of thousands of Americans equipped with the qualities which Europe needs. Spreading throughout all sections of life American influence will be felt. It will be welcomed not with

polite complacency as heretofore, but with a thankful fervor which will of itself spread deep and wide all kinds of external American influences.

There is so much excellent and well-founded discussion as to the similarity in fundamentals of the great democracies that one is sometimes inclined to overlook 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 for most people. It's all very well for the highbrows to tell us about the emotions, national and in-

a word; the untrammelled 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-dressed nation in the world, in the sense that they are more careful and precise and sometimes more elaborate than any

selves in the minds of European fashion-makers. Fashion is a spasmodic thing. It may well be that in the coming year or two there will be a rage in Europe for certain American articles of attire, and that Fifth Avenue firms and others will find themselves international depots for special varieties of coats, or hats, or boots, or skirts. Perhaps, within a period of months, we shall see inscriptions in Paris and London on customers' and tailors' windows: "The latest from Fifth Avenue."

America is a wonderfully sober, great nation. Climate has a good deal to do with it. Habit grows, and, apart from the insidious cocktails, there is less drinking in this country, I am perfectly certain, than in any country on the face of the globe. It is just a question as to whether the damp atmosphere of Europe, the different method of life, and the effect of association will or will not make some change in the peaceful American army of invasion in the years to come. On the whole, it is probable that the Americans will exercise an influence in a greater degree than they will be influenced. It may well be that prohibition, firmly established in many States of the Union, will provide an influence in a similar direction abroad. I have frequently heard prohibition States cited as examples in discussions on the liquor question in the House of Commons, and such examples will have treble weight in the future.

One thing England could most advantageously copy, and that is the practice of having men as bartenders. The practice of having women to serve drink behind the bars is a survival which has many objections.

With regard to amusements, I see it forecast 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 well-rooted and much loved pastimes, especially among an out-of-doors people like the British, that I cannot see baseball supplanting cricket, for example. Cricket has a subtle charm not to be known by those who have not played it or been brought up to it from boyhood.

So far as the theatre is concerned, there will probably be a greater market than ever for the American play, always a popular feature in London. In the theatres themselves there is little or nothing for Europe to learn. The best London theatres, for instance, are more comfortable in many ways than the best New York theatres. The lounges, buffets, tearooms, and other comforts and conveniences are sadly missed by a stranger in New York. Perhaps in response to the many good things America is sending us we may be able to provide a hint or two on our own account.

Europe will very likely get new dishes added to its dietary through its closer association with the United States. Why cannot we have the delicious grapefruit for breakfast that you have here? Why are we denied buckwheat cakes? Broiled chicken is almost unknown in European restaurants. Many Europeans fall in love with it when they come to America. Corned beef hash will begin to appear on bills of fare. I should not be surprised to see waffles become almost a rage.

We might beg of you not to introduce your breakfast bacon, because that is one of our disappointments here. But the many delicacies unknown to us on the other side offer a wide field in which breakfast bacon becomes an insignificant speck, and there will be fresh delights of the table opened to all kinds of homes in Europe as the American invasion reaches its height.



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ternational. Influential sections are interested. Everybody, and not just a section, is interested in matters of food, drink, dress, talk, making love, amusing the children, going to church or the theatre. Strange how widely Europe differs from America in many of these things.

It is not to be expected that the French or English will proceed to become enamored of American intonation or pronunciation. The French are adaptable, but their swift, soft talk will certainly not adjust itself to the harder, slower accent of America.

Nor must there be any illusion with regard to the English. Their liquid vowel sounds will still be regarded by them as the proper method of expression of the English language. In both countries the American accent will continue to have rather a foreign sound.

And yet I can foresee a certain percolation of what, for want of a better term, I may call the "American language"—the idioms, the lightning turn of phrase, the sudden visualization of an idea—in

other people. The ordinary men in the streets of New York, for example, are dressed with a precision which is not equaled 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 Europeans, but they always dress extremely well from an American point of view. Hitherto Paris has been the home of ladies' fashion for 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 become immediately enthusiastic over American dress, it is almost certain that various phases of it will assert them-