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## TWO POEMS

*by Frances M. Frost*

### FOG

Where black woods were, there are no woods,  
Nor any field where once was damp  
And rusty grass. No casual hoofs  
Plunge down and stamp  
The slope to a sandy cattle-trail.  
All known things fail

The silent hour, and fog remains.  
Caught in the wet and heavy cloud,  
He walks to move his stricken heart,  
He sings aloud  
Against the loneliness of white  
Thicker than night.

Lost on a lost and muffled earth,  
He stands and gulps the whiteness in,  
Drawing impermanence down a throat  
Where song has been,  
Finding this dreaded, last defeat  
Chilly and sweet.

### FRAGMENT OF AN UNRETURNING YEAR

By the brown fields, long-harvested and barren,  
Goldenrod withered, and stripped trees creaking in the wind,  
By the low gray sky overhead, and deserted pastures,  
And the hill brook crying suddenly out of thinned  
Thickets, and the pools edged with morning glitter—  
By these things I shall know a dark year ended,  
And this brief gauntness before the first snowfall  
As a fragment to be hoarded, locked in the breast, defended,  
Against north-beating wings and a March crow-call.

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## FRENCH AUTHORS TAKE REVENGE

by C. E. Andrews

THE immorality of the French is an ancient legend that never dies. We never want it to die, for we secretly like to think that there is some place in the world where all of the Ten Commandments are not taken too seriously. The movies always make Paris the setting for the most alluring temptations. French girls are delightfully dangerous creatures given to dancing and strong drinks. They descend long staircases clad, for the most part, in incredible plumy head-dresses, and captivate firm-jawed, but weak-hearted young gentlemen who forget all they have learned in Sunday school. In the end, of course, the nobler natures of the young gentlemen assert themselves and lead them back to the path of true love and holy matrimony. But for a moment we are terribly worried about their careers. Paris is a dangerous place. Every year we go over by the hundred thousand to see just how really bad it is. And this desire to study wickedness first hand sends us rolling through the purlieus of pleasure in vast auto-buses and leads us to bask fearfully under the glamorous lights of sin in a land where the constitution has no amendments.

This wholesale invasion of Paris, which has turned some quarters of the town into American suburbs, has made the French extremely conscious of America. They have suddenly become curious to know what the country and the home life of these strange invaders are like. They are eager to read the

reports of discoverers who have crossed the Atlantic, and to examine their theories about our government, our digestions, and our folk-ways. And by way of exchange of compliments, recent French novelists, dramatists, scenario-writers and newspaper men have begun to develop a very striking and not altogether flattering American legend.

In the French novels and stories of the last two years, the American girl is always a coldly sensual "vamp" whose violent methods of getting her man can hardly be called anything so mild as seduction. When she lives in Europe she rises at five P.M., breakfasts on asparagus and Manhattan cocktails, and makes whoopee until bright dawn warns her that she must hurry home to escape the danger of sun stroke. In Marcel Prévost's latest novel, *I Am Your Master*, a very rich young *américaine* comes to France to pick out a title, seeks it in the society of the Bœuf-sur-le-Toit, and quite deliberately makes a few bedtime experiments before deciding which one to marry and carry home. The deserted French mistress of the titled commodity is left a shattered wreck of tears and neurasthenia.

In Luc Durtain's two volumes of American tales, *Fortieth Story* and *Beyond Hollywood*, American hypocrisy in whatever pertains to sex is the chief theme. The strict taboos in conversation are in vivid contrast to the license in behavior. American women wear décolleté in the day time, take every

advantage of display which recent fashions gave them, make up for out-of-doors as though they were on the stage, act like demi-mondaines, always take the initiative in love, experiment in sex from an early age, choose whom they will for husbands, divorce them when they become bored and then choose others. These bold females make open proposals to slowly aroused males, either in marriage or in love. In one story, laid in San Francisco, a boy, after a perfectly proper comradeship of some time, goes to call on a girl of his acquaintance. She appears with a suitcase, gives the taxi-driver the address of a hotel, registers for them as man and wife, and undresses immediately on arriving. The boy has an attack of conscience and buys an engagement ring. The next day the girl returns the ring with a brief note, disappears, and the incident is closed. He is only a passing whim. In another story, this time laid in Seattle, three men acquaintances are taken home casually by a middle-aged business man, who introduces them to his wife. They mix a punch out of all the violent alcohols in the cellar. The men take off coats and shoes and dance in a wild orgy with the wife, to the combined music of the radio and phonograph, while the husband looks on in drunken complacency. When his animal jealousy is finally aroused he starts a fight and drives them out of the house.

One of the most curious pictures of American life is Ferri-Pisani's *Lucile, an American Girl*. If this book were only rhymed it would be funnier than any Gilbert and Sullivan opera. The heroine is the daughter of the *roi des packers*, who is the richest man in the world, and lives in a marble palace on Fifth Avenue. She is an amazing creation. Incredibly haughty, scornful of the whole earth, cruel, savage, lascivious, and hyper-neurotic. Although she grants her lover almost every liberty, she holds to a literal virginity and takes pride in believing that she is a "good girl". She treats her lover, a poor innocent French duke in disguise, as the female spider

treats her unfortunate mate. She ends in a lunatic asylum. Her father lives on rare beef and whisky but gives out to the world that his only food and drink is milk. He is parsimonious, heartless, insulting to inferiors, capable of the most atrocious cruelty. And he has an erotic fetishism of the strangest variety known to Krafft-Ebing. He is fortunately murdered in the end. The French duke flirts with a little school-teacher who leads him on with tantalizing familiarity. She also remains "*vierge, sinon chaste*". She gets her lover a job, rents a flat, furnishes it on credit, procures a marriage license, and then tries to drag him to the altar. But he prefers the neurotic millionairess. At the end of this amazing study of American life, Jack the Ripper, who has escaped from an asylum and murdered thirteen people, including the great millionaire, is drowned in the Hudson river by the police, at the express command of the district attorney and the mayor of New York!

Paul Morand, who holds as high a place as any living writer of fiction in France, has written a best-seller on an American theme. *Champions of the World* is the most widely advertised book in France today. It will probably soon reach a sale of two hundred thousand copies. It is a serious study of four American men and four women, whose story gives a wide view of American life in many aspects. The effect is the most unflattering and unsympathetic picture possible. The rule of the dominating female who thwarts or ruins the life of the man to whom she is related as mother, wife, or mistress, is one of the recurrent themes. The men are controlled by these women of strong wills but narrow minds, and all the men, in the end, are failures at forty. They are hard, hurried, unpleasant people, troubled by puritan consciences but guilty of hypocrisy and lack of understanding. One girl, a Jewess from East Side New York, deserted by her husband, finally becomes a Spanish duchess, a Soviet spy, and mistress to an American diplomat.

Another of the "heroines" of the book, in an excited scene with her Knickerbocker lover, exclaims, "If my lover should die I should telephone the police to take away the body, and I should go out and dance! I am not afraid of microbes or of death. I am a savage woman ready to pass from one chief to another. Nobody can scare me. I am too bad for that! I know what you think of me. I am low. I am dull. I have bad manners". To illustrate this point she picks up the tray full of bottles and liqueur glasses and hurls it across the room against the chimney piece, calling her aristocratic friend a "bastard and son of a bastard". She then bursts into tears and says she does "so want to be happy—happy!"

Naturally, the graphic newspapers and the magazines devoted to crime find America a rich mine of material. Chicago gang-warfare and sporadic race-wars and lynchings are subjects for articles continued from week to week, illustrated with the most frightful photographs. America appears in these journals only as the home of Leopold and Loeb, of hammer murderesses and of blood-thirsty mobs, the land which poisons presidents and burns prisoners alive. Of course, we can hardly protest against this kind of reporting, because we have the same unfortunate journalism at home. But the French public which reads these magazines has no means of knowing any other side of America but its crimes and horrors. For the novelists have depicted us as only one degree less brutal and crude in our manners than the tabloid writers have reported us.

The French have taken their revenge for the absurd caricature which passes for a Frenchman on our stage or screen. Americans in recent French plays are either drunk, or in a constant state of dull boredom, unable to find any amusement in Paris. When they eat, they take ice cream before the fish and pour Worcestershire sauce over raspberries. Even Adolphe Menjou's first French "talkie" was a good-humored satire on an American's

attempt to do business in his own way in France, with his final conversion to the French point of view.

We cannot object that the scenes and characters of Marcel Prévost, Luc Durtain, Paul Morand and others cannot be found somewhere in American life between Paris and San Francisco. But the total unfavorable impression which these writers convey seems to be definitely expressive of a change in attitude toward us. Thirty years ago, Pierre de Coulevain wrote *American Nobility*, a novel in which French and American manners were contrasted, the kind of international story which Henry James did with such great skill. De Coulevain's book was a very subtle study of an American girl in aristocratic French society. It showed a fine sense of national differences, and presented both sides with an even-handed justice which James might have envied. The tone and the attitude toward American character was quite the opposite to that of these modern French writers. In them you find no such remark as this comment of De Coulevain, "With us, purity is considered a virtue; in America it is simply a matter of good education".

The difference between the American girl as presented by a French writer in 1898 and in the French fiction of 1928-30 may, of course, indicate that our manners have changed. We are being constantly reminded of this fact by writers at home. But the most marked contrast is in the tone. The novelists today do not seem to wish to find much that is admirable in our character. They are forming a new legend about us and prefer to believe that. There are, of course, political and economic reasons—the treaty, the debt, prohibition and the tariff; there are causes for resentment in all of these. But a more important reason may be found in the overwhelming American invasion of French industries and in the fear of "Americanization" of French life. Since the war, France has changed almost as much as America, and the change has been in the direction of mass

production, mechanization of life, restriction of individuality, and a development of advertising propaganda. All of these things are the "American invasion", the work of the rather exuberant and self-satisfied people who throng Montparnasse in the summertime and seek a release from their excessively over-standardized existences at home.

The danger of this Americanization is evident on all hands. American automobiles are crowding in, American agricultural machinery has invaded the provinces and the colonies, American safety-razors and American soap can be bought in the remotest French villages; worst of all, the American rules for bridge are destroying the traditions of French whist. America is blamed for the devastating cocktail habit that has taken possession of Paris, and for the recent bold robberies and hold-ups *à la Chicago*. The French public has seen so much hard drinking and hard shooting in the American movies that appear on every screen that it is in danger of being diverted from its own quiet *apéritifs* and from the gentle traditions of Continental crime. The French are quite distinctly worried about all of these things. Soon the great American principle of the sacredness of business above life itself may sweep over the land, and the pleasing custom of spending two hours for lunch in the bosom of one's family will be something for antiquarians to write chapters about. These are the reasons that the French have become extremely curious about the United States, and that their curiosity is strongly tinged with apprehension or dislike.

In response to this interest, a large number of books about America have recently appeared, some serious studies, others hasty travel sketches. And, besides the books, there have been serial letters in the newspapers, and innumerable reviews, taking both sides of the question. Some of these recent discoverers have found much to praise in American civilization; some have even shown extravagant enthusiasm. But it is significant that the

two books which are most sharply critical are the two best sellers of the season, Morand's *Champions of the World*, already mentioned, and George Duhamel's *Scenes from the Life of the Future*. These are the books which fit the newly formed popular legend about America. And, unfortunately for us, these two books are the most striking from the point of view of style. They say boldly and brilliantly what the French are ready to believe about us. George Duhamel's hasty and violent denunciation is really amusing reading. It is the cry of the individualist against a world which his rigidly standardizing every phase of life—health, amusement, exercise, dress, food, art, personal habits. And he feels that our passion for mechanism will invent not only a machine for picking strawberries but also for choosing them, tasting them, digesting them! He takes exactly the same point of view that our own critics take toward the movies, the automobile, modern publicity, football, prohibition, or the stock market. He finds in the American scene a vision of what the whole world is coming to, and utters his wail of despair. The wail is a little shrill. It is not so much an attack on American civilization as a violent protest of an individualist against the tendencies of the whole modern world. Incidentally, one cannot help pointing out that, in spite of his horror of the Chicago stockyards, he eats meat; and in spite of his fury against automobiles, he drives one himself and it is of an American make!

Of these books of impressions, the most interesting for an American to read is Paul Morand's *New York*, which has recently appeared in translation. This is not written in the same vein as his novel. He sees much to admire, and has discovered the beauty and thrill of Broadway as only a foreign observer can see it. It appeals to his love of the exotic; he writes of it as though he were in Timbuctoo. He is both delighted and afraid. All through the book he seems afraid of losing his sense of self; his own individuality is op-

pressed by the tremendous scale of things, the vastness of the avenues, the tremendous height of skyscrapers, the hugeness of bridges and docks, and the amazing crowds such as one sees nowhere else but in Asia. The rush and whirl of life he describes without loving it. He is often puzzled and sometimes superior. He is another individualist who fears the loss of self, the representative of the old world which is built on a more human scale. But he enjoys the romance of the foreign quarters of New York. He describes their color and charm just as he has shown the glamour of other strange places he has written of in his journeyings round the world in search of the bizarre. The romance of the speakeasy amuses him. He delights in the splendor of Fifth Avenue shops, their luxury and fine taste. He likes the social activity of New York, the hospitality, the love of dining out, the elegance of dress. But he also has a horror of the movies. His description of Roxy's is in his most amusing vein: "A nightmare light falls from imitation alabaster bowls and yellow glass lanterns and ritualistic chandeliers; the organ-pipes lighted from below by a greenish glare, make one think of a submerged cathedral, and in the walls are niches intended for cursed bishops. I find a deep, soft arm chair to sink into, and for two hours I watch giant kisses on mouths like the crevasses of the Grand Cañon—embraces of Titans, a complete propaganda of flesh which, without satisfying them, excites these violent American natures. It is worse than a black mass, it is a profanation of everything: of music, of art, of love, of color. I could say that I have had a complete vision of the end of the world". The fierce unrest of New York life is the theme to which Paul Morand reverts most frequently. He sees in everyone's face the signs of keen, excited struggle and activity. A cat was the only calm being he saw on Broadway. The tone of his descriptions always suggest fear rather than love.

The most favorable impression of America

comes from the journalist Paul Achard. He was thrilled by everything he saw. He was delighted by the scale of things and by the efficiency which he found in every phase of life. Skyscrapers were exotically beautiful, railway trains were ideals of comfort and speed, the movies were soon to be the most useful and the most perfect art in the world. At the end, he says that America is the one country from which France can learn anything, and that the voyage to America is, for a young European, the only one worth taking. Another book full of appreciation is Yvon Lapaquellerie's *New York in its Seven Colors*. He writes charmingly of the beauty of the city and has a great admiration for the best traits in American life. The thesis of the book is that the true meaning of the three words painted on every public building in France—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity—is to be found only in the United States. Monsieur Lapaquellerie puts together a great number of observed facts and incidents which show that we really have these ancient national principles which the French republic knows only as words. This conclusion is especially interesting since our own critics are disposed to be very doubtful whether we possess this trinity of virtues.

The most unusual book of all that have appeared on the American theme is H. Dubreuil's *Standards; American Labor Viewed by a French Workman*. This is detailed account of the experiences and observations of a highly intelligent French metal-worker during several years in many shops and factories in the United States. He has a few frank criticisms of our shortcomings, but in almost every respect he praises our organization, our methods, our attitude in industrial life. He dislikes our boastfulness, our chauvinism, our total ignorance of Europe and our belief that we have invented everything, and he has no sympathy for our strange habit of chewing either tobacco or gum. But he, like several other recent observers, finds a true democracy in the United



States. The attitude of the workman toward the foreman or the employer is almost always cordial, and there is no shade of patronage in the relationship of superiors to workmen. Dubreuil reiterates all through his book that it is ability that counts most with us. "We'll see what you can do", was the phrase with which he was always greeted in a new place. And he was never made to feel inferior because he spoke with a foreign accent. From the point of view of a worker, he praises the organization of the Ford type of factory, with every possible application of principles of economy and efficiency. By certain average comparisons he shows that the American workman works fewer hours and minutes for every article of living necessity than the Frenchman does for the same corresponding things. This is a very interesting book.

And there are other books; and still they keep appearing. America seems to be the most interesting literary subject in France today. Perhaps it will be worth while to sum up the chief points on which both pro- and anti-American writers agree.

A most surprising thing is that nearly all of these discoverers find us a polite nation. We are liberal with invitations even to strangers, we are fond of hospitality, we are always giving one another presents. Our workmen go out of their way to be helpful or agreeable to one another. It is almost universal for automobilists to ask pedestrians to ride. But we lose this genuine sense of courtesy when we travel in Europe. We do not behave well there. We become intolerant, impatient, and refuse to appreciate another point of view. We are like bad children. And so it is not fair to judge Americans by the examples who throng European hotels. We are well dressed. There is a degree of smartness found in every class of society, and much less difference in appearance between the classes than in Europe. We have a passion for comfort and for luxury. Our crowds are much more colorful than those of large European cities.

Our food and our drinks and our children are all very bad, just as bad as they can be. Our cookery is pale; we mix the most incongruous foods, and gulp them as though we did not enjoy them. Only a quarter of our people eat as well as the average Parisian taxi-driver. The rest prefer to own automobiles. And as for our drinks under the *régime sec*, they are beyond any power of description! Prohibition is an unreasonable thing, not comprehensible to a Frenchman. It is the result of our Calvinistic passion for conformity, and of our allowing old maids and preachers to dictate our moral standards. Our children are the worst-behaved in the world. They are the only beings in America who are not forced to conform to some kind of behavior. Our large cities have a hard fierce beauty of their own. Modern skyscrapers are unbelievably superb; they are original and distinctive contributions to the great architectural forms of the world. Broadway at night has a grand poetic beauty. To Duhamel, however, it is the poetry of the Inferno. At any rate, skyscrapers, by day or night, are the most impressive things in America.

The amazing use of mechanical contrivances in every phase of life is what distinguishes America most sharply from Europe. These are often ingenious and sometimes have real advantages, but, for the most part, they are looked on with suspicion. They require a deal of care and expense, and, in the end, one is in danger of becoming a slave to the machines. Europe could, perhaps get on with more of this sort of thing, but then, there is the danger that, if once started in this direction, she might in time have those terrible automatic eating-places. The marvelous express elevators in office buildings give the French discoverer his greatest thrill. But he is relieved when he gets back to Paris to see the familiar sign "Elevator not running". He can not bring himself to believe in mechanical efficiency.

In considering our qualities and characteristics as a people, these later observers no

longer say that our sole interests and admirations have to do with dollars. Several Frenchmen have written that an admiration for power is the most marked American trait. Power is the attribute of a great man, and the attainment of it is the only reason for becoming a millionaire. Energy, not love of wealth, is the chief characteristic of the new race. Our desire for conformity is a characteristic that most foreign visitors do not understand. The European is reluctant to relinquish his individuality before a policeman or a red light, he will not wait his turn in a line, he will not content himself with a choice of five kinds of tinned soups. He feels that a country which produces one hundred varieties of cheese and grows fifty sorts of plums enjoys more freedom of spirit, which is the chief joy of man, than a nation which limits itself to a large scale production of a few types of foods or of useful articles. This willingness to be all alike and the desire to force everybody's taste and everybody's ideas into one mould gives the Frenchman a very poor opinion of us. A people whose standards of judgment and of conduct are those of the crowd is doomed to perpetual inferiority. Our desire for uniformity and our childish acceptance of the absurd lies of wholesale advertising make possible the mass production of ideas or of shaving soap. This is the worst thing about American life.

An extreme love of pleasure is a very conspicuous trait. Our delight in dancing, in the movies, and in the radio is far greater than that of any other people. We live in an

atmosphere of nervous speed and worry and our daily life is extremely monotonous. We therefore rush for diversion whenever we can. We are not satisfied with conversation; we have none, in fact. We do not understand the joy of repose, we never listen to what the inner spirit sings. We must be actively, noisily amused. But we take our amusement with stolid faces; we do not know how to be lighthearted like the Latins.

The dominance of women in American life is a point on which all observers agree. And even the most strongly pro-American agree that their influence is bad. Our women are extraordinarily good looking. But they are spoiled, headstrong, exigent. They have little modesty, they have no standard of manners but whims. They have more privileges and are better protected than anywhere else in the world, but they have abused the privileges. The independent, fierce, fighting man of business obeys passively the two great forces in America—women and policemen.

This hasty summary represents what the French visitor sees when he comes to look at us. If he believes that the world should progress toward greater organization and if he admires efficiency, he sees many of our characteristics as virtues, which the individualist sees as faults. But the Frenchman, by nature, is an individualist. And the great body of readers of these books of discovery will feel that America is not so nice a place to live in as France, and that the Americanization of Europe is something to be resisted.



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## THE DEATH OF THE GARDENER

*by L. A. G. Strong*

THE unexpected June shower thinned suddenly: its whispering ceased. It hung a minute in the air, a veil of gleaming gossamer, dissolved, and drifted out to sea. Looking carefully about him, Ian McLean came out from under the thorn where he had been sheltering, and swung the empty sack from his shoulders. A bout of rheumatic fever, some years ago, had made him pay heed to showers.

Standing with his legs apart, folding the sack, and drawing a deep breath, he gazed on a transfigured world. The evening had been beautiful before. He was not conscious that anything could be added to it. But now, each arching frond of bracken, each blade of grass, sparkled with points of light. The road glistened, and the boulders above it; the broom revived and glowed. Even the iron posts of the old wire fence across the road shone glossy as jackdaws, while rows of single jewels hung from the underside of every wire. Beyond, the reeds stood up, fresh delicate green above the milk-white sand-hills: the stretch of sea was calm and luminous as silk, and Skye, the enchanted island, rose, picked out with emerald, its jagged, fantastic pinnacles dim as a bloom upon the evening sky.

Ian gazed, rubbed his ginger moustache with a huge, freckled finger, and went on to fetch his goat. His day's work in the garden was over. It had been a heavy day, for next Friday the family were coming to the Big

House for their summer holidays, and he wanted to have all in order. Do what he would, it was impossible to start making ready till a bare ten days before they arrived. The Northern spring came late. Next Friday would be the first of July, and the garden was a good six weeks behind their garden in the South. They knew that, of course. They were always very just, very generous, in their dealings. More like friends than employers, ever since he entered their service, thirty-six years ago. It was for this reason, not for his own credit, that Ian wished he could make the garden do impossible things. He could coax more out of it than any man; but the little hill and the row of pines which so effectually sheltered it from the south and west kept off a deal of sun, and the soil was light.

"Meh-eh-eh-eheh!"

Martha saw him coming. She was straining on her tether, stretching out her thin neck, and bleating welcome. He had put her a hundred yards up the slope, where the grass grew strong and sweet. Ian looked up at her, but did not speak until he had climbed a good third of the way. Then, to tease her, he called in a soft, enticing voice, "Mar-tha! Eh, girl! Mar-tha!" and chuckled to see her impatient efforts to get free.

Soon, leisurely, he had reached her, and stooped to untie the picket. She leaned against him, shoving her head into the hollow between his chest and his thigh as he