

savage herd-mind arraying itself in the ceremonial robes appropriate to civilized justice, like a naked Polynesian parading in top-hat and spats. It began with the solemn appointment of a Commission of the leading Allied and Associated Powers to make an impartial inquiry into the question of responsibility for the war, and it ended in the Article of the Peace Treaty setting up 'a special tribunal' to try 'William II of Hohenzollern, formerly German Emperor, for a supreme offense against international morality and the sanctity of treaties.' Who is to try this charge against 'international morality'? An international court composed of presumably impartial neutrals? Not so. The court is to be composed entirely of the Kaiser's enemies, who are to be at once prosecutors, judges, and executioners. The law, the facts, the verdict, and the penalty are all to be found by the complainants, who have already openly and repeatedly committed themselves to the guilt of the defendant. Yet listen to the solemn asseveration of his own high-mindedness and equity by Mr. Justice Lynch: 'In its decision the tribunal will be guided by the highest motives of international policy, with a view to vindicating the solemn obligations of international undertakings and the validity of international morality.' And in a court so constituted Mr. Lloyd George dares to say 'They will get a fair trial, all of them, an absolutely fair trial.' He adds that 'We have got to show that we are a civilized people' and that this is a way of showing it. If this were sheer hypocrisy, disgust would banish humor. But the essential comedy lies in the innocence of those who utter and those who accept these brave assertions of our fitness to be judges in our own case.

The Nation

OUR DISAPPEARING YOUNG LADIES

BY D. WILLOUGHBY

YOUNG ladies are said to be a disappearing class. They were exquisite on a Watteau fan, and in the Pump Room at Bath must have been charming; but it is doubted whether there is any place for them in the world to-day. Jane Austen's schoolgirl whom Scott described as 'very good humored, very pretty, very silly, and very much disposed to be married,' was the young lady of her period in embryo, and, fortunately for herself, she never had to wrestle with such difficulties as earning a living or getting home on a tram-car, nor was she faced with the present scarcity of husbands. Some are already crying that she can be of interest only to the antiquarian. There have, it is true, been great changes, and more than a quarter of a century has passed since Mr. Miller of Oneida Creek wrote of *The Strike of a Sex*. It is a long, long trail a-winding from Fanny Burney to Miss Rebecca West, and even in the crowd things have not been at a standstill. The typical English girl of the present moment would be more than half inclined to resent being called a young lady, a name which, as Stevenson said, has 'such niminy associations.' Yet I should not like to tell her she was not one, and in my heart of hearts I question whether the alteration in her has been as great as either the optimists or the pessimists affirm.

Caught in a serious mood, Mr. Justice Darling has issued a jeremiad on the subject of young women. 'It can be seen in a walk along the street,' he says, 'that they differ by the width of heaven from what their mothers were.' That a walk along the street should be taken to afford evidence for so sweeping a statement may seem strange

to those who do not possess the judicial mind, and before indorsing it with all its implications the ordinary observer would want to follow the accused to her home, her office, and the place where she dances. One would, in fact, have to compromise one's self seriously, and one must, therefore, be content with suggesting that outward appearances are not always safe indications of a person's character or status. When I see Mr. Justice Darling in ermine, I am, indeed, compelled to believe he is a judge; but the fact that my neighbor dresses in scarlet and uses a superfluity of cosmetics does not make me confound her with the apocalyptic woman or with Jezebel.

Whenever, indeed, a condemnation is to be made of the sex, it is usual to begin it with a scathing reference to the way in which its members clothe themselves. Critics are constantly affirming that the dress of our young ladies is immodest and betokens the immodesty of its wearer. Let it be granted that it reveals plainly the fact that they are bifurcated beings, whereas in days of train or crinoline it was far easier to imagine them as mermaids, creatures out of their proper element on our gross earth. The upper part of their costume tends to become as scanty as the lower, and displays at all hours of the day a profusion of beauties which more careful generations concealed until the lamps were lighted and dinner was served. Good Hannah More used to urge that, if women only knew their own interests, 'they would dress decorously . . . and assume modesty as an artifice; the coquette would adopt it as an allure-ment; the pure as her appropriate attraction.' Sydney Smith, having pondered these words, replied that, if such were the truth, nudity had become a virtue, and no decent woman could for the future be seen in clothes. In

reality, it should be recognized that what women wear offers little or no indication of their disposition. Bare necks and gossamer-covered calves mean nothing in particular to those who display them.

Only when a fashion or a custom has originated in the male mind can one trace it to any deep design. The long-maintained ban on smoking by women is a case in point, and its open flouting by the modern young lady shows that here at least she has gained a victory for her sex. Dispassionately regarded, it will be seen that it was on a par with the Victorian ordinance which confined female passengers to the interior of the omnibus in all its stuffiness, while their lords enjoyed the air on the top. If with the aid of a little fantasy one can picture Mr. Justice Darling plodding his homeward way one evening from the Law Courts, one can imagine him not a little scandalized by the number of girls who smoke openly in the streets when dusk has fallen. Perhaps he would only notice their cigarettes as so many signs of the decay in public morals; but were he to speak with two or three of the crowd, he would discover that others were condemning the practice for other reasons. Smith could tell him that his difficulty in obtaining 'yellow perils' was largely due to feminine competition for those fragrant weeds. Jones, too, could tell a piteous tale of his fiancée's affection for yet more expensive brands, and add that her new liking for 'Abdul Hamids' had in no way lessened her pristine love of chocolates. One has heard of certain cunning savages who made eggs taboo for women in order that they might eat them all themselves; and civilized man is not in wit behind the savage, but in at least one or two small matters he has been outwitted by his sisters.

Another change alleged in the habits

of the young lady is in her choice of literature. Alderman Evans, of Lambeth, who, for all I know to the contrary, may be an authority on the subject, declares that at the age of seven she begins to read the works of Mrs. Elinor Glyn. Such a state of affairs may make a moralist sigh for days when 'Chapone's instructive volume' lay open on every girl's toilet-table, but it has never been proved that the pages of that remarkable treatise were often turned. Sukey Saunter and Lydia Languish found more congenial matter in such romances as *The Mistakes of the Heart* and *The Innocent Adultery*, and Sir Anthony Absolute was not speaking at random when he compared the circulating library to an evergreen tree. Titles alter, but the young lady's taste in novels is little affected by years and seasons, though it must be allowed to her credit that she no longer attempts to conceal her gingerbread fiction in the cover of a book of sermons.

Sukey and Lydia were taught the virtue of concealment. Little Dorrit was told that 'nothing disagreeable should ever be looked at.' There was once a child who ran to her governess, and, in unquotable words, borrowed from the gardener's boy, informed her that she was suffering from the heat. 'My dear,' replied her mentor, 'animals sweat; men perspire; but young ladies only glow.' Thus, at an early age was it impressed on the small girl that she was a being whom Providence had set apart from the rest of creation. Though the sun seemed to shine with equal force on her and her brothers, the results upon them were not allowed to be the same. Mother Nature, coarse old woman as she might be, had suspended certain laws in favor of the daughters of the genteel, while for those which, unfortunately, still operated, an elegant patchwork cloak of

hushes and euphemistic words had been invented. Advancing in her teens, the young lady may have found the suspensions fewer than she had been led to expect; but mother, aunts, and governess were constantly adding to the cloak's length. In the end it almost completely concealed her from herself.

'Fanny,' said Mrs. General, 'at present forms too many opinions. Perfect breeding forms none.' The time, one fears, has come when Fanny must form an opinion, even if breeding is thereby thrown to the winds. She must decide for herself about herself. The young lady of the past was generally content to live in a garden inclosed, taking no more than a few peeps through a chink; but she who is now with us has scaled the wall after throwing some preliminary stones over it. What she intends to do is uncertain, and her present position is anomalous. During the war she showed both desire and ability to be a useful member of society. If she wants employment, one does not wish to see her denied it; but it is scarcely fair for her at the same time to be keeping a man from his job and demanding everything but pin-money from her father. If she has decided to choose her own dresses, let her give some thought to her choice, and, if there is to be no censorship of her reading, one would beg her at once to develop her own critical faculties. Whether she determines to be a genuine wage-earner or not, to wear her skirts long or short or tight or full, to read natural history or romance, all will be well if there be some reason behind her decisions.

All the young lady's past, all the past, too, of her ancestresses, is against her. An acknowledged part of her education and theirs was 'to keep ideas from getting into the girl's head.' She

has been starved of ideas for generations, and is now trying to make her way through the world with no more illumination than that of the cigarette she has lighted for herself. Like Amy Dorrit, she may say that she requires a little time, although a learned judge, in the role of Papa Dorrit, frowns and looks anything but pleased. It is too late to talk of building her back into the care of a Mrs. General or a Mrs. Malaprop, for already she has taken a step or two into 'the contagious coun-

tries.' Nor is it any good merely to scold her. She has been a chrysalis, and is now alternately blamed for having emerged as a butterfly or a worker-bee, with all the defects of either insect. Give her the time she requires. Perhaps she will curl up, and, in the full sense of the term, become a young lady again, even though she will have no duenna to aid her. Or, possibly, she may spread herself, and presently become a woman.

Everyman

IN A LONDON SUMMER

BY PAMELA HICKSON

I stood in a sun-baked London street,
Weary of dust and glare,
And thought of a rain and wind-swept road
That runs to Dromahair.

Oh, would that I might leave this town
And travel once again
Along that wet and shining road
And feel the Irish rain!

If I can close my eyes a space
And leave this dusty street,
I feel the rain upon my face —
Was ever rain so sweet!

Oh, would that I might walk again
Through heather to the knee
Where all around is purple bloom
As far as eye can see.

That road runs winding through my heart.
I hear the peewits cry —
Oh, I must travel to Dromahair
Once more before I die!

The King's Highway