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## "American Girls are Swell, But..."

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# AMERICAN GIRLS ARE SWELL, BUT...

by  
Sgt. John P. Dolch



*Luna*  
An Army sergeant who  
fought in Europe risks his life again  
by frankly comparing  
foreign women with American girls

**F**IT ISN'T true that all barracks bull-sessions eventually get around to women, but the one we had the other night did. There were about eight of us, and we'd all been overseas for more than a year, part of the time in England, part in France.

We got to comparing American women with the ones we'd seen on this side of the Atlantic. There wasn't much argument, because, oddly enough, we agreed on pretty nearly every point. And we didn't overlook much: looks, charm, sex appeal, conversation, education, and womanliness, whatever that is. Even voices. (We decided, especially after hearing Englishwomen talk, that American girls sounded to us a little too high-pitched, harsh, and twangy.)

As for looks, we didn't have any trouble. The American girl is way out ahead. She's just naturally better-looking, with better figure and better legs. *Much* better legs. She's better groomed, too; she takes excellent care of her hair and teeth, which so many English girls don't. The Frenchwomen come next, in both natural looks and grooming. They've a natural gift with make-up; it's subtle and natural-looking and never too much. It must take them hours, but it's worth it.

The American girl is the best-dressed, too. She's got a neat, simple taste that we haven't seen anywhere else. Partly because we've learned to mass-produce good dresses that are also cheap. Britain hasn't yet learned this (although American dresses make an enormous hit there), and British girls tend to tweeds and low shoes and dresses that don't fit any too well.

That was true even in peacetime, and the war made it far, far worse—for which, of course, you can't blame the English girl. Now it's almost impossible for her to buy new clothes. By comparison, the average American girl has a wardrobe a British millionairess might envy.

*yes!*  
Frenchwomen do all right, too, when it comes to dressing. The war drastically restricted them also, so that many have had only one new dress a year, if that. But they've an amazing knack of taking an old towel and some old window curtains and making them into stunning clothes. And I'm not exaggerating; some of them actually used such materials. One night I watched a French girl, just for her own amusement, take her husband's blue and gray scarf and wind it into *five different kinds of hats for herself!* Each different, each very attractive.

Once we left the subjects of looks and clothes, we got out on some rather thin ice. Because, for example, we agreed that there's a certain simplicity and genuineness about the English girl we don't remember in the girls back home. Whatever the reason, we like it.

My memory may be getting rusty, but I seem to recall that a lot of American girls want to be entertained all the time. They're like a theater audience—impatient if somebody doesn't put on a good act for them. They want to be taken to a dance or a movie or out for dinner. Something's got to be happening all the time.

**T**HEN I compare that with the very first date I had in England. We simply went walking in the park. Then we dropped into a pub for a couple of beers. Total cost: 70 cents. Amusement? We just talked; that's cheap and it's the world's best entertainment. I didn't feel I had to keep her amused. She did as much to entertain me as I did to entertain her. It was simple and natural and genuine, and I think I enjoyed it more than any of the usual high-pressure expensive dates I had in the States.

Another thing we appreciated in the English girl was that she knew what the war was like. We feel toward the English girl as we would toward any other comrade who has gone through the same battle with us. I'm

afraid we won't feel that way about most American girls, although it's only fair to say it's no fault of their own. They weren't drafted for war work, and of course the war wasn't as close to them as it was to English girls—for which, thank God.

I guess the fact is that we've got a great respect for the way the British girl has faced up to the war. She went through more hell than most soldiers ever see. She's been through the terror of blitzes; she's pulled bodies from bombed houses; she's served tea to fire fighters as calmly as if she were in a parlor. She's died at gun controls, and she has done all kinds of difficult and dangerous jobs.

**T**HE French girl, too, has been sobered by the war, but in a different way. She's known what it's like to be conquered, with the smirking enemy strutting around the streets of France. She's known hunger that came near starvation; she's faced atrocities so cruel that many Americans have a hard time believing them; she's helped the underground Maquis, at the risk of her life; she's had armies fighting in her back yard and in her very home. She, too, knows what war is. . . .

As the bull-session moved on, we let down our hair and admitted frankly that we've been flattered abroad more than we've ever been flattered at home—and we're suckers enough to enjoy it. It's going to be a little hard to explain just what I mean by "flattered."

In European countries, a man is considered much more "the boss" than he is in America. Women defer to him more; they bring him his slippers; they go out of their way to please him—in food, in comfort, and in other ways. This is particularly true in France.

Now, don't get me wrong! I think the American idea of a fifty-fifty partnership between men and women is far sounder and far better. When I marry (if anybody will have me after this), I expect (Continued on page 139)

*No?  
many  
would  
disagree  
here!!  
so awful  
& they  
never  
take  
baths.*

# American Girls Are Swell, But...

(Continued from page 45)

it to be on a fifty-fifty basis. I'll get my own slippers. And I don't agree with most Europeans that American men are henpecked and browbeaten by their women. My only point is that no matter how bad all this kowtowing to men may be theoretically, in practice it's damned pleasant.

We're also flattered because girls abroad like our American sense of humor. They seem to think that almost everything we say is as witty as a Bob Hope crack. Back home, of course, the girls are used to this kind of chatter and it doesn't make much of an impression. I guess we're getting spoiled.

British girls, especially, like the way we compliment them. Apparently, British men never complimented them much, and they respond to it the way a flower does to the sun.

It seems to us that foreign women are more "womanly" than American ones, and that's another thing not easy to explain. It's not necessarily a matter of looks, because most English girls, for instance, dress and act more mannishly than American girls. I guess it has something to do with what I said a few paragraphs back about how women here put themselves out to please men. They regard themselves as completely different from males, especially in France. We've found out it's nice for women to be women. Just so they're not too helpless.

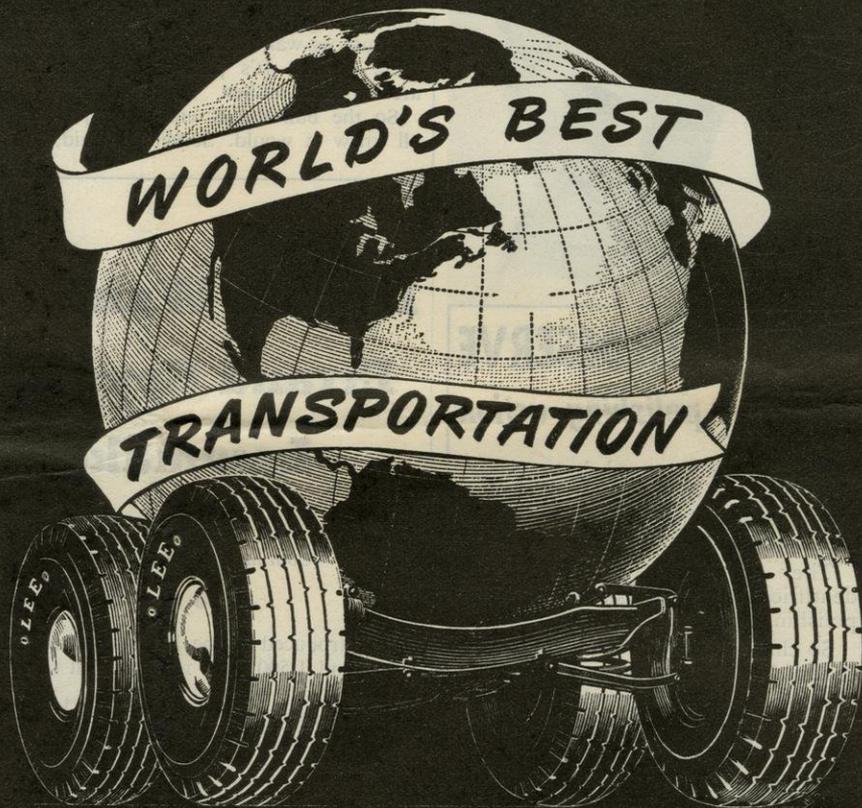
THIS leads us to sex appeal. H-m-m-m-m-m. It's hard to discuss, because nobody has ever yet figured out just what it is. However, we rated the Frenchwoman first, the American woman second, and the Englishwoman third.

Frenchwomen have a certain "light in their eyes." I hate to use such a vague phrase, but that's exactly what it is. You won't find that same light in either American or British girls. The eyes of Frenchwomen actually look different, as if a kind of *joie de vivre* were shining through. It's tantalizing, humorous, and intriguing. There is sex appeal in the very way they talk. They have a gift of light repartee which is gay and daring, as if they were playing the most fascinating game in the world—the game of being a woman—and enjoying it.

When we got around to education, we gave the blue ribbon to the American girl. One thing we've become convinced of is that the United States has far and away the finest school system in the world. We've met no woman abroad who is as well informed, generally, as the ones we've left behind. For a serious discussion (aside from war topics) we'll take the American girl every time—or at least most of the time.

She also seems more responsible and serious-minded than the French girl, for there are times when the gay, tantalizing talk of Paris isn't quite enough. It's fine for a date, but for a wife . . .

The war has given us our first chance to



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compare American girls with others. And, as I've indicated, we've discovered some things abroad that we wouldn't mind seeing in the women at home. But we doubt whether American girls will change much, and we're not sure we want them to, even if they're not quite perfect. It's just barely possible we aren't perfect, either.

So the bull-session ended up just as we all knew it would. Somebody said, "Yes,

but even after all the good points of these babes abroad, what kind of a girl would you marry?"

And of course all seven of us said American, and nobody but. The eighth man was already married to a British girl, and quite happily. The rest of us were ready to leave any minute to get back to the Statue of Liberty—and other women as well.

THE END ★★

## Do You Want Errand Boys or Lawmakers?

(Continued from page 33)

were introduced in the last session of Congress, and 1,500 were reported out of committee.

It has been proposed that congressional machinery should be modernized, the number of committees reduced, and that congressmen should be given adequate staffs, so that they may have more time for the job they were sent to Washington to do. Such reforms would help, but so long as members of Congress are required by their constituents to spend 90 per cent of their time at trivial chores, under compulsion of political disfavor, no amount of streamlining will make it possible for the legislative branch to serve the purpose for which it was created.

There can be little understanding of the real responsibilities of Congress by ladies of the Garden Club who call their congressman from Washington to make awards at the annual petunia exhibition, by the constituent who sends his congressman a model of his latest invention and asks to have it patented, by the job-seeker from my own district who got at least 50 of his friends to write urging me to help him get employment, or by the voter who asked me to send him a copy of *The World Almanac*.

Newcomers to Capitol Hill charged with ambition and enthusiasm are quickly discouraged by these unending selfish demands. The cynicism with which people regard their representatives in Washington is matched by the cynicism with which their representatives come to regard them. This is illustrated by a popular Cloak-Room story:

A candidate for re-election was distressed to find that one of his oldest friends was not supporting him in the campaign. When they met, the congressman asked for an explanation. "Jim," he said, "I can't believe you're not going to vote for me. What does this mean? You must have forgotten all I've done for you. Remember your Uncle Jake? Well, I got him appointed postmaster, didn't I?"

The voter admitted this.

"And I got your wife's brother the rural mail route, didn't I?"

"Yup," agreed the voter.

"And your son Billy," the congressman per-

sisted; "I got him an appointment to West Point."

"That's so," said his friend grudgingly. "But you ain't done nothing for me lately."

One of my colleagues, who had never distinguished himself as a lawmaker, was returned to Congress for more than 20 years by his constituency. He never failed to answer their letters. He wrote them friendly notes on their birthdays, sent them post cards when he traveled out of the country, and unflinchingly expressed his sympathy for the farmer whose silo burned down or the grocer whose till was emptied by thieves. He is a throwback to the early days of our history, when we were an isolated nation of small communities with small interests. He cannot mature in public service until his homefolks grow up to take their place as world citizens.

The final and decisive power in our system of government is granted by the Constitution to elected officials, particularly legislators. These lawmakers have the responsibility of maintaining the balance of power. If they fail, we must resign ourselves to some form of executive control.

Representative government will survive only if Congress continues as the chief policy-making branch of government. It will not survive if congressmen vote with blocs and yield to pressure groups because their calendars are too crowded with the affairs of individual constituents to allow them time to study legislation. It will not survive if, when "we the people" speak, we ask favors for ourselves without regard to the national interest, if we compel Congress to think in terms of the jobs its constituents want done instead of in terms of national welfare.

THE people are willing to give Congress the responsibility for curing unemployment, for adapting our domestic economy and national policies to new world conditions. They are willing to trust it with their money and their lives. But they are not willing to take it seriously.

Congressmen are regarded as comic-strip characters given to windy harangues on local power projects, with which they lull their colleagues to sleep. They are regarded as servants, not of the public, but of the individual voter. They are underpaid and overworked. Because their salaries are paid by the Government it is assumed that they aren't worth their salt. They are burdened with tasks to which an efficient business manager would assign an office boy—and threatened with political defeat if they demur.

Yet these are the men to whom the world looks for peace. Whether your children will go to war will depend on the kind of peace confirmed by the men and women you have sent to Congress. Without their co-operation and consent, as we discovered in 1919, there can be no respite from the dying, impoverishment, and weariness of war.

where are they?

don't