AMERICAN BEAUTY.

COMPARATIVE MEASUREMENTS OF GIRLS IN TWO CITIES.

The California Young Maiden Is Claimed to Be Nearer Perfect as to Form Than Her Sister in New York — Interesting Comparisons as to Feet.

A sculptor's ideal of beauty is evolved on mathematical principles. A perfect woman is 7 or 7½ or 8 heads tall; her shoulders are two heads wide; her legs are 3½ to 3¾ heads long; her waist is 3 heads in circumference. But the size of heads varies in women who are equally perfect in shape; the head of the Venus de Medici is nearly one-eighth less in proportion than that of the Venus of Milo or the Cnidian Venus of Praxiteles, which was esteemed by the ancients the most perfect statue in existence. The Medici Venus is a slim, slender girl, whose proportions resemble the statues of Psyche. Living reproductions of her are more frequently seen in New York than here.

There fell into The Argonaut's possession a list of measurements of the proportions of a young lady of San Francisco, who is looked upon as being beautiful and having a fine figure—in short, a typical California girl. With these we have compared a similar ground plan of a New York girl which we secured at the time Professor Sargent was collecting statistics concerning the young women in eastern seminaries; likewise the measurements of Ballow's well known ideal beauty. They compare as follows:

	California girl. Ft. In.	New York girl. Ft. In.	Ballow's ideal. Ft. In.
Height	5 6½	5 5½	5 6
Length of head	8¾	8	8½
Circumference of bust	35	30½	32
Circumference of hips	35	30	32
Circumference of waist	24	19½	26
Circumference of neck	12½	12½	13
Width of shoulders	17½	15½	16½

The weights of the first and the last are between 130 and 135 pounds, while the New York girl weighs about 126.

Polycletos, an old Greek sculptor from Licyon, left rules governing the relative proportions of the female frame. He said that twice the thumb was once round the wrist, which it is not, unless the thumb is unusually large and the wrist unusually slender; that twice the wrist is the size of the neck, which is about the case in a well proportioned woman; that twice the neck is once round the waist, which is about so. But he also says that the hand and foot and face should all be of the same length, which is very rarely the case, and that the body should be six times the length of the foot, which would limit most men, whose feet average ten inches in length, to a stature of five feet. The gentleman from Licyon is evidently not a trustworthy guide.

Referring to the above table, it will be observed that the waist of the New Yorker is much smaller than that of the other two. The fashion of small waists is the rage in the east, and the desired result is obtained by tight lacing, which is carried to such an extent that the physiognomist is lost in amazement as to where the lady has bestowed her vital organs. No statue in existence exhibits such a disproportion between the waist and those portions of the trunk which lie above and below it. The compression of the girth is a mere fashionable fad which good taste must condemn. Our California girl wears a 24-inch corset, which might easily be reduced to a 23-inch if the wearer saw fit to sacrifice comfort to eastern fashion. There are belles in New York who are not satisfied till they have squeezed themselves into a 17-inch corset. Such persons, it would seem, would have enjoyed the Scottish boot.

The bust and hips should, in a perfectly formed woman, be exactly the same in circumference. They are so in Ballow's ideal, in the Venus of Milo, in the Cnidian Venus and in the California girl. In the New Yorker the circumference of the bust is half an inch greater than that of the hips, which is probably the work of art, not nature.

Ballow does not give the dimensions of his ideal's feet or hands. He merely says that they are "in proportion," which is rather vague. The rule among sculptors is that the foot should measure one head, which is unsatisfactory, as some large women have small heads, and some small women large heads.

The female foot is probably smaller in New York society than here, for the simple reason that it has less to carry. Shoemakers say here that they sell more 4 and 4½ shoes than any others, but many ladies in society buy 3½, 3, and even 2½ shoes. The knights of St. Crispin do not believe in the sculptor's rule about feet. They say that small feet, like large wits, are a gift from heaven, and may be found attached to persons of any dimensions. Everybody has observed that there is no necessary connection between the hands and the figure; that some slim girls have large hands, and some girls with opulent figures small hands and fingers.

Take all the measurements together, and the conclusion is forced that the Californian girl more closely resembles the Cnidian Venus than the Venus of Medici, and that a representative Californian statue should be cast after a study of that masterpiece as well as of the Venus of Milo and the Venus Callipyge.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Women Carry Daggers.

A prominent jeweler says that he sells a number of daggers annually to women. These are not ornaments, but serious weapons. They are just large enough to slip easily inside a woman's gown. Some women have these made to order, when they are lavishly adorned and incrusted with precious stones. They are frequently carried in traveling, when they are intended as weapons of defense. They are preferred to revolvers, which are likely to go off summarily and in the wrong direction.—Jewelers' Circular.

Interpreting the Scriptures.

"There is a queer old preacher down in my country," said a native born Marylander to a party of friends in the Manhattan club one evening last week. The man had just returned from a visit to his old home after a long absence and was amusing the company with anecdotes.

"He is about seventy years old," continued the speaker, "and he has had little or no education and is utterly incapable of preaching a sermon. He believes every word, letter and punctuation mark in the Bible is inspired, and his method of teaching his flock is to read from the Scripture and expound and explain his reading to the best of his ability.

"Of course the good old man quite frequently runs up against some passage most difficult to interpret. His method of extricating himself, as I have reason to know, is unique. I was listening to his exposition of Solomon and all his glory the other Sunday and wondered how he was going to do justice to the great king in the matter of his thousand odd wives. All of a sudden he came upon the passage, which he read through slowly. Then he paused, mopped his brow and said:

" 'Brethren, we have come across a difficult passage. Let us, however, not shirk our duty. We must look the difficulty firmly in the face and pass on to the next verse.' And he promptly proceeded to do so, to the evident satisfaction of his flock."—New York Herald.

A Typical Mississippi Steamboat.

The City of Providence was one of a long line of Mississippi boats edging the broad, clean, sloping levee that fronts busy St. Louis. She was by far the largest and handsomest of the packets, but all are of one type, and that is worth describing. They are, so far as I remember, all painted white, and are very broad and low. Each carries two tall black funnels, capped with a bulging ornamental top, and carrying on rods swung between the funnels the trade mark of the company cut out of sheet iron, an anchor or an initial letter, a fox or a swan, or whatever.

There are three or four stories to these boats—first the open main deck for freight and for the boilers and engines, then the walled in saloon deck, with a row of windows and doors cut alternately close beside one another and with profuse ornamentation by means of jig saw work wherever it can be put, and last of all the "Texas," or officers' quarters, and the "bureau," or negro passengers' cabin, forming the third story.

Most of the large boats have the big square pilot house on top of the "Texas," but others carry it as part of the third story in front of the "Texas." The pilot house is always made to look graceful by means of an upper fringe of jig saw ornament, and usually carries a deer's head or pair of antlers in front of it.—Julian Ralph in Harper's.

A Mania for Decorations.

There are Frenchmen, according to M. Simon, who collect decorations just as others collect postage stamps. In certain official positions it appears the one thing is hardly more difficult than the other. "I knew," he says, "two public officials who had this inoffensive mania. One was fat. The chain on which he hung his medals spread across his ample chest and struck downward and was lost to view in his waistcoat pocket, in the interior of which the imagination pictured further honorary insignia. The other was thin, to his great disgust, and he could only exhibit some thirty decorations in a row. Some one advised him to wear a double line, just as unruly convicts wear a double chain. He did so, and he was quite right. His breast was a collection of all the animals of creation in gold, silver and enamel. It amused people to look at all this while he was speaking, and they were very glad of this little distraction, for he was an ass."—London News.

The Shape of the Shoe.

Our Puritan fathers wore shoes moderately peaked. About 1680 square toes made their appearance. In the reign of Mary, who died in 1658, there was a proclamation issued that no person should wear shoes over two inches wide at the toes. Square toes began to lose favor in 1757. In our newspapers from 1716 to 1735 round toes became more common, and peaked ones less, according to descriptions given of shoes on runaway slaves and servants. From 1737 shoe toes continued in a small proportion and became mostly pointed. This shape lasted nearly a hundred years. Square toes began again in 1825, and in 1836 were succeeded by round toes.—Boston Herald.

A Description of the Heart.

Here is a question and answer of a high school pupil:

Briefly describe the heart and its functions or work. The heart is a comical shaped bag. The heart is divided into several parts by a fleshy petition. These parts are called right artillery, left artillery, and so forth. The function of the heart is between the lungs. The work of the heart is to repair the different organs in about half a minute.—Miss A. C. Graham in University Correspondent.

A Shocking Organization.

The Liars' club is all that its name implies. It is composed largely of wicked fishermen whose improbable stories have given a bad name to honest, truth telling worshipers at the shrine of old Izaak Walton who would not tell a lie about the number of fish they caught for the world. The biggest liar is chosen president, and several gentlemen of prominence in our community have held the office.—New York Times.

A good conscience is to the soul what health is to the body—it preserves constant ease and serenity within us and more than countervails all the calamities and afflictions which can befall us without.—Addison.