

# Five Ages of Woman



"Childhood."

## Sculptor Sherry E. Fry's Remarkable Presentation of Unfolding Womanhood and His Personal Theories of the New Need of Education in Love.

By Nina Marbourg

AMERICAN art circles are discussing with lively interest the completed "Five Ages of Woman," sculptured by Sherry E. Fry, and Mr. Fry's theories of domestic education have occasioned scarcely less of comment.

Mr. Fry rather startles American complacency by asking, in effect, Are the women of America many years behind the rest of the world in their understanding of love?

Has the education of the women of this country been such that sex consciousness has been led to an extent dangerous to society?

If so, is the state of marriage to be left here to the foreign population, and are the American women to continue to regard the serious question as vulgar, or, absorbed in professional pursuits, find no time to give to love and marriage?

Much is said and written on the matter. But for all that, the large number of unmarried women in the United States is not being noticeably put down. Some have figured out the matter from a psychological point of view. Others lay it to economics and the entrance of women in business. The late Theodore Roosevelt fought race suicide with all his might. And it would seem now that the time had come to fight against the ever increasing numbers of bachelors and single women if there is to be a continuation of true American society.

### Studying the Eternal Feminine

Sherry E. Fry, one of America's leading sculptors, has given a great deal of serious thought and study to this subject. Mr. Fry was a captain in one of the camouflage divisions during the war, and having seen and studied women of other countries, he is only more strengthened in his opinion that the American system of education on the great issues of life, among American women, is not only mid-Victorian but is surely a menace to our future civilization.

Mr. Fry is not only a sculptor but a student. His long study of art has led him to delve into the art of the ancients and also the histories of many countries. For the past six years he has been slowly working out a group of five figures carrying the life of woman from childhood to motherhood. For this he has given much study to the philosophers both ancient and modern, and has produced a work that holds a message to the women and mothers of this time.

These five figures made by Mr. Fry speak out boldly, perhaps they hold a stronger appeal in their beautiful modeling and lines than could be made to the women of the age through pages of writing. This work is an appeal to the women to remember their sex, be proud of it rather than ashamed.

It was in Mr. Fry's studio at 21 Carmine street in New York's Latin quarter that he talked on the subject of this work. The next to the last figure he is just completing. This was left unfinished when he went to war, and is now receiving the last touches.

"The question," said Mr. Fry, "of the obligations of men and women toward one another and to society has been one that has interested me intensely. The education of women in such matters is vital to society, every person capable of thinking at all knows that marriage is necessary for the continuance of the race, and without this our society degenerates."

### Danger of Repression

"It seems to me that the whole matter centres around repression. Repression not only of desires but of thought and understanding. In this we have the most striking instance of the survival of the Puritanical strain in the American mind. Hide, cover up, do not speak with your daughters of love, marriage, child birth—and if you do speak of these things do so in hushed, ashamed tones. Do not properly prepare them for the world. Keep them ignorant of the greatest thing in the world—sex consciousness and love."

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"That is the method that is being pursued, and has been pursued for years and years in this country, and now, as never before, the dangerous result of this training is being seen.

"At one time women had to marry because they were not in a position to be economically independent. But even at that time they were kept in a state of ridiculous ignorance until their marriage. Now that many are independent as far as money is concerned, that old and deep training of repression is coming out strong, and in a year you cannot change a state of mind that has been bred for generations. The result is that the business woman is not marrying, her sex con-

"Motherhood."



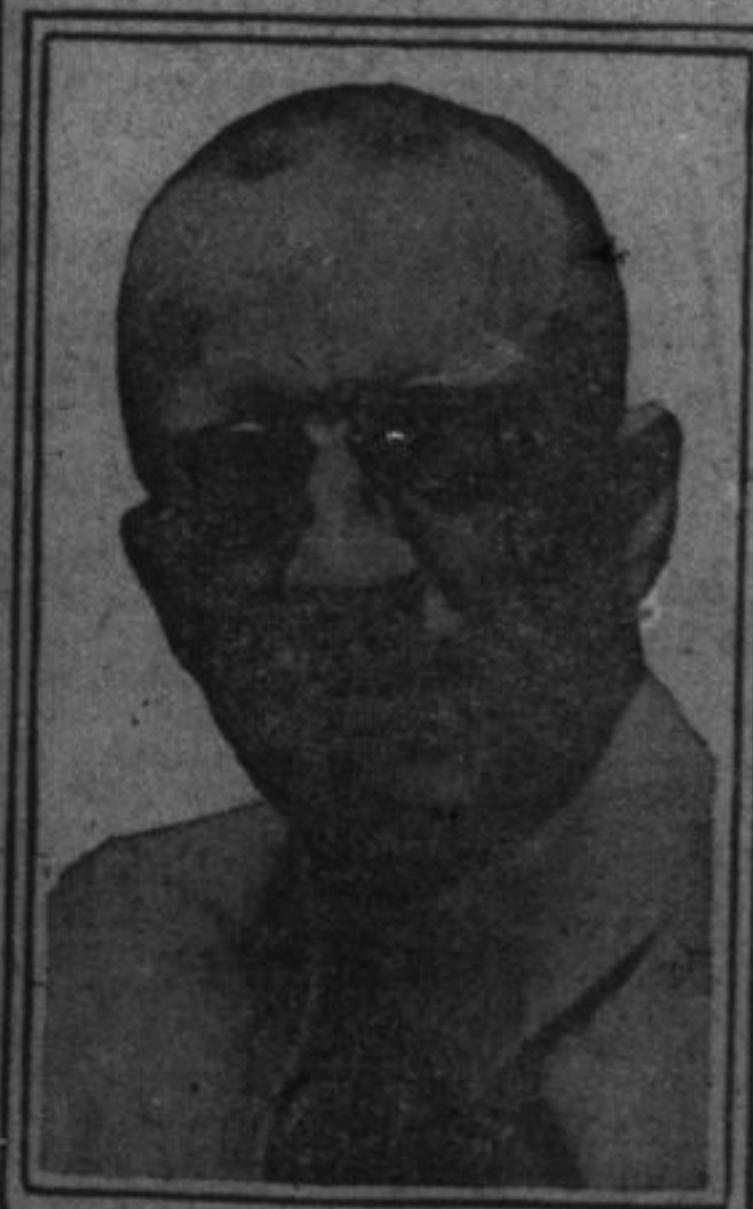
"The Awakening."

sciousness is being repressed, and to a greater extent than ever before, for she will tell you plainly that she 'has no time to think of love or romance,' and many, many women will tell you today that they have never been in love, and hope they never will be.

### The Effect on Society

"That is one side of what the repression for generations has done to the society of today. But there is another side, that means that hundreds of women are taking the other extreme, equally upsetting to society, and that is radicalism and free love. These two factions in society, the 'conservatives' and the 'individualists,' are dominant at present, and it is only through education

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"The Offering of Love."

that matters may be righted.

"Do not think for a moment that I mean all restraint is to be thrown aside when I say that is not it. I can think of no better example than the women of foreign countries.

"The girls of those countries have been educated to know that in love and sex consciousness there is nothing wrong, nothing 'bad.' They do not outwardly restrain their emotions, but as surely as you are here, they have been taught that love is the greatest thing in the world, that it is the ultimate thing, and have been so prepared for its coming that they radiate a gentle, suppressed glow, the thing that means the great feminine appeal. They are not on the defensive; they are not always on guard watching for situations that would prove uncomfortable, neither do they throw down the bars of convention. These women have been so reared and educated that in them one sees the finest of examples of repression of the right sort, and this is the thing that must come to America.

"In the work that I have just completed I have given a great deal of thought and study. For this I early decided that it would be impossible to use a model and obtain the desired result. Using a model destroyed the ideal. I desired to follow the development of the woman from childhood to motherhood as it seems to me that it should develop. One could not select a child and wait for this, and if he did begin to do so, especially in this day and age, the result might have been decidedly opposite to the one I have tried to attain. In fact such a thing would be impossible; so I studied and worked, and I have endeavored to give the amount of repression to the modeling that imparts the spiritual and intellectual development of the woman.

### Beginning with the Child

"This possibility of development is in every woman who is truly feminine. If you watch you will see the woman unfold like a beautiful flower. If her surroundings are right, her education clean and pure, without the drawing of the curtain over the great things of life, all this will come naturally.

"Of course one begins with the child—the unawakened little soul, the clean white sheet ready to record impressions. The child grows, and from the little girl one suddenly finds before him a bud, delicate, hushed, on the brink of the great

"Fulfillment."



beginning of life, and here at this first dawning of sex consciousness when the education of this delicate creature should be most natural, here at this critical time the curtain is drawn closely over 'life' and the repression is doubled. Ideally this bud should gradually, naturally unfold until we have the young woman ready and waiting for love. As the flower unfolds in the light, so does the woman's nature unfold, and as the flower offers its petals to the sun, so does she offer her self to love.

"You may see this in young women if you study them, and when education has been right when the right repression has been taught, they are wonderful in the sweet repose and waiting. When such has not occurred there is a restless nervousness that many times drives away love; at this period in woman's development comes the turning point and at this turning point in the American woman the 'career' has stepped in to kill the longing for affection.

"And now love has come. She draws about her a veil of mystery, calm, content, marvelling at the world about her; she is confident of the beauty of the world, the greatness of love.

"This complete round of her life comes with motherhood. Once again begins the wonder of the world. Her child, the wonder, the marvel, the beauty of it all. Here is fulfillment, completeness.

"This is the beauty of woman as I see it, the true course of life. That such a beautiful unfolding should be stunted by economic conditions by wrong education is a great crime, and a crime against the men and women of a country that will be felt as surely as the world moves by any nation that cannot or will not learn the great importance of the education of the young men and young women concerning the great issues of life."