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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12, 1921.

American Appreciation of Art

Jo Davidson, the sculptor of international fame who, from an east side messenger boy, fought his way to pre-eminence, has faith in the aesthetic qualities of the American people. Art is universal, he says, and the American child is naturally as much of an artist as any child on earth. Because of our concentration on other things, there has been little demand for pictures, hence the supply has been meagre. If we could make the connection between supply and demand, we should see a great development of creative art, for the universal passion for beauty in line and form would be revealed.

Mr. Davidson thinks that the solving of this problem is not for the artist, who is not an economist, but for minds of the type which created the public library. America, he says, is the greatest market in the world for books. "And because the people can get all sorts of books in their homes, it is possible for almost everybody to get the kind of books he wants at a very reasonable price. But we can't get the kind of pictures we want. Pictures, for most people, are an unattainable luxury. If we will examine the difference between the way literature was developed in America and the way in which we have attempted to develop art we can find the reason."

Instead of cultivating a great popular taste by supplying books which could be taken home from the libraries, thus stimulating the reading habit, we have established museums, splendid as repositories of the great art, but confusing and without appeal to the uninitiated. Art can not begin with museums and be "handed down" to the people; it must come through the people, and develop to the point where it can be handed up to the museum. Instead of having pictures crowded together in galleries where they fatigue rather than inspire, pictures should be in circulation in school rooms and in homes, says the sculptor. Art, as the expression of emotions, can not be static. Hence there should be frequent changes in the pictures about us. The charm of a home lies not in what it is, but in what it is becoming, and the pictures which reflect the growth one year may not be an inspiration the next.

Because even the most attractive pictures do not always "wear well," the circulating picture gallery would give to all subscribers the living message at a small cost. There are no big financial problems to be solved, as every work of art could be insured, and each artist could be assured a royalty in proportion to the amount of rent received. Not as charity or as "uplift," but as a sound business proposition and as an incalculable aid to art, the circulation of statutory and paintings should therefore appeal to the American who, with Jo Davidson, would like to live in a more beautiful world.

The sculptor has one other message of comfort to the American who is a novice in art criticism: "There are no good pictures and no bad ones. A picture is good or bad according to what it means to you. If it makes a big appeal to you, it is good as far as you are concerned, regardless of what I or any other critic may have to say. And if it leaves you cold, it isn't good for you, no matter how much some of us may rave about it. . . . We need not worry about the popular taste. The public will develop its own taste just as soon as it is free to do so; but it cannot do so until it has access to works of art."

Increases in Wealth

Contrary to the commonly held opinion that the United States made more money out of the war, or during the war period, than any other nation, are the statistics just published by the Savings Banks Association of the state of New York. While the United States' estimated wealth is today \$300,000,000,000, a gain of \$50,000,000,000 since 1914, Great Britain shows an advance of \$100,000,000,000, making a total of \$230,000,000,000 to date. In considering these figures, one must realize, of course, the fact that, though they are based upon financial reports from foreign and domestic sources, they are at best estimates. In the case of England, for instance, the big gain is due to the wealth added by the Mesopotamian oil fields, African territory taken from Germany, and the elimination of Germany as a trade competitor. The elements in all three sources are unstable; no one can tell to what extent new territory is to be a source of revenue, and to what extent a source of trouble only. That these figures are vouched for by a financial organization of the standing of the Savings Banks Association, however, is guaranty of their probable accuracy. We are richer than any other nation in the world, but at any rate no one can accuse us of having only "war baby" wealth.

Laughing Gas

To those pessimistic Americans who sometimes wonder if they are getting their money's worth out of Congress we would recommend enrollment on the subscription books of the Congressional Record, a fairly well known journal published in the City of Washington by Uncle Sam himself. We are convinced that any skeptic would thereby be set a-wondering why the circulation of this congressional product is not alone sufficient to defray all of the necessary expenses of the government with an occasional battleship thrown in for good measure.

Perhaps because we have always been somewhat sinistrally minded it is the humorous department of the journal that usually engages the larger share of our interest. It may not be generally known that the sound of boisterous laughter now and then echoes through the halls in which our statesmen sit. Let doubt no longer persist. There is laughter and cause for laughter, as we may learn from the most casual perusal of the Record's pages. With apologies in advance for the injury that we may inflict upon the prestige of such feeble imitators as Life and Judge, we beg leave to reproduce a few average examples:

Mr. Miller—Mr. Chairman, I exceedingly regret that the gentleman from Illinois is scandalized by the railroads. He probably arrived at that conclusion because of his absolute ignorance of the situation. (Laughter).

Mr. Madden—That is what I have been dreaming of.
Mr. Miller—Dream a while longer but do not explode. (Laughter).

The Miller brand of humor may seem a little too much like rough stuff, but we shall bear with him a little longer:

Mr. Miller—There are other places outside the great state of Illinois. (Laughter).

Mr. Madden—Not many. (Laughter).

Mr. Miller—I am afraid that is a correct survey of the mental horizon of the gentleman from Illinois. (Laughter).

Enter the well known Blanton of Texas, with Mr. Good.

Mr. Good—I do not suppose that there would be a great many of these people who could have been induced to visit the national parks if some attractive literature advertising the parks had not been prepared.

Mr. Blanton—Oh, every time a man gets money enough to take a trip in the summer time, he goes to some of our national parks—if he doesn't go somewhere else. (Laughter).

We had begun to realize by this time that the men who defined humor as a mixture of love and wit had never attended a session of the House or perused the pages of the Record. The Congressional branch of humor, we are persuaded, is put to love—otherwise its perpetrators would not so long survive.

The gods of merriment were at this point dispersed by the following solemn, not to say startling pronouncement from the chair: "The time of the gentleman from Texas has expired. All time has expired." And there was no laughter, not even a giggle.

The Inaugural Up in the Air

It is becoming clearer every day that the policy of Mr. Harding is to make up his mind only when there is nothing else left to do. Millions of thoughtful Americans will be quick to commend his action in ordering a suspension of the elaborate preparations for his inauguration. The repugnance which he professes to feel toward an unnecessary expenditure of money on that event has long been in evidence among the people of the country generally. They will not now feel that they are merely indulging in a disposition to querulousness if they inquire why the President-elect's decision was withheld so long. Mr. Harding must have been aware of the ambitious inaugural plans which were well under way at Washington, both in Congress and among the socially elect of the national capital. Time and again it was stated that he had placed the matter entirely in the hands of his friends and would veto no part of their program. The order to suspend comes after large expenditures have already been made on the preliminary preparations, after Congress has solemnly, sometimes heatedly, debated the matter of inaugural appropriations through many weary hours. The lumber that was to have been used in the fifty thousand dollar inaugural stand already rests in nice, even stacks near the intended scene. The legislative end of the program had been concluded. But suddenly Mr. Harding has made up his mind and wired "No." Congress doesn't know what to do. Edward McLean is in the same fix, and so are thousands of others who had banked strongly on the approaching show.

We believe that Mr. Harding should be commended on the wisdom and good taste indicated by his decision. We believe that even an eleventh hour abandonment of the lavish program is preferable to its full execution. But our uneasiness over his possibilities as a Chief Executive is not removed or abated by this illustration of his seeming inability to decide at the time when a decision may be most effective.

We imagine "Senator" Newberry would be entirely willing to have the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections count him out if he could have any assurance that the Supreme Court is not about to count him in.

The best minds seem to have been clever enough to draw Mr. Harding into one of the most befuddling and bedevilling situations of his ordinarily placid existence.

President Wilson, according to his physician, is now able to do two hours work daily without fatigue. He may not know it, but there are a great many perfectly sound huskies who consider that a pretty stiff record.

Granted a day's leave from jury service with the solemn warning from the court that she must return promptly the following morning, a Philadelphia woman departed with an air, "Thank you so much, I'll be back as soon as I can." We do hope she didn't forget.

"We are living in an age of bold and adventurous men," said a Western bishop, who then proceeded quite unconsciously to show that women are entitled to about ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent of the responsibility.

We expended so much energy protesting against England's wartime habit of reading our mail that we can't get up much steam for a kick against the alleged present practice of giving our cable stuff a once-over.

It is our firm belief that something will come of this agitation for disarmament yet. In addition to the innumerable arguments of a more substantial sort, we must consider the shrewd appeal carried in the second half of that phrase, "naval holiday."

Letters to the Editor

COMMENTS EDITORIALS

EDITOR OF THE STAR:
Permit me to express my admiration and hearty indorsement of several editorials appearing in recent issues of The Star. I do this with the more pleasure as I am often obliged to disagree with your editorial pronouncements. At such times, however, as you may notice, I, like David, keep silence and without somewhat of the same feeling. The editorials of the issues of January 5th were particularly worthy of commendation. I will take them up seriatim.

"Wastage in Fees" should have the hearty indorsement of all thoughtful citizens, as also "No Concealed Legislation." New Hanover county has been particularly unfortunate in this respect, being made a sort of football for this particular kind of legislation during the past few years. The passage of a law at one session, only to be followed by its immediate repeal at the next, does not tend to increase respect for laws and law-makers. I am not expressing any opinion as to the laws themselves, some I approved of, some I did not; it is the method I am criticizing. Any law worthy of the name should only be enacted after serious and full consideration or repealed, if repeal is necessary, in the same manner. And the citizens, or at least those more immediately affected, should always be consulted.

"A Different 'Klan'" should be applauded by all true Americans. There is no place in this free America and no need for any secret order to assist in furthering the government. "Open covenants openly arrived at" would be but an impertinent slogan in connection with affairs abroad if it did not likewise apply to the conduct of affairs at home. The right of free speech and a free press are guaranteed both by the federal and state constitutions and a full, fair and impartial administration of the laws of both state and federal officials is the best and, in fact, only way by which the citizen may be assured that his constitutional liberties will not be infringed.

But it was "The Value of Good Manners" that I most wished to refer to. This should be cut out and pasted in every home in our city and the parents should endeavor to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest and outwardly apply same. Good manners bear a close relation to good morals; a disregard of one soon leads to disregard for the other. To be a lady or a gentleman in the best sense of those much abused words, should be held up before our boys and girls as the end of their endeavors. This is not dependent upon rank or condition, which is often only a cloak to gloss over real uncouthness, but rather upon innate goodness of heart, of which good manners is or should be only the outward and visible sign. How, then, are we to attain to this much desired good manners and good morals? By association with the good, the true, the cultivated, whenever possible. By study of and reflection upon ennobling subjects. By reading of good books and the best literature. By frequenting only those places of amusement which appeal to all that is good and true in us. Here I come to that vexed subject, the movies.

Whether we approve of them or not, they seem to be with us. How then to make them a means for dispensing good rather than evil? By insisting that they show those pictures from which something worthy may be learned rather than something debasing or criminal. Everyone enjoys good comedy occasionally, but the so-called comics of the movies are simply exhibitions of vulgarity which if enacted in any private house would be a cause for calling the police. Yet young children are taken to see such "reels." Children are universally imitative, small wonder that their manners become uncouth and boisterous. Even worse are the attempts at serious drama. The unreal and overdrawn situations, even when they do not verge upon the vicious, which is only too often, yet tend to give the immature mind a false view of what appears so like actual life that one is half deceived into believing it must have actually happened. Such scenes are bad for the adult; let alone the unformed mind. The melodramatic detective stories are often worse; in many cities they are being prohibited by the police, much real crime having been traced to them. The great increase in criminals, especially youthful ones is thought due to their having received their first impulse to exploits of crime and violence through visiting some drama of the screen.

The Church Service League of St. James' church of our city has recently given serious consideration to this question and in the interest of the child has been endeavoring to have a certain afternoon in each week set apart by the local management on which pictures that appeal to the child mind or that deal in uplifting and educative subjects shall be given. In this way the movie may be made a helpful adjunct to the education of the child rather than something to be guarded against as a menace to the youth of the community.
LILLIAN M. B. RODGERS.

Contemporary Views

SCIENCE AND DISEASE

New York Tribune: How the number of deaths by disease may be greatly reduced by the use of present-day knowledge is strikingly brought out by Health Commissioner Copeland. In this city sixty years ago 28 out of every thousand patients died of smallpox, while last year Dr. Copeland says, makes it possible to tell whether a child is susceptible or immune to the disease. This discovery will be of incalculable benefit. If the remarkable development and growth of medical knowledge for the treatment and prevention of disease could be flanked on the other hand by the general application of known methods of sanitation and hygiene in living conditions the dream of a diseaseless world might be realized.

A LARGE "IF"

Kansas City Star: Cuba, it is said, is sure of continued prosperity in spite of the process of deflation going on there, if the people work and save and if the government takes no unwise step. That's how sure.

The news columns tell of an appeal for the hard of hearing; likewise of many appeals for the ear



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Rheuma is absolutely harmless and thoroughly reliable because it is one discovery that has forced rheumatism to yield and disappear. It is recommended and sold on the no-cure-no-pay plan by R. R. Bellamy and good druggists everywhere. —Adv.

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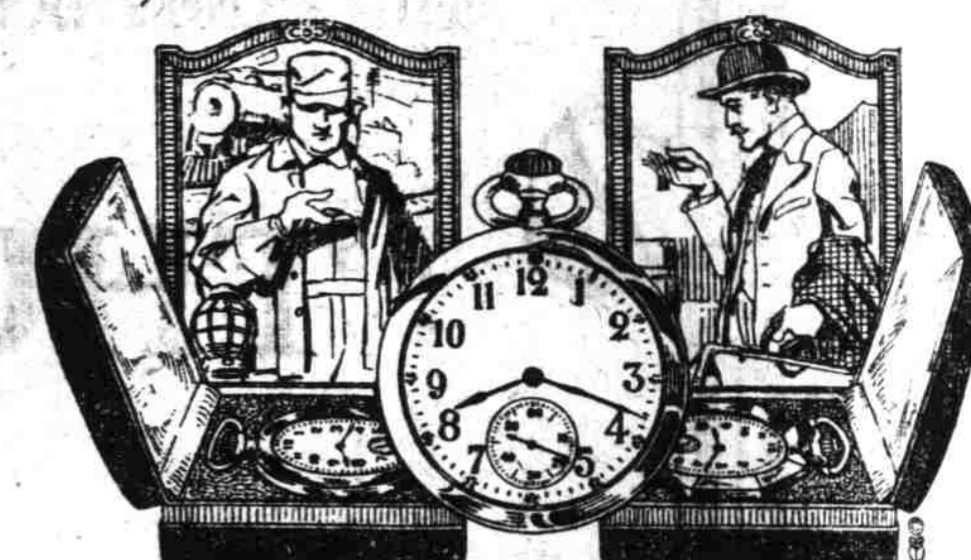
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Notice to Stockholders

The Annual Meeting of the Stockholders of The Wilmington Savings and Trust Company, of Wilmington, N. C., will be held at the office of the company on Thursday, January 20, 1921, at 11 o'clock. It is desired that all stockholders be present at the meeting.

The Wilmington Savings & Trust Co.

W. HULL MOORE, Cashier