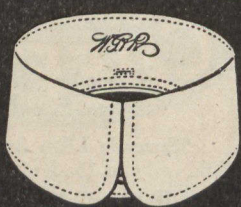


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PEOPLE AND PLACES

"ONCE to every man and nation comes the moment to decide," is a saying of Lowell's which the Toronto Guild of Civic Art urges for the consideration of the citizens in its report on a comprehensive plan for systematic improvements in Toronto. The Guild thinks that the Queen City has been very dilatory and negligent in forming a resolution about matters aesthetic. Toronto of late years has mainly been devoting her energies to piling up population and to commercial development. The question of civic improvement has been lost. This situation is not peculiar to Toronto. Chicago went mad over wheat, and, at one time, finance was the chief concern of New York. But Uncle Sam's cities have learned a lesson. They discovered that a town which allowed an alley to be termed a street, and jammed its buildings in artistic chaos was destined to have congestion of population, a slum problem, and a high death rate. Thirty-nine cities of the United States have gone in for wide continuous business thoroughfares, parks, parkways, playgrounds, aquatic sports, pure water, sanitary sewage disposal, rapid transit, clean streets, underground wires and a thousand other brisk ideas which tend to make the daily grind a wee bit easier. Their fancies cost money. Baltimore amassed thirty million dollars not long ago in order to be up-to-date. This is since the big blaze down in the Maryland city. That affliction was after a manner a blessing. The flames licked up a lot of ungainliness and awkwardness, and gave scope for the ingenuity of the decorators. Toronto had a fire about the same time. But Canadian conservatism saw no necessity for expenditure beyond a paltry \$300,000 for better fire-fighting facilities, to prevent the occurrence of a similar catastrophe. The cities of the Dominion are getting big enough to assume a metropolitan aspect. Toronto on the Bay could set an example by adding the word Improvement to her vocabulary. She has the advantage of natural situation. A great many people will add that she has the price tucked away somewhere in the City Hall tower to pay the salaries of landscape painters for years to come.

* * *

FOOTBALL INSANITY.

TORONTO was last week football crazy. There were some weird scenes during the period of aberration. When Ottawa comes rough-riding into the Queen City there is invariably a Pretoria stir among the denizens of Ontario's capital; none of it so picturesque as the other Wednesday evening when three hundred Varsity students sat down on long, thin Yonge street in front of a store waiting for the plan of the big game to open. Students in congregation do not as a rule willingly recline. In lecture rooms even under the spell of the most poetical black-gowned eloquence they are ever restive; their theatre deportment is traditionally a boisterous antipathy to the villain and hero alike; on the public highway theirs is a deplorable tendency to smash everything in sight. This bunch was the quietest and most excited ever seen. They were tired. Some of them had been at their posts since eight o'clock in the morning. There were twelve hours of the siege yet before they could get a chance at the eighteen hundred reserved seats for their greenbacks. All came fully prepared to spend a gentleman-hobo existence out on the chilly street. The landlady of Bill, the freshman, would have had to resort to gin if she had happened by and seen the star boarder curled up in that nice, soft quilt intended for the best room, which Cousin Anne had just sent in from the country. The boys had quilts, cushions, sheets and great coats of fur; could they have brought the radiators down from the residences domestic felicity to them would have been complete. They rolled into palatial bank doorways, and lay by the curb—some to hear the panting of the rugby ball over the frozen ground in their dreams; others to squint through spectacles, persistent in their efforts to follow Aristotle's speculations and the intricacies of Plato's Republic by the ruddy glimmer of a cigarette or the weak rays from a distant street lamp. One little, pale-faced freshman fell asleep in four overcoats with a torch of a cigar between his fingers glowing dangerously near his clothing. The freshman and the coats might have fallen into a serious predicament had not a sweet-faced lady come to the rescue.

Were the vicissitudes experienced by the night hawks worth while? The boys think so. A good many embryo lawyers made more money in the twelve hours than they will ever probably enjoy in a period of like duration, until they begin to draw the fees of corporation law. Anything from ten to thirty dollars was commonly paid by gridiron enthusiasts to exchange places with the lucky three hundred in the line-up. The man in the van was offered forty-five dollars cash and said no.

* * *

TORONTO THE "DULL."

ONCE in a while Toronto struggles into print—outside the daily and weekly papers published in that city. Two United States periodicals lately contained the name "Toronto" the same week; one being a story by Will Payne, "The Losing Game," in the *Saturday Evening Post*; the other by Mrs. Humphry Ward in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. A few months ago also *Harper's* mentioned Toronto in a story by Norman Duncan. All of which is worth noticing, because it is said to be the fashion nowadays for United States editors to change the locale of Canadian stories to the United States because they object to giving Canada too much free advertising, even in literature.

This, however, may be the plaint of a few disgruntled litterateurs who get their stories "doctored." At all events Mrs. Humphry Ward goes Kipling one better when he called Toronto "consumingly commercial." She calls it—Dull! Heavens! and she even intimates that one of these days interesting Winnipeg will be as dull as Toronto. This is as bad as being called "The Good"—or even "Hogtown!"

Well if Toronto is dull—how does Mrs. Ward know it? She was in that city about a day last year when she delivered a lecture on "The Peasant in Literature." So far as can be ascertained Toronto society did its dead level best to fall over itself paying homage to the woman novelist. Perhaps that is what she objected to.

Well, what makes Toronto dull? Very likely the peasant in literature has something to do with it. There are a lot of people in Toronto who were born on the farm. That is no sin. It is probably a good thing for Canada that a large percentage of the people in the second city came from the outlying places. Toronto's alleged dullness is very likely a good thing—even though it has nothing to do with the fact that Toronto is hopelessly Tory. One of these days we shall probably need all the dullness Toronto has—to keep the rest of the country from running away with the game.

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