

At the Sign of the Wooden Leg.

You have all read many columns of advice in magazines and newspapers on how to build a homelike home for \$600, or how to convert a backyard fence into a fairyland facade or something of that sort. Few realize, so runs the rede of these journalists, what a man or woman can do with a dozen tomato cans and a yard of burlap. I am not one of the few. I realize very little in the department of simple economies. When I need a chair for my attic room I go to Bryson & Graham's and buy it on the instalment plan, well aware all the time that with a flour barrel and a discarded shirt, not to count in the brass tacks, etc., I could devise a chair for my use not less uncomfortable and hardly more expensive than the one I have bought for \$3.98. Allow me then to talk to you for a while on the Art of Economy.

We must first find some definitions. Art is the doing of ordinary things as if they did not concern us, and unordinary things as if they were the only things necessary to be done. It creates hencoops in the Queen Anne style when Mother Hen would be as well pleased with a dry goods box, and searches the hundred languages of the world in vain pursuit of rhymes for "month" and "orange." Art is long, but work is longer. In the world of labor we must ring in our hours of arrival and departure; in the world of art we quit when we please. "There are no clocks in Arden."

Now, Economy defies successful definition. One must experience it like faith, but unlike faith it cannot be called the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. On the contrary, it substitutes hope for substance and a bank balance for realities. It is a secondary virtue, a primary vice, and for most

of us an ultimate necessity. It supplies texts for copybooks, clips the wings of imagination, and makes landlords out of people who might have been men. You remember the despairing cry of Burke: "The age of chivalry is gone; that of sophisters, economists and calculators has succeeded." So it is with individuals as with nations. In youth we would follow Arthur and Lancelot, but at mid-life are found with Sir Kay, the seneschal among the meats.

Can we then speak of the Art of Economy? I think so, for it is only the miserable practice of it that deadens the feelings and paralyzes the heart. For example, the practice of economy is the erecting of a 50 x 100 ft. building in a business section on five thousand square feet of space. The art of economy is exemplified by the owner paying taxes on the lot and growing rhubarb there. This latter can become economic practice only when the lot rises in value. In fact it is the glory of art to be inexpressible in terms of money, so that even he who is an artist in things economic has a fine disdain of the practical and works for the joy of the working.

An artist needs two things, — genius and a plastic material wherewith to work. One feels inclined to say that the specialist in the economic art must have not so much a material as a lack of material, but that is a poor paradox and confounds again art with practice. A thirsty man with a thimbleful of water at his lips cannot have the balance of faculties necessary to make him an artist at saving, but he is a genius who fills his scallop at the river brink and, knowing that the stream is fed by countless springs on the hillside, treasures every drop as if he were in the centre of the Sahara. As you sit at your breakfast to-morrow eating your toast, imagine for a moment that you are on a raft in mid-ocean, and that the last crust has just been