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Light in Pictures

SINCE ARTISTS, LIKE DOCTORS, usually differ, it is not surprising to find the masters of the brush disputing as to the merits of the great French collection of pictures—with some Belgian—now at the Canadian National Exhibition. That is a sure sign that the interest of the public is safeguarded. If all the artists agreed that the show in question was first-class it would be a conspiracy against the public. Not to see some of these remarkable canvases is to have missed a carnival of restrained and opulent colour such as could be garnered from nothing but a thousand splendid sunsets. To see half of them is a glimpse of a very exhilarating world. In such a Latinized aggregation we do not look for pure virility or crude, Cromwellian realism. We find instead no end of obviously interesting—and some obviously obscure—subjects treated in a tremendous variety of styles. Much—perhaps the bulk of it—is called Impressionism. The "Post" is omitted. Futurism in any form is not contained in this congregation of canvases, most of them produced during the past fifteen years.

We can scarcely agree with the artist who said that the interest was largely pathological. Some of the pictures may suggest clinics. Most of them are of infinite stimulus in colour, form and atmosphere.

One thing that characterizes these French pictures and that could scarcely be missed even in a ten-minute scud through the gallery, is the astounding use of light. This was a great stroke of the Impressionists. Some artists paint light, as they do trees or sheep. The real Impressionist treats it as the eyes of the pictures, or the light that comes from the eyes. The suffused, subjective treatment of light makes a great picture resemble a strong face in which the light of expression pervades every feature. That is away better than painting light, as one does a shadow.

If no other quality strikes the visitor to that show, this masterly handling of light in many of the pictures is sure to be observed. But there is also a marvelous prodigality of colours, and a superabundance of high vibrations. The lady in the green-lemon-yellow full-bloom skirt looking with alarm at the frog interrupting her toilet is a fine example of daring in the use of a rather disagreeable colour. And there are low tones as well.

In such a vast and comprehensive collection, the finest foreign exhibit ever shown here, there is infinite room for disagreement among the artists—and general keen interest on the part of the public.

American Railway Troubles

CERTAIN FACTS REGARDING the present deadlock between the American railways and a number of their employees are worth knowing. The strike, which at this moment seems likely to take place in spite of President Wilson's mediation, will represent only 18 per cent. of the railway employees of the United States. The strike would throw out of employment 1,400,000 other railway employees and thirty-two million workers in other lines dependent upon the railways for their prosperity. All of this seems likely to happen in spite of the railroad commissions of half a dozen American States, in spite of the Interstate Commission, and now—so it would seem at the time of writing—in spite of the American President himself.

The claim of the Brotherhoods, if granted, must affect Canada sooner or later, since it means a heavy increase in the rates of pay of the men, an increase that must affect all other workers in railwaydom on this continent. A considerable body of fair-minded people in the United States stands, this time, on the side of the railways against their employees. The men involved have steadfastly refused arbitration and seem inclined to secure their demands by sheer insistence. Neutral observers state that the trouble arises merely from the desire of Brotherhood officials to "show off" just before the Brotherhoods elect

new officers. Whether this is so cannot be judged satisfactorily from here. If it is so, it is a good argument against internationalization of railway unions on this continent.

Newspaper Defeats

HARTLEY DEWART'S ELECTION as a Liberal in southwest Toronto was, among other things, a defeat for the Liberal papers that opposed him. They were defeated not for lack of effort on their part, nor for lack of skill in backing their effort, but because the public often does and will think for itself whatever its favourite papers may say. Toronto Liberals were not encouraged by their papers to elect the Liberal Dewart. They were discouraged—yet they elected him. The power of the press is not always infallible.

Luggage in Retreat

WITH THE USUAL MIXTURE of courage and stupidity, the Germans planned all their campaigns on one basis—a basis of victory. They reckoned always on being able to make and hold the offensive. For that purpose they created gargantuan siege guns and other heavy contrivances.

But in defeat these instruments are a burden. The German cannot retreat quickly. His mobility is hampered. This is one important reason why the Germans put up such a poor defence compared to their offensives. The further back the Germans are driven the greater must be their embarrassment. Their chariots of victory become their refugee luggage.

Smiles and the Law

AFTER all, it is public opinion that enforces anti-liquor-selling laws. If, after prohibition goes into effect in a province, the people wink at the violation of the law and smile sympathetically at the law-breaker, who "does time" for filling the bowl for thirsty customers—then the law is lost. There have always been certain offences for which, if a man served a jail sentence, no stigma was attached to him. A certain popular senator at Ottawa was met by a brass band on his release from jail after serving a term for criminal libel. There are people who will take the same attitude toward liquor selling. They must be frowned down. The hardship of a jail term counts for little. The disgrace involved is the real deterrent.

A Practical Reply

ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN, Professor of English and Literature in Dalhousie University, makes a ringing response to the question asked on this page not long ago, "Why no Poet," referring to the lack of good poetry about our Canadians at the front. This is Professor MacMechan's answer:

THE CANADIANS AT YPRES.

(April 22-24, 1915.)

They did all men could do. The smoke of hell
Gripped at their throats, but could not force them
back!

The grey-coat foe charg'd hotly in the track
Swept by his iron hurricane of shell,

Resolved to win the sea-gate. None may tell

The force he pour'd, attack on mad attack,

On our brave few, as in the direst lack

Of every aid, three days they fought,—and fell.

But they endur'd. They held their blood-soaked
ground.

Between the sea-gate and the desperate foe

Their thin, worn lines were adamant bars.

Therefore their names with honor shall be crown'd

In their dear land's fair story, not with woe,

And in the record, they shall shine like stars.

ARCHIBALD MACMECHAN.

Comment is unnecessary.

Secret Diplomacy

PACIFISTS BLAME "SECRET DIPLOMACY" for war. What do they blame for secret diplomacy? Lowes Dickenson would charge it against the traditional systems of Europe or the indifference of *hoi polloi*. The truth of the matter is that even in the most enlightened countries it is this indifference or ignorance of the people that enables secret diplomacy to flourish—indeed, compels states to rely upon that kind of diplomacy.

Between the interests of the ordinary voter and the viewpoint of statesmen there is a wide gulf. The average voter in England, in Canada, in the United States does not know the meaning of "economics" and has no conception of the economic problems which the state as a whole has to face and

solve. It is these economic or fancied economic interests of states that bring about most great wars between civilized states. Great Britain's overseas trade, the outlets for her goods abroad and the sources of supply for raw material are her great problems. Thus India has, in the past at all events, been a reservoir of raw materials for British manufacturers. If Russia appeared to menace India, the diplomatists of the Court of St. James were at once very busy. If German aggression in Africa menaced a base from which England defended her commerce with India and other parts of the world, England was naturally on the qui vive.

A comparative few manufacturers, importers and exporters in every state have a close and quick understanding of the economic interests or trade ambitions of their State as a whole. These men, as a matter of fact, are the unseen prime movers in the shaping of foreign policy and the diplomacy based thereon. But the bottom-layers of mankind, and often even the scholars of great universities, have no understanding of these primary facts.

If the world is to have open diplomacy it must have open objectives and open motives driving them toward those objectives. The public in those countries must be raised to a position to understand these things. Pacifists may believe it possible within a reasonable period. It is a big problem. Until it is solved there is no use disclaiming secret diplomacy.

Getting Rid of the Germ

ITALY'S DECLARATION OF WAR against Germany is an act of postponement. It is also the clearest proof yet that Italy has become wise to the common menace of Germany. From the best available accounts, the German influence had made as much deadly headway in Italy as it had in Russia. Business, finance, religion, art, politics, had all been incredibly Germanized. There was a good reason. Italy was in alliance with Germany. The surest way to keep her in line was, not merely to get Italian ink on treaties, but to get German money, brains and intrigue into the life of Italy. It took Russia more than a year to get rid of the Germanized bureaucrats in her system. England had her troubles with them. France was canker-eaten with German influences. Italy, next to Austria, was the most Germanized non-German country in Europe.

The delay of King Emmanuel in declaring war on Germany is quite natural. Much of the reason at first was the local desire to settle the score with Austria by reclaiming Italia Iredenta, by the plausible machinations of Prince von Buelow married to an Italian woman, and the lack of a clear understanding that after all it was Germany who was bludgeoning Austria into the war.

Having frankly made a common enemy of Germany, the Italians are now in a position to free soldiers for service on other fronts than their own, and are well rid of the doubtful imputation that perhaps after all Italy was not fighting for the cause of civilization so much as for the cause of Italy. Her declaring war on Germany may seem like a mere technicality. It is much more. It is another step in the process of consolidating the aims of the Allies.

The Penalty of Facility

TWO MODERN WRITERS WHO ARE heavily advertised are H. G. Wells and Hilaire Belloc. Mr. Wells belongs to the most up-to-date popular-analytical-novel-writing class with an occasional excursion into the realm of prophecy. Mr. Hilaire Belloc writes analyses of the war, its past, present and future. Both gentlemen have allowed their work to suffer by the easiness with which words come to them. They write too much and say too little. This is more true of Belloc than of Wells.

Reading one of Wells' latest books, a series of essays on the future and what it holds, one is impressed by his bold declaration that Oxford and Cambridge and the kind of learning they have represented for several hundred years, are both dead, never to be revived. For this Wells praises whatever deity he believes in. So also must many thoughtful people. A new Oxford and a new Cambridge, with more sense of the future and its hopes and problems than of the past with its fetid antiquities, may result from this war. It is to be sincerely wished for.

Mr. Belloc, unlike Mr. Wells, shows himself in most unfavourable light in his study of "The Second Phase" of the war. Praise be, we have escaped seeing his "First Phase." The second is a sort of talking-in-his-sleep lecture in which the writer takes half his chapters to explain why he can't give you any accurate analysis of the Battle of the Marne until it is over. The other half tells nothing.