

THROUGH A MONOCLE

SPENDING OR WASTING, WHICH?

I NOTICED the other day that a number of wealthy men in New York were listed as paying \$25,000 a year each for apartments in an apartment building. That is a fairish amount of rent to pay, and then not get a house, but only a part of a house. As some one pointed out to me, as we chatted about the item, four or five years' rent would build quite a house. Yet the gentlemen who paid this rent were shrewd New York business men, and no one imagines that they could be "done." I am very certain that they could not have got these apartments for less. Yet I rather suspect that they could have got other apartments just not quite so good, and whose original cost was not so very much smaller, for a good deal less. That is, I fancy that a considerable part of that \$25,000 a year is paid for the privilege of living in the very best; and that the rent for these apartments will fall heavily one of these days when somebody else builds others a trifle better. Moreover, the smaller rent will probably pay for the money invested.

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THERE are several things which an item like this suggests. One is that it pays splendidly to produce the very best of whatever you are engaged in producing. It is the last step up the ladder of excellence that makes your fortune. There may not be more—let us say—than a few hundred dollars difference between the fourth last step and the third last step and the second last, while the difference between that and the very last step may reach as many thousands. It is entirely worth while to make yourself or your product the best. This may sound a little trite; but I have been thinking of it while playing golf recently. Usually there is only one prize worth having to be played for. Now you may beat all the field but one man; and you are very little better off than the player who stands fifth or tenth. But if you go up just one place, you get the Cup.

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NOW this pays especially on this Continent; and that for a reason which hardly seems to me to be very much to our credit. We are so wastefully extravagant over here that we constantly pay much more for things than they are worth—if we happen to want them very much. If a man possesses what is admittedly the best thing of a sort which is in demand, he can ask what he likes for it—and get it. Take lawyers as an example. There is not so very much difference between good lawyers and the few leaders at the bar; but we all know that many good lawyers have quite a time to make a living, while the few best simply charge what they please. Some of us have so much money—I like to say "some of us" in such a connection, though what I ought to write is "some of them"—that we cease to know its value; and we will let a man help himself out of our pocket-book if that is the only way to get from him something we want.

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NOW this wasteful lavishness with money is not so evident in the Old World. I would not like to say that no Englishman would pay \$25,000 for an apartment; for I might be confounded by the statement that some are actually doing it. But I do not believe that any Englishman, whose family has been wealthy long enough to get them well-accustomed to the fact, would do so. Yet it is not that they lack wealth. There is more wealth by far in England and France than in the United States. Men like the Duke of Westminster have untold wealth; and they have—not one house—but a half-dozen Palaces. Still they get a Palace and not an apartment for their money; and my point is that Europeans do not waste money—not that they do not spend it. Such a place as Eaton Hall, which the Duke of Westminster possesses outside of Chester, or Blenheim, which the Duke of Marlborough has near Oxford, is simply priceless. You might as well try to put a value on sunshine as assess such places. The European has things; but he does not pay ten prices for the glorious privilege of being known to possess something just a trifle better than anyone else.

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THE American tourist is known from one end of Europe to the other as "an easy mark." In one way, that is a compliment to our Continent. We make our money much more easily than that class of Europeans who bother with us when we are

over there. A dollar looks less to us than it does to them. But that is because—as shrewd old Thomas Carlyle put it—we have very few people to very much land. We talk about this Continent being "filled up." The Americans especially talk that way. Why, you could not find us with a search warrant if we got scattered a bit. It is not our cleverness or our industry that gets us this "easy money"; it is the vast store-house of nature to which we have practically free access. The only clever move we have made in the business is to get born out here—those of us who have not immigrated of our own volition. But as for this subject of cleverness, I feel that it is too delicate a topic for talk. I notice it makes us cross to have anyone say other people can possibly be cleverer than we are—we, with our unparalleled school system (which is beginning to borrow a few of the German ideas), our free institutions (copied from Britain), our moral movements (adapted from the

same source), and our religions (imported variously from Europe and Asia).

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BUT I will say that we do not begin to touch the Europeans for industry. We do not know what work is out here—and we ought to be very thankful for our ignorance. However, this is getting away from the subject we started to discuss. That was waste. We now waste because we have it. But what will we do when we can no longer "tickle the earth" and see it "laugh in a harvest?" Possibly we will then learn to work. It will be a sorry lesson; for work has always been a curse from the days of Adam. But it is equally certain that we will at the same time learn a worthy lesson; and that is the folly and wickedness of waste. We will no longer go about the world bragging of our good fortune in the most offensive fashion. We will not pay two prices for a thing just to show that we can pay it. We will cease to be ashamed of thrift and the old-fashioned virtues. Our morals are now largely the morals of a mining camp. That stage will pass. And we will get the spirit of civilization, whereas we are now content to make a brave showing of its furniture.

THE MONOCLE MAN.

MEMORIES OF MUSIC MASTERS

By AUGUSTUS BRIDLE

MUSIC is one form of art that undergoes suspension in the middle of the year. It hibernates in summer. From the end of June till early in September the studio is closed; an exceedingly melancholy place. While artists are out on the hills with palette and brush getting material for winter painting, and writers are busy grinding out copy for summer reading, the man of music closes the door on his piano and gets as far from the sound of music as he may.

It is a matter for speculation whether our musicians, when they get to the rocks and the silent places, perceive in the sounds and sights of nature much to remind them of the studio. Probably not. I have known a number of music teachers who, when they got away from the studio, got a sudden interest in trying to compose. The distracting potpourri of the daily grind, along with its frightful monotony, gave place to a quiet routine of nature where the sunrise and the rippling river and the rocks—

Some balderdash here. The poetic conception of the music master is an exploded notion. He himself knows you are foolish to credit him with anything more than a good reputation and an earning capacity. He knows that some men make money out of music. It is the aim of every music teacher to make money. Many of them do so—very well. Few of them have to struggle with paying rent and taxes on seven pupils at fifty cents a lesson; which has been done in Canada often enough and might be a good thing to happen to some studioites of the present day.

But the music-master who got his fifty cents a lesson had no studio. He went from house to house. I have in mind one very useful personage in the backwoods story of this country who rode horseback or drove a sulky many a weary mile in a day to reach pupils in remote settlements whose parents paid about twenty-five cents a lesson and sometimes had trouble paying that till after the wheat was sold or the hogs killed. I recall several who covered the circuits as faithfully as did any circuit preacher with his saddle-bags. They kept alight the puny torches of primitive culture in a rude community. The best their pupils played was the "Mountain Belle Schottische" or something from Richardson's Pianoforte adapted to the cabinet reed organ.

With fond respect also I remember the itinerant whose chief business in life it was to run singing-schools. This man had no abiding place. He camped among the farmer folk who gave him the best they had—feather bed in the spare room and a wash-bowl, so that he came upon the family at breakfast full-combed and ready, while the farmer's sons were still wiping on the family towel in the kitchen corner. He had a mysterious book of notation containing rounds and pieces for two parts and three parts and four parts; and he wrote exercises in a fascinating way. Also he had some sort of chart of music which he called a modulator, the complement of which was the school pointer; and when of a winter evening he had the school-house lighted and the box-stove roaring with fire, the folk of two and sometimes of three generations assembled on the benches to learn singing by the method of do-ra-me.

It was a highly stimulating exercise, as well as

a profoundly beautiful pastime. The music romances of the singing school are without number; delightful background recollections of an age when the troubles of too much art had not invaded the rural breast; when there was a real art-hunger among the young folk and their elders; when such as could sing at all respectably were duly enrolled in the church choir, each to the part the singing-master had assigned him—and many the conference he had to find out who was soprano and who alto, which tenor and which bass; mezzos and baritones being unknown. He taught them the rudiments and he did it well. The rounds they learned were the preliminary to the part songs and the anthems—all in the same book, which cost twenty-five cents or more, when one would do for two if both were in the same family. "Sing Ye Jehovah's Praises" might come in the same evening with "Three Blind Mice." It was all good. And when the singing-school got out to the sleigh-boxes and the old lay-back cutters and the stoneboats, jingling home under the moon, the choristers sang anything that came handy without regard to the notation—chief among which were "John Brown's Body" and "Nellie Gray."

Well-remembered, too, is the personage who, at a later era of country culture, conceived it possible to go from house to house teaching boys and girls to sing by the individual method. He was a more pretentious if less admirable person. His methods were all a mystery. He knew how to distinguish a chest tone from a head tone, which the old sol-faist of the baton and the modulator never troubled about. He discoursed upon tone colour and phrasing and the value of bringing the tone forward to the teeth. He even went so far as to regulate the breathing of the family—with delicate allusions to the function of the diaphragm, whatever that might be. The exercises he gave were scientifically and artfully set to the vowels from *a* to *u*, and he had a passion for producing from the artless, spontaneous voices of rustic folk the velvety texture of the concert stage and the shuddering crescendoes that accompany what he called interpretation.

This sublime person fluttered up many households, and he was the courier of culture. It was due to him as much as to all else combined that father was persuaded at length to trade off the old reed organ and buy a piano which was much better to accompany the voice and gave so much more inspiration in culture. Then, before he had anybody's voice out of the underbrush, and when he had got to the end of his vocal tether even to the collection of his fees, he wound up the quarter and went out to other parts to do it all over again.

Such are a few of the music masters whose primitive efforts in rude places blazed the trail to the modern studio which costs as much to furnish as any one of them could make in five years. Music culture has profoundly changed. We are beset with modern culture. From September till June we are its victims. The season opens and closes as methodically as a concertina. Probably we are more musical than we were in the days of the singing school. But we don't have quite the same unsullied enjoyment of musical art as we had when our stock-in-trade was the "Mountain Belle Schottische" and "Sing Ye Jehovah's Praises."