

But in some of our public galleries it is largely the fault of the management that visitors do not more often buy with periods of quiet contemplation, and take away in their memories as their own possession for ever, the treasures of beauty that are displayed before them.

As for the "cherishing of gifted persons," it is, of course, highly important, for upon such persons we depend not only for the right conduct of our museums and the right guidance of the public, but also for the art of the future. Often the museum will be the agency that reveals to some frequenter that he is a gifted person; but if he really is this—if he is born an artist or born with a strong love for art and keen and delicate powers of perception and appreciation—he will be able to direct his own development. For him the museum will scarcely need to do more than make itself as rich in the excellencies of art as it can. It is those who have vaguer desires, or even as yet no conscious desire at all for the ministrations of beauty, who chiefly need that the museum shall exert itself in their interest. Perhaps it is time now to ask more definitely, What can it expect to do for them, to do for the people at large?

Not, of course, to turn them in quantities into accomplished amateurs of art! But it may hope to give some of them a love of art, of beauty, that will be a perennial fount of refreshment and true pleasure. And it may hope to prove to many that material things are not all in all; to widen their horizon and temper their devotion to the cult of "practical efficiency" by demonstrating that there are matters of genuine interest apart from the bread-earning routine and the money-grasping adventure; and to improve their taste so that they may wish for decency, order, and beauty in the conduct and the surroundings of their daily lives. If it is to do this in any widespread way, if, in Emerson's words, it is so to "open the sense of beauty" that "vulgar manners, tricks, bad eating, yelps, and all the miscreations of ugliness will become intolerable," it must strive for one main result which will be at the same time the root of further progress. It must convince the people that art, that beauty, is not a mere ornament of existence, but a prime necessity of the eye and the soul, and that it need not be the personal possession of a few of the rich and leisured only but may be and should be a general possession, an integral part of the life of the community.

In our museums of art should the lines be drawn to embrace "fine art" only? Evidently not. Indeed, when we think what art really meant to any really creative people, we must mourn that the term "fine art" has been incorporated in the name and that its implications have been respected in the policy of any large American museum. Evidently the public is right when it takes a special interest in a broadly inclusive collection of the work of a people like the Egyptians, who never made a useful object without striving to please the eye, and seem scarcely ever to have made a beautiful object which did not serve some definite purpose. To show the artistic products of each land and period as inclusively as possible, and with their aid to explain as clearly as possible the intimate interweaving of art with every phase of the life of the people that produced it, surely, in the America of to-day, which lacks the vivid object-lessons bequeathed by the past to older countries, this is the proper aim of a museum—not to set art aside from life by trying to segregate its higher "purer" forms. One way to emphasize the intimate connection that may and should exist between art and life is to show the affinities of the art with the history and the literature of any given period.

To-day we offer our urban populations one beautiful and beneficent thing that mediaeval people did not have, the public park. But apart from this, what? Little excepting the museum of art. If they find pleasure there, even unaccompanied by such profit as we hope that many of them will also reap, surely the benefit will react upon us all; for to be starved for pleasure is as bad for a man as to be starved for bread and is even more provocative of evil thoughts and deeds.

So a first and foremost duty of a museum room is not to look dreary. Yet I remember some that do—some that are cold and colourless, inhospitable, even empty-looking, although in fact they contain very beautiful and precious things. It is not enough to show such things. Each room as a whole, the museum as a whole, must at least be pleasing to the sight. If it can be sumptuous, a veritable expression of "the riches of art," so much the better. And why should not a museum dedicated to plastic art be used to further other kinds of aesthetic enjoyment which will be beneficial in themselves and will attract people who might not otherwise seek its collections? What most surely and widely attracts our people to-day is music. Is there any good reason—that is,

any unsurmountable reason—why at certain times music should not be provided for them in our art museums as it is in our parks, but of a higher quality than is there appropriate?

## STILL BEAUTY-HUNTING

*Most Modern of Poets Continues to Discourse on the Ancient Theme of Bards*

DISCUSSING modern poetry in general and "Georgian Poetry" (a new volume) in particular, S. P. B. Mais, in the Nineteenth Century, gives an interesting account of Mr. Lascelles Abercrombie's play, *The End of the World*. The



### THE GRATIFIED WISH OF THE ENTENTE.

"We have always wanted to see a beaten Hohenzollern, and here he is!"

The reference, of course, is to King Ferdinand of Roumania.

—Erich Wilke in *Jugend*, Munich.

plot of *The End of the World*, he writes, is quite simple. The scene is an ale-house kitchen; a stranger comes in full of news to the assembled drinkers, news which they attempt to drag from him by various means. He tries to convey to them his state of mind:

I wonder, did you ever hate to feel  
The earth so splendid and so fine?

They come to the conclusion that he is mad:

Yes, I was mad and crying mad, to see  
The earth so fine, fine all for nothing;

he then opens the door and shows them a comet in the sky; he says that that means the end of the world; they are about to be burnt up:

Time shall brush the fields as visibly  
As a rough hand brushes against the nap  
Of gleaming cloth—killing the season's colour . . .  
And sailors panting on their warping decks  
Will watch the sea steam like broth about them.

The publican wishes he had his old wife with him:

This would have suited her.  
"I do like things to happen!" she would say,  
Never shindy enough for her; and now  
She's gone and can't be seeing that.

Each man takes the news differently and calls down the derision of the dowser on their original scepticism:

Ay, you begin to feel it now, I think;  
But Life,  
Life with her skill of a million years' perfection,  
Of sunlight, and of clouds about the moon,  
Spring lighting her daffodils . . .  
And mountains sitting in their purple clothes . . .  
O life I am thinking of, life the wonder,  
All blotched out by a brutal thrust of fire  
Like a midge that a clumsy thumb squashes and  
smears.

Huff the farmer seizes the occasion to gloat over the faithlessness of his wife: now at least he will see vengeance. The man with whom his wife ran away comes in, and Huff attempts to make him cower, but to no purpose, and the curtain rings down on Act I., leaving the dowser alone bemoaning the intolerable waste of beauty that all this scorching of the world will bring about.

On the rise of the curtain for the second and last Act we see Sollers, the wainwright, wrecking the ale-house room in a frenzy of apprehension; the publican comes in weeping, "I've seen the moon; it has nigh broke my heart . . . I never before so noted her." Beauty at last is beginning to mean something to him now that it is all about to be smashed up and ruined. Merrick, the smith, begins to achieve a philosophy; he begins to find a meaning in the life which is just slipping past him:

You know, this is much more than being happy.  
'Tis hunger of some power in you, that lives  
On your heart's welcome for all sorts of luck,  
But always looks beyond you for its meaning.  
The world was always looking to use its life  
In some great handsome way at last. And now—  
We are just fooled. . . . I've had my turn.  
The world may be for the sake of naught at last,  
But it has been for my sake: I've had that.

Huff comes in, moody, unable to find comfort in the vengeance he thought to obtain from the panic-stricken evil-doers: his good, straight life has been like that of a crawling caterpillar . . . he thinks of a day long past in Droitwich, where he saw women half-naked cooking brine . . . he could have been daring once but missed his chance: suddenly Shale, his wife's lover, comes in and implores Huff to take his wife back: Warp, the molecatcher, enters during the scene that follows and tells them that there is nothing to fear: the comet is going away from them: Huff's ricks are alight, certainly, but there is to be no end of the world—yet.

Mrs. Huff turns both from her lover and her husband:

They thinking I'd be near one or the other  
After this night.

We are left with Vine moaning:

But is it certain there'll be nothing smasht?  
Not even a house knockt roaring down in crumbles?  
—And I did think, I'd open my wife's mouth  
With envy of the dreadful things I'd seen!

There is no doubt about the fascination of the play: it holds the reader's attention throughout: there is not a false note from beginning to end. It contains all the philosophy of the younger school: the unending search after beauty, the refusal to shut the eyes to ugliness and dirt, the endeavour to find a meaning in life, the determination to live life to the full and to enjoy. At all costs they strive to avoid sentimentality: these country folk in *The End of the World* really live: they may be coarse: they certainly have their tragedies, but they are human. We seem



### THE INJURED HUN.

"Can't yer SEE what a peace-loving man I am?"

—Norman Lindsay in *Sydney Bulletin*.