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of Beauty
to a City

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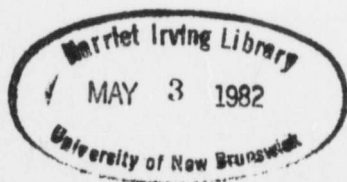


THE VALUE
OF
BEAUTY
TO A CITY



1905

FREDERICTON, N. B.
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The Value of
Beauty
To a City

Chief among the things of Life worthy of pursuit are Love and Beauty, and all that serves not to assist in their creation is unworthy of man's thought and energy. Those who really guide the world are engaged in devising effective ways and means for making this earth fit to live in, and are leaving the matter of paradise, in a future world, to take care of itself.



*The Value of Beauty
to a City.*

GEORGE

THE small minority of great men who guide the world, have decreed that the essential things needed to change this earth from gehenna to paradise are three in number—**Liberty, Health and Beauty.**

Liberty of all kinds ; political, religious and social,—Health of all kinds ; physical, intellectual and spiritual.

Above all, beauty of all kinds and everywhere ; not only beauty of the body, mind and soul, but of the house, the **City**, the state and the nation.

So wide spread has this philosophy become in Europe, that already there is in France in the progress of evolution a new religion called “The religion of the beautiful.”

Very few on this side of the Atlantic have heard of this growing religion, because new truths travel slowly, and Canadians are so busy making money. Besides, every new truth creates pain, and the pain is in exact proportion to the novelty of the new truth, and we do so hate to be disturbed by a new truth. But next to Love, Beauty is the only really important thing in this world, and when a man becomes truly enlightened he does not fail to see this truth.

This being the fact, it has always seemed to me strange that the Anglo-Saxon race has ever been so indifferent, not to the beautiful, but to the ugly.

There is no people in the civilized world which will put up with, and tolerate ugliness as quietly and as long as the English and American people. We as a people appreciate the beautiful, but we do not hunger for it.

The result is we are not irritated or shocked by the ugly. The cause of this is simple,—we love power more than anything else on earth. As long as we see our energy rewarded by the increase of our power we are happy. If, incidentally, we grow in beauty, or acquire some beautiful things, we do not grumble. But to make beauty in all its forms,—beauty of our mind, soul and body, of our home, City and nation, our main object in life has never occurred to many of us. Until it does, until we co-operate, not simply to build up an army or navy of volunteers, factories and such, but also to make our country lovable by making it beautiful, we cannot be said to have come out of our swaddling clothes in the process of our civic or moral evolution. What good will a hundred and fifty thousand dollars do you unless you spend it? It will enable you to strut about like a turkey gobbler and

say, "Look at me, how rich I am," an absurd spectacle. And if you spend it, you are bound to spend it on beautiful things,—unless you wish to work for the deterioration of yourself and those around you.

You cannot spend all your money for material things only, without surely lowering the tone of your mind and soul.

And what is true of the individual is true of the City and the province. For beauty is the first product of the finest activity of the finest men of the race. Therefore the amount of beauty in a community or a nation is the finest test of the moral and intellectual activity—and the true civilization—of that community or nation. In short this earth will only begin to be a paradise when mankind seek first universal peace, then universal liberty, universal health, and universal beauty. There are many among us, no doubt,

to whom these thoughts are perhaps, mere platitudes. But it can do no harm to express them over and over again.

What we need to do is to get together and co-operate for the production of beauty everywhere.

No matter how eager we may be in the pursuit of a private fortune and of power, we can still be respectable citizens, if we think of and pay for our share in beautifying the city we happen to live in.

If we had a truly healthy civic life, we would set aside annually as a regular thing, at least **One Per Cent.** of our taxes for the purpose,—and cheerfully. As we have no healthy civic life anywhere in this world, such an idea will seem ridiculous to the average conservative business man and lawmaker ; but what is there to prevent us from spending such a small sum of our yearly taxes on the beau-

tifying of our City, or even less than that, if all were not agreed as to the amount. We say every dollar of money spent in any City for civic beauty, within a certain limit, is a dollar invested, and invested in a heavy interest bearing asset. This is true of course within a certain limit only. But within that limit it is so true as to become ridiculously true. All love the beautiful. Only, some pursue it lazily and others with energy.

But people will always gravitate, slow but sure, towards a city or country known to be beautiful.

If you go to Europe, you see it there, and if we had time and space we could make a long and detailed argument, backed up by figures to prove the commercial value of beauty to any City, and its power to increase property value anywhere, and to prove the heavy interest, bearing capacity of every dollar invested in beauti-

ful fountains, statues and parks.

We will mention one fact : In Paris, that greatest storehouse of civic experience in the world, whenever the City wishes to clean out a certain quarter, it proceeds to make a small square, and put into it flower beds, a fountain and a statue or two. In a few years the whole quarter becomes transformed. Old houses are supplanted by new and more beautiful ones, and the whole population changes in character. And, in a very short time, the increased taxable value of the neighborhood brings in an increase of taxes that quickly pays for the park, fountain and statues.

Such statements ought not to require any proof. Of course there is a limit **beyond** which that which we say is not true, for we can overdo a thing as well as underdo it.

Now what can we do with our

City—We will not say what we ought to do as Citizens.

But what would we do, if we were in a position to carry out some of our ideas. Having one of the finest locations for beautiful residences and business houses, that we know of, and located as Fredericton is, on a level, fronting a beautiful stretch of the Saint John River, we would set about to improve the entire front from the Old Government House to Elmcroft. Quite an undertaking I think I hear some say. We would put Queens Park in good order and ornament it with Elm and Maple trees, have a band stand in the centre or a small fountain, settees all over the grounds, swings for the little tots, a pond of water, statues and so forth. It is true the City has done no great work, as a City, but many of the Citizens have worked assiduously and unselfishly for the general improvement against

opposition. Yet it is also true that we have only just begun. Many improvements and reforms call for the energy of all our wide awake Citizens to take advantage of every opportunity offered and our watchword should be no flagging, no backward movements, but onward until we conquer all objections.

We hope to see in the near future a beautiful Park made out of Queens Park, where old and young, the loved and unloved can enjoy their measure of happiness or lessen the pangs of grief basking under the starry canopy of God's goodness to man.

We hope to see the day and that soon, when the weary toiler, after a hard day's work can seat himself in one of the new settees with his partner in life and his little ones and there enjoy the balmy breezes from College Hill and then look up into the starry heavens and thank God for living in

such a day and the beautiful City of Fredericton, governed by a generous number of Aldermen.

To live in the hearts we leave behind is not to die,—we must be judged by what we do and not by what we say.

We would not asphalt the walks, but have a mixture of clay and sand which would last for years if properly done, we would have a drinking fountain for the thirsty, and grade the gutters so the water would run off as fast as it came down.

We would organize a committee for every one or two blocks, of residents who would take pride in their block or blocks, and take full charge of keeping the same in proper shape. This would arouse not only local pride, but a generous and beautiful rivalry.

In the centre of each block we would sink boxes to receive blocks,

chips, paper and sweepings, level with the walk with a cover to hide the contents and have them emptied by the city team to the city dump. If this would not suit them Garbage Cans or barrels with covers to be treated as above.

We have many magnificent trees in this city and they are a priceless heritage. They should be the objects of jealous care. Alas, it is not so, many are ruined by the electric and telephone wires. We would make a personal friend of every tree, honor it, talk to it when it is well, and nurse it when it is sick, and punish anyone severely if they injure it in any way. We would not give any permission to cut down a tree unless unavoidable. And as soon as a tree should die, we would immediately plant another in its place and nurse it also into strength and beauty. Fredericton is more like a garden with houses thrown in and

is fitly called the **Celestial City**.

A good Hotel back on the hill for summer use on the highest ground so as to get a good view of the City, River, Saint Marys and Gibson, would be in order, but we suppose we are looking too far ahead. We would make a nice road across the back part of the City on the hill from College to Brick Hill road, for a drive way for tourists or visitors as well as for the citizens making a round ride up one road, across and down the other. The views from there can scarcely be excelled.

In order to carry out this idea of the beautiful we would as soon as possible, pass a law that every telephone, telegraph and electric wire must go under ground,—nothing is more hideous in the City than ugly telegraph poles, they are an eye-sore and a danger to our trees. This may seem hard on the stockholders of the Com-

pany, but if we must have them we advise iron poles higher up and fewer of them. These are only some of the features we would introduce into Fredericton if we had the power.

To carry out our ideas we would have a regular plan drawn up for the beautifying of our City by a standing committee of public spirited citizens including both sexes ; and we would have on it Doctors, Lawyers, Architects, Engineers, Editors, practical mechanics and level headed men. We would follow their plan as a daily habit of mind, devoting to it the **one per cent.** of general taxes with the regularity of clock work, without question, no matter who objected. For objectors will always be found. There will still be found a man with a bat ready to down one in every community and who never fails to kick against everything new that does not smell of rank materialism and more junk.

Not only would this attitude of mind on the part of our citizens bring in capital and desirable settlers, but it would act like a tonic on ourselves, on our body as well as on our souls. For we feel that we are pursuing **patiently** but steadily the noblest civic ideal possible, that is, the endeavor to make a paradise of our earthly dwelling place even if we never reach the ideal. There are cities, that cannot be made beautiful, but ours can, and with a **limited amount of money** one of the most beautiful cities in this Canada of ours.

Of course it would take years, but say in twenty-five, or even fifty years when some of us are dead and gone we would win a national reputation as a highminded, cultured people, living in a beautiful city, and this reputation would be a source not only of justifiable pride in our descendants, but an ever increasing accumulation of dollars and cents.

What Fredericton wants is more population and capital. To get it we must attract it. To do that we must make our City attractive by putting into it something that we can point to with pride. Then it will advertise itself.

It is not sufficient for a man to have talent as an artist, lawyer or doctor. He must advertise in some way. The same is true of a city. Therefore, if **six** energetic men, backed up by a **dozen** enthusiastic women of Fredericton, were to get together with the firm determination of making our city so attractive that it would achieve a national reputation for beauty, and then start an agitation to secure from the City Council an annual amount for local purposes, we feel sure they would succeed.

We have not the slightest doubt that in five years the judicious spending of a few hundred dollars on beau-

tifying the City would so raise its reputation, and enhance the value of all property that it would more than pay the investments.

Now the question just comes down to this, have we **Six** men with imagination, hope and **Square Jawed** energy enough, and a **Dozen Women** with quiet enthusiasm enough, to work steadily for this ideal.

Every thinking citizen must know this question is a very important one and naturally all progressive citizens point to the future, and whatever is done should be done now and a bold effort made to accomplish it. We must act like business men and not be behind the times and stand by the men and women who are willing to put themselves in the gap, because regeneration and prosperity are in the air in this city. You see it on every hand, all that is needed is for the men and women to get together, lift up

their heads and hold aloft the banner of City adornment and constantly follow that Idea.

If we do many of us will see Fredericton become a city really worthy of being proudly called the **Capital** and the **Celestial City**.

Yours faithfully,

Improvement.

Fredericton, N. B.



