It's Spring—and He's "Cleaning" —the Movies

Veteran Reformer, at 71, Demands Clean Pictures for the American Theatergoers

By JOHN B. WALLACE

THE press has carried reports recently indicating that Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts, superintendent of the International Reform Bureau, was disposed to compromise with the producers in his fight for clean motion pictures. The other evening as Dr. Crafts was preparing to address a meeting held in Los Angeles, the capital of filmdom, I intimated that the report had spread around that because he had dined and conferred with several of the leading motion picture producers, he might be weakening.

The veteran reformer sniffed.

"Weakening, huh!" he exclaimed. "You listen to me tonight and see if you note any traces of weakening." And when he had concluded his address to that immense audience, which included many of the leading producers of the world, I was forced to admit that if there were any traces of weakness or change of attitude since his conferences I had failed to detect them.

Dr. Crafts, despite his seventy-one years, is as full of energy as a spring colt. The matchless climate of Southern California has rejuvenated him to such an extent that he has decided to abandon Washington, leave Congress to its fate and settle down in Hollywood, there to beard the producer in his den.

Dr. Crafts is a born reformer but he is not of the type that rushes about the country calling names, antagonizing the friends of a cause and getting nowhere. Dr. Crafts plans a campaign, lays out an objective and then proceeds to work steadily toward that objective. He gets setbacks as do all reformers but he steadily, persistently works to his end until it is accomplished. Then he starts on something else. Today his main objective is to force the motion picture producers to clean house. He says that there is only one successful and satisfactory manner to accomplish this. That is by the establishment of a Federal Commission, along the lines of the Railroad Commission, to regulate motion pictures. This commission would consist of men of the caliber of college presidents who would be paid a good salary and who would be absolutely independent of both politics and producers.

This plan is being bitterly opposed at the present time by the majority of the motion picture producers, and Dr. Crafts says that he realizes that there is no hope of carrying it in the present Congress. Therefore, he plans to work for state, county and city censorship, for the closing of motion pictures on Sunday until such time as the producers of their own accord produce pictures that are fit to be shown on Sundays as well as on week days. This constant harrying of the producers, the infinite confusion into which the industry will be thrown by the varying standards of censorship of different communities, Dr. Crafts believes will eventually cause the producers themselves to favor a national commission by which definite lines will be laid down for the guidance and regulation of the industry

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REV. WILBUR F. CRAFTS

"The picture producers have asked for a truce," said Dr. Crafts. "They have promised to clean up. But with very few exceptions they have made no move to do so. Mr. Hampton and a few of his type are honestly trying to clean up. Mr. Lasky has formulated fourteen points for the guidance of his writers and directors which, if carried out in good faith, will be a great step in the right direction. But other studios are doing little or nothing. They are going ahead with the production of photo-dramas that out-Herod Herod. The motion picture industry seems to be afflicted with the same kind of men who killed the liquor traffic. They have put the dollar above the home, the Bible and the nation. Blinded by the golden flood that has poured into their coffers they fail to see that the hour of reckoning is at hand.

Dr. Crafts says that the mayor of any city has ample authority to stop the showing of a picture that offends the morals of the community, but that, owing to the rottenness of municipal politics, few mayors have the courage to do their duty.

"It was a Tammany mayor in New York who showed the way when he closed not one picture but all pictures until the producers, alarmed, got together among themselves and had the present board of review created —a board which, by the way, is the biggest farce that was ever heard of—a bit of camouflage which was successful for a time but which is now the laughing stock of the country."

The thing that especially arouses Dr. Crafts's indignation is the bogey that a certain element has made of the so-called Sunday blue laws.

"There is no national Sunday closing law pending in Congress and this bureau does not contemplate the introduction of a bill for Sunday closing. It is all a bogey created by a certain element in this country that wishes to throw open wide the doors to a commercialized Sabbath. These elements, consisting mainly of the men who controlled the liquor business, have enlisted the support of the motion picture producers, the prize fighters, the tobacco men, the baseball promoters and are even trying to scare the automobile men into line by claiming that there is danger of the passage of a law stopping the running of automobiles on Sunday. This unholy alliance with total lack of a sense of humor is solemnly quoting the utterances of ministers of the Seventh Day Adventists, a sect that will join with any movement that would lead to the abolition of the Christian Sabbath.

"The object of the whole conspiracy which began last August is to create a Continental Sabbath instead of an American Sabbath. The American Sabbath is written in the laws of every state in the Union except California and the District of Columbia. They are trying to break down these laws as they are trying to break down the prohibition laws. And they are trying to break them down so that they can make money. They care nothing for the moral welfare of the nation. They care nothing for its spiritual welfare. Their god is Mammon. The three smartest, shrewdest peoples on earth are Scotchmen, Yankees and Jews. The Scotchmen and Yankees fortunately for the world have religion. With their brains industry and frugality it is hard to contemplate what might have happened if they had not the saving grace of a religious conscience.

"The liquor traffic was never defeated by total abstainers. A prohibition law could never be carried in a thousand years if it depended upon the votes of nondrinkers. But when the men who controlled the liquor business attempted to control the government of the nation then the people rebelled. Drinking men asked themselves, 'Are these men our masters?' The rottenness of our municipal politics became a stench in the nostrils of our citizens. The liquor men began to crack the whip in state politics, then they reached the nation. They invaded Congress. They thought they owned the nation. But pride goeth before a fall. The very men whom they had counted upon for support, the men who used their goods, went back on them.

"The men who are trying to commercialize Sunday are in the same case today and they will meet the same fate. American ideals are too firmly planted in the breasts of the citizens of this country to be torn out by the unholy hands of the men who have prostituted for the sake of gold every business, sport and institution into which they have been allowed to creep."

A Comparison in Relativity

With the Fourth Dimension as Comic Relief

By JAMES S. RYAN

JUST outside the boundary of infinity begin the suburbs of complete nothingness, so far as space is concerned. First of all, imagine a suburb of "nothing," and then go one better than that, and imagine it composed of vacant lots. Then—but the proposition is possible of conception only in the mind of a child. A child's mind contains no knowledge or wisdom, so it is obvious that it has much more room for gigantic voids. The very young are very rich, if they only knew it, being mentally possessed of all the nothingness there is.

Now, if the reader's mind could be emptied for the moment, it might be possbile for him to conjure up something approaching a suitable stage setting for the following little sketch:

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

The Great Gazamgazumgaroooooooooo (ceaseless ciphers suggesting size).

His Little Son.

SCENE: Nothingness, "and then some," on the minus side, beyond the outer ether. The child is seated on the father's knee. To amuse his offspring the father wiggles his knee, and the child laughs. Each wiggle describes an arc of fifteen billion miles; and into the cavity of the child's laugh could be placed hundreds of millions of bodies each one as large as our own sun. If you "get that" (scientific language apart) you are on the way to think big things. I hate to be instructing you along like this because you seem a decent sort of scout.

FATHER: Now, my little boy (a teeny weeny little chap only about a hundred billion miles tall) I think it is time to begin letting you into the secrets of geology. (*He reaches down and picks up from the ground a small fragment of adamant comprising seventy or eighty of our ordinary domestic solar systems.*) Do you see that? You would think it a solid body, wouldn't you?

SON: Yes, popoooooooooo (ciphers used to avoid reproducing the voice here which, though only a child's voice, would reduce this earth and several of our esteemed neighboring bodies to imperceptible dust).

FATHER: Then look through this (*over the specimen in his hand he places a microscope made of a combination of ether tremors and cosmic clarity, fused by a sigh and chilled to hardness by a cold stare of insolent egoism*).

SON: Golly, Father (excuse the boy's ignorance of outer-space technical language) there's pores in it! (While in the excusing mood extend a little to his grammar also.)

FATHER: Yes, and in that apparently inert fragment there is continual atomic movement.

SON: How do you account for that, father? It seems impossible.

FATHER: This solid mass we stand on is an aggregation of molecules, each one a universe. Here on the outside of this great body there is no space, but there is time; it is a great blessing to have plenty of time and we have time to burn.

We lost our space long, long ago when the great blizzard of Milky Ways killed off all the young sprouts. And we should lose Time, too, if by any unlucky chance some neighboring nothingness were to poke its nose into ours. Then there would be such a cataclysm of epochs that lunch hour today might be hurled away to bedtime a hundred million years hence; a fragment wrenched from the end of a year might be thrown with such force as to reduce the next century to a handful of crumbled seconds, and some insignificant five minutes going about its ordinary business suddenly find itself flattened out into a million years of thin time; *NOW* would be *THEN*, *WHEN* would be *YET!* How would you like all in an instant to discover that, as you sit here, it is a thousand years before you were born? Whiz! Whiz! Whiz! Whiz! the present century doing a home-run; and out of the terrible vortex finally would come *NEVER*—a sad state in which we would find that we never were, and never could be. It is very difficult to place the mind on time—it slides off; but I am working on that now, having a theory—

SON: Father, you are raving!

FATHER: Well, even if I am, it often happens that the raving of today is the wisdom of tomorrow.

CURTAIN

(Furnished by the spinnings of our own planets.)