GLOUCESTER AS AN ART CENTRE HOME OF IDEALS

Summer Colony of Painters and Dramatists Fostering a Higher View of Life Most Refreshing in Days of Materialism

By WILLIS STEELL.

TO most of us there is ever a nameless charm in the picturesque litter of an artist's studio. We visit it idly, never reflecting that it represents a force waging battle for the soul of man against materialism. Or if we do think in such five-syllabled words we do not utter them for fear of being ridiculed. Only here and there, in certain summer art colonies, the leavening power of picture making is appreciated and measured.

Gloucester and its environs, Eastern Point, Cape Ann, Annisquam, Rockport, Pigeon-cove, Lanesville, Bass Rocks, have drawn shoals of painters to them year after year, and these painters have done what they could to make the peculiar beauties of Massachusetts's north shore widely known. Unconsciously these painters have taught, another lesson neglected or not learned by other art colonies, the lesson of man's powerlessness against the forces of nature.

In these days of wings that outfly the eagle's, of intoxicating multiplication of human power, that is a wholesome lesson. Superman, a word of the hour, is only a word of arrogance. Day by day in the soft summer weather Gloucester painters repeat on their canvas a smooth, seductive ocean, while storm and destruction fall into stage properties of the sea dramatist.

Then the clouds suddenly gather, thunders crash, lightnings flash, an angry ocean assaults the headlands, great trees are torn up—here are new pictures for Waugh and Lie and Lever, for all the artists who have been painting "When the Boats Come In," "The Ginny Fleet," and a thousand other peaceful and familiar Gloucester scenes. The artists are asked to paint these also, and it is well for us they are so.

Old Fishing Port Flourishing As a Home for the Drama

In the struggle between materialism and idealism to the ranks of the latter which are so thin we hear that Gloucseter has brought reenforcement. Long a mecca of modern art, the old fishing port, willy-nilly, has become one also of literature and the drama—and particularly the latter. It has a flourishing community dramatic school, with dancing attachments and all three are corellated or focussed in the Gallery on the Moors. This is a pretty specimen of Gothic designed by Crane of Boston and built by private enterprise. Here have been held since it opened six years ago exhibitions of paintings, and here have been given in the same number of successive summers groups of plays by the Community Actors, some simple, others pretentious, but all presented with careful rehearsing and an open vision of the dignity of the work.

In truth the work in its several branches has outgrown its housing. The community school of acting, under direction of Miss Florence Cunningham, is carried on in a big old building on a wharf in the inner harbor of Gloucester, but this offers no fitting place for the display of results, and when the young actors are ready to show the public what they can do they must go up to the Gallery on the Moors. These exhibitions in painting and drama so overlap that it is usually impossible for the actors to gain the benefit of a dress rehearsal before a public performance.

The plan is now to erect another building on land adjourning the gallery for the theatre proper, and to do this by means of a business corporation which shall acquire its funds by the sale of stock. The founders to whose generosity the Gallery on the Moors is due offer to throw in the necessary land as part of the holding on which stock will be issued.

Just before the exhibition of this year the management of the Gallery on the Moors submitted a brief explanation of the work of the preceding five summers and of the aim and ideal striven for.

The general plan of the gallery work is primarily art. In the cataclysm of war and the unavoidable downward swing of the great pendulum of world forces, from rising civilization to impending materialism, it is believed that the individual effort, however small it is, manifested in art galleries and exhibitions, love of pictures, small theatres, people's pageants, fused into life by community spirit—in these lie the great, perhaps the only hope of inculcating a love of art in the younger generations, already too seriously tinged with eroticism and decadence. It is hoped that these many and scattered individual efforts may become a great collective force with ever broadening influence and enlarged vision.

In 1920 the exhibitors chose by ballot their own art jury. This year a committee was appointed by the management with the idea of combining different elements and some outside interests in the art world. This committee consisted of Charles T. Hopkinson, Hobart H. Nichols, Louis Kronberg, Charles H. Pepper, Charles Grafley and A. H. Atkins.

Deserving as this latest exhibition is of particular mention with all degrees of praise distributed to this artist and to that, it can't have it here. Besides, people are more interested in the environment of the artists themselves, that "litter of the studios" which, as has been already said, charms us all.

And in Gloucester this charm is essentially personal. Everywhere among this congeries of villages, along the dominant rocks of the seashore, amidst the moors and along the wooden wharves of the mother of them all, we see the busy artist. He or she (and she is more numerous) is everywhere. To chase them to their lairs is more difficult. They live and paint in the oddest out of the way corners. Old barns, old sheds, abandoned cottages, nestling in hidden corners at the summit of some rocky wynd or perched on a rock, bush embowered at the base of an ancient garden on the edge of the harbor, one needs patience and a quick sense of locality to track down these places which by all sorts of ingenious devices have been rendered fit for living and painting on.

No general terms describe. But come along to the studio of Haley Lever, and what you see there must serve as a description of the others you haven't time or patience to hunt out.

What you come to first, if you have been rightly directed, is a simple wooden cottage of the ordinary village type on the ordinary village street. You pass down a rough track to the one side and, still descending between thick bushes of juniper and clematis, the latter just beginning in this northern air to flower, and turning through a sort of door cut out of the foliage, you find yourself in a small garden containing some three or four old trees, a rustic seat, a grass plot about the size of an ordinary dining room table, a sun dial on an antique looking fragment of broken column—and all this hemmed in by ascending beds of gorgeous marigold and dahlia, surrounded by artificial rock work.

At the lower extremity of this garden, filling the whole space from wall to wall and occupying as much space as must have been equal to half the original enclosure, stands a cottage the existence of which from the street could never have been suspected. It has windows and a glass door opening on the garden and a skylight in the roof. And from this room, the studio, the artist and his wife come forth to greet you.

Counts Laughing Charles Lever Among His Own Ancestors

Lever, who counts among his ancestors laughing Charles Lever, is, it needs not to be told, a realist. If he sees burnt sienna in the sky he puts burnt sienna in his picture, to the horror of some of the academicians. His canvas, "St. Ives," exhibited at the Gallery on the Moors this season, had in it the very wash of the water on which the boats seemed to dance and courtesy. He will show you pretty pastel effects of his work of fifteen years ago to demonstrate the evolution of an artist.

While the situation of this studio is characteristic of Gloucester's artist nooks, the interior of all of them is not so simple as Lever's. It is possible to pass through the narrow door of a barnlike outside into an inside abounding in rich and costly detail, in old draperies and Mandarin costumes from China, shawls of gorgeous color from Spain, precious old Italian cassoni, suits of armor, strange, quaint pieces of old Puritan mahogany, bureaus and buffets full of rare and even unique laces and draperies, while the shelves about the studio are loaded with quaint and highly colored pottery from Brittany, candlesticks from Italy, goblets of antique Venetian glass, around which wind strange garlands of leaves and flowers in emerald green and blue and crimson.

Half of the effect of these beautiful and costly things is found in the incongruity of the surroundings. But that is the charm of Gloucester, where one is content to live in a shed on lentils while one feasts his eyes on unimaginable glow of color.

A young woman artist, Miss Grace Horne, has been clever in focussing this evanescent charm, binding it to a commercial purpose. She has opened her studio, situated where the lumbering bus turns up to Rocky Neck, and in a sort of Greenwich Village cellar opened it as a cafeteria two nights a week, whither flock the idle summer guests.

Here every color of the rainbow and some the rainbow would disown in hangings, paintings, brasses and pottery mingle to compose a room that is like a beautiful mediaeval interior. An impromptu entertainment, where the singers, pianists, violinists, reciters, spontaneously offer their services, is a feature of the place, making the innovation, in spite of only soft drinks being procurable, quite delightful.

We come back to the true theme of this rambling notice of Gloucester, which is that it inspires ambition of one kind or another even in the most frivolous. It would be easy with the presence there (or in the neighborhood) of painters so eminent as John Sargent to make notes about the artists only, listing them as dryly as Homer's catalogue of ships.

But the painters, although they pervade the peninsula, are not by any means the whole of it. The inspiration they afford is but one facet, and there are as many others as a diamond's.

Some quality of this strong Atlantic air that blows across recumbent Mother Ann induces even the most indifferent to give himself, heart and soul, to the work he has begun, and make up his mind to succeed in it.

One has only to talk to the students who come to Gloucester in great numbers—students of art predominating—to realize that Nature here, whatever she may be in Newport and Aiken, is not a mere vulgar cook providing meat for the body, but a subtle chemist yielding precious ambition for the mind.

What she accomplishes is, to be sure, various. That variety was seen to perfection in the recent Gallery on the Moors exhibition. It was a small but comprehensive exhibition, everything in which was Gloucester, yet Gloucester as she is seen through different eyes. In it as almost everywhere the ancient war between realism and idealism went on unchecked.

There was the canvas of the former, the fellow who paints only what he sees, and who sees only what is commonplace, and the canvas of the idealist whose trees and waves and rocks are not the trees and waves and rocks common mortals see. There was, to be specific (and offensive), the zinc like green water of Jonas Lie, and the mysterious moonlit water of Hobart Nichols.

Which is right—the dull, unimaginative picture—the real as ordinary folk see it or the ideal which the modern artist says is the real distilled and sublimated in the alembic of his mind? Both styles were to be had in this small exhibition, and the spectator had no reason to be discontented. He might choose for himself without trying to answer a question which never will be answered, for art is the Sphinx, and to question her is destruction.

The people who are trying to make an art centre of Gloucester go to work in a cleverer way, a more direct way, without starting on tempting by-paths of useless art discussion.

"The art exhibitions," they say, "are not held for Gloucester alone, nor for the benefit of the artist alone. We are delighted when a picture is sold, but we consider quite as great a benefit is conferred on the purchaser as on the artist.

"Our theatre, too, is not held for the individual actor alone, but for the public as well. We believe that we are entering an era of materialism and that to oppose it we must all strive individually and collectively to work for the development of art."

"The Wakening Day," by W. Lester Stevens; a scene in Gloucester Harbor, and shown this year in the Gallery on the Moors.

Gallery on the Moors Scene of Noteworthy Exhibitions Yearly—Plans Being Made for Theatre Near By to Meet Demands

New Hampshire Village, painted by A. T. Hibbard, one of the admired pictures in this year's exhibition at Gloucester.

The Gallery on the Moors at East Gloucester, Mass., where the work of artists is exhibited yearly and famous plays produced by students of the Dramatic School of Gloucester. It has grown so popular that a theatre near by is being planned for next year.

Carl Nordell of the Community Players in "Le Medecin Malgre Lui."

Old Ideas About Babies Are Found Best

Real Mothering and Individual Treatment Will Be Features in the New Fifth Avenue Hospital, and Even Distinctive Clothes

THE old fashioned mother, who cuddled her baby, who tossed him in her arms and gurgled at him, who sang him to sleep with "Rock-a-bye-baby" and did all the other things that have been frowned upon by scientists and hygienists—is the best mother after all, it now appears!

Those wise pronouncements of eminent baby specialists to which the world has given credulous attention for about a decade or so haven't proved themselves. Mothers were cautioned against picking up the baby, and a kiss was as bad as the bite of a rattlesnake, they would have had us believe! And as for tossing the baby and singing to it, why the only thing which could possibly be worse would be playing with its toes—and babies so treated, they averred, had about one chance in a hundred of ever getting to the age where they could recite pieces and entertain the company.

The whole theory, that of handling the infant as little as possible, and never under any circumstances petting him when he cries—has been petering out lately. And the reason is just this. The theory has been proved a bad one.

Babies are queer little things. They don't seem to understand that from a hygienic and scientific standpoint they musn't be petted and cuddled. And when they don't get a whole lot of loving and mothering they pine and die.

"The death rate in the hospitals is greater than in the tenements," says Dr. Reuel A. Benson, specialist in children's diseases, who believes that old fashioned mothering is the only way to raise children. "In the very worst tenements the infant mortality rate is only five per cent., while in some hospitals it is as high as forty per cent."

Dr. Benson, a prominent pedriatrician, is president of the medical staff of the Laura Franklin Free Hospital for Children and will be connected with the children's department of the new Fifth Avenue Hospital, at 105th street and Fifth avenue. There he will try to do away with the bad results existing in hospitals because of a lack of mothering. Most baby wards are fortunate if there is one nurse to about twenty children. In the Fifth Avenue Hospital there will be one nurse to every three babies.

"And one of her duties," says Dr. Benson, "will be to pick up the child at feeding time and sing to it and cuddle it a bit."

In planning the children's department of the new Fifth Avenue Hospital provision has been made for mothers' rooms. A mother whose baby needs hospital treatment may stay with the child and even help care for it. This arrangement is particularly convenient in cases where laboratory diagnosis is necessary. With its splendidly equipped laboratories every sort of examination can be made right in this one hospital, and the mother may remain with her child until the diagnosis is decided. As it is to-day, unless the mother is very wealthy she cannot afford to remain with the baby.

The practice of treating a child in the hospital for a long time is obsolete. Just so soon as the child is able the Fifth Avenue Hospital will send it to a camp for further recovery or back to its own home, which will be visited by the follow-up nurse, who watches the child's progress and instructs the mother.

To check any possible contagion which may develop among children, a cubicle system will be adopted by the new hospital. There will be only two or three children in each cubicle. These will be separated by glass partitions so that the children all along the floor may see one another without being exposed to contagion.

The sunshine cure will be applied by the Fifth Avenue Hospital to all children suffering from rickets. The patients will bask in the sunshine all day on its open air roofs, and when the sun is hidden behind clouds a sun-lamp, having the same kind of ray, will be focussed upon them.

Even in the minor matter of children's clothing it harks back to the mothering idea.

"There is no reason why children in a hospital or institution should be all dressed exactly alike," says Dr. Benson. "It isn't good for them. It doesn't cost any more to dress them differently. I'm in favor of each little girl being togged up in just as pretty clothes as can be had. Even if they wear gingham slips I think each one ought to be of different color and pattern. The practice of clothing boys in ugly overalls, or some similar uniform effect, is abominable. Attractive and individual clothes do not in the least interfere with hospital treatment."

Rage for Marriage Sweeps Great Britain

STATISTICS for 1920 are now on the market, and in the line of marriages, at least, they are very interesting. In England and Wales, for instance, nearly 400,000 couples were married in 1920, an increase of 20 per cent. over 1919, which, however, had broken all previous years.

For three years preceding the great war these two countries had averaged only 280,000 marriages yearly. In 1915 and 1919 the boom in weddings reached 300,000, but never more, and in 1915, as we all know, war weddings were the order of the day. Thousands of young couples, who would never have thought of marriage in times of peace rushed off to a minister. Sixty per cent. of those war brides, it is estimated, are war widows; nearly 30 per cent. have been divorced or are seeking divorce, leaving a scant 10 per cent. who will (let us hope) "live happily ever afterward."

Of the 1919-1920 marriages only a rough estimate can be made as to how many are "real." Never before in the history of the world have there been so many cases of bigamy as have obtained in the British Isles during the last year and a half. Nor do the statisticians like to guess how many of the 1920 weddings are illegal. It would be too depressing.

"Girls and women," said a leading English clergyman for publication recently, "are rushing into marriage without due thought or investigation. 'Men are scarce,' say they; 'we'll take one while we can!' Before the war there was a scarcity of men in England. Many women went to their graves unwed in spite of beauty and charm, and many other women went out to the colonies to seek a husband. To-day, after the toll of war, husbands are harder to find than ever, and the boom in marriages is all the more surprising. The number of cases of bigamy now in the courts shows the extent to which women are wedding without inquiring into the past of the bridegroom."

In his opinion, however, the crest of the boom had been passed, and 1921's marriage list will be considerably smaller.