

Stock and Home, established by his brother the previous year. Colonel Owen was the Farmers' Alliance candidate for Governor of the State in 1890, and received 58,000 votes, though without party organization or campaign funds. In 1894 he was the Populist candidate for Governor, and received 88,000 votes out of 296,000 votes cast, running ahead of the Democratic candidate. In addition to serving three times as regent of the State university, he was an active member of the State Forestry Board, and at one time its president. A man of clear mind and strong convictions, Colonel Owen's advocacy of the fundamental propositions of democracy never flagged. With tact and good humor, and above all at appropriate moments, his readers were led to peer deep into the well of political and economic truth, there to see below all the rest the eternal land question. Of him Governor John Lind has said: "I regarded Mr. Owen, and always shall, as the one man who has contributed more to the uplifting of the people's ideals than any other man with whom I have come in contact in public life."

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A Correction.

In *The Public* of December 10 (p. 1177), Lincoln's beautiful words on "charity for all" were attributed to his address on the field of Gettysburg. A friend of *The Public* who had the privilege of hearing the words fall from the President's own lips, reminds us that they were uttered at the close of the second inaugural address.

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CIVIC ART A NATIONAL PURPOSE.

The soul of a man looks out not only through his eyes, but through the windows of his house. His disembodied spirit meets you at his gate, conducts you to his bodily presence and shows you through his house, affirming or denying his spoken words. Chairs and tables announce the simple, contented nature or denounce the social upstart. Pictures and books reveal the open heart and mind or mock the hypocritical hanger-on of art, the shallow thinker. Insignificant knick-knacks illuminate dark corners of the soul. The very essence of a man passes unaccountably into his belongings, is distilled throughout his dwelling place.

In fact, I question whether a man's possessions do not picture his inmost soul more unmistakably than his walk and conversation. Manner and speech may vary with the passing mood, can be studied, assumed for the occasion or special purpose in view, albeit with indifferent success. But

the character of a man's possessions changes only as his whole nature changes. It grows in beauty and meaning only as his soul develops.

Conversely, it may be said that personality is affected by and is to a certain extent the result of environment. Between the man and his external surroundings there is a constant interplay of subtle forces, uplifting and refining or degrading and debasing both the soul and its objective world. The environment may be the controlling factor, determining whether there shall be progress to a higher level or retrogression to a lower. Again, it may be a contributing factor only, providing a suitable medium of growth for an inborn impulse towards better things.

Equally true is it that the ideals of a people cannot remain hidden. The intrinsic nature of the things animate and inanimate with which it surrounds itself betrays its inner life and purpose. Towering office buildings proclaim the ideal of commercial success. Great schools, hospitals, churches, point to more lofty aspirations. A multiplicity of objects discloses a multiplicity of motives. Properly correlated and directed towards a definite end these infinitely varied motives constitute a national life of real meaning and significance. Struggling among themselves without thought of orderly co-operation or advancement, they render a nation's life chaotic. Its energies are dispersed, dissipated. Its destiny is left to fate and the working of natural forces.

The civic art movement in the United States is an instance of the gradual transformation of an isolated, unrelated impulse towards a higher ideal of civic beauty, into a conscious national purpose. Born of the vision of an inspired, far-seeing mind, it is slowly permeating and informing the consciousness of the people.

No great advances in the sphere of civic art are possible save on a solid basis of material welfare and prosperity. Before we can have beautiful cities we must have prosperous communities. Equality of opportunity and economic justice must make it possible for men to live with a degree of comfort. Constantly harassed and driven by the fierce struggle for a bare existence, the mind affords little foothold for ideas of civic beauty. Unsanitary tenements and filthy streets do not foster that sense of physical well-being without which it is idle to talk of spiritual things. Thus, the civic art of the future, as that of today, must rest on a substantial foundation of practical achievements. Broad, well-lighted streets must replace narrow, unsanitary alleys. Well designed and built dwellings must supersede the unsanitary

speculative tenement. Rapid means of communication must assure to the worker a degree of leisure in which to refresh and restore the soul. Beauty of perfect adaptation to an end must underlie beauty of form, color or texture.

Modern civic art is thus a natural outgrowth of all efforts to meet the essential needs of the city dweller. It is not an external scheme of decoration applied to the surface of the city's life. It is interwoven into the very warp and woof of its existence. Hence it will endure. Its highest mission must be not merely to contribute to the purely aesthetic enjoyment of the citizen, but to awaken within him that civic pride and feeling of personal responsibility which will tolerate nothing base or degrading in the city's life.

One phase of the civic art movement illustrates with especial clearness the growth of a local into a national sentiment. - Until the middle of the nineteenth century no American city had conceived the plan of refreshing and reinvigorating the lives of its citizens by bringing the country into city. Sporadic efforts there had been to better living conditions in congested city districts by providing small open spaces where a few trees and a bit of grass might feebly recall the memory of a lost paradise. There was no suggestion of landscape art in these areas, no appeal to the aesthetic instinct. It remained for New York to demonstrate in Central Park the feasibility of setting aside a large area of valuable city property where nature could not merely be suggested, but be actually reproduced on an adequate scale.

New York's example has now been or is being followed by practically all the large cities of the country. The park idea has been extended to include areas outside of the city proper which possess attractive natural features capable of presenting nature in her wilder and more untrammelled aspects. Parkways provide interesting and convenient means of communication between the various parts of the system. Ample breathing spaces for the future growth of the city are thus assured and its heritage of natural beauty is saved from the despoiling hand of commerce.

County and State reservations mark the next step in advance. In the great Western Park and Forest Reservations the park movement assumes a national scope—one might even say an international aspect. These huge national playgrounds are mute but expressive witnesses before the world of our national belief that a people's greatest assets consist not alone in its material resources, but in the uplifting power and spiritual appeal of its environment.

The growing consciousness of the double func-

tion of a public park as a source of spiritual as well as physical refreshment will demand that the highest standards of art be observed in its creation. The public park should lead public taste, not follow it, as is too often the case. All purely spectacular, fantastic and bizarre effects should be rigidly excluded. Each part should be harmonious with the whole. The whole should present nature in her best estate, in her most appealing moods.

Reacting on the taste and habits of life of the city dweller, these public parks, if they do not now, should eventually exert an appreciable pull countrywards, offsetting the inflow of the rural population to the city. The perennial fascination of the city, the varied spectacle and kaleidoscopic character of its daily life will always lure the country dweller grown indifferent to natural beauties because of too great familiarity. A growing appreciation of nature combined with greater ease and reduced expense of transportation will entice the city dweller into the suburbs. Here he can enjoy the delights of a rural or semi-rural existence without sacrificing the undoubted mental stimulus afforded by the city. The park movement will thus play an important role in shaping the future life of the American people. The ebb and flow of urban populations will result in a unifying of interests, a broadening of sympathies. Legislatures will no longer be torn in hopeless efforts to reconcile the conflicting claims of country and city.

Working hand in hand with civic art other movements national in scope might be cited which clearly indicate the slow but inevitable evolution of a formulated plan of national life. The conservation of our national resources, the crusade against tuberculosis, each in their way point to the growing conviction that a nation's destiny is determined by what it wills to do—not by an inner, automatic principle of growth. We have been hitherto, and still are in a large measure, a nation of "fatalistic optimists," as Mr. Wells cleverly puts it. Now and then a hidden social or economic danger looms on our national horizon, and we are awakened into a temporary state of purposeful activity. The immediate danger past, we fall back into our traditional attitude of complacency. Yet running through the apparently meaningless patchwork of cross-purposes and misunderstandings may now and then be seen the gleam of a golden thread drawing together the widely sundered elements of our national life. Not until these golden threads predominate may we be truly said to have attained a homogeneous, coherent existence as a people.

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