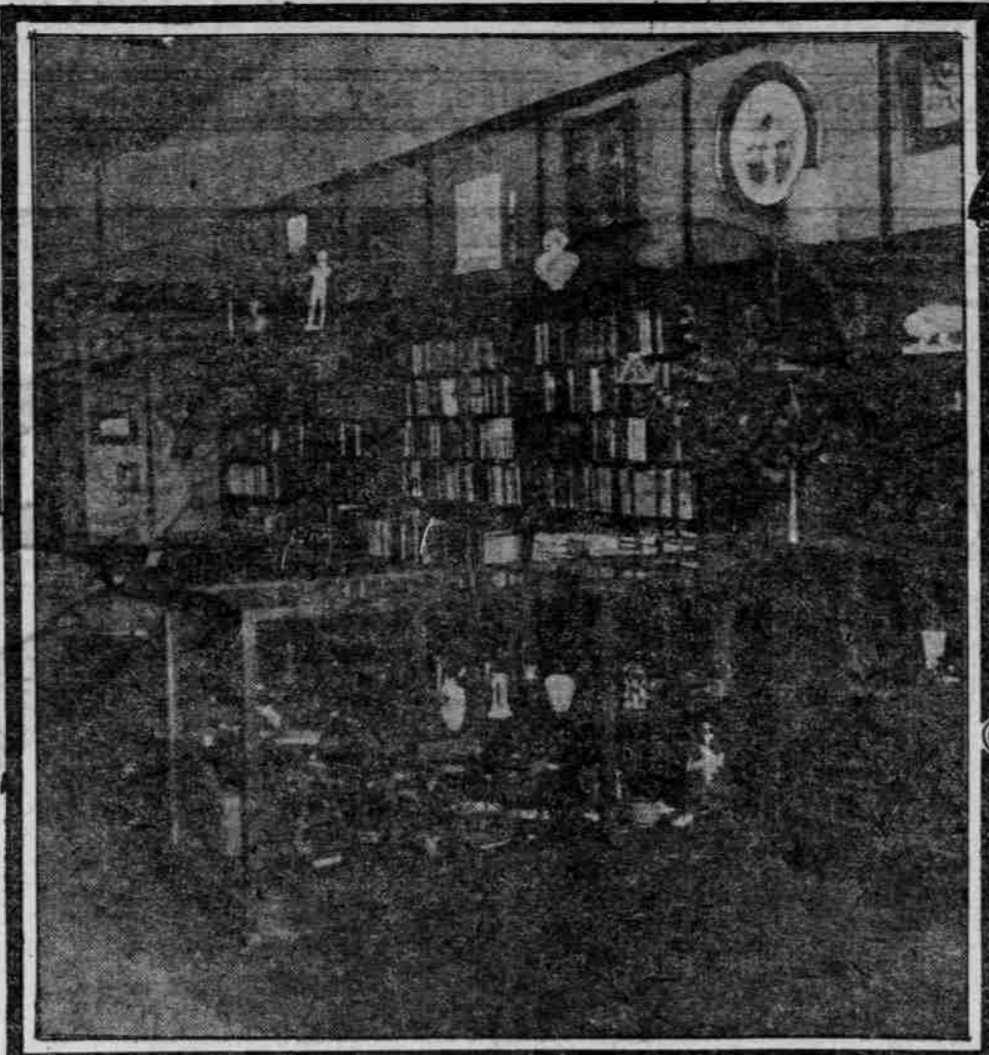


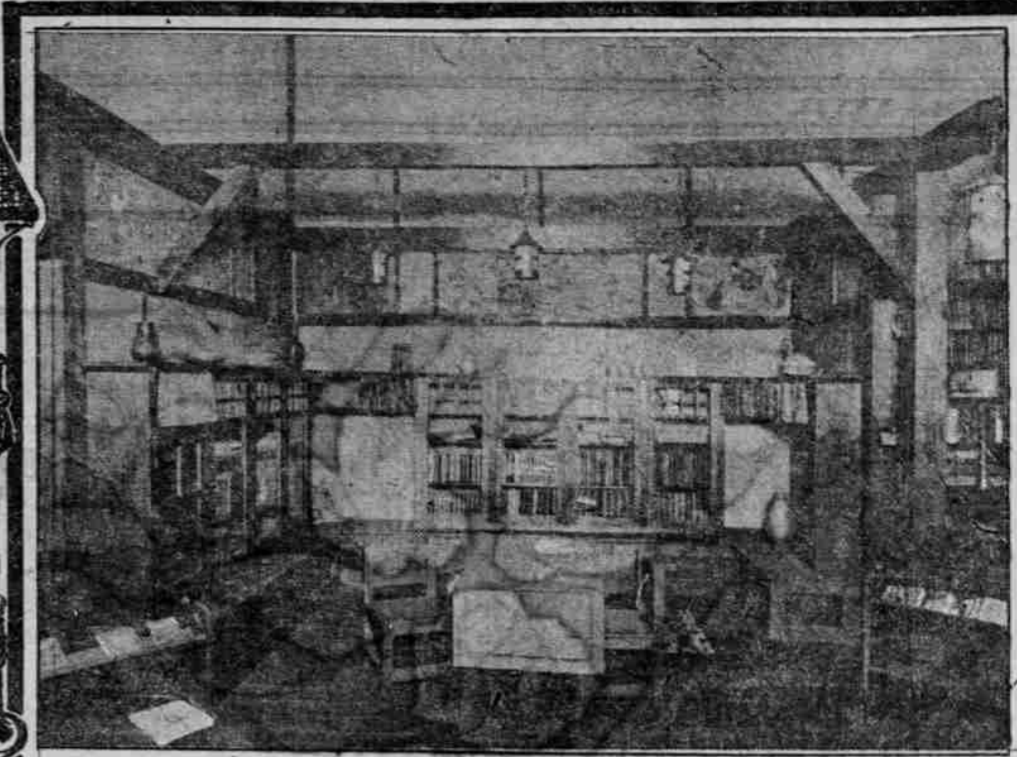
REVIVING INDIVIDUALITY AMONG HANDWORKERS



Influence on Portland of the Arts and Crafts Movement Which is Getting a Foothold Here
What the City of Eugene Has Done in a Practical Way to Develop Hand and Brain



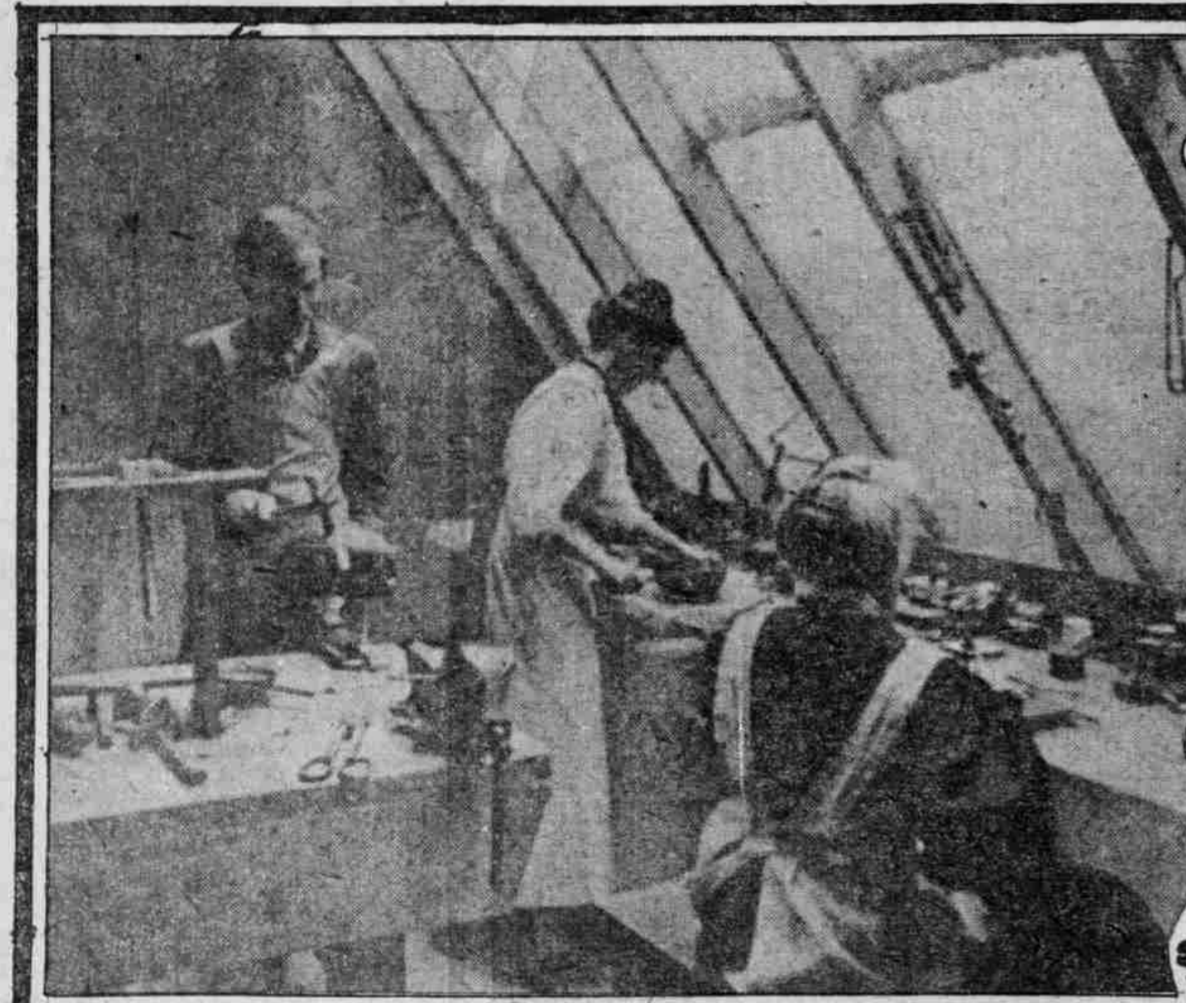
A CORNER IN AN ART SHOP



CHILDREN'S ROOM IN MR. EATON'S SHOP



NAGAI AT WORK



SHAPING A BRASS BOWL IN A PORTLAND ART SHOP



MISS PARKHURST AT BOOKBINDING



TRIMMING THE EDGES



HEATING THE METAL



DRAWING A DESIGN IN PYROGRAPHY

“O LDER than all preached gospels was this unpreached, inarticulate, but ineradicable, forever-enduring gospel—“Work and therein have well-being; whatsoever of morality and intelligence; whatsoever of patience, perseverance, faithfulness of method, insight, ingenuity, energy; in a word, whatsoever of strength a man has in him, will be written in the work he does.”

When Carlyle wrote these words he became the “John the Baptist” of the arts and crafts movement. He preached the gospel of work from a new standpoint; not that work is the primal curse laid upon us for apple-stealing in the Garden of Eden, but that it is the true and one means of self-expression. In Carlyle’s theory work is to the worker what this poem is to the poet.

William Morris applied this gospel, to handicrafts. He went so far as to believe that most of the evils of our race would be cured if only we united the labor of hand and brain in the creation of beautiful objects. In the Middle Ages men commonly held the secret of color and form, of use and beauty, and imparted it to their surroundings. They forged wonderful arrows, irons, locks and candlesticks; they filled cathedrals with rare illuminations and glass of marvelous colors; they wove fabrics which the most modern of machines cannot imitate; they sought effects of simplicity and solidity in furniture and decoration; they hammered copper and brass and silver into things of unique and delicate beauty, and in all this the individuality of the worker was wrought into his work. Each object was stamped with the thought and purpose of the man who made it. Thus art and life became own slates.

We have traveled a long way since then. We have become so used to ugliness in our daily life that we can scarcely detect it. Our machine-made products are all alike, monotonous and without character; neither we nor the maker has any joy in them. We have divorced the intellect from labor. In our present system of highly competitive and highly specialized industry a manufactured article goes through scores of processes. Each process is in charge of a laborer whose only duty may be to push a lever, or turn a cog thousands of times a day, all the days of his life.

The laborer has no knowledge of the other processes, no interest in the finished product, no sense of creating anything. He becomes an automaton. Work ceases to be a means of self-expression, an educative force; it is done without pay,

for mere wage. In this system the only man who gets any mental stimulus whatever is the inventor of the machine. . . . As a result of this divorce of intellect and labor the finished article itself is without element of beauty, or personality. Show and cheap ornament have taken the place of true decoration. We may sum it all up and say our modern industry has lost the soul out of it. As Carlyle would say, “Only the profit and loss of it, only the pudding and praise of it remain.” Among certain people of earnestness and taste a reaction has sprung up known as the arts and crafts’ movement. Originated in England by William Morris some 15 years ago, the movement has spread over the United

States and Europe. It has even penetrated Portland. . . . Societies have been organized for the revival of handicraft, with schools of designs and practical workshops. They have certain definite esthetic ideals, chief among them that beauty can be obtained only through skillful use of the hands and brain together. All useful things can be made beautiful through a return to old-time simplicity of material and designs. Above everything else the arts and crafts worker revolts against mechanical, automatic labor. This isn’t because he has a blind grudge against machinery, in fact he holds that much labor should be done by machinery to save time. But the machine must be used

to supplement, not to supplant, the skill and beauty of hand work. When it is used to crush out the personality of the worker it is bad. . . . The true arts and craftsman revolts against another feature of modern industry, over-production. Under stress of competition men make recklessly thousands of times more chairs and carpets and iron pots than the home market, or any other market can use. Factories then shut down, men are out of work, and our streets are filled with labor. Overproduction, so says the arts and craftsman causes all this; and the machine is at the bottom of it. We would cure the evil if we returned to the true spirit of work; if we made only what was needed, and

made that beautiful. The hand-made product cannot compete on equal terms with the machine-made product. But its superior workmanship, its character, make strong appeal to people of taste. Hand-made articles can find ready sale, always. Consider the untold thousands we spend on Persian rugs and French lingerie! But in order to bring the value of handwork before the public, as well as to cultivate appreciation of it we must have organized arts and crafts societies. . . . They have met with such success in Europe that the Hungarian government has practically taken them over. Each farming community in Hungary has its workshop, loom, or foundry, where the peasants in Winter time

work in metals and fabrics. The government supplies well-qualified teachers and inspectors and manages the sale of these products. Thus the peasant supplements his earnings; some element of beauty enters his life and his personality is enriched by the creative stimulus. . . . Gustave Stickley, editor of the Craftsman, is trying, through the Department of Agriculture, to introduce such a system into farming districts of this country. But for the most part the effort of the Arts and Crafts societies in America is concentrated in cities. The most flourishing exist in Boston and Chicago. Three classes of people compose these societies: practical workers, men and women, who, after efficient training have entered the field of arts and crafts as a profession and really use their hands; sympathizers, who understand and appreciate the true craftsman spirit; faddists, whose perennial thirst for novelty leads them even to the unaccustomed field of work. The latter are worthy women, and lend social position to the movement, which, of course, counts for a good deal. Through these channels craftsman ideals have spread rapidly throughout the country.

is a blow to arts and crafts in Portland. Miss McKnight still remains, however, and rightly occupies first place. Her specialties are design, for which she has been efficiently trained in New York, and jewelry making; though she has a broad knowledge of the crafts in general. Miss McKnight is one of those rare workers who combine idealizing theories and practical achievements. Those who have not visited her Arts and Crafts shop, on Washington street, near Thirteenth, have missed a rare pleasure. It is, indeed, the one place in Portland where one may get a glimpse of true art as the craftsman conceives it. Some of the best potteries made in America are there, and many things of distinct individuality and beauty such as no commercial “art store” can show.

Miss McKnight also has pupils, some of whom are showing dexterous ability. But as yet in Portland, neither Mr. Wisner nor Miss McKnight has found anyone seriously inclined to take up handicrafts as a profession. Pupils in plenty they have, but no apprentices. In the East the vitality of the movement is shown by the number of serious workers, or apprentices; when no serious workers are present, the movement is looked upon as a fad. One has suspicion that apart from a few talented exceptions, the Portland movement may be so described. The third class of arts and crafts members are in great predominance.

To be sure, active exertion with hammer and file gives more useful results than bridge-playing and pink teas. Moreover, it is a firm principle of Arts and Crafts that the aesthetic impulse can and should be cultivated everywhere, even in high society. But monopolization of the opportunities for such development by any class not intending to become serious workers goes against the vital ideal of the movement. Conditions in Portland are due no doubt to the new