

# WHERE ARCHITECTURE ATTAINS PERFECTION

**HUMAN SKILL IN BUILDING  
CARRIED TO ITS ULTIMATE  
IN THE ANCIENT TOWN HALLS  
OF BELGIUM.**

**B**ELGIUM is the country of architectural perfection. Many of the world's greatest masterpieces are to be found in the various cities, and in state and municipal buildings there is hardly one that does not maintain the superb standard.

The world's foremost architects have lavished their skill on these structures, and he who would study the Gothic form at its finest must visit the land of Leopold.

Antwerp, Brussels, Bruges and Louvain all have a host of superb buildings. Brussels especially is favored, and visitors to the "Cradle of Lace" never weary of praising Town Hall and its annex.

The Town Hall at Brussels is conceded by experts to be the finest example of a building of the kind in Europe.

It is pure Gothic, with its many pointed arches, grand terraces, hexagonal turrets and crenellated balustrade. The tower, which has more than 500 years of history to add dignity to its record, for it dates back to 1448, is 370 feet high, and is the last touch of beauty to a building that never can be forgotten.

Of the Antwerp Town Hall, the interior is the most attractive part. The facade in renaissance is the work of the noted Da Vinci. The entire structure dates back to 1550.

Louvain, noted at all times for its men of mental power, declines to concede the palm for beautiful architecture to Brussels, but maintains that its Town Hall is the most superb in Belgium, and critics are not lacking to give their hearty assent.

It is without doubt a very fine sample of the pure Gothic, and resembles the Town Hall of Bruges in general style.

Bruges, however, is far older, for it goes all the way back to the fourteenth century, having been built in 1375. It has suffered far less from the siege and from the same-culture than might have been imagined.

In the case of the Bruges Town Hall and the principal buildings of the other cities which have any antiquity, large part of the present handsome condition has been due to the close attention which the government constantly gives to its architectural masterpieces.

Thus no "restoration" is necessary, with all its ruthless tearing down and destroying that which is known to be old in order to produce that which will look as if it had age.

There has been a never-ceasing process of restoration ever at work on these buildings to keep them constantly in the proper condition. Pride in them has been a characteristic of the Belgians for centuries, and whenever a stone became missing or repairs of any kind were needed, the remedy was promptly applied.

Even during the wars of the centuries the same close attention was given to maintaining these monuments of inspired building, and after peace had been restored the first act was always to repair the damage that strife had done to the edifices of the city.

The Town Hall of Ghent is an excellent example of a building that has been preserved down to the present time in all its glory. It is not pure Gothic. It is an admirable combination of the Gothic form with the ideas of the renaissance. The effect is at first somewhat too severe, too regular to impress the visitor as deeply as some other edifices of Belgium do, but when the detail of the buildings is closely studied, it is found that there has been most admirable discrimination in the blending of the two styles. One has not been emphasized at the expense of the other. The effect is harmonious, complete and satisfying, and the exquisite carving holds the close attention of every student of sculpture.

The citizens of Ghent guard their building with the most jealous care. When repairs must be made the original material is used as far as possible, for there is a righteous horror of the "restoration process."

When it became necessary to make some repairs to the ancient town hall of Bruges, the work was put in charge of Count von Kegn, and his first act was to appoint a historian to be charged with no other task but to get the best likenesses of the 48 sovereign counts of Flanders.

It was the plan of the chief architect to put statues of the counts in the niches of the facade. But the list had to be complete and the likenesses well authenticated, or the plan would be abandoned. This was the ultimatum.

Some part of this historian's work was comparatively easy, for many of the counts were men of notable achievements, and among the many remarkable artists which the nation has produced were painters who had devoted themselves to delineating the royal features.

But not all these Flemish counts had been prominent. In any company must come some nonentities, and the diligent search narrowed the list down to 43, of whom good portraits were extant, leaving five on whom the data was either unavailable or completely lacking.

In the meantime the statues of many



LA MAISON DU ROI, BRUSSELS.

of the 43 had been prepared or were in the process, but as soon as Chief Architect Kegn learned that five were lacking, he ordered all the work stopped. The list must be right or the project dropped.

Deeper still delved the historian. He made journeys. He went to old art galleries. He dug deeply in the home places of the dead rulers of the past, and finally he was able to present a completed list of portraits. Then, and not till then, was the final order verified. Had one been lacking the royal figures of Flanders would not now be looking down on visitors from the ancient street.

This is the kind of conscience that has been put into the work of maintaining and restoring the homes of authority in the land of Leopold.

The "Cloth Hall" at Ypres, although it is not actually the town hall, is generally accepted as such.

The real seat of municipal authority is an unpretentious little building that has been noted by few visitors, the Cloth Hall being such a handsome building that it quite dwarfs anything else in the town.

Visitors to Ypres usually note something familiar about this handsome pile, which is not surprising, since in its essential details it has been reproduced in the United States in many of the superb railroad stations of the bigger cities.

At Audenarde, one more of the oldest cities of the Scheldt, there is another very good sample of the Gothic architecture. The tower which rises from the center of the facade has five stories and a crown-shaped roof.

In one respect Antwerp's town hall has a considerable advantage over its rivals, the prospect is somewhat better. Ghent and Bruges somewhat overlooked the chances of a distant view of the buildings, but in Antwerp the town hall fronts on a pretty little park with fountains, trees and green spots. Sitting here and looking at the town hall in leisure, one gets an excellent idea of its beauties.

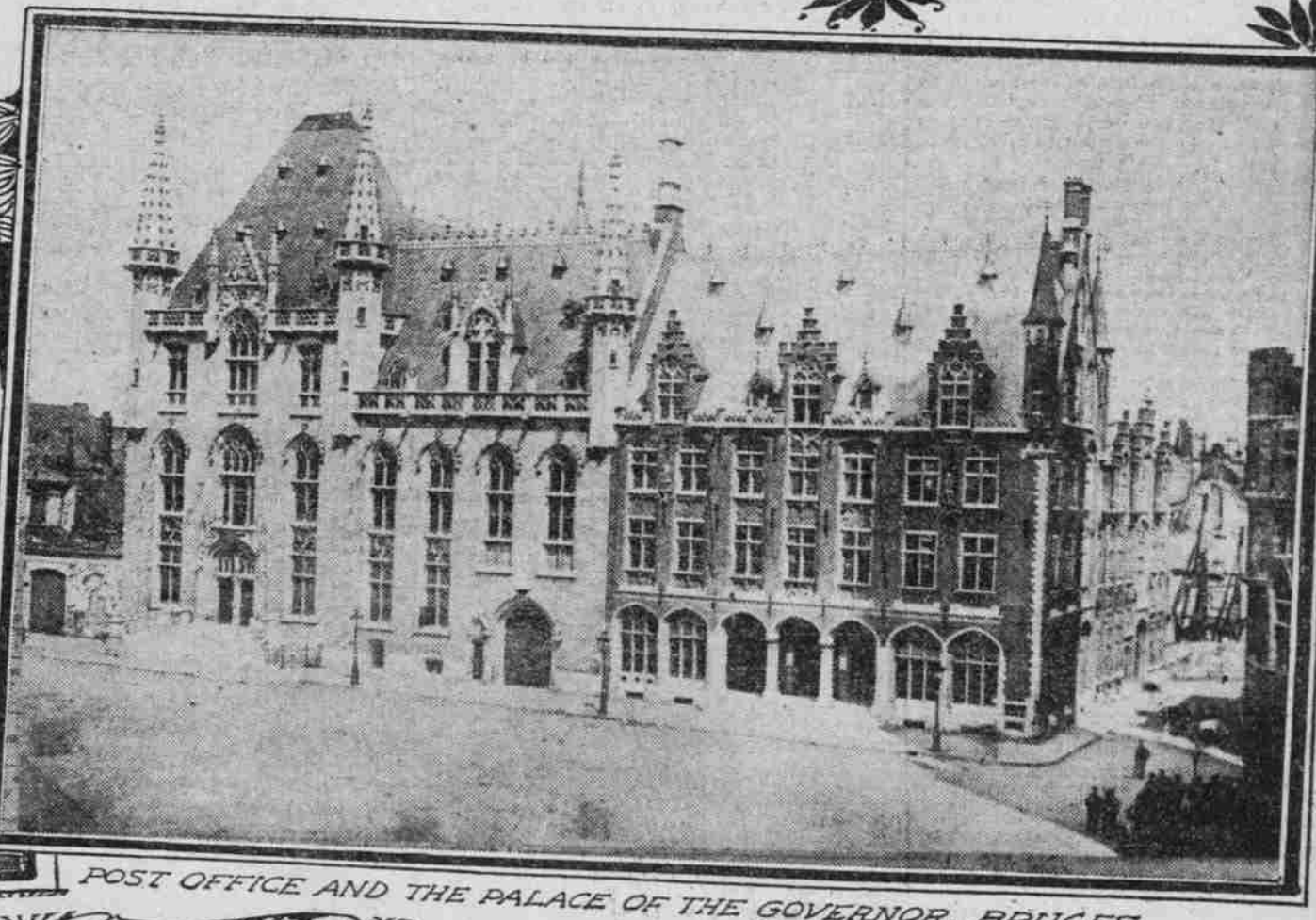
Most of these buildings are fitted out in a style worthy their magnificent exteriors.

Notable examples of statuary and painting have been strewn through many of the houses. Thus they become more than mere seats of municipal power. They are the visible representation of the dignity, the culture and the refinement of the city.

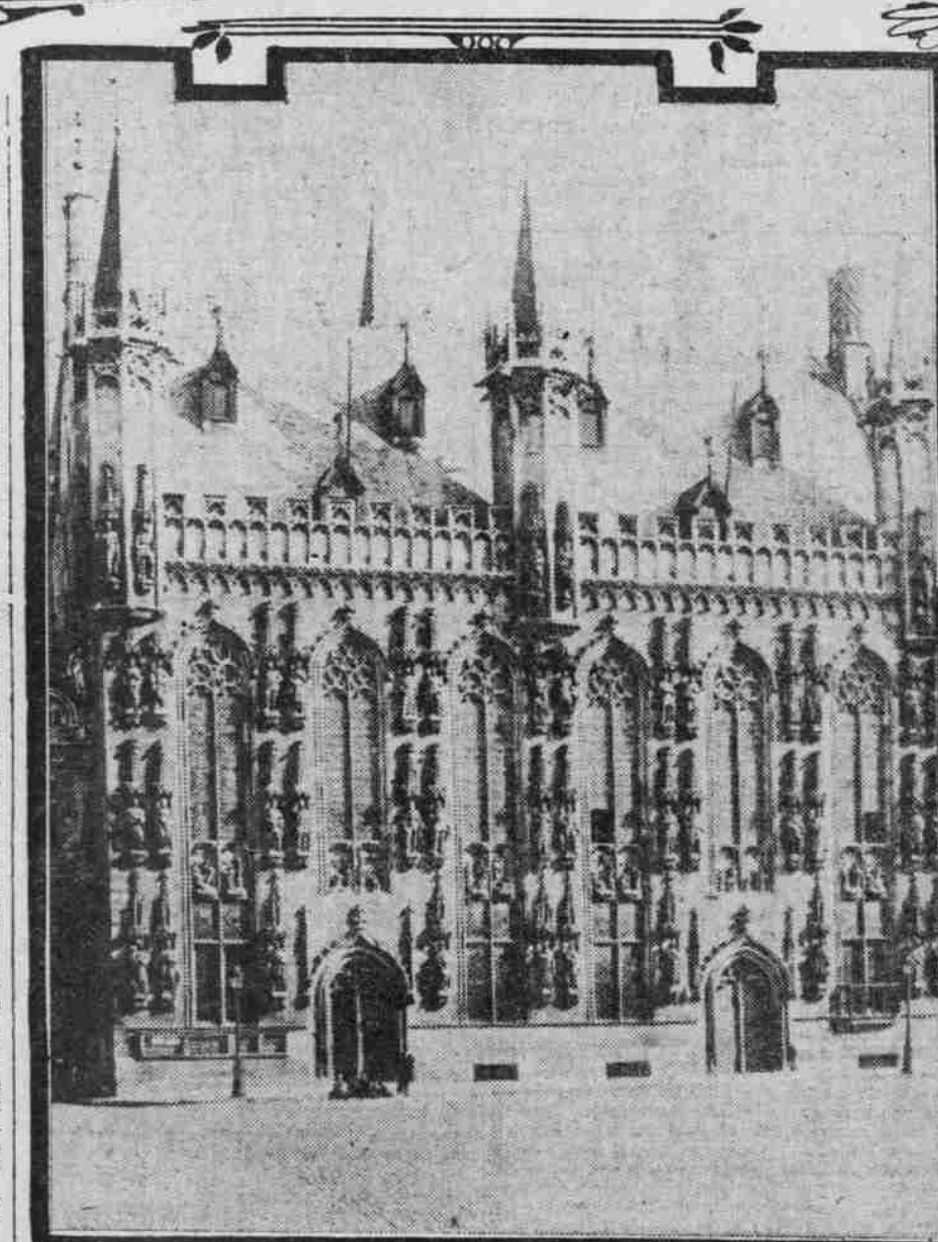
As far as possible the local note is emphasized. For instance, if a town has had a great artist or sculptor there are certain to be some samples of his work in the town hall.

To the beautiful municipal buildings must be added the handsome churches with their spires. There are also a host of superb palaces and private residences.

The world's architects go constantly to Belgium in search of ideas, and well they may.



POST OFFICE AND THE PALACE OF THE GOVERNOR. BRUGES.



MAGNIFICENT HOTEL DE VILLA, BRUGES.

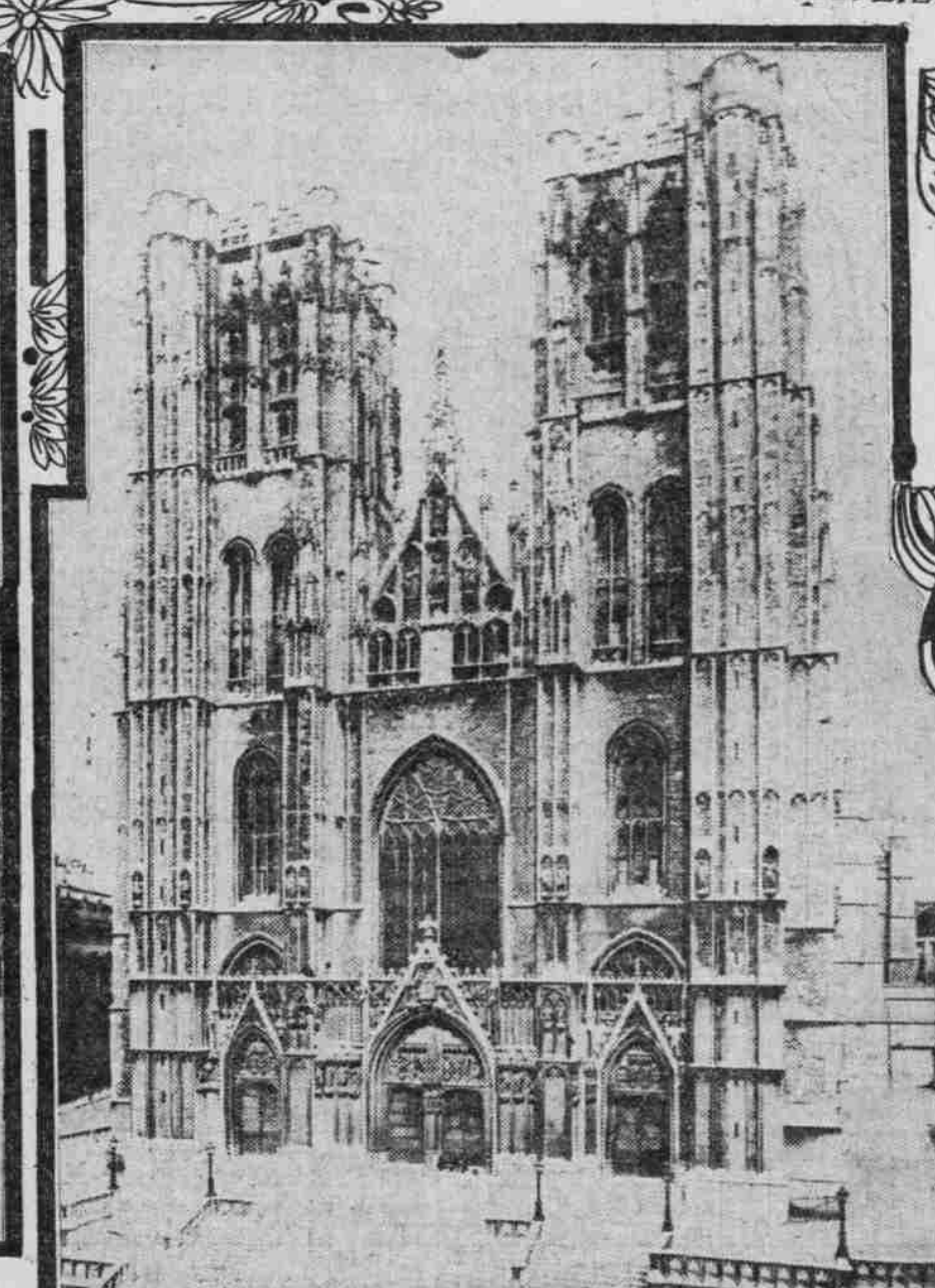
properly be asked why do men and women laugh? Or cry? Why disturb the natural repose of the face with a smile which for the time displaces the features because something has happened which appeals to our sense of humor? Usually this hilarious indulgence parades of a noisy outburst sufficient to be heard a block away, though it presents no new idea whatever. It is every phase is utterly devoid of additional intelligence and, as it would seem, therefore, unnecessary. But we laugh as a means of giving expression to a certain emotion, and it seems necessary, though in time we may reach that stage of perfection where the emotions may be suppressed and all noises which do not contribute to our intellectual advancement absolutely abolished through an increased conception of the value of conserved energy.

Of course, useless noises are distracting, exasperating, but it is necessary to remember that civilization is activity, a condition which spells noise, while there is no place quite so silent as a wilderness. There was a time when the great Columbia heard no sound save his own dashing, but it was changed as rapidly as possible and now the North Bank road vies with the O. R. & N. in an effort to destroy the solitude by sending unnumbered reverberations into every canyon and valley where Lewis and Clark heard only the distant howl of the prowling coyote.

In Portland today it is no noisy on our principal streets fully one-half the time on account of the deafening noises occasioned by passing street cars and conversation is impossible, and the telephones in two-thirds of the business offices are rendered useless much of the time for the same reason.

The fact is we can't do things without agitating the atmosphere, and since we are more or less animals anyway, there seems no help for it. On the other hand, if only creates a noise and useless noises are an abomination, except that our animal natures demand them, must have vent somewhere in some way.

And going a little further in the consideration of this question of audible demonstration unaccompanied by any sort of verbal expression, it may ap-



SPECIMEN OF THE GLORIOUS CHURCH ARCHITECTURE OF BELGIUM, CHURCH OF SAINTE GUDULE, BRUSSELS.



BEAUTIFUL TOWN HALL OF BRUSSELS.

gan and ended in noise, though this admittedly would frequently include the "oration."

Of course this is true only because we are a lot of animals, but, being animals, where is the remedy? Why should a gathering of grown men give three cheers for the American flag? All noise. Wasted energy. Ten thousand men spend a half day looking at a game of baseball. If these men should devote that half day to hoeing potatoes for the human race. And yet, what is more exhilarating than a game of baseball—to the spectators? If all the days spent in all the cities of the United States during 10 years attending football and basketball games were employed in digging the Panama Canal it would suffice to complete that great connecting link between the Pacific and the Atlantic. And it would be impossible to imagine a greater gathering of inanimate, worthless hulks than 10,000 Americans watching a game of baseball for two hours and remaining as quiet and sane as a church congregation. It is the red blood that calls for a vent which only finds adequate and satisfactory expression in noise and lots of it. The sick man not only detests noise, but those husky fellows who make it. It is a sorry situation, but there will perhaps never be a remedy for it. And maybe there shouldn't be.

So, let us do what we can to prevent the use of such explosives as endanger human life and property, but as to noise, it is well to remember that in the Garden of Eden, even Adam and his side partner got into a racket the first thing and the turmoil has not ceased to this day. Nor perhaps never will.

**The Girl and the Game.**  
He took her to the ball game, and when they had found their places, He showed her where the players stood and told about the bases; With patient care he showed her that the umpire did not play, Explaining that on every point he had the final say; He pointed out the benches where the rival players sat, And made it clear that "club" is not the same thing as bat.

She thanked him prettily, and said she thought that it was splendid To have the chance to see a game and be so well attended; And when he carefully set forth the pitcher's plan and aim, She thanked him once again, and said that she was glad she came. He told her why the man was out, and showed her how a fly, When caught before it struck the ground would make him out, and why.

He did not give her any chance to ask a single question; He analyzed the game for her without the least suggestion. With fingers pointed at the men, he showed how it was done; Showed how the catcher signaled to the men to stay or run; And while with cheers the very air above the field was jarred, He showed her how to mark the run upon the little card.

She smiled a gentle smile and said she wished she had his knowledge, That she had tried to play the game one year at Smassar College; He grinned in pity, then he told in measured terms and slow The inner motives of the game as then and there on show. Then came the ninth, the score was tied; two out and the bases full, And every rooster in the stand exerting psychic pull.

A long clean hit to center—and a tumult on the bleachers. With men in wildest voices shouting like to crazy creatures— And she! Oh, she was on her feet and yelling all the while In accents that you could have heard, "Oh, run! Run! Run! Run! Run!"— Her tones were shrill and loud, And soared above the roaring and the shrieking of the crowd.

He never said a word as they walked homeward from the game, But for a week or so the world was not to him the same.

—Wilbur D. Nesbit in Chicago Post.

During the Fall and Winter season of 1908-1909, which ended March 21, 221 persons perished by shipwreck and 59 vessels met with disaster off the New England and British North American coasts.

## In Defense of a Noisy "Fourth"

Philosophical Treatise on Animal Side of Human Being.

BY T. T. GIER.

**T**HE crusade against noise as the leading feature of our Fourth of July celebrations, now being waged in all parts of the United States, should doubtless meet with the support of all "sane" people, but if confined to the mere verbal expression of patriotic impulses and of appreciation of the "heroes of '76," there is reason to fear that it will be difficult to enlist the enthusiasm of young boys and girls, not to say of old boys and girls, in any demonstration which would be of sufficient interest to keep the day we celebrate alive. It is conceded that these outbursts of deafening explosions are unpleasant in the extreme, but in this as in most cases of human action, the animal predominates and must be recognized, and what are you going to do about it?

Delving a little deeper into this disposition to create apparently unnecessary noise, common to all animals, one might inquire why men should applaud a speaker when he declares a sentiment which appeals to the sense of approval. It doesn't really mean anything—or, rather, it adds nothing to the value of what has been said. The lesson taught, if that has been said, the result of the speaker's effort, would be precisely as effective if every auditor had remained silent and taken it home where his cogitations could be continued wholly divorced from the clapping of hands or the boisterous shouts of "bravo!"

And yet, nobody is likely to ask this seriously. Especially would the speaker rebel at any such abandonment of present methods of expressing approval of his soul-stirring or hair-lifting utterances. Everybody will admit that if a theater curtain should drop at the end of a specially good act where Henry has shown his undying attachment for Gladys under the most trying circumstances and where every prospect pleases, without any demonstration of approval whatever, the inference would be that either the actors were a "punk" lot, or the auditors a bunch of unappreciative stoics. And yet, what benefit in an intellectual sense is the clapping of hands, the creation of a deafening din, after the scene has closed, the players retired and the full effect of their efforts received? Indeed, nothing could be more senseless than the clapping of your two hands together because someone has said something that you endorse. Of course, from an intellectual point of view can it be defended or accounted for. It only creates a noise and useless noises are an abomination, except that our animal natures demand them, must have vent somewhere in some way.

And going a little further in the consideration of this question of audible demonstration unaccompanied by any sort of verbal expression, it may ap-

individual in the entire assembly is he who has unfortunately consented to "deliver the oration." All he can say has been read in the papers and books hundreds of times and is known to everybody. The young people are found elsewhere on the grounds,

making noises, and only those who are on the shady side of life are gathered around the stand, really for the reason that they enjoy the rest which the seats afford.

And yet, when the Nation is in danger the young fellows are the ones

who scramble over each other in the rush to enlist in its service and make the best fighters the world has ever known! And these young men, as a rule, since their earliest boyhood have cared little for any phase of Fourth of July celebrations save that which be-

ing noises, and only those who are on the shady side of life are gathered around the stand, really for the reason that they enjoy the rest which the seats afford.

And yet, when the Nation is in danger the young fellows are the ones

who scramble over each other in the rush to enlist in its service and make the best fighters the world has ever known! And these young men, as a rule, since their earliest boyhood have cared little for any phase of Fourth of July celebrations save that which be-