

LACK OF IDEALS BASIS OF AMERICAN HUM-DRUM LIFE

Owen Wister Sounds Keynote of Alarm—Pursuit of Wealth, He Says, Deadening Cloud on This Country's Hall of Immortals

By J. F. S.

IN A LECTURE which he lately delivered at Harvard, Owen Wister, the novelist and essayist, spoke on the ideals, or, as he put it, the lack of ideals, of the American people.

The reason why the Americans who would be accounted great thinkers or artists in the perspective of a century are so few in number that they can be counted on the fingers of one hand is that the ideal is practically an unheard of quantity in the lives of most of us, said Mr. Wister.

It seemed to be the speaker's impression that never before had a race of people been so swayed by a common impulse as Americans by the desire for wealth.

Sydney Smith, writing nearly a century before, made the same complaint of the English. Referring to the motive power of life he said that if one were to watch the throngs in Bond street or the Exchange and take out those who were moved by the love of power, the love of wealth and the love of esteem, in half an hour the street would be empty.

Everybody plants of art and of ideals. The difficulty lies in distinguishing between that ideal that strives for good as the extreme object of knowledge, and that miscalled ideal which seeks the gratification of the very common desire to be thought well of.

Not everyone can comprehend and still fewer can be sure of themselves feeling that exquisitely homely reply of Burbank's Italian gardener, who when the Californian asked him what he would do if he had a million dollars he had heard him wish for answered that he would build greenhouses and hot beds so that he might furnish the poor with all the vegetables and fruits that they could want.

He was uneducated and unlettered. His life's horizon was bounded by the vegetables, over which he puttered and toiled. But his work had not consisted in merely hoeing potatoes or grafting fruit trees. While he worked he had reasoned that the fruit which he worked to bring to perfection was something intrinsically good and that by rights it should be distributed to rich and poor alike.

He was unintelligent, as the word intelligence goes. And yet Plato in his Republic classifies intelligence into four stages, of which the first might be called imagination and conjecture, the second certainty, the third intellect, with its formal rules and laws, and the fourth pure ideal. The Italian had not failed to conjecture, he may have revelled in the certainty of his knowledge of his own craft, in his modest sort of way, and he was not oblivious to the fact that life has its aims as well as its daily routine.

But however great the number of those who have no ideals may be, the number of idealists who can't see the forest for the trees is almost as disconcerting.

The young actor, or writer or artist of any kind is rather prone to consider the routine as inconsequential. For instance, the stage manager of a stock company will tell you that all his people are occasionally good but that few of them can keep their enthusiasm and bring it into play to help out a part that does not appeal to them.

Perhaps once a month they are cast in the way they approve of. The other three weeks are spent in unconvincing labor. There is an element of pathos in the effort of Eddy Foy, the comedian, to turn from the burlesque parts which he has played so long and to take up with that most deeply metaphysical of Shakespeare's characters, Hamlet.

Foy has made thousands laugh by his absurd antics as a clownish comedian. He has won fame and wealth in that way. And yet all through the years he must have had a feeling of repulsion for his work, which grew and grew until he is finally able to attempt that which he has aimed at through thousands of nights of buffoonery.

It is said of the playwright, Alfred Sutro, that when a young man he had a consuming ambition to write plays. He realized, however, that the way of the young dramatist is usually a lean and hungry one and so he calmly set about to make enough money to insure himself from starving. Always keeping his ideal before him, he worked up a chemist's business, becoming finally a manufacturer. When he had made enough money to insure himself of a comfortable income he gave up his business and set about seriously to the writing of the kind of plays he desired.

Robert Louis Stevenson relates of Thoreau that once the Sage of Walden Pond tried the manufacture of lead pencils. When he had gained considerable success and his friends began to congratulate him on his establishment in life he said he would never make another.

"I will not do again what I have done once," said Thoreau. "When a thing has once been done as well as it wants to be it is of no further interest to the self-improver."

But later on when his family needed money he went back to his cast-off art and went at the distasteful work of making pencils again until something more congenial came to him.

Thoreau was not a man who liked business. He was a worthy predecessor of Mr. Wister. "The whole enterprise of this nation," he wrote, "is not illustrated by a thought, it is not warmed by a sentiment, there is nothing in it for which a man should lay down his life, nor even his gloves. If our merchants did not most of them fail and the banks, too, my faith in the old laws of the world would be staggered. The statement that ninety-six in a hundred every such business surely breaks down is perhaps the sweetest fact statistics reveal."

As Stevenson adds, the wish was probably father to the figures, but there is a great deal of truth in the statement after all, and Thoreau did not fail to perceive the lesson they contained for him. He, however, was a man of exceptional strength of character. It sounds romantic to go off into the woods and build one's own cabin and furniture and live entirely by the labor of one's hands. Actually there is a deal of hard work in it, considerable privation and more inconveniences than most dreamers of dreams are willing to undergo.

Facts are disillusioning. The world is overrun with people who see before them the ideals of wealth, or power, or learning, or art. They strive and work and suffer now as they always have and always will.

Take the very common instance of the poor boy struggling to win a higher education, that he may shine in some profession or possibly some art. It is one of the most pitiful things one sees in the universities and colleges of the country. Boys toiling from morning till night, insuffi-



Lee Willard, in the "County Squire," at the Marquam Grand.

Cheridah Simpson, in "Red Feather."

ciently clad, improperly nourished, waiting on table, doing the work of servants between recitations and lectures, not only undergoing hardships themselves but enforcing hardships on their families at home, all that they may attain some position in life which has been idealized by their imaginations.

The silly faddists are largely responsible for this. They insist on romancing about the beauty of this and the nobility of that, hold their idiotic exhibitions of one kind and another and chatter until the head of the honest artisan who if unmolested would do his work and do it well, becomes turned. Then, the mischief done, they run away, and leave their victim to follow the ignis fatuus kindled by their talk of art and fame and wealth.

"Every kind of work tends to be lowered by becoming a professional," exclaimed Socrates, moved to anger by the Sophists. And one kind, sensible person, doing his day's work well, whether it be the mere "filling in" of a minor part in a cheap stock company, the teaching of school, the clerking in a store or the bringing up of a family is probably credited with more in the ultimate reckoning than the art of Paderewski and all his votaries taken together.

The stage-struck school girl who raves over the mummies she sees each week would probably be crestfallen to know that most of them are very nice comfortable people indeed, who live in unromantic boarding houses and sit at the table with Brown, the shoe clerk, and Smith, the assistant paying teller at So-and-So's bank, and usually support their mothers, provided their mothers need supporting.

They find something more in life than a change of costumes and the replacing of a blond wig by an Auburn one. And having done that they have started on their way to the fourth stage of intelligence, which is the much sought-for ideal.

PROMISES MADE BY THE PRESS AGENTS

(Continued from Page Five.)

"The Wolves of New York."

There will be a widespread interest felt in the performance of "The Wolves of New York," that famous metropolitan melodramatic success, in which the Allen stock company will appear at the Grand Opera House, Monday night and continuing through the week, with matinees Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. The management has provided a complete investiture of elaborate and beautiful scenery and effects, and some of the most famous localities in Gotham will be reproduced with marvellous realism.

The leading role is a rollicking southerner, such as Emmet made so popular, and in the part Verne Felton will have an opportunity to display his remarkable versatility as an actor, in a role very different from anything she has done before. Rupert Drumm will also be a surprise to his friends and admirers for he will appear as the villain and give a great performance. Forrest Seabury will appear as a darkey and will make one of his customary hits. Mrs. Clara Allen will play the old hag, and Marie Thompson and Irving Kennedy will be with us on Monday night and enjoy the big show.

The Best at Pantages.

Even if you have not seen the marvelous Florene troupe at Pantages this week, there is little doubt but that you have heard people talking about them. The three musical Kuhns have proved another big drawing card of the past week and the bill throughout has been good. Music, burlesque and lively comedy combined in one act will be the wholesome feature of the new week, especially when it is taken into account that the producers of the act are the famous Colby four.

Something novel and pleasing in the comedy quartet line is the act put on by the S. four.

How does Mysticus change the coloring of his clothes, hat and gloves right before your very eyes without your discovering the secret? Mysticus has puzzled the whole country. He is very careful of his secret and works only on a boxed stage so that not even the stage hands can have any chance of learning his processes.

"Jack Wells" Today.

The closing performances of "Jack Wells of Wyoming" will occur this afternoon and tonight. This play has been one of the biggest successes in the history of the Lyric, and the Allen stock company has certainly increased its hold on popular favor by its splendid work in the various roles of this great cast of all cowboy plays. Go this afternoon or tonight.

Grace George in "Divorcans."

Grace George in Sardou's "Divorcans" will be the attraction at the Hellig theatre for three nights beginning Thursday, February 13.

DeWolf Hopper at Hellig Sunday.

An attraction that gives promise of being one of the most enjoyable offerings of the season is no less than the favorite comedian De Wolf Hopper, supported by dainty Marguerite Clark, in the most successful musical production—Reginald De Koven and Frederic Ranken's comic opera de luxe, "Happyland" comes to the Hellig theatre for four nights beginning next Sunday, February 9. The advance seat sale will open next Friday.

"Kerry Gow."

Born of Irish parentage in Lynn, Massachusetts, twenty-six years ago, Bernard Daly, who is Dan O'Hara in the new production of "Kerry Gow," which comes to the Marquam Grand next week, is hailed in theatrical circles as the sweetest singer of Irish songs on the stage, and a worthy follower of William J. Scanlan.

"Dream City" Coming.

Little Chip and Mary Marble have scored splendidly in Joe Weber's production, "Dream City." These clever little stars and their merry associates will undoubtedly draw a capacity audience at the Marquam Grand, for they have never had so fine a vehicle. The management is entitled to much praise too, for the stunning manner in which it is mounted and cast and the chorus is remarkable for the number of pretty and graceful young women.

"Charley's Aunt" Released.

"Charley's Aunt," after being withdrawn from stock for nearly four years, has been released for use in the high class companies, and is announced for London, some time in the future. The play, which was written by David Harum. It will open next Sunday matinee, February, with Howard Russell in his popular role of the young college boy who plays the bogus Aunt. Miss Gleason as the real Aunt and William Dills, also of the original Baker production, as Spettigue, the Oxford lawyer.

"As Told in the Hills."

"As Told in the Hills," which follows Peck's "Mad Boy" at the Empire, tells a story of emigrants who, crossing the plains, are attacked by Indians and killed, while their beautiful little daughter is taken captive and brought up by the Indians. It is a beautiful tale, filled with exciting events, and last season made a splendid impression with all patrons of the Empire. It will open next Sunday matinee, February 9.

THEATRICAL NOTES.

Nat Goodwin is to reorganize his company, keeping some of the old members. Edna Goodrich will remain his leading lady.

Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett is writing a new play for Eleanor Robson based on her story, "The Dawn of a Tomorrow."

Robert Edison has now been a star for six years. His biggest hit before his starring days was in the title role of "The Little Minister," as leading man with Maude Adams.

A one act melodrama by Owen Davis, "The Battle of Port Arthur," has opened at the New York Hippodrome. A hundred persons took part and the military and naval part made it a big spectacle.

Pietro Mascagni, like most other Italians, is said to be extremely superstitious. He carries about with him a regular battery of charms and mascots. One of his mascots is a living diva, Mme. Calvi, whom he always tries to secure to sing in the first production of his new works, because he believes she is an infallible magnet for success.

Austin Strong, who is a nephew of Lloyd Osbourne, and who wrote "And What Happened Then?" for De Wolf Hopper, has in his hands a tiny theatre which just fits the top of a large table. It is completely equipped as to scenery and lighting effects, and in this theatre he puts on with casts composed of pieces of pasteboard the plays which he afterward takes to the managers.

María Guerrero, the famous Spanish actress, spent a few days in New York last week on her way from Havana, where she has just closed a brilliant season, to her native Spain. On Monday evening, January 6, Senora Guerrero occupied a box at Mrs. Fiske's performance of "Bohemians" at the Lyric theatre, at the conclusion of which she visited Mrs. Fiske in her dressing room and expressed her delight and appreciation. She was the guest of Mrs. Fiske's Spanish actress to New York, though she has made many tours to South America, Mexico and Cuba. One of Senora Guerrero's most successful roles is that of Marta, in "Marta of the Lowlands," which Bertha Kalich is now acting so triumphantly under Harrison Grey Fiske's direction. She was greatly interested in Madame Kalich's success in the play, and asked that she might have portraits of Madame Kalich as Marta and a set of photographs of the production. Angel Guimera, the author of "Marta," has written upon a new drama for Guerrero, upon the American rights of which Mr. Fiske has an option.

PORTLAND PLAYERS SUCCEED IN EAST

(Washington Bureau of The Journal.) Washington, D. C., Feb. 1.—Popular Portland actors have been in Washington this week and others recently, and the Theatre Stock company, gives an account of what these thespians have been doing since leaving the Rose City. Southard, who was with Morosco in Los Angeles, came east a year or so ago, and, appearing in New York for the first time as an aspirant for Broadway honors, laid his card on the desk of Charles Frohman.

"I have been looking for you, Bennett Southard, for two weeks; I have heard of you from the west and I want you to recreate your part as the judge in 'The Judge and the Jury' at the Savoy theatre."

"Mrs. Sarah Cowell Le Moyne returns to her former reading of Browning and Shakespeare."

If "The Jesters" proves the success expected, Adams will probably be seen in the play in London.

Marie Doré is to appear in London, but first she will visit the theatres of American cities in "The Morals of Marcus."

Donald Brin, who plays Prince Danilo to Miss Ethel Jackson's Sonia in the New York "The Merry Widow" company, next week, is hailed in theatrical circles as "The Two Orphans," which was written by Miss Jackson's father.

Musical friends of Henri Gressitt, who was last year associated with the publicity corps of Puccini's "Madam Butterfly," will be glad to learn that he has resumed his position with this company. Mr. Gressitt's blue-grass courtesy has made him a column of interest stretching from Maine to California, and he has received from them a stack of congratulatory messages on his return to the staff of Mr. Savage's great operatic success.

Another former member of Henry W. Savage's English opera forces has entered upon what promises to be a bright career in Europe. Marion Ivel, the young American contralto, made her debut at Nantes recently in "La Favorita" and will remain there all season, appearing in 15 different roles.

Miss Ivel commenced her musical education in Paris in 1900, studying with Scriglia for a year and a half. Mr. Savage heard and engaged her as principal contralto for his English grand opera company. She made her American debut as Amneris in "Aida" at the Broadway theatre, New York, in 1901.

She remained for four seasons with the Savage company, singing the contralto roles in "Lohengrin," "Trovatore," "Aida," "La Gioconda" and "Faust," also "Carmen." For the last year she has

been with the Baker Theatre Stock company, recently was married to Mr. Price, president of the Interstate Amusement company, one of the most powerful theatrical organizations in the east. Miss Countess lately opened as leading woman of a stock company in Pittsburg, under Eric's management, and is retaining every pledge of her fine abilities and faithful work in Portland.

Charles Wynygate, leading man when Catherine Counties was leading woman at the Baker, is here with "The Great Divide" company at the Belasco theatre.

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