Municipal Art in Western Cities

(Eugene, Oregon.)

(Prof. George Wharton James, in August number of Arena.)

It is hard for Westerners, much more for Easterners or Southerners, to realize the gigantic strides the awakened West is now taking. A month makes a difference. Not only do new settlements spring up almost with the rapidity of mining camp days, but camps become villages, villages towns, and towns cities, with a rapidity that startles even those who are used to seeing the speed of American development. Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana are now on the crest of an ascending wave that is flooding their areas with a tide of incoming population that in ten years more will completely change the face of the country. The "Wild and Wooly" days are past; the mining camps of Bret Harte and Joaquin Miller are no more; the frontier has disappeared; the stage-coach is practically a thing of the past, and in these states, at least, the public library, artistic from an architectural standpoint, and well equipped from the bookman's viewpoint—the opera house, the art museum, the city park system, supplement the electric light, telegraph, telephone, water systems, and railways—steam and electric—and give proof that the old things are become new.

In this series of articles, written as the result of careful investigations made on the ground, it is my purpose to show what some of the new Western cities are aiming at, how they are accomplishing their ends, what they have already done, in the line of democratic civic art, in the hope that thereby other cities may be stimulated to high endeavor; may learn lessons; and, mayhap, the cities themselves the subject of consideration, in seeing themselves through the eye of another, may take suggestions to their advantage and profit.

Eugene is neither the capital city nor the metropolis of Oregon; yet I have purposely taken it for the first city of the series. It is merely one of a type—I think, perhaps, the best of its class, of Oregon interior cities, which a decade ago had existence, and had apparently settled down to be a quiet, sedate, unprogressive, old fashioned country village. But Eugene of ten years ago reckoned without wisdom. It did not take into consideration the Divine law which, from the dawn of history on to the banks of the Hindu Kush, has kept pushing men westward. It did not consider the rapid growth of other countries, which, becoming crowded, began to look for new fields of endeavor. It neglected the fertility of the soil of its encompassing country, and failed to take note of the fine crops of apples, cherries, berries, peaches, etc., which its few everyday farmers were yearly bringing into market,—each year in increasing quantity. And, finally, it did not take into account that, even if it hid its own lights under a bush, there are curious and peering men whose joy it has been in late years to go overturning bushels everywhere, seeking that light they might discover thus hidden.

All these things combined to reveal Eugene, first to one, then to nother, and finally to a score. Then this score said to themselves—"Is this really Eugene of the past? Have we this and that and the other that we had not thought of.

And then, like a true woman, fully awakened from girlhood, scarce knowing that she had passed the age of puberty, until men sought her to wife, Eugene awoke to self consciousness, to recognition of her own, and began to put on the garments of adornment, to beautify beauty, and make herself the more to be admired because of the tasteful garments she had given to her natural beauty.

Leaders of the state helped her in her scarce gained self-consciousness. They established the State University there, but up to the last two or three years, while good and true students have been turned forth, they were fe win number and the equipment of the institution was practically much less than that of many an Eastern High school. But now all is changed. Everything has experienced the electric touch. Progress, advancement are felt the moment one steps foot into the city. For many years Eugene, like nearly all other American towns, paid no attention to its railway approach. Around and near the depot were the usual shacks, tumbled down fences, livery stables with their accompanying piles of decaying filth, giving to the visitors every emotion and sentiment save those of pleasure of enjoyment as they descended from their incoming trains. A year or so ago the Eugene Commercial Club organized a Promotion Department under management of Mr. John H. Hartog, a gentleman of refinement, culture and education, who has inaugurated and successfully carried out a campaign of city cleaning up in one of the cities on San Francisco Bay. One of his advertising "hobbies" was beautifying a city. This was undoubtedly the result of the civic neatness of his native land—Holland—for all travelers who have wandered through the land of canals and quaint windmills, of artists and simple-hearted peasants, know how neat and clean, as well as artistic, the cities of Holland are. Early in his Eugene experience Mr. Hartog began to agitate for the improvement of the city, beginning at the grounds of the railway station. He contended, and wisely too, that not only does civic beautification and adornment pay the citizens in the enjoyment they experience in seeing the new beauty, but it pays from a commercial and advertising standpoint. It attracts visitors, induces them to remain longer, gets them out-of-doors, and, when they leave, sends them away loud and enthusiastic in their praises of the city that values itself enough to expend time, money and energy upon its adornment. He said, too, that the best place to begin was at the railway station—the place where visitors get their first impression of the city, and where their last glances fall upon it as they return to their homes. Accordingly he interviewed the members of the city council, and saw the authorities of the railway company, as well as conferred with the officers of his own Club, finding them easily convinced of the enormous benefit that would accrue from the improvement, the Club engaged an experienced landscape architect to prepare a plan for the beautification of the grounds and of the streets close by. Armed with this he secured the hearty co-operation of the railway company, his Club made a liberal appropriation, and then the Governors of the Club appeared before the city council and asked their approval, endorsement and financial assistance in the scheme. I happened to arrive in the city the same day the project came up before the council, and at the request of Mr. Hartog I was invited to address them upon the subject. I did not have to urge them to accept the plan; that was already done; but I congratulated them upon their action as an epoch-forming event in their civic history. Their example would be followed by all progressive Oregon cities, and they would thus help on the work of general beautification of the great centers where "men and women most do congregate." Furthermore, having begun the specific adornment of one part of their city, other sections would demand attention, and thus a laudable competition in the spirit of improvement would be aroused, which, once awakened, can never be quelled.

Less than two weeks after the city had agreed to contribute its share to put in water mains, alter the streets where necessary, undertake to supply all water needed for irrigation, put up the needful electric lights for this small park, I returned to Eugene and found the work well under way. Men were at work grading, hauling in manure and earth for the rose garden, rocks for the fernery and curbing, and within two months from the time the plan was agreed upon I venture to think it will be successfully carried out. The accompanying plan shows how the evergreen trees are so planted to form a complete barricade, shutting out of view the stables, barns and other unattractive features. In front of these evergreens will be planted fancy deciduous trees, such as silver birch and the like, trees which are ornamental even when devoid of foliage. Along the tracks or platform will be flowerbeds, while between these and the driveways will be lawn, dotted here and there by shrubs, flowers and trees, making shady nooks and cosy walks. A person then arriving at Eugene will land in a 5-acre park, with the pretty depot standing out by itself, and it will be quite a novelty for the average traveler to land in a bower of beauty instead of the usual mass of debris, fences, tin cans and other such things which abound in the back alleys around so many stations.

From an article in the Portland Oregonian of aMrch 7, 1909, I learn that the Eugene Commercial Club devised the scheme and pays for its accomplishment, the Southern Pacific Railway Company allows the use of its grounds (5 acres), delivers the loam for top-dressing, and agrees to maintain the grounds in order and beauty, and the city council builds the walks along the driveways, purchases and sets up eighteen ornamental lamp posts, and furnishes the electricity for light and water for irrigation gratis. The total cost will be some $4,000.00.

For location Eugene is ideally situated. It is built about 125 miles south of Portland, on the banks of the Willamette river, the valley of which is noted as one of Oregon's chief charms. Indeed to the dweller in the Pacific Northwest the Willamette valley is as noted as is the Connecticut River Valley in New England. It is as equally as picturesque and beautiful in its quiet and pastoral character as is the noted New England valley, with the addition of the wild, rugged picturesque of the forest-covered foothills leading the eye to the Cascade mountain range on the east and the Coast range on the west; where snowy peaks twelve and more thousand feet into the blue. The whole valley is rapidly becoming one vast apple and cherry orchard. A few years ago it was discovered that the soil and climate were marvellously adapted to the growth of apples and cherries and the crops are almost beyond ordinary belief. The apples are fine, but the cherries and walnuts are simply perfection. Imagine, therefore, a city with such a location. A good site on the banks of a beautiful river; rolling hills destroying monotony in the suburbs, while the city proper is of level grade and suitable elevation; the surrounding country one vast orchard; forests in the foothills beyond, with a horizon bounded in every direction, forty, sixty, a hundred miles away with virgin snow-white peakes that companion the stars.

The town was founded in the "forties" or "fifties" of the last century, for in one of the main strets is a huge boulder on which is inscribed: "First jury trial held under an oak in 1853." What a landmark, and how suggestive. In 1900 the official census gave Eugene a population of 3200 souls—half a century to grow up to a 3000 population. In 1905 the report was 5500. In 1909 it is over 10,000, and the ratio of increase is growing. The state legislature of 1907 increased the appropriation for the State University to $125,000.00 and the result is immediate expansion of the University and upon artistic lines The campus has been enlarged some forty acres, and several new building are being erected. The present president, Mr. P. L. Campbell, is an active and ardent supporter of civic beautification, and his influence has already been most beneficial as shown in the improved style of architecture of the new buildings, and the comprehensive plan he has formulated for theimprovement of the University grounds.

The residences and churches as well as the business blocks show keen appreciation of the beautiful and good taste as the various photographs show.

To many of my readers it may sound strange when I say that until two years ago there was not a mile of paved street in any Oregon city save and except Portland, its metropolis. Eugene was the first city to destroy that antique and not very creditable record. In 1907 she began the laving of pavement and within fourten months this city of but 10,000 inhabitants payed 58 blocks in the principal strets and residential suburbs at an outlay of nearly a quarter million dollars. Other cities have thus been spurred into action, and now several Oregon cities are preparing to lay pavement as rapidly as they can accomplish it.

Eugene has two libraries, one belonging to the city and the other to the University. Both are dignified and pleasing structures, very different in architecture, yet equally attractive and in good taste. The new court house and High school are also noteworthy buildings. A few weeks ago the citizens subscribed in the short time of eight days over fifty thousand dollars for a Y.M.C.A. building. It has already voted $300,000 worth of bonds to purchase the water works and establish its own water supply.

The progressive among the citizens are now advocating a full system of parks, city squares, boulevards and scenic outlooks. Nature has given Eugene the opportunity to work out such a system to perfection. In the center of the city is the small city square. It is useless as a park, but is admirably adapted for a civic center. The county court house and county jail already overlook it, as well as the "White Temple" of the Odd Fellows. One lot is to be occupied by a hundred-thousand dollar hotel, and a whole block can be utilized for the new city hall which is contemplated building. Other public buildings can be massed here, such as an Art Museum and a theatre, and thus a civic center assured while the city is in the infancy of its uplift. From here a parkway or tree lined-street leads to the University grounds, which President Campbell ere long hopes to have laid out after the plans of a first-class architect. Within stone's throw of the campus is the mill race, originally designed merely for commercial purposes, but already beautified by trees, shrubs and flowers along its banks, and pressed into the service of the city as a feature of pleasure and beauty. Boats and canoes float to and fro with their animated burdens of youth and beauty, giving a life and joy to the scene, and affording an enjoyment many a less favored city would give a good deal to possess. Along this mill race a boulevard can be extended to the Fairmount hills, two miles away in the heart of which nestles Hendricks' Park, a naturally beautiful unimproved property of nearly eighty acres, forty-eight of which were presented to the city in 1905 by the Hon. T. G. Hendricks, one of the oldest settlers, and now is president of the First National Bank, and the other thirty-two purchased by the city. Here among the arrow-straight fir trees, and other indigenous trees, and surrounded by millions of wild flowers, the boulevards and parkways will be made, affording outlooks towards the mountains, the city and the river. The general panoramic view is sublime, imbibing all these elements, with the addition of glimpses of the pastoral McKenzie river, which empties near hear into the Willamette, the snow-clad mountain summits, above which tower those three sentinel peaks, the Three Sisters, in supernal majestic and virgin purity. In blossom time, twice a year, once for the apples and once for the cherries, the whole valley is an exquisite Turkish carpet, spread out in dazzling beauty, responding to the ardent caresses of the brilliant sunshine. It is a scene of rich beauty as well as one denoting prosperity and plenty.

Passing now through these many orchards, the boulevard will lead to the banks of the Willamette and follow its winding course back to the city, to a magnificent butte, which immediately overlooks the architecturally pleasing railway station. This butte belongs to the city. On the city side it is green and open, but on the river side it is a dense mass of fir trees. It is the intention to construct winding drives round the butte passing in and out of the forest and planned in such a fashion as to afford the most delightful scenic surprises. Part of it can be converted into a children's recreation ground, and part for the delectation of the citizens who have to sit or walk and enjoy the flowing river at their feet, the expansive valley view beyond or the aspiring mountain summits of the far away distance.

To the park at the railway station is but a stone's throw, and from thence to the civic center the street will be parked somewhat, and thus a complete drive enjoyed of fully eight miles of most interesting boulevards, affording a remarkable and pleasing variety of scenery. That so young a city has so elaborate a plan in view and with every reasonable hope that it will ere long be carried out is a matter for congratulation to the citizens of Eugene.

There is an abundance of trees in the residence section of Eugene, with lawn, flowers, pampas grass and the like, and when the improvement spirit took posession of the town it was found that the hideous telegraph, telephone, electric light and trolley poles did not add at all to the charm of the city streets. Not being able to relegate them to an underground conduit the citizens determined to render them as unobtrusive as possible by painting them green. It is really remarkable how much less hideous they are when thus disguised by a coat of paint. It is now proposed to discontinue the use of the overhead arc lights on some of the most prominent residence streets and substitute therefore side lights, large opaque globes, sustained by ornamental iron-work brackets. Instead of putting up special poles to hold these brackets an arrangement has been entered into whereby the existing poles may be utilized for the purpose.

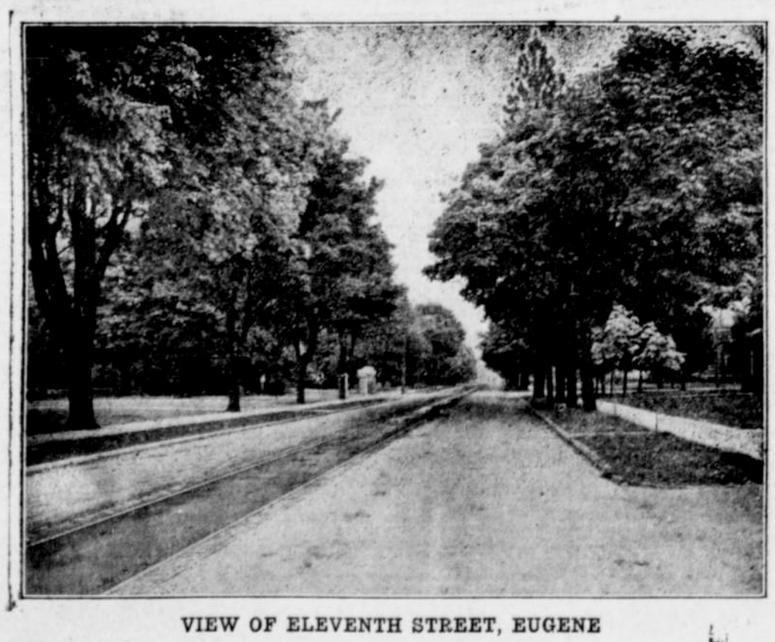
The ladies of Eugene are an important factor in this work of civic improvement and beautification. They have aided in every direction and urged upon the men fuller participation in the movement. Sometime ago they erected a pretty and comfortable Rest Cottage in the city square where the wives and children of the farmers who come to town to trade may be able to rest after doing their shopping. They are now planning to erect an artistic electric fountain in the new depot park, and in their regular meetings they keep up the agitation for the further and continued beautification of the city.

The growth of the improvement spirit and its infectious character is well illustrated by the outcome of the mere commencement of the work upon the depot park. Many of the owners of lots backing upon the park, who hitherto had been content with the shacks, hovels, barns, stables, etc., that had for so long been an eye sore to incomers to Eugene, are now planning so to remove these objectionable structures and are discussing the erection of fine residences upon these same lots. Planting of trees has already begun, and ere long all the old debris will have disappeared. Thus the good work goes on.

I have been somewhat explicit in this recital of the doings at Eugene, because it is a small city. It is going to work in the right way. It is beginning well. What it is doing other cities may do. I commend its spirit to others. Indeed it has already begun to exercise a marked influence throughout the state. I often heard the expression, as I traveled about, "The Eugene Way," and men would say to each other "that's the way they do things in Eugene," etc. At the same time I wish to make a suggestion to Eugene, namely, that in the planning of its park and boulevard system it call upon some expert who has had knowledge of what other cities have done, and let him lay out a far-reaching and comprehensive system, which shall provide for the needs of the city for fifty or more years to come. Thus, by foresight, much can be gained, errors avoided, and all work done in accordance with a large and comprehensive plan which it may take half a century, or even a century, fully to complete.

EUGENE CHERRIES

MILL RACE NEAR U. OF O., EUGENE



VIEW OF ELEVENTH STREET, EUGENE

TAFT NEGROES WOULD MONOPOLIZE ENTIRE TOWN

Muskogee, Okla., Sept. 17.—Following a warning that unless three white men in the strictly negro town of Taft, Okla., left town, death would follow, the negroes dynamited the store of one of the whites. The white merchants declare they will remain, and further trouble is expected.

A HURRY UP CALL.

Quick! Mr. Druggist—Quick!—A box of Bucklen's Arnica Salve—Here's a quarter—For the love of Moses, Hurry! Baby's burned himself, trrribly—Johnnie cut his foot with an axe—Mamie's scalded—Pa can't walk for piles—and my corns ache. She got it and soon cured all the family. Its the greatest healer on earth. Sold by W. A. Kukkendall.

OLDEST PRELATE PASSES AWAY AT LOUISVILLE, KY.

Louisville, Ky., Sept. 17.—Right Rev. William George McCloskey, of Louisville, the oldest living prelate in the United States, died here today. He was 85 years of age, and death was due to ailments incidental to old age. He had been the head of the Kentucky diocese for 41 years and was honored and beloved by Catholics and Protestants alike.

It's a pity when sick ones drug the stomach or stimulate the Heart or Kidneys. That is all wrong! A weak Stomach, means weak Stomach nerves, always. And this is also true of the Heart and Kidneys. The weak nerves are instead crying out for help. This explains why Dr. Shoop's Restorative is promptly helping Stomach, Heart and Kidney ailments. The Restorative reaches out for the actual cause of these ailments—the failing, "inside nerves." Anyway test the Restorative 48 hours. It won't cure so soon as that, but you will surely know that help is coming. Sold by all dealers.

ELECTRIC CAR KILLS SALEM WOMAN

Salem, Or., Sept. 16.—Mrs. Charles A. Whale today fell from a crowded Portland Railway, Light and Power Company street car, on North Commercial street, between Marion and Union streets, about 10:30 o'clock this morning, and sustained injuries from which she died at the Salem hospital about noon. An examination by Drs. Clay, Mott and J. N. Smith disclosed the fact that the woman had sustained a concussion of the brain and a dislocated shoulder. She died without regaining consciousness. The train, consisting of a motor car and one trailer, was in charge of David Hart, Roy Stiffler and Harry Hatch.

SHIP THIRTY-FIVE CARS OF VETCH

Fred Dose, the vetch buyer arrived this afternoon. He has just shipped his last car load of vetch, sending out more vetch than all other buyers combined, over thirty-five car loads in all, of which ten car loads were shipped from Albany, and quite a number from Tangent, 695,000 pounds all at an average of 3¼ cents a pound means a good deal among the farmers of the valley. Mr. Dose likes Albany and considers it a fine business town, the best shipping center in the valley. Mr. Dose's home is at Woodburn, but he is arround Albany a good deal.—Albany Democrat.

Levi Mullinax, of Eureka, Kan., who has been visiting his brother-in-law, W. J. Gibson, and family for the past week, left yesterday morning for Tacoma to visit James W. Geppard and family. They will incidently take in the A. Y. P. fair before returning home. Mr. Mullinax visited many points in California before arriving here and after being shown over this part of the country and taking in the district fair he thinks Eugene a much building town. He was also taken to the top of Spencer's Butte to get a better view of the city and he left with the impression that Eugene has a great future and thought it a fine town to live in.

Three new linemen have been added to the Willamette Valley Company's force to keep up with the large amount of work about to be done here. Two who started work this morning were sent here by the company from Baker City.

ORCHARD MEN WHO HAVE SUCCEEDED

Bales Bros., by Their Efforts, Have Valuable Property At Cottage Grove

Cottage Grove, Or., Sept. 16.—The Bales Brothers' apple orchard, located about 9 miles east of Cottage Grove, is a source of pride to its owners. These two young men began with practically nothing in 1894, when they cleared the land and set out 120 trees. Since then they have gradually increased their orchard until they have 14 acres of fine healthy aple trees, consisting of the Jonathan, Baldwin, Mammoth Black Twig, Greening and King varieties. Four years ago they sold 500 boxes of apples from four acres, and two years ago they marketed 1200 boxes from the same trees, with a net profit of $800. Last year by mistake, they killed most of their fruit crop with a too strong solution of lime spray, but while it was a financial loss their trees are in fine healthy condition this year as a result. They have 2½ acres set between the rows with strawberries, set out last November, many of which plants measure two feet across. From these vines Mr. Bales picked ripe berries of excellent flavor last month.

Felix Currin has brought samples of fruit to the Commercial Club from his farm four miles east of town, consisting of three varieties of wild apples and one of wild peaches of splendid flavor and color. In his exhibit were three varieties of tame prunes, French prunes, measuring 3¼ by 3½ inches; sugar prunes and silver prunes larger than the French variety. Bartlett pears, cherries and pears, tomatoes, Burbank potatoes, and Early Crawford peaches, highly colored, and surpassing both the Southern Oregon and Hood River peaches in flavor.

ORVILLE WRIGHT FLYING HIGHER

Berlin, Sept. 17.—Orville Wright, flying here today, attained a height of 765 feet, thus breaking Latham's record.

A marriage license was granted yesterday afternoon to Earl E. Siemmons and Grace E. Penney, both of Eugene.

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