



By Lynn W. Watkins
(Register & Tribune Syndicate, 1961)

Small Worlds Around Us

The Gull Had Passed 'The Word'—But How?

Three miles away from the nearest seashore, in a wide open field, we deposited half a hundred large fresh water snails, taking particular care to drop the mollusks when there were no seagulls visible in the sky, knowing that from time to time one or more of the birds flew over the area.

We didn't have long to wait. From high in the sky a cruising gull located the snails and sailed down to investigate.

The bird picked up the mollusk in its beak, shook it violently and flung it to the ground. The shell broke. The bird quickly grabbed the soft body and swallowed it. Having tasted the feast and finding it good, the gull ate three more snails. It wiped its bill on the ground, gave a little jump forward and took to the air.

Scanned the Sky

With binoculars we scanned the sky in the direction the lone gull had taken when it flew. We had not long to wait. An even dozen seagulls suddenly came in sight. They slanted down and came to rest on the field within a few feet of the snails. These birds took no time to survey the situation, but began breaking up the snails, and gobbling up the soft bodies.

The feast was short-lived. Within a few minutes all the snails had been eaten. Then at some silent signal they leaped into the air and disappeared in the direction of the beach.

We waited and watched, wondering if there would be another delegation arriving only to find the table empty, the food gone and the guests departed. We waited over an hour, but no gulls showed. Evidently those out there on the beach must have known the table was empty, but we wondered, for we knew there were hundreds of the birds and they would all be hungry, but none came. Evidently the word had been passed.

Salem Chordsmen Barbershop Champs

Forest Grove—(UPI)—A Salem group, The Capital Chordsmen, won the All-Northwest Barber Shop Quartet singing contest here Saturday night.

The contest was the highlight of the city's annual Gay Nineties Celebration.

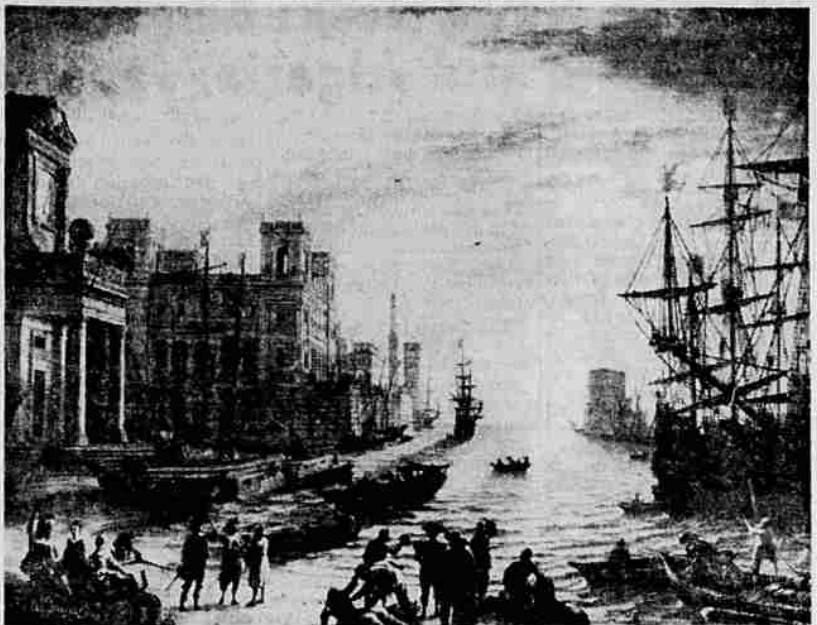
The Chordsmen won in the finals over the Four-Do-Matics of Seattle. The original field was 19 quartets.

The Salem group, was composed of Dick Roth, Al Smith, Dick McClintic and Lloyd Griffiths.

Learned What?

We attempted to analyze what we had learned, wondering at the same time if we had really learned anything, or were we just spectators to a regular occurrence?

Was the arrival of a dozen gulls only an accident? Why not only a hundred? We were not even sure that the gull



MASTERPIECE—“A Harbor at Sunset”, painted by Claude Lorrain in 1639, a masterpiece included in the exhibition of French art, entitled “The Splendid Century.” Claude for the first time among landscape painters, took his palette into the great outdoors. He was also first to paint the sun, head-on. The work is on loan from the Louvre museum in Paris.

that discovered the snails had returned with the even dozen. Probably he had not.

Intrigued with what we had discovered, we repeated the experiment a few days later. The result was identical, this time we were careful to study the gull that discovered the snails—he did not come back with the flock. Obviously he had had his fill, and he shared the information with his friends who were glad to come and feast at the table.

Perhaps it's stupid of us to wonder, but just how did the original gull, the one that first discovered the snails tell his friends about it, and at the same time give them the exact direction and location? It must be a silent but well understood language—that of the wild and the free.

Our oldest son thought we ought to buy an Imperial. He said I had worked very hard for many years and deserved something superior. My wife wanted us to keep the 1951 yellow Ford convertible as a symbol of our modest circumstances and general frugality. She pointed out that the payments would be smaller. She also said that it was an airy car, since the top had been stuck for a year and 14 months, and air is good for children. Besides, she said, she had lost an opal earring in it somewhere.

We sold it finally to a

OF SMITH & MEN

By Jack Smith
(c) 1960 — Times-Mirror Syndicate

Now that the average person allegedly has a swimming pool, a psychiatrist, a girl's school and a gardener, the automobile is supposed to have lost its status as a status symbol.

That's not so. We have a new car at last and we feel that it has given us some status. The trouble is, we don't know what status.

We finally bought a large white compact with red insides. Our youngest son wanted us to buy a smaller compact on the grounds that it was more compact, and it could be had with red insides, if necessary.

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THE SHAPE OF THINGS

The Splendid Century: Lorrain Paints Sun, Moods of Nature

By RICHARD HIRSCH
Director
Allentown Art Museum

Court art and royal academies have come to suggest pompous boredom to the people of our time. Even those of us with the most conservative tastes have been brought, somehow, to believe that art can only flourish in total anarchy.

For a century or so our artists have demanded their “freedom”, insisting that unless they were encouraged in absolute irresponsibility their creativeness would wither and die. Whether we like or disapprove of the artists who scream these slogans it is surprising to note that these claims are, now, generally and universally, accepted. We have been successfully brainwashed.

An exhibition which refutes the art - for - anarchy's sake philosophy is currently starting a significant segment of our museum public. The revelation has been provided by the collection of French 17th century art entitled “The Splendid Century.”

It has been visited by huge crowds at Washington's National Gallery and at the Toledo Museum of Art. New Yorkers and tourists will see it early March at the Metropolitan.

Not Reach Audience

One must regret that “The Splendid Century” will not reach an even greater audience, coast to coast. One consolation is that our art periodicals have taken considerable note of the event and have thus broadened its public.

The Splendid Century of France lasted 115 years, closing only with the death of Louis XIV. He it was, the Sun King, who gave the century its grandeur, encouraged its arts as no one had before him, set its goals and, by his wisdom and his follies, made it unique in the history of Western man.

In that century French became the great international language, when only Latin had served the purpose before. French writing and French thought set new standards of clarity, eloquence and reason within and without the borders which Louis XIV expanded and stabilized. Academies were established, to purify the language from medieval obscurity, to find rules for the arts, to encourage the sciences.

Dominated The Arts

Le Brun, the King's painter, dominated the arts, dictated a new style. He organized the craftsmen of France into royal manufactories, armies, regiments, battalions, whose production, under his influence, was colossal, from tapestries to doorknobs and from book titles to palace ceilings. Le Brun's creativeness was staggering; his gift of organization was practically infallible.

Louis XIV remembered the terrors of his youth when his widowed mother, Marie de Medici, had had to smuggle him out of Paris because the nobles of the realm were waging a civil war. He never gave them such a chance again. He bound them with gilded chains to the court where rumor and whispers made major intrigue and conspiracy virtually impossible.

As a result, the Splendid Century is that of the commoner, whom Louis XIV understood, admired, encouraged. His prime minister, Colbert, doing the work of ten ministers, was the son of a cloth merchant and his closest friend.

Loved Common Sense

The King loved the common sense of his commoners and they thrived upon his approval. The Splendid Century upon which he left his regal stamp made us heirs to the great plays of Moliere, Racine and Corneille, to the philosophy of that honorary Missourian, Descartes, who encouraged belief only if its grounds could be proved, and to the mathematics and religious fervor of Pascal.

In the arts the Splendid Century, paradoxically, sought the rules of reason to govern in all things and yet encouraged the greatest diversities of personal genius. We despise the Academy because we think of it as imposing rules. We forget that, at least in the Splendid Century, the Academy was an exciting enterprise devoted to research.

Strongest Influence

It's first function was to seek out the philosophic basic for such rules as it might, later, seek to define and, eventually, to impose. We forget this, remembering only the abuses of its later dictatorship. In the splendid century it was not yet dictating. It was searching.

Poussin, though living in Rome, had had the strongest

influence in creating this trend. His persistent assumption was that a painting—and every detail in it—should be justified by reason before brush touched canvas. His personal success in this philosophic approach made Paris and the young Academy forget the lush color of Rubens and much of the baroque fantasy of his riotous inventions. The “Rubenists” lost favor. Even while many of them painted like Rubens, they talked like Poussin.

Someone who talked hardily at all and wrote even less (because he never quite mastered the art of spelling his own name) is another Frenchman who also worked in Rome. Claude Gellée, called the Lorrain because of his birthplace, or simply Claude, painted the sun. Before him no one had much courage nor such specific talent to carry it out. Only Turner and Van Gogh would have it again.

But Claude Lorrain was no wild romantic, sunstruck and emotional. He was a man of his splendidly reasonable century. He started out as a pastry cook, and was fortunate, after traveling to Rome from his war-impooverished province, to work for a painter whose best fame is that he taught the youngster how to use a brush.

Some other things no one

could teach Claude Lorrain. First of all the great landscape painters. Claude took his palette out into the open air. This he did in a world where painting had always been a studio activity.

Claude mixed his paints out of doors and then ran back to his canvas and painted the sun, painted light and shadow, light on the water and light in the trees, as no one had ever painted before him. He created fanciful palaces and dreamed-of seaports.

In the manner of his time he illustrated the myths of antiquity, tiny figures lost in

surrounding nature. In this way did Claude justify his deep dedication to catching the moods of nature. He became wealthy, though never losing the humility of his beginning.

With Poussin, the Norman peasant, and Le Brun, the commoner, Claude of Lorrain, along with the sculptors, the architects and the inspired gardeners, left his unique seal on the French 17th century. It was a century of vigorous, serious and prodigiously laborious personalities the most splendid of which was the Sun King himself.

It was the age not of enlightenment but of reason, searching out the “why” of all things, certain that all things, including man and his works, were or should be governed by reason.

Poussin, the most reasonable of painters, wrote, however, that “the purpose of painting is delight.” And Claude Lorrain, the classicist, standing in the fields of Rome, painted, ecstatically, the sun.

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