

Editorial.

Art in Modern Life.

TO the uncultivated and unenlightened eye, Life presents a pattern of dull and opaque surfaces, which require the trained and organised imagination that results from an artistic education to behold many common-place things as stirring, translucent and marvellous.

For Art is the expression of Man's conception of the beautiful ; it is not the cultivation of one thing only, it is a carefully taught appreciation of all that is conducive to physical, moral or mental perfection—it is in reality "beauty" made manifest in any "shape" or "form," and its principles, though their mode of treatment may differ, are always the same ; being derived from Nature, which has been likened to an "Aeolian harp," a musical instrument whose tones are the re-echo of higher strings within us. Behind Art lies the perception of strange mystical elements of beauty in even the most common sticks and stones of everyday life, and the student who bears this in mind cannot go far astray in his quest for the Higher Arts of Life. It is one of the greatest attributes of Man that he can create beauty which partakes of his own individuality, even though its inspiration has been derived from Nature.

When we look back on the history of Art, we find that it ministers to the sentiments of taste, through the medium of form, colour, rhythm and harmony. The higher arts begin where utility in its narrower sense ends ; and it is also noticeable that the primitive beginners of Art arose from an impulse in mankind to honour their gods, to reverence their dead, and to commemorate past glories. This originated sculpture, architecture, music and poetry. After this came a powerful influence of Christianity and a new cycle of artistic progress and cultivation in the earlier civilisation of European nations.

France in the Middle Ages, splendid in her intelligent zeal and love of beauty, out of crumbling ruins of feudalism created the "Modern State," with the immediate result of development and progress in all branches of arts and crafts, as well as an awakening desire on the part of the nations to satisfy a higher taste in all that was artistic and beautiful.

As the influence of Art upon the mind tends to refine and elevate it, so the special functions of Art upon a people or country should be to stimulate them to higher achievements in both social and moral reform.

Art divorced from morality and higher ideals loses its place and dignity, for in the past few centuries humanity has moved forward from a lower and obscure understanding of Life to a higher plane, by a broader education in the sense of colour and fitness and an appreciation of all that elevates the mind and attracts the senses. This became apparent about half a century ago in the craze that spread through society known as "aestheticism" or the "cult of the beautiful." It professed to glorify and subdue the spiritual and poetic faculties of our nature and to subordinate the crude and material. It was true enough in principle, for it set to lift the whole machinery of civilisation to a grander and loftier life by a perfect culture and a better understanding of the beautiful, and such a perception would have given us a higher standard of morality.

Like many other crazes, it was carried to a ludicrous

extent, and died a natural death ; for true Art will never court popularity under a cloak of eccentricity. As well might we describe that fashion as Art which decrees fantastic designs for "a poodle's coat" or "limits the length of a terrier's tail." Even beauty cannot excuse eccentricity.

Nature by creative re-shaping of inner and outer material presents us with Art ; but art demands personality so that it may be recognised by its individual hall-mark. The finer art is produced from an illusion on the ground of truth, but the hardest problem of Art is to produce an illusion of the loftier reality.

At this time we have so much that makes this epoch the door to the most cultured age the world has ever known, for has not Art allied herself to Science, and the constructive and creative capacity in various handicrafts which minister to the practical needs of everyday life has been subjected to a far-reaching influence of Art within colour and symmetry, and together they have done so much to reform the abuses disfigured by an age otherwise so enlightened and refined.

Art is said to employ method for symmetrical formation of beauty as Science employs it for the logical exposition of truth, and a mechanical process is in the last ever kept visibly distinct, while in the first it escapes from sight amid the shows of colour and the shapes of grace.

In whichever form Art presents itself it should serve to increase happiness. Teaching of Art demands thoroughness, accuracy and the unwavering earnestness chosen. But a sure desire to practise the Art is an essential to learning. The vocation of the artist is sacred for his art follows Nature as a pupil imitates his master, and has it not been said that "Art is but a shadow of the Divine Perfection."

It has been written : "All that is good in Art is the expression of one soul talking to another, and is precious according to the greatness of the soul that utters it." Nursing is one of the greatest Arts. Science has given nursing the forward movement, but Art has really caused the actual movement to be felt. Let Science and Art move forward hand-in-hand, and what will they not do for the world in the centuries that are to come ?

Do the truth ye know,
And ye shall learn the truth
Ye need to know.

M. B. MACKELLAR.

Ministry of Health.

Chief Medical Officer to Retire next May.

SIR Wilson Jameson, G.B.E., K.C.B., M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.H., K.H.P., Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health and of the Ministry of Education, is retiring from the Public Service on reaching the age limit on May 11th, 1950. Sir Wilson Jameson has been Chief Medical Officer since November 12th, 1940.

The Minister of Health and the Minister of Education have appointed John Alexander Charles, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P., K.H.P., a Deputy Chief Medical Officer in the Ministry of Health, to the joint post thus vacated from May 12th, 1950.

George Edward Godber, Esq., M.D., F.R.C.P., D.P.H., has been appointed Deputy to the Chief Medical Officer in succession to Dr. Charles from May 12th, 1950.

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