

man soul is nourished by prayer, by whatever name such contemplation is called, and if we deride a child's prayer known to millions from a stage viewed by thousands, it is time for someone to shout, "Halt!"

Don Quixote fought for vanishing romance. The Christian martyrs died for love as represented by the Son of God. Is it ridiculous to raise banners to fight for reverence, and to blow trumpets for an army to champion good taste? Or is this, too, intolerance?

### THIS MEANS A LOT IN THE MIDDLE WEST

A YOUNG man from St. Louis emerged from a New York bookstore bearing a large volume. He pointed to the jacket. It carried one of those snobbish blurbs which make the volume and its publisher seem like purveyors of special, exotic and highly rarified perfume. "This means a lot in the middle west!" he remarked.

Does it? Is the middle west or the far west or the south or the northwest any more cursed by intellectual snobbery than the portals of the Hotel Algonquin or the Players Club? Publishers have found, simply, that one way to sell books is to make people think it is *chic* to have them. Certain publishers have established lines of goods which they jacket and case much as do the manufacturers of high priced bonbons, manufacturers who would much prefer to be termed *creators*. These publishers do not cater to the middle west any more than they do to Fifth Avenue. In all parts of the country are those who do not need to be told what they are to be snobbish about, those who must learn, and those who are no snobs at all. As long as

they read the books they buy, what difference does it make? Does it make any great difference if they don't read them? Possibly if they leave them on their library tables long enough, their servants will read them!

The only discoverable difference in the attitude of various parts of the country toward books is a difference in eagerness. The middle west is far more eager than Boston, for example, or yet again than Philadelphia. It reads, perhaps, with more seriousness the current product. It is quicker to find points of discussion. It is more willing to admit a new reputation to the ranks. This proves, doesn't it, that it is less snobbish. We must not malign the book buyers of St. Louis or let them malign themselves; for one can meet quite as many intellectual snobs on Beacon Street as on the banks of the Mississippi.

### WHEN IS A DRIVE NOT A DRIVE?

GOVERNOR LEONARD WOOD of the Philippine Islands does not believe in great drives for the raising of money, — conventional ones, at least. Yet he is undertaking to raise a million dollars for the support of the leper colony at Culion, two hundred miles south of Manila on the edge of the China Sea. He believes in the power of the press minus the usual committees and ballyhoos employed by most charitable organizations for the gathering of funds. So he sent to America recently one charming lady, a doctor's wife, the only white woman resident of this huge and appalling settlement of the diseased. Her instructions were to interview the editors of America and to interest them in her project. The

prediction that no campaign of recent years will exceed this of General Wood's in point of space accorded it by the magazines is not only a tribute to the publicist governor's perspicacity but a recognition of the worth of his cause. Vast strides are being made on the island in the interests of science, and the measures for prevention and cure being discovered there will be of use to mankind in handling not only leprosy but other diseases, including tuberculosis. Aid for this colony means, therefore, not only assistance for pitiful and terrifying individual cases but for the world at large.

During the war we resorted to the most elaborate means for raising money. While our troops were fighting at the front, Douglas Fairbanks rode down Fifth Avenue in New York City, on an elephant, to fill the coffers of righteousness. This fever heat of propaganda has never quite subsided and it often becomes necessary to tickle several of our jaded appetites before it is possible to loosen our purse strings. So dignified a procedure as that of the governor of the Philippines and his able assistant should meet with our earnest coöperation. The press welcomes his discretion, and the public will undoubtedly respond. Contributions of any size will be accepted by the Bureau of Insular Affairs, the War Department, Washington, D. C.

## FORM AND BEAUTY

THE "American Mercury", curiously enough, published some months past an excellent discussion by John McClure on "The Domination of Literature". The paper is, in effect, a defense of formal beauty. "The menace to the formal arts today", he

writes, "is the effort that is being made to establish literary significance *as the essence of form.*" This is true in music, in painting, in writing — especially, perhaps, in the writing of poetry. Already, however, the reaction is setting in. The public never really liked free verse nor can it ever really be educated to enjoy the most modern of the composers, although that this is a fact will be roundly denied by many.

Life is in itself formal. It is governed by rhythm. The appreciation of beauty in form is immediate and satisfying. A beautiful body, a Greek vase, a rhythmical poem: these produce an effect of aesthetic satisfaction. When expressionism enters in, the mind must be brought to bear on the picture or song. Curiosity and an effort to interpret take the place of pure appreciation.

More and more in America we are coming to realize that form matters. How a thing is made is important. A scientific invention faultily executed is no more tragic than a great artistic idea developed with faulty technique. The novel and the poem, confined so long within well defined limits, have had their debauch of formlessness and are coming back to sobriety. Mr. McClure in his article was pessimistic about the present and the future status of the arts. His difficulty seems to be that he has taken a present mood for a permanent obsession. His excellent closing paragraph follows: "Those of us who cherish formal beauty cannot but regret the effort to discredit it. Is there, after all, any need to destroy form because we admire symbol? Is there any need to say that expressionism in painting is the same thing as the formal beauty of the fine art of painting? Is there any need to say that the magnificent imagery of Carlyle is the same thing as a Latin harmony?"