

Perhaps I may here recapitulate. The mere prosaic business economy of the Wirt scheme is enough to recommend it. No school board can afford to neglect a plan which not only saves money to the taxpayers, but provides better facilities, more varied equipment and better educational opportunities than even well-to-do communities can at present afford. The Wirt school solves the vexing "part-time" problem. Gary is the only city I know that has room in the present building for at least one-third more children than there now are to go to school.

In the second place, the plan solves most of the problems of vocational and industrial training which now confront the public school. It catches the child's curiosity and skill on the up-stroke. It makes no separation of manual from intellectual work, and avoids that sinister caste-feeling which seems to be creeping into the vocational movement. And from the point of view of economy again, the scheme of devoting industrial work to actual care of the school-plant enables the school to provide a great variety of occupations almost without additional cost to the community.

In the third place, the plan provides a large measure of individual instruction. It is a school

for every kind of a child. The flexibility of schedules, the cooperation of outside agencies like the churches, the varied activities, give opportunity for the fullest development of differing interests and capacities.

In the fourth place, the plan carries out throughout the school life the educational truth that learning can only come through doing. The habits and attitudes of careful scientific observation, or purposeful interesting activity which is neither work nor play, the social, democratic, and cooperative background which such a school cultivates, are exactly the qualities we need for our younger generation in American society.

Such a school carries out the best ideals of American democracy, as I see them, in an extremely effective way. Its philosophy is American, its democratic organization is American. It is one of the institutions that our American "Kultur" should be proudest of. Perhaps professional educators, accustomed to other concepts and military methods and administrative illusions, will not welcome this kind of school. But teachers hampered by drill and routine will want it, and so will parents and children.

RANDOLPH S. BOURNE.

CORRESPONDENCE

"Stop the War"

SIR: We have long needed in this country a journal of fearless, unbiased and thoughtful opinion. As one who has looked to you to fulfill this need, I was painfully astonished to read in your last issue the specious, not to say absurd, argument you bring against the magnificent appeal by the editors of our foreign-language press asking manufacturers and workmen to stop supplying arms to the European nations. You say: "Will an embargo on arms shorten the war? In our opinion it will simply prolong the war." In other words, the crime against humanity which is now being perpetrated abroad will go on anyway, whether America has a hand in it or not, so let's have a hand in it. Could anything be more unreasonable, more immoral? You might as well say the conditions of life will never be perfect, therefore we should do nothing to improve them.

The fact is, however, that by placing an embargo on arms, our government would not only emphasize to the world that our ideal is peace, that we are sincere in this ideal and not the double-dealers the cynical European has had good reason to consider us, but also that the war cannot last if American firms cease to supply the belligerents with arms. The press is constantly bringing us news that the campaign is slackening because of a shortage in war-materials. Only recently Lord Kitchener tried to force English factories to work at increased speed. And did not Russia a few days ago place a loan of \$80,000,000 in the United States for the purchase of arms? In view of these facts your statement that England "can stand a

It stands refuted in the acts of the belligerents themselves.

If, as you say, the editors of our foreign press "will have to be met by argument," the argument, I submit, is up to our national government, and its object must be to explain why the sale of arms is not immediately stopped. That argument our government is unable to furnish.

HENRY G. HILL.

Baltimore, Md.

A Word for Dublin

SIR: The reviewer of Mr. Joyce's book, "Dubliners," does several injustices to the Irish metropolis; but his roughest piece of injustice is in the heading, "True Dublin." Surely the reviewer knows that a "true Dublin," a "true Edinburgh," or a "true Springfield," cannot be rendered in fifteen sketches. Mr. Joyce's book is remarkably good, but after all, it deals with the "Bowery" end of Dublin life. It would have been only fair for your reviewer to tell your readers that Mr. James Stephens' "Mary, Mary" represents another and an equally true side of Dublin. Your reviewer takes it for granted that Dublin is a city of second-class human beings. What place could he have in his mind for comparison? If Dublin contains second-class human beings only, the writer of this note has been meeting mainly third-class human beings since he left it. "The town," says the reviewer, "is one of the dirtiest and meanest in Europe." Well, take Fifth Avenue and the better part of Broadway out of New York, and Michigan Avenue out of Chicago, and

The Movies

THERE are two ways, after all, of considering any modern invention. One is to consider it in the light of its use, another in the light of its misuse. There is no human contrivance that hasn't certain dire possibilities. A safety match is an admirable little thing, but not when the baby eats it. A laundry pin serves its humble purpose in the world, but not when the baby swallows it. Dynamite can be employed to blow men to smithereens, but it can also be employed to blow rocks to smithereens. One of the ugliest murders in modern times was the Phoenix Park murder, but it was only by a cruel irony that Lord Frederick Cavendish was stabbed to death with the finest surgeons' operating knives. The man who bought those knives had often put similar ones to a purpose diametrically opposite. If the demon in man can pervert his own instruments, it is a feeble argument against the instruments.

There are times when man's machinery seems created to enslave him. Were one a pit-boy at the mines, or a youth in the glass-works, or a shirtwaist maker, or a laundry worker, or a coal-trimmer on a liner, or a fighter in the trenches, one might curse the day that machinery was invented. But man is the deity over it all, over his glass and his sewing-machine and his ocean greyhound and his lyddite, and when he asserts his deity over these, his own creatures, they will glorify, not bestialize, his existence. A "simple life" is not the answer to machinery.

It is understandable, however, that the attempt to adapt a machine process to art should antagonize the conservative. Most conservatives still see the "movie" through the noisy gloom of the first firetrap theatres. The movie, in their eyes, is still a theatrical tintype. They observe its vogue, but they also observe the vogue of chewing gum. And, as they reckon it, the movie is in a class with chewing gum.

To assume a lofty tone about chewing gum would not be sincere on my part. Still, as one of the mortals to whom it was never anything more than an avocation, conducted in timid privacy, I recollect it as perhaps the least delectable of uselessnesses. Combining the maximum of activity with the minimum of effect, it seems to be the supreme example of lost motion, and on that ground alone I disdain it. On similar ground, though they are equally dear to millions of Americans, one criticizes the average moving pictures. Popular though they are, the conservatives are justified in condemning them. Incapable of assimilation, they are, for the most part, mental chewing gum. The objection which holds for one holds for the other. And it is no apology to say that they are "popular." The best test of democracy is often the desire to revise, rather than submit to, the popular. It was once popular to dress like an undertaker in midsummer, to sleep in a stuffy bedroom, to regard a woman who smoked as a prostitute, to be lugubrious on Sunday. A custom or a taste or a prejudice is not entitled to respect because it is popular. If the popularity of bull-fighting in Spain does not vindicate it, the popularity of the vapid movie in America does not vindicate it either. It is perhaps pleasant that our tendency is toward aesthetic insipidities, not brutalities. But that is also open to question. A country that leads the world in domestic homicide cannot lay too much flattering unction to its soul. Perhaps it would be better for us if we killed a few more bulls

satisfactorily utilized it is not proved capable of the most wonderful utilization. They fail to appreciate the illimitable artistic, the illimitable social, possibilities of the moving picture.

What Bernard Shaw says in the current *Metropolitan* is true. The moving picture is incalculably potential. It is availing of human curiosity and human imagination as no other medium has ever availed before. Speaking the universal language, it is the greatest instrument of popular suggestion that has ever been devised. Capable of pouring the most diverse material into the brain, it is limited only by mental capacity. However inadequately its material has been governed up to the present, its power is unquestionable. To ignore that fact is, for actors or publicists or educators or playwrights, to go on thinking in terms of gas after the discovery of electric light.

Last year nearly ten million feet of film were inspected by the National Board of Censorship. The total cost of the circulated films was probably close on \$50,000,000. What this means, as regards the interest created and the time and money consumed, staggers the imagination. That the profits of the regular theatre should be cut in half is only one small proof of the energy diverted to the movies. Most of the energy has come from channels never before tapped for semi-aesthetic amusement. The movies have broken a window into the blank wall of myriad minds. They have spread a thousand worlds at the feet of the simplest spectators.

But, granting its social significance, the question of its artistic significance remains, and it is on this that its ultimate value hinges. Primarily a process for reproducing things seen, the great problem is its potentiality for giving artistic value to the things it reproduces. Can this machine process, in other words, be used to express emotions inexpressible in any other way?

As it exists, the moving picture process is not yet aesthetically enlightened. Its aesthetic possibilities have been ruthlessly sacrificed to the mere crude informative or sensational possibilities. Neither actors nor producers have learned as yet to work within its conventions as the sculptor works within his, controlling their mechanism as he does in the interest of a new, an emotional, result. But, once the aesthetic intention governs the process, and raw reproduction ceases to be the object, the prospects for an art are illimitable.

That an art can lie submerged in mankind, as the Gothic cathedrals lay submerged in the unchiseled rocks of France, is one of the facts which give life its value. It is only of recent years, we may as well remember, that through the genius of Isadora Duncan we became again aware of the possibilities of dancing, and began to recapture the "fair attitude" of Tempe and the dales of Arcady. It is perhaps ambitious to suppose that any machine process could lend itself to any such emotional result, but the experiment beckons us.

Once men begin to think of the camera as an aesthetic instrument, I believe the art of the movies will be vastly subtilized, ramified, developed. There is nothing which the eye of man has seen, nothing in form or color or movement, nothing so delicate, so evanescent, so glorious, nothing from dawn to dawn or from pole to pole, which may not be captured and adapted by its magic. I believe the day will come when people will look back on the present productions as admirers of Coburn and Stieglitz look back on the first tintype. And when that day comes the perfected machine will have paid part of its debt to