

Photograph by J. W. Ritchey

COLONY HALL AND UNFINISHED SIGMA ALPHA IOTA COTTAGE

## THE PETERBOROUGH COLONY

"A WORKSHOP, WITH A WONDERLAND THROWN IN," FOR  
CREATIVE WORKERS IN THE SEVEN ARTS

BY HERMANN HAGEDORN

THE evil things, the materialistic things, the negative, destructive things, always make so much more noise than the forces of harmony and beauty that the average individual may be forgiven if he concludes that there is nothing but turmoil and discord and blatant vulgarity in the world. But the true music is there all the time to confound the pessimist when, for an instant, it makes itself heard above the circumambient racket. We are developing streets besides Main Street; and young men besides the keen-eyed and fleet-footed hounds of success who make college endowments possible and college reunions dull; and novelists besides the bright young men who moralize salaciously and profitably; and poets besides the Get-Rich-Quick-Wallingfords of free verse. Quietly, in unexpected places, you come on them, following the gleam, and when you have had a half-dozen surprises you think better of the prospects of the coming generation.

It would be a daring statistician who would attempt to enumerate all the resounding "movements" which have been "launched" with a great blare of trumpets during the past fifteen or twenty years and died, after a noisy life, leaving no heirs and few regrets. There have been many of them, and all have had secretaries and most have had expensive office furniture and impressive directorates and much publicity. They have gone the way of all flesh when contributors became bored.

One enterprise, set in motion fourteen years ago by the whispered appeal of a dying man, has not perished like the others. It was the most fragile of dreams. Any "practical man" would have said that it was hopeless to think of fulfilling it. It happened that it was a practical woman to whom it was entrusted. Edward MacDowell, who has been described as "the most serious, the most scholarly, the most inspired, and probably the most thoroughly sophisticated of American composers," pleaded

in his last illness that some plan be devised to give creative workers in the arts the opportunity, which had been denied to him until the last years of his life, to work for a portion of each year away from the distractions of the city and free from financial care. His wife pledged herself to the fulfillment of his wish, and out of that wish and that pledge has grown the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire.

It was not an easy task which Edward MacDowell asked a frail woman on crutches to accomplish. Artists' colonies were notoriously difficult things to handle. To the average mind they meant "temperament" and "fine frenzy" and communism and scandal and disaster; and the seats of the scornful were crowded. In the hands of a visionary MacDowell's dream would, in fact, have been impossible. But Mrs. MacDowell was not a visionary at all. With a level head, a clear brain, and a sense of humor, she set about translating an artist's passionate hope into dollars and acres and buildings and by-laws and boards of directors. The deserted farm of eighty acres which MacDowell had made the joyous refuge of his last working years became the nucleus of an estate which now comprises nearly a square mile of rolling woodland and farmland and pasture. MacDowell's own house, Hillcrest, became the center and headquarters of the Colony, where Mrs. MacDowell presided with grace and extraordinary effectiveness; another farmhouse, half a mile away, was given over to the women among the resident artists; a third was given over to the men. MacDowell had done some of the best work of his last years in a cabin in the woods not far from Hillcrest—

A house of dreams untold;  
It looks out over the whispering tree-tops  
And faces the setting sun—

and Mrs. MacDowell determined that the forest solitude which had been an inspiration to her husband should be

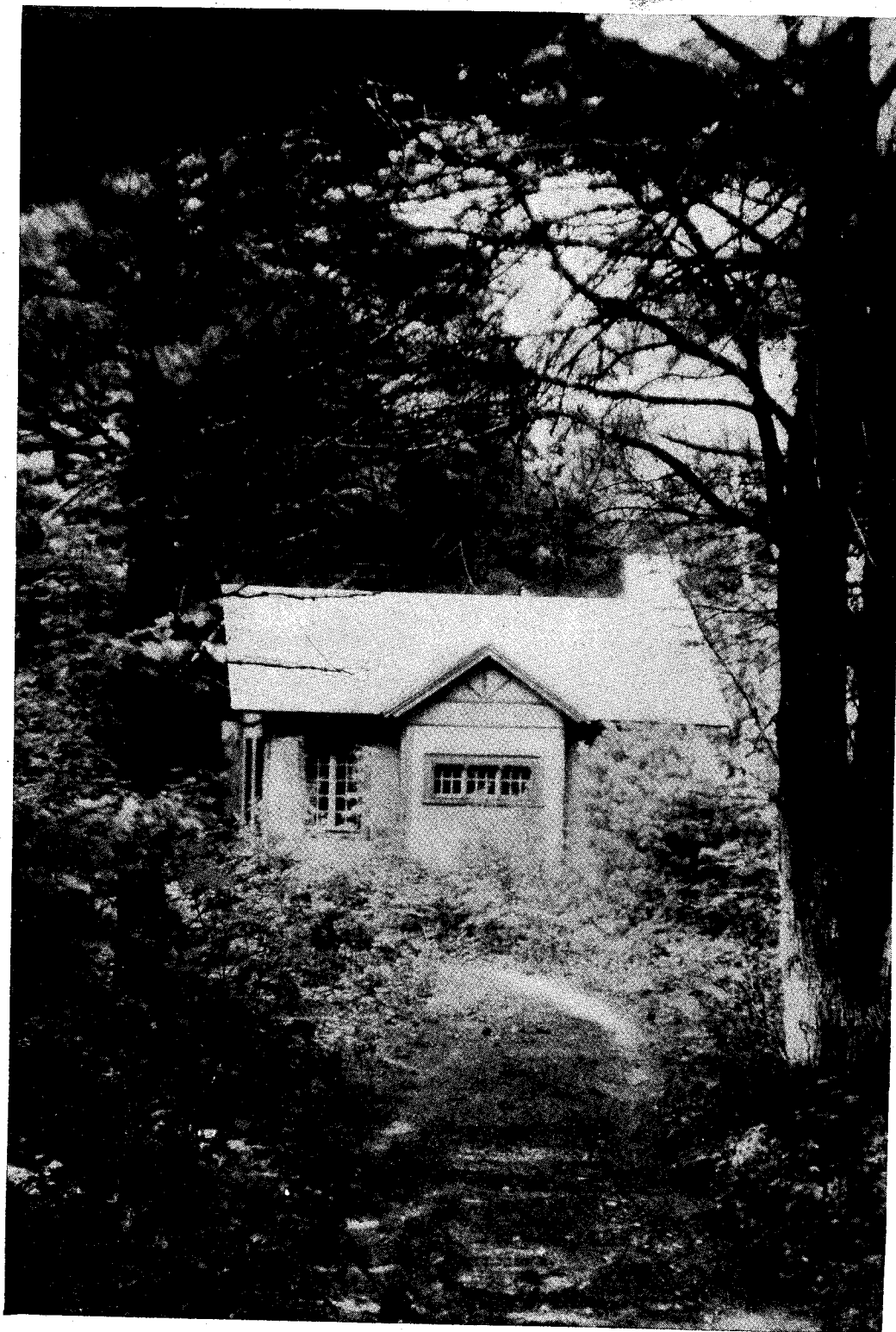
granted, if possible, to every member of the Colony. A studio was built, then another, and another. Individual friends of the Association, as well as musical clubs here and there over the country, began to donate them. Each was given its own corner of fragrant seclusion in the great pine woods; no two were in sight of each other, or, better yet, within hearing. A man could compose his soul or a symphony without danger of being disturbed or of disturbing.

To-day there are twenty studios, scattered through those Northern woods, each different from every other, fitted to its surroundings, with its own vista westward toward blue Monadnock or across the lovely rolling country to the north. Edwin Arlington Robinson, who has for ten years spent every summer at Peterborough, has a studio which has Monadnock at its door, and in "Monadnock Through the Trees," first published in *The Outlook*, has brought its majesty for all time into American literature:

Before there was in Egypt any sound  
Of those who reared a more prodigious means  
For the self-heavy sleep of kings and queens  
Than hitherto had mocked the most renowned,—  
Unvisioned here and waiting to be found,  
Alone, amid remote and older scenes,  
You loomed above ancestral evergreens  
Before there were the first of us around.

And when the last of us, if we know how,  
See farther from ourselves than we do now,  
Assured with other sight than heretofore  
That we have done our mortal best and worst,—  
Your calm will be the same as when the first  
Assyrians went howling south to war.

For twelve years or more the Peterborough Colony has now been an as-

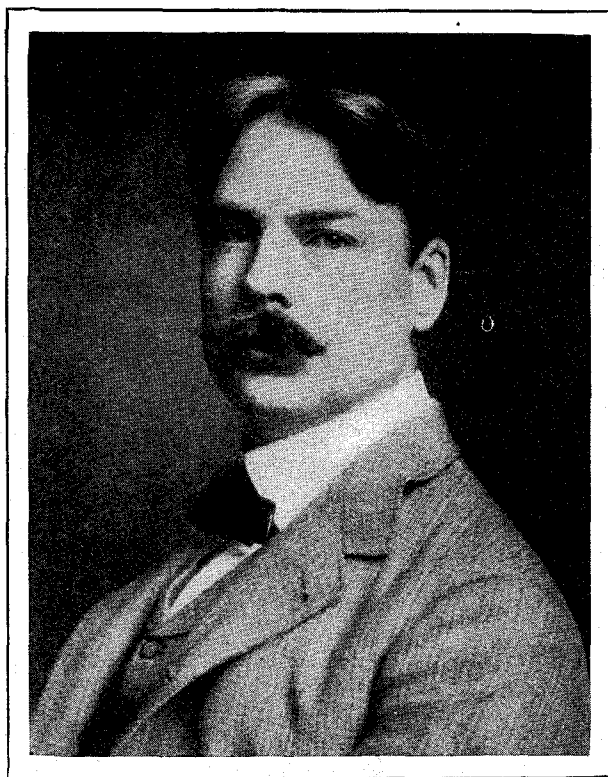


Photograph by J. W. Ritchey

#### CHAPMAN STUDIO

Each of the Studios in the Peterborough Colony has its "own corner of fragrant seclusion in the great pine woods"





EDWARD MACDOWELL

sured, practical reality, confounding the scoffer. It has proved the complete antithesis of the Greenwich Village type of artistic community. Instead of a place of posing and temperamental eccentricities, it has from the beginning been what Mr. Robinson has described as "beyond a doubt the worst loafing place in the world." The impulsion to work is in the air. It is easier to work than to resist its persuasive influence. What the MacDowell Association has, in fact, established for the workers in the seven arts is a practical workshop where each can "do his job" to the best of his ability, free from distractions and worry.

The "workshop" character of the place is not the result of rules, for Peterborough is joyously free of regulations. There are, in fact, only two. No one is allowed to work in his studio at night, for night-work means lamps, and lamps mean danger from fire—a very real nightmare in the heart of a pine forest. No worker, moreover, is permitted to call on any other during working hours—that is, between eight and four—since it is the Association's pledge to the colonists that they shall not be interrupted. Beyond these two rules there are none. The artists work because they are unhappy when they don't.

The care with which the members of the Colony are chosen has something to do with its success as a community of workers. No one is accepted who has not to some extent proved his creative ability to at least two recognized leaders in his own field. A musician must bear the indorsement as a creative (not an interpretative) artist of two musicians of National standing; a painter, of two painters; a poet, of two poets. Sponsors of course make mistakes, and now and

then a dilettante or a loafer strays into the fold. He does not, as a rule, however, stay there long. Peterborough is, as Mr. Robinson has indicated, a disconcerting place for loafers, and dilettantes are revealed to themselves more quickly there than in most places. They drift away to more congenial surroundings.

The day's programme at the Colony is, in its simplicity, a quiet but compelling force for industry. Breakfast is at 7:30, and a half-hour later there is a great scattering. Thereafter, for eight hours, each member of the Colony has his own four walls and his own bit of forest to himself. No one invades his meditations. There is no interruption even for luncheon. At noon or thereabouts a dog-cart stops at his studio and a basket is deposited on his porch. No conversation smites his ear until he goes in search of it himself in the late afternoon. Dinner in Colony Hall is a social function, and after it, for any one who wants it, there are music and good talk.

Edward MacDowell's dream has become a glowing and palpitating reality. American poets and playwrights and painters and musicians are actually having the opportunity, which he begged might be granted them, to work for a season each year under conditions which he himself had found to be ideal. Peterborough is, in fact, a great place of liberation. There the shackles of ordinary existence are, for a season, removed. There are no trains to catch, no meals to order, no interruptions or distractions to combat. The mind is, for once, set free to meditate, to dream, to arrange and co-ordinate experience. The disturbing, the almost maddening element to the artist in the endless hurry and confusion of metropolitan life is

just the lack of opportunity to stand aside and sort and relate to each other the flood of daily impressions. Peterborough exists for the purpose of giving the artist that solitude for mental clarification which the average American can find scarcely anywhere else.

Peterborough constitutes a new idea in altruism. Allen Upward, discussing the Nobel bequest in his book "The New Word," ten years ago, emphasized in words that do not lose their savor the importance of giving a helping hand, not to the laggards of civilization only, but to the clear-eyed forerunners:

Hitherto the hereditary objects of charity have been the sad leavings of mankind—

The poor, whose broken lives  
Lie underneath great empires' pageantry  
Like rubble underneath rich palace walls.

Nobel is the first philanthropist who has desired to benefit the forerunners of the race, as well as the laggards, and who has seen that in benefiting them he would benefit all the rest.

There are two kinds of human outcasts. Man, in his march upward out of the deep into the light, throws out a vanguard and a rearguard, and both are out of step with the main body. Humanity condemns equally those who are too good for it, and those who are too bad. On its Procrustean bed the stunted members of the race are racked; the giants are cut down. It puts to death with the same ruthless equality the prophet and the atavist. The poet and the drunkard starve side by side.

Of these two classes of victims the stragglers are not more in need than the forlorn hope; but the ambulance has always waited in the rear. It would seem as though the vanity of benevolence were soothed by the sight of degradation, but affronted by that of genius. Even the loafer and the criminal have found friends. The thinker and the discoverer have been left to the struggle for existence. For them are no asylums; for them no societies stand ready to offer help. Millions have been spent in providing libraries for the populace; the founder of German literature was refused a librarian's place. And so philanthropy has cast its vote to this day for Barabbas.

Nobel alone has had the courage not to be afraid of genius, and the wisdom to see that whatever is conferred on it really is conferred on all mankind.

Art is the expression of the nation's highest thought. The men and women who give their lives to it constitute the vanguard of civilization. They are the true physicians, healing with beauty the perplexity and pain of men; they are the torch-bearers, fitfully illuminating the darkness that is to-morrow; they are the trail-blazers, winning new worlds; they are the interpreters of the pent-up idealism of the inarticulate millions. Through them humanity speaks and moves and achieves. To give them the opportunity to express the vision that is in them is to strike a blow at all that is base and materialistic in the national life.





JAPANESE ROOTERS AT THE FAR EASTERN GAMES—"THE IMPASSIVE ORIENTAL"

## TEACHING THE WORLD TO PLAY

BY ELWOOD S. BROWN

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ONE day last spring I was seated in the office of Chen Tung Wang, now the leading spirit of the Chinese business community in Shanghai—better known in America as Dr. C. T. Wang—the man who as China's representative to the Versailles Peace Conference declined to sign the treaty because of the Shantung clause. Dr. Wang had recently been elected President of the Far Eastern Athletic Association, an international organization including China, Japan, and the Philippines, which conducts the biennial Far Eastern Games. He found it necessary to enter into correspondence with the Japanese officials regarding the next Games scheduled for Shanghai, and was somewhat embarrassed in doing so. I waited while he finished up a conference in Chinese with five long-robed business colleagues. As they filed out of his office he turned to me and said:

"Mr. Brown, I find myself signing letters with my right hand urging a commercial boycott on everything Japanese, while with my left hand I am beckoning the Japanese to come over and participate in the Games. This may appear inconsistent to some of my friends, but since China is the host country, no matter what stand it seems necessary to take in business and politics, on the field of sport I can never express any attitude other than a friendly one."

The Japanese came to the Games re-

garded as welcome guests and not as threatening conquerors. Through these contests the Oriental has discovered, in endeavoring to learn who is the better man, that the other man is a good fellow.

The Far Eastern Games are just one of the normal expressions of the great American "play-for-everybody" movement that is under way around the world to-day. At no previous time in history has a similar situation presented itself. Just now, for a variety of reasons—because of the universal lesson learned during the war of the importance of good physical condition; because of a realization on the part of the Allied nations that America's play life was a potent factor in the ability of this country to send quickly an efficient fighting physical machine overseas; because of an awakening on the part of South America to the fact that sports and games beat bull fights and cafés as diversions for her youth; because of a hope in the Near East that simple games may have a place in the reconstruction and readjustment plans for that part of the world; because of a perception by millions in Far Eastern countries and in India that recreative play has added a factor of joy and health to that portion of the population reached by our physical men in recent years—because of all these things, just now is the time for a great advance movement in this phase

of physical education; just now is the opportunity for America to make a unique and constructive contribution to twoscore foreign countries.

This task has been undertaken by the Young Men's Christian Association. Its Foreign Department has around the world what might be termed a great physical promotion machine—seventy-five trained physical directors working in twenty-five different countries. These physical directors, representative of all that is best in American play life, pioneers in the promotion of community and nation-wide service, are in the business of teaching every possible person in every possible country how to play. These men are also vigorously promoting an intelligent interest in the principles of community hygiene and health. They are making rational physical life indigenous by training native physical directors who can take over the responsibility for the ever-expanding programme. They are establishing the best standards of amateurism and fair play in competitions. They are co-operating with other agencies of similar ideals and ideas.

A universal need of the kind outlined above demands the nearest approach to a standard programme that can be arranged with due regard to climatic and racial conditions. Such a programme has been adopted, and is based on the fundamental principle that the Association