Manhattan sketch

BY ELGIN GROSECLOSE, '20

THE QUALITY OF TOLERANCE

Almost the first thing the countryman is taught on taking up residence in the big city is to discard the small town ideas with which he has grown up. This, it appears, is the antecedent step necessary to prepare him for reception of the greater and broader conceptions of life which are in store for him. It is on the theory, no doubt, that the human mind is a storehouse that must eject its old lumber before the new can be admitted. The neophyte of the city must, in fact, experience a complete rebirth if he is to become a true metropolitan. And since there are some thousands of these yearly, the process of their re-education is an interesting phenomenon.

The first of small town ideas to go is that of intolerance. The narrow conceptions of life found in so many of our villages, which regards all persons not of Anglo-Saxon blood as barbarians, all faiths not produced by the second Protestant reformation as forms of heathenism, all standards of social conduct that were not approved by Queen Victoria as queer or improper, quickly meets its fate in the big city.

The Southerner, accustomed to "niggers" in their place, finds himself attending inspiring plays enacted entirely by colored artists, or listening to concerts by such singers as Paul Robison or Jules Bledsoe, and comes to the conclusion—if he is not too warped—that the negro race possesses abilities that would never be guessed from observance limited to a cotton patch. The pioneer descendant of Scotch or English colonists, drifting cityward, rubs shoulders with newer colonists of Magyar, Italian and Slavic strain, and learns that Virginia is not the only soil that grows family trees, and that a hundred year lineage on American soil is no better qualification for citizenship or social position than good intelligence averted at work. Thus in the big city the astringent acid of small town intolerance is gradually replaced by a warmer milk of human understanding.

Tolerance, in a word, is the mighty influence of the city. It is a blessed word, a noble concept. America, emerging from its nineteenth century provincialism into the wider responsibilities of the twentieth, could hardly have taken its place in the vanguard of world affairs without the broader sympathies, the fuller views which its cities inculcate among its citizens. And as our responsibilities have grown, so has this spirit of tolerance. It has become the leitmotif to which all other airs and moods are subordinate. It becomes a pervasive atmosphere, penetrating into every corner of the varied life of the city. More, it takes on a positive, rather than a negative quality. It becomes a shibboleth—the "Allahu Akbar" of its devotees. The fever for tolerance assumes a fanaticism which beats itself into a rage at the slightest evidence of intolerance within its midst.

The colonist from the rural districts, either from a native adaptability, or from the awh of which the Gargantuan dimensions of the city inspire in humber natures, quickly learns its lesson, and frequently too well. The quality of his tolerance is not strained. From having learned not to stare at women smoking in public, he soon accepts the propriety of maudlin parties making the welkin ring under the effect of gin and soda water, and soon is frequenting, with an air of detached understanding, those divers and sundry dining places where the appetite is diverted from a scanty fare to a scanty display of lingerie on a group of female entertainers.

As the neophyte's residence stretches into a year, and he can vote, he learns to take a broader view of a social system which permits the fluctuation of spurious security issues and their sale to simple-minded professional people, widows and salaried persons; or the existence of dance halls where fresh young girls, for a nickel a dance, contort their bodies into ugly, vicious movements, and entice schoolboys into thoughts and actions inspired by grossest sensuality; or speakeasies where evening frocked gentlemen and ladies sip illegal liquors purchased at exorbitant prices, and discuss with becoming gravity the duty of the President in these parlous times. All this he dismisses with the complacency of the sophomore in the school of tolerance.

As a householder he accepts with that expanded view which his advancement in the art of tolerance has taught, the vitiating and demoralizing practice of incessant tipping, the deceitful advertising of department stores, and the discriminatory practices of business in general. As a voter, he watches with judicial understanding the ballyhoo and wild expenditure of political parties engaged in electing a candidate, confident that the source of the funds by which these campaigns are conducted is either honest or not a matter which his tolerance should permit him to question. He accepts tin boxes as a part of the necessary accoutrement of every office holder, regards the tipping of inspectors to obtain his driver's license as necessitated by the natural indulgence of public servants, justifies deals between the major political parties over the allocation of judgeships as an unavoidable compromise.

Women, being more conservative on the whole than men, shake off the prejudices of the country less readily, but with the examples set by the advertising and illustrations of metropolitan journals, are less concerned than ever over the matter of display of personal charm, and under the stimulating influence of the contemporary theatre and movie gradually acquire advanced views of morality. The Magdalen is no longer regarded as a social pariah, and under the benign doctrine of such plays as The Greeks Had a Word for It and Tonight or Never—doctrine sure to spread now that they have been transferred to the movies—immorality actually achieves a certain virtue. The precise effect of this influence is, of course, difficult to measure, for our education has not yet advanced to that Periclean stage where women will openly discuss their liaisons.

The baccalaureate cum laude of this curriculum in tolerance is apathy and indifference. The gradual weakening of the forces of prohibition, the constantly growing effrontery of cigarette advertising, catering to youth and womanhood, the growing nonchalance toward municipal and state mismanagement and corruption, the political apathy in the face of great issues, all point to the conclusion that the gospel of tolerance is well learned. The apathy is only too obvious in the response of the New York electorate at the recent elections to a whole series of scandalous disclosures of graft, incompetence and nepotism in the municipal administration.

The indifference is evident in the condition of the theatre and the way its worst features are rapidly transferred to the movie to be disseminated into every village in the country. It is apparent in the cold-bloodedness with which our utilities magnates throw debutante parties at a

(TURN TO PAGE 123, PLEASE)
1932

The Sooner Magazine

HASKIN-KIRK: Miss Muriel Harris, Johnston City, Tennessee, and the University of Iowa. She was granted her master's degree at Columbia University, New York City.

1928

Dr Joe Bird, M. A., '27, who after receiving a master's degree was general secretary of the university Y. M. C. A. for several years, has been appointed assistant to the president of the Missouri Valley college, Marshall, Missouri. For the last three years he has been working on a doctor's degree at New York University.

Mrs Elizabeth Ball Steen, '24 arts-sc., and daughter Janet Ellen, are spending the winter at 1510 West Thirty-eighth Street, Oklahoma City, while Mr Steen is in Detroit on business.

MANHATTAN SKETCH

(continued from page 109)

cost of a hundred thousand dollars while men stand shivering in breadlines and pace the sidewalks without a place to sleep.

It is not to be expected that a righteous wrath will be vented by the native stock of the city. By birth, by training, they have become too inured to the whole system. Besides, tolerance is their virtue. There are, naturally, those in the city itself, of its own stock, who revolt in mental abhorrence of these conditions, but the noblesse oblige of their natures, the finely drawn philosophy which suffers itself to be concerned with the motes in the eye civic only when assured of the impecca-

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ity of its own virtue, restrains them from ever uttering a dissentient cry. The fire of indignation within them burns from ever uttering a dissentient cry. The late on the nourishment given the Ro-

value of a balance between the rural and not be a bad ingredient in the national

a certain Victorian conventionalism might to their villages, with the result that there,

hard road, they carry their doctrine back to their sons well equipped with charac-

ter possessed of iron inelasticity. ▲ ▲ ▲

THE END OF A "NOBLE EXPERIMENT" (continued from page 114)

reveal one or two other results worth mentioning. Cleveland voters, famed for their socialist tendencies (they delivered the city to LaFollette in 1924, to their everlasting glory) refused for the first time to approve a bond issue to increase the capacity of the city light plant. But in this respect abuse should not fall on Cleveland voters. Blame, instead, Ohio farmers. These worthy men, controlling the Ohio legislature and taking their cue from their brethren in Illinois have consistently blocked all efforts toward facilitating progressive government in metropolitan areas of Ohio. One of their little jokes has been to require that all bond issues of the type Cleveland was considering, must receive a sixty per cent majority to pass. A majority of Cleveland voters favored this improvement of the municipal light plant, a plant the very existence of which has forced the private utility also furnishing the city with electricity to give the lowest rates extended to any large American city today. But the insidious propaganda circulated by this private company had its effect and the majority fell short of the required sixty per cent.

Masilon, Ohio, attracts the attention of the country by electing as its mayor none other than Jacob Coxey of "Coxey's Army" fame of nearly forty years ago! The man evidently flourishes in time of economic crisis. He waited a long time for his comeback!

In matters of general statewide concern, Ohio voters did a bitterly tragic thing. They defeated by a vote of more than two to one, a $7,500,000 program to improve the penal institutions of the state, a program instigated as a direct result of the Ohio penitentiary fire in which some three hundred men literally roasted to death. So quickly do men forget! Here is one of the most scath-

ing denunciations of the workings of democracy of which I can conceive. Shortly over a year ago the people of Ohio were shocked by a grim, horrible tragedy and demanded immediate activity in improving the penal institutions of the state. I find it difficult to conceive in what frame of mind these Ohio voters went to the polls. Do such people have a right to participate in government?

Summarizing those phases of the Ohio election on which I have touched, we have poor Coxey as the sole credit, the mayor plan vote in Cleveland, and the defeat of the light plant and penal institution bonds as our debits. With all due respect to Coxey I am afraid that the debits far outweigh the credits.

So functions democratic government in one great American commonwealth. ▲ ▲ ▲

SPORTS OF ALL SORTS (continued from page 108)

as compared with $26,000 in 1930 and $46,000 in 1927. About $17,000 was taken in gate receipts compared with $35,000 in 1930.

The attendance follows

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Ohio</th>
<th>Rice</th>
<th>Iowa State</th>
<th>Kansas</th>
<th>Okla. Aggies</th>
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<td>4,100</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>4,400</td>
<td>8,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930</td>
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<td>4,000</td>
<td>8,700</td>
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A contributing factor last year to the smaller receipts is the fact that the gate price was $1.00 as compared with $2.50 previously. ▲

Harrier captain

Ralph Dale, '33 arts-sc., of Enid, was elected captain of the harriers November 19. ▲

Fencing

For the first time in the history of the university, private fencing classes are open to students. They are being taught by Mr Ralph Shaw, former student of Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh. Most of the participants are students in the school of dramatic art. ▲

Financial situation

The situation of the athletic association was reported to be critical as the new year began. The association must pay a $10,