Provincial New York

By Betty Kirk, '28
Illustrations by Dorothy Kirk, '23

No man is more provincial than the New Yorker and nowhere is the New Yorker more provincial than in his attitude toward the westerner.

That New York is the Alpha and Omega of American culture is one of the current myths. This is the belief of the majority of young artists throughout the United States but it is nowhere more devoutly accepted and touted than by the residents of Manhattan Island.

That this conception is false may be seen from a brief review of the genesis of the "New Yorkers" who are proudest of the name. Herbert Asbury, author of "Hatrack" and "The Gangs of New York" is from Little Rock. "Bide" Dudley, dramatic critic of the New York Evening World, is from Kansas. Heywood Broun, accepted by many as the acme of Gotham sophistication made his name as a sports writer in Denver; and our own Burton Rascoe hails from Shawnee.

The list continues with birthplaces recorded as Podunk and Green Falls and Paris, Texas. Not only did the great spring from such sources however, they also remained within them until some degree of fame beckoned them out.

New York's Seekers Come from Land Like This

Like Circe, It Attracts the Guileless American Who is Seeking to Sell His Name There

New Yorkers, born and bred in the city. In these two I found a sincerity and genuineness never found in the "New Yorkers" of two to ten years. They were simple and unaffected and expressed a real curiosity in the west and a degree of appreciation for whatever wonders it might contain.

These two however were the exception and not the rule. The average resident of the northern Atlantic seaboard has curiosity only for England and the continent. He is sublime in his belief that any spot west of Albany, with the possible exceptions of Chicago and Hollywood are dull, dreary and exist only to send haphazard delegations to the city in order to furnish more "New Yorkers."

It is not the ignorance of these peasants that is annoying. Unconscious ignorance may be excused. There is no plea however for the wilful ignorance of college bred men and women who have studied at least the elements of geography. Theirs is a misconception which is colossal, stupid and unforgivable.

To what extent this blindness reaches may be illustrated by a query (Turn to page 324, please)
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made at the information bureau at the Grand Central station. A woman called and asked at what hour she could get a train going west. The clerk asked how far west and she stated, "To Yonkers." To appreciate this remark we must recall that Yonkers is not only in Greater New York but is only a two hour's drive from Times Square.

For an unexplained reason Oklahoma is to the easterner the extreme point of "The West" as he conceives it. To such the state means but two things—Indians and oil. Moreover "Indian" conveys to him blankets and papooses and war whoops. "Oil" spells nothing but derricks and stained corduroys and tough dance halls. They are too complacent to look behind the term "Indian" and see such statesmen as Vice-President Curtis and Patrick Hurley. They refuse to view the products of petroleum in such a palace as that of E. W. Marland in Ponca City or such a resort as Frank Phillips' Woolaroc Lodge near Bartlesville.

That such a condition is to be deplored may be the viewpoint of our booster organizations but that it is to be encouraged is another and perhaps more constructive viewpoint. The isolation of our state for the next ten years will result in an eventual flowering which in due time may place it in the front ranks of American culture.

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**Doctor Spier Resigns**

Dr. Leslie Spier, for seven years a member of the University of Oklahoma faculty, and head of the department of anthropology here, has resigned his position to become head of the department of anthropology at the University of Washington and director of the Washington state museum. Doctor Spier had been granted a year's leave of absence for study in the Gilbert and Ellis Islands. He is one of the best known American anthropologists.

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**Look! Lionel Strongfort**

At last! Readers of this celebrated family journal will rejoice to know that a chapter has been formed on the campus to petition Sigma Psi, national scientific health fraternity. The object of this Greek letter organization is to study the fundamental principles of health. About the only fraternity not organized on the Oklahoma campus is one teaching people how to eat and sleep. And how to study! Alarm!

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