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GENTLEMANLY ENGLISH MEN—AND AMERICANS

by EVELYN SCOTT

ENGLAND may have been, or still may be, "a nation of shopkeepers," but it is not the English shopkeeper, any more than it is the English laborer on farm or in factory, who has designed the culture which continues to prevail in articulate circles. A Labor Government temporarily in power, a Ramsay MacDonald as Prime Minister, are accidents which

COMMO

by BRANC

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EDITORIAL

THE first and most obvious disadvantage of being educated is that one is exposed at an early and defenseless age to the strange ministrations of educators. An educator is a person who calmly undertakes to teach subjects, whether they be interesting or not, to people who may or may not be interested in them. The results are universally with us in the

under a Public School influence, he has, just the same, been cowed by the traditions there established, and seldom really succeeds in getting to the bottom of his resentments, any more than do the numerous politely protestant young men, themselves "old boys" of such institutions, who have lately risen to tell us that all is not as it should be with Public School education.

The truth is that not only are wars won on the playing fields of Eton and Harrow, but that English aestheticism also is, even when its origin is disguised, very largely a Public School product.

Many of England's great (including her greatest Shakespeare) have not been gentlemen. In the days when aristocrats were, themselves, untrammelled individualists, they, doubtless, as patrons of art, were far less insistent than are the present representatives of the ruling class that the creative

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COMMONPLACES

by BRANCH CABELL

Art, one remarks, with wholly honest regret, has been over-advertised. Its importance in human living seems always to have been naïvely exaggerated; and even today, whether in print or upon rostra or behind the desk of the pedagogue, do very many excellent people assume the axiom that it is "art" which affords to every properly cultured person his moments of supreme ecstasy.

The reflective hearer cannot but marvel at the creature who speaks in this fashion. It is quite as though (you might imagine) this prattling and grave blockhead had never known the great commonplaces of his life here as a thinking animal: had never clung to the soft and warm and bulging body of his mother for protection against his childhood's terror of darkness; had got no delight from the awkward kisses of first love; had possessed no maiden ruthlessly in the while that her young face, so close to his face, wore that fond look of agony and submissive gratitude; had never felt the hand of his own child cling uncertainly to his hand for the first time; and had not ever looked upon the aloof strange sleeping of any beloved dead. It is, for that matter, as though this prattler had never tasted food when he was actually hungry.

Otherwise, he would not speak thus zany-like as to those thin and feeble tinglings which "art" trickles costively into its patronizer's but half-engaged consciousness. He would not talk of these as being in any well-rounded human life an important element, nor as having to compete with the commonplace and sublime moments which I have but indicated from among so many other moments—those moments in which every man has felt (with a sudden kindling, with an unexplained exultance which finds his happiness or his fear or his sorrow alike splendid) that all his faculties are now engrossed, and that all his bodily and mental and spiritual being is in full use, and that all the volatile flame of his living is crowded now into one tiny point of incandescence, concentered, devouringly, intolerably.