

OH! SHAME ON AMERICA!

Isadora Duncan Leaves Us--We Have No Appreciation of Art--Americans Are Money Worshippers, Unintelligent and Beyond Hope of Artistic Redemption.



Isadora Duncan in a classic Greek dance and costume. No male version would have been so exquisite, she thinks, for the traffic

BY ISADORA DUNCAN,

The Well Known American Dancer and Idealist.

I AM going to an island in the Greek archipelago to live on bread and onions and worship beauty. Because my own country doesn't want me I am renouncing America forever. It has shown me it doesn't want me by allowing me to lose my fortune here, because it does not know art. This season I have lost \$40,000. The last time I paid a visit to my own country I had to borrow my passage money back.

In Europe the government fosters my art by giving me aid. In this country I would be permitted to become bankrupt, so far as aid from the rich and powerful is concerned.

Those who have the power to foster art in this country do not do so, because they are not intelligent. Intelligence and taste for the beautiful are the same. Our government does not have it, nor do the persons of great wealth in the United States.

So on March 9 I and my children are going back to Greece. There are blue skies and olive groves. We will go every day to the Pantheon. We will enjoy the beauties of the view from the Acropolis. We can live cheaply and happily there, instead of expensively and sorrowfully here. I will found a colony of artists. It will be a peace colony and will be a mild, living protest against the horrors of war. For artists are the light and heaven of the world. We will all dress as did the ancient Greeks, and do as they did. I had dreamed of doing this for New York.

It is the fault of the government and the rich that you have no art here. One day I took my children to the People's theater on the East Side. The children danced and Schubert's last symphony, the unfinished one, was played. The great audience sat there and listened soundlessly to the end, the tears

to the feelings! The masses restrain their emotions. In the "classes" the emotions are atrophied by the chase for gold!

I look at that wall along the Hudson, the home of your millionaires. I call it a wall of desecration. To me it is the symbol of the city, the poscur among cities, claiming what it has not.

I brought these beautiful maidens over here. Some of them I have had for ten years. Beautiful little German maids, some of them, and I would not leave them behind, for in the streets of Paris, if they had been overheard to speak German, they would not be safe. I bring them all in the first cabin. Not, as my friends advise, in the second cabin, because I want them to see and have the best. And what happens, in my own inhospitable country? They are detained at Ellis Island for eight days! Horribly un-Greek Ellis Island! What a blow to their sense of beauty! What an awakening from their dreams of America!

And then I lost \$40,000!

I gave exhibitions of their dancing at the Metropolitan Opera House. I had to pay one thousand dollars a night for the music! And eight hundred dollars for the printing! I had some striking posters announcing the Dionysian, and I was unable to have them printed! They say they are not—decent! So art is rewarded. It is the history of great art that

terly unhappy. I should not repine for myself, but I mourn for my country and the hopelessness of its future in art!

You have children, yet you do not appreciate the health and wonder of their beauty. Release your children! Release them by letting them dance from the time they are 6 years old. Not until this is done will you realize the possibilities of womanhood.

Oh, she is coming, the dancer of the future! The free spirit, who will inhabit the body of new women. More glorious than any woman that has yet been! More beautiful than the Egyptian, than the Greek, than the early Italian, than all women of past centuries—the highest intelligence in the freest body!

Your first need is to free your children by letting them be taught to dance. Children are more wonderful than we. They are the true gods and goddesses of earth. For they have the power of living in an idea. We are utterly unconscious of self. My little girls, eight of the original forty, live always in an idea, the ideal of beauty. Their faces are like the angels, transfigured.

I had thought to aid your children. It was my purpose to open on the floor beneath my studio a shop where Greek robes and veils and sandals should be sold. I would have freed the children of New York and of other communities. Not only the children, but the elders.

Wanted All of America To Adopt Free Greek Dress.

I wanted not only New York, but all America, to adopt the old free Greek dress. I would have had your automobiles made in the shape of the beautiful old chariots. The chauffeur, instead of sitting unhealthfully on the small of his back, would have stood upright in the classic, virile, decorative attitude of the ancient charioteer. Your traffic policeman on Fifth-av would have stood there in classic robes, waving, instead of a club, the thyrsus. Can you imagine Fifth-av under such conditions? No sordidness, no disharmonies. But thousands of men and women in Greek dress coursing along in their auto-chariots, their chauffeurs finely, vibrantly erect, the traffic police with their acorn-tipped wands! Oh, it would have been beautiful!

Could there be gaugmen, thugs, other denizens of the slums if the slums had been turned into gardens and these people all clad in the flaring tunics and peplos of the great Greeks? There could not have been. The disharmony between such clothing and such acts would have been so great as to be impossible.

The subway—with its utter lack of politeness and consideration, its brutal, inhuman guards, its dread-

fulness. Imagine a transformed subway with these guards in flaring robes, all grace and ease and courtesy; its occupants old Greek—ah, it would not then have been like a passage of the Styx, but one to Paradise!

And so I dreamed of an America transformed. I talked with your multi-millionaires who listened to my plans for spreading the gospel of beauty in America. They went away and never came back. You yourselves have proscribed my gospel of beauty, because you have permitted expenses to remain so great that you cannot meet them and keep enough money to feed myself and my children. This land of the free is a cruel country, monetarily cruel.

I have offered you music and dancing, and you would have it not.

In France the government aided my art and the rich gave for its continuance. The government gave me the use of the Trocadero. Here I pay a huge rental. Europe makes its art free to all. When I gave my exhibitions in the People's theater free I met such response as made me happier than I have been since I came to America.

Art Should be Free, Also Without Any Price.

Art should be free. It should be without money and without price. Music is the wellspring of the arts. Everything that is good comes from music. Great artists in music should work without money. They are priests! Yes, I am sure they would be willing to forego their salaries, huge as they are. Those artists who sing at the Metropolitan Opera House for enormous salaries would surely forego the price of their efforts. They know that music belong to the people.

What could the rich and the government do? The rich could stop importing antiquities into this country and endow myself and others who want to liberate their children and free them to roam at will in a land of beauty. The rich and the government could provide classic amphitheaters everywhere. I understand there is an amphitheater in California, the Greek theater at Berkeley. I am glad of that. I have never seen it.

And they could make the style of dress I advocate compulsory. Soon everyone would be transformed for the better.

The theater is not for the rich, but the poor. It is essentially a democratic institution. There should be no boxes, no galleries. There should be a half circle, which an artist could include in a sweep of her arms, and where the seats are practically on a level, no auditor interfering with the bearing or vision of another. I offered to convert the Madison Square garden here into such an amphitheater and produce there great music and dancing exhibitions, but the rich whose aid I asked—listened and never came back.

I reminded them that Plato had said that everything in life depends upon music, dancing and poetry. I repeated to them my vision of the Greek theater and my vision of a Grecian New York—and they never came back.

My vision of the Greek theater: That architectural form in which the greatest number of people can see, hear and feel at the same moment, with the same intensity and equal proportions; that form which enables me to take a vast audience into my



Isadora Duncan in a simple Grecian at home gown.

streaming down their pale faces. Though they were its apostles suffered. Beethoven was a very poor hungry, they understood! And enjoyed! Art appeals man. Schubert was a very poor man. Both were let-



Another ancient airy street costume advocated by Miss Duncan for American women and a classic walking pose.

arms; the form of a theater in which all the people sitting there will feel the significance of a simple gesture, in equal vision of form and proportion; a form of theater in which my magnetic force can go forth from me, covering the people in uninterrupted rays, as the sun's light covers the earth; that form in which a simple tone of voice, going on the natural currents of its sound waves, will stir the hearts of a vast multitude sitting before me in places, one not more fortunate than the others; in which the emotion I give will flow from one to another—infectious, all compelling waves of emotion, going from me to them and returning to me.

And so with the Greek theater built. And so should other Greek theaters be built in America, without boxes or galleries or balconies or parquets, an essentially democratic institution, where all people are equal and where art is free.

In these theaters, beside the classic music and classic dancing, plays by Sophocles and Aeschylus should be given. It should be given every night and it should be free.

I would have inaugurated this work. I tried to, you heard me, but heeded not. The public was interested. Artists, musicians, sculptors gathered worshipfully about me. It is always so everywhere. The artists always understand.

As one looked down mournfully upon an indifferent city, so I turn my backward gaze and grieve over an indifferent country. Like Him, I say in farewell:

"I would have gathered ye as a hen gathereth her chicken, but ye would not."

And so I am going back to Greece! To Greece and beauty! To Greece and democracy! To Greece and intelligence.