

Mrs. Whitney's Latest Photograph, Which Denotes Her Artistic Tastes Expressed in Dress.



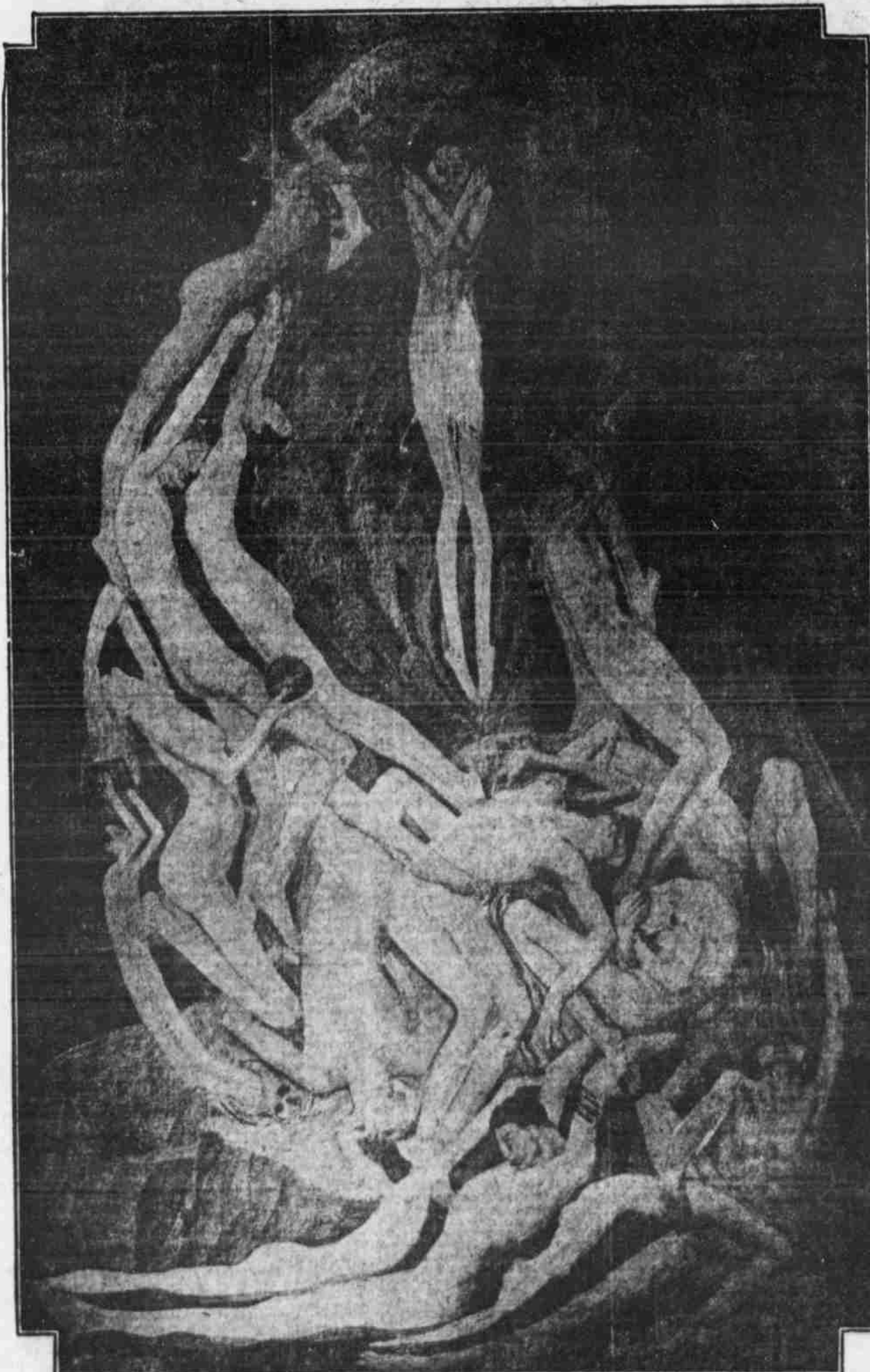
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Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney and The Soul of the Immigrant



The Group by Benjamin Bufano, of New York, That Won First Prize at Mrs. Whitney's First Exhibition as the Best Representation of "The Soul of the Immigrant."

New York Fashionable Society's Own Sculptress Explains Her Effort to Materialize Immigration's Spirit in Art and Why Such Odd Ideas of It Win Her Prizes



The Curious Painting by Mr. Evan T. Walters That Won a Prize from Mrs. Whitney as an Inspired Representation of "Immigration's Soul."

MRS. HARRY PAYNE WHITNEY is seeking the soul of the immigrant. Mrs. Whitney is Cornelius Vanderbilt's favorite child, her claim to her father's special regard lying in her talent, her earnestness and her large social consciousness. Not content with the life of society to which she was born, she tossed away the golden spoon and opened a studio at No. 8 West street, where, close to Washington Square, that has the homes of Knickerbockers on the north and east, and is bounded by New York's Latin quarter on west and south, she pursued the art of sculpture.

She has become deeply interested in the problem of the immigrant. How, after he has come to this country, he shall be assimilated into the national life to its betterment and his own, she regards as one of the most vital questions to-day before the American people. Seeking a solution of it, she asked artists to compete for \$1,100 in prizes she offered for the best sculpture, painting and posters on the subject of the immigrant's relation to America; or, as she puts it, the soul of immigration.

She opened her studio for the purpose and there more than one hundred works on "The Immigrant in America" are being displayed. Two of the interesting conceptions which have been awarded prizes by Mrs. Whitney as most nearly approaching her ideal are shown on this page.

"The reason for the exhibition and competition is this," said Mrs. Whitney before her recent departure for California: "We wanted to do what all our wise books on immigration and all our commission investigations and lengthy discussions in Congress have never done—show the average American that he has too long lost sight of the immigrant as a vast human asset. He is a tremendous factor in the spiritual destiny of this country.

"We wanted foreign-born and native-born artists alike to bring their creative insight to the theme. I asked the artists to teach us by pictures the relation of the immigrant to America, and America to the immigrant. I believed that they would help us to reach a better understanding of the meaning of the immigrant to America and of America to the immigrant.

"Look at the exhibit. See how the artists of America, native or foreign-born, answer the question: Do you think they, in their answers, show a deeper comprehension than that of the average thoughtless American on these points? Do they photograph for us the soul of the immigrant in America? Have they discovered or rediscovered it for us?

"Some of them have and some have not. Of the art in the work I need not speak. It is the idea rather than its expression that interests me.

"In other words I wanted to evoke in art a powerful, concrete, convincing materialization of the soul of the immigrant. By doing so we could recall America's attention to the fact that immigrants have souls and that there is a soul of immigration. This lesson once forcefully brought to America's attention, the lot of the immigrant would, conceivably, be much happier.

"There are many pictures that bear a striking family resemblance, due to the presence of the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island and the New York city skyline. The pictures show the promised land, the dumb gratitude and inarticulate hope of the immigrant. That, to some artists, as to many thoughtless citizens, is all. According to them, the drama of it, the fulfillment, are in the arrival. The view is as naive as that of the immigrant himself. Only let down the gangplank. Peace, liberty, opportunity, prosperity will begin with the first footfall on shore and will continue without interruption, they think.

"Others of the artists have shown deeper vision. They all have aspiration. The hope of fulfillment is always there, but the vision is chastened by struggle.

"The first prize was won by a young Italian. He has shown the soul of the immigrant in a sculptured group. He shows a number of immigrants at the threshold of our country. A child is struggling to raise a cross. Persons admiring the work have said: 'That cross is the emblem of religious liberty.' I think not. It is rather the old-world burden of care and poverty borne along in the new! In front of the figure of hope, on the base slab, is the attitude of many immigrants toward America. 'We came unto our own and our own received us not.'

"The heaviness, the animal heaviness of their faces, has been commented upon.

"If this typifies the immigrant's soul," said one of my friends. "We'd be better without that soul." I pointed to the spark shining in the cloud. It is that spark that it is our duty to fan into God-like beauty. It can be done. It is our mission.

"I believe that this exhibit will make a way for greater exhibits to come. I should like to see the artists teach the lesson of the immigrant's true relation to the United States in every large city in this country by means of such exhibits. They will, I hope, teach us more about the immigrant in America. They will cause us to better value the spiritual forces represented by the dark eyes and clear-cut, pointed chins of the faces we see on the East Side.

"The artists by these pictures will hint to us how to invite, and to use more fully, the spiritual forces and capacities we now ignore in the immigrant on our shores. And the more they think upon the theme the more often will the soul of the immigrant be present in their works."

"Mrs. Whitney was well pleased with the exhibit as a beginning," said one of those in whose care she left its conduct. "But she hopes that artists, and citizens, too, will grasp the big part the immigrant plays in American industry. We know the brawn and muscle of individuals well enough, but we don't know the collective strength of the possible citizens.

"But the big mine owners, and subway contractors, and barge canal builders know. The average American does not know that the railroad that carries him on his journeys, the clothes he wears, the cigars he smokes, the furniture he puts into his house, are made for the most part by immigrants.

"Take iron and steel, that have been called

the strategic industries of this country, for instance. The Federal Immigration Commission found that 57.7 of the workmen were foreign born, and that, if you add the workmen of foreign born parentage, it will reach 71.7. The large controlling percentage runs through a long list of fundamental industries. In bituminous coal mining, 61.9 per cent are foreign born. In sugar refineries, 85 per cent were born on other than American soil.

"Mrs. Whitney was impressed by the lack of knowledge on this point. And she was impressed by the waste of undiscovered talent among foreigners. For example, she and all of us often speculated upon what becomes of their artistic powers. They come to us with vision trained for centuries in beauty of line and color with the deft hands of races skilled by the shaping of arch and temple or cathedral for thousands of years. They feel the beauty and nobility of outline as only those feel them who have lived with them for generations. What becomes of those dormant capacities? Does America give immigrants a chance to use them? American doesn't seem to realize that they exist.

"Mrs. Whitney and all others interested in the exhibit want to see the soul of the immigrant recognized. America has seemed to ignore his soul and give consideration only to his brawn and muscle. There is more than hope of prosperity in his soul. There is aspiration for the beauty of life. We were impressed by the recent impassioned declaration of a young strike leader on the East Side: 'What do we want?' she cried. 'We want something beside the chance to work our lives out to keep from dying. We want some of the beauty of life. That is in the soul of every immigrant, no matter how brutish his aspect, how stolid his countenance.'

"The brutishness, the idiosyncrasy of the faces of the winning sculpture group have been much commented upon. It has been severely criticized as being not at all representative of the immigrant. It has been said that the immigrant we want is the clear-eyed, alert, intelligent type. So we do. But what a greater mission is ours to take these human clods, trodden flat by centuries of ignorance and oppression, and make of them strong men and women! That is the message I wish to group, and it was this that Mrs. Whitney felt so powerfully.

"The painting by Evan T. Walters has also aroused much comment naturally. But it has a quality of inspiration that was felt to call for reward. Here we see the immigrant's soul rising out of the souls of his ancestors. It has their ancestral faults and it has their virtues. What are we going to do with this soul?

"That is the great lesson Mrs. Whitney wants to teach—that the immigrant has a soul; that there is a soul of immigration just as there is a national soul to America, to England, to France—to all races. If we can materialize this soul in art, in such a way as to move men's hearts and make them say, 'This is truth,' then we will have put the immigrant on a different plane. We will have created the right interest to make us do our best to get the best out of him for our own dear country."