THIS is an age and ours is a country in which events of national magnitude succeed each other, new cults arise, movements progress, and opinions change with bewildering swiftness. Within a decade there could be found serious-minded men and women who questioned the value of higher education to the youth of our land—who believed that college training tended to unfit rather than to fit a man or a woman for usefulness in life. Recent events would seem to support the more conservative view that there is no more important factor in the progress of our civilization than the schooling for practical affairs afforded by our so-called higher institutions of learning.

In almost every constructive activity—in commerce, in pedagogy, in government, in material development of natural resources, in literature, in the sciences—the university is taking a leading part.

In one important field of expression, however, it would appear that we are in need of an authoritative voice that shall quell the confusion of tongues, a quickening breath that shall clarify the atmosphere of threatening clouds of indolence, ignorance and ineptitude, and a deft hand that shall single out the truth from the tangled mass of insincerities, for “where there is no vision the people perish.”

It is true that in no field of culture has there been a greater quantity of more or less purposeful endeavor than in that of art production and appreciation. But in this endeavor the university has not played a prominent part. With one or two noble exceptions the leaders of artistic thought in our country have been men of other than academic rank.
Some fifteen years ago there were fewer than a dozen institutions of college grade that included art instruction in their curricula. Up to the present day the number has increased almost tenfold, a recent enumeration* showing that nearly one hundred American universities and colleges give instruction in the history of art as a portion of the work leading to the bachelor's degree.

With a development in this phase of education so recent and rapid, it is but natural that there should have been a vast amount of unorganized experimentation resulting in methods as varied as the capacity and training of the instructors under whose guidance the work is carried on. The number of institutions giving instruction in the history of art is approximately one-fourth of the total of those in which the liberal arts are taught for a period of four years, there being some three hundred in which no such instruction is given. That there are not more institutions which give such instruction is, doubtless, due partly to the fact that there is no commonly-accepted view even among art teachers as to what, how, and when art shall be taught in undergraduate and graduate courses. College authorities naturally hesitate to extend their already widely-spread resources over new fields whose boundaries and nature are still undetermined.

The urgent need of a unity of purpose and the importance of weighing and comparing methods in this department of education have been manifest for several years, and as long ago as 1907, the Western Drawing and Manual Training Association created a new department by the appointment of a committee† for the purpose of investigating and reporting to the Association on the conditions of art work in colleges and universities.

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Further attention was given to this matter in 1910 by the American Federation of Art through the appointment of a committee for precisely the same purpose.

The action taken by the Western Drawing and Manual Training Association in 1907 is of especial interest, as it was this action which ultimately led to the founding of the College Art Association. After 1907, the Department of University Art Instruction was represented at succeeding annual meetings of the Association until 1912.

The feeling arose among many members of the department that, valuable as was its union with the Western Drawing and Manual Training Association, the department could succeed better in engaging the interest and in winning the cooperation of college art instructors throughout the country, including those engaged in schools of architecture, and other professional art schools, if it became an independent organization. It was in response to this feeling that in 1911, when the Western Drawing and Manual Training Association met at Springfield, Illinois, the College Art Section of the Association met at the same time, but at the near-by University of Illinois. In 1912, when the parent body met at one of the high schools in Cincinnati, the members of the department accepted the invitation of the Cincinnati Art Museum Association to meet in their buildings at Eden Park.

At the meeting held at the University of Illinois, plans for a separate organization were discussed and a committee was appointed to draw up a form of constitution. At the meeting in the following year at Cincinnati the College Art Association was formally organized, its present constitution adopted, and its officers elected.

It seems fitting that a statement of the origin of our Association should here be recorded, and a grateful acknowledgment of the hospitality of the larger association accorded to the lesser should here be made.
It is sincerely hoped that college instructors engaged in the cultivation of appreciation of art, whether through the teaching of its practice, theory, or history, or in any of the professional departments, such as schools of architecture, will join the new Association and give it their cordial support and active coöperation. The annual dues have been placed at the sum of $3.00, with the hope that no one might be debarred from membership on account of financial consideration.

One of the important functions of the Association will be the publication, from time to time, of a bulletin of which this forms the first number. At the first annual meeting of the Association, held during the last Christmas holidays in the Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, it was voted that the cost of this initial number of the series should be defrayed by special subscriptions, and most of the necessary amount was promised at the meeting. It is confidently believed that by the time sufficient material has been accumulated to justify the issuing of a second number, the membership will have grown to such dimensions that the cost of the second and succeeding numbers of the series can easily be borne by the treasury of the Association, so that no further call for voluntary subscriptions will be necessary.

Other activities of the new Association will be revealed upon an examination of the list, printed elsewhere in this number, of the various committees that have been appointed by the executive board. These activities will be further extended from time to time as the problems of college art workers become urgent in their demand for solution.

The Association has begun its attack upon some of its more urgent problems. But there are questions of still broader import to which the collective intelligence of the members of the Association must be addressed if it is to fulfil its highest purpose.

Is it true that of the million students in our American
colleges and universities there are comparatively few to whom any opportunity is offered for the cultivation of an appreciation of the arts of architecture, sculpture, painting and the crafts,

Is it true that the annual exodus from our universities of young men and young women, whose sympathies for the beautiful in art and nature have been stimulated, would produce a profound effect for the better upon the quality of artistic appreciation throughout our land?

Is it true that a great increase of intelligent interest in art would do more than anything else to narrow the breach between the artist and an unappreciative public?

If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, there is no lack of opportunity for usefulness on the part of the College Art Association. Its aim should be so to influence our board of governors, our faculties and our student bodies that the university may eventually occupy a leading position in artistic thought, such as it has already attained in the other great branches of national activity.