

The Barnes Foundation and its first book: "An Approach To Art," an educational book for the public. This is not so bad as a subject, but Mr. Barnes' approach to art is well, internationally known among the artists. "Mr. Barnes of Philadelphia" is too good to waste in a short magazine article. Some one will go into the matter thoroughly and show him up through his own pathological letters, which he has lavished upon a rather dangerous audience.

It is amusing for a few moments to play with the idea of challenging Mr. Mencken to explain some of his recent statements and to produce his superior, secret artists.

"Today, it seems to me, the American imaginative writer, whether he be novelist, poet or dramatist, is quite as free as he deserves to be. He is free to depict the life about him precisely as he sees it, and to interpret it in any manner he pleases. Our stage is perhaps the freest in the world—not only to sensations, but also to ideas."

I doubt whether Mencken has ever been in a position to know whether the above is true or not, yet he makes the statement quite easily in his sentimental, halo-adjusting farewell to the Smart Set. He has never known the creative artist as a fellow artist, but as a critic and as the hired editor of a commercial magazine: that gulf could never be explained to any critic, editor or layman . . . of all the first-raters that I know, I don't know one who would just naturally send his best or strongest work to the Smart Set . . . that is a part of the thing that makes them first-raters. Somewhere in "Prefaces" Mencken tells just how cagey he has always been about accepting Mss. . . . "before ever I give any thought to its artistic merit and suitability is the question whether its publication will be permitted" . . . does he think that the artists have been less cagey in sending him their work? "I have a long list of such things by American authors, well-devised, well-imagined, well-executed, respectable as human documents and as works of art, but never to be printed in mine or any other American magazine." I should like to see those documents of wronged American art . . . I am willing to wager that