

PSYCHOLOGY

Effect of Movies Measured Scientifically

Attitude Test Given to Children Before and After Showing of Films Shows How Much They are Influenced

A TEST which can be used to measure scientifically the changes of attitude produced in children by any particular motion picture film, was described in a report to the Midwestern Psychological Association by its president, Dr. L. L. Thurstone, of the University of Chicago.

The test has been used, for example, to determine the actual effect of a picture which has been criticized as unfriendly to the Chinese.

When it is desired to test attitude toward nationalities, a list of twenty nationalities is presented to a group of students. The nationalities are arranged in pairs so that every nationality is paired with every other one in the list. The student answers, for each pair, the question, "Which would you rather associate with?"

By combining all the answers it is possible to draw up a scale showing for that group the average preference for, or prejudice against, each of the nationalities. As might be expected, in Dr. Thurstone's experiments, Americans came out at the top of the list, other English-speaking peoples came next, and races other than our own fell to the bottom.

The effect of witnessing a film is found by giving this test just before the film is shown and again afterward. Dr. Thurstone found that a dramatic film will cause a decided shift in attitude toward a particular race or nationality. The change in attitude may continue undiminished for several months or it may return part way toward its original state.

A similar method is used for measuring attitude toward crimes or ideals or principles. In the test for crimes, the question is revised to read, "Which do you consider the more serious?" Children have come to regard gambling as much more serious after seeing a motion picture playing up the evils of this crime.

Dr. Thurstone warns against the use of this test for the elimination from college or elsewhere of persons with attitudes considered undesirable.

"In the first place, you would immediately make liars of many applicants who differ with you in their political or religious convictions . . .," he said. "But even if it were possible to ascertain the political and religious attitudes of people under conditions which would detect when they are lying, it would be a vicious policy for any educational institution to adopt."

Dr. Thurstone referred particularly to a case where several boys were reported to have been denied graduation from high school because of political beliefs.

"The stupid psychology of those school authorities can hardly be calculated to make those boys change their political convictions. If ignored they might change their minds many times before reaching mature years. But it is startling to hear that an adolescent can be refused graduation from a public educational institution because of his political beliefs . . . I sincerely hope that none of the attitude scales that we have developed will be put to such vicious purposes."

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Historic Cup Sold At London Auction

A CUP FIT for a king, which many antiquarians believe to have been the private drinking cup of the twelfth century martyr-saint Thomas à Becket, was sold at auction May 12, from the estate of the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Marshal and Hereditary Marshal of England. It was purchased by Lord Wakefield for \$55,000 in behalf of his nation and will be given, it is understood, to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The cup stands over twelve inches tall. It is made of ivory and has an ivory cover. Both cup and cover are richly mounted with silver-gilt and studded with pearls and garnets.

It has been known as the "Thomas à Becket Cup" on the supposition that it



IVORY, PEARLS AND GARNETS

Are the materials of this historic cup which sold recently for \$55,000.

was the property of the murdered Archbishop of Canterbury, Saint Thomas. In support of this argument are the initials TB engraved on a silver band on the ivory cover, and with the initials an engraved mitre. A cup described as St. Thomas cup was willed to Queen Catherine of Aragon, first wife of Henry the Eighth, by Sir Edward Howard, and it is considered possible that this was the same cup. After Thomas à Becket's death, objects associated with him were venerated and preserved, and the suggestion has been made that Queen Catherine accepted the fine ivory cup as a relic of St. Thomas and added the sumptuous mounting at that time.

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