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### The Personal Accent

IN SPITE of the fact that most of us have a good deal less money than we had a few years ago, the crowds that attend concerts by such men as Fritz Kreisler or Rachmaninoff seem almost as big as ever.

Artists who are less well known than these two are having a harder time of it. People who go to concerts are saving their money for a few events of the first importance.

It is safe to say that out of every ten at the Kreisler or the Rachmaninoff concert one was there because he could fully appreciate the virtuosity of these masters and the other nine because they wanted to see Fritz Kreisler or Sergei Rachmaninoff. Such is the magic of a great name.

People want to be able to say they heard the celebrated So-and-so. With an opera glass they study his face, his motions. If they could merely hear his music without seeing him at all, as for instance over the radio, that wouldn't seem nearly so momentous. They might even neglect to turn the radio on.

A man like Rachmaninoff is a personality. The impression of that personality is stamped upon our minds. The radio can give us some hint of it, but does not satisfy us. We want to see the man himself, a person like you or me, but who nevertheless has succeeded in lifting himself out of the mass into the eminence of a great name.

We cherish the accent of personality. We refuse to believe that a man should remain just a bee in a swarm, just an ant in a column. Every human being has something within him that urges him to be an individual.

This is the source of our hero worship. In the great man whom we admire we behold a proof of the preciousness of personality. And the exceptional person who lifts the frail materials of our human endowment into unforgettable greatness has done us this service over and above his special achievement, whatever that may have been: he has demonstrated once again how "nigh is grandeur to our dust."

The truth holds for lesser accomplishments as for the greatest. A man came to Oakland a few months ago and right in the midst of the depression started a new restaurant. Old and well-established eating places were going out of business. But this man imparted to his restaurant a special quality, a new and interesting accent, and he made a conspicuous success of it. One trouble with a good many businesses is that they offer nothing that numerous other places can't supply just as well.

The personal accent may be advantageous to a grocer or a barber as well as to a violinist. No salesman can be very successful without it. In our standardized modern life we get into the way of following too much, imitating too much, concealing our individualities instead of making the most of them. But of all a man's possessions the best and the most precious is his personality.