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Life Prospectus



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**A PROSPECTUS
FOR A
NEW MAGAZINE**

THE PURPOSE:

To see life; to see the world; to eyewitness great events; to watch the faces of the poor and the gestures of the proud; to see strange things—machines, armies, multitudes, shadows in the jungle and on the moon; to see man's work—his paintings, towers and discoveries; to see things thousands of miles away, things hidden behind walls and within rooms, things dangerous to come to; the women that men love and many children; to see and to take pleasure in seeing; to see and be amazed; to see and be instructed;

Thus to see, and to be shown, is now the will and now expectancy of half mankind.

To see, and to show, is the mission now undertaken by a new kind of publication, THE SHOW-BOOK OF THE WORLD, hereinafter described.

THE NEED & OPPORTUNITY:

I

In the course of a week the U. S. citizen sees many pictures. He sees a few in the newspapers and more on Sundays. He may see travel pictures in travel magazines, art pictures in art digests, cinema pictures in cinemagazines, scientific pictures in scientific journals. But nowhere can he see the cream of all the world's pictures brought together for him to enjoy and study in one comfortable sitting. No publication devotes

itself directly, without compromise and without conflicting purposes, to the business of supplying the biggest and best package of pictures which it is possible to produce at a popular price. Nowhere, therefore, does the insistent demand for pictures meet a direct and fully satisfying supply.

II

Pictures have become a dynamic power in the Fourth Estate of the Twentieth Century. But, although people demand and get pictures in nearly every periodical; although the gravure section of the New York Times is the section most "read" by the distinguished clientele of that journal; although pictures have made FORTUNE famous; and although the superlatively successful Daily News is commonly regarded as a picture paper - - -

Nevertheless, people are missing relatively more of what the camera can tell than of what the reporter writes. With more or less success they "follow" the news—i.e. the written news. They scarcely realize how fascinating it can be to "follow" pictures—to be for the first time pictorially well-informed.

For this there are many reasons. Pictures are taken haphazardly. Pictures are published haphazardly. Naturally, therefore, they are looked at haphazardly. Cameramen who use their heads as well as their legs are rare. Rarer still are camera editors. Thus, many a newsworthy picture which can be taken is not taken. Thus, too, only a fraction of the best pictures of widest interest are brought to the attention of any one alert U.S. citizen. And almost nowhere is there any attempt to edit pictures into a coherent story—to make an effective mosaic out of the fragmentary documents which pictures, past and present, are.

The mind guided camera can do a far better job of reporting current events than has been done. And, more than that, it can reveal to us far more explicitly the nature of the dynamic social world in which we live.

III

THE SHOW-BOOK OF THE WORLD undertakes to meet this challenge, this opportunity.

It proposes to be the biggest picture show on earth—and the most vividly coherent. It proposes to scour the world for the best pictures of every kind; to edit them with a feeling for visual form, for history and for drama; and to publish them on fine paper, every week, for a dime.

SHOW-BOOK takes for its field not all the news but all the news which now and hereafter can be seen; and of these seen events it proposes to be the complete and reliable record.

SHOW-BOOK takes for its field all the world which may be known by seeing—and it promises to reveal, every week, aspects of human life and work which have never before been seen by the camera's miraculous second sight. By giving to pictures their own magazine, SHOW-BOOK intends that the camera shall at last take its place as the most convincing reporter of contemporary life.

EDITORIAL CONTENT

I. THE SOURCES:

Raw material for the world's first showbook already exists in prodigious quantities. Each week some 5,000 news photographs are brought into being by the four major American newspaper services alone. Cascading into the offices of SHOW-BOOK this flood of pictures may be thought of as the main stream of optical consciousness of our time. Harnessing this stream, filtering out the trite, the banal, the repetitious, to isolate perhaps fifty or sixty really memorable pictures, is the beginning of SHOW-BOOK's function. Tributary to the main stream is the output of about a dozen minor U.S. photo services whose findings are not widely published. With these services, SHOW-BOOK will cooperate in exploring many specialized fields.

Foreign lands are in many instances well abreast of America in photography, and to their richest sources SHOW-BOOK will extend contractual pipelines—into camera-crazy Japan, into Germany, Italy, Russia. In London it will establish a picture-seeking editor to get the best from Europe's cameras. Exclusive U.S. magazine rights on its foreign findings will be the rule with SHOW-BOOK.

Unorganized and uncounted is the world's great company of freelance photographers who, just as soon as the nature of the world's first showbook becomes apparent, may be counted upon to offer SHOW-BOOK an inexhaustible, bubbling supply of original and independent work. Already SHOW-BOOK has made arrangements with scores of well-known freelance picturemakers.

Finally, SHOW-BOOK will go (has gone) into the business of picture-making on its own account. A corps of crack photographers, at home and abroad, some on salary, some at call, some "candid" specialists, some portraitists and interior specialists, some

technicians and some dare-devils, will be ready to march out and make for SHOW-BOOK pictures which might otherwise not be made, either through lack of inspiration, of funds or of editorial contact.

II. THE FORMS:

Record and Revelation being the two shining words in SHOW-BOOK's charter, its table of contents will be built around two cornerstones.

1. First of these—for the Record—is the Big Newspaper Story of the Week. Not necessarily the biggest news story of the week, but the story which most potently combines historical significance and pictorial punch—the biggest news that is best recorded by the camera. This story may be an Assassination, or a Flood, or a Horse Race, or a trial by Jury, or the Cure for Cancer. The cameras were there—scores of cameras. So were plenty of able reporters. In order that the story may be seen as thoroughly as it may be read, SHOW-BOOK will lay hands on all the pictures taken by all the cameras; will compare them, select the very best, shape, size and arrange them thoughtfully, caption them with clarity, color and force, and give them plenty of space on four to ten pages of high-grade paper.

2. Second major feature of each issue will be SHOW-BOOK's own Big Special Feature—a four to ten page essay into some subject of major current interest and significance which has not before been explored pictorially. The exploring will be done by SHOW-BOOK's own editors and cameramen, or by cameramen directed at long range by SHOW-BOOK's editors. As distinguished from the function of recording a big piece of news, the function here will be Revelation—taking you intimately into the life of a famed personage, be it Shirley Temple or the Pope; or intimately into the inner workings of a celebrated institution, such as The Jockey Club, The Japanese Army, Alcatraz, Vassar or Father Divine's Heaven; or exploring for you a newly current phenomenon, such as the execution of the condemned in lethal chambers, the advent of television, the commercial crossing of the Atlantic by Zeppelin.

In this feature, SHOW-BOOK, the diligent reporter will become a creative student.

Supplementing these major features, the balance of SHOW-BOOK's contents will fall in varying degrees under the headings of Record and Revelation. Forms will vary as pictures available vary, but certain secondary features will remain at least functionally constant. There will be:

3. Great Photographs Which You Will Never Forget: (Each a full page.) Of these there may be only two or three a week. Sometimes a Great Photograph may be a part of a pictorial story, sometimes it may stand in stark loneliness.

4. A Portrait: This will be the picture-story of SHOW-BOOK's Man-of-the-Week—politician, tycoon, sportsman, crooner or bishop. It will show candid pictures of his characteristic expressions. It will show him at every stage in his life from birth to present. It will take you into his home, his office, his club, will show you whom he meets and how he lives. And besides the pictures there will be a full portrait in words, this being one of the features which will set off the pictures with text.

5. Change: The shifting mores and fashions of the world will be recorded under this broad heading. Its name implies the flexible character of the section. One Week it may be radical change in women's styles—suppose that Schiaparelli, Lanvin and the rest of the haute-couture suddenly turn out a collection of evening dresses knee-high. It may be some basic change in automobile design like the first Airflow models. It may be news in interior decoration, in dinner table procedure, in small house architecture, in men's golf clothes. It may be cellophane or ping-pong, lastex or trailers, skiing or ant palaces.

6. Movies: (Two to four pages.) A movie is a story told in pictures. A story in pictures is what SHOW-BOOK likes to tell. Therefore, it will tell, perhaps not fifty-two a year, but certainly most of the notable cinema stories of the year—in pictures.

7. Theatres: SHOW-BOOK will send the best stage photographers to Broadway openings and bring you the best scenes from the season's best plays. Amazing it is but

true, that no one made a picture of the great show-stopping tableau in Act III of Victoria Regina. SHOW-BOOK will see to it that thereafter such sights are not overlooked.

8. Art: It stands to reason that a painting or sculpture or building should be seen and not heard about (or written about). Every week SHOW-BOOK will bring you the best contemporary art.

9. The President's Scrapbook: Two pages SHOW-BOOK will reserve for pictures which the President of the United States might have chosen for his scrapbook; himself eating peanuts, his new swimming pool, his wife on roller skates, the dam he is building in Oregon, his appointee to the Supreme Court, the assassin who almost got him, the meanest cartoon, a boondoggle, his favorite house-guest.

10. Maps: Nearly every issue will carry a one or two-page map. This will go with one of the big stories. Scattered through the issue, as integral parts of other stories, will be smaller maps, explanatory drawings, charts, diagrams. These will serve the double purpose of clarifying the story and of giving the eye a change from an array of photographs.

11. Drawings: Another visual pace-changer will be the illustrative (as distinct from the explanatory) drawing. A coronation in shadowy Westminster Abbey, a Supreme Court Justice reading a historic decision, the fall to death of a trapeze artist in the circus—perhaps no camera may catch these. SHOW-BOOK will send staff artists to make drawings of stories which cannot be satisfactorily photographed, which may have to be pieced together from the accounts of many eye-witnesses.

12. Parties: SHOW-BOOK will crash the Party-of-the-Week. It may be Muriel Van Astorbilt's debut. It may be a stately affair in Hollywood or the gaudy birthday of an Indian Maharaja. It may be a swank yachting party or a White House reception; an Alpine picnic with Realmleader Hitler, or the Reunion of Princeton '16.

13. March of Time Sequence: Every month "The March of Time" spends much time and money to cover three important subjects in Motion Pictures. Frequently—perhaps

every month—SHOW-BOOK will appropriate the best shots from "The March of Time's" best sequence and tell the same story in "stills" (with due credit to "The March of Time").

14. FORTUNE Pictures: Dollar-a-copy FORTUNE has an entree into industrial sanctums which no other magazine could have. When FORTUNE gets a remarkable set of photographs to illustrate one of its stories, SHOW-BOOK may use them at the same time,—may use more of the set than FORTUNE can.

15. Private Lives: In exposing to light the loves, scandals and personal affairs of the plain and fancy citizens, the mighty picture-getting organization of the U.S. Press reaches maximum efficiency. SHOW-BOOK will cull out the best eight or ten snaps of the week and around them will write a light, good-tempered "colyumist" review of these once-private lives, as they figure in the Press. (But SHOW-BOOK will dig no dirt.)

16. Cartoons: (One page—and perhaps more among the ads.) A selection of the world's best current cartoons. An old magazine job, but one which is not now being done by any popular periodical.

17. Exposures: Every week hundreds of human beings—some of them newsworthy—reveal their exhibitionist traits by showing off before a camera—sometimes with appalling results. SHOW-BOOK will save a half page or so in the back of the book for the silliest of these self-exposures.

18. Other Regular Features: Besides the Number One News-Pictures Story of the Week, SHOW-BOOK will also publish the Second, Third and Fourth Best (each one to seven pages). And besides its own Big Special Feature, SHOW-BOOK will also take out three or four smaller subjects in similar fashion.

19. Notable Miscellaneous Photos: There is always a handful of "orphan" photographs not sired by a big pictorial story, not belonging to the Great Photograph family, which nevertheless may be so appealing, so rare, so funny or so moving that they are their own raison d'etre. Of these interesting orphans SHOW-BOOK will make a two or three page gallery.

20. Text Features: Every week there will be published in the front of the magazine, signed by The Editors, a review of the week's pictures. The Editors will mentally sort out for the reader what the camera brought in and comment thereon. It will refer to many of the pictures and groups-of-pictures in the current issue. It will touch on news events which the camera failed to cover, or covered poorly. Thus, in addition to the uncritical pleasure of seeing pictures, SHOW-BOOK will give its readers a sense of what pictures are all about, what they add up to and how in various ways they have contributed to a knowledge of the contemporary world. In the back of the magazine will be published a less important department which will tell interesting or amusing stories of how various pictures in the issue came to be taken.

21. The Unpredictable: Above has been given the basic framework of the magazine, SHOW-BOOK—the biggest printed picture show on earth and the biggest dime's worth on any newsstand. But occasionally SHOW-BOOK will break away from this framework. It may publish a portfolio of a dozen super-magnificent industrial photographs. Or it may devote two-thirds of an issue to the Queen Mary, thereby making all other pictorial jobs on that ship look not like a dime but like nothing at all. On the eve of a great political election it might devote a whole issue to a pictorial review of the campaign. So that while SHOW-BOOK's readers will usually know what to expect they will never be quite sure that they will not get a whacking surprise.