

WHITE

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May 6, 1940

Mr. Lawrence Grant White  
McKim, Mead & White  
101 Park Avenue  
New York, New York

Dear Mr. White:

Mr. Lovejoy, who will be away on vacation for a time, has asked me to thank you for your kindness in taking time to write your recollections of Mr. Eastman.

We are glad to have such intimate and frank opinions of Mr. Eastman. No great man is without foibles and we do wish to present a true picture so that he will be quite human.

We appreciate your letter and thank you for your contribution.

Sincerely,

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White, Lawrence Grant

*Colonel Salbert*  
*ms* 4/30/44

MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE  
101 PARK AVENUE  
NEW YORK

LAWRENCE GRANT WHITE,  
JAMES KELLUM SMITH,

FREDERICK J. ADAMS,  
GEORGE FRANCIS MORSE,  
LOUIS ROBERT HOLSKE,  
WILLIAM B. MYLCHREEST,

HERBERT LUCAS,  
ASSOCIATE.

WM. MITCHELL KENDALL,  
CONSULTANT.

April 29, 1940

Mr. F. W. Lovejoy  
Eastman Kodak Company  
Rochester, New York

Dear Mr. Lovejoy:

As you know, my principal contact with Mr. Eastman was in connection with the Eastman Theatre of Rochester. I always found him an easy client to work with. Although his opinions were strong, he was in no sense dictatorial, as is so likely to be the case with very wealthy men. I believe he had only the highest ideals in wishing to help the people of Rochester in every possible way.

He always impressed me, however, as a man who had never had a good time in life and never could enjoy himself. Not that he was in any way melancholy, but there was a certain flatness, a negative quality in his character that is hard to describe. For instance, what one enjoys on going on a pack trip in the West is the sense of adventure and roughing it. One day he showed me in his stables, the most elaborate camping equipment that I have ever seen. He used to take a party of his friends out to the Rocky Mountains and take delight in serving them quails in aspic, or paté de foies gras, with tables and comfortable chairs and, no doubt, a portable radio. Again, the general idea of a fireplace is a blackened hearth with crackling logs. One day a distinguished engineer and I were shown into his library on East Avenue. I remarked to the engineer that the hearth was built up in concrete, with a hollow space to receive the fire. The contraption struck us as a rather horrible piece of efficiency. It was only upon very close examination that we found that wood ashes had been carefully sifted, and so perfectly moulded to represent concrete, that it fooled an architect and an engineer at a distance of five feet!

As you probably know, Mr. Eastman, in spite of his great interest in music, was totally unmusical. I remember being astounded when I breakfasted with him one morning at half past seven, after getting off the midnight train from New York. The table was set in the large central room, a room so large that we needed an electric light over the table. As I was putting some excellent pancakes into my mouth, an organist - hidden behind a bank of a thousand cinerarias - played the "Maiden's Prayer" on an organ with the vox humana pulled out. The pancakes stuck in my throat. Again, he

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instructed his man servant to show me up to "Room No.4". Numbering one's guests' rooms is the surest way to change the atmosphere of a home into that of a hotel.

On another occasion a string quartette played at his house after lunch. They played extremely well, and the programs were printed, which gave a formal air to the occasion. Although I am passionately fond of music, I could not enjoy it thoroughly because, although there were four performers, there were only three of us in the audience. I had had the same feeling of uneasiness once before when I went to tea with a very wealthy Frenchman who had an entire Symphony Orchestra playing in his garden for four of us to listen to.

In spite of these somewhat derogatory sidelights on Mr. Eastman's peculiar character, I liked and admired him, but pitied him for his extraordinary lack of spiritual or intellectual resources of any kind.

Faithfully yours,

*Lawrence Grant White*

LGW

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