record. This object was presented to Edison by a group of dealers in phonograph records. In the library, too, is a framed motto composed by Sir Joshua Reynolds, which Edison tacked up in every building on the grounds; it reads, "There is no expedient to which a man will not resort to avoid the real labor of thinking." The cot on which Edison slept when he couldn't be bothered to go home to Llewellyn Park, two-thirds of a mile away, is in a nook in the library. If a problem was particularly baffling, he would undertake what he called a "campaign" against it, during which he would work almost incessantly, day and night.

In the library building are two small machine shops and a stockroom, among whose items are a large turtle shell, a piece of rhinoceros tusk, and an elephant hide. At one time the Edison corporation used to offer a prize to anyone who could name something that wasn't in the stockroom. The prize was once won by an insufferably clever little boy who suggested a clothespin. In the smaller brick buildings are a chemical laboratory, a wood-turning shop, an experimental laboratory, and two rooms used for research. "We don't keep the buildings too clean," Speiden said. "They weren't too clean when Edison used them, and we don't want to make them look unnatural."

In a vault on the grounds are twenty-five hundred notebooks and tons of uncatalogued correspondence. Edison's procedure was to make notes on whatever he wanted done, pass them along to an assistant, and then have them copied in a notebook for later reference. We saw some of them, written in pencil on slips of white paper. Although he wrote them when he was over eighty, the writing was firm and legible. "½ of ether mixed with acetic acid," one slip said, and we guess the assistant must have known what the old man was talking about. Five hundred and thirty of the notebooks have to do with Edison's research into the problem of domestic rubber production. During the last four years of his life, he supervised the testing of seventeen thousand plants for rubber content. About forty had commercial possibilities, and from these forty Edison singled out goldenrod, since it can be raised practically anywhere in the country, grows quickly, and can be mowed, which eliminates the necessity of hand picking. By selective breeding, he raised the rubber in goldenrod a hundred and forty per cent. Because the Department of Agriculture had trouble getting the necessary funds, his findings weren't tested on a large scale until the recent war was nearly over.

In the early days, Speiden told us, the grounds contained an apple orchard, a small pond, and a building known as the Black Maria, which was the first film studio built in this country. It was so named because its walls were covered with black tar paper, and it was designed in such a way that it could be revolved to catch the sun when its roof was opened, the making of movies being at the mercy of the weather until lights strong enough to substitute for the sun were developed. The Black Maria was built in 1892, at a cost of $637.67, but when M-G-M made a movie of the life of Edison in 1940 and constructed a replica of it, the bill came to two thousand dollars. Whether this was because of increased costs or because of an effort to make the reproduction look three times as real as the original, we don't know.

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INCIDENTAL INTELLIGENCE: There's a garage in Manhasset called Rudy's Valley Garage.

The Pentagon Bar, at 12 Vanderbilt Avenue, is hexagonal.

Consequence of Affection

PEOPLE interested in having their own or someone else's portrait painted are likely to show up at a flourishing, exceedingly genteel enterprise known as Portraits, Inc., which occupies a gallery at 460 Park Avenue so suavely furnished with fine old French pieces and so deftly baited with samples of the work of the artists for whom the gallery acts as agent as to induce in a prospective subject the conviction that the commissioning of a heroic three-quarter-length likeness is a most urgent matter. This hushed and handsome clearing house of art—the only one in the world devoted exclusively to portraits—is presided over by two soft-spoken, hard-working ladies named Lois Shaw and Helen Read, who accept commissions on behalf of a stable of more than sixty distinguished artists, among them John Carroll, Sidney Dickinson, Gerald Brockhurst, John Koch, Guy Pène du Bois, Eugene Speicher, Simka Simkhovitch, and Henriette Wyeth.

We visited the gallery ourself on a recent afternoon, tiptoeing about the dusky, gray-and-golden rooms under the good-humored guidance of Mrs. Read and inspecting the samples, which are either completed portraits not yet delivered to the people who commissioned them or portraits painted as samples for the gallery. Mrs. Read asked us if we knew the motto of the establishment, to which we ungallantly replied that we didn't. "It's by Dr. Johnson," she said. " 'Portrait painting is a reasonable and natural consequence of affection.' Don't you think that's appropriate?" Mrs. Read explained to us the principle upon which the gallery works. "People come in," she said, "and look over the fifty or so paintings we always have on display, or go through some of the hundreds of photographs of paintings we have in our files, until they find an artist whose style and price appeal to them. Prices go from a hundred dollars to ten thousand dollars, depending on the artist. We're always on the lookout for talented young American artists—we're not interested in pushing the careers of any but American artists—and we try to steer people away from the merely snobbish attraction of a name. But good portraitists are hard to find, because up until a few years ago portrait painting was looked down on as a corrupt branch of art, in which the artist was forced to do nothing but slick, flattering likenesses of his subjects, as Boldini did. People have learned not to expect that sort of prettiness nowadays, or, anyhow, less of it."

Mrs. Read told us that, contrary to the general opinion, men are more eager to have their portraits painted than women, although they invariably pretend that they're sitting only under protest. College presidents and children are about the most numerous subjects, with bankers and industrialists coming up fast, possibly as a natural consequence of the fact that the commissioning of a portrait of the chairman of the board for the directors' room is a deductible business expense. Yale commissioned six portraits through Portraits, Inc., in the last two years alone, the sitters being President Seymour, Dean Warren, Dean Meeks, Henry L. Stimson ("For Skull and Bones," Mrs. Read told us, in a frightened voice), the late Emerson Tuttle, and the late Frederick Vanderbilt. Large paintings have gone out of fashion, along with large houses. The current favorite size is twenty-five inches by thirty, or not enough space for Sargent

"Darling! The dam has burst!"

to have warmed up in. Most artists insist on the sitter's coming to the studio, but a number of the younger artists are prepared to go anywhere on an assignment. Some artists need only five or six sittings, some twenty. (Whistler took up to sixty.)

Portraits, Inc., was incorporated in 1942 and is already big business, arranging for the painting of several hundred portraits a year and getting as commission, in most cases, a third of the price. "One of the most important things about our gallery," Mrs. Read said, "is that if you don't like a portrait when it's done, you don't have to take it. The artist may ask to try again, or you may choose another artist. For the artists' own sake, we want to make sure their work isn't tucked away in attics or apologized for." Doubleday came to Portraits, Inc., for help on the dust jacket of "Lydia Bailey," the new Kenneth Roberts novel, in which a portrait of the heroine, supposedly by Stuart, figures importantly. Portraits, Inc., got an artist named Schwarz to paint a girl in the Stuart manner.

Comparison

OUR attention has been called to an entry in the diary of an eight-year-old miss who has been sojourning in a warmer clime: "The first thing we did this morning was go out in a glass-bottomed boat. We saw all kinds of fish and a shark about as long as Mother."

Specialist

ONE of the less well-known publishers of the city is Mr. August Howard, a man who divides his time between the Boy Scouts of America headquarters, at 2 Park Avenue, and his home, at Long Beach, and issues the *Polar Times*, a semi-annual journal. Howard has long been a staff worker at the Scouts' national offices, and it was there we found him last week and learned how an interest in Scouting led to a devotion to the polar regions. In 1927, Admiral Byrd, exuberant over having flown the Atlantic, wrote to the Boy Scouts of France that he would be willing to take a Scout along on the trip to Antarctica he planned for the following year. The French Scouts expressed hearty approval and that was that, so far as they were concerned. But the letter was printed in the American press and hundreds of American Scouts wrote in asking to accompany him. He delegated the choice to National Headquarters, which picked Paul Siple, a Sea Scout. Off Siple went to Little America, and off went Howard to his desk to do right by the relatives and friends of Siple, including the twenty-five members of his Sea Scout ship, by getting out for them a mimeographed monthly paper he called the *Metropolitan Pilot*, which consisted largely of reprints of newspaper articles telling of Siple's explorative adventures. By the time Howard had completed this self-assignment, he was a polar bug. In