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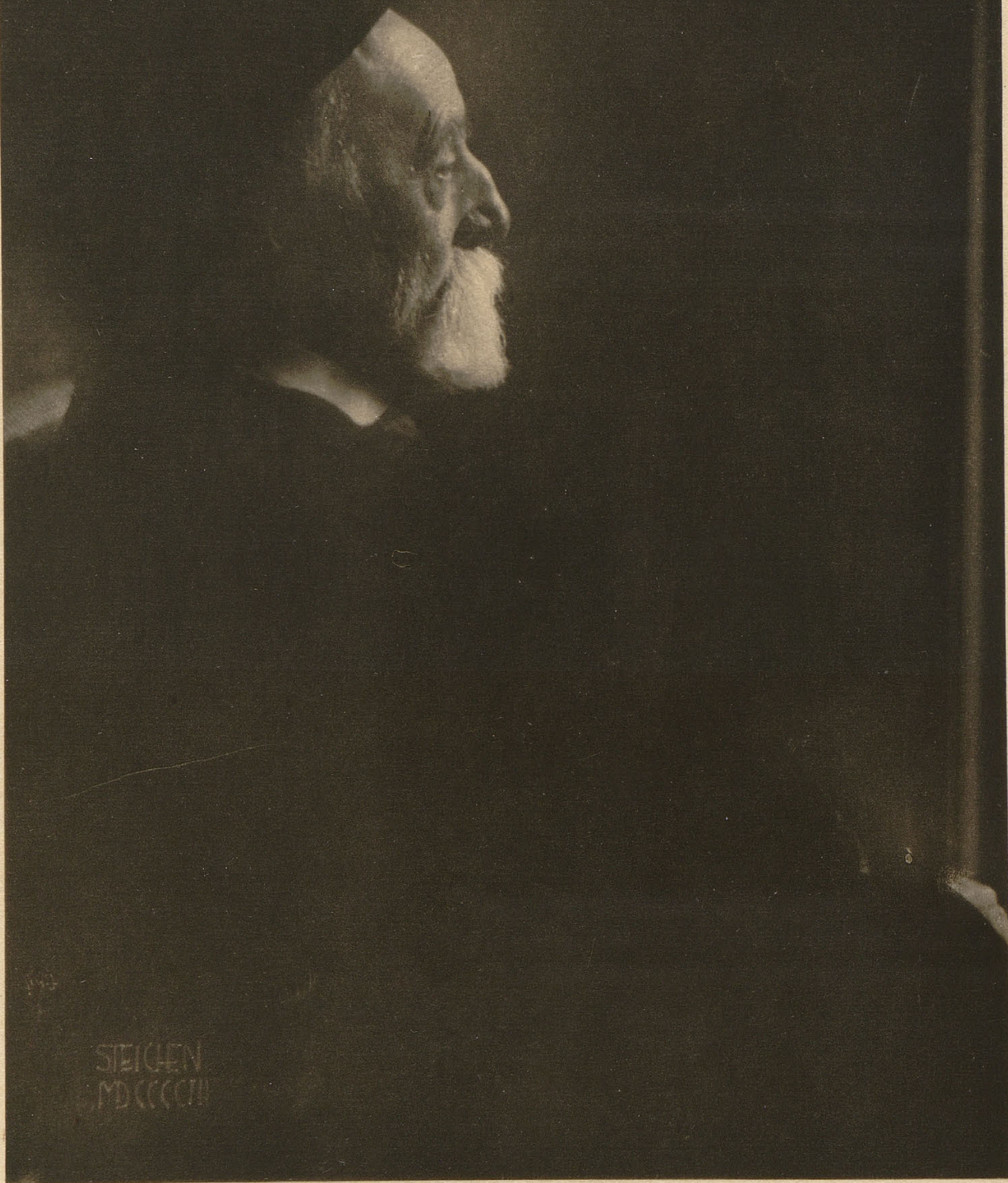


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EDUARD J. STEICHEN.

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GEORGE FREDRICK WATTS



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EDITORIAL.

ON November 25, 1905, was taken the most important step in the history of the Photo-Secession. In the evening of that day, without flourish of trumpets, without the stereotyped press-view or similar antiquated functions, the Secessionists and a few friends informally opened the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession at 291 Fifth Avenue, New York. The inaugural exhibition of one hundred prints consisted of work of the members, each member having been privileged to show one print, and of the eighty odd members, of whom about sixty are photographers, forty were represented. Statistics of this and the following exhibitions will be found elsewhere in our pages. It is but natural that varying impressions should have been made upon the visitors to the Little Galleries, and as it is not our intention ourselves to describe or review the Secession efforts, we can perhaps best aid such of our readers who have not been able to judge visually in forming some impression by reprinting three or four articles typifying the diverse points of view. The reprinted articles are chosen because they were written by men representing different beliefs as to the possibilities of photography and its proper place in the scheme of things.

That ancient conundrum, whether the medium of photography can serve to give expression to a temperament, has again naturally been propounded and the answers are as numerous as the photographers, whose name is legion, and as art-critics whose numbers are even greater. This makes opportune the reprinting, with consent of the author, of two articles by Bernard Shaw, himself the greatest of critics in that he has been known to criticise himself and that he still retains his sense of humor. Mr. Shaw, himself an enthusiastic photographer, has been a "Constant Reader" of *Camera Work*, and yet despite the quarterly sermons and constant examples set before him he looked through the proof sent him, corrected the errors of the press, but found nothing to modify or withdraw. One of the articles, he thinks, was addressed to a particular evil that was prevalent when it was first written and that it would be irrelevant (that is bad journalism) if it appeared in the absence of that evil, but finds himself forced to admit that there is not much danger of that. But what may one hope from a photographer who dares note upon a portrait of himself (taken by a prominent Secessionist): "This is my authentic portrait, G. Bernard Shaw"? Perhaps our reader finds himself in the same quandary as the maker of this portrait and vainly asks: What could G. B. S. have meant?

The articles reprinted in this number express views often so divergent that it seems a fitting opportunity for us once more to emphasize our policy, which consists in printing any point of view or any idea, whether we approve of it or not, provided such point of view or such idea appears to have behind it some solid gray matter of brain. It seems that some persons believed that the fact of our printing implied our tacit approval. Nothing is further from the truth. This should have been self-evident to any careful reader, but as some seem to have misunderstood we take this occasion to repeat our position.

THE UNMECHANICALNESS OF PHOTOGRAPHY.*

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LONDON PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITIONS.

BEFORE I resume the subject of the annual exhibitions of pictorial photography, let me, in mere humanity, beg my fellow-journalists of every degree not to continue the really desolating display of clever ignorance—the most trying sort of ignorance—which has raged ever since certain platitudes of mine last year were extensively quoted, requoted, and quoted yet again, as startling and outrageous paradoxes.

It happens that for the moment we have our minds sufficiently open and active on the subject of photography to be rather aggressively conscious of its limitations, whilst we are at the same time so reconciled by long usage to the very same limitations in painting that we have become unconscious of them. That is why we think nothing of citing a dozen of the most obvious drawbacks to easel-work and throwing them in the teeth of photography as if we had never met with them in any other pictorial method. But this is not the worst. Critics who have never taken a photograph elaborately explain why the camera can not do what every painter can do, the instance chosen being generally of something that the camera can do to perfection and the painter not at all. For example, one writer has taken quite pathetic pains to demonstrate the inferiority of the camera to the hand as an instrument of portraiture. The camera, he explains, can give you only one version of a sitter: the painter can give you a hundred. Here the gentleman hits on the strongest point in photography, and the weakest point in draughtsmanship, under the impression that he is doing just the reverse. It is the draughtsman that can give you only one version of a sitter. Velasquez, with all his skill, had only one Philip; Vandyke had only one Charles; Tenniel has only one Gladstone; Furniss only one Sir William Harcourt; and none of these are quite the real ones. The camera, with one sitter, will give you authentic portraits of at least six apparently different persons and characters. Even when the photographer aims at reproducing a favorite aspect of a favorite sitter, as all artist-photographers are apt to do, each photograph differs more subtly from the other than Velasquez's Philip in his prime differs from his Philip in his age. The painter sees nothing in the sitter but his opinion of him: the camera has no opinions: it has only a lens and a retina. One reply to this is obvious. It is that if I only knew how stupid a painter can be, I would admit that many painters have no opinions, no mind, nothing but an eye and a hand. Granted; but the camera has an eye without a hand; and that is how it beats even the stupidest painter. The hand of the painter is incurably mechanical: his technique is incurably artificial. Just as the historian has a handwriting which remains the same whether he is chronicling Elizabeth or Mary, so the painter has a hand-drawing which remains the same, no matter how widely his subjects vary. And it is because the camera is independent of this hand-drawing and this technique that a

*Reprinted from *The Amateur Photographer*, October 9, 1902.

photograph is so much less hampered by mechanical considerations, so much more responsive to the artist's feeling, than a design. It gives you a direct picture where the pencil gives you primarily a drawing. It evades the clumsy tyranny of the hand, and so eliminates that curious element of monstrosity which we call the style or mannerism of the painter, a monstrosity which, in some very eminent cases, amounts to quite revolting deformity. It also evades the connoisseurship in these deformities which is the stock-in-trade of many critics. The effect on them is as if the brains of a goose were removed. They lose their bearings completely, and flounder into the counter-sense that the camera is more mechanical than the painter's hand.

The true relation of the two can be seen by adding a third term to the comparison. There are things still more mechanical than the draughtsman's hand: to wit, the rule and compass. The medieval masons found out that if they drew their decorative patterns with rule and compass they got regularity without life, interest, or beauty. So they made their patterns free-hand; and the result was enchanting. But when a modern builder gets his brother-in-law the Mayor, to humbug the Dean into a panic about "the dangerous condition of the west front," and so puts up a lucrative "restoration" job for himself, and a knighthood for the brother-in-law, at the expense of subscribers whose knowledge of art is represented by the delusion that photographs are mechanical, he tries to imitate the old work by rule and compass, and produces work which is no more enchanting than the figures in Euclid. Now if it could be proved against the camera that its lines were ruled and its curves struck with a compass, there would be some sense in the parrot-cries of mechanicalness. The truth is that it is as much less mechanical than the hand as the hand is less mechanical than the compass. The hand, striking a curve with its fingers from the pivot of the wrist or shoulder, is still a compass, differing from the brass one only in the number of movements of which it is capable. Not even when it is the hand of a Memling can it strike a curve quite such as flesh or flower reaches by its growth; and the student of pictures who has never felt this incompatibility between the inevitable laws of the motion of a set of levers and the perfectly truthful representation of the forms produced by growth will never be a critic of photography: his eye may be good enough to compare one picture with another, but not good enough to make a lens for a five-shilling camera.

Easily accessible illustrations of this incompatibility may be found in the Punch drawings of Linley Sambourne. Whoever compares Sambourne's drawing of mechanical objects, such as jack-planes, yachts, saddles, guns, and the like, with his drawing of flesh contours, will see instantly that the mechanism of a hand that can follow the stroke of a tool almost to perfection can not follow the swell of a muscle or the dip of a dimple at all, however cleverly it may suggest them. The same thing may be seen in the drawings of Dürer, who, ingeniously as he could suggest a head, could not draw it as he drew a helmet; but I prefer to cite Linley Sambourne, because, thanks to photography, we now have his drawings virtually at first hand, without the intervention of the wood-cutter. It is the sense of this difficulty that has

given rise among artists to the saying "There is no outline in nature"; and you find Michael Angelo, in his finished drawings (as distinguished from his sketches and memoranda), discarding outline and presenting us with a mess of blacklead, out of which the figure rises as if modeled. Raphael, who, for so bad a painter, drew in black and white with masterly feeling, liked to coax his forms out of a very soft outline, just as John Leech did on a very different plane. All the delicate draughtsmen—Coreggio, Greuze, Velasquez, Rembrandt (one can pick up instances at random)—felt and shrank from the mechanical stroke of the hand. Dürer and Walter Crane, on the other hand, have turned the fault into a quality by making their lines delightfully decorative, and taking advantage of the rich effects of color and surface which great painters, as well as great decorative draughtsmen, can produce with simple ink and paper. Thus Crane can snap his fingers at photography because the camera cannot design nor decorate. It is so utterly unmechanical that it cannot arrange its lines, being indeed unable to draw a line at all. In representation, however, this unmechanicalness becomes a power instead of a disability. It is the secret of the mysterious something that every photograph has, and every design lacks. The equally mysterious something that every design has and every photograph lacks is simply the mechanical mannerism of the lever and the stroke. That lack is a supreme charm in the representation of life and growth. What, then, are we to say to the wiseacres who tell us that all photographs are necessarily mechanical, and all designs purely "artistic"? There is as much difference between such criticism and that which always keeps the real world in one eye, and the studio world in the other, as there is between, say, the drawing of Flaxman, with his factitious sense of "the antique," and the drawing of Segantini.

It will be seen that the penalty of talking conventional nonsense about the camera is that its disparagers not only muff the case they bring forward, but miss the case they might bring forward if they had sufficient judgment to measure the enormous artistic importance of the new process. Their attempt to pass off their ignorance as superiority by a display of inconsiderate insolence was not necessary: it was only easy and lazy. There is plenty to be said against any pretension of the camera to supersede the designer altogether. The camera cannot decorate; it cannot dramatize; it cannot allegorize. Just as it cannot do the work of Dürer or Crane, any more than it can design wall-papers, so it cannot do the work of Raphael, or Kaulbach, or Hogarth. Of course you can twist boughs or festoon ribbons and arrange flowers decoratively, and then photograph them. You can pose actors in costume and photograph them. But a born decorative draughtsman like Crane will make you a good design in the fiftieth part of the time a bad photographic makeshift will cost; and as to anecdotic, dramatic, didactic, and historical tableaux vivants, you have only to glance at the attempts in the exhibitions at giving dramatic titles to sentimental-looking portraits to see that the camera's power of representation is so intense that the photographer who attempts little fictions of this kind is at

once found out and scorned for playing the fool. This is why I selected Velasquez instead of Dürer or Raphael last year as an instance of a painter whose drawing the camera could beat. The passage in which I did so has been reproduced again and again in almost every paper in the country, and in many out of it, with every conceivable stupidity of comment.* Most of the commentators, instead of honestly buying *The Amateur Photographer*† and reading the article they were criticizing, took the newspaper quotation as their text and went to the greatest pains to show what an efficient booby-trap I had unintentionally constructed. Velasquez was a terrible stumbling-block. If I had said Raphael, they would not have minded so much; for they all know now (having been carefully told so) that Velasquez was beyond comparison a greater painter than Raphael. But if I had said Raphael I should have been quite wrong. Velasquez could have drawn Philip better with a telephoto-lens than with his brush (he would have thrown a portrait-lens at the head of the optician); but Raphael could not have produced the *School of Athens* or the *Hampton Court* cartoons with a camera, nor would he have dared to draw the halo of the Blessed Virgin round a head photographed from a real woman.‡ Compared with Velasquez, Raphael was a mere story-teller, whose draughtsmanship and coloring must have filled the Spaniard with contemptuous amazement. One can conceive Velasquez saying, "What this man expressed in these daubs of his must have some universal popularity, or he could not have gained his reputation; but an artist, in my sense, he certainly was not." And it is just as an artist in that sense, meaning the man with the power of representing life with subtle truth, that Velasquez with a camera could, except in color, or in historical *Breda Surrenders* and so forth, have gone further than Velasquez with a brush. I chose my painter and my words warily; yet I grieve to say that only one writer (it was in a northern paper) knew his business well enough to begin his remonstrance with the words, "Of course all this is true; but, etc., etc." The others appeared to have no idea that there is any distinction between what Hogarth did and what Monticelli did. Probably they have no idea that there is any distinction between the man who photographs a sewing-machine for a half-tone advertisement-block, and Mr. Cochrane, or Mr. Evans. To them, pictures are pictures, and photographs are photographs; and a picture is Art and a photograph isn't, and there's an end. The truth is that neither a photograph nor a painting is necessarily "artistic"; nor does anybody who knows the A B C of criticism suppose that Fine Art refers to the processes by which works of Fine Art are produced, instead of to certain qualities of the product.

The attitude of the photographers themselves is not encouraging to their supporters. Far from claiming their rights, they are shy of accepting them when they are conceded. One or two have explained that my article

*In the latter outbursts a "sic" appears after the technical term "rocking," showing that the quoter is ignorant not only of photography but of mezzotint.

† Reprinted on page 57 of this issue.

‡ By the way, Mrs. Barton has done this at both the Dudley and New Galleries; but Mrs. Barton has the advantage of Raphael by not being subject to the first fury of that outburst of demand for transcendent unrealities called the Renaissance.

last year was a joke! They believe that my object in the twenty years' work I have done as a critic has been to gain a reputation to fool away for their amusement. Happy egotists! As to the leading photographic journal, which insists so irritably that "every intelligent photographer has long since satisfied himself that it is absurd to claim for any kind of photography whatsoever the distinction of being a fine art," I can imagine an honest white-washer, hearing rumors of the Arts and Crafts revival, and terrified at the prospect of being dragged out of his depth by demands for "tone" in areas and passages, proclaiming that "every painter in the trade knows that it is absurd to claim for any kind of brush-work whatever the distinction of being a fine art." Still, without pretending to take such petulances seriously, I cannot look round the exhibitions without sympathizing with the veterans who indulge in them. For there is something more in them than the protest of the chemist and optician against the intrusion of the follies of the studio into his laboratory. The fact is that photography is being taken up by painters and draughtsmen; and they are importing into the dark-room the imperfections and corruptions of the methods which have come down to us from the stone age. These old methods are such arrant makeshifts that artists have always been forced to make a merit of each makeshift by cultivating the utmost virtuosity in its employment. This virtuosity in the artist calls for its corresponding connoisseurship in the critic; and the result is that fine art becomes a game of skill in which the original object of the skill is constantly being lost sight of; so that the genuinely original men who recall this object by periodical "returns to nature" are vehemently abused and ridiculed, not because their works are not like nature, but because they are not like pictures.

Hence, if you take an artist out of the Parisian ateliers, and give him a camera to work with, what happens? He immediately sets to work to produce, not photographs, but the sophisticated works of art which formerly attracted him to the painter's profession. His very first blunder in exposure, especially underexposure, may result in a negative which a skilled tradesman would instantly scrub off the glass. The artist-novice makes a print from it, and finds that he has got something like what he calls an impression. Trained as he is to make merits of makeshifts in the atelier, he is not slow to make a merit of a mistake in the dark-room. He very soon finds out that though his proceedings involve a great deal of what a London shopkeeper described to me the other day as the backbone of his photographic trade: namely, waste of materials by amateurs, yet an encouraging proportion of his plates, especially those which, if turned out by a skilled member of the trade, would lead to instant and precipitous loss of employment, give prints which have many of the qualities of those early makeshifts of Impressionism in which tone was achieved by a frank sacrifice of local color and local drawing. If he is really an artist, the blunders he selects for exhibition will be more interesting than the unselected technical successes of the photographer who is not an artist. He soon learns how to produce these happy blunders intentionally, at which point, of course, they cease to be blunders and become crimes.

Finally, he discovers that the camera can imitate the most flagrant makeshifts of the draughtsman, and in so doing get all the advantage of that curiosity which mere processes rouse: the same curiosity that makes people with no ear for music crowd eagerly round a pianoforte to *see* Paderewski play. When a photographer prints from his negative through a hatching, and so makes the resultant picture look like an engraving or etching of some kind, his work immediately becomes what bric-à-brac dealers call a curio; and as a photograph had better be curious than merely null, the trick is not so unmeaning as it seems. Then there are the pigment processes, in which the most amusing games can be played with a kettle of hot water. The photographer gains control of his process, and can, if he likes, become a forger of painter's work.

When the photographer takes to forgery, the Press encourages him. The critics, being professional connoisseurs of the shiftiest of the old makeshifts, come to the galleries where the forgeries are exhibited. They find, to their relief, that here, instead of a new business for them to learn, is a row of monochromes which their old jargon fits like a glove. Forthwith they proclaim that photography has become an art; and all the old phrases that were composed when Mr. Whistler was President of the British Artists, and the New English Art Club was perceptibly newer than the New River Water Company, are scissored out of the old articles and pasted into the new ones, with substituted names, as Steichen for Whistler, Käsebier for Wilson Steer, Demachy for Degas or Sickert, and any lucky underexposer for Peppercorn or Muhrman.

Now this is all very well; but who would not rather produce a silver print which could be fitted to an old description of a picture by Van Eyck or Memling, or a platinotype portrait that would rival a good impression of a mezzotint by Raphael Smith, than imitate with gum or pigment plasters the object lessons of the anti-academic propaganda of twenty years ago? I grant that some propaganda is still needed; that the old guard of photography used to tolerate, and even reward by medals, such monstrous faking as no gummist has yet been guilty of; that the plucky negative with microscopic definition, plenty of detail in the shadows (and everywhere else), and a range from complete opacity to clear glass was made just as much an end in itself as the simulation of the makeshifts of painting and draughtsmanship now threatens to become; and that Philistinism was as rampant in the Royal Photographic Society as in the Royal Academy. But none of the Impressionists was so wanting in respect for his art as to pretend that the pictures in which he preached tone and atmosphere, or open-air light, were not paintings but photographs. Besides, he aimed at representing these things as he saw them, sometimes with very defective sight, it is true, but still honestly at first hand. Now some of our photographers who have been corrupted by beginning as draughtsmen and painters *are* wanting in self-respect; for they openly try to make their photographs simulate drawings, and even engravings; and they aim, not at representing nature to the utmost of the camera's power, but at reproducing the Impressionists' version of

nature, with all the characteristic shortcomings and drawbacks of the makeshift methods of Impressionism. This modeling of new works of art on old ones, instead of on nature and the artist's own feeling, is no novelty: it is Academicism pure and simple. Mr. Whistler was not academic; but the photographer who aims at producing a Whistleresque print is as academic as Nicolas Poussin. Every original artist draws into his wake a shoal of academics of his "school," who imitate his infirmities and observe the limitations and conventions imposed on him against his will by the imperfections of his methods and faculty, just as bigotedly as they strive after as much as they understand of his excellencies. Thus in orchestral music we have the barks and stutterings of the defective trumpets written for by Beethoven, still imitated by learned professors, although modern instruments have a complete scale which makes the stuttering as unnecessary as it is absurd. Haydon, who wanted above all things to be an "old master," painted flesh a dirty yellow, because candle-soot had reduced the altar-pieces of his idols to that complexion. Let nobody suppose, therefore, that the critics who stood for Sargent against Bouguereau, for Monet against Vicat Cole, nearly twenty years ago, are now going to stand for the photographers who imitate Sargent and Monet against the original photographers. Much of the most daring and sincere work of the Impressionists and Naturalists dealt with most elusive and difficult subjects, and had to be painted with grotesquely inadequate colors; so that the desired effect was often suggested only by letting everything else go by the board, and demanding allowances from the spectator which the ordinary hooligan of the shilling-turnstile refused, with loud horse-laughter, to make. Even spectators who were by no means hooligan, including John Ruskin himself, lost their tempers under the strain at first. But they soon saw the point of the movement and made the allowances cheerfully, and even enthusiastically.

And now, may I ask, what right has photography to these allowances? None whatever, it seems to me. The difficulties which justified the Impressionist in asking for them do not exist for the camera. The photographer has his own difficulties and receives his own allowances for them; and the minimization of these is quite enough to keep him busy. If he deliberately sets to work to make his photograph imitate the shortcomings and forge the technique of the Impressionists, he must not be surprised if he finds that those who were most tolerant of both when they were the inevitable price of originality will be the most resolute not to stand them for a moment when they are a gratuitous academic affectation.

I prefer not to connect these painful observations with the names of any of the exhibitors of the Dudley and New Galleries. In their fullest force they do not fairly apply to any individual artist; but they are reasonable for all that. Nobody can look round the Salon without seeing that the remarkable and sometimes exquisite technique for which the French and American exhibitors are specially honored is not always an original photographic technique; and nobody who remembers the first Grosvenor Gallery exhibitions and their offshoots (to go no further afield than St. James's

parish) can possibly mistake these enthusiasts for anything but Academicians. The Academic enthusiasm is a wonderful and beautiful thing when it is young; but it leads to a dull, decrepit age. When Benjamin West first saw the Apollo Belvedere, he felt unutterable things; but if he had foreseen the curse that now superseded statue was to bring on later generations of Academy students he would have smashed it then and there. And a Whistler nocturne may in course of time become a greater academic nuisance than ten Apollo Belvederes.

And now enough of sermonizing. Let us have a look at the actual photographs. . . .

G. BERNARD SHAW.

OF VERITIES AND ILLUSIONS.

III. SELF-EXPRESSION.

IT is accepted, nowadays, almost as an article of faith, that the artist should express himself in his work. Perhaps it is the natural rebound of that idea of realism which regarded the artist as an eye gifted with a superior breadth and penetration of vision, and attached to a mechanism capable of precise record. It is, certainly, like this realism which it has supplanted, symptomatic of an age that is not satisfied to do things, but must have a theory of conduct and motive to justify the doing; that, in a word, is self-conscious. And the age in question has lasted already some hundred years and over, dating from Rousseau and his "social contract," and the "glittering generalities" of Tom Paine, extending through a succession of word-congested theories even unto the organized systems of our own day, when persons have found it "helpful" to band themselves into an association for the promotion of taking walking exercise! Before the nineteenth century, men had organized themselves into guilds, or what-not, for mutual advancement, generally for protection of their business interests; but until the past hundred years has there ever been a period so beridden with theories, formulas, and axioms, so absolutely at the mercy of the word-mongers, whether they were philosophers or quacks? The result is a jumble of honesty and quackery, of truth and flummery, of verities and illusions, well-nigh overwhelming. And out of the hurly-burly bobs up this bit of driftwood—self-expression—and men cling to it as to a spar of safety.

Let us try and look at it for what it is really worth. There must be good in it, or men would not be drawn to live and work by it. But how much good, and whether any deception?

It is unquestionable that the artist, being not a machine but a conscious agent, must put into his work some portion of himself, some flavor and coloring of his own idiosyncrasy. But the considerations which arise are: firstly, is this product of himself a conscious *motive*; and, secondly, what is its quality?

More than that of most artists was Shakespeare's genius objective. Into his sonnets he may have consciously poured of his own soul; but the very conditions under which his plays were written and produced preclude

the idea of conscious personal expression. We think of him as having a mind inexhaustible in its faculty of reflecting the life that came into his purview, whether from the writings of others or from his own individual observations, a channel into which all kinds of waters from all manner of sources flowed, that directed their course and by its variety of windings and of levels determined the impetus and character of the stream. We imagine him a man strenuously engaged in doing things; too busy to have theories; too constantly under a time-pressure to have leisure even for formulas of dramatic construction—a spontaneous craftsman. It is, perhaps, the chief marvel of his vigorous, wholesome genius; the foremost product of an age of strenuous doing. Moreover, it is probable that if a genius of the caliber of Shakespeare's could arise in our age such complete objectivity would be impossible to it. Even had it the gift from nature, it would grow conscious of it.

Some such gift is Monet's, but the world got on to it and told him he was an "eye," and compelled him to be conscious of it. It has become with him a motive, and by so much a gift of poorer quality. For the more that self-consciousness enters into a man's work—it is a special disease of writers, and permit one of that kidney to confess the fact—the less is he master of himself, the less unimpaired is the clarity of his mental vision.

But, admitting what I believe to be incontrovertible, that in the age we live in escape from some degree of self-consciousness is impossible, Monet's vision is as near to the purely objective as we are like to find. What, then, is the nature of it? Behind the eye is, of course, a mind; but are we to suppose that the latter is as free from emotions as a mirror? On the contrary, he yields to none in his enthusiasm for nature or in his joy of representing it. But the point is that nature is the sole source of his enthusiasm and his inspiration, and it is here that he differs from those painters, subjectively obsessed, who find in nature a reflex of their own moods and use her to interpret themselves. Monet loves nature as a man may love a woman—because she is supremely good and for her own goodness worshipful. Of another kind may be a man's love, discovering its worthiness in the gratification to himself; and it is love of this kind, really a love of SELF, that characterizes the subjective landscape-painter. Such a love is so human, so correspondent to the principles of egoism upon which modern society is built that we are bound to treat it with respect. Yet it is open to this criticism, that the measure of its worth is neither more nor less than the composite qualities of the ego. And in the artistic ego, as well as in any other, these qualities are chiefly distinguished by limitations; the possession of a little something at the expense of being without a great deal more.

But that is not the average artist's estimate of his peculiar, individual ego. He proudly fancies himself the chosen recipient of a great gift, when, as often as not, he is merely the victim of a hyper-esthetical condition of the nerves that tends to atrophy of mind. He is not like the active sons of man employed in doing things, but sits alone by himself *feeling* things, coddling his sensations, pampering his own disease which he calls by the specious name of temperament.

Modern art is temperamental. Men pass the word around as if it were a cause for congratulation instead of a confession of weakness. For, pray you, what does it mean? In a dictionary sense, that art is expressive of the particular bias of the individual artist. Of course, it cannot fail to be, so this definition does not advance our knowledge. As a matter of fact, we know that in actual experience temperamental means that the source as well as the direction of most modern art is determined by the condition of the artist's feelings. His mood may be morose to-day and gay to-morrow, and he will look out of the windows of his eyes to see if nature glooms or dances to his mood. But it is a world that he looks out on, itself but one of myriad worlds, yet to him the universe is within his pigmy self. Instead of building his art upon eternal breadth he rears a tiny pyramid upside down upon his own atom of matter, and it wobbles to its fall like the feather balanced on the nose of a circus-clown.

Perhaps he is doing his best, so don't shoot him; using what he has—his feelings—and guiltless of what he has not—a mind. His case is rather one for pity; he is the victim of disease, and a future age will recognize the fact, as our own has done in the case of the dipsomaniac. Rum-sodden or sodden with feelings—the charitable philosophy of the future will try to help them, allowing them, perhaps, a comfortable income from the State as long as they abstain from intoxication, or, at least, from the exhibition of it in paint.

For just as a speaker, or, for that matter, a writer, too, may be "intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity," so is the temperamental painter for the most part intoxicated with the exuberance of his own feelings; they master him and, instead of merely coloring his work, become not only the stimulus but the source also of his endeavors. His motive, his expression, and his very existence as an artist are determined by the condition of his liver. It is symptomatic of an age much addicted to the public discussion of the stomach that its art should be largely an exploitation of nervous moodiness.

Considered philosophically, however, it is the last phase of a condition of art that already shows signs of being moribund. Painters having exhausted every possibility of new growth in the direction of representing external appearances, are now absorbed in the analysis of their own feelings; it is a condition that in human pathology points to insanity and death. To the patient thus afflicted the physician will prescribe that he try to get out of himself, and in order to do so that he widen his interests. Only a similar course can set modern painting upon a road to recovery. Already those men who, like Winslow Homer, are doing something of real moment, have done so because they either have not been afflicted with the disease of self-expression or have shaken themselves free of it.

They have found their inspiration in the vastness outside their puny selves; nature has not been to them a mirror for their own sensations, but an infinite mystery; they have passed from absorption in the concrete to some companionship with the Universal and the Abstract.

CHARLES H. CAFFIN.

PLATES

EDUARD J. STEICHEN.

VII. The Brass Bowl.

VIII. The Flatiron—Evening.





THE PHOTO-SECESSION GALLERIES AND THE PRESS.

MR. CHARLES FITZGERALD, that keen and witty art-critic of the *New York Evening Sun*, wrote as follows in the issue of December second and December ninth, 1905, under the heading, The Pictorial Photographers:

I

The fourfold purpose of the Photo-Secession, as set forth in the prospectus, is: "To hold together those Americans devoted to pictorial photography; to uphold and strengthen the position of pictorial photography; to exhibit the best that has been accomplished by its members or other photographers, and, above all, to dignify that profession until recently looked upon as a trade."

In 1902 the members of this body, including most of the ablest exponents of pictorial photography in America, held their first exhibition at the National Arts Club. It was shortly after the publication of Mr. Caffin's elaborate work on "Photography as a Fine Art" (Doubleday, Page & Co.), a work which had been criticised at some length in these columns; and the occasion seemed convenient for a fuller examination of Mr. Caffin's claims on behalf of the photographers, the more so since several of the examples shown were precisely those chosen by him in illustration of his arguments. Now, Mr. Caffin is one of the most uncompromising enthusiasts of the camera, and can discover no real distinction between the photographer and painter, except that the former employs a "dark-box with a lens in front of it," whereas the latter prefers "a brush or knife or his own thumb." In short, according to his argument, "the most important difference between the painter and the photographer is in their respective tools." There are other differences, however; and to some of us the substitution of a sensitized film for a brain seems, in the absence of a psychologic lens, to separate the photographer from the painter by a wider gulf than Mr. Caffin allows in his plausible statement. The exhibition of the Photo-Secession was used, therefore, in illustration of this, the fundamental distinction between the two; but no attempt was made to prove that photography and art are incompatible; on the contrary, it was explicitly pointed out how "the photographer may show himself an artist whenever he selects, whether in taking a photograph or in developing or printing it."

It is a little discouraging, under these circumstances, to find oneself described in *Camera Work*, by the director of the Photo-Secession, as a critic who "has in the past strenuously denied the claims of photography as a possible means of art-expression." Why, it is not only a possibility, but a certainty, beyond all controversy. The exhibition at present open at No. 291 Fifth Avenue is simply reeking with "art" down to the very catalogue with its eccentric lettering, its pretty little gold seal, and its ragged edges. There is surely nothing wanting in the way of refinements; if there is a question, it is whether all these excrescences are traceable to a foundation as solid as the photographers would have us believe. They suggest, not the struggles of exploration, but the easy satisfaction of established convention, not to say the refinement of decay.

It is one of the chief arguments of the photographers that their art is still in its infancy; that they are but pioneers feeling their way and striving for expression in a medium which has barely begun to reveal its vast possibilities. Yet, with all their modesty, they are exceedingly jealous of their claims, make a great mystery of their calling, and throw the words *Master* and *Masterpiece* at each other with a prodigality that would astonish most painters. It is amazing to find Miss Alice Boughton, one of the ablest of them, speaking as she does in the December issue of the *Scrip* of "Photography, a Medium of Expression." For a sound and sober review of the pictorial photographer's aims this is almost unparalleled in the current literature of the subject, and it makes a welcome and pleasant contrast to the wild hysterics to which the professionals have accustomed us.

In a future article Miss Boughton's exposition of the photographer's ideal will be considered in its relation to the work of the Photo-Secession.

The bugbear of the photographer with any art instinct is the undue importance which non-essentials assume in a photographic plate.—ALICE BOUGHTON, in the Scrip.

Suppose the camera to be a perfect instrument; suppose it possible by means of it to represent the appearance of things in common terms, so that in every man a photographic print would evoke exactly the same feelings as the subject represented; it is obvious that, besides being limited in various ways by natural conditions, its undoctored products would, at best, be equivalent only to the first step in the painter's art.

Recognizing its limitations, the earliest pictorial photographers afflicted with artistic aspirations were content to mimic their betters by such simple devices as dressing up a young woman in classical raiment, posing her in a wood, and labeling the result "In Arcady." Presently they perceived that this would not do, that the essential difference between a photograph and a picture was evidently less simple than they had supposed; and so they fell to aping the mannerisms and peculiarities of particular painters; one adopting costumes affected by Burne-Jones, another procuring long-necked models of a Rossetti type, a third contriving strong contrasts of light and shade in imitation of Rembrandt, a fourth parodying the twilight of Whistler's nocturnes, and so forth. Some went a step further, and tried to heighten the picture-illusion by printing their photographs on canvas or some surface resembling it in texture.

A few, however, more conscientious or more discerning than the rest, deprecated these fopperies, knowing full well that nothing worthy of the name of art was to be compassed by such dishonest methods. And as they saw in the camera a ready means of literal reproduction, partially controllable in expert hands, so the problem they undertook to solve was, how to reduce it to the service of their tastes by correcting its bald and indiscreet statements of fact, and providing by emphasis and suppression for those allowances made instinctively by every reasoning being in the presence of visible things. In a word, they resolved to assert their freedom and, instead of imitating the parasitic practices of the older pictorialists, to achieve effects approximating as nicely as the medium would allow to their particular impressions of the world.

The exhibitors at 291 Fifth Avenue manifestly stand for pictorial photography in this sense, and it is curious to remark the various means by which they endeavor to supply or conceal the deficiencies of their instrument and to deal with the bugbear indicated in the text at the head of this article. At first thought it might be supposed that the difficulties of the advanced photographer, the manipulator of negatives and skilful eliminator of superfluities, would be least of all evident at the outset, namely in the choice of subjects. But a little reflection will make it clear that the pictorialist is necessarily obliged to anticipate the restrictions of his procedure from the first, and will further show why it is that these restrictions are so frequently betrayed in the subject. Conscious of the cold impartiality of the lens, and the very limited measure of his control over its workings, the discreet photographer is willing enough to depend on the general and obvious interest of the thing presented, and so it will be seen that many of the subjects here are what may be called eccentric; subjects curious or remarkable in themselves, apart from any particular act of the photographers.

Consider the portraits. In this kind of work photography is very apt to be dull, unless the model happens to be extraordinary or is made to appear so by violence of treatment. An example of the former condition is to be found in one of Mr. Steichen's contributions. When this print was exhibited in London, the correspondent of *Camera Work* described it, in the extravagant language common among critics of photography, as "simply magnificent." But really in this case the simple magnificence (if that is the proper word) is due much less to Mr. Steichen than to the picturesque poser represented. When the photographers have to deal with a sitter not obviously amusing or *outré* in appearance, they are constrained to fall back on various devices which are, to say the least, meretricious. In this way they will convert a perfectly decent, common, undistinguished figure into a hero or demigod of tragic or mystic mien, either by the skilful arrangement of light and shadow or by the various refinements they have invented for the annihilation of character.

Of course, the same process is common enough among portrait-painters, only in painting it is not usual to hail the result as a masterpiece, unless, indeed, on the part of the sitter. The photographers, however, seem to be well satisfied if they succeed in making what they call a picture and are

mightily offended and think you very uncultured if you happen to find more amusement in the accidental surprises of a casual "snap-shot" than in their carefully calculated results. Yet the truth is that the thoughtless and unpremeditated experiments of the unprofessional and unartistic wielder of the camera do occasionally result in a partial revelation of character—an absurd yet authentic perpetuation of some insignificant phase of expression. And ridiculous or monstrous as such results are apt to be in normal eyes, used to sorting things and judging them always in their relations to other things, yet this much may be said for such fragmentary discoveries, that to a limited degree they simulate the process of art inasmuch as their effect is derived from within, though, of course, in a purely fortuitous way; whereas, in the work of the pictorial photographers, the interest is generally quite extrinsic and imported, being a mere wrapper that bears no more relation to the subject than does the ornamental signature in the corner.

Now, excellent precedent may be found for this detached sort of art in the tradition of painting, and if the positive results secured by the photographers were in any measure comparable to the sacrifice the specific distortion might well be condoned. But the poor little art-disguise is perfectly transparent, and even when we turn from portraiture, where the requirements are in a sense peculiarly rigid, to the larger fields of pictorial enterprise invaded by the photographer, we find him still at odds with his subject and perpetually tormented by the same difficulty of effecting a satisfactory compromise with the camera. Having complete liberty in the selection of material, he is continually chastened by the obstinate character of the engine in his hands, its awkward habit of reporting the significant and the impertinent with equal indifference. Thus even the ablest practitioners find the difficulty of insuring interest or establishing anything like a tolerable unity of effect so great that, when they have done what they can in a preliminary way by choosing odd subjects, they are frequently compelled to correct the record to such an extent that in the event it is either half-transformed into a drawing or reduced to a vague shadow that throws all the responsibility of interpretation upon the beholder. It is to this point that persons of exacting taste, like Miss Boughton, are compelled to retreat when the bugbear proves quite untamable, as it happens very often, even though all sorts of bribes are thrown out in the form of strange themes.

The truth is that photography will always be a very imperfect substitute for drawing, or rather no substitute at all. To the designer of power it can never be more than a help, to be used with great caution; for others it may serve as a harmless amusement; but it is ridiculous to imagine that it can ever take the place of invention or supply natural deficiencies and the lack of training in those who play with it. This may seem a superfluous observation, but you would not say so if you had read *Camera Work* with any attention for the last year or so. There is no limit to the extravagant claims made by photographers whose heads have been turned by a few successes. One of them assured us recently that his "art" was "not a fashion of a moment," but a "permanent fashion which is to replace the Greek"; that among other useful lessons it had taught us that Greek art was out of date, that Greek composition was "stereotyped in the extreme" and had "lost its hold on almost all healthy art," and much more to the same effect. The vanity of these people is unbelievable. The fopperies displayed in their work, their eccentric frames, the whimsical flourishes in which they habitually indulge, and their incurable gravity—all these are but symptomatic of their essential frivolity. Not that all of the exhibitors come under this condemnation. There are some earnest workers here, but it is not to them that this discourse is addressed, but only to those who are disposed to believe, because the world agrees that their art is an abortion that they themselves are great artists born before their time.

Roland Rood, painter, scientist, and critic, wrote as follows in the January issue of the *American Amateur Photographer*:

On November 25 there transpired in the amateur photographic world an event few as yet have heard of, an event still fewer understand, but an event of such paramount importance that its effects will in time be felt from one end of the country to the other. It was on this date that the Photo-Secession opened their "Little Galleries" at New York. The following modest prospectus sent to a few lovers of the photographic art is the only announcement that heralded the event:

"The 'Little Galleries' of the Photo-Secession, No. 291 Fifth Avenue, New York City, will be opened on November 25, with a member's exhibition, consisting of pictures shown at the

Lewis and Clark Exposition, at this year's London Salon, and of other work. Running through December, this exhibition will be followed by exhibitions devoted to Viennese, French, and British photographs, and by other exhibitions of modern art not necessarily photographic. These exhibitions will be open to the public on presentation of visiting-card on week-days, between 10 and 12 a.m., and 2 and 6 p.m.

The conception of the galleries is an extension of that of Camera Work and the Photo-Secession generally, "a protest against the conventional conception of pictorial photography"; and in these little rooms one can see an epitome of the life-work of Alfred Stieglitz and his collaborators. The immediate idea is to reach a larger public and present to them the very best that has been done in photography. But the Secession is esoteric if it is anything, and altogether apart from advertising to obtain this larger public, it seems almost to have made an effort to avoid it. Aside from the few prospectuses already referred to, and a small and almost unnoticeable sign on the street of No. 291 Fifth Avenue, there has been, and will be, made no endeavor to attract. Those who love and understand and have the art-nose will find their way; those who do not recognize art when they see her, although they may come and look if they like, are not appealed to.

A further object of the "Little Galleries" is the bringing out of new talent, of hitherto unknown or ignored men; and not merely is it intended to give young talented photographers an opportunity to show what they can do, but painters and sculptors, as well as others, will have an opportunity, the only requirement being that their art is art in the true sense of the word. The nature and arrangement of the exhibitions will be decided upon by the whole council of the Photo-Secession, neither one taking more part in its decisions than any other.

In its intention I know none like it in this country. It reminds me much of that of a certain Frenchman (I am sorry that I can not remember his name this moment) who, recognizing what great difficulties, and, in cases, almost insurmountable obstacles, were put in the way of young painters by the wire-pulling and political methods of the Paris Salon, decided to give these young men all the help they required to make themselves known. With this object in view he engaged two or three small rooms in the Rue Druot in Paris—they were still there a few years ago—and in them it was that Monet and Manet, and others made their debut.

There probably exists no country of importance in which such work is more necessary than in our land. We are, *par excellence*, a race of big and little shopkeepers; our ideal is the utilitarian, the commonplace our standard, and the conventional our goal. So I feel, and strongly, that any fight against this bourgeoisie is the fight of all fights to be fought; and those who lead it should be encouraged and helped in every possible way; they should be welcomed as champions come to the rescue. But such a fight as the "Little Galleries" propose is intensely difficult; for true art can not advertise. It must stand aside and wait for the public to come to it; it must attract through its inherent excellence (an almost mathematical impossibility in America); it must wait for those who understand it to speak for it; it must, without protest, suffer the vilifications and ridicule of the pseudo-artist, the pretender, and the *Canaille*.

Now, in speaking for these "Little Galleries," I can do so with a clear conscience, for I am not a Secessionist. I am an entire outsider. It is their results and principles which I believe in.

But let me take you to the galleries and show you what they look like; you will then be able to judge for yourself. The first thing that strikes one is the elevator; it is unpretentious in the extreme—but effective—and takes us to the rooms at the top of the house. My sensations the first time that I entered them were confusing and not easily described. I knew I had come to see photographs, but the instant I was in their presence I forgot about photography. It did not seem photography at all, nor even (with very few exceptions) black and white. It was a series of sensations. I was in the fields and rambling through the brush; the sun was brightly shining and the wind gently blowing; I was transported into deep, cool shadows and startled by Rembrandt-*esque* light; I saw the sun sinking in splashes of vermilion and gold. Then gray mists enveloped me; I was in the twilight, the lamplight, and the night. For a long time I wandered through the rooms, unconscious that there were others there. Suddenly a voice awakened me. "How do you like our illumination?" it asked. I had never noticed it; I had forgotten that it was evening, and that there must be some kind of light; I had never seen the series of beautiful electric lights that by their quality and disposition gave such a natural illumination that you did not notice

them. And then, for the first time, I saw the rooms. There are three, and they are small. I had not observed how small; my mind had been in the big spaces created by the pictures on the walls—and they are decorated in grays, in a few notes chosen with the very best taste, a few notes so arranged as to make you forget them unless you purposely look. I walked through the rooms again, and then realized that for the first time in my life I was in the presence of a series of photographs in which the photographic had been eliminated; for the first time I was beholding what the enthusiastic advocates of photography have always claimed for it, namely, a proof positive that photography could be made one of the means of personal expression. This, I must say, I had never doubted. I knew of individual examples which were complete works of art; but I had never seen, and I think very few others have, a whole collection (100) in which I felt that the medium and means to the end were no longer visible, in which the end, art, was an achieved fact.

Of course, there are some examples in which this has not been accomplished. The exhibition was open to every member of the Secession who chose to send, and, naturally, some fall slightly short; but what is so delightful is that you will never notice these unless you especially look. I had to in my capacity of critic. The only fault I have to find is that Alfred Stieglitz, or those who hung his frames, have so scattered his exhibit in various places that it does not quite produce the effect it might if it had a separate space to itself, as do the Whites, Käsebiers, Steichens, and many others. Certainly, no one can complain now that the "Dictator" is not willing to sink his personality in the cause of art.

Before closing there are a few words I wish to say about Steichen. For a long time I have withheld passing any judgment upon Steichen's work, for, although I have greatly admired it, yet I always felt that there was something unphotographic about it, and have again and again tried to find what it was, but have always been foiled; and, as I know that there are many others who are perplexed by the same doubts, I offer the following solution, which, however, I would stake heavily is the right one. It is exceedingly simple. Steichen is "unphotographic," you are quite right, *but he uses pure photography to accomplish these unphotographic results.* "What do you mean by this sophistry?" I hear you ask. It is not sophistry at all, but pure logic; it is your sophistry that prevents you seeing the truth. I will explain. When we see a chromolithograph we instantly recognize it by its material conditions, or what is vulgarly termed technique. We expect a chromo to look like a chromo, and should be very much surprised to find it looking like anything else; yet I once ran across a lot of chromolithographic reproductions after the paintings by Turner, and for a long time thought they were water-colors, and this merely because they had been produced with such thought and care as to eliminate the *appearance* of machine-production; yet they were chromos, machine-made, and nothing else. An oil-painting is produced with oil-pigments; it is through the mechanical combination of canvas and oil-pigments that it is made and in the majority of examples of oil-paintings we can feel the pigment and canvas, and when we do so instantly call them amateurish. We only call an oil-painting a picture when the materials have been handled in such a way as to make us forget them. And in this we are right, for ages of artists have taught us that true art can not be attained until we are made to forget the materials through which it has been brought into existence. And just so it is in photography. Only the art is so new, and we have such an exceedingly small number of photographs in which the lens and paper, etc., are not felt the moment we look at them, that we always expect to find them; and when we see such work as Steichen's, where none of the machinery is visible, we unconsciously conclude that it *can not* be a photograph, that it *must* be something, anything else. But this is wrong, and it is not Steichen's photographs which are not photographs; *they* are photographs; *they* are drawn by light. But it is the ordinary every-day photographs which are not photographs, and should properly be called cameragraphs or machinographs.

And Steichen's works in this little show are certainly wonderful. I have never seen a more beautiful wall of black and white than he covers. I went back twice to see if they were, in truth, as they had appeared to me that first night. And they were! They haunt me to this day as a strange and lovely dream.

The "Little Galleries" are free to the public on presentation of visiting-card, from 10 to 12 a.m. and 2 to 6 p.m. The present exhibition will be on view this month, followed by foreign work in January.

The Black Mirror, that brilliant, iconoclastic, anonymously published and edited little art-pamphlet, printed the following in No. VI:

On November 24 of last year there was opened at 291 Fifth Avenue, in the gallery of the Photo-Secession, an exhibition of the work of members of that body.

The "principal influence observable," to quote the usual critical phrase, was that of good taste, second only to the Whistler exhibition in Boston.

While taste is considered a somewhat superfluous detail — by those who have it not — even that amount displayed at the Photo-Secession room will be to the wanderer in our artistic desert a most delightful oasis, while the photographs shown will in the most part, from their refinement, prove restful, provided one be not a professional portrait-painter, in which case they would be as a slap in the face. The same remark might apply to the professional landscape-painter as well.

As a provoker of remark the exhibition was a success, as every critic has had his fling about the subject, from that A. Hoeber to Mr. Fitzgerald, who seemingly feeds upon the flesh of Gargoyle, raw.

Regarding the eternal debate as to whether photography is lost, strayed, or stolen, let us paraphrase that statement by Mr. Eddy:

There are photographs;

There are photographs which are also pictures;

There are pictures which are also photographs;

There are pictures.

I think it is scarcely worth while to discuss the subject further.

In regard to the limitations of photography, it may naturally possess them — like men; but as a camera is merely a thing of wood, paper, glass, and metal, its feelings can not be hurt by the remark.

The whole matter is surprisingly interesting and could be made entertaining for both old and young as a sort of puzzle.

People could go to an exhibition at the Photo-Secession, then the annual exhibition of, say the National Academy, and turn around three times while standing on one leg. The puzzle would be: Which were the artists?

Under the heading "The Photo-Secession — A Protest Against the Ordinary," Henry R. Poore, the well-known landscape-painter and author of "Pictorial Composition," wrote in the January issue of *The Camera* as follows:

A correspondent writes: "Will you not make a little more clear your recommendation for 'originality within the compass of art-principles?'"

One of several distinctions between the fine arts and business or science or religion is that it is the mission of the former to please. For that single reason the art we affect puts us under bonds. Business, science, and religion are founded on truth, and when they remove themselves from it they fail.

Art is likewise founded on truth, but, its first mission being to please, truth is forced to become elastic, to be turned, twisted, manipulated, cajoled, threatened, outraged: all this merely that man may keep on being pleased.

But man is no such tyrant that for the sake of a holiday he could wish truth murdered. No, she always escapes, or, if not, man finds that together with her he has killed his art also.

If man were not of this sort and his mental processes merely reasonable and mechanical one form of graphic presentation would suit him for all time and the key of "C" would contain for all necessary harmony.

But man will pass on. From the cradle up he has been outgrowing his toys. This demand for change must therefore be recognized in his pleasures. In art he is constantly craving it.

The artist who gratifies him, however, need only be himself if so be his cast of mind is differential, different from the majority; but if he finds he is molded out of the majority's common clay, then he must assume by appropriation or through education that originality which his public demands.

And how?

First, by association with originality. In this hot-house the microbe will have a better chance than if denied incubation. Its development appears first by enthusiasm, then inquiry, then a growing unrest, then discontent, and when all seems dark something happens, easily, all by itself. The man has arrived.

If association be necessary, seek out the old masters; they had the first chances at the secrets you are after and these are now world's property. How strange that but few know this!

But if the old masters are too remote and you long for a closer touch go to the modern masters. They are here among us. Some of them have gone apart by themselves, but they are none the less approachable. Their protest is against the "conventional in pictorial photography." What wonder, if by this is meant the thoughtless, careless, haphazard outpourings of the print-rooms of the country. The term, however, is unfortunate, as it really does not designate this, but does stigmatize the conventions of art which none more truly than the Photo-Secession are helping to conserve.

We enter to find the snug exhibition of a hundred frames tastefully hung in three attic galleries.

A glance is sufficient to show that no conventions in art have been seceded from. Many of the best of them have here a better setting forth than they usually receive at the National Academy. Indeed the Prado, the Pitti, the Dresden, and the London National Gallery in time begin to loom up and enter claims. Here is Velasquez, and Rembrandt, Michael Angelo, Terbourg, Rossetti, Besnard and Manet—photographs not reminiscent of any particular creations by these artists, but bearing all the marks of the spirit dwelling in them.

Coming, as the writer did, after a series of stops along the avenue at the galleries of the dealers, he was obliged to confess that a greater thrill was his as he glanced at those burlap-covered walls than had come to him in those palaces with "purple and fine" art.

But the objector says if we seek originality, why look for it where we are reminded of other men?

The formative principles of art are so few that of necessity they are in continual use. Personality in art is determined by varying degrees in the force or inclination of these principles.

The critic can not nor should he want to determine the exact personal influence accounting for a result.

But while what Mr. Steichen calls a "Poster Lady" recalls Velasquez, his "Profile" in no wise does, and it is just as good, constructed, too, with the same daring and surety as the former.

The supposition is that in the former case two artists directed by the same line of thought ran parallel.

The same may be said of his "In Memoriam," a heroic nude which could well adorn the sepulchre of a de Medicis side by side with the marbles of Michael Angelo.

But in the "Penseur," his portrait of Rodin, to the original conception of which he has now added a bronze figure on the right, contributing another great simple space of dark, one should not say he recalls Rembrandt, but rather at this rate Rembrandt will, in time, remind us of Steichen. Not that this particular print has the subtleties of Rembrandt luminous shadows, but it has all and more of the great gamut of chiaroscuro upon which the master played.

But, as an application of these forces to modern portraiture, witness his "Chase." How cunningly do the shadows creep over this figure, losing its vertical lines which parallel the sides, sweeping the whole together laterally at the bottom and reserving the light until it may burst in and assert its supremacy where it will do the most good! Above the face with its redundancy of light the delicate shadows gather again, and the well-polished hat with its particular curve joins its force with theirs. In his mother and child in a garden entitled "Sunlight Patches" the opportunity of light and shade has been used for variegation instead of concentration, the theme in each case being regulative of the manner.

On the opposite wall Clarence White shows even greater variety of temperament—no two of his nine contributions recalling any other, yet each having a parallel in the erstwhile art of the painter. "The Kiss" is reminiscent of Rossetti, the "Old Chest" of Tolmuche, "Mrs. W." recalls the sixteenth-century Dutch interiors—but why particularize? Happy are we that there be

those among us who can gather up these fallen mantles and assume them with the dignity which they deserve! Yet who shall say that these be borrowed, but rather with more truth that like causes bring like effects, and that it is the principles of art which are known and practiced? When these are put in motion modern work will always be coterminous with that of a former day.

Applying these to the severely modern subject we get in Mr. Stieglitz's "Race Track"—not only a theme dear to the heart of the horse-lover, but an expression which causes the art-lover, who perhaps has gone over to automobiles or may regard racing as wicked, to pause and enjoy it because of its beauty as a mere piece of decoration. So, too, with his locomotives spouting up their columns of vertical smoke. Here it is not only dignity of simple mass but the esthetic attractiveness of the vertical line, the most commanding in art, and that other line so valuable, the curvilinear, conveyed through the series of tracks. His charming portrait of the Vienna beauty "Miss S. R." has received in the decorative forms above the head that encasement which lifts it out of portraiture into a higher plane.

That added something which has to do the lifting in so many cases, the lever raising one's work above the ordinary, what is it but a knowledge of how to apply the art-principles in given cases? Mrs. Käsebier beautifully exploits two of these in her picture, "The Sketch," which is not only a young girl against a low wall making a sketch of a distant landscape, but a pattern of space-filling masses of light and shade, and this consideration should be a close second to the idea. Indeed there is a school of art which places that first. But of this in a later number. Look, too, at her "Magic Crystal" for the inclusiveness of its line and its ensemble as decoration.

Striking examples of what may be accomplished with the decorative opportunities of light and shade, graduation, balance of forces, and pure line, each playing its part as related with the space limitations of the frame, may be studied in "Wier's Close—Edinboro," by A. L. Coburn; "The Web" and "Wandering Brush," W. B. Dyer; "April Showers," W. F. James; "An Indian Head," J. F. Keiley; "April," F. H. Pratt; "Dorothy Sutton" of remarkable quality by Mary R. Stanbery; "La Cigale" and others by Frank Eugene.

Space is denied to mention others full worthy of notice—but sufficient for the point at hand.

Here the brazen serpent has been lifted up in the wilderness of the ordinary. It is by no means the only brazen serpent in this country, but it is warranted to cure any who have that common disease of which we speak.

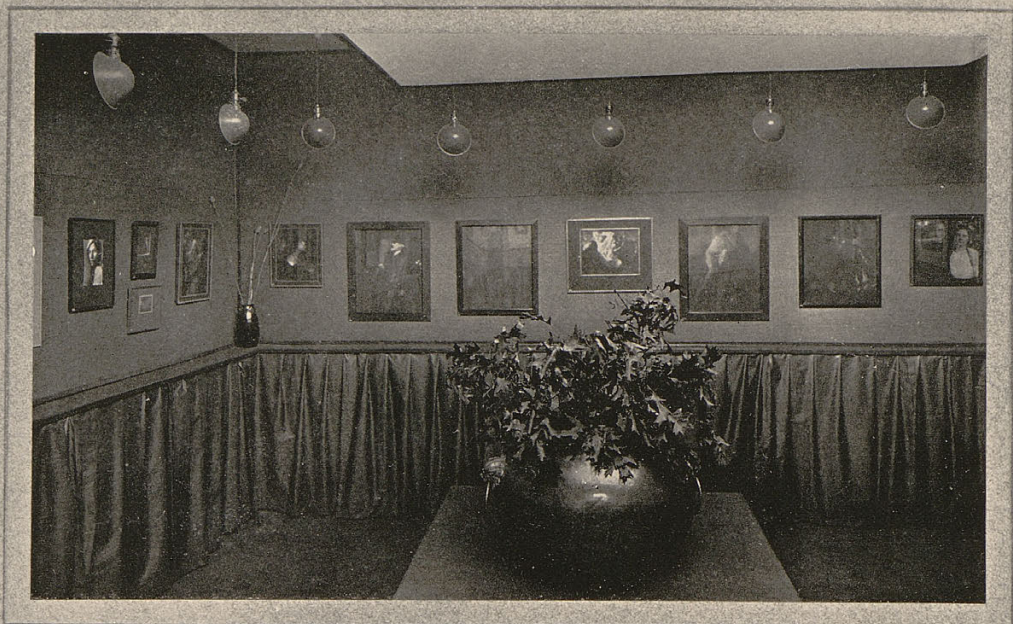
But see how history repeats itself: Those stubborn Israelites preferred not to look up. The public has swarmed into these galleries and have gone away rejoicing. Few students of photography have attended, and yet there are those on hand who will willingly converse with any who inquire how it is done, declaring with genuine zeal that they have no secrets and are striving only to advance the status and claims of photography through art.

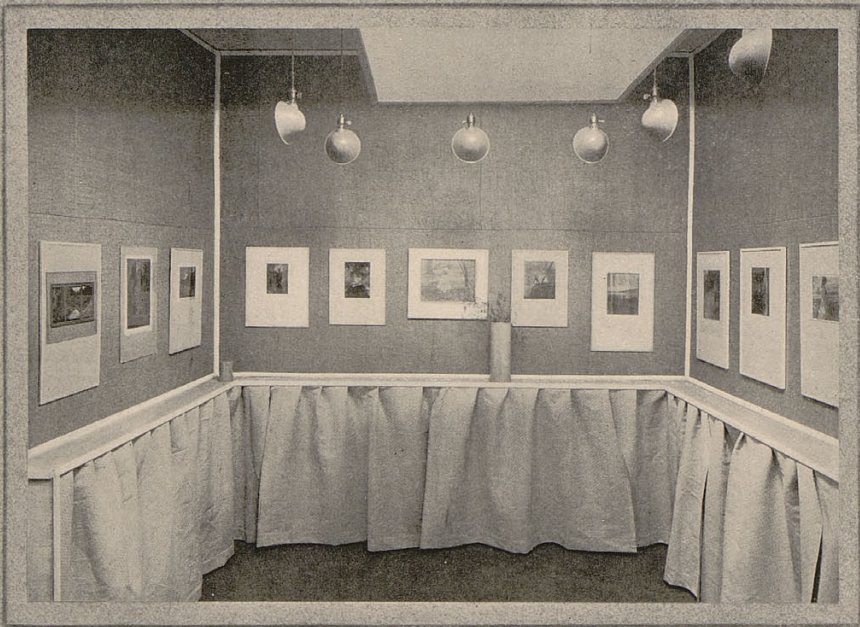
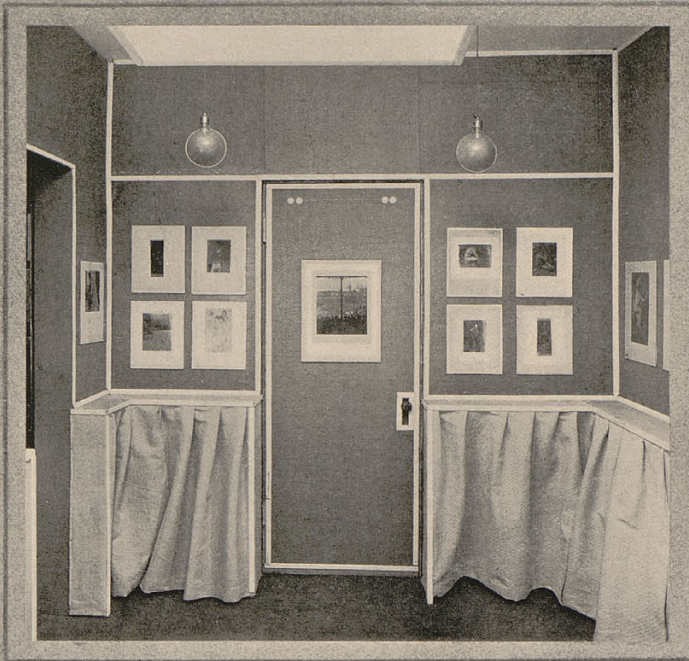


THE LITTLE GALLERIES OF THE
✠ ✠ ✠ PHOTO-SECESSION ✠ ✠ ✠



TWO HUNDRED NINETY-ONE FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
DECORATIONS DESIGNED BY E. J. STEICHEN
OPENING EXHIBITION, NOVEMBER 24, 1905-JANUARY 5, 1906





THE COUP D'ÉTAT.

THE evening-boat was late and the crowd loafing on the bank to see the new arrivals was growing restless.

One young fellow, who did not appear to have been long from Broadway, remarked to a Greek shepherd in a faded yellow chlamys that old Charon was "getting beyond his job." "It is the third time this week," he said. "The superannuated old fossil ought to be pensioned and an auto-boat put on the service."

"I'll bet there's graft somewhere," he added to himself.

Meanwhile in the rooms of the Stygean Arts Club the members were holding their usual evening reunion. At the end of a long table in the assembly-hall sat Michael Angelo. His head rested on his hand and two of his fingers protruded from his carefully disarranged hair in such a way that he resembled his own Moses. He looked gloomy and out of sorts. At his right, in the Secretary's chair, sat a dapper little fellow with a supercilious smile and a white tuft like a rabbit's tail above his dark forehead. At his left Turner, having surreptitiously dipped his finger in the red ink, was doing a sketch on a yellow blotter, while sitting at the table in various attitudes of more or less impatient ennui were Benvenuto Cellini, Gilbert Stuart, Fra Angelico, Reynolds, Giotto, Meissonier and a number of the other members.

Time was when these rooms had borne a livelier aspect. Once, indeed, they had resounded nightly with the clash of ideals.

Here had occurred the historic debate over the admission of Rubens, vehemently accused of conduct unbecoming a gentleman of the Old School. And the no less sensational scene when Raphael Sanzio was defeated for his one hundred and eighty-seventh term as president of the Club. And here Rossetti *et al* had been acquitted, after an interesting trial, of the charge of malicious libel brought by Perugino and Botticelli.

But times were changed. With the exception of Corot and Velasquez, who in a half-hearted sort of way were pitching into Henner, the entire company seemed sunk in the depths of boredom.

As a matter of fact, they were waiting for the Art notes in the *Evening Sun*.

Suddenly there was a commotion in the outer hall. The porter, the doorman, the desk-clerk and the bell-boys seemed to be all talking at once. Voices unanimous in a remonstrance at first firm, then insistent, came to the ears of the assembly. Then amid a clamor of high-pitched objection the door of the meeting-room was thrown violently open and a tall figure walked calmly in and closed it in the faces of the clamorous attendants. A young man whose tumultuous hair was dashed with spray, who had evidently had a rough crossing and had come straight from the boat, who wore a brown check suit, a black velvet waistcoat, a sea-green tie with streaming ends, a three days' beard, and a smile.

Having closed the door and taken a quick, amused survey of the room, he moved toward the head of the table in the midst of an astonished and

incredulous silence. Half-way down the room, however, he was confronted by an imposing figure. It was Rembrandt, snowy ruff at neck and flashing eyes alight with indignation. But it was to require more than this to check the intruder. Scarcely breaking his stride, he advanced his face till it almost touched the Dutchman's and fairly hissed a single word: "Copy-Cat!" he said. And it was enough. The proud head bent; the swart cheek paled: the figure shrank aside and the newcomer passed on.

As he reached the president's chair the young man, once more smiling and assured, grasped Messire Michael Angelo by the shoulders, lifted him firmly from his seat and set him down in the lap of Tintoretto, who sat at Turner's right. Then he sat down in his place.

For a moment there was neither sound nor motion in the room. Then, far down the table, Holbein jumped to his feet. "Ach, Gott!" he cried. "Dis vas Lese Macheestee yet! Say! Who vas you anyhow?"

"Gentlemen," said the new arrival, rapping for order, "allow me to introduce myself. I am Eduard J. Steichen."
J. B. KERFOOT.

PHOTO-SECESSION NOTES.

THE LITTLE GALLERIES.

IT being impossible to review the continuous performance going on at the Little Galleries, exhibitions succeeding each other at fortnightly intervals, we must content ourselves at present with publishing a bare statement of the nature of these exhibitions.

Exhibition I was devoted entirely to the work of members of the Photo-Secession, one hundred prints being hung. Represented were the New Yorkers, Alice Boughton, A. L. Coburn, Frank Eugene, Gertrude Käsebier, Joseph T. Keiley, Marshall R. Kernochan, J. B. Kerfoot, Helen Lohman, E. J. Steichen, Alfred Stieglitz, J. F. Strauss, W. E. Wilmerding; from Massachusetts, Mary Devens, Chester A. Lawrence, Jeanne E. Peabody, Fred. H. Pratt, Sarah C. Sears, W. Orison Underwood; from Pennsylvania, John G. Bullock, J. Mitchell Elliot, Wm. J. Mullins, W. P. Stokes, Mary Vaux; from Ohio, Herbert G. French, F. D. Jamison, Katharine A. Stanbery, Mary R. Stanbery, Clarence H. White; from Illinois, W. B. Dyer, Eva Watson-Schütze, W. F. James, S. L. Willard; from California, Annie W. Brigman; from Canada, Sydney R. Carter; from Colorado, Harry C. Rubincam; from District of Columbia, Jeanne E. Bennett; from Maine, W. B. Post; from Virginia, Landon Rives.

Exhibition II was devoted entirely to French workers. The collection, although not embracing all the pictorial workers of France, was, notwithstanding its small size—50 prints—thoroughly representative of the work done in France to-day. M. Robert Demachy, who at the request of the Secession selected the prints shown, is himself not only considered the foremost photographer in France to-day, but was the first pictorialist to realize the possibilities of the gum-bichromate process. In conjunction with M. Puyo he has perfected this printing medium as it is at present used by French

workers. The collection consisted of thirty-one Demachys; eight Puyos (including two of his color experiments); three prints by Celine Laguarde; three by René Le Bègue; two by Georges Grimprel, and one each by Maurice Brémard, G. Besson, and A. Hachette. The exhibition was virtually one devoted entirely to gum-prints. In a later number we shall refer to it more fully, and with illustrations.

Exhibition III consisted of a series of photographs by Mr. Herbert G. French, of Cincinnati, illustrating portions of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King." The purpose of this series is to suggest, in relatively the same order, the varied human emotions portrayed in certain portions of the Tennyson version of the Arthurian legend, commonly called the "Idylls of the King," such was the foreword of the catalogue. We hope to refer to this remarkable collection of forty-five prints in some future issue of *Camera Work*.

In the first ten weeks of these exhibitions the attendance was considerably over three thousand, and it included the best element of the New York public, although comparatively few photographers. The cultured public's vital interest, as shown in their attendance at the successive exhibitions, and their liberal purchases of prints—at prices which but a short time ago seemed impossible—proves that our own propaganda has not been in vain. The sales in the first two exhibitions amounted to six hundred and twenty-eight dollars, nineteen prints finding purchasers. While the cultured public naturally includes some photographers, it is rather to the connoisseur than to the mere camerist that the Photo-Secession endeavors to appeal. There are neither cards issued nor admission charged to the Little Galleries, presentation of visiting-card being sufficient to obtain entrance.

WORCESTER ART MUSEUM.

At the recent exhibition held at the Art Museum, Worcester, Mass., the Photo-Secession was represented by a Loan Collection, which, as usual, was hung as a unit and which, according to the press, was the most interesting note of the entire exhibition. Mr. Frederick H. Pratt, the newly elected Fellow of the Photo-Secession, was the moving spirit in arranging the Worcester Exhibition.

EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC ART AT THE CINCINNATI MUSEUM.

An invitation collection of seventy-five prints was shown at the Cincinnati Art Museum from February 11 to March 5. The preface of the simple but beautifully printed and arranged catalogue reads as follows: "During the past few years there has been a movement of constantly increasing importance toward the establishment of photography among the fine arts. Possibly the most active organized effort in this direction has been conducted by the Photo-Secession, whose headquarters are in New York City, but whose members are to be found throughout the entire country. The Photo-Secession is a society of protest against the use of photography as a purely mechanical means of reproduction; and its chief object is the establishment of photography as a recognized art-medium. The present exhibition is secured through the effort of one of the members

of the Photo-Secession, but it is not limited to the work of that body. It is believed to be as carefully selected a group of American photographs as has heretofore been shown outside of New York City."—*Herbert G. French.*

The exhibition was an unqualified success, and amongst the cultured classes of Cincinnati, photography, as represented by the Secession spirit, has gained many new and valuable adherents.

ALVIN LANGDON COBURN AT THE "ROYAL," LONDON.

As we go to press word reaches us that Alvin Langdon Coburn, Fellow of the Photo-Secession, who has been residing in London for the past year, is holding a one-man show—120 prints—at the Royal Photographic Society. Not the least interesting part of the exhibition is the preface to the catalogue written by Bernard Shaw. As the next number of *Camera Work* will contain some of Coburn's newer work we will defer further remarks until then.

NEWLY ELECTED FELLOWS OF THE PHOTO-SECESSION.

Miss Alice Boughton, of New York; Mrs. Annie W. Brigman, of Oakland, Cal.; and Mr. Frederick H. Pratt, of Worcester, Mass., have been elected to the Fellowship of the Photo-Secession. Heretofore they had been associates.

THE PHOTO-SECESSION GALLERIES.

In looking at the illustrations on another page our readers can form an idea of the decorative arrangement of the Photo-Secession exhibitions. Heretofore, with but two or three exceptions, photographs have not been shown to their best advantage; the crowding of exhibits, the garish or, still worse, insufficient light, the incongruous color-scheme have certainly not helped in affording the public an opportunity of satisfactorily studying pictorial photographs. With these facts in mind, the Secession Galleries were arranged so as to permit each individual photograph to be shown to the very best advantage. The lighting is so arranged that the visitor is in a soft, diffused light while the pictures receive the direct illumination from a skylight; the artificial lights are used as decorative spots as well as for their usefulness.

One of the larger rooms is kept in dull olive tones, the burlap wall-covering being a warm olive gray; the woodwork and moldings similar in general color, but considerably darker. The hangings are of an olive-sepia sateen, and the ceiling and canopy are of a very deep creamy gray. The small room is designed especially to show prints on very light mounts or in white frames. The walls of this room are covered with a bleached natural burlap; the woodwork and molding are pure white; the hangings, a dull ecru. The third room is decorated in gray-blue, dull salmon, and olive-gray. In all the rooms the lamp-shades match the wall-coverings.

MYSTERY.

THE mystery sense is an integral temperamental attribute of northern races and is shown in their lives, in their myths, and their painting, literature, and architecture. Southern peoples manifest the mystery feeling only occasionally, and linked especially with their religious ideas. Religions and churches have always cultivated some atmosphere of mystery, yet it is not merely mysticism.

Greek art displayed it only in the drama, in dealing with the supernatural. In Italian art the Umbrians showed it not, and the Tuscans only in occasional Gothic outcroppings. The Venetians would seem to have approached closer, owing to their way of painting, but it was in a technical manner, to secure sacrifice of extra line and detail; and melting outline in art is but a first physical step from the common ground of fact into the infinitude of the thought-world. The Dutch fared further; Rembrandt infused a deeper quality into his technical treatment. But from remote times runs the roll of northern men who have been seers — and so down to present times, and to Arnold Böcklin, to Whistler, to Albert Ryder—to mention a few that come first to mind in graphic art. In literature, examples will crowd to the reader's mind. And most of these workers in all arts would illustrate intellectual, as well as technical mystery.

But what is mystery? Is it a survival of wild times and things; of long northern nights and cruel winters, and the swift rebirth of a world compassed by cold and threatening seas? Is it the child of wonder? Too thoroughly has man banished the spirits with which he used to people the unknown, to make their recall, even in art, more than a rare imaginative play, or a fanciful symbolism — though even this little of a renaissance of wonder is welcome. But the world is full of mystery still, although nothing but its poles remain unexplored and unexploited. The sea breathes mystery; the woods and mountains are full of it; so is the dusk, starlight, the dawn — all vague or vast spaces, all ever-recurring, basic things. Materially and scientifically has man banished the unknown to the farthest confines of his physical world — yet it is ever about and within him, and by its promptings must he live and feel and have his being.

Mystery in art is as hard to define as it is easy to exemplify. It is not mysticism. It is not reserve, nor selection, but includes them all in its service. Begotten of man's spiritual needs and melancholy possibilities, suggestion is its handmaid. Death is its brother. And its essence is as its name — mystery!

DALLETT FUGUET.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

IT is not many years ago that the work and name of Steichen acted upon the average photographic public as a red rag does upon a bull. How things have changed—even Mr. Steichen's work—but his has been no step backward. The inference is plain that the photographic public has been in a measure educated. The non-photographic public, at first but slightly interested, has begun to appreciate that photography holds within itself some possibilities, though individuals still differ as to their extent. This interest is growing, and reacting upon photographers tends toward a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation, resulting in such a decided improvement in the standards of all, even in the standards of the Philistine, that we feel confident that many who found no pleasure in the earlier published work of Mr. Steichen will now thank us in giving them a second opportunity of viewing the work of this maturing young painter and photographer.

The plates in this number, together with those published in the Special Supplement, constitute a landmark in the achievements of the camera and in their relation all that has thus far been accomplished in photography give promise that either Mr. Steichen himself or some one at present unknown will in the future accomplish such achievements that even the most doubting Thomas will be convinced. Perhaps what we believe in to-day, the world will acknowledge to-morrow. The photogravures were all made from the original negatives and under Mr. Steichen's personal direction. We flatter ourselves that some of the gravure plates are even above our own average of reproduction and give a fair idea of Mr. Steichen's spirit, although it is impossible to reproduce the full quality of his originals, some of which are in gum, some in platinum, some in bromide and some in a combination of these processes. It should be a matter of interest to all photographers that "Mother and Child—Sunlight," the chief prize-winning print in the recent International Kodak Competition, in which 28,000 prints were submitted, was made with a 4 x 5 Kodak camera and lens on a roll-film, developed in machine and printed on velox paper. This ought to be sufficient answer to the many charges that Mr. Steichen's acknowledged superior skill is dependent upon faking negatives and prints or both. The prize-winning cover design in the Goerz Catalogue-cover Competition, in which the famous designer M. Alphonse Mucha was one of the three judges, proves that photography lends itself to this branch of art. The Goerz people deserve great credit for encouraging the use of the camera in this hitherto undeveloped field.

Mr. Steichen's three-color work which we had hoped to include is as yet not ready for publication, owing to the fact that the engravers have not been able to satisfy us in this regard. It will be published in a later issue of *Camera Work*.

PLATES

EDUARD J. STEICHEN.

IX. Mother and Child—Sunlight.

AWARDED TWO FIRST PRIZES IN EASTMAN KODAK COMPETITION,
1905.

X. Cover Design.

AWARDED FIRST PRIZE IN THE GOERZ COMPETITION, 1905.





STICKEN
MDCCLX

G. BERNARD SHAW ON THE LONDON EXHIBITIONS.

Reprinted from the *Amateur Photographer*, October, 1901.

THE fable of Pilpay, in which the three rogues persuaded the Brahman that an unclean beast was a lamb fit for sacrifice, has been used by Macaulay to illustrate the methods and efficacy of modern puffery and log-rolling. But if Pilpay had been a photographer he would have turned his fable inside out and described three Brahmans persuading some poor rogue, who had brought a lamb to the altar, that it was only a mangy goat.

I know nothing funnier in criticism than the assurance of the painter and his press-parasite, the art-critic, that all high art is brush-work; except, perhaps, the humility of the photographer, who is not yet allowed a parasite of his own, and must timidly beg for a contemptuous bite or two from that of the brusher. For surely nobody can take three steps into a modern photographic exhibition without asking himself, amazedly, how he could ever allow himself to be duped into admiring and even cultivating an insane connoisseurship in the old barbarous smudging and soaking, the knifing and graving, rocking and scratching, faking and forging, all on a basis of false and coarse drawing, the artist either outfacing his difficulties by making a merit of them, or else falling back on convention and symbolism to express himself when his lame powers of representation break down. In this year's exhibitions I find two portraits of myself — one in the Salon by Frederick Evans, the other in the New Gallery by Furley Lewis. Compare them with the best work with pencil, crayon, brush, or silver point you can find — with Holbein's finest Tudor drawings, with Rembrandt's Saskia, with Velasquez's Admiral, with anything you like. If you can not see at a glance that the old game is up, that the camera has hopelessly beaten the pencil and paint-brush as an instrument of artistic representation, then you will never make a true critic; you are only, like most critics, a picture-fancier. And please observe that these two portraits of me, far from being mechanically alike, are less so than any two drawings of me that have ever been made. The style of Mr. Evans contrasts as strongly with the style of Mr. Furley Lewis as the style of Velasquez with the style of Holbein. The portraits, too, though both like me, are not like one another. When I compare their subtle diversity with the monotonous inaccuracy and infirmity of drawings, I marvel at the gross absence of analytic power and of imagination which still sets up the works of the great painters, defects and all, as the standard, instead of picking out the qualities they achieved and the possibilities they revealed, in spite of the barbarous crudity of their methods. But that is what always happens; for to those whose fancy for pictures is "an acquired taste," the faults of the brush are as dear as its qualities. It was once considered that the tone given to an Italian picture (late sixteenth century preferred) by a filthy coat of tallow-soot, acquired by a century of exposure to the smoke of a host of altar-candles, was a chief element in its value; and "old masters," which had accidentally remained clean, were actually washed with porter to bring them down to the picture-fanciers' standard. May I venture to add that I am not quite sure that I have not seen a few photographs this year that have been deliberately faked to make them resemble pictures?

It is now more than twenty years since I first said in print that nine-tenths (or ninety-nine-hundredths, I forget which) of what was then done by brush and pencil would presently be done, and far better done, by the camera. But it needed some imagination, as well as some hardihood, to say this at that time, not because the photographic exhibitions were less convincing then, in spite of their delight in representing nature as eternally reflected in silver dish-covers, but because the photographers of that day were not artists (except when they photographed by stealth and exhibited the results in Bond Street and Burlington House as drawing), but craftsmen, more interested in their process than in its results, and often having no artistic purpose whatever — that is, no feeling to convey. Still, they photographed just as well, and plenty of them a good deal better than some of the modern artist-photographers; and they never played the old painters' game of making a merit of their failures — for instance, calling underexposure impressionism and fog-tone. If they are out of fashion now, let us not forget that when Tintoretto, the artist-painter, was in fashion, Orcagna, the craftsman-painter, was out of fashion, and that National Galleries are nevertheless just as keen on Orcagna as on Tintoretto. Let us admit handsomely that some of the older men had the root of the matter in them as much as the younger men of to-day; but the process did not then attract artists. It may be asked why, if photography be so exquisite an artistic process, it did not attract them.

Well, there were many reasons. The first and principal one is never mentioned. It was, that artists were terrified by the difficulty and mystery of the process, which, as compared with the common run of their daubing, in which any fool can acquire a certain proficiency, certainly did require some intelligence, some practical science, and some dexterity. However, many artists were quite handy and clever enough for it; and a good many of them, as I have hinted, used it secretly, with lucrative results. But, on the whole, the process was not quite ready for the ordinary artist, because (1) it could not touch color or even give colors their proper light-values; (2) the impressionist movement had not then rediscovered and popularized the great range of art that lies outside color; (3) the eyes of artists had been so long educated to accept the most grossly fictitious conventions as truths of representation that many of the truths of the focusing-screen were at first repudiated as grotesque falsehoods; (4) the wide-angled lens did in effect lie almost as outrageously as a Royal Academician, whilst the anastigmat was revoltingly prosaic, and the silver print, though so exquisite that the best will, if they last, be one day prized by collectors, was cloying, and only suitable to a narrow range of subjects; (5) for a villainous oil-painting of a hospitable chairman, whilst they considered a guinea a first-rate price for a dozen cabinets, and two pound ten a noble bid for an enlargement, even when the said enlargement had been manipulated so as to be as nearly as possible as bad as the £50 painting. But all that is changed nowadays. Mr. Whistler, in the teeth of a storm of ignorant and silly ridicule, has forced us to acquire a sense of tone, and has produced portraits of almost photographic excellence; the camera has taught us what we really saw as against what the draughtsmen used to show us; and the telephoto-lens and its adaptations, with the isochromatic plate and screen, and the variety and manageableness of modern printing processes, have converted the intelligent artists, smashed the picture-fancying critics, and produced exhibitions such as those now open at the Dudley and New Galleries, which may be visited with pleasure by people who, like myself, have long since given up as unendurable the follies and falsehoods, the tricks, fakes, happy accidents, and desolating conventions of the picture-galleries. The artists have still left to them invention, didactics, and (for a little while longer) color. But selection and representation, covering ninety-nine-hundredths of our annual output of art, belong henceforth to photography. Some day the camera will do the work of Velasquez and Peter de Hooghe, color and all; and then the draughtsmen and painters will be left to cultivate the pious edifications of Raphael, Kaulbach, Delaroche, and the designers of the S.P.C.K. And even then they will photograph their models instead of drawing them.

So much for the general situation and its prospects. As to the exhibitions, which are the immediate pretexts of this article, the Salon impresses me, as it has done before, with a sense of the extent to which the most sensitive photographers have allowed themselves to be bulldozed into treating painting, not as an obsolete makeshift which they have surpassed and superseded, but as a glorious ideal to which they have to live up. I remember once accidentally spilling some boiling water over a photograph of myself, which immediately converted it into so capital an imitation of the damaged parts of Mantegna's frescoes in Mantua that the print delighted me more in its ruin than it had in its original sanity. On another occasion I photographed an elderly laborer with a scythe, and incautiously left the negative near a hot-air flue, with the result that the film crinkled and produced a powerful and extraordinary caricature of death, which had all the imaginative force of a lithograph by Delacroix, and very nearly all the unattainable infamy of his drawing. I have also a remarkable turn for forgetting something in taking a photograph: for instance, by inadvertently focusing with one lens and exposing the plate with another, I have produced fantastic images which would have qualified me for the extreme left of the New English Art Club in its early days. Now, so thoroughly has my own experience as a critic and picture-fancier sophisticated me that these accidental imitations of the products of the old butter-fingered methods of picture-making often fascinate me so that I have to put forth all my strength of mind to resist the temptation to become a systematic forger of damaged frescoes and gothic caricatures. That this temptation is not always vanquished is proved by several works in both the exhibitions. Deliberate imitations of the priming of canvas and of the strokes of the crayon are to be found there: and one gentleman, exasperated at the revolting oversharpeness of the real Lucerne, has put it out of focus to an extent that would do injustice to Lincoln's Inn Fields on a November afternoon. Another gentleman, by imparting a high-art mildew to some otherwise presentable photographs, and clapping them into frames of a color that suggests nothing but the feebly baleful green of a sick glow-worm, has made the judges

so afraid of being called Philistines if they confess their natural dislike of the effect that they have awarded him a medal. But the giving of medals is at best an undignified and incurably invidious practice, involving a "judgment" which no really capable critic could honestly pretend to deliver. The Royal Photographic Society ought to discriminate between a lens (which may legitimately be Kew-certificated or medaled for passing a certain measurable test) and an artist, to whose nature and function anything like competition is abhorrent as a matter of feeling and irrelevant as a matter of fact.

On the whole, I greatly prefer the photographers who value themselves on being photographers, and aim at a characteristically photographic technique instead of a sham brush-and-pencil one. Look at the enormous humor and vividness of Mr. Craig Annan's George Frampton (only to be appreciated fully by those who know G. F.), and the fine sympathy of Mr. Holland Day's "Maeterlinck"! Would either of them have been possible if the artists had studied, not their sitters, but the possibilities of making the negative come up like a portrait by Mr. Sargent? It would be easy, I should think, for Mr. Furley Lewis to take his negative of Mr. Malcolm Lawson, and, by making a cleverly doctored enlargement, produce the effect of a portrait by Franz Hals, just as other exhibitors have aimed at something as unlike a photograph and as like a smart impressionist picture as possible; but Mr. Lewis has not thought of trying any such trick, knowing, I take it, that this sort of dissembling is not the strength of the forward movement, but its besetting weakness.

Mr. Steichen and Mr. Emmerich are justly distinguished by their work; but they dissemble sometimes; for instance, Mr. Emmerich's "Mill on the Elbe" is meant to look, not like a mill on the Elbe, but like a certain sort of picture of a mill on the Elbe. And then comes Mr. Frederick Graves, and says, "Steichen and Emmerich show me the way to fame; I also will dissimulate," his Birches being the result. And I certainly should not like a gallery full of such birches, though I could hardly have too much of such tones as Mr. Emmerich has produced in his quite undissembled photograph of a Church interior. All the good church interiors, by the way, show the influence of Mr. Evans, who was, as far as I know, alone in that field some years ago; and Mr. Evans made himself the most artistic of photographers by being the most simply photographic of artists. Yet I have a crow to pluck with Mr. Evans, too, for what I take to be a stroke of technical satire at the New Gallery. In photographing Mr. Dallmeyer with the Dallmeyer-Bergheim lens, he has, by the slimmest of hairs' breadths, overdone the soft definition which is the quality of that lens, and thus burlesqued the sort of portrait represented most favorably by Mr. Auld's medaled "Study of a Head," in which the softness is carried to the point of suggesting incipient decomposition. Mr. Evans has used the lens with consummate judgment in his other portraits; and it seems hard that because Mr. Dallmeyer's invention has been abused to decompose other people Mr. Evans should revenge them by disintegrating Mr. Dallmeyer himself with it. But the sarcasm need not be lost because it has fallen on the innocent; for it certainly strikes at a growing folly. When it was discovered by photographers that their cherished sharp focusing was detestable to artists, a convention arose that sharp focusing was wrong and soft focusing right. Hence we are getting focusing that is as much too soft as the old focusing was too sharp; and the "judges" are hastening to medal it, to show how advanced they are. Side by side with the satirist I detect also the propagandist. Just as, fifteen years ago, Mr. Whistler, in order to force the public to look at and for certain qualities in his work, would draw a pretty girl and then obliterate her face by slashing his pencil backward and forward across it, in order to checkmate the "Who is she?" and "Ain't she pretty!" people, so does Mr. Horsley-Hinton somewhat sacrifice one of his contributions to the Salon to teaching how the photographer can select a certain plane in his landscape for emphasis, and thus get effects of composition and perspective which are spoiled by the old plan of producing "depth of focus" by the use of a small stop, and flattening all the world into one well-defined plane. But there is reason in everything; and in this cunning but too instructive picture the transition from clear definition to downright blur is too sudden for my eye (which has perhaps too small a stop), and is underlined, besides, by the skill with which the artist plants his thistles and bushes, so as to catch fascinating flecks of light. On the whole, work like Miss Mathilde Weil's, in which difficult focusing problems are not purposely set up for solution, and what focusing there is quite simply done, with a view to the picture looking right, pleases my simple taste best. But do not conclude that I can not appreciate the Barbizonian charm of Mr. Cochrane's lanes and draught-horses, or that I would have their atmosphere marred by sharper focusing. His medal is one of the happy accidents of the "judging."

I hope to say something next week about the instances in which the very photographers who have copied from the painters the things they ought not to have copied, have also left uncopied the things they ought to have copied, notably in matters of mounting, framing, and dimension. The remarkable display of color-photography needs a word likewise. Meanwhile, let me here disclaim any intention of writing a complete account of the exhibitions. There is plenty of admirable work in them which I should point out with pleasure if that were my present business; as it is, I have mentioned, and shall mention those works only which seem to me to best illustrate certain typical faults or qualities of the movement.

II.

There is a good deal of blundering at the New Gallery by artists who have learnt that the old-fashioned white mount and gilt frame is tabooed nowadays by those who are "in the movement." The insufficiency of this merely negative knowledge is shown by several attempts to get into the movement by ignorantly following the latest fashion, with results quite as bad as the worst American attempts to imitate the masterpieces of the Kelmscott Press. One gentleman, vaguely associating high art with damaged panels of oak chests from Surrey cottages, gets an unsightly piece of brown timber, cuts it to the shape and nearly to the size of a fanlight and sticks his photograph, cut to the shape of a protractor, in the middle of the fanlight. And he invites the connoisseur to buy this lumpish thing and stick it up in his wife's drawing-room. She will let him, perhaps, when he has burnt the frame and replaced it with one of reasonable size and handsome appearance, like that of Mr. Fitzgibbon-Forde's "Puritan Maiden." Then there is Mr. Crooke, who last year exhibited some portraits which owed their special charm to the intelligence with which he had learnt from the eighteenth-century mezzotinters how to put his block of black tones on paper; how to proportion its sides; how to letter it and how to frame it. But this year, instead of letting well enough alone, he exhibits a portrait as to which, in spite of the sitter's good looks, the critic can say nothing except simply that it is too big. Strange that a photographer whose work in the merely "professional" section last year positively tempted collectors, should, in the "pictorial" section this year, exhibit a warning to others not to neglect his own former example! Mr. Warneuke has made the same mistake: his "Ready for Market" is an overgrown thing.

In the works which are presented as prints and not as family pictures, the confusion about margins is so obvious that I may as well lay down a little law about it. The aspirants to a place "in the movement" are right in supposing that the ordinary commercial slip-in mount, with the photograph in the mathematical center of it, is a fashion of Gath. Fortunately, there is first-rate authority to correct it and to give novices a safe starting-point for experiments of their own. The medieval scribe, who for centuries had nothing to do but to find out how to make a margined page look handsome, found out all that was to be found out about it; and modern pages have become ugly in proportion to the straying of the modern printer from the medieval practice. Any photographer who can get hold of a good medieval MS., or a Kelmscott Press book, can get his mount right by simply putting the photograph on it where the medieval monk, or, following him, William Morris, put the block of letter-press on the page, always bearing in mind that the right-hand page of the opened book is the one to be copied, as the photograph is held by the right hand and the margin should leave room for the thumb. M. Pierre Dubreuil, missing this point, has, by the mounting of his "Profil Perdu," irresistibly suggested that he is a left-handed man. Mr. Page Croft knows better: his "Meditation" is as obviously in its right place on the mount as M. Dubreuil's is out of it. Mr. French's mounting of his study is elaborately ingenious, and, centered as it is, would make a capital design for a letter-box in a hall-door. If he would shift his strip of platinum and its border well to the left of the mount and nearer the top, the letter-box suggestion would vanish, and the picture be *tout ce qu'il y a de plus dans le mouvement*. The old white mount, representing simply the symbolic starched collar and cuff of the respectable man, hopeless from the artistic point of view, has very nearly vanished; but in the South Room at the New Gallery I noticed some stupendous examples exhibited by Messrs. Speaight, whose portrait of the Misses Gardner nevertheless seems to prove that they know how to frame a photograph without spoiling it, when their sitters will let them. M. Jean Lacroix has had the unhappy idea of trying to make his photographs resemble small etchings on monstrous pieces of "outside" paper. Why on earth should photography, the most beautiful of all the artistic processes, ape etching, which is quite the vilest? I could forgive M. Lacroix for imitating lithography or mezzotint, just as I

forgive our American pioneers for photographing with a French accent, so to speak. I could even forgive him for etching, if he did it as well as Rembrandt or Whistler; but to imitate etching!!! All the same, his portraits of Desboutin is one of the good things in the exhibition.

If a calculation were made of the subjects represented by the total superficial area of silver, platinum, gum, and tissue in the galleries, the result would probably be ten per cent. of humanity, thirty per cent. of background, and sixty per cent. of clothes. In the New Gallery there is, amid acres of millinery and tailoring, just one small study of a whole woman, by Professor Ludwig von Jan, of a rich tawny-downy quality, which would be called superb, masterly, and so forth, had it been drawn by Henner. I invite our friends, the picture-fanciers, to look at it a moment and then think of the works of, say, Etty; or, if that is too dreadful, Ingres. Or say Correggio, and, at the opposite extreme of taste, the President of the Royal Academy. True, the camera will not build up the human figure into a monumental fiction as Michael Angelo did, or coil it cunningly into a decorative one, as Burne-Jones did. But it will draw it as it is, in the clearest purity or the softest mystery, as no draughtsman can or ever could. And by the seriousness of its veracity it will make the slightest lubricity intolerable. "Nudes from the Paris Salon" pass the moral octroi because they justify their rank as "high art" by the acute boredom into which they plunge the spectator. Their cheap and vulgar appeal is nullified by the vapid reality of their representation. Photography is so truthful—its subjects are so obviously realities and not idle fancies—that dignity is imposed on it as effectually as it is on a church congregation. Unfortunately, so is that false decency, rightly detested by artists, which teaches people to be ashamed of their bodies: and I am sorry to see that the photographic life-school still shirks the faces of its sitters, and thus gives them a disagreeable air of doing something they are ashamed of.

Photography in colors is either advancing with extraordinary strides or becoming very skilful in avoiding the subjects which baffle it. I remember seeing last year a color-photograph of a cauliflower which will haunt me to my grave, so very nearly right, and, consequently, so very exquisitely wrong was it. I was accustomed to cheerfully and flagrantly impossible groups of a strawberry, a bunch of grapes, a champagne-bottle, and a butterfly, remote alike from nature and from art. But this confounded cauliflower was like Don Quixote's wits: it was just the millionth of a millimeter off the mark, and hence acquired a subtle impressiveness, the effect in the cauliflower's case being disquietingly baleful, as if the all but healthy green of the vegetable had been touched by the poison of the Borgias. I find no such horror in the fascinating peep-show arranged by Messrs. Lumière this year. It is true that they shun the cauliflower and revel only in garden-blooms, crockery, richly colored stuffs, French yellow-blacks, and elaborately tooled bookbindings. But the illusion is perfect; if the process is generally practicable, the "still-life" painter may pawn his poor box of squirts of gaudy clay and linseed, and apply for a place as bill-poster. In color-printing much ingenuity has been spent in forging old engravings of various kinds. Some of the attempts are quite successful; but why not forge banknotes instead? I no more doubt the capacity of photography for imitating the lower methods than I doubt Vasari's story of Michael Angelo successfully imitating the caricatures scrawled on the walls by the Roman rabble. What really did interest and stagger me were Mr. Roxby's three-color photographs from nature, by Dr. Gustav Selle's process. If that blue jar is not an accidental success out of a mass of failures—if Mr. Roxby can do it as often and as surely as Messrs. Window and Grove can photograph Miss Ellen Terry, then the advance represented by these prints is a very notable one indeed; for they are complete as pictures: it is no longer a question of getting a blue photograph of a blue jar: Mr. Roxby has got a complete picture of the jar, and a picture of fine quality at that. What other successes the exhibition may contain I can not say, as I arrived at the New Gallery before many of the items in the catalogue, and soon got tempted away from the color-work by Dr. Vaughan Cornish's wave-studies, and other scientific matters.

On the whole, the contrast of this R. P. S. exhibition with the last one shows that the American exhibitions at Russell Square have precipitated matters a good deal, and that the bold energy of the German photographers, all the more effective in modifying our tastes because it overdoes everything, will not let us relapse easily. Last year the big "professional" gallery was as full of dish-cover silver prints as ever; this year a nice, shining, aluminum-complexioned officer, with his hair newly cut and brushed for the occasion, would attract a crowd as a curiosity. This sudden and thorough intimidation of the burnishers can hardly be taken as a change of artistic

conviction; for the silver print has its charm and its use as much as gum and platinum. But it is, perhaps, as well that a Reign of Terror has been set up with regard to it, as it will not now be used by exhibitors, except for good reasons.

The conquest by photography of the whole field of monochromatic representative art may be regarded as completed by the work of this year. The conquest of color no longer seems far off or improbable; and the day may come when work like that of Hals and Velasquez may be done by men who have never painted anything except their own nails with pyro. The worst painters—those whose colors never were on sea or land—are the safest from supersession. As to the creative, dramatic, story-telling painters—Carpaccio and Mantegna and the miraculous Hogarth, for example—it is clear that photography can do their work only through a coöperation of sitter and camerist which would assimilate the relations of artist and model to those at present existing between playwright and actor. Indeed, just as the playwright is sometimes only a very humble employee of the actor- or actress-manager, it is conceivable that in dramatic and didactic photography the predominant partner will not be necessarily either the photographer or the model, but simply whichever of the twain contributes the rarest art to the coöperation. Already that instinctive animal, the public, goes into a shop and says, “Have you any photographs of Mrs. Patrick Campbell?” and not “Have you any photographs by Elliott & Fry, Downey, etc., etc.?” The Salon is altering this, and photographs are becoming known as Demachys, Holland Days, Horsley-Hintons, and so forth, as you should say Greuzes, Hoppners, and Linnells. But then the Salon has not yet touched the art of Hogarth. When it does, “The Rake’s Progress” will evidently depend as much on the genius of the rake as of the moralist who squeezes the bulb, and then we shall see what we shall see.

In conclusion, let me recommend these hasty notes of mine to an intelligently liberal construction by photographers. As to the painters and their fanciers, I snort defiance at them; their day of daubs is over.

AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE FOREIGN ANNUALS.

IN that best of the photographic annuals, *Die Photographische Kunst*, 1905, published in Germany by Wilhelm Knapp, Ernst Schur, the critic, reviews at length the Berlin Exhibition of that year. His analysis of the Photo-Secession pictures there exhibited covers some seven pages and we quote the following:

Among the exhibits of the various nationalities that of the Americans is easily first. It is more complete in itself than any of the others and shows a refined artistic sense highly developed and fully matured.

Owing to the wealth of expression and the manifold technical attainments which the Americans command, their work, viewed as a whole, presents a remarkable variety of treatment and ideas. It is a mark of authority in them that they are strong where strength and positiveness are required, delicate where subdued tones are called for, impetuous and racy where life and temperament are desired, and full of reverence where they approach the mysterious. It is a mark of maturity in them that they steer entirely clear of exaggeration, pretension, and modern affectations. They are the most modern of all, yet the most sure and reposeful. They are the most advanced, yet they have prepared their position with circumspection, and they reach a consciously selected goal with the calm of perfect deliberation, like the hunter who with a cool and deadly aim reaches his prey.

They do not overstep their limits, but seek the highest possible perfection within their clearly defined sphere. They do not reach out for the impossible, the forbidden, and avoid every insincere pose. Being of a practical bend they exploit the possibilities of their technique, thus producing a rare harmony between their aspirations and their attainments. At every step we feel that they have practiced long and hard; that their development has passed through a number of stages; and their work is entirely free from the faults of the beginner's impatience.

With all his insistence upon his marked personality, Eduard Steichen is no exception to the remarks just made. True, he has a personality all his own and he does not hesitate to give it the fullest play. He was one of the leaders. But he, too, shows that close interrelation between material and intention, purpose and success, that ultimately resulting harmony of the artistic impression which arises only from a complete mastery of the technique. These are the qualities which count. What matter if some think him eccentric, criticize him for making use of non-photographic expedients? The fact remains, nevertheless, that his is a fully developed artistic personality. . . .

To sum up, the Americans startle us by their wealth of motives and their aptness and truth in solving problems. We could easily double the number of names, each would show some characteristic accomplishment. Chief among these is the remarkable ability to avoid the rigidity of the portrait; to intimate the possibility of a change of expression which gives life to the features; to get rid of the portrait appearance and of the studied pose. They ever delight in observing natural poses and lifelike groups. It is life they seek, the individual being merely a factor therein. Hence they try to picture groups or to represent the individual at some one of his every-day occupations. One of the chief elements of value in these groups is the stimulus they give to the study of composition. Again, seek to avoid the dark and harsh studio-light which makes the features appear so stony and unnatural and they look instead for a natural lighting. In this respect, too, they enlarge the scope of photographic possibilities and seek to solve need problems of light and atmosphere. They are the impressionists among the photographers; they prefer delicate gray and light tones. They have a way of showing an entire space, in which we see persons, as it were, accidentally moving about—working, standing still, meditating—their figures at times being but partly visible. This is what renders their conception so beautiful, their way of looking upon the world of objects.

(Translated from the German by G. H. Engelhard.)

In the *Photograms of 1905* (London), A. C. R. Carter, the art-critic, in reviewing the London Salon, says:

“ . . . As in 1904, the display is a great opportunity for Eduard Steichen, who is clearly the head and front of photography's offending in its invasion of the field of art. Such a masterpiece of insight and arrangement as the Rodin portrait, instead of being the last word in photographic advance seems rather to me a first trumpet-note in a new world of progress. Another American, Alvin Langdon Coburn, has made a big spring forward, and Clarence White, too, is much better represented than for some time past.

Whether the word went forth that this year native products would have a short shrift I can not say, but it is obvious that the English section, apart from its reduced number, does not contain a large leaven of greatly improved or inspired work. There is plenty of accomplished and attractive work, yet one looks in vain for some one who has taken his courage in both hands and broken a lance with the Americans. . . . Once again I have to bear witness to the dominating force of Eduard Steichen's art. Confronted with his achievements, neither the protagonist nor the detractor of photography can say his last word on the subject. The first feels that a worker has arisen who at last can continue from strength to strength, and that therefore he can not foretell to what pitch he may advance photography. As for the hostile critic, I defy him to come out of his windowless entrenchments and formulate any new attack that has a shadow of logic in it. It matters not to me what art Steichen's examples do or do not resemble. They must be judged by what they are and what they convey. If a man tells me that he can not see the sunlight in the *Mother and Child* or in *Spring*, then he must swear to me that he is blind, otherwise his portion should be in outer darkness forevermore. But I have done with him and his kind. I wish to enjoy my own thoughts, and I shall remember for many a day the rich depth and strength of the velvet tones in the *Poster Lady*, the tearful vision of *Duse*, and that masterpiece of portraiture, *Rodin*, set before his own masterpiece, “Le Penseur,” inspired and inspirative — with the ghost of the Victor Hugo looking on. I am tired of that addled question in the short catechism of the camera: “Is photography an art?” with all its bungling answers in extenso. Let the answer be: “Yes: It is Steichen. Enough said!” And some day doubtless another man will spring forth and be to Steichen as Steichen is to Stieglitz. The services rendered to the cause by Alfred Stieglitz must not be forgotten, for it was his pioneership which cleared the tangled ground and made a Steichen possible. No. 120, for example, shows the genesis of Steichen's *Spring* theme, and again the Stieglitz who saw the sunny air in *Going to the Post* paved the way for Alvin Coburn to arrive at his sunlit bridge.

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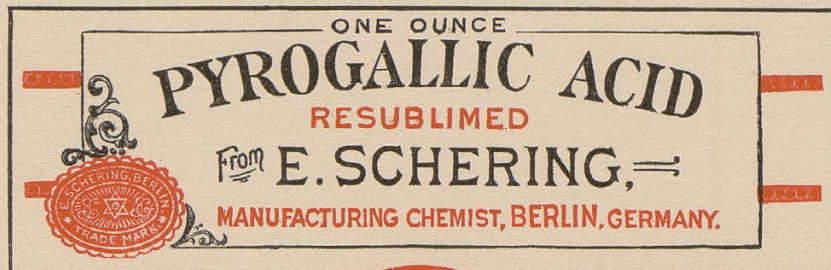
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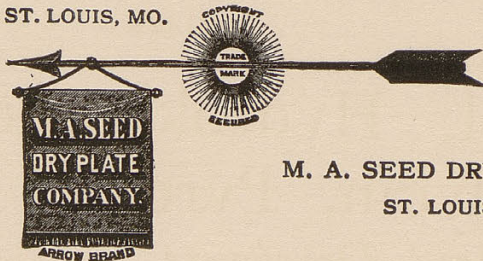
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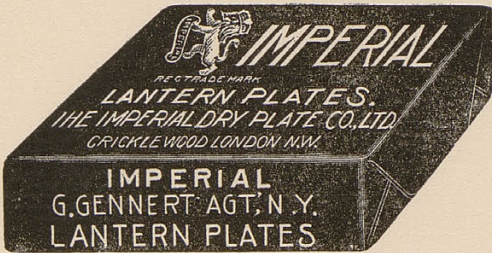
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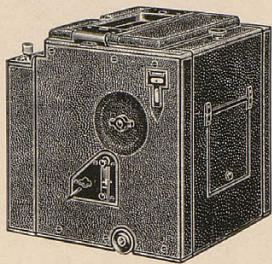
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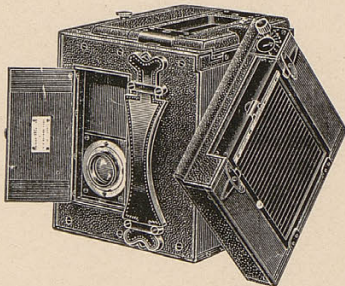
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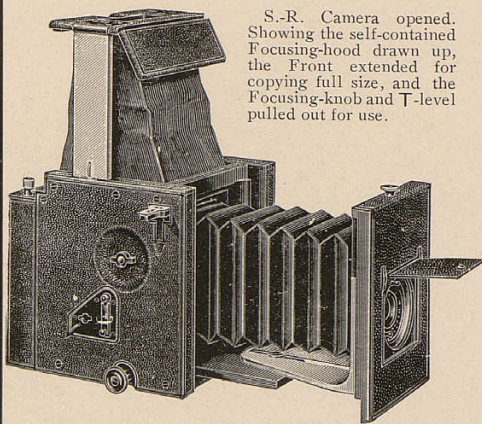
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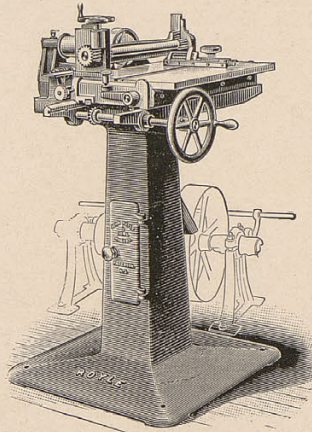
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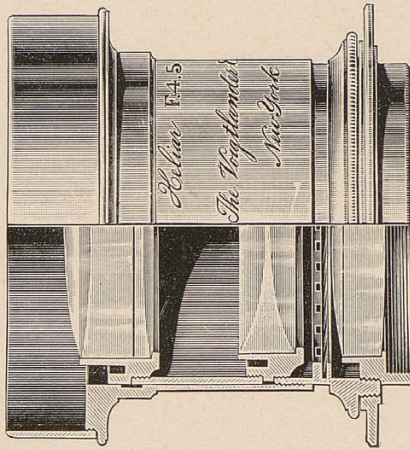
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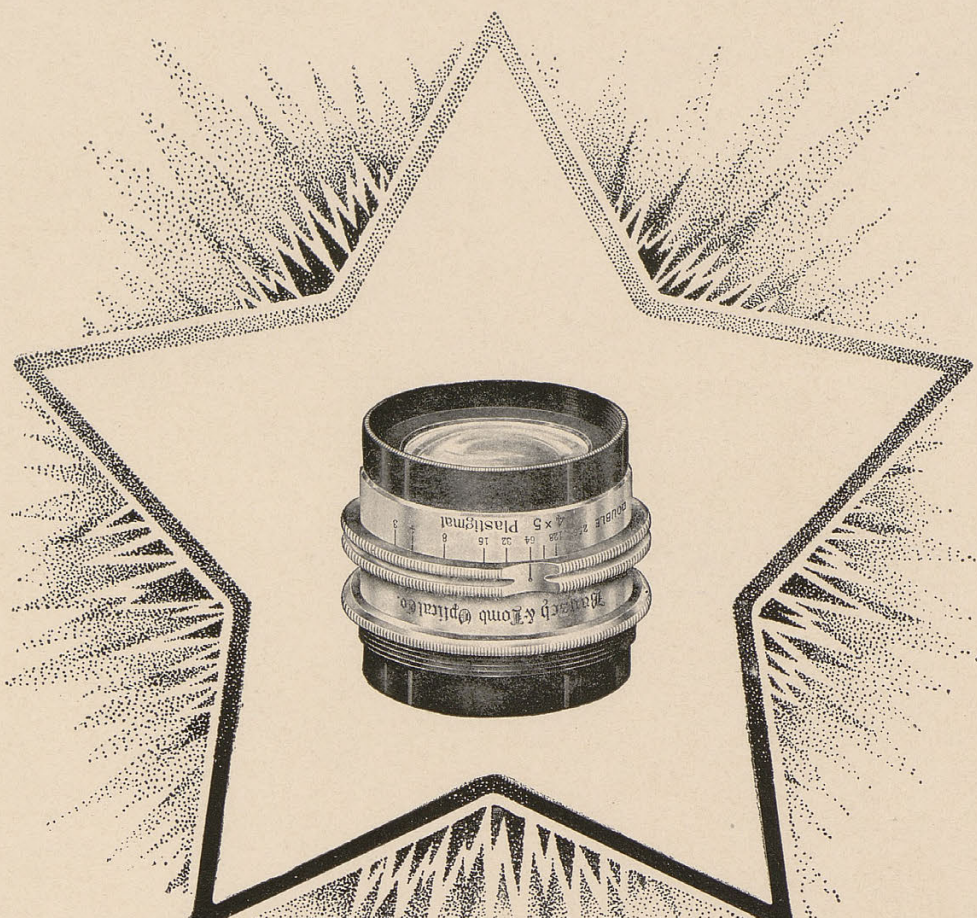
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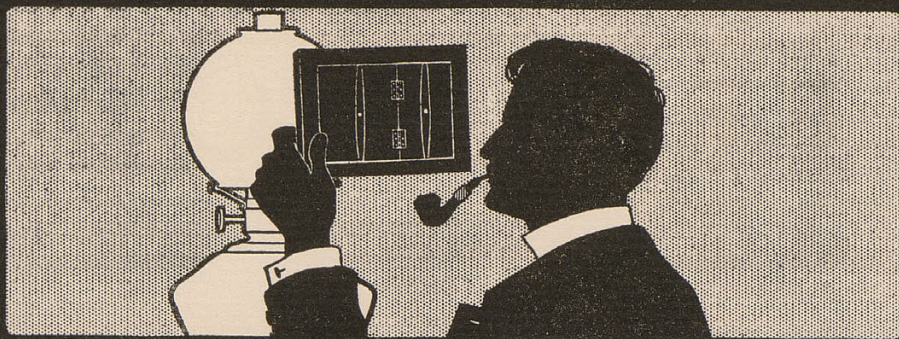
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