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PAINTERS, PICTURES AND  
THE PEOPLE



# PAINTERS, PICTURES AND THE PEOPLE

BY

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THE GALLERIES OF THE EXPOSITION  
THE SAN DIEGO GARDEN FAIR

WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS

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## FOREWORD

*THESE chapters are addressed to those students of art who form the great majority ordinarily overlooked by writers on the arts. Far too often, unfortunately, so-called higher aesthetic criticism is attempted when simpler ways of approach would be much more useful. Many books on art are over the heads of the masses, and all readers forgotten save those chosen few for whose favorable opinion the author is most eager.*

*All the topics in this book have been developed originally in speaking to classes of undergraduates in the University of California, as an introduction to a course in the general history of modern art, and in public lectures before audiences of many different types. Dealing constantly in a practical way with many people of little technical knowledge, I have found that it is a mistake to take too much for granted a knowledge of the fundamental principles of aesthetic appreciation. This book, therefore, is an attempt to lay foundations for a general appreciation of art that may be further developed according to individual ideals.*



## INTRODUCTION

IT may be asserted without fear of contradiction that no art activity enlists so many zealous admirers as the profession of the producer of pictures. Many times we hear at art exhibitions the ingenuous exclamations of enthusiastic appreciators who think they would give much if only they might know how to paint a picture. This wistful attitude of the public we seldom find extended to the other arts—music, poetry, architecture, sculpture. No other art seems so universally rated as the essential food for aesthetic satisfaction as painting. Although the ability to produce works of art is denied the average mortal, it is considered a solace and delight to be able to talk about pictures, particularly in studio or technical terms. To own an oil painting—even if of dubious quality—is more impressive to the multitude than the possession of a grand piano. This all seems very encouraging, and one might almost believe that to be an artist is to be bedded on roses. Unfortunately, the public has some very positive views as to what a picture

should be, and the artist puts forth some others—often very contrary to those of the public.

This incontrovertible condition at once places a twofold responsibility upon the artist, for, while working primarily to be respected in his profession, he must please a sometimes very fickle public besides. Take some other artistic profession—that of the architect, for instance—for contrast; the architect may ignore the public, usually, and produce entirely for the satisfaction of his single client and the relatively small number of his fellow architects. It is different with the painter. It is very perplexing, to the artist and public alike, that their two judgments differ so widely—to the artist, who cannot understand what he calls the whims of the public, and much more to the public, which finds only very few painters to its liking, and then not always those the profession would put on a pedestal.

But what is this public, and is it worth being taken into account by the artist? Of the small number of those who have been students all their lives I am not thinking, nor of that small coterie of those equipped with the same artistic instincts as the producing artist, although without

a power to express their emotions in any medium. We speak of the latter as the people with marked artistic perception; we speak of them as connoisseurs. They do not themselves produce, but their instinctive judgment has made them most valuable studio aids and advisers of the artist. When they are blessed with this world's goods, they are angel visitants for the profession, and an artist's Utopia would not be possible without them. These people with artistic perception are essentially of the same kind as the producing artist, the sole difference between the two existing merely in artistic productiveness or unproductiveness. However, they are so few and far between that as a class they neither need nor invite any attention—they are an exception.

But let us pay attention to that rather large, heterogeneous mass of those who make up our exhibition crowds and who are said to constitute the backbone of our civilization. I have no delusions about the number of those who wish to be able to respond sympathetically to the individual appeal of the painter. Since they will always be in the majority, it is doubly necessary that everything possible should be done to help train their instincts into the channels which lead to

real appreciation and fullest enjoyment. That this is fundamentally a problem of education becomes evident when one discovers that discerning appreciation is a question of desire plus knowledge of certain principles evolved by long usage and common understanding.

Of all the many perplexing problems of education none seems, however, more discouraging than that of bringing artist and public together upon a common basis of mutual understanding. To allow the product of the painter—his picture—to be the sole and only means of communication—to depend upon it alone to produce enlightenment, without any other previous preparation on the part of the public, neither is nor has been, to all appearances, productive of the best results. The chasm still remains, and even becomes wider, as one experimenting age of art after another presents new problems which the public seems utterly unprepared to receive with interest, or even with respect.

The fact that among the well-to-do an understanding of artistic efforts is more widely found than among the masses is not so much due to a keener innate instinct or artistic perception or inherited tendencies as it is to more frequent



FIVE O' CLOCK JUNE

PLATE II

From the Oil Painting by  
ROBERT SPENCER, A. N. A.





opportunities for study, and experience based on more intimate acquaintance with art.

The great masses of the people continue to nurse the fond belief that all that is necessary to settle the question of aesthetic responsibility is merely to express a personal choice.

It is a curious fact that many people who have contributed conspicuously toward a more general appreciation of pictures are often from outside the painter's realm, with sometimes no other qualification than a capacity for literary expression, and possibly a generous or exuberant imagination which enables them to endow a picture with boundless qualities which the artist in his most extravagant dreams never conceived.

The artist as a rule is so discouraged over the literary exploitation of the children of his muse that he has become resigned to his fate and with grim humor accepts what he cannot change. On the whole he deserves sympathy in a predicament which he himself has not brought about, but which, on the other hand, he generally does not attempt to change. He feels that after all his work is misinterpreted by people who are on the whole more interested in the literary meaning of pictures than in those artistic qualities of

paintings, dear to his heart, which have to do with line, form, colour, and their disposition in an orderly and organized fashion on the basis of certain artistic principles.

The application of these principles, rather than a knowledge of historical events, of the physical appearance of a country, of the characteristics of a person, or of exterior facts, must be the real test of the artistic merit of a picture. Without some proper understanding of technical procedures and an understanding of some of the many laws of design, it seems to me very hard to make any progress in the acquisition of what we may term an ability to judge and enjoy.

Art in its traditional aspects, as represented in painting, is dependent for its success largely, I take it, upon demonstrable conditions which in a great measure may be understood by any studious person, without the necessity of much technical knowledge.

Human nature prefers to be guided by standards in almost everything else, but not in the consideration of pictures. It is true that many of the working rules of the studio are very subtle, and scarcely recognizable, but they are present, nevertheless, in any good picture. The

stubborn attitude of most painters in refusing to take the public into their confidence does not help very much. The minute a picture is exhibited and has become the common property of the multitude, the artist, on the other hand, is kindly invited to retire to the seclusion of his studio and allow the public to make of his picture whatever it pleases. In a measure that is fair enough, since a picture can only mean to a person whatever it conveys on the basis of what the individual beholder is able to get out of it or able to put into it.

If our artists would devote their energies, now too often spasmodically applied toward educating the public along technical lines and in the principles of composition, color theory, and design, they would doubtlessly be able to sell more good pictures and moreover promote their own artistic freedom and economic independence.

The talking artist is greatly and unjustly despised, but after all he is as necessary as any person who through educational endeavors takes the public into the inner mysteries of the hows and wherefores of any profession.

It is safe to say that the great mass of artists do their work instinctively. They dispose of

line and form, of areas and colour, according to intuition, and they are rarely able to explain the reasons any further than to say that theirs is the right way. The most obscure, after all, is the purely technical side of the painter's art, which is often treated with a secrecy bordering on mysteriousness; but it is no more subtle than the many aesthetic principles which have been evolved from the experience of the past and which in their accumulation are alike bewildering and baffling. Our American interest in art has certainly become phenomenal, and we can no longer complain of lack of opportunities for study at home. But so long as the interest is focused exclusively upon the subject matter and little concern manifested as to abstract artistic qualities, it will never result in anything else but pseudo-expertship.

Before examining the working principles of art, it might be well to inquire into the aims of art, and its objects as related to the life of men. Since art is not based merely on individual efforts, but on broader things expressed by collective efforts of many people, its significance as a part of civilization becomes evident. To lay a liberal foundation for an appreciation of the

aesthetic manifestations of a people, one has first to recognize the true function of art within a civilization, and its intimate connection with the world at large.

While the creating of what we call the beautiful will always remain the privilege of a chosen few, only the understanding and enjoyment of art by the masses can bring about an ideal democracy.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART

THAT the meaning of art is an enigma to many people is probably due in part to its boundless variety of occurrence, and in part to a prevailing ambiguity in the use of the term. To furnish a concise explanation of the word, other than a dictionary definition, would be very difficult, and one is reminded in this predicament of the well-known query—what is a spiral? and of the usual movement of the hands in answer. That is to say, we all know what is understood by art, we can give many examples to illustrate what we mean, but we falter in attempting any direct statement of its meaning. To the artist, the thing is much less a puzzle than to the layman, because he knows that if he has a good day, whatever he may do is *ipso facto* art, by reason of his possession of a God-given talent for producing the thing we call art. For the convenience of the public, and for philosophic purposes, art has been defined in many ways, all in the last analysis expressing the same idea. Art is essentially the expressing

of something in such a way as to give aesthetic pleasure. It is the significant way of doing a thing, anything that might be ennobled by an improved and dignified form of representation. Or, as in the case of satirical or humorous expression, the primary purpose may be merely characterization, or the heightening of some phase of self-realization, rather than the achieving of what is ordinarily thought of as the beautiful.

We have learned to recognize art in very many forms through which human nature gratifies its aesthetic senses. Thus the arts are divided into the aesthetic or fine arts—the free and independent arts which exist entirely for their own sake, to produce beautiful things—embracing painting, poetry, the drama, sculpture, music, the dance; the dependent arts, which minister primarily to some utilitarian purpose, like architecture, landscape gardening, decoration, ceramics, the goldsmith's art, and others. The so-called fine arts seem to offer the favorite means of aesthetic satisfaction as compared with the dependent or utilitarian arts, which, curiously enough, are frequently rated as inferior in their aesthetic appeal.

I seriously question the truth of this common

contention, because I do not believe that the abstract artistic element in poetry, painting, or a piece of sculpture is to most people the moving force in their so-called enjoyment, but rather the pleasure of intellectual satisfaction in contemplating the subject matter involved. To the great majority of people the pure abstract beauty, the beauty of form, line, balance, spacing, color, composition, and what not, is unfortunately of little or no consequence. Their approval of a picture is almost entirely based on the acceptability of the subject matter, which, if intelligible, and better yet, of a moralizing, preaching tone, is the decisive factor in causing them to pronounce it a work of art. On the other hand, the utilitarian art object—an oriental rug for instance—does not necessarily possess the quality of moving our intellect, but it may bear infinitely more of real art meaning than the story-telling picture. But we shall have to devote ourselves to this very important subject separately, later on, and return for a time to a general discussion of the subject of art.

Materially, then, painting, the less abstract art, as contrasted with music and poetry, has become recognized as momentous above all





JUAN DOMINGO AND THE BREAD JAR

PLATE III

From the Oil Painting by  
VICTOR HIGGINS  
Owned by the  
CITY OF CHICAGO



other arts—at least in popular favor. One must come to this conclusion when one hears of the common classification of artist, sculptor, architect, and realizes what is meant by it. The German language is more fortunate in having a collective name indicating aesthetic responsibilities—in the word “Künstler.” The three representative artists—painter, architect, and sculptor—are collectively “Künstler.” An “artist” in Germany is a vaudeville performer—one who does stunts, turns somersaults, and juggles with a variety of objects. In France we have the “peintre artiste” as the supreme being of aesthetic ambitions, with the architect and sculptor vying for a close second. I believe this sad confusion of terms has no little to do with our common misunderstanding of the meaning of art. Art in its real intent must mean an all-including comprehensive unity of aesthetic expression which cannot occur in isolation. It is the isolated and over-specialized expressions of art which in their very nature are artificial and meaningless.

The greatest period of art we know of is that of the Greeks. Their whole existence, their various ways of thinking and of doing things,

their whole philosophy of life was guided by the dictates of the laws of the beautiful. It was only under such unified thought that they could produce the beautiful simultaneously in literature, poetry, the drama, sculpture, and architecture. Their every object of use was shaped and created with the same thought of beautiful expression as their more monumental artistic productions. We have become so convinced of their superiority in expressing things in a beautiful way, that nowadays the word classic has become the highest praise we can bestow on any work of art. It is fortunate that at so early a date in recorded history we should have been furnished with expressions of art of many kinds fit to become guiding examples for later civilization. We possess today actual specimens of their art which are the inspiration of all artists of the present time and which bid fair not to be surpassed, nor even equalled, particularly in sculpture and architecture. The Greeks have given us the formula, the a, b, c, by which we could attempt an expression of our own civilization in artistic form. It is true enough that the formula is often all that many so-called artists ever recognize in Greek art, much to their own loss.

Moreover, the Greeks gave us the fundamental principle of idealization—the means of expressing ordinary things in an ennobled way. Their art was guided primarily by an understanding of the fitness of things. Their costumes, for instance, were practical and beautiful alike, and conducive to a normal development of their bodies. Their vases, urns, and vessels generally had proportions and shapes equally fit for use and beauty. Their architecture, domestic and monumental, never lost sight of the requirements of simplicity and fitness, and became aesthetically satisfactory by simplicity and soundness of construction. Simplicity used to stand for artistic quality—but how we have changed nowadays! The over-ornate is now readily confused with the artistic.

All we seem to think necessary to an artistic atmosphere nowadays is some thousands of pictures. Though evanescent, marvelous was the beauty of the architectural ensemble of our last great exposition, in San Francisco. We could not say enough about Jules Guérin's successful chromatic treatment of the finely-textured travertine surfaces of the exhibition palaces, but when it came to "real art," only pictures would

do. Why everlastingly pictures, and why not carpets, wall-papers, fountains, interior decoration, and the thousand real things in need of artistic formulation and expression? The great artist of by-gone periods, whether architect or sculptor, would smile at the topsy-turviness of our modern world of art, which too often begins at the top and works toward the bottom. Not only is the public obsessed by this misguided pursuit, nowadays, but very frequently artists show condescension rather than pride in turning their interest towards basic utilitarian art, after having made a pathetic fizzle of so-called higher aspirations. The artist nowadays is often a good example of inverted methods of art, beginning at the top and landing heavily at the bottom.

We may, whenever we tire of Greek examples, turn our thought toward another great country of artists—to Japan, where artistic attention to utilitarian things is carried farther than anywhere else. The Japanese artist, while his architecture is not monumental, manifests a real capacity for artistic expression in everything he undertakes to enrich in form, with a persistent regard for fitness and a wonderful individuality in meeting the constructive necessities involved.



THE GROVE

PLATE IV

From the Oil Painting by  
WILLIAM WENDT, A. S. A.





Japanese sculpture seldom occurs detached, but more often as an embellishment of the architectural forms. And as for pictures, the Japanese execute many important pictures on screens. The so-called Japanese prints are produced semi-mechanically to satisfy great numbers of people at little cost. Japanese art, unfortunately, has never impressed the great masses of the western world, on account of its alleged plebeian scope—its lack of exclusiveness. I venture to say that if fuller understanding of the Japanese idea of art could develop in our country, many of our aesthetic problems would solve themselves.

So far, art with us is in danger of becoming the exclusive interest of the well-do-to by being continually restricted to pictures which become more and more the objects for speculative financial juggling in the hands of owners and certain art dealers alike. The commercial exploitation of art is really not of our own invention, and of no significance so far as the artistic status of this country is concerned. The fact that somebody has the money to buy a Franz Hals for half a million when somebody else is willing to give four hundred and ninety-nine thousand dollars is of no artistic significance. Only when

one thinks that the amount of money invested that way, if it is an investment at all, would go a long way toward supplying every museum in the country with a comprehensive collection of all good original pottery made in the year 1918 in these United States, then the seriousness of such waste becomes at once most apparent. But who cares for pottery when pictures are heralded as the paramount concern? That we have a native instinct for the really beautiful is evident enough in the many independent efforts put forth with true creative self-reliance in the field of the decorative arts.

Since the very early days of American art, it has been paintings first, then sculpture and architecture. The demand for purely sentimental reasons, for pictures of our distinguished citizens called for the service of the portrait painter, and many collections of so-called colonial portraits shows that the prevailing lack of appreciation of artistic quality in everything else could not very well lead to anything better than those wooden, stupid, front-parlor chromos. There were exceptions, like Gilbert Stuart, and possible a few lesser men. Gradually artistic expression in utilitarian things, largely in archi-

ture, brought about a more genuine native artistic capacity, which in the meantime has become applied to other artistic interests and which at present promises far to outstrip the progress of architecture in this country.

The use of the classic formula is the right thing in the student atelier, but when it is persisted in, and merely used as a lifeless rule, it becomes distressing. The great architectural performances at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition were all classic in formula, but not always so in spirit. The difference between a mere receipt and an ability to build up on a classic foundation new constructive forms in architecture is ever recognized by the layman. Bernard Maybeck's Fine Arts Palace and Louis Mullgardt's Court of Abundance were imposing and uplifting to the multitude, although very few could give any direct reasons for their convictions. The great Court of the Universe, on the other hand, with all its immensity, was like an arctic sea in its coldness.

Real art must be the expression of an original experience, and not a repetition of an historical style. In many ways the art of this country has so far only just started to assert its native force,

only just dared to throw off the restraint under which it has labored, unable to realize its own impulses. The art of the Greek was based on a noble civilization, a young and vigorous state. When it was bodily transported to Italy, it did not thrive as abundantly as at home, because it was borrowed, and grafted on an alien root. Secondly, the creative instinct was not present, to carry on to higher individual Roman expression what had come from a people only slightly related. It is true that the decorative element in architecture and sculpture was much accentuated during the Roman period, sacrificing, however, that classic simplicity for ornateness, and not always to the gain of the work.

We find in the Renaissance proof of the necessity for individual creative genius in a people for the production of true art. The artistic a, b, c, so to speak, was very much the same after it had once been laid down by the Greeks—or possibly by the Egyptians. There is little difference in the artistic formula of the Greek, that of the old Romans, and that of the Renaissance. But the spirit, the enthusiasm, the temperament of the great Greek masters is found again in the leaders of the Renaissance. It was

not merely a physical revival of old forms, or a direct transplanting of their artistic products, as in the earlier days of Roman splendor. It was something totally different. It was a desire to realize an aesthetic ideal while dealing with local conditions. The Renaissance artist could not copy any palaces from Greek models to line his canals. He could not absolutely shape his sculpture after great patterns of the past. His paintings were the first of their kind. But the spirit which guided a Phidias must have lived in Michael Angelo, Leonardo, and Raphael. Is there anywhere a more convincing example than Leonardo of the all-comprising meaning of art, when, in his letter to Ludovico Sforza, after dwelling on his capacity as military engineer and his ability to construct cannon and scaling-ladders, and mortars and engines of beautiful and useful shape, he concludes, "In time of peace I believe I can equal anyone in architecture in constructing public and private buildings and in conducting water from one place to another. I can execute sculpture, whether in marble, bronze or terra cotta, and in painting I can do as much as any other, be he who he may be. Further I could engage to execute the bronze horse in

eternal memory of your father and the illustrious house of Sforza.”

It was this ability to turn anything, like magic, from something without meaning, without form, into something beautiful, that characterizes the true artist. It is the universality of art which alone can transform a country from pseudo-artistic into a civilization of true artistic significance. The isolated artistic expressions may exist by accident, but the feeling of artistic unity will never spring from “the narrow channels of one-sided goodness.” It has ever been so when great things were done.

The Renaissance shines in the brilliance of its many versatile men who were never too proud to turn their hand to the beautification of utilitarian things. The foolish classification of fine and—shall we say “unfine” artists, is the great mistake of the age. Many so-called artists of the Renaissance might be called artisans today, by reason of the subject matter of their work, although their manner of work might be superior to many modern so-called artists. One of the most hopeful signs in our country is presented by the constantly increasing employment of our so-called artist sculptors in what they themselves

unfortunately often call commercial work. Peculiarly it often is their best, because it is the kind of work their instinct tells them is based on a logical condition. Fortunately, also, our painters have come more and more into contact with native necessities, particularly in the fields of mural decoration and illustration.

Few people have any conception of the boon that the desire for illustrated reading matter has been to the painter-illustrator who has the gift, unfortunately too rare, of creative instinct and feeling for design. It is in this typical field of art that we have so early developed a higher quality recognized throughout the world as a genuine American accomplishment. Such names as Howard Pyle, Maxfield Parrish, Jules Guérin, are typical of our achievement in that field. So many are content with the mere copying of nature that any arbitrary problem such as illustrating throws them off their feet.

It is always a sign of improvement to have artistic energies turned towards utilitarian problems. I remember very well the sensation of my early student days in Berlin when Otto Eckman arrived from Munich to take over his classes in decorative painting, after having said a fond

farewell to picture-painting in Munich. His announcement to the profession in those late nineties created a sensation. Having become utterly disgusted with painting innumerable—but nevertheless excellent—pictures for purposes always to be determined later on, he decided to separate himself at once for good and all from the last vestige of his easel painting, and forthwith proceeded to design and paint only directly useful things. His work as a teacher of design, cut short as it was by an early death, was surely more far-reaching than his most interesting and successful pictures. The whole movement in Europe erroneously labeled “Art Nouveau” is based on a recognition of the idea of the utilitarianism of art and the idea of getting away from the classic formula and developing a classic spirit. It is this spirit that must take hold of us before we can hope to have a real American art.

The protest that William Morris voiced for his time, should be doubly appreciated in our own country—more so here than anywhere else. His demand for an art which concerned itself with the fundamental necessities was, I think, well founded, and he started the snowball which



developed into the avalanche of modern art, which bids fair to replace entirely the formalism which has held the world since the Renaissance.

It is, of course, so tempting to go along in the old way, so much more convenient, less strenuous in every sense. To what silly conditions this never-ending re-use of old artistic forms can go is well illustrated in the case of the acanthus. In an arid country like Greece, it was one of the few indigenous naturalistic forms presenting itself to the native architect-designer for decorative purposes. And how they made use of it, understanding fully its wonderful decorative and organic constructive possibilities. The Romans used it with even greater decorative force. On its reappearance in the Renaissance—it is still recognizable, though often merely copied as an almost abstract ornament. Its use in northern Europe became more and more imitative, and eventually devoid of real character, until ultimately one has the feeling, particularly during the end of the last century, that many architects, sculptors, and decorative designers hardly knew whether the acanthus was an animal or a plant. They simply copied it in never-ending monotony, having no chance of seeing it grow

since it is not indigenous to northern Europe. And with the acanthus, other things became similarly amorphous. Artistic expression must be based on a personal emotion, experience, personal observation. No matter how clever the physical form may be, it must possess the spirit of the thing. Our period imitations all suffer from the absence of real underlying experience. No matter how well done, they are generally devoid of that fitness of things which is essential in art.

The Renaissance artist who rebelled, first quietly, then openly, against a transplantation of Gothic art into Italy, did so because, while he may have been sensitive to its beauty, he must have felt that such architecture, such steep roofs, such fragile, lacy walls, were not well adapted to southern European conditions. The decorative forms of the Gothic were all foreign to Italian eyes. The oak, the maple, were northern, and his sympathies were all with the palm and the laurel and the olive. The classical architecture persisted, however, even where Gothic had gained its strongest foothold, and still persists, particularly in this country, where architecture as a national school has made little

advance. Who does not contemplate with mixed feelings the innumerable St. Peter's domes which have become the architectural pièces de resistance in every state capitol and county seat from the northeast to the southwest? This sorry self-complacency in repetition is not by any means from a lack of originality among our leading architects. It is simply a strict adherence to a recognized standard form. Although some of these domes are very lofty, very noble, none serve a practical purpose. There is never anything housed inside them. They are purely ornamental, and for that reason might have been done just as well in some other form—some new form sprung afresh from a new opportunity. Some, like the new San Francisco City Hall, are beautiful in their fine-scaled, jewelry-like ornamentation, and their successful personal note, the note which alone can save such a building from commonplaceness. Their practical purpose is to serve as the physical emphasis of the center of the city business. In some cities, particularly abroad, this has been done with much greater originality. I am afraid my hopes of ever having an architect confer the honor upon me of executing a mural painting will

dwindle away if I do not leave architecture alone—a field I cheerfully abandoned in my early days, on account of a very violent and healthy antipathy for mechanical drawing. However, architecture is, so to speak, the supreme factor in artistic production. At least it ought to be that, for one is constantly looking for relief in that quarter rather than to the other arts. It is true we have the skyscraper, as our original architectural contribution—but what of its artistic merit? The older type was seldom beautiful in proportion. Some of the latter-day towers, like the Woolworth Building, are inspiring as masterpieces of rhythm. Collectively, standing among them in lower New York, they are very ineffective decoratively. They impress one only after one hears of their cost and size. Our engineers are doing a good deal better. Many modern engineering feats of this country are both artistic and original. The judicious use of concrete and steel in dams, bridges, and buildings, often entirely without any so-called architectural embellishments, is astounding. A bridge like the Lindenthal span over the East river is a wonder of proportion, of rhythmic space and line work, and it will bring us more

praise from competent art critics in Europe than many thousands of our pictures. In engineering we are really on the right track, in a profession which was never before even counted as an art, and which has existed only as a necessary adjunct to architecture, losing its identity under an architectural cover.

In our decorative arts we can hardly be expected to have done better than Europe up to the beginning of the "art nouveau." Our jigsaw-ornamented modern buildings are not a bit more mid-victorian than similar monstrosities of Europe up to the eighties. The triumph of planing-mill machinery has had its day, and the healthy growth of the new decorative art movement abroad has already spread to us and taken root here in America. We are beginning to recognize art in the minor things. We are actually holding exhibitions of the "useful arts," which I believe is meant to denote the work of useful artists in contradistinction to the "useless arts," by the useless artists. I admit the logic of this classification, originated by the Chicago Institute of Art, which now holds annually an exhibition of the useful decorative arts, followed by the annual display of American fine arts, by

which must be meant the work of the useless artists. I admit I have been one of them, but only by necessity, since I cannot get enough people to buy my book plates and other useful things, and I do occasionally sell an easel painting.

We are finding ourselves. Our native talent is too genuine not to realize quickly our true artistic necessities, and pictures may well be the very last of them. This question of artistic self-realization is just as important to a nation as to the individual, and naturally can be accomplished only by the individual's beginning—and very many are beginning, fortunately. There is first of all the use of the native raw materials of wood, stone, marble, the response to the many new forms in nature available for ornamental purposes. Then there is the development of minor styles of constructive beauty, as, for instance, the so-called Mission furniture. Rightly, it is no decorative style at all. It refrains from using any period forms of European origin. It is content to be plain and devoid of any curlycues and dewjiggers and is just plain American. It will always be in style, because it was never out of style, possessing no decorative ornamental feature of any kind. Its charm is

entirely in its proportion and utility. But one thing we can say for it, it did not come from Paris or London. It is child of America by reason of its rigid construction, simplicity, and common sense, which an engineer might have thought out.

The shrine of worship of things beautiful in the average house undoubtedly will continue to be the "front parlor," that mysterious museum of miscellaneous monstrosities. I have a parlor myself, but I call it a living-room, because I spend all my time in it, and feel comfortable in it besides. I have no "parlor" because I can use all of the things in my living-room without fear of destruction. Too often the parlor is the sacred temple of art, of an art which is ludicrous, useless, and therefore pseudo. Why is everything in the parlor so artistic just because you generally can't use it?—Gold chairs you can't sit on—vases you can't put flowers in because they tip over if you fill them with water—chandeliers obscured by superfluous ornament which will not give enough light but which are crushing with their weight of hollow metal, and many other things too numerous to mention. We are often perfectly content to sacrifice the

front parlor to silly conventionality so long as we are permitted to enjoy life in other parts of the house. Besides, the pictures hang in the parlor, and that is of some moment. I really wanted to speak of these if it has not become evident by this time that this book is merely a disguised plea for something else but pictures. I regret that I find myself spreading iconoclastic ideas when I am producing pictures myself. However, I am willing to suffer the consequences of the betrayal of confidence of a deceived reader.

Art, then, must exist, must express itself in every conceivable part of our physical surroundings, before the easel picture has any claim upon recognition. Sad and unprofessional as this may seem, coming from one who has himself engaged in the struggle for pictorial expression, it is nevertheless true, and the development of our own art will again show its logic. The fundamental requirement of all art is necessity. Art is the expression of emotion or passion in many mediums—not one alone—to appeal to our aesthetic senses. One cannot emphasize this too much in the light of the modern predilection for pictures, which almost amounts to passion, kept





THE RED PARASOL

From the Oil Painting by  
GEORGE BELLOWS, N. A.  
Owned by  
DR. W. C. WARD, New York.

PLATE V



at fever heat by the fascination of the speculative monetary value of paintings. The great art of any day must offer clear insight into the civilization upon which it is based. It must become the truthful record by which future generations may judge the humaneness of their forefathers. An art showing merely skill can never be really alive—it will impress only as a feat.

THE ARTIST'S VERSUS THE PUBLIC'S  
POINT OF VIEW

WHAT is, after all, the criterion which guides the painter in his endeavor to express himself in his particular medium? Looking at large numbers of pictures, as any exhibition permits, one feels that few painters themselves know what they were about, but curiously enough the few painters who, according to the profession, are entirely in the wrong are frequently the pets of the masses. The new lights in the profession are seldom immediately recognized as such by the public, and it is only after the trusted connoisseur has spoken that the public, eager to be on the safe side, dutifully adopts his opinion—and the rest is easy. What the great mass of people would do with an unexplained collection of pictures can very easily be imagined—not least from the results of the popular voting contests often held throughout the country in art galleries of miscellaneous character. The greatest number of votes will go to some trivial picture, while the real canvas, with a lasting message of

beauty, is generally overlooked. This common occurrence calls for immediate reference to a contention which every one will ultimately acknowledge as basic, namely, the artist's discrimination between those paintings which agitate only our temporary, our fleeting passions, and those which engage our interest permanently, by reason of their appeal to our more constant emotions. The former, owing to their nature, often enlist our attention more promptly than the latter. It is a common experience of many people on longer acquaintance with large numbers of pictures, as at any long-term Exposition, to change their affection from the first to the second type and this is a most significant and encouraging symptom. The artist has relegated the lighter kind to the illustrator, who cannot afford to interrupt the thread of the story any longer than necessary to emphasize a passing point. However, it does not follow that illustration is not art, though in a certain sense it is an inferior art owing to its restrictions. The illustrative picture is generally the most successful in capturing the attention of exhibition visitors, but it will invariably be supplanted in the affections of those capable of more serious

thoughts by the at first less appealing picture of the latter type.

Beauty seems to be found by most people only in the painting which most closely approximates photographic truth. The popular fallacy that it is difficult to attain this goal is stubbornly maintained. If that be right, then why not apply this fixed belief to music and literature, for the sake of consistency. If literal truthfulness is art, then why does not a faithful repetition of the sounds of the birds result in what we call music, and why, on the other hand, does not a merely painstakingly accurate account of some event in itself most interesting, observed on the street and reported by a newspaper man, count as literature? It must be obvious, if consistency of application of the same principle is helpful at all in an attempt at analysis, that art as expressed in painting must consist of something else.

Many paintings, and these are a goodly number, are scarcely art and merely imitation of a fact, rendered correctly but without a fragment of suggestive power, of those finer elements that open avenues of beauty, and give the thrills of aesthetic enjoyment which only an imaginative



YOUTH AND SUNSHINE

PLATE VI

From the Oil Painting by  
EDWARD DUFNER, A. N. A.  
Owned by  
MRS. J. HENRY DICK, New York





and creative artist can give. Unfortunately many painters, by reason of temperamental impotence, see the world as any ordinary person would, which oftentimes accounts for their popularity; while the susceptible painter leaves the mere physical fact far behind him and soars above the heads of the common herd in the visual expression of his imaginative fancy. To keep up with the former is not a hard task, but the number of those privileged to accompany the latter is unfortunately very limited. It does not seem to be so impossible as many artists think to add materially to the latter class if people could be made more serious and studious in their attitude toward pictures. The real artist, then, endeavors to lead us into an atmosphere which is distinctively his own, and which differs with every creative individuality. I feel very strongly that only the creative artist, who can bring to us things which are not an everyday feature of the world at large, is at all worthy of permanent consideration. The pathetic experience is all too frequent of the painter who after much painstaking toil in an art school over methods largely technical thinks that the worst has now been conquered, and then comes face

to face with the necessity of saying something in his acquired language. The number of those who paint well, who can reproduce a fact clearly in paint dexterously employed, is always large. But the company of the real creative painter will always be limited. The surface of this earth, with all its many-sided aspects, its multi-colored people, its illimitable fauna and flora, is open to all painters on the same basis. Only a few, however, will tell what they have seen and felt in such a way as to be vital, interesting, original, and at the same time intelligible.

It is, however, necessary to learn that the picturesque and the paintable ought to be recognized as two totally different things. Many a painter has contemplated the ideal state which would result if the public were inclined to feel in this matter as he does. People outdoors are continually seeing marvelous pictures which to their disappointment do not stir the artist at all. Most often artists are painfully bored by the jubilant descriptions by their friends of scenery which the art-loving layman advises them to paint.

The hunting-grounds of the landscape painter are scarcely ever to be found on the highway of

tourist travel. If they are, it is often the artist and his product which has made the place attractive to the public, and not the place itself. The great western scenery in which we Californians are so rich, the lofty mountains, the deep gorges, the groves of enormous trees, do not attract our serious painters half so much as the quiet caves of our coasts, the flat marshes, and the more placid phases of out-of-doors.

To be interesting and original without being intelligent is of course very easy, as some of our recent exploitations in Post Impressionism of so-called Cubism and Futurism have successfully demonstrated. If to be interesting means to attract attention or curiosity, a certain type of recent art leaves nothing to be wished for. If originality means merely to be different, we have produced of late masterpieces that it will be hard to surpass.

It is interesting to bear this in mind, because it proves the artist's contention that the spectacular appeal of the emotional productions of nature, her more violent architecture, makes no such lasting imprint upon our mind as do aspects of nature more leisurely produced, more quiet and more calm. Aside from that, the

problem of scale representation the artist has found almost impossible. Few people realize the impossibility of preserving on a small canvas that oppressive feeling of size which one experiences at the base of a great mountain, or at the bottom or the brink of a vast chasm. This has been tried by many energetic and equally misguided painters, over and over again, but never with complete success. Some painters, like Thomas Hill in a large canvas of the Yosemite Valley, in the Crocker Art Gallery at Sacramento, have come very near to it, and another western veteran of the brush, C. D. Robinson, in his earliest very spontaneous sketches of the same region has gone further than any western painter.

However, the average painter turns to quiet things. Waterfalls which thunder into the picture at one corner and impetuously rush out of the opposite appeal to few. The sketching grounds for the landscape painter, here and elsewhere, have never been brought to his attention by the traveling public. His instinct for unadulterated nature, character, simplicity, and true picturesqueness has led him there. St. Ives, Concarneau, Etaples, Laren, Volendam, Worps-

wede, Dachau—to name a few abroad—would not be on the map if it were not for the artist. They become known in spite of the lack of public patronage. Here in America it has been the same. The virile character of the Maine coast, expressed so simply by Homer—Woodstock, to whose beauties the eyes of the public have been opened by Birge Harrison, John F. Carlson, and their disciples—such nooks and corners are not nourished by the automobile arteries of the affluent traveler. In the west the discerning artist turns away from the Canadian Rockies, the great mountains of the Northwest, Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, and other co-called beauty spots, to retire to the placid beauty of Monterey Bay, Laguna Beach, Bolinas Bay, the shore of Marin county, or the marshes of Alameda. The desert appeals to many strongly, no matter how disagreeable are the associations psychologically connected with it. How many really excellent pictures are there at the art exhibits based on subjects which are commonly spoken of as “scenic wonders”? Very few that I can remember. On the other hand, some of the most captivating of canvases are based on subjects which no layman would stop to look at if he saw them

in reality. A most convincing example of this sort is the small *Le Sidaner* canvas belonging to the Luxembourg, that has been exhibited in many places in the United States—an abandoned supper-table, in a backyard of a French manor. A lamp is burning on the table, and the whole picture is bathed in the atmosphere of a warm summer evening. The picture was acclaimed a gem by the artists first, and later by the public—by the artists because they realized the daring and originality of the author in making so big an appeal with a relatively insignificant motive, and by the public, eventually, yielding at last to the convincing poetic atmosphere of a picture full of intimate charm. Aside from that, it has other technical qualities and charms of color, typical of *Le Sidaner*, of which I want to speak later.

In the other fields of painting it is much the same. In figure painting the richly and expensively gowned woman often appears trivial and uninteresting as compared with *Duveneck's* ragged *Whistling Boy* in the Cincinnati Museum, who looks much more picturesque than a polished and primped society portrait. Artists have a way of turning toward the dilapidated,

the ruined, the decayed, and it is no morbidity, either, which deflects their attention to those things. There is variety of form, of surface, of color, in old weathered buildings, covered with watermarks and many discolorations lacking to a brand new house, as in Robert Spencer's Philadelphia Tenements.

We even find the artist engaged in painting things which are repulsive to us on physical contact. Slimy pools, emitting stench and breeding mosquitos, not infrequently make charming subjects for canvases, and neglected cemeteries appeal to the artist a good deal more than to the layman. This realism, if we call it this, is not a product of the modern age, either, and it certainly has brought into existence multitudes of very enticing works of art. Velasquez's beggars, reeking with filth and dilapidation, Franz Hals's fishwomen, and a great number of modern things are of that class, Randall Davey's Drinker, for example.

By contrast, one is led into the examination of the so-called idealized expression of a subject in a painting. Our innate sense of beauty often moves us to idealize whatever we wish to endow with increased artistic appeal. Idealiza-

tion is the method most frequently practiced of giving a picture interest and charm. Goethe has described it as a concentration upon the most important, the most appealing elements in a subject.

To single out, for instance, the height of a person as a desirable artistic feature, we find that in practically all great paintings of important personages the height has been made much more than the original warrants. Such tenuous, stately ladies as Gainsborough, Reynolds, Romney, and Hoppner painted never walked this earth, but we seem quite willing to believe in them. The laughable efforts of society photographers, putting their stumpy patrons on pedestals, carefully disguised by flowing trains—those touching absurdities will not leave my memory. It discloses photography in one of its most distressing handicaps. This enlargement upon desirable qualities, proportion, color, etc., we find practised in all forms of painting, and we might say that no picture ever was entirely free from it. Whistler's witty retort to a lady who contended she had never seen in the skies sunsets of such superb gorgeousness as Turner painted is very characteristic of the true artist.





THE DRINKER

PLATE VII

From the Oil Painting by  
RANDALL DAVEY



He answered the naive complaint by the whimsical question, "But don't you wish you could?"

In general, the artist recognizes two distinct types of pictures, the naturalistic picture and the decorative; if the public also understood the distinction, much would, I think, be gained. The first and the older one of the two is the naturalistic picture, as it is called—that picture which tries to create an illusion which will make you forget there is such a thing as canvas and wall. Pictures of this type may deal with any subject. They are regarded by many as a bastard race, a perversion of the real function of painting. The type came about gradually, fostered by false outlook and false ideals. Its most popular achievements were the still-lives and interiors of the Seventeenth Century Dutch, and later on the Munich and Düsseldorf school. The latter kind could in most cases be much more sympathetically rendered by literary means, and to the layman became much more enjoyable in the works of such men as Dickens than in painting.

We must not lose sight of the fact that painting is after all the art of ennobling and decorating a surface by means of form, area, color—and an idea, of course; but the idea must not be in

sole control of the problem, to the detriment of the mere qualities of design. Themes like Hovenden's "Breaking Home Ties," in all its sentimentality, would be much more appealing in literature. It is too "literatesque" a subject to be justified in painting. If you were to turn the painting upside down—let me say this to explain more radically what I want to say—it would become uninteresting in the extreme. If you treat a canvas by Abbey or Alexander in the same way it would still exert a charm, because of a certain arrangement of spaces and by reason of the relation of these spaces, its coloring, and its design generally, which give it interest no matter from what distance it is viewed nor from what view-point. If, irrespective of the significance of the subject, this experiment is tried once or twice, it will convince many people of its reasonableness.

In modern times the naturalistic picture of the older schools has had to yield to the conventionalized expression of form and color we meet in the decorative picture. The aims of these two types of picture are almost opposite, and so constantly confused that a lack of appreciation of the principles involved in either one leads to

more misunderstandings than almost any other fundamental artistic contention. The decorative picture, in which I group most conventionalized art expression, has come to us from the Orient. The Japanese screen picture, with its formal linear treatment, its elimination of shadows and lights, has caused a tendency in modern art which meets with much hostility on the part of the western public. The naturalistic picture, as I remarked before, aims at a complete illusion. In trying to destroy the surface on which it is painted, it creates, so to speak, a hole in the wall. The person looking at such a picture is led far into the picture. The element of aerial perspective which involves the change of appearance objects assume by loss of color as they are removed farther from the eye is an important element in such pictures. The decorative picture is built up on entirely different principles. My own contention is that the purely naturalistic picture in a certain sense is really not good art at all, since the art of painting aims primarily at the decorating of surfaces, with a proper regard for the preservation of such surfaces in the architectural ensemble. However, the naturalistic imitative picture has come to stay, though a

great many pictures of that type on investigation are found to belong to the decorative conventionalized group. The decorative picture is the picture of the present day. Our exhibitions are controlled by them, and the public is growing to appreciate them more and more. Pictures like "Monterey Cypresses" by Mathews, at the Metropolitan Museum, the "Monterey Bay" by Bruce Nelson, and particularly Joseph T. Pearson's "In the Valley," in fact the canvases of all our leading men are largely decorative, conventional, rather than naturalistic, imitative. An example of the other type, the naturalistic or imitative, is Church's well known "Niagara," which aims at absolute fidelity to nature without, however, giving it. The great painters of all times have always been strongly imbued with the principle of dealing arbitrarily with naturalistic facts and still carrying the interesting message of indoors or out-of-doors.

While there is an astonishing variety of artistic expression, the laws on which production is based are in most cases the same, used either instinctively or with full knowledge. They are the rules which the painter is taught in the schools, or at least ought to have been taught, and which



THE BROKEN OAK

PLATE VIII

From the Water Color Painting by  
FRANCIS MCCOMAS  
Owned by  
MRS. C. B. RAYMOND, Santa Barbara, Cal





should become a part of his artistic instinct while at work. They are the laws we know as the laws of composition, the art of putting things together for an agreeable artistic effect. The word "design" covers the process more completely, since it includes color, and it is the importance of these laws of design, as applied to the making of pictures, which I should like to impress upon the public. A successful application of them will invariably culminate in certain artistic qualities we have since time immemorial recognized as desirable. They are Balance, Harmony and Rhythm, and Color. The most important thing to convince the public of is the fact of the arbitrary attitude of the trained painter toward his subject. Whether it be a portrait, landscape, interior, still-life, or what not, the thinking painter will always arrange the subject for his canvas to suit himself or he will arrange the object in a way as nearly approaching what he calls a good composition. Only the rank amateur, the person of no experience, or too stupid to understand, will attack any subject as it presents itself. It is this that decides upon the success or failure of a painting. Our great figure painters—Whistler, Sargent, Chase, Tarbell, or any of

those whose work seems so obviously correct and complete—show obedience to these laws without any evident effort. Outdoor subjects are even more affected, and the study of any landscape, cloud arrangement, foliage, shows, in spite of its effect upon the observer of truthfulness, that although these paintings may bear the name of a locality, they are never accurate copies of the spot. There are landscapes which are attempted copies of nature, but they are painful to the eye, they are devoid of everything that makes a work of art interesting. The earliest attempts of the painters of the Hudson River School are pathetic evidences of the futility of copying nature. Nothing will enrage the artist half so much as the well-meant, naive question of the interested layman, "Where did you take this picture?" It was probably, if at all a good picture, not "taken" anywhere, probably not even painted outdoors, but largely the accumulated result of the artist's studies outdoors. Besides, hardly any painting, no matter of what subject, is true to nature. The very best we should expect of it is an agreeable approximation. It is always a sad day for any enthusiast when he finds out there is no such thing as imi-

tation of nature in art. Already Reynolds, in his most interesting discourses on art, points out to his students that general copying is a delusive kind of industry. "The student satisfies himself with the appearance of doing something; he falls into the dangerous habit of imitating without selecting, and of laboring without any determinate object. As it requires no effort of the mind, he sleeps over his work; and those powers of invention and disposition which ought particularly to be called out and put into action lie torpid and lose their energy for want of exercise. How incapable of producing anything of their own are those who have spent their time in making finished copies, is an observation well known to all who are conversant with art."

And why should anybody want to copy nature? The many attempts I have seen were all of the most unsatisfactory kind. First of all, nature is not always beautiful, and when she is, it is never with the fulness of beauty that a true artist can give her in his work. Moreover, why duplicate something that already exists unless you can glorify it, visioning its most exalted possibilities?

Most pictures of the great masters of out-of-

doors look most decidedly as if they had been done in the open though they rarely were. Winslow Homer's early paintings of ladies in hammocks and boys eating watermelons are very close to the "taken" picture, though a feeling for design was never lacking in his work. Not a single Corot, not one of his many "Ville d'Avrays," ever did exist, nor did any of our American Barbizon followers, such as Inness or Keith, ever paint actual places in their riper works. Keith's many "Sonoma Valleys" or "Berkeley Oaks" are general types rather than facts.

It is this arbitrary arrangement of component parts of any picture upon the canvas which puzzles the public and which the artist recognizes as the first important evidence of his fellow artist's ability. Munkaczy, the great Hungarian painter, painted even his very largest pictures, like "Golgotha," so to speak, out of his sleeve. His preliminary studies, his sketches, were not within his reach during his final work, and the popular fallacy that a large picture is merely an enlargement of a small sketch is easily disproved by the fact. Our own William Keith, to return once more to him, was a most interesting example of the ability to work independently and

creatively without the presence of sketches or studies.

Every painter has suffered untold agonies in his contact with the public when sketching outdoors, particularly when the unsophisticated question is asked before his finished study, into which everything has been carried that is essential, "Of course when you get home you will finish this?" Generally and good-naturedly that expectation is granted by the tormented painter, who is ready more or less to grant anything under the condition. As a matter of fact, what the artist takes out of nature is only a limited number of things, and these are the essential things, things which carry the point. He knows that if he should take everything there is, his picture would be nothing but nature rendered on a small scale, while the thing he is really after is to maintain that feeling of the big scale that is so uplifting in nature. Any layman who ever watched a painter work is amazed as he sees how many things that he puts on his canvas the layman's untrained eye has not observed in nature itself. So the first thing the man on the outside should understand is the artist's necessity for making whatever arbitrary changes he sees fit in

order to attain Balance, Harmony and Rhythm, and in the end that feeling of unity, of oneness, which is so essential in any great work of art. What charms us in a picture is the artist's ability to seize upon a single phase of something he has observed and to present it to us in its most convincing, most characteristic, and most beautiful aspect. The entire range of human qualities may be reflected in figural and portrait work, while all the subtler shades of outdoor moods may enter into the appeal of a landscape. It must become clear, then, that the obviousness of a picture as an accurate representation of a fact is not an exhaustive test of its artistic worth, and the artist can hardly be expected to be very cheerful when he finds that most people are never going beyond that point. However, the qualities which the artist recognizes and which give joy to his art are so demonstrable that it will not be a lost labor to deal with them more specifically. A picture, to whatever type it belongs, portrait, figure, landscape, or genre, is a complete unit, all by itself. Its relation to the wall upon which it hangs forces restrictions upon it of which we are not conscious in nature. A picture is an arrangement, and that assumption

at once gives it freedom of expression. If it were merely a slavish imitation, it would be lacking in all the vital appeal which comes with the intelligent manifestations of rules. I see no necessity for entering upon any discussion, even casually, of the meaning of the many subjects found in pictorial art. I believe that they present no such problems as the appreciation of the purely abstract qualities of art in a picture. Anybody will easily be able to learn to recognize what a picture means in an intellectual way, although I should like to qualify this statement by excluding certain modern pictures which are often enigmatic in their meaning.

## ON COMPOSITION

A PICTURE undergoes manifold constructive operations in its development from fragmentary sketches to the definite product. The putting together of the various elements which constitute a picture offers, naturally, boundless opportunities for individual expression. To the artist, therefore, it is a most engrossing process. He begins with limitless possibilities for self-expression. How to divide the surface of the canvas on which he works in such a manner as to give an unusual amount of aesthetic pleasure and preserve, at the same time, the meaning of the subject—here is a problem which, unquestionably, offers the one opportunity by which the painter may always hope to attain a new note. Composition has nevertheless a much larger meaning than most terms emanating from the studio. Of course I realize fully that here again many will interject the thought that as long as the artist reproduces a thing as he sees it, as it is before him, he need not enlarge upon his many difficulties and change things around to



satisfy his perverse whims of fact-juggling. It is generally a commendable attitude to have such implicit faith in nature, but her compositions are not always arranged to suit the demands of an artist. Nature as she exists is a big unending unity of many things interrelated, and on a little thought must appear quite different from a small fragment of her confined in a picture frame of rectangular proportions. Nature has no frame. She is indefinite. Her effects melt into one another in evanescent fashion. The thing seen outdoors is altogether different from what the painter must present within the physical boundaries of a frame. It is sadly true that few artists pay much attention to the frame, as such, though one is at times highly gratified by individual effects, as, for instance, the fine proportion and colour in the frames of Herman Dudley Murphy. Nevertheless, there exists the line, the boundary of a picture, accentuated by the frame which has given the *raison d'être* for many composition laws.

What has so definitely settled the shape of our frames is probably an attempt to standardize all compositional laws upon the one shape. When one contemplates the many shapes of frames

possible on the basis of geometrical potentialities, one cannot but wonder at the very restricted shapes in vogue. Is it, perhaps, that we feel a lack of stability in differently shaped frames, oval, for instance, or round?

Our compositional laws are all, naturally, guided and shaped by the system of construction of the human body. First of all, our picture must have feet, something to stand on, a base. The horizontal lower side of the picture furnishes this basis. In the round frame we do not get the satisfaction of organic stability from the bottom up, so to speak. The round or oval frame is sideless. It is absolutely without beginning or end. The treatment pictorially of that part of the picture which borders upon the lower horizontal line is often secondary, frequently a mere nothingness of tone and meaningless form. As we travel upward in a picture we have a gradual development of energies, a loosening of form, a certain attempt at gesticulation, which we may liken to that of the human body. The seat of expression with a human is decidedly above the belt. The lower part of our body furnishes the foundation, the support for the activities and movements of expression which emanate from

the upper part. It is quite the same with pictures, at least with good ones. When the picture is divided into halves by a vertical line, it will often reveal equal opposing forces; horizontally divided, no such condition exists. Again, the picture may be likened to a plant, a tree, in its upward growth from basal stability as exemplified by the roots, and the increased flexibility and life of the upper lateral limits and minor branches. While we are vertically symmetrical, horizontally divided in half we are not. In the picture we often find, similarly, the expressive movements and forms of composition above the immobile and stationary region of the foreground.

Our examination of a picture generally begins with the bottom. We slide into the picture from below, seldom from either side or from the top. There may be exceptions to this rule, but certainly not among painters who do not lay out their pictures for the sake of being analyzed in some other way than the conventional. The general scheme of distribution of force in most compositions may be described as a horizontal line supporting a vertical line. This is often the disposition in pictures of greater height than

width and those which are square. The horizontally inclined canvas will naturally have very little of this building up. The shape of pictures is of the utmost importance, and not merely an accident, as many think. Most conscientious artists have a stack of many canvases of many proportions from which they select with great discrimination. They realize fully that the relation of a subject in a picture to the four sides of the canvas is the first and most important consideration. How important this is and how difficult it is to gauge absolutely the effect might be demonstrated in the beginning by the fact that some of our most able artists feel the necessity for altering the shape of their pictures after having proceeded with them pretty far. How many pictures have been cut down after they were finished to adjust their composition we do not know. Only an examination of the hidden edge of the canvas would disclose that, but that some had pieces added to them afterward some of the work of our most competent painters discloses. John Johansen's splendid "Rider" had at some time during its production almost half a foot added to the base and a smaller amount at the right. A casual examination of the picture shows

the seam where the joining was made. Some will argue that it might have been better technically to paint the whole thing over again but a painter generally knows what he has already accomplished, and to do a thing over is not wholly within the power of the will. That admirable canvas was unquestionably much improved by the addition of the two strips. It is more satisfactory now to be able to see clear under the horse, rather than to have the unsatisfactory suggestion of the enormous bulk of the animal run against the lower side of the frame. The little strip at the right gives more freedom to the head of the horse and also takes the girl to the left, a little out of the exact physical center of the picture. Gari Melcher's large canvas "Maternity" acquired an addition to its base to satisfy a compositional demand, and another by him, "The Smithy," bears evidence of the altering of its shape. The size of a picture assumes in pictorial art a much greater importance than most people realize. Obviously it would be much less troublesome to the artist to have certain definite sizes used, agreed upon by everybody, but the requirements of different subjects vary so much that any such uniformity is manifestly

impossible. As it is with the size, so it is with the proportions. Many a perfectly good motive has been destroyed by adjusting it into a badly proportioned frame. Certain pictures demand a vertical emphasis—others a horizontal. The vertical grandeur of a waterfall, of a group of stately trees, is often enhanced in dignity by emphasizing the natural expression of verticality. On the other hand, how stunted do arrangements of that sort look if put into a square frame, which nullifies all vertical growth in the picture. Contrasted with this vertical development we find the horizontal composition so common in marines or paintings of marshes, where a certain horizontal indefiniteness is appropriate to the characterization of the subject. Most marines do look more convincing in a horizontal arrangement, unless an expansive sky above the water is more important than the ocean itself, as it often is in Emil Carlsen's work. Ritschel's marines, again, are often directly opposite in composition to Carlsen's, displaying hardly any sky, but a boldly patterned water surface which by reason of its detached interest is well confined in an almost square canvas. It is one of the most fascinating of pleasures to

study the compositional growth of a picture from its sketchy foundation to the finished product. Hardly any canvas ever remained the same through its evolutionary stages. To find a good composition outright and bodily lift it upon a canvas is scarcely possible, although we speak of paintable subjects and those which are not. By picturesqueness, we do not invariably mean color and an interesting occurrence, but often compositional opportunities. Holland has for many years been the sketching ground for many painters on account of the simple arrangement of her out-of-doors, a quality so very useful in the making of pictures. On the other hand, the complex contortions of a tropical Amazon landscape will hold charms only to a deluded painter. Simplicity is the one desirable feature which the painter knows he cannot sacrifice, no matter how spectacular the thing may be to the eye. Simple contrasts of light and dark are often met with in pictorial composition, and the silhouette plays a very important part in much of our modern decorative art. It seems to me the art of the present day pays a good deal more attention to composition than that of any previous period, which may be explained by the importance the

decorative picture has attained. The pure joy of abstract beauty of line and form and color seem to appeal to the artist more than ever—though less to the layman, who does not know what to do with them, whether on account of a lack of training in such matters or of inherent artistic perception.

Much could be done to help the cause of art and the public at the same time through study of the principles of composition, or of the desirable conditions in a work of art, and the way they are attained. A good deal has been written on the subject of composition, and some of the books are exhaustive in showing endless possibilities rather than in demonstrating artistic reasons. The primary importance of the subject becomes manifest when one considers that no attention can be paid by the artist to mere painting until the location of each form within the picture is definitely established. The partly finished works of many artists have shown us the many experimental changes which pictures suffer in their development toward the final form, and it is this which gives to many sketches and studies a charm of which the finished picture, often turned cold and inanimate, is devoid.





A MEMENTO OF OLD MADRID

PLATE IX

From the Oil Painting by  
HOVSEP PUSMAN



## BALANCE IN PICTURES

WHEN the varied elements of a picture are arranged in such a way as to result in a condition of repose, we may well regard it as properly balanced. Obviously the constituents of a picture which engage our attention may comprise a great variety of elements, disposed of in an even larger variety of ways. In order to simplify matters, I will attempt to classify the various elements, so as to be able to deal with them separately. In thinking of balance, the various kinds of scales may readily come to our mind, and to help illustrate and understand the problem, they serve the purpose well.

We cannot, of course, speak of physical balance in a work of art in two dimensions as we do in sculpture or architecture, though the underlying idea is the same in all. A comparison with a pair of scales will be found convincing in more than one way, particularly in the fact that the point of support is found in the center of both the picture and the instrument. That is to say, an ordinary scale, consisting of two arms of

equal length, supporting equal weights, will find its counterpart in many pictures of similar arrangement, such arrangement resulting in obviously absolute symmetry. On the other hand, another kind of scale, with the supporting point slightly removed from the center, and two arms of different lengths, comes much closer to a more usual system of balancing the various units of a painting. The opposition of objects dissimilar in appearance but of equal force of attraction appears to be the aim of many artists striving for originality and variety. Anything that conveys to the eyes the impression of a greater weight will naturally attract our eye more forcibly than an object of lesser interest. Granting for the present that this contention is correct, it will be found subject to a great many interesting modifications and variations. Line, form, color, light, and dark may all be set to play against each other, in order to distribute the interest equally within the frame, the natural boundary of the picture. Next to the purely abstract agencies, the powers of sentimental or even merely intellectual appeal will have to be considered; every conceivable kind of object in a picture which exerts an attraction must be taken into account.

The social rank, physiognomy, size, and action of a person may all call for proper adjustment of a pictorial composition, in order to insure balance. Distribution of similar objects in even or uneven numbers often seriously engages a painter before he ever thinks of their detailed expression.

The easiest way of creating balance in a picture, as already pointed out, is, of course, to make it perfectly symmetrical. But it will readily be seen that balance of that kind is apt to be uninteresting in the extreme, and therefore hardly ever artistic. Recognizing this necessity for variety, the painter's ingenuity, in order to meet the requirements of artistic quality, is put to a singularly hard task. Beginning with the simplest graphic expression, the line, the artist through observation knows that shapes bounded by perfectly straight lines will very easily be outweighed in interest by those held together by a curved line, for the very simple reason that straight lines in their lack of character, their meaningless form, do not excite our interest as does a curved or animated line. This difference of character in the two forms of line we shall have to deal with again while investigating the

element of rhythm. In fact, the conditions of animation due to an excessive employment of curved lines in one part of the picture may easily lead to a lopsidedness that may be hard to counterbalance by other means. This must not be taken too literally, but in a broader sense it will be found true in many otherwise worthy pictures. The "Andromeda" by George de Forest Brush may be used as an illustration. The left side of the figure is animated by a variety of curved lines, while the right has little animation, particularly along the torso. In consequence, the balance of interest is not very well maintained. The figure, of course, is physically so well balanced on her feet that her standing position is not affected.

An effort is made in many pictorial compositions to assemble the more important elements into a small compass. Within it is found the physical pivoting point around which all these many forces are located. This point is easily established in a physical sense. By drawing the two diagonals, it will be found invariably that the most engrossing notes of interest are found not exactly at this point of intersection, to avoid the obvious, but grouped somewhere very near.



WIND ON THE HILLS

PLATE X

From the Oil Painting by  
WILSON IRVINE  
Owned by  
PERCY ECKHART, ESQ., Chicago, Ill.





These two diagonal lines are occasionally found to be very emphatically marked, or where this has not been done, one strong line from one corner of the picture to the diagonal opposite is opposed by a number of less obvious parallel lines of interest, running in the opposite direction. Ettore Tito's well known "Centaur and Nymphs" is obviously composed in that plan. The picture is divided into light and dark by a strong line running from the upper left to the lower right, largely caused by the dark mass of foliage; opposed to it are the pursuing centaurs, the distant shore, the foreground, the line connecting the heads, the bodies of the nymphs—all these many minor forms run counter and create a balance of forces which being of equal strength cannot destroy the equilibrium of the picture. Thus balance is well maintained without being too obvious.

Another interesting means of balance of no less importance is that two apparently different things may easily balance if placed on about the same spot on either side of the center of a picture, provided the pull they exert is equally strong, though based on different details. The "Sistine Madonna," for instance, reveals per-

fect balance—to be sure of the almost symmetrical kind—in the divided curtain above, continuing downward. The Christ Child is opposed by the arm and the headdress falling on the left shoulder. The figures of Pope Sixtus on the left and of St. Barbara on the right attract equally, while the cupids at the base are so near symmetry as scarcely to be interesting. This picture is so splendid an example of artistic balance easily recognized that we must always admire it for its daring simplicity—if one could get away from the suspicion that it represents no great effort along any line. Then, also, the purely intellectual significance of the persons in a picture must be taken into account. We always find the king, the president, or the mayor in the middle of the composition, because in the ensemble in their respective atmospheres they are the most commanding figures. Single out the socially most prominent person in a figure picture, and never in any well-balanced picture is he far away from the center of the canvas. This may seem like a very commonplace observation, but a violation of this rule would be disastrous to balance. In Hovenden's "Breaking Home Ties" there are two groups of people at similar opposing points

in the picture—the lamenting mother and her son on the left, and the father and somebody else of equal interest on the right. It would be tiresome to enumerate any but the best-known pictures, but to single out a few more from the different fields of painting is too tempting. Luca Signorelli's "Education of Pan" at the Berlin Museum is another very telling example of balance achieved by the almost symmetrical arrangement of different figures of equal interest, and Titian's "Entombment," in the Louvre, and also his so-called "Sacred and Profane Love," are distinguished for the same simplicity of arrangement and well-weighed balance. The "Origin of the Milky Way," by Tintoretto, at the National Gallery, London, is much more daring in its two opposing strong diagonal lines, easily recognized. While frequently obscured, this method of achieving balance is strongly felt. The "Descent from the Cross," by Rubens, at Antwerp, and his "Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus," in the Pinakothek at Munich, are all similar in principle. To the well-trained artist who comprehends the rules this is so easily achieved that examples of bad composition in the matter of balance are relatively rare.

In dealing with forms or areas of tone, with the addition of color, the thing becomes more complicated, and more difficult in consequence, the general rule being that a form of animated outline and of light tone will attract more attention and have more weight than a form of quieter outline and dark tone. The analysis of any picture will disclose this fact very quickly. Light faces, hands, the extremities generally, will much more quickly draw attention than the larger, quieter masses of dress and background. For that reason do we find those parts of figure pictures always assembled near the center. The lighter and more animated any part of a picture is, the more likely are we to find it in the center. The exceptions to that rule are rare and difficult to find, since badly composed pictures rarely find their way into those collections from which examples for illustration are apt to be taken.

In regard to the distribution of the quantities of light and dark and the balance maintained with them, it will be observed that darker masses of a picture generally exceed the lighter in quantity, since a very much larger amount of dark is necessary to balance a lighter and ani-

mated speck in a picture. It is a bit of common knowledge that a white dress is dangerous for any woman inclined toward stoutness and that a dark dress is often almost fatal to the thin girl, since the former tends toward larger and the latter toward smaller appearance; a fact which many misguided people still refuse to take into account in planning their dress—otherwise it is hard to explain why people with large feet always insist upon wearing white shoes. What is true on the street is true in the picture. The optical effect there is precisely the same. In a crowd on the street half a dozen people in dark conventional garb will seldom offer as much interest as one person brightly and gayly clad. This question of light and dark is intimately connected with color, naturally, and where dark tones are associated with dull colors, nobody's attention will be stirred, while light tones and brilliant colors will most pronouncedly hold us in a tight grip. Pictures are constructed entirely on those principles.

The preliminary sketch for any ambitious composition is the first and most important visual step, in which the distribution of masses of light and dark must be settled, without any

thought of the detailed delineation of the individual elements. The greatest animation of form commonly is observed somewhere near the center, or equally distributed around it. The bright and cheery colors are found in similar positions, while those parts of a canvas approaching near to the frame are mostly negligible in color and interest.

A Corot landscape will seldom have the man with the red bonnet far from the middle. A Keith landscape usually has its strongest color emphasis in the middle. The poetic moonlights by Peters present the illuminated window always near the physical center—and so on. Caser's very delightful "The Fire" consists of a harmonic form of design of dark blue accentuated by the complementary orange of the fire in the middle. The bright blue, orange red, or any brilliant note, is seldom found far away from the center of a picture, no matter whether the spot represents a light, a bonnet, the sun, a curtain, a door, or what not. The picture demands this to maintain its equilibrium, its balance, and the well-trained painter knows it. It is for this reason that the painter speaks of a pattern in a picture, by which he means a

systematically constructed arrangement based rather on laws than on external nature. Only the beginner will put the brightest cow in his herd near the outside of the group, and all his lamentation that the cow was actually there will not help him a bit with his intelligent critic, who knows that unless there is another equally attractive element on the other side, making a similar spot, there will be no balance. In a still-life by Carlsen, Chase or Breckenridge, the emphatic color, the lively, stirring movement, is found near the center. In figure pictures, particularly in the case of drapery, much interest can be given to a picture by the opposition of colors of differing kind, but of the same interest. For instance, it is quite conceivable and of everyday occurrence that a blue is outweighed on the opposite side by a similar quantity of red, of the same strength or interest, and this example must be sufficient to suggest the endless artistic possibilities along this line. Since I want to deal with color all by itself later on, I shall refrain from adding complications to a subject already rather involved.

We find, then, that balance in a picture can be best maintained in two ways, first, by the

opposition of attractions as represented by purely abstract elements, either line, form, or color, or by intellectual elements of equal importance; and second, by opposition of unequal quantities, when a large quantity of a quieter kind will be outweighed by a small quantity of a more animated character, or by small equal portions of very emphatic note amidst larger, quiet masses.

Of course the possibilities, as in any artistic field, are endless, but I find that it is interesting and profitable to examine pictures from this point of view. The peculiarly restricted extent of a picture is the immediate cause of the necessity for balance. The psychology of the picture is identical with that of any object. Without balance, an unhappy feeling of disturbed equilibrium will result. It is no small surprise, then, to find how the preliminary assembling of the facts may entail for the artist long study, careful analysis, and all the consideration that eventuates in a state of complete satisfaction.

Long after the intellectual significance and the spiritual appeal of the picture has ceased to give concern to the artist, he may find himself shifting his material from one side to the other,





TANIS

From the Oil Painting by  
DANIEL GARBER, N. A.  
Owned by  
WALTER S. DAVIS, Esq., Reading, Pa.



accentuating here, and there adding an element, with the desire to achieve repose. Obviously nature only in a limited way offers any assistance in this process, which is largely dependent upon scientific reasoning. It is no wonder, then, that the attempt at analysis of these artistic principles opens new avenues of aesthetic pleasure to the lover of pictures.

## RHYTHM AND HOW IT IS ATTAINED

THE element at once the most elusive and most pleasurable in a picture discloses itself in the aesthetic manifestation we call rhythm. It furnishes, next to color, the most stirring quality in art. While balance is a purely constructive necessity in a work of art, yielding pleasure that comes with the contemplation of good order and proper opposition of weight, and while harmony may produce emotional effects, neither one in results is to be compared to the intense delight which springs from the rhythmic charm of a masterly canvas. A picture endowed with rhythm reverberates in the soul of the beholder, giving him the utmost sensation of life which can pulsate in a picture. While balance and harmony must be found in any picture, if it is to be worthy, rhythm is not essentially necessary, however frequent a quality we may find it to be.

The term may be said to cover two distinct elements recognized in a picture by the painter: First, a certain clarity of arrangement of the subject matter, which will enable one to find his

way through the many parts fluently, uninterruptedly, and without interference. The second and larger meaning of the term, as mostly used, is a sustained movement, leading the eye from one part of the painting to certain others, and from them again to others, and so on, and back to the starting point. As to the first meaning of the term, naturally any pictorial composition must be so arranged as to result in an orderly arrangement which will permit an inspection of the various parts in a systematic way, free from confusion and physical involvedness. Owing to the emphasis of the middle of some pictures and the subordination of the remaining parts, the inspection will begin in most cases with objects near the center, whence certain parts will be taken up invariably in the same order by all people.

To bring this subject more closely to the understanding of the average person, an excursion into nature might be made, to see how the 'god mother of all art in many ways discloses rhythm. Her ways are not always aesthetically satisfactory, but from a purely theoretical point of view they illuminate the subject. In order to comprehend rhythm, even in nature, it is first of all

necessary to know what brings it about and how it is attained. The most widely recognized factor is perspective, both linear and aerial. We all know that things seen from an angle seem to become gradually smaller as they are farther away from us. Objects of the same kind, size, and dimension, like a row of trees looked at from an angle, seem to diminish gradually with a most charming regularity and consistency. The wooden posts and wire fence paralleling the row of trees follow the same law, as does the road which seems to narrow down systematically toward a common point of confluence on the horizon opposite the spectator. To complete the picture, the equidistant telegraph poles on the opposite side, the car-tracks in the middle of the road, all tend to take possession of one's interest, all with the sole aim of forcing one to travel to a certain point. It is most convincing to surrender one's self to the overpowering control of converging lines, whether in nature or in a picture. In the many architectural pictures of the Renaissance this confluence of lines is a very common means of leading the beholder's eye toward the point reserved for the Madonna and the Christ Child. It worked then very nicely, but



THE HAY MAKERS

PLATE XII

From the Oil Painting by  
GOTTARDO PIAZZONI





also very obviously, and therefore seems often like a crude device. Moreover, in the huge architectural ceiling decorations of the late Renaissance and Baroque, and wherever linear perspective is in evidence, it has always been used as a simple working device. It is unquestionably much more interesting to see great numbers of the same things, like windows in a facade, in gradually decreasing sizes, than to have them all appear of the same size. This rhythm of the perspective of lines is best expressed by the difference of the appeal of the architectural drawing of the so-called front elevation type, with its stiff and monotonous regularity, and the sometimes deceptive charms of rhythmically disappearing apertures in a perspective drawing. The architect knows that the former makes no impression, and the latter has been forced upon him by the public, which seems to have a vague feeling for the charm of rhythmic beauty.

The systematic increase or decrease of the size of objects, as they are affected by perspective, contains a wonderful amount of beauty which most people hardly sense, though many similar forms written on the face of nature are popularly considered most fascinating. The reasons for

their appeal are seldom given, but they are often based on rhythm. The clouds in the sky, particularly the small cumulus, often referred to by children as little lambs, are most engrossing in their subtle gradation of decreasing volume. Many of the skies of the painter seem less primitive when one studies the carefully carried out formula of rhythmic cloud formation. Again, the sea, with its unceasing motion, has more of rhythmic movement than any other of nature's protean expressions. The gradual collapse of the high waves, spending their last energies away up on the sand in faint ripples, have the irresistible fascination of movement that as soon as spent is recreated by a never-ceasing force. There is something typical in the manifold suggestion of movement disclosed in the activities of the waters rolling up the shore. It runs through every part of the immediate shoreland, not alone through the water itself. The charming decrease in volume which leads one from the far-out breakers gradually into the lapping shore-waves is very pleasurable, and the meaning of its charm of systematic change is recognizable in many other things. The sands on the beach, with their indentations remaining from

the eddying tide, become much more interesting when one once recognizes their linear and form alignment, which will always be found to contain that element we know as rhythm. Further up the beach, even debris of often hygienically repulsive composition has formed itself into curving and roaming linear arrangements of unmistakable rhythmic charm. The pebble beaches of our California coast are enchanting, with their gradually increasing and decreasing multi-colored pebbles, which seem to have been arranged with due regard for gradual increase or decrease in size. The bigger ones are near the water, the smaller ones higher up, as if assorted and arranged by some skilled hand. One could give many more examples of this sort of thing from nature, but these will be enough to show that the gradual increase or decrease of an object, whether produced by perspective or by actual physical difference of size, will set the attention into motion to travel from the smallest toward the bigger, and yet bigger, or vice versa. One must understand this to appreciate the peculiar charms which are brought about in pictures by an application of that law.

Theoretically speaking, the commonest

method of creating a feeling of movement is merely to alternate a large space in a design with a small, and to repeat this indefinitely. One travels from the large to the small with accelerated motions, to be caught, possibly, by some other rhythmic device which will lead one back. The undulating line, therefore, is the artistic line. It has life. The straight line is lifeless. It is the undulating rhythm of the female form that has for all time settled the greater artistic value of Venus over Apollo. There is no doubt that the practice observed in most painters of the academic schools, of drawing in curved lines to round out and fill out corners has much relation to this difference in the artistic significance of the straight and the curved line. Rhythm gives that element to a picture which we may call swing, that verve of motion which agitates us pleasantly, and which gives a work of art dynamic force. Most commonly, the undulating lines of rhythm are produced by the introduction of intervals, that is to say, a regularly repeated change of certain forms. Then again, our attention is set in motion by the simple device of increasing the interest of a picture in a certain direction, by intensifying drawing,



LYDIA

PLATE XIII

From the Oil Painting by  
GIOVANNI BATTISTA TROCOLI



and particularly color. It stands to reason that a more or less different pattern, gradually lengthened and intensified in its design and color, will draw the eye from the lightly developed part towards the more expressive. Any sunset will demonstrate this—and some other points as well. The converging lines of the rays, assisted by the increase of intensity of color toward the point of convergence, culminating in the red, fiery ball, is so tremendous that the sun seems almost like a bloody symbol of the crash of mighty forces which culminate in it. After you once get to the sun, you can't get out of it. The sunset illustrates again not only the dominate quality of the converging lines, assisted by the increase in color intensity in the direction of their convergence, but also shows that it is very easy to take the beholder of a picture into one corner or to any point from which there is no escape. Since a picture is something different from a piece cut out from nature, it must provide an intelligent means of allowing the eye to travel through all the parts. No "cul de sac" is possible, as in the sunset picture. Every part must be accessible, in a way to produce in the beholder the pleasures of contrast—light and

dark, important and unimportant, or other pleasurable effects might occur.

It is this element of line movement, of space division and color and variety, which the true artist utilizes to express his mood. It was woefully lacking in many men of the Düsseldorf School, who were so absorbed in the faces their people were making that the pure abstract beauty of a canvas never could mature. How much more rhythmic are the pictures of the Pre-Raphaelites! What a wonderful play of swinging lines is there in Moore's goddesses or in the ephemeral figures of Dante Gabriel Rossetti! In fact, all of the followers of the brotherhood, like Walter Crane, had the instinctive feeling for the swinging, singing line. The most acutely interesting examples are the purely decorative figural studies of Whistler. Nobody who has any conception of the meaning of rhythm could help succumbing to the charm of his most tenuous sketches and studies. These slightly indicated figures may have no faces—merely heads without features to express joy, grief, concern, fright; they need tell no story: their hands may be undivided masses and their feet similarly undeveloped. But a wonderful charm



comes from them. Their poses make them reach out for each other. They speak to one another without visible means of communication. It is all rhythmic movement, suggesting invisible forces tying together the simple figures of these charming studies.

Take another example, say the "Forge of Vulcan," by Velasquez, at Madrid, where the eyes are carried in an elliptical path from head to head, passing over the anvil and back again. The line is indefinite, always aiming to lead the attention within the picture over a well-defined road. Often the artist does not succeed in moving the eye over a certain road of attraction, and it may easily happen that the interest is violently thrown out of the picture, much to the detriment of the effect. Any good picture will meet this test, though it must not be used too obviously. In figure painting it is particularly Rembrandt as in his "Lesson in Anatomy," at Amsterdam, who shows how to manipulate many heads in a picture in such a way as to avoid confusion and to enable one to travel from head to head and back to the starting-point with remarkable ease. Rembrandt's method was largely that of making his pictures simple and

pushing everything back into the obscurity of his luminous background.

Many of our modern painters either do not possess the knowledge of these laws, or if they do, do not use them, since in many modern pictures an attempt at orderly arrangement is too seldom visible. Rhythm in the second meaning, that of suggested movement, to carry the eye through a picture composed of sympathetic areas and along beautiful lines, is very much more difficult to attain. A picture may be very beautiful merely as a rhythmic design, irrespective of an intellectual meaning. John W. Alexander's "Pot of Basil" at Boston, or his "Phyllis" at St. Louis, are typical. The folds of the gown, while perfectly natural, are so wonderfully arranged as to give one pleasure merely as spaces and as lines. Here the artist adds his knowledge to nature as only such a designer as Alexander could do.

It will easily be seen that the methods of producing rhythm in a picture are numerous. One device frequently employed is the gradual reduction of tone in a picture, whereby the eye begins with either the darkest or the highest color in a picture, gradually following the scale

of increasing or decreasing tones. It is a common expression that one will travel through a picture, following the increase or decrease of color, which in most cases is, of course, toward the important point in the picture, commonly located in the center. With this increase or decrease in tones, one must think of the assistance given to that suggested movement by perspective, or the change in the appearance of things that corresponds to their distance from the eye.

Any normal eye will naturally, either owing to habit or to optical necessity, look first at those parts in a picture which are represented as being closest to the eye. For instance, in a row of houses or trees or a fence or a row of people in a military parade or a procession, the eye will travel from the tallest in the foreground to the smallest in the distance. This progress of study is accelerated by the reduction in color, giving those things in the foreground the most brilliant colors, and those farthest away little or no color, the loss being very gradual. The decrease in size of things, owing to perspective, is so gradual as to be subject to a fixed law; an artist, having recognized this, makes use of it in many ways.

To draw the attention to the central figure in

a composition, a device often employed is gradual increase or decrease in size and also in intensity of color. Some of the most trivial and ordinary objects are often appealing to the artist for reason of their artistic quality of rhythm, that wonderfully interesting relation of size which leads the eye pleasantly through the arrangement. Water, of all the elements, is more endowed with rhythmic motion than any other. From the highest motion to the faintest ripple on the beach, there is the rhythmic decrease in distance; if it is slighted, the picture is commonplace. Artists like Hokusai, in his picture of the wave, with the great Fuji in the distance, have demonstrated the beauty of it to perfection. All good marine painters know this and utilize it, as the works of Alexander Harrison, Emil Carlsen, and Dougherty, Waugh, and Ritschel show.

The recent work of Woodbury, in some respects the master painter of the open sea, depends upon rhythm for much of its compelling artistic quality.

The skies of every season show in themselves the evidence of rhythm, owing to the influence of perspective over form and color. In any well-

composed sky we are led from the bigger clouds above us to the smaller, near the horizon, particularly on a moonlight night, with cirrus clouds above which seem gradually to dwindle away into the dark horizon. It is in things like these that the painter ordinarily makes his work more appealing than nature herself, for nature's rhythm occurs only at times, while the artist can produce it whenever he will.

## HARMONY AND UNITY

**AFTER** Balance in a picture, Harmony may be taken up as the next problem of the artist. How to achieve it very few can explain, since, as said before, most artists work by instinct and not by rule—which of course is well enough for the artist, but all the more intricate for the layman who wants to know why certain things are done in one way and not in some other way.

Harmony is generally understood as the quality in a picture which makes it appear that the many component parts have something in common. Harmony, therefore, must necessarily result in an expression of interior accord probably more easily recognizable than any other quality, though the public at large readily falls a victim to loud sensations aroused by the battle of elements opposed to each other. I begin again with the outlines of a picture. Every artist has a certain characteristic method of using lines which is different from that of his fellow artists. Botticelli's outlines are elegant, reposeful, and unmistakably different from



CALIFORNIA LANDSCAPE

PLATE XIV

From the Oil Painting by  
CARL OSCAR BORG





Rubens's most animated but often agitated lines. This quality of Botticelli is found persistently through all of his pictures, and the same is relatively true of any peculiar style of line, whether it be angular, emotional, impassioned, like Rubens, or cool, calm, serene, and distinguished, as in the early Italian, or, again, restrained line, in a Whistler design. To copy a figure of Rubens into a Botticelli would naturally be out of harmony and contrary to artistic effect, relatively fascinating as the figure might be in its place in the master's own pictures. Hundreds of interesting experiments could be made among old masters as well as new. I am thinking now merely of a picture aside from its color, with no regard for anything else but the quality of line, which is different in the picture of every individual painter. A casual review of the chief exponents of the greatest schools of painting will disclose the truth of this law of harmony. Every part, even the most secondary, in the great work of all the great masters is in harmony with every other part of the picture in the peculiarly individual manner in which it is done. The one thing which gives away so many unoriginal pictures is their lack of harmony. They are com-

posed, frequently, of details borrowed from a number of other painters, and owing to their different origin, these elements are not in interior accord. Imagine a landscape with a Rousseau tree in the distance, sharply patterned against a clear sky, and a feathery Corot tree in the middle distance. No matter how pleasing the landscape might be to the uninitiated, it would never ring true, because it has not a harmony of conception. The world is full of patchwork landscapes of that type. The same is true of figure-painting where two or three types are thrown together, and though compelled to appear together, refuse to live in the same atmosphere. Harmony of expression is highly typical of the great men. The Frenchmen, Gaston La Touche, Eugène Carrière, and Puvis de Chavannes, are excellent examples of pronounced harmony. While the three are totally different, each one's own method of drawing and painting is most consistent throughout, and to imagine one collaborating on the work of another is almost comical. While harmony of line and form is less easily observed, harmony of color is more obvious when present, and more disturbing when overlooked. The strongly pronounced

talents will furnish, again, the best example. While most pictures of the older school excel in a harmony of brown, many modern painters have demonstrated the possibilities of other color harmonies. Twachtman as a landscape painter made use of a grey tonality in his work which he seldom lost. The artist feels that a picture is held together by this element of harmony, and he feels it falls to pieces if not regarded in that light. That contention, of course, is not necessarily based on an observation of nature, but on an aesthetic consideration.

Naturally a harmony can exist among ugly elements, as some of our newest productions so successfully demonstrate. Cubist pictures possess harmony in a marked degree, since every part of them has something in common with every other part. But the question arises, is the result aesthetically pleasing? Is it gratifying to the eye? Does it convey a meaning? However, one point must be borne in mind—that absolute harmony in itself cannot be recognized unless emphasized by a slight element of something out of harmony. In every part of a picture where in character of line, in color, in style, like every other part, the result might be mono-

tony, and in order to avoid monotony a distinct note of contrast is introduced. To take again the delightful pictures of such a master as Corot as an illustration, the woman in the center with the red bonnet is not there merely by accident. She was put there with a purpose. The general tonality of the picture is blue-grey-green. It is bathed in silvery tones, which for emphasis are contrasted with the little spot of vermillion so effective in the picture. Leave out this red note and the picture will be dull and dreary. Many boutonnières in well-known portraits, small bits of colorful jewelry, bright scarfs, give life to pictures which without them would be dreary in spite of their harmony. Naturally the effects of these things in a picture are in principle the same as in nature, where they are used the same way, although sometimes with distressing effect, at the wrong place. But color, I say again, is so important that I shall have to deal with the subject by itself. Every picture will disclose to the student a concession to this law, which demands that the larger masses of harmonious color of one type must be enlivened, even if only slightly, by a contrasting note of opposite or complementary color. It is its characteristic



THE FAMILY

PLATE XV

From the Oil Painting by  
IVAN OLINSKY, A. N. A.



kind of harmony more than anything else that makes a student, seeing a picture at a distance, know its painter, recognizing certain characteristics persistently running through his whole work. Moreover, what is true of one work is found in practically all the works of one man.

The painter who has found himself gives to all of his work a certain uniform quality which is unmistakable in all of his work, no matter where we meet him. It is this quality by which we can often detect fraud in a picture, or assign certain works to certain artists. Going into a gallery of Fritz Thaulow's, as we did at the Exposition in San Francisco, we could see at a glance that a very small number of the pictures in the room were evidently not by this Norwegian but must be by somebody else, since in their very nature they were out of harmony with the rest. It is harmony which made the Duveneck gallery so enjoyable, continuity of style in Tarbell, Redfield, Hassam, or any other strong man that unites in a very marked degree the same expression of interior accord. It is a quality seldom attained by beginners, and invariably found in a master, and it has a great deal to do with what we recognize as style. We

are probably more susceptible to harmony than to any other quality in a painting, but strange to say the artist finds very little evidence that the public pays any attention to it as represented in art or painting, though in many other practical affairs the absence of it would be keenly felt. We should see the humorous note when a woman buys a dress consisting of sixteen different kinds of goods, but people often do not hesitate a moment to purchase a painting that the painter has heaped magpie-like together from half a dozen different sources. As in everything else, parts of a painting must appear to belong together. They must express that affinity which is one of the greatest qualities in a work of art, contributing more than anything else to the oneness of expression we call unity.

While, Balance, Rhythm, Harmony, may occur by themselves, the culmination of all desirable artistic elements is possible only from their unification. A work of art which has the expression of unity, of oneness of each and every desirable element, is bound to become a classic in due time. We have great works of art, but very few which seem to have been so inspired in every particular phase as to give you that



complete satisfaction which one is more apt to feel than to be able to explain. Such works make us breathless. They seem to command an attitude of respect and reverence. They do not readily yield to analysis, and the only thing we can do with such inspired examples is to give ourselves over to the peculiar spell they cast upon us. If we run down the entire gamut of the acknowledged classics in painting, all breathe that perfection typical of their kind. Perfection seems to exist in every element, and their apparent ease of production seems to be equal to their other superior qualities.

It is true that the monumental in painting has never been the fashion since the days of Michael Angelo or Titian, Velasquez or Rembrandt, but the monumental style does not insure the feeling of unity; we sometimes observe it, even in paintings of small proportions. It must become obvious that size has little or nothing to do with unity; indeed it is more difficult to control large surfaces than smaller ones.

My first feeling before any truly great painting, as, for instance, Whistler's "Mother," in the Luxembourg, or Chase's "Woman with the Shawl," at the Pennsylvania Academy, is that it

holds together; that is to say, that every detail seems to play its part in the concert without disturbing any other parts. There is no wrangling, no agitation nor fuss; everything seems content in its place and satisfied with its aesthetic responsibilities. We feel about such paintings just as we feel about great minds, that they are perfectly at ease. They say what they have to say simply, they tell their message candidly, without stuttering and fuss. They are primarily clear in enunciation and articulation. No matter what their subject may be, no matter what their intellectual appeal, the truly great ones are all of that kind. Gari Melcher's well-known "Mother and Child" in the possession of Mr. James Deering is full of that oneness of expression. It seems to have been seen clearly before it was started, and we shall always regard it highly for its artistic unity. Inness's "Georgia Pines," and the "Medfield Meadows" are distinctly his greatest works for unity of expression.

We easily remember them all by their commanding qualities. They need no explanations. They are outside the pale of artistic criticism. Most often they are simple in the extreme, even to a point of sternness, but always endowed



THE SAGEBRUSH TRAIL

PLATE XVI

From the Oil Painting by  
OSCAR E. BERNINGHAUS



with the telling beauty of a big and simple message. Titian's "Man with the Glove" at the Louvre, or Rembrandt's "Man with the Helmet" at Berlin, or to name a few more, Alexander's "Portrait of Walt Whitman," at the Metropolitan in New York, and Tarbell's "Mending Girl," while produced at different times, all seem inspired in similar ways. Their appeal is inherent in the same qualities. They defy analysis, but, as already indicated, their chief asset is simplicity in every element. Simplicity of expression, then, has apparently a great deal to do with their artistic powers, and I firmly believe that the agitated fussiness of the small-calibered painting mitigates against its lasting effect upon our senses.

All declining periods of art have been marked by a loss of simplicity, and by substituting for the candid presentation of one single phase the irritating and scattered expression of many contributing elements. The calm serenity of a Leonardo is essentially present in a marine by Homer. We feel the same quality in two totally different subjects. It is a certain bigness that cannot be accomplished where there is not subordination of every detail to a single predomi-

nant expression of greater appeal. The thrill we get from a Velasquez is one that springs from the bold characterization of the outstanding qualities of his personages. We call it style, but it is the big style, the influence of grandeur, that is the element that appeals to us. Moreover, it is the quality which permits us to grasp the full meaning of a painting at once. Only when we can include the entire significance of a painting in one visual attack do we seem to feel the quality of oneness.

The size of a painting has little or nothing to do with this; it is entirely a question of principle. The problem of painting our great western scenic assets is of acute interest in the task of preserving their unity, a quality which we feel in them in nature and which we rarely observe in their pictorial representation. What has become of the enthralling feeling of overpowering magnitude of the Grand Cañon in the petty depictions of some of our popular painters? It has not been achieved and never will be, until some modern Michael Angelo solves the problem of artistic unity that presents itself in the great mountain architecture of our incomparable country. The great scenic wonders of our country

still await the day when their message will be carried through artistic means into the world to everybody, not only to those who have actually enjoyed them in reality and can furnish the thrill that is lacking in the picture by a spiritual revival of their own memory, their own experience. Difficult as it is to get unity into a work of art—so certain are we of its commanding quality whenever it exists in a painting. The imitation of even the simplest expression of nature will not insure its presence in a painting, as we may readily observe in many paintings which, while they may be simple, are nevertheless lacking in unity because the painter has treated them without concentration upon the spirit of things, of which he has merely painted the shell. The power to paint the spirit of the thing is a gift; it is what we call talent, and when it is superlatively well done, we recognize genius. Modern art is less concerned about the spiritual than were the old masters, whose calm unity of beauty deteriorated into much sentimentality. It was logical, then, that art should become engaged in the representation of externals without paying much tribute to the soul of a subject. In external representation I think we are as

efficient as any, but I doubt whether we associate with it a valid psychology of the subject such as the old masters achieved, and therefore unity has ceased to be so potent a factor in our days. It has become the tendency of the age to pick out a single element in a painting and dwell upon it, omitting whatever other quality might demand recognition in a subject. Sometimes it is rhythm, or color harmony, or vibration, or again, light, or what not, that is the sole moving force in a picture, and we are given to understand that we must not look for anything else. That sort of painting can be only sympathetic in demonstrating principles, but rarely will we get a complete all-round thrill of utmost satisfaction such as we get from Terborch's "Musician" at the British Museum, or Rembrandt's portrait of a Polish Nobleman at the Hermitage at Petrograd. They are complete in every detail. They are positive, and still they leave room for suggestive interpretation.



## WHAT COLOR MEANS TO AN ARTIST

ESSENTIALLY, color is the one element in a painting which ought to furnish the *raison d'être* for its existence. It is the one element in art which decides whether architecture, sculpture, music, or poetry shall be the affinity of the artistically producing. Of all visible features in a painting, color should hold most attraction to most people, artist and public alike. It is the color element in a painting which lures people into the painting profession, a lure which must be very enticing when one considers the vast hordes of painters as compared with architects and sculptors. The very earliest known use of paint, by the Egyptians and Assyrians, was a genuine demonstration of their love of color for itself. Color has a very wide range of effect upon different people, and we are just now treated to the spectacle of some very recent artists, cubists and futurists, post-impressionists in general, who are trying to dish up to us as a new thing, the symbolism of color, which has existed since time immemorial. The use of

color to symbolize human emotion, passion, or sorrow is no new thing, merely a primitive thing which has nothing to do with painting directly, though often brought into play, as I will try to point out later on. The relation of color to music is closely akin to the visual rhythm element and an attempt to represent color by a color code. These experiments belong scarcely in the studio, but rather in the laboratory of the professor of psychology, who will probably be much more sympathetically inclined toward all this new movement than the painter's profession.

The color problem of the artist is different with every painter, and while some painters manage to get along with very little color, having more pleasure in form and neutral values, the great majority consider color a most essential element in their work, whether they are easel painters, or concerned with decoration or any other artistic problem involving adornment of flat surfaces. With the modern development of chemistry, no known hue is denied the profession in their striving for original expression of color. It would be impossible here to go into the technical side of painting, as based on the production and behavior of paints, but it can safely

be said that no color of the spectrum but could be produced in permanent quality for the use of the painter. Whether this is a blessing or a disadvantage is hard to tell, as it is yet too soon to come to any definite conclusion in regard to the comparative lasting qualities of the picture of the schools since the beginning of Impressionism, and the gay and vivid color schemes of recent schools.

The grudge that many sympathizers of the modern school have against the old school is that they get tired of the brown pictures, the endless rows of brown pictures, with the occasional relief afforded by the few pictures of the greatest—such as Titian, Tiepolo, Rubens, Van Dyck, the great Englishman of the eighteenth century, and others. Even then while there is an occasional flaring up of color passion, it is always on the brown foundation, the brown background. The use of color in those days was a formula, as compared with the freedom practiced in our day. The many things that may be said against the brown picture will, however, not set aside the great truth that brown as the controlling hue in a picture is far more agreeable than blue.

In order to explain this contention, one has

to go into the psychology of color, which is one of the most interesting of subjects to study and a source of never-ending pleasure. We all learn early in life, almost in our kindergarten days, symbolic meanings of color as closely associated with psychical experiences and conditions. Red and hate, yellow and envy, blue and purity, green and hope, purple and depression, and so on, are so closely associated in our minds that one is tempted to ask whether certain of our newest and most ardent color experimentalists ever went to kindergarten, or whether they thought that the public never did.

One very important element in color appreciation and enjoyment is the difference between warm and cold colors. We find the explanation of this difference in our physical experience, which is to the effect that those natural elemental forces which produce comfort and warmth are associated with red—a certain red closely resembling a reddish orange. The first thing we think of in that relation is the fire, then also the setting sun, possibly also the color of blood, as the life element in our body. Our whole inclination is to look for red, and anything related to red or with a preponderance of that kind of red



PORTRAIT

PLATE XVII

From the Oil Painting by  
CLARENCE HINKLE  
Owned by  
F. W. HOLLMAN, San Francisco, Cal.



is described as a source of physical pleasure. On the other hand, a certain sense of coldness overcomes us in the presence of large quantities of a certain blue—the blue of the glacier, of ice, of night—and we have learned to associate that color with physically discomforting sensations. Carried into art as almost a law, we have become so used to it that it was the chief cause of the opposition of the old school to the new, with the introduction of Impressionistic painting. Constable is generally spoken of as the first one to break away from the brown “sauce,” when he had the then preposterous idea of wanting to paint a landscape out-of-doors. To us nowadays the idea of wanting to paint at least the preliminary studies outdoors is a sacred law. Constable is credited with having first had the courage to paint blue shadows. It really matters little whether Constable was the first man or not, but one thing seems certain—that he created a commotion in 1823 by the first exhibited work representing his new venture.

The brown picture, to return to it once more, was really little in danger of offending by its relative lack of color since the many warm gradations were invariably pleasing. What sym-

phonies of rich and luscious browns some men achieved is best indicated by the work of Rembrandt, who surpassed any painter of his day and who has never since been equalled in luminosity. I have spoken in another chapter of the "frotté" and its generally brown or reddish tone. The nuance of brown varies with the artist, but as an undertone it seems still to be cherished even by many very modern painters. Not only the idea of warm and cold colors, but the whole question of color resolves itself into an absolutely demonstrable science, of which the average talented painter gets control as a present at birth, and which scientists regard as a series of simple facts, demonstrable in many ways. We hear a great deal of complementary colors and their use in artistic expression, and to most people this term is another one of the studio mysteries which the artist himself rarely bothers to explain. He knows he would not be a painter if he did not have a sense of color, including the use of complementary color, so why bother about the why and wherefore? However, people are curious. Beginning with the spectrum, the basis of all color themes, we find that the twelve colors running from red to violet are



all very beautiful in their own way, but that the effect of any one can be much enhanced by the close proximity of some other color than the one immediately preceding or following in the spectrum. We know that a physical experience is the basis for the grouping of colors as complementary colors. If we look with a fixed stare for a short time at a vivid red, and at the first feeling of exhaustion turn to a blank space of neutral or white tone, we behold a spot of green. If the first color looked at was violet, it will be a certain yellow; if red—violet; yellow—green; if orange—yellow; violet—blue, and so on. In other words, the directly opposite color seems to be the one which will afford the greatest amount of relief. The skilled artist gives constant pleasure by his intelligent application of this law, and to examine pictures for this point alone is interesting in the extreme. The most common example is that of the combination of blue-green and red, the two colors most frequently used as complementary. That large red areas are opposed by green or blue-green areas in all of the Renaissance Madonnas is too well known to need to be dealt with at length.

In landscape painting we have the delightful

examples of Corot, who very cunningly and effectively introduced his red-bonneted peasant to give life to the pleasant greens in his landscape. Omit the red nuance, and how dreary and lifeless those otherwise refreshing landscapes would be. With all due regard to the old masters, our appreciation of color has become much more subjective in our own time than during the so-called great periods of art. The clever use of two complementary colors against large masses of neutral tones is Whistler's chief contribution to modern art. His refined, sensitive color-arrangements of flesh color and black, green and violet, and the many other possible combinations were never thought of before his day. He carried his aesthetic appreciation of the abstract relation of colors into less pictorial representations, to the astonishment of his contemporaries. Whistler invariably encourages and incites comparison, and he represents one pole as much as Rubens represents another, not only in color but in general style—as well as in everything else.

What remarkable changes have taken place in the color aspect of the painter's art! First we had for a long time the vigorous contrasts of



AFTERNOON

PLATE XVIII

From the Oil Painting by  
ARTHUR F. MATHEWS  
Owned by the  
METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, New York



the brown based picture, then the remarkable change to the cool grey of the pleinairist and the impressionist, and now again the demand for vigorous, lively color, as stirring and stimulating as it ever has been. The exhibitions of the eighties and nineties, with their acres of grey and silvery canvases, are still in our memories, and now we have the evidences on our exhibition walls that pure primary colors are not at all too striking if properly handled. Such canvases as Raymond P. R. Neilson's have attracted much attention of artists and public alike, and as color pattern they surpass anything done heretofore. Neilson's art is typical of the age, which is an age of contrasts highly seasoned but not devoid of a wonderful charm of personal style. Frieseke's art, while not possessed of the placid surfaces one admires in Neilson, has color unbounded, and this element is a special charm in his always carefully considered compositions. Randall Davey, Gifford Beal, and Robert Henri have gone beyond anything ever attempted in the use of almost pure colors with often singular success.

The tone picture in this age of color has no chance at all. It isn't even looked at. It does not seem that ours is the period of the tonal

picture at all. The aristocratic tonal dignity of a Mathews is sometimes interpreted as weakness, and many other tonal compositions find a like reception. It is scarcely to be expected that the large public should at once appreciate the noble restraint and enduring quality of the low-toned "Art and Nature" by Mathews, but the greatest of all low-toned painters, Whistler, even in a period of the grey tonality of the Frenchman Bastien-Lepage, did not arouse any more popular interest than the man of restrained color schemes today. The tonal picture has always to contend with the accusation of being anaemic and arbitrary and remote from nature, and the whole thing resolves itself again into the question of imitation or translation of nature. Doubtless nowadays many ambitious young painters imagine their work is full of color when it is merely full of different paints, and this difference of meaning is surely worthy of more recognition than many modern artists care to give it. To use a great many different paints on a canvas is hardly more than a sign-painter's performance, but to intelligently gauge a number of colors so as to produce a harmony is another thing.

Harmony has been said to be a condition wherein a number of things have something in common, where an invisible inner accord exists. How many pictures really give one this feeling of an inner accord, of having something in common among themselves? This harmony—this being of the same kind, so to speak—is the strength of the low-toned tonal picture, and it is a very enduring quality. It is largely the harmony of analogous colors, as opposed to the color scheme of opposing colors held together by other qualities of relationship. The amount of color which an artist sees in nature differs with every artist, and it is this divergence which makes paintings so interesting. Many pictures look very much better in black and white, while others seem to lose without their color. Is this largely a matter of deception? Often a picture with very vigorous color, but of poor tone values that mean a bad relation of light and dark in its many gradations, deceives one regarding this lack of values, and reproduced in black and white seems like a different work, unpleasing and of no consequence. On the other hand, some of those very fascinating modern decorative canvases are never lacking in interest even if seen in black

and white. This is particularly true of the smaller outdoor Frieseke and of his big toilette scenes in ivory and greys and greens. Bellows's "Polo Players" in the original does not satisfy so well as in black and white. The red in the man's coat is metallic and of no moment in a canvas which holds by its dynamic, forceful painting.

A closer examination of many paintings discloses in a general way two types of color expression—the complementary opposition of different colors and the combination of analogous colors. The first, and chronologically older type, prevails in almost all of the work of the older schools up to the middle of the last century, when there appeared the arbitrary tonal arrangement, which finds its highest expression in Carrière, Puvis, and Whistler. The brown undertone of the Renaissance masters, supporting rich areas of opposing blues and reds—such they mostly were—is a common feature of many pictures. We meet with this in Raphael as well as in Murillo, and later on in the *Hollanders* and *Englishmen*. Most of these older works were decidedly dark in tone, and often obscure. But from their dark foundation the opposing notes of red and blue would often rise to strike a sym-





DESPAIR

PLATE XIX

From the Oil Painting by  
PERHAM W. NAHL.



pathetic chord. The pictures absolutely devoid of color and expressed merely in the meaningless contrasts of light and dark that we see in some of the galleries of Europe are unique in demonstrating the superiority of sculpture as a means for plastic representation. These "grisaille" pictures, as they are called, painted in many greys, seem lamentably uninteresting for their absolute lack of color. The analogous color schemes of certain modern masters are so removed from the pictures of the earlier schools that it would be futile to look for any relation between them. Carrière's low-toned scales of a certain purplish brown, almost monochromatic in their elimination of any strong note, suggest this type better than the work of any other master. It may have been the influence of the greys of the modern schools which produced such charming ranges of color gradation. The chief difference between the old and the modern is largely explained by the substitution of a cool grey for a warm brown. If we were to take a Tiepolo or Titian and substitute for the brownish middle tones the same range of dark and light blue violet greys, the color, as represented by blue-greens, red-purples, and yellows, would remain un-

changed. The bath of golden browns in which we see the many colors swimming, has in modern art given room to the neutral grey of the outdoor atmosphere of the student of nature. Often the effect is less appealing because, as indicated above, the golden brown of the old canvases is psychologically more sympathetic than the blue-grey of the modern school. How great were the possibilities of using many hues or color nuances was first demonstrated by Monet, who painted a series of pictures of the same subject, identical in composition and facts, but each in a different hue. His scenes of the Seine in Paris run from the pale blue-grey of the early morning through the yellowish light of midday into the purplish hazes of the late afternoon and the dark blue-green of the night. All the pictures are identical in subject, but different in that each is based upon a different prevailing color. Such color conceptions were unknown before his time, and eventually they opened the eyes of the artist to a better perception of color, until now we live in an age of art where color has first rank in the expression of the artistic individuality. No matter what may be one's quarrel with modern art, one thing must impress itself upon even the most re-

actionary admirer of the studio brown of by-gone periods—that in daring opposition of intense colors and vigor of contrast many of our modern painters are achieving vital expressions which are bound to command respect and admiration.

Color may be said to epitomize the spirit of modern art, and whatever of the trivial we may observe, no matter how lax in technical execution many of our moderns may be in their vital color, they express both daring and joy. Never before has painting been so independent in accentuating the one feature which none of the other arts can equal—the element of color. Arthur Carles's nudes and Breckenridge's recent still-lives, are excellent examples of the clarification of color in our art. The decorative and highly imaginative art of Bertram Hartmann vibrates with color such as we have seen only suggested before, and the virile art of Brangwyn discloses a daring juxtaposition of colors which disarms all efforts at comparison with any art past and present. We are living in an age of color, and the life which modern art owes to this element will not be least in fixing, ultimately, the position of present-day art in the history of the evolution of aesthetic expression.

## THE TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT

OF ALL the many phases of painting none is regarded by the public with so little interest as the purely technical. The public naturally finds it distasteful to admit profound ignorance on the subject of technique, and prefers to leave that part of painting to be enjoyed exclusively by the artist. The often-charged capriciousness of the painter has a good deal to do with this intricate question. Very, very seldom do artist and layman agree upon the best picture in a show, because the painter persistently, before any other phase is taken up, wants to satisfy himself that the paint is put on the canvas in such a way as to earn his professional approval.

The layman immediately, on the other hand, proceeds to look for the intellectual appeal of the canvas, and the war is started. If we were to be as logical with painting as we are with other things when it comes to the question of technical production, we should quickly remove a great stumbling block in the path of the appreciative, willing layman, who is often inclined to

give it all up, so to speak, from sheer desperation over the question of technique. We can scarcely blame the painter, as I shall endeavor to point out, and the layman deserves sympathy for the reason that perception of technical excellence is in a measure dependent upon technical experience. My friends those art critics who have entered the field from the purely aesthetic and literary side will heartily disagree, but the fact remains that all painters look with grave suspicion upon the average art critic's innocence of technical experience.

Since painting is a most individual exercise, it is no wonder that the method of disposing the pigment upon the canvas presents another instance where a stereotyped method must not be expected. Even in the various periods of technique, if we can speak of them so, we find a variety of technical usages which add much to the involved character of painting. In the earlier days, when painting was largely an imitative effort, the technique was concealed, care being invariably taken by the artist not to disclose his technical procedures at all, for fear of spoiling the illusion of his purely imitative handiwork. That attitude certainly still prevails with a very

large part of the public, and even with some very few painters of the present day who are inclined, like their predecessors, to let their work be carried by the sober fact, without any expression of a man's own skill in the handling of his material. As the possibilities of painting were discovered, painters gradually grew to appreciate the difference between the skillful and the unskillful, the easy and the difficult. This question of skill offers to the artist a much larger field of enjoyment than the public generally is aware of. The painter, having had practical experience, knows full well what is difficult and what is easy to do, and he has formed his technical ideal accordingly—and I might say that essentially this does not differ with different painters. The public—not to lose sight of its attitude—is on the whole convinced that so to execute a painting as to destroy all evidences of how it is done is most difficult, and accordingly admires immensely paintings resembling in smoothness of finish a colored photograph. It is this naive enthusiasm which drives the average painter into frenzies of fury and agonies of despair, and which often turns his interest permanently away from even hoping to find any



sympathy from the public for his technical point of view. The public fortifies itself behind the belief that all the great masters "did it that way," pointing with great pride at Raphael's Madonnas and Leonardo's smiling lady, beside these any number of painters of polished doll faces now long since surpassed in freshness of execution, finish of appearance, and spontaneity of method. It is true that nothing like Leonardo's "Mona Lisa" has ever since been painted, but we ought not to forget that it is her subtle smile, her calm serenity, which is so compelling, and not the very cautious method of painting. We have vastly improved since then in representing texture—the differing qualities of different surfaces. The faces of the Madonnas of Gari Melchers are just as exhaustive individual studies as any of the old papery kind, but possess a certain added charm of life, of vitality, which the older painters seldom attained. The old methods of painting were generally speaking thin, though not invariably so, as certain exceptional painters like Tintoretto or Velasquez will instance. It was not necessary to resort to any heavy or opaque painting to represent the indoor subjects, generally dark in tones. The

necessity for a technical change did not develop until the problem of outdoor painting forced the painters before they were quite aware of it into a heavier application of paint, which on the whole seems to most laymen a technically inferior method indicating the less accomplished painter. When Constable and his French followers, the Barbizon men, went outdoors, the necessity of rapid work did not allow the careful gauging of the quantity of paint, to the detriment in the popular eye of the appearance of their canvases.

This laid the foundation for what was to come in the seventies, what is known as Impressionistic painting, an art which has as much sound technical basis as it has aesthetic interest. Before the days of Monet the generally adopted method of painting was to lay paint upon the canvas with the same tools as today but by means of brushings in downward strokes, mostly executed in a slightly slanting way from the upper right toward the lower left. This practice became almost an academic law. It had to be done that way, and to do anything else meant an infraction of the rules of the studio. That rule was based on the human custom of using



AT SUNRISE

From the Oil Painting by  
JONAS LIE, A. N. A.  
Owned by  
MRS. HENRY J. CROCKER  
San Francisco, Cal.



the right hand to work with and on regard for the law of gravity, and also it was for the convenience of the painter, that he might see what he was doing. It is just as arbitrary as the rule that the light in a picture must fall into it from the upper left-hand corner, because the light falls that way upon the canvas of the painter, who, working with his right hand, must have his light from the left in order to see what he is about. How arbitrary this rule is, thought of the left-handed painter will immediately point out. To say that this is the way and no other way is right could hardly lead to progress. The impressionistic painter threw these studio conventions to the wind. He began to put his paint on very heavily, in order to get body, and in his search for light and expression of texture violated all the sacred old rules. Working in a high key, large quantities of white lead had to be used. He was at first promptly disqualified but now, after some thirty years, we acknowledge that the impressionistic technical method is the most important artistic gift of the last century. The greatest change yet to come, however, arrived with the Neo-Impressionistic painter at a time when the public had scarcely recuperated

from the first shocks of impressionistic painting. None the less our modern exhibitions owe much of their appeal to the very general use of this latest method, although in its application often much disguised. The old method of painting was one of unbroken surface, though an undertone was often permitted to make itself felt throughout the canvas. This method of employing an undertone is still in vogue, and probably always will be, since it is the foundation of individual expression, through the great varieties of tone possible, and also by reason of the technical durability it gives to a picture. It is interesting to look at pictures and see what the undertone used is. The French call it "frotté," or a rub-in of some color, generally warm, very thinly applied, upon which, while it is still wet, the final color is put. To start and finish a canvas painted into the frotté has always been considered a technical accomplishment of the first order, only the elect can achieve it, and the paintings produced that way are few and far between, but they unquestionably include many of the greatest paintings of the world. A little canvas of a Dutch girl by a Munich man, Max Thedy, shown at the Carnegie Institute and elsewhere

was the admiration of the profession for its unique qualities of painting. Into a brown, sympathetic undertone, a few lighter and darker tones had been set, with surety of touch and keenness of perception. There was really little effort about it, on close examination, but everything was there, wonderfully suggested in the picture's clear restrictions to a few simple facts. Most of Duveneck's canvases have that same directness and simplicity. It is the result of putting the final painting immediately and broadly into a wet and sympathetic technically warm under-painting. Duveneck's "Whistling Boy," among others, is a good example of this method, though all of his work is easily recognizable by the same quality. Even in landscape, some of the very greatest paintings are interesting for the same manner, as Inness' "Coming Storm" in the Buffalo Fine Arts Academy must easily prove even to a laymen. Such directness, such swiftness and energetic method, is enjoyable in the extreme. In spite of its apparent completeness, this was perhaps the work of forty minutes, and technically, to the initiated, it looks the part. That he afterwards put in that dry tree and artificial foreground, including the

stump, was more a concession to an old-time formula than anything else. To carry that wonderful green middle distance through the entire length of the picture would have been too much to expect of a man who, after all, was unconsciously working in the Barbizon tradition, in spite of the very daring courage he possessed. This indirect method of painting a picture first in a neutral color in different values, or expressing it in light and dark irrespective of the actual color, had many advantages and many drawbacks. But the best things produced in this method are as fine as any other methods, past or present. One should, however, discriminate between the spontaneously painted picture when under and over-painting were done in one sitting—where everything was staked upon one card—and the other type, when the frotté was painted at one time, allowed to dry, and finished some other time. Our own William Keith was a past master of the first method, and some of his best canvases were painted in a now-or-never spirit which we seldom meet with in art. It was this technical swiftmess and facility in which Keith excelled and in which he at times even surpasses the most spontaneous of Inness'





LANDSCAPE

PLATE XXI

From the Oil Painting by  
MAURICE BRAUN



work. At its best, this method of apparent ease is convincing by reason of its freedom from hesitation and fumbling.

But the method of warm under-painting has now generally fallen into disrepute, perhaps as being too dangerously connected with the past; the younger men of the modern type, to judge from their work, must be suspected of looking upon the older methods with a mixture of sympathy and pity. Perhaps it is not so much the method of painting as it is the lack of color—in the modern sense—which causes this attitude. However, I do not believe the world will ever tire of Duveneck, Chase, Currier, Sargent, Brush, and some more recent arrivals like Troccoli and Pushman.

After the thin and wet under-painting we have the Impressionist and after this the Neo-Impressionist—whom I abruptly abandoned in my discussion—who wants to go him one better. The light palette, gay with color, is not enough for him. He wants the utmost in brilliancy and sparkle. Here, fortunately, science came to the rescue. Having become interested in the light problem of the Plein-airist, or painter who paints in the open air, the scientist pointed out

to him, on the basis of an optical discovery, that small quantities of different colors put alongside each other would at a distance appear like the direct mixture of two on the palette; take primary colors, red, yellow, and blue, selected in pairs, and juxtaposition of the proper two would make orange, green, or violet, and so on with the secondary colors and tertiary colors. That advice started a furious technical activity which at first shocked the public worse than anything had ever done before. These dotted or stippled pictures upset their fondest convictions, beside forcing the necessity upon the people of learning to see all over again. The close examination of pictures became a joy of the past, and squinting had to be cultivated to get any satisfactory sensation. However, we must admit that Neo-Impressionism is still with us and that we like it—some of it we like immensely. Metcalf's "Trembling Leaves" is as popular a painting as any and the Frenchman Le Sidaner's night pictures awaken poetic sentiments in many. Robert Spencer's charming portraits and even those delightful quarries of our very gifted Daniel Garber show the symptoms of Neo-Impressionistic influences. Our modern art is absolutely dominated

by it, and since our art is so largely the art of outdoors, the art of the landscape painter, we recognize its influence everywhere. No matter what the particular method of the painter has been, in one regard painters have always been of the same opinion, and this is in the desire to use whatever may be their personal methods to express themselves skillfully and with grace and charm. We find that endeavor always, no matter how different the technique. A German philosopher has justly said that as Kunst—art—is derived from “Können”—to be able—a great deal that is paraded as art is not worthy of that designation, since little or no “Können” is in evidence. The whole question of Cubism and Futurism becomes less a problem if looked upon in that light, since “von Können da ist keine Spur”—of real knowledge there is no trace.

The question of technical quality is naturally governed by the effect desired, and any art exhibition will disclose as many methods as there are artists. One of the most acutely interesting and competent of present-day painters in a technical sense is our own Redfield. There is not much romantic appeal in his work, but in its straightforward method of painting it is almost

in a class by itself. He presents a most interesting phenomenon of a most heavily painted picture which invites very close inspection and which reveals a most fascinating technical quality. One's admiration grows for the painter of these suggestive fragments of nature, largely because the plastic handling of the paint seems most carefully considered in each and every stroke, with a full feeling of responsibility that each stroke must tell, not only constructively, but by enlivening the surface of the painting, by catching light and throwing shadows. Redfield's art is particularly noteworthy amidst that of many modern Americans because of its live quality of paint. Speaking of the living quality of paint, one is reminded of the dynamic work of a young Russian, Nicholas Fechin, who has fascinated many by the technical extravagance and animation of his superbly original work. One feels that here paint has been made to do things one too seldom sees on a canvas. The suppressed emotionalism of Whistler's paintings seems almost dead alongside of a Redfield or Fechin, but it has a quality of its own which is inimitable—and vexatious, as any Whistler naturally would be. The "Lady by the Shore" by



AT THE HIPPODROME

PLATE XXII

From the Oil Painting by  
GIFFORD BEAL, N. A.  
Owned by  
MARTIN RYERSON, ESQ., Chicago, Ill.





Leo Putz, shown on many occasions in this country, discloses another method of putting on paint which, while it is decidedly mosaic, is nevertheless very absorbing. After some thought about this technical procedure, I cannot help but feel that anybody must quickly come to the conclusion that it is just along these lines that painting really gains in interest. The vast numbers of pictures painted in an abstract, meaningless style will certainly arouse no interest. It is here that a conception of style formulates itself even in the mind of the layman, who must readily see that the handwriting of a painter, so to speak, is an inalienable asset of which he cannot be deprived. On the other hand, the catchy legerdemain performances of certain painters are often as quick in captivating one's eye as they are in boring one's intellect. They are often merely skill and nothing more. But mere skill is hardly enough, though it should be the support of the artist to facilitate the transmission of his idea upon the canvas. Much of the modern slovenliness of painting is due to a lack of understanding of technical means. The "alla prima" methods of modern stenographic painting often profess to have as an ideal the fluent and direct

methods of Velasquez, Franz Hals, Hogarth, and Whistler, without realizing that much of the wild dash of modern art is nothing more than a physical stunt expressing neither an idea, a mood, nor an observation. The present-day leaders in the field of portrait painting, men like Sargent, Salomon, Shannon, or Blanche, never allow one to stop with an enjoyment of mere beauty of paint, but they carry one on into the psychological depths of their sitters. Style is often used to define a certain difference in character of technique, and while the word is not applied to that alone, it includes that. It is the technique that attracts us to certain painters because it contains something individual; the man's technical procedure differs from that of any other painter; it has a personal quality.

## CHANGES IN THE AESTHETIC IDEAL

IF we placed any trust in the oft-asserted contention that what is considered beautiful and elevating today was not so regarded in days gone by, and vice versa, we should deprive ourselves of the most engaging pleasure that art offers, namely, its multiformity of expression. While the choice of subject matter in art throughout succeeding periods must justly seem most vacillating, it must again be repeated that the same common abstract qualities of art have endured through all times. While the subject matter in art may naturally have changed from one thing to another, whatever constitutes artistic appeal in methods of representation will be found a universal quality throughout all ages. This applies not only to the abstract elements of beauty in a work of art, those which are dependent upon line and form, balance, harmony, rhythm, color, technique, and composition and arrangement, but also to their *raisons d'être*.

The use of different subjects in art, as they appeal to our intellect, by reason of their moral

religious, political, and philosophical character, has on the other hand shown a great many variations. To many people only those pictures are absorbing which depict the habits, morals, and customs of bygone days and of different periods. Undoubtedly it is this aspect of a picture that particularly controls and fastens the interest of the masses upon art, and for that reason it becomes of prime importance to the student. It will be found that the genuineness, the veracity of atmosphere in a picture, is very intimately connected with its power of appeal. Since the true artists of any period convincingly and intentionally reflected the milieu of their days, on the other hand all historical pictures not coincidental in their production with the period represented are annoyingly uninteresting and affected. The pictures which at once become engaging to the mind are those which spring from the personal experience of the artist—irrespective of chronological affiliation with old or modern technical schools. The fresh and candid pictorial document belonging to any time holds not the same charms, however, in all cases. The subjects represented may in their appearance differ vastly, but the spirit of sug-

gestive realism, of live interpretation, has ever been the same in the worth-while pictures of both new and old. It is customary with many to value paintings according to their so-called moral power, as expressed by the subject—as if the subject had any part in this question of moral uplift—as if art could moralize in the sense of the direct moral verbal appeal of the preacher. The artistically good and the bad religious picture will prove the wrongness of this trite idea. The loftiness of style, the rhythmic charm, the stately balance of a Bellini Madonna stir our instinctive feelings of exaltation just as much as the expression of maternal pride and devotion in her face. On the other hand, a treatment of the same subject that is crude and vulgar in form, color, etc., will put one's mind into a state of depression in which one's capacity for good is impaired. This common confidence in the emotional and spiritual effect of a subject, independent of the abstract artistic quality inherent in the manner of representation, to my mind is not based on any real experience, but merely on prejudice and confusion of ideas.

It was purely an historical accident, I feel certain, that the first important pictures painted

were of a religious character. The church, being the moving spirit in every human activity, early constituted itself, in its customary zeal, the first real art patron, with the result that the earliest important pictures were all of the ecclesiastical kind. It would be very wrong to conclude, just because that was the case, and with regard for age, that all religious pictures are necessarily of a superior order. Since the age of the Madonna and Child is synonymous with that of many of the world's best pictures, the popular prejudice in favor of these is easily understood. The astonishing fact that the first period of easel painting has never been equalled or surpassed in loftiness of style, imaginative fancy, and luxurious technique, moreover, very easily explains the confusion. I certainly believe that after the truth of its appeal to sentiment is acknowledged in a picture, the technical method of the canvas should always be taken into account, and if they are found to support the intellectual beauty, all is well. But how rarely do we observe any attempt at this professional attitude among the masses! The public at large seems to have a most perplexing time trying to estimate comparatively one quality against the

other. Every religious picture is treated with reverence as if in its very nature it must be good art. That the goodness of a picture may manifest itself in twofold ways—in the intelligent representation of the idea as well as in qualities of abstract beauty—this alone can be the foundation of artistic criticism. To many laymen it seldom occurs that a religious picture might be bad. The idea is generally regarded as preposterous, no matter how distressingly composed, no matter how dry in paint, the picture of the Madonna and Child may appear to be. The conventional idea of respect for everything religious has removed the religious picture almost entirely from the sphere of criticism. What is true in a special way of the religious picture is even more true of the so-called Old Master generally. The term Old Master to many means only one thing, namely, something supremely good and exceedingly valuable. Any old canvas with flyspecks on it and showing in every conceivable way the signs of old age is termed an Old Master. That it might be the work of an old time apprentice or journeyman painter seldom occurs to anybody. My many visits to remote places to inspect so-called Old Masters of

supposedly enormous value have never resulted in the discovery of a single picture which would justify its being taken from its place in the store-room. People are perfectly hysterical about the discovery of Old Masters. As if there were really many yet to be discovered? Most paintings worth any attention are duly known and recognized. But the merry chase goes on, like the proverbial hunt for buried treasure on one of the many palm-studded islands of the Pacific. The religious picture remains a great favorite with the public in this regard, and the worse it is in color and drawing, the more likely it is to be pronounced a masterpiece. With the modern disregard for execution and form, the blame is partly to be laid at the door of certain schools of modern art. The great pictures of the great masters of the Renaissance were mostly religious though with the influence of the church lessening and the patronage by a rich aristocracy waxing, naturally the character of pictures changed and Saints or Madonna and Child ceased to be the sole motives. However, the Christ Child and its Mother, the glorification of the joy and tragedy of motherhood, has occupied painters of all time, even to our own times





MONTEREY BAY

PLATE XXIII

From the Oil Painting by  
BRUCE NELSON



when men like Melchers, Brush, Thayer, and Paxton have treated it with great sympathy and a new meaning. During the Seventeenth Century, the great period of painting in Spain, religious pictures were continued in the work of Murillo, but the portrait of the rich citizen or the nobleman and the battle picture began to come to the fore. Since, as already remarked, any art period reflects the political, religious, and economic history of its time, art has often supplied a truthful background invaluable for the historian. Thus to the serious student art becomes doubly interesting, while the person merely looking for passing pleasures in art does away with period pictures, as merely amusing, forgetting how we ourselves might appear if pictorially represented to some future gallery stroller a hundred years hence. As to people ridiculously dressed, the last twenty years here and abroad surely have been as sensational as anything we might meet in the early Spanish, French, or Dutch pictures. The *Meninas* by Velasquez, with their odd and cumbersome hoop-skirts, are not half so amusing as the glued-on hats and curls of the early Twentieth Century damsel.

The northern countries ultimately discarded religious subjects entirely and went into an artistic exploitation, with a realism sometimes very frank, of subject matter which often shocks the Puritan. We hear constantly that in spite of the realistic depiction of every-day occurrences in the art of the Seventeenth Century Dutch, their art was great and on a par with the best of the world. These Dutch painters—Rembrandt, Terborch, Ver Mehr van Delft, Metsu, Brouwer, Teniers, Jan Steen—they knew how to impart to their work a charm of abstract beauty, a feeling of conviction which will make any painting attractive. Pictures like theirs, having a quality of beauty in line and form and color, do not suffer by reason of subject, providing it is not directly debasing. The Dutch painters certainly proved this very forcibly. The Dutch were also the first to introduce still-life as an independent subject of very ambitious proportions. Jan Weenix, with his photographic still-lives reflecting in the highlights of the polished metal the whole interior of the studio, are still looked at in the museums of Holland and Germany with amazement and boundless joy. They are said to have been painted under a

microscope and they certainly give one that impression. They are great demonstrations of the small value of the time of their painters, and also of their lack of understanding of the limitations of painting. While perfect in drawing, they are very unsatisfactory in texture, and every article in them looks almost as if made from glass. This glassy, transparent quality is more helpful in the representation of glassy things like glass itself, or polished surfaces like marble, copper bowls, or hand-polished fruit. But when it comes to pieces of fabric, carpets, and velvet particularly, the whole thing becomes inconsistent. This school of the Dutch still-life painters still has its followers, though our modern painters certainly show more knowledge in the handling of textures. Hondecoter was the really wonderful man in that field, and his barnyard pictures will always remain most interesting for beautiful design, bold handling, fine characterization, and for the curiously human fowl. The veracious art of the sturdy Dutch finds its antithesis in the ultra-refined art of the English portrait painter, such as Gainsborough, Reynolds, Romney, Hoppner, and others. While the Dutch painters painted

invariably the true physical aspects of things, the English strove for an idealized spiritual representation of their aristocracy and upper classes. We admire the stately dignity of the English school, but it assuredly does not give us much of an insight into the life of the English people. Hogarth practically stands out alone as the cool observer, the biting critic, the sometimes snarly cynic, among the painters of England, showing in bold ruthlessness the vices, corrupt politics, and decadent home life of some of his contemporaries. Hogarth's position as an individualistic analyzer of his time foreshadows the even more personal outlook and self-realization expressed in modern art. In the long run, Hogarth as a figure will retain the admiration of the world, not so much for the bold manner of his painting as for his broad and illuminating conception of his professional responsibilities. Art has always been in England, more than anywhere else, the interest of the rich, though the true art of the people, curiously enough, was advocated first by William Morris, in the seventies, when he laid the foundation, by his work, his writings, and his preachings, of what we now enjoy as the new school, particularly in



IN THE VALLEY

PLATE XXIV

From the Oil Painting by  
JOSEPH T. PEARSON, JR.  
Owned by the  
UNIVERSITY CLUB, Philadelphia, Pa.





applied art. To point at the constant change in aesthetic ideals as a proof that art is simply a matter of taste is an argument much used by the public. But to choose a subject and interpret it in the right environment is not always an easy task. There is hardly a greater step than from the Dutch painter to the English portrait painter, although we know that the two are intimately connected by the art of Van Dyck, who laid the foundation for the great English Eighteenth Century school, and in his more polished and restrained art bridged over from the sensuous realism of Rubens to the refined portraits of Gainsborough and Reynolds.

It is most puzzling that the ideal of physical beauty painted by the Dutch is scarcely sympathetic to anybody excepting the Dutch people. Again, their independence in art, resisting the southern tradition in aesthetics as well as any attempt from that side to interfere with their political existence, culminated in a spirit of freedom that is well-nigh amazing. They could neither be seduced by the exotic nor forced by arms to be anybody but themselves. The aesthetic ideal of the Dutch was home-made. However, the shock is great to the

average American travelling abroad for the first time, when he sees the many florid pictures by Rubens or Jordaens in England, France, Holland, and Germany. They are positively provoking to him at first, though eventually he learns to admire their skill and technique, their joyous expression, and their big, decorative style. The Dutch are absolutely by themselves in the outspoken realism of their art. It is simply the reflection of the life of these people, whose every manner and whose language were and still are free from prudishness and false modesty. Van Dyck carries over into his adopted country all the technical brilliancy of his great teacher, and in the studies of Gainsborough, Reynolds, Hoppner, and the others this grows into the stately and untemperamental dignity of a calm and more stoic race. To the English, who had no understanding of the often peculiar pleantries of Dutch country life, the turning up of the seamy side of life, as the Dutch sometimes did, appealed even less.

The difference may seem radical between the highest expression of the Dutch and of the English, but not any more so than between the two of them and the Watteaus, Fragonards, and

Bouchers of the Eighteenth Century French. While art in England portrayed idealistically many people of high position and was always careful to leave a good moral impression for the future historian, the French painter of the Eighteenth Century cared naught for the deluge to come after him. These French painters snapped their fingers in the face of future historians, and in representations of lax morals surpassed even the coarse naturalism of the Dutch. The many frank scenes of bibulous peasantry making love to their rotund women that we see in Adrian Brouwer, Jan Steen, Teniers, and others, are devoid of the graceful, conventional mannerisms the gallant Frenchman displays in the art of the fastidious painters of the periods of Louis XV. and XVI. The Dutch painter dwells upon the moral looseness of his people by using as models the very same people in their everyday surroundings, while the Frenchman puts wings on them, so to speak, and transfers them into Arcadia. It is simply another phase of the change of the aesthetic ideal, an ideal that will never seem the same, and will always find its expression in some phase of the political, social, and moral background

of a people. So long as the art expression of a people is in harmony with some characteristic phase of their life, there will never be anything wrong with it. It is only when the art of one country is bodily transplanted into foreign nation that bad will result. The craving for the exotic and the affectation of an ideal based on alien backgrounds has diverted the attention of many good painters from the fields of inspiration in their immediate surroundings. The cloudy mirroring of their own civilization was the inevitable result of their short-sightedness and lack of real interest in their work.

We see the half-digested art of the Paris atelier in the modern Filipino paraded as a so-called national art of that country. The effect is grotesque, to say the least. The many efforts of well-prepared modern painters to revive in their art the civilization of bygone days is always singularly pathetic. The classicising and fragile art of an Alma Tadema is hardly a contribution to the art of the present age, in spite of its popularity. That the great periods had no naturalistic painters, in the modern sense, is doubtless regrettable, but we get all we ever wish to know about their lives, manners, and contribution



THE STORM

PLATE XXV

From the Oil Painting by  
HERMANN DUDLEY MURPHY



through other channels, and the pleasant platitudes of such a painter as Alma Tadema, whose every effort is uninteresting by reason of a lack of wholesome imagination, will not tell us any more than is already known. The beginning of decay in any art has always been foreshadowed by the borrowing of the methods and subjects of bygone periods and of other peoples, and art never was more interesting and wholesome than when it was concerned exclusively with the restricted atmosphere of a natural or racial unit. Greece, the Renaissance, the Gothic period, the art of the modern French, of Sweden, Norway, and Finland, and even the art of America will illustrate this point. The great ideal art of any people has come out of the logical development of their particular civilization, and the reactionary methods of the Nineteenth Century painters had to lead inevitably to the revolt, the full importance of which we are made to feel right now. What really constitutes the aesthetic ideal in pictures nowadays is hard to say. There is one part of the profession who think any old established way is good enough for them. They compare themselves with any older generation of painters of any period. They are naturally

opposed to anything which might force them to unlearn old ideas and study new ways. To this class belong all of the successful older present day academic painters. The other is the modern man generally, the younger member of the profession, who for many reasons, all of which are very human and interesting, is generally opposed to anything the older ones do. Sometimes he is a mere faker, realizing that the easiest way to publicity and notoriety is to be different, and he finds that very easy. To be contrary has been at all times the attribute of the seeker of the limelight. He has never known the rudiments of the old school. Hard work is not an experience of his life, and everything he does he values in proportion to the ease with which it can be accomplished. He often belongs to a mutual admiration society, frequently large, and the general attitude of the public toward all societies of that type—the same attitude it takes toward quarantined people—permits such coteries to flourish unmolested until they die from persistent anaemia. Works by these men go sometimes into respectable exhibitions, and certain people who yearn for new sensations hypnotize themselves into the belief that they are witness-



ing the beginnings of a new art. This sort of art enthusiasm is not uncommon, and flourishes anywhere. However, not all innovators are of this kidney. The really earnest ones have graduated from the conventional school, sometimes with conspicuous honors. They have become dissatisfied with the monotony of repeated performances, and led by perfectly honest motives, they begin to experiment, invariably with no idea of reward of any kind. Often they make great sacrifices in their search for a new expression of their ideas, go into seclusion as a proof of their seriousness—and work! Just now we are confronted with the results of such experimental art, and the perplexities of the public have grown almost unbearable. Although a certain consternation reigns, with remarkable unanimity the public insists upon being amused by these latest efforts. Despite solemn warnings from the historically inclined that similar things have happened before, and that contempt has turned into approval, this time no such warning has any effect. The typical examples of great innovators are pointed out over and over again—Constable's pathetic experience, the Barbizon men in general, and particularly the great

French Impressionists of the seventies, Monet, Manet, Renoir, Pissarro, and others. But to no avail; the public refuses to take these latest innovators seriously. The chief cause for the refusal lies in a certain lack of similarity of conditions. While on former occasions only things physically visible were involved, our new art professes to have invaded the realm of the psychic—that is to say, claims that painting has rather suddenly ceased to be an objective expression and has turned to give visual form to subjective motives of the artist, who, owing to a change of circumstances to be pointed out in a chapter hereinafter on “Art Patronage,” no longer finds it either necessary or useful to paint objects for their own sake and so to have his subjective feelings subordinated. We have had always the “art of art’s sake” painter, but the rabid negation of the traditional has never assumed such violent form as in certain instances today. It has become very largely a direct contest between the objective painter of the past and the subjective individualist who seems to sense possibilities in the part of painting heretofore never regarded as properly its field.

Here, immediately, the great question of the limitation of pictorial expression is brought up, and there, to my mind, lies the whole trouble. No sensible person will deny the right of experimentation to any person technically gifted, and we are usually bound to respect any honest experiment, but whether we should *ipso facto* take as final and conclusive a new outlook heretofore never connected with the aims of painting, as to this, I think caution, if not suspicion, is surely warranted. What is generally designated as Cubism is of course no novelty to any painter with academic training. The novelty merely consists in presenting something as a finished thing which was formerly looked upon as a basic constructive start. From Egyptian and Assyrian days to the present we find the cubistic principle of drawing and also of painting. It is a perfectly sound principle, a nursery idea which no painter can afford to neglect. To see and represent things geometrically in planes is the most primitive method of reproduction, and the most economical at the same time. Japanese wood-carvings of older periods and modern wood toys are as typical as the paintings which attempt representation in the same fashion. The cubistic

idea is absolutely sound, and nothing but a most healthy expression of the objections of certain men in the profession against insipid and loose construction of pictures. Cubism is constructively inherent in any good painting, whether of old or new schools. To make it the single feature of a picture denuded of any other quality is of course objectionable to any person trained in the belief that the constructive features of a picture must be modified by decorative aspects. A building left in the raw, so to speak, merely in steel construction, is artistic sometimes if the engineer happened to feel his material, as does an artist. Eventually it will be clothed by the varied and modified forms of the architect. Sometimes steel alone is not at all uninteresting, and occasionally this fact is acknowledged by doing the unconventional thing and not covering up the engineer's work with traditional architectural forms. The artistic idea will always assert itself unless art ceases to exist, and the fact that it has been suppressed so vigorously by certain Cubists proves merely their resentment against the meaningless repetition of trivial things, particularly of the pretty-pretty or sickly sweet variety. Asso-

ciated with the constructive Cubism of many modern artists is a demand for primitiveness in color as well as in form. It is the logical step in eliminating all mild and mushy middle tones for the modelling of these figures, and is absolutely consistent with the underlying idea of simplicity. Some of the things which have been produced in that vein are wonders of action and of pattern. The Cubists do refuse to use the conventional principles of rhythm, which play a very important part in academic work. The best of the Cubist work, Cezanne's, Picabia's, and Picasso's, certainly is bound to find high place in the history of art, and it is already evident that the effect of the movement has been most beneficial to art. Let us imagine, for a moment, what might have happened if Cubism had not been revived for us at this time in such vigorous language. The complacent and gouty self-satisfaction of the great masses of painters would by this time have arrived at a point where it could only be called sickening. The vigorous spirit of the Cubists and their contagious method of plastic thinking have given new impetus to art. The best of their art is decidedly decorative, reverting to the old original idea of the true

function of painting, and that fact alone should be greeted with approval.

I wish I were equally certain in my feelings about the Futurist, whose procrastinating title savors of conceit. He may be innocent of choosing it, but the title has stuck, and increased one's bias. The Futurist, by reason of this, will always lay claim to be the latest. I confess he is somewhat obscure to me, not so much in his aims as in his attainments. I respect his attempts, but often have no understanding of the result. I believe he is as serious as his half-brother the Cubist. Personally, I doubt whether psychic emotion can be represented by pictorial formulae. To me, the Düsseldorf painter with his literary subjects was just as wrong as the Futurist with his effects which might be more successfully approached by literature or music. But it remains to be seen, and we can well afford to wait, since the great majority of painters have decided to remain within the limitations of the older schools. The public remains perplexed and makes no effort to hide its feelings of disapproval. Why worry over it? Those who saw a new world open up to them when the Futurists or Post-Impressionists generally held their first



PORTRAIT OF ELMER S. HADER

PLATE XXVI

From the Oil Painting by  
E. SPENCER MACKY





studio teas, had no doubt honest intentions in giving the larger public a chance for observation in public exhibitions. It would have been far better if all of those experimental efforts had remained with their sires. But it was the great nation above all others willing to be used as an experimental rabbit which opened its doors to the new school in a large exhibition in New York in 1913. When one considers that not one in fifty people in this country of ours can appreciate a conventionally painted picture, this exhibition can only be called a futile though a well-meant effort. Our method of bodily transplanting the very latest to our shores, when other and older nations have not yet taken a definite stand, was typified in this Armory exhibition at New York in 1913.

It is not improbable that our aesthetic ideals will undergo a very radical change within the next few decades. On the other hand the pendulum may swing back, but that does not absolve us from the responsibility of appreciating the art problems of the day as they are expressed in the more conventional paintings of our exhibitions. The Cubist, the Futurist, or to use the collective name, the Post-Impressionist, became

a rebel in the evolution of his aesthetic conscience. His experiences, his disappointments, in the traditional methods made him what he is today, and the serious student of art cannot hope to reach his point of view by any different road. The understanding of his aims must spring from a firm belief in the broader meaning of art as a medium for the realization of a personality, rather than a trade for the manufacture of pleasing pictorial effects. However, the foundations of all art will always be sincerity.

## THE NUDE IN ART

**I**N the heyday of ancient Greece, the undraped human figure was the supreme expression of representative art. Our museums abound not only in eloquent fragments of the sculptures of the Greeks, but also in complete copies of their statues. Although the most of them are only in white plaster, they nevertheless readily convince us of the fact that the inspired Greek artist fully understood the nobility of the beauty of the human form.

In contemplating the vast galaxy of unclad beauties, mostly reclining, which liberally dotted the walls of the Fine Arts Palace at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, one is set to think about the underlying motives of this promiscuous pictorial specilization in human forms.

It is evident that the classic point of view is present in only a very few instances, and that the greater number of nudes had little to do with abstract beauty of proportion of line and rhythm of form. We all know that to a Greek

sculptor or vase painter a human body was first of all a symbol of nature, the very noblest product of creation from a purely artistic point of view. Even though these statues and portraits bear the names of individuals, their abstract beauty is so compelling as to make us forget the personality represented. Often these noble forms are a type of beauty, an idealized expression of what probably did not in reality exist, either then or today. All of the statues of Apollo or of Venus possessed in common certain qualities of beauty which frequently assumed almost the character of an artistic convention. This conventional treatment may be summed up in the term—classic style.

What, then, more definitely, is this classic style and why do we seem so lacking in it? Indubitably it was not a faithful reproduction of one particular figure, but rather the result of observations of a great many models, each contributing in its way to stimulate the artist's sense of form and proportion. The classic statues have been analyzed by the philosophically inclined archaeologist and a canon of beauty laid down as representing the fundamental artistic requirements of the human proportions in art. Any-



THE PALACE OF FINE ARTS, SAN FRANCISCO

PLATE XXVII

From the Oil Painting by  
COLIN CAMPBELL COOPER, N. A.



body may have access to this table of measurements nowadays. It is the common property of all artists. And still our nudes, in sculpture or in painting, are scarcely as good as the classic figures. I take it that the idea of physical representation, or rather imitation, never guided the great Greek artist in his work. The naturalistic figure is a creation of the modern dime-museum, the most nefarious agency for the perversion of public taste. Possibly the great sculptor of the past, if he had had at his command the technical facilities of the modern age, might have been tempted to imitate with the idea of absolute deception. However, imitation did not appeal to him, neither of form nor of colour, and still artist and lay-public alike admire the beauty of classic sculpture. People even rave over it when sadly diluted into small machine-made replicas in marble from Italian sculpture-factories. It is probably in that case the marble that lures the multitude. Marble seems to be rated higher than any other substance, though it went begging after the fire of 1906 in San Francisco, when great quantities of good marble of many abandoned doorsteps were carried off for pavements. To me those small Italian commercial replicas

certainly hold but little inspiration in their cold, machine-made, technical brutality.

But to return to the live, pulsating quality of the ancient marble. The individual model, posing for such a figure, became subordinated to the artistic formula based on form and line and proportion. Nothing is simpler and more convincing, as showing the dignified formality of such art, than the treatment of the hair; and the same conventional handling of the major parts of the body, and of many minor details as well was carried out almost on the basis of a uniform artistic understanding. The ears were always beautiful in proportion and well attached. They did not so much express individuality in ears as an ideal ear, made up of all the qualities of the most perfect ears that could be found. The hands, the feet, were shaped as nature produces them but seldom and only in her most favorite children. But what has remained of this artistic conception of the human form in our present-day figures? We see little of it after the disintegration of the Roman Empire until the Renaissance, several periods intervening of the most primitive childlike renderings of human form. The Renaissance, again, gave us many noble



expressions of undraped human forms which a prejudiced world unfortunately declines to receive on the same basis as the ancient classics. With the northward movement of art, the human form, owing to climatic conditions, apparently became less familiar to artists, and more and more obscured, owing to the artists' lack of every-day opportunities for the study of the nude, an opportunity which the Greek sculptors enjoyed in their gymnasia and elsewhere. I wonder what would have happened if figure art had become the heritage of a civilized people living in the tropics?

The artist of the north found himself obliged to resort to the artificialities of the studio model, and to all appearances he has never—with few exceptions—been able to free himself from the influence of the individual, the one person among many whom he might see unconventionally devoid of garments. This limited opportunity for study may be one cause of the many banalities present-day sculptors and painters too often perpetrate. In many cases their productions are nothing but imitations; too seldom are they translations or interpretations by means of artistic symbols. Many are outspoken

in their outright brazen attempt to be suggestive and even sensual. For these we are indebted, I believe, to a certain coterie of modern French painters who either accidentally or by cunning produced many nudes of the kind now universally recognized as the American saloon nude. Water will find its level, and the saloon nude, conceived in the saloon spirit, never could rise to an appeal free from the base atmosphere of its sphere of influence. Most of these pictures are openly sensual, and one cannot but admire the unalloyed honesty of the efforts of their painters in that regard. No other potentialities of appeal—and there are some—in these pictures have any chance. This type of picture was scarcely taken half so seriously here as abroad, and the unabashed naiveté of the many pseudo-Bouguereaus who produced countless Eves, Venuses, and other alluring ladies is really amazing. As far as that noble institution, the saloon nude, is concerned, we seem to have conquered the mania, and eventually we will cast it into oblivion, together with the temple in which it symbolized the physical nature of its devotees. But the nudes still continue to appear, or rather imitations of the naked studio



MORNING

PLATE XXVIII

From the Oil Painting by  
NORWOOD H. MACGILVARY



models which the artist was neither able to forget, owing to the rarity of the occasion, nor to put into artistic language. Far too many modern nudes impress one as mere literal imitations of a particular model, sometimes to an embarrassing degree of photographic physical resemblance.

It is so very tempting, owing to the possibilities of deception in the painter's medium nowadays, to yield to a desire to imitate. The worker in three dimensions, the sculptor in marble, knows that nobody will take his creation for the real, but the painter, although he is deprived of the third dimension in his work—in the physical sense—often allows himself to cater to a certain public taste and produce the near-photographic. It seems to me that as with everything else, the best nudes might be painted out of the head, as Böcklin, the German-Swiss, painted his in practically all of his figural compositions. Such naked, sea-roving creatures as he painted could not be found in the flesh, and that reason alone eventually forced him into absolute independence of models. Many of the greatest painters must undoubtedly have produced their work in that way. How otherwise could

Jordaens, Snyders, or even Rubens have painted their large canvases of human anatomy with such remarkable spontaneousness and ease? Those things cannot be done in the presence of the models nor directly from smaller sketches and studies.

The most flagrant of examples of this photographic type of so-called art was "Stella." Have you seen Stella? Well, I fancy you have seen that reposing damsel, of coke-oven coloring. The pigs in the painting in the Argentine Section, at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, glowing with colour, which looked as if they had swallowed some burning incandescent lamp, were in no way inferior to the naturalistic, apoplectic, roseate hues of Stella. But aside from the colour, so effectively enhanced by orange reflectors, carefully concealed, what of her so-called beauty? What of her so-called aesthetic charm, of which we were told so enthusiastically? It must have pleased many a high school boy to discover an atmosphere of indecency sanctioned by popular approval. But was there really any beauty about this picture? Honestly, does anybody think he could live with such a picture, such a roseate incarnation of

farm-maid's plumpness? Of course I take it the illusion of reality was a great factor in the whole affair, but as a matter of form, proportion, and abstract beauty, Stella was a sad piece of academic draughtsmanship. I shall forthwith be accused of jealousy by that part of the public who know my small efforts in paint and who believe that the manner of painting seen in Stella is so difficult that jealousy prompts me to make such emphatic statements. The portfolios of the average well-trained painter contain many convincing indications of his ability to paint photographic likeness of a nude, and Stella is nothing but a work of either immaturity or conscious deceit. Stella as a starting point is most interesting, because it is an emphatic example of the sensuous nude which in the very artificiality of its existence has no relation to our own time. The undraped figure is not as common a sight in our midst as in the classic periods, and that consideration alone makes the position of the modern painter of figures doubly difficult, and human weakness puts many temptations in his way. He ought more and more to be satisfied with a conventional form. He ought to appeal to our artistic senses, and not to the physical

instincts. There was nothing noble about Stella, and a good deal that was base, vulgar, physical. However, many of the nudes in the legitimate art exhibition were of similar caliber, particularly in Portuguese art, where the most offensive examples of mere physical nakedness abounded. The life-size marble portrait of a society lady without any clothes, not even the proverbial fig-leaf, presented a sad mixture of technical dullness and hopeless insipidity of style. As an example of close study of the nude nothing could have been more painstaking. But the horrible nakedness of the thing is appalling. Anybody who lives in the home town of the artist and model must have been morbidly pleased at having thus been taken into the confidence of the lady. In other words, she is an individual, definite person, and not even being possessed of good proportions, she appears merely naked, devoid of idealization, with no appeal to one's sense of beauty. One feels the colossal waste of material, time, and energy. In her company I observed a typical nude allegory, a reclining studio nude, unconvincingly put into an aquatic background. What a difference between a performance, if it is a performance at all, of this



type and Besnard's lady with the rabbits, in the Luxemburg! Some may little care for the vigorous colour of Besnard, but the personality of this energetic painter manifests itself in every artistic phase of this very remarkable nude. Although it deals with feminine charm of a somewhat over-ripe type, the wonderful harmony of artistic expression of what may well have been an entirely out-of-the-head painting is most compelling. The distribution of light and shade, the effect of the sunlight, the live flesh and sound anatomical construction, are all active in making it a very commanding performance. Though florid and Rubens-like in type, it is a masterly picture, and it might be called "Nature" in its wonderful wealth of fine colour, light, and animated drawing. Representing the opposite, the nudes by Mercié challenge comparison by their sweet bonbon-box-cover type. They are, as far as I have observed, the more popular of the two, but for what reason is hard to understand, unless the crescent ornaments in the hair of his ladies account for it. In the Besnard nude the face is concealed behind the raised arm of the figure. The faces of Mercié's nudes show the charming harmlessness of a wax

doll of the better type. No character, nothing—just a face with two eyes, a nose, a mouth, and other accessories—though a certain idealization of the form of the body contributes the saving grace of these trivial pictures. As to painting, I do not think it was fair to have them hung as they were in San Francisco, as pendants to Besnard, but still, who could hang in the company of that dynamo—perhaps Simon.

On the whole, the French seem now to preserve a much more subjective attitude in their art, from the point of view of the painter, than the other countries. The international section at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition contained a delightful nude at the spring, of wonderful texture and great restraint. In this age of actualities, the nude by Agthe was very gratifying in contrast with the many atelier studies of naked women hung in the American section. Such things as Gutmann's lady with the parrot as the protector of her virtues and a small velvet ribbon as an identification mark was as banal as anything I have seen for some time. It was well painted, in a general way, but why indulge in the cheap trick of attracting attention by such means? In the same class must

be put Glackens's fragments of a discomposing lady propped up on a chaise longue.

What may be done in the modern naturalistic vein Carles demonstrates in a small, square picture of a nude against a dark background, presented to the San Francisco Art Association by Mrs. Harriman. If we had a half-dozen more nudes of the Carles type, it would be well, but the Glackens type certainly is of no profit either to the profession or to the public. Friesecke's pictures, with their healthy glamour of colour, life, light, and atmosphere, strike a particularly happy note, though his outdoor nudes are only half as interesting as his boudoir scenes. Friesecke has the faculty of making use of the model without being everlastingly under the spell of the individual's physical features. His art achieves a personal style, the individual note possessed by Besnard, and it is charmingly compelling in more than one way. Particularly interesting is Robert Reid's nude before a Japanese screen, owned by Mr. Spencer Kellog. One feels that is not merely an academic study of a model, but an underlying idea as well. My imagination may be playing me a trick when I see some very subtle symbolism in this com-

bination of what is popularly but wrongly called a stork in this country and the somewhat pensive attitude of the graceful young woman. Reid gives such individual technical charm to his easel pictures that they at once assume a quality of their own. Of a totally different type, Sargent's well-known Nubian girl compelled great interest, not to be compared to the impressionistic technical methods of a painting of the Reid type, but most interesting from a very keen quality of rhythmic outline, which ran spirally through the picture from top to bottom. It is a wonderful accomplishment, this Nubian girl, in spite of its naturally leathery colour. As in Reid's seated figure, one had here again the satisfaction that the artist went beyond the model in emphasizing certain suggested qualities which, accentuated, became the real note of interest in the picture.

Essentially, the trouble nowadays with so many painters of the nude is that they are utterly unable to free themselves from the influence of the individual before them. It is here, again, as with the landscape painter of immature attitude. He copies directly, clinging desperately to the belief that his only salvation lies in



CARMEL COAST

PLATE XXIX

From the Oil Painting by  
WILLIAM RITSCHEL, N. A.



the faithfulness of his adherence to the fact. In a nude of similar conception, this becomes doubly painful because the indelicate exposure of a more or less defective individual thus brought about adds to the discomfort of the observer, who is seldom rewarded for his patience by other artistic qualities in the picture. The Greek artist did not give us this personal introduction to the model. He does not reveal the privacy of physical characteristics of an individual model. It was partly this physicalness in painting which moved the Puritan forefathers to turn against art; unable to resist, in their curious lack of self-control, they condemned all art and poured out the child with the bath. The suggestion of immorality which there is in art for many people is related to the incompetency of the professional painters who are unable to rise above mere physical suggestion. There is something repulsive about the vulgarity of the portrait nude that mitigates against the fair treatment of the whole problem in the hands of the public. In other words, the nude which has an artistic message is luckily devoid of the voluptuous. Its claim is not physical, but based on rhythmic contour, good proportion

and spacing within the frame, and pure color and tonal qualities.

One of the very finest examples of modern art, one that is beyond all question free from the suggestive and full of the logic of its milieu, is Millet's "Goose Girl," in a private gallery in Bordeaux. Here we see the budding form of a country girl, relinquishing her task of leading the village flock of geese and quietly dipping into the shallow waters of a pool. Whether ever observed in actuality by the artist or not I neither question nor know—I well can go further, and say I do not care at all—but the whole situation is so convincing in everything that nothing but complete aesthetic satisfaction will result from a contemplation of this Millet masterpiece. As another example of absolute purity of form, devoid of any base quality, Arthur Matthews's "Art and Nature" deserves high praise for its singular combination of strength and idealism. How sadly unconvincing, alongside of these, is the "September Morning" by Chabas—that much-known picture of dubious reputation. It is a shame that it should be so, because it is a masterpiece of liquid painting, but the artist is not free from the accusation of



being guilty of putting a pampered Parisian model into surroundings in which she is not at home. It is the aesthetic antithesis of Millet's "Goose Girl." It does not ring true, and the Chicago policeman who exceeded his authority by having it removed from the gaze of the curious public confessed to a fitting artistic instinct which the artist himself did not have, or did not care to exercise. The latter, of course, can be the only assumption in a man who has given so many evidences of excellent artistic powers.

Idealization is not one of the qualities accepted as necessary in a painting among a great many of the radical naturalists of present-day schools, but while one may rarely be offended by the candid realism of a still-life or landscape, the insistent vulgarity of the modern nude in art is scarcely reconcilable with aesthetic demands. We are indebted to modern tendencies for much wholesome agitation, not always successful in its results, but in the interpretation of the human form we are farther than ever away from the classic ideal.

## ON ART PATRONAGE

WHILE in the historic periods of the development of European art practical support was furnished exclusively by the dominant religious and political organizations, such as the church and the aristocracy, the growth of art here in America clearly demonstrates how in a truly democratic country the very life and existence of art may well depend entirely upon the broadest kind of popular support, and not merely upon the interest of a few of the well-to-do or socially prominent or ambitious. Patronage of art has never been confined in this country to any small, select group of interests centralized in the church, the government or the moneyed aristocracy, and it is this fact that raises one's hopes to expect more of the art of our country in the future than of that of any modern country abroad, where conditions in art patronage have suffered little modification.

During the greater part of the Renaissance the church was practically the sole patron. Artists looked to the church for commissions to



WHAT AN INDIAN THINKS

PLATE XXX

From the Oil Painting by  
MAYNARD DIXON  
Owned by  
F. M. DANZIGER, ESQ., Los Angeles, Cal.



support themselves and those dependent upon them, and this one-sided patronage, as at any other period, produced a very one-sided art, reflecting only one definite phase of civilization. We are almost forced to believe that the artists took no interest in the many artistic suggestions which must undoubtedly have come to them in those days from the many other varied aspects of life; one looks in vain for anything that might indicate that their Italy was populated by anything but Madonnas and Saints. This concentration upon one subject naturally produced the flower of religious paintings, but it shows also what exclusive patronage will result in. Eventually, the worldly nobles and the moneyed aristocrats assumed the responsibility of caring for the promotion of artistic aims, either to gratify aesthetic ambition or for purely selfish purposes of self-glorification. And so we find during practically all of the fifteenth and sixteenth century periods, throughout many countries, art put into the service of the aristocracy, to help preserve their positions by perpetuating the dazzling, awe-inspiring phases of their more or less artificial existence. The masses had to be impressed with the wealth, the power, and the

glory of the reigning families to keep them cowed and in servile obedience. A true art of the common people in those days did not exist. The early Dutch, so independent in many ways, had far less of this sycophantic attitude toward religious and political institutions, and one feels with great joy, on more than one occasion, that the antics of the lower classes, as one sees them in the pictures of Breughel, Steen, Brouwer, etc., must, at the time of their production, have violated all the traditional rules of the academic dignity of accepted subjects. One enjoys nothing more than the *bêtes noires* of these various periods—those independent, socialistic spirits who scorn the artificial, and like Hogarth among the English, jump into the whirlpool of everyday life. History shows, very consistently and gradually, the slipping away of the arts from the grasp of the church and the state.

So today no government openly dares to prescribe subjects for the pictures of its state-supported prize students, although everything is tried to encourage young artists to help in the perpetuation of the system in power and in making more secure existing political institutions. To the church, the change amounts

almost to a pathetic collapse. The religious painter exists no more—there is simply no such thing as a religious painting in the sense of the old sycophantic flattery of the Roman Catholic Church, although I believe we are by no means less religious than our deceased forefathers. There is a splendid opportunity for our youngest sister of the family of churches, born on our own soil, to avail itself, in its generous way, of art for the popularizing of its institutions. The whole question of patronage has changed, and it presents, here in America particularly, some most interesting and novel phases.

The most significant thing is the growing independence of the modern artist as compared with the older man. Where little was done except by commission, a spirit of self-satisfaction and loss of individuality could easily develop, while in our modern age the artist's thoughts are seldom diverted from his work by the interested patron. That is to say, modern artists produce, first of all, to satisfy themselves, to realize their own ideal, irrespective of the objective use and application of the picture. The modern spirit in art owes much to its freedom from official patronage, and it is singularly true that the path-

finders, the innovators in art, could dare to follow their convictions only on account of this very severance of official patronage and the artist.

Originally, in the earlier days of American civilization, we cared naught for the home product in art—in fact we most consistently preferred art made abroad. The few artists at home were given to understand that there was no hope for them in this great country. This pseudo-civilization continued for a long time, even into the days of the middle of the last century, when we had already produced good artists like Innes, whose work compared favorably with that of then popular European colleagues. The only thing these artists could do, often, was to scrape enough money together and turn to countries where governments and associations more kindly disposed were willing to fill their pockets and decorate their yawning buttonholes. That artists have to live, seldom occurred to anybody at that time in this country, and our very rapidly increasing art patronage of today is probably more often moved by a vain desire for something we observe other nations in proud possession of than by an



acknowledgment of the responsibilities of the public toward the artist. In our very earliest days of American art, in Colonial days, the historians tell us of the signs for tradesmen's shops our painters had to produce in order to eke out a living. Since Watteau and even Titian and others did similar things, no odium should be attached to this experience of the American painter. I think conditions generally were no different in our pioneer days from what had been the case under similar conditions abroad. Slowly at first, and then with increasing rapidity, we have changed, and at the present moment an art interest is holding the country in a grip so vital that one almost fears its ability to develop any further. It is interesting to compare present methods of support abroad with those in the United States. Abroad, it is still the government, officially, which controls the channels through which the artist receives his financial and social encouragement, and the latter is by no means less welcome than the former. Human vanity has in the past deprived America and does even yet of the presence of a great many very capable painters who would rather live in a country where decorations, titles, and other like

distinctions give the artist a social standing which he cannot as yet hope to attain at home. To the man of artistic perceptions, it may not mean much when he contemplates the kite-tail of honour and decoration in the biography of American artists like Alexander Harrison, who cast his lot entirely with European interest. His brother Birge, who stayed at home, one of our very able landscape painters, pales into insignificance in a biographical catalogue alongside his brother for lack of any such distinctions as are indicated by orders, decorations, memberships in societies, medals, honorary offices, degrees, and what not. Such were the penalties of staying at home, one might say. But one may care for such things, and one may not. That may well explain the social discrepancies between the two brothers. Unfortunately, the public follows the artist whose biography looks much like the suitcase of the man who went to Europe for the first time, and who wants everybody, on his return home, to know where he has been.

After all, the difference in artistic quality between the work of Alexander and of Birge Harrison is not truly indicated by the number of their medals, etc. But gradually we are supply-

ing the means of ready classification of the artistic profession, and it looks as if we were going to outdo Europe, at least in the establishment of monetary prizes and honorary distinctions an artist may receive at home. Ours do not as yet mean quite so much as the foreign article, but eventually time will supply the dignity necessary for their effect. The generous attitude of the private citizen in our country has furnished the most effective means for the cultivation of the fine arts. And by that, only one thing can be meant, and that is the expenditure of money for the support of the profession. We may prattle eternally about art, write about art, and profess to be interested in it, but the only means by which the growth of art can be measured in any country is the relative amount of money put at its disposal. The world has seen some very interesting examples of the power of money in promoting art. Money alone, without national professional ability for artistic production, of course will not suffice, but after the artistic capacity of a people has been developed, the thing most necessary is financial support. Competent artists will always go to those countries, those places, where they may expect at

least to make a living and possibly a little more. The establishment and success of Munich as an art center was due entirely to the lavish endowment of artistic enterprises by a Bavarian king who could easily have lost in the promotion of his city scheme against the rivalry of better climatic conditions elsewhere. But art in Munich flourished, though in a raw climate, by lavish patronage. The one similar American example is that of Pittsburg, where, under very uninviting general conditions the munificence of one citizen has caused the most important art exhibitions on the American continent to be held. Surely there are other cities than Pittsburg in the United States predestined through cultural interest, artistic atmosphere, and climatic conditions to be leaders in art. But, curiously the liberal interest of one man has provided for Pittsburg the distinction of holding the most important artistic function in the United States, in the biennial international exhibitions of the Carnegie Institute.

The commanding artistic standing of the French is the result of their persistently kindly and generous attitude toward their painters and their artists in general. No other people have so



LOWER MANHATTAN

PLATE XXXI

From the Oil Painting by  
LEON KROLL



liberally and tactfully looked after the needs and interests of the artistic professions as have the French, and the national benefits derived have surely paid for the effort. France has set the example and furnished the method which has become the guiding principle for all of the modern countries. We here in America have adopted in many ways the methods of the French, and our whole system of art patronage is brought over directly from Paris—the Mecca of American artists. “*Les amis d’art*” of France, imitated as the Friends of American Art at Chicago and elsewhere, have been a blessing to the profession, and a cultural boon to an otherwise abundantly flourishing commercialism in that section of the country.

While organized support of art in this country goes back as far as 1804—to the foundation of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts—the more solid interest in art was caused and accentuated by the great American Expositions. The year 1876, the year of the Centennial, is generally counted the turning-point which marks the awakening of a national consciousness of an American art. Again, the Chicago Exposition in 1893 stimulated the Middle West,

and the years 1904 in St. Louis, and 1915 in San Francisco, saw the American public revel in the pride of having discovered the fact, up to that time very obscure, that there is such a thing as American art. Since the days of Philadelphia we have made enormous strides, and the mushroom-like growth in the United States of publicly-supported institutions and societies devoted to art is astonishing. We learn from the *American Art Annual*, in an article by Miss Florence N. Levy, its editor, that in 1882 the report on art education prepared by the United States Government points out thirty museums existing at that time, and the first volume of the *American Art Annual*, published in 1898, enumerates forty-one. Since then, the increase has been surprising, so that we have at present in this country nearly seven hundred and fifty art museums and societies and two hundred and fifty art schools—a total of approximately one thousand organizations. We learn further from the same source that the first American museum to be devoted wholly to art was the Wadsworth Athenaeum, at Hartford, opened in 1842, to which the Morgan Memorial has been added within recent years. Among the newest



museums are the Watson Memorial at Rochester, dedicated in December, 1913, and the Los Angeles Museum, opened in 1914. The building of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts has lately been dedicated and an important art museum has been opened at Cleveland. Recent additions to our art galleries include the Deshong Memorial, at Chester, Pennsylvania; the Peter A. Gross Gallery, at Muhlenberg College, Allenton, Pennsylvania; the Franklin Simmons Museum, at Portland, Maine; and the August Saint Gaudens Museum, at Connot. All this is gratifying—and bewildering. Many of these museums are permanent structures and architecturally of great beauty, and their collections are diversified and representative. The good that some of these institutions have accomplished for artists and public alike is very far-reaching. Moreover, I believe that their activities are much more progressive and up-to-date than those of similar institutions abroad, and not merely confined to regular exhibitions, open to the public at little or no cost, but also broadened by very liberal courses of lectures, public instruction to young and old, and education generally reaching in a true democratic way far into the hearts of all

classes of people. This is carried on in even the smallest communities, and one is amused and pleased to find that even a community rejoicing in such a name as Pawhuska, Oklahoma, has an art club with a membership of thirty. This Pawhuska society proudly reports to the *American Art Annual*, referred to before (which yields much valuable information), that it organized in 1911, that its dues are one dollar, and that the membership, of only thirty, has studied Italian art during the last few years. A photograph of the "Sir Galahad" by Watts was given to the High School, and last, but not least, an exhibition of the work of local artists was held at the home of one of the members. One is immensely pleased to read of such enterprise, which surpasses the activities of many much larger cities, particularly in attention to local artists. While this is only an isolated instance, it shows what we may eventually expect everywhere. The most promising feature of the situation is the inevitableness of the turning of our industrially acquired wealth toward artistic aims. This started with general university endowments, and gradually begins to single out special professions, particularly the artistic.

With one notable exception, all this support is coming from the public. The United States, at the instigation of a few interested congressmen, in the nineties provided for an American Academy in Rome, where our native talent could go to be inspired, alongside of the schools of the European countries. Unfortunately, the government forgot to provide the money to run the place with, and the director of that institution finds himself obliged to make periodical journeys home to appeal to the public for support. It is not very dignified, but it is sadly true. I do not believe the patronage of the government will ever be more than negligible, and it is probably better that way, since our government officials seldom consider an enlightened knowledge of art a necessary means to political success. Nevertheless, I am optimistic enough to feel that we shall be privileged to vote yet for a president who will be courageous enough to include the creation of a Secretaryship of Fine Arts in his platform. Some men in public life have as private citizens aided generously—Senator Clark of Montana and many others.

Speaking of politics, we are gradually, also, discarding the notion that art museums must

furnish some of the many sinecures necessary for retired and disabled politicians. It was this condition more than anything else, in some instances in the past, that retarded the growth and development of many organically-healthy institutions. The Museum Director is beginning to be recognized in this country as belonging to a special profession, as he has long been recognized abroad, where men with a thorough academic training and a special knowledge of archaeology and also of the equally broad field of modern art are put at the head of the museums. Sometimes we have helped ourselves, in this country, by making use of artists with executive ability to look after our museums and galleries, and in many such instances we have done remarkably well. The professional publicity man has sometimes fitted in, welding a bond between the public and his institution by providing information, and sometimes instruction. Eventually we shall take art administration as seriously as any other profession. One of the reasons we do not regard it as we do law or medicine is because human lives will never suffer for mistakes made within its sphere of influence.

The artist individually, also, enjoys better

social advantages than heretofore, although, as with everything else in this country, there is no national standard in this regard. There are now approximately five thousand artists living in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, and decreasing numbers as one leaves the seaboard. Their influence, as collectively expressed in clubs and other organizations, is making itself felt for the good of the commonwealth. The public, on the whole, has a general disinclination to patronize the artist directly, and prefers to obtain what it wants through the agency of dealers. The lack of accessible and inviting working quarters in many cities, outside of the big centers, is often the cause of this. Many of the dealers are of no help to home art, since they, for purely commercial reasons, decline to handle American art. There is not enough profit in dealing with American pictures, since the standard of living at home does not permit the American artist to compete with his European colleague. It is much more lucrative for the dealer to buy a picture in Europe for two hundred and fifty francs and to sell it for five hundred dollars in America than it is to buy from an American artist for two hundred and fifty

dollars and to sell it for five hundred. The picture dealer on the whole has been little helpful to the active artist, with the exception of some genuinely interested men, like the recently deceased Macbeth, who in New York for many years courageously tied his fortunes exclusively to American art. As for the great number of others, pictures are to them commodities, and they sell pictures as they would a chandelier, with interest only in what they can get for them. The one agency the artist here in America must look to is the direct patronage of the public, the practical support of that part of the community which is discriminating and which is willing to learn. It is only a small group, but wherever it exists it is the mainstay of artistic existence. The Panama-Pacific International Exposition sold to individual visitors works of art, mostly pictures, amounting in price to more than one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Such support is encouraging, particularly when one considers the generally high standard and originality of the work sold. No accurate statistical material regarding the total amount of money expended on art in the United States is available, but it is certainly very generous, and

growing continually. The great industrial prosperity of this country will ultimately cause the richer classes to turn much wealth toward educational purposes, and not all of it is going into the sciences. America, to the capable original artist, will be as worth while to dwell in as it was discouraging only fifty years ago. The conditions abroad will for many years not be conducive to a very liberal patronage of the fine arts, and already the European artist is looking toward America for a market. Twenty years ago we should easily have yielded to the fascination of a foreign name, but the American artist is beginning to be so firmly established in the affection of his own people that national pride alone will safeguard him forever against unfair foreign competition. Times have changed. Though we have yet to give a distinctively American art exhibition abroad, we are in a fair way to assert our own artistic convictions, alongside of the art of the world. It is still customary for the European to attach the success of our leading painters to their European training, but the number of those who are rooted in home influences is becoming larger, and this is for the profit of American art.

## HOPES FOR AMERICAN ART

ALTHOUGH the loftiest exemplification of art is still to the average person the painting, and an oil painting at that, one cherishes a fond hope of making the public extend their interest to other artistic matters besides paintings. This, briefly, I feel to be our most urgent need. The art sections of our many civic organizations and clubs when they devote themselves to art still generally take up the study of painting—Renaissance Madonnas. My own experience in this respect in dealing with women's clubs is too often disappointing. I am asked to give a lecture on art, at such and such a date, and misgiving at once are evident when I suggest as a subject the beautification of the home garden, the problems of sculpture, or even mural decoration—let alone architecture. Paintings seem to be regarded as the most exalted expression of the noble, the uplifting, in art, and the only reason to which I am able to ascribe this deep-rooted prejudice is that it is the solitary art expression which is utterly disconnected from



anything we need and use, and absolutely irrelevant to the particular needs of a civilization. Moreover, painting certainly has in itself all the elements of luxury, and it should for that reason alone come the very last in the affection of mankind. People do not seem to realize that a picture has become a rather perverse form of art, and that it is fundamentally no more important than the many expressions of the so-called dependent or applied arts.

My own faith, then, in pictures is not so very great either as an exhaustive expression of the art of a people or as of fundamental educational value for the large masses. If we had consistently developed our art by inherited instincts, we should probably never have arrived at the making of transportable pictures, such as we see now by the thousands in art-shops, exhibitions, and galleries generally. One can only hope that the character of our art expositions will change radically by embracing within their scope all the manifestations of art which contribute to the beautification of even the humblest dwellings. In thus depriving art of its character of a luxury, we shall make it an alleviating factor in our life, free from the taint of decadence

and arid privilege. What it means socially to put a desirable thing at the command of the masses, the modern automobile has demonstrated. Once upon a time, when prohibitive prices deprived the man of average means of having what he instinctively felt was a sane pleasure, the rich automobile owner in his inevitable predicaments on the roadside had to be content with the taunts and sneers of a jealous mob. He had to rely upon his own resources. But now, with the introduction of inexpensive small motor cars, what was once a luxury is now well nigh a necessity. The expression of social friction by envious humans by a lavish distribution of nails upon the road has ceased to be a popular pastime. So it is with art. To turn artistic ability exclusively into the Locomobile picture class has only an exclusive effect. The thing that counts is to spread the enjoyment of art broadly over our common world. Every material, every detached object, first, and later on the walls and dwellings generally, will reflect some day, I hope, the desire of men to make them alike beautiful and useful. My firm belief is that art is in the broader sense based entirely on a utilitarian principle, and should exert itself

that way in a proper promotive and stimulative atmosphere. We have accomplished such prodigious beginnings in this country, in developing the artistic significance of our dwellings, that I hope we shall be leaders in future domestic architecture. In fact, I am sure that our American homes are on the whole more tastefully furnished than those of Europe. Our sense of simplicity and fitness, and a demand for the practical, have saved us from the mistakes of the old countries, which have never been able to free themselves completely from imitation of the historic styles.

We must all deplore that we have neglected so far to show the great mass of original work we are doing as a nation in the field of the useful arts. But the scattered evidences make one very hungry for a big comprehensive American exhibition of the industrial arts. I have a suspicion that it would be even more interesting and convincing than our surprisingly good national fine art. So far, one still looks forward to that event with great anticipation, and I believe the next international exhibition in these United States will not be able to sidestep this issue as deplorably as was done in San Francisco. The St.

Louis Exposition, in 1904, gave the American public the first comprehensive idea of the importance of national art as demonstrated in the displays of the German and Japanese peoples. To my mind, they contributed the most interesting single units of that great undertaking, notwithstanding the fact that in the Palace of Fine Arts no effort had been spared to impress with square miles of ludicrous paintings and miles of linear feet of more or less ugly frames. In the meantime, we should not lose sight of the fact that we must do our share in the field of the industrial arts.

That art as related to life not always finds its expression through the medium of the picture is shown abundantly by the great number of very artistic people who seldom come in contact with paintings. We all have had the refreshing experience of meeting with all the qualities of an artistic atmosphere in the most unexpected places, particularly where there was no outward indication of wealth, which so often tempts people to acquire more than the necessary things. Good proportion, true tonality, agreeable spacing and grouping of furniture, proper accentuation of color, often seem to work

together in such instances into a unity of artistic atmosphere, and we often observe that the presence of a painting in such houses is not the rule but the exception. Almost all paintings in the great periods were painted for certain definite positions. In our day we have reached the high-water mark in the production of detached and portable paintings, and to watch the antics of artist and public alike in trying to dispose of them is surely amusing, to say the least, if not pathetic. The fact alone that people do not know what to do with their paintings is a proof of their absolute lack of relation to everyday life, and for luxurious purposes, their number is entirely out of proportion to the available wall space.

In the development of this country's art, we may observe the same imitative procedure as in anything else—as in our government institutions, our schools, or our social system. As the inauguration of our national independence we adopted whatever happened to be the vogue at that particular time in the mother countries of our varied population. And it is only recently that we are beginning to shape our institutions to our own needs. There are even some people

who are actually sacrilegious enough to say that our laws and constitution are not befitting to our needs, and who wish, accordingly, to change them. With art it is rapidly becoming much the same. Our first pictures were a typical transplantation of English motives upon American soil. Again, we were content to borrow the effects rather than to develop an art of our own. We began with pictures right away, and we have stuck to them more or less ever since. Instead of trying to develop any real national art from the soil, so to speak, we adopted a certain phase of a declining European easel picture, and thought we had done everything necessary to be called artistic. The greatest achievements in art, however, do not come about that way. They are the direct result of a common co-operative desire of all the artistic forces to make everything beautiful, not merely to produce an abstract expression of artistic impulse in one form alone. It all amounts to this, that as long as the necessary things in life are not taken care of artistically, the picture is apt to be merely an unhealthy affectation. Doubtless we are producing too many pictures, largely for speculative purposes, and we are paying too little



SOBRANTE VISTA

PLATE XXXII

From the Oil Painting by  
EUGEN NEUBAUS  
Owned by  
MRS. W. C. WHITCOMB, Rochelle, Ill.





attention to the so-called useful arts and their primary importance in our art activities.

Our first art schools in this country, like our universities, were copies of European patterns of the highest type of education instead of schools for teaching the practical, technical, useful things needed at the moment. We are acknowledging the mistakes by the almost hysterical way in which we are providing technical schools for teaching the things actually needed within a civilization of physical development. Our universities are now really becoming American institutions, not imitations of certain institutions abroad, and if the desire for technical education has become so great as to overshadow the study of the classics, it is merely a temporary symptom, which will remedy itself with the changing of our industrial civilization into one more cultural. Our art schools are affected similarly, and the change that is taking place must be received with joy by every intelligent citizen. While formerly we had nothing but art academies in this country, the number of schools of applied art is increasing so rapidly as to assume the right proportion. In England, and in France, and Germany particularly, the propor-

tion of art academies to industrial or applied art schools is one to ten, while in this country it was originally one to nothing. The change, however, is taking place rapidly, with the awakening of a national understanding that the art of a great people is not merely a matter of looking at pictures but a question of living in well-designed surroundings, in houses which are artistic primarily by reason of the application of aesthetic principles to their every detail, of orderly arranged and harmoniously formed interiors and exteriors which reflect an understanding of artistic principles. Foreign critics have been quite right in their observation that we spend large amounts of money for pictures and often put them into ugly houses. It must seem to some that I am again getting away from pictures. As a matter of fact, I am getting nearer to them all along. A good picture embodies certain artistic principles which we should meet with and desire everywhere.

To return once more to our schools—we are about to do what we should have done a hundred years ago if the encouragement coming from Europe had been of the right kind. When we set up housekeeping in America at the end

of the eighteenth century, art in Europe had started on a downward march, only here and there relieved by symptoms of life. The interest in the useful arts was carried on only by the endless and meaningless imitation of Renaissance ornamentation. The acanthus was worked to death, and into a shapeless mass. The inevitable happened in a renewed interest in original expressive art—a sudden desire to find new and heretofore unused forms of ornamental decoration. Picture-making suddenly was pushed into a corner. Many very talented painters abroad saw the narrowness of their outlook, and applied their talents to what is properly called design—the designing of useful things. That is what I hope will be the privilege of our talented younger Americans, who are working, often against their own convictions, along the narrow lines laid down by a public which is unconsciously guilty of retarding the growth and universal spread of art. In Europe and in America art had become so hopelessly dull, by the end of the last century, that the only thing that promised any relief appeared to be a return to the artistic shaping of needed things. Picture-making had lost sight of its

true aim. The Düsseldorf and Munich school flourished, in anecdotal pictures which had no relation to the sister arts of architecture and sculpture, having invaded the realm of literature.

From England this new impulse for the beautification of everyday things spread to Belgium, whence it went to Germany, and soon the modern movement spread all over Europe. It traveled like wildfire, and caused many local artistic revolutions. The old guard, finding that all was not well, fought furiously against the new idea. The new idea was first of all a desire to be original, independent of the past. The older men agreed that this was not possible, and pointed with pride to the example of the Renaissance, acknowledged to be the second greatest period in art, the greatest since Greece; the Renaissance, they said, developed upon the foundations of the classic tradition. Of course this is only partly correct, for the art of the Renaissance is partly attributable to that same spirit of creative desire which caused our modern movement in art and which had its beginning in the useful and decorative arts. The spirit of independence, the desire to get away

from the past, arose simultaneously in the so-called fine and applied arts. We are not as yet fully realizing upon our inherent art instinct, here in the United States, as eventually we shall be able to do. In St. Louis in 1904, as already pointed out, the most fascinating artistic efforts displayed were not found in the Fine Arts Palace but in another building, where certain complete units, from carpets up to pictures, were exhibited in separate buildings devoted to the applied arts. John Brisbane Walker, at that time editor of *The Cosmopolitan*, wrote a very fine appreciation in his magazine of what he saw to be the real art at St. Louis. In San Francisco, the matter of grouping applied and fine arts together was officially under consideration, and at the last moment it was decided, very much to my regret, that such a logical arrangement was impracticable. Still, as many remember, this was done in part. Several of the foreign nations, under no restrictions as to the nature of their art exhibitions, and following a custom now well established abroad, did not exhibit exclusively pictures, and they saved the Palace of Fine Arts from what would have been monotony. Japan had entrancingly wonderful screen

pictures, bronzes, carvings, lacquerware, and all the practical art of the Orient, upon which we ourselves are beginning to focus our attention. China had similar things. Sweden had decorative pictures made into wall hangings, and France, in a building all by itself, charmed thousands of people daily with the most extraordinarily skillful combination of the beautiful in the abstract and in the practical-useful. The French display was a veritable sermon of art. A people who can give aesthetic pleasure in a neighborly display of Gobelins, perfumes, porcelains, and pictures, justly deserve our unstinted praise for their artistic accomplishments.

In the American section, the only man working in the useful arts was Mr. Louis Tiffany. He was seen with some excellent jewelry and decorative vases, all in one case, in one of the larger galleries. As for the rest of the show, it was a flood, a sea, a veritable ocean of paintings, and I don't blame people for getting tired of them. The only way I can see to deal with the great desire of the masses to appreciate art in the form of paintings is to teach them first to appreciate the beauty of a well-designed spoon, and in an evolutionary way proceed from practical things to

things of a more detached artistic expression, leaving paintings to the very end. In other words, to learn to appreciate paintings is a question of beginning at the bottom of the ladder, and learning to see beauty and get aesthetic enjoyment out of the ordinary, useful things. Nothing is more agonizing than to hear expressions of so-called intelligent interest before some highly experimental and individual pictures, from people who do not understand even the simplest kind of conventional picture—not to speak of the glorious expression of poor taste in the clothing in which such people often parade. A person who cannot understand art as a principle in clothes, generally cannot expect to appreciate the same principle in a picture.

That brings us right to the crux of the matter. Everybody feels, then, the need of a certain principle to go by—certain means of approach. Of course without an understanding of those principles there will never be a full enjoyment of art, and the only thing to do is to study them and try to recognize them in a universal way. These principles, of course, are not new, as I have pointed out, and while I have spoken of them in previous discussions, I feel moved to say

again that they are universal conventions, open to anyone who is willing to learn. These laws certainly were not invented to inconvenience either the public or the artist—on the contrary, they owe their existence to the fact that when artists do things in a certain way this results in agreeable, pleasure-giving effects. While we have not as yet shown any very marked independence, we have certainly developed original opportunities for the study of art, which I anticipate will aid materially in our national artistic problems. In speaking of the art schools of the country, I have referred to the exclusively technical school. In concluding, I should like to refer to the modern American university, where all studies, the classics, the humanities, the sciences, the applied sciences, and finally the arts, have found themselves side by side in a unified whole. One has to know European institutions of similar names but of totally different make-up to appreciate the advantages of our young people. Now the broadest foundation for an understanding and appreciation of all the arts may be secured entirely within one institution. Such centralization may have its defects. I have discovered none, however, though this is sur-



prising in a type of institution which owes its existence to expediency rather than to plan. It is something new under the sun, quite outside of precedent, but I believe it will result in a very generous culture, not one-sided, but genuine in its recognition of all phases of aesthetic expression. Where is the institution abroad where a general student, interested in art, could study classical archaeology, the history of architecture, the philosophy of aesthetics, the history of costume, of ornament, the theory of design and of color, artistic anatomy—to name the purely theoretical subjects alongside of practical ones—and drafting-room work of every imaginable kind, to support and augment his other studies? The breadth of such work and the possibility of getting it, so to speak, under one roof, is to me one of the most interesting elements of the American universities.

The universality of this all-comprising teaching is at once novel and effective, producing not only people for the professions outside of the so-called fine arts, but giving also, to a student of medicine, for instance, or engineering, agriculture, or chemistry, opportunity to lay a foundation for an interest in the finer things of life that

may ultimately become the saving grace and happiness of his later years. Since the great majority of our teachers in the public schools system are women, so far the nucleus of our art lovers will be found largely among that sex. It is possibly the refining and soothing element in art that is sometimes thought to appeal more to women than to men. At any rate, among the average student there seems as yet to exist the delusion that an interest in art is a confession of mental and physical weakness. The average young man with aesthetic appreciation is still the exception in America, not the rule. However, this will change, with many other things which are the heritage of a civilization where physical strength was more valued than spiritual power.

The important problems in art education in America seem to me to be these: First, to provide in all communities opportunities for the study of the aesthetic traditions of art, including those manifestations that disclose man endeavoring to shape and express things in such a way as to give aesthetic pleasure. The general museums, with its broad educational activities, of which the Metropolitan Museum in New

York is the most conspicuous example, is the institution best fitted for this work. Such an institution in its beginnings in the smaller communities will eventually be nothing more and nothing less than a store-house of collected things which may be of interest largely from a sentimental and historical character. The properly classified and catalogued museum of authenticated and evaluated things is only possible, generally, long after the first stage has laid a foundation for the understanding and interest of the next generation. The change from the first to the next will successively involve the employment of experts, which many of our museum directors as yet scarcely are. In this regard we might well go further, and establish at our larger museums schools for the training of museum directors, to supply the need of a profession which at present is recruited from every source. Second, we must teach the masses, particularly through the public school system, to appreciate what we are pleased to call the applied or useful arts, or, to be more logical, those arts which do not belong among the fine or useless arts. Only then shall we be able to enjoy the full realization of our artistic efforts

when we learn to understand art wherever it exists, whether as an independent element, in pictures and poetry, or in wall-papers, a carpet, or an illustration. Our native talents are so numerous and endowed with such enthusiasm and energy that if properly supported they will yet, I am confident, give to this country an art that will dominate the world. Our time is bound to come, and before long.

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