

# EXHIBITIONS AND OTHER MATTERS OF FINE ART

## THE IDEA AND THE PICTURE

### Questions of Subject, of Technique and of Other Factors in Painting.

By ROYAL CORTISSEZ.

TOMORROW morning there will open at the Knoedler galleries the exhibition which for some years now has always been one of the pleasantest signs of the advent of spring. It is the exhibition of the Ten American Painters. On Saturday the Academy will come forward, as usual, at the Fine Arts Building. There will be other shows of native work, of course, but these two will serve peculiarly to round out the season for the American painter. As for foreign art, divers collections of high interest are to be expected. One of them, which ought to prove of unusual character, will be that left by the late T. J. Blakeslee. The sale at the American Art Galleries will present a far more diversified body of old paintings than at one time might have been expected from this dealer. When he first entered the market he concerned himself chiefly with the eighteenth century English school. Later he widened his scope, and we remember meeting with surprise in his place some remarkable examples of Italian Renaissance painting. The full list of his possessions will be awaited with great curiosity.

The Salmagundi Club announces its annual display of oil paintings by members. A reception was held last night and the show opens to the public tomorrow, to remain on view until March 26. The monthly group exhibition of paintings and sculptures at the MacDowell Club is composed of works by Althea Hill Platt, E. M. Scott, Isabel M. Kimball, Payson Graham and several others. At the Municipal Art Gallery paintings by three artists are to be seen, the trio consisting of H. Ledyard Towle, Harold L. Phelan and Charles Lennox Wright. The Folsom gallery offers portraits and paintings by Howard Logan Hildebrandt. Designs in marble and bronze, all interpretations of the dance, by various American sculptors, are on exhibition at the Macheth gallery. The exhibition of "portrait impressions" by Robert Reid at the Seligman gallery has been extended to March 20.

## INSPIRATION THAT IS SOUGHT IN THE GOSPEL OF THE SOIL

Is there anything in subject, as subject? Does an artist gain, or lose, according to his theme? It is an old question, which in all probability will never be conclusively answered, but we are tempted once more to discuss it by two exhibitions lately opened in New York. One of them, at the Montross Gallery, is made by the American painter, Mr. Horatio Walker, long favorably known for his pictures of rural and of rustic types. The other, at the Braun Gallery, presents for the first time in this country the work of a Spanish artist, M. Pascual Monturiol, who portrays more particularly the plowing man of his native land. Both are dedicated in an unmistakable manner to what we may call the gospel of the soil. They are realists for whom "the human interest" is a constant factor. What do they get from it? What do they make of it?

Mr. Walker, we gather, studies his material in a quite unemotional manner. He has a strong sympathy for the humble farmhand or he would not so steadily choose him for a model, but he sees nothing dramatic in the farmhand's world. Neither did Millet, it has often been asserted by artists and critics impatient of the philosophical profundities attributed by sentimentalists to the famous Frenchman. But the fact remains that Millet's peasants repeatedly touch the imagination through the paths they express. It is not the sole source of their effect upon us, as will presently be shown, but that it is a source of effect, and a not one, is an obvious element in the artist's fame. Mr. Walker makes nothing, or next to nothing, of character, of gesture. His ploughman, moving with uplifted arms beside the straining team, is in himself no more than a picturesque silhouette. Movement is the theme, yet the picture has a curious immobility. The subject, as subject, hardly interests us at all. We are thrown back upon treatment, pure and simple. This is as it should be, according to the hypothesis of the studios, yet it does not altogether settle the matter. Though we have moved a step forward in the argument we have still to find out what the treatment signifies. It signifies, in Mr. Walker's case, an odd disposition in respect to the cardinal qualities of form and color. This is a large, retrospective exhibition of his works, and one can get from it a pretty exhaustive idea of his talent. That talent would seem to be rather for landscape than for the figures and animals he has painted with so much devotion. The beautiful picture which we reproduce, the new "Shepherd and Sheep—Morning," provides the aptest of illustrations. The charm of the thing lies wholly in the vibrant sky, in the masses of foliage that glow through with the glow of the rising sun. The huddled sheep possess little of that artistic interest which Manue was wont to extract from similar motives. The shepherd does not for a moment touch us as we are touched by a shepherd of Millet's. The explanation is simple. Mr. Walker may be as interested in form as he is in color, but he has not mastered the one as he has mastered the other.

Mr. Monturiol's toilers are more of the sea than of the fields—fishermen, laborers in the shipyards, and the like. He delineates them in oils, in water-colors and in monotone, his drawings, in fact, coming well into the foreground of the exhibition. The works in color have no special quality; they are the ordinary canvases of the Salon. The studies in black and white disclose the promise, at least, of some individuality. As Mr. Walker sets us to thinking of Millet, so M. Monturiol sets us to thinking of the sculptor Meunier. He recalls the rather sombre sentiment of that artist, his somewhat heavy realism. The Spanish type, like the Belgian, gives subject its full value. These poor workmen of his, and their wives, are interpreted with genui feeling. The young giant pausing to fondle his child, the solicitous young mother at his side, are living human creatures from whom it would be impossible to withhold our sympathy. Into the group of rough men standing on the barge that moves steadily toward us in one of the harbor scenes we are prepared to read all the meaning that the most exacting of humanitarians could demand. And yet we fail to experience here the artistic emotion which alone will satisfy such ideas as M. Monturiol embodies in his works. It is, again, the precious element of style that is missing. He has something to say that is worth while, and he says it with equal tenderness and force. He employs, too, a certain skill. But he

followers of Millet almost invariably stumble. Decidedly it was not through pathos alone that he made his peasants immortal. It was through the antique grandeur of his style. His draughtsmanship was by itself extraordinarily potent, and he used it but as a means to the expression of larger things. His figures have a sculptural mass and dignity. They are simplified, like heroic monuments. When they move it is with a kind of primitive force and weight. Out of the contour of a limb, the poise of a head, artless, unconscious, the very essence of mute, pastoral life, he distills something of the sublime beauty which belongs to a Greek statue or a Sisyphus by Michael Angelo. Form is for him a language, and, touched by his genius, it appeals to us as with "the large utterance of the early gods." We can imagine Mr. Walker's deprecating the idea that he had ever pretended to anything of the sort, and, indeed, we have aimed at no disparaging comparison. If we refer to Millet it is only because he affords, in the circumstances, the most convenient touchstone for the explication of this always fascinating question of form. Mr. Walker shows us drawings as well as paintings, the little notes in line on which he has founded many of his pictures. They are admirably clean cut, full of knowledge, the serviceable tools of a competent workman. They are not brilliant, they are not warmly personalized, they have no power, no grace, of style. No, it is upon his color, upon his light and air, upon his warm, luminous realization of a given scene, that this artist depends. It means, in the long run, that he gives us a good deal of wholesome pleasure. In some of his lighter studies the color fairly sings. That, perhaps, is enough. There is, after all, no reason why we should ask him to be another Millet.

of the painter who has his technique tolerably well in hand and yet falls short of any really interesting achievement? He is, if anything, more of a disappointment than his ill equipped colleague. This reflection is invited by Mr. Maurice Sterne, who has at the gallery of the Berlin Photographic Company a voluminous collection of paintings and drawings made in India and the Island of Bali.

Ordinarily the preface to an exhibition catalogue is negligible, as uncritical eulogy must always be, but in the present instance Mr. Birnbaum's introduction to the work of this young Russo-American artist contains some information germane to our analysis. He tells us that Mr. Sterne, having been trained in the rudiments at the Academy of Design and at other schools, won a travelling scholarship and proceeded to Paris. There he sometimes copied the old masters, Mantegna among them. There, too, he fell under the influence of Gauguin and Cezanne, but "he did not begin to find himself until chance took him to Greece." He has worked also in Italy, and now, as these newer pictures show, we have to reckon the East among the sources of his development. Is not the whole record suggestive of enviable opportunities? What tremendous gains, we naturally say, should an artist not reveal after such travels? But there is nothing talismanic about travel. It all depends upon the compass you take with you, and the purpose at the back of all your effort. And purpose, here, is inextricably associated with thought, with imagination.

Neither the thought nor the imagination needs to be of the kind implying a literary end. The artist is under no obligation to tell a story. But there is one responsibility which he cannot safely evade—he must make his work beautiful. That is where Mr. Sterne's compass appears to have betrayed him. He has painted them in the light of that hypothesis which used to go by the name of "art for art's sake," with the result that he gives us at the best a mildly interesting bit of technique. All that fertilizing influence which is to be inferred from the biographical data we have cited above resolves itself into nothing more nor less than a stimulus to do a little clever painting. Mr. Sterne is indubitably clever. He could draw well, even earlier in his career,

does not cross the line which divides the well trained journeyman from the creative artist.

### The Question of Purpose in the Work of a Painter.

More than once of late we have had occasion to touch upon the distinction between the artist who is "trying for" something and the artist who achieves it, laying stress upon the weakness of the former type. If he fails it is, as a rule, because he does not know how to use the tools of his trade. But what

not as a master draws, giving a rich personal character to his line, but adequately. Then his sense of form has been strengthened by study, and he knows how to simplify, so that a figure of his is bodied forth in admirable solidity and with the right synthetic touch. Perhaps the best illustration of this point in the entire exhibition is the "Woman with Green Head-Dress." Nothing could be more workmanlike. Mr. Sterne's observation is clearly for the essentials of form, and he notes them with perfect manual dexterity.

not enough for him to record facts of form and color. He had to raise them to a higher power by the process of making them his own, the vehicles for the expression of a style. Above all, he had in his mind and at the tips of his fingers felicitous conceptions of design. Besides making studies and portraits he made pictures. He did not copy. He created.

In the absence of constructive power cleverness is of but little worth. It has landed Mr. Sterne in an impasse, a fact to which we are in no wise

lovers of art? If so, the artists in question have yet to make it plain. There are a number of credible, if not very particularly interesting, things in this exhibition—a South Sea head by Gauguin, a still life by Van Gogh, some views of London by Derain containing vivid color, and a figure by Picasso, "The Guitarist," which at least shows technical adroitness. The rest is frantic stuff. The post-impressionist, cubist, philosophy is terribly persistent. It tries mightily to enforce itself. But somehow it is forever reminding us of what the wit had to say about the bruiser who wanted to prolong the fight after he was beaten: "Mike tried to pull himself together, but he couldn't do it. He was too far apart."

### The Conservative Impressionism of M. Albert Andre.

The followers of Claude Monet have usually been disposed to paint in a high key. They have let the sunlight into their pictures in floods. Not so M. Albert Andre, the painter whose works are shown this week at the Durand-Ruel gallery. He has been influenced by Monet and by Degas. Also he has been influenced by Corot. Moreover, these diverse elements in his artistic make-up have been charmingly harmonized. He knows, unmistakably, what he is about. A painting of his has a sterling unity. On the other hand, if he has escaped the confusion sometimes incident to emulation of several masters, he has not quite achieved a style of his own. These landscapes, interiors and studies in still life are full of truth; they tell us much about nature, but they tell us little about M. Andre. The point of view reflected in them is significant of a clear vision, of good taste, of a feeling for quiet color. It is not particularly significant of personality. We are not sure that we regret it. One craves originality in art, the confident, affirmative force; yet one can do without it when pictures are so sincere, so charming, as are these of M. Andre's. And one quality he has in such rare perfection that almost it might be counted unto him for originality. It is the quality of pure, diffused light. The atmosphere in which he envelops his still life is like the atmosphere in a Ver Meer. This is one indubitable, by the way, of an authoritative touch in his art hardly associated, as a rule, with a painter so wanting in the distinction of style. M. Andre may not be the most individualized of artists, but he is deeply versed in his craft. There is a lot of sheer good painting in his exhibition.

At the Ehrlich Gallery there is an agreeable group of six or seven old masters, interiors by Uchtersveld, Le Dueq and De Hoogh, and other designs by Jan Steen and Benjamin Cuyt. Best of all is the little full length of Terborch, the "Portrait of a Lady." It is a delightful illustration of old Netherlandish elegance and polish. In the upper rooms at this place there is an exhibition of paintings by Florence W. Gotthold and May N. Washburn, two artists who achieve, both in much the same way, some pleasant effects of color, but in respect to technique have still to develop their abilities. The Little Gallery is making an exhibition of enamels on metal by various artists,

blinded by the fervid testimonials of his admirers. Think of the panegyrics that have been bestowed upon Matisse and his like! In these hectic days, when a new "movement" is hiding behind every tree, it is well for the disinterested observer to keep his head. He need not be terrorized by the post-impressionists, if only he will put their works to the test of a few simple and searching questions. The first and last of these—"What do you mean?"—would be answered quickly enough, on the very face of the canvas, so to say, if the new "masters" meant anything, or knew, themselves, what they meant. Indeed, written and spoken argument

can avail them nothing. The artist must justify himself by his work.

### A Leading Figure in the Annals of Tudor Portraiture.

To the organization of a few years ago of the Walpole Society, in London, students of English art are already indebted for some fruitful research. British painting did not really come into its own until the eighteenth century; nevertheless, long before Hogarth, there were men who are to be reckoned as pioneers of the school, even though they were of foreign origin. One of these founders, Haunce Eworth,

was rescued from obscurity by Mr. Lionel Cust, writing in the second of the annual volumes published by the Walpole Society, and now, in the third, another is made better known. This is Marcus Gheeraerts the younger, who is credited by Mr. Cust with a leading role in the development of Elizabethan portraiture. Numerous excellent illustrations make this study of the subject very entertaining.

The great Queen, as every reader of her splendid history knows, was not by any means above the vanities of this world. Her taste for her wardrobe is one of the best remembered of her minor traits. And she was particular about the manner in which she was to be presented to posterity, as Mr. Cust thus shows:

As early as 1533, Elizabeth issued a proclamation of considerable length, speaking of the demand of "all sorts of subjects and people, both noble and mean," for portraits of the Queen as a national desire, and stating that owing to complaints and the unsatisfactory results in "rayting, graving and prynting" as to the "natural representation of Her Majesty's person, favor, mien, and grace," the Queen had been recommended to sit only to "some special coming paynter" to make a portrait "to be participated to others for satisfaction of her loving subjects," which was to be regarded as a "patron or first portraiture."

Mr. Cust remarks that it is not clear if this proclamation was ever issued, but he says the purport of it is confirmed by a statement made by no less a personage than Sir Walter Raleigh, who declared that "by the Queen's own commandment all pictures by unskilful and common painters were knocked in pieces and cast into the fire." We can imagine the choler of the formidable lady when some dabster failed to do justice to her charms! Upon Mar-

## ENGLAND'S FIFTY WOMEN "BOBBIES"

WHEN, in 1829, Sir Robert Peel, recognizing that the "Charlies," as the old watchmen were called, were almost useless for protecting the streets of London, formed an entirely new body of men, upon whom the nickname of "Peelers," or "Bobbies," was bestowed, and which, "Tit-Bits" says, was the nucleus of the magnificent police force of to-day, he did so entirely on his own responsibility, defraying the cost of training and equipment by voluntary contributions. When, however, the force had proved itself efficient and capable, he handed it over to the Secretary of State, the government being only then too willing to officially recognize and maintain it.

What Sir Robert Peel did eighty-six years ago, Miss Damer Dawson, chief officer of the Women Police Volunteer Corps, and her co-workers are trying to do to-day in the way of forming a woman police force.

"In America and Germany," said Miss Dawson, as we chatted about the movement recently in her Old World house at Chelsea, "women police have been recognized for years, and have done most valuable work. I met my first policewoman at Frankfurt-on-the-Main, and was astonished at the splendid work they were doing. And the Women Police Volunteers propose to demonstrate in this country the practical value of experienced women as a protection to women and children, and as a preventive of crime. At present there are about fifty members of the corps, of whom thirty are in London, and I am receiving scores of applica-

ions every week from ladies of all classes who wish to join."

"Do you think, Miss Dawson," I asked, "that women police will be ultimately officially recognized and organized in the same way as the men police?"

"I certainly think so. For not only have we been thanked by the military authorities in the provinces for services we have rendered, but, as local authorities in provincial towns are at present discussing the advisability of encouraging women to assist the police force, we are aiming at establishing a training ground for those women who later on may have opportunities of taking up police duties on a professional footing."



SHEPHERD AND SHEEP—MORNING. (From the Painting by Horatio Walker at the Montross Gallery.)



THE VISIT OF QUEEN ELIZABETH TO BLACKFRIARS, JUNE 16, 1600. (From the Painting by Marcus Gheeraerts.)

DANIEL WEST PAINTINGS 47 SO. 10TH ST. BY MANIGAUULT GALLERY

RECENTLY RECEIVED

Several Important Paintings By

IGNACIO ZULOAGA

of Spain.

C. W. KRAUSHAAR

Near 29th St. 260 Fifth Ave.

THE

Folsom Galleries

Portraits & Paintings

BY

Howard L. Hildebrandt

Until March 25 inclusive

306 Fifth Ave., Opposite Tiffany's

SPECIAL EXHIBITION

Dutch and Flemish

17th Century Genre Paintings

The Ehrlich Galleries

707 Fifth Avenue.

Jean Francois Millet and His Latter Day Followers.

It is on this rock of form that the