

The Conning Tower

ON READING "GRATITUDE"

I read Mrs. Wyckoff's poem.
It made me think of the hospital, where we both had our babies—
And of that day of white fire, and scorching dread, and the despair.
And of how I wanted my mother, but she was dead.
How I wanted my husband, just to look into his eyes, and take from
them courage.
I knew he could help me.
But they would not let me see him, as he might interfere with the
technique!
I remembered the nurse in charge, the sharp faced one,
Who stood over me in the last moments of agony.
I thought of her look when I begged for the chloroform that I knew
would still me.
How she asked with a snarl if I thought SHE was going to have the
baby for me.
Then the long silence.
And a sense of being me again.
Being sure
That when I opened my eyes I would know about
My baby.
Next through the stillness came her voice,
"How I hate children! I wish I might never see a baby again."
Last week my baby was a year old.
She laughs and plays like a little angel all day long.
And cannot imagine unhappiness—
But I cannot forget the nurse,
Who might have held out a friendly soothing hand
Who abused me instead.
And I hope that she may never have a little daughter—
I should pity the little thing so!
Is it wicked to wish that?

F. S. F.

Some Recent Studies In Early Italian Art

Three Publications of the Yale University Press and the Light They Shed on the Growth of Æsthetic Appreciation in America

By ROYAL CORTISSOZ

Sixty years ago, when James Jackson Jarves brought a collection of early Italian pictures to the United States, his was a voice crying in the wilderness. A few commentators there were who took an intelligent interest in the subject. They were led—it is pleasant to recall—by the late Clarence Cook, then the art critic of The Tribune. His articles in this paper are recognized by Dr. Oswald Siren, the latest contributor to the discussion, as "most important." But this matter had no importance at all for the people at large. We knew nothing about Italian art and we cared less. Jarves valued his collection at \$100,000. He obtained a loan of \$20,000 on it from Yale, and in 1871 the university had to pay only \$2,000 more in order to acquire the property as its own. How times have changed since then! Mr. John G. Johnson, of Philadelphia, was long the only American collector who emulated Jarves; but in more recent years his example has been followed by a constantly growing number of our citizens. Mr. Berenson, in his "Venetian Painting in America," cites more than fourscore examples of just this one school, and some of them might be envied by the greatest of European museums. If the illustrations of Renaissance painting and sculpture of all schools that are owned in this country could be brought together in an exhibition it would leave the directors of those museums breathless. To explain how this great development in American taste has come about would take us far afield. Certain volumes which lie before us invite comment on one sufficiently suggestive phase of the subject.

From the Primitives to Pontorno

Jarves catalogued his pictures himself. Then, in 1868, his book was re-handled to some extent by the late Russell Sturgis, and in the form in which he left it, it was thereafter kept in use at Yale as the only printed guide to the collection. One of the first projects of the Yale University Press was the suppression of this manual, but the matter was delayed until Professor Sergeant Kendall, director of the art school, put his back to the wheel, whereupon Dr. Siren executed the task. The Press now issues a handsomely illustrated volume from his pen, "A Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures in the Jarves Collection." He is, of course, ruthless. Of the 119 pictures which he describes there are only about twenty-five which he leaves with the attributions ascribed by Jarves, and perhaps fifteen on which he partially agrees with the original owner. For the rest he brings the list "up to date" with a vengeance. He does so, on the other hand, with much good judgment, very ingeniously and persuasively, and there can be no question about the broad significance of his work. He makes the collection more intelligible, so to say, than it ever was before. Also, he leaves it with its glory in no wise dimmed, and, in fact, this book forms a grateful monument to the extraordinary *flair* which Jarves possessed. At a time when the scientific connoisseurship which has done so much to aid the modern collector was hardly in its infancy, he had at least a true instinct for the spirit of Italian art and a gift for recognizing a thing of beauty when he saw it. Dr. Siren clears up his subject, transfers this picture from a master to a disciple, that one from a great name to the anonymity of a school piece, but he has done his work well, in a word, but we are for the moment even more interested in his having done it at all. This volume, so valuable in itself, is also a precious testimony to the entrance of a new element into our artistic affairs.

Press that Professor Marquand was able to launch the series of "Monographs in Art and Archaeology," so effectively affirming his ideals and those of his staff. At Yale Professor Weir's administration of the art school gave it a reputation which has been well maintained by his successor, Professor Kendall, but their work is enhanced by these new activities of the University Press. The Jarves catalogue appears under the auspices of the School of Fine Arts. Dr. Siren's "Leonardo" is published on the foundation established in memory of Herbert A. Scheffel, of the class of 1898, and Mr. F. M. Clapp's "Pontorno" is similarly linked with the memory of Henry Weldon Barnes, of the class of 1882. These books, in short, are essentially the expressions of a university policy. What could be of a finer influence upon the whole business of art study in this country?

The paradox about the teaching of the history of art in American universities has been that for all its seriousness, for all the enthusiasm which has here and there accelerated its impetus, it has not been serious enough. We judge by results. What has it done to leave the lump, to clarify and enrich the general taste, to promote the art of criticism? The little it has done has been so little as to be almost negligible. And the cause would seem to have been a failure to fix a sufficiently high standard, above all, to make the undergraduate and the parent grasp the fact that art is indeed, quite as important as mathematics or electrical engineering. Art will come into its own in the United States when men realize that as a matter of self-respect alone it is as much worth while to know Leonardo as to know Darwin. They will be slow about seizing that fact so long as the subject is left in the twilight of a possibly amusing, but by no means essential, "elective course." There is a pretty anecdote of two students meeting on a walk and talking about the subject of the day. One of them, who will not say which campus and wondering whether or not to attend the lecture of the professor of art that day. His subject, one of them vaguely surmised, had something to do with the "Jiberty Gates," whatever those were. On the whole, they decided to let Ghiberti's masterpiece go down the wind. Well, it is the professor who, in the long run, must correct that sort of thing. But no less important than his intervention is the clear resolution on the part of the university to give art its full status, posing it as a fitting subject for the hardest kind of hard work, bringing it into the foreground as second to nothing in the curriculum. That is where a university press comes in, in a thing of pure gold, as in the present instance. The publication of these books is a constructive assertion of the dignity of art. If the reader thinks we over-emphasize the importance of the matter let him go to the public library, and by a little research find out just how much of this sort of thing has been done in the past.

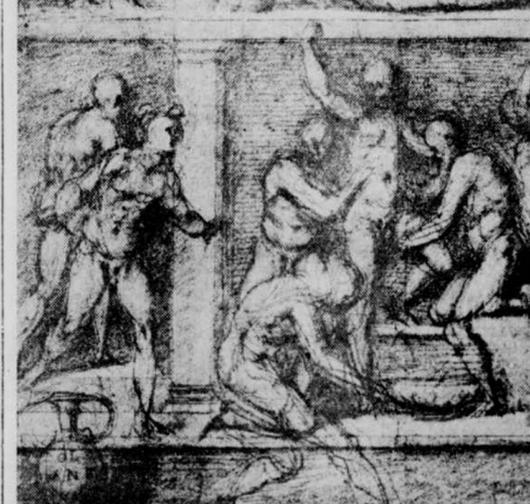
But we must return to the books themselves. Dr. Siren's "Leonardo" is a translation of his work originally published in Sweden, revised with the aid of William Rankin and others, is precisely what is needed by the layman who wishes to be initiated into that side of the subject which most concerns him—namely, the great Italian artist Leonardo in a kind of cosmopolitan type of universality. Dr. Siren wisely addresses himself to the analysis of the master's work in painting and sculpture, thereby simplifying his theme and vividly illuminating it. We especially appreciate the systematic nature of his discussion, the order which he has introduced into a portentously complicated field. His purely biographical notes are perfectly arranged to pleasantly extend from Leonardo's apprenticeship, wherein it is so easy for the critic to become entangled in his own doubts, he pursues the troublesome question of Verrocchio's influence with a lucidity we cannot too warmly commend. And in the same manner throughout he unfolds his fascinating story through the earlier paintings and drawings, through the stages of the Milanese period, through the obscure, yet positively thrilling phase of Leonardo's interest in equestrian sculpture, and so on down to the end. Collateral questions are always creeping in, the relations which Leonardo made of the subject of the game of attributions. But his main purpose is to interpret Leonardo's genius, to re-create the master's atmosphere, and he does this with a freedom from pedantic jargon which by itself commands our sympathy. His book has unity. With its innumerable excellent illustrations it is a true guide, a true help.

Mr. Clapp, like Dr. Siren, has written not only to instruct, but to give pleasure in a delightful preface to the book Mr. Mather remarks: "I shudder when I think what a German or a Germanized American scholar would have made of the subject of Pontorno." It is a good saying. Mr. Clapp has done an almost incredible thing. He has performed a labor of love, in the service of the most ardent devotee of the art of Pontorno, or of any one else; but he has done it with a masterly not of the highest rank—overdoing it. One may share his admiration for Pontorno or any one else; one may not go quite as far as he does, but nowhere in his volume does he give the impression that he is brought under compulsion. Mr. Clapp is content to state the facts of his hero's life and to express his own convictions in urbane terms. As for the facts, they are here set forth in ideal fulness and orderliness. Pontorno's biography, organized with minute care, is briefly traversed. Quantities of his paintings and drawings are then given in point, but to give pleasure in the subject, including, under separate heads, pictures attributed to him, lost pictures, etc. Documentary evidence winds up the scheme.

Dr. Siren's "Leonardo" is a masterpiece of the kind that Andrea del Sarto was the last great Florentine artist, "and his younger contemporaries, one and all, more facile eclectics whose art was dominated by the traditionalism of the Palazzo Vecchio." He would cite Pontorno in refutation. For our own part we are not altogether with him. Neither in Pontorno's religious paintings nor in his portraits, fine as they often are, do we recognize a creative genius adequate to the task of maintaining him on a plane higher than that on which modern criticism has been content to leave him. Nor do the drawings—those constantly referred to in the text—seem to us as rich as they are claimed to be. We feel the force of the suggestion thus expressed:

He received, dimly perhaps, but still more clearly than any Italian of his time, that in every work of art there is an element of decoration, an element of representation, source of our sense of reality—an emotional and a scientific side. And he also perceived, perhaps more clearly than any other artist of his time, that the best order had been spent in solving problems of representation, light and shade—in a word, in the evocation through the figure arts of sensations which could not be expressed by any stable word, and that by 1510 all the discoveries of the school, from Masaccio to Michael Angelo, had been condensed into elaborate formulas.

That, in a nutshell, is the enchantment of Pontorno in his drawings. He could not, like Michael Angelo, dip into earthquake and eclipse, but he could put emotion into his work, using the power of draughtsmanship which, in the hands of the highest significance, had never been a remarkable potency. He had, in a measure, style. If he missed the magic of the kings of art he had the kindred charm which belongs to its princes. Mr. Clapp's book commemorates what was, for him, an adventure. "I had discovered Pontorno," he says, in recalling his first adequate view of the "Deposition" in Santa Felicità in Florence. He passed on, with an inspiring touch, the sensation of the discoverer. Whatever the reader's final impression of Pontorno may be it will be the richer and more sympathetic for his study of Mr. Clapp's pages. And once more, as we take leave of the book, we must allude to its meaning as coming from Yale. Of more and more discoveries such as this one, of Pontorno we may be the more confident, among American scholars and students of art, because the university thus conspicuously recognizes their importance.



THE DEATH OF SENECA

(From the Drawing by Pontorno in the British Museum)



THE RAPE OF DEJANIRA

(From the Painting by Antonio Pollaiuolo in the Jarves Collection)

Random Impressions In Current Exhibitions

The Society of Independent Artists—Herman Webster in Italy and France—Paintings by Warren Davis and Albert Gihon—Lithographs

While Mr. Halsey's prints at the Anderson Galleries are directing attention to the splendor of the British mezzotint in the eighteenth century, another collection is elsewhere appealing to the amateur on kindred and yet very different grounds. This is the collection formed by Mr. Percy R. Pyne, 2d, and devoted to the history of New York, which is to say to much eighteenth century work. It embraces other epochs, too, earlier and later, and other American cities. The prints, historical china and books assembled by this connoisseur have long held a high repute. The exhibition, which opens at the American Art Galleries next Tuesday, and the sale, set for the evenings of February 5, 6 and 7, will excite unusual interest. At the same place Dr. Alfred Owre's cloisonné and other enamels will also be shown and sold.

The Brooklyn Museum opens next Saturday evening an important exhibition of early American art. At the Montross gallery Mr. Hassam's exhibition is followed on Tuesday by one of paintings by Mr. Jonas Lie. Paintings by Mr. S. J. Woolf are at the Ralston gallery, the Photo-Secession shows recent work by Mr. Marsden Hartley, and at the Modern gallery there may be seen portraits by Miss Marion H. Beckett. The American Water Color Society opens its annual exhibition next Thursday at the National Arts Club.

A Successor to the Armory Show

Four years ago this winter the Association of American Painters and Sculptors held the exhibition which introduced a lot of the more freakish modernists to the public here, and, in spite of its absurdities, excited a good deal of serious interest. "The Armory Show," as it came to be called, has not produced any important effects. There has been some increase, perhaps, in the number of young men eager to evade the discipline of art, but American painting and sculpture have shown no sign of being influenced to any appreciable extent by the "new" hypothesis. But the show, as a show, was a great success and was bound sooner or later to excite emulation. The Artists' Club, which has been organized since the incorporation of the Society of Independent Artists do so? This body announces that it will hold an exhibition at the Grand Central Palace in the month of April, whereas the artist will have sufficient space for at least two pictures, hung in daylight, with one on the line. Works will be hung in alphabetical order, "thus relieving the hanging committee of the difficulties raised by their personal judgments." The great name of Ingres in support of its decision, the society states that there will be no juries, and under a similar sanction from Renoir it claims that there will be no prizes. And, "there are no requirements for admission to the society save the acceptance of its principles and the payment of the initiation fee of \$1 and the annual dues of \$5." Everybody is to have a vote.

In the exhibition of drawings of Italy and France by Herman A. Webster, at the Keppel gallery, a number done in the last few years by Mr. Webster, the introduction to the catalogue tells us, "answered the summons of war by hastening to join the American Ambulance Corps in France," and he has served continuously at the front ever since. There are a dozen drawings issued from the environs of this service. They are not unlike the majority of drawings come from France, and are merely to show that it is possible to form an idea of the state of contemporary art. No such survey could be obtained from a dozen visits to the exhibitions of former years, when none could care to be thoroughly representative. This one is putting in its claim a little early. But whether it turns out to be representative or not, it ought to be amusing.

Paintings by Warren Davis are shown at the Warwick House, where they are to remain until February 12. They suggested our writing Mr. Davis down a poet. Mr. Davis may descend from Mr. Arthur B. Davies, or he may have stepped up providentially into a place vacated by Mr. Davies. We do not place in the association of men and of ideas here is inevitable; there is even an associative notion to be got out of particular pictures. And yet there is a difference. Mr. Davies, try as he might, could never throw off the moonlight that runs through his veins; it has always cropped up, and perhaps even mathematics may not remove it, mathematics, if they are not, as de Moplaux suggested, in the matter of fact moment, the foundation of poetry. Mr. Davis is an emotional rather than a literal realist. Mr. Davis is a straight from the soul inventive faculties or poetry from the obvious. He gives us literal moonlights. He presents them verbatim. And, of course, we recognize them, and recognize them as poems because that is a name that tradition has written over moonlight. But we need not so docilely accept it. Mr. Davis's poetry is derived from a prescription which demands the weakening of the literal truth, of the photographic truth, and never a denial or an adaptation of it. His bonds are too strong. We notice that he desires to spring free of them, and we see that the feat is beyond his understanding or his inventive faculties or his power. Poetry is a dogma which suggests dancing nudes of the romantic to him, silver lights on water that ripples over stones, tall still trees and pale air; which presents a certain restricted set of props and titles for the settings, like "Grey Shores," "Pool of Jade," "Whispering Pines" and "Singing Brook."

Twenty-nine canvases and seventeen panels by Albert Gihon are shown at the Braun Gallery. They are more or

less attractive reminders of a period of art that the present day is beginning to forget, to forget for reasons. Mr. Gihon is an American who has spent the last twenty-six years in rural France, where, apparently, the changes of time have slipped by him unnoticed. He is still living in the picturesque period of painting. We can guess that he went to France because America lacked atmosphere, and we can see in these pictures, done at Moret, Montigny, Nemours, Montreuil, Picardie and Brittany, in these poplar trees and winding rivers and little, old houses, the very atmosphere that America lacked.

Bolton Brown, who is a pupil of Legros and Herkomer, shows lithographs at the Print Gallery and Wilfrid M. Evans portraits done in chalk. Mr. Brown shows his prints to prove a theory which he propounds in a pamphlet distributed at the gallery. He says here, among other things: "I have made many pen drawings, made and printed many etchings. I am as responsive as the next man to the charm of the clear line of the stylus. Yet I perceive that no such instrument is so sensitive, nor anywhere near so varied, as is the lithographic chalk. This, when it will, can be as definite as steel, but it wears a velvet glove. It is more beautiful." This is a question which any of us shall answer in accordance with personal taste. Mr. Brown is a good technician. He can make a printed line resemble one made delicately by a pencil. He draws authoritatively. But perhaps he does not carry his point. There are etchings by Rembrandt and Whistler that have quality and something else, something else expressive, which we call art. Among Mr. Evans's portraits are studies of J. Alden Weir, Edwin Markham and Sir Forbes Robertson.

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Exhibition of Paintings
BY
JONAS LIE
January 30th to February 10th.
MONTRUSS GALLERY
530 Fifth Ave., above 45th St.
New York

WARWICK HOUSE LTD.
45 East 57th St.
Exhibition of Paintings
BY
Warren Davis
Jan. 22 to Feb. 10.

Milch Galleries
Paintings
by
Leonard Ochtman
Jan. 30—Feb. 10
108 West 57th St.

Arlington Galleries
Landscapes and Cattle Pictures
BY
MATILDA BROWNE
January 31—February 14
274 Madison Ave., near 40th St.

The Washington girls are no reactionaries, at any rate. The Washington Post's title to this picture is "STREET STYLES FOR EARLY SPRING."

Jam at Strawberry Festival Thick.—Union Hill, N. J., Hudson Dispatch.
If there's one thing we hate more than another, it's thin strawberry jam.

I THOUGHT THIS MORNING OF LIFE
I thought this morning of Life and how I had passed through its veils and coverings.
How surely, looking beyond, I had seen the clean symmetry of Truth. Mentally I bulletined the great essentials and stripped away mystery and complexity—
One, two, three,—how easy for the penetrant mind!
(For me, I said, no longer illusion and delusion, reform or conformity;
How simple and beautiful is Life free from veils and coverings!)
So thought I this morning—
And so thinking I lived my day.
And to-night I lie prostrate, and cry:
Oh, if life is simple and beautiful, it is also barren and awful! Give me back illusion and glamour, for my eyes are burned by the white nakedness of Life.
One, two, three, four, five,—let me count to a hundred, a thousand—
But bring again the veils, the coverings.
ADIN BALLOU

Addition—C. H. T.'s—to Those Who Write Too Little: Oliver Herford.
At Tiber, Montana, the new postmaster is Hiram Coster.
Two guesses as to his nickname. F. P. A.