SCULPTURE IN THE WINTER ACADEMY

Some Notes on the Recent Hamilton Palace Sale

By Royal Cortissoz

It is cheering to learn from Philadelphia that an important step has been taken with reference to the great bequest of the late John G. Johnson. A custodian of his pictures has been appointed "in order that these valuable art works may not undergo deterioration while in storage." It is a wise move. Mr. Hamilton Bell, who has been placed in charge of the collection, has had a good deal of experience in the care of paintings. He will use not only ardor but judgment in so safeguarding the Johnson treasures that they will be in the best possible condition when they finally emerge into public view in a permanent home. When that happy event befalls it is probable that even those who knew the collection well will be surprised anew by its splendor. It was always seriously crowded and, to a certain extent, confused. Hung with system, in spacious and properly lighted rooms, it will do itself justice for the first time. The exhaustive illustrated catalogue, in three large volumes, compiled some years ago by Mr. Berenson and Dr. Valentiner will supply the basis for precisely the right convenient handbook. May the day for its popular use soon come!

Light at the Academy On American Sculpture

In traversing a fortnight ago the French show at the Museum and the Winter Academy we cited the remark of M. Léonce Bénédite about American indebtedness to Parisian example. That indebtedness has been incessantly disclosed in the last thirty or forty years. But the Academy reveals the manner in which our cultivation of the French habit of studying technique has nevertheless gradually left us free to develop our own racial traits, to print pictures which are not French, but American. This is obvious especially in the field of landscape. Our school, which is rich in emotion, in an imaginative feeling for landscape sentiment, is even richer in what we can only describe as a delightful raciness. It makes its most distinctive affirmation as a school by basing beauty upon accurately noted truth, a truth obliterating all traces of a definite technical emulation. There is no hint of Parisian method in our landscapes, save for the broad fact of impressionism. Look at "The Little Black Bridge," by Mr. Gregory Smith, or Mr. Ernest Albert's "December Afternoon," or the snow scenes by Mr. Ernest Lawson, Mr. Harry Waltman and Mr. John F. Carlson, or the sketch by Mr. S. Guarino, "The Quarry Road," or the "Aqua Marine," by Mr. Cullen Yates, a superb view of the sea observed beyond cliffs. In these and in scores of other fine canvases the Winter Academy gives us the tang of the open air, with artistic skill and taste superadded, and, over and over again, the personal accent which lifts honest workmanship to a higher plane. Where painting is concerned, the friendly rivalry between the Academy and Museum exhibitions is maintained on high grounds by our countrymen.

It is useless to ask how it is maintained in the matter of sculpture, for the French display of plastic art is almost negligible. There are, to be sure, a few interesting pieces by Bourdelle and one or two others. Carabin, that picturesque worker in wood, also appears, and to good, effective purpose. But there is no really representative showing of French sculpture. In the circumstances there are no comparisons to be made. Tried solely by its own standards, the American school leaves a mixed impression at the Academy. And perhaps the most puzzling figure in it is the most conspicuous as here represented, Mr. Rudolph Evans. He has an important group in the exhibition, the "Boy and Panther," to which the Elizabeth Watrous medal for sculpture has been awarded. It was certain to receive an honor of some sort. There is nothing else displayed which is so ambitious, nor, for that matter, is there anything else so good. Yet, as we have indicated, it wakes diverse reflections.

From an academic point of view this bronze has the fine quality which previous work by Mr. Evans has led us to expect from him. The nude youth is modeled with knowledge of form and with the severely expressive simplicity which points to careful study of antique sculpture. Mr. Evans follows reverently in the pathway of classical art, adding to his Greek dignity the more modern traits of movement and of a peculiarly human sentiment. At the same time he disappoints us precisely where we would have him carry his humanizing touch to its logical conclusion. This desire for a warmer, more vitalizing quality is not a matter of the observer's whim. It flows direct from the nature of the artist's subject. Parenthetically this work is catalogued as a portrait of Mowgli, the hero of Kipling's "Jungle" stories. The boy is supposed to be at play not with any symbolical animal, but with the panther that was Bagheera. The bronze is, in short, a kind of illustration, done on a heroic scale. And it disappoints because it does not illustrate at all. Mowgli is an individuality in a million. Bagheera, too, is a creature whose character is known to us all. The two together in a truly creative work of art should touch the imagination with an immediate sense of their dramatic authenticity. Instead of which they leave us, as Mr. Evans portrays them, absolutely cold. Without the sub-title he has affixed to the group we would take this "Boy and Panther" to be just another decorative monument for some lordly terrace, a work austerely to stand guard at one side of an entrance gateway—with a duplicate standing guard at the other. It is as though the artist's academic technique had influenced his thought, subduing it to the same cool measure. As a piece of modeling the bronze is, with all its merits, a trifle muscle bound, and as a picturesque conception it suffers the same handicap. Incidentally it brings up the whole question of the rôle of ideas in American sculpture. We are not as strong in invention as we are in manual dexterity.

Scattered through this exhibition there are a number of small nudes dedicated to more or less high-erected themes. Miss E. M. Bryant gives us an "Ariadne," Mr. C. L. Hinton one "Pandora" and Mr. Allan Clark another. In the round and in relief there are further evidences of an imaginative purpose. But the aim of these craftsmen, who would give a measure of poetic exultation to their work, does not quite come off. Briefly, they are not poets. Like Mr. Evans, they fail to achieve a convincing impersonation of the given character drawn from fiction or mythology—they achieve, at best, a clever portrait of the model. The only piece we have encountered in which elements of emotion keep pace with elements of accomplished technique is Mr. Victor Salvatore's "Mask." That lovely study of a spiritualized face has in it genuine spirituality. The more persuasive sculptors in general are those who adhere to a naturalistic or decorative motive. The fountain figures of Janet Scudder and Edith Barretto Parsons are good. Well modeled and charming, too, is "The Pigeon Girl," by Miss Brenda Putnam. This figure of lithe girlhood is a very skillful, sensitive piece of work, particularly winning in spirit. Forming a little group by themselves, a group full of interest and significant of talent, are the studios of animals. Mrs. Laura Gardin Fraser's "Baby Goat" is a perfect interpretation of an amusinb subject. All her sculptures leave an individual impression, "Snuff," her portrait of a dog, is one of the most forceful things in the show. In this category, which embraces Mrs. Fraser's compositions, Miss Jane Poupelet's "Hen," Mr. Proctor's "Puma" and Mr. Riccis "Pups," there should also be cited with warm appreciation Miss E. F. Shonnard's "On Guard," in wich solemn long-legged birds are convetionalized, yet preserve their wild grace, like creatures cut out of lapiz lazuli by some Oriental varver. She has made an original and beautiful design.

There are some echoes oof the war, of course. Mr. Emil Fuchs has a couple of small symbolical reliefs on view. There are military statuettes by Mr. R. Hinton Perry, Mr. E. R. Amateis and others. None of these things, however, discloses any particular merit. Characterization of types is evidently a difficult problem. The expression of personal traits, on the other hand, lies well within the scope of many of the exhibitors. There are surprisingly numerous portrait busts of unusual excellence. Some of them are subtle. Miss Malvina Hoffman in "My Mother" has produced an exquisite bust in marble, a bust in which sound technique is enriched by delicate feeling. More representative of the portraiture at large in the exhibition is her "Lieut. Col. Philppe Bunau-Varilla," a direct, vigorous study. With this we return to the quality which we have noted in the landscape painting so helpful to the Winter Academy, the quality of truth simply and easily set forth. There are any number of busts here which quicken our sympathies through their racy, vitalized character. The heads by J. Juszko, Melik Finkle, Victor Salvatore, Rudolph Evans and Gerome Brush are all admirable. They are fresh, spirited portraits, not only workmanlike but possessing the vivid accent which comes from originality. The past has influenced the making of some of them. Mr. Evans in his bust, as in his group, reveals a classical tendency. Mr. Brush has a trace of the Italian Renaissance in his work. But the busts first and last are eloquent ofo oour native instincts. They are thoroughly American sculptures. A similarly pleasant suggestion is made by the artists who contribute medals and plaques. They are not all successful, by any means, but the portraits by Mr. A. A. Weinman and Mr. J. Flanagan are genuine sculptural performances, without that thin quality which has followed so often upon our emulation of the French school, and there are other small designs in low relief which, if not so satisfying, are at all events done in the same American way. That is one outstanding merit of the sculpture in the Academy. It may not always be brilliant, but it is sincere.

MRS. W. J. STILLMAN
(From the drawing by Burne-Jones at the Willow Brook Gallery)

BOY AND PANTHER (Mowgli)
(From the sculpture by Rudolph Evans in the Winter Academy)

The End of a Great Britain Collection

Some belated catalogues from Christie's, London, supply some moving glimpses of the last act in a famous drama, the final dispersal of the artistic treasure accumulated by the Dukes of Hamilton. The trustees of the late Duke had his English and foreign silver put up at auction on November 4. The old and modern portraits and pictures were sold on November 6, among them the Romney "Misses Meckford," which was reproduced in this place a few weeks ago, the Romney which the Duveens bought for $273,000. On November 12 and the two following days the sale embraced the remaining contents of Hamilton Palace, including woodwork and fittings. The first Hamilton sale, an event now nearly forty years old, is described in that amusing work by Mr. Roberts, "Memorials of Christie's." It scattered a fairly royal collection. Yet the sale of last month was one of the most important ever held in London.

When William Adam, in the eighteenth century, designed the so-called "Chateau of Chatelherault," in the great ducal park near Glasgow, a pack of hounds had quarters provided for it in the center of the building, which hence came to be known by the rather shabby title of "the Dogg Kennell." But the seemingly disparaging title could easily be borne. This cast structure was only an episode in the architectural adventures of the heads of the house of Hamilton. They were building and rebuilding from the fifteenth century down to the nineteenth. The last sessions of the recent sale illustrate some noble rooms, adorned with masterpieces of Georgian wood carving. Some of these, we dare say, with quantities of the beautiful period furniture, will in due course find their way to this country.

The prizes among the paintings in the sale were very rich. One of them, as noted above, is to be regarded as ultimately an American acquisition. We would be glad to hear that certain others were coming to the United States. The catalogue reproduces some unmistakably magnificent examples of the eighteenth century British school. One of Sir Joshua's is the full length of Elizabeth Gunning, whose first marriage was with the sixth Duke of Hamilton. It is a portrait in the grand style, a perfect illustration of his courtliest manner. Less impressive but more enchanting is "The Hon. Mrs. Peter Beckford," in which one of the stateliest figures he ever painted is shown standing in a Greek temple, burning sacrificial incense. There never was any one like Reynolds, even in France, for a fusion of natural grace with the machinery of a semi-symbolical portrait. The British school dominated in what was left of the Hamilton Palace collection of paintings, portraits by Reynolds, Romney and others. Raeburn, by the way, was conspicuous in the company. His portrait of the tenth Duke, standing in military dress beside an Arab charger, is an example of his occasional deviation into a kind of majestic formality. The study he made of Douglas, the eighth Duke, is a simple bust portrait, and clearly a masterly piece of painting. Rubens and Van Dyck led the foreign contingent, the latter with a superb full length of William Fielding, the first Earl of Denbigh, who was father-in-law to the first Duke of Hamilton. This Van Dyck is a stirring picture, far removed from the measured atmosphere of the portraits by which we usually know him. The earl is shown in red striped hunting garb, standing in a landscape accompanied by an Indian page who is clothed in yellow. The color scheme as the catalogue describes it would appear to be sumptuous, and the illustration indicates Van Dyck's puissant brush in its freest, most sweeping vein. A few Italian things are recorded, notably a couple of religious subjects by Tiepolo.

This is a busy period in the London salesroom. Other catalogues received from Christie's disclose momentous activities. The property of Captain B. C. Vernon-Wentworth, lately disposed of, included some glorious Flemish tapestries, and among his miscellaneous objects there was a wonderful illuminated manuscript. This sale was followed, late in November, by one of objects of art, porcelains and tapestries belonging to Sir Philip Sassoon and the Countess of Rocksavage. The catalogue reveals some particularly interesting examples of eighteenth century French sculpture. The latest Christie catalogue we have in hand enumerates the pictures in several collections which were sold on December 12. One of these paintings is a military full length by Raeburn, a portrait of Lieutenant General Hay Macdowall, which even in the small reproduction shows the artist at the top of his powers. From the Hope estate came a fine Romney, "The Hon. Mrs. Trevor." A striking feature of this sale was a group of old masters from the collection of the late Edward R. Bacon, of New York. Bronzino, Cuyp, Guardi, Hals, Tintoretto and Largillière are in the list. The passing of these pictures across the Atlantic is a pointed reminder that London has lost nothing of its potency as an art market. In fact, since the war, the prestige of Christie's had been markedly reaffirmed.

Random Impressions In Current Exhibitions

Mr. James Earle Fraser, the sculptor, is presently to have an exhibition of his own. It will open at the Arden gallery on January 6 and will bring forth especially his numerous portrait busts. These will have, it is announced, "an appropriate and unusual setting."

The Macbeth gallery will open on January 9 its annual exhibition of thirty paintings by thirty artists. The last time a demonstration of the kind was made at this place it excited exceptionally appreciative comment.

Mr. William H. Singer, who has a group of eleven canvases at the Folsom gallery, gives us the pleasantest kind of surprise. Some years ago, when he showed some pictures here, they proclaimed him an accomplished technician who had nothing very exciting of his own to say. Now his Norwegian landscapes are as individualized as they are workmanlike, and they are tinged, too, with something like emotion. He paints his snow scenes truthfully and, what is quite as important, rationally. No undue stress is laid upon those blue shadows which some artists think are the sole necessity in a winter picture. There is nothing forced about his white, gleaming impressions. They are very simple arrangements of tone, painted in a high key, but so delicately that despite the snow glare in them they have a positively restful, beguiling quality. The moving water in Mr. Singer's icy streams is also beautifully painted. Indeed his water and his snow fields, his bleak mountains and his shivering trees, are all brought within the compass of friendly pictorial units. He has never been so completely in command of his instruments, so deft in composition, or so sympathetic in the interpretation of his cold northern themes. He has added measurably to his artistic stature.

A. G. Warshawsky, one of the younger American painters, who has made his home in Paris for several years, will have an exhibition of landscapes and marines at the Howard Young galleries, 620 Fifth Avenue, beginning January 3. Mr. Warshawsky was an athletic instructor in the French Army during the war and for part of the time was stationed at the training camp at Antibes, on the Mediterranean coast. The pictures to be shown will include a series made at Antibes and along the Riviera and some marines and landscapes on the Brittany coast.

A charming exhibition of water colors by Marie Stillman (Mrs. W. J.) will be open until January 15 at the rooms of the Willow Brook Company, 9 West Forty-seventh Street. Mrs. Stillman has chosen as her principal subjects old English manor houses and gardens, but she has also painted "St. Clement, Rome," "Spring in Umbria" and the romantic picture, "Dante Tells the Pilgrims How Florence Is Mourning the Death of Beatrice." Two notable features of this exhibition are the portraits of the artist by Burne-Jones and Ford Maddox-Brown.

The work of modernists, good, bad and indifferent, still continues to be the attraction at the Lantern gallery. In the present group of exhibitors are A. S. Baylinson, L. Huber, Jean Gufeau, Emil Senn, Yesrej Toclaw, M. Kantor, Colline A. Erne, Louis Eilshemius, Arthur J. Anderlet, Harmon Cheshire, L. Jean Liberte and Victor Arnet. The paintings are chiefly interesting as illustrating the present tendencies of "art" as understood by inhabitants of Greenwich Village.

At the Reinhardt galleries an impressive allegorical war picture by S. Montgomery Roosevelt will be on exhibition until January 12. The painting is intended to represent the following verse from "The Battle Hymn of the Republic":

"In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me;
As He died to make men holy, let us die to make men free,
While God is marching on."

Variety of subjects combined with general excellence in quality are leading elements of the seventh annual art exhibition by the Association for Culture, which will be open at the Municipal Art Gallery until February 1. There are portraits, marines, landscapes and still life studies by well known exhibitors, which include Alexander Altenburg, R. S. Ament, G. L. Berg, Melita Blume, De Anders, Albert Dreyfuss, F. K. Detwiller, George Pearse Ennis, A. R. Freedlander, T. Victor Hall, Frank Hazell, Grace Hazen, Eugene Higgins, Henry Hintermeister, Henry Hintermeister jr., Alice Judson, Oscar H. Julius, Victor Julius, Richard M. Kimbel, Joseph Lauber, Sophie L. Lauffer, Leander Leitner, William Mathews, Joseph Newman, John F. Parker, Al. Peters, F. A. Precht, Ernest D. Roth, Clara Ruge, A. G. Schulman, Florence G. Smith, H. Vance Swope, James Weiland, Frederick Widder and Gustave Wolff.

New York Symphony Orchestra

The New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch conductor, will give three concerts in New York this week. The regular Sunday afternoon concert will occur this afternoon at Aeolian Hall, at which there will be an interesting novelty in the introduction to New York of the harpe chromatique. This instrument is a harp which does away with all pedals and is constructed so that any composition which can be played on the piano can likewise be played upon this harp. Its strings, which represent the white and black keys of the pianoforte, are strung transversely on the frame of the instrument, the black and white strings crossing one another, but, of course, not touching. The introduction of the harpe chromatique will be made by Mme. Wurmser-Delcourt, one of the foremost harp virtuosi of France.

WILLIAM FIELDING, First Earl of Denbigh
(From the portrait by Van Dyck in the Hamilton Palace sale)

Giving People's Concerts

The third in the series of Symphony Concerts for Young People, given by the New York Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Walter Damrosch, will be held in Carnegie Hall, Saturday afternoon, January 3. The program itself will consist of the Overture to Weber's "Freischütz," the "Jupiter" Symphony of Mozart, the Schumann A minor piano concerto, in which the solo part will be sustained by Mischa Levitzki, and the Intermezzo and Perpetuum Mobile from Moszwokski's suite Op. 39.

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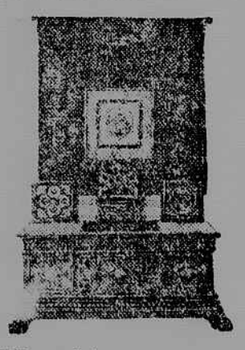

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