

Art Incidents of the Early Spring

New Works by Melchers, Griffin and Some Others

By Royal Cortesoz

As the season draws to a close it is marked by an important exhibition of American art. This will be the exhibition of the Metropolitan Museum early in April. There is every reason why it should prove of exceptional interest. The gradual resumption of building operations which has followed upon the war will naturally have resulted in the development of many new designs, and in showing these the League will have a new environment of which it may be expected to make the most. Sculpture, we gather, is to play a serious part in the ensemble. Best of all, it is to be assumed that within the precincts of a place like the Museum the show will be organized for the sake of one more of those spectacular affairs in which the League has so often dealt in recent years. Against a truly monumental background it would be a pity to plunge once more into decorative iron-work. Later in April, by the way, the Museum is to have a loan exhibition of modern French painting, one which will remain on view throughout the summer.

American Paintings Studies of the Figure and of Landscape

If there is one thing more than another which makes welcome the exhibition of pictures by Mr. Gari Melchers, at the Milch gallery, it is the suggestion there of a certain mental range and activity. Artists so often get harnessed to routine. The subject with which they have succeeded once is unattractively strikes them as a subject to tackle again, and while genius may turn the temptation to desirable uses anything less than genius is bound to end, under such circumstances, by functioning in a vacuum. There is something about the temperament of Mr. Melchers which we can only define as artistic health. He maintains his gusto, a gusto alike for the art of painting and for the play of life about him. There is a very human note struck on the threshold of his exhibition in the little sketch of a Dutch peasant, called "Ice Sweeper." It is a sincere, vitalized portrait, beautifully done. The fresh spirit of it runs through everything that this painter has produced. He has his ups and downs, but there is no mistaking the energy, the freshness, with which he attacks his diverse themes.

He ranges, as we have indicated. Yet he stays, on the whole, a realist. The point is enforced by his "Supper at Emmaus," a picture we value not only for some good passages of painting, but for the mere fact that an artist of to-day should have undertaken to compose it. We had the same impulse of gratitude when we came upon Mr. Bohm's "Sermon on the Mount" in the Academy. What a boon it is when an artist finds it worth while to embark upon a really high enterprise! The theme chosen by Mr. Melchers is one of the most appealing for a painter, to be found in the Scriptures. It brings the Divine Presence into relation with human life on terms which only gain in pictorial form as they are interpreted with a kind of homely simplicity. The heart-breaking test comes, of course, where the beauty of that Presence is to be realized. Rembrandt's great picture draws most of its significance from the unearthly poignancy of the central figure. Mr. Melchers is touching, but not overwhelming. We note the fact with sympathy. One realizes the vastness of the ambition here launched upon. There is another point in which one misses not so much the imaginative magic so rare in any period, but a purely technical element in the problem. We refer to the unity which comes from a broad sweep of executive power.

It is especially important in the painting of a Biblical subject that it should be seen, and mastered, as a whole. The design needs to be knitted together with a peculiar spontaneity. No matter how modernized our minds may be, we inevitably ask—unconsciously, perhaps—that the picture of an episode in the life of Christ should partake of the nature of a vision. It may be localized and humanized to the last degree, but it remains detached from ordinary existence. The successful artist solves the problem through the imaginative magic to which we have alluded, but he is aided immensely by the unbroken impetus of an absolutely authoritative brush. Let the reader, for confirmation of this, consider the "Supper at Emmaus" painted by so mundane a type as Tiepolo. He states facts, but even his theatrical profession is tempered by the brilliance of his technique. His technique is like a great creative gesture. It carries the details of his composition into one majestic chord and leaves the picture "all of a piece." It is in this that we find Mr. Melchers disappointing. His figures seem doggedly built up where one wants them to fall easily into a delicious group. We want to grasp the meaning as a unit, but we find its merits only in the workmanlike treatment of each figure by itself. The realism which so distinguishes this artist cannot quite carry the tremendous burden put upon it.

Observe, on the other hand, discharged from the grave obligations of devotional painting. Go back to the small canvas which we first cited, the "Ice Sweeper." There Mr. Melchers is not embarrassed by a portentous pre-occupation. He simply rests his eye upon a picturesque object and lets his sense of form and color have its way. The result, in this picture and in others, is altogether charming. In color especially he has a quality of his own

It has always been engaging, and today it is a little finer than it has been on previous occasions. The grain, we surmise, is due to study of the effects of light. Some of these paintings are unaccountably interesting in their atmospheric passages. Mr. Melchers has been wrestling with the problem of contrasted lights, the key of a room and that of the scene revealed through its window. The beauty of his achievement lies in the new refinements of tone which he has secured. These are no-

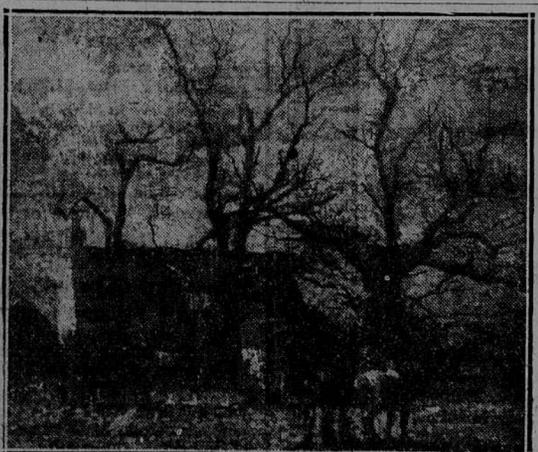


THE SUPPER AT EMMAUS
(From the painting by Gari Melchers at the Milch gallery)

ticeable particularly in the "Interior" and in the figure study painted at a window, called "The Snow." It has usually been his way to rely upon a bold statement of facts in coloration, but now he more frequently attracts us by nuances of tone. There is an amusing circumstance to be noted in this show. When Mr. Melchers paints for the sake of painting, when he executes an "Academy" like his "Nude Study," his skill commands respect but leaves us cold. When he paints also for the sake of his subject, draws his "Mother and Child" or landscape incidents like "Winter," he is instantly beguiling. It is good for him to paint with sympathy, with emotion. He thus best brings us back to the thought and feeling which we mentioned at the outset as indispensable to his technique.

There is another American artist of individuality exhibiting in New York at present, Mr. Walter Griffin, who has eight or ten landscapes at the Rehn gallery. He has for some years been developing a very personal method. It is marked, in the first place, by a heavy impasto. Pigment is laid on the canvas as though with a palette knife. But it is not coarsely kneaded, with the touch of the artist who is fumbling toward his effects. On the contrary, Mr. Griffin obviously knows quite well what he is about, and as one looks more and more into his work one perceives that his technical method is but the expression of a broad point of view, that he sees nature in the rich, sumptuous threads of a kind of tapestry. It is a tapestry of superb color.

Sometimes his fervid hues are concentrated with simple force. The beautiful "Bridge of St. Trovaso, Venice" is an illustration of this. But more often the glow is softened and diffused, as in the "Autumn Afternoon" or the "Stroudwater Mill Dam." Mr. Griffin's sylvan tones make his special triumph. They are strong and deep. The impasto aforesaid gives them positive solidity, yet there breathes through them a fineness of emotion, which might be called poetic. In one of the paintings, "The Old House," there is a light gleam of blue. It tinctures the whole scene with its loveliness. This is Mr. Griffin's art.



THE HILL BEYOND
(From the painting by Henry F. Waltman at the Ferragil gallery)

painting of leafage. He has a clever way of hitting off the masses of a tree, through which light is sifted. It is too clever by half. It has, in the long run, a spotty, staccato and even tricky effect. The big picture containing the figure of a girl, the "Springtime," illustrates his manner at its worst. There are too many other paintings here which are marked by the same foible. There is technical accomplishment in every one of the pictures shown. Mr. Garber's polish, his precision, is evidently inborn. The trouble is that he

opened at the Museum of French Art. He is represented by one of his richest and weightiest pastels, "Le Peignoir Jaune," but we find even more attractive the sheaf of drawings lent by Mr. Gallatin. There are some other fine things on the walls and in the cases, delightful souvenirs of Steinen, Rodin, Odilon, Redon and Forain. But too much space is given to tiresome things by such artists as Gleizes, Marie Laurencin, Picasso and Derain, who claims to consideration dwell chiefly in the imaginations of those hierophants who think that what they assert about them must be so. We wonder how long it will take for sane taste to explode the notion that hanging the modernist on the walls of a picture gallery and glowing over him will turn him into a great artist?

the same merits and the same rather disconcerting mannerisms. Every now and then some landscape painter appears who has a faculty for exact definition of forms and carries indulgence in its exercise a shade too far. The late William Bliss Baker was an outstanding type of the sort we have in mind. He drew trees and reeds with a remarkably deft touch, so deft that it ended by weakening his grasp on anything like a synthesis of his subject. Mr. Garber has the same foible.

The puzzling thing is that when he chooses to do so he can paint with an exhilarating breadth. His "Rural Scene" offers a case in point. This is a handsome canvas, well composed,

satisfy any one, yet we cannot help wishing that one just opened in Boston were to be brought on here. The Vose gallery is celebrating its eightieth anniversary, and to mark the event it has brought together twenty or more examples of Adolphe Monticelli. Some are borrowed from Mr. Angus, in Montreal, and other connoisseurs. Monticelli has always been a painter for the connoisseur. Born at Marcellines in 1824, he achieved fame in Paris under the Second Empire. He was, in his way, devoted to the world of fashion. He painted the park fetes in which Eugenie and the ladies of her court found delight. They rejoiced in his interpretations of their grace. But it was not the world of fashion that preserved his vogue, long after the events of 1870 had sent him back to live the life of a recluse and an eccentric in his native town. It was, instead, the discerning lover of pure art,

and adds pictures to show that he has a broader scope. He paints summer sympathetically enough and with the technical proficiency which we have noted before in his work, but he remains essentially an interpreter of winter. His special note lies in his preservation of snow forms, the wetness and weight of a substance which is no doubt often a "Heeey blanket," but which frequently has a richer, negligible point. Paintings of snow often decline into studies of mere whiteness. Mr. Waltman is admirable in his truer realism, in the force, the directness, which he brings to his studies. He has, too, some lively accents of color in more than one of these new pictures. "The Hill Beyond" is the best of them.

Mr. Herbert Meyer has a pleasantly varied exhibition at the Babcock gallery, studies of the Hudson and of Vermont hills containing some well painted grays, a good portrait of "Mrs. G." and one particularly good decorative composition. This last is a screen in three panels, with ducks arranged below a willow branch. Oriental in motive, it is done without slavish imitation of the Japanese method. The design is good and so is the workmanship.

Next Wednesday the public will have an opportunity to observe the characteristics of perhaps the most conspicuous figure in modern Russian art, Ilya Repin. A collection of his portraits and historical subjects will then be exhibited at the Kingore gallery.

Of the three collaborators in the current exhibition at the Folsom gallery Mr. Guy du Bois does most to justify a venture having about it an atmosphere of experiment. He shows some singularly promising landscapes, careful statements of fact in which one is conscious of effort yet not wearied by it, as so often happens. Two of his studies, made respectively at Sound Beach and at Bernardville, are winning in their sincerity and truth. The "Nude in Studio" is also veracious, but it wants the suggestion that the landscapes give of an artist on the way to something new and fine. In the essays in his familiar, satirical vein Mr. du Bois does what he has often done before: he is piquant, but falls short of making his technique charming.

He has for comrades Eugene Speicher and George Bellows. The former paints landscapes, landscapes which begin by recalling Cezanne, in a mild, amusing way, and end by impressing one as merely dull. Mr. Bellows contributes six or seven landscapes which do not even begin to hold attention. In one of them, perhaps, the "Old Barn—Gray Day," there is a hint in the treatment of the hills that he was trying for something with beauty in it; but there is no lasting quality in this, the best of the lot. Mr. Bellows seems to have been rather aimlessly thrashing about, as though his talent had taken a vacation. Thinking back to some of the brilliant things he has painted, we are fairly astonished by these inconclusive fragments.

There is a new gallery to be added to the already long list in the city, the Mesnard gallery, at 28 East Sixty-fourth Street. It makes a creditable start, with American paintings, among which good examples of Emil Carlsen, Childe Hassam and the late William M. Chase are conspicuous.

Random Impressions In Current Exhibitions

The pictures by the late George Hitchcock which were to have been shown this week at the Reinhardt gallery have not yet arrived from Europe. The exhibition has been postponed, but it has not been abandoned.

This is the last day of the exhibition of Swiss art at the Brooklyn Museum. In order to increase its interest for the public, motion pictures representing scenes of life in Switzerland will be shown in the auditorium this afternoon from 2:30 to 4:30. Next Saturday there will open at the Museum an exhibition of French art for which the Kelekian collection provides the nucleus. About four score works are to be hung, from Daumier and the Barbizon men to the Modernists of the present day.

French art is certainly not being neglected in our neighborhood. Besides this Brooklyn display there is soon to be at the Metropolitan the show which we have touched upon in another column. The Rosenberg collection has lately been introduced at the Wildenstein gallery. At the Durand-Ruel gallery there is a notable group of the Impressionists, including some especially interesting pieces of Degas. Degas is conspicuous in the loan exhibition which has just been



THE HILL BEYOND
(From the painting by Henry F. Waltman at the Ferragil gallery)

Mr. Bryson Burroughs has just opened an exhibition of his latest works. It is at the Montross gallery, to continue until April 9. Paintings and drawings are included.

Two collections will be placed on view at the American Art Galleries next Thursday. One is formed of the stock accumulated by Amos A. Lawrence, of Boston, composed of antique furniture and miscellaneous objects of art. He adds his personal collection of eighteenth century Chinese Lowestoft. There will also be shown at these galleries, at the same time, Mr. William G. Peckham's American and foreign paintings.

The Kraushaar gallery announces an exhibition of recent paintings by Gifford Beal. At the Levy gallery there may be seen decorative flower paintings by Carle J. Blenner. "Twig sculptures in caricature," by John Held Jr., are at the Fridenberg gallery, and at the Weyhe gallery there are new water colors by John Marin.

Two artists occupy the Ferragil gallery for the rest of this month, Mr. Henry F. Waltman and Mr. Karl Anderson. Mr. Anderson paints decorative portraits and pictures, the latter occasionally touched with fancy. There is grace in his designs and there is attractive color. But his figures are not very solidly constructed or interestingly drawn. Mr. Waltman, whose snow scenes have often made welcome episodes in local exhibitions, brings several of them together here

the connoisseur who could appreciate his consummate handling of paint. He never learned to draw. His figures are rather boneless bodies. Landscape, as he understood it, was not an affair of construction. The scene in one of his sylvan compositions is just an exhalation of shadowy color, the figures in it are more or less humanized wraiths. Only both scene and figures are steeped in romance, the romance of a visionary who expressed himself in sheer color. Diaz, we suppose, has ten times the renown of Monticelli, but Monticelli had a lyrical exquisiteness at his finger tips of which Diaz never dreamed. Like our own A. P. Ryder, he could dispense with technical finish, dominating by the power of genius and nothing else. He was without Ryder's mystical strain. Monticelli was all for the roses and raptures of a tangible world. But because he had genius he invested it with the glamour of a most unworlly beauty.

Still another memorial exhibition is to be recorded, one at the Braus gallery, devoted to the paintings of the late Gilbert Gaul. He was a spirited illustrator of military and Indian life. He knew how to reflect action in his pictures, how swiftly to set down the movement of a plunging horse or that of a soldier in some moment of peril. The minutiae of draftsmanship seemed to escape him. He generalized after the manner of a snapshot. In color his works were of no great depth. Animation was his strong point, the drama of the battlefield, vividly expressed. Besides the military subjects in this show there are some landscapes indicative of genuine feeling, though not of any technical distinction.

Collectors of Americana will be interested in the forthcoming sale at the Anderson Galleries of the collection formed by the late William Loring Andrews. It comprises over four hundred lots, including maps, views, prints and books relating to New York and other Americana. The exhibition opens April 11 and the sale comes, in two seasons, a week later. In the mean time there are scheduled for sale at this place, on March 28 and 29, the modern etchings collected by Herschel V. Jones, of Minneapolis.

The Daniel gallery displays a group of water colors by Mr. Jules Pascin, the Bulgarian artist who has become an American citizen. They are impressions of the South, interesting sometimes in the notation of character and movement. They are not attractive in style. Mr. Pascin has a decidedly modernist conception of beauty.

Jacqueline Logan, Star In Paramount Picture, Enters Screen Via Stage

"My ambition from the very beginning was to be a screen actress," confesses Jacqueline Logan, who plays the leading feminine rôle opposite Thomas Meighan in the Paramount picture, "White and Unmarried." "But the opportunity to play before the footlights, knowing that was a step toward the goal."

All this happened only a short time ago, in the early part of 1920, and there are those who will remember the little girl who began at the Century Theater in New York as understudy to Margot Kelly, who was playing the rôle of Angela in the revival of the famous comic opera "Florodora." It will also be recalled that only four months after she first entered the stage door Miss Logan assumed the rôle of Angela and continued to play it until September of that year, at which time she joined the Ziegfeld Follies as a singer and dancer.

It was while she was with the Follies that the opportunity to go before the camera was first presented to her, and the result was that between Follies shows Miss Logan found time to play the lead opposite Johnny Hines in one of the series of Torchy comedies. "There are two ways to become a leading woman in motion pictures," continues Miss Logan. "One way is to start in as an extra player and climb slowly upward, and another is to do something else that will make your name well known to the public, after

which it is much easier to find opportunities to get a real part in a screen production. "I went to New York with my mother to study dancing, and the opportunity to understudy Miss Kelly in 'Florodora' presented itself. My mother wanted me to wait a while before going on the stage, but I just couldn't wait. I knew that the sooner I made a name for myself before the footlights the sooner I would be able to pass the studio gate."

Considering the fact that Miss Logan reached her goal in less than a year's time, it must be conceded that her reasoning was sound, and although it may not apply in every case it was at least the right "hunch" for her. The only experience which she had had

previously was in Colorado Springs, when, as a schoolgirl, she played in stock in that city in "Little Lord Fauntleroy" and "The Poor Little Rich Girl."

At fifteen Miss Logan entered Colorado College at Colorado Springs, the youngest freshman in the school, and the next summer she served as society editor on a Nebraska newspaper. There are several other interesting facts about Miss Logan. She is Irish, as the name implies, has Auburn hair and violet eyes, was born in Texas, speaks French and Spanish, and at the age of eighteen is playing screen leads. The most startling fact of all is that she told her age without flinching. "I shall be nineteen next November," she said, with a frank, sincere smile.

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There is a new gallery to be added to the already long list in the city, the Mesnard gallery, at 28 East Sixty-fourth Street. It makes a creditable start, with American paintings, among which good examples of Emil Carlsen, Childe Hassam and the late William M. Chase are conspicuous.

At the Whitney Studio Club there is a memorial exhibition of the works of the late Charles F. W. Mielatz. He was a prolific and uneven etcher, specializing in New York scenes. His line was firm and accurate, sometimes a little hard. Now and then it took on a surprisingly painterlike quality, as in the delightful "Catharine Market." He was a useful and occasionally a charming historian of the city's architectural monuments. It was a good idea to show with his prints a number of his drawings, especially those landscapes in which he employed altogether the delicacy often omitted from his work with the needle.

There may also be seen at this place a number of drawings by Mr. Donald Corley, who seems at one moment to have derived from Aubrey Beardsley, in the next to have studied Pompeian decoration or Persian manuscripts, and ultimately affirms himself as having a slight but personal talent. His fantasies are deftly drawn. They need an infusion of even greater cleverness before he can rival the famous English draftsman. But they are good, so far as they go.

Mr. Purcell Jones, at the Knoedler gallery, is another designer of curious motives, decorative costume studies,

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