

RAEBURN'S PORTRAITS—ART SHOWS—NEW PICTURES

Qualities of the Work of the Scots' Velasquez Which Makes Him Great as a Painter

We have discussed from time to time the artistic merits of various English painters, Reynolds, Romney, Gainsborough, and there remains in addition to such lesser men as Lawrence, Beechey and others, the noble name of Henry Raeburn. Of him Henley has said that the material he found in his native place was of the finest quality. The blessing of the Union was everywhere apparent, but Scotland was not yet Anglified, and Edinburgh was still her capital in fact as well as in name. As the city at once of Walter Scott and of the Great Un- known, it was a metropolis of poetry and fiction, as the city of Jeffrey and Macgill was a centre of so-called criticism as the city of Raeburn and John Thomson it was a high place of portraits and landscape; as the city of Archibald Constable and the Ballantynes it was a headquarters of bookelling and printing. It was the city of Dugald Stewart and Reid of Erskine and Henry Dundas, of John Home and Henry Mackenzie, of Braxfield and Newton and Clerk of Eldin, of Francis Horner and Neil Gow, and as Raeburn painted the most of these—and indeed there was scarce an eminent Scotsman but sat to him—his achievement may be said to mirror some thirty years of the Scots nation's life. Scarce anywhere could he have found better models; which, for their part, were thrice fortunate in their painter. Honorable as were his beginnings, they scarce gave earnest of the results of his later years. His genius, essentially symmetrical and sane, did not mature with time; artistic from the first, his accomplishment was finest at his death; his vision was at its keenest in his latest efforts; his life in fine was a piece of work as sound and healthy and manly as his art.

Thus he is said to have lost a great deal of money by becoming security for a relative, but he bore his loss with great composure, and painted no more industriously after than before; he spent much of his leisure in mechanics and natural philosophy; he practised sculpture—it is said that when he was studying under Michelangelo in Rome he came near to preferring it before painting—

a capacity of brain and hand unequalled in that owner's day. Thus does Scotland work; she has the genius of fitness, so that to the world without her achievement seems ever instinct with the very spirit of romance. There are two great artists in the Edinburgh of 1823, and the one dies painting the other. The fact remains "a subject of affectionate regret" to the survivor.

There is often virtue in a nickname; and much as Jameson is still renowned as the Scottish Van Dyck, even so, but with greater propriety, might Raeburn—who used neither compass nor chalk, dealt with his sitters directly through the medium of paint and was identified with the use of the "square" touch at least a couple of generations before its present apotheosis—be distinguished as the Scots Velasquez. It is told that when Wilkie was painting in the Museo del Prado he had to consider the work of the Spaniard to be "always reminded" of the Scots, and it is a fact that the one has at least some tincture of the breadth of manner, the unity of effect, the quick, inevitable touch, the notable capacity for preferring essentials—something, too, of the turn for perfect prose as opposed to high romantic poetry—which are present to so marvellous a purpose in the other. But these comparisons of less to greater are misleading, and it were well to push the parallel no further. The interest of art is absolutely incompatible with the sentiment of patriotism, and it is enough to know that Raeburn, whatever his degree of kinship to the king of painters, was an excellent and distinguished artist in paint. He came at the break between old and new, when the old was not yet discredited and the new was still inoffensive, and with that exquisite good sense which marks the artist he identified himself with that which was known and not with that which, though big with many kinds of possibilities, was as yet in perfect touch with nothing actively alive. His draughtsmanship was good enough when he chose; his color was sound enough to be distinguished; sober as it may seem, his feeling for paint was very real; his brush work intelligent, vigorous,



"SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW" BY FRANK BRANGWYN, A. R. A. NOW ON EXHIBITION AT THE KRAUSHAAR GALLERIES

Landscapes by Sisley, Prints at Public Library and Other Current Art Exhibitions of Interest

As gifts for the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, they are masterly. Charles W. Mielatz set himself a difficult task when he etched the brilliantly colored painting by George Luks called "The Woman and the Macaws." You may recall the canvas, which was exhibited at the Macbeth Galleries. Elsewhere on this page is a reproduction of the etching, the test plate of a part of the picture. It is the first state. It is, says Mr. Mielatz, nearly like the handling of the big plate. This represents what he calls the face plate, and it is not intended to print in black when the plate is finally run off the press. The color can only be determined by experiment and may be anything from a reddish brown to a grayish black. There will be three other plates, a yellow, a red and a black; they will be done in equating. In this colored etching is as successful as earlier work of Mielatz, notably his Coenties Slip and his Chinese restaurant, then Luks will be content that he has been sympathetically interpreted.

At the Montross Gallery till April 20

the success of such an innovation may be, but it is certainly to the credit of those who have been progressive enough to take such a step. Certain it is, too, that a very large number of people within whose means it is to furnish their homes with comparatively expensive pictures never visit an art gallery, and know little or nothing of paintings, we abstain from calling it art, beyond the purely commercial variety which usually adorns the walls of the art gallery of the department store. The galleries in the Gimbel store have been redecorated and new gallery lights installed. Eighty paintings by American artists are on exhibition there at the present time. The exhibition opens on Monday, April 8, and will continue to the twentieth of the month. It is the purpose of the directors to hold two such exhibitions annually, one in spring and one in the fall. The rest of the year, it is proposed, to devote one of the three galleries to a permanent exhibition of the work of such artists who have on hand paintings which they can spare for the purpose.

The present exhibition lacks paintings of any great distinction, but there are a

toward portrait painting was discovered by his master's friend David Deuchar, a seal engraver and an etcher of some skill, who gave him some instruction, and Gilliland, who had become interested also, introduced him to David Martin (1798-1798), the leading portrait painter in the city. Martin had been a pupil and assistant of Allan Ramsay (1713-1784), and was a painter of some little accomplishment, if of no real gift; but beyond giving Raeburn access to his studio and permitting him to copy a few of his pictures he does not seem to have given him any assistance, and before long, having unjustly accused him of selling some of the copies he had been allowed to make, the slight friendship came to an end. By this time, however, Raeburn, encouraged by his master, who helped him to sitters probably and cancelled his indenture in consideration of a share in the profits, appears to have taken to portrait painting as a profession.

He painted miniatures to begin with, but soon abandoned them for lifelike portraits in oil. His earliest dated oil picture, a full length in Dunfermline Town Hall, was painted in 1776, and technically, even without allowing for the fact that he was practically self-taught, it is a remarkable performance for a youth of 20, while it is marked by many qualities which are characteristic of his mature style. Gradually his practice increased, and in 1778 he married one of the widows of a Franco-Scottish count, one of the Leslies of Balquhain, Aberdeenshire, she had three children and was twelve years older than Raeburn, but the marriage turned out most happily in every respect. They settled at Dean- baugh House, the property of his wife near Stockbridge, and for several years he continued to paint in Edinburgh, with increasing reputation and skill, but in 1785 desire to see and learn more than he could at home took him to London, where he met Reynolds, in whose studio he is said to have worked for a few weeks.

He seems to have contemplated a visit to Italy when he and his wife left Edinburgh, and his intention was confirmed by Sir Joshua, who advised him to go to Rome to study Michelangelo in the Sistine Chapel. Reynolds gave him more than advice; he offered him financial assistance and introductions, and while Raeburn did not need money he was glad to avail himself of the letters. In Rome, where he knew Pompeo Batoni and other artists, he associated chiefly with two of his own countrymen, Gavin Hamilton, historical painter and discoverer of antiquities, and James Byres of Toney, an Aberdeenshire laird who was devoted to the arts and whose counsel never to paint anything without having the actual object before him contributed in some degree to the mastery of representing actuality which Raeburn acquired. His way of approaching a subject and even his style were practically formed before he went to Italy, but the two years spent there matured his views and added richness and depth to his art. Returning to Edinburgh in 1787, he took a studio in George street. Soon his supremacy as an artist was acknowledged, and thereafter he had no rival in the Scottish capital. Everybody sat to him, and his practice and industry were so great that he must have left over a thousand portraits. More than 700 are mentioned in L. L. Cav's catalogue of his works.

He made no preliminary studies for his portraits—only one drawing with good claims to be his is known—he did not use chalk or pencil even in placing his subject on the canvas, but commenced at once with the brush and he painted without a model stick. For the greater part of his career also he employed little or no assistance in forwarding his work. Nor did he take pupils in the ordinary way. He was always willing to be helpful, however, and among those who enjoyed his advice Sir J. Watson Gordon, P. R. S. A.; Samuel MacKenzie, R. S. A., and John Syme, R. S. A., who was his assistant for some time, may be named. Many others were influenced by him and the soberly

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Raeburn had exhibited at the Royal Academy as early as 1783, but it was not until after 1810, when one of his portraits of Sir Walter Scott was shown, that he sent much to London, and then, as it happened, not his best pictures. They were good enough, however, to earn him the associateship in 1812, and three years later, although he took no steps to press his claims, he was elected Academician. Yet his reputation remained to a great extent local, and when in 1810, during one of three recorded visits to London, he proposed trying his fortunes in the South, Lawrence had no difficulty persuading him to remain at home. He had gone to live at St. Bernard's, which came to him on his brother's death in 1788, and in 1798 he built a fine studio and gallery in York Place, where he worked until the end. It was in his gallery that the early Edinburgh exhibitions were usually held and he took considerable interest in efforts to found an academy in Scotland. In 1822, when George IV. visited Scotland, Raeburn was knighted, and in the following year, only a few months before he died (July 8, 1823), he was appointed "His Majesty's Limner for Scotland." He was also a member of the academies of Florence, New York (1817) and South Carolina (1821). Raeburn was exclusively a portrait painter, and after his early years, when he painted miniatures, few of which

are traceable, almost all his work was done life size in oil paint.

Characteristics of His Art.

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clear rivers, for small country roads, for guy lites houses in the midst of gardens, for old churches gilded by the sun, and for great flights of clouds in the azure. There have been more individual landscapists than Sisley, an interesting exhibition of his works is now in progress at the Durand-Ruel Galleries; but he possessed in the highest degree the feeling for light, and if he did not have the power, the mastery of Claude Monet, he will at least deserve to be frequently placed by his side as regards the expression of certain combinations of light. He did not have the decorative feeling which makes the landscapes of Monet so imposing; one does not see in his work that surprising lyrical interpretation which knows how to express the drama of the raging waves, the heavy slumber of enormous rocks, the intense torpor of the sun on the sea. But in all that concerns the mid aspects of the Ile de France, the sweet and fresh landscapes, Sisley is not unworthy to be compared with Monet. He has a similar delicacy of perception, a similar fervor of execution. He is the painter of great blue rivers curving toward the horizon of blossoming orchards, of bright hills with red roofed hamlets scattered about; he is beyond all the painter of French skies, which he presents with admirable vivacity and facility.

He has the feeling for the transparency of atmosphere, and if his technique allies him directly with Impressionism, one can well feel that he painted spontaneously and that his technique happened to be adapted to his nature, without his having attempted to appropriate it for the sake of novelty. Sisley has painted a notable series of pictures in the quaint village of Moret on the outskirts of the Forest of Fontainebleau (where he died); and these canvases figure among the most charming landscapes of our epoch. Sisley was a veteran of Impressionism. At the Paris exhibition of 1900, in the two rooms reserved for the works of this school, there were hung a dozen of his canvases. By the side of the finest Renoirs, Monets and Manets they kept their charm and their brilliancy with a singular power, and this was for many critics a revelation of the prime artistic importance of Sisley, who had hitherto been too often accounted a pretty colorist and naught else. In Berlin the collection of modern French art formed by the late Professor von Tschudi, there are several Sisleys of great beauty, and they hold their own among the superb Monets, Manets and Doges's. The present show at the Durand-Ruel galleries is a thoroughly characteristic one. It will last to April 27. For a few days last week there were at the same galleries two portraits by Courbet sent by Mary Cassatt, which she destined

there may be seen recent pictures by Dewing, Tryon, Elliot Lathrop, J. Francis Murphy, W. L. Dainoff, C. A. Winter, Alexander Schilling and Horatio Walker.

Bronzes and drawings by Mahonri Young are at the Berlin Photographic Gallery. That delightful painter of delicate landscape and seascape, Maurice Prendergast of Boston, is showing some of his recent work at the Women's Cosmopolitan Club till April 27. Paintings by Walter L. Palmer are at the Folsom Galleries. Henry Clews, Jr., has sculptures and paintings on view at the galleries of Gimbel and Wildenstein. Among the portrait busts we best liked that of Cortland Palmer. Decorated fabrics and color arrangements by Birdaline Bowdoin and Evelyn Manley are at the Powell Art Gallery. At the New York School of Applied Design for Women is a collection of thirty-eight paintings by the late George Inness. The National Arts Club announces a loan exhibition of valuable paintings, rare textiles and embroideries from the collection of Emerson McMillin, vice-president of the club. The Architectural League of New York is still agitating in favor of the projected Lincoln Memorial, believing that the proper and best scheme is for a building on the Mall site in the District of Columbia. This would cost two or three million of dollars at the most, and two million have been already appropriated. The alternate scheme proposes to build a memorial state road from Washington to Gettysburg, this road would originally cost at least \$40,000,000, and the Government engineers have estimated that the annual upkeep would be somewhere between five and seven millions. Hence the Architectural League is against the road scheme.

The prints division of the New York Public Library has arranged in the Stuart Gallery (room 810) of the library building its usual spring show of recent acquisitions. Naturally only a small selection can be exhibited on such occasions and merely to give an indication of the nature of the additions to the collection. So an etching or two each by Bjoet, Lepere, T. F. Simon, Robbe, Lehours, Bourdeley, Strang, H. Winslow, Hurley, Shirrav, Duvenecq, J. Andre Smith, C. B. King, A. A. Lewis, Bicknell and Learned represent in not a few cases any number from a half dozen upward. The large collection of working proofs of the mesostats printed in color by S. Arant Edwards is indicated by three or four examples. Engravings by S. A. Schoff and S. L. Smith, drawings by Walter Shirrav, book plates by Spenceley, Cheney, Garrett, Hopson, Rhoad and Chambers; a wood engraving by the late F. H. Wellington, seventeenth century portraits by Nanteuil, lithographs by Pennell, E. J. Sullivan, C. E. Holloway; Cochin's large "Jeu du Roi," and illustrations by John Leech, further emphasize the varied character of this exhibition. The prints, a number of which form part of the S. P. Avery collection, will be on exhibition April and May. The Japanese prints remain on view in room 321 and the C. W. Sherborn exhibit in room 318.



"THE BRIDGE, AUTUMN" BY CHARLES W. MIELATZ AFTER A PAINTING BY GEORGE LUKS ENTITLED "THE WOMAN AND THE MACAWS." NOW ON EXHIBITION AT THE KRAUSHAAR GALLERIES



GIRL WITH FAN BY ROBERT HENRI

with a certain diligence; he "excelled," says his biographer, "at archery, golf, and other Scottish exercises"; he laid out and built "on so judicious and careful a plan" that his estate became in no great while "the most extensive suburb attached to Edinburgh"; he was an excellent taker; he appears to have been singularly fortunate in his domestic relations; he enjoyed the friendship, as he commanded the admiration, of the most distinguished men of his time; his health was perfect; he stood upward of six feet two in his boots; it may be added that while engaged in painting his step and attitudes were at once stately and graceful.

The Scots Velasquez.

His character and his career, indeed, have all the balance, the unity, the symmetrical completeness of his genius and his achievement; and the rhythm to which they moved—large, dignified, consummate, like that of a Handelian chorus—remained unbroken until the end. It came in 1823. He was now a man of 57. His health was apparently imperilingly with Scott and Adam and Shephard had been for some years in the habit of interposing a parenthesis into the career of public business for the purpose of visiting objects of historical interest and curiosity; and this year he had not only visited with enthusiasm the ancient ruins of St. Andrews, of Pittenweem and other remains of antiquity, but had also contributed much to the hilarity of the party.

Returning to Edinburgh, he had been honored with a sitting from Sir Walter, of whom he was anxious to finish two portraits, one for himself and one for Lord Montagu; and "within a day or two afterward" he was "suddenly affected with general decay and debility," a condition not accompanied by any visible complaint. He lingered no more than a week; and so it befell that the portrait of the author of "Waverley" was the last to make any call upon

expressive—was that of a man of choice and forceful temperament trained in the ways and nourished upon the conventions of a great school.

A Gift for Portraiture.

And with all this he was Henry Raeburn—a personality so shrewd and sensible, so natural and healthy and sincere as to seem not out of place in the circle of Walter Scott. He was content to paint that he knew and that only, and his conscience was serviceable as well as untroubled and serene. Of the mere capacity for portraiture—the gift of perceiving and representing individual character and form—he had more perhaps than any portrait painter that has lived, and not a little of his merit consists in that he was always so far his master as to be able to vocalize it, as it were, in the terms of paint, so that his portraits were, to begin with, pictures. Here, if you will, are facts, but here unmistakably is paint, is accomplishment, is art. And that is why a bad Raeburn is better than the best of men like Shee and Grant. That is why a good one might be compared without much suffering or offence to a good Sir Joshua, the truth being that Sir Henry at his strongest need hardly veil his bonnet to the best that have painted the living aspects of men. A gentleman is company for the king.

Sir Henry Raeburn, the most famous of Scottish portrait painters, was born March 6, 1756, at Stockbridge, a village then on the northwest fringe of the "new town" of Edinburgh and now absorbed in the city—where his father, who came of Border stock, had established himself as a manufacturer. The mills were successful, but when Henry was only 8 both father and mother died, leaving him to the care of his elder brother. He was educated at Heriot's Hospital, the school founded in his native city by the bequest of James L. a jeweller, until the age of 16, when he was apprenticed to Mr. Gilliland, an Edinburgh goldsmith and jeweller. During his apprenticeship his bent

DURAND-RUEL
5 West 36th St.
Paintings
By
SISLEY
April 10th to April 27th

New Galleries of
P. W. FRENCH & CO.
6 EAST 56th STREET
Rare
Antique Tapestries
Furniture and other
Objects of Art
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1247-1249 Fulton Street, Brooklyn
(Between Bedford & Nostrand Aves.)
SPECIAL EXHIBITION
of Recent Paintings by
Paul Cornoyer, A. N. A.,
and
H. Ledyard Towle
April 8 to April 22, 10 A. M. to 10 P. M.
CHARLES E. HENRY I. O. McDERMOTT

ART NOTES.

If Mahomet will not come to the mountain, the mountain must come to Mahomet. Such seems to be the persuasion of those interested in the opening of galleries for the exhibition of the work of American artists in the Gimbel store. It is difficult to judge of what