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HENRY WOLF has added another to his long list of beautiful engravings on wood. This time it is a portrait of Lincoln, based upon a small photograph taken in 1863 by Brady of New York and Washington, which Mr. Wolf found in the collection of a Lincoln enthusiast. From the illustration on this page the reader may see the general character of the portrait, and note its dignity, its reserve power, its forceful modelling of the forehead, the cheek bones, the nose, the deep settings of the eyes. It will convey to most observers one of the best aspects of the real Lincoln.

Since the illustration on this page is made by the halftone process, from the original proof taken from the wood block, it does not preserve as might be wished the lines and handling of the engraver. Yet it is possible to see in it something of the very interesting way in which such work is done by one of the two remaining masters of the first rank in wood engraving in this country—for Mr. Wolf and his friend and colleague, Timothy Cole, are the sole survivors of the once flourishing school of artists who found their best expression in this medium.

While such work as that of Mr. Wolf and Mr. Cole is still being produced it may be worth while to look a little closely at the process itself. Every one is familiar with the fact that engravings on wood have been made from early times, before copper plates came to be employed for a similar purpose. Albrecht Dürer used both wood and copper, so did other masters of sixteenth century Germany and Holland. At first the wood blocks were not expected to be particularly sensitive as the vehicles for gradations of line and tint, outlines were obtained, but not too often more than a rudimentary system of modelling. The tools used were crude, the wood was intractable and easily split, and the designs, drawn on the wood block by the artist and then cut out for printing, were first of all limited by the possibilities of transfer from the wood to the paper.

To-day the wood engraver has carried his art to a high pitch of efficiency. Instead of the old blocks of pearwood, upon which he had to cut with the grain, he now uses slabs of boxwood of nearly the same thickness as the height of type metal, about one inch, and made up of small squares glued together very accurately so as to present a smooth and unbroken surface. The grain of this wood is set vertical, that is the surface upon which the engraver has to work is that afforded by the ends of the fibres, so that the lines incised on the block by the engraver's tools are cut across the grain. This wood is brought from Asia Minor and the Black Sea region. Engravers have to pay about seven cents a square inch for their blocks.

Those blocks are polished until their surface is true and even. If the engraver is to reproduce a translate would be a more accurate word—an existing design the modern way is to have this design, whether it is a painting, a drawing or even a photograph, as in the case of the Lincoln, photographed upon the sensitized surface of the wood block itself in the exact size of the proposed engraving. Then with the original before him or within easy reference, the engraver places his block upon a stand under a magnifying glass and begins.

His first task is to plan a system of directions for his lines, and this is determined generally by the shape of the parts of the composition. In the collar of the Lincoln, for example, Mr. Wolf has let his lines run parallel, or nearly so, with the line of the top of the collar. Wood engravers work in white lines, be it remembered, not in black ones. These lines are cut out in the block with the graver or burin, a diamond-shaped rod of steel, whose

point is ground into the shape of a lozenge. This tool is held by a small wooden handle in the palm of the hand and pushed from right to left, slowly and carefully, over the surface of the block, the engraver keeping his thumb stationary on the block while the tool slides horizontally past it.

The accepted method is to cut these little grooves or dots or dashes closely parallel to one another, with enough variation to suggest the desired contour or the modelling of the original. The hard block of wood permits an almost infinite variety of lines to be made upon its surface without tearing away the tiny ridges and points left between the incised white lines. It is these points and lines of the original surface of the hard block that receive the ink when the printer's roller passes over the finished design on the wood, and it is these lines and points that are transferred, reversed, to the paper after being inked. As said already, the white lines that are cut in the block, which appear on the finished engraving as the spaces between the black lines that are printed, are really the functional ones. It is they that express the author's purpose.

No one who has not looked closely at a first rate wood engraving would guess the range of expression and the delicacy with which gradations of light and shade may be attained, by so few and relatively simple means. If the engraver wants a part of his design to approach a white he makes incisions of a considerable breadth, leaving thin lines of the wood between them. To gain higher light he cuts away more of the boxwood surface. If a further intensity of illumination he desired the engraver introduces a system of cross lines at something near a right angle to the trend of his original lines. The effect of this is simply to diminish still further the area of wood left at the original level and thus to lessen the amount of ink that will eventually be spread upon the paper.

Had the engraver wished to make a certain part of the pattern relatively dark he could have used the system of tiny dots or dashes called stipples. There is an unbelievable variety of ways of making these little marks upon the smooth surface of the wood. They may be so shallow that the finger tip, passing over the block after they have been cut, can scarcely feel them, or they may be deep enough to show strongly upon the wood and even to assume definite shapes to the unaided eye. They may take the round pointed shape of the cutting end of the burin, or be as indeterminate as the skillful manipulator pleases to make them.

The thing to be noted is the apparently unlimited number of different ways that lie open to the artist craftsman able to pursue them. And every variation in manner has its own influence upon the finished work. To obtain a given effect, supposing two engravers to have agreed upon a precise and definable purpose, it is altogether probable, for example, that Mr. Cole and Mr. Wolf would choose ways distinctly separate. And as in painting, every engraver has his characteristic method of expression, which is as much his own as the way he signs his name or walks upstairs.

Going back to Mr. Wolf's fine Lincoln, the reader may note a little further how the gradations of light and dark have been obtained. The collar, as already indicated, has its underlying structural lines of white, but in order to gain the highest and coldest illumination possible Mr. Wolf has put over these a series of faint but influential cross lines. The shirt bosom is also cross lined near the top and for about a third of the way down, but as it becomes less and less prominent the cross lines are gradually omitted and toward the bottom of the picture the tone merges into a softer and deeper gray. The face of the President is also in part cross lined for a portion of its surface to gain the requisite approach to the

functional quality of such lines that one also takes the measure of the man that has made them. There is nothing deeply mysterious about such matters; nearly any person of reasonable sensibilities and a fair familiarity with prints and drawings will recognize strength or weakness in the treatment of lines like these. If they be flabby or evasive their effect will be correspondingly weak. If they be vigorous and sure, as though struck off confidently and without hesitation by the artist, the least experienced will hardly fail to note and to enjoy them.

In Mr. Wolf's head of the great President, even the half tone rendering of his design, shows that there was decision, coupled with sensitiveness, individual, so free from monotony in the original print as to hold fresh interest as often as one looks at it. It is an interpretation and it is also a work of art in itself.

Something like a stir has been caused by the reentry here of Chester Beach with his surprisingly large and also surprisingly good exhibition of marble and bronze sculpture at the Macbeth gallery. The advent of an artist of undeniable power and engaging personality, as revealed in his work, is felt even in so large and commercial a city as New York. Creative originality is precious as an asset of any community in whatever form it be exercised, and when it finds utterance in sculpture of a beauty and earnestness so appealing as this of Mr. Beach's it may be the more heartily welcomed.

As already mentioned in a review printed in this newspaper ten days ago Mr. Beach hails from California by way of Paris and Rome. It was in the Italian capital that most of the forty figures and groups shown at the Macbeth gallery through to-morrow took shape. It is hard to credit the statement that it represents only four years of actual work. And, according to Mr. Beach's friends, it was within the same period that the young sculptor married, and there are already two little Beaches. This latter fact, or, better, these two small but important facts, probably explain the singularly sympathetic way in which the sculptor has rendered the helpless and touching quality of tiny babyhood; there are several instances of this in the show.

It is not always easy to transfer from three dimensions to two and from glistening white marble to the printed page by a halftone plate the essentials of a sculptured figure. However, the reader may gain from what he sees here some notion of Mr. Beach's work. There is beauty in it; beauty that any one would acknowledge to be such, no matter to what wing of the army of modern art workers he may belong.

The two figures that have attracted most attention in this assemblage of Beach's work are "Beyond" and "Sacred Fire." Each is characteristic of the artist, though they are wholly different in spirit. "Beyond" is a young woman looking with faith, though also with realization of things grave and momentous, into the mysterious future. Every line of her slim and graceful body is in accord with the sentiment of the pure and spiritual face; the head is set a little forward as though to emphasize the attitude of quiet thought; the arms and hands are relaxed; the torso and limbs show no hint of tension, but the whole composition is organized; it is expressive.

Again in "Sacred Fire" there is sounded the note of preoccupation in the attitude of the vestal that steps down as from an altar, carrying the lamp or torch of guarded flame. Rhythmic vitality is felt in the poised attention of this straight limbed young woman and the artist has centred well the interest of the design upon the lamp and the sheltering hand of the vestal. It was an Italian mountain girl that served as model for this figure in antique drapery; there is something almost Egyptian about the character of her heavy face. For the slender loveliness of "Beyond" it is obvious that an American model was employed; at least the face is essentially American in type.

Honest, earnest art this. Mr. Beach should go far.

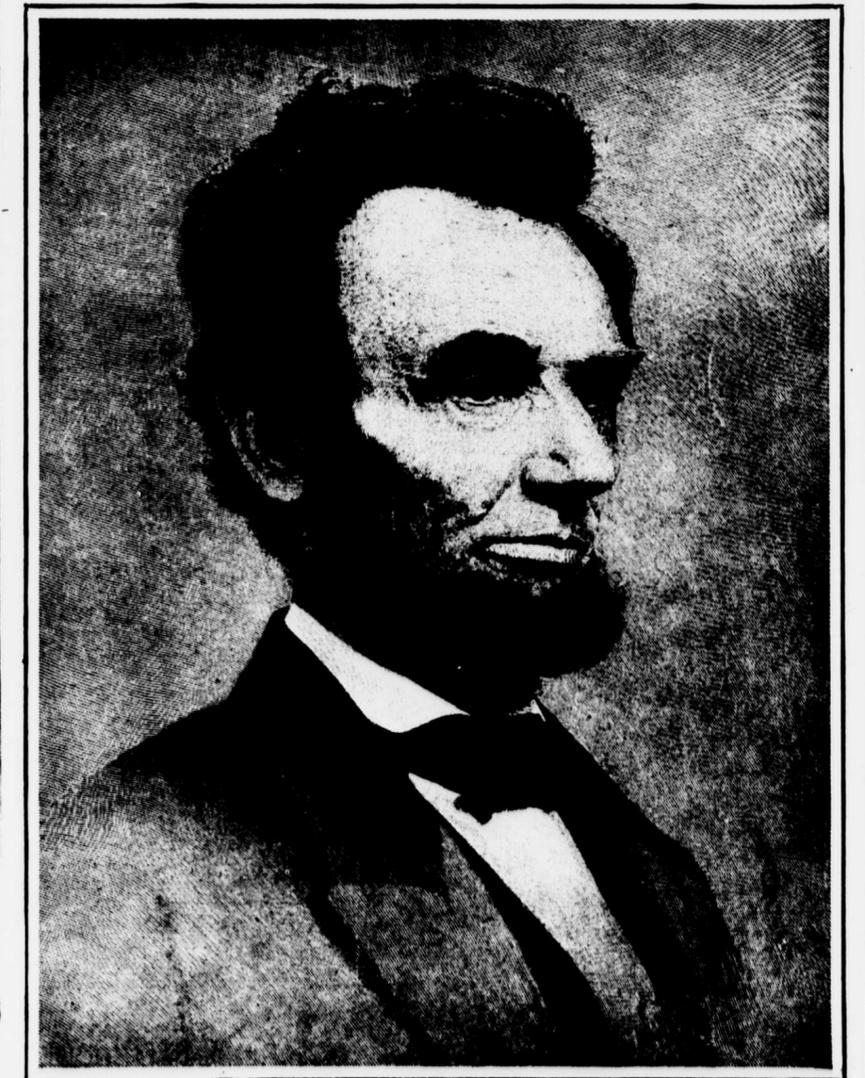
Andrea Mantegna stands out more and more as time goes on as one of the living forces of the Italian art of the great period. Artists of to-day, Americans as well as Europeans, are still energized by his conceptions and by his

throughout. The relative strength of lights and darks, constituting the values, so called, of the design has been gauged with the eye and brain of a sensitive artist. This scheme of light and shade is the framework, so to say, of any design. The treatment is so

broad shouldered way of carrying them into execution. So the exhibition that is now to be seen at the print cabinet of Richard Ederheimer on the eleventh floor of a Fifth Avenue office building is all the more important because its list of old Italian engravers is headed by



"BEYOND," BY CHESTER BEACH "SACRED FIRE" BY CHESTER BEACH.



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