

NEWS AND COMMENT IN THE WORLD OF ART

THE discussion concerning the authenticity of the Malbone self portrait just acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art has added some interest to the artistic topics of the past week. According to the announcement of acting Director Kent the museum prefers to believe that the painting is genuine until it has established proof to the contrary. Then the public will hear just what the picture is.

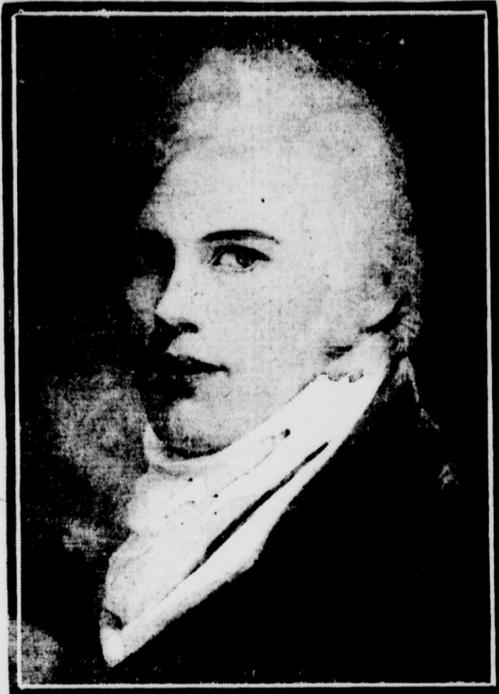
The claim is that the little painting at the Metropolitan Museum, appropriately acquired through the Lazarus Fund, since it was from members of the Lazarus family that the first Malbone came into the possession of the museum, was copied from the original, which is shown here. This hangs in the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington. Sanford Mason, an expert copyist of the '60s, is said to have made the copy of the painting which was in the collection of Col. Etting of Philadelphia, which has found its way into the room of recent accessions at the Metropolitan Museum.

The miniatures of Malbone in particular have attracted attention during recent years. He was always highly regarded among American portrait painters, although he has become more and more appreciated every year. In view of the interest which the present discussion has aroused the biographical material collected by R. T. Haines Halsey for Scribner's six years ago is worth reprinting. According to Mr. Halsey, Malbone, who was born in Newport in August, 1777, and died at Savannah on May 7, 1807, was peculiarly fortunate in living his short professional life at the very inception of the nineteenth century.

The country had fully recovered from the disastrous effects of the War of the Revolution. The adoption of the Constitution and the subsidence of the mutual jealousies long existing between the separate colonies had developed a strong national spirit and an enthusiasm for things American, with its encouragement for native craftsmen, sadly lacking to-day. Pride in past achievements walked hand in hand with the stern realization of the duty of building for the future. A desire for education and the finer things of life was springing up. The patronage given to home manufacturers was extended to those working in science, literature and art; an en-

couragement which made possible the achievements notably of Fulton in science, of Cooper, Irving, Paulding and later Poe and Hawthorne in literature, and Stuart, Morse, Vanderly and others in art.

"Malbone's ancestry was thoroughly American. His great-grandfather, Peter Malbone, was born February 10,



"Portrait of the Artist," by Edward G. Malbone, from the original oil painting in the permanent collection of the Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington, D. C.

1667, and died at Norfolk, Va., May 26, 1738, in the vicinity of which his son, Godfrey Malbone, was born January 18, 1695. Godfrey Malbone, as was the case with his distinguished grandson, matured early in life and settled in Newport, R. I., where, in 1718, in the deed in which he took title to a piece of land on Thames street for his mansion

House, he is styled 'Capt. Godfrey Malbone, Mariner.' He was one of New England's princely merchant navigators, and early acquired a fortune in the then eminently respectable trade of importing rum from the West Indies and slaves from Africa, and later turned many an honest and patriotic dollar in fitting out his ships to act as

with dormer windows and surrounded by elaborate gardens.

"In 1719 Godfrey Malbone married Catharine Scott, by whom he had ten children, the eighth of whom, John, born August 21, 1735, was the father of Edward Greene Malbone, the subject of this sketch.

"From early childhood Malbone evidenced great interest in the study of painting. He was at this period chosen for him. At the age of 15 his playtime alone in his room, drawing and painting in colors of his own manufacture. His devotion to art and its kindred subjects was discouraged at home, as his father believed it would interfere with success in the profession chosen for him. At the age of 15 his drawings of heads gave him a local reputation, which two years later was added to by the voluntary painting of scenes for the local theatre—a field far removed from that in which he made his reputation. It was at this period that he began his lifelong friendship with Washington Allston, then at school at Newport.

"In 1794 Malbone disappeared from his home and went to Providence, R. I., where he established himself as a miniature painter, which fact some weeks later he announced to his father in the following letter:

PROVIDENCE, Oct. 11th, 1794.
HONORABLE FATHER:—
Pardon me for leaving Newport so abruptly without informing you of my intention to stay at Providence, nor would I have you think me so bigoted to in gratitude as not to wish to repay with future services the many favours I have received from you; as I thought it was highly necessary for me to do something I chose this for my first attempt which I have hit upon as a staircase leading to the curule. Its dimensions were 64 by 52 feet, and it was topped by a double pitched roof

privateersmen during the wars with France. His house on Mantonmouth Hill was notable among the finest dwellings in the colonies for its sumptuous furnishings and lavish use of mahogany in its door and circled staircase leading to the curule. Its dimensions were 64 by 52 feet, and it was topped by a double pitched roof

him to forego opportunities for study abroad offered him by friends who recognized his talent. It foreshadowed also his devotion to the material needs of his family and the resulting overwork which led his system open to the pulmonary trouble which caused his early death.

"In 1796 Malbone moved to Boston, where he was successful in obtaining many sitters, and while there was able to renew his friendship with Washington Allston, then a student at Harvard.

"During the next three years Malbone was eagerly sought as a painter in New York, Philadelphia and Newport. In the late summer of 1800 his failing health made it advisable that he avoid the rigor of the Northern winters and he went to Charleston, where shortly he was joined by Washington Allston. Orders poured in to his studio and the peculiar hospitality for which this Southern city has always been famous opened up to him the homes of its people. It was accentuated by the endearing qualities of the young Northern painter. Much of his leisure time was spent in the company of Charles Fraser, then a law student and later a miniaturist, whose work is second only to Malbone's in this country.

"In May, 1801, the profits from his brush allowed Malbone to accompany Allston on a long looked for trip abroad. His reception by Benjamin West is thus recorded by Charles Fraser when writing of his friend: "When in England he was introduced to the president of the Royal Academy, who, conceiving a high opinion of his talents, gave him free access to his study and showed him those married and friendly attentions which were more flattering than empty praises to the mind of his young countryman. He even encouraged him to remain in England, assuring him that he had nothing to fear from professional competition. But he preferred his own country and returned to Charleston in the winter of 1801."

"During the next two years he filled many engagements in the cities along the seaboard. His charm and personality made him more than welcome everywhere. However, he allowed nothing to interfere with his profession. The confinement to his studio wore on his constitution and in 1805 he was obliged to give up work and seek to reestablish his health. The next year he went to Jamaica, where he failed to secure the hoped for benefit. In December he returned to the United States and landed at Savannah, where he died on the 7th day of May, 1807, at the home of his cousin, Robert Mackay."

"Malbone's reputation rests on the correct drawing and acute discernment of character always present in his

portraits, coupled with harmony and truth in coloring. His portraits show the absence of forced and theatrical effects. Practically all his work was done when relying upon inspiration derived from within. Occasionally,

Veronese, Rembrandt and others on exhibition, Washington Allston recorded his horror at Malbone's pointing to a portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence and saying that he would rather possess it than all the other pictures of the

never sacrificed character to pretentiousness."

Hugh Henry Breckinridge, the Philadelphia artist and instructor at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts School, has recently gone on record as to the works of the most advanced painters in a way that leaves no doubt as to his convictions as to the merit of their work. "Then he has supplied a definition of the purpose of the painters of such pictures as 'Nude Descending a Staircase' and 'King and Queen Surrounded by Saint Nudes,' which ought to ease the minds of those who wonder in vain what it is all about. It is no longer the picture of an impression that artists put on the canvas. It is the impression itself. Mr. Breckinridge wrote of these examples of advanced art:

"There is in Philadelphia at this time an exhibition of 'new thought' paintings, and the same artist has again produced for us one of his marvelous intricacies and called it 'The King and Queen Surrounded by Saint Nudes.' Judging from the title, I suppose he wishes to convey the impression of voluptuous luxury and regal magnificence, and most likely he has succeeded in doing so to those who are acquainted with the craft of his profession. Another painter has called his work simply 'A Painting.' And this removes a great deal of the offence to orthodox eyes because there is no title to suggest to the mind that which is not optically before it.

"Like all new things, it will take a great many years before the public will appreciate these bold ventures. I am sure, however, if we once get some inkling of their technique and its modes of conveyance when our eyes see in their laborious colorings and shadings meanings of beauty and not fripperies and mental unbalance, they will have a more comfortable seat in the halls of artistic fame.

"If you will permit me, I may say they have taken a mighty step ahead of present modes of expression. They have gone so far ahead they have taken the breath from the public. Instead of making a picture which suggests the impression, they seek to put on canvas the impression itself and then allow the viewer to get it at first hand. That, I think, all 'new artists' are agreed upon.

"An impression recorded upon canvas rather than in the human mind or soul is exceedingly novel and almost bizarre, but there are possibilities in the thing. One must be wonderfully adept to paint an impression. To do so they are laymen as regards that sort of art it seems very much like painting a noun or a pronoun minus the printed words, or, better still, recording the hole in a doughnut. This new art is an attempt to reduce to an optical image something which has hitherto been felt by the senses and, if you will, by the soul."



Self portrait of Edward G. Malbone recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Authenticity in dispute. This is said to be a copy of the Washington picture.

... when his inspiration was gained from without, he failed to secure the frankness and honesty so predominant in the work done under the influence of his own intuition.

"The English school of painters alone made any impression upon him. When viewing together with him in London, the examples of Titian,

collection, Malbone's work showed great sadness and was not affected by mannerisms. He painted portraits, not types, in which he differed from his great English contemporaries, Cosway and Shelley. All his pictures show his ability to adapt himself to his sitters' moods. He was not self-centred; his work was even, and he

VISITING THE HARBOR SENTRIES ON A STAY AT HOME VACATION

By JEANNE JUDSON.

ONE hears so many conversations beginning "If an enemy from overseas should come to attack New York" or words to that effect that I decided that a visit to the harbor sentries would be interesting and enlightening.

There are two ways by which an enemy might approach the port—one

The front door entrance interested me most, so I left the Battery on a St. George ferry to Staten Island. Doubtless the fact that the New York ferries are so useful explains why no one has seen fit to exploit them as pleasure boats. The commuter looks at his watch as he gets on the ferry and then buries his nose in his paper. To him the ferry is just a means of getting home in so many minutes, but to the person who starts out in the morning "to go and see" it is quite a

and I take a South Beach trolley car to the army reservation. A small guard house and an iron gate bar the entrance, and as if that were not sufficient protection, there is a soldier pacing back and forth in front of it with a real gun. The sentry assured me that the gun was loaded. It is not often that we see loaded guns in America, so I looked at it a long time as the sentry explained that there might be some difficulty about permitting me to enter. He would consult his commanding officer. So he called another soldier from the small guard house who permitted me to enter through the iron gate and conducted me to a Captain. The Captain had blue eyes and red hair and he looked very stern when I explained that I wanted to see how New York is guarded.

Then being an army officer and of Irish descent or ascent, since he is an American, he decided to be good natured, and after I had proved that I was not a German spy, and didn't really know the difference between a rifle and a gun, he led me out to the old fort and the new fortifications.

The old fort was built in 1847 on the site of a previous fort built during the war of 1812. It is of gray stone, rectangular in shape, presenting a bare face to the sea, its only windows being the narrow slits through which the infantrymen thrust their rifles in the bygone days of primitive warfare. Inside a firing end are two round towers through which spiral stairways run up to the gun mounds, where the cannon were placed. The old gun platforms still may be seen on the top of the fort.

"Lift the drawbridge, let the port-culverts fall, I couldn't help thinking these words out loud as I looked at the old structure and across the ship-filled narrows to Fort Hamilton.

"There is still a moat around Fort Hamilton," the Captain told me, and just as I was looking for armored knights he pointed to where a great rifle warship and a torpedo boat destroyer lay in the lower bay, and the Union was dissolved.

In spite of the two old time forts guarding the entrance to New York, like two toy spaniels set to watch a feudal castle, this was the twentieth century. I felt sure of it when I caught a glimpse of the modern long distance guns that circled the water's edge at the foot of the ancient fort.

I felt more sure of it when I looked

at the erect, olive drab clad figures around me. We may be unprepared, the sentry explained to me that the finest in the world and the best marksmen.

The guns in the harbor fort batteries will carry from twenty to forty-five miles, and the soldiers who man them must be able to judge the influence of wind and drift before firing. How well they have learned their lesson is shown by the records of the annual target practice at Sandy Hook.

I was congratulating the Captain on our safety with such long distance guns when he explained to me that an enemy warship could be outside the lower bay and send shells into Fourteenth street. Fortunately a lot of us live further up town.

I asked if the preparedness agitation had made much change in the life of the sentry.

"Practically no change," he answered, "except that army men are talking less and doing more. All information must come from the War Department. The new army bill provided for an enlargement of ninety-three companies in the coast artillery. We have only three companies here, although there is accommodation for nine. The other forts are about equally undermanned. A limit of five years is given to bring the coast artillery up to this increase. The Mexican situation has not brought many recruits into the regular army. If there should be a little real fighting they would come flocking, but the average man wants to be sure of active service before he enlists."

The old fort behind the modern batteries was called Fort Tompkins. Fort Wadsworth proper stands somewhat back from it and now is used as a barracks for the soldiers. The Captain showed me the well equipped reading room, the combination billiard room and barber shop, the mess room, where the best of food is served on the cleanest and barret of tables.

The soldiers who hid their interested glances under respectful salutes, would be amused if they knew that the whole thing reminded me of a monastery. There really is a similarity. The rigid discipline, which had been going on day after day during these years of peace when half America has regarded the standing army as a useless luxury, is the sort of training that springs forth either martyrs or the finest soldiers in the world, according to need.

Day after day there is the same

early rising hour, the same inspection, the same drill, the same target practice, and the response of the officer is "two and eight" or "one and eight" or "private." Here come great, shambling youths from the country and narrow chested boys from city factories. They are taught to stand and walk and breathe and to take care of their bodies and happy to their minds, and before the three year "chick" is completed they have become soldiers and men.

At the entrance to the lower bay on Sandy Hook stands the outmost sentry of the port—Fort Hancock. To go to Sandy Hook something more pretentious than a ferry is required. There are two methods of conveyance, the Mandalay and the Sandy Hook Route steamers. I took the Sandy Hook steamer at the foot of Cedar street and started out again through the harbor, whose infinite variety a thousand ferries cannot equal.

Passing through the Narrows, I got a closer view of Fort Lafayette, built on a reef, just opposite Fort Hamilton. The fort was built during the war of 1812 on Donom Reef, and its name was changed in 1825 in honor of Lafayette, who was then visiting New York. During the civil war it was a military prison, and since 1868 it has been used for storing ordnance.

When we passed into the lower bay I expected to go direct to Sandy Hook, but I discovered that the Sandy Hook boat doesn't stop at Sandy Hook at all. Instead it goes into a deep bay formed by the "hook" called the Horseshoe and lands at Atlantic Highlands. From Atlantic Highlands a train runs at convenient intervals to Fort Hancock. Here also one must have a permit from the commandant, but feminine apparel and a neutral name drove suspicion far from me, and I was permitted to enter, though no military secrets were divulged.

The life in each fort is very similar. There are the same barracks for the men, the officers' quarters, or homes if they are married, and the parade ground. But Sandy Hook has an added interest in that it is here that the proving station is located.

Here the target practice is held, and new guns are tested and adopted or discarded according to their merits. Here the most powerful long distance guns are placed to meet the approaching enemy battleship even before it has an opportunity to leave the latitudes of Fort Wadsworth and Fort Hamilton.

These are the three important sentry

posts guarding the front door of New York, but there is another entrance on the east through Long Is and Sound.

There are three important forts guarding this entrance—Fort Tompkins on Plum Island, and Fort Wright on Fishers Island. These forts guard Gardiners Bay and Peconic Bay as well as Long Island Sound. They are the watchtowers to be feared, showing rows of gleaming teeth in the shape of powerful long distance guns to any enemy that dares to force an entrance and land troops at the back door of the city.

The fact that so many of the forts are on islands led to a discovery, on my part which may be new to other New Yorkers—the city is located on forty-five islands; yet no one has called it Venice!

Discipline forbade that the men with whom I talked should discuss plans or express opinions, but it was easy to see that the United States army, composed of the true "watchful waiters" of America, is more than delighted with the awakening of the people to their need for reinforcements and cooperation.

One officer told me his views on compulsory military service.

"I would like to see the term of enlistment shortened to one year," he said, "and every young man in the United States compelled to spend one year in the army. This measure would be more beneficial to the men themselves than to the army. The son of the millionaire and of the mechanic would serve side by side, subject to the same living conditions and the same discipline. They both would be private soldiers, and they each would get a better understanding of the other. It would be an influence for democracy such as the country never has known. It has been said in France during the present war, 'Friendships which will last a lifetime have been formed between titled men and workmen who have been fighting side by side.'

"The benefit to the individual cannot be overestimated. It could think of any finer year for a young chap to spend his first year after leaving college than in the army. Any man of quick intelligence can grasp the training, or a large part of it, in one year's time, and the period of enlistment should not be so long that the man would feel himself irreversibly committed to a military career. Of course, this idea of mine is

purely personal—nothing official—so please don't quote me, but you can see for yourself what army training does for men."

I could see. There are doubtless some men in the United States army who aren't good looking, but there are none who are not good to look at. They are so straight and clean and clear eyed, with no lost motion when

addition the best fed and the best clothed soldiers in the world and the best paid.

However much unprepared the rest of America may be, it is comforting to know that these men always are waiting, clear eyes and shining guns, trained on the "possible enemy" at whom the pacifists scoff so loudly. The gates of the city at least are



The gun was loaded.

is by way of Long Island Sound and the other and more direct seeming route is past Sandy Hook through the lower bay and the Narrows into the upper bay, New York's big front door. It is customary when visiting the forts which guard the harbor to write to the commandants asking permission, but when one's party is so small as to bear no resemblance to a Cook's tourist aggregation it is much simpler to go, and ask permission afterward.

different matter. There is no time for newspapers.

Sky and sea and ships and whatever lie in the soft gray of the atmosphere—a mingling of smoke and fog. The Statue of Liberty assumes a new importance from the deck of the ferry-boat and above Governors Island there is a big bird soaring in uncertain circles—an aeroplane in the hands of one of the pupils of the army aviation school.

Arrived at St. George on Staten Isl.



Like a toy spaniel guarding a feudal castle.

they walk, that it is a joy to look at them.

The physical requirements of the United States army are so high that only a few of the thousands of yearly applicants for service gain entrance. Added to this there is a literacy test to which there is rigid adherence. After enlistment every opportunity and encouragement is given to the man to improve himself mentally as well as physically. They are in

guarded with real guns and real men.

America is so large that some may regard the New York harbor fortifications as the buried head of an ostrich which has forgotten its own body.

But there are more people who think as does the New Yorker who told me that "one person out of every million in the United States lives in New York city. The solution offered by



The finest soldiers in the world.