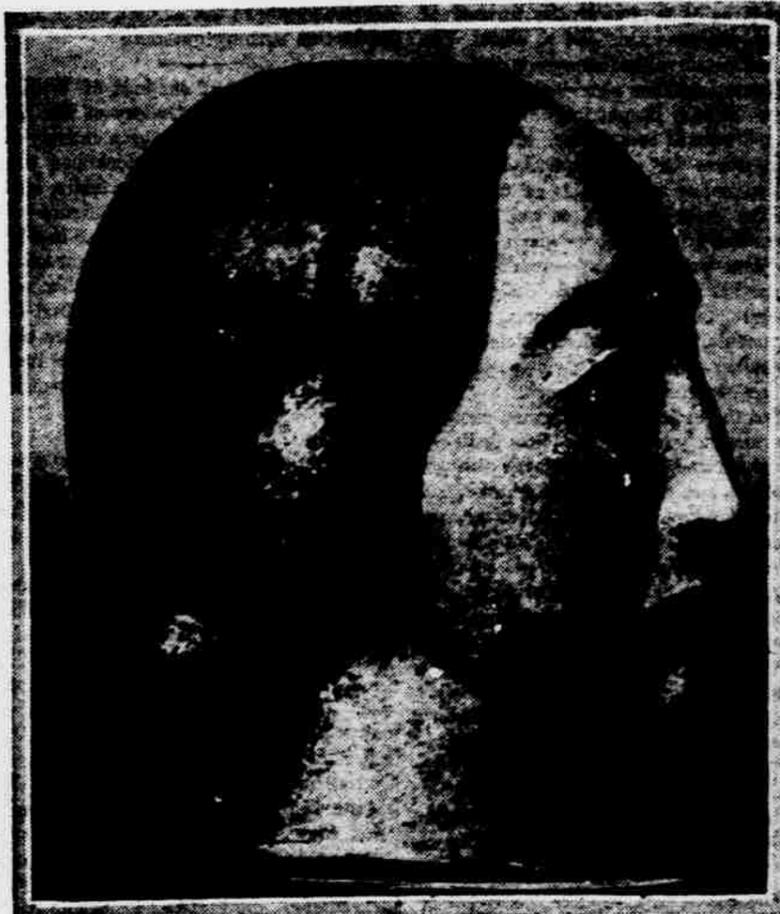


Views and Reviews in the World of Art



Head by Lachaise. On exhibition in the Bourgeois Galleries.

(Continued from preceding page.)

upon his native traits and upon his own ideals, when launched at a tender age upon a community like this, where every atom of the social fabric is aligned in an effort to standardize character.

Mr. Lachaise being French has been impressed by our recently enfranchised ladies. His attention so far has been almost exclusively focused upon our feminine voters. He feels, he says, and his work shows that he feels, something extraordinary and powerful in our women. They seem to be energy incarnate. There is a force in the air here that the sculptor felt when he first breathed it. There is energy stamped upon the faces of our men and upon their gigantic engineering achievements.

But these goddesses, the American women of 1914-1918, are the true equals of the men. (To look at the sculptures is to fear they excel men.) Aspiration and achievement are one with them, as Madame Nellie Melba recently said. They are full of the *je ne sais quoi*. The sculptor, who speaks excellent English, could not find words to define the emotion suggested by our superwomen. He dropped off into French, but in his native tongue also was continually saying "comment dirai-je?" This is as it should be.

There is nothing I like better to hear from a sculptor describing his aspiration than: "Comment dirai-je?" If he knew how to say it in words, doubtless he could not say it through sculpture. The most sacred things carry us beyond words, beyond definitions.

The first thing in a work of art is a feeling, and it cannot be defined if it be immense; and it is immense in the nude figure called "Elevation."

I like this figure immensely. It is as strange a piece of sculpture as any that has happened in America in recent years, but it is real and vibrant with the sculptor's emotion. Americans will I hope be properly impressed by the fact that this statue is a tribute by an ardent Frenchman to the women of this country. If the ribald laugh at it and call it a fat woman they may. What the idle think of a genuine work of art is unimportant. The main thing is that a sufficient number of intelligent art lovers signify their interest in the work emphatically enough to encourage the sculptor.

I believe, however, that this new artist has sufficient force to survive temporary non-comprehension. A worse thing for a young artist than neglect is a too vehement and fashionable appreciation.

George Moore Recalls Memories of Degas

It appears that Mr. Walter Sickert effectually got Mr. George Moore's goat with his published memoirs of Degas in a recent *Burlington*. I feared he would. (Mr. Walter Sickert loves America)

slang, so THE SUN's readers must pardon the above expression for his sake.)

Mr. Sickert's memories were so copious, so fresh and so important that Mr. Moore, who only has a few memories of Degas, which he is continually rubbing up, polishing and offering to passersby like a vendor of dubious fruit, was naturally irritated. He pays his compliments to what he calls Mr. Sickert's "list of quips" in the current *Burlington*, and then has his revenge by concluding with a lengthy quotation from his own Degas article written twenty years ago.

The new wine that Mr. Moore pours into the old bottle by way of preface is this:

"In his lifetime legends began to gather about him, and the legend that has attained the greatest currency is that Degas was an old curmudgeon who hated his kind and kept his studio door locked. As early as '76—it was about that time I made his acquaintance in the *Nouvelles Athènes*—I heard him described as harsh and intractable, but I could not see that he was either and wondered why people should speak of him with bated breath, as if in terror, for indeed he seemed the type and epitome of a French gentleman, as I conceived it to be.

"He was courteous to all who knew him, entered into conversation with all who asked to be introduced to him and invited those who seemed interested in his painting to his studio. Why, then, the legend? Degas put himself forward as an old curmudgeon, and as it is always easier to believe than to observe he became one in popular imagination, and by degrees this very courteous and kind gentleman, loving his kindred and finding happiness in society, became moulded and fashioned by the words he had uttered casually, without foreseeing that sooner or later he would have to live up to them. He said that he would never speak to a man who wrote about him in the newspapers. He described journalists as pests. 'The artist,' he said, 'must live apart and his private life remain unknown.' The power of speech is greater within than without and in the end every man falls a victim to his own words.

"Said I to him once, 'How are your works to become known?' He answered, 'I've never heard of any one buying a picture because it was spoken about in a newspaper; a man buys a picture because he likes it or because somebody told him to buy it.' It may be that I have quoted these words of Degas before; they may be in the article to be laid before the readers of the *Burlington*, but if they are I have repeated myself, a license that must be allowed to everybody upon occasions.

"And now I bring to my telling a fact that is testification of the truth of what I have said regarding Degas's natural character and how his artificial character came into being: I forgot Degas's warning that he would never speak to any one who

wrote about him, and went to Paris, forgetful that Degas and his opinions were in 'Confessions of a Young Man.' I called one morning at his studio in the Rue Fontaine. He pulled the string at the foot of the spiral staircase. I went up and found Degas reading amid his lithographic presses my book in a French translation. And for a moment I stood like one frozen, but Degas was amiable—highly pleased expresses his mood—with all I had said of him—so pleased indeed that he took me out to breakfast and entertained me, as he never failed to do, with wit and wisdom till late in the afternoon.

"He spoke of my book to the crowd his personality collected about him, he had passages off by heart, and encouraged by his enjoyment I began to meditate an article on Degas, untroubled by any fear of an interruption to our intimacy. His dislike of notoriety is purely an imaginary one I said to myself. So it was, and the article might have proved as acceptable to Degas as the book had done if somebody had not unfortunately told me that Degas's brother had lost a great deal of money in Mexico and that Degas had proved himself a great brother on that occasion, saving his brother from bankruptcy.

"As the article happened to be one of my best articles (it could not be else since it was written out of a very complete knowledge of the subject and with enthusiasm and love) it attracted attention in France, and Degas found himself in a dilemma. He had given out to the world that he would never speak to anybody who related his private life in an article. He either had to allow that he was not a man of his word or he had to break with a friend, one who I have reason to believe was a dear friend. Mine was a flagrant instance. I counted on the help of Ludovic Halevy, but despite all Halevy could do and Madame Halevy to bring us together he persisted in his determination not to see me, till he fell under the power of remembrance and sent me word that he would be glad to see me when I came to Paris again.

"The last news I heard from him came through Monsieur Lafond, the curator of the National Museum at Pau. Monsieur Lafond wrote to me asking me in which book he would find my article on Degas, and I sent him 'Impressions and Opinions,' and a correspondence followed the sending of this book, and a phrase of this kind occurs in his last letter to me: 'Degas lives alone and almost blind, seeing nobody, without any kind of occupation.' The letter fell from my hands and I fell to thinking of the old man of genius hearing of his pictures selling for thousands and unable to see them, sitting thinking, weary of life.

"Into this solitude a certain French nobleman, the Playboy of Paris, the inspiration of Huysmans's *Des Esseintes*, the hero of 'A Rebours,' succeeded at last in clambering through an unguarded loophole and reaching Degas. 'Why, Monsieur Degas,' he asked, 'do you remain always at Montmartre; why not let me take you to the Faubourg St. Germain?' The answer he got was: 'Monsieur le Comte de —, leave me upon my dunghill,' a quip that seems to me as worthy of quotation as any in the huge dish of Degas's table talk that Mr. Walter Sickert laid before the readers of the *Burlington Magazine* in a recent number.

"However this may be, it will help to make clear a point that Mr. Walter Sickert had in mind when he was compiling his list of quips. He seems to have felt that any criticisms written at the present time about Degas's work could not be else than a languid repetition of things that have been said and resaid for the last ten or a dozen years. Since we must write about Degas, Mr. Walter Sickert thinks

(Continued on following page.)

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