

NEWS AND COMMENT IN THE WORLD OF ART

By HENRY McBRIDE. THE quick sympathy that has been aroused here for Lemordant and for Lemordant's pictures, now on view in the beautiful galleries of Gimpel & Wildenstein, is only one more instance of the general friendship that exists between the two countries and which answers to every test. The Americans love the French because that Old World nation has so much of the quality this New World lacks, the quality of irrepresable and unquenchable youth; and the French love us in return, chiefly, I think, because they like being loved. Our boys over there last summer were never subjected to criticism. They were not held off at arms length to be examined at leisure. They were adopted at once as brothers, and long before the famous Chateau Thierry drive, when even our own newspapers were far from being optimistic as to the quality of history we were to make, the average French eye moistened with enthusiasm when the Yank was mentioned. Whatever he did was perfect. He seemed to captivate the French imagination instantly.

In the early summer, when groups of American boys tumbled ecstatically back to Paris on leave after their first ventures over the top, they told tales that caused the hair on conservative American heads at the Cafe de la Paix to stand on end. They had become young. They had become terribly, and to the American ears into which they poured their tales, indiscreetly young. They told of two or three who, just for a lark, made their way across No-

Man's land at night and into the enemy trenches, killing two or three French before the signal of alarm got sounded and then making their way back under fire but in safety to their trenches. A Southern soldier, a mere boy, told of the first and only charge in which he participated. He said his company could scarcely wait for the command to attack. When it came they piled out of their trenches, whooping, yelling, whistling, the officers laughing, and my young man added enthusiastically, "It beat any rabbit hunt I ever saw."

Troubled somewhat by these unorthodox methods of warfare, I mentioned them to a French friend, a captain in a tank division, who got back one night, covered with mud from the front, and said, "I was afraid our boys were imprudent." He replied, "That's what we need. We've got to be imprudent to win this war."

So as the two countries seem to have an instinct for each other, any envy that the French might send here could count upon a welcome, but when the French happens to be a distinguished painter, one who was blinded in battle, one who was a hero among many, one who gave up a certain career for his country's service, then it is all the more fine that the two countries should have been so united, as it gives us a claim of our own upon Lemordant. We can and we have, as promptly adopted him as the French did our soldiers. He has been here only a few days, but he has been honored already by Yale, the artists of New York have given him a dinner and all New York will go to see his work.

The exhibition, in three galleries, with drawings from models and color schemes for decorations in both oil and water color. It proves that M. Lemordant has a robust talent with much in it that is essentially and typically French. He draws straightforwardly and commandingly, in the tradition of the Beaux Arts. It might give an idea of the style to those who will not see the exhibition to say that it has certain qualities of draughtsmanship in common with that of Lucien Simon. In color M. Lemordant is strong. He is a Breton, and the atmosphere of Brittany with its brilliant blues is reflected in his palette.

There are so many studies of workmen in the collection that one might jump to the conclusion that Lemordant had chosen "My" as his theme—a la Meunier—but this is scarcely a fair conclusion, since the artist is still young, and not even he himself may say how his career would have shaped. His chief commissions before the war had been the decorations for the theatre at Rennes for the Fisheries and Oyster Breeding Syndicate of France. For the theatre ceiling he did one of the most joyous scenes that Brittany presents, a long string of peasants dancing on the green of a fete day. For the syndicate his subject was "The Sea" and it led him into studies of all the activities of the fishermen.

The drawings will give great pleasure—they are so direct—to students and, it is to be hoped, to collectors. Lemordant studied art apparently in the traditional manner, but he was not one to be swamped by tradition. He used his acquired method spontaneously and in a quite personal way, and there can be no doubt that as time went on the Beaux Arts element in his work would soften and diminish and the personality would develop. The sound working method, however, is where in evidence ought to have an invigorating effect here, especially among our young people, who are inclined to shirk the work that leads to understanding.

The catalogue has been sumptuously turned out and contains graphic accounts not only of Lemordant's exploits in war but in peace from several sources. Gustave Geffroy, director of the Gobelins, in these words tells of the tragedy that happened to the artist: "He volunteers, changing territorial for active service, the artist giving place to the soldier with the same ardent spirit which manifests itself speeding toward the battlefield and victory; toward defeat also, toward death, and, worse still, toward martyrdom."

Lemordant joins those armies which struggle at Charleroi trying to arrest the progress of the barbarian invaders of Belgium who want to overrun and subjugate France. He is wounded seriously enough to be removed to a base hospital, yet he refuses to leave the field; he has his wound dressed temporarily, and later is promoted to a lieutenancy on the battlefield. He drops back with the army in its strategic retreat and takes part in the battle of the Marne. Wounded again, he takes part and leave the lines. He is with the troops that pursue the enemy, taking part in the battles of Champagne. His third wound strengthens his will to accomplish what he considers his moral duty.

"We find him again in Artois, wounded anew but still at his post. This time, after his thighs and back have been pierced by fragments of shell, his right arm struck and almost useless, he is hit again in the leg, his knee is pierced from side to side and the joint stiffened. When he takes part before Arras in the assault upon the German trenches, he is obliged, in order to be able to walk, to have his leg held by bayonet scabbards, as one ties the broken branch of a tree, and it is in this condition that with his company he takes the German trenches and machine gun posts. Then, at the moment of firing upon the commanding officer in front of him, he is struck in the forehead by a German bullet. He thinks for a moment that his eyes are springing from their sockets, that his head is bursting and he falls. "He remains five days and nights in the spot where he has fallen. Between his fainting spells he hears the noise of battle, the heavy steps of the Germans who march back and over him, he hears the cries of the wounded, calling for their mothers, their 'Mamans,' as the Bretons among him say, and the cries of those who beg for something to drink or pray for death. A brutal hand tears his field glasses from their straps; he makes an effort to defend them and a blow of a gun butt on his chest hurds him back to the ground. He remains there half fainting, covered with blood, trying to see, putting the hand that he still has use of toward his crushed forehead, toward his eyes that he is seeking. "He forgets one of the wounded near by. "What is happening? Is it night or day? It is broad daylight, Lieuten-



Animal Group, by Grace M. Johnson. On view Mrs. H. P. Whitney's Studio.

ant. "Then I understood," said Lemordant, who was relating these memories to me with calm simplicity. "He understood, and still had will and courage enough to comfort and aid a little Breton who was dying near him. At last, after five mortal days, he was picked up with the rest. He only had to assuage his feverish thirst a mouthful to drink, whether of sour wine or vinegar he knew not. He was taken from stable to stable, from hospital to hospital, among the wounded, the dying, the gangrenous, in the frightful odor of the charnel house, where the German surgeons, not knowing whom to care for first, had to be summoned by Lieut. Lemordant to operate upon an unfortunate who gasped with the death rattle in his throat. "At last he was carried away, his wounds badly dressed, badly nursed, to the Rhine cities which he had dreamed of seeing, but which were invisible because of his bandages. "He was a prisoner, wounded and weak, and it was in this condition that twice he escaped and refused to give his word of honor not to attempt to try again. The first time he was thrown into a fortress and again interned in a reprisal camp where he was conscious of horror and suffering. At last he was taken to Switzerland and returned to France. I have seen him among his pictures and drawings; I have seen him suffering, stretched at length, awaiting the result of the cure that he only knew in France. He does not complain; he has the same energy, the same strong will which he had at Charleroi, on the Marne, in Champagne and in Artois. If he could recover his sight he would return to

forward, a ring intoxicating and charming, rustic and voluptuous, a Bachanal of the countryside which Lemordant has been able to spread upon the sky of a theatre, all trembling with agile feet and whirling skirts, with the same grace, the same amorous intensity, the same fleeting and tender beauty of life as revealed to the traveller who stops in surprise before such a fete—a bright spot with its vivid costumes, in the solitude of the crossroads and the moors. "The design of this ceiling was to have been completed by a striking scene painted upon a drop curtain, of deep red draperies edged with gold which were parted to disclose the descent of a swarm of women, maidens and children in garments of brilliant colors embroidered with gold and silver. It is the continuation of the garden of the ceiling, the prolongment of the movement and intoxication of the dance. Thus the decoration of the theatre would have been conceived and completed by the same artist, and the eyes of the spectator would have found no break between the dancing figures of the sky of the amphitheatre and the joyous descent between the folds of the crimson curtain."

Miss Genth's Paintings at Milch's. Miss Lillian Genth, whose paintings remain on view in the Milch Galleries until April 5, has received many honors at the hands of the American officials, and quite a number of the art museums that are now scattered throughout our fair land contain specimens of her



Woman and Parasol, by Lillian Genth. On view Milch's Galleries.

those places. If you should ask him why he did not have his first wound dressed he would reply that a leader is responsible; that one who has charge of sending men to death must accompany them. He remains as he always was. His ideas of a free citizen, of a republican, he has preserved. It is because he saw France and his ideals endangered in the dark days of August and September, 1914, that he has given the best of himself unreservedly. He has been an officer of France and of the republic. We shall remember in Paris that he was before all an artist; as this exhibition, which is under the auspices of the Government and the army, testifies. May all those visitors who admire his forceful and brilliant genius also evoke within them the soldier of resistance and of our coming victory, the French champion of justice and liberty. M. Geffroy also gives this description of Lemordant's decoration at Rennes: "Lemordant, a few years later, prior to the war, was to achieve his creation by decorating the ceiling of the theatre of Rennes. That garden of dancers of southern Brittany, bright and smiling, which he had arranged in rhythmic and balanced curves about the pipers grouped in the middle of his composition; a wreath as lovely with its difference and freshness of treatment as those graceful garlands which decorate Greek vases; a ring of young men and girls holding each other's hands, dancing as they dance in Brittany, a charming dance of quick turns, of linked hands and free, of encoiled waists escaping to be clasped again, of faces which converge with smiles and laughter and away backward and

Success. In short, is a highly desirable thing, and if the Latin blood that courses through the veins of the present writer sometimes prejudices him into momentary enthusiasms for the mid geniuses who defy the public, believe him, it is only momentary, and as soon as the fit passes he realizes as well as the gentle reader that interesting as eternal glory may be in theory, in practice worldly success is irrefragable. Miss Genth paints female nudes. She is almost alone among our artists to do this. Practically she has a monopoly of nudes. It is no longer considered quite the thing for gentlemen artists to paint nudes. The reason for this American state of affairs is not known. It has been said that our artists' wives do not care to have them do that sort of thing, but I think it much more likely that the wives of our collectors do not care to have nudes upon the walls of their drawing rooms where they give their teas. Whatever the reason may be, nudes are scarce, and so Miss Genth, with greater ease than she would have had in another epoch, has obtained a specialty. But what pleases our gentlemen art jurors with Miss Genth's work is not so much the motif—for to the gentlemen art jurors justice they are not

with special reference to its former activities on Long Island. Under the general designation of "wild life in art" the museum has undertaken to assemble an exhibition of the work of contemporary American artists in sculpture, painting and black and white dealing with animal life. This exhibition will be representative partly of the artists who have been employed for illustrative purposes from a scientific point of view in natural history museums, among whom there are many men of real distinction, and it will partly represent the painters and sculptors whose point of view has been decorative and artistic and who have drawn their subject matter from animals and plants. As regards the relations of pictorial art to nature it should not be forgotten that the earliest art works of primitive man, namely, those of the cave men of the paleolithic period, were devoted to animal life. Although this was probably a phase of a belief in magic which considered that success in the chase and power over animals were obtained by pictorial reproductions, the vigor and the fidelity to nature in the broad sense of the art in question are widely recognized. Thus the oldest art of man was devoted to the representations of animals. In later times, and especially



Study by Lemordant. On view at Gimpel & Wildenstein's.

as a rule "free" in their tastes—but the unflattering manner with which Miss Genth attacks the motif. Just because art jurors have so much inclination themselves they loathe that quality in others, and so Miss Genth, who has devoted herself to the study of animals is very large. The success of American artists at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893 is not less striking than the continued interest in this field which has since developed. In the field of animal sculpture of small dimension the success of recent American artists is notorious, and as regards the collections of the Brooklyn Museum the important collection of Barry's work leads us to think of European success in this direction. The exhibition is of an eclectic and comprehensive character as regards the schools of art represented, and the most recent and most advanced school has not been neglected. Among the artists represented are the following: James Earl Fraser, Anna Y. Hyatt, Eugenie F. Schuyler, Paul Herzel, Eli Harvey, Mrs. Converse, Bossett Potter, Vonnob, Robert H. Rockwell, Antonio Miranda, Dwight Franklin, Gaston Lachaise, Eli Nadelmann, Carton Moore, Henri Caro-Delvalle, F. W. Benson, Charles R. Knight, Charles Livingston Bull, General Thayer, Z. H. Pritchard, H. B. Tachibana, Carl Runquist and Julius Rolshoven. Another feature and phase of this combination exhibition relate to marine camouflage. It will be the first public exhibition of the kind ever made in this country, and represents the original studio and planning material, including both models and diagrams, which has been used by the United States Shipping Board and the United States Navy Department. The exhibition is thus a loan of United States Government material of an extremely interesting, important and novel character. The fact that the system of military and army camouflage is derived from the theory and principles of protective coloration in animals, especially as explained by the notable authority of the American painter, Abbott H. Thayer, and other artists, again offers a point of contact and relation between art and science. It is true that marine camouflage, from its origin, was wholly derived from art. Marine camouflage was, of course, actually designed and executed by men who were artists and decorators. Even in the relics and memorabilia of the whaling industry, which are a third feature of the Brooklyn Museum exhibition, there will be found an interesting phase of art in a collection of the curious work known as scrimshaw or scrimshawn, and there are various other spellings. The sailors of the old whaling naturally had many

intervals of leisure and relief from their otherwise arduous labors, which they devoted to carving or etching on bone or ivory, mainly of whales' teeth. Various objects of utility were produced with designs in carving of a decorative character, such as "swifts" or reels for winding yarn, "jacking wheels" for working patterns on oleo-crut, handles of various implements (including those used for extracting teeth of sawfish), many interesting objects besides the etched designs and pictures on whales' teeth, some of which have a highly artistic character and all of which are of remarkable human interest. The drawings on ivory and bone made by the American Eskimos in the Northwest American Arctic territory may have very probably suggested this class of work to the whaling sailors. Aside from this artistic or semi-artistic interest the special relations of the Brooklyn Museum Department of Natural History to Long Island, the relations of the whaling industry of Long Island to natural history studies of marine life in general, and the relations of the whaling industry to the general commercial relations of the early days of American history, are all points to be considered. Inasmuch as the implements of the old whaling industry are now out of date they properly become relics and reminders of the life of older days and have remarkable interest from the standpoint of early American history and industry, as well as from the standpoint of the scientific study of the whales themselves. The relics in the Brooklyn Museum exhibition are of a remarkably varied and comprehensive character.

Notes and Activities in Art World. C. W. R. Nevinson, the London artist who will arrive in the United States about May 1, is one of the most talked of painters of the modern school of English art. He will bring to the United States a new message, as artists generally and to the public, and he is bound to make a very decided impression upon the people of New York. Mr. Nevinson will open an exhibition of his etchings and lithographs on East Thirty-ninth street, and New Yorkers will have an opportunity of not only seeing his work but of talking to this very delightful exponent of the new art. His work during the war has attracted tremendous attention, not because he opened up any new lines of depicting war scenes but because of the forcefulness and truth with which he reproduced what he saw of the fighting in France, from the ground and from the air. Before the war Nevinson was one of the well known leaders of the futurist movement, associating himself with Marinetti, the founder of the violent futurist gospel. Nevinson is a firm believer in the commonness of art and believes that the whole community should use art to feed its intellectual soul, wherein he claims lies happiness and contentment. "I am absolutely against the 'high-brow' in art and it is my desire to bring the beautiful to the people, and if indulging in violent movements accomplishes this purpose I am for the violent movement. Interesting to the public in art is one mighty good way of getting them away from the physical life and putting their minds on definite impressions of the horrible side of the war that the censor prohibited the public seeing several of his best efforts. This artist's desire to break down the conventional ideas held by a great number of his contemporaries has been much commented upon in London. At a recent banquet given by the Poet's Club, where "high-browed" writers of verse held forth lengthily in epic and blank verse, Nevinson was called upon to share in the programme. He arose, and to the astonishment of the assembled poets sang an American song entitled "Texas Joe," imitating with ludicrous perfection the voice and airs of a real "coon shouter." At the Royal Academy of Arts in London there are now on exhibition five pictures which Mr. Nevinson painted for the Canadian War Memorial at Ottawa. The largest of the five deals with war in the air, and there is probably no artist better qualified to paint aerial combat, for Nevinson has many times flown over the enemy lines to get real impressions of what goes on 15,000 feet above the earth. His lithographs, especially, have attracted unusual attention. The curator of the print room at the British Museum has declared one of Nevinson's characteristic prints to be one of the finest lithographs of the present day. Collectors of war lithographs, who have been exceedingly active during the past year, have created an unusual demand for this branch of Nevinson's work. They are probably the most authoritative and concentrated utterances of the war as depicted on canvas. Nevinson's stay in America will be brief, but during that time he will undoubtedly find an opportunity of impressing indelible ideas upon the better part of our artists, who will find him not only interesting but a pleasing and most attractive personality as a man.



Animals in Art and Camouflage. Study by Lemordant. On view at Gimpel & Wildenstein's.

William Zorach. The exhibition will be open daily from 1 to 10 P. M., including Sundays.

The New York Public Library's print division has transferred its exhibition "The Making of Prints" from the picture gallery (room 318) on the third floor to a special room (No. 112) on the main floor, near the Fifth avenue entrance. In six or seven cases this show offers a compact illustration of the processes by which etchings, line engravings, mezzotints, wood engravings, Japanese color prints, lithographs and process prints are produced. The tools and printing surfaces are shown in each case, and there are descriptions which lay stress on the characteristics of each process. Thus the influence of the medium, always present in all art, is emphasized. Each process, of course, is accompanied by the final product, the print. The exhibition, technical though it is, is attracting not only those directly interested in the subject, but the "general public" and to a noteworthy degree.

The Temporary Group will hold their annual exhibition at the gallery of The Penguin, commencing April 7 and continuing for three weeks. This exhibition will be open daily from 1 to 10 P. M., including Sundays.

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