

NEWS AND COMMENT IN THE WORLD OF ART

By HENRY McBRIDE.
COLLECTORS and patriots will enjoy an exhibition of portraits by Gilbert Stuart that has been arranged especially for them in the Ehrich Galleries. It contains no less than three portraits of the Father of Our Country, one of them being the "Baker" full length. The marked increase of public interest in early American portraits, particularly of celebrities, will insure them much attention.

In the "Gen. Peter Gansevoort" and the "Mr. Webb, Jr.," there is much bold direct painting to please those who rate art above history. Those who do not may prefer the "President John Quincy Adams." But the "Gansevoort" not only shows easy characterization but records an engaging and breezy personality who undoubtedly impressed Gilbert Stuart. There is nothing perfunctory about the work.

Why Rockwell Kent
Went to Alaska
 The most interesting event of the week—and, from an American point of view, the year—is occurring in the Knoedler Galleries. Rockwell Kent is showing the drawings he made in Alaska.

It may be that the reader will not have known until this that Mr. Kent went to Alaska. In that case the

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reader must be warned that he or she could live in closer proximity to the centre of the art world than apparently he or she does, for all of US knew that Rockwell Kent went to Alaska as soon as he went.

In fact we keep a close watch upon all of his doings.

His exhibitions, within the recent years have been pretty well looked at by his contemporaries. He has shown paintings of icy waters beating upon the rocky coasts of Maine and of the snows of even farther north, and in these pictures there was vigor, and breadth, and an almost suspiciously easy accomplishment. They came symbolic, mystical, compositions, with curious ships on midnight seas, fierce lights beating upon lonely cabins where fate had just been knocking at the door, and constellations of unusual planets dotting all the skies. It was an event to the artist's friends that he should have turned mystic, if he had turned into something quite different they would have followed him with equal enthusiasm, for by this time Rockwell Kent had secured his friends with hoops of steel. But no great furor was noticed among the public, the buying public, and I believe that the artist still has most of these weird paintings to dispose of.

The drawings in pen and ink that began to appear about this time fared no better. As drawings they were fully as accomplished as the snow and marine paintings had been, but they were a part of an idea in each, sometimes a poetical idea, and drawings with leadings toward poetry in them, frightened our magazine editors to death. They would none of them, in spite of the obvious decorativeness and the clean lines and solid blacks that would have made them so easy for the engraver.

Rockwell Kent as an illustrator was a failure. The consternation of the friends was great, but most of them secretly envied the artist and would gladly have been so interesting a failure themselves. Of course Kent could not know this, and so in despair sallied away from chilly New York to still chillier Alaska, courting the more bearable misery, he confesses in a letter you shall read, of the terrible wilderness of the North.

And now he has come back. The drawings shown at Knoedler's number about sixty. In fact, it is wonderful that the faithful evinced more than the usual curiosity? They went and saw not only that the artist had gained in power, but that the curious constellations of stars that had been so evident in the pictures had taken an earthly form in the shape of little blue wafers and were perching saucily on most of the picture frames. These stars indicated "sales." Something psychologic had taken place. The indifferent public had melted and was driving Rockwell Kent's drawings as precipitately as they had been Baksta. Rockwell Kent had been asked to undergo the severest test of all—public success. It seems a time for his friends to stick closer to him than ever.

He has wisdom, he says—you shall read the whole letter, presently—and I believe him. The first time I met him he gave me a sample of it, it was at one of the opening days of an exhibition in Mrs. H. P. Whitney's studio and he had been introduced to me by Carl Ziegler to whom the present exhibition in Knoedler's was being dedicated. We got along very well and as I was going Mrs. Forc came up to us, saying, "I didn't know whether to introduce you two or not. I didn't know what kind of notices he gave you. What kind does he give you?"

"I think he gives me bad ones," replied Kent, laughing, and shaking hands more cordially than ever.

Higher than that wisdom cannot reach. But at the same time it is easier to apply wisdom to the individual than to the mob. Backing my brain, I can think of no single instance of an artist who has been permanently helped by fashionable applause, and I can think of many who have been shipwrecked by it. Shelley said at the time when he was doing his greatest work that he wrote for five or six people only. Those "five or six" are all a serious artist needs, and if an artist be deeply serious he will sometimes address but one.

There remains a word or two that should be said about the present collection of drawings. Some of the best are to be found in the series called "The Mad Hermit." Other subjects have been taken from Nietzsche and from the pioneer life in Alaska. Such titles as "Cain," "Nostalgia," "Foreboding," "Waltzmer," "Ecstasy," "Prison Bars" abound. The artist has read the Book of Job and has probably been incited to this reading not by the exhortations of his spiritual adviser, but by the drawings of William Blake. He has turned over other despoiling pages and has gone out alone at night to interrogate the heavens. But for all that tragedy has not as yet tinged his style, and it is impossible to be tragic over him or his work. Mr. Kent's life has not been tragic, but, on the contrary, and in spite of his own words, it has been distinctly larkish. No one will be much misled by the open and gay statement, "I have burned the candle at both ends"—a remark most sinners whisper in tears in the confessional—nor the "fight to freedom" of the artist who remains away eight months.

The quality in the drawings that commends them is not so much profundity as pure physical exuberance. It is a cheering spectacle to see so much youthfulness, vivacity and vitality, and the exhibition cannot but be encouraging to all the young artists who will now see it. Artists have a way, too, of drinking hope from the evidence of sales, even the sales of others; but they must be warned again that such thoughts are evil, and must be put firmly aside.

An Artists Confession of Faith
 The following was written to Dr. Christian Brinton, who arranged the catalogue for Rockwell Kent's exhibition of drawings:
 Fox Island, Resurrection Bay, Alaska, Winter, 1919.
 DEAR DR. BRINTON: It is difficult to know what to write down for you, as it has always been hard for me to understand myself, to know why I work and love and live. Yet it is fortunate that such matters find a way of caring for themselves. I came to Alaska because I love the North. I crave snow

topped mountains, dreary wastes and the cruel Northern sea with its hard horizons at the edge of the world where infinite space begins. Here skies are clearer and deeper and, for the greater wonders they reveal, a thousand times more eloquent of the eternal mystery than those of softer lands. I love this Northern nature, and what I love I must possess.

The Northern wilderness is terrible. There is discomfort, even misery, in being cold. The gloom of the long and lonely winter nights is appalling, and yet do you know I love this misery and court it. Always I have fought and worked and played with a fierce energy and always as a man of flesh and blood and surging spirit. I have burned the candle at both ends, and can only wonder that there has been left even a slender taper glow for art. And so this sojourn in the wilderness is in no sense an artist's junket in search of picturesque material for brush or pencil, but the flight to freedom of a man who detests the petty quarrels and bitterness of the crowded world—the pilgrimage of a philosopher in quest of happiness!

But the wilderness is what man brings to it, no more. If little Rockwell and I can live in these vast solitudes beside the heartless ocean, perched high up on the peak of the earth with the wind all about us, if we can stand here and not flee from the terror of emptiness, it is because the wealth of our own souls warms the mountains and sea and peoples the great desolate spaces. For the time we look into ourselves and are not afraid. We find here life, true life—life rich, resplendent and full of love. We have learned not to fear



Two Race Horses, by Hunt Diederich. On view, Bourgeois Galleries.

destiny, but to live for the heaven that can be made upon earth.

Often I think that however much I draw or paint, or however well, I am not an artist as art is generally understood. The abstract is meaningless to me save as a fragment of the whole, which is life itself. I can only see life as a human gesture, a gesture that has no value apart from what it signifies. It is the ultimate which concerns me, and all physical, all material things are but an expression of it. In planning a picture I am as one who merely plays his appointed part. If I draw a man, he is but the embodiment of my inner and outer vision, a creature huge and glorious, striding over towns and cities, rivers and mountain peaks, with arms outstretched, raised high into the luminous abyss. Is this art? I do not know—or care.

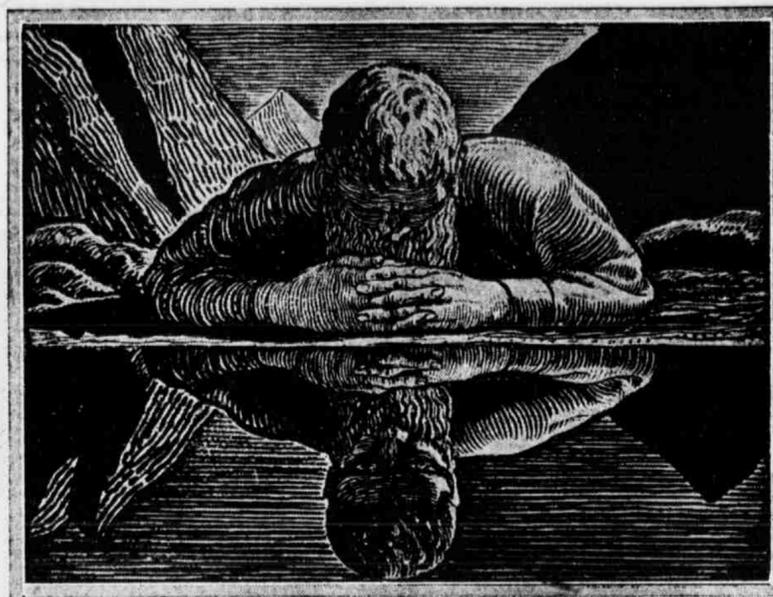
We have searched hard, my Kathleen and I, for the Great Happiness. Yet I can readily see that the struggle would have been for nothing without the constant hope of peace before all is over. Always we seem, at least to ourselves, to gather a little more wisdom along the pathway to some wonderful free land. It is this that we are living for, and art is but the outward record of our progress. You'll know, Christian Brinton, when our goal has been reached. And the "show" for which I trust you may some day prepare the catalogue shall be called "Paintings of Paradise."

So here you have a sort of profession of faith. We are part and parcel of the big plan of things. We are

Two New Exhibitions of Modern Art
 There is an unusual show of activity in the galleries, and after a week or two of apathy, most of the shops have put forth ambitious exhibitions. The Bourgeois Galleries are devoted to modern art and the Montross Galleries have arranged a special show in which there is much of the latest tendency. Arthur B. Davies heads the Mon-



Gen. Gansevoort, by Gilbert Stuart. Ehrich Galleries.



Drawings in Alaska, by Rockwell Kent. On view, Knoedler Galleries.



Study of an Indian, by Maurice Sterne. On view, Bourgeois Galleries.

ross gallery with three new paintings with poetic titles and contents, five drawings and a complete set of his etchings. Van Deering Perrine sends fifteen drawings, most of them children lightly touched upon dark backgrounds. Henry Fitch Taylor, Allen Tucker, Maurice B. Prendergast, Walt Kuhn, W. J. Glackens and Max Weber are among the others of the advance guard. Max Weber is represented by his well known "Women in Tents," one of the finest essays in modern art to have been produced in America.

That the Montross Galleries, in admitting the new, does not mean to forsake the older forms, is seen in the inclusion of such artists as Albert P. Ryder, Horatio Walker, Childé Hassam, Winslow Homer, and R. A. Blake-lock in the same collection.

The Bourgeois exhibition is exclusively modern, is very modern. Amid much that is striking, Walkowitz's impressions of Isadora Duncan and her pupils stand out as impressively as any. The one of Isadora is a large watercolor showing this lady doing the "Marsellaise" by the sea. It does not require a label. It is in Walkowitz's simple style, yet one glance is sufficient to place it. This is a compliment both to Isadora and to the artist. For

though they enveloped themselves in the frail poetry of old things nostalgic, thus can we understand without being shocked the repetitions and imitations of Europe that encumber the new continent.

We can say that in Europe there is more originality than in America. It is a manifestation of cause and effect. But it is the very weakness of European art. Every work of art desires to be original a priori, starting independently. Let us not turn toward the European past exclusively, but toward the past of mankind in its entirety.

What do we find?

The proof that whenever the universal conscience drew near its ultimate expression there followed a great explosion of art. Asia, Africa, Europe bear the marvellous scars of these moments of spiritualization. Where the species crystallized itself into one sole bloc, where the individual was the devoted servant to his faith, epochs of impersonal art sprang up when the human substance reached the divine. The Zenache, Joseph Stella and Herbert Lespinasse come out strongly in this gathering, and others who contribute worthily are Emile Branchard, who was "discovered" at this year's Independent; Paul Burlin, Louis Bouché, George O. Juliette Roche, Maurice Sterne, Oscar Bluemner, Albert Gleize and Hunt Diederich.

Mr. Gleize, who has been sojourning in America for several years, has written an essay for the Bourgeois catalogue, of which these are a few excerpts:

I have often heard American painting and American sculpture censured for being but a feeble distortion of European painting and European sculpture, and I have in vain endeavored to conceive what an original American art might be.

The organic construction of America has in no way followed the same

processes as that of the countries of Europe. It is the result of a superposition of incongruous European elements on a lost continent finally rediscovered.

American folklore belongs to the Indian tribes. There is no concurrence between these people and the emigrants who drove them back before them. How could we expect that the impetuous and eager conquerors, stamped already by their own human evolution elsewhere, could suddenly forget all their traditions and become as simple as at the time of the first appearance of man on earth?

Since Columbus to this day those who come to America bring with them their memories in their luggage, and these memories are the Europe of their past and their desires. Thus the heart of Europe continues to regulate the basis of American artistry to its own proper rhythm. The newcomers in America for a long time undoubtedly were compelled to neglect the spiritual values in order to give their entire effort to the material difficulties which bound them. Meanwhile as spiritual values are indispensable to man as much as material values, and as indestructible they persisted nevertheless even

Final plans have been perfected by the Municipal Art Society for the unveiling of the Evangeline Wilbour Blashfield Memorial Fountain at Queensboro Bridge Market. It will be remembered that Mrs. Blashfield was most active in the preparation of the fountain planned as the Society's gift to the city and that the intended presentation, as originally planned, was postponed because of her untimely death. It was then decided to make the fountain a memorial to Mrs. Blashfield and its formal presentation will take place on May 13th. The exercises, to be held at four o'clock, will include a speech by Albert S. Bard, President of the Society, to which Commissioner Jonathan C. Day will respond in acceptance for the city. Addresses will be made by Dr. Royal S. Copeland and Alfred J. Talley and a speech of acceptance will be made on behalf of the market people.

The Police Band will furnish music. The design of the fountain which has become familiar through previous description in the press includes a mosaic by Edwin H. Blashfield and sculpture by Eli Harvey. The architectural design is the work of Charles W. Stoughton.

The students of the New York School of Fine and Applied Art will hold their annual exhibition of their work at the school building from May 12th to 20th inclusive. The exhibition this year will be given with the regular classes of the school in session, except Saturday and Sunday, May 17th and 18th, when no classes will be in attendance. The exhibition is open from 10 A. M. to 6 P. M. week days and Sunday from 1 to 6 P. M.

As a fitting close to a successful season in its new house the Grolier Club opened yesterday to the public an exhibition of historical bookbindings ranging from the earliest forms of binding used in Europe to the end of the eighteenth century. The exhibition will include the early gold and jeweled covers which protected priceless manuscripts, a massive "chained book" and the leather over thick boards used by the early printers, who were their own binders and publishers as well. There are also to be seen by series rich in beautiful leathers, gold tooling and mosaic work exemplifying the work of the great binders of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—the Eves, Le Gascon, Samuel Mearne, Padeloup, Roger Payne and many others—and the styles which characterize successive periods.

The exhibition will appeal not only to all lovers of the beautiful, to the collector, and to the practical binder and worker in design, but in hardly less degree to the student of literature and history, who will see how and by whom the great books of the ages have been preserved, and who will find the tastes and fancies of famous personages of the past reflected in the books which they owned and the dress in which they caused them to be preserved. Indeed one of the great charms of many of the books in the exhibition will be found in the associations which they recall.

There are books with the crescent and intertwined "H" and "D" of Henri II. and Diane de Poitiers, and with the design of marguerites used by the beautiful and learned Marguerite de Valois, wife of Henry of Navarre. A volume presented by the city of Paris to Louis XV. bears his arms on one cover, and those of the city on the other, while two of the tragedies, all history are recalled by a book which was bound for Mary Queen of Scots during her happy days in France, and



Study of an Indian, by Maurice Sterne. On view, Bourgeois Galleries.

another with which Marie Antoinette played at the Little Trianon. Characteristic bindings made for the various Tudor and Stuart rulers of England may be seen.

There are also many of the treasures of the library of Jean Grolier, prince of book collectors of the sixteenth century, from whom the Grolier Club takes its name, and of many more who set styles in binding, and for whom the best work of their respective eras was done.

All of the volumes exhibited have been drawn from the libraries of members of the Grolier Club. It is doubtful if such a comprehensive exhibition were ever brought together in this country, and no one should neglect the opportunity to view the collection—an opportunity which may not be repeated in a lifetime.

One of the first and principal initiators of the modern art movement in Lithuania was Antoine Zernaitis, who, fresh from the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris, where he studied from 1904 to 1907, took the initiative in founding a Society of Arts in Vilnius upon his return there. The start was a favorable one, such artists as P. Rimša, Chirilnis, Varnas, Stapels, Kalpokas, Silas, Stabrauskas, Jarošaitis, Zikaras, Ulinskis, Aleksandravicius, &c., aiding Zernaitis without ulterior motive and without the hope of reward.

The first exposition of the Lithuanian Beaux Arts was soon organized and met with great success, 114 artists participating. It outgrew its original quarters and was transferred to Kaunas and thence to Riga, where its initial success was repeated. Since then expositions have been an annual event in Lithuania.

Besides Zernaitis the distinguished trio Silas, Kalpokas and Varnas are the Society of Arts. Of these the last named, Varnas, is the exquisite landscape painter who renders with such beautiful fidelity and simplicity the fields, the Lithuanian sky and the Lithuanian birch trees in the autumn.

Charles Hoffbauer has received about all the recognition that French art has to offer: Honorable mention Paris Salon Artistes Français, 1898; second class medal Paris Salon, 1899; bronze medal, Paris Exposition, 1900; Bourso de Voyage, 1902; Prix Rosa Bonheur, 1902, and finally the highest of all awards, Prix National du Salon, 1904. His works include "Les Gueux," "Museum of Rouen," "The Roof Garden," "Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh," "Revolt des Flamands," Memorial Hall, Philadelphia; "Coin de Bataille," Luxembourg, Paris; "Sur les Toits," National Gallery, Sydney, N. S. W.

esoteric formula. Could it be otherwise, art being the savory fruit of the tree in full growth, the fruit is assuredly unable to ripen on a puny tree whose sap flows poorly.

The impersonality of the Americans is the result of their spiritual truth, impersonality which unfolds itself on a value which they attribute to Europe with or without reason, but living only on its faith. Therefore let Europe disperse itself in individualism, America gathers itself in a mass. It is possible that to-morrow Europe forms itself again a whole, but to-day America has already an entity.

To look at each isolated individual in America, to judge him from the European standpoint, would be a grave error. American art should be seen in its ensemble, in concordance not in discordance, by its inner growth not by its exterior appearance, and this will be the means of finding joy and security, to understand it and to love it notwithstanding its weakness.

Art has never had as an end the material imitation with its manifold results and multiple compromises. Art has always been the plastic covering of a spiritual value giving breadth to a fraction of the whole, and to-morrow will be a universal spiritual value.

Notes and Activities in World of Art
 Taking advantage of the moment when most of those who have country houses and multiple gardens are thinking of flying to them, the Milch Galleries have arranged an exhibition of decorative sculpture. This branch of sculpture has much developed in America of recent years, but it needs to develop more, for both our gardens' sakes and our artists'.

Some of the works on display have been seen in other exhibitions, such as the "Rish Boy" by Miss Scudder, the "Duck Boy" by Mrs. Parsons and the "Offrande" by Miss Hoffman, but owners of gardens, hesitating over a choice, may like to see them in comparison. A new work by Miss Hoffman is "The Sacrifice," a design for a memorial to the fashion of cathedral tombs. For this memorial she had a genuine inspiration in choosing the legend: "Leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way."

Other exhibitors are Mabel Conkling, Isadora Kott, Mario Korbel, Edward McCarran, Philip Prabhakar, Abbie Polak and Mrs. Myers. Mrs. Myers sends a new caricature of feminine fashions as witty and clever as its predecessors, which is saying much.

The gallery of the Hotel Majestic is showing a group of paintings by Americans G. T. Chapman, C. C. Cooper, Gilbert Gail, Albert L. Groll, C. C. Curran, W. J. Whittemore, Glen Newell and Edward Potthast are among those exhibiting. Two small pictures by the two last named, "Hauling Wood" by Mr. Newell and "The Surf" by Mr. Potthast, are the highest that the group have to offer.



Study of an Indian, by Maurice Sterne. On view, Bourgeois Galleries.

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