

News and Reviews of Art World—Davies's Lithographs are Suggestive of Poetic Things

Figures Appear to Romp Into Compositions of the Artist.

By HENRY McBride.

It is without any faintly sentimental wish to insist that the darkest cloud has its silver lining that I draw attention to the one encouraging feature of this dull season—the continual additions that are being made to the family of native art publications. The newest baby in the bunch is called Contact, and it is edited by William Carlos Williams and Robert M. McAlmon. It was born apparently into a very poor family—its swaddling clothes are of the most shabby—its papa and mamma cannot even afford types for it and it is issued by some manufacturing process, but it is a willful, lusty infant for all that and there is something imperial in its outlook.

William Carlos Williams is a poet who stands in well with the newer artists. Marsden Hartley thinks he is all right, and one of the queerest of the water colors in Charles Demuth's exhibition in the Daniel Gallery was dedicated to him. The poems in recent Contact have disclosed that he has a pretty wit and a limpid feeling for the use of words. There is a short one in the first number of Contact that is quite nice and sufficiently vindicates the claim that he is an artist.

The title page is odd. The following sentence is printed upon it: "Art is the supreme hypocrisy of an information-cultured people." Without CONTACT. Justifiable perhaps if it becomes at last actually the way sensitive people live.

As most people get what they get from example rather than precept, Contact is lucky in being able to present explanatory instances of "contact" taken

from the letters of the late Rex Slinkard. Slinkard was a poet, a young painter who was sensitively alive when he was alive and whose posthumous exhibition in the Knoedler Galleries aroused a quick emotion in certain quarters.

Writing from a California ranch to his fiancée, he said: "The Great Ones are covered with snow. Wish you could see them. I like the open air, the clear air, the free air. The air between me and the snow mountains. The snow air. I like the breeze air between me and the pine tree on the ridge top. I think the big open mountains wonderful. The freedom of the open. High above the rest of things. The horses that are wild and the work horse that tries to be after being out on the hilltop awhile. The bunch grass and the soft ground in the mountain, small meadows where horses sink to their bellies.

"And the canyon I had never been in before. The big boulders and the small water through them. It's hot steam and it's rock ground. The ranger's cabin that he had left and which had fallen in. I got off and looked inside. I liked the hilltop awhile. The bunch grass and the soft ground in the mountain, small meadows where horses sink to their bellies.

"By way of postscript, he adds: 'I asked Carl to come up Sunday. One letter is as much as I can write and say anything. Can't see you, so I write you. Can tell him more than I can write. Listen! The woodpile. Dark night, black. But not black. Clear sky. One big dark tree, can hardly see. And one great woodpile of wonderful dark color.'



LADY DIANA MANNERS. BY AMBROSE McEVoy RECENTLY SHOWN BY DUVEEN BROTHERS

Light on pile from lantern I am holding. Pie designed against air sky. With one great cool diamond lighting air sky. And it is in the right place. Just saw it. Great thing. Goodbye, Rex."

If there is any one in America who paints with the breathlessness of which Slinkard writes, I don't know him. Other contributors are Wallace Cowley, Mims and Marsden Hartley. Among the editorial announcements is this: "We do not seek to 'transfer the center of the universe' here. We seek only contact with the local scene and with the world. We believe that in the perfection of that contact is the beginning not only of the concept of art among us but the key to the technique also."

DAVIES LITHOGRAPHS.

All that is incontestable in the art of Arthur B. Davies is to be found in the collection of his lithographs, aquatints and water colors, now being shown in the galleries of E. Weyhe. There always has been the freshness of the first effects—but the tired Garden of Eden of the present day have had such stigmata vision that they have not always received it. Seeing, like many others in the aged, and many of our mannered amateurs used to laugh at Mr. Davies's pristine landscapes with little children or nymphs in them who were meant to be right out of poetry into the pictures.

But the drawings for these nymphs and children, when shown later, were not put upon the same trial, but were accepted at once. They were not put into the Garden of Eden at the eleventh hour got there by way of these drawings. Mr. Davies does not search for the mood in the drawings—evidently the drawings are done in the mood they are all mood. It seems not to be possible for him to stop with one figure on the paper—one figure to him looks unbearably lonely—so he allows others to romp into the composition—it becomes one and all to antique music. Mr. Davies's nymphs never shake a limb to anything before the present day than Mozart.

The lithographs and aquatints have all the qualities of the drawings. In some of the lithographs the artist has been experimenting, washing his effects in with a brush instead of using the time-honored crayon, and the consciousness of wading in where the classics had never dared to spurred him on to extra vivacities. One of the compositions is very typical of its maker. A sprawling mass of maidens flung pell to earth, as though some Gulliver had sent them from a Poldavianian coracle. But each of these maidens is like a flower, so who can regret the artist's prodigality? The watercolors are in the same class, and many of them are studies for the lithographs. They sparkle with color, are suggestive of all sorts of poetic things, and, in short, are lovely.

SMITH PORTRAIT OF "WASS."

Albert Delmont Smith, who is showing a collection of portraits of the Milch Chelsea, was a pupil of the late William M. Chase, but has been away from the teaching long enough to have dropped all the mannerisms he acquired in the atelier. In one portrait, that of "Wass," the Scotchman, which is much his best, he achieves work that would not have disgraced his master, but in none of the others is there such authority. As an artist he is at least at ease and paints freely and with acceptable color. There is not a single trace of the trickiness that was always at the tips of Chase's brushes and he lacks the tact or instinct that keeps an artist from exposing his weak points to the public. I can't say that Chase was a consummate master of drawing, but at least he knew, among other things, how to place feet upon the ground and how to get the relationship in perspective when there were several figures in the group.

If Mr. Smith's "Wass" is among his latest works, and represents the style toward which he is working, then he will be considered and his future will be looked forward to expectantly. To be sure, Wass had every advantage over the monadic sitters who happened into Mr. Smith's studio, for he has a truly picturesque costume and the nonchalance that goes with it. The informality and women of the polite world of today are poor material for an artist, for none of them knows how to dress. Their costumes are quite mechanical, and one is like another. The task of the contemporary painter who, like Mr. Smith, may be presumed to desire to give the world a new type of portrait is a fair sitters will be made when he induces his sitters to give him carte blanche, as Wass, the Scotchman, did; and when he teaches them to be as imperturbable as that worthy was.

THE WORK OF WALT KUHN.

The December issue of the Rainbow features the art of Walt Kuhn and gives many full page reproductions of his work and an appreciation by James Frederick Gregg. Mr. Gregg confuses to an immense but purely profane affection for the portrait of a lady of truly mountainous proportions dressed in fifties that Mr. Kuhn calls "The City."

What particular city she is, Mr. Kuhn doesn't say, but as he has ridged, carmined lips and a balustrade glare from beneath pencilled eyebrows, it is safe to assume that she isn't Philadelphia. She might be Chicago, of course, but in that case Mr. Gregg wouldn't love her. Mr. Gregg loves only New York. He wouldn't stir a block from Broadway for money. So, discerning as the fact may be to some of us other New Yorkers, we may as well concede that in the extraordinary creature in the litho, and round cheeks Mr. Kuhn typifies the metropolis of the country.

Say what Mr. Gregg will, this person that he is in love with doesn't in the least seem a fit companion for Uncle Sam. But then out-of-towners are always enviously saying to foreigners that one mustn't judge America by New York. It is all very puzzling, to be sure, and perhaps the metaphor had better be dropped. Hear Mr. Gregg: "But some one might suggest, without seeing the painting, that perhaps she has 'indivinity,' 'character' or some of those other endowments that help her sex on their career of conquest."

"Not at all. As a moralist I distrust her just as much as I do in any other capacity. 'Yet the picture is beautiful. This is in spite of the fact that the subject is not beautiful and the model is not beautiful.' The explanation is that the 'beauty' is what the painter got into."

Another contributor to the Rainbow is Robert J. Condy, formerly editor of the New York Evening Post. He writes of the most forceful personalities in the art world and one of the few with constructive abilities. It is tragic to think that the soul cannot continue, but in the meantime it is reassuring to see that Mr. Condy loses none of his vigor. He writes of the situation in America: "It is time our art, its elements, its characters and its purposes were understood and that we removed the obstacle in the way of its development. It is time we did away with the big-hip hooray of the politician and the sentimental moralizing of the economist and realized that the 'political centre' and the 'economic centre' are things of the past and that the cultural centre is the pivot of human progress and of the happiness of the individual. The man has developed through instinct and intelligence into various degrees of culture; that it is his culture which dictates the kind and amount of his social activities and his group or individual life by nature, by reason and by right, entitled to dominance—this is the lesson the cannons taught and the shrapnel shouted, the wounded groaned and the dead recite in a dirge."

"It is time we got together and took things in our own hands, for the world to-day is in need of our culture. The European ready-made practically makes us the pivot of human progress."

CONCERT CALENDAR

Acollan Hall, Gustave Tiniot's violin recital on Friday afternoon in Acollan Hall, Miss Frieda Hempel's evening song recital on Wednesday evening in Carnegie Hall, Royal Daddman's song recital on Thursday afternoon in Acollan Hall, Miss Daisy Krey's song recital on Thursday afternoon at the Princess Theatre, Gervase Elwes's first song recital here on Friday afternoon in Acollan Hall, Miss Marion Armstrong's first song recital here on Friday evening in Acollan Hall, the morning concert on Friday at the Biltmore Hotel, Miss Marie Magdeleine Du Carp's piano recital on Saturday afternoon in Acollan Hall, the first of eight free orchestral concerts on Saturday evening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Trio at Acollan Hall in the evening.

LEFT DENTISTRY FOR STAGE.

Amateur actor in Australia, cricketer player at the University of Pennsylvania, almost a dentist, then vaudeville actor, now Charles, the chief son of the house of Howdhowey in "The Skin Game" at the Bijou—such is a brief life history of N. St. Clair Hales. Mr. Hales first faced the footlights as an amateur in Sydney. He had it in mind to adopt the stage as a profession then and there, but his father, who hailed from Boston, had other ideas. He promptly sent the youthful aspirant for stage fame to Philadelphia and the University of Pennsylvania for a dental course. There he stayed and was graduated, but found time to win a place and to covet "B" on the Pennsylvania cricket team. He found time, also, to return to his first love, and made something of a reputation in college theatricals through his work with the Mask and Wig Club in two of his productions.

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ACTIVITIES IN WORLD OF ART.

Charles N. Szekel, an illustrator of repute, has been sojourning in Porto Rico, and the fruits of his labor—drawings there are now to be seen in the Touchstone Galleries. His drawings in watercolor are small but full of vivacity and give him all the data that will be needed to illustrate the Caribbean tales of O. Henry. There is something about those islands that always catches at the heart. One laughs when one is there at such a thing as the porch of the "Casa Ingles," and yet when one gets back to "civilization" one thinks of it with tears. That country not only has a background, but as far as painters are concerned it has a present. Every inch of it is material.

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One of the most important shows of the season at the Milch Galleries will begin January 10. It will comprise four pictures each from George De F. Brush, Bruce Crane, T. W. Dewing, Childé Hassam, W. M. Metcalf and J. Francis Murphy.

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how manufacturers and designers use the museum collections in developing their current output. It is an exhibition of today's workmanship taken right out of stock; pieces to be found on a score of saleroom floors in New York and other cities, goods sold across the counter at our department stores, have been brought together in a gathering of hundreds of designers in several dozen different kinds of objects and in all of them the collections of the Metropolitan have been of direct use. There are lace and rags, fashion designs and advertisements for perfume, lamps and marquettes, chairs and batiks, mirrors and clocks, and so on.

Americans have been accustomed to look to European museums, and notably to Lyons and to South Kensington, to witness real cooperation between museums and the art trades. Yet here in our own Met., as the designers call it, this work has been slowly developing until it has reached a proportion that both producers and designers are coming in always greater numbers to avail themselves of the unlimited resources offered by the art of the ages. The Metropolitan makes its collections available in every way possible, under the necessary limitations of exhibition and protection, for the use of persons actively engaged in the design and manufacture of home furnishings and other types of industrial art. The present exhibition will serve to make plain the excellent results of this field of museum cooperation, and above all to direct attention to the great value of collections of art in the improvement of American design. The things shown, needless to say, are but a small selective representation of the great range of commodities that are the result of the work of our leading art museum. In fact, the intention is merely to present a demonstration and record of practical usefulness, not a comprehensive exhibition. The designers therefore all the more surprising in variety as well as in standard of design.

The exhibition will continue until the 10th of January. It is an excellent indication of intelligent effort toward a justifiable expenditure of public money, for every item shown is one of immediate utility and current value in our lives.

In the Arden Gallery will open on January 3 a remarkable exhibition of ritual and theatrical masks, together with a collection of exquisite decorated costumes designed and made by Mrs. Maria Callenbach of Venice. The reason for holding this exhibition is the recent and widespread revival of interest in the use of theatrical masks, which has fixed the attention of a group of American artists on the ancient tradition of these more ancient and cruder disguises, which transformed the actor in mysteries and dances at will into a god, animal, demon, etc., as the occasion demanded.

Greek and Japanese art lifted these crude but often elaborately decorated disguises into the realm of subtle characterization. Specimens ranging from Ceylon to America will be shown, this series culminating in a wonderful (signed) Mohr mask from Japan and a group of modern masks by contemporary artists.

To these will be added Japanese marionettes distinctly Greek in feeling, probably the last remnant of the influence of Alexander the Great's Indian conquest and a few marionettes of the Punch and Judy type, some of which show by their vividly decorated faces the conventions of the larger masks. Michael Callenbach's costumes, designed and executed under her direct supervision in her Venetian studio, are important enough as an art product to form an exhibition of their own. In Europe Maria Callenbach's genius in her particular field is acknowledged. Every detail of these superb costumes is designed and made in her atelier. Their lines are founded upon the Indian, Greek and a few marionettes of the Punch and Judy type, some of which show by their vividly decorated faces the conventions of the larger masks.

An unexampled array of first rate paintings by art masters will be on view at the Anderson Galleries next Saturday, January 8, when a collection comprising more than sixty pictures will be opened to the public. The exhibition will continue until the evening of January 14, when the pictures will be sold at auction.

The collection includes Dutch and Flemish masters, Rubens, Jordans, Leysens, Cornelis Huisman, Blauwvelt and others, and Italians; Titoretto, Guido Reni, Carpane, etc.; also a Raeburn, a Troyon and numerous other canvases of the first order. Most of these paintings come from the distinguished galleries of Austrian and Hungarian noble families, and were sold by their owners on account of after war conditions. The collection is the first large shipment of art treasures from the Central European countries, and all these countries have since put an embargo on the exportation of paintings and other objects of art.

The Titoretto of the collection is a gorgeous "Last Supper," from the last period of his life. The "Death of Adonis," by Rubens, and "Hercules," by Jordans, belong to the best of the favorite of the seventeenth century; its counterpart is in the Hermitage at Petrograd.

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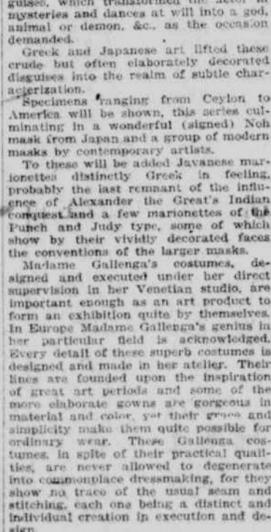
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