WALTER PACH

ANANIAS

OR THE FALSE ARTIST

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WALTER PACH

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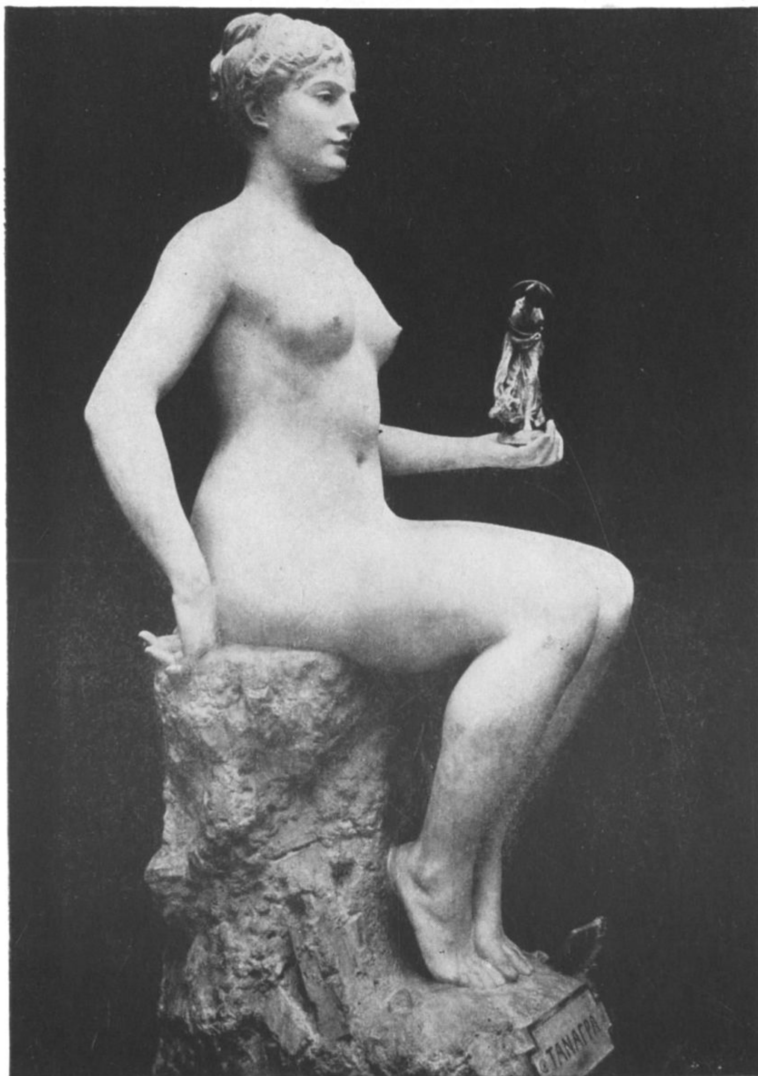

Luxembourg Museum

TANAGRA—J. L. Gérôme

WALTER PACH

A N A N I A S

O R T H E F A L S E A R T I S T

Neither was there any among them that lacked:
for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold
them, and brought the prices of the things that were
sold,

And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution
was made to every man according as he had
need....

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira
his wife, sold a possession,

And kept back part of the price, his wife also being
privy to it, and brought a certain

part, and laid it at
the apostles' feet.

But Peter said, Ananias ... thou
hast not lied
unto men, but unto God.

—ACTS, IV *and* V

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TO

ARTHUR B. SPINGARN,

FRIEND OF ALL TRUE ARTISTS

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FOREWORD

A BOOK that uses the name of Ananias in its title may well begin with a word of explanation as to what that personage represents. Like many another character in literature or history, he is better known in the aspect that popular speech has given to him than in the manner intended by his original discoverer. I have accordingly placed the passages from the Bible which tell of his act on my title page. They make it clear that to use the name of Ananias merely as a synonym for the word liar, or possibly a form of it implying the quasi-justification of a Biblical precedent, is to hit pretty wide of the mark. Peter lays his hand on the essentials of the case when he distinguishes between an ordinary lie and that of the man who breaks faith with a great trust. The fact that the old fisherman explains to Ananias the enormity of his conduct proves that the unhappy man was not well aware of what he had done, though, with the relentless justice of the old beliefs—and of nature—the punishment follows hard upon the sin, whether it was committed with full knowledge or in ignorance. So also with the False Artist, he could not have produced such work as he has done if he had grasped its significance.

The title of this book, therefore, does not imply that all the men it treats are to be classed with the Biblical forbear of the weak in faith. The spirit symbolized by him has its results in the acts of men very different from himself. In art, their failure to equal the masters is explained by them (in the cases where they recognize it, as some do not) through the insufficience of their gifts from nature, or through the unfavorable character of their period. They would be honestly horrified to think that their work was connected by anyone

with the mentality of a betrayal, even if the connection was indirect—through the progressive weakening, in the course of generations, of the sense of true values.

The writer of the Ananias story was not the judge who meted out the result of the man's wrongdoing; that followed of itself, and the historian merely recorded the facts and their steady logic. The False Artist is one misled by the error which betrayed Ananias; and in telling of certain painters and sculptors in this book it is not I, again, who am passing judgment. The nature of art is such that every deviation from the truth declares itself in the work, and with that there appears in it also the punishment which automatically follows—the loss of the quality of life. My own rôle here is simply to make known things which everyone in the profession will recognize from his memory of many a private talk within the walls of the studios. As I shall show, there is little difference of opinion as to which artists are the false ones, when a sufficient length of time (usually not more than a generation) has given opportunity to see things in perspective.

The causes of the tragedy in the case of Ananias are difficult to fathom. My suggestion, later on, that we must look to his ancestry for an explanation of his bad thinking is one that I venture to insist on. It frequently transpires that women engaged in the most pitiful trade open to their sex have never realized its baseness, or even understood that their mode of life was anything but the common lot of those who have to earn a living. From earliest childhood, their associates, their mothers even, prepared them for their course; and it is not begging the issue to say that not the individuals nor the class, but the whole of society has a share in their shame.

I know that in giving to Sapphira a character usually held even lower than that of Ananias, I am adding insult to injury

in my reckoning with the False Artists. And, as regards many individual members of the clan—fine men, perhaps, in everything save their professional life—I very sincerely regret that my explanation of their wrong course must give so much offense. It will not be lessened by my statement, a moment before, that they do not personally bear more than a small part of the blame. I repeat that false training is largely at the bottom of the trouble, and I would ask those who feel hot for condemnation to see whether they are themselves quite free of reproach. Small wonder if Ananias and Sapphira looked on themselves, until denounced, as people of blameless life. The part of their goods which they withheld from the apostles made such a brave show before the world. The big public that laughed at the poor folk with its wild creed, felt a particular friendliness toward Ananias, and flattered him with honors and prizes. To the crowd, contemptuous of the new order proclaimed by the fanatics who would have none of the things of the everyday world, Ananias was doubtless the man who understood whatever tatter of truth there might be in the ravings of ill-bred Peter and fierce Paul, but who did not, like them, break out into terrifying denunciations of Things as They Are. And so, having been told so many times what a clever fellow, what a charming and good and romantic fellow he is, Ananias really believes his public, and sees his conduct as the golden mean between bourgeois placidity and the dæmonic excess of the fervent but "impractical" believers. He will steer a middle course between the two—laying part of his wealth at the apostles' feet, but keeping the rest for dealing with the world of common affairs. In his relations with it he is strictly honest ("Ananias, thou has not lied unto men"). He was not of those who voted for Barabbas, the robber: he is of the elect, and is very harsh about any wrongdoing among the

people, convinced, as he is, of his own uprightness. (Men who have no single good word to say about the painting of a certain prominent modern—about the essential fact of his life, that is—will ask: “How can you speak so against him? He is so sincere!”)

As his credit with the big world would be endangered if he appeared to be too close to the radical horde (those who went to the roots of contemporary evils), Ananias can be depended on for the greatest severity toward them when they make a new move. And even when he says a word in their favor—at moments when they are harmless—there is always a mitigating tone of disdain with his approval, to reassure his hearers. Cézanne having died, Besnard could permit himself the amount of generosity contained in his remark about the wild man’s painting: “A beautiful fruit, though rather unhealthy.”[A] Or read, in Vollard’s book on Renoir, almost any of the reports on the true artists of his time, in which the fascinating recital is so rich. For example, telling of his experiences with Roujon, the official who had charge of choosing works from the Caillebotte Collection when it was bequeathed to the Luxembourg Museum, Renoir said, “The only canvas of mine that he admitted with confidence was the *Moulin de la Galette*, because Gervex appeared in it.[B] He regarded the presence of that master among my models as a sort of moral safeguard. He was, on the other hand, quite disposed to like, though without too much exaggeration, Monet, Sisley, and Pissarro, who were beginning to be accepted by collectors.” Being strong for respectability, Ananias lends a quick ear when the voice of the market-place confers that quality on men he has previously been told to consider dangerous.

And lest it be thought that I am favoring the French by too frequent citation of their words, let me balance the account by telling of the distress that overwhelmed one of the False Artists of America when I asked him about a "colleague." A work by the latter was about to enter the Metropolitan Museum, where my informant himself had for years had a picture, and one of the most foolish pictures in the group that represents our country so feebly. The natural thing would have been for him to express satisfaction over an honor for the man he professed to like. But it was pity for the quality of the other's work that modulated the sad voice in which this son of Ananias bade me ask no more as to the artist whom he had known. And it was just that hint of chivalrous pity for a man supposed to be a failure which one always met with when one inquired about the painter—a man of whom every American may be proud. In general, this afforded the most effective means of keeping up around him the wretched fiction that only a few painters and collectors broke through—to find the splendid artist that the "sympathetic friend" tried to dismiss as "Poor Ryder! Poor, poor Ryder!"

A mistake as to my position, that I must take more seriously than that which would make me a mere Francophile, appeared in replies to an article in "Harper's Magazine" for June, 1927, wherein I published an outline of the ideas contained in the present book. I believe that very great art has been produced in the last hundred years or so, with work of extraordinary importance in the most recent decades, and I have at various times asserted that belief. And so, several more or less friendly critics, assuming that modern art is my sole interest, treated the article as a new attack by a "modernist." But the attack was not on the older schools. It was against the counterfeit of art in the recent schools as well

as those of an earlier time. I spoke of the thing growing progressively worse, and indeed reaching its lowest level among the so-called modernists. I do not reckon my critics as partisans of the art of Ananias, but surely it would seem bad tactics on their part to credit the modernists with an effort to dislodge the False Artist from his position. The attack ought naturally to come from the upholders of the great tradition; so that my critics seem to be lending support to an idea several times expressed by the admirable painter and thinker that we possess in John Sloan. He observes that the conception of the most recent schools, passing over the heresies of the nineteenth century, rejoins the conception of the greatest periods of the past. If this is modernism, then I can only rejoice at the thought that my own painting is considered to have any slightest share in it. But I insist that this book is no more a defense of Cézanne, Derain, or Duchamp-Villon than it is one for Chardin or Rubens. To be sure, no one is attacking the latter men—though it is a pity to see their names invoked by the False Artists. If I refer to the great modern men frequently, it is because the facts about the past are so much less accessible and sure, for purposes of illustration, than those of the present, which is, moreover, the period in which Ananias has developed his powers in a way that simply eclipses all his previous efforts.

Let me add a brief note on the paintings and sculptures reproduced in the book. In selecting them my watchword has been moderation—as indeed it has been throughout the text, which affords only one passage that might be considered as extreme; and that is not my own, but that of the paragon of virtue who modestly veils his identity behind the name of an ancient exemplar of the chaste mind—Petronius. I bear cheerful testimony to the fact that he outdoes all other

spokesmen for Ananias, and so I cannot claim that he is typical. The illustrations, on the other hand, are not only typical, they are the work of men in the most eminent official positions, represented in the chief museums of the world, and exercising almost unlimited influence on the taste of their time. The Titian is, of course, included for a special reason, and does not belong to my own text; like the picture by Thomas Eakins, it is to be considered for its contrast with the other works reproduced. The Cypriote sculptures, which alone bear the burden of representing the school of Ananias in the time before the modern period, are evidently in a class apart. Only a student well acquainted with ancient art will be apt to know offhand that these works are contemporary with the greatest of all sculpture. Behind the art of the Phœnicians, we see the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Greek works which they travesty. It would have been no great task to have followed out their spiritual descendants, but it would have been unprofitable. Time has dealt so definitively with their work. And if I have avoided the most grotesque, most ludicrous productions of the False Artists of modern times, the things that every visitor to exhibitions and, alas! to museums will be able to recall in large numbers, it has been because of my desire to treat only men of pivotal importance. The waters of oblivion that are rising to close over them have already hidden away the lesser sons of Ananias.

It may seem that, in my reproductions and the text, I have devoted an undue amount of the discussion to the Metropolitan Museum in New York. I hope most sincerely that my criticism of some of the museum's possessions will not be thought by anyone to suggest the slightest lessening of our gratitude to the institution whose service to art in America is unequaled and beyond estimate. It has built up collections

that represent the Greek, the Renaissance, and other great schools of the past with a wealth of fine examples truly astounding, if one consider how brief America's experience with connoisseurship has been, and also the difficulty in recent times of obtaining works by the masters. The collections at the Louvre, for example, are the work of centuries, the modern Republic having given to all men what was once the private gallery of the kings, though it has added much since their time. Our own institution started with nothing but an idea—to develop the tremendous store of treasure we have today. Even without making allowance for drawbacks, if we study the galleries simply on their merits, they would be an honor to a great capital in Europe. In achieving such a result, the museum has helped to place the future of our country on a base firmer than any other that is known to men.

Those who care most deeply for their city, however, are the ones who want to see it cleared of the relics of insecure building, bad drainage, and other tokens of a pioneering past or mistaken government in later days. We have some museums which have not yet begun to emerge from the stage of the beginner, and on their walls one can still see canvases bearing, in large letters, what purports to be the signature of Leonardo da Vinci. There, also, are modern pictures by Ananias, in the special employment of his name which I have tried to define in this book. But to have drawn my examples from places which represent the Age of Innocence too conspicuously would have robbed the illustrations of their value, which derives, above all, from the fact that work by the False Artist is found in the most important places, and that it is still entering them. My purpose is to aid in our developing of the sense which distinguishes the true artist's works. It is

no pleasure to let one's mind dwell on the false; but the effort will not have been wasted if this book contributes even slightly to freeing people from the things which contradict the classics in their summing up of all that is heroic or gay or calm or otherwise expressive of the finest in human activity. The vast majority of works in all museums worthy of the name have such characteristics. No other works should find a place there.

W.P.

A N A N I A S

OR

THE FALSE ARTIST

CHAPTER I

ANANIAS OR THE FALSE ARTIST

I

QUESTION anyone, quite literally anyone, who takes an active pleasure in works of art, and you will find that he has a Dark Past. He formerly liked pictures—in magazines, exhibitions, and museums—that he now sees to be insipid or false. Go through any museum containing the art of the modern period, and you find that it has a Dark Past. On the walls are pictures that nobody believes to have the least value, and the cellars are crammed with the ones already discarded. I am not speaking of conditions in America alone, for the art-lovers and the modern museums of Europe bear out my statements quite as well. If the question were simply that of a Dark Past, if the simulacrum of art that fooled us thirty years ago had no successor today, this book would be superfluous, even objectionably superfluous, for there would be no reason to stir up unpleasant memories. But for every bad work of the old school which time has brought to contempt there are ten works of the present schools as bad or worse.

And so there is every reason to bestir ourselves about the Dark Present. Perhaps there has been progress in the last generation or two; perhaps not. If there has been any, it is so slight, as compared with what remains to be done, that it scarcely counts. Optimists may point to certain good modern pictures that have been going into museums or private houses in recent years; they forget that for each one of them there are ten, twenty, a hundred or several hundred bad modern pictures

to combat its influence. The good picture always gains with time, while the others reveal themselves each year more clearly as the worthless things they are. But while the individual bad picture dies, its race continues to flourish—if increase in number means flourishing, for in point of quality the bad pictures of today are enormously below those of thirty years ago. We should be in a poor way indeed if we judged the state of the world by the false artists. Fortunately, there is another breed of men at work, and we know that the world is healthy because of their presence among us.

They only come to acceptance after a long time, it is true. And for a century or more we have been growing so accustomed to the phenomenon that we are prone to think it a normal one. It is quite abnormal. In the past the masters were pretty generally recognized in their lifetime; the less important artists were given the less important work; the men unfitted for art remained in other pursuits. But with the loss of authority in the modern period, with the substitution of democratic control in art for guidance by men of culture, the whole scheme of things has gone topsy-turvy; it is the men unfitted for art who have power over public commissions, exhibitions, and too many museums, while the men who continue the great tradition have been recognized so tardily that the world has not had the full benefit of their genius. For the time when their effort counts most is their own time. Later on they are of the past; and, if they have, indeed, the authority that only time confers, they have also the aspect of unfamiliarity caused by the changes in men's ideas. What is most absurd about the whole thing is that the accusation of being revolutionaries should have been leveled at all the masters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and that the incompetents should be listened to when they offer the

classics as the support of their position. Surely the question of the true line of descent in art is the one which we most need to answer today. Other books have dealt with the matter by bringing to notice the positive forces in art, the work of those men whose importance increases with the years. But there is another method of getting at the truth. It consists in understanding the failure of those men who have falsified the line of descent. And so a very special need today is for comprehending the phenomena presented by the False Artist, whose name I have called Ananias.

The story so marvelously told in the few lines of the Bible is immeasurably more than the parable of the liar. One needs to think of the circumstances—of the solemn trust that was in the hands of that little body of men and women who had seen the coming of the Messiah, who had heard His words, and witnessed His death. In their hands was the heritage of newly uttered truth which was to replace the outworn narrowness of old rituals and to triumph over the Roman's worship of material power. (Let your preferences when you go to the Museum be what you will, the words that I have used to describe the religion of the first Christians will apply equally well to the rôle that art fulfills among man's activities.) Ananias is the man who, when the others are putting the whole of their substance into the common store, keeps back a part of his possessions. The False Artist is a man who knows the unique significance of the work on which he has entered and yet cannot give himself to it wholeheartedly. With Sapphira, his wife, he professes the faith that is to change the world, but he clings to the tokens of an opposed order of existence.

At this point I hear the cool ironical voice of a friend of mine saying that I am getting on quite nicely with my

ecclesiastical style. For the “objective” school of critics, any reference to such words as truth and beauty is mere question-begging. Undismayed by the fact that they cannot prove such a simple, material point as the claim that a given passage in a painting was done with tempera instead of oil, or that a passage in a print was done with dry-point instead of pure etching, they treat as sentimental vaporings the ideas of people who seek to understand the incomparably more difficult questions of the motive behind the work of art. They cite various fluctuations in the estimate of value of different schools or individuals, and would thereby rule out belief in the existence of a permanent good or bad in art. Since we cannot be sure of anything, they say, everybody is to be allowed his preferences, momentary or enduring; an atmosphere of decorous tolerance is to impose silence on fanatics who would question anyone’s right to his opinion. Is it not enough that he has one, whether he ever studied the question at issue or not? Or even if he has no opinion, but has accepted some tradition in his family or his class, that must be respected, too. A member of a certain London art club tells me that the unwritten law there is that no one shall ever mention art.

But art is about the most interesting subject there is, and there is probably no way of keeping it distinct from matters which are sometimes thought to be purely within the domain of religion—“mother of all insipidities,” as it has been called. The witty man who spoke that phrase needed a reminder that all art is religious. Whether the subject of a given work be “sacred” or “profane,” as the old distinctions would have it, art is our means (and probably our chief means) of telling the meaning that life and the world in general possess for us. And as to such matters, words like truth and beauty are not only in

place, but they designate the objectives of our most important study.

II

Let us have a look at the claim that nothing is certain. It was the basis of the Sophist philosophy in Athens, which was opposed by Socrates with his grand affirmation that a real knowledge of men showed their beliefs to be identical. I think that only the Sophist can affirm the existence of any important fluctuation in our idea of the value of the older arts. When one goes out to seek evidence in support of this claim, he can find a period here and there, usually a short one, when the Greeks, or Michael Angelo, or Rembrandt were held in low esteem. He can point out, for example, the burning of the marbles of Greece to produce lime, and argue from such contempt for classical art that it is no more a permanent guide than the most ephemeral things of today. The answer to that argument, in the changes of religion and in the coming of the barbarians, seems too obvious for mention. One can point to the slight opinion that was held of Egyptian art a century or so ago, or to the position as mere curios of Chinese and Japanese objects hardly more than half a century ago, and the neglect of El Greco which obtained till within very recent years. But again the simple reply must occur to everyone: the arts in question were barely known, or even unknown, when the world left them out of its reckoning. "Your modernist friends have come up very suddenly," I am told; "they will sink back to where they belong just as suddenly—and stay there." Excuse me, but now you are assuming to speak for the future; I think we must wait and let it speak for itself.

The "objective" school, eschewing the question of right and wrong, gives its attention to matters of chronology,

attribution, derivation, methods, materials, etc.; to these things scientific research may be applied—and has been applied—with truly admirable results. But when the most difficult of such problems are finally solved, there still remains the more important question of the value of the different arts. And that matter presses for a decision in one place if in no other. Since a century and a quarter, or a little more, the world has possessed an institution unknown previously—the Museum. As it now exists, taking in all periods and all forms of effort (the applied as well as the fine arts), it forces us to define our terms by our acts, by including certain works and excluding others.

We are told that the Museum expresses no opinion on its possessions but simply exhibits the various paintings and sculptures to public view, as the natural-history museum presents all stones, all insects, with perfect impartiality. Does anyone really believe that? If so he must be one who can apply to himself the words: "He who thus believes has the faith which opens the gates of heaven." And such faith becomes difficult to maintain when one even glances at the facts. Whole races are excluded from the art museum: the Africans (save for the Egyptians and the Moors, who are partly Arab) and the American Indians—even including such mighty contributors to the human record as the Aztecs, the Mayas, and the Peruvians. As to the schools accepted as being within the purview of the Museum, see whether there is no expression of opinion. How much of the work in the Luxembourg will go to the Louvre? Only what time decides on as the best. This is, indeed, as it should be, and perhaps there should be yet more time allowed than now for the reaching of a decision. Or perhaps we may reach the point of getting museum authorities capable of making valid decisions

in a short time. It is difficult today, with the immense political power of the False Artist. Yet the existence of great private collections shows that the only thing needed is leadership. The public collections, as a rule, give the main weight of their testimony in favor of Ananias, and the future would be black indeed if his products did not have the peculiarity of revealing their shoddiness in a generation or two—or often in a much shorter time.

Even as to the ancient schools the great museums are forever reconsidering their estimates—seeking to obtain the master forgotten before, or sending to the provinces the man whose previous acceptance was merely a matter of passing favor. To note this is not to lean toward the Sophist in his denial of absolute values. The action of the Museum is rather a confirmation of the claim that in the long view we do come to agreement. But if one thing is certain, it is that the Museum is the place to which we repair for standards and, even more, for a training of judgment to fit us for our new problems. It will not tolerate that refusal to choose between true and false artists which would expel me from the genteel quiet of the London art club, because I say that much which hangs on museum walls is the work of Ananias. In passing, I should like to ask the guardians of the proprieties who are so shocked at my language a question or two as to their own words—and their acts—when the matter is one of the things they dislike in modern art. Did not that pillar of the National Academy, Mr. Robert Aitken, give legal testimony at the Customs House that the sculptures of a man he disapproved were not works of art at all? That being the case, they could be admitted only under the provisions covering manufactured articles. Yet their producer had been a favorite pupil of Rodin's, and one who has come to be regarded as one of the ablest representatives of

the later tendencies. Here was no matter of calm, philosophic discussion, but one of practical, financial results: Brancusi and the purchasers of his work had their choice between seeing the sculptures remain under the objectionable classification of commercial work in metal, or prove to the satisfaction of officialdom that free entry to our ports was their right as original works of art.

Nothing is commoner than to hear artists charged with insanity and dishonesty. The two things are, of course, quite separate, but both may be given a moment's attention. There have been men whose minds were deranged as far as ordinary affairs were concerned, but who expressed themselves in their art with perfect clarity; and everyone agrees that they have done so—if he happens to like the work. Certain psychopathic experts say they can plainly see insanity in the painting of van Gogh (when they know from other sources about his abnormal conduct—under the strain of tragic circumstances). They must explain, if they want to be accepted as scientists, why they see no insanity in the style of Meryon, a downright madman. In one or two of his plates, outstanding masterpieces of the art of etching, there are fanciful figures flying through the sky over Paris, and in these, as in his great picture of the demon who looks down from Notre Dame, some writers have imagined that they saw a trace of Meryon's insanity. But such figures are to be found in work by men of the sanest mind. Moreover, it is not in van Gogh's subjects, but in his style—his drawing and his color—that the doctors claim to see the expression of an impaired mind. If they can do that, what reason can they give for failing to find such evidence in the case of Meryon? The reason is that they are not talking science but art. They dislike the painting of van Gogh, and knowing him to have had seizures of dementia, they say his

art was crazy; but Meryon did work they admire, therefore his art was not crazy. To speak so is to use the word insane merely as an epithet, in the way that certain people refer to the race or religion of men they dislike. Perhaps, starting with the fact that demented people have done admirable work, like that of van Gogh, Jongkind, and Meryon (add Blakelock, if you are so disposed), and also, that other demented persons have done perfectly commonplace work, a genuinely scientific consideration of insanity might arrive at the conclusion of separate functions of the mind—the art-function sharing or not sharing the derangement of the rest, according to the particular case.

The charge of dishonesty lies in a different category. There has probably never been a real artist who was dishonest in his work—who did things he believed to be false. The artist knows that the whole of his honor resides in the faith with which he holds to his conception of his work. As business men, as husbands, as Sons of Temperance, as citizens, and perhaps—in a few cases—as friends, artists have sometimes left a bad record. It may be neglected even when we should most like to see it changed. For the essential point is not to be found in those parts of the record. It lies wholly, uniquely, absolutely in the man's attitude toward his work. Once more the matter comes back to a religious issue. Beauty of form and color is simply the attribute by which we judge the artist's success in conveying his idea. It is a by-product which cannot be reached by direct effort. The man who makes such an effort is the æsthete, and the world is right in regarding him with suspicion. The artist searches for certain lines and colors so that he may render the sense of the world which it awakens in his brain. Whether he makes a portrait, a still-life, or a landscape, a piece of armor or a palace or a rug, all the

science, all the workmanship, all the knowledge of the precious materials he employs, all the study that makes him master of the flux of appearances in the surrounding world, are only the means for telling what it signifies to him. If he has done so, we and all the generations after us, see that he has spoken the truth. And to denote the special type of truth that is open to the artist we say his work is beautiful.

We are not disturbed by the fact that the various periods bring forth very different phases of truth. On the contrary, when we find that a Greek does one thing and a Dutchman a thing quite unlike it, we see that both are right and feel only the more gratitude for our heritage. The Dutchman is untroubled by the fact that his work does not look like the art of the Greek, and his concern need not begin until his people go after the strange gods that will mislead them as to their proper idea. The artist has often been beset by poverty, but even that fact does not permit him to tamper with his idea for the sake of gain—either of goods or of fame. He does not need to be told the parable in those chapters of the Acts in order to avoid the penalty that waits like Fate itself for those who lie "not to men, but to God." Honesty being the first condition of his whole nature, he goes on in his work without a suspicion that he could do it otherwise, without understanding the man who sets some other reward above the knowledge of the work well done. Ananias has the mind most completely alien to his own; the other men of the time do not see the truth at all, but the False Artist knows what the issue is and tries to be on both sides.

III

I am not merely vituperative in choosing the name of Ananias to represent the man whose faith in his calling has

been insufficient. One must look behind his action to its cause. One must consider the probable ancestry of the man and ask oneself whether a failure such as his does not point back to forbears whose thinking was vitiated by compromise between ideals and avarice. Ananias is a type; one recognizes him in unnumbered spiritual descendants, and as they are so plentiful, it is logical to see in the past of his tribe also, one individual after another who sensed the truth at some time, but wore away its point by misuse of the faculty for making right decisions. The process is so gradual that one needs to examine the minds of such men at long-separated moments to realize the way they have gone downhill. Visit the studio of the worst artist you can think of, and you will probably find in some cupboard or portfolio a painting or drawing that takes you back to a period of idealistic youth that you could never have suspected from his mature work. Not infrequently the artist has a recognition of his own debasement and will speak of it quite freely when there is no question of his losing trade. A portrait-painter whose annual income ran into many tens of thousands of dollars told me that he would never again enter the Louvre, because of the humiliation his last visit there had cost him. The reminder of his student days in Paris, the contrast between the masterpieces he had loved in his youth and the work he had done since, threw him into such despair that he plunged into heavy drinking for a week to rid his mind of thoughts of what he had become. A member of the Institute of France said to a friend of mine, “If my wife’s hats” (I nearly wrote, “If Sapphira’s hats”) “did not cost such sums, do you think I would paint the *cochonneries* that I am turning out?”

Sargent refused to sell many of the works he considered his best, especially among his earlier pictures. “I need to keep

them around to console me for the rotten stuff I am doing," as he said to some visitors to his studio. The words were, of course, not intended to describe his later painting as a whole. He believed in it thoroughly, though the genuine modesty of the man, which kept him from being misled by the adulators of even his worst work, doubtless gave him some idea how low he stood in comparison with the masters. The Old Masters, that is, (with capital letters). Once they were enshrined in the mystic penumbra of the Museum, Sargent in later life could recognize them, though he could not see the true line of their descent among his contemporaries. Yet he had, in his twenties, stood side by side with Claude Monet and other big men in Paris, when they demanded the admission of Manet's *Olympia* to the Luxembourg. Was it the favor with which society flattered his mundane elegance that led him to turn away from the conscientious effort of Manet and his descendants? If so, he paid for the sacrifice with more than the loss of his standing as an artist.

He really hated the "society portraits" that crowded in on him in ever-increasing numbers. "I've simply got to finish that damn thing," he said of his big canvas of the Countess of Warwick and her son, "the boy keeps getting older and the woman keeps getting younger";—which did not prevent him from recommending the picture as one of his best works to the museum of Worcester, Mass., which purchased it accordingly.[C] When portrait-painting had become positively intolerable to him he refused all commissions, even those for pictures of people for whom he had the greatest fondness. When Monet was told of this, his simple comment was, "It is too late, isn't it?" Sargent did return to portraiture occasionally, when his subject was a Woodrow Wilson or a John D. Rockefeller, and perhaps I ought to set down, for

Worcester Museum

THE COUNTESS OF WARWICK AND HER SON—John S. Sargent

purposes of contrast, an opinion the contrary of my own, such as that of the well-known critic who spoke of the rapt expression the painter had caught on the upturned face of the oil man, which he said was like that of a mediæval saint, St. Francis of Assisi receiving the stigmata, if my memory serves me.

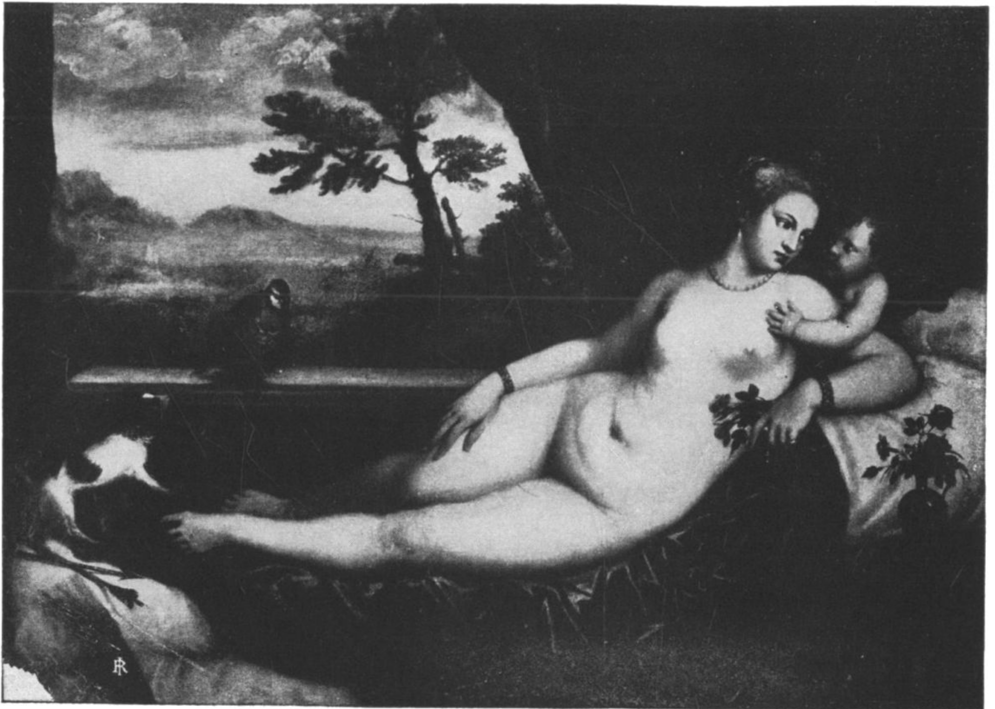
An admirable poem, *Idéal*, by Albert Samain, tells the story of the young men who start out together in the morning, lifted up by the faith which is to carry them to the mountain heights. By evening almost all are seated comfortably, stupidly, before the doors of their shops—a well-rouged matron at their side. But occasionally they raise their faces to the peaks they had thought to climb, and their dull eyes descry for a moment certain moving figures silhouetted against the sky—those of the men who kept on.

It is before such an image that one realizes the moderation contained in the story of Ananias. His punishment is only death. But suppose he had lived on: either he would have realized that his refusal of a complete faith had rendered valueless even the halfway gesture that he had made, and he would have known the despair of the shopkeepers who look up to the mountain, of that painter who could no longer enter the Louvre, or a worse—if less painful—fate would have awaited him. Speaking of the False Artists in Paris, a friend of mine used to say, "Their prayer, morning and evening, ought to be—'Let us never wake up and see the thing we are!' " Most of the sons of Ananias simply do not know the wretchedness of their work.

How should they know it? They have long since lost all true vision of the masters, and their mental distortion of the great works actually makes these a justification of their own efforts. Whistler used to tell of some artists who wanted him to go and look at certain pictures he had called very bad without seeing them. Upon their insistence that he go to look at these particular works by the man he detested, he agreed to do so on condition that they first go to look at some pictures that he liked and that they had never seen. The proposal being accepted with enthusiasm, he marched them to the National

Gallery and showed them the Rembrandts. “But you didn’t mean those pictures, Whistler? Of course we’ve seen those.” “No, you haven’t. You’ve doubtless glanced at them, but if you’d ever seen them, you’d not be proposing to make me look at the stuff you talk about.”

The worst punishment for Ananias, then, is that blindness to standards which makes him unaware of his worthlessness, or rather of his rôle as a spreader of corruption. Let me give an example of his teaching. A few years ago, a group of artists got together to combat the growth of appreciation of Cézanne, Matisse, and other moderns whom they hated.



Uffizi Gallery
VENUS AND AMOR—Titian
For a description by Ananias of this work, see page 19

Backed by a well-intentioned millionaire, they founded a magazine which had such contributors as F. Wellington

Ruckstuhl, Dr. Theo. F. Hyslop (who wrote in support of the insanity theory as applied to the modern artist), Kenyon Cox, Daniel C. French, Robert Underwood Johnson, E. H. Blashfield, Brander Matthews, and William M. Sloane. It is only fair to say that some of the men who lent their names to the scheme have since disclaimed all sympathy with it and affirmed that they looked on the magazine as one that would, as its founders claimed, be used as an aid to American culture. Others of those involved must accept their share of responsibility for the following extract from an article. Though signed with a pseudonym ("Petronius Arbiter"), a foreword under the title "Our Creed" gave it the standing of an editorial pronouncement, and therefore acceptable to the various participants in the work of the publication.

In the words of the old French poem, Here singeth one (his subject being one of the most magnificent of Titian's works, the *Venus and Amor* of the Uffizi).

This is a trivial work of art. Why? Because it is a nude? No!... Then what is the matter with it? Much!

Titian had a weakness for plethora in woman—he loved the *planturesque*. And nearly all his pictures of women are buxom. When draped, this is all right. When undraped it is all wrong. And in this picture he went to excess and made Venus so padded with embonpoint that he reduced the goddess to a naked earthly woman. By dragging the goddess from Olympus to the earth he trivialized a sublime subject. He made a lofty thing common. And, in art, at least, this should not be done. If he had reverently painted, and even slightly idealized, a beautiful, nude young girl, and called it simply *Spring*, he would, perhaps, have poetized an ordinary subject and, in so far as he did so, would have lifted us above the brutal reality.[D] That is the rôle of a great Artist. But in this picture, no doubt painted for some sensuous, royal lubber of his day, he frankly reversed the process and appealed to the senses, not exactly the immoral—because there is here not even the budding of an impure gesture in movement. But he dragged the Goddess down from Elysium to the earth earthy. Instead of idealizing his model he de-idealized his Goddess—materialized her and so trivialized a sublime poetic subject.

How different is his nude in his own *Sacred and Profane Love!* How graceful and merely nude the beautiful body!—the whole work lifting us to the plane of

serene delight where dwell the Gods.

To take a subject capable of being conceived on a lofty plane, and to conceive it on a common carnal plane, is to trivialize it, no matter how great, or by whom, the craftsmanship displayed. And, however one may pardon this in life, in art that is: *The sin against the Holy Ghost!* Titian in this work was guilty of this sin. That is why it is trivial.

Some people who have read this passage and others from "The Art World" (long since defunct) have thought its ideas merely comic; and so they would be if a vast number of persons did not devoutly believe in them. To be sure, the age-old fame of Titian and our respect for the classics, even when they commit the sin against the Holy Ghost, render such works as the one discussed secure in their position. But do we all see the comedy that is involved, or rather the humiliation to every American, when the leading museum of the United States is called upon to answer the charge of exhibiting degenerate art—as the matter was called in an anonymous letter sent out by "Petronius Arbiter" or some of his associates and printed on the front pages of the newspapers? Again quoting the old French poet, let us introduce the lament of the afflicted with the blithe words: Here singeth one (this time about the exhibition of works by Degas, Renoir, Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, Seurat, Matisse, Derain, and other modern painters at the Metropolitan Museum, in 1921):

This cult of "Satanism" appeals to a limited number of European painters and sculptors, for the most part men of no talent, and handicapped by taints of hereditary, or acquired, insanity. To this class the cult of the ugly and the obscene became the prime stimuli of their work. From these, since the early 'sixties to the present time, there came a steady output of hideous examples of mental degeneracy in the plastic arts. It goes without saying that the work of these artists was not generally approved. Their paintings and sculptures were refused, regularly, at the exhibitions, at Paris and elsewhere, and they were flouted as men of defective mentality, or charlatans—playing for sensation.

Ananias telling of his maudlin dislike for the picture by Titian is a joke, for his drivel disturbs nobody. Time has assured the place in art of the great Venetian; and time is already bidding fair to carry Renoir, Cézanne, Seurat, and other modern men to a secure hold on the affection of mankind. If we cannot pretend to anticipate the judgments of the future, it is quite within our power to give the present an opportunity to know the work that most concerns it. A later chapter will attempt to define the rôle of the Museum; for the present let me give two more examples of the way the False Artist reacts to the work of the masters—and few people today will even question the application of that word to Rodin and Manet. There are some who will, to be sure, just as after all these centuries there was still a man to write those lines on Titian. And as the question of the modern masters still puzzles many sincere people, it is a help in studying it to know the opinions of the men whom William Blake had in mind when he wrote his proverb: "Listen to the fool's reproach; it is a kingly title."

If one man in America succeeded in making his name a synonym for deadness in art—through the spurious quality of his imitations of the classics and through his intolerance toward new talent in the exhibitions—that man was Kenyon Cox. So that his comments on the Armory Show of 1913 are a pretty safe indication of the untruth about it: "The thing is pathological! It's hideous.... Many of Matisse's paintings are simply the exaltation to a gallery of the drawings of a nasty boy.... That row of Rodin drawings at the Metropolitan Museum is a calamity." Such calamities—to the artists represented by Kenyon Cox and his like—are increasing in frequency. If Ananias is growing more and more impotent to prevent the acceptance of the better men, he loses no means

of minimizing the effect of his defeats. Thus when Manet had reached the Metropolitan Museum (and his early recognition there is one of the real triumphs of American connoisseurship), the opponents of the great painter managed for many years to reduce his biography in the catalogue of the Museum to the following lines: “Pupil of Couture, with whom he studied for six years. An eccentric realist of disputed merit; founder of the school of ‘Impressionists.’ His pictures were several times rejected at the Salon.”

Here, as in the previous quotation, from the manifesto of 1921, where he recalls the rejection of other modern works, Ananias is gloating over the penalty incurred by those whose faith made them give up the whole of their goods. Disdain for the worldly success of the False Artist, refusal to compromise upon matters of principle, did indeed cause the exclusion of the modern masters from many of the official exhibitions of the nineteenth century, and their works were indeed often treated as mad or perverse. This does not by any means refer to the recent masters alone, for if we turn back to the words dictated by the False Artist to his press representatives a hundred years ago, we find that they are surprisingly like those which we hear about the great men of today. Here is what was written in 1834 about the portrait of Mme. Leblanc by Ingres, formerly in the collection of Degas and, since his death, in the Metropolitan Museum: “I cannot believe that this monster, with no top to her head, with her bulging eyes and her sausage-like fingers, is not the deformation, due to an effect of perspective, of a doll seen from too near by, and reflected on to the canvas by several curved mirrors applied to each detail, each one being left separate.” Of Delacroix’s early masterpiece, the *Dante and Vergil* of the Salon of 1822, the aptly-named “Moniteur Universel,” wrote: “This is a

picture which is no picture; it is a mere spattering of colors." When the great painter exhibited his *Death of Sardanapalus* in 1827, the "Observateur des Beaux-Arts," again taking up Ananias's favorite argument of the nonsuccess of the men who hold to their faith, remarked: "M. Delacroix and the other leaders of the new school have received no prize, but to console them for this defeat, they are to be permitted two hours of sojourn in the Morgue every day. We must encourage our young talents."

IV

A poor old argument, worn threadbare with misuse, still reappears from time to time. It is to the effect that citing the attacks on the earlier masters of the modern period is an attempt to prove that every man who is attacked must, therefore, be a master. No one in his senses ever made such a claim. This book is not about modern art. It is about a particular type of artist as old as the Bible. I shall try to show, presently, why he has been especially plentiful in modern times. My recalling the cases of Ingres and Delacroix had a purpose quite different from that of defending the period to which they belong. It was because they present one of the most dramatic examples of antagonism between two great men—a case about which we have more complete details than those handed down by tradition about the slurs which Michael Angelo is said to have cast on Titian and even on Leonardo.

People will say: "You call opposition to the great men the work of Ananias. Do you apply that name to Ingres, with his bitter hostility to Delacroix? When the great Romanticist was finally elected to the Institute, Ingres said, 'Now the wolf is loose in the sheepfold!' Or if you want a specimen of what the chief of the Classical school thought of one of the Old

Masters, what do you make of those words which Ingres pronounced to his atelier: 'You are my pupils, and therefore my friends, and, as such, you would not salute one of my enemies if he happened to pass beside you in the street. Turn away, then, from Rubens in the museums, wherever you meet him, for if you go toward him, he will certainly speak evil of my teaching and of me.' After that, from a great man, let me hear what you have to say about your grand principles, your beautiful right and wrong. I tell you, art is a matter of taste, and I don't agree with yours when you use the name of Ananias as to what is simply a difference of honest opinion."

I never linked Ingres with the men about whom this book is written. I mention him now only to deny that he has any likeness to the breed. Delacroix never impugned the sincerity of his rival, and it was only in the intimate confidences of a diary that he revealed his opinion of Ingres's painting, "The complete expression of an incomplete intelligence." The terrible epigram is mitigated by other of his observations on the Classicist, many of them favorable in the extreme. Taking the matter from the other angle, considering the opposition to Delacroix by Ingres, we read the following in Lapauze's biography: "Ingres had no reproach against the man; what he pursued in Delacroix was the delirium of the brush, which he abominated, and the influence, a disastrous one in his opinion, which, sweeping along the ignorant and easily captivated, was precipitating the decadence of French art." There is no hint, then, in the words of either of the masters, that he charged his opponent with that desertion of principles which I take as the characteristic of Ananias. If the case of Ingres and Delacroix be offered, therefore, as an example of arraignments as drastic as my own and which have since turned out to be baseless, I think it is clear that such instances of past error have no

bearing on my argument. There is no connection between "honest differences of opinion" and a breach of faith.

There remains the certain matter that convictions as to art may be held with passionate sincerity and yet be mistaken. Time decides such questions. Ingres was wrong about Delacroix, whose influence has been almost everywhere victorious in French art—and without precipitating any decadence. On the contrary, every development that has come from it directly or indirectly has been one of health and fertility. "But when you admit that even a master like Ingres may fall into error, should it not make you pause, when you may be committing the gravest injustice toward men against whose style you probably have nothing more than a merely personal dislike? Look at Ingres's attack on Rubens. The personal element in it is clear when you notice the words 'he will certainly speak evil of my teaching and of me.' " No; there is evidence that we are even here dealing with general principles, and with essential agreement as to good and bad. In his scholarly commentary on "L'Atelier d'Ingres" by Amaury-Duval, Elie Faure adduces a significant sentence which he came on among notes which the Classicist thought of as "destined never to see the light." We may be happy that they did, for they are needed, both for a better understanding of Ingres himself and for the certitude they give us that opposition to the masters, by those who are at all of their race, is always more apparent than real. Here are the words, "Yes, to be sure, Rubens is a great painter; but he is that great painter who has ruined everything." Again the idea that we found in the statement about Delacroix, the worshiper of Rubens. The two masters themselves are not the object of Ingres's enmity; he warns the world against the "disastrous influence" of the one, and the fact (as he sees it) that the other

ruins those who approach him. Ingres had the idea which Goethe had expressed in his axiom—"Classicism means health; Romanticism means disease." Finding two great painters—one of an older school, the other a modern—leading French art in the direction he abhorred, Ingres thought it his duty to combat them by every means at his disposal.

The truth about his attitude toward Delacroix appears in that passage in M. Faure's invaluable notes on his new edition of "L'Atelier d'Ingres," wherein he permits Chenavard to recount again the scene witnessed by the latter as he and Delacroix were going to the Institute for one of its sessions:

> Chance willed that Ingres should be only a few steps ahead of us. As we were approaching the door, and those two irreconcilable enemies were just meeting and measuring each other with a look, Ingres suddenly extended his hand to Delacroix, moved by an impulse of secret sympathy which for a long time had been drawing together the natures of the two great artists, both revolutionaries in their way and both sterling men....
>
> I cannot tell you the joy that gripped my heart when I stood beside those two splendid athletes whom the French School had watched in their proud struggle, when I saw their two flags finally united by their embrace of friendship, when I evoked the memory of so many fallen comrades, who, could they have seen as I did, Ingres and Delacroix—irreproachable draftsmanship and the life inseparable from it—meeting and clasping hands on the landing of the Institute of France, would have asked no more for the moment of their death as conquered men.

The "objective" critics will not fail to notice that the artist-philosopher has proved nothing with his "lyricism." His references to struggles, flags, embraces of friendship, France, and death will be for them only another example of the Gallic temperament venting its fury in theatrical eloquence. Yet I must impenitently confess that I cannot read the passage without experiencing the very emotion which Chenavard describes; and if that is a sign of weakness, then I fall back on the fact (and the objectivist loves a fact) that Ingres, deep in his heart, had the respect for his rival which made him

suddenly offer his hand to the man whom he had attacked. That gesture of the old artist who had taken it for granted that even his pupils would not bow to his enemies, may well cause us to suspect that it is in the pupils of both men that we are to see the chief explanation of their enmity. “No one lies like a disciple.” The insults exchanged between the two camps caused a personal bitterness between the masters and led Ingres to speak in public those words against Rubens, the idol of the Romanticist, which he nullified by the contradictory words he wrote in private.

Chenavard, it may be asserted, has offered at best a hypothesis, not a proof. I agree; I will go further and deny that any essential thing in art ever was absolutely proved. I spoke before of the impotence of science to demonstrate quite simple, material points. Let me now ask the man who insists on my giving proof that Ananias is what I claim, how he proves that Rembrandt is great, or Shakespeare. The opinion of educated men? Possibly—if it were quite unanimous throughout many centuries. But we have no such approach to proof—the opinion on Rembrandt a hundred years ago was a relatively low one; somewhat later, Ruskin, entranced by the purity of the Italian Primitives, spoke of Rembrandt as vulgar; and in 1851, when Delacroix in his musings confided to his diary that a day may come when Rembrandt will be looked on as far greater than Raphael, he speaks in the next line of his thought as blasphemy, or at least as something that will seem like blasphemy. And as to Shakespeare, one cannot lightly dismiss the opposition of so clear and powerful an intellect as that of Voltaire. The possible explanations of it leave it still a fact, and with it one may cite similar instances, not many, it is true, but enough to let us say, Gentlemen may cry “proof, proof,” but there is no proof.

And there is, I am sure, no inconsistency in my denying the right to ask for proof in art-matters after taking up so much time with my insistence that there is a right and wrong in art. I cannot prove that the fault lay with Ruskin and Voltaire instead of with Rembrandt and Shakespeare. But who wants proof in the question? Only the man who does (or rather, only the man who can supply it) may demand proof of the convictions expressed in this book. I will meet you as far along the way as I can; I will affirm that my beliefs are those of a large number of artists and art-lovers, not merely of one school or one time, but of all schools and all times; I will offer evidence where I can, as in the case of Ingres and Delacroix; and I point to the record of all true artists as that of a body of men who have held to their faith with a singleness of purpose that rises above the need of proof or the possibility of it. Here, then, is the central fact in the problem: the artist does not create by means of intellectual logic, such as presides over a mathematical demonstration. Reason is satisfied by his result, when sufficiently familiar with it; but reason alone is powerless to bring it into being. A coördination of the brain with the senses (sight, hearing, and touch) is needed, and their meeting involves the whole of the man; we sometimes say he acts by instinct, by inspiration, by intuition. The recognition of art is closely akin to the creation of it, and though incomparably more frequent and less intense than the artist's experience, that of the appreciator is still near enough to explain the world's perennial delight in works of art. When men like Schiller and Beethoven discuss art together, it is not in the terms of the law court, or of the chair of logic, of chemistry, or of mathematics, it is in the words of the "Ode to Joy" which closes the Ninth Symphony—"Hail to thee, daughter of Elysium."

CHAPTER II

THE COUNTERFEIT OF ART: ITS THEORY

I

FOR twenty years I have been trying to strangle this book; now let somebody else take the job. Like others, I had long known that a worse form of art was being produced today than ever before in history, and I was convinced that it was misleading numberless people. But I believed that the prodigious wealth of great painting and sculpture in the modern world offered a sufficient guaranty against permanent harm, and also that the underlying conditions of modern life must change before what was bad could disappear and a healthy and beautiful result in art become general. I still believe both arguments to be right; but it may be that a survey of the counterfeit of art in our period can hasten the needed process of improvement. While I was making a final attempt to be faithful to my conception of the critic's duty—which is, as I see it, to increase the recognition and understanding of true artists and to ignore the false ones—a chance conversation furnished me with certain facts which brought the problem into such startling relief that the need of speaking out appeared more urgent than ever. A curious old directory of artists in the Paris of somewhat less than a hundred years ago had turned up in a small bookshop. Its total of entries, including artists of all kinds, was about two hundred. How many are there in Paris today? "Forty thousand" was the estimate of the Under-Secretary of Fine Arts of the French Government. Of the two hundred artists listed in the old

directory, perhaps ten possessed either genius or first-rate talent; eighty or ninety more had enough talent to be of some interest to somebody; therefore, there were about a hundred who made the world richer for their presence. I doubt if more than a hundred men in Paris today can stand that test. What is to be said, then, of the remaining 39,900? And of the innumerable thousands of others in the rest of the world? What causes them to turn to art? Is it merely the desire to enter an activity they vaguely imagine to be "higher" than those of the men who give us food and shelter? Why do they fail at art? And are they all known to be failures? This last point is what interests us here, for there has been a misleading silence concerning it.

What we have refrained from saying is that a large number of the men who should be ranked with the failures are considered by the general public as successes, the great men of the modern period, indeed. Yet they not only leave the world no richer than they found it, but do harm to their admirers by diverting appreciation from the things worth while. We need not trouble ourselves about the vast majority of men who spend their time in art-work without winning praise either from the profession or from laymen. They are, as a rule, incompetent rather than false artists, and the interest they offer lies in their number—a phenomenon unknown even a century ago, as we have seen, and even less known in an earlier time. Many of them are quite likable people who know their limitations, cheer on the better men, and are of value in widening the circle of laymen interested in art. Often, when visiting the smaller American cities, I have been astonished at the strong and inspiring influence exerted by some artist, usually a teacher, whose own production was devoid of interest.

But the really false artists are not merely negative—they are an active source of injury to the community; the more so since their organization into societies, their titles, their public recognition, and acceptance in museums give them a spurious authority before which the critics and, too often, the genuine artists are silent. And who suffers from this state of affairs? The genuine artists? Not to any very grievous extent. They have usually picked up some kind of a living, though, as Roger Fry has acutely observed, it is harder to do so in America, whose "highly organized production on a grand scale, with its large wages and high profits, leaves far fewer of those interstices in the social system into which the artist can insert himself, than does a society based on a multiplicity of small and individual producers"—such as one sees in Europe, and particularly in France. Yet if the artist can get food, a lodging, the materials of his craft, and time to work, he is pretty near content. Being human, he would like some luxuries, though he is so far from rating his small collections as luxuries that he has paid for them out of money which "ordinary common sense" would have counseled him to reserve for physical subsistence. Being human, again, he would like the encouragement that comes of appreciation by one's fellows. Every Philistine will tell you what a shame it was that such and such a great man had no recognition during his lifetime; but the platitude is hardly out of his mouth before he will tell you of the decorations in the new court-house, and the portrait of his bank president, both by Ananias, that he is negotiating for; and he sees no connection between his pious sentiment of a moment before and the shame it is that the great men of his own time are not being supported.

In our own country, we had the case of Thomas Eakins. Around him there was such a barrier of neglect that few of his

contemporaries knew of him as the master that later men, often of quite a different school, have acclaimed. His very friends were often unaware of his greatness, and there were cases of people to whom he presented works—which were never removed from his studio, because the recipients of the pictures had no desire to live with them. Doubtless they want them enough today, when the work of the painter is taking an ever higher place in the museums; and it is pleasant to know that Mr. Eakins, during his lifetime, had the steady appreciation of certain clear-sighted art-lovers. Artists do not usually die of starvation, though they do usually lose a large part of their time in pursuits that have no value beyond the livelihood earned through them.

And that brings us to the real sufferer from the present state of affairs. It is the public. One need have little sympathy with the artist who is poor if he can go on with his work; he is the happiest of men, as Ananias himself testifies in those rare moments when he recalls the days of his honesty. What would he not give for a tithe of that inner certitude which sustains the real men in their hours of doubt? They have known that most poignant of tortures, but it has come from the difficulties of their work, from anxiety lest they fail in the strength to go on; their doubt does not arise from the incomprehension of the people around them, as is proved by the case of the man who was most completely ignored in his lifetime but who kept to his painting with unabated courage. This was Cézanne, and if his regard for the opinion of the world caused him to continue sending his work to the Salon, only to see it refused by the jury every year to the very end, we have one precious glimpse of the man's consciousness of his triumph. It appears in that sentence which he uttered when a group of his townsmen had invited him to the discussion of an art-matter

—and then let him feel that his opinion was of no importance. Stung to a realization of the contempt in which he was held, his knowledge of his worth suddenly rent the trammels of his customary humility and he burst forth with the indignant challenge: “Don’t you know, all of you, that there is only one artist in Europe—myself?”

It was not Cézanne but the public that was cheated when the pictures which best expressed the genius of the time were kept out of contact with the world that needed them. Art has the magical property of imparting its mood to the beholder, of making him conscious that he has in himself the same qualities as the artist. When he finds in the work of art such things as vigor, freshness of thought, courage, originality, serenity, he feels the stir of the same generous impulses. When he finds compromise, sentimentality, base commercialism, mean ideals, the flabby acceptance of old forms (forms quite valid for the ideas for which they were created, but unsuitable for new ideas), he is harmed to the exact extent of his belief in the ugly things. He is not disturbed, as we have seen, by the senile railing of Ananias against Titian. The Museum is a fortress that stands sure guard over the past. But if it protects the Old Masters, it is also the mark of our difficulty in entering their domain. Only after a period of probation, after prolonged study of the classics, can the modern man see that they belong to all time, that they are not “antiques” (things which have interest merely as souvenirs of a by-gone period, like the Currier and Ives prints that are having a moment of vogue today).

II

The case for the old writers is not so difficult as for the old painters and sculptors. Whether because Anglo-Saxons find

their chief expression in literature or because books are so much more accessible than pictures, we are not surprised if a man of even moderate education finds his everyday ideas (or his ideas of very special days) expressed by Shakespeare, and in easily recognized form. But how many see that, in giving form to sensations of deepest moment to us today, the Egyptians, the Greeks, Giotto, Raphael, and Rembrandt have an unshakable modernity? Certainly those who really care for these artists are not the same who take the Salons and Academies seriously. When you hear, "He is a good painter; he is always hung at the Salon; he has a picture in the Luxembourg," the joke of the matter is plain enough if you think what a Rembrandt would look like hanging at the Salon or in the Luxembourg. (One of the great privileges is to go through those rare private collections and museums where the ancient and modern masters hang together; there indeed one has the grandiose confirmation of the permanence, of the identity of character, in all true things.)

Cézanne loved to speak of the "*bonnes humantiés*" he knew in the schools of his youth, and I think it is the neglect of the classics in our democratic and materialistic time which has brought about the truly monstrous confusion between the work of the artist and the work of Ananias. The greatest strain I shall put on the reader's belief in my statements will probably come just here, but I have no other course than to affirm that nearly all the paintings and sculptures we see around us are bad. A sweeping statement? not quite so much so as it seems, when you recur to those figures I gave as to the increase in the number of artists. Does anyone think that the genius or even talent in the world has increased during a century in the proportion of 100 to 40,000? No one; and it is the 39,900 who are supplying most of the stuff that passes for

art. It shouts at us from the bill-boards; it glares in the electric light of the subway; it leers and simpers on the magazine covers that bedizen the news-stands. If the Middle Ages and the Renaissance formed their vision on the imagery of the churches, how can we doubt that the idea of art in our day is created, to an enormous extent, by the pictures all around us? We can read, as the old periods could not, but as we open our newspapers and magazines, there is the same type of art that we just saw in the poster.

"Oh, is that what you've been speaking about? Then there's no harm done; nobody looks on any of those things as works of art. We thought you were discussing painting and sculpture, like one sees in the exhibitions." I am; and I say that their mentality is that of the things you have said were not art. The fact that they are printed in quantity is not against them; a Rembrandt etching, issued in large editions, is still a Rembrandt, just as much as a painting—which is unique. What counts, with him and with all artists, is the conception of humanity and the world, and the form and color which express that. The conception of practically all the paintings in the Academies and Salons is due to the mind that expresses itself most openly in the Subway pictures. Whatever differences there are between them and the things reproduced in this book are superficial at best. The camouflaging of cheap ideas with certain externals of the masters does not put the exhibition pictures—"genuine hand oil-paintings" though they are—on any higher plane. The ephemeral car-card would indeed be negligible if it were not a symptom of the disease which breaks out in uglier form in the "high art" of Ananias.

In one respect, the men who dilute the poison of the worst things down to the dosage of the banality around us, almost do the world a service. Most of the stuff we see is not

dangerous; it is merely dull, and that is one thing that art never is. Yet how difficult is any change from the current idea of pictures when we come to buy them for our homes—if we do, (between Ananias and the interior decorator, they are growing a bit "old fashioned"). But if the better kind of home still retains the tradition of having pictures, and an effort is made to place before the family a finer thing than it gets from the advertisements, no such loving care presides over the decoration of public buildings.

There are large sums of money to expend for these, and so they are a very favored matter of attention for Ananias. No other field of art exhibits so clear a difference between our period and the great days that gave us San Marco or the Ducal Palace in Venice, Santa Croce or the Carmine in Florence, and the Sistine Chapel in Rome. Having once entered

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THE GRADUATE—E. H. Blashfield

the chapel of the College of the City of New York, where Mr. E. H. Blashfield's big mural painting of *The Graduate* is located, and being struck by the identity of type between this young man and those "ideal American youths," the wearers of a much-advertised collar, I wondered what effect would be produced if some of the Subway advertisements were placed beside the painting. Would their resemblance cause the observer to condemn the work of the well-known decorator? Or would the "touch of vulgarity that makes the whole world kin" (to use Whistler's paraphrase) react in the other direction, and lead the Subway rider to see in his daily art-exhibit a higher value than he had imagined it to possess? I am sure that the latter result would be the one produced. The enormous effect of Subway Art is to be observed everywhere. While the politicians who award the contracts for decorating public buildings—or for defacing Stone Mountain in Georgia—themselves prefer the Subway school (in so far as they think of art-matters at all), they would not stand out against the people if the latter really wanted better imagery for their court-houses and state-houses and the Library of Congress.

Perhaps the same thing was true in the old days—always allowing for the different level of taste. In the early Cinquecento, a Julius II, for example, had very positive ideas about the kind of art that should go into his churches; but after all, the deciding factor, then as now, was doubtless the ideas of the public. The great decorations were of course the pride and honor of the rich, but they were also, as we know, the Bible of the poor, who could read no other. Just as our Subway decorators have to sell goods to their public, so the decorators of the Church had to inculcate or (as our current idiom has it) "sell" its ideas to the public of the Renaissance.

Subway Art does more than sell face powder and cigarettes to the crowd; it "sells" the art-conception of its makers to the vast majority of people, and in every rank of society. The essential thing about the advertisement is that "it gets its story across" in the momentary glance vouchsafed it between two jostles from the neighboring straphangers, or between two flickerings of the electric light. This "story" is contained in the absolute naturalness of the plate of tomato soup, the jar of cold cream, or the entrancing and chaste, if rather brainless, specimen of American maidenhood who owes her complexion, her teeth, or whatever it is, to both.

Naturalness and always more naturalness is the demand, and it is supplied as the Subway Artists, attracted to their profession by its high wages, train themselves for it more intensively—by longer and more special school study than was open to the advertisement-maker of a generation ago. And the reproductive processes, always based on photography, have been perfected and now seem to be near a maximum of efficiency. How quaint the advertising pictures and magazine illustrations of 1895, say, appear today. Soon they will be antiques, like the old prints of fish and game once thought the right thing for a grill-room, or the famous pansies or the "Yard of Kittens" that adorned the dark walls of the country sitting-room, or the old kerosene lamps and ketchup bottles which our thrifty farmers sell along the roads to city motorists, who alternate between the physical hunger they satisfy at the hot-dog stands and the nobler craving of their spirit for the masterpieces of Colonial American art. When the supply of these is exhausted, our "patriotic" *cognoscenti* will doubtless get around to forming collections of the early, middle, and later styles of Leyendecker and Howard Chandler

Christy. Later on will come the turn of the hosiery and tooth-paste artists.

It is in no mood of sarcasm, but simply in view of the writings on antiques now appearing, that I predict, at least as a possibility, carefully documented handbooks on these "characteristic expressions" of the present day. Will there be much space in these writings for the fine design and workmanship that Jeanneret, in his remarkable book, "Toward an Architecture," finds in the airplane, the automobile, the tobacco pipe, the locomotive, and other modern productions? Probably not. They may, in the future, have the charm of rarity, always a powerful lure for the collector whose possessions would cease to interest him could the fellow across the street boast the same treasures; but there is no indication that manufactured articles of recent date are to be canonized as art, like the Gibson Girl. Perhaps you will be leaving a fortune to your children or grandchildren if you pass on to them a good batch of Candy-Loving Mothers, Bathing Girls, and Gloss-haired Boys. As a way of buying for a rise, which also has a great lure for a certain class of "art-lovers," this offers perhaps as good a chance for speculation as the next. Perhaps not, again; it is conceivable that something will open people's eyes to the utter worthlessness of such pictures. A collection would, however, show our present skill in rendering to the life (so to speak) the look of the syrup in which float SOMEBODY'S Canned Peaches, the very gleam of the gold in EVERYMAN'S Exquisite Mustard, and the precise degree of silken transparence in the stockings on EVERYWOMAN'S Adorable Legs. "Look to your ankles—everyone else will," runs the catchword of the stocking advertisement. And since ankles flit even as the lights flicker,

you must look quickly. The Subway School products are not intended for long and loving contemplation.

III

Therein seems to me the difference between the art of the modern crowd and the art of the past. Egyptian sculpture was not made to be exhausted at the first glance. For fifty centuries the Sphynx has kept its unhurried gaze steady above the desert, and in that time the world has looked in vain for a flaw in the craftsmanship of the race that carved the gods of the Nile, set the jewels of its princesses, and incised the deathless figures on their tombs. The planes of a Chaldean head turn with the slow majesty of the constellations that the shepherd-astronomers of Tello observed in the nights of their ancient, faith-holding world. The age of the sculpture has nothing to do with its impressiveness; as a piece of stone, a geologist may tell you, the Adirondack boulder on which you have put a cushion to sit is five times as old. The time that lends to the Chaldean stone its awesome dignity is the time that the old sculptor and his race gave to meditating the exactitude of proportions, the precision of curves, the perfect balance between incident in the detail and silence in the inter-spaces which, together, tell what the universe meant to the great people of the land of Sumer.

The influence of Ananias has kept out of the modern art-schools any teaching that would prepare appreciation of such an art. And that is why we get such blunders as that of the Brancusi case. The sculptor, after passionate study of the museums and years of indefatigable toil, reaches a conception of modeling very near to that of the great schools of antiquity; his works are held up at the Customs House, and in court the statement is made that they are not art. The purchasers of the

sculpture certainly did not want it as manufactured metal, but that is all it is in the eyes of the school which gave to the world such cause for rejoicing as the statue of “Sunset” Cox in Astor Place, New York, and most of the Soldiers’ Monuments in the squares of our cities.

I do not know whether the “Sunset” Cox artist and the rest of the tribe have ever given much attention to the period of Tello. If so, they have been one hundred per cent successful in keeping out of their work any trace of their study of this or any other type of great sculpture. Perhaps that is because the guides at the Louvre rarely take American tourists through the Chaldean rooms. You can spend hours there without catching even an echo of the “thundering herd” that plods through the galleries of paintings, wearily gaping at the Old Masters that it is their bounden duty to admire and tell the folks at home about—even if, in their later outpourings of emotion, they suppress their intimate conviction that the old pictures don’t seem to have as much “naturalness” as the pictures on which they had formed their taste.

They must, of course, have a look at the “original” Venus of Melos downstairs, but it will be a brief look, for they have a tremendous lot of sightseeing to do yet on that day. And one knows how their Subway mood of haste has robbed them of whatever idea of art they might have derived from their one visit to the sanctuary, when one hears accounts of study-parties who covered everything of note between Edinburgh and Egypt in a two-months’ trip. I come back to my point that the appreciation of art is akin to the creation of art. For both, time is needed—not to mention the humility that comes of a realization of the vastness of the field. It is a humility that takes away no slightest bit of the joy that art affords. The man who created the Venus of Melos knew that he was dealing

with a goddess, that she is as eternal as the sea from which she arose, and that for all the time when she should be honored by men, his work must be worthy of her greatness. Only when that time is past will there have been enough love and study of the art of Greece.

How can we believe that the artists of whom I write this book have ever given the scantest tithe of such study when we find their work so different in fundamentals from that of Hellas? I remember, from personal experience, the case of a competitor for the highest prize of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts who did not know that the Venus of Melos was in the Louvre. In the words spoken quite in earnest by another student there, "Being a painter, not a sculptor, he did not need to know it." Why should people take seriously the statement they have read, that Greek sculpture is supreme, when they find contemporary practitioners of the art doing things completely opposed to the spirit of Olympia and of the Parthenon? The modern men, whose work is seen every day on public buildings, rich men's houses, and in the parks, are the natural intermediaries between the public and the classics, the interpreters we trust to make clear the meaning of distant things that time has rendered unfamiliar. Judge for yourself what that interpretation must be, the next time you walk through the Greek and Roman sculpture galleries at the Metropolitan Museum and into the adjoining hall of American sculpture. I am sure that my reputation for patriotism can stand the strain when I say that a man planning the museum in a spirit of bitter irony could have thought of no crueler trick than placing those ancient and modern sculptures as neighbors.

Had there been such an intention it would, however, have been frustrated in the case of all but the rarest visitors. The

great mass simply do not think of comparing the two types of work. In fact, they scarcely look at the broken torsos, the battered heads, the bits of architectural carving, and the remains of tombs. A rather morbid curiosity about mummies holds their interest in the Egyptian rooms, as also the recent wave of publicity given to the Tut-ankh-amen finds, which stir the imagination of all through the vastness of the time during which the horde of gold and other treasures has lain hidden away in silence. But for the Greek things, there is no such romance; nothing is hidden or mysterious—to the man who walks through at even a leisurely pace. He does not see that the limpidity of Greek art, as clear as a summer sky, is as infinite in its depths. Instead, he recognizes that here is an arm, there a leg, a belly, feminine breasts, a head that has lost its nose. Why don't they put one on? The idea of so real-looking a person with the nose gone causes him rather a shudder.

How could he look on the matter in any other way when his guides, the sculptors of his community, have accustomed him to things that need only color to make them as natural as wax-works? If Daniel C. French and Lorado Taft are right in the affirmation made by their art, if the one thing to be asked of a sculptor is the ability to render in lifelike fashion the appearance of beautiful women and handsome men, then, of course, the Greeks are wrong, and the public does well to pass by the mutilated fragments of Attic marble as having only an "archæological" interest. If, however, as artists contend, the essential quality of sculpture resides in the sense of scale through which the Greeks first found harmonious proportions for steps and columns and pediment, then adjusted the figures within the pediment to its lines and spaces, and finally gave to each detail of the figures its relationship to the whole, then the

buttery surfaces, the mean forms, the absence of any structure save that taught in the anatomy class—which characteristics seem fairly to sum up the false sculpture we see all around us—are a travesty of the classic qualities.

The good word "conservative" could not be abused more thoroughly than by applying it to such work. Instead of leading to a conservation of the art-values which the great schools of the past have stored up in man's instinct, the savorless naturalism of the weaker type of modern sculptors breaks down all idea save that of resemblance to subjects held to be pleasing at the time. How often has each one of us heard the remark (as to Rembrandt, let us say), "It's wonderful work, but why should he choose such an ugly subject?" And the imprudence of Chardin in spending so much time over still-life! "A picture of some pots and pans, or of a dead animal like that would not be pleasant to have in one's home; it ought to be put in a museum." There you are—the distinction is clear: the classic things are all very well in their way, and may be stored in certain galleries that no one is obliged to visit, but for real enjoyment a very different type of art is demanded by the man educated in the Subway and its corresponding galleries at the Museum. Highbrow stuff such as you find there in the rooms of the Italian Primitives, for example, may get by with professors, whose chief indoor sport is working out the puzzles of dates and schools. But the "plain man," when he looks at pictures, has no time to waste on mere thinking, and, as he has millions of dollars to spend for his pictures (see the reports of the Advertising Men's conventions) there will be plenty of artists to furnish him with "real beauty that anyone can understand at once." Those last words are clearly not original with me—a philosophical

training quite different from my own was needed for such an inspired phrase.

IV

One hears a good deal about the leveling effect of democracy. If this meant to justify trampling down noble things to the level of the mob, then democracy is as hateful as its first opponents thought it to be. But it need not mean that. The Museum as we know it today is the most democratic of institutions; all that it needs is proper directing. Then the leveling process may work in the opposite way from that which we now see, and the objects of common use, even the Subway advertisements, may become delightful things, as were the productions of popular art in other times—as they are still, in our time, in certain fortunate countries like Mexico. Already there are men working vigorously to obtain such conditions. But of all these matters I must speak at more length in another chapter. My purpose here is to point out differences between the work of good and that of bad artists. What a mad state of affairs it is that allows such a piece of writing as this to be any more than the telling of what everybody knows. Yet experience simply cries out the fact that few people have any idea of the difference, or any notion that it is important. I have never heard of anybody's explaining that good odors are preferable to bad odors. And though art is an infinitely more complex thing than odors, or the material of our sense of touch or hearing or sight, we ought to distinguish between good and bad almost as easily as we do in cases when we say, This smells right; this smells wrong.

Artists and real art-lovers say just those words, and with far more conviction when they speak of a picture than when they

speak of an article of food—for, as to that, one is really dealing with a matter of taste. My own warns me not to eat cucumbers, because my inner man has always protested violently when he has had to make his vain efforts to digest them. My friend, who can get away with a whole bowl of cucumbers, can hardly bear the sight when he sees me eating snails, which I happen to find a great delicacy. You may affirm that this is still a metaphysical question, but let us be good-natured and allow each man his own order from the bill of fare.

I shall be among the first to claim a similar right at the Museum—the route I lay out for myself there bespeaks only my own choice of the viands and wines it offers, and I know that one cannot assimilate all its good things at once. But I do insist that what it offers be health-giving, and not simply "the most perfect specimen of its kind." A particularly poisonous type of mushroom might be called that, or—to take a more probable instance—there were those substitutes for bread that were evolved in Germany during and just after the Great War. Wheat flour and milk being unavailable, *Ersatz Brot* was produced from bean meal, ground potato peels and sawdust, worked into dough and baked. The result may have looked right, and we know that flavoring extracts added to wood alcohol will make it taste somewhat like good liquor, but it affects the system in a different way. Poison is poison even when disguised, and the *Ersatz* bread did not nourish; even today one can see the effects of the starvation years on numberless young Germans whose physique still tells of the time in their childhood when they had no good food. Undernourishment and the poison of adulterants in matters of the mind are as sure in their effects as they are in matters of the body.

One of the worst results of Ananias' work is that in his blindness to standards, of which I spoke before, he has spread confusion in the mind of the public. To his betrayal of his trust, more than to any other cause, we must charge the public's ignorance of the classics, its failure to take delight in them when it goes to the Museum, its conception of Europe as a sort of Coney Island for the rich, with one-side show for those who want to see "high-class antiques" in their original setting; another for those who love to shop, and who supply their wardrobe more cheaply than their neighbors at home; with peep-shows for those who would turn a severe scowl on any immoral spectacle in their own town, but who suddenly become broadminded under the mellowing influence of Montmartre; or there are the educational "features"—more colorful than a movie film and even more real—where you go into some dark, unhygienic church and see the superstitious foreigners saying their prayers to a wicked-looking priest—or maybe it was a cardinal—and you are glad to get out into the sunlight again and think that in a few weeks you'll be sailing past the Statue of Liberty and getting back to God's country and your office—though first you are going to have one more round of Paris and see those cafés where artists with long hair go to drink with their models, when they are not doing the beautiful paintings in the Salon, or maybe the nut-stuff, like Matisse and Picasso pictures, that some one was saying was what really got the big money. "I'm glad I'm not in that line; mine is good, conservative oil-stocks. What's yours?"

It is the fault of Ananias if men with work to do think that art is contemptible, something fit for effeminate idlers to produce or to own. Or, let us hear the words attributed to one of our statesmen, a man whose very simple beginnings were not, apparently, improved by the political portraits which

surround him. If he referred to these, let us hope he really did say "Art is the bunk!" The walls of many American homes show the result of this belief. Once more, it is not the artists who suffer most from the lie. Ananias has paid for it with his chance to live, the public he has fooled pays for it with loss of understanding for things that make life worth living.

Pazienza, col tempo, say the Italians, with the tranquil philosophy of a people that has itself had the patience and time to learn what it is that gives lasting enjoyment. We shall not always accept counterfeit art. Like counterfeit money, it will not pass again when once people have stamped it as false and have arrived at a sense that protects from new imposture. It was the sense for genuine things that gave the Italian Renaissance such sureness in recognizing its great artists. The thrill that ran through Florence when Cimabue made his break with the weakening tradition of the Byzantines was to be repeated with each of the great events due to his successors. The public believed in the work, and chose among its producers with unfailing judgment. When a man enriched the tradition, whether by his research, as in the case of Leonardo, or through his personality, as with Raphael, his merit caused the greatest princes of the Church and the State to vie with one another in obtaining his service. The men of little talent were left in their villages, or in the workshops where they practiced the crafts. It is curious to see how late the old styles continued in out-of-the-way places that were beyond the influence of the innovators, who held the attention of the great cultural centers. Thus it is certain that Greco, during his early years in Crete, came into contact with Byzantine traditions that still had vitality, even at that late day. His subsequent school work in semi-pagan Venice never effaced the religious strain of his beginnings. And when he came into relationship

with a Spanish diplomat, the latter was not thrown off the track by the new idiom of the Titian studio. Recognizing the special value of the Greek painter for the expression of the Catholic spirit of Spain, he brought about the journey to that country of the young artist, who stayed there all the rest of his seventy years—with the marvelous results that we know.

One can scarcely imagine Greco as developing the great style of his mature and later life in the splendorloving city of the lagoons, instead of in Toledo, with its arid surroundings and the mystic fervor in the land of Saint Teresa. Was it accident that singled out for Spain the only one of the young painters of Venice who was to do work in a spirit suited to her own? That does not seem likely. It is far easier to believe that Renaissance connoisseurship was equal to the task of choosing the men who could do the best work.

Col tempo; we shall get to that stage of understanding, even as Spain did when she was drawing from an older culture the elements she needed. People had time then, especially for matters of religion and art. Men's hours of meditation and prayer were passed in front of paintings and sculptures, whose secrets could not remain hidden from eyes that gave them such scrutiny. One reason why the work of Ananias can have its momentary success is that it has been specially created to catch the favor of those who glance quickly and move on quickly, like the tourists on their race through the galleries. Time is the factor that we are constantly forgetting, when we consider both the making and the understanding of art. Speaking about ancient quite as often as about modern works, people ask why they cannot see the great qualities attributed to them—IF they are there. Ask them how long they have known the work in question, and how long they have studied it. Very frequently they will admit that it is a matter of

minutes; and some recent observations by museum officials, timing visitors with a stop-watch, found that their average halt before each work at which they looked at all was of a few seconds. Even the most experienced judges, when dealing with museum objects, do not attempt to see them at such a *tempo*.

There is a story that illustrates the way that the seeing of pictures was regarded in the Renaissance. Piero della Francesca had painted a band of decoration around the choir of San Francesco in the city of Arezzo, then another series of pictures above the first, and was beginning a third still higher up. Whereupon (and I only hope the story is as true in fact as it is in spirit) a great prelate tried to reason with him, saying, "But Piero, no one will see what you paint up there." "God will see it," was the reply of the artist. He spoke for the artists of all time. When I said before that Ananias is the type most directly opposed to that of the artist, I was thinking of such a conception as Piero's. To do the work well is the main concern, what the world may say is secondary. Incidentally, there are days when a certain structure is placed in the church at Arezzo, and if you get up on that you see the glorious painting with ease.

With this insight into the mind of a good artist of the old time, let me couple a remark by a good artist of today. André Derain was protesting against the abuse of reproductions. He conceded that they do an invaluable service as documents, and that the modern art-book, which permits a quick survey of a given man's work or his period, would not exist without them. Also they permit people to make a study of arts they had not known, preliminary to seeing the originals. But already we are at the danger line. Abuse begins when people allow the reproductions to become a substitute for the

originals. Some of the recent processes approach the effect of water-colors, particularly, with extreme closeness, and in the case of drawings and etchings, only the most careful scrutiny reveals the difference. But there is always some quality that evaporates in the making of a reproduction, and the owner of such a work feels the inferiority sooner or later; he begins to doubt how far the effect is false, how far true, and is dissatisfied—as one always is by things that lack full genuineness. “I hate them,” said Derain; “it is because of them that people lose the power to make distinctions. In the past, an artist would go a hundred miles on foot to see a masterpiece. When he had made an effort like that, he studied the thing he had come to see; and he went back to his own work with a will to do something as good.”

One needs, indeed, to keep before one’s eyes the great things of recent times in order to withstand the temptation to think that the past alone is the realm of perfection. It is not: we have done more than search and struggle. The modern masters (men of a class that is rare in any period) have given us works that have more than latter-day idealism to recommend them—that stand up as impeccable, however closely they are studied. One understands the admiration for Giorgione and Rubens, for Vermeer and Watteau and Delacroix, that Renoir’s published conversations tell of when, for example, one sees a small nude that he signed in 1916. The circumstance, unusual with him, of adding the date, seems to say, “He was seventy-five years old, paralyzed, and wasted with rheumatism; and he could see, on the earth that he always loved, this joyous color and this grand form.” When we see a picture like this, the thousands of days of his earlier painting, with all their triumphs, seem mere preparation for the final mastery that came in the old age of

the artist. It was then that he could do the things which must be ranked with the perfections he had seen in the museums.

V

But perfections are of various kinds. There are those of the men who work long on a single piece until it baffles all search for an incompleteness; there are those of the men who push onward impatiently from one picture to another, under the spur of an ever deepening conception of their art. Renoir was of this class, and though only the pedant would search out details in the earlier pictures that admit of betterment, it is not until his last years that we come, breathless, on such works as the one just mentioned. They seem so clear, and they are the most mysterious of all; we do not know whether it is the new development of the painter’s vision that we are to admire most, or the control with which he makes his complicated medium render his idea with the uttermost finesse.

Perhaps it is because Rembrandt is always willing to give up the smaller perfections for the chance to go on to mightier achievement that he is, for most of us, the supreme type of aspiring effort. The hours we have spent poring over his etchings stand out in memory as luminous as the figures in them when they emerge from the surrounding darkness. Who, having once seen a print of *The Woman with the Arrow*, ever outgrows the experience? And who, unless he has Mr. John C. Van Dyke’s genius for misunderstanding art, ever dreamed of calling it bad in drawing? Rembrandt is modern in our day because he was modern in his own. He knew the plates that Dürer had brought to their incredible perfection, and instead of trying to duplicate the mediæval patience that gave to the world the *Melancholia* and the *St. Jerome in His Study*, Rembrandt made those hundreds upon hundreds of rapid

notations with brush and sepia which in their ensemble make a grander perfection than he could have attained by lavishing all his care on a few works. He understood the urge of his period and his temperament, and was deaf to the solicitations of the burghers who would have paid well for more of the "finished" work that he had done in his earlier years. His break with the virtues of his youth, his even greater break with the marvelous qualities of a period not his own, like Dürer's, led to his becoming the giant we know.

Returning to the conditions of our own day, and remembering that I have spoken ill of a certain type of artists, let me give an example of the manner in which they have, on the other hand, made a start at winning new merits from circumstances that have led dependent, imitative men into the poorest form of art. A connoisseur was asking Mr. Alfred J. Frueh about the style he uses in his admirable drawings. It is evidently quite different from the one that produced the marvelous black-and-white of John Leech, the careful pen-work of Charles Keene, or even from the masterpieces of Wilhelm Busch, who, among the older humorists, is probably Mr. Frueh's nearest neighbor. "My work has to be seen under different conditions from theirs," was the observation of the American artist. "Their drawings were studied carefully by the public, under the quiet lamp of the family library; mine have to be caught on the fly in the Subway."

The case affords one further example of the thing that the big men of the past did when they met new ideas with new forms. Italy had her Uccello and Leonardo; Holland had her Rembrandt and Ruisdael; and Matisse and Derain—(Cries of "Modernism! Modernism!")—have profited by their example. If this be modernism, make the most of it.[E]

The Subway is probably the least of the things which give hope that our time is finding forms for its ideas. The limited possibilities for beautiful construction afforded by cars and stations seem to indicate that they must wait until our artists are ready to evolve decoration. Today our attempts at it are pretty generally abortive, as is seen in the poverty of mural painting, the usual failure of architectural detail (as when the decoration of the Woolworth Building imitates Gothic, or when the Shelton achieves its place as the finest of our effort by suppressing all detail and depending on mass). The sense of fitness in decoration shows itself to be astray again in that bad understanding of the theater which would make the play a mere pretext for the display of scenery and costume. One might as well think of a girl as an animated clothes-rack. Despite interesting and even valuable contributions to stage-craft that the recent scenic designers have made, their work cannot strike the channel to real success until they learn to subordinate it to the play. Gordon Craig went to the opposite extreme, some years ago, when he told a group of painters that just as they, in their art, had to combat the poison of the story-telling picture, so he, in the theater was fighting its abuse by literature. He made a double error: the story in a picture is not a poison, unless it so absorb the artist's attention as to make him indifferent to the æsthetic qualities; a fine havoc we should work in the museums if we abolished religious and historical works! And, with the bad parallelism of so many analogies, Mr. Craig's other error in leaping to the defense of the theater from the ladder of the scene-painter offers a spectacle that must seem grotesque enough at the present, for instance, when we have just seen on the boards such admirable "literary" plays as "Juno and the Paycock," "The Plough and the Stars," "Porgy," and "him."

One is eager for architectural detail that will enhance the effect of the Telephone and Telegraph Building, among others. In the perspective of a big city, only a few buildings can stand out enough to make a sufficient effect by their mass and their large proportions. But these things—which our architects have already achieved—are basic; and they are part of the evidence on which we may rest a conviction that our time promises splendid developments ahead of us. Cross the Hudson on a ferry-boat and hear the vigorous expressions of admiration and of disapproval that the most casual laymen utter, as one big building after another profiles itself against the sky of Manhattan; watch the heads of twenty passengers turn in unison as a Fifth Avenue bus in its moving along affords different views of a new construction. That intensity of interest by the crowd is also a basic thing; on that reposes the incentive of the artist to do work that will bring him success with his public—and every artist wants that, even when he happens to have around him such a ring of ignorance that he can hope for success only with a public afforded by the future.

Why should he have to wait? Or rather, as I have been insisting, why should the public be missing the show? The artist gets his chief pleasure, after all, from doing the work, but imagine a public among whom no one enjoyed the buildings (I do not speak of cities where there are no good ones to enjoy); where only poor books were read; where actors and musicians got their livelihood mainly in other callings, and gave their plays and concerts for their own satisfaction and that of small audiences—too small to give support to more than a few of them. With the artists, financial success has usually come so late in life that they have grown indifferent to money; though if they only wait long enough, it

often comes in floods—when the Philistines have been told sufficient times that a given work is the proper thing to buy. “All you have to do is to live till you’re eighty, as I often told Manet.” That was one of the standing jokes of dear old Théodore Duret.

Does anyone think that Manet’s case was exceptional? Let him read all the histories of art of the nineteenth century, and he will see that the exception, if there be any, would have to be to a rule that no good artist, under modern conditions, can have the support of a sufficient public until he is at just about the age selected by Duret. There are, of course, glorious exceptions among the illustrators, like Daumier and Guys; and the fact that they did the work that they loved and got a fair living from it has led some men to think that artists should all adopt the tactics of these two masters—which is to say, turn their backs on the cultured classes and address themselves to the people. The proposition—especially the latter half of it, opens up a perspective that is tempting enough. And, under the right conditions, there are more chances to reach and please the crowd than through the illustrated papers, which today, indeed, would have no use for Guys, since the omnipresent camera chronicles daily events. But there might be the decorations of public edifices to interest the people again, as they did in the past. And once more I look forward to a later chapter when I say that the great enthusiasm for the admirable mural work of Diego Rivera and José Clemente Orozco, on the walls of government buildings in Mexico, has come from the masses at least as much as from the people of education.

Why cannot such a state of affairs be made to include all forms of art? ask the Socialists, who say that the artist is class-bound because he does not break with the “educated”

entirely and make himself one of the people. The trouble is that the people—the poor as well as the rich—need education in order to appreciate most forms of art. Or rather—and here we get back to the central idea of this study—they need to undo the mis-education to which they have been subjected. It has been with always increasing completeness that Ananias has taught them what to see and what *not* to see, though in the latter decades a rapid growth in the number of collectors, and even museum officials, opposed to him is to be noticed. The prospects of governments as the arbiters of æsthetic questions is one that few artists want to consider. The problems of their craft are always so pressing that they have no time or inclination for the political action that Ananias, with his eye ever open to material interests, is quick to profit by. Hence his standing in corporate bodies where votes bestow titles or prestige, hence the fact that among the men represented in the illustrations to this book are a president of the Royal Academy, two presidents of the National Academy, and various members of the Institute of France. There is not one of the names of all the painters and sculptors represented that is not entitled to several initials of societies to which they belong. The catalogues of exhibitions also give lists of their various prizes, medals, stars, crosses, titles, and orders, and it is difficult for the simple citizen to believe that men who have attained all these distinctions are not the best artists, that they are merely the best of their kind—like the most dangerous of the poisonous mushrooms.

The histories of the nineteenth century may be consulted again as to the actions of official art-bodies, as well as on the lack of pecuniary success by the masters. A hundred years ago, Constable wrote in a letter to a friend, " ...still smarting under my election to the Academy," the matter having been so

long delayed as to come as an offense to the great man, whose success with the outer world finally prompted the Academy to rectify the injustice of his former nonacceptance. In various other cases, the defenders of tradition, as the corporations of artists love to style themselves, have added the names of the masters to their lists only just in time to save themselves the disgrace of omitting the greatest men. Thus Delacroix, after an earlier defeat for election to the Institute, was made a member only in 1857, six years before his death at the age of sixty-five. In his case as in that of Constable, it seems unlikely that his mere genius explains the honor, which attaches more to the favor shown him by Napoleon III. That monarch broke with democratic practice as much by recognizing the greatness of Delacroix as by the steps he took to reach the throne. The case of the greatest sculptor of modern times is even clearer, for Barye was not elected to the Institute till he was seventy-two (seven years before his death). His friends had persuaded him to offer himself as a candidate at the time of a previous vacancy. On that occasion, when he was seventy, he had the deep mortification of seeing himself rejected by the vote of his inferiors.

As the century advances, the case of the corporations in art grows more and more indefensible. Hardly a voice is raised to refute the charges of commercialism which, on every hand, critics have leveled at the Academies of England and the United States. The people who are still impressed with the letters R. A. or N. A. after an artist's name must be pretty far away from the echoes of professional opinion. In France, the partnership between the Government and the Salon has been so uniformly and flagrantly opposed to the great painters and sculptors of the later time, that the better French artists not only shun the old Salons, but have again and again refused so

simple a recompense from the State as the red ribbon. An editorial in one of the leading Paris dailies a few years ago bore the title, "Men no longer refuse the cross" (of the Legion of Honor). Had a particularly wise distribution of it to war heroes relieved it of the suspicion caused by the failure to grant the red ribbon to most of the masters of the recent time? A reading of the article dispelled any such idea: the cross is no longer refused because a new ruling prevents its being offered to anyone before he has signified a willingness to accept it.

Much has been written about the strength of the social instinct among the French, and the way it causes collective recognition, like a governmental award, to have a prestige that other peoples hardly understand. A long series of abuses was therefore necessary to lead to the refusal by artists of a decoration usually so coveted as that of the Legion of Honor. A condition like this, when it reaches the point of anomaly as regards the spirit of a people, should go far toward explaining distrust for government control of art, such as a Socialist régime would bring in. Democratic governments are the expression of the majority, but in art the minority is usually right, and in modern times always.

When the political or national appeal is resorted to, in obtaining a decision in matters of art, we may be sure there is something wrong. Among many examples that could be given, one must suffice here. Courbet had been more or less connected with the taking down of the Vendôme column, and, as a result of the gesture (it meant no more than that to him), was exiled after the Franco-Prussian War. Alleging the fact as his cause of action and stating that one of the pictures submitted by Courbet had been painted in Germany, Meissonier demanded the rejection of the Realist's

contributions to the Salon. The form of his statement is especially significant: "Gentlemen, this is not a question of art, but one of dignity. Courbet must henceforth be for us as one dead, his works must be excluded from the Salon." When the measure thus called for by the president of the Society of French Artists was carried by vote, Puvis de Chavannes protested by resigning from the jury, as he was later to withdraw from the Salon as a whole. There is hardly an artist of any type today who would not side with him in condemning the action of the pygmy among painters who used public affairs as a screen for his rancor against an artist a thousand times as great as he himself was small.

Did Meissonier have any conception of the perfidy of his act? Probably not. And if our belief in human decency makes us assume a confusion of judgment in this extreme case, we are better prepared when we come to examine the work in art of Ananias. No decision as to its falseness must be taken to imply objectionable personalities among the men who have produced it. On the contrary, they are, in private life, apt to be quite upright, and even pleasant and kind as individuals. Like Meissonier, they believe sincerely in their work and in their school. Courbet is anathema to them—until the time comes for him to be placed with the great men and held up, as an example of real instead of assumed progressiveness, to the Courbet of the next generation. "The trouble with you people who attack the Ecole des Beaux-Arts is that you still think of it as a school under the influence of Bouguereau. Today it has everything in the modern tradition that is sane"—which means that instead of the straight academic work of forty years ago there is an assimilation of tendencies (this is more polite than to call them "steals") from the better men who seem to promise a new layout for the shop window. But

please—no one wants to attack the Ecole: it is a victim of false art far more than a cause of it. All that is necessary to note here is that when butterfly wings have been grafted on the torpid animal of the past, the resulting hybrid is still unable to fly. And so, whatever the formula employed by the successive generations of Ananias artists, one may say of their work, “the more it changes the more it’s the same thing.”

Poor Bouguereau! What a byword his name has been made, now that people have singled him out to represent the bad ideas of a generation or two ago. But that is no sign of progress when the same people refer to Bakst as a painter to be taken seriously, or even as one of importance. Did not the newspapers record the names of artists, men of affairs, and society leaders who gathered for luncheon in order to march in a body to the opening of a Bakst exhibition and so inaugurate it with befitting pomp? Did not the world’s greatest art-dealer offer two studies by the painter to the Metropolitan Museum—which accepted them? But Bouguereau, whom we blush to remember on our grandfather’s walls, was a far better artist than Bakst. For if the latter managed to bedeck himself with a little of the color and design of certain modern masters, he remains, beneath all his finery, a slight and ill-schooled draftsman, without vision or conviction. Low as Bouguereau’s ideals were, whether of humanity or of art, he held to them consistently, and his very hostility to the better men was sincere enough to cause one to look on his narrow talent with a species of respect. The fact that his sugary painting sold to hundreds upon hundreds of people was not due to any deliberate cheapening of his ideas. Those sentimental platitudes remained unchanged from the beginning of his career to the end, and were simply the type of picture congenial to the people who never looked seriously

into the value of art. They found the famous Hoffman House Bouguereau agreeable to glance at now and again in the café there, while saloons which had attained opulence were hung with work of the less famous members of the school.

But it is a school that is agreed on now as the type of the old-fashioned, and is as good to get a laugh with as the bustle which the dashing young lady of 1886 employed to accentuate the charm of her anatomy. Dear Grandma—she WAS rather sporting for her time, and some of the books she read aren't so bad, when you stop to think of them; but how could she know how swank it is to be modern? A generation ago, even, she might have had Boldini and Helleu, or the second crop of Impressionists, according to her taste, or Sorolla, perhaps, but what is that compared with today—with our Post-Cubist painters and the Near-Cubist stage-decorators? You might as well compare the jokes in an old number of "Punch" to the wise cracks that are such a scream at the "Follies."

Everybody knows that fashions change, and as long as people look at paintings and sculptures as something that is smart just for the time being, like a certain type of cigarette holder, hat, or upholstery, there is nothing to bother about. But one does have to take notice when work is placed in the Museum. The most frivolous flapper who ever saw a hip flask as a symbol of romance can remember with a kind of reverence Hoffman's *Christ among the Doctors* or Rosa Bonheur's *Horse Fair* or *The Spirit of '76* (the "Yankee Doodle picture") in the principal's room at her school, where there was also a small cast of Michael Angelo's *Moses*, one of Barye's *Walking Lion*, and the head of the Hermes of Praxiteles. At the museum, where her class was taken one day, the teacher pointed out the same Greek head attached to

its figure, and put a stop to a certain embarrassment and tittering among the pupils by explaining that nudity in art was not indecent. The Greek work being in the gallery, and the Barye and the Michael Angelo, also *Washington Crossing the Delaware* and *Columbus before Isabella* (she knew all about the two paintings from her history lessons), the Museum became almost as sacred a pillar of truth as the Church. She has never been back to the museum, but she knows that anything it contains is Great Art.

Her simple faith—better, as Tennyson says, than Norman blood—is the faith of millions. And so we are approaching an important matter, when we come to works that are not only in the Museum, but by men who fix the whole policy of museums.

CHAPTER III

THE COUNTERFEIT OF ART: ITS PRACTICE

I

IN Florence one sees at the Uffizi Gallery, a collection of self-portraits by the artists of some four centuries. Raphael and Dürer are there, and Rubens and Rembrandt, and Ingres and Corot. Down to the time of the last-named painters, everything in the gallery seems to belong to the type of art exhibited in the rest of the museum, as do a few among the more recent self-portraits. But what are we to understand when we find there the effigy of Sir Edward J. Poynter that is reproduced here? Is this vapid piece of sentimentalism the inheritor of the sense of humanity that has evolved in struggle, and been registered, age after age, by the artists? Is this wooly painting, this dead form, this mockery of color, to be connected with anything that makes up for us the august tradition of art?

An English sovereign, following the old custom

Uffizi Gallery

SELF PORTRAIT—Sir E. J. Poynter

as to presidents of the Royal Academy, could confer knighthood on the painter, but no more of knightliness than of art is apparent in the picture; its one quality is that of being typical of the institution which chose Sir Edward as its head. And the institution is itself the typical product of the False Artists of modern times. Not even the modern Italian

galleries, where the work of Ananias seems the more contemptible by reason of the contrast with the glorious past of Rome and Florence, can offer anything to surpass the efforts of the False Artists of England.

In the work of Sir L. Alma-Tadema we have a flagrant contrast between the period he habitually depicts and his interpretation of it. The mood of Rome was one of combat, of triumph, of organization, order, and law. Even in decadent times there was no softening, and when debauches were wasting the strength of the people, they could retain the haughty style that we see in the portraits, the bridges, and the aqueducts. Where is there a hint in the present work of the people of conquering constructors? We are given a representation of their architecture, but no glimpse of the character that called the mighty thing into existence. The False Artist has not been so much as clever in the lie which, in this instance, he tells to men as well as to God. The reference to antiquity reeks of pedantic school-books. One does not want to affront the charming figures of Tanagra by recalling them at moments when one is faced with a work like this; but if we do recollect the grand form that underlies their unassuming grace, a devastating conviction as to the unreality of Alma-Tadema's pretense to classicism must result. The mood of his picture is all of saccharinity. The pretty girls in the bath are the very ones, apparently, whose heads we have seen in a Subway advertisement. Was it for soap, for corsets, or for candy? This picture took longer to do than the lithograph, but in essentials the art of Ananias is seen to be the same, whether produced by a man of the highest official position or by the "nameless folk," as Mr. Berenson once called the makers of current illustrative pictures.

Whatever interest there may be in this painting derives from its subject. Has the artist informed himself correctly as to the scene, its general character, and its detail? If he is right on all these points, his work has just the value of one of the thousands of exposures in the cinematograph reel of a play depicting ancient times. As the separate images unite to produce their wonderful impression of movement, the play ("Ben-Hur," for example), has educational as well as dramatic value. But the camera-man of Hollywood knows that the credit for the piece registered by him belongs to the actors, the author, etc.: the *man-camera* of the Royal Academy deserves no

Tate Gallery

A Favorite Custom—Sir L. Alma-Tadema

more credit by reason of the fact that his “still” was made by hand instead of by a machine.

Of any creative quality in the drawing and color there is not a trace. When the Roman artist gave the most astounding exactitude to his portrait, when he particularized most faithfully as to personality or age, as in the set of a jaw or the

droop of the skin, his work still retained a universal character: behind the individual lines of that one head was the grand sweep of the lines which bound together the world of his time —and which drive into the future, to make it part of his empire. Behind his hard materialism, there is still the harmony of his Greek teachers, and behind them the vision of Egypt and of the Asia of antiquity. One does not reproach Alma-Tadema for his naturalism—the ancients go immeasurably beyond him in this regard; what gives to his work its groveling futility is his failure to imagine any quality beyond naturalism. Perhaps, after all, his work will have an interest for the future: it represents human skill applied to the poorest purposes ever known; it expresses the inability to express anything—if I may borrow George Moore's words; by its own worthlessness it throws the clearest light on the relationship between nature and art in the great schools of the past.

A picture by Vibert that hung for many years in the Metropolitan Museum went a step further in its bid for naturalness than the work of Alma-Tadema. It was entitled, *The Roof and the Bath-Room*, and was painted in two sections. One depicted the exterior of a modern building where workmen have been repairing a hole in the roof of a women's bathing establishment,—which the other section represented. The rough fellows peer down at the half-draped beauties below, who are quite unaware of the pleasure they are affording their admirers. A bar of the frame separated the two scenes. You did not know whether to wonder most at the ingenuity of the scheme, at the skill with which the bright sunshine on the roof was handled in contrast with the diffused light indoors, or at the failure of the painter. His almost uncanny ability was bankrupt after the telling of his anecdote

whose rather shabby character did not, apparently, disturb a public which could delight in the merely correct drawing of the picture (accepting that in place of good drawing), and that could imagine the naturalness of the color to be the same thing as quality of color, such as might have been seen in the Corot pictures in the very gallery with this Vibert.

II

When an artist has no sense of the qualities through which painting and sculpture produce their true effects, or when he has sacrificed that sense through pandering to a public devoid of it, he has recourse to a variety of substitutes. All of them are based on the feat of making a canvas or marble resemble something in nature. This feat can be imparted; and the increase of facilities for acquiring it, the fact that "art-study" was vulgarized in the nineteenth century to only a less degree than instruction in reading and writing account for the enormous increase in the number of artists. "It remains to be seen," remarked Okakura Kakuzo in a lecture, twenty-five years ago, "whether the present school life of the student can take the place of the family life of art in the days when each master took a few pupils into his workshop and slowly trained them to follow the highest traditions of their craft." The characteristically Japanese reserve that marks the observation of the admirable critic does not leave any doubt as to his opinion on the subject.

The school can teach anyone possessing the slightest aptitude, to depict everything we see—men, objects, and landscape. The artist's ability to record our seeing has been bought at the price of hard study in the past, exactly as our scientific knowledge is the result of heroic research by innumerable seekers for truth. Yet the man who has learned

the contents of all the books on biology, for example, is not to be ranked with the humblest emulator of Aristotle, Leonardo, or Lamarck, and when a man has acquired all that the school can teach him of anatomy, perspective, chiaroscuro, and color, he is not for that reason to be ranked with the most modest follower of the masters. But he can go far with people who are not interested in the deeper matters of his art. These are not to be learned at school. Certain elements of composition are taught, but only attentive meditation on nature and the classics, together with ceaseless experiment, will orient the young man's own design toward that unity and variety which characterize the world and are as much an element of truth as drawing or color. These, moreover, are not inert things, the same for all ages and countries. They are differently felt according to the phases of sight that are important to people at a given moment.

The Egyptians gave as intense an account of the world as any race before or since their time, without feeling the necessity of working out certain matters of representation which are known to every schoolboy today. The early masters of Italy gave no more than a hint of the play of light and dark on a head, yet they got the sense of existence they needed—and no painting surpasses theirs in this respect. Nor can any school teach the quality. It was not from a teacher that Cézanne acquired a mastery of form probably no less great than that of Castagno and Piero della Francesca, but from a faithful following out of the Impressionist ideas with which he grew up, and by modifying them with the results of his study at the Louvre.

People will say that Cézanne is a painter for painters, that the layman has no time to go to the Louvre and find out what art is. That is only a half-truth. In the literal sense, few can

spend the time at museums that a great student like Cézanne gave to them. But there are two things that take the layman out of the helpless posture into which that poor excuse puts him. The first is our instinct for the right works. That, and not the machination of dealers which "Petronius Arbiter" denounces, or even the enthusiasm of artists and critics, is what has established Cézanne in his position today—not so long a time after the period of his reprobation. The other factor, which, one must admit, is too uncommon, is the presence in the home of even one work of art. Each painting or etching by a good artist, that our layman has had under his eyes from childhood, represents, as a microcosm, the whole of the distant Louvre, and prepares the person who has cared for it to recognize other things of its kind. Of course, for nothing you get nothing, and if a man go to the Louvre for half an hour or so, taking with him an empty mind, he has one when he leaves.

Here is the opportunity for Ananias. The part of his goods he has retained is worthless; like the other half of the dog which annoyed Pudd'nhead Wilson (he said he wished he owned half of the beast, and that he'd kill his half). The work of the artist is indivisible, like all living things. But it can be imitated, and since Ananias is not concerned with the qualities of a "painter for painters," he will deal in things that are understood by those who know nothing about art. They do know what they like, as they often proudly affirm, and one such thing is a portrait that looks natural. A most interesting inquiry it would be to determine what it is that looks natural to the eye of the plain man. No more convincing likenesses were ever painted than some that remained in the studio of Thomas Eakins. Perhaps they were more like the people represented than they were like the mental image that these

sitters (or their families) had as to their appearance. Ananias (whether he appear in the guise of one of the Frenchmen, Germans, and Italians now reaping a rich harvest from our portrait sitters, or whether he be English, or even a good American citizen) will see to it that he gives a satisfactory account of his client's beauty, intelligence, social station, and wealth—and then the work is sure to look natural. If he does it with quick easy brush-strokes he is a "brilliant craftsman," or, as Sargent was hastily styled, "a master."

Of course it is only the rural trade that demands the type of mastery which produces optical illusion, as with the visiting card apparently stuck under the

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THE DOCTOR--Sir Luke Fildes

frame of the picture but really part of the painting, just like the rest. And I know that I am illustrating a thing known to be poor by many people when I include here a photograph of *The Doctor*, by Sir Luke Fildes. It always finds ardent defenders, however, when a critic speaks against it, and they have very appealing reasons to offer. No one who has ever known the hours when a kindly and competent physician is all that stands between us and the loss of a loved one fails to get something of the chastening moral of the humble tale told in this picture. What a brute it must be to say a word against the painter of such a comforting work, one so eminently fitted for the home! Will the "æsthetic stuff" recommended by the critic (I hope he did not recommend it to these gentle people), will his Old Masters—many of them foreigners—or his queer modern pictures keep our baby alive when the poor little thing is lying there struggling for breath? That is the thought at the back of people's heads when they buy the *Doctor* picture. Of course they would recognize the superstition as such if anyone (save the horrid art critic) put it into those words; but they do make the association of ideas, none the less; and when, in their own idiom, the happy young married couple tell you they "just idolize" this picture, they are speaking the most exact anthropological truth.

The savage making his idol with primitive tools must find swift lines, powerful planes, dazzling projections into the light, mysterious retreats into the dark, and exquisite surfaces on precious material to tell of the attributes of *his* idol. It is not supposed to be a likeness of his god—indeed, he does not claim to have seen the god. That is perhaps what makes him a savage, for

his untutored mind
Sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind,

if one may quote a famous English poet in support of the "modernist heresies" which would attribute to savages imagination, skill, aspiration—or in one word, art, and deny it to Ananias when he merely plays on the feelings of his public and sells them such stuff as *The Doctor*.

III

The feelings invoked by the last-named picture are not the only ones which the False Artist will appeal to. There is patriotism, and the sense of military glory, for example. Read Meissonier's description of his *Friedland, 1807* in the catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum. He does not waste his time in it by answering Manet's remark, "Everything is steel in the picture except the cuirasses." Manet was a painter, and in writing to the purchaser of the picture its author kept to language that a millionaire, as he conceived one, would understand. However generous the price paid, Meissonier says, he is confident that the picture will be worth more in the future. (One seems to remember having heard the statement before when buyers of all sorts of goods are complimented on having acted wisely.) Then, leaving all the "theoretical rubbish" to Manet and his friends, he explains what the picture represents. You might think that pretty clear on looking at a work that fairly outdoes a photograph, but then you have not had it as "the joy of your studio for years," as the painter assures his munificent patron that this has been; and so you may well have overlooked the significance of certain details. This is a scene of triumph, and so nothing shall suggest the horrors of war, save the one dismantled cannon

and the field of wheat that will never ripen. At such a moment the artist could not bear to think of a shadow on the Emperor’s face, and so, as he goes on to tell, he paints Napoleon in the act of raising his hat to his troops. As in the case of *The Doctor*, the emotion intended has nothing to do with art, but is simply what we might feel if we witnessed the scene represented.

No wonder that the schools of Ananias lay all their stress on the ability to represent, and that their graduates have no conception of the principles which stand above that of representation. Our business is not with such questions here, though one is tempted to ask a Meissonier where, in his description of his masterpiece, there is any hint that he sees in this work the quality which, for example, puts a sculpture on a different plane from a life-mask or other cast from an actual object. But he has already replied, from the mouth of a later student at the Beaux-Arts, that as a painter, he did not need to have any knowledge of the qualities in such works as the Venus of Melos. Our business is to show that it is the tactics of the False Artist to flatter the man in the street in his idea that the subject of a work is what counts. A patriotic subject, faithfully portrayed, entitles a work to respect by every lover of his country; a religious subject makes a religious picture; and a scene of comedy makes a comic picture. If you answer that things like *Washington Crossing the Delaware* are what makes the talk about patriotism a bore, or that you consider a landscape by Ruisdael a religious work, you are thought of as impious or mad. You go on to explain that in such a picture as *The Sick Girl* by Jan Steen, the essential point is not to be sought in the explanation of the Molière-like idea, that of the girl who cozens the quack doctor so as to go to her lover, but that it lies in the noble proportions of the work, the

unimaginable subtleties of the color; you say that if you are absolutely obliged to feel patriotism in the presence of pictures, you would choose this one, in honor of some Dutch ancestors; also, by way of continuing, that if you want to see a work that contains the source of the comic element, which is incongruity, you will spend a reluctant moment in recalling that "best seller" which represents the Pears Soap Baby with a nice tame lion and a lovely wooly lamb, and which has made fortunes for its publishers by palming itself off on the religious-minded under the title *A Little Child Shall Lead Them*. But now you are talking blasphemy instead of mere lunacy, so you had better stop. Ananias may have a friend at the district attorney's office who will have you up in court. He did it in the case of an artist who painted a picture which opposed Prohibition by treating the acts of Mr. W. J. Bryan and others as an affront to the Man who, at the marriage at Cana, gave the people wine for their time of rejoicing. In two New York courts the decision went against the picture, though the charge had to be changed from blasphemy to outraging public decency. A third and higher court held that the prohibitionists under attack not being [as yet] objects of religious worship or the sole repositories of public decency, the sentence of fine or imprisonment previously imposed must be remitted.

But do not think that you can always get away from the verdict of public opinion on any such flimsy grounds as logic or art. When the Metropolitan Museum took down *Washington Crossing the Delaware* for a time, indignant protests from patriotic societies flowed in, and the picture returned to the walls. What concern of the patriots was it that they were dictating to an art institution? What did they understand of such talk as calling the painting bad art? How

could it be with such a subject, and after all that Ananias had taught them about the subject, faithfully rendered, being the thing to consider? Long-haired æsthetes might point, by way of contrast, to such a work as the Brueghel in the same galleries and say it proved that painstaking fidelity to a subject does not prevent the artist from coördinating the tiniest of his facts with the work as a whole. The grand conception of the world—so painters might affirm—is marked out in *The Corn Field* by the broad lines of the design; the masses of the grain are as inevitable in their Tightness as a geometrical theorem, and the minutiæ, a thousand times more finely handled than those of the *Washington* or those of the Meissonier, take their due place in the scheme of the picture; it was in vain if anyone tried to show that the mechanical exactitude of those false modern painters could not result in the truth that emanates from the Brueghel. Such talk might go down with highbrows, who are likely to be Bolshevists, anyway, but red-blooded he-men (and probably she-women)

Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE STORM—P. A. COT

knew what was what when they saw the American flag insulted.

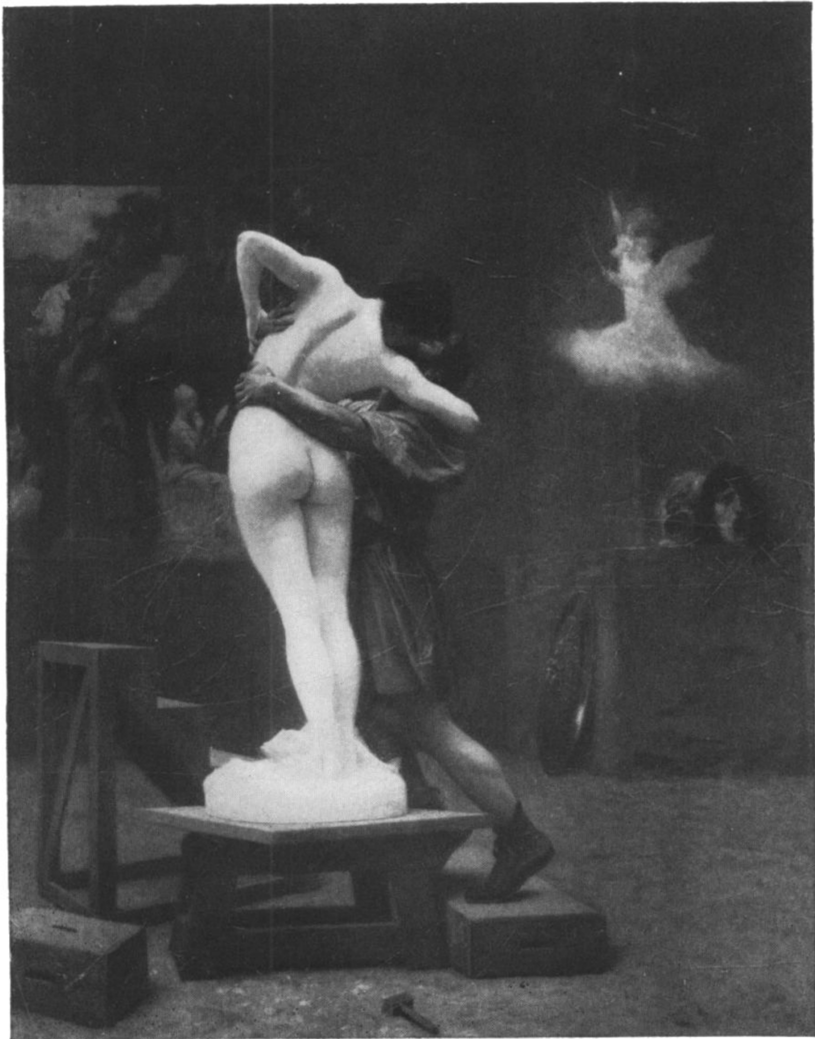
Do such pictures as I have been discussing represent the bad taste of the past alone? Do I feel quite, quite sure that the future is not preparing other bad pictures to take their place? Alas! I am only too sure that it is doing just that—but since

hope keeps on springing eternal, one permits oneself a hope that the future may also provide museum authorities who will debar the later falsities from our walls. If the pictures here considered were indeed done some time ago, they still represent the taste of the present in the vast majority of cases. Mark Twain tells in his "Autobiography" that he and Robert Louis Stevenson once amused themselves by ascertaining exactly the sales of all widely-read authors in America, and found that the best seller of all was Laura Jean Libbey. Exactly on a par with this fact is the bit of statistics yielded by the photograph desk at the leading museum of our country. The work most often called for there is *The Storm* (also known as "Paul and Virginia"), by Cot. And why should it not be? How natural it is that millions, literally millions of visitors to the gallery should look on this picture as great art and the kind they would like to take home and see frequently. They are stirred by the sight of those young lovers who flee from the lightning—their sweet nudity allowed by the manners and customs of their far-off land (a little flying drapery making them only the more alluring, and at the same time keeping the picture within the bounds of decency).

When people call such a work a thing of the past, they mean that the part of the public which keeps abreast of the new schools demands pictures in a different convention. But the most up-to-date conventions are furnishing us with things in which the lascivious and the banal mingle in just about equal measure, though with more ambiguity, much as the present-day stage permits allusion to unnatural vices in a way that our grandfathers would not have stomached, but which modern society can countenance because it has read books on psycho-analysis. And the "art" of the false moderns is as feeble as the worst of 1870.

IV

I return to the fact that the artists who gave us such works as *The Storm* are by no means discredited in the eyes of our museum-authorities. To be sure, Gérôme was a far more celebrated member of the school than poor old Cot, but it was blank incredulity that spread over the features of one of the best artists in America when he heard that another Gérôme had been placed in the Metropolitan Museum, a few months ago. “It isn’t true,” he said, trying to be



Metropolitan Museum of Art

PYGMALION AND GALATEA—J. L. Gérôme

loyal to an institution he loved, despite all the times it had strained his patience, and where his own painting was represented. He took the first bus uptown, and soon had the testimony of his own eyes; for there hung the *Pygmalion and Galatea*, not indeed a picture like *The Storm*—as large as life and twice as natural, but shameful enough to rob our artist of

hope for any change to a better policy on the part of the museum. And the violent language just quoted was not that of a "modernist"; it was a quiet student of the old Italians who spoke thus of the new Gérôme.

Here was a work that one almost wanted to meet on its own terms, discussing it from the standpoint of subject, as Meissonier did his battle scene. Could any conception of the theme be more cheaply, squalidly literal than what we get in this interior of a Paris studio, where Mimi, the model, is changing back from the deathly white of the marble to her own warm, rosy flesh, while the young sculptor, overcome by this miracle of his art, clasps the soft breast against his blouse and gives the charming inspiration of his work a kiss prolonged beyond the time limit of even our most "liberal" movie houses. The advantage of this work over the medium which brings before their eager public the bathing beauties of Mr. Mack Sennett does not consist merely in the absence of ANY clothing on the girl: the film, with all its resources, could not equal the ecstasy produced in the beholder when he becomes aware of the delicate device which explains the triumph of art. It is love. However imposing M. Gérôme's knowledge of the classics, however painful the labor that brought him to his mastery, it was love—throbbing, intoxicating love—that gave him the power to pour his life into the cold, marble virgin of art. This is made clear by the unexpected apparition somewhere in the gray plaster of the studio wall of a little pink Cupid aiming his invincible arrow at the hearts of the happy pair. Let us leave appreciation of this work to the famous Glasgow gallery god who, on the infinitely worthier occasion of a play by one of his nation, bawled down, "Whaur's your Wullie Shakespeare noo?"

Is it the intention of the museum to offer us an example of the French School of half a century ago? If so, let every thinking man protest at representing the period in such a way. An only less deep-rooted error is made by those galleries which purport to show the styles of 1860, 1880, etc., in interior decoration. Of course there were such foolish things as the piano with elaborate, naturalistic carving of leaves, flowers, etc., all over its legs and other parts, such wall-paper, chinaware, and gimcracks of various kinds. One sees them in plenty of old houses today; and it is probable that the rooms here recreated were typical of any number of interiors of their time. Doubtless it was such a place that witnessed the plans for the uplift of art formed by M. Chauchard, the French edition of our Mr. Hearn. Both gentlemen had department stores with great stocks of the cheaper wares, both made collections that have won the applause of the public they served, each of them gave his pictures to the great museum of his country. For a play that wanted to poke fun at a Lord Dundreary or a Flora McFlimsy, interiors that might well represent the Chauchard-Hearn school of taste would afford material that needs only the first appearance on the stage of the famous side-whiskers or the crinolines to "start a riot" from stage-box to sky-parlor.

If the function of the museum is to furnish "properties" for the theater, comic or serious, then the rooms mentioned and the Gérôme picture are in place. But then, too, we should be given reason for the break with the long tradition of connoisseurship, honored by the great private and public collectors alike. They sought the things that represented a period in its strength, not its weakness. The dying schools of Byzantine and Gothic which were mentioned before as reaching down into the later centuries cannot, because of their

date, be spoken of as Renaissance art, any more than a Cypriote sculptor represents the age of Pericles, or the painting of van der Helst, "the Bouguereau of his time," can fairly exemplify the art of seventeenth-century Holland. For the latter period we must look to Rembrandt or at least Frans Hals; for the fifth century B.C. we turn to Phidias. And if the Victorian period had to choose between contemporary furnishings in bad taste (like most of our own) or living amid things derived from the past, the record is to be kept in a historical society, not an art museum. That institution has always chosen to be silent as to periods of complete decline, such as overtook Egyptian art after its period of unparalleled fertility. (The new races who inhabited the land, successively, are not to be called Egyptian save in a geographical sense.)

If the nineteenth century had no genius for the applied arts, if there is really nothing of merit to exhibit, let us permit its people to write their history through the things it understood. To get a laugh at the expense of a poor period (that of Balzac and Daumier, of Lincoln, Spencer, and Wagner, in other fields), is unworthy of a museum; and to place the modern rooms where one comes on them after seeing the beautiful work of the eighteenth century is to go in for mere burlesque-show business. One even suspects that the museum did not quite believe the period to be as bad as it is represented, when one finds that the paintings on the walls are, in many cases, things long since banished from the galleries whose criterion is one of art. If the new Gérôme be finally housed with the other works in those rooms, it will be most nearly in its proper element. And the fact that it must hang with the "horrors" of the time is evident when we think how out of place there a Monet, a Redon, or any other of the men hated by Gérôme would appear.

The worst feature of the picture is not, however, its betrayal of the genius of its time; the really execrable thing is its stultifying of the past. No wonder the nineteenth century cries out, “Who shall deliver us from the Greeks and the Romans?” when antiquity and its beliefs were presented in such a form. To take the lovely myths of Greece and render their poetic metaphor in terms of the colored photograph is to confess the most abject substitution of materialism for a genius whose power over the symbol has been the marvel of all the later time.

For a further illustration of this impotence to understand the essentials of art, consider Gérôme’s *Tanagra*. This inch-by-inch copy of a plump, naked young woman is announced by the letters on the base of the statue as a conception of the city whose figurines tell us of the most intimate, most ethereal fantasies of the Greek people. If we remember that the sculpture has been for years in the Luxembourg, we get an idea of the perversion that Ananias has wrought in the genius of part of the people whose inheritance from the classics gave to the world Racine and Poussin—and Corot and Renoir.

V

Across the Rhine we find the False Artist without even the simulacrum of style that persists in all but the poorest work of France. Since Germany’s great outburst of energy at the time of the Reformation did not found a tradition in painting, as it did in music, the men who should have represented the genius of Dürer, Holbein, and Grünewald have as a rule, been borrowers instead of creators of art. They are so thorough in their work that again and again one is tempted to see a national talent among them. One does find minor artists of real charm, especially when they are content with the less

pretentious forms of effort. There is no more striking contrast than that between the drawings and the paintings of Wilhelm Busch—on the one hand, irresistible, inexhaustible drollery, on the other, dull efficiency in face of a serious business. Modern German art, in its best examples, as with Menzel and Marées, is a matter of personal inspiration, as is proved by the way in which enthusiasts over the work of both these able men will tell you that such and such of their pictures are quite worthless. But no van Gogh is worthless—from the black painting of his beginnings to the blaze of his latest color; and you can see the quality of Degas in every picture he painted. On days when his talent lagged a bit, his good schooling sustained him.

INFERNAL REGIONS—Franz von Stuck

The Germans, despite their aptitude for learning, seem unable to take that most important step in art-study which would give them reserves of knowledge, such as make the French come up so buoyantly each time they seem about to

sink into decadence. One sees a group of pictures by Leibl, Schuch, and Trübner, and they have so much the quality of painting that one says, "Now they are started." But nothing grows out of that remarkable Munich School of fifty years ago. One sees that its members were followers of Courbet, and that they needed another shot of outside inspiration to set them going again. The Germans know it themselves, and so are making tremendous efforts to get back to the old Teutonic traditions of their own race. Perhaps it is only just to wait till this tendency has born mature fruit. Perhaps they are right in saying that a person who has witnessed the continuance of the great currents of art in countries of Latin culture cannot be quite fair to Heckel, Dietz, Schmitt-Rottluf, and Beckmann. It is a case where one must reserve judgment, though at present a visit to the Kronprinzen Palais in Berlin, or other showings of this art, makes it seem to outsiders a repulsive misrepresentation of the present-day spirit.

And one imagines, at least, that one has seen such errors before. Stuck's utter incapacity to rise above materialistic copying when he faced nature frankly led him to a pseudo-Greek formula for sculpture, and to silly bugaboo painting, as in the one here reproduced. It is more unpleasant than Bœcklin's work, but scarcely more false. Meier-Graefe has remarked that there is more of Greek lyricism in one line of Theocritus than in all of Bœcklin's "lemonade" put together. One feels that the whole business is a masquerade when one sees Bœcklin appearing now as a mediæval saint, now as a Teutonic fairy-tale personage, now as the spirit of Hellas, now as the prophet of some new mythology of his own.

One feels that, or (if you insist), I feel that, and the German who considers that I am bent on annihilating the whole modern culture of the Fatherland may turn on me with a

defiant “Prove it.” I cannot prove it, or, as I have said, anything else as to qualities in art. But I can cite the case of an artist (not German) who had steadily maintained that I was unjust to Lenbach. I had said his work was merely photography doctored up with sauces whose recipe came from the artist’s long experience in copying Titian, Rembrandt, van Dyck, and pretty nearly every other Old Master, as it seemed after seeing that collection of his work in the Schack Gallery. And what poor copies they are; black, yellow,—and dead! One could well believe the story current in Munich, that the famous portraits were done on an actual photographic

BISMARCK—Franz von Lenbach

base, and not merely from a vision evolved from that of the camera; the distinction is of no importance.

But my friend liked Lenbach, and there was no answer to that—except seeing the work, which he had previously known only from reproductions and a very few actual examples. After sedulously resisting any temptation to discuss the question while at the gallery, I asked him that evening how he

found Lenbach going. “On the toboggan,” was his frank reply —and our last word on the subject.

Evidently the work of the Germans here discussed is of a quite different type of falseness from that of Gérôme. The latter had all around him—and behind him, in point of time, artists who belonged to the living tradition. It is another matter if you can see genuine art only when you look to the past. The explanation why the big mass of “official” artists in France continued on their course can only be that they stifled the timid voice within them that counseled study as to whether the true line of art did not run through the camp of the “innovators” like Chavannes, Degas, Manet, and their successors. Ananias has found various words to set the crowd against them—“Impressionist” was quite a good one for a while, until it became respectable; but the most serviceable word was almost always one that suggested danger to society, as “Gothic” (another word for vandal) did in the past, and “revolutionist” can at any time. During the early days of the World War, M. Frédéric Masson and others tried to imbue the public mind of France with the idea that the Cubists were favorable to Germany as their best patron. Our well-known painter of society portraits, Mr. Carroll Beckwith, outdid the French academician by the ingenious explanation of Germany’s blood-lust which he published in the “New York Times”: at bottom, he said, France was responsible for it, for she had been systematically exporting large quantities of modern art to her neighbor (Mr. Beckwith was informed that Vollard, the dealer, shipped a trainload of Cézannes to Germany every season), and it was German consumption of such stimulants that had driven the good, industrious nation to madness and war.

The silliness of both stories does not prevent their containing a certain grain of truth: the German collectors were early and liberal buyers of the “modern” art of France; and today we see the result, in magnificent public and private galleries—with far more that we do not see, in the homes of people who could afford only two or three pictures. Still, German painters had not the background of the French, and it was natural that a Lenbach (like the Nazarener of an earlier time in modern Germany), should have had his blind trust in the Museum as his preceptor,—and his superficial understanding of its lesson. They were not false artists in the sense of having willfully betrayed their trust. The times were out of joint for them: the sudden success of Prussia under William I and Bismarck had come too quickly after the Romantic simplicity of the Biedermeier time.

That period, one of the most lovable in German history, is known to everyone through the songs of Schubert and Schumann. The painters were not of the stature of the musicians, but Moritz von Schwind, Wilhelm von Kügelgen, and Ludwig Richter gave to their country an art of really deep charm and genuineness. When, after the victory over Napoleon III, the country demanded a more ambitious style to celebrate its new greatness, the tradition which could support a Richard Wagner in the one field had not the strength to uphold Lenbach’s pretensions to the scepter of the Venetians or the Flemings in painting. Personally, the man of the Bismarck and Mommsen portraits was not of the direct type of Ananias: the lack of a normal development behind him, the disparity between his evident claim to importance and the slenderness of his preparation for the vainglorious attempt are the explanations why it falls entirely into the realm of the false.

VI

Nothing is harder to define than the thing which makes the difference—and it is an enormous one—between a deep and a superficial reading of the classics. Everyone claims to be a follower of the masters, just as both the Abolitionists and the slavery men before the Civil War gave the Bible as their justification. To speak of Gérôme as stultifying the past or Lenbach's claim to be of the line of Tintoretto and Rembrandt as heresy, and then to offer Cézanne and Renoir as the true inheritors of the classic values, makes many an honest man say that this is a case, if there ever was one, of the devil quoting Scripture. But our friend must possess more than honesty. It was honest men who invented such inept words as Gothic and Primitive, and who failed to distinguish between the Greeks and their Roman imitators. Does our honest man really know the masters? In the long run, as we have seen, the truth appears the same to all, or all who want to know it—which amendment excludes a "Petronius Arbiter," who is evidently beyond the pale. One remembers the admirable story, in "Nathan the Wise," of the three rings—the true one which always marked the succession from the father to his heir, and the imitations which had brought confusion into the problem; the question in Lessing's play is, of course, that of religion, but one sees how the famous story applies to art when Nathan makes the judge tell the three claimants to return to him only when the love inspired in men by the possession of the true ring shall have declared which was the next in the long line of his race. The voice that decides in art

THE DUCHESS OF ALBA—Ignacio Zuloaga

matters is always that of the artists. See whether they are tending toward the ideas of Gérôme and Lenbach or to those of Cézanne and Renoir, and you will see which ring among those of the claimants to the succession is declaring the real descent from the masters.

Sometimes, and perhaps most frequently, it is the false work which offers the most obvious likeness to the classics.

Zuloaga goes so far in his attempt to be the modern Goya as to paint the Duchess of Alba in a pose recalling those used by the great Spaniard of a century ago. But that no more constitutes a likeness between the two artists than does the identity of title in their subjects. The present Duchess of Alba may look, act, and dress like the one of a hundred years ago, but her portraitist sees, paints, and, above all, thinks in a different way from the great predecessor whom he apes. The most conspicuous matter about Goya's thinking is that he did it for himself. Zuloaga, in this work, does not do his for himself, and he cannot claim that Goya did it for him, for if the Duchess of Alba picture manages to impose on some people, and causes them to think that the mind of the old painter had come back to inhabit a new body, there are too many pictures like the *Lola de Toledo* to prove that no such miracle has taken place. If one was willing to give some semblance of reasons why the pictures previously considered are to be despised, surely the bad taste of this piece is too overwhelmingly evident to permit comment. The reproduction tells every experienced person that the color is as bad as the form (it always is, both being part of the same idea). Let us be fearfully specific, however, and say that from the standpoint of characterization, Goya's color gives us Spain; no other painter has so epitomized his country; Zuloaga's color is the cheap tinsel of a music hall. From the standpoint of harmony, Goya's painting has a certain dark luster to which Manet paid the final compliment; for with all the influence he was delighted to accept from the older master, he knew that the beauty of Goya's color was too personal for anyone to follow. If imitation is the flattery of little men, an original work based on that of a great predecessor is the homage of the artists who count.

“Don’t you think you’re getting a bit foolish, picking on a work like that last one?” asks a painter who has dropped in to see how I am progressing. “In another minute you’ll be explaining that because you have slammed several pictures of the nude, no one is to infer that you consider all nudes as shocking; or what was it your friend said about the Titian?—it had ‘not even the budding of an impure gesture in movement.’ ” All right, I’ll try not to get too tragic. And I don’t mean this as a book for artists. Those who have any respect for their work never go to exhibitions of the performances of Ananias, anyhow—they

LOLA DE TOLEDO—Ignacio Zuloaga

hardly know there are such things; and if they want to look at a book it will be for the illustrations after Lorenzetti or Le Nain or Seeghers or some one like that; the artists who have no respect for their work will not change their ideas because of any book at all, and if they want to do their duty to their fellow men, they probably discharge it by going to the polls on election day. But before you decide that the two pictures by Zuloaga are too inconsiderable for discussion, just go over the list of people who had him paint their portraits and who bought his pictures. Consider the wall space that the cultured museum of Boston gives to him, and think of the social prestige, the collections of Old Masters, and the millions of dollars that are hanging over the heads of the other museums, ready to force "the modern Goya" down their throats. Or if you find this argument too tainted with opportunism to be admitted into a consideration of what should be philosophy, and dealt with *sub specie æternitatis* as "The Freeman" used to say, there is still the point where we began—that discrimination between apparent and real relationship with the masters is not so easy to establish.

VII

Zuloaga's bid for a place in the tradition of his country is worth noticing if only as a step toward the ability to meet the more difficult problems of criticism. The Kuppenheimer Klothes boy laughs off any chance for Mr. Blashfield's mural to be imagined as belonging to the line of Raphael, though the smoke from Mr. Cox's incense before the altar of the "bee of Urbino" did get into the eyes of some people and caused them to see the Iowa State House as the next best thing to the Vatican. You tell me that now I am going too far, that you visited the recent Blashfield exhibition at the gallery in the

Grand Central Station and that while his prayerful painting stood out from the “pot-boiling” of some of the artists there, you are sure you have put your finger on an exaggeration this time, when you find a statement here that the painting of our decorators was formerly ranked by some with the greatest things of the past.

Am I speaking on the basis of a few words picked up from some stock-broker coming from the Salmagundi Club where the painters among his fellow members had been telling him how glorious was the art of his country, and selling him some samples of it?

Not at all. Get down your copies of “Scribner’s Magazine” and turn to the pages wherein William Walton describes the work of one of Mr. Blashfield’s predecessors in the presidency of the National Academy. Can you doubt that your native land has reached its place in the sun when you read the following about the murals of Mr. John W. Alexander in

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APOTHEOSIS OF PITTSBURGH—John W. Alexander

Pittsburgh? "The wall space covered by his paintings alone measures over five thousand square feet, and he estimates the number of figures in his various themes as between four and five hundred. In fact, it is claimed that this is the largest and most important commission ever given a single artist in this

country or anywhere else." Poor Michael Angelo, poor Rome—poor Italy, indeed; for here is another passage from the article—for which the artist, as may be noted just above, furnished some of the data. "An architectural character, a sort of epic grandeur ... are secured by presenting the figures as floating, drifting through space and time ... not as flying with unseemly haste ... like the foreshortened and somersaulting figures of the later Italian painters of the Golden Age."

The above rather unceremonious expedition against the treasury of the past may impress those who estimate the importance of a decoration by the number of square feet it covers, but, from another standpoint, it shows also how the False Artists (or their spokesmen) falsify judgment when they are permitted to exploit for their own purposes a thing of such decisive importance as our feeling for the masters. "There is nothing outside of the classics," as Renoir said; and at every moment in our study of art his definition of our standard comes back to the mind. The words with which he continued are so perfect that I cannot forbear quoting them again: "To please a pupil, and were he a prince, a musician could not add another note to the scale; he must always return to the first, an octave higher or lower. In art, it is the same thing. Only one must know how to recognize the classics, which look different at different times. Poussin was a classic, but *le père* Corot was a classic too."[F] And with this one thinks of another passage in Renoir's conversations—a thrilling one for those who have come to love the man himself—and, with him, that one survival of the last painting of Greece which he told of in recalling Italy and his delight in the art of Pompeii. "It was the art of Corot himself, and in full, that I came upon in the Naples Museum, with that simplicity of workmanship of the Pompeians and the Egyptians. Those priestesses in their tunic

of silver gray—one would think they were no other than nymphs by Corot."

And then people ask what reason we have for our certitude as to which are the *true* artists! You object that there was a long period when Corot was not recognized as the inheritor of the Greeks? It is not yet passed, and never will be. For when you speak of his nonrecognition, you mean by the sons of Ananias and the public they mislead. There was always a Renoir—and not merely one man but a whole company—to affirm the genius of Corot. And, slowly, this type of appreciator is coming into power. His work is not finished when he has urged the acquisition by museums and private collectors of works by the older classics. That is important enough and there is plenty of chance for originality there, as well as knowledge; but what really justifies confidence in an improvement of taste is the more rapid recognition, and by a larger public, of the classics of our own time. Renoir himself did not stop either with Corot of the older generation, or with Cézanne of his own. When well along in the 'seventies, he visited Matisse, whose work he had previously been in doubt about, having seen little of it. A witness of the scene has described the old man's delight when, at a black moment during the War, he found that his country had another artist. "Why, it's painting!" he exclaimed again and again, "*C'est de la peinture, de la bonne peinture!*"

VIII

The Museum is the most important factor in the progress toward better taste on the part of the public. But not until the institution has reached the maturity of knowing how to deal with modern work will it fulfill its whole function. We limp along on one foot when we are concerned only with the past,

as is proved by the men who have knowledge of ancient things and a total misunderstanding of the fine modern ones—which are, after all, the best commentary on the classics. Cases of the kind will occur to everyone who knows collectors of the Old Masters; often they make it almost a point of honor to ignore what is going on around them! Therein lies the explanation of the distrust in which so many artists hold the men who occupy themselves with the past. Fortunately, some of them are the best judges of the present, having—like Renoir—discovered that there is no real distinction between ancient and modern; that the great distinction is between what is art and what is not art.

Léon Bonnat was one who never got to this point of distinguishing between the true and the false. For visitors to his city of Bayonne, he will be remembered as the collector of the marvels he bequeathed to the museum there. What treasures of Rembrandt and of Ingres! And what catholicity of taste the man had when he could honor both a Nordic and a Latin! How could anyone accuse M. Bonnat of narrowness after that? What he insisted on was doing one's school-work, learning to draw; there must be no nonsense about that. A different impression of his mind results from reading the list of works that went to the Luxembourg during the many years when his was the deciding voice as to its acquisitions. They are bad enough, but the list of exclusions is worse. For if it is so hard to refrain from speaking a good word for the work of an artist, even when you know he does not deserve it (see Anatole France's description of this kind of complaisance toward weaklings, in "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard"), such an explanation of the wretched stuff at the National Museum does not cover the omission of the good men—and

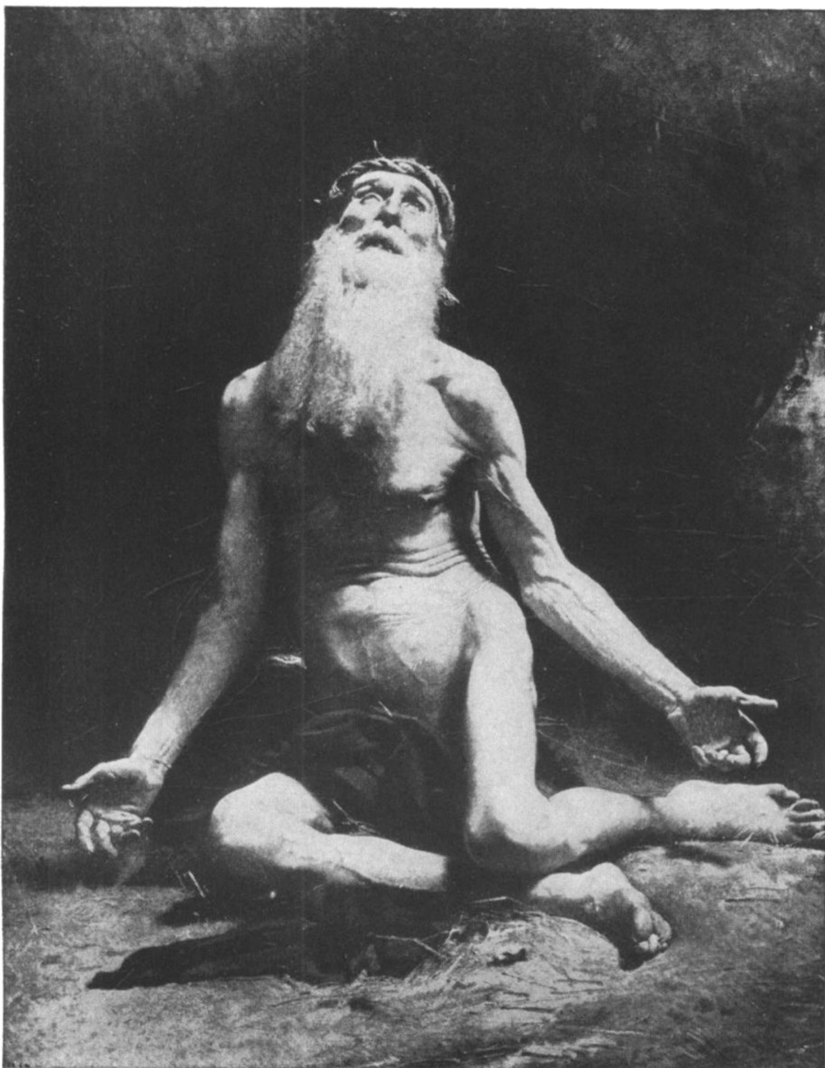
few indeed among them entered the Luxembourg save in the teeth of Léon Bonnat's opposition.

One has only to look at his own *Job* in the gallery to know that it was not injustice, but the fierce hatred in the breast of the witch-burner that made the man act as he did. All whom he voted for were the saved, all whom he voted against were the damned. That terrible concentration which permits him to follow every vein, every roughness of the skin of the poor old man who posed as his model for the *Job*, tells of a mind compounded of honesty and stupidity. He knew that you must work if you want to be paid, even though his American trade was a lucrative one. (He became known as "the painter of bank-presidents.") When he bought works by the masters with his hard-earned money, genuine admiration for his treasures was the motive of his sacrifice (portrait-painting is not always a bed of roses; even for a Bonnat, the vanity or lack of time among the patrons could account for many a difficult hour). Studying the fine works about him with all the intensity of his nature, he came—as many another man has done—to identify himself with his possessions, and so it was in the name of the law and the prophets that he thundered his Jeremiads against the wicked. Woe betide them if they did not heed the voice of the righteous man!

Their heresy must be black indeed if they doubted the infallibility of the oracle given to France by the *Grand Monarque*, later on informed by the strength of David, the painter of the Revolution, and maintained by the Government as part of the Ministry of Education. To reject the authority of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was, for Bonnat, to diminish the honor of France, just as much as a partisan of Dreyfus did when he accused officers in the army of a lack of integrity. Emile Zola had committed both iniquities: he had defended

Manet and the Impressionists, the abomination of the School, and he had exposed the scoundrelism which sent Dreyfus to Devil's Island. Those around the traducer of the Army were linked with him in the reprobation of patriots, and Cézanne, Zola's boyhood companion, found himself compelled to face a new imputation, that of Semitism, which was rather trying for a devout Catholic.

We have seen that Meissonier had used the same trick, and with success, in his war on Courbet, but the recourse to politics was scarcely necessary in the latter decades of the nineteenth century: Ananias held so many trump cards, chief among them being the



Luxembourg Museum

JOB—Léon Bonnat

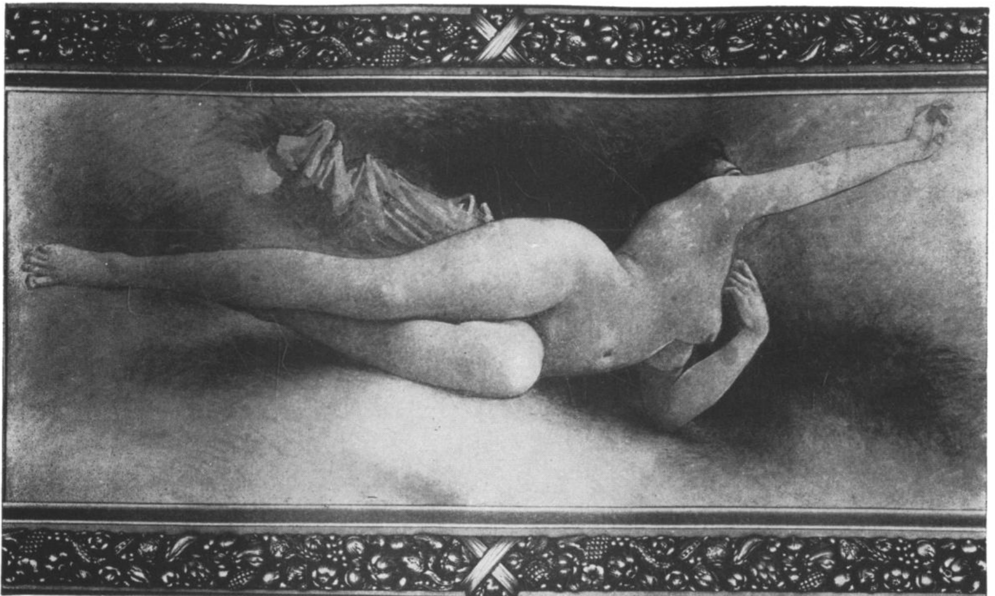
School. Bonnat's *Job* tells what it gave: the ability to reproduce appearances with a mechanical accuracy exceeding that of the photograph. Here was not only color as "honest" as the drawing (it is, of course, an insult to art to speak of Bonnat as either a colorist or a draftsman, but there are no other words); here were the thousand little advantages

through which hand work can always beat the machine on quality if, indeed, it cannot compete as to quantity. Have you done your anatomy class thoroughly? then you can put in muscles that are not sufficiently developed in a particular model to be caught by the camera. Many a man has had to struggle hard, in later years, to avoid including in his work things he knows to be in the nature, but that he does not see. Have you done your perspective class thoroughly? and your study of shades and shadows? then you can make every detail stand out as in a stereoscope, the quality of the paint—thin and transparent in the shadows, thick and shiny for the highlights—giving you resources that the photographer cannot even hope to employ.

In all of this there is not a hint of the thing on which the School bases its title to authority, which is the stewardship of the attainments of the masters. Their drawing and color are not to be studied at the School, but at the Museum; and then only upon the understanding that the great qualities are not standardized, transferable things, like a bolt or a nut that fits one Ford car as well as another. The drawing of Ingres is of a celestial harmony when Ingres uses it; when it has gone no further than the hands of his pupil, Flandrin, it has grown dull and commonplace; when it has descended to Bonnat it gives us the pretentious emptinesses at the Hôtel de Ville, in themselves a definition of the word academic, in its bad sense, and of the fallacy of speaking of the men of the School as the Bourbons of art: there is, to be sure, the fact that the academies learned nothing; but they forgot much, thereby differing on the second point from the real Bourbons, who, moreover, inherited their royal blood, whereas, in art, genius is not hereditary. No more so is the right to speak for the past.

Those who have claimed most arrogantly to represent it have been its real enemies.

For one who believes in the study of the masters, it is not less than desolating to see what the School has made of Delacroix's color. This dull thing is what has been made from the mysterious and living flame that the master pursued throughout his unbelievably active life—from Paris to Morocco, through Flanders and Venice (which latter place he knew only from the Louvre), and farther afield yet, as his instinct—aided by some slight hints from the Museum—leaped the barrier of the centuries and told him of color as the Greeks knew it! Looking at the academic counterfeit of Delacroix's color one could truly say, To



Hôtel de Ville—Paris

THE IDEAL—Léon Bonnat

such base uses do we come at last. And so one does not look long. Instead one goes to another room in the Louvre, where *The Circus* of Seurat tells that some men still pass beyond the

fawning of the slaves who can never look their master in the face. For that painting is by one who stood erect—and freely, if with modesty, asked and received from Ingres the quality of line and, from the work of the other master of the classic values, that of Delacroix, his counsel on the nature of color.

If the School confined itself to affording useful discipline along the lines of drawing, perspective, anatomy, etc., it would be useful instead of misleading. But it must needs teach the "higher" things also. It has a system of composition guaranteed to produce beauty. It has a hierarchical arrangement of "subjects" which keeps the young man from straying in the matter of the moral effect of his work. Scenes of religion and patriotism are to be the means of his most important teaching, analogies from the history of the Greeks and Romans or the Bible are always edifying, as are symbolic figures (like Bonnat's *The Ideal*), while portraits and genre form a gently descending scale, with which landscape and still-life are connected after the manner of poor relatives.

With military exactitude the course was laid out which led to medals, orders of merit, and the Institute—with jobs in academies and museums, safeguarded by pensions from the State, for those whose devotion to the good cause was not well remunerated by a generation of vipers turning to the false gods—a somewhat disquieting phenomenon. Business was not what it used to be. However, the credit of the firm was intact; and today the School still represents the Law for millions of people in Europe and America: while I write, a young college president warns a graduating class of teachers against the forces of anarchy which are at work in art, threatening to destroy all standards. Probably it is the standards of the Ecole, or, a derivative of them, to which the

gentleman referred, the newspaper did not say—and perhaps he did not, either; it is often better not to be too specific.

How can one be specific when the world is changing at its present rate? Denounce a tendency today, and tomorrow it may turn out to be the big thing. The safest plan is to stick to a few good, water-tight generalities; for the rest of the program, have a rule like that which earned George Sorrow's man his reputation for knowledge of art: whenever the subject was mentioned, he turned the conversation to Pietro Perugino (or some other unexceptionable artist) and praised him.

Still, something had to be done about the public's mania for modernism, and so the School, fighting the devil with fire, delighted in honoring the really

Hôtel de Ville—Paris

METEOROLOGY—Albert Besnard

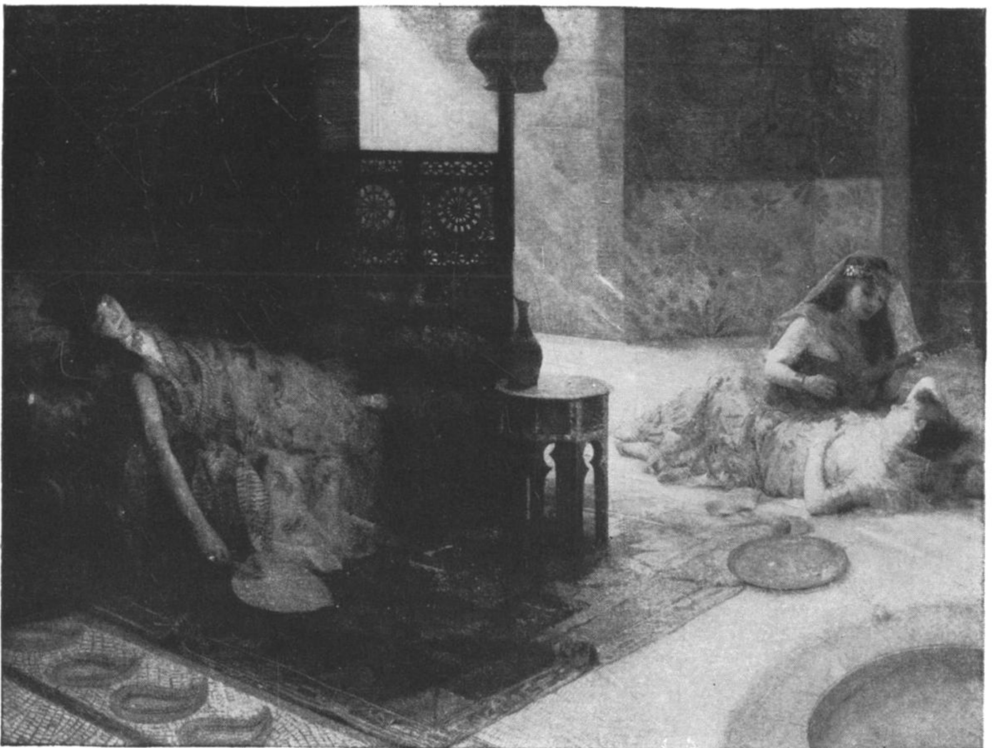
remarkable talent of Besnard. Here was an Impressionist who, while temperamental and a bit given to display of brush work, could be trusted not to go to extremes. Besides, Monet and

Pissarro were really turning out to have some right on their side, after all—they were part of the great scientific research into the phenomena of light, and therefore Realists like Courbet—now securely canonized, and among the national glories. The Salle Caillebotte, with its collection of Impressionists was the most popular gallery in the Luxembourg. It was a pity that the elders of the School had been a bit severe with these artists in rejecting their work at the Salon in earlier days. Perhaps something could still be done to straighten out the little misunderstanding: Renoir was given the Legion of Honor and, for the first time, the Government bought a picture from Monet in 1907. (He was sixty-seven years old, and the steady sale of his work had carried him from poverty to affluence.) Perhaps he would even teach, and become one of the pillars of society. But the old "revolutionist" refused.

It was just as well, maybe; Besnard was so much safer. He had well repaid the patronage lavished on him from his early years. There were, to be sure, some eccentricities of color, such as crimsons and bright yellow-greens, that gave him his startling effects of luminosity (and which the ungrateful new generation of modernists called gaudy), but his naturalistic drawing (which, again, the admirers of Gauguin and van Gogh affected to treat as a glorification of the accidental) was as faithful to the tradition of the school as that of M. Bonnat himself. Compare the two figures by the older and the younger man at the City Hall of Paris (facing p. 118 and p. 120) and you can see that Besnard is, at bottom, quite orthodox. Many years later, the sodden materialism of the School is still his guide for the drawing in the *Cardinal Mercier*, which is now in the Library of Louvain. The figure of the crucified Christ in the picture of the great Belgian is

based on types found in the past; but the “modern” color, if nothing else, makes us feel the separation of this school from those which gave us the *Pietà* as we know it in the work of Giotto and Castagno or of Romanesque and Gothic sculptors. No such screen of subject intervenes between us and the characterization of the cardinal. The painter’s idea of humanity is evidently an expression of the same insolent triviality which dictated the ugly composition.

The comparison with Ananias seems nowhere more applicable than in the case of Besnard: here is the man who saw the great truth of his time and yet could not bring himself to offer up more than a part of his goods. What he retained has brought him prosperity; an international reputation has rewarded his efforts and the French Institute elected him a member



Metropolitan Museum of Art

HAREM SCENE—H. Siddons Mowbray

in 1926—the same votes going to him which, year after year, denied the incomparable perfection of Renoir and the majesty of Cézanne.

IX

Yet with Besnard we still have a big figure in the tradition. His Orient has some of the audacious quality that has carved out the colonial empire of France, and the buildings he has decorated do get a kind of vivacity from his flying brush. Now see the Orient of Mr. H. Siddons Mowbray's *Harem Scene*. It would not seem audacious to the most respectable dweller on Main Street, and the murals he has painted are, in similar degree, a dilution for the American palate of whatever strength there was in the flesh-pots of the French protagonists of the school.

Mr. F. C. Frieseke approaches nearer to the Gallic spirit as conceived by Anglo-Saxondom, and the counterfeit of Impressionism employed by him in *The Toilet* is, indeed, not much inferior to that of M. Besnard. How comfortably his decorations fit into the big department store that for years delighted its rural visitors with the big pictures from the Salon. We are far, to be sure, from that earlier innocence which gaped at Munkacsy's *Christ Before Pilate*, under the auspices of the same uplifter of our artistic and religious sense. Even the latter had to sacrifice to the Moloch of modernity; indeed, a number of his compeers have recognized that a gallery of the "new stuff" worked quite well—at least as advertising material. With no more than equal perspicacity about art, but with a better instinct for what will sell, they are now educating the public on the modern styles of interior

decoration and house furnishing. In such a setting Mr. Frieseke might almost begin to look too classic, but a little daring in the way he suggests his audience's opportunity to observe the fair model in the intimacy of her boudoir makes his painting more up to date with a dash of the naughtiness to be expected from one who has lived in France. Although Mr. Harry W. Watrous's *Passing of Summer* is of pre-Prohibition days, its cocktail glass was probably intended, like the more carnal allurements offered by Mr. Frieseke, to suggest surcease from the monotony of existence.

Cocktails, Boudoirs and Harems—Wine, Woman and Song! If these three expressions of the Joy of Living, in present-day America, really represent the pace at which she is speeding, one must grow pale with dismay if one thinks of the price she will have to pay for the debauch. Fortunately the *Passing of Summer* is not without a hint of the sterner realities, for with this picture we get back to the art of the Subway, hear again the clatter of its turnstiles, and feel that all's well with the world. The sense of the

Metropolitan Museum of Art

THE TOILET—F. C. Frieseke

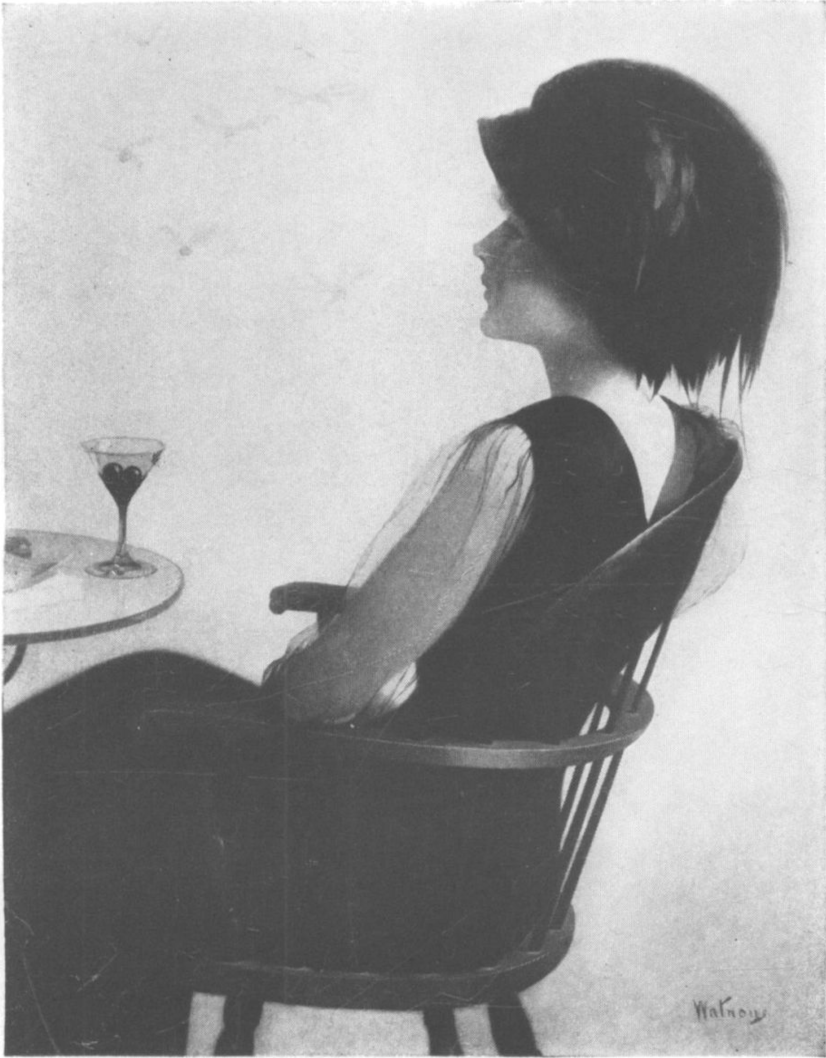
natural and accustomed deepens when we reach Mr. William M. Paxton's *Tea Leaves*. It has almost the right quality to do as an advertisement, though for this again, if submitted for sale to one of the big publicity plants, the art director there might criticize it as lacking in sex appeal: two girls together do not fix the attention long enough; a picture of a girl and a man, on the contrary, stirs the imagination and sells the tea. Perhaps, after all, this work, did not first appear in the advertising pages of the "Maidenhood Magazine," but as an

illustration to one of its short stories of domestic life. The glimpse of the little home on which the stenographer let her innocent fancy dwell so wistfully, was connected with the Subway only because it was in that place that she read the account of this scene, and studied the artist's enchanting vision of it.

The Tea-Ceremony, the cocktail incitement, and the corset ad. in the three pictures last noticed are typical examples of the tie that binds together, in America, art and the people—with the Museum and the exhibitions on one hand, the Subway and the Munsey-Hearst press on the other. Would it be too black an ingratitude to the man who bequeathed his colossal fortune to the Metropolitan to suggest that his motive was expiation, as in the case of the queen who built a chapel to the memory of the child she had murdered? By a progressive cheapening of the quality of our magazines, Mr. Munsey and others degraded illustration to a level it had never known before, though they could not realize that that was what they were doing. If you think my statement too violent, ask any old-line editor what American magazine pictures were when Edwin A. Abbey, A. B. Frost, W. A. Rogers, and William Glackens were drawing them—and what they are now.

Not that America is the only sufferer from the disease. Every country in Europe can show quite perfect specimens of it. Probably when people say that Paris since the war is not the Paris of old they have in mind that loathsome baby of the Cadum Soap advertisements. They cannot mean that the bad pictures in the exhibitions are any worse than before—there was no chance for that; and they cannot mean that good things have ceased to be produced, for there are quantities of them.

If America has a type of bad picture peculiarly its own, it is probably among the landscapes. Strzygowski has shown by a remarkable series of examples that there are on all continents two great families of peoples, which he calls the Southern and the Northern. The genius of the Southern peoples (the Greeks, for example) expresses itself by an art in which interest centers supremely around the human figure; the genius of the Northern peoples expresses itself most characteristically through their love of landscape, and



Metropolitan Museum of Art

PASSING OF SUMMER—Harry W. Watrous

through the forms derived from it. Returning to the counterfeit of art, we may say that in the realm of the figure, Italian or French adulterations of the classical qualities are especially obnoxious because one thinks of the past of the Latin peoples, and remembers the extent to which the values accumulated by the past have been in their keeping. But

Americans are, predominantly, a Northern people and look back to Holland with the landscapes of van Goyen and Ruisdael, to England with the visions of earth and sky of Constable, Crome, and Turner (when he followed his true bent), for their ancestry in art. From this standpoint, a work like Henry W. Ranger's picture of *Bradbury's Mill Pond* is more of a disappointment to one who hopes for American art than the figure paintings we have just looked at. Their unmanly softness is disagreeable, when one notices them at all, as when going about town with a foreign visitor, for example. But among Anglo-Saxons, there are no artists from whom the decadence would be so great as if these works belonged to the race of Masaccio or of Fouquet.

Landscape art has always made a special appeal to the instinct of Americans, which explains the enthusiasm for Corot, Rousseau, Daubigny, and Dupré in an earlier generation of collectors, and for Monet, Pissarro and Sisley in a later one. The figure-painting of Corot and the art of Renoir have been more of an acquired taste; (the expression is sometimes employed to denote things in which one may not have full confidence, but such a use of the words is surely wrong). We remember also that our English forbears collected masterpieces by Ruisdael and Hobbema when there was little appreciation of them on the Continent; that the great English landscapists built their art on that of the Dutch, and that Turner aspired, above all, to equal Claude Lorraine, the master of landscape in France. As fine as is the work of the early portraitists of America, we can scarcely see in them our most characteristic expression thus far. The timid beginnings of nature-painting in the Hudson River School, the sudden outburst of talent with Inness, Winslow Homer, Whistler (in his nocturnes—a new field for Occidentals), Ryder, Homer

Martin, and, later, the work of the best American Impressionists and Post-Impressionists, from Twachtman and Weir to Prendergast and Marin, all show how strong the feeling for landscape is in this country. The important figure-painting here (often by these same men) proves that our place among artists is not yet decided—nor is it apt to be for a long time, the amalgamation of races being still far from complete and the time ahead of us being doubtless that which will count most.

Still, at a period when landscape painting was particularly strong in America, a large group of men

Metropolitan Museum of Art

TEA LEAVES—William M. Paxton

appeared, typical of the exploiting class that hastens into every field of effort when important developments have been made. They contribute nothing; their business is to make profit from the discoveries of the pioneers. An unassuming gleaner from the harvest of the masters, whom he is not afraid to acknowledge in his art, may still have solid merit of his

own, and a personality that occasionally carries him to work of importance. This is the case of William Morris Hunt, and his picture of *The Bathers* is one of the finest effects of the great stir caused by Millet among the young men of his time. Unless we look into the history of Hunt, we might not even know that this scene of woodland and water owed what it did to the great peasant-painter. But how different is the genuineness of this art of a minor master from the pretention of the Ranger picture! The original of it would not fool one for a moment; but, looking at the reproduction, one first asks whether this is not a work by Dupré, or more likely Diaz. Or a Californian, surrounded by the barrage of diluted Barbizon painting due to William Keith, might think that a production of that son of the Golden West had reached the National Gallery. There may indeed be a Keith at the National Gallery of Washington, D.C.; probably there is; but there never will be one in the National Gallery of London or that of Berlin. And that safe prophecy is not based on hostility to Americans on the part of European galleries, for no such feeling exists.

Everyone knows that Whistler's portrait of his mother was bought by a French museum when Americans did not want it; not so many know the fine Winslow Homer in the Luxembourg, or that there are works by Inness and Chase in the Neue Pinakothek in Munich. The best writing on Ryder is still that of Roger Fry in England; and the work of John Sloan when shown in France has commanded eager admiration and caused a demand for more knowledge of him on occasions when his etchings, or merely photographs of his paintings, have been seen by European connoisseurs. To return to an artist whose record does not increase the pride of *all* Americans in the artistic achievements of their countrymen, the name of Sargent was one to conjure with in Europe,

whether at the big exhibition in Venice or at the Royal Academy in London. His *Carmencita* is at the Luxembourg—and is one of the most arrogant and empty things there. But that museum will have to take new steps to maintain its unenviable notoriety when the great English gallery gets its entire collection of Sargents.

The examples here given of Americans who have had success in Europe (and many more could be added) should dispel whatever impression there may be that our countrymen have a harder climb in Paris

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BRADBURY'S MILL POND—Henry W. Ranger

or London, for example, than any other foreigners. And so we may take at its face value the unfavorable opinion expressed

when a European dealer was asked about the chance for sales abroad of an American landscapist whose work sells for large sums in this country. "But perhaps," added the questioner, "his style would not be known in Paris." "Oh yes," was the reply, "one constantly sees such paintings in the summer auctions at the Hôtel Drouot. Only they are not put up for sale according to the names of the artists. It is just—'One framed picture, with glass; or one framed picture without glass.' " Perhaps, in describing Mr. Ranger's picture for the catalogue of such a sale, a critic might say something about his methods of glazing, etc., to produce the "golden tone" beloved by certain collectors; but as to *The Silent Dawn*, by Mr. Walter L. Palmer, the silence need not be disturbed by any description more colorful than that quoted from the Paris auctioneer.

Or, since the present writer cannot see the picture in any terms save those of the lithograph trade which supplies the calendars that grocers give their customers at Christmas, perhaps it would be better to hear the ideas of Mr. Kenyon Cox on the later American School.

In "Scribner's Magazine," some years ago, he wrote on Impressionism, and conceded the good it had done in cleaning from the painter's palette the blackish tones of the older men. He went on, however, to foresee an obscuring of the fame of Monet, Pissarro and the other French artists of the school when time should have darkened their brilliant color, for they had not taken the precaution to buttress it up with a sufficient amount of design. It was in this respect, said Mr. Cox, that the American representatives of the movement were superior to them. I am sure that even our painter-critic's national pride would not have stretched as far as *The Silent Dawn*. But the thousands of landscapes it typifies in our exhibitions and

museums furnish proof that no such encouragement is required by our artists or our collectors.

X

The Countess of Warwick's researches in the science of rejuvenation (see page 16 for Sargent's report on her), may perhaps have reached the point of discovering the secret of eternal youth. If so, she should have gone a bit further and found out how to apply the recipe to her portrait. How cruelly it has aged and how rapidly! Was there really a time when people thought it a good picture? And will it ever take on that quality which makes us, when referring to things as old or old-fashioned, employ the terms to express affection for bygone days? More probably, when the picture finally descends to

Metropolitan Museum of Art
THE SILENT DAWN—Walter L. Palmer

the lumber-room of the museum, the parting scene will be one of relief over the burial of an unfortunate past.

But what can the future do about Sargent's *Marching Soldiers* in the Harvard Library? Our geographical position deprives us, as a rule, of the assistance that other regions may hope for from earthquakes. And so, must all the generations who will yet attend the university be faced with the fact that after nearly three hundred years of New England culture, Harvard could permit the placing of such a memorial to her dead? One recalls how much of the spirit of the Revolution, the Civil War, and the World War hovers around the old campus—and one feels again the chill, dismayed bewilderment of that Sunday morning when one first came to know this picture. Glancing through the rotogravure supplement of the paper, and enjoying the photographs of swimmers, statesmen, and stage-dancers, one's eye was caught by the big flag, and one idly read the caption to see whether this was a belated poster from some Y. M. C. A. drive during the recent war, or an invitation to prepare for the next one, in Nicaragua or a place like that, or whether it was not just the advertisement of a firm such as supplies the uniforms for military schools and training camps—a masculine pendant to the Sunday supplement's illustrations of the minimum requirements to clothe the female form divine. If the ravishing slaves of the lingerie and garter-belt magnates are chosen for their closeness to the "boyishform" ideal of beauty, why should they not share their publicity with boy models, and not only with the society ladies whom they had graciously received into their part of the paper before? Why should not the men's clothiers have the same chance as the dressmakers?

The impression given by the work was a mistaken one, or almost that. The picture was not a poster, it was a Sargent! One thought back to the really startling portraits in which the character of charming women and thoughtful men had been caught by the American artist, whose fine breeding had prepared him to appreciate that of his sitters. One thought of the water-colors, and the firmness that underlay even their flippancy, when they reached that remove from the seriousness of his early work in Paris. One did not like to think how close he had been to the great artists around him then, and how he had bid fair to keep step with them. The years in London had made the difference; he had rubbed shoulders too much with the men of the Royal Academy, who would have elected him their president, even despite his inability to make the required public speeches,—which was the jesting reason he gave for not accepting the honor. Ah, there was the point: he would have considered it an honor—even while knowing, as most of his

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MARCHING SOLDIERS—John S. Sargent

fellow members of the Academy did not, the utter baseness of its art!

And now at last, he had got down to the level of the Subway. But only by the quality of his work. Never did he go in for "commercial art" in the way that Sir John Millais,

himself a president of the Royal Academy, had done on behalf of Pears Soap. That is still the greatest justification for the Subway in its rewriting of Shakespeare. For the soap people he should have said "Sweet are the uses of advertisement." Sargent did not need to join in that refrain.

No, the blatant thing at Harvard was intended as a tribute to the boys whose generous impulse made them rush from their college to join the students from other lands on the battlefields. Surely some mocking spirit whispered in the ear of the painter (who had seen the horror in France and in Flanders), and strange words, half-caught, confused his ordinarily practical mind. Well, the job had to be done anyhow, just as, fifteen or twenty years before, Lady Warwick's portrait had to be got through with. You can always count on a line of soldiers to stir people; a good, fierce American eagle would be a useful "property," as the theater chaps call it, and "Our Old Flag," from center-stage, in the clarion tones of a Fourth of July speech, or an election rally, or of the columns of the "Congressional Record," would be certain to bring down a round of applause again.

Look at the way the print-shops used to carry a line of brown photographs of the *Hebrew Prophets* and the *Dogma of the Redemption* in the Boston Public Library; and remember how the critics could not find words strong enough to express their emotion about them, even if a few, like Berenson, were so swallowed up by their moth-eaten "Primitives" that they had got off some talk about his not being in the class with the Florentines and Sienese. They were right about that, thank the Lord—he'd seen enough of THEIR stuff when he was a boy in Italy. Not that he was a man to be disrespectful of the past—he had shown that he could take over what was good in it; but you've got to keep up to the times, and painting is painting,

which nobody can deny. Look at the way he had made people catch their breath in reverence before his portrait of Mrs. Jack Gardner—and all that made it different from any other chromo was the gold background, like that in a saint’s picture, and the row of fresh Easter lilies always renewed in the perpetual adoration before it. (Sargent did not often do anything quite so trashy.)

Well, now he was to be serious again and chant the epic of modern war—if that wretched voice would only stop squeaking and gibbering around his head, “War is evil, war is a lie.” Did the thing imagine it could frighten John Sargent? His ambition was still of the sterner stuff, even if his hand was not what it used to be, and some things in his drawing had been looking a trifle weak, of late. Whistler had regretted, toward the end of his life, that he had not been taught drawing in the school of Ingres—those hard old chaps did know how to get strength with line. Well, he could paint. That, and stiffening the contours a bit and, above all, getting some nice, manly young chaps to give the right types for the soldiers and some pretty women to symbolize the martyred countries ought to carry him through any tight places. Landscape work had been good fun after the grind of all those portraits, but if he’d put the time in on drawing he might not be feeling it as such a dull chore now. Surely he hadn’t had half this trouble when he smashed out his picture of *El Jaleo*. Where was the man who could equal the feat he had done in that?—a life-sized Spanish dancer on a full-sized stage, the picture lit from below by a row of real electric lights, so that the spectator almost thought himself in the theater! That footlight effect had been pretty daring. One has to be young to do a thing like that!

Still, Renoir had kept on painting till the day of his death, just shortly before. Poor old boy—how he'd gone off from the time when he did those handsome pieces of drawing and painting back in the years when Sargent was a student under Carolus-Duran. "*Le patron*," as the French fellows used to call the teacher, had certainly done some pretty cheap portraits since then; but never mind, it was in the atelier of Carolus that he got his training for the *Madame Gautreau* that made such a hit at the Salon. Where would he have landed if he'd lost his nerve and run away from the good juicy commissions that could be had for going to a few stupid dinners at Newport, or in London? He might have been a failure like Cézanne.

And at that, the man's stuff was beginning to sell, and for high prices. Sargent had been rather shocked to find it, and even worse things,[G] at the Brooklyn Museum, right near the big collection of his own water-colors. He and his good friend Helleu (to be remembered for his dry-points of famous ladies and their coiffures—one stroke for each hair) had admonished the director on his evil ways; but the only thing to do, really, was to wait till this midsummer madness had spent its force and the clock had turned back to where it was in the good hours of his full success. That would come again, never fear. Were there not still plenty of critics refusing to be stampeded by this crazy bunch who were booming "modern art" and attacking the School for teaching "the lie of the noble subject," a phrase picked up from that lunatic, Elie Faure. No man could say Sargent had ever lied—his life had been as straightforward as his painting. What did they mean about "noble subjects" being a lie? Was it some more of this Socialistic twaddle, or had they never looked up the Peerage to see what sort of people had sat to him? Probably they did

not even know how to express the weak ideas they had; they did not dare to say his people were not noble, they meant his style. Very well, let them break their teeth on the fact that when he had painted dear old William M. Chase, the latter, a real lover of art beside being an artist, had gone home to America and—quite of his own accord—had related how Sargent had showed him not in the casual pose he gave to some sitters, but that this portrait was "in the grand manner," as the phrase is that has come down from the old Italians.

But (to interrupt the painter's musings) *la maniera magnifica*, in Florence or in Venice, was something that derived from the artist. It was *his* manner, *his* gesture that was magnificent. In the case of Sargent, as Mr. Chase quite accurately indicated, the "grand manner" was that of the person portrayed: hence the success of the portraitist with the great ones of earth who wanted to see their greatness immortalized. In discussing the picture by Titian at the Pitti Palace that is sometimes called *The Duke of Norfolk*, Sir Claude Phillips said that it shows the difference between real and assumed nobility. So it does, indeed, but not in the sense intended by the "cultured" critic of whom Mr. Fry, in his "Transformations," has given such a consummate description. Sir Claude was counseling modern portrait-painters to distinguish between real character and the imitation of it. But go into the next room at the Pitti and see Titian's portrait of scoundrelly and depraved old Pietro Aretino: the art is the same, and—what is important—there is the same nobility; it is not that of the duke (if he was one), nor that of the licentious blackmailer. The quality of the work—in these pictures as in all others—is the quality of the painter's mind. What has weathered the storms of the centuries is the nobility of Titian, not that of his sitters. Sargent, like Sir Claude

Phillips, was deceived by the master-lie of all those that Ananias has fostered, the one which says that the quality of a work resides in its subject, and that the treatment is a matter of accurate drawing and color, and of technique.

Not for Sargent was there any meaning in Leonardo's words, "Painting is a mental thing." A hundred years later, Domenichino, still following the Nestor of Florence, gives the same idea to his new French disciple, Poussin,—"Never put into your picture a form that has not previously been in your mind." Two hundred years pass again, and Delacroix, writing his great essay on Poussin, records the sentence once more and is thrilled over the scene of the old Italian passing on the ancient traditions to the young man from Delacroix's own land. As the nineteenth century advances, as the twentieth opens, the realism of Courbet, Cézanne, and Detain still leaves unquestioned the ancient supremacy of the idea: with those men—with all who count, as with all who have counted in the past, the structure of line and color is still that of the mental image. Unlike Ananias, they do not keep back part of their substance, but see that if it is divided it does not remain the living thing of which they are the guardians.

Sargent cannot grasp the meaning of such singleness of mind. He remains the chosen expressor of all that is external in his age. The goods he knows *can* be divided—a part for Cæsar and a part for God. Even the strong rendering of character in the Chase portrait, the *Mrs. Wertheimer*, and the *General Leonard Wood*, among his masterpieces, is on a plane that is never to be thought of as near to that of a work by Antonello da Messina or Lorenzo Lotto, Holbein, or Rembrandt. The "grand manner" of these men gives to their work a more vital type of reality. "Form," with them, is not something that results from observing the individual cast of

the features, or their expression: it is form that possesses a rightness of its own, as all classical things do. You cannot prove that a Greek vase is right in its outline, its division into parts, and its decoration, but you KNOW it is right. You say that the form in Greek art, and in that of Antonello, Holbein, and the rest is great because they belong to great periods. But ours is a great period, and that is what Sargent fails to record. The veil which obscured the essentially superficial nature of the man's whole art was his astounding virtuosity. In the *Marching Soldiers*, the veil is withdrawn, and the débâcle of a great talent is revealed. "War is a lie" was the warning of the spirit which haunted the aging painter. He went on with his chanting of the epic. And, as his recourse to the raucous commonplaces of the mob-orator tells of the breakdown of his extraordinary technical power, we see that the bad school of his youth had never ceased to claim its price from the quality of his art. The work of his final period is like a sudden light, in whose tragic clearness one sees anew the long career—the same from first to last. The very elements which crowned it with worldly success were those that marked its defeat along the lines on which art has always stood.

XI

Our interest in the work of Mr. Daniel C. French and Mr. Lorado Taft is chiefly centered around their influence on American collections and monuments. I have already discussed the nature of their sculpture and its connection with the great tradition of their art, or more precisely, its contradiction of it. We must expect that the ideas dominating their handiwork will be further expressed by their activities in the positions they hold.

As the sculptor-member of the Board of Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum, Mr. French can doubtless speak with more authority than anyone else concerning its collection of modern sculpture. The Barye there, of *Theseus Slaying the Centaur* came as a gift, over forty years ago,—before Mr. French's time. It stood in the center of a room, freely seen from every angle, as it needs to be—and was, for many years. But in Mr. French's time as a trustee, this great masterpiece of nineteenth-century art was relegated to a position against a wall and under a window. For some years, hardly more than half of it has been visible to students and visitors, and then with the light from the pane just above shining in their eyes and rendering almost impossible a true appreciation of the mighty thing in the shadow. However, it is still tolerated in the exhibition space of the museum, which is more than can be said for our other big Barye, the *Lion and Serpent*. It was the gift of the French Government in 1889, when American admirers of the master helped to raise the monument to him in Paris (surmounted by the *Theseus and the Centaur* just mentioned, as one recalls from memorable visits to the island in the Seine where it stands). Our example of the *Lion and Serpent* bears the stamp of the casters who worked under Barye's own eyes, and it shows the great work as he saw it, before the weather had worn away part of the surface of the example that has stood in the Tuileries Gardens for nearly a hundred years. The cast at the Metropolitan had been hidden away in storage rooms for so long that few people even knew of its existence; then, upon the occasion of a lecture on the sculptor, it was brought out and left on view for about a year, since when it has returned to its former eclipse.

As the museum's actions result from the decisions of groups of men and not from that of any one man, it would be

unjust to assign to Mr. French the whole responsibility for the treatment of the Barye works; but his position as a trustee and his standing as a member of his profession would unquestionably cause his desire to be followed, if it were his desire that the sculptures be given a fit place in the one instance, and in the other, any place outside the storerooms. As curator of sculpture at the Louvre, Barye was tireless in measuring the great works under his care and in analyzing their proportions; his own art is eloquent of this study. Consider Mr. French's works. A conception of sculpture such as they offer could scarcely have come from a study of Donatello or Laurana, or from that of Houdon or Barye (whose wax model of a fawn—one of our great treasures—is still allowed to remain on view, with other of his works of small size). And it is this conception—even less to be

From a cast, original in Forest Hills Cemetery, Boston

THE ANGEL OF DEATH AND THE YOUNG SCULPTOR—Daniel C. French

connected with that of the ancients than with those of the Renaissance or of modern times—that has given us *The Angel of Death and the Young Sculptor*, and presided over the selection of the works forming the larger part of the collection of modern sculpture at the Metropolitan. The Lejeune *Ephebe*, recently added to it, renews our subjection to the Pseudo-Classicism that produced Gérôme's *Tanagra*; while works of Bufano and Allan Clark go almost more wildly astray in their imitation of Chinese sculpture, whose meaning and laws are so remote from the Occidental mind.

Mr. Lorado Taft's work might be passed over in silence so far as its own qualities are concerned, but to do so would be to ignore the artist's position as the great authority of the Middle West. By his writings, his lectures, and his personal influence, he has done more to retard the appreciation of the great in modern sculpture throughout the eager, alert communities of that section of the country than anyone else. The reason for this appears when one considers the work of his hands. Such a piece as the fountain-group outside the Art Institute of Chicago, or the pitiful thing at the foot of the stairs inside the building, would make one despair of the advisability of having museums. Still, by walking a little further in the Chicago gallery, one can reach the hall of casts from the works of the masters. They give only faint echoes of the glory of the marbles they represent, but more than enough to make a visitor with a sense of values forget the deadness of the works last noticed. Compared with them, Solon H. Borglum's *Captain "Bucky" O'Neill* refreshes the spirit as a thing of health. And in the same artist's *Bucking Broncho* one almost hears the cowboy himself let loose a blue streak of light-hearted profanity. That last may be at some distance from literature, just as the shack where the cowboy got his whisky is at a certain remove from architecture, and as the figure of the broncho-buster is from sculpture. But the big swear, the rough bar, and the rough rider may be connected with moments when one's blood ran a bit faster and hotter in one's veins than usual. That is a symptom, also, of coming into contact with a work of art. It is unlikely that anyone ever felt his pulse beat harder on looking at work such as the productions of Mr. French or Mr. Taft here mentioned.

Or such as the *Centaur and Dryad* of Mr. Paul Manship. If the drink offered us by Mr. Borglum suggests red liquor of a

somewhat violent kind, and the beverage of the two academic gentlemen seems to have been sugared a bit too freely, a product like Mr. Manship's group leaves one in doubt as to what mixture of spice and perfumery could have brought about such an exotic flavor. The label on the bottle tells in large letters of its Classico-Romantic ingredients

Metropolitan Museum of Art

CENTAUR AND DRYAD—Paul Manship

and assures you that it is of highest quality and just off the boat.

Or, to treat the matter without more reminders of the wicked days of King Alcohol, the art represented by Mr. Manship's sculpture is a reaction from the failure of the academies of the recent past. He had studied in the American Academy in Rome and, too intelligent to be unaware of the poverty in which it left its graduates, he started his search among the riches of the museums in order to increase his resources. The thing nearest at hand was the art of the Renaissance. Why did he not stick to it, like Bastianini who, some fifty years ago, made sculptures so close to those of the old Florentines that they passed for ancient? Bastianini did his work with marvelous skill, and believed in it thoroughly. Only through the dishonesty of certain dealers did it come occasionally to be sold as a product of the past. Mr. Manship's intentions are even less open to doubt on such a score, for his work does not follow one school alone, but suggests della Robbia at certain times, the Chinese at others, most often the archaic Greeks or Etruscans, with occasional blendings of the various sources.

The success his work has had is a cause for hope that we are moving toward a better state of affairs. In reaching it by way of the study of the classics we naturally had to pass through a period when we followed the letter of the law instead of its spirit. Recurring to the description of modern art as one that passes over the false realism of the nineteenth century to rejoin the principles of the earlier periods, the welcome accorded to Mr. Manship may well be ascribed to the fact that a good-sized public had awakened to the error of the preceding generations and wanted something different, something modern in the best sense. People had spent great

days in Naples, with the Greeks and their archaistic followers; in Florence, with the Renaissance men at the Bargello; in the Musee Cernuschi, with the Chinese wonders; and in the British Museum, where there is everything: Mr. Manship, with his unusual ability, producing work in our own day with some look of the great old things, was the artist people were waiting for.

The fact that they began to murmur about getting too full a measure of ancient citations in this form of modernism, and about a certain inconsistency in the joining together of the parts, could be discounted by the need for preliminary experiment in so big a task as that of giving a new life to things that dated from many centuries ago. More serious were the persistent reminiscences of certain features of nineteenth-century naturalism. In the shop windows of Florence one sees everywhere a sculpture of a sleeping baby on whose face a fly is sitting. Sometimes the fly is of white marble like the rest, sometimes it is colored to look quite real. Could it be remembrances of Europe such as this that suggested to Mr. Manship his rendering of the collar and necktie in the portrait of James F. Ballard? They are so "convincing" that they look as if they might be unbuttoned and taken off at night. And could, haply, the sculptor's idea of coloring his marble have been affected by his viewing of bad modern Italian works in that medium or did it come directly from the ancients? Renewed comparisons of the *Centaur and Dryad*, the *Calypso* or the *Diana* with the small Greek bronzes like the *Discobolus* at the Metropolitan Museum, or the figures from the mirror handles, or the late-archaic *Horse* made one suspect deeper and deeper differences. The long centuries since the time of the Greeks have shown the world so many things that it can no longer see nature with their eyes; the

attempt to do so, registered the most clearly perhaps in the relief on the pedestal of the work here illustrated, was foredoomed to fail.

As we are approaching the art of today in a frame of mind so much more receptive than that of a generation or two ago, it is necessary to guard against a mistake pointed out by the French saying, “Everything new is good.” The Innocents Abroad who brought home the typical bad collection of yesterday asked no more than an art in which pleasing subjects were portrayed with skill. A big public could enjoy such things without a suspicion of any need for the æsthetics of a later day. Now that artists and critics have brought about a consciousness of qualities that the earlier collectors did not know, the whole situation is changed, and Ananias must offer a different type of goods to the artists if they are to believe in the things and, in their turn, pass them on to the world. Already with Lenbach we saw that it was merely the lack of a good tradition that brought him to do his dull and unpleasant painting. We have seen Sargent and Besnard cling to such rags of the truth as they got from the good artists whom they frequented in their early days. As the wave of the worst of modern art recedes, professionals and laymen see the problem more clearly. Even the museums must soon become conscious that a work like Gérôme’s *Pygmalion and Galatea* offers us only the deadest dross in exchange for the living spirit of Greece.

Perhaps a majority of art-lovers already see the weakness of the particular sculpture by Mr. French here reproduced. They do not like it, and so they have not troubled to explain to themselves wherein its error consists. The idea of the artist’s work going on through the centuries when the sculptor himself is dead may be as obvious and as consoling as *The*

Doctor by Sir Luke Fildes, which they have conveniently pigeonholed as "literary." But the epithet quite overshoots the mark and hits many of the great men, Fra Angelico for example, as a type of the story-tellers of religious art. The real contradiction appears when we notice the difference between the two arts shown in the present work. That of the Egyptian finds in a physical "unreality" the symbol of his ancient faith, that of the modern sculptor can imagine nothing better than to make a naturalistic copy of two models, one male and one female, the latter decked out with a pair of wings to tell that she represents Death. Bully Bottom and his companions of the clowns' play in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" have about the same conception of art when they tell their audience to recognize the moon because the worthy tailor who plays the part carries a lantern. We laugh when the simple actor who plays the wall holds up his fingers to represent the hole through which the lovers kissed; but many people are coming to feel that Mr. French's stagecraft is only a little less naïve. Or rather, using a phrase that means for them that there is something wrong in his work but difficult to define, they say it is "old school." Will they feel the wrongness of a work when it is "new school"? One may believe they are moving toward the ability for that when we note the number of connoisseurs who differentiate between Mr. Manship and the Greeks as definitely as they recognize that the abyss between Mr. French and the Egyptians is measured in terms of art far more than by centuries.

XII

The danger of a new Reign of Error, like that of the nineteenth century, does not seem probable. We have, of course, not purged ourselves of all its bad conceptions, and

for an old form that dies there is a new one to replace it. But the new mistakes are not quite so widespread; there is a larger nucleus of cultured people to resist them. Above all, there are, in all countries, exhibitions outside the control of Ananias: it is not possible for another Cézanne to be kept out of contact with his public for forty years. I know about the mote and the beam; and have asked myself whether a generation that acclaims Matisse and Derain is as far from the truth as the admirers of Meissonier and Gérôme. Have we a new academy? That would mean a new group of teachers—and one looks in vain for teachers among the "modernists." Are the men of today making blunders as bad as those of the past? The most serious trouble with the work of the present-day men (aside even from the weaklings who merely swim with the current) seems to be that they are too often carried away by the market demand for their pictures when once they have reached success, and produce too hastily, scanting the work. But people soon feel that one Vlaminck is of a time when he was "turning them out," another when he kept his high spirits in hand and pushed on to the admirable quality of his best work. As between Picasso and his imitators the distinction is not hard to make. The errors of those who like "modern art" are apt to be on matters of detail, not along the big lines of principle, though the fundamental matter of idea is apt to be neglected for a time, at least, when we are caught by a new toy, like the bright color of Impressionism or the simple, building-block logic of the minor Cubists. But the mistake does not last in the case of people who look on art with any seriousness.

Just the matter of the people who judge is a safeguard. The man in the street could see the beauties in the "old school," but the man in the street has less to do with deciding things

today. He may be able to recognize the truth in homely statements of common experience, and yet be imposed on in matters which have to be put into less elementary language. At least a slight acquaintance with the arts of poetry and music is necessary before he can realize that in "*Die Forelle*" Heine and Schubert produced one of the most beautiful of all songs. Yet it was his own proverb about catching fish in troubled waters which offered its dull fact as the filament which was to become incandescent with the genius of the two artists. Our "plain man" goes to the concert where Elena Gerhardt sings the masterpiece, and when he is back in the street he again hums the "*tingel-tangel*" that is natural for him. It is true that the nature of music is such as to keep him from getting as far from art in it as he does in painting or sculpture. Our innate sense of the laws of music, of what is harmony and what is discord, gives to a large public the power to distinguish between good and bad; so, too, the greater knowledge of the other arts, which the museums and exhibitions are creating, must prevent a recurrence of the worst conditions we have witnessed.

It is trying, to be sure, to see false art in the new movements, from which we might have hoped for a sign of our progress in appreciation (there is, naturally, no such thing as progress in art itself). But again, what is worthless among productions of those who follow the modern forms is accepted by so few people. Without the school-taught ability to copy nature, without even the academic formula for design and color, the counterfeit of art of the modernist camp-followers is about the poorest thing in the whole scale. It usually avoids cheap sentiment, but cheap æsthetics is just as futile. Its one chance for acceptance lies in the "snobbism" that swallows the rubbish of the so-called moderns because it

looks different from the bad things of the old school. One more chance for Ananias to mislead artists and public! A move to the modernist camp would give him a magnificent strategic position in which he could do business under the protection of his former enemies.

And when he sets out to be modern, he can employ quite wonderfully the methods of the advertiser—with whom, as we have seen, he has dealt so much in the fields of commerce. He has quantity production to dispose of, just like the manufacturers. He can offer the goods cheap—with tempting tales of profits made in the past, and so appeal to the speculator, who might just as well buy this stuff as oil stock. Of late he has been sending out broad-sheets, much like those of certain houses in the fringe of Wall Street, telling of the wonderful "find" of a neglected master of the modern school, and giving the public a chance to get in on the ground floor, before the market is prohibitive in its quotations. A few well-placed newspaper puffs, disclosing the phenomenal sales of the new genius, will catch the people who still follow the trail of "success" in art, instead of looking for themselves at pictures, and owning what they enjoy.

Mr. E. E. Cummings is fascinated by the catchwords of the advertisements, and his collection must contain some wonderful ones, like that of the cigarette company which uses the line, "When they smoke for pleasure——" One asks oneself what other reason there is for smoking, and then one looks at certain art-collections and sees that the pictures in them were not bought to afford pleasure. They could hardly have come from anything but the desire to get ahead of the neighbors, in tokens of wealth or culture. The more "modern" the art of the bad collection, the less joy it seems to offer.

After all, only a weak, lazy attention was demanded by the old pretty-girl picture. Its interest was genuine, for we all relish the sight of youth, attractive features, and healthy bodies; and the artist who suggested these things was the welcome one. If he also suggested a life freed of pretense to the dull, sexless morality which found its lying symbol in the ugly clothes of the nineteenth century, so much the better! When the future goes into its museum of old costumes and looks at our pantaloons, corsets, and trailing skirts, it will understand the nostalgia for a world where Paul and Virginia disported themselves in the quasi-nudity of *The Storm*. When the gifted son of Bohemia gave to his contemporaries a glimpse of this world, where he was supposed to dwell, it was but natural that the bourgeois should pay well for his moments in the land of Cockayne. He would pay, too, for nice pink newsboys who reminded him of his rise from the ranks of the workers, or for a nice landscape that "babbled of green fields" and reminded him of the country place which he had just bought. The painter was a good painter in proportion to his skill at producing an illusion of nature; the rest was "æsthetic guff." Or as Max Liebermann expressed the matter, "*Immer das Kunststück, nie das Kunstwerk*."

Capitale—Toulouse

THE REAPERS—Henri Martin

What chance of success is there for the man who can neither catch Mr. Babbitt on a *Kunststück*—a feat of skill—nor produce the *Kunstwerk* which appeals to the art-lovers? Most of the false art of the Post-Impressionist, Cubist, and Post-Cubist time is such a sorry joke, and so well known as that by people who like the real men of those groups, that the

main difficulty here is to find examples worthy of notice. After dealing with the famous men considered previously, it would be exaggerating the importance of a lot of poor whippersnappers to put them in the pillory, if one could remember their names at all. The work done by the modern schools in abolishing the lure of the subject (at the price, for a time, of showing no visible feature of the subject) has already had a very solid effect in making people see that the artist's expression of reality is attained by his proper means of form and color, and not by competing with the tangible object.

Refusal to use this, the finest variety of the birdlime furnished by Ananias, leaves the False Artist very poor in resources. The snob is unreliable; he will hasten on to the next "new school" as soon there is one. The man who wants museum art cannot be depended on much more; he will either spend his money on ancient things or discover which modern ones really contain the classic qualities. There remains that species of malcontent whose hatred of the past makes him go in for modernity at any price. We have seen him gobbling down Bakst as a protest against Bouguereau. In France he caused his representatives in the government to give commissions to an Impressionist. Besnard was, after all, pretty close to the Ecole; and while he might be somewhat modern, Henri Martin would be the real thing. Look at those dabs of bright color, easier to count and catalogue than those of Claude Monet himself! And for his position as the "Official Revolutionist" (the title he has earned), he had the further advantage of doing nice, charming figures with "good" drawing—which showed that the Revolution, this time, would not destroy what was agreeable in the past. The same men who hailed Henri Martin's lilac-scented powder-puffs turned away from the genuine renewal of the Impressionists'

research, in the hands of Signac and Seurat. The same *Ersatz Brot* psychology in the Post-Impressionist period is what has given us, instead of the masterpieces in the time of Paul Elie Dubois, the big “Ku Klux picture” by him that hangs in the Metropolitan Museum, where it received its nickname from the white hoods and robes of the Algerian women it represents.

But as we come down to the men of today, there is more and more difficulty to find in France examples of the Ananias school that have achieved any great degree of prominence. The names of Picasso and

MOSES—Ivan Mestrovic

Braque are heard everywhere in the world of art, and even people who do not like them concede the extent of their success. Seurat is no longer spoken of as ugly, the word of 1884, when he and his group founded the Independents. His picture of the *Bathers*, first shown at the memorable exhibition of that year, was bought for the Tate Gallery in London at a big price, or what seemed one a short time ago;

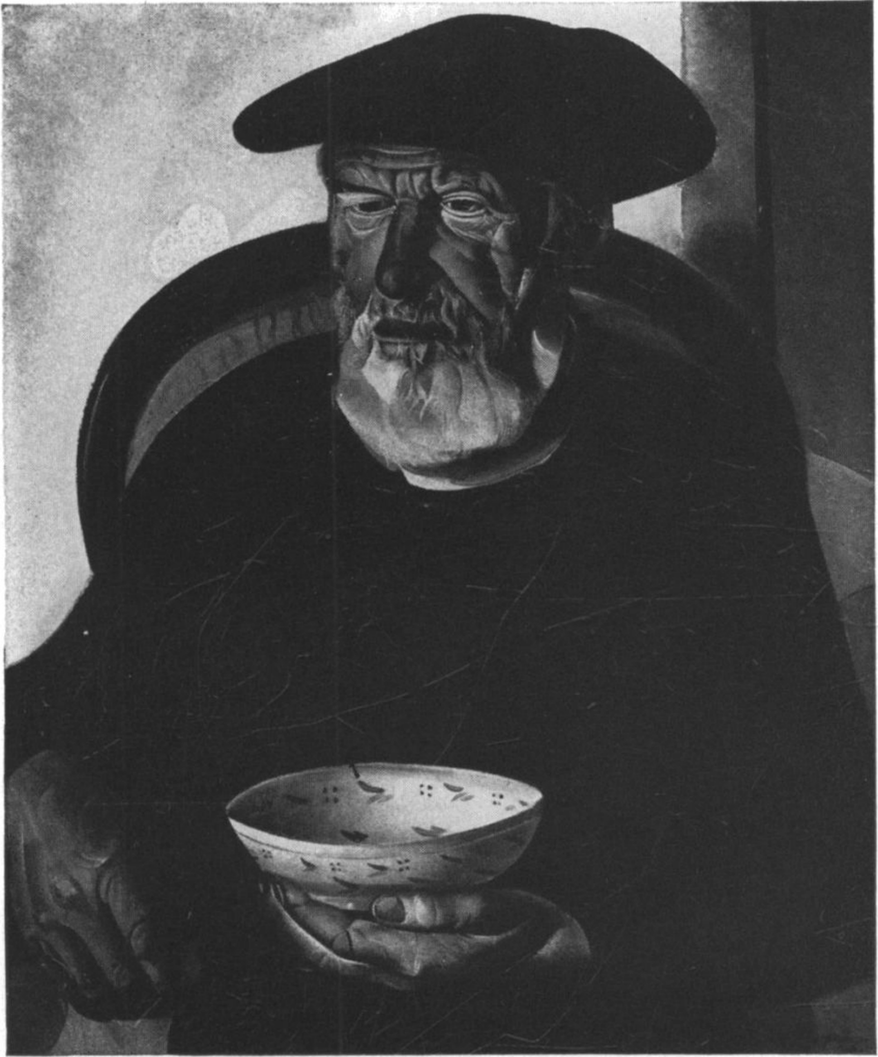
and, when the pictures of the late John Quinn were put on view in New York the Ambassador of France came from Washington in order to accept the great collector's bequest to the Louvre of a picture by Seurat.

The partisans of modernity-at-any-price who "arrive" are almost all outside the country which, having most contributed to the production of modern art, is also reaching a state of calmer judgment on the subject. And so, for conspicuous examples of the counterfeit of art in the new schools, one has to turn to peoples like the Slavs, with their Mestrovic and Grigoriev. We have already noticed the explanation of the weaker modernism in Germany—the desire to reach a tradition suited to the national character, and it is permissible to hope, at least, that the changes may bring about results in the end happier than those of the beginnings. The Futurists of Italy were more concerned with bombastic political clamor about a new Italian greatness (of which Mussolini appears to be the present exponent), than with getting a solid basis for their art, and so there is no reason for surprise in its shipwreck. Paris and London were practically unanimous as to the deadness of the Futurist pictures when they were first shown.

But Mestrovic still has his place in the limelight, though it is cruel to him in its revelation of the poor, academic basis on which he has piled up his reminiscences of the Byzantine, Rodinesque, and Cubistic schools. They fail so completely to amalgamate, that only people unused to discerning the qualities of sculpture fail to realize that a work like the one here reproduced is simply one more example of the bad judgment which mistakes the colossal for the significant. Similarly, Grigoriev's planes and angles, accented according to the Cubistic conventions, make only a new skin—and a

transparent one—over the bad form and color in his picture of *Old Trombola*. Fierce impatience with the tyranny of the past —a political past, once more—gives to the Slavic strength of both the sculpture and the painting last mentioned an appearance of artistic power. It fades away when we see how incomparably nearer they are to the weak tradition of their countries than to the living idea of the arts they have tried to enter.

With them we may take leave of the devious line of the art that we have been following at such length. It is far from having run its course, but it is today



Brooklyn Museum

OLD TROMBOLA—Boris Grigoriev

confused and leaderless as compared with what it was in the days of Gérôme, Lenbach, and Sir Frederick Leighton, P.R.A.—to mention one more name, and a prominent one, among the chieftains of the past. The true Friends of the Louvre, in the society of that title, gave a great sigh of relief when American dollars outbid French francs for possession of

Regnault's *Salome*. The painter's death on a battlefield of 1870 and his consequent position as a hero made his wretched picture a menace to their walls; they had been unable to overcome the zeal of the "patriots," during the next war, who thought that Regnault's connection with the national glory entitled *Salome* to a place in the national museum. The danger, one of the last serious ones, had been averted—for them—and Christopher Columbus was thanked once more for discovering America.

Pazienza, col tempo; as our store of good works increases, as they make their influence felt among artists and collectors, there will grow up a love of art informed by understanding of it which will avert the danger of counterfeits, for us. Eternal vigilance may well be the price of liberty in the fields of politics and economics, for the old evils are forever ready to appear again there. The field of art is more happily situated, for we can get to the root of things in it, and can make them healthy, future writers on Ananias will have to record names among his descendants that have not yet reached renown; but we may be sure that they will be harder to find than are those among which our harvest has been so lamentably plentiful. It has been aptly observed that what prevents the acceptance of art is not ignorance, but prejudice. A person who has seen little of good pictures will take to them more readily than one who has been trained in a false school. The best condition, of course, is that of persons or nations that have always been surrounded by the products of a genuine tradition, and the reason for the change now occurring is that more acquaintance with the true arts is already making people see the futility of the false ones.

CHAPTER IV

A SURVEY OF CONDITIONS

I

EVEN if a better knowledge of art causes the counterfeit to be recognized as worthless, there still remains the phenomenon of the number of artists in the modern time, and the enormous percentage of bad ones. If your severity is only one-tenth of that required for our previous estimate, there are still thirty-nine out of the forty thousand artists in Paris whose work is no asset for the world—though, as I have said, they may be of some use in interesting the general public. Be one hundred times as generous as I (and the other people who would say that there is no greater number of real talents today than in the days of Ingres, Corot, and Daumier): you have still thirty thousand men and women who can show only the weakest justification for their presence in the profession. If their desire were really to help art, instead of to play with it, they would make money, buy works by the genuine men, and see to it that the museums and exhibitions were maintained at the highest possible level. They do make money, when they can, though only in a minority of cases is it enough for more than a bare living. When they are rich they go in for motor-cars, clothes, country houses, etc., just like the business man and his wife; and not much oftener than those honest people does the well-to-do painter or sculptor have a collection that means something for the benefit of his profession. Every museum official, reviewing the people he sees in his daily rounds, can bear witness that the number of artists who come often to the galleries is astonishingly small;

and the good Lord knows whether the people who organize exhibitions find the mass of artists going into them with an idea of raising the level of art, or in order to gain personal success!

If the mere numbers of artists throughout the world today are improving conditions (which is debatable), their influence on the public taste is not the thing that makes them adopt art as a life work. It is time to try for an answer to the questions asked on an earlier page: what causes these thousands to turn to art? and why do they fail at it? The reason would seem to lie in the very restricted outlet now afforded for the art-instinct which the past has stored up in mankind.

Old India had more wisdom than we sometimes recognize, in her theory of the castes. If we cannot accept them as a rigid system with tyrannical powers, we have ourselves ample material for tracing out the persistence of racial, local, and professional habits of mind. William James has observed that only ancestral habit keeps certain communities to the hard life of the peasant or the fisherman, when other occupations offer so much more ease and remuneration. There is such a thing as the call of the soil. And Eugene O'Neill's old sailor, who had sent his child to be raised a thousand miles inland, is only one of innumerable instances of those who have known the irresistible call of the sea. Can we doubt that men feel in their blood the passion of their ancestors when we read the life of Matthew Fontaine Maury, born in the mountains of Tennessee, making his way against the harsh condition of early America to the ocean that he had dreamed of but never seen, and then, through a long life devoted to seafaring, becoming one of the great seers of his noble profession?

In the old centuries, if a man felt in his veins nothing that united him to the caste of the soldier, the peasant, the trader,

the priest, and others, if his whole instinct made him turn to art, there were a hundred doors open to him. He could be a worker in iron, or wood, or pottery, or paper (with written or printed characters), in textiles, or glass, or the innumerable ancient and splendid things to which the hands of the craftsmen have given their dignity. Go once more to the Museum and see whether among a given 40,000 artists of the past, more than about a hundred were painters or sculptors. The rest worked in other fields, but far from being the enemies of the masters, they carried something of the great spirit into utilitarian forms—and had pride in doing so. Today they are disinherited outcasts from the callings of their forefathers. The machine has taken their jobs; and when they look about for an escape from the ramifications of business life, which surrounds them everywhere in the modern world, they find only painting and sculpture still open to them.

Even so, these are pretty badly cut off from their old basis of architecture. If painting and sculpture have concentrated their effort in the less monumental styles, if they have managed to absorb some of the energy that once went into the crafts, they are impoverished by loss of the support they once had from the buildings. Often, indeed, they were an integral part of the architecture, and did as much for its splendor as the underlying construction. The age of commerce and the age of steel changed that construction. First came the quasi-bankruptcy of architectural style in the earlier nineteenth century; then came the skeleton of girders, the mere screen of the walls, in the latter part of the modern time. As we have seen, the period has not so much as begun to attain an understanding of decoration on a par with its genius for construction.

Here, then, are reasons why the artists in Paris have multiplied from 200 to 40,000 in a century (with a corresponding increase in the rest of Europe, and America), and why all but a few are failures. The age-old need to work with the hands explains the first point, the fact that the higher arts are not the work of the hands—that “painting is a mental thing” as Leonardo put it, explains the futility of most of the work of the last seventy-five years or more. In general, it is scarcely within the purview of this book. It is not so much the work of the False Artists as of incompetent artists.

II

Were there not a danger of confusing the issues, we might inquire whether all the men considered in the last chapter were not incompetent—in their thinking. Meissonier applied to picture-making the attention to minute detail which might, in the past, have given us the marvels of accuracy that we see in the gauntlets of the old armorers, the complication of their scheme and the delicacy of adjustment in the little plates of steel almost recalling nature’s own miraculous devices in the human hand. We have seen that in an artist of the great time, like Brueghel, the “mental thing” was the end which all the perfect workmanship subserved; and in no period but the modern one do we find a Meissonier carried away by his skill with the means—and carrying with him a big public unconscious of the pettiness of his work.

Consider two other old-time masters of minutiæ. A painting by Fouquet, perhaps three by four inches in size, and containing innumerable figures, each of an incredible perfection of detail, looks as big as a fresco when reproduced. The scale is not less than majestic in the tiny picture, because the idea was that of his whole period, not simply that of the

parvenus of culture. The caste-system of Fouquet's time put the decision as to art-matters in the hands of men prepared for it by the presence in their castles of great art from an earlier day. A Fouquet worked for the princes of the Church and State, and the peasant's bowl and knife were made by other men—who had their traditions also, and their joy in their craft.

The case is no different when we turn to Flanders and see what van Eyck did in painting for the merchants. What is there in the world to surpass the closeness of observation in the *John Arnolfini and his Wife* in the National Gallery in London? The man's character, the woman's figure, the reflection in the mirror, all come back to one with incomparable sharpness of definition, even after years during which one has not seen the picture. But each detail in this stupendous piece of Gothic art is as necessary to the ensemble as the details of a great cathedral. Being unable to build cathedrals in the modern time (and I think that not even the most fervent supporters of our attempts would call them architecture, in the sense we gave to the word at Notre Dame or Chartres), we square our score with the great epoch by calling its painters "Primitives." The misunderstanding of the past by the people who invented this epithet has no equal save in the ignorance of the whole problem of art shown by the men treated in this book.

Back and forth across the centuries one goes, without finding anything to balance it. No wonder the fabled Golden Age of art was located in the past, and recent work was suspect. We struck bottom in the modern time. To say so is indeed to understate the case. Our false painting and sculpture are not only the worst things ever produced; they are in a class of badness never before known. The dregs of Greco-

Roman art make a poor enough show when compared with the things of the golden periods, but the sorriest type of ancient melodrama, the most groveling approach to paltriness of their late realists, loom up as something colossal beside the ineptitudes of our time. Titian might caricature the figures of the *Laocoön* group as squirming monkeys, and so avenge the later world for its subjection to the decadence of classical art, but what knowledge, what power was still in the ancient body when the fresh mind of the Christian era gave the genius of the world into other hands. Those who have tasted the delights offered by Greek sculpture of the centuries preceding this time may venture to pronounce the word decadence before the *Laocoön*—but they take a risk in doing so: the thing is prodigious. Even a late copy of Greek sculpture is sometimes not less than bewildering in its perfection. Michael Angelo's admiration for such things cannot be discounted because of the fact that he did not know Athens and Olympia. He knew the glorious work of Niccola Pisano, and if he studied the late products of antiquity instead, it must have been because, as his era approached a culmination and a decline, his genius demanded the nourishment of a period of full knowledge and full consciousness.

After the fall of pagan Rome, come centuries torn by the incursions of fierce peoples from the north, and troubled by the differences between the mind of Europe and that of the Orient, in their new meeting at Constantinople. But the most barbaric stuff of the time has its vigor to recommend it, and what we called Byzantine rigidity and effeteness in the days of our ignorance is seen, upon better acquaintance, to proceed from one of the great arts of the world.

When we come down to the poorest aftermath of the Renaissance, we find that the sentimental piety-pictures of a

Carlo Dolci or a Sassoferrato still hold something of the immense style attained in the period before them; the heavy, black paintings turned out as a sort of factory product from Bolognese workshops, too poor to be identified by more than the name of some late master that they resemble, are often inventive in design to an astonishing degree, and handled with a breadth and clearness that recall at times the great work of a century or more before. As long as the activity is kept up at all, it is genuine in its very lack of inspiration, the authentic expression of Italy's weariness. Her effort, unparalleled in its time, had left but little energy for the late comers of the school. And, conversely, the best reason for condemning the False Artists of our time lies in the fact that they misrepresent us, for we are not in a period of decadence. The modern period is one of research, of invention, of courage and creativeness. Its character can be expressed only by works of the same qualities, and there is a wealth of them around us.

I think there is one analogue in the past for the condition we have been witnessing. It is not furnished by the provincial artists of Germany and Flanders, who, after the rapid rise and fall of painting in those countries, continued with base imitations of the earlier works. When some musty little museum shows us these almost forgotten pictures, they are as tedious as could well be imagined in their whimpering poverty. But again, they are the end of a great line and, making no pretense to be more than things of their country, they may even have an echo of its greatness. The same is true of the late art of Holland, as it drags down to its sleep in the eighteenth century.

But our hunt for knowledge at the Museum really yields fruit when we reach the sculpture of Cyprus. At first sight this seems a strange place and time to look for the art of Ananias

—several centuries indeed before he was born! But the Bible story, Like all the masterpieces, applies to a period before its own, as well as to one eighteen or nineteen hundred years later, such as we have been examining. And see the way in which similar conditions in the two epochs produce similar effects. Among the Mediterranean peoples, the Phœnicians, who left the Cypriote works, were the great race of traders. Their wanderings over the known world in search of gain and adventure did not result in the building up of a body of faith like that of the Assyrians, the Egyptians, and the Greeks. The ideas of these three peoples took the form of art—whether in palaces and temples, pyramids and obelisks, the Parthenon and the theater, or in sculpture, painting, and ceramics. Those are the tokens of the religious mind and of the artist mind. The Phœnicians, having no strong basis of such ideas, could produce no art of their own, so they borrowed it from the great schools before them. Though the stature of the whole epoch, and their nearness in time and place to their models, prevented them from falling into such grotesque results as we have seen from Alma-Tadema and Gérôme, the falseness of the work is almost as complete.

In the relief showing Hercules with the cattle of Geryon, at the Metropolitan Museum, observe the wholesale fashion in which the sculptor has appropriated the art of the Assyrians, most evidently seen in the profile of the bearded man. But this relief dates from the latter part of the sixth century B.C.; and for over a hundred years there had been no one alive who could do genuine Assyrian work, or impart its vanished principles to newcomers. That did not trouble our sculptor's public; they were not squeamish as to such minor matters. They didn't know about art, but they knew what they liked, precisely as the patrons of the modern Salon did; and one can

almost imagine a Cypriote art-salesman assuring his customers that this work was of the finest quality and just like the classic things of the past—as a New York dealer could make his clients see the color and quality of Tintoretto's painting in a picture by Watts, the "finish" of a Terburg in the meretricious slightness of Fortuny, and the art of Frans Hals in the slippery brush-work of Laszlo. The last-named painter is the one to whom two of our great collectors addressed themselves for their portraits, which hang on their walls with the Hals, the Rembrandts, the Vermeers, and the Ingres (works by Reynolds, Hoppner, and Lawrence helping effectively to bridge the gap, however).

To see such a combination is almost enough to make one join the Philistines in their idea that people buy pictures out of sheer emptiness of mind. It would be unjust to the dealers to hold them alone answerable for the confusion; it comes at least as much from higher sources.

Let me recall a lecture on Raphael by a professor of fine arts at an American college (both may remain nameless, like the two collectors of a moment ago, since there are so many other collectors, professors, and colleges like them). This particular guide of American youth said that the art of the great Umbrian had not passed from the world, for Kenyon Cox's drawings were as fine as those of Raphael. When a new incumbent of the same professor's chair was to be selected, a distinguished artist was asked to give his recommendation to one of the candidates. He had already spoken for another of them, and when surprise was expressed at his giving support to so poor a painter, he replied, testily, "Well, he'll do for a professor, won't he? He knows the names and dates, and can give lectures, can't he?" Of another college authority on art, whose writings are used as text-books, a practical expert on

the professor's subject remarked, "The trouble with him is that when he isn't teaching, he's studying books in the library. As for getting any first-hand knowledge of the subject he treats—he doesn't look at pictures one day in the year." The artist having been treated as a superior type of skilled workman by the professor, returns the contempt with interest; and the great profession of teaching is the sufferer—together with the students who, too frequently, get scarcely a grain of wheat in a bushel of chaff.

Every so often one feels remorseful at what sounds like harshness toward a mistaken past (the matter of the professors, however, is of the present hour). But as to the absurd statement about Mr. Cox's drawing in that lecture, it was mentioned only to exemplify a kind of superficiality forever threatening us. The final responsibility for it does not lie with the professors, any more than with the dealers. All things in art, good and bad, are ultimately to be traced to the artist, in this case the painter who, in his *académies*—as the French call figures such as are drawn in art-schools—imitated Raphael's studies.

If there is unkindness in dwelling on this phase of Mr. Cox's work, it may be repaired by directing attention to his picture of *The Harpist* at the Metropolitan Museum. Its unassuming charm caused it to be acquired by an artist who was also a true connoisseur. He remarked at the time, "I never expected to see the day when I'd buy a picture by Kenyon Cox." The words of the man who could recognize by his act the merit possessed by the other painter showed that he also saw the failure of the major effort of Mr. Cox's career. Surface imitation of Raphael such as his, the sentence of the professor who indorsed it, the patter of the dealers who sold it, and the mentality of the art-commissions that ordered it for

public buildings are phenomena which would lead us to believe that the modern era in art is simply the age of the Cypriotes once more, if we did not have evidence of a different genius in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. No one dreams of regarding the art of Cyprus as representative of its great period, but not less than millions of people in our time have known no other art than that which continues the character of the most debased product of antiquity.

How clearly we see the mind of the False Artist, as we know him today, in a work like the bearded *Votary* of the fourth century B.C. Like the other Cypriote work discussed, it dates from a time long past the one when the great art from which it derives was alive and genuine. Perhaps the man who did this was "sincere," to recall the pet word of excuse for such artists; perhaps he really thought his work was like that of the archaic Greeks. That scarcely consoles us for the absence of their qualities when

Metropolitan Museum of Art

VOTIVE FIGURES—Cypriote Sculptors—350-300 B.C.

we see the poor, smirking expression of this face instead of the irresistible lighting up of the features given by the Hellenic sculptor as he becomes aware of the still timid but exhilarating increase of his power. In a headless fragment, the difference is only the more sensible: before the subtle planes of the face were mastered in Greece, the large forms of the

body were understood and related with matchless æsthetic science. As many men have observed, the basis of Greek sculpture is impersonal, something that has a truth transcending the fugitive impressions of the artist as much as it is above mere resemblance to his model. “I never think of classical art,” writes Paul Valéry in his admirable study of the European mind, “without inevitably choosing the monument of Greek geometry as its best example.” If there is a vestige of the logic of Greece in these Cypriote things, it is only less garbled than the references to the masters found in the Ananias-art of the modern time.

III

At least the Cypriotes had enough modesty not to set up as schoolmasters—which, as we have seen, was what the False Artists of the nineteenth century did. If their schools are under the strongest suspicion today, if the question of so many a young artist going to Paris is, “What good modern man can I study under?”, the fault rests squarely on the shoulders of the teaching which characterized the reign of Ananias. Travestying Raphael and the Greeks, the men who claimed to represent the classical tradition bear the sole responsibility for the reaction against those masters. Theirs also is the blame if the firm discipline in drawing which was general in the past is being neglected by many today. The shallowness in the work of the academic teachers so disgusted the young men as to lead them to avoid the schools. That naturally made men like Léon Bonnat cry anarchy: what they did not see was that they themselves were the cause of such anarchy as existed. It was not, however, what they imagined—the better artists had simply founded their own schools, or clubbed together in studios where they practiced drawing without supervision.

Even in the official ateliers many were heard to say that they came merely to use the model, and paid no attention to the criticism of the professor.

Good men refused to teach—as we have seen in the case of Claude Monet. A deep student like Matisse found that the people who came to work under him wanted merely to find out how he got his "effects." He closed his door on all pupils when he realized that he was being applied to (in a majority of cases) by would-be modernists who could not comprehend the simple fact that his position in Paris was the result of the hardest delving into the principles of his art. He had set his pupils to drawing from a cast of the Mars Borghese and they had been mystified if not aggrieved at his concealing his "secrets," still more so when he said there were none save those which study at the Louvre and hard work at home would explain. Things are topsy-turvy indeed when the great rôle of the teacher is misunderstood to the extent that we see today. Many a good modern artist bears the scars of his struggle to attain a rational mode of procedure. Often it is only in later life that he has come to see that the study of form is fundamental as a base for his painting or sculpture, and to realize what a beautiful thing drawing is. Modeling that gave a mere simulacrum of roundness, and drawing that wiggled into a slavish copy of the contours, characterized the art which was the most general product of the School; and the ignorance it permitted as to technical matters like the chemical action of paints, oils, and grounds, is not the least of the indictment against it.

From the school to the exhibition was only a step in the course laid out by the False Artists, just as the next step was admission to the museums. Do you ask how else matters should be? Shall we have no schools, no exhibitions, no

museums? I have already declared my belief in teaching. Exhibitions are of enormous use in letting artists know what is being done, and which among the diverse tendencies of a changing age are those that offer hope for development; and for the public to know the art of the day they are a necessity, under modern conditions; also they can be a source of the most real enjoyment and instruction. Museums are, or should be, the exponents of all that is best in art. But everything depends on the way the three institutions are directed. When the school sets money above art, it is time for a change; and the school is doing that if its one purpose is either immediate profit, for an owner (perhaps a teacher), or eventual profit, for a system. On this score, even the Ananias men cannot be accused of a deliberate betrayal of trust. When their own work was rotted through with the compromises demanded by an always more degraded market, their adherence to bad methods in the school was an honest one. They believed in their system and hoped that, somehow, the new generation would get back to the psychology that gave the great results of the past. To face the fact that their own careers had been based on falsehood, a thing which always begets deeper falsehood, would have been too appalling for men who—at their worst—retained some memory of the significance of their ancient profession.

As conditions are today, with young people in steadily increasing thousands applying at the schools, there is probably no chance to follow out in practice Mr. Okakura's idea of the superiority of the family life of the old studios. There would be too few studios to house the aspirants who would apply, to say nothing about placing them in the studios of good artists. If we ever get back to reasonable numbers again (a state we are today almost unable to conceive) the

apprentice system may be restored. But till then we must probably content ourselves, in the main, with seeing to it that teachers in the schools are the best obtainable—that outside of the indispensable technical instruction they must give, there shall be also an incentive for the students to work toward a better general state of affairs instead of a worse one. A few years ago, a visitor to an American art-school whose enrollment reaches the enormous number of five thousand students, was struck with the low type of art toward which all the work he had seen appeared to be pointing.

“But aren’t there any good studios here?” he asked of his guide, an instructor at the school.

“I don’t know just how you the mean word good,” replied the latter—a young artist of merit, who added to his income by teaching. “Mr. A’s pupils are doing pretty well for beginners; Mr. B’s are quite competent in their way.”

“Yes, just so. But you like good pictures, and I do; and I am sure neither of us would ever want a picture that came from even twenty years more of working ‘in their way.’ Aren’t there any studios that seem to promise a good artist or two for the future?”

“Oh, if you mean that—no. We’re asked for a definite result: men able to do good practical drawings for catalogues, magazines, cartoons, posters, etc., with sometimes a man to paint portraits and make a living at it. Most of the students come from families of moderate means, and when they go back to their home towns they want to make good. I’d like to work with some people who were interested in the art of the thing, but I shouldn’t be very long on the job if I waited for that.”

His logic was fair enough for the conditions around him. But it also illustrated the vicious circle in which we revolve when artists, teachers, and students follow the taste of a public whose ideas, in turn, come from the bad pictures in the museums. If the masters there were the ones consulted, they would not afford justification for false ideas. But go to any museum which has both good and bad works on a day when the crowds are there. The Greek rooms will be practically deserted; the Old Masters of painting will hold the attention of a few persons who are evidently enjoying them, while a few others are attempting to like them; but the great mass of the visitors will be in the galleries of modern work, and that would be a very healthy sign if the modern paintings and sculptures were not so low in their average of merit. A Corot, a Courbet, a Manet, and, within the last few years, perhaps even a Cézanne, will tell the educated visitor that the great tradition continues vigorously; but to the ignorance of the majority, the modern rooms are almost a condemnation of the ancient ones. The people feel, rightly, that there is a fundamental difference between a Ranger landscape and a Ruisdael landscape; they decide, wrongly, that the picture of a place they know, painted in familiar colors, is the one with which to spend their time.

It is too much to ask the ordinary layman to proceed directly to the great things of the old days. He almost thinks that you are making fun of him if you say that a Sienese Madonna is a thing of the rarest beauty. That squint-eyed, hatchet-faced shadow of a woman? But if he had been seeing some of the drawings of Odilon Redon just before, if he had gotten interested in the faces from Toulouse-Lautrec's pictures of Parisian music-halls, it would have been easier to trace for that layman the line of humanity that has remained

so startlingly pure throughout all the changes of the schools, it would have been easier for him to see that the sense of form which the Sienese used in describing a woman of his time was at only the slightest remove from that of the two modern men, whose vision is so much more accessible to their contemporaries.

Linking us with the ancient things of the Museum stand those intermediaries I spoke of before—the artists of our own time. It is at the current exhibitions that we see their work. Let the reader think back to all the big shows of contemporary work he can remember in America or in Europe. Do they point to a higher or a lower level in the Museum, when its galleries receive their new accessions from these Salons, Academies, the various World's Fair exhibits, etc.? No wonder that the public thinks that the works shown there represent the real art of modern times, and accepts the word "revolutionary" for works such as were seen at the Armory Show of 1913, where Cézanne, van Gogh, Matisse, and the Cubists were first revealed to the mass of the American people. When, somewhat less than a year after that event, the collection of Mr. J. P. Morgan was put on view, it was astonishing to note how nearly the same was the expression of the big public at the two exhibitions. Both were large-scale demonstrations of the way an unprepared democracy approaches art. "The old man knew about finance, all right, but those art-dealers certainly put over some awfully raw things on him," were the exact words of a remark heard in the crowd that surged and gaped through those galleries of unimaginable treasure. And the remark was confirmed by the looks, nudges, and chuckles of countless ignorant (if quite honest and otherwise estimable) people who glanced at the elongated Gothic figures in the pale tapestries, the curving

body in an ivory carving, the “caricaturish” head on an Umbrian plate, or the weird beast forming a Romanesque aquamanile. The “plain people” decided—precisely as they did at the Armory Show—that if this was art, then art was what the statesman before quoted called “the bunk.” They liked *real* art, the kind that didn’t require all this study and explanation.

And the big annual exhibitions furnished it. The men who have been treated here as the victims of the Ananias-spirit were no victims, but great lords, in those shows! To go through one, say the Sesquicentennial at Philadelphia, is to doubt whether a new Deluge is not needed to clean up the earth. But no, even in that wilderness of depravity there were bright spots, which is more than one can say of exhibitions where the False Artist has full powers. A committee of art-lovers, not necessarily the most enlightened even, will try to give a certain balance to an exhibition, letting it appeal to the “modern” as well as the “old-fashioned” public. And good showmen have found out that the modern things draw the crowd—which was the cause of an experiment tried at the National Academy in New York in 1927.

It requested the participation of a large group of the artists who had for years abstained from showing their work at its exhibitions. All formalities of a choice by jury were waived, and a special room was reserved for the newcomers, many of whom had never submitted work at all, knowing it to be of a type which contradicted the whole tendency of the things previously shown at the galleries. The affair was mainly significant of the realization by the academies that they must make some change in their offering. Relatively few dealers in the big cities try any longer to sell such puerile wares as those which make up the bulk of the great annual exhibitions. It is

becoming plain to too large a public that the trouble with those 39,900 artists in Paris and their innumerable counterparts elsewhere is simply incompetence—in execution or in conception.

Ask any dealer about the pictures by the idols of forty years ago, the "champions of the classics," a euphemism commonly applied in the past to men like Cabanel and Knaus; you will hear a tale of disappointment—not that of the dealers themselves, for they had got rid of their share of the stuff long before—but the disappointment of people who had thought their possessions of value, and then found them worthless. "But my father paid a big price for the picture to one of the most reputable houses in Paris!" "I'm sorry, madam, but it isn't the character of work I handle at my gallery. You might try the firm it came from, but I think it would be better to write them before sending the picture; that may save you expense"—and another person goes home to tell of the heartless commercialism of the present day. Why should the lady have expected anything else? People are not in business "for their health," especially with Fifth Avenue rents hanging over their heads.

IV

And yet, if she knew the history of the art-dealers, she might alter her idea of their being mere money-grubbers. To be sure, there are those who look on pictures as they would on the merchandise of any other line of trade. There are also the men, and not too few, who have told the public things they themselves believed to be untrue about the quality of their stuff. How can you sell goods if you don't say they're fine? But there are too many others to allow the merely venal ones to constitute the rule. And when we come to certain men, we

can only think what a vindication of human nature they are, seeing how they have refused to go "the easiest way" in a business that knows the immense uncertainties and difficulties of their own. The "art patron" whose house is such a temple of culture is often the most industrious of shoppers, the hardest of buyers—and the most wavering of judges. Once the picture is on his walls, the same man (who does not represent all collectors) is a lion of courage, albeit with the modesty becoming one who assumes no credit for the gift which permits him to distinguish the best at his very first glance. The dealer could tell a different story about that gift, and how it had to be propped up by his arguments, and how he or a colleague could have swung the quality of the collection into quite another course.

America, and indeed Europe, do not know their debt to the galleries that, year in and year out, have been directing attention to a better kind of art. As the business became more organized and the public realized more clearly which men in it told the truth, the decrease in the numbers of forgeries was only the more obvious sign of improvement. There is a deeper kind of honesty than that which refuses to sell "Old Masters" of recent fabrication, or even that which will not close its eyes to evidence indicating that only a minor artist did the work which was at first attributed to a great man, the head of his school. The really conscientious dealer studies the quality of the art in the various kinds of goods possible to deal in successfully, and stands by the things which promise permanence.

The profession has had a great example in one firm which, for a century and a quarter, has had not merely business rectitude as its principle, but conviction as to the art in what it offered. Compromise—the thing the artist cannot afford—is

sometimes imposed by conditions in a trade; yet by keeping off the reefs of disaster through conservative investment in accepted things, it was possible for the house in question to offer its hospitality to the men whose work was at first difficult to sell. What a long past one caught a glimpse of in hearing the old head of the firm tell of the time when Millet, pressed by the needs of a growing family, would drop in at the end of a day to see how much ready cash was in the drawer—and would receive all that the dealer could spare! From the days of Barbizon to the end of the nineteenth century and beyond, the tale was the same: belief that time would bring about the acceptance of artists who do not make the choice of Ananias—if it is a choice, and not simply the result of circumstance.

If we look back over the changes of art in America, we see how strong the hold of circumstance really is. When George Inness was approaching his personal style, just before the Civil War, landscape painting was pretty well in the cramped hold of the "omnibus school" of the older artists, whose decalcomania trees were continued for a while on the panels of the horse-drawn vehicles, and as they still are on the decorations of safes. The strong imagination of Inness broke away more and more from this tightness, which a Thomas Cole, with all his fantasy, could not abolish. A new conception again was brought in by Chase, Weir, and the others who made people aware of the light and atmosphere of Velasquez, while John La Farge, with his French cousins and friends, his wide knowledge of the past, his eclecticism, and his travels in the Orient, contributed even more, by his writings as well as by his paintings, to push back the horizon for his countrymen. So it was also with the pioneers of Impressionism and the later schools; the influence of Maurice

B. Prendergast is not alone to be measured in terms of his beautiful vision and his color: one needs to hear what the continual references to Cézanne in his conversation meant to the Americans who knew him abroad and, later, at home.

With each new change in conditions, in the seeing of the artist's problem, there were certain men who remained "old school"; but these *retardataires* are not for an instant to be confused with the decendants or even the victims of Ananias. Minor artists, as a rule, for the strong men—if not too old—would be willing to risk disaster to their sales or indeed their style by adopting new-found aspects of the truth, their work has its own value, if often a modest one; and it were certainly only the most priggish connoisseur who would refuse to enjoy a genuine small art because it was not a big one. Perhaps this statement will seem to contradict the rigor which estimated the number of true artists today as so low; let the visitor to the exhibitions see how long it takes to find enough talents of real value to add up to a hundred: the figure will look harder to reach than when we compare it with 40,000.

And it was not the modest but genuine talents that were favored by the juries of the exhibitions. Those watchers at the gate were there to defend a system, and the record of their activity is to be read in the names of the great men whom they rejected. Sometimes an artist will take offense at rejections, and, after a time, exposes his work to them no more. That was the case of Delacroix, who, in the last and most glorious years of his life, refused to send his works to the Salon, as a rebuke for its injustice. Already in 1848, Ingres, the most distinguished member of the art-commission of the Government, wrote a report condemning the jury system and demanding its abolition. "A jury, however constituted," his report continued, "will always function badly. I consider it

unjust and immoral to deprive any man of the chance to make a living from his work, as long as he does not attack morality." The juries, by excluding men from the exhibitions because of the tendency of their pictures as art, were depriving them of the main chance of reaching the public, of selling their work, and of communicating their ideas.

Despite increasingly ample proof of the clear-sighted wisdom of the old Classicist, it was not until 1884 that the Salon of the Independents "based on the suppression of juries and of prizes," was instituted. Anyone could exhibit, even Ananias (and he did); for the new "anarchists" were in earnest in accepting the principle of Voltaire: "I wholly disapprove of what you say, and will defend to the death your right to say it." The policy of the Independents found a response in every country, and the forty-odd years covered by the movement are those which witnessed the great development of new talent—and also the main increase in the census of artists, till it attained its staggering proportions of today. Perhaps a new period is beginning, when corporate control can be exercised over the excesses of the frankly mercenary men and the too ill-trained or merely silly exhibitionists, and yet not cause a relapse into the insincerity and incompetence of the old juries. Or for a while longer, perhaps, the words of Ingres will still have to be the guide: "We must learn to accommodate ourselves to freedom, whatever may be its drawbacks."

At all events, the public of today is demanding pictures that are not merely merchandise; though enough of that type are still to be seen in the galleries of contemporary work, as well as those of the older schools. In the big cities that see the better kind of art, the day for the worst rubbish is nearly done; so the business representatives of Ananias are concentrating on shows sent out to the newer communities, where the

organizing and advertising abilities of these dealers are said to be obtaining a considerable measure of success for their precious wares. Patience; with time——. But even if one has never seen one's fellow-mortals in the regions of Illinois or Georgia or Texas favored by the new salesmen, one is too sure that they are nice people to be content with saying it will all come out right in a hundred years. Art is long, but that is no reason why we should be misled about it for one more day.

As the more enlightened public grows in appreciation, through opportunity to know the true arts, more knowledge of them and care for them develop also among the dealers. The *expertise* of the old bric-à-brac man who could interpret the marks on porcelain or silver is not enough to prepare the dealer of today for success. His judgment on periods and authenticity must be as exact as that of the old-fashioned antiquary, but he must have, above all, a love for the art he deals in, which is the quality imitated for commercial purposes by those more than tiresome salesmen whose emotions seems always to have them on the verge of tears over the beauty they have nurtured in their bosoms.

It is not merely against the counterfeit of art in the hands of the False Artists that the dealer of today must be on his guard. Among his neighbors—perhaps right next door to his gallery—are people who would treat the art-business as if it were an application of the dressmaker's ideas to the walls of the house. "This picture just fits the space over your mantelpiece; or perhaps you would like something a size smaller—the best people are having less and less on their walls nowadays. Now here is one that would make a perfectly lovely spot in the room; I should have thought a bit of velvet would have been richer, but if you really want a picture, I'm sure this would be altogether unobjectionable. A Rembrandt etching? Oh, I just

couldn't bear it; the period is quite different, and think how you would have to go up close; in case you ever wanted to look at it. Besides, it wouldn't match the window-curtains at all." Anita Loos has given a perfectly characterized, full-length portrait of this type of artist. It is in the words addressed to the French lawyer by the immortal Dorothy, whose sweetness makes one fall as "madly in love" with her as do the policemen. The sentence should be inscribed in letters of gold on the walls of certain interior decorators: "Louis, if you kiss Robert so often people will think you paint batiks."

As Ananias's traveling salesmen are reaping a harvest in the towns new to an acquaintance with pictures, so the batik-boys are having their day with the "culturenes" of the big cities. "You speak of art-collectors as if there were more than a handful of them in America," said a great dealer. "Always bear in mind that that's all there is—the rest of the buyers are just doing a refined sort of house-furnishing."

Which does not mean, of course, that pictures are the only form of art; and doubtless the Rembrandt etching could not be well appreciated high up on a wall; it might better be in a cabinet, like the exquisite small objects that the collector brings out in quiet moments, for himself or for guests to hold lovingly under the light that will best reveal them. Still, people who care for the works themselves have a mysterious way of finding places for them, even in a modern apartment. And when a great painting or sculpture is rejected because it "doesn't fit the scheme of our interior," we are no far cry from the case (every bookseller will vouch for its being a real one—and less infrequent than might be supposed) of the person who comes with a bit of red or purple material and asks for bindings to match it, "and please send up forty-eight feet and

nine inches of books like that." It is less of an insult to the Muse of Reading to have those panels which simulate the backs of volumes—the wall remaining undisturbed in the "library." The man who invented that marvel—sometimes executed with real taste—was the ancestor of the modern interior decorators. Reversing the grand Latin words, their motto is "Non esse sed videri."

V

But coming back to art, which we are constantly losing from view in our travels with Ananias, it can never proceed on the above principle; not what seems but what is constitutes its sole interest. There is a magnified example of the contrary of this to be had when one looks at the art of present-day Japan—and thinks what it was before the people knew the influence of Europe. Right down to the epoch of Meiji, when Western ideas began to be imported wholesale, the old craftsmen continued their traditions, something of the old pictorial genius still lingered, and the people lived with their beautiful things, as travelers of sixty years ago, or even less, have told. But as the country became more and more aware of the need of Occidental science, business methods, and war implements, in order to meet new conditions, an absurd, if natural, logic carried their national art as much out of fashion as their older material equipment. Westernizing was the great word, and Japanese art students appeared in the schools of Europe and America, while painters from the Occident—usually pretty poor ones—were employed to increase the feverish rate at which the new ideas were acquired.

Behold the result—in a succession of "styles" that have flooded the country with pictures which are the most perfect demonstration one could have that art comes from within—or

it is non-art. The dislike of the Japanese for being "other than expected," as one of their expressions has it, and their marvelous talent for imitation, have given to their most noted representative in Paris the painting which at one moment looked just like that of the Italian primitives—gold backgrounds, cracks, thin-faced Madonnas, patina and all—then was "modern" up to the hilt, then Rousseau-le-Douanier till you had to look at the signature to make sure it was not really by the old gentleman, and later, when the painter learned that originality was the *real* thing, a salad of all the ingredients. Another Japanese in Paris makes "African" wood-sculptures that have fooled all but the keenest experts (also some people who thought themselves experts). A Japanese restorer of old sculpture said to a dealer, "Sometimes you have me put a hand on a statue that has lost it, sometimes a foot, sometimes a nose or an entire head. Why do you go and spend all that money for pieces of statues, that I complete? Give me half the price and I will make the whole thing—just as nice as the old ones and with all the mellowness of age." (The English used to report the foregoing speech has dropped back into the groove worn deep by much frequenting of art-writers and art-talkers, but the sense of the restorer's offer is rendered without the slightest change of any other kind.)

Of course such candid innocence as his takes him, and those like him, entirely away from the neighborhood of Ananias. They furnish the most perfect, because unconscious, satire on the European and American artists and their fancy-dress balls, known as art-exhibitions, where one person comes with a Velasquez make-up, another masquerades as a Greek, a third as Picasso, a fourth as a photographer, and so you have *tout le bazar*, not omitting the people who have discovered

the success of the American Indian, and paint things in the style of the Hopi, more or less.

Is it necessary to say that all contemporary Japanese work is not like that of the three men described above? Since there are people who think that the mention of a bad example means wholesale condemnation, perhaps it will be wiser to specify that amid the great confusion of the Japanese artists there are strong minds searching for an issue from the present dilemma. There is no turning back from the ideas that Europe has given, but the national genius is too precious—and too vigorous—to be lost. The thousands of readers of Okakura Kakuzo's books know how well he understood the thought of both the races. From the lecture heard twenty-five years ago a phrase of his that has perhaps escaped print heretofore, stands out in memory—"Rembrandt's orchestration of the shadows." It was spoken a few days after he had attended a Wagner opera, and is only one more example of his felicity in seizing the essence of Western culture. But perhaps the most striking example of it was given on the day of his visit to the Autumn Salon in Paris, when, after going about entirely alone and studying the modern works, (which were new to him), he said that he had discovered some paintings whose art he felt to be beautiful in the sense established by the schools of the Orient. He had not previously heard the name of the painter, which he said was Matisse.

Not only the critic who interpreted the West to the East and the East to the West, but Japanese painters and sculptors point to a solution of their country's problem. "It is strange," said Moriye Ogihara one day, "at the Louvre I kept thinking of those grand landscapes of Cézanne when I was looking at the Ruisdaels; and now, at this Cézanne exhibition, my mind is always going back to the things of the old Italians at the

Louvre." Such penetration into European art was even more important when he worked at his sculpture, for he saw beyond the surface, there, too, and decided, in his calm and positive way, on the possibilities open to one of his ancestry. When news came of his untimely death, Rodin grieved over the loss of a pupil whom he regarded as a great man; and the artists of Ogihara's native land knew that the few years after his return there had seen him produce works which meant that Japan could express her own ideas in the Western forms. There is reason to hope that the present-day painting of Toshi Shimizu, coming home after his years in America and in France, may add to that conviction, and other men are certainly continuing the story.

The explanation that my attack on certain Japanese did not involve the whole people was at least the occasion of bringing some rays of hope into what may seem the darkness of this book. Let me, therefore, explain some more: the False Artist is not a limb of Satan, separated from the True Artist in the clean-cut way that the old Sunday-school books differentiated between the two little boys in the fables. In their totality, the counterfeit things point away from the true ones as diametrically as the two monstrous little paragons of vice and virtue were opposed, but when one is faced with individual artists or works, the difference may not appear so complete. And in the strictures of these pages, more than one reader may have fancied he recognized the state of mind that dictated the conception of a pogrom picture in a New York exhibition a few years ago. Some artist, brooding on the horrors he had seen—or read about—more probably—had painted a ghastly incident of torture, with a fiendish personage gloating over the cruelty. "What does that represent?" inquired a small boy of John Sloan, who

happened to be standing near by. "Everybody's idea of the enemy," was the instant reply.

This time it is myself I must try to extricate from an arraignment. If I have painted False Artists as black all over and have not spoken before of the remarkable qualities of the more accomplished ones among them, it is because I was assuming that everyone gave to Gérôme such credit as he deserves for his conscientious working out of detail; that no one doubted that Léon Bonnat produced "*honest* photographs" as Elie Faure calls them, and that Besnard was entitled to the admiration of one of his colleagues, who called him the "ablest man in France,"—provided one understand thereby the ability to use the hand and the lesser functions of the mind. The Alma-Tadema, perhaps the silliest picture in this book, and the Stuck, perhaps the most atrocious one, are performances due to ability such as no other artist in their time possessed. But after all deductions from the account are allowed, the reckoning must show that such men are of the class who have failed to give with the full hand of the artist; and so they incur the penalty paid by Ananias. Their work is dead work.

That they tower above the little men of their school seems so obvious that it is only on this late page that it occurs to me to say so. Will the reader make a last pious distinction, while I myself drain my ecclesiastical style to the dregs, by repeating once more the words, "Not failure but low aim is crime"? If I am to be bastinadoed for saying these obvious things, perhaps I can reduce my chastisement a little by recalling what happened to Senator Hoar when he, on the contrary, took too much for granted. Reading aloud to his family the manuscript of his autobiography, he had just finished the pages covering the time of the Civil War, when an excited little voice piped

up, “But, Grandpapa, didn’t anybody help you to put down the Rebellion?”

VI

I hope that good Yankee story has not been repeated to too many readers of these pages who, like myself, have failed to go to the original source of it. First-hand testimony is always the best, and I can again speak of things I have seen, in telling about a country whose example forms a pendant to that of Japan. Returning to the question of the rôle that circumstance plays in determining the character of a people’s art, that of the Mexicans is, in some ways, more a product of conflicting influences than that of the Japanese. But in the land of our southern neighbors, there was not the long isolation and then the sudden bursting of the barriers that we have seen in the Orient. Instead, Mexico has known invasions from immemorial times. The savage tribes from the north came down over the country in successive waves, destroying what they could, then learning from the earlier and more civilized peoples they had conquered—and finally settling down to be Mexicans, in the sense of the word which denotes the boundaries of the present republic. To this day, each region, each town even, has the special character deriving from its old inhabitants. The Spanish invasion, with all its importance, does not seem so vast an event if we consider that the past of the country covers some thousands of years, and if we notice that the Mexican faculty for absorbing alien races, physically and spiritually, made the descendants of the men of Cortés and his successors into real Americans, a people of the New World, that is, and very different from the Spaniards.

Mexican art has expressed the mind of this people throughout the changes of régime. The red, white, and green

of flowers and leaves remained the same and were always loved. They go into the countless art-products of the people wherein color is the thing that gives delight. One sees this color sense of the Mexican again in his use of the tezontle, the wine-red volcanic stone of which the great houses are built, and in the clear tones with which the houses of the poor are painted. It made relatively little difference whether an Aztec emperor, a Spanish viceroy, or a republican president directed the government, whether the warrior shot with bow and arrow or with a modern rifle: the volcanoes still looked down on the old capital, the pyramids of the ancestors still rose in proud response to the line of the mountains, and the monumental forms continued in the work of the sculptors who told of the mystery of the serpent, the courage of the jaguar, the humor of the monkey, and the spirit of the quetzal—the most beautiful of birds, which dies when it loses its freedom. All these are still there; and above all there are men and women. The millions of little earthen sculptures of heads that the soil contains, like the grand figures in stone, tell of people whose life was essentially that of today. They fought and prayed, they had music and poetry, they loved and they brought forth children. What was changed? Not the need of an art to put all this into lines and colors that last, while the forms of the world waver in their indecision and pass away. They are good forms, but we did not make them, said the old Mexicans; let us love them—and make our own forms. Mexican art contains a thousand things that have reminded travelers of the great creations of Egypt, but not one thing that could remind them of the art-school figures that Mr. French offers in contrast with the symbol of Egypt. The secret of the Sphynx is no secret to any Mexican who has looked at the old sculptures of his country—and every farmer, every workman,

has done so; it is a secret told by men who render things not as they seem, but as they are.

Therefore Juanita and Miguelito do not understand the counterfeit of art when it is brought from Europe or the United States. Alas for us that sometimes it should be spoken of by them as “Gringo art”! They stare “stupidly” at the naturalistic pictures, wondering why people make such things (which are not more comprehensible if they happen to be the work of Mexicans who have learned to perform these tricks—but who do not produce Mexican art). It is, however, in the most vigorous fashion that the people respond to the frescoes that Rivera and Orozco have painted on the walls of public buildings. *They* are “mucho muy Mexicanos” in telling about the same old fighting and praying and all the rest of the things that their ancestors knew. (More propaganda for modernism, I shall be told, Rivera having been a Cubist or, as he says, being one yet, even when he resumes the picturing of the visible world; and look at Orozco with his head full of mathematics—and all sorts of revolutionary stuff!) The former of these two artists is already known and admired in the United States; when we know more of Orozco it seems certain that we shall add his name to the roll of the great men of our time.

Mexicans are not afraid of modernism, whether in the fine arts or the applied arts, any more than they are afraid of being old-fashioned when they have on the bed a blanket whose fine pattern dates from centuries ago, or on the table a gayly painted lacquer box that they learned to make after their contact with Chinese art. Here we see things, and get rid of words. What does it matter if art is modern or ancient, fine or applied? What matters is the question of art or the counterfeit of it. And no Mexican ever says “Gringo art” about certain ones among our products—perhaps because we didn’t think to

put an æsthetic label on them. “Look what I bought today,” said Don D., pulling out a .45 caliber revolver and offering it for the inspection of his young wife. “Oh, how pretty!” was the delighted comment. And it did not leap forth so spontaneously from the charming lady because of the business ability of that raw shooting-iron; it was because of the clean, logical surfaces, the strong, elegant lines, the really architectural quality of the thing. If the man in Connecticut who made it had put on some æsthetic decoration, as his neighbor puts near-Greek acanthus designs in gold paint on the wheel of a sewing-machine, the logic of the thing would have been marred, and the lady would have disliked it. In its natural beauty, it was to her mind a becoming attribute for a man, just as a bit of lace was nice for herself.

The same vegetable-seller who drops in at the museum for twenty minutes, on the way home from his stall at the market, will come out after looking at the old masks there, and stand in silent admiration before an automobile. Its gleaming black enamel has something of the texture of the obsidian in which the sculptors worked, and the reflections in the sides of the modern wonder are not unlike the depths into which he seemed to look as he peered, with the eye of a connoisseur, at those carved fragments of volcanic glass. The old artists had taken a bit of the formlessness of nature and given it a meaning, the modern artists had used their materials with the same relish for quality, and the same pride in giving the world something it had not had before. Doubtless the day will come, though not for a long time, when the need for the special type of workmen who produce the automobile will have passed away, and then when we can no longer make such things, we shall have a different appreciation of their beauty. We now prize fragments of metal or wood or stone, perhaps a ten-

millionth part of the objects and buildings which once glorified the whole of Gothic Europe, and which were used as roughly as we use our special possessions.

You may object that the automobile factories run on a modern kind of slave-labor, not artist-labor. Doubtless there are, indeed, many factory departments in which the men think as little as does the machine; but was there not, also, much merely physical drudgery in building the cathedrals? Yet the toiler who set the stones or made the glass had his sense of sharing in the triumph, as well as the artist of the time, who was only another workman himself, and who surely did far more than what one catalogues under the heading of pure æsthetics. So, too, the pride in intelligent labor probably begins much further down in the scale of modern industry than we might at first imagine. No other explanation seems possible for the marvels that are being produced.

The airplane! There is a thing to stir our Mexican. The pivotal discovery of using a geometrical element, the plane of the wings, resulted from observation of the hovering and soaring of birds, and the intensity which went into that observation was the same employed by Leonardo, to mention him again, whether in the study through which he anticipated the airplane itself, or in his notation of muscles, insects, plants, etc., or in a sublimation of his whole genius in a work like the *St. Jerome*, or the *Adoration of the Magi*. The simple man whom we have just seen staring at the sculpture of the Aztecs and Toltecs in his museum, was also beholding the new product formed when nature is comprehended (not merely copied) by the mind of man. And so there is no change in the quality of his thought, as he looks up in crossing the green patio of the museum and sees, in the clear air over his mountains, a steadily moving spot of silver against the blue of

the sky. The faint whir of the machine which reaches his ear is not quite new to him, for it comes almost as an echo of the sound he had been thinking about just before, when he saw, represented in the ancient works, the big ocean shells that were a symbol of the sea-god, because the droning sound they imprison is like that of the waters. Does a mere peasant know all this? All this and more. The old people hand on the legends to the young; and besides, there is the museum, where things are not only beautiful but real, living.

In Mexico there is more that melts into the void than the idle words used by the æsthetes to divide up, as ancient or modern, the indivisible force called art. The distinctions we make among all great human achievements disappear. In the museum, before the ancient miracles in stone, the son of the race that wrought them felt the power of genius; seeing the airplane, he felt the same power again. That is why in this country, where art and life are so close, the great tact and sympathy of Colonel Lindbergh caused him to write of feeling in his welcome there a quality somewhat different from any he had ever received before. Such American intervention as his—the only kind worthy of us—is understood by the people who have so many times known invasion from without, and always gained new values from it. That is the process also by which the artist can transmute sensation into those new values which he creates. If we would offer a true monument to the Mexican aviator who returned the visit of Lindbergh, it must be by appreciating the racial genius which directed the life of Emilio Carranza—and that of Alvaro Obregón.

That genius understood the spirit of the United States, sometimes called modern, to be as timeless as the art of the old Mexicans; we cannot fail to respond in kind to their

appreciation. We shall do so when we realize that the course of all our past achievement, and that which we aspire to, is charted in the “mental thing” of the Museum.

CHAPTER V

THE MARINER'S COMPASS OF ART

I

IT is perhaps only now that I can present fully the *apologia pro libro meo*—and even my poor recollections of schoolboy Latin tell me that those words mean something quite different from an apology for this book. Yet explanation may not be out of place after using the name of Ananias to designate the type of the False Artist. In my foreword I spoke of him as a victim of bad training and I have since attempted to show the effect of circumstance on the minds of men at certain times. The men of the fifteenth century were not more "good" than those of the nineteenth century; it was the difference in conditions that caused the work of the Renaissance artists to be art in the majority of cases, and the work of the modern men to be the counterfeit of art in perhaps the same proportion. Those who pushed on against the backward sweep of the tide were among the real heroes of human effort, and it is impossible to condemn utterly those who were dragged down by the current. That is why I hope the reader will be indulgent toward a last attempt to show reason for an attack on men who, with time (to use the pregnant phrase once more), will be forgotten.

Things only come out right in a hundred years if people have been working aright for the ninety-nine years before, because the relation of cause and effect is not a matter of fits and starts, but is steady and cumulative. The things in the Museum were not made in a day. "Do you demand 200 guineas for the work of a few hours?" as Whistler was asked

in the famous lawsuit about his picture. “No, sir, for the study of a lifetime.” All the long past of the artists, or indeed the race, goes into the things of the Museum, and they show us the course we must travel as well as that over which we have come. The Museum is the mariner’s compass by which we steer, in far more important measure than it is a record of the past. “Never speak of the dead as dead; as long as men are living the dead will live,” said van Gogh—who had a right to the ecclesiastical style, since he had studied to be a minister.

Those callow boys, the Futurists, who shook their fists at the Museum and talked (metaphorically) about the need to destroy it, in order to keep tourists from treating Italy as a land of the past, were promptly laughed out of court for their pains. And their summary rejection was not the work of M. Léon Bonnat, for the thunderbolts he hurled against them had missed fire too often, when he had directed them against the great artists of his time. It needed the adverse judgment of the “modern” men to refute the idea that the Museum is a sort of valley of dead bones. A recently founded institution of great interest is called “The Gallery of Living Art.” But why the distinction? Because the works exhibited there are almost all by living men? But the title does not say that. The things of an Egyptian or a Gothic gallery are at least as much living art. Century after century the magnetic force in them has swung the point of the compass in the same direction; they are not inert, but alive, in every sense but the physical one.

The old stories tell that when Donatello had done a certain bust which is particularly life-like, he tapped it on the shoulder and said, “Speak”; and that, referring to this, Michael Angelo said to one of his figures, “Walk.” The words have been taken by a few people to mean that the sculptors

looked on their work as real men, in all but speech and action, and that their words counsel the artist to strive to equal nature.

Count Gobineau has fun with the idea in his wonderful book on the Renaissance. It is in that dialogue between Titian and Aretino wherein the latter, having goaded the old artist into a rage by innuendoes about the quality of his drawing, gets Titian to burst forth with the defense: “I draw as well as nature herself!” “Very true, master, and the world can contain no one so base as to deny it,” replies the poet; and then throwing aside his mask of humility—“but the trouble is that you do not draw better than nature.”

Whether the angry speech attributed to Titian has any historical basis or not, the words of the two great sculptors recalled just previously, and which have come down to us from old sources, certainly indicate that the artists of the time could, in their speech at least, give to their work a function which has now been fulfilled by the cinematograph, where the figures really move, and have lately been supplemented by a mechanism through which their voices are heard. But no one thinks that this is the kind of moving, talking, and “nature” referred to by the three masters. Aretino, scamp though he was, came nearer to the theory of the matter when he showed the old artist that his boast of equaling nature was rubbish.

The painter’s expression is given with his brush; when lured into controversy by a crafty manipulator of words, even a Titian may have gotten himself into the untenable position which his tormentor gleefully exposed with such devastating effect. Most artists know the danger, and Titian himself employed Aretino to do the talking for him in his bickerings with critics and patrons.

Today he needs no defenders but his painting; a simple reproduction like the *Venus* in this book would refute the idiocy of a hundred would-be-arbiters like the “Petronius” who assumes the title in his campaign against the “modernists.” His attack on the Titian is mere preparation for assailing Degas,[H] a page or two later, and his constant effort is to link the modern men with Bolshevism. But questions of painting are not decided by words, and are scarcely affected by epithets; the last thing to do here would be to answer the arraignments of Cézanne, Derain, Léger, or whoever may be the object of what the “Arbiter” doubtless regards as criticism. If the work of those artists is bad, people will see it as that; if it is good it will continue to gain in favor; and the main importance of exhibitions, art magazines and books lies in the opportunity afforded to the work, or reproductions of it, to come before the tribunal of public opinion. When it appears there the picture or the statue moves and speaks in a different way from the one intended in the joke of the two great artists of the Renaissance: all through the centuries the world has been listening to the essential words of the masters—those contained in their work.

Take even the most rapid walk through the museum, and one clear fact stands out: that the later arts follow the earlier ones in character as inevitably as the years follow one another in time. That father-to-son relationship of the masters, however, does not mean that they take the mathematically fixed course of the years. The line of art makes a zigzag, a century either continuing the tendency of the one before it, as the eighteenth goes in a direction established by the seventeenth, or it may follow as a reaction against previous tendencies as, after the French Revolution, the nineteenth century sets its face against what the *Dix-huitième* held to be

wise and charming. Yet the seeds of the whole modern development are to be found in the past, and critics have pointed out at various times that Renoir takes us back to the naturalness and grace of that very eighteenth century against which his own started out in a revolt. Being a man of what I have called elsewhere the period of consciousness, it is natural to find him quite aware of the direction of his art, and corroborating it by his words, those deep and lovable words in the conversations with Vollard and others previously cited, as in the passage about Corot and the painters of Pompeii. It was by no accident, and still less by collusion, that Renoir and Monet chose the same eighteenth-century work as the most beautiful picture in the world—Watteau's *Embarkation for Cythera*.

And if the more or less apocryphal sayings of the older masters quoted before seemed to point to a conclusion that it is wiser for the artist to refrain from speech, I return to a point touched on earlier, and repeat that our fuller and more exact knowledge of the facts in modern instances permits us to say that the words of the great painters and sculptors only confirm the ideas expressed in their work. We know the opinions of almost all of them in the nineteenth century—in a large number of cases from writings they have left. Those of the man who may well be the greatest of all the moderns, Delacroix, amount to a number of volumes.

The body of testimony in words is of course most valuable, indeed the most authoritative of all spoken or written criticism. Yet it is not for an instant to be compared to the testimony in the work of the masters' hands. When we recall how the painters of Florence learned their craft and, even more, decided their character, by drawing from the frescoes of Masaccio, we have an illustration (and there are a thousand

such), of the way that the essential ideas of the great artists are transmitted to the later time. To know these ideas, the modern public goes to the museum. It is therefore of absolutely crucial importance that what we place there be worthy of its place; for judgments are rendered, standards are established for innumerable people by what is offered to them as the result of the ripest consideration. The layman may eventually come to distinguish between true and false in the modern work at the museum, but the chances are that he will be caught by the "easily understood" pictures, such as are shown in this book, and never move on to comprehension of the great things.

II

In presenting a certain defense for the victims of Ananias, I perhaps exaggerated a little. They had the Museum as their guide, quite as much as did the men who took the course opposed to their own. Sometimes, as when one sees the marvelous drawings that Ingres made as a child, or when one thinks of Delacroix painting the *Dante and Vergil* at the age of twenty-three, one is tempted to believe in predestination, to say that Fate determined that these men should go their noble way and that the False Artists likewise should go their own. Philosophers may gather data for both sides in the old controversy herewith connected. If the example of the two great men of a hundred years ago is an argument for necessary consequences of given conditions, the partisans of free will in our lives may point to other cases where artists have dominated circumstance, changing from the direction they took after a bad start, raising the quality of their work, and doing this not so much by achieving better execution as by arriving at a finer conception.

William M. Chase used to observe that if Rembrandt had died after painting *The Anatomy Lesson*, the world would never have known the profound genius with which his name is always associated. His evolution is doubtless to be connected with the outer events of his life, the death of Saskia and of his children, the loss of his early prosperity, and his refuge, during the later years, in the Ghetto, with its color, its sorrows, its philosophers, its life—so much more poignantly real than that of the comfortable merchants he had frequented before. We cannot hope to know the cause of Rembrandt's rise to his final grandeur, but if we take note that other men's lives have known the light and the shadow of his own, we are at least directed elsewhere for our explanation.

What was the occasion for the break in his fortunes? We know that it came when he began to head toward his deeper idea of picture-making. *The Night Watch* was the great turning-point in his course, and, as we know, the canvas was rejected by his contemporaries. It is at about that time also that we see in his work a clearer effect of his study of the masters before him. He had been accumulating sketches of theirs, he had copied those precious documents and made variants of them, such marvelous ones, that we have to study them closely in order to become aware that they are not his original work. Mantegna and Leonardo and Dürer were pondered by him; Raphael's *Baldassare Castiglione* was hastily noted down in a drawing when the masterpiece appeared in an auction in Amsterdam, and such Persian miniatures as he could see were eagerly seized upon for the glimpse they afforded of the art of the Orient. It is impossible to avoid the conviction that the master's continued meditating of all these works and others, (which were for him the equivalent of the Museum in our time), influenced his later

painting quite as much as did his environment or the events of his life. And if these matters be regarded as the things independent of his will, his study of the arts of the Museum is surely to be reckoned as evidence of his determination to widen the range of his ideas; and as they widened, they also deepened.

Everything brings us back to that great institution where the chart of our course is traced. The example of Rembrandt is beyond refutation in giving the lie to those who would say that the mariner’s compass, which I have imagined as the symbol of the Museum, points only to the past. For weaklings who look on art as an escape from life, the Museum may indeed offer a means of daydreaming themselves into a golden age where they forget actualities. But for the strong man it is not merely a gateway to enchanted fields, it is life itself, in an epitome to which no other that we have can be compared. It does contain the past; and the present also, if we are alive to it; but above all, if we look closely enough, it contains the future.

When we see a Napoleon giving his passionate study to the campaigns of Cæsar and Turenne, when we read that Joffre and Foch analyzed so deeply the generalship of our own Grant and Lee, we do not imagine that they take an “archæological” interest in those things of the past: it was, in the case of that genius of a hundred years ago, in order to draw the stupendous design of his own operations; just as, in our day, it was to evolve the “sublime strategy” of the victory at the Marne. Again, as we did in Mexico, we see the oneness of human genius, however different its manifestations. No one who has had the privilege of listening to Marshal Joffre will ever forget the thrill of hearing the steady voice of the master tell of the survival of France, and say that the reasons for it

are written in the art of the country. He was addressing a group of American students of art-history at the Louvre, to inaugurate the school which New York University was founding there, and he said, “You will study the stones of our cathedrals, and the statues and the glass and the pictures of our artists, and in them you will find every secret of our past and of our present.”

More than the military man, more perhaps than the worker in any other field, the painter or sculptor bases his action on the teachings of the classics. Those secrets, which the old hero spoke of to his hearers from the younger country, are open to the man who will look into the great works with sufficient intelligence and faith. Always the same themselves, the principles of art always lead to new results when they are invoked in dealing with the new problems of the surrounding world. The essential failure of the False Artist comes because he does not approach the masters in their own spirit. They turned the whole of their possessions into the values which they gave to their fellows so that—in the words of the old narrative—there were none among them that lacked. But Ananias cannot believe fully in values more important than those of his “lands or houses” and the esteem they mean for him with the crowd. He has some notion that the career he has entered is more desirable than those which are centered entirely around material things, but he cannot give these up completely.

As long as the counterfeit of art is known for what it is, there is no reason to trouble about it, still less to add to the punishment of individuals whose action, as we have seen, carries with it the loss of everything really precious to the artist. The question is different when we find the counterfeit

entering the museums. If the mariner's compass is rendered inaccurate in its indications, our whole course is falsified.

The matter was never stated in more conclusive fashion than in the words of Renoir which Meier-Graefe records in his book on the great painter. The German critic had been inquiring as to what, in the opinion of the old artist, was the decisive thing for the work of the student intent on becoming a good painter. "You would say that he should work his problem out by study of nature, would you not?" Renoir hesitates a moment over the great word: Monet and Cézanne, among his old comrades, had always talked of nature, and the word had a sort of halo around it, anyhow. But finally he determines to speak out:

"No; nature brings men to isolation. I want to stay in the ranks."

"But the schools being bad, as you have said, if it is not before nature, where is it that the young man becomes an artist?"

"*Au musée, parbleu!*"

It was at the Museum that he himself had served his apprenticeship in the time-honored procedure of copying the masters, as Ingres, a few days before his death at the age of eighty-seven, was still doing; as Delacroix had done, with his profoundly analytical mind; as the rough mountaineer Courbet did with his grandly heavy brush; as Manet did with the eclecticism of his old culture; as Degas did with his severely classical intelligence; as Redon did in order to situate his world of vision within the sphere of reality which he saw in the great draftsmen; as Seurat did to strengthen the scientific basis of his painting with the greater authority of art. All these men were the "moderns" of their respective periods,

and what is more, all of them could make their intense use of the classics and yet retain their originality intact. Of course, no one would accuse Renoir of being unaware of the fact that artists of the greatest merit have studied at schools or under teachers or from nature. What he meant, as is quite clear, was that the deciding factor in the formation of an art is, after all, the influence—direct or indirect—of the classics we have heard him discuss before. The Museum has been the real teacher of all great men—of the present and the past, even if it is powerless against the incapacity of little men.

For the artist, the value of studying the masters does not reside in such knowledge of them as the art-historian or critic possesses, nor is it simply a question of that enjoyment, however deep, which the appreciative layman or collector derives from his visits to the Museum. The artist's study gives him, or strengthens in him the ability to apply the mental processes of the masters to his own problem. But whatever the category of persons who use the Museum, whatever the type of work they want to see there, there is one type that has no proper place on its walls, and that is the counterfeit. People will turn away from it in proportion to the quickness of their intelligence, in proportion, also, to their knowledge of what is real. No one gets any help from the false things; they can cause only loss of time. This is above all true in a country like the United States, with its great openness of mind in respect to art; its awareness of a limited preparation, and the eagerness of its public for authoritative guidance.

Compare the situation of that public with what one finds in Europe: the intelligent young Italian in a city possessing no museum has surely an old palace to give him an idea of architecture and its teachings as to proportion and style, perhaps a fountain of a good period with some sculptural

figures, and, in the churches, some paintings, that tell him of the great tradition, even if in the hands of minor masters. What is there to tell the young American of the small cities, or even many large ones, of the immense and ancient force called art?

I have fallen into treating the Museum from a standpoint at least in part pedagogical; but to make amends even for that I should not think it needful to touch on the phase of its problem which has to do with its resources for giving pleasure if it were not for the curious words "museum fatigue" which have been appearing in certain quarters of late. It appears that visitors get tired when they go to the galleries; and museum men are asked to take elaborate precautions to prevent the public from over-straining itself in its effort to know the great works. Or perhaps the danger is of its never returning to them. Of course everyone who looks at art objects knows that light is indispensable; and good ventilation is desirable in every place. A proper presentation of the works adds much in facilitating enjoyment of them, and a masterpiece looks its best among other masterpieces related to it in character. But surely the concern about "museum fatigue" is a result of a too short acquaintance with the institution, whose pioneer example, the Louvre, is still less than a hundred and fifty years old. Doubtless whenever it was that collections of books accessible to the public were first instituted, people discovered that there was such a thing as library fatigue. The recipe for avoiding it is very simple, and involves neither a régime of digestives or soporifics, to counteract excesses. For the newer phenomenon of the museum, Alfred Stevens gave a similar prescription—that one look at only a few pictures at a time. It takes quite a while to see them thoroughly, and if one

needs a change, there are the galleries of sculpture, ceramics, etc., to offer another fillip to the appetite.

III

If such words bring us near to suggestions of merely physical indulgence, let us hasten on to less frivolous thoughts. There is, for example, the commercial value of the Museum. We shall examine but one phase of it, though one that is very much to the fore at the present day—the new enthusiasm for the decorative arts. For these the problem of the curator is mostly one of good taste and scholarship, and in this department the Museum itself comes near in character to the natural-history collection, where the ideal is to have a specimen of everything.

We cannot tell beforehand what types of work may be needed for consultation, so all should be there, whatever the preferences of those who do the assembling. They must deal mostly with the past, and very few objects, among those of the minor arts, have survived the judgment of time which are not genuine and of value.

Perhaps the first use of the collection will be by the manufacturer who wants to make nothing more than machine reproductions. The Museum offers him every incentive to come and find out why his competitors are cutting into his sales. He knows that he must improve his product, and perhaps he will be led to see that what he thought faithful copies of the old things really miss some indefinable but essential quality in them. At first he will say that you are talking æsthetics and telling him to make the river run uphill if you say he can charge more money for goods made in moderate quantity, when his past effort was always for cheapness—a bigger output and lower prices than the other

fellow. But he is willing to experiment, and when he understands better the beauty of the old things, he realizes that real workmanship and fine design are factors in his market which he had been neglecting.

The workmanship of the machine age is bound to be different in some respects from that of the time of hand labor. The marks of the hammer by which the old workman beat his metal into plates become mere affectation on the part of the modern “artcrafter” who buys the plates all rolled out and buffed, and puts the hammer marks on his hand-wrought silver as its last touch of artistry. They are not quite in the class with the “artificial” wormholes which Ananias uses to prove the beauty of the furniture he is making today; they are not meant to deceive, like the “fading colors of age” by which the False Artist, reduced to the industrial field, increases the price of certain modern textiles. (Ask any tapestry restorer, by the way, about the color of the old things, which Ananias so beautifully calls the pallor of time. You will hear that the workman ravels out threads from bits of old tapestry and mends with them. The old dyes were chosen for permanence, and the repair would soon be visible if modern dye in the thread changed tone.) When the old designer wanted silvery color he used it, when he wanted brilliant color, he used that also and got his harmony at the beginning, not with the smoke and dirt of the centuries. They are a poor substitute for talent. The fake hammer-strokes, wormholes and faded colors are as far, one as another, from any connection with the traditions that gave us the beautiful things in the museum.

When, in his visits there, our manufacturer gets to making excursions outside the department that he thought the only one of importance to him, he begins also to form an idea of the other quality he was missing in his product. He had sensed

the fineness of the workmanship in his models, and his men had taken to the idea of equaling it with an enthusiasm he had never seen in them before—except when they were inventing new troubles for him at their labor union (and they had been doing less of that lately). But every time he employed another designer from the art-school, even the one with all the prizes, he had come on just one more “frost.”

In this connection appears the more interesting part of the problem of the decorative arts section of the Museum. More and more it must take up contemporary work. The deadly Victorian interiors we glanced at before represent a period of numbness which seems to be thawing out, though the torrential freshets of the first exhibitions of furniture, etc., are bringing along stuff that is just as rubbishy, in its new style. Like the work of the modern Japanese, it is the result of adverse conditions. But, on the other hand, there are things which mean more than hope, which are actual achievements. And they are produced (to repeat the words used previously about the good painters and sculptors at the museum), by applying the mental processes of the masters to the problem of the new time. The same genius that built the cathedral and made its statues went into the designing and carving of its choir stalls, and into the color of its glass. We cannot copy those things: there is no copying in art. But neither have we lost the genius for such work, even if modern conditions have hindered new expressions of it.

But look today at the fine painter, Raoul Dufy. He does a big panorama of Paris, and you feel his gusto as he followed the logic that drove the great line of the Champs Elysées from the Place de la Concorde to the Place de l’Etoile. In his fascinating painting he tells how the builders of his city loved the winding of the Seine and so were inspired to line its banks

with simple, healthy buildings of even height and color. The Opéra comes at a climax in the life of the capital and at a masterpoint in the radiation (or should we not say the radiance?) of its streets; while Notre Dame, on its calm and ancient island in the river, has the isolation befitting its sacred character. But what is this new-looking structure which juts up so suddenly, opposite that masterpiece of the eighteenth century, the Ecole Militaire? *Mais, mon ami*, that filigreed pyramid, from which the tricolor of the modern republic looks down on the great past and the great present of Paris—you surely know what that is, why the Eiffel Tower.

Duchamp-Villon, writing his admirable account of French steel-construction, told of the long study of its nature, from the time of the markets, the Hall of Machines, etc., to the present-day, centering his article around the epoch-making giant that Gustave Eiffel placed on the Champ de Mars. The qualities of the great sculptor who wrote of the modern tower fitted him to appreciate not only its daring, but also its harmony with the constructive genius of the Gothic builders. In his own figures the same attributes appear. And Dufy's pæan of praise to his city is that of a man who, in a gayer mood but with the same modern daring of the Eiffel Tower, continues in this panorama of Paris the old sense of beauty that is in the decorative design of the cathedral-time. In that collection of master-engravings with which he accompanied the verses of "Le Bestiaire," by Guillaume Apollinaire, are plates like the *Dove* and the *Ox*, which might have been done by one of the very great designers of the old centuries. Yet they are by that Post-Impressionist (or *Fauve*, to use the word of twenty-odd years ago), who has adapted others among his engravings for use in textile printing, and so, right in the

decorative arts, has proved again that the mariner's compass of the Museum really does point to the future.

I know that the title of this book bids me talk about False Artists instead of true ones. *Pazienza, col tempo*, I shall get back to them if only for a little while. (Once one gets started on real art it is too bad to return to the counterfeit.) I said in my foreword that this book is no more a defense of the moderns than of the Old Masters, and that is true. I have even been proving it with greater fullness than I intended, by continued references to Rembrandt, Leonardo, Piero della Francesca, and Renoir, who, in the celestial sphere where he is going on with his painting, is already of the Old Masters. Meanwhile I have it on my conscience that a word of mine might have been taken as an insult to a class of modern decorative artists with a tradition behind them more ancient even than that of the sculptors and painters. I mean the dressmakers. Not all of them are good artists, of course, any more than all interior-decorators are bad; it's that the latter don't understand proportion when they would treat etchings as they treat upholstery. When they come to see how Dufy's drawing and painting are the direct source of the finest fabrics in the silk and linen houses of today, their own upholstery will be better. It needs to be.

But the dressmakers, the good ones, have always understood proportions, the most beautiful ones nature has to show—those of the human figure. Nowadays we are getting the special wisdom and grace to cease being ashamed of this phase of nature. Our bathers wear merely an extra skin of cloth; and when we see the young men and women dancing together on the beach or diving or otherwise showing the outlines of glorious arms and breasts, torso and legs against the sand or the sky, we know that the unsightly swaddlings in

which their great-grandmothers bathed indicated no greater delicacy of mind in the generation that thus insulted bodies as beautiful as those of our time. And when the dressmaker studies these bodies she does not, like M. Gérôme with his *Tanagra*, or those other makers of wax-figures who supply places like the Eden Musée or Mme. Tussaud's, imagine so idiotic a thing as vying with nature. On the contrary, she is an artist, so she creates.

Anglo-Saxons in Paris may smile inwardly when she proudly refers to her dress as a "*création*," but the ladies of the family dream of owning one even when they do not know that it is the art in her work that is what the dressmaker in their home towns cannot imitate (more Francophile propaganda; I must really try to conceal my aims more deeply). When one reflects on what goes into the art of raiment, it is astonishing how many faculties it draws on. M. Paul Poiret says, for example, that the success of men in their planning of the colors and lines is due to the fact that in the men the architectural sense is more developed than in women.

But the dressmaker is, above all, a decorative artist, and so she decorates. And the more she allows to appear of the divine thing she decorates, the finer, as she knows, must be the resourcefulness with which she uses her means. The dress of the Spanish infantas (said to have been designed by Velasquez to befit the pomp of the court) gives opportunity for one kind of art, but is not the only kind. As a simple style of dressing the hair demands a greater sense of the appropriate than was required by the wearer of an Egyptian wig, with its rigidly determined shape, so an ever more sensitive art is demanded by the simple clothing of the modern girl. Let me do Mr. Kenyon Cox the justice to say that he spoke warmly in recognition of its beauty; and he would

undoubtedly have remained of his opinion had he seen the dress of today. It may yet "deliver us from evil," the evil of thinking shameful things of the visible evidences of youth and health in the human body. Perhaps we may even come to think no evil of matters of sex and generation. And in saying this I am again not making propaganda for the "modern" type of artists, any more than for the Greeks, or for art in general. If anything I am speaking against the superstition of obscenity in art. The two words exclude each other.

Let me pause for a last word about the decorative arts, and why we must wish them success in the great new effort they are making today. It is easy to see how far they fail in many cases, but has everyone thought of the fact that they may yet absorb that impossible number of people who are today wasting their time and boring the world with their sculpture and painting? A very special type of mind is required for the latter arts; a mere disinclination or lack of ability for agriculture, business, or similar occupations is not enough. In the past, a Gérôme, with his patience, his sharp eye and firm hand, might have made those marvels of niello inlay in the steel of a buckle or of ornaments. There is use for such ability today.

Zuloaga might have done quite handsome posters. And this is not said to belittle things like the poster, which one should be able to take in at a glance. Everyone admires the fineness of niello work, even while he realizes that it does not require the spiritual insight needed for a Madonna sculpture. The artists of printing, since their work is of interest to such an immense public today, are making some of the finest efforts to be found anywhere among the applied arts, and in some cases are draining off part of the misguided zeal that went into painting, in the hands of Cubists unfitted for the conception of

the picture. Every traveler in France and Germany, of late years—everyone who follows the publications of those countries and of others, knows what fascinating and original show cards, lettering, advertising composition, etc., are appearing. Few realize probably, that many of these things are due to men who were known previously for very bad pictures.

IV

A plea for the bad works in the museums (to return to our special interest) is that people like them. A very delightful letter, which resulted from publishing the sketch of this book, told of the thousands of people who, after wandering in bewilderment through the unfamiliar marvels at the Metropolitan Museum, find at last the pleasure of recognizing a familiar thing when they find "Paul and Virginia" (*The Storm*). Allusion was also made in the letter to *Deer in the Forest* by Rosa Bonheur, a picture whose clear-sighted observation of the animals had endeared it to many admirers of the beautiful wild creatures. The writer asked quite fairly whether all the other old popular favorites were to follow *Columbus before Isabella* and *Diana's Hunting Party* to what I had ruthlessly called "their well-earned oblivion." An excellent connoisseur has pointed out that nearly every art-lover preserves some relic of his early love-affairs with bad pictures. He does not boast of it, he prefers, indeed, not to hear it mentioned, but it may make him gentler to the foibles of other people.

It is not the naïve delight in seeing things one likes represented in pictures that I would speak against, as I think this whole book shows. The choice of the deer picture would have touched a memory of bygone days among thousands of people who, in childhood, have transferred their love of

animals to representations of them. And then the museum had such variety of appeal: history, literature, sentiment—and should all this be sacrificed on the cold altar of this strange, rather foreign god of art? History and literature, it is scarcely necessary to say, can best receive in their own houses the honor that is their due, and an hour at the zoo watching the grace of real deer, or the play of real bear cubs or any other of the lovable personages of that small wilderness, is worth years of contemplating the colored photographs of Rosa Bonheur or of Landseer. It is this type of counterfeit that makes people use words about cold altars and strange gods—the same words being pretty good evidence that the False Artist is the greatest enemy of art.

"We began with what you call, perhaps correctly, the bad pictures," it is objected, "and then went on to better things." A few people did—those whose native bent for art cautioned them to investigate the master-works, that at first seemed forbidding. But the sanction which the false things gave to venal of ignorant artists throughout the community, and the pressure brought to bear on the minds of the vast majority of people by the mass of worthless stuff, make up a thousand times over for any good that may have been done in attracting visitors to the galleries. Had the Museum been an opponent instead of a partial ally of Ananias, the Augean stables now to be cleaned would not present the task they do. It is not easy to convince people who do not know art that it is superior to what I have called the counterfeit of art, just as it is not easy to convince a boy that good books and plays are worth making an effort for. He gets pleasure from his impossible stories of adventure and from the bad movie films. Why should he struggle with the other things? He has no ambition to be a highbrow. But if you ask him what he had at the end of

the film which he did not have at the beginning, he may see that the finest entertainment is that in which one feels that something is retained for further enjoyment later on. Let him get a taste of this kind of thing and he will not go back to the other, save as a rather listless method of killing time.

Quite certainly the problem of attracting crowds to the Museum would have been greater without the purely popular picture. But the way to deal with the poor is not to give them charity and break their spirit, but to give them a chance to work, and so strengthen their resources of money and character at once. The false picture may offer the "easiest way" for the Museum, but it is the way that leads to an always worse picture. And the Museum can have patience about the crowds; they will come, even if gradually, when they feel that what they are getting is not the sensation of a moment but the enjoyment of a lifetime. The Museum itself, to build securely as a collective work of art, must count on the passing of the years. "Time respects nothing that was made without its own aid," if I may quote a French saying again. And the Museum need not wait idly for results, but may make the amplest use of the resources of showmanship; experience proves most fully that the public will flock to the galleries when a fine exhibition is to be seen there.

But the numbers on the turnstile do not furnish a quite reliable measure of service. A trustee of one of the younger museums was asked why matters were permitted to go on in the very bad way they were in. "Well it's the fault of our chairman; he just runs things to suit himself and overrides every one else, except Mr. X, the richest man in the city and the mainstay of the gallery." "And Mr. X, isn't there anything to be hoped from him?" "Not a thing—he doesn't understand art, and knows he doesn't. He's public-spirited and generous,

but he leaves everything to that Rotarian who runs things and who couldn't even meet Mr. X save at our board meetings. All that either one of them can judge by is the number of people who are coming to our shows." There are too many galleries that fail to inquire what the crowds come for and what they see; the one objective is to get them to come.

A sidelight on this criterion of art-management was furnished by the director of another museum who, to keep the record of visitors to his institution up to its past figures, planned an aviation meet in the open space of the park where the building stands. It was to be in the cold weather, and the calculation was that a good number of the thousands attracted by the fliers would come into the museum for warmth and comfort. No wonder my own argument was turned against me after the publication of the outline of his book. "Why, you said yourself that people don't go to the museum for the classics. From the standpoint of attendance, the Greek things are just excess baggage."

It was with no thoughts like this that the Metropolitan Museum, for example, was founded, and was carried through the difficulties it had, a half-century ago or more. Visitors to the great exhibition of 1920, which marked its rounding out of fifty years, doubtless found that not the least impressive feature of the celebration was the gallery of portraits of the men who had built up the great institution. The trustees who had carried the burden of material matters, and had esteemed it one of their real honors to share in the work, represented the finest that America had to show of the leaders of commerce, the law, finance, and statesmanship; while the staff of the museum, in all its changes throughout the period, offered a record of devotion which made the men of affairs feel that if they were giving to the institution time that money simply

could not buy, the technical administrators were looking at their work in the same spirit of whole-hearted faith in a great cause. Such an attitude was reflected again in the gifts to the museum, not so much the bequests of vast sums of money, but the gifts from living men like Mr. Marquand, Mr. Morgan, Mr. Altman, and others, of collections that meant much in their lives and that they presented to the museum because of their conviction as to its value for their country. It was a similar conviction that the artists had when they looked back to their debt to the institution, to its having given them most of their knowledge of their profession and, even more important, their main reason for belief in the need for it.

With this background for the present trustees of the various museums, it is hard to understand the theory that men with such interests in their hands should follow, and not lead the taste of the public. We have seen that if they go on the purely democratic basis of the largest numbers, they land in the Subway, whose advertisers have pretty accurate ways of calculating what attracts the crowd. Leaving this point aside, as an exaggeration of the argument, there is the theory that it is desirable for the trustees, and the museums as a whole, to represent a good average of culture and yet not go too far over people's heads. That is only a diluted statement of the previous idea, and it illustrates the shortcomings of popular government when the leaders are not firm in the conviction that the best will prevail. It is in the matter of contemporary work that a faith of this kind is the most necessary. In one or two museums one observes a tendency to give to the "modernists" an amount of space commensurate with the public's interest in them. But the museums that do this without conviction as to which ones among contemporary artists are of the true line of the masters are giving as false an

account of modern art as the museums which represent only the younger men of the Ananias school or which continue to add to the representation of its "veterans."

Does it seem possible that the *Pygmalion and Galatea* of Gérôme, appearing on the walls of America's chief museum in the year 1928, does not represent a conscious concession to that part of the public that still delights in the collection which gave us our Bouguereau, our Bonnat, and all manner of nameless trivialities? The collection did good service, forty years ago, in the days of our early struggle; but to show the gratitude we owe its donor, we should try, as she did, to raise the tone of the museum, and not merely acquire another Gérôme—a more objectionable one than the example in her collection. While I have tried in this book to avoid statements that bespeak a merely personal opinion, I know that I must have said many things that really do not reflect more than my own feeling, or that of a minority of similar taste. As regards the new Gérôme, however, I think the case is different. If we imagine a group of art-lovers from all countries, chosen for their competence and without regard to the schools they prefer, I believe I am on safe ground in saying that they would answer with no uncertain voice if asked whether this picture showed a spirit of leadership on the part of the museum—that they would declare, on the contrary, that it meant surrender to the most abject ideas of the school of Ananias.

It is illogical to ask just how much one or another of the individual trustees of a museum knows about art. They have power, a natural consequence of their doing the vital work of administration and supervision. But when one speaks to them, one sees that, as usual, it is the ideas of the artists that are behind their own. How can they, with great public and private concerns to think of, make themselves authoritative in

judgment on the difficult problems of connoisseurship? As a rule they do not pretend to have done so, and as a rule also the collections of the museum are excellent exactly in proportion to the completeness of their control by the experts in charge. Greek art presents problems of the utmost difficulty, so it is left largely to those who have made it a life study. The result is that the Greek collection at the Metropolitan Museum, for example, has grown, in a little over twenty years from almost nothing to be one of the most perfect in quality in the world, and of extraordinary importance in extent.

But "painting is the thing that everybody understands," as Delacroix said in a moment of bitterness that expressed itself (though only in his diary) through sarcasm. And so we find that "everybody has a right to his opinion" about the paintings at the Museum, especially the modern ones. The older schools, like Greek art, present difficulties calling for scholarly control; besides, it is the modern galleries that the artists look on with most interest. And we soon find that the "everybody" who dominates the collections of modern paintings is very like in character to the artists who form the subject of this book. They are the majority and they possess organization; also, that ability to please which leads to the success of their work makes them acceptable, even delightful counselors of the banker or lawyer who is willing to serve the Museum as a trustee, but who has not found a Wilhelm von Bode to be invested with the absolute power of the man who built up the German museums so marvelously. But the conscientious layman does not feel, on the other hand, that he can cast the deciding vote on art problems. So, quite logically, he listens to the judgment of the professional, perhaps even to that professional who signs himself "Petronius Arbiter." The final responsibility comes back, then, to the artists. Not only

do they set the general tone of ideas throughout the community, but they frequently exert a direct influence at critical moments.

The fact that the collections of modern painting and sculpture are the farthest from rightness of any in the museums is the gravest of all the counts against Ananias, for when he introduces his type of art into the place to which we repair for guidance, he falsifies our ideas at their source. If true judgment survives and is indeed growing stronger, it is due, first, to our instinct for the real in art, then to the study of the great things of the past, and finally to a minority representation before the public of the genuine men of modern times. We can therefore understand the reason for the sentences with which Manet was for so many years belittled in the catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum, that I quoted on an early page. Their rancor is a reliable index to the fear which the coming into the Museum of a great modern painter inspired in the breast of the False Artist. It was well founded: as time passed the wording of the catalogue was changed, and people defending the policy of the museum would say "It isn't as bad as you make out,—look at its pictures by Manet." He had become the man whose uprightness could justify the city. And, by contrast the men who fought him appeared as something akin to what this book calls the descendants of Ananias.

V

A last glance at their psychology may be had from the words of Lord Bryce about the machine politicians:

"It must not be supposed that [they] are wicked men. They are the offspring of a system. Their morality is that of their surroundings. They see a door open to wealth and power and

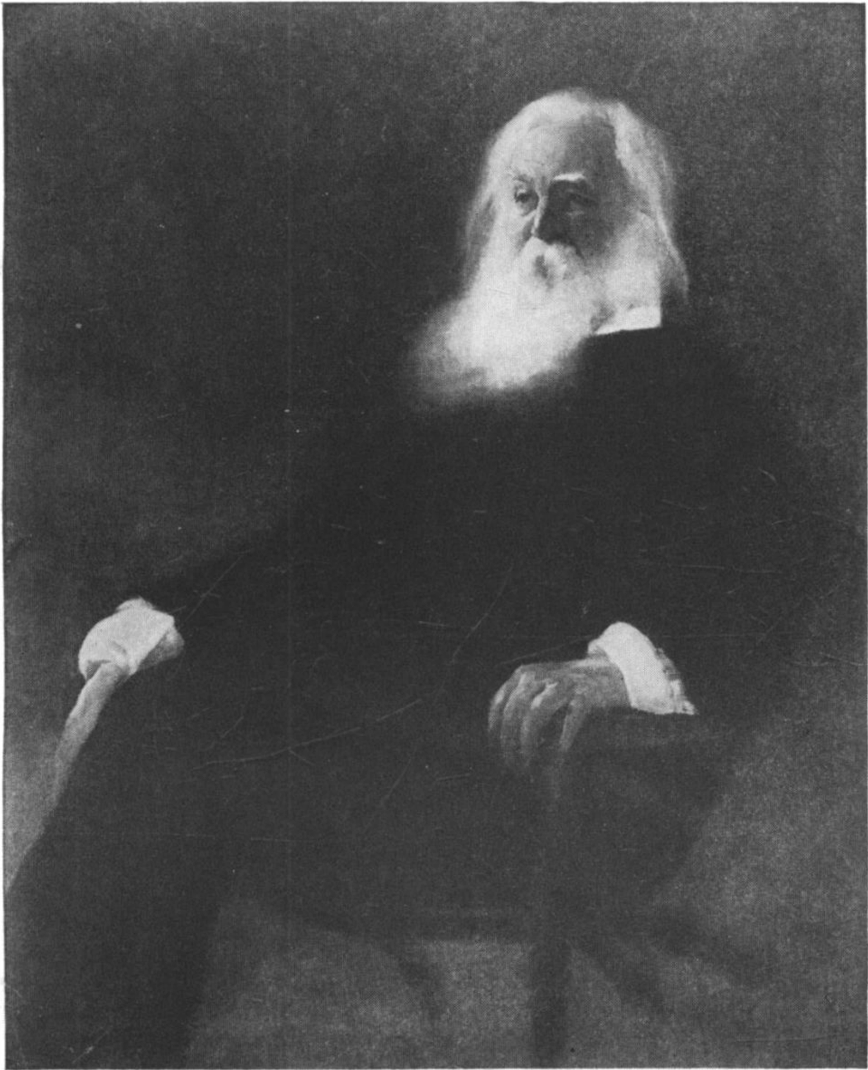
they walk in. The obligations of patriotism or duty to the public are not disregarded by them, for these obligations have never been present to their minds."

The parallel, even if imperfect, between the wrong thinking here outlined and that of the False Artists will be obvious to anyone who has agreed at all with the analysis of character I have attempted in the present work. The parallel fails to hold completely because the failure of the politician is in matters where quite elementary ideas of right and wrong would have carried him through. In the question of art, complications of circumstance, training, and the others that have confused the modern period intervene to make the words of the English statesman apply less closely than first appears, though sufficiently to warrant consideration here. It would not be impossible to find a place in such a comparison for the minor artist, who might represent the public official whose modest competence, even accompanied by perfect integrity, had never carried him to the great places of his profession. And so also one might find an analogue in political life for the great mass of people whose painting and sculpture inundate the exhibitions. For one of the latter, an advertising genius imagined the words of a poster which must have terrified many with the prospect of having to look at "Two Miles of Art."

It was for the Independent Exhibition in New York, and if the two miles of pictures there did not bear out the claim of the poster, they did contain many things of value or of promise, the most, indeed, of such work that we have in America. The other things were mostly the work of sincere men and women who lacked the talent to carry out their ideals. That means failure, in one sense, but not the ugly failure that comes from flattering false taste. Perhaps it is

worth remarking that the sincerity of the people mentioned is not of that poor kind which may accompany fanaticism, or that which an Alma-Tadema had in making his house into an imitation of a Roman building—half palace and half temple. Among the merest amateurs may be found many genuinely delightful persons whose love of art frequently aids, as I have said, in the spread of understanding as to the subject.

Of course, agreement or disagreement on my characterization of the art of Ananias depends entirely on one's judgment of the paintings and sculptures themselves. Let me still submit two pairs of parallel cases. In most of my previous discussion of the works reproduced I have preferred to inquire whether the viewing of life proved its genuineness by giving rise to new harmonies of form and color. The factor of the artist's attitude toward life prevents this from



Metropolitan Museum of Art

WALT WHITMAN—John W. Alexander

being a definition of art involving æsthetic considerations alone; but I want to go a step further and glance at two portraits, as representing a form of art where the realist may give full play to his powers and yet not incur the reproach Redon addressed to the False Artists of his time whom he called "the parasites of the object." (Perhaps it is only fair to

observe that the gentleness of the old painter rarely permitted him to be so outspoken as to the things he disapproved.)

Both the portraits that I shall refer to hang in the Metropolitan museum; both are by American painters, and of exactly the same period. But there ends any resemblance between them. The career of John W. Alexander carried him to honors of every description, to high offices, medals, and the "largest and most important commission ever given a single artist in this country or anywhere else," to recall once more the article on it. In the same years, Thomas Eakins had to support himself by teaching (a work he did so magnificently, however, that one knows he got incomparably more from it than his salary), and to this day only one museum possesses an adequate representation of his art. In many of the largest galleries there is not a single work by him, and his picture of *The Swimming Hole*, where some of the splendid nudes have a quality of drawing like that of a great Florentine, was permitted to go to Forth Worth, Texas. While sincerely congratulating the authorities of the museum there on its acquisition, a person living far from their city cannot help wishing that this work, so important in the history of American art, were more accessible.

However, in the room of recent accession at the museum in New York, there was recently hung, as a pendant to the *Pygmalion and Galatea* of Gérôme, the latest addition to the group of works by Thomas Eakins in the collections, his portrait of *Signora Gomez d'Arza*. The confrontation was instructive, not merely because our painter had studied under the famous Frenchman, but because it showed how a powerful personality remains untouched by bad influences. In Mr. Eakins's own picture of the sculptor carving the figure to represent the Schuylkill River, a female model is shown in a

pose not entirely without resemblance to that of the *Galatea*, yet the American work is as charged with truthfulness as the Gérôme is with artificiality. The teacher took a bit of the great symbolism of the ancients and turned it into a banality that would rob one of all respect for one's period, had the modern time not also produced men like Thomas Eakins. Taking an actual scene—the thing he knew as the Greeks knew the men and women they made into divinities—and rendering it with almost touching fidelity, he could renew our

Metropolitan Museum of Art

SIGNORA GOMEZ D'ARZA—Thomas Eakins
(Included here for purposes of comparison)

confidence that there are still artists whose work rises to the dignity of the symbol.

The same contrast exists between Mr. Alexander's *Walt Whitman* and the *Signora Gomez d'Arza*. In the latter picture one feels that the artist had such a sense of the goodness of

the world that no intensity and fullness he attained in his work could ever satisfy him, for always ahead he would see a new comprehension of reality. It deepened in mystery as he deepened in power, and the grand drawing and color here are things beyond the grasp of the "parasites of the object"; they are of the elements of that life which the Greeks intended when they evolved their profound story of Pygmalion. The unreality of the other work must be so flagrant to every lover of the "good gray poet" that but few words need be spent on it. It was not less than puerile to show Pittsburgh as a mediæval knight (the steel-clad figure, however, being a delicate allusion to the fact that Mr. Carnegie's millions, which built the Institute thus decorated, came from the steel mills of the city.) The same type of mind is seen in the present portrait, where the singer of the great songs serves as a mere pretext for a gaseous silhouette, devoid of all semblance of the reality that Walt Whitman's hand hewed out in his verse.

But why continue? No words can increase the effect of the reproduction Ln the case of Titian's *Venus* if you think it deserves the opinion of "Petronius Arbiter". We agree or disagree on the basis of things seen, not on matters of words. There are none that can increase the effect of the reproduction of Mr. Alexander's *Walt Whitman* if you think it has any connection with the work of the masters—if you do not see that what it really resembles is the work of an "art-photographer." The "Aristide Bruant of Greenwich Village" has described that product of our time:

He makes a lot of hocus-pocus And takes the picture out of focus.

This is, to my mind, a perfect appreciation, doggerel being the only reply to drivel.

But, as we saw just before, not all American painting is drivel. The more shame to our sense of values if we allow a false patriotism to cloak the introduction into our museums of unworthy works because they were done by Americans. One of the most unfortunate phases of the subject of this book is the attitude toward public collections of too many of our painters and sculptors. They look on the galleries as the money-changers looked on the temple. Two cases will illustrate the point, and every museum official knows dozens of cases of the artists whose one thought about entering the collections was the increase in their reputation and sales.

A painter whose picture had been acquired by a museum, but not yet hung, came nearly every day for a month to ask at the information desk why his work was not yet on exhibition. He never once entered the galleries for a look at the art there, but spent his time haranguing the attendants on the injustice that was being done to him in concealing his work. Finally he had to be forcibly reminded that the museum was not an artist's sample-room, and even to receive a hint of ejection. It is almost needless to say that his picture is as ignominious as his conduct. Another painter, complaining in vain about the removal of a work of his from the walls of a museum which had decided, after mature consideration, that its purchase was a mistake, actually threatened to bring suit against the institution to recover the sums that the "insult to his art" had cost him through injury to his sales. Both the artist and the museum knew that such talk was bosh. Still, as there was tension between the director and the political powers from whom his funds came, he was a bit apprehensive over comment by hostile newspapers if his institution were assailed from a new quarter. Fortunately he was of the kind who believe that the right side will win, and stood firm for the

removal of the picture, a purely commercial work that had come before his term of office.

Such cases are the more regrettable because they hamper the museums in contributing to the development of art in this country. As long as there is the attitude among artists that they are in a sort of bread line, waiting their turn for dole from the public resources (or scrambling to get a better place in the line), so long will the standing of the American artist in our galleries be an inferior one. For the public will feel that his works are not there entirely as art, but because they are American. When we really recognize the stature of the men we have produced and take pride in seeing that they can enter the Museum on the same footing as the artists of Europe, then a place in the collections will be regarded as the great honor that it should be. At present it is too frequently like representation in the archives of a historical society, which preserves every record of a given period, without regard to intrinsic merit.

VI

A counter-argument should be presented, however. It is one offered by very sincere and competent men, who regard a policy much like that of the historical society as the right one. Let the Museum lend all its prestige to the American artist, they say, and encourage the public to support him by purchasing American paintings and sculptures: time will decide the merit of each work, in public or in private collections. Even if inferior things are acquired, the artists will feel that the people are with them, and will be strengthened in their effort accordingly. As to the mariner's compass theory, there will always be Europe. We cannot move the Parthenon or the Louvre across the Atlantic,

anyhow; we shall always have to go abroad to see them, and travel is being so facilitated that with the conquest of the air, a visit to Europe in a not too distant future will mean no more in effort than a Clevelander's visit to New York does today. Meanwhile the vast sums we are spending on getting a few of the classic works over here would support all our artists.

In reply to this tempting scheme of things one must first agree, and cordially, that support for our artists is a matter of vital necessity. It is they, above all, who are raising the level of appreciation, here as in other countries. The actually false ones are ephemeral, as we have seen, and it would be absurd to propose any diminution of interest in American painters and sculptors because some of them are of the tribe of Ananias. The very fact that rich America offers less reward to her artists than many a country of Europe has bred a kind of idealism here that is probably second to none in the world.

The weak point in the counter-argument cited seems to me to lie in its misdefining of the function of the Museum. Not the material, but the spiritual interest of the artists must be the criterion of its policy. They must eat, to be sure, if they are to work, and work as well as study is needed to increase their spiritual strength. But in the long view of the matter, even their material welfare will be served best by keeping the point of the compass absolutely true. The patriotic impulse can furnish but limited resources for the support of our artists. Sooner or later, collectors come to buy for quality alone, as everyone knows who has seen the other reasons for acquisition fade out of the interest of one man after another. They started with dog or horse pictures, or church pictures, or "to help the boys along"; but if they stick to the fascinating problem that art collections open up, if they once begin to know what art means in a picture, they will eventually drop

every other consideration in collecting. And when the public feels that it is invited to buy American work as a matter of philanthropy or even patriotism, instead of as a matter of art, there will be a deep-set prejudice against things that make only such appeals, a prejudice that will far outweigh, through harm to our artists, any good that may temporarily result from increased resources for them. We cannot gain permanently by allowing any criterion to be used except the quality of their work as art. Any other means lack of faith in ourselves and in the thing we have set out to do. It would entail the penalty always paid by the artist who compromises with his standard.

And while it is true again that the Parthenon must remain in Greece and that in order to see the supreme things we must travel to the continent that produced them, the treasures in American museums are already more than enough to convince us of the efficacy of works less final in their importance than those for which we shall always have to go abroad. It is over here that we live, and it is over there that we must be able to see great art. Let all the artists and students be given means for a year, two years, or ten years, if you like, of travel and residence in Europe. There is still the public of America—which is no more to be moved across the Atlantic than is the cathedral of Chartres. That marvel resulted from the fact that art was an everyday matter in the life of the people. Our own people must become as accustomed to art. They should be as unconscious of it as of the air they breathe. Otherwise the thing will be unnatural, the artificial respiration which may be precious in sustaining life for a time, but which cannot replace the natural function.

In the great periods, art has its place in every household. We have seen that it was so in the Japan of yesterday, that it is so in Mexico today. One may see the humblest people there

give really expert scrutiny to various pieces of ceramic ware in order to buy the very best ones for their tables or for wall decoration. More or less of care with the materials or the firing would produce more or less perfect specimens, but the idea that people deliberately make false things to sell would never occur to those Mexicans. When wretched machine products from abroad are offered them, they hardly regard them as even ugly; certain human faces are ugly, but these strange things must be like the foreign languages—comprehensible only to the people of the unknown countries. The greatest service that the Museum can do the American artist is to convince the public of the incomparable force that works of art contain. Then people will go on of themselves, and sustain all that is real in the effort of our workers. It is not desirable that they sustain the counterfeit.

The problem of the American artist is so absorbing that I have been long in reaching the other pair of pictures that I want yet to offer for comparison. In one sense it is an impossible comparison, for they are as unrelated to each other as the two discussed before. But with them we return to the criterion of æsthetic values rather than those of representation; and that, I believe, is needed to balance the argument. Imagine a work with the theatrical sentiment of the Franz von Stuck here illustrated, the false Orientalism of the Siddons Mowbray, and the crassly materialistic vision of the *Job* by Bonnat, and you have the qualities of the *Salome* by Regnault. Its garish colors are unrelated to one another, its lines form no organism; every aspect of the thing bespeaks the breakdown of the sense of art in its encounter with the scientific naturalism of the modern period. Regnault, idolized at the atelier where he studied for the extraordinary ability with which he epitomized the vices of the École, has had the

admiration of people whose idea of pictures has been formed by continued seeing of the counterfeit of art, even when there is no question of the special position accorded him in France because of his death for his country. Remembering what France was going through during the Great War, one can understand how his prestige must have been enhanced by the new perils in the midst of which this picture was sold—and was rejected by the fortunate minority of the Friends of the Louvre who saw a foreign purchaser carry off the picture they feared must go to the museum. Today it is one of the works most frequently copied at the great gallery in New York.

I know of only two copies—one of them a mere sketch—that have been made in the twenty-five years that that museum has had on its walls the magnificent *Abduction of Rebecca* by Delacroix. Search among the innumerable permits for copyists during that quarter-century might reveal other examples of such appreciation of the work, but they would be few, if there are any. Where etchings by men of the most fugitive interest sell for thousands of dollars apiece, a print of the ordinary edition of Delacroix's *Jewess of Algiers*, pronounced by an authoritative connoisseur the finest etching of the nineteenth century and by no competent critic rated as far from that, brings some ten or fifteen dollars. While the artist's paintings are beginning once more to rise in price, costing perhaps half what they did fifty years ago, he has always been what the biting tongue of his admirer, Degas, called "the cheapest of the great masters."

Why should he not be that in the time which lifted a Regnault to his popular position? Did ever a true artist, however humble, apply to Regnault such words as Odilon Redon treasured for fifty years, recalling in his old age what a great thinker had once said to him of Delacroix? "He spoke of

the force spreading like a radiance in the attitudes of Delacroix's warriors, lovers and heroes, of the passionate life that he saw in them, and that he compared to the genius of Shakespeare, telling me that a single word of the English dramatist immediately and totally depicts the personage in question. In the same way with Delacroix, a hand and an arm caught sight of in a fragment of the scene, translate the whole of the character."

Such, then, was the master's hold on life, as described by Armand Clavaud, the scientist whose deep imagination caused the young Redon to hearken to him so attentively. And though Delacroix made a veritable cult of the great poets, and himself could write well of his theories and convictions, it is in his own art of painting that he comes down to us entire. That radiating force of which the scientist spoke does not stop when it has animated a detail, any more than Shakespeare's genius is exhausted by the magnificent choice of a word. The movement continues, in both cases, throughout the entire work. In the *Abduction of Rebecca* great lines sweep majestically through the composition and come to a climax around the figure of the woman, which is near the point of the reclining pyramid formed by the planes of which those lines are the boundaries. Each of the myriad touches of color in the picture pulsates like blood in the veins. The "passionate life" of the whole work is a unity that may in very truth be compared with the oneness of impression resulting from the innumerable and indivisible effects which, together, we know as "King Lear."

But, granting that convictions such as those expressed here are really those of the men who utter them, some people may ask how there can be certainty that the whole mass of it reposes on any base more solid than the wandering

imagination of a few minds, perhaps not even the soundest ones. “You use violent words to tell that certain artists are what you call false; you carry us suspiciously close to the confines of mysticism in telling that others are what you call true. Your great Delacroix has fallen in price, you say. Why should anyone accept your word about all these things? Where are your proofs?” I have not asked that anyone accept a single word of mine without verifying it for himself. And the nearest anyone can get to proof is to point to the general agreement among men who have given thought to art. It is not they who made the reputation of Regnault; it is they who keep the price of Delacroix as high as it is. His perhaps unequaled number of works (estimated at 12,000 including everything) could not be absorbed by permanent collections in the time that has elapsed since they were produced. In the day when his tremendous effort was resounding throughout Europe, high prices were paid—though not so high as what must yet be paid when fewer of his pictures come up for sale, and when the new and solider appreciation of his genius becomes general.

But the proof we believe in does not come from outer events, it resides in the art experience that each of us has had. Rembrandt may have come into our ken at an early period in our lives. Later on, our interest may have gone out to the things of the Far East, to the Greeks, or to the Egyptians; or we spend a time in Italy with the early masters of cool gray color and clear, shadowless form,—attributes that are, superficially, the very contrary of those of the Dutchman. But after each new accession of knowledge, we come back to him and find him only the greater. Here, then, is a type of that inner certitude which is all we know of proof. According as

things give us something of it or fail to do so, we accept or reject them.

VII

"But for the practical question of the Museum, does not the best answer demand one institution for the old things, as to which time has given us this certitude, a different gallery for modern things?" To say so, save in matters that are of the present, or perhaps of the immediate past, is to acknowledge defeat. Some time must elapse, it is true, before we can speak with honest confidence; first impressions do sometimes mislead us. But of what use is study of the past if you deny that men who recognize the classic qualities in old things will recognize them in new ones? Goethe at eighty, or thereabout, was open to new expressions of art: witness the admiration of the inveterate Classicist for the young Delacroix, the idol of the Romantic school. As the great poet could see the gods of the past he knew so well within the new forms they assumed through the genius of the young men, so also old errors can be recognized under fresh disguises. Claude Monet said, "When the Impressionists appeared, the pictures at the Salon used to be in general of a brownish tone; now they are bright pink and blue and green; but whether they look like chocolate or like English bonbons, they are nothing but confectionery still". The Museum can show the work of the recent schools tentatively and so give the public the evidence needed by it in forming a judgment on contemporary things. No one claims to be infallible even as to the past, but surely no very extraordinary clairvoyance is needed to keep museum walls free from the art of Ananias.

Despite every disappointment we have had, there is reason to believe that solid progress is being made toward ability to

distinguish the real from the counterfeit. The visitor to the Tate Gallery in London, recalling the unrelieved dreariness of its account of modern art, but twenty years ago, rubs his eyes in wonder at the magnificent works shown there now. In Paris, each year sees more of an effort to redeem the unfortunate past of the Luxembourg. The idea of French decadence which obtained before the war might have been amply proved from that museum as it was for so many years, when the small Caillebotte Collection, the Rodins, and a very few other works were the only things worth looking at. And yet the mass of commercial claptrap that filled the rest of the galleries represented the modern art of France to millions of foreigners. Going to Paris for frivolity and sensation, they found them in certain theaters and cabarets at night, and in the Luxembourg during the day. Lip service had, of course, to be paid to the "old stuff" at the Louvre. But the easy virtue of the Luxembourg artists, their engaging smiles, and their yielding of all that was in them without any of the study and thought demanded by the Old Masters made the modern gallery the favorite of the tourists. Today the fine pictures, moved to a room of honor, are increasing in number, and the worst of the old disgraces are disappearing from the walls. In Germany, with the intelligence which is so notable in the country's museum-directing, the proportion of false works in the public galleries is probably the lowest of all. Even the "patriotic" impulse, that most insidious means of propaganda for the False Artist, is not allowed too free a rein. If a fault is to be noted, it is in respect to over-tolerance of new forms. The mistake is so rare as to suggest that in a short time it will correct itself.

On our side of the Atlantic a measure of popular success still goes to the type of work represented by most of the

pictures in the Hearn Collection at the Metropolitan Museum and those bought by the Friends of American Art for the Chicago Institute. But the recent additions to the latter museum are a clear indication that the period of acceptance in our galleries for the counterfeits will be shorter than it was in the past. The example set by Chicago will not go unheeded by the rest of the country. Dissatisfaction with the ignorance shown by our earlier museum men (honest and public-spirited as they usually were) is to be noted in many of our communities. In 1922 the Detroit Museum made a start in the right direction by acquiring a van Gogh and a Matisse, and by building up a better collection of ancient works. The Cleveland Museum's acquisition of a painting by Redon gave such pleasure to the city that the purchase of a second one soon resulted; and the intelligent guidance of public taste through which the institution has made an enviable name for itself was demonstrated at about the same time by a loan exhibition of modern works which Clevelanders have bought in the last few years.

Boston offers conflicting testimony. It acquires a Chaldean head and so adds to the great record it made with its collections of important Egyptian work, its Greek marvels, and the bewildering mass of things from the Orient; moreover, in our period, Millet and Chavannes appear—the latter magnificently, and the Impressionist idea had an early recognition in the city. Yet most of the other modern works there are of a conventional poverty that makes one ask oneself again what possible connection there is between the two parts of the museum. Perhaps no one really thinks of it as more than an oil-and-water mixture, the ancient things having been gathered by connoisseurs, the bad moderns reflecting the influence of one or two painters who have dominated the

buying and held it to works of the type they prefer. Even in Boston, however, which had Maurice B. Prendergast as a resident for so many years and then let him move to New York without recognition from the museum of his city, there is a strong stir of activity from people who demand more seriousness in the consideration of the art of recent times.

Is there a deduction to be made from the example of Boston and from the manner in which the two pairs of pictures last discussed entered the Metropolitan Museum? As between the Thomas Eakins and the Delacroix, on one hand, and the John Alexander and the Regnault, on the other, the two good pictures were purchases of the museum and so represent its fullest approval, whereas the two bad pictures, as also the new Gérôme, were merely accepted as gifts. Can we think of this as an indication that the museums, if permitted to use their unbiased judgment, will take the wise course? The idea is very appealing. And it is not shaken but rather confirmed by the fact that the museum itself bought the new Sargent of *The Wyndham Sisters*, which consumes so many square yards of precious wall-space, and paid a staggering price for it; we must remember that the purchase was made after an outcry in the press over the failure to spend money left for additions to the group of American works. The announcement of the acquisition was given officially as a reply to that complaint. And those who regret the buying of this picture should remember that the sum paid for it might have bought thirty American or other modern works, by as many artists; let them look at the recent purchases of the kind and say whether the single big canvas is not preferable in the galleries.

The purchase of the Sargent comes too late to serve as more than a postscript to the bad account of the past. But there is another phase to these activities of the Ananias spirit.

While our attention is being held by unworthy things, great opportunities are slipping by, and sometimes without hope of repair. It was not enough that Berlin should get the great archaic Greek figure of the Seated Goddess which was offered to American museums just before the war, and which was allowed to stay in Europe for lack of decisive action. For some years another work of the same period was known and might have been had. It was not comparable to the first one, yet the Germans, at almost the worst moment of financial distress after their defeat, gave a price credibly reported to be a million gold marks for the statue.

Much as the False Artist is to blame for, he cannot be held directly accountable for our loss of these works, although his directing of public opinion and his failure to build up interest in the classics he assumes to represent are factors in the matter. But when we come to other examples of the chances we have missed, his influence is to be seen beyond possibility of mistake. At the exhibition in the Metropolitan Museum in 1921 hung a great picture by Seurat called *La Poudreuse*. Inquiry as to what likelihood there was of its entering the gallery permanently brought the reply, “None at all,” from one of the officials. This was before the appearance of the anonymous letter of protest against the exhibition, that was quoted earlier in this book; but that manifestation of hostility by the Ananias men was not needed to explain who would oppose the acquisition of the picture. When it was sold a year later it went to John Quinn for about $5,000. The previous owner, who followed its later career, is authority for the statement that after Mr. Quinn’s death, a Paris dealer noted for his daring as a buyer and for the high prices at which he sells, paid $25,000 for the work. From him it went to its final owner, the Tate Gallery in London, which after a few years’

study of Seurat's earliest masterpiece, *The Bathers*, as it hung on the museum walls, was so sure of the artist's importance that it was willing to pay what must have been a round sum for a second painting by the great Neo-Impressionist.

Another work by him, and probably the finest, as it was the last of his life, might easily have been ours. It belonged to that same great American collector who had owned *La Poudreuse*. On the day of its arrival in New York, Mr. Quinn was asked, "You'll lend it to the museum before you take it home, won't you?" His fine face darkened as he said, "No. They don't want that kind of a picture up there." If he took the tone he did it was because he had had experience with the authorities of the institution. For years he had lent pictures to the museum, some of which it purchased after his death. He had seen the rejection of other works, not his property, which he had urged for acquisition, and this fact, together with the buying of pictures he considered bad, resulted in his estrangement from the institution he should logically have aided in supporting. He was known as an absolutely disinterested man, and one who was unsparingly generous of his time and his money in working for the cause of art. If we have not received the gifts he and other great collectors might have made us, it is the False Artists, the enemies of their ideas, who, this time, are directly answerable for the loss.

To retrieve it we shall have to look to other means of advance. It seems probable that New York will never possess a Seurat of first-rate quality. The artist died young after expending his energy on the few canvases that tell the story of his genius. All the master-works among them are in museums, or collections that seem destined for museums. Yet even this is not to be taken tragically. The essential thing, after all, is the growth of intelligence, not the possession of this or that

particular object. In the case of Seurat, New Yorkers will always be able to experiment with the theory discussed before that one can see the great works by traveling. They need go no farther than Chicago, whose museum contains one of the masterpieces of the painter—as part of a memorial gift to the public, and not indeed to the public of Chicago alone, for the whole of the country is learning from the activity of that city.

Mr. Quinn's picture by Seurat, *The Circus*, was bequeathed by him to the Louvre. Looking at it today and recalling the intensity of purpose needed by the artist to complete it in those last days before his death, one knows that any recollection of the Ananias men around him must have been the thing farthest from his mind. And so this profound and joyous work may also dispel dull thoughts on the subject of this book. There are still men to know the unchanging truth of the Museum, and to see how steadily it designates the accessions to truth that the future will bring forth. We can remain convinced that the great tradition goes on when we see a Seurat, and the other works of our time around it, at the Louvre; when we see that they continue the direction established for us by the older masters.

Once more it is not the tradition of one country that is involved, but that of all art. We are coming to understand our mariner's compass; the very mistakes we made before emphasize the need to clarify our ideas. We pay for our progress, but it is worth the price if public and private connoisseurship learns, as it is learning, that it was an error to acquire the work of a pseudo-Greek like Lejeune while allowing works by the real Greeks to go into museums that need them less than we do; to acquire a Regnault—and at a price that might have bought a dozen masterpieces by Delacroix; to acquire our ninth oil-painting by Sargent and to

turn our backs, perhaps forever, on the chance to own an important Seurat.

But these cases, and all others of their kind that might be added, sink into insignificance beside the magnificent positive achievement of our collecting. A single true artist makes us forget a thousand false ones, and this proportion holds also when we look at our galleries and their past: the success there counts a thousand times as much as the failure. The great halls contain treasure which the old trustees and directors would not have ventured to think of as possible, and are the result of the great faith of those men in the work they undertook. And the work goes on with ever greater strength and understanding. American museums and private collections are making a steady approach to the highest level of excellence. American artists are showing a constantly finer appreciation of their problem, a constantly growing determination to meet it in a spirit worthy of it and of their people. Therein lies our most solid reason for confidence in our future.

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FOOTNOTES:

[A] *Saumatre*—literally brackish; the word is as unusual, to describe fruit, in French as in English. Whether it be translated by unhealthy, bitter, or unpleasant, the derogatory sense of Besnard's remark is clear.

[B] I shall be sparing of footnotes; but, as Gervex is but little known in America, it may be well to describe him as a comrade of Renoir's student days, but one whose later painting shares no quality of the art in the great picture where he appears as a model.

[C] The former of these two facts comes from Sargent's friend and admirer, William M. Chase, the latter from Mr. Henniker-Heaton, a former director of the Worcester Museum.

[D] As this quotation is somewhat long, the author begs his kind reader to remember that not he but "Petronius Arbiter" is the one who is referring to the beautiful nude young girl as the "brutal reality." For the article in full (and other gems of criticism) see "The Art World" for October, 1916.

[E] I have never troubled to find out the exact meaning of the word, but the above sounds as if it *might* be modernism, or might have been so, about 1906. My lack of interest in the much-discussed subject may be due to my admiration, over a number of years, for one of Sir Owen Seaman's parodies of Marie Corelli. He makes her say: "Man lusts for glory—a woman is content with genius." Resolved to be even more modest, I am willing to exchange pounds and pounds of modernism in the exhibitions for even an ounce of talent—and there is plenty of it about.

[F] The sentences just preceding are from an article in "Scribner's Magazine" for May, 1912, in which was published an account of my visits to Renoir, and the opinions on art which he expressed.

[G] Some of them really are rather awful. W. P.

[H] The complaint against Degas was that of lewdness, the picture chosen as a pretext representing a woman bathing in a tub. The charge was taken up in a lecture by a well-known critic who, calling the work a "Peeping-Tom picture," asked his audience "Shall our young people be offered such things as art or shall they look at works like this?" and he threw on the screen a lantern-slide photograph of a great Rembrandt. The dishonesty of the trick was clear to all who knew even the (unmentionable) names of certain of Rembrandt's etchings. While their subjects present incomparably greater obstacles to anything but a lascivious treatment than does the subject of Degas, one need scarcely say that both cases bring us back to an exchange of words which has become famous: "Don't you think, sir, that that picture is indecent?" "No, sir, but your question is."

[The end of *Ananias or the False Artist* by Walter Pach]