Conference Table Desk

(500)

Reprinted with permission from the series of articles in the New York Sun and the New York Herald, 1915-1922, by Henry McBride.

Société Anonyme Inc.
19 East 47th Street
New york City.

Melomime Publication Inc.
192 West 10th Street
New York City

them. Later he detached himself from the union. Some desire to call him a post-impressionist, others insist he is a [illegible] er in the least to me what he shall be labelled. It suffices that he is a genius and the father of modern art.

Before ending this slight notice it should be added that Vollard's work has been excellent. The roughness of his style brings the subject out all the more vividly. After all, in the last analysis the subject himself was rough. Emile Bernard's phrases are more polished, and one has the grateful sense that Bernard adapted himself to the difficult Cezanne with exquisite tact, but in Vollard's picture there is more red blood. The dialogues of Zola with "moi" and Cezanne with "moi" are amusingly like pages in George Borrow. There are more than these resemblances to Borrow in fact. Vollard is much in the book, but there is one thing he left out, to my disappointment. He neglects his own induction to the Cezanne cult. He saw it first at Pere Tanguy's, he says, but he does not explain if it shocked him; if he had to grow accustomed; if it was his heart, his head or his business sense that guided him.

Emile Bernard neglects this point also. I should like to know when and where occurred the turn in Cezanne's affairs that changed him from a student's hero to a definite formidable figure in the world of art.

There was
en unheard
hurch bells
y years, to
works that
Cezanne we
hat matter,
th," which
not be said
who were
ny virtues.
andt as in
more. It
ices of the
ture dealer
important
book has a
xists. The
y intention
. This is
s and who
Very bad,'
then, the
be aware
at he was
the Zola
achment to
Hugo. All
ris. When
mprends-tu
e unknown
il a pre-
life of a
le to stand
be taken
on is less
an on the
and begins
that each
the tears
His adult
inion upon
that even
is parents,
of pocket
to pay a
wo of his
ghter and
ho carried
nguy, who
arro, Gau-
he studio,
"horrors,"
s, leaving
tendering
ough Paul
of art be
a fitting
iated with
er in the

"The Allies," for so must we know henceforth the Houses of Knoedler, Montross and Stieglitz ("291"), unite in forcing us to consider the question of Cezanne. Stieglitz has worried us with this troublesome painter for years, but he now yields the centre of the stage to the Montross-Knoedler duet. But these galleries begin the new year with exhibitions of works by the wild man from Aix. The Knoedler's art performance will be given by a veritable galaxy of stars AND Cezanne; in the Montross show every turn is by the inimitable artist himself. Of course we shall all have to see both exhibitions. Between them we may be able to make out what all the European pother over Cezanne means. Perhaps, and what joy for us provincials will this be! we may even be enabled to join one of the two great clans, to range ourselves with those who say this painter eclipses Rembrandt or with those who insist that his art is a revolting pretence.

Fortunately there are other "helps" for inquirers than the exhibitions. Certain books and pamphlets about the strange painter have arrived upon these shores and are now available in the public libraries. (If not they ought to be. At least they can be had in the bookshops.) The books give many of the facts of the man's life, and are so interesting that they will be considered valuable even by such connoisseurs as do not as yet admit Cezanne's genius. These assistances are, however, only for those who know French, as Ambroise Vollard's "Paul Cezanne" and Emile Bernard's "Souvenirs sur Paul Cezanne" are not yet made into English.

That those who have a natural repugnance for Cezanne's style will be able to overcome it by a study of the works now on view is not at all sure. Pronounced feelings of that kind yield, in my opinion, only in confrontation with extreme crystallizations of style—with the self-explaining masterpieces of which each artist produces but a few. The life of Jean Francois Millet, which may now be seen in clear perspective, yields an instance. His peasants were as brutal, as untrue, as insane, as insincere as Cezanne's are now until suddenly the "Angelus" made its appearance. There was no reply to that.

It was a great picture. Suddenly there was a sharp interchange of bids, and we read in the newspapers that it had sold for 250,000 francs, a then unheard of price. After that nothing more was said of the "immorality" of Millet. The Philistines saw a great light and all of them could hear the church bells ringing in the picture. Not only the "Angelus," but all the other works were at last truly felt to be pious.

Americans had the advantage of seeing the "Angelus" with this extraordinary price mark labelled upon it. We were permitted too, for many years, to see the greatest works of Manet and Monet in the galleries of Durand-Ruel. The price marks were not amazing, then, but they were the actual works that were so wildly disputed on the other side, and we could join in the fray with as good a will as any. But for similar enlightenment in regard to Cezanne we need his "Card Players," now privately owned in France; a work which, if not as religious, is at least as persuasive as Millet's "Angelus." (For that matter, to me, it is equally religious.)

The artist is always judged by his masterpieces. The mere fact that "Hamlet" is superlative puts it upon a plane immensely above "Macbeth," which would have been superlative itself had it been written by any other than the author of "Hamlet." But if you have not read "Hamlet" you may not be said to know Shakespeare. I have more than once met fellow citizens who had not seen Rembrandt's "Night Watch" nor his "Christ at Emmaus," and who were vainly trying to reach the fervor of those who had, by arduous but unavailing study of the Altman Rembrandts. The Altman Rembrandts have many virtues, and the "Woman Paring Her Nails" explains very well the now fashionable admiration for the "late" Rembrandts, but alas, in the case of Rembrandt as in the case of all other artists, one begins with the study of the superlative work.—

Vollard's life of Cezanne should be translated at once. In many ways it is a most unusual book. It does Cezanne to the life, but it does much more. It puts the whole background in, with the intriguing juries of the Salons, the ardent hopes and enthusiasms of youthful geniuses, the amusing prejudices of the bewildered Philistines, the generosities and sacrifices of the hardy patrons of the new school, and last but not least a full length portrait of a picture dealer having a "corking time" (as Col. Roosevelt expresses it). There is, in short, all the "atmosphere" that produces artists, and no such whiff of this important essence has come to us since "Trilby" first explained the joys of student life in language that even brokers could understand. For that reason the book has a double mission. "Trilby" sent hundreds of young Americans off to participate in the Parisian revels. Alas, the Paris of Little Billee no longer exists. The Vollard book, could it be widely circulated, might help us to construct an art world of our own. That, however, was probably not our author's primary intention in writing the book.

Cezanne emerges from the book in big proportions, and what is most astonishing is that he appears to have been a genius from the beginning. This is contrary to the general idea. Nine people out of ten imagine him to have been a forlorn, old gentleman, who had the pity of his country neighbors and who worked on alone, totally without a comprehension of the quality in his work which, by a strange fluke of fortune, the Parisians suddenly admired.

This impression was not dissipated by the much quoted passage in Emile Bernard's Souvenirs:

"We had, hanging on the wall, a little still life by Cezanne that I had bought in Paris at least fifteen years before. I showed it to him. 'Very bad,' commented he. 'It is by you,' I replied, 'and I think it's very good.' 'Is that the sort of stuff they admire in Paris now?' asked Cezanne. 'Well, then, the rest of their work must be pretty poor!' "

It is quite true the neighbors were callous, for the neighbors were more than passing ignorant, and it is true that Cezanne scarcely appeared to be aware of what was most admirable in his painting, for geniuses in all the arts are seldom the best judges of their own work, but it does not appear that he was particularly mad, or was ever very far from public scrutiny. There seems always to have been some one believing in him.

At the first there was Zola for a boyish friend. The Zola episodes are charmingly real and strangely pathetic. One would be tempted to call the Zola chapters "documents," were it not now beginning to appear likely that Zola in the future must play second to Cezanne. Zola found a romantic attachment to Cezanne and a third youth, Baptistin Baille, who was equally ambitious, and read aloud to them in a wild and secluded spot from de Musset and Hugo. All three dreamed fine dreams and talked big, as fine boys will, but it was Zola who first went out in the world and who gave Cezanne the pull toward Paris. When Cezanne finally arrived in the capital it was Zola who wrote to Baille, left behind in Aix, "j'ai vu Paul!! j'ai vu Paul, comprends-tu cela, toi, comprends-tu toute la melodie de ces trois mots?"

The comradeship of Zola and Cezanne could not stand the tests that life in the great world put upon it. Alas, there arrived a time when the unknown Cezanne could say of the famous Zola: "C'etait une intelligence fort mediocre et un ami detestable; il ne voyait que lui; c'est ainsi que l'Oeuvre, ou il a pretendu me peindre, n'est qu'une epouvantable deformation, un mensonge tout a sa gloire" (Bernard's Souvenirs). Zola had written "l'Oeuvre," the life of a painter, and the hero, Paul Lantier, was a study of Cezanne, and this hero's picture was no less than Cezanne's much discussed "Baigneuses"!

The two friends had begun to see less of each other some time before the appearance of the novel. Cezanne's shyness and proudness not being able to stand the restrictions that Zola's increasing importance imposed upon both of them. The phrase "detestable friend" that Bernard quotes, however, is not to be taken too seriously, being certainly the too forceful expletive of an irritated man of "temperament." Vollard's answer from Cezanne to the same question is less severe and probably nearer the artist's true feeling.

"One mustn't expect an outsider to say reasonable things upon the art of painting, but n. de D.," and Cezanne began pounding like a deaf man on the table. "How dared he say a painter killed himself because he had made a poor picture? When a picture is not a success one chucks it in the fire and begins another."

Nevertheless in the reported remarks of both Zola and Cezanne it is easy to see that in spite of the separation there was a basis of affection that each guarded for the other. When Cezanne heard of Zola's death he shut himself up all day with his grief, and when he spoke of him years afterward the tears came to his eyes. The real tragedy was that Zola died without discovering that his boyish estimation of Cezanne's genius was the correct one. His adult opinion was that still held by the Philistines: "Cezanne had the genius of a great painter, but not the talent to become one." But then Zola's opinion upon matters of art, as poor Paul Cezanne observed, are worthless.

What will prove astonishing to the public, however, in Vollard's book is the picture of Cezanne's student days with the unavoidable conclusion that even to his fellows of the atelier the young painter was a hero. Part of his popularity may have been due to the fact that he had an allowance from his parents, and always had in his pockets something with which to pay for a friend's dinner; but art students are not entirely time servers, and no amount of pocket money produces the reputation of genius among them.

When Cezanne decided to try to get into the official Salon of 1866, however, he happened not to be "flush" and did not have sufficient sous to pay a commissionaire. So bravely making the most of it he loaded the two canvases—his "Apres-Midi à Naples" and his "Femme à la Puce" were the two of his works most likely to be understood by a "bourgeois" jury, he thought—into a pushcart, and with the aid of complacent friends, moved it with laughter and many jokes to the Palais de l'Industrie. Upon his arrival at the Salon Cezanne was the object of an ovation upon the part of the young artists, who carried him about in triumph.

Is it necessary to add that the jury did not partake of this enthusiasm? The two paintings were rejected.

This student admiration was followed by the appearance of patrons, and there was even in the early days an amiable picture dealer, Le Pere Tanguy, who was supposed to have a sentimental weakness for unfortunate art students. A list of his proteges, that includes Guillaumin, Cezanne, Van Gogh, Pissarro, Gauguin and Vignon, suggests that his charities were distributed with almost uncanny intelligence.

Cezanne used to leave the key of his studio with Pere Tanguy, and when a customer for the Cezannes presented himself he was conducted to the studio, where he could choose among the paintings, the prices of which were fixed, 40 francs for the small and 100 francs for the large canvases. The "horrors," it seems, were cheaper then than at present. There were also a number of canvases upon which Cezanne had flung a number of small studies, leaving to Pere Tanguy the task of separating them. In consequence one often saw Tanguy, scissors in hand, clipping off a "motif" and a poor Maecenas, tendering one louis and preparing to carry away three "pommes" by Cezanne.

These episodes, picturesque and amusing, round out a period of apprenticeship that to artists at least will not seem a difficult one. All through Paul Cezanne's life may be said to be a typical artist's life. He was not mad, unless an inability to think or feel life except it be expressed in terms of art be a madness. He was a complete artist.

The question of his special contribution to modern art may be left for another time. The question of the confusions of the critics may make a fitting pendant to it. There is no hurry at all about classifying the artist. His epoch coincided with that of the Impressionists. For a time he was associated with them. Later he detached himself from the union. Some desire to call him a post-impressionist, others insist he is a classicist. It does not matter in the least to me what he shall be labelled. It suffices that he is a genius and the father of modern art.

Before ending this slight notice it should be added that Vollard's work has been excellent. The roughness of his style brings the subject out all the more vividly. After all, in the last analysis the subject himself was rough. Emile Bernard's phrases are more polished, and one has the grateful sense that Bernard adapted himself to the difficult Cezanne with exquisite tact, but in Vollard's picture there is more red blood. The dialogues of Zola with "moi" and Cezanne with "moi" are amusingly like pages in George Borrow. There are more than these resemblances to Borrow in fact. Vollard is much in the book, but there is one thing he left out, to my disappointment. He neglects his own induction to the Cezanne cult. He saw it first at Pere Tanguy's, he says, but he does not explain if it shocked him; if he had to grow accustomed; if it was his heart, his head or his business sense that guided him.

Emile Bernard neglects this point also. I should like to know when and where occurred the turn in Cezanne's affairs that changed him from a student's hero to a definite formidable figure in the world of art.

M. Chase are already lost, r other faithful readers the Henri Matisse are now on

in his beautiful galleries. me, at the beginning, but aries who do not as a rule

king ex-Presidents into his ney get to yawning at the en when these same repro- ver the objects on display, ic, might well ponder over. that those who refuse to turn for well-known certain days for

mply because he likes them. He

e state of mind e perfectly satis- Even if all your n't go. To go is

riticisms in cafes, but there

s; but all you fellows see if there's an idea in it I'd

Cook's guide explaining the rt made easy for dull intel- ."

o. It's just by accident I t believe in fussing about t argue yourself into liking

esn't like a public favorite. sliked him first. Cox and ve to have Cox and Chase came out with his denun-

Wilde discovered simulta- one count upon the moral enough to be honest if he ne, that the work Matisse

t was getting into his great it was my innocent refer- these things, but my poor upon the mosaic floor. ing the table again so that he emotional Dubois. ithout squabbling is one of

end wishes to know how ork of art. The business whether one disposes of

range new paintings some- It's an extravagant age. w.

the sort that would have n accepted by the dealers.

lly he will be able to do ve been selling old brown w that I have opened my

e earnestness, no one who admired in America some latisse not to acknowledge me accepted by fashion in

the great war has killed

modern art. They forget that Matisse was the great name current upon people's lips at the critical period before the outbreak; a period, you may be sure, that will be analyzed by future historians from every point of view. To have been the conspicuous painter of such a day bespeaks future attention for him.

"No doubt so great a cataclysm will change the atmosphere. It always does. It is difficult to see how people for years to come in Europe will care for the refinements of Matisse. Watteau and Boucher went out, as you know, in a similar situation, but they came back. Matisse may go out too, but he will come back. The world always has its recurring aspirations for the softer side once its robust, impatient gesture for fresh air has shaken down all the housetops.

"Art never had been so refined before, for the alliances and intermarriages between nations, due to the modern world welding brought about by science, compelled art to distil all perfumes into one essence. Congo and Persia, yes and no, thunder and flute pipings, nothing could be too blended for an age that knew everything, desired everything, and got everything. The state of modern art did not bring on the war, as some cruel people suggest, but it clearly foreshadowed the inevitability of war. Anything so perefctly typical therefore will be invaluable later on.

"One has occasionally to hand out such bitter pills to your friends the academicians that it would be nice to pick something comforting in the way of a moral out of this great smash for them, but really I don't see anything coming to them out of the war. Matisse himself will not be broken. He and Rodin will go on working out their characters formed long ago. It is the great crucible that moulds public opinion that is broken.

"They will not have successors in the same line. But the academicians will not get back their dear Bouguereau. Very likely the history of our civil war will be duplicated. For a decade or so there may not be any art at all. Heroes and persons capable of great energy will give all their force to State and business reconstruction."

If you do not wish to succumb to modern art, keep away from it. Mr. Kenyon Cox and Mr. William M. Chase are already lost, although they may not know it. But they have looked upon it. To look is fatal. We wish to give all of our other faithful readers the friendly warning that drawings, etchings, lithographs, sculptures (oh, those sculptures!) and paintings by Henri Matisse are now on flagrant view in the Montross Galleries.

Poor Mr. Montross! Little did he dream two short years ago that he would have such a show as this in his beautiful galleries. But he was led into it by degrees. He went to the armory exhibition frankly as a scoffer and he scoffed some, at the beginning, but the constant click of the turnstiles admitting famous ex-Presidents of the United States and other great dignitaries who do not as a rule frequent our exhibitions sobered him and put him in the proper mood for reflection.

He vowed then and there, mark his words, that the day would come when he would have turnstiles clicking ex-Presidents into his galleries. Art he saw was for the people. You might fool some of the people some of the time; but when they get to yawning at the academies and to saying that art is probably very fine and they are sorry, but they don't care for art, and then when these same reprobates rush off by the hundred thousand to the "modern art" show to giggle and argue and come to blows over the objects on display, there is something in the situation that the progressive art dealer, whose science it should be to know his public, might well ponder over.

For over a year there have been rumblings of modernism at the Montross establishment, little indications that those who know how to take a hint understood, but this great eruption of Matisse and the actual, visible turnstiles that refuse to turn until cold cash has been deposited will come as a surprise to some. We believe there is a limited free list for well-known artists. Mr. Cox and Mr. Chase are both upon the list, we rejoice to say. Students later on will be allowed certain days for their hilarious selves.

But here is the curious thing that has happened. Mr. Montross, who sent for these Matisse things simply because he believed the public wished to see them, simply, in other words, as a business proposition, already admits that he likes them. He goes even so far as to say the paintings are beautiful!

There is no occasion to enlarge upon this phenomenon. You, dear reader, are likely to fall into the same state of mind if you go to see the pictures. If all that you know about modern art is what Mr. Cox told you, and you are perfectly satisfied with his account then it will be much wiser for you not to go to the Montross Galleries. Much wiser. Even if all your young friends go and talk by the hour for and against the great or infamous Henri Matisse, be adamant. Don't go. To go is to fall into what Mr. Cox and the late Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy call "error."

Just there we felt a tug at our sleeve. We are writing this in a French cafe. We do not as a rule write criticisms in cafes, but there are times when every little bit of atmosphere counts. This is one of those times.

The tug came from a friend, an academician.

"Say, tell us: What's he driving at, that fellow Matisse?"

"Merciful powers! Have you never seen his work?"

"Sure; but the more I see of them the more my head spins. I thought at first they were simply fakes; but all you fellows see something in them, and maybe you're crazy, or perhaps it's me"—l'anglais tel qu'on le parle!—that's crazy, but if there's an idea in it I'd like to know what it is."

"The idea? My poor academical friend, that's what you'll never get from me. Did you ever hear a Cook's guide explaining the Puvis de Chavannes style to a party of Nebraskan schoolma'ams in the Pantheon? Did you ever read Ruskin's art made easy for dull intellects? Explanations that do not explain! When a picture can be explained it's already en route for the garret."

"Well, what pleasure do you get from him, then?"

"Part of the pleasure is in seeing you ruffled, my friend."

"Nice character you give yourself. Easily entertained, you are."

"Yes. If you want to know I'll tell you something. I don't know any more about Matisse than you do. It's just by accident I happen to be in the fashion by liking him. If I were out of fashion I shouldn't worry in the least. I don't believe in fussing about him. I like some Matisses and dislike others, just as I accept certain Grecos and discard others. You wouldn't argue yourself into liking an artist, would you? What is it to you if you don't like Matisse?"

"I don't like to feel I'm missing something."

"On the contrary, you're acquiring an opinion. Always feel like congratulating a fellow who distinctly doesn't like a public favorite. My own pet vanity is a loathing for Murillo. I should have disliked Rubens, I think but that Thackeray disliked him first. Cox and Chase are simply stunning, you know, in the hearty wholesome way they detest Matisse. All the 'moderns' love to have Cox and Chase detesting Matisse. Some of the younger fellows weren't even sure that Matisse amounted to anything until Cox came out with his denunciations. Great sport, isn't it?"

"Tell me one thing. Is he honest?"

"Who, Cox?"

"No, Matisse."

"How on earth should I know? Honesty isn't an essential to good art, as Jimmy Whistler and Oscar Wilde discovered simultaneously. It was Whistler who found out that the lovelier the blue and white ginger jar was the less could one count upon the moral character of the Canton opium eater who had painted it! All that I can say about Matisse is that he is now rich enough to be honest if he wishes. He can certainly afford it. I really think, and this is the only critical opinion you shall get from me, that the work Matisse has done since he became rich is remarkably true to the ideals he promulgated when poor."

I regret to say that at this point my academical friend lost his temper. He was leaving anyhow, and in fact was getting into his great coat with the assistance of Dubois the waiter, when he began to shout incoherently at me. I thought at first it was my innocent reference to the Matisse riches, for nothing irritates an academician so much as the idea that idiots actually buy these things, but my poor friend thumped the table with his fist so heavily that a coffee glass jumped into the air to fall in fragments upon the mosaic floor.

"Dishonest, is it? I knew it all along. I don't give that for an art that's founded on dishonesty," pounding the table again so that two liqueur glasses joined the coffee glass, and then angrily stamping out of the room, leaving me to pacify the emotional Dubois.

The discussion had, in fact, the usual Matisse ending. Why even old friends cannot talk Matisse talk without squabbling is one of the mysteries, and, shall we say? one of the blessings of the modern movement.

Business men and people in general take a more rational viewpoint than my academical friend. My friend wishes to know how Matisse's work conforms to the principles of Leonardo da Vinci, as though that were the only test for a work of art. The business man merely desires to know if the public is interested. The principle involved in art dealings is the same whether one disposes of picture post cards or Suun porcelains—one meets the demand.

The public, the dear public, knowing almost nothing of Leonardo and caring less, simply sees in these strange new paintings something that corresponds to some of their own experiences. They jump at them, as children do for new toys. It's an extravagant age. These are extravagant pictures. That they are accepted by the people any one may see who goes to the show.

The spectators glue their eyes to the weird colors and shapes, they linger long. The attention given is the sort that would have flattered Leonardo himself in his day. They were accepted by the people some time ago. They have now been accepted by the dealers. But it will be years before our public museums accept them.

"Yes," said one of the rival picture dealers, "Brother Montross has stolen a march upon us. Undoubtedly he will be able to do good business with this Matisse show. I'm sorry now I allowed him to get it away from me. Of course I've been selling old brown Dutch pictures for years and my eyes are unaccustomed to such straight, frank methods of painting. Still, now that I have opened my eyes I can see the facts.

"Matisse is the greatest name in art to-day. There is no one in France who is talked about with the same earnestness, no one who arouses deep interest but him. Vuillard, Bonnard and Roussel are immensely clever Parisians who will be admired in America some day for their 'chic' just as they are appreciated for that quality now in Paris, but they owe too much to Matisse not to acknowledge him themselves as their master. There is nobody in England much in the public eye, and since Davies became accepted by fashion in America he has no longer been a subject for debate.

"Now here is the little point that strikes a business man. The detractors say modern art is dead—that the great war has killed modern art. They forget that Matisse was the great name current upon people's lips at the critical period before the outbreak; a period, you may be sure, that will be analyzed by future historians from every point of view. To have been the conspicuous painter of such a day bespeaks future attention for him.

"No doubt so great a cataclysm will change the atmosphere. It always does. It is difficult to see how people for years to come in Europe will care for the refinements of Matisse. Watteau and Boucher went out, as you know, in a similar situation, but they came back. Matisse may go out too, but he will come back. The world always has its recurring aspirations for the softer side once its robust, impatient gesture for fresh air has shaken down all the housetops.

"Art never had been so refined before, for the alliances and intermarriages between nations, due to the modern world welding brought about by science, compelled art to distil all perfumes into one essence. Congo and Persia, yes and no, thunder and flute pipings, nothing could be too blended for an age that knew everything, desired everything, and got everything. The state of modern art did not bring on the war, as some cruel people suggest, but it clearly foreshadowed the inevitability of war. Anything so perefctly typical therefore will be invaluable later on.

"One has occasionally to hand out such bitter pills to your friends the academicians that it would be nice to pick something comforting in the way of a moral out of this great smash for them, but really I don't see anything coming to them out of the war. Matisse himself will not be broken. He and Rodin will go on working out their characters formed long ago. It is the great crucible that moulds public opinion that is broken.

"They will not have successors in the same line. But the academicians will not get back their dear Bouguereau. Very likely the history of our civil war will be duplicated. For a decade or so there may not be any art at all. Heroes and persons capable of great energy will give all their force to State and business reconstruction."

For instance, absolute condemnation of any one kind of art does harm, for there is no bad kind of art.—*Edwin H. Blashfield in the Century.*

Do not be deceived. This is not vital art, it is decadent and corrupt.——*Kenyon Cox in Scribner's.*

Instead of devoting pages and pages, as it should, to a timely discussion of the great event of our art year, the annual exhibition of the Academy, the April number of the *Century* devotes itself to what it calls "Modern Art" and has a symposium upon that subject, with contributions from John W. Alexander, Edwin H. Blashfield, E. L. Blumenschein, W. Pach, J. Stella and J. and G. Hambidge. *Scribner's Magazine* for April has less of it, but what it has is pithier than the entire *Century* aggregation's utterances rolled into one, coming, as it does, straight from the outraged soul of Kenyon Cox. Our esteemed contemporary *Puck* with fine courage and the keenest sort of business intelligence goes both of these magazine one better, buys the "modern art" and prints it carefully and tenderly as frontispieces. Is not all this wonderful?

The avant-garde, the rebels, the cubists, or whatever you choose to call them, are delighted. They know perfectly well, the reprobates, that the dear public won't understand a word of all this stuff that is written about modern art, but knowing that where there is so much smoke there must be some combustion will seek out the Pictures and study them for themselves. When they do that a large portion of them will become converted.

The public for "modern art" grows every day. Even Mr. Kenyon Cox believes it to be the work of "in the main, honest if unbalanced and ill regulated minds." Something in the very name "modern art" seems to attract people. Besides, all over the world, a pathetic craze for honesty has broken out. Honesty has become such a rare and high priced jewel that people are arriving at the point where they prefer the honesty of crazy loons to the tiresome fibs of the "sensible." "Honesty, at any rate," they cry. A certain portion of the public can be fooled all of the time, as one of the most honest of men discovered. These will be fooled by the modern art just as they are fooled by everthing else that comes along.

Another portion, the guiding portion, of the community recognizes sincerity or honesty in any form, in any language, in any sort of expression. These will decide upon the "real things" in the sweeping art movement of the day, which is important if for no other reason because it is the movement of the day. The wise ones are busily scanning the output and making their purchases with the identical acumen that the Havemeyers displayed years ago in purchasing their Manets, or Mr. Canfield used in his Whistler adventure.

In the meantime the more talk the better. It doesn't much matter who is right and who is wrong in the talk. In the end, as we said before, the pictures will do the real talking. Palpable hits will be given and taken on both sides. In the fray of battle no matter how much truth you may have with you your armor shifts occasionally and vulnerable spots are exposed to the enemy.

Mr. Cox shouldn't have said all that about Rodin. Fully half the readers of *Scribner's* are devoted to Rodin and always have been. If they get the idea that Rodin is at the head of the cubistic school they will consider it must be right and go over en bloc to cubism. Even Mr. Blashfield doesn't agree with Mr. Cox. Mr. Blashfield says: "In the long succession the chain is unbroken from the cave-dweller to Phidias, from Phidias to Rodin." Mr. Cox says Rodin in his old age has "produced marvels of mushiness and incoherence hitherto undreamed of" and Mr. Cox will not allow himself to say in public what the faces in the Rodin drawings at the Metropolitan Museum really look like to him.

The "marvels" of modern advertisement that Mr. Cox so deplores in another portion of his thesis are such that instantly all of Mr. Cox's readers who have not seen the Museum's Rodin collection will journey up there straightway and those of them who have given the same amount of time to the study of nature that he has to drawing will be apt to accuse him of having achieved a hasty remark. Mr. Cox says not a touch in them has any truth to the aforesaid nature.

As literature we like Mr. Cox's essay very much. Decidedly he knows how to write. Set back the clock for him sixty years and nobody in America can touch him. When he gets anywhere near the firing line, however, a panic overtakes him and confusion is his.

Killing, what he says about the Academy! Nobody over here has been quite so blunt before. "The salon picture, a thing created for no man's pleasure." "As exhibitions became larger and larger and the competition engendered by them grew fiercer it became increasingly difficult to attract attention by mere academic merit." In the midst of all this uproar the voice of Mr. Alexander can be heard gently defending the Academy and claiming that the reactions of the rebels are very much to the Academy's interest. Mr. Cox paints a relentless and cruel picture of our time. Practically he throws up his hands and declares that everything academic has gone to the demnition bowwows, everything, that is, except mural decoration, at which occupation three or four of us are still able to earn an honest living doing things for Minneapolis, Council Bluffs and other places in the Far West.

Without any doubt Mr. Cox's article is the finest thing in the way of propagandism for "modern art" that has yet appeared. He blames it all upon the public. The times are out of joint. The public will not look at the old fashioned picture. The public has become separated from the artist, who is regarded for the most part as a sort of freak. All this is traceable to the French Revolution Since then there have been no masters.

In other words, Mr. Cox denies democracy, liberty and the whole of modern life.

He admits that the entire classic fabric has been worn to shreds, but he foams at the mouth when he sees the new art garments that the world is arraying itself in. There of course he is weak. The French Revolution may have put a period to one form of art, but it did not put a period to life itself. Life goes on, and every phase of life demands expression. A historian is demanded for every epoch, and sometimes arrives. A hundred years from now the student of this particular age will be immensely interested in the strivings after abstract art in the midst of so material a time. A few of us are immensely interested in it now.

To be frightened because certain wild boys talk of casting the old masters overboard is nonsense. That will not happen soon. We may like Walt Whitman, but it does not follow that we throw our Shakespeares out of the window instantly. We do put aside a little of Shakespeare every day, however. Shakespeare himself, could he walk again upon the earth, would rub his eyes at his own performances; so greatly have we changed the readings. The time will come inexorably when Shakespeare will be as remote from the living forces as are the Greek and Chinese poets now. The law of life is that all things pass, ultimately. The healthy and the young are undisturbed by this law. The old cannot arrest it. Not even Mr. Cox could reestablish Marie Antoinette upon a respectable throne. Think what modern journalism would do to her!

Who shall say that the return of cubism is bad for business? Ask in Delmonico's. They know! There has developed a distinct reciprocity between Delmonico's and the Carroll Galleries. I have seen nice white whiskered old gentlemen and lovely ladies in Persian costumes descend the Delmonico steps after luncheon with every intention of strolling westward and up the avenue, but some invisible force pulls them three doors east and into the Carroll Galleries before they are aware. Isn't that strange?

They stay all afternoon. There is something about modern art that makes the eyes of "lovely woman" shine. She takes to it naturally. Then, too, it is all so wonderful and so—so—inexpressible. Thereupon the ladies gesture. The white whiskered old gentlemen are enraptured, with the gesture, and with cubistic art. It is curious how "modern art" excites gesture. That was already noticeable in the great armory show. Now that Persian costumes are universal it is more noticeable still in the Carroll Galleries. In the best Persian costumes motion is absolutely necessary. Repose isn't the thing at all. And gesture above everything else is what we Americans need to acquire.

These repressed, ascetic, unemotional faces that we all wear have been a frightful detriment to our artists and the gentleman who keeps both of his hands in his pockets the while he describes to you the sad fate of his sister's cook, who perished in the latest awful railway accident, should be abolished in the name of art. He never will be missed. How can our artists get a gesture into paint if they have never seen one in all their lives? Miss Bryant should provide a little row of inconspicuous chairs—the kind they supply by the dozen for funerals will do—to be placed along the wall of the rear gallery so that our artists may comfortably study the gestures of the lovely Persian ladies explaining modern art to the nice white whiskered gentlemen.

But of course all this motion, both physical and mental, is exhausting. That's where the reciprocity with Delmonico's comes in. You see, modern art makes one think. The wicked Alfred Stieglitz was laughing the other day at the latest Boston Symphony audience, which at one point in the Sibelius symphony suddenly began to fan its heads with its programs. The brains in the audience were actually recording sensations. And immediately after the concert had ended it was noticed that every one present rushed out to the nearest Jardin de Tango to get something to eat.

This history repeats itself at the Carroll Galleries. Very few people would ordinarily tea where they have lunched, but under the circumstances, and the sense of goneness after two hours of modern art being so complete, there is no alternative. Delmonico's is indeed fortunately placed.

But to get down to tacks. You have probably seen the cubistic water colors and drawings in the Carroll Galleries yourself and you merely wish to know whether I liked them as well as you did yourself. I did. Possibly more so.

I thought the rooms looked very pretty and the spots of color upon the silvered walls had that indefinable air of being smart and important and the real thing, even before the spots were examined in detail. When examined in detail you saw that they are even more the real thing than you had supposed.

Dufy's things, for instance, just opposite the door as you enter. Aren't they charming? And do you know why? I don't. That is, I know why, but I'm not going to tell. I wish the Metropolitan Museum of Art would buy them. They are great. I wish the Metropolitan would buy all of Dufy's. Those cows in No. 29! What liquid and yet what precise color. That's just like "modern art," to be two opposite things at the same time.

But I mustn't help you. You must learn to think for yourselves like the Sibelius symphony audience the other night.

In the museum the collection of musical instruments could be shifted around once more and the Dufy things could be installed instead. It would have the advantage of being near the subterranean Italian lunch room. Perhaps the restaurant concession could be induced to chip in a little if the museum feels the stress of these hard times.

The two Dufys I like best are just opposite the door. One of them might be a balcony if you liked. The tile passage is most musical. The balcony was very tiled. It is early in the day for a serenade, yet you hear it. In those Latin countries they don't care when they serenade. Why should we wait until the price mounts up into thousands and thousands of dollars? One should buy now. Gertrude did. See how she prospered.

Signac's water colors arrive most opportunely. All the water colors arrive opportunely, just as I was sighing for some proper examples to hold up to the Water Color Society. His "Venice" is a lovely flutter of gondolas on agitated yellow green waves that should always mean Venice to everybody. The "Embarcation from Valaunais" and "The Surging Sea" of the dead Englishman, Cross, are built upon unsubmerged and heavy lead lines, an expedient that produces as curious effects as the piano does when emerging from the orchestral setting to a bad modern concerto, but in these two instances triumphant as is the piano in the rare good concerto.

But let us tour the rooms and I'll tell you what I like. To tell the truth, I like almost all of them. They've been marvelously well selected. How do you like the Isadora Duncan drawings by de Segonzac? Lots of "go" to them, eh? That's the essential characteristic of Isadora. The knees! No other lady in all the world has knees like Isadora. That is, it would be wrong for them to have them. It would be plagiarism. Poor Paul Poiret, who has had such an unfortunate year, held de Segonzac in great estimation. He was always insisting I must meet him. But first the Avenue d'Antin fell in from curb to curb, during the awful floods last summer, making lots of trouble, just in front of Poiret's establishment, and before that was patched up the great war came upon us.

The "Man on a Balcony," by Gleizes, looks like Jo Davidson. There will be those who will be fond of it for that. Gleize's "City," "Port," "Football" and "Houses" are matted; interlaced with such energy that they will no doubt always stay as they are. The Villon etchings are not so matted and will not stay as they are. . . . What is the title of that one? It is No. 44 in the catalogue, let's see, it's "La Vierge," by Duchamp.

"What nonsense, what——"

Hush, my friend. Les dames persanes peuvent vous entendre. Et ce monsieur avec la barbe blanche nous ecoute! C'est difficile d'etre precis sur ces sujets-la en Anglais, n'est-ce pas? Surtout par ce qu'il y a deux points de vue, le point de vue physique et le point de vue moral. J'espere bien que ce monsieur Duchamp est assez religieux mais on n'est jamais sur de ces sacres artistes. Heureusement c'est tout a fait dans le coin. Tiens, les dames persanes! How do you do, Mrs. Billastor? Been admiring your gown for ten minutes. Never dreamed it was you. Liking 'em?

"Enormously. I adore 'em. Come along, will you? We're going. The dear baron suddenly feels faint. Most extraordinary, isn't it? It's only 4 o'clock, but we all feel faint. Those Dufys are sweet, are they not, although I loathe the cows. They are too fat for their legs, just like horrid real cows. Come along and tea with us. Au revoir, Miss Bryant, au 'voir!"

DUFY
SIGNAC
CROSS
SEGONZAC
GLEIZES
VILLON
DUCHAMP

The letters of Paul Gauguin to Georges Daniel de Montfried have been translated by Ruth Pielkovo and published by Dodd, Mead & Co., the foreword being by Frederick O'Brien. These letters almost cried aloud for translation, for in them the much maligned, much misunderstood genius draws his own full length portrait.

Gauguin was, it is true, a rough customer, but heretofore enemies and misguided friends have emphasized his roughnesses to such a degree that he seemed no longer human. In the letters his robust humanity comes out so forcefully that his "roughness" becomes a triumphant frankness that accuses smug and complacent city dwellers of hypocrisy. There is much of the frank, full outcry that Gauguin makes to his friend that is not in strict conformity with the teachings of American books of etiquette, but since the "Confessions" of Rousseau and the novels of Balzac are now considered part of the education of the well informed, it is impossible to think that any but the fussy will be shocked. And the fussy do not count.

On the other hand, there is a constant stream of cheery art talk that will prove immensely stimulating to our artists. It is like being admitted to the inner circle of the Cafe Guerbois and hearing the inside secrets of the events that were afterward to become famous. Gauguin was a true child of Henri Murger, and his ennuis were incessant, but now that his life is finished and his place secure, his ennuis seem amusing rather than not. His frantic exhortations to Monfried as to the best ways to sell have considerable wisdom in them that present young geniuses in difficulties will ponder over with respect. His talks about methods and the conditions necessary for production will also hold their attention. It is possible to differ with Gauguin about certain tricks of the profession, and it is also possible to feel that many of the agonies he went through followed inevitably and legitimately upon his rashness of conduct, but it is impossible to close the book without an overwhelming admiration for the greatness of his spirit. One may laugh at him and weep with him, but to criticize him as a human being would be petty.

Mr. O'Brien says in his foreword, "he is one of the most heartening men I know of. As a painter he was absolutely necessary to his age, which was fast hardening into a wretched scientific precision and which had abandoned simplicity and breadth. As a human being he evinced an incredible aversion to the machine efficiency that he thought was destroying the race, and he fought this threat of annihilation—as he believed—with a tenacity and an unselfishness that must light a flame in the hearts of all thinkers, though it killed Gauguin in middle age. Unable to adjust himself to anything about him, either in Europe or in the South Seas, he yielded only to death, and that stole upon him as he was smiling at his own plight."

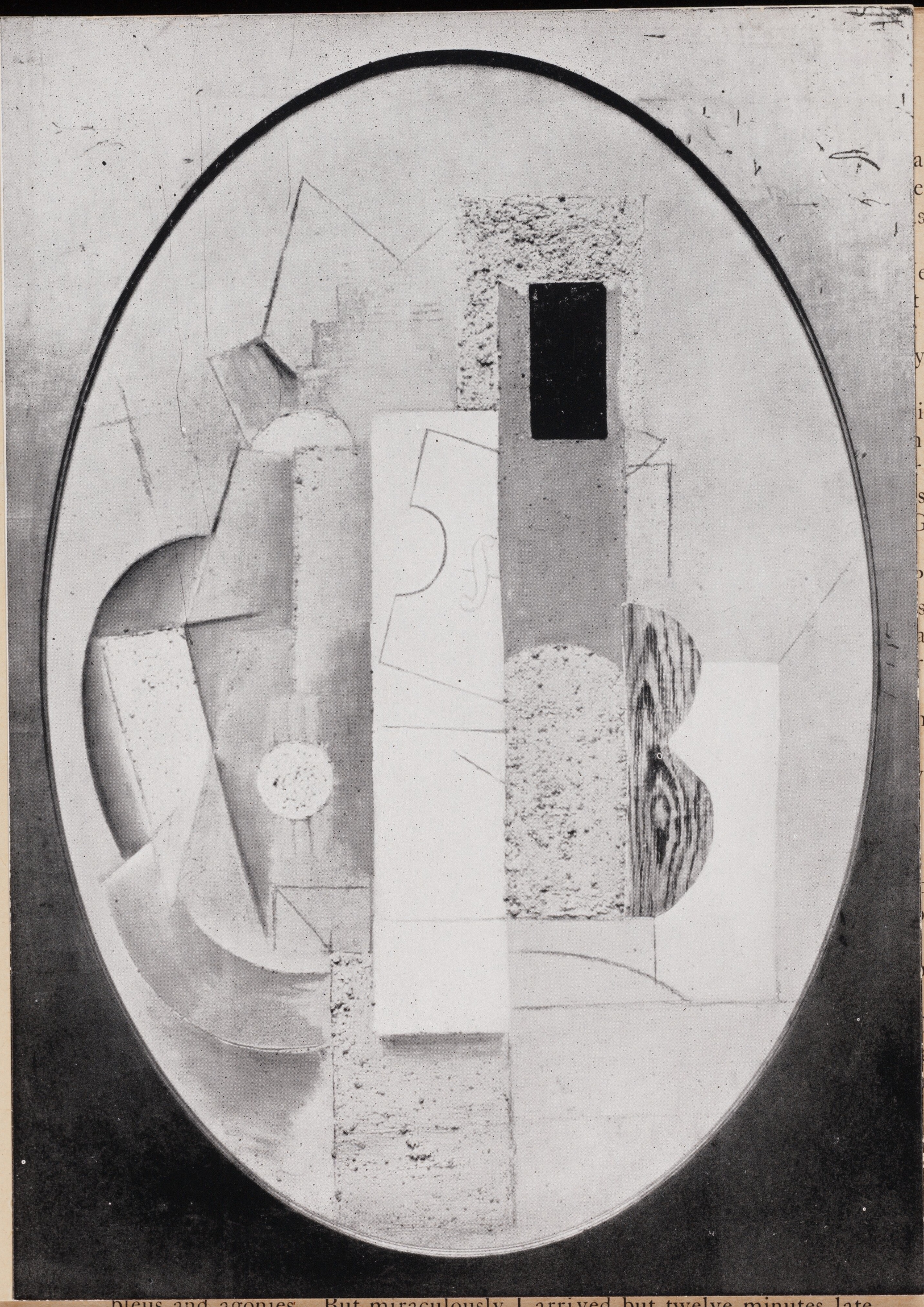
A quotation or two from the letters will give artists an idea of what to expect from them. Speaking of the "D'ou venons? que sommes-nous? ou allons nous?" his masterpiece, he writes: "The more I look at it the more I realize its enormous mathematical faults, but I would not retouch it for anything. It must remain as it is—only a sketch if you like. Yet this question comes up and perplexes me: Where does the execution of a painting commence and where does it end? At that moment, when the most intense emotions are in fusion in the depths of one's being, when they burst forth and when thought comes up like lava from a volcano, is there not then something of an explosion? The work is created suddenly, brutally, and is not its appearance great, almost superhuman? Sometimes I hear people say that arm is too long! Yes and no. No, principally, provided as you elongate, you discard vari-similitude to reach out for mystery. But of course all the work must reflect the same style, the same will. If Bouguereau made an arm too long, ah yes! What would be left of him? For his vision, his artistic will only consists in that stupid precision which claims us to material reality."

In another place he says: "So the climate of Algiers is not marvelous? It's freezing here, too, now. I'm just back from a six-day trip to Belgium. It was fine. I saw some Memlings at Bruges—what marvels, my dear fellow, and afterward on seeing Rubens (entering upon naturalism), it's a come-down."

In 1893 he writes: "But anyway I have seen Durand-Ruel, who received me very kindly and who is again dealing with the impressionists; for a while he was not selling their work. It seems that Pissarro and Guillaumin are selling well. He has promised to come and see my things when they are ready and to exhibit them. So I shall hold to all this and, as it is not possible to do anything without a suitable studio, I have made a sacrifice and have rented 8 Rue de la Grande Chaumiere (I even paid the rent in advance with money borrowed from the woman who runs the milk shop opposite)."

And again: "During the short period when I corrected work at the Montparnasse Studio I said to the students: 'Do not expect me to correct you directly, even if the arm be a little too long or too short—and who knows about that anyway—I shall correct only inartistic faults. You can be precise if you care about it; with practice the craft will come almost of itself, in spite of you, and all the more easily if you think of something besides technique.' "

The original French of the letters has a certain downright, breakneck quality that cannot be entirely reproduced in English, but the translation upon the whole is most faithful.



alleries dur-
emuth calls
sso. There

ew York, it
t hand facts
of meeting
y sins I was

im Monday
a taxi that
of an hour
ss in Paris.
Goethe's nor

Picasso must
s and reach
and there is
roper place.
Fi
nally

, fe-
cor-

st gone out.
dog was in-
f both ani-
She always
assage way

ld be better
gement, for
tures. Pi-

y after that
Zoise with

Miss Stein's.
be an hour
ams, petits-

bleus and agonies. But miraculously I arrived but twelve minutes late.

Miss Stein said it would not have mattered in the least. No one in all the quarter was ever on time for anything. The only person she knew who was prompt was Picasso. He was never late, that is he was never late but once, and that wasn't his fault.

The Picassos were coming to the Steins' for luncheon, and the united households were then going to the vernissage of the Salon d'Automne. Mme. Picasso was to bloom in a new gown. But the dressmaker held off until the last moment. The Picassos were half an hour late for luncheon. Pablo was in a dreadful state. "Record of a lifetime smashed," added Miss Stein. "We led an awful life for three or four days because of it, and of course the vernissage was quite ruined for us."

While there may be no historic disputes over cubism in the Carroll Galleries during the present exhibition, the elect at least may have what young Mr. Demuth calls "moments." Mr. Demuth has a "moment" whenever he looks at a Picasso. There are, in fact, seven Picassos in the show.

Considering the gravity of the public exhibition of seven Picassos in New York, it is a matter of deep personal regret that I am unable to contribute any first hand facts in regard to the master in honor of the event. It is true I had the pleasure of meeting him and madame one evening last summer at Miss Stein's, but because of my sins I was not permitted to see his studio nor his latest work.

He was leaving Paris the following Wednesday. Could I come to see him Monday morning at 11 o'clock? I said I could, and after wasting some minutes upon a taxi that didn't appear I set out in the Metro, foreseeing that I should be one-quarter of an hour late. But the Metro is of no assistance when one searches for a new address in Paris. Neither are the gendarmes. They are not to be blamed. No intellect, not Goethe's nor Voltaire's, could master those little streets and impasses.

The gendarme on the Boulevard Raspail, somewhere near where I knew Picasso must live, blithely sent me on a mile out of the way. Eventually I retrace my steps and reach the atelier building precisely one hour later than the time appointed. I ring and there is no response. I hear a wild, melancholy cat yowl. There is no doubt it is the proper place. That is the famous cat about which we talked all that evening at Miss Stein's. Finally the loud thumps of the concierge upon the door bring a maid, and finally pretty Mme. Picasso.

The lean yellow and black spotted tiger cat stretches herself menacingly, feverishly along the floor. A wolflike dog behaves himself with difficulty in a corner of the room. But Picasso himself had gone out.

He had been positively obliged to keep an appointment at 12 and had just gone out. The cat yowled so loudly we could scarcely hear ourselves. The wolflike dog was invited to assist the cat to depart. The acceptance of the invitation and exit of both animals were instantaneous. The cat's name was Zoise, madame informed me. She always called all her cats that. It was a good cat name, she considered. Down the passage way from a back room the animal noises were still arriving, though muffled.

I agreed to come again Tuesday morning, if possible at 10 o'clock; it would be better at 10, madame thought. But this time I was not serious in making the engagement, for experience had taught me that I was never fortunate in early morning adventures. Picasso would be désolé at not seeing me, madame said.

The next day prevented even an attempt to gain the studio, and the day after that Picasso and Mme. Picasso left for the south of France. I believe they took Zoise with them.

Shortly after their departure, I was twelve minutes late for a dinner at Miss Stein's. This was a triumph. In the late afternoon it had seemed written that I was to be an hour or even two hours late for this festivity, and there were questions of telegrams, petits-bleus and agonies. But miraculously I arrived but twelve minutes late.

Miss Stein said it would not have mattered in the least. No one in all the quarter was ever on time for anything. The only person she knew who was prompt was Picasso. He was never late, that is he was never late but once, and that wasn't his fault.

The Picassos were coming to the Steins' for luncheon, and the united households were then going to the vernissage of the Salon d'Automne. Mme. Picasso was to bloom in a new gown. But the dressmaker held off until the last moment. The Picassos were half an hour late for luncheon. Pablo was in a dreadful state. "Record of a lifetime smashed," added Miss Stein. "We led an awful life for three or four days because of it, and of course the vernissage was quite ruined for us."

On the avenue yesterday I fell in with a young man, an assistant in the gallery of one of the dealers, who told me that a cousin of his was holding an exhibition in one of the rival establishments and that he was on his way to see it. His cousin, he said, had passed a number of years in Paris, and the family had been immensely relieved and pleased upon his return to find that the young painter had been absolutely uncontaminated by "modern art" and painted nice pictures that anybody would like.

"It's terrible the sort of thing some of those fellows are putting over on the public," he added. "Have you seen the Picabia Exhibition in the Modern Gallery?"

"Yes. What do you think of them?"

"I think," and an expression of deep loathing passed over his young face, "I think they are insincere. Don't you agree with me?"

"Hardly. On the contrary, I think Picabia is oversincere, if there be such a thing as oversincerity. Look about you. * * *"

We were trying to cross the roadway and the block of motors extending from the Forty-second street crossing prevented us. Immediately confronting us were the rubber tires of countless automobiles, and the pistons and valves were shining brightly. Above against the sky could be seen the rectilinear lines of the steel beams of new office buildings, varied by the zigzags of the derricks and softened here and there by an occasional rope and pulley.

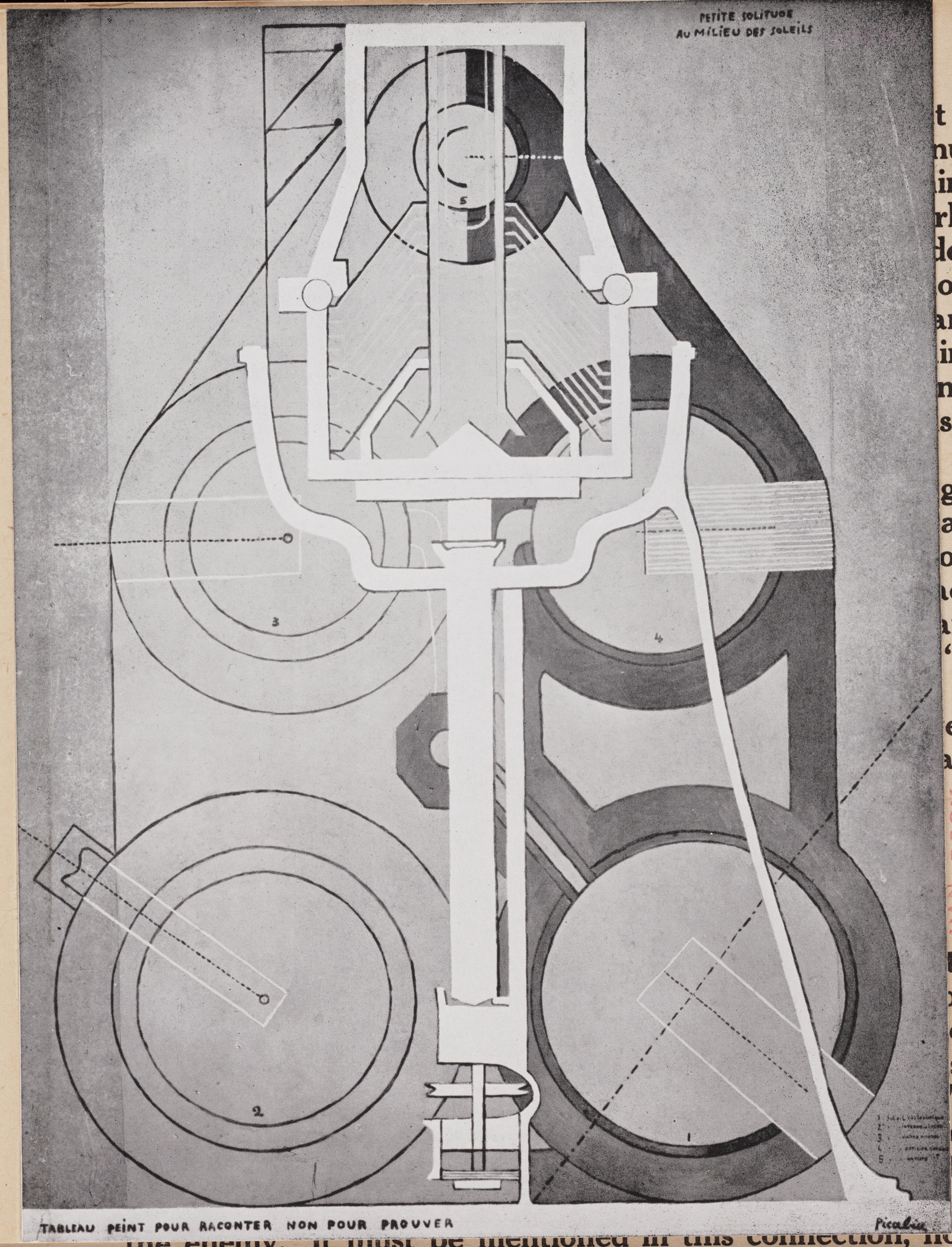
"This is what you see every day. This is what countless thousands of New Yorkers see every day of their lives. These buzzsaws, steel hammers, hard mechanical forms are recorded on your brain. Whether you know it or not they are there. It is impossible not to live incessantly in the midst of such things without being influenced by them.

"If you were to talk honestly from your own experiences you would talk buzzaw talk, for that is all you've heard. Instead you repeat like a mechanical doll or parrot formulas of beauty left over to you by ancestors who lived in the wilds of nature. If you really believed or understood what you say you would live yourself outdoors with nature.

"Picabia, on the other hand, actually dares to use the shapes of discs and piston rods to express his emotions. It is amazing that you picture dealers won't look at them simply and unconcernedly, as a child or an engineer might, to see what you get from them. Why, that arrangement of four black discs with the connecting rods, in gold and red, has something of the simplicity and force of early Japanese art. I should hardly call it insincere."

"Now that you explain it to me," the young man said, and there was a note of fear in his voice, "I see it differently. Here we are at my cousin's show. Won't you come in? It's awfully nice work, I assure you. You won't! Well, I'll see you again soon. Good-by."

He saw it differently! I wondered if he really did. It struck me that the conversion was altogether too quick. He had yielded to my opinion precisely as he had previously yielded to the arguments of his unprogressive family. It really is one of the most difficult things in the world to induce people to think for themselves on subjects of art.



t is
nue
ing
rld,
der.
ose
any
ing
not
s, I

get
ain
our
ace,
and
"at

ere
and

ten
ody
ese
st's
'in-
e.
t is
end

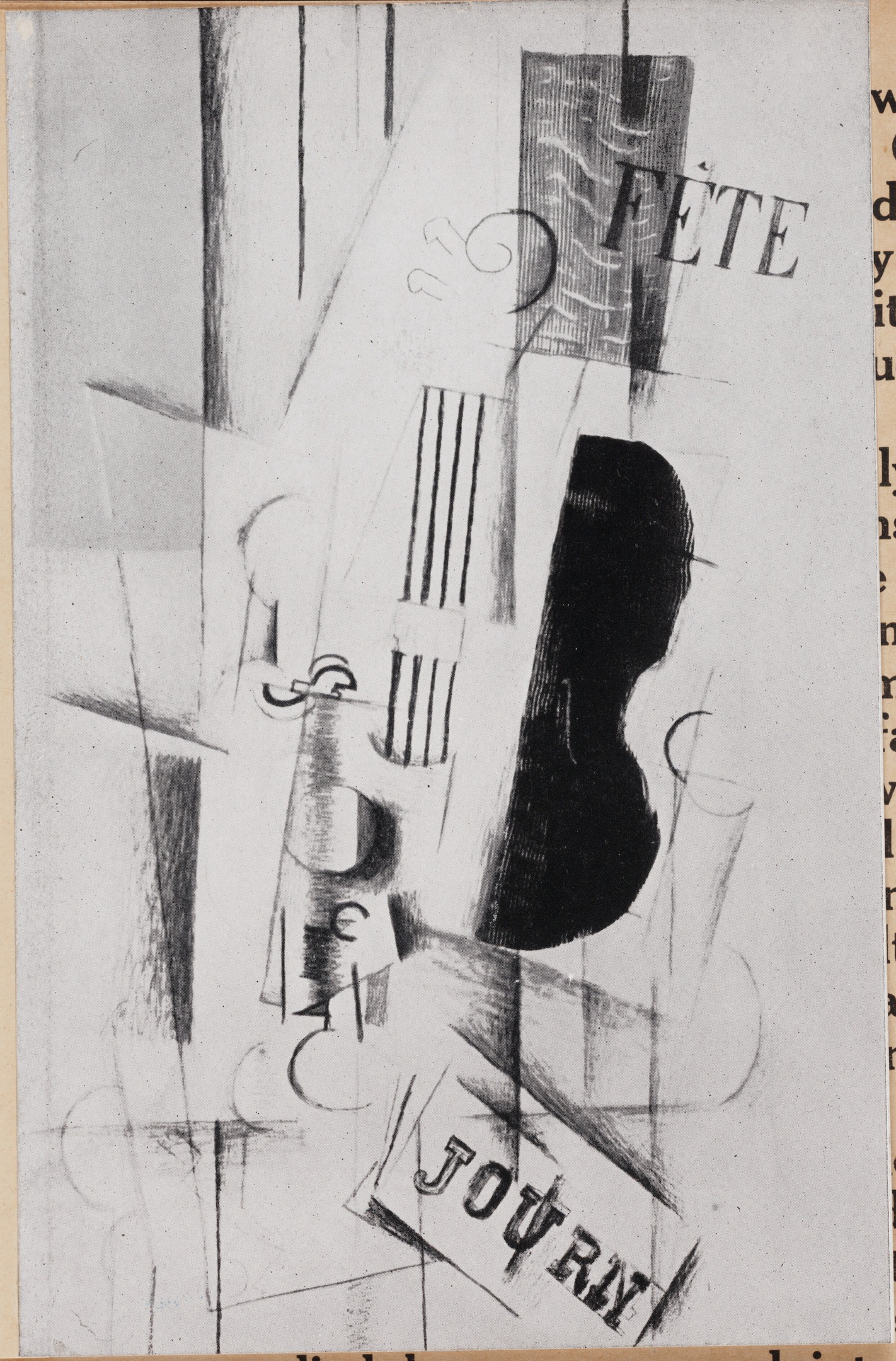
the enemy. It must be mentioned in this connection, however, that the very Americans who cry loudest against Van Gogh adore Blakelock. They also adore Greco. They probably would adore Blake if they knew him. Unfortunately one hears very little of Blake in these parlous times. I know at least one enthusiast for modern art who chortles every time one of our museums buys a Greco.

The Van Gogh exhibition in the Modern Gallery that is being directed by M. de Zayas at the corner of Fifth avenue and Forty-second street brings back again the heartburning questions this difficult Dutchman propounded to the world, and which many Americans have refused even to consider. Van Gogh always has been a stumbling block, even to those who in the snobbish wish to be up to date swallow any strange dish that is set before them. There is something about Van Gogh, however, that is so monstrous that not even snobs may swallow him whole. This something is, I suspect, his sincerity.

Sincerity in any walk of the modern world is apt to get one into trouble. Emerson knew a man who under a certain religious frenzy cast off the drapery with which we cloak our thoughts and, omitting all compliment and commonplace, spoke to the conscience of every person he encountered, and that "with great insight and beauty." Emerson adds, "at first he was resisted, and all men agreed he was mad."

To complicate the matter in Van Gogh's case there were actual mental aberrations toward the end of his life, and death came to him in one of his fits of madness. For many people this fact has been held as sufficient to justify a complete rejection of this painter. They have not understood him. Worse, they have been horrified and revolted by him. They leap with satisfaction upon the painful history of Van Gogh, now, alas, sufficiently written down, and declare his art to be diseased because his body was. And all the time what really has been tormenting these lovers of art by rule has simply been the unfortunate artist's sincerity. Of the "great insight and beauty" of much of Vincent van Gogh's work they have been absolutely unaware.

In art, of course, consistency is not the jewel that it is supposed to be, and it is too much to ask it even of our friend the enemy. It must be mentioned in this connection, however, that the very Americans who cry loudest against Van Gogh adore Blakelock. They also adore Greco. They probably would adore Blake if they knew him. Unfortunately one hears very little of Blake in these parlous times. I know at least one enthusiast for modern art who chortles every time one of our museums buys a Greco.



work of con-
Carroll Gal-
dilon Redon.
y him "sing"
its ofcolor in
uch an adjec-
the remote
ly by photo-
nstead of the
e may object
nizing of the
nay not stem
facts. About
whiteness" in
l upper tones
nies in paint
lt that Odilon
answer to an
m Chicago),

ed as by en-
l, so unearth-
taking these
longer they
are studied the more one reads into them. They are like the dazzling chromatics of Liszt, in which modern interpreters are always heralding new thematic ideas. The "Chariot of Apollo" upon acquaintance grows into one of the finest hymns to morning in paint.

The second exhibition of the work of contemporary French artists in the Carroll Galleries is a sort of "hommage" to Odilon Redon. The sixteen splendid examples by him "sing" even above all the other musical bits ofcolor in the room. I regret having to use such an adjective, for some of our readers in the remote West, who know modern art only by photographs, think it an affectation, instead of the effort at precision that it is. One may object with all one's power to the fraternizing of the terms of the various arts, but one may not stem the tide of the actual democratic facts. About the time that actors developed "whiteness" in their voices and sopranos acquired upper tones of pure "emerald" the harmonies in paint began to sing. It is not my fault that Odilon Redon's color sings (this is in answer to an inquiring correspondent from Chicago), but I confess it is my pleasure.

His colors appear to be assembled as by enchantment, they are so unexpected, so unearthly and so true. One begins by taking these pieces as "absolute" color, but the longer they are studied the more one reads into them. They are like the dazzling chromatics of Liszt, in which modern interpreters are always heralding new thematic ideas. The "Chariot of Apollo" upon acquaintance grows into one of the finest hymns to morning in paint.

Oh, how the wives of the New Hope Group of Artists would disapprove of the work of Marie Laurencin that is now to be seen in the Modern Gallery, just around the corner from the Arlington Gallery, and dangerously near. Marie would never do at all in New Hope. Fancy her attending the weekly meetings of the "Lapsed and Lost Society!" It wouldn't do. She'd be too disturbing. She knows too much. It's not good form in New Hope—what a delicious name for the place that is—for a lady to know too much.

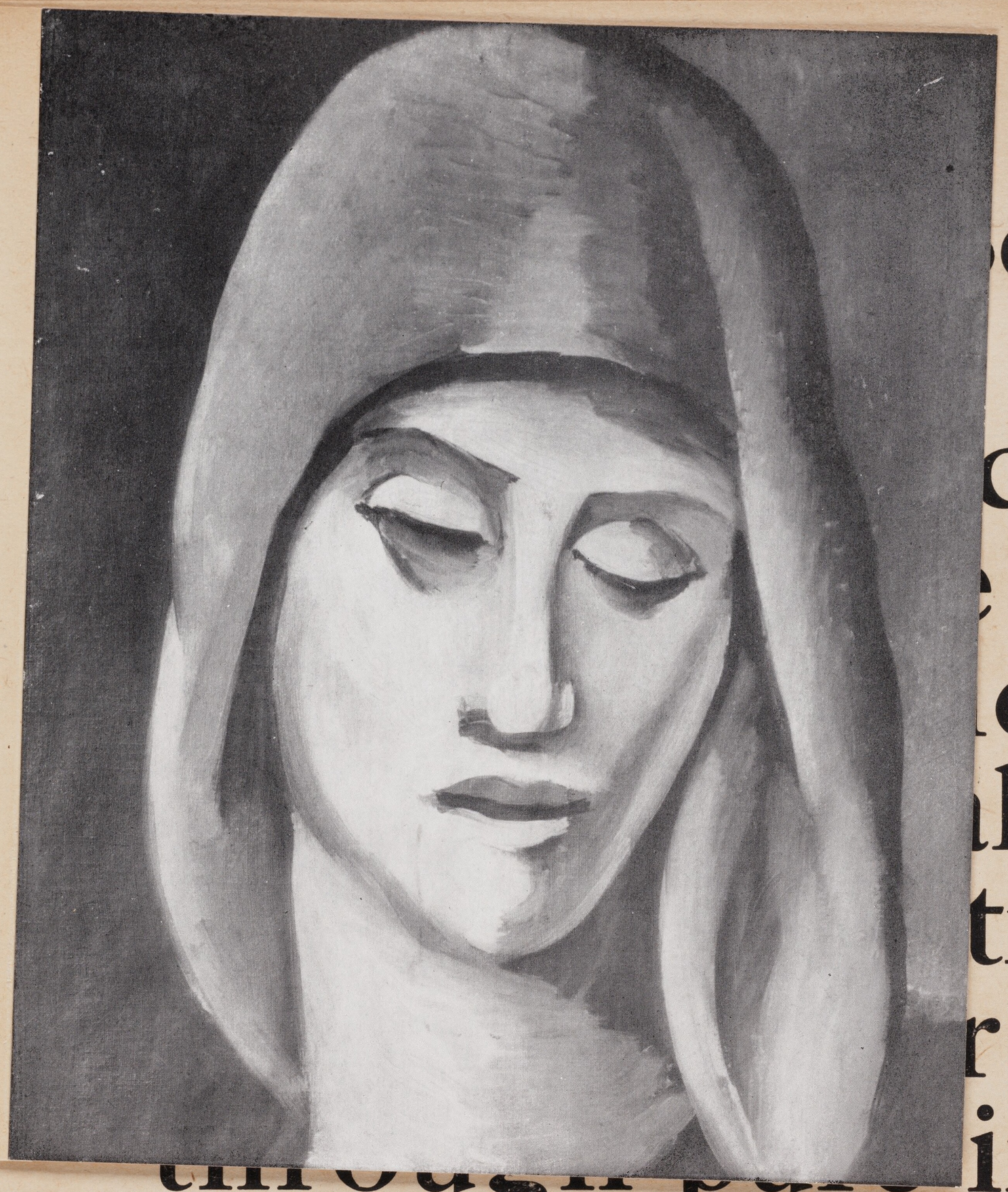
It's a knowing age, though, and that cannot be denied. People these days seem to know everything, especially in Paris. Marie comes from Paris. See that portrait, isn't it awful, but interesting? That's the great danger in Paris, things seem to fascinate one that one wouldn't look at in New Hope. A hat perched on the back of that woman's head like that is immoral. The hair de-

scends about the pallid face in thin driblets as though the creature had been standing out on the corner in the rain all night.

It reminds one of the spiteful things George Moore said about Madge Kendall's performance of Juliet. He said she didn't know what love was. He said no woman knew what love was who had not waited about for hours in the rain for a lover who didn't come. But this woman knows what love is. At least she has waited about in the rain.

But Marie is an artist. Like Jules Pascin, she has the secret of the line that is vibrant with meaning. No wooden touches in her pictures. How fine

those cats are, stealthily creeping through the soft fern! Perhaps they are Paris cats. But they have the same air of mystery and antique savagery that Henry Thoreau remarked in the city cats that drifted into Walden Wood. How knowing even those Picabia children are in their portraits!



enja-
was
com-
e vice
e for
lity's
tirely
rson,
inno-
cence, is liable to
get into astounding
situations and is
certain to be mis-
judged by the world,
whereas an ever so

POIRET

It was Sir Benjamin Backbite, was it not, who recommended a little vice to Lady Teazle for mere practicality's sake? The entirely innocent person, through pure innocence, is liable to get into astounding situations and is certain to be misjudged by the world, whereas an ever so

POIRET

slight acquaintance with sin seems to teach us at once what attitudes we may safely adopt for the public.

Looking at the affair from the worldly viewpoint of

Sir Benjamin, one must acquit Paul Poiret of any deliberate intention to acquire oceans of free advertisement from the ef-

fect the strangeness of his ideas made upon the interviewers. At the same time his defence is difficult, for the question involves a divorce between art and business, which is always hard for English speaking races to understand, and also M. Poiret is really too innocent, with the innocence of an artist, the worst kind.

He is a very great artist, working in costumes. To hold the costume in place and to give it motion (and fully half the charm in a great costume is the motion) an extremely rich lady is necessary. It happens that more rich ladies spend a portion of the winter with their husbands in New York than in any other endroit in the world, and by a set of curious chances most of M. Poiret's costumes are set in motion in the region immediately nearest Central Park, south and east.

It is impossible for the serious artist who has "lived" a portion of himself into his work to resist always the desire, which must be strong in proportion to his seriousness, to see his creation against its ultimate background. "I came to America for a vacation, not to be shown off in anybody's shop window," he explains. "I wanted to see for myself whether American women understand my styles and how they wear them." Nothiing could be more reasonable. It is so axiomatically true and understandable that comment would have been unnecessary had not our interviewers (the best in the world too) become confused by the simplicity of it.

M. Poiret knows that the one great danger to the artist is overproduction. Dreadful modern examples have not been lacking. Everybody in Germany weeps whenever Gerhart Hauptmann's name is mentioned, and there has been more than one effort to suggest to him through his friends that he should take a complete rest, say for five years, before attempting anything fresh. And there's D'Annunzio, who goes in his haste from bad to worse. Probably M. Poiret himself was among those who were insufferably bored by "La Pisanelle" last spring and could moralize upon it with the best if he chose.

There has been, however, a great deal of space accorded to M. Poiret in the daily press. It constitutes, willy nilly, advertisement. Advertisement, they say, means increase of business. Increase of business is what M. Poiret must not accept. He has no intention at present of accepting it. But hitherto he "has been tempted too little to fail," to quote the late Mayor Gaynor. Can he continue to resist? There is always the danger. Londoners continue to assert that Mrs. Pat Campbell has never been quite the same since her little American excursion. Paris will be uneasy until she gets her M. Poiret back again and assures herself that he be safe and sound and uncommercialized.

200 copies
no. 5