



TETE D'EXPRESSION.

Matisse.

## The Wild Men of Paris



Sculpture by Matisse.

weeping eyes, at a picture. Even in my haste I had noticed other spectators lurching hysterically in and out of the galleries; I had caught sight of paintings that had made me gasp. But here I stopped in amazement. It was a thing to startle even Paris. I realized for the first time that my views on art needed a radical reconstruction. Suddenly I had entered a new world, a universe of ugliness. And, ever since, I have been mentally standing on my head in the endeavor to get a new point of view on beauty so as to understand and appreciate this new movement in art.

"Une Soirée dans le Désert" was a fearful initiation. It was a painting of a nude female seated on a stretch of sand, devouring her own knee. The gore dripped into a wineglass. A palm tree and two cacti furnished the environment. Two large snakes with target-shaped eyes assisted at the debauch, while two small giraffes hurried away from the scene.

What did it all mean? The drawing was crude past all belief; the color was as atrocious as the subject. Had a new era of art begun? Was ugliness to supersede beauty, technique give way to

naïveté, and vibrant, discordant color, a very patchwork of horrid hues, take the place of subtle, studied nuances of tonality? Was nothing sacred, not even beauty?

If this example of the new art was shocking, there were other paintings at the Salon that were almost as dire. If you can imagine what a particularly sanguinary little girl of eight, half-crazed with gin, would do to a whitewashed wall, if left alone with a box of crayons, then you will come near to fancying what most of this work was like. Or you might take a red-hot poker in your left hand, shut your eyes and etch a landscape upon a door. There were no limits to the audacity and the ugliness of the canvasses. Still-life sketches of round, round apples and yellow, yellow oranges, on square, square tables, seen in impossible perspective; landscapes of squirming trees, with blobs of virgin color gone wrong, fierce greens and coarsening yellows, violent purples, sickening reds and shuddering blues.

But the nudes! They looked like flayed Martians, like pathological charts—hideous old women, patched with gruesome hues, lopsided, with arms like the arms of a Swastika, sprawling on vivid backgrounds, or frozen stiffly upright, glaring through misshapen eyes, with noses or fingers missing. They defied anatomy, physiology, almost geometry itself! They could be likened only to the Lady of the Limerick:

"There was a young girl of Lahore,  
The same shape behind as before;  
And as no one knew where  
To offer a chair,  
She had to sit down on the floor!"

But it's no use going on; you will, I am sure, refuse to take me seriously. You will merely think I am trying to be funny. Wherefore, I hired a man, a brave one, too, to photograph a few of these miracles. In line and composition the reproductions will bear me out, per-

haps; but, unfortunately (or is it fortunately?), the savagery of color escapes the camera. That color is indescribable. You must believe that such artists as paint such pictures will dare any discord. They have robbed sunsets and rainbows, chopped them up into squares and circles, and hurled them, raw and bleeding, upon their canvases.

Surely, one cannot view such an exhibition calmly. One must inevitably take sides for or against such work. The revolt is too virulent, too frenzied to be ignored. Long ago my father said: "When you see a fool, don't laugh at him, but try to find out why he does so. You may learn something." And so I began to investigate these lunatics. Had they attempted to invent a new form of humor? Were they merely practical jokers? Or must we seriously attempt anew to solve the old question: "What is art?"

It was an affording quest, analyzing such madness as this. I had studied the gargoyles of Oxford and Notre Dame, I had mused over the art of the Niger and of Dahomey, I had gazed at Hindu monstrosities, Aztec mysteries and many other primitive grotesques; and it had come over me that there was a rationale of ugliness as there was a rationale of beauty; that, perhaps, one was but the negative of the other, an image reversed, which might have its own value and esoteric meaning. Men had painted and carved grim and obscene things when the world was young. Was this revival a sign of some second childhood of the race, or a true rebirth of art?

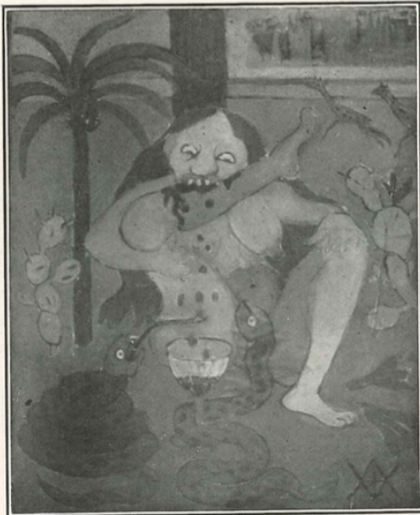
And so I sought to trace it back to its

meaning and to its authors. I quested for the men who dared such Gargantuan jests. Though the school was new to me, it was already an old story in Paris. It had been a nine-days' wonder. Violent discussions had raged over it; it had taken its place as a revolt and held it, despite the fulmination of critics and the contempt of the academicians. The school was increasing in numbers, in importance. By many it was taken seriously. At first, the beginners had been called "The Invertebrates." In the Salon of 1905 they were named "The Incoherents." But by 1906, when they grew more fervid, more audacious, more crazed with theories, they received their present appellation of "Les Fauves"—the Wild Beasts. And so, and so, a-hunting I would go!

Who were the beginners of the movement? Monet, Manet and Cézanne, say most, though their influence is now barely traceable. Cézanne, no doubt; Cézanne,

the pathetic bourgeois painter, whose greatest ambition was to wear the ribbon of the Legion of Honor, and to have his pictures exhibited in the old Salon, and who, because his maiden sister disapproved of the use of female models, painted nude women from nude men! Truly, he deserved the red ribbon. But Cézanne, though he experimented with pure color, was still concerned with tonalities. He was but the point of departure for these mad explorers. It was Matisse who took the first step into the undiscovered land of the ugly.

Matisse himself, serious, plaintive, a



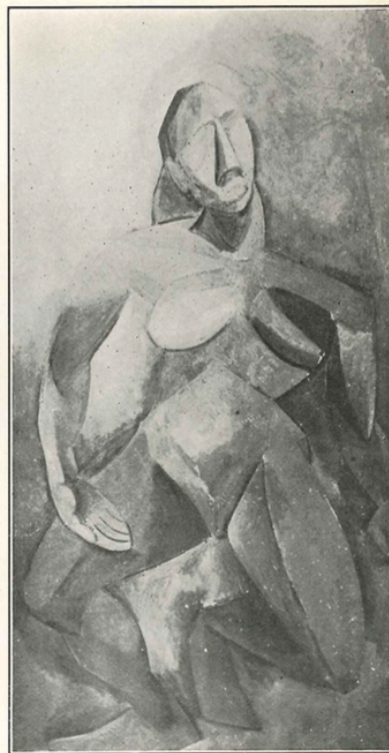
Soirée dans le Désert.

conscientious experimenter, whose works are but studies in expression, who is concerned at present with but the working out of the theory of simplicity, denies all responsibility for the excesses of his unwelcome disciples. Poor, patient Matisse, breaking his way through this jungle of art, sees his followers go whooping off in vagrom paths to right and left. He hears his own speculative words distorted, misinterpreted, inciting innumerable vagaries. He may say, perhaps: "To my mind, the equilateral triangle is a symbol and manifestation of the absolute. If one could get that absolute quality into a painting, it would be a work of art." Whereat, little madcap Picasso, keen as a whip, spirited as a devil, mad as a hatter, runs to his studio and contrives a huge nude woman composed entirely of triangles, and presents it in triumph. What wonder Matisse shakes his head and does not smile! He chats thoughtfully of the "harmony of volume" and "architectural values," and wild Braque climbs to his attic and builds an architectural monster which he names Woman, with balanced masses and parts, with openings and columnar legs and cornices. Matisse praises the direct appeal to instinct of the African wood images, and even sober Dérian, a co-experimenter, loses his head, moulds a neolithic man into a solid cube, creates a woman of spheres, stretches a cat out into a cylinder, and paints it red and yellow!

Maitre Matisse, if I understand him, which, with my imperfect facility with French, and my slighter knowledge of art, I am afraid I didn't, quite, stands primarily for the solid existence of

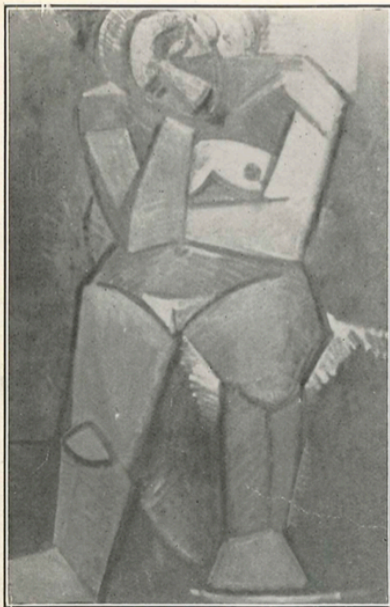


Le Moulin de la Galette. Czobel.



La Femme.

things. He paints weight, volume, roundness, color and all the intrinsic physical attributes of the thing itself, and then imbues the whole with sentiment. Oh, yes, his paintings do have life! One can't deny that. They are not merely models posed against a background, like thousands of canvases in the Salons, they are human beings with souls. You turn from his pictures, which have so shockingly defied you, and you demand of other artists at least as much vitality and originality—and you don't find it! He paints with emotion, and inspires you with it. But, alas! when he paints his wife with a broad stripe of green down her nose, though it startlingly suggests her, it is his punishment to have made her appear so to you always. He teaches



Meditation.

you to see her in a strange and terrible aspect. He has taught you her body. But, fearful as it is, it is alive—awfully alive!

Painting so, in a burst of emotion, he usually comes to an end of his enthusiasm before he has attained beauty. You point out the fact to him that his painted woman has but three fingers. "Ah, that is true," he says; "but I couldn't put in the other two without throwing the whole out of drawing—it would destroy the composition and the unity of my ideal. Perhaps, some day, I may be able to get what I want of sentiment, of emotional appeal, and, at the same time, draw all five fingers. But the subjective idea is what I am after now; the rest can wait."

Matisse, however, should not be classed amongst the Wild Beasts of this Parisian menagerie. But of him I learned something of the status of the movement, which is a revolt against the subtleties of impressionism. It is a revolt

against "mere charm," against accidental aspects of illumination; a return to simplicity, directness, pure color and decorative qualities.

Matisse, being as mild a man as ever tortured the human form or debauched a palette, what of these other Fauves, who had left him out of sight in the runaway from beauty? I picked out seven of the most ferocious and stalked them all over Paris. From Montmartre to Montparnasse I chased, from the stable on the ground floor to the attic on the sixth, through courts, down corridors, up interminable stairs worn to a spoon-like hollowness, in and out of Quartier and Faubourg. And what magnificent chaps I met! All young, all virile, all enthusiastic, all with abundant personality, and all a little mad. But all courteous and cordial, too, patient with my slow-witted attempts to make order out of intellectual chaos. And, after long dialogues on art, on ideals and new orders of beauty, in each studio was a new impossible outrage in color to confute their words. It was amazing in contrast. It was as if some fond mother, after a doting description of her first-born babe, should lift a cloth and show



Portrait d'Homme.

you a diseased, deformed child upon the point of death!

And so, first, to visit Braque, the originator of architectural nudes with square feet, as square as boxes, with right-angled shoulders. Braque's own shoulders were magnificent. He might be a typical American athlete, strong, muscular, handsome, as simple as a child and as modest as a girl of nine. To see him blush when I asked permission to photograph him—and then to turn to the monster on his easel, a female with a balloon-shaped stomach—oh, it was delicious to see big, burly Braque drop his eyes and blush!

It was in a court off the Rue D'Orsel, up I don't know how many flights of stairs. No one could have been kinder than was Braque to the impertinent, ignorant foreigner. He gave me a sketch for his painting entitled "Woman" in the Salon des Indépendents. To portray every physical aspect of such a subject, he said, required three figures, much as the representation of a house requires a plan, an elevation and a section. His chief preoccupation is the search for violence (he spars, too, does Braque), for a primitive emotion. He looks at Nature in order to possess it emotion-



La Femme.

Braque.



Georges Braque.

ally. In his sketch there is a "harmony of volume," which is a step further than any mere flat decorative effect. It is a spiritual sentiment. Now, gentle reader, look at his drawing! I had to keep my face straight.

"I couldn't portray a woman in all her natural loveliness," says Braque. "I haven't the skill. No one has. I must, therefore, create a new sort of beauty, the beauty that appears to me in terms of volume, of line, of mass, of weight, and through that beauty interpret my subjective impression. Nature is a mere pretext for decorative composition, plus sentiment. It suggests emotion, and I translate that emotion into art. I want to expose the Absolute, and not merely the factitious woman."

Do you get it? It takes a bit of trying. Let's repeat the dose. Follow me, with Braque leading, to visit Dérain, whom all consider the most intelligent and earnest of the Fauves, an experimenter like Matisse, seeking to find the way for the youngsters to travel.



Dérain.

Why, here's Dérain, now, across the street, with his model, a dead-white girl with black hair, dressed in purple and green, Dérain leaves her pouting, and we walk through a crowded bourgeois neighborhood with Dérain, who is a tall, serious-looking young man, with kind brown eyes and a shrill blue tie. We plunge down a narrow lane-like passage, with casts amidst the shrubbery, into a big open studio, with a gallery at the end.

Look at his biggest picture, first, and have your breath taken away! He has been working two years on it. I could do it in two days. So could you, I'm

sure. A group of squirmy bathers, some green and some flamingo pink, all, apparently, modeled out of dough, permeate a smoky, vague background. In front sprawls a burly negro, eight feet long. Now notice his African carvings, horrid little black gods and horrid goddesses with conical breasts, deformed, hideous. Then, at Dérain's imitations of them in wood and plaster. Here's the cubical man himself, compressed into geometric proportions, his head between his legs. Beautiful! Dérain's own cat, elongated into a cylinder. Burned and painted wooden cabinets, statues with heads lolling on shoulders, arms anywhere but where they ought to be. A wild place, fit for dreams. But no place for mother.

Dérain, being a quiet man, doesn't care to talk, but he sits obediently for his photograph, holding the cylindrical cat in his arms, as I instruct him. He shows us portfolios of experiments in pure color, geometrical arrangements such as you did yourself in the second grade of the grammar school, tile patterns, sausage rosettes, and such.

But who am I, to laugh at Dérain? Have I not wondered at the Gobelin designs, at the Tibetan goddess of destruction, and sought for occult meanings in the primitive figures of the Mound Builders? Let Dérain talk, if he will be persuaded. What has he learned from the negroes of the Niger? Why does he so affect ugly women?

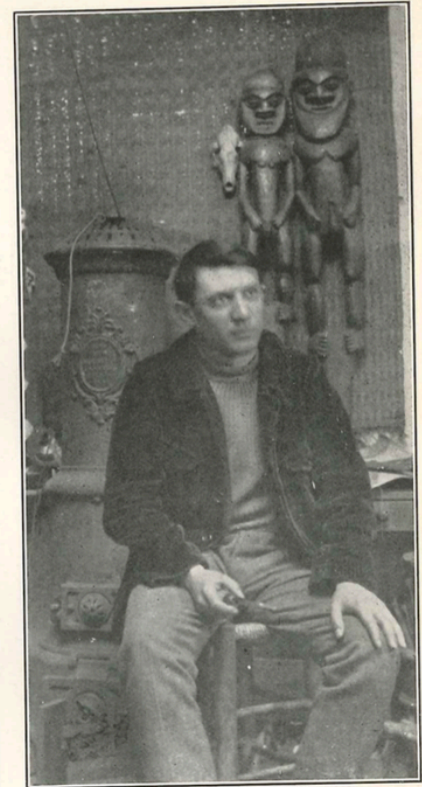
"Why, what, after all, is a pretty woman?" Dérain answers, kindly. "It's



Landscape by Dérain.

a mere subjective impression—what you yourself think of her. That's what I paint, another kind of beauty of my own. There is often more psychic appeal in a so-called ugly woman than there is in a pretty one; and, in my ideal, I reconstruct her to bring that beauty forth in terms of line or volume. A homely woman may please by her grace, by her motion in dancing, for instance. So she may please me by her harmonies of volume. If I paint a girl in the sunlight, it's the sunlight I'm painting, not the real girl; and even for that I should have the sun itself on my palette. I don't care for an accidental effect of light and shade, a thing of 'mere charm.'

"The Japanese see things that way. They don't paint sunlight, they don't cast shadows that perplex one and falsify the true shape of things. The Egyptian figures have simplicity, dignity, directness, unity; they express emotion almost as if by a conventional formula, like writing itself, so direct it is. So I seek a logical method of rendering my idea. These Africans being primitive, uncomplex, uncultured, can express their thought by a direct appeal to the instinct. Their carvings are informed with emotion. So Nature gives me the material with which to construct a world of my own, gov-



Picasso in his Studio.

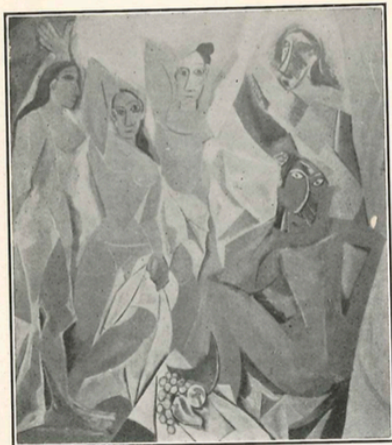
erned not by literal limitations, but by instinct and sentiment."

Fine, fine—until one looks again at his paintings to get this appeal to sentiment. Then one is thrown back upon one's reason. Where is that subjective beauty that is his? In the cubical man? In the cylindrical cat? In the doughy bathers? But, as he is only an experimenter, the failure of the experiment does not prove the falsity of the principle involved. So much is already clear, though; these men are not attempting to transcribe the effect Nature makes upon the eye, as do the impressionists. It lies deeper than that.

And now for Picasso, of whom, here and there, one has heard so much. Pi-



"La Femme," by Picasso.



Study by Picasso.

casso will not exhibit his paintings. He is too proud, too scornful of the opinions of the *canaille*. But he sells his work, nevertheless. That's the astonishing thing about all of them. Who buys? God knows! Germans, I suppose.

It is the most picturesque spot in Paris, where the wide Rue de Ravignan drops down the hill of Montmartre, breaks into a cascade of stairs and spreads out into a small open space with trees. Picasso comes rolling out of a café, wiping his mouth, clad in a blue American sweater, a cap on his head, a smile on his face.

Picasso is a devil. I use the term in the most complimentary sense, for he's young, fresh, olive-skinned, black eyes and black hair, a Spanish type, with an exuberant, superfluous ounce of blood in him. I thought of a Yale sophomore who had been out stealing signs, and was on the point of expulsion. When, to this, I add that he is the only one of the crowd with a sense of humor, you will surely fall in love with him at first sight, as I did.

But his studio! If you turn your eyes away from the incredible jumble of junk and dust—from the bottles, rags, paints, palettes, sketches, clothes and food, from the pile of ashes in front of the stove, from the chairs and tables and couches

littered with a pell-mell of rubbish and valuables—they alight upon pictures that raise your hair. Picasso is colossal in his audacity. Picasso is the doubly distilled ultimate. His canvases fairly reek with the insolence of youth; they outrage nature, tradition, decency. They are abominable. You ask him if he uses models, and he turns to you a dancing eye. "Where would I get them?" grins Picasso, as he winks at his ultramarine ogresses.

The terrible pictures loom through the chaos. Monstrous, monolithic women, creatures like Alaskan totem poles, hacked out of solid, brutal colors, frightful, appalling! How little Picasso, with his sense of humor, with his youth and deviltry, seems to glory in his crimes! How he lights up like a torch when he speaks of his work!

I doubt if Picasso ever finishes his paintings. The nightmares are too barbarous to last; to carry out such profanities would be impossible. So we gaze at his pyramidal women, his sub-African caricatures, figures with eyes askew, with contorted legs, and—things unmentionably worse, and patch together whatever idea we may. . . .

Then Picasso, too, talks of values and volumes, of the subjective and of the sentiment of emotion and instinct. *Et pat-à-tie et-pat-à-ta*, as the French say. But he's too fascinating as a man to make one want to take him only as an artist. Is he mad, or the rarest of *blaguers*? Let others consider his murderous canvases in earnest—I want only to see Picasso grin! Where has he found his ogrillions? Not even in the waters under the earth. . . . Picasso gets drunk on vermillion and cadmium. Absinthe can't tear hard enough to rouse such phantasmagoria! Only the very joy of life could revel in such brutalities.

But, if Picasso is, in life and art, a devil, he at least has brains, and could at one time draw. Not so, I fear, poor Czobel, a young Hungarian, almost a Hun, that is, what's not Vandal in him. He hasn't yet succeeded in getting himself talked about, but he did his worst to achieve infamy at the Salon des Indépendants this year. He even sacrificed himself in the attempt, painting his own

portrait for the enemy to howl at. And Czobel isn't bad-looking, either. He has Picasso's verve and courage tamed into a sort of harmless idiocy. As I waited for him, at the very end of the Cité Falguière, on the bridge that connects a row of studios built like primeval lake dwellings above the level of the gutter, he appeared, bearing a bunch of hyacinths. What a country, where such incarnate fiends on canvas appear, flower-bedecked, to welcome intrusions! I expected at least a vivisectionist, feeding on fried babies.

Czobel's studio was just behind Picasso's in the race for disorder. But, then, Czobel has to work and cook and sleep and hang his clothes and entertain his friends in his one room. Let's scrape the yellow ochre off a chair, wipe it with his shirt, and sit down, while Czobel nervously folds and refolds the black silk handkerchief about his neck, smilingly explaining that he cannot possibly explain. He is painfully inarticulate; he struggles like a dumb beast to express himself, then boils over into German.

In the center of the room is a revolting picture of a woman. Did I say woman?



Czobel.

Let us, in decency, call it a female. Czobel, no doubt, like Braque, would prefer to call it Woman. She is naked and unashamed, if one can judge by her two large eyes. Others of her ilk lie about. As a rule, they are aged 89. They have very purple complexions, enlivened with mustard colored spots and yolk-yellow throats; they have orange and blue arms. Sometimes, not often, they wear bright green skirts.

Czobel himself has a green throat, but it's only the reflection of his green canvas coat. Back to the plough, poor little Czobel, say I in English, and Czobel sweetly smiles.

But there was one picture I really wanted to buy. It satisfied some shameful, unnamed desire in my breast. It was called *Le Moulin de la Galette*, and is supposed (by Czobel) to represent that lively ball on a gala night. I had been there myself, but I saw no Aztec



Portrait de Femme. Czobel.

children waltzing; I saw no ladies with eyes like gashes cut with a carving knife. All the figures were outlined with a thick line of color. His men were apparently all brothers—to the ape. But let us not take poor Czobel too seriously. Not even Les Fauves do that.

But Friesz is a man we must take seriously, for Friesz is a serious person, and, if he would, could paint. He is a tall, straight blonde, looking like a musician, with clear-cut features, waving

and out of it another room with many beautiful things. Amongst them, of course, are African-carved gods and devils of sorts. Since Matisse pointed out their "volumes" all the Fauves have been ransacking the curio shops for negro art. But Friesz has a quaint taste of his own, for, hung across the window panes, like transparencies, are funny old magic-lantern slides, "hand-painted," made in Germany. They might be examples of Matisse's later manner. Friesz



"TRAVAIL A L'AUTOMNE," BY FRIESZ.

hair and an air of gentlemanly prosperity. He is dressed sprucely, except for his rubber overshoes, evidences of the chill, watery Parisian spring. Very gentle, almost winsome. He has huge portfolios of reproductions of Cézanne's pictures, he has many of his own drawings, neatly mounted. He has the work of other painters framed upon his walls. It is evident that he is well-to-do.

His studio is long and wide and high, with ecclesiastical-looking Gothic doors,

is not only exquisitely courteous, he has a mind. He speaks well. Listen. We must not call it any longer a school of Wild Beasts.

"It is a Neo-Classic movement, tending towards the architectural style of Egyptian art, or paralleling it, rather, in development. The modern French impressionism is decadent. In its reaction against the frigidity and insipid arrangements of the Renaissance, it has gone itself to an extreme as bad, and contents

itself with fugitive impressions and premature expressions. This newer movement is an attempt to return to simplicity, but not necessarily a return to any primitive art. It is the beginning of a new art. There is a growing feeling for decorative values. It seeks to express this with a certain 'style' of line and volume, with pure color, rather than by tones subtly graded; by contrasts, rather than by modulations; by simple lines and shapes, rather than by complex forms."

We're getting nearer, now, though still the theory is apparently inconsistent with the practice. Friesz is the nearest to Cézanne; he's not yet quite clear of tonality. He has only just begun to go wrong. But let's drop in on Herbin, who paints still life and cafés. He's near at hand.

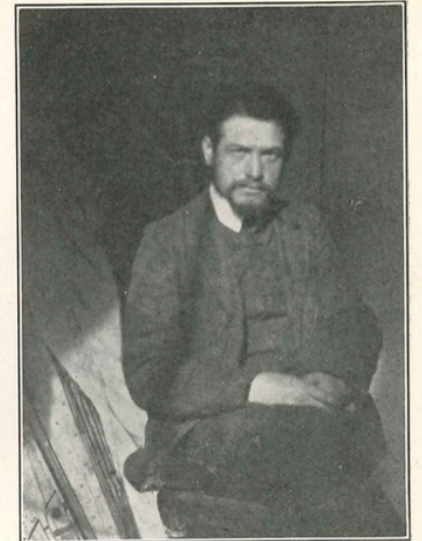
Barely around the corner, it's true,



Othon Friesz.

but what a contrast to Friesz's elegance and aristocratic surroundings! Herbin lives in a garret higher than Braque's, smaller than Czobel's, but as sweet and neat and clean as an old maid's bedroom. It is, in fact, bedroom as well as studio. A rose-colored hanging conceals his couch. There's but one small window, a skylight in the roof, but the place is pleasant with pots of flowers. A shelf is filled with bright-colored vases. A Chinese slipper holds a bunch of fresh green leaves. But the mark of the Wild Beast is over all the room, for Herbin's own pictures are hung there, and the wall is gaudy with palette scrapings. I back into them and have a green smooch forever afterwards to remember Herbin by.

Herbin is almost sad. Not that, quite, though; not even quite melancholy,



Herbin.

though he is poor and a hermit. He has no friends, and wants none, this small-featured, bright-eyed poet-person, with longish hair and sparse beard, immaculately clean in his dress, scrupulously



"Portrait de Femme" by Herbin.



"Nature Morte" by Herbin.

polite in his hospitality. It seems unfair to describe him, for his aloofness was noble, yet I must draw my picture of life, as he draws his. He sees nobody, never goes to the cafés, is interested in nothing but himself and his work, and a good book or two. There was a completeness about his attitude that forbade pathos.

Nor can Herbin say much of the "movement," if it is a movement. To his mind, it is individualism, and every man works but for himself. He paints for his own satisfaction, at any rate, and the world may go hang. He paints the roundness and heaviness and curliness and plastic qualities of still life; he paints the thing-in-itself. He does not feel the necessity of drawing every twig on a tree, nor yet to present the mere appeal to the eye. Therefore, draw a curved line connecting all the points on the top of a tree, and you have a simple expression of Nature as it appeals to him.

"I don't distort Nature," he says; "I sacrifice it to a higher form of beauty and of decorative unity." And so we leave Herbin, who should be in the green fields, and not cramped under his scant skylight, and go away not quite knowing whether to envy or pity him.

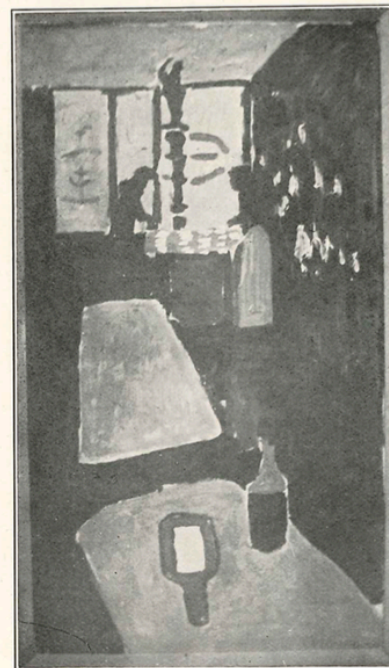


"Baigneuse" by Metzinger.

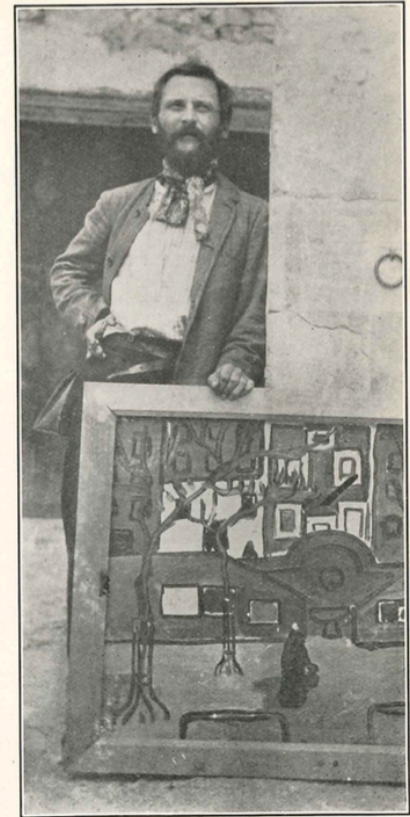
So, finally, to Metzinger's abode. Now, Metzinger himself, like Friesz, has gone through the impressionistic stage; so he should know about this new idea. It is not as if he never were tame. He once painted that "mere charm," of which, it would seem, we are all overfed. Metzinger once did gorgeous mosaics of pure pigment, each little square of color not quite touching the next, so that an effect of vibrant light should result. He painted exquisite compositions of cloud and cliff and sea; he painted women and made them fair, even as the women upon the boulevards are fair. But now, translated into the idiom of subjective beauty, into this strange Neo-Classic language, those same women, redrawn, appear in stiff, crude, nervous lines in patches of fierce color. Surely, Metzinger should know what such things mean. Picasso never painted a pretty woman, though we have noticed that he likes to associate with them. Czobel sees them through the bars of his cage, and roars out tones of mauve and cinnabar.

Dérain sees them as cones and prisms, and Braque as if they had been sawn out of blocks of wood by carpenters' apprentices. But Metzinger is more tender towards the sex. He arranges them as flowers are arranged on tapestry and wall paper; he simplifies them to mere patterns, and he carries them gently past the frontier of Poster Land to the World of the Ugly so tenderly that they are not much damaged—only more faint, more vegetable, more anaemic.

What's Metzinger? A scrupulously polite, well-dressed gentleman as ever was, in a scrupulously neat chamber, with a scrupulously well-ordered mind. He is as complete as a wax figure, with long brown eyelashes and a clean-cut face. He affects no idiosyncracies of manners or dress. One cannot question his earnestness and seriousness or sincerity. He is, perhaps, the most artu-



"La Gargotte," by Chabaud.



Chabaud and "La Place aux Affiches."

late of them all. Let us not call him prim.

"Instead of copying Nature," he says, "we create a *milieu* of our own, wherein our sentiment can work itself out through a juxtaposition of colors. It is hard to explain it, but it may perhaps be illustrated by analogy with literature and music. Your own Edgar Poe (he pronounced it 'Ed Carpoe') did not attempt to reproduce Nature realistically. Some phase of life suggested an emotion, as that of horror in 'The Fall of the House of Ushur.' That subjective idea he translated into art. He made a composition of it."

"So, music does not attempt to imitate Nature's sounds, but it does interpret and embody emotions awakened by Nature through a convention of its own, in a way to be aesthetically pleasing. In some such way, we, taking our hint from Nature, construct decoratively pleasing harmonies and symphonies of color expression of our sentiment."

I think that there I got nearest to it. Let's regard their art as we regard Debussy's music, and Les Fauves are not so mad, after all; they are only inexperienced with their method. I had proved, at least, that they were not charlatans. They are in earnest and do stand for a serious revolt. Now, a revolt not only starts an action, but a reaction, and these Wild Beasts may yet influence the more conventional schools. Whether right or wrong, there is, moreover, something so virile, so ecstatic about their work that it justifies Nietzsche's definition of an ascendant or renescent art. For it is the product of an overplus of life and energy, not of the degeneracy of stagnant emotions. It is an attempt at expression, rather than satisfaction; it is alive and kicking, not a dead thing,

frozen into a convention. And, as such, it challenges the academicians to show a similar fervor, an equal vitality. It sets one thinking; and anything that does that surely has its place in civilization.

Men must experiment in art and in life. Some may wander east or westward from the beaten track, some reactionaries may even go back southward along the trail of the past. But a few push north, ahead of the rest, blazing out the way of progress for the race. Perhaps these Wild Beasts are really the precursors of a Renaissance, beating down a way for us through the wilderness.

But there's the contrast between their talk and their work! It doesn't quite convince me yet. But, then, I'm not a painter, and perhaps none but a painter can understand. There's my clue! And so, as a last resort, as the best way, too, I've bought a color box and brushes. I am going to try it out practically on canvas. That's the only test. I'm going to be a Wild Beast myself! For, mind you, they do sell their paintings, and I may sell mine. Who knows!

*Gelett Burgess.*



Andre Dérain.

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# ' THE ' ARCHITECTURAL RECORD

CONTENTS	
	PAGE
The Work of N. Le Brun & Sons. ....(Illustrated)	365
<small>Montgomery Schuyler</small>	
A Fifth Avenue Mansion.....(Illustrated)	383
The Wild Men of Paris.....(Illustrated)	401
<small>Gelett Burgess</small>	
The Evolution of Architectural Ornament—III..(Illustrated)	415
<small>G. A. T. Middleton, A. R. I. B. A.</small>	
Notes and Comments.....(Illustrated)	433
<small>A. I. A. Circular of Advice Relative to Competitions—The Crown of the Skyscraper—Bill for Harmonious Streets—Bill for National Fine Arts Commission—Dinner to Brooklyn Architects—The New Palace, Tokio—A Letter to Touch—New York in Provincial Eyes—Architects Propose Medals for Clients—Masonic Homes Competition—Architectural Tribulations.</small>	
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