

# The Independents in American Art



The Gold Screen by Robert Reid



The Butterfly by Childé Hassam



June Idyll by Childé Hassam



A Girl Mending by Edmund C. Tarbell



SOME time ago the HERALD printed an article on the exhibition of pictures then being held in Atlanta, and which subsequently was transferred to Nashville and from there to New Orleans. The suggestion was made that there was no reason why a travelling exhibition of fine paintings might not be sent all over the country, thus giving pleasure to the art loving public and, through sales, benefiting the artists whose work was exhibited.

This article was widely commented on and many letters were received commending the suggestion referred to. Among these letters was a communication from one of the foremost American painters. Now comes a letter from Watertown, N. Y., regarding an exhibition there, and showing how exhibitions can be secured for a chain of small towns, and how through some body like the municipal improvement leagues it may be possible for a public collection gradually to be formed by purchase from such exhibitions, the admission fees to be used for that purpose.

EVIDENTLY Mr. Charles Frederick Naegele, a New York artist who has won several prizes and medals and has painted portraits of several distinguished persons, has been instrumental in arranging the Watertown exhibition. He also made an address there which gives the kernel of the matter, and which the Watertown resident who writes to the HERALD encloses with his letter.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD:—I enclose a copy of a talk given by Mr. Charles Frederick Naegele before the Municipal Improvement League of Watertown, and if you will read it it will explain what is intended. It is hoped by this method of giving exhibitions in small towns to secure the establishment of permanent collections of paintings, paid for by the people who love pictures. Although the admission is only ten cents, it is quite possible that at the end of the exhibition the people themselves will have contributed enough to pay for one or more paintings, and that each succeeding exhibition will pay for the purchase of one or more paintings exhibited. Thus, in the course of a few years, the town will own a first class collection of pictures, voted for by those who have paid for admission to the exhibitions.

The paintings in each exhibit having been selected by an artist, there is very little chance of the voters making a mistake.

WATERTOWN, N. Y., March 19, 1906.

As Mr. Naegele's address tells something about the origin of the travelling art exhibition in the South and refers to the management of picture shows in small towns, something that has an important bearing on art culture in this country, it is well worth quoting from.

"LAST spring," he said, "I was in the South, and while there I was called upon by a number of prominent art clubs in Atlanta. They had been hard at work trying to develop some interest in the field of art, or to put it in another way, they had been trying to teach the people to appreciate beauty when it was placed before them.

"They thought it would be a good idea to show the people of Atlanta a fine collection of paintings, and so show them what was being done in other cities. I gave them the best suggestions I could, and they called a meeting, and through this meeting was formed the Atlanta Art Association. Each member paid \$5 to create an exhibition fund for defraying expenses and the exhibition was duly held, was a great success, and was later taken to Nashville and to New Orleans.

"HERE, through the generosity of one of your private citizens, Mr. Frederick S. Fowler, I have been able to gather from some of the foremost artists of this country a collection of paintings for exhibition in Watertown. Mr. Fowler will pay all expenses for the collecting, bringing here and the return of the paintings. It seems like saying, 'You press the button and I will do the rest.'

"My main object, however, is to suggest to the Municipal Improvement League that it take charge of this exhibition for thirty days, and that it charge an admission of ten cents to see the paintings. This ten cents paid by the visitors will go to the artist, and in their opinion is the most attractive in the exhibition. At the close of the exhibition the painting receiving the largest number of votes will be paid for out of the proceeds of admission and become the property of Watertown, and the nucleus of a permanent public gallery.



MAKING DECORATIONS FOR FRENCH SENATE

M. Albert Meignan Working at Drawings for a Series of Gobelin Tapestries.

[From the European Edition of the Herald.]

HARD at work in his studio I found M. Albert Meignan before one of his drawings for a fine series of tapestries destined for the Senate chamber, which are woven by the Gobelin factory as soon as they are finished. When one is completed the artist immediately begins another. The subjects are taken from Ovid's Metamorphoses.

That which has just been finished represents Minerva and Arachne. The daughter of Idmon boasted that she could excel the goddess in tapestry work. Minerva, disguised as an old woman, comes to see her weaving and makes herself known to Arachne, who was bold enough to challenge her to a contest. Arachne actually does do better than the goddess, who, becoming angry, strikes her with a shuttle and changes her into a spider.

M. Meignan in his drawing has chosen the moment when Arachne, bending before her loom, is surprised by Minerva, who appears raising a portable, while in the foreground are obelisks. The two figures are perfectly placed and the decoration is appropriate to the subject. The border consists of an arrangement of leaves very happily arranged so as not to be too heavy.

NEXT M. Meignan will begin "The Golden Fleece." It represents Medea seeking to put to sleep the dragon near Jason, who is standing in a very graceful attitude, but the design is as yet only imperfectly sketched out.

Besides these purely decorative pictures, perhaps more difficult to compose than to paint, M. Meignan intends to make a canvas less imaginative and one drawn from nature. He has chosen a corner of his studio—which, by the way, is as interesting as a museum—and is painting in it a life size portrait of Mme. Meignan, seated opposite the artist himself while in the act of painting. This bit of painting, which is scarcely begun as yet, gave me an excellent impression. One may be sure that the work of this conscientious artist will be fine.

As is well known, M. Albert Meignan is a great collector of works of art, of curiosities and of antiques. He was kind enough to show me his last two purchases,

and went out to milk the cow. After a while he came back with an empty pail. "Why, what's the matter?" said the farmer. "Can't you milk the cow?" "Oh, yes, I can milk the cow all right, but I couldn't get the darned critter to sit down on the stool."

"Now, what I hope to find is some one that can milk the cow, and when this exhibition closes that there will be enough milk in the pail to give Watertown not one picture but several pictures. Then I hope that arrangements for sending the exhibition to other towns may be completed, and that each of these may procure the nucleus for a permanent collection of paintings in the same way."

THE first is a little Greek head in marble of Paros, of the finest art of the Parthenon epoch. It comes from a funeral stele of the fifth century before Christ, found at Maropoulo, in Attica. The other is a beautiful painted Limoges enamel, "Calvary," by Jean I. Pénicaut.

CHARMING little portraits are now being made on cardboard in black pencil, slightly relieved by white, by M. Rodolphe Hereny, a Hungarian painter, who made his first studies at Munich under the celebrated Piloty and who is one of the most popular portrait painters in Germany. He settled in Paris a few months ago and is now attracting great attention by his simple drawings, which have all the effect of pastels.

I have been very much interested in the composition of some of these designs which are really masterpieces. In one of them, that of a nice little girl, the artist gives the illusion of color, although he uses only whites and blacks. But one of the most graceful is that of a lovely young woman, Mme. Henri Fritsch Estrangin, half length, partly turning away her body, but her face almost seated in a chair. The fineness of the features and expression are rendered with the talent of one who has full command of his art.

M. Francis Jourdain is exhibiting three-score little pictures in the Galerie Druet, which are quite characteristic and executed with a real perception of coloring. I would especially mention "The Show Windows of Stores," the views of Fontainebleau, the Riviera landscapes and some still lifes.

PICTURES BY THE "INDEPENDENTS"

The Ten American Painters, with Mr. Chase as New Member, Hold Exhibition.

PAINTINGS reproduced on this page are representative of the work displayed in the exhibition of the Ten American Painters which is being held in the Montross Galleries. The "Independents," as the ten sometimes are called, were not a secession from any art body, nor had they any grievance to protest against. Rather they were moved to unite into a small society and hold exhibitions by the impulse that brings together men whose aims are alike. Their work is marked by freedom from conventionality and decided individuality.

How far they are from forming a "protest" against either the National Academy or the Society of American Artists is readily shown by certain facts. Mr. Childé Hassam, whose group of paintings has the place of honor in the show of the ten, is the chief prize winner with his canvases "June" at the present exhibition of the

society. Mr. Weir, another of the ten, also exhibits at the society and took a prize at the last academy.

EVEN of this small group of artists as originally formed one, Mr. Twachtman, has died. The vacancy has been filled by Mr. William M. Chase, who makes a characteristic contribution to the exhibition with three paintings, a portrait, "A Young Musician," and an interior without any figures and entitled "The Green Window Curtain." This last shows a hall, an open door leading into a room, and, seen at the end of the perspective through this narrow opening, the curtain.

In its informal draping and unusual tint one catches a hint of the light human touch that caused it to hang so familiarly and of the delicate fancy that led to the selection of fabric so dainty and of such charming tinge. So, although there is no figure in the canvas, one suspects that a slender, graceful woman is the good fairy of this house, and that her touch is everywhere about it.

MR. HASSAM'S canvases are rightly distinguished by their hanging. True, some will say that his "Butterfly" should be called "Find the Butterfly," yet the winged insect can be discovered impressionistically poised on the bank upon which the nude young woman is seated. Mr. Hassam's nudes usually roam about outdoors and some one remarked of his "June" that "if you had a country place to let and reproduced that picture at the head of your aid an army of would-be lesses would arrive by the first train and pound at your gates."

His outdoor landscapes with nude female figures in the exhibition of the Ten American Painters is called "June Idyll," and though far from being as large or as ambitious as his "June," it will strike many people as the most charming of the two. It shows a lake viewed through a vista of trees and over gently undulating ground and the two figures at the edge of the water.

Mr. Frank W. Benson, Mr. T. W. Dewing, Mr. Joseph De Camp, Mr. Willard L. Metcalf, Mr. Robert Reid, Mr. Edmund C. Tarbell and Mr. J. Alden Weir are the other painters who exhibit their characteristic and strikingly individual work here.

RECENT PICTURE GIFTS TO MUSEUM

Notes on Some Important American Figure Subjects, Marines and Landscapes.

WITH successive issues the bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum increases in interest. The current issue has an article by Mr. Roger E. Fry, curator of paintings, on "Ideals of a Picture Gallery," which already has been quoted from at length.

The bulletin continues to devote considerable space to Mr. Hearst's recent gift, which is natural, it being one of the most important practical benefactions in the interests of American art that has accrued to the Museum. Mr. W. Stanton Howard, who has made a thorough study of Mr. Hearst's collection, writes informally concerning certain pictures in it that are going to the Museum, as well as on certain aspects of American art which they illustrate. Nothing so much interests the visitors to the Museum as the picture galleries, and, consequently, Mr. Howard's comments will be valuable to the public, which the Museum attracts in such large numbers. What follows is condensed from his article.

AGLIANCE discloses that the landscapes presented by Mr. Hearst are not literal renderings, but interpretations of nature in a distinctly personal manner, products of the artist's self-torment to awaken emotional expression. Hence they may be said to illustrate our modern development as well as that of our painters. It is impossible to group them; they differ according to the development of their peculiar faculties and gifts, and each one must be studied for himself and liked or disliked for his individual qualities and idiosyncrasies; Ranger and Tryon and Williams are as unlike each other as are Thayer and Homer and Weir.

Before taking up consideration of the individual qualities of the landscapes of this group let us note the special merits of the marine and figure painters here so worthily represented. Standing before the two widely varying examples of Mr. Winslow Homer, "Cannon Rock" and "The Entrance to Santiago Harbor,"

some observers will ask, in what school did this artist gain his training? Like many another painter his development came mainly from his own observation of the world.

THE locale of these seascapes matters little. They carry conviction that the artist has seen and felt the resistless power of the waters. "Cannon Rock" is no exception. Beyond the black rocks, over which the spray trickles in white foam, stretches the pitiless sea. The picture is one of the movements of the great ocean symphony which Homer has given us in a dozen canvases, ever striving to set forth its might, majesty and infinity as he knows it.

Now turning to Homer's other canvases we have a marked contrast vividly illustrating the painter's versatility. Here, in spite of the grim reminders of war, all is peaceful, and a southern calm prevails. Above the frowning barbarian, now gnawed by the tooth of time, a retiring moon seems to regard with curious interest several dashing searchlights in their effort to rival herself in dispelling the darkness. They play across the calm sea, touching the rocky shore and the masonry of the ancient fort with gleaming silver, while one artist's fanlike rays upward against the distant sky. Everything shows this picture to be the product of an accomplished hand and trained observation, and it must ever remain an interesting interlude in this artist's series of studies of storm tossed seas.

REGARDING Mr. Abbott Thayer's "Young Woman," which the artist chose to represent him at the last Paris Exposition, we have one of the noblest examples of figure painting which our native art has yet produced. Mr. Thayer himself is different from the whole contemporary school of figure painters, yet at the same time distinctly American, and possesses a rare and original personality. His women are never the frivolous light hearted, selfish beings we see every day and which we cannot help liking, even though we are robbed of all illusions concerning them; on the contrary, they are women without thought of the furbelows of fashion, women to whom we look up with awe, descendants of a distinct race of Titans.

In "The Green Bodice," by Mr. J. Alden Weir, we have the only other distinct figure composition in this group of paintings, and at once let it be said that Mr. Weir has never succeeded better in enlisting the interest than he has in this picture. The harmonious color scheme of green and black, the firm modelling, the expressive face, the quiet elegance of the figure, its capricious arrangement and decorative feeling give an air of distinction to the picture which has not been reached by this artist in any other work put forth.

THE actual life of the field and farm interests Mr. Horatio Walker and affords him infinite resources for the study of life, light, color, movement and expression. He translates for us the emotions aroused in him by the contemplation of scenes of labor connected with tilling the soil, clearing the land of timber, or working or caring for dumb brutes. He shows us the beauty to be found in commonplace scenes and sordid surroundings. His toilers in the field and in the woodland represent the poetry of labor and a common brotherhood. As he presents him the husbandman of to-day is more intelligent and better conditioned than Millet portrayed him and not dead to the beauty of the world around him.

"The Sheep Fold" represents him in one of his less strenuous scenes of farm life. The humble duty of the farmer as he tenderly gathers the sheep at twilight into the old wooden shelter, the distant landscape, the warm sunlight that floods the evening sky, falling across the field and touching the backs of the sheep, combine to make a picture of interest and satisfaction.

MR. HENRY W. RANGER is a vigorous and thoughtful exponent of American landscape art. He has produced a series of resonant interpretations of field and forest that, like his "Spring Woods," reveal an interesting personality. In Mr. Louis Paul Dessar's "Evening" we find an illustration of the divergence in pictures based on similar lines where personality is allowed full play. This landscape, showing a pool on the edge of a clearing, in no way resembles Mr. Ranger's picture. It shows Mr. Dessar's recent manner in which he has striven to produce pictures of a robust, full bodied texture, using in his effort to do end extremely rich color pastes. The picture seems like a lyric of an eternal summer.

"Church at Chale, Isle of Wight," seen from some hill overlooking the peaceful

summer-landscape, with fields of harvested grain and the sea and chalk cliffs beyond, shows in Mr. George H. Bogert the same traits that mark the productions of his fellow painters, a noble generalization taking the place of precise rendering.

Mr. Elliot Dainingerfeld has long been recognized a painter of poetic mind and exuberant fancy who would make a place for himself. He has heretofore devoted himself to the work of figure composition, but in his "Slumbering Fog" we find him utilizing his gifts to cope with the transient effects of nature.

Mr. D. W. Tryon's "Moonlight" is a solid and virile work which has the appearance of an improvisation, but is doubtless the result of persistent observation and constant effort at realization. Mr. Tryon is essentially a poetic painter and is at his best in suggesting the sentiment and charm of some tender mood of nature.

In Mr. F. Ballard Williams, the last of the group, we have one of the recent acquisitions to the ranks of the poetic landscapists, and from his beautiful "Passale River" it will be granted that he is an artist to be taken into our hearts and cherished.

PRIMARIE light envelops and bathes the whole scene, rocks, hills, river and buildings, with its transparent yet subtly colored fluid. The whole canvas is filled with an exquisite joyousness of light and music, transporting one to some ideal world of meditation and dreams.

There is no human sentiment," concludes the Howard, "that does not find a correspondence in nature, and all that we can ask of our painters is that they look below the surface of things and translate in the souls of men. In fact, a picture must have its ideal significance to permanently hold attention."

A VETERAN OF THE BARBIZON SCHOOL

M. Ferdinand Chaigneau, at the Age of Seventy-Six, Faithful to the Traditions of Millet.

[From the European Edition of the Herald.]

HEAT excellent landscape and animal painter M. Ferdinand Chaigneau is exhibiting in Paris a collection of his paintings which reveal the artist's rare talent. M. Chaigneau is seventy-six years old. He is one of the survivors of the second Barbizon school and is still a member of the little colony of artists in that village, in the vicinity of which he seeks inspiration as varied as it is happily interpreted.

More than one tie connects M. Chaigneau with the pleiad of Rousseaus, Duprés, Corots and Millet, and of this we could have no better proof than the fifty canvases, collected with much trouble and with filial devotion by M. Paul Chaigneau, son of the artist. Plains lost in the horizon, purple sunsets, gray clouds floating over rich fields and golden haystacks, flocks of sheep wrapped in golden dew or in the shadow of moonlight have been painted by M. Ferdinand Chaigneau with a fine understanding.

CHARMING was the impression I received from a view of the oil paintings and pastels which M. Edouard Gellay is finishing for the Salon. An "intimate" by fancy, but an "intimate" of surpassing elegance, like Mr. Walter Gay, for example, M. Gellay excels in little canvases, in which he expresses at the same time both woman's grace and the intimate significance of things. I want no better proof than his last work, the title of which, "Back Again," is only a pretext for an arrangement of furniture and valuable knickknacks artistically grouped and presented.

I was particularly attracted by such pictures as "The Plain," belonging to M. Chevillard; "Sheep in the Heather," owned by Mlle. Delormel; "The Barbizon Woman," from M. B. Cravoy's collection; "Sheep Grazing," from the Babel collection; "Evening," loaned by the Marquis de Castrone; and "The Peace of Nightfall," from Mme. Piazza. There is also the "Snow at Barbizon," an excellent study of exquisite harmony, which shows the perfect technique of the painter.

GEORGES BAL.