LADIES LIBRARY CLUB

The following paper was read at a recent meeting of the Ladies Library Club in this city:

ART

(Mrs. P. S. Weittenhiller)

What is art?

Let us Legin by considering what we understand by art. The word is one which we use constantly in speaking of painting, sculpture, and architecture; less commonly, but still often in speaking of poetry and music.

There are the different arts. Each of them differing in some respects from every other, but in some points all of them are alike. Now that is which, all the arts resemble each other, what is common to all the arts, is called art

What is that one thing which shows itself in all alike, whether we are dealing with stone, as in sculpture; or with words, as in poetry; with canvas as in painting or with sounds as in music? To answer this question, is to make a beginning in the intelligent study of art

The greatness of art depends on the sum of truth, and this sum of truth can always be increased by delicacy of handling, it follows that all great arts must have this delicacy to the utmost possible degree. This rule is infallable and inflexible. All coarse work is the sign of low art. Only, it is to be remembered that coarseness must be estimated by the distance from the eye, it being necessary to consult the distance, when great, by laying on touches which appear coarse and seem near but which, so far from being coarse, are in reality more delicate in a masters work, than the finest close handling, for they involve a calculation of result. This delicacy is generally quite perceptible to those who know what the truth is.

Nature contains the elements in color and form, as the key board contains the notes of all music. But the artist is born to pick and choose, and group with science these elements, that the result may be beautiful. As the musician gathers his notes, and forms his chords until he brings forth from chaos glorious harmony.

To say to the painter, that nature is to be taken as she is, is to say to the player that he may sit on the piano. That nature is always right is an assertion, artistically untrue. We must have the conditions of things that shall bring about perfection of harmony worthy of a picture, which is rare, and not common to all. The sun blares, the wind blows from the east, the sky is bereft of cloud, and without all is of iron, the painter turns away; then on the other hand the evening mist clothes the riverside with poetry, as with a veil, and the buildings loose themselves in the sky, the warehouses are palaces in the night; the whole city hangs in the heavens. fairy land is before us. Nature has sung in tune, sings her exquisite song to the artist alone, to him her secrets are unfolded, to him her lessons have become gradually clear.

In summing these phases of art we find that "Art is the spontaneous expression of a natural universal emotion. It expresses a civilation in each of its phases." Art depends upon three things, first Religion, second Physiography and climate, and third Industry.

he early art all tended towards life, activity, and animals, and was of a circular form. The characteristics of Egyptian Art was their religion, endurance, and embalming of the dead. Among the Greeks we have the sculpture and painting which was their way of expressing and interperting national life. The primary end was to make statues of the Gods and heroes. An individuality of expression was encouraged at this time. Then we have the Byzantine Arabian and finally the Roman esque. There was little progress in painting during the dark ages and the medevial. The Renaissance really started in Italy.

From the thirteenth to the sixteenth century new types were brought to the front. Instead of useing gold for the back ground they began useing naturallistic, working for life and action. Everything up to Misheal Angelo were frescos, they used mineral paint mixed with glue and worked on wet ceilings. They also used the white of an egg to give it an opaque effect. Every church shows the Madonna and child, also other pictures depicting scenes of the Bible.

From here we pass to the Dutch. We find smaller pictures and scenes of the Canals and home life, a few of the religious. These scenes were painted smaller as the houses were small. By some artists they were not considered works of Art. They drew from the Italian school but put the characteristics of their own country into their work. The same is true of the French. The German, Scandanavian and English. The former depicted or glorified the peasant life. We find each country giving the truth or characteristics of its own nationality as well as the influence of previous schools.

An important factor in American Art has been interest in native landscape, with or without reference to definite locality. In the colonial period, art was mainly limited to portrait painting but soon after our entry into nationhood there came a consciousness of our country's natural beauties as well as a pride in its material development. Local pride then played its part, but while it was not yet the time for the expression of mood in landscape, as with our later painter, landscape was depicted fairly soon. American painters, for the most part are to be congratulated on the simplicity of their choice in subject matter, this is true of collections exhibited at the set shows of the national Academy of Design and the Salamagundi Club and the national Arts Club.

In later years we have the birth of the Realists, Idealism, Naturalism Impressionist, Cubist, and Futurist. The Realist is defined as being fertile in immagination. The idealist as expressing emotion of some idea and not so much of drawing. The Narutlist expressing nature. The Cubist as someone has expressed it, one being stationed at a distance above the earth and then attempting to draw objects as the earth whirls by The Painter gives only a Geometrical plan without the deformation of distance and light. He can create depth but instead of the subterfuges of lineal perspective he uses these Physiological properties of colors. Black will always be a hole; light always far back; yellow always prominent. These points might indicate the Bubist picture are not quite undecipherable confusion, altho scome call it a Bable of Art. The Impressionist came about by placing British Art on a false baisis through its insistance among other things of placing things of placing to high a degree of finish. This finish brot in its train a divorce from truth and from nature, an intire disturbance of that right focus which alone can satisfy the artistic sense.

To adjust to modern views of painting was indeed a Herculeanan task one which to all, but an inspired pioneer might well have appeared impossible of accomplishment. To that undertaking came Sickert, who may justly be called their leader, he and others must be granted the distinction of grafting new life and vital principals into art which then passing throgh what threatened to be a period of morbundity. To clearly define this term impressionistic in our mind we will quote Turner. "Impressionists strive first of all to reproduce the real, an aim which they share with many who are not Impressionist. All Impressionists are Realist, but all Realists are not Impressionists; next they have striven to solve the mystery of light, to give to color the greatest luminosity and effect. They are above all things colorists; thirdly, they try to sieze some instantaneous aspect of life and faithfully to reproduce that vivid impression as distinct from this or that detail or series of detail. Another paragraph on the same tratise further elucidates the aim of Art. An Artist, then is one who by means of some instrument, such as a picture transmits emotion to a responsive person, or a least evokes some asthetic feeling in him, throu the wish to transmit such emotions need not be present. And a work of Art is the vehicle of this transmission."

In studing pictures we must consider the story of theme, the emotion expressed; second the center of interest brought out by structure, repitition or lines that go in pairs also color; third the interpretation by yourself and the Artist, the life of the artist, and how he was influenced.

John C. Vandike, one of our leading art critics says: "You must look at pictures studiously, earnestly, honestly. It will take years before you come to a full appreciation of art; but when at last you have it, you will be possessed of one of the purest, leftiest, and most enobling pleasures that the civilized world can offer you."

In touching upon a few of our English artist we find that England began finding her art in a queer way for a country so great and progressive. her first paintings were made by distinguished foreign artists, who were brought into England by her monarchs, such was Holbein, the German portrait painter, who served Henry the VII, for more than fifteen years and then fond an aliens grave in some nknown quarter of Plaguestricken London, such also was Van Dyck the polished Fleming, who painted the court beauties and gallants of the ill-starred Charles the I. Artists like Holbein and VanDyke reflect great credit on the Kings who patronized thehm, but later foreign artists like Sir Peter Leley and Godfry Kneller, who, at best were poor workmen, made the English public willing to look at home for talent in the art of painting.

At about the time the Englishmen realized this fact, there was born two little boys, who, as they progressed in life showed without doubt that there could be such a thing as English art on English soil. These two men were, Joshua Reynolds and Thmas Gainsborrough. The latter's life time of 61 years was covered by that of Reynolds, who was four years older and who lived four years latter. Reynolds was the first President of the Royal Academy and Gainsborrough was one of its original thirty-six members; even in the early career of Reynolds, his method of laying on color and his preference for certain colors over others was thoroughly established. There were grave faults here too, which we owe the destruction of some of his most highly prized pictures. They cracked and scaled off and however courteous the remark that "A cracked Reynolds is better than a perfect picture by a less able man," yet the fact remains that within a few years some of his pictures have actually had to be removed from gallery walls on account of their ramaged condition. He always bought the highest priced paints, so it was in the mixing and experimenting that his peril lay. It will give some idea of his method of laying on colors to relate the following incident. A servant was delivering one of the masters works when some rude fellow struck the back of the canvas with a stick, the face dropped off as completely as if it had been of plaster.

An interesting story is told of how he painted his beautiful picture "Babes in the Woods." A boy from the streets had been brought in to sit for the artist. He was tired and fell asleep in a graceful attitude. thus and shortly the boy changed his position to one more attractive still. This the artist likewise sketched, and so grew the picture which has been so much admired. When the lovely Mrs. Siddons examined the finished picture of herself she noticed what appeared a line of embroidery on her robe which on clever examination proved to be merely the painter's name, what pleasure he must have given and felt as he gallantly excused himself for his apparent vanity by saying, "I could not lose the honor this opportunity afforded me of going down to posterity on the hem of your garment."

Gainsborrough was also noted for his portrait work as well as landscape. His continual wrangling with Reynolds gave rise to the well known "Blue Boy" Reynolds said a picture could not be painted in the blues or cold color and be successful. Gainsborrough contended that it could. The result was a triumph of Gainsborrough's art. Gainsborrough's power of color is capable of taking rank besides Reynolds, not excepted of the whole English school. To quote Ruskin, "Gainsborrough's hand is as light as the sweep of a cloud, as swift as the flash of a sunbeam. Gainsborrough's masses are as broad as the first division in heaven of light from darkness. Gainsborrough's forms are grand, simple and ideal. Gainsborrough never loses sight of his picture as a whole. In a word, Gainsborrough is an immortal painter.

Turner as a landscape artist now fills first place. Ruskin urges that, "The painter forsaking conventional coloring went to the cataract for its iris, to the conflagration for its flames, asked of the sea its intensest azure, of the sky its clearest gold." Mr. Ruskin insists that the firriest, and what on first glance may seem the mildest Turner's colors, in his last years, are warranted by nature.

Landseer was the great English painter of animals, his dogs are almost human. There are many other artist's that might be mentioned but time forbids. Then our own artists. Benj. West is called the father of American Art. He showed decided talent when very young. At the age of six years drawing a picture of his baby sister asleep in the cradle. His parents were Quakers, they finally decided that God had given him the gift and it would be right to develop his talents. The Indians brought him red and yellow paint, his Mother gave him blueing. Later an Uncle sent him paints. In after years he went to England and finally located there. He succeeded Reynolds as president of the Royal Academy holding the position till his death. It was the custom at that time to represent all figures as wearing Greek costumes and when West painted the famous picture "The Capture of Quebec" he painted the figures in costumes such as they actually wore. The King tried to dissuade him from this but West replied "May it please your Majesty, the subject I have to repgesent is a great battle fought and won, and the same truth which gives law to the historian should rule the painter. If instead of the facts of action I introduce fictions, how shall I be understood by porterity? The classic dress is certainly picturesque but by using it I shall lose in sentiment what I gain in external grace. I want to mark the time, the place, and the people to do this I must abide by the truth."

We have other noted artists of which much might be said, Whistler, Inness, Chase, Martin, Hmer, Abby, La Farge. The greatest living today are Sargent and Parrish.

The one great purpose of studying art is that of opening the eyes to beauty all around, which an artists trained eye preceives while it is missed by others, "We're made so that we love first when we see them painted, things we have passed perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see, and so they are better painted—better for us, which is the same thing. Art was given for than; God uses us to help each other so, lending our minds out."

BLACK FOXES SOLD TO MEN IN HARNEY

Harney county will shortly boast a fox farm, according to J. Edward Larson, who with his brother C. H. Larson has just completed the sale of two pairs of registered black foxes raised near Spokane, to Alvin Baker and M. A. Hayes. It is believed that the Central Oregon country will prove especially well adapted to the raising of this class of fur bearers, says Larson.—Bend Bulletin.

NO MIND FOR DETAILS

Romantic Miss (of many summers)—"I wonder if you remember me? Years ago you asked me to marry you?"

Absent minded professor—"Oh, yes, and did you?"

YOU NEED NOT FAIL

—By— WHIT HADLEY

Somebody must be "It" in every walk of life. James Logan, millionaire General Manager of the U. S. Envelope Co., of Worcester, Mass., says: "The day always comes for those who hang on tight. You've got to find the WAY to hang on, that's all." Logan started life 72 years ago in a poverty stricken hut in a tiny village in Scotland. Out of work and with a wife and four children to support, Logan's father brought his family to America when Jim was three months old. The father paid for passage over by working as a coal heaver. Settling in Worcester, the family lived in a hut three miles from town for which they paid $2 a month rent. When Jim was ten, his father was a night watchman. Then the elder Logan lost his job and the landlord took the cow and horse for rent and ousted them. Jim went to work in a woolen mill at $8.50 per month. When he was eleven, his right arm was crushed in a machine and he was crippled for life. But he STUCK to his job. After 14 hours' work in the mill he studied bookkeeping. Then the Civil War broke out; his age and his crippled body prevented his enlisting. Working holidays, Sundays and until midnight his pay jumped to $31 a month, and the whole family lived on it. At 16 he was a finished bookkeeper and got a job at $150 a year in a dry goods store.

A firm, crippled by the war, heard of Jim and hired him as bookkeeper, salesman and manager at $700 a year. Three years later he formed an envelope company of his own. His reputation for honesty became a byword. The banks loaned him money. His business became the largest in the United States. In 1898 the U. S. Envelope Co. merger was consummated. He was made vice-president and general manager, at $100,000 a year. That was 26 years ago. Today he is worth millions. And he still lives in Worcester.

Editorial

Time To Look Facts in the Face

Two outstanding disclosures that comes as a result of the recent naval maneuvers and which should command serious thought from the American people are, first, that the Panama Canal cannot withstand assault; and, second, the statement of Rear Admiral Plunkett, Commandant of the Brooklyn Navy Yard, that if our battle fleet were ordered to the Philippines it would be able to get there but that it could not operate or get back home again unless some friendly nation sold to this government enough fuel to enable the ships to move.

This statement, the Admiral explained, is not a theory, but a condition demonstrated by events leading up to the battle of Manila when only the fact that a British coal-laden ship was purchased saved the day for Uncle Sam.

There is something wrong somewhere when this country must depend upon the friendship of any foreign nation for its naval operation. Friendship between nations hangs on a thread even thinner than that which binds the individual relationship. It is always taut and ready to snap. Indeed recent exhibitions demonstrating that the stern grim power behind the call of the dollar made a blind man see that even noblesse oblige is no more existant.

This background throws into bold relief our situation in reference to American merchant marine. If we must look forward to future wars then the demand for a powerful merchant marine is imperative to our safety. If on the other hand we may look forward to the elimination of war then our prosperity and development will be measured largely by our position on the seas.

It is a peculiar fact that America can find the money to finance other nations which in turn use our money to develop their shipping power, but that when it comes to the production of money for the development of American ships upon the sea the purse strings are pulled tight.

In the light of present events the words of Admiral Benson uttered when he was in charge of the United States Shipping Board are almost prophetic. Benson said that putting the American flag back upon the seas was dependent on the understanding of the farmer. His programme of enlightenment was rudely shattered, and in the whirligig of political scramble which followed his retirement, the spades were stuck deep into the ground which formed the foundation of American peace and safety. Perhaps it is not yet too late to save ourselves maritime extinction.

"And now are there any questions?" asked the presiding officer at a public village meeting after announcing what he intended to do. A man in the audience arose. "Mr. Chairman," he said, whereupon the presiding officer smashed him on the head with a chair.

"Are there any more questions?" asked the presiding officer. Which is one way of conducting a political meeting.

We are told that 25% of the public school pupils in New York have defective vision. What about our government officials when they are looking at contracts?

Sing Sing reports that Anderson, convict prohibition leader, gets [illegible]

Poem by Uncle John

I've a mighty good opinion of the plain, old-fashioned plan, that they shouldn't run fer office till the office seeks the man—for, it's mighty nigh disgustin' when we contemplate the mob, that cavorts around the country simply huntin' fer a job!

Of course the princely salary's a mighty temptin' bait to the crooked politicians that would like to serve the state,—but I call to mind the doin's of some over-trusted men who would serve the country safer—if we had 'em in the pen!

I've watched the game impartial—and I'll state in white and black, that we better watch the candidate that's first upon the track. . . . And, when I cast my ballot, as I'm mighty apt to do, you'll see me scratch the feller that has the least to do!

the Jedge's Josh