

save that it seems to be in fashion. Then there are those who buy modern first editions as they learn to play mah jong, because their friends collect modern first editions and play mah jong. It seems to them as necessary to be a book collector as it did to other folks a quarter of a century ago to be seen at the Horse Show. Fortunately, such collectors generally do not get much farther than Madame Du Barry, with her thousand volumes of elegantly bound "remainders" to match the example of the clever Pompadour. But while they remain in the field they are fair game for the dealer and help raise prices in the auction-room.

A few men, of unlimited wealth are gathering up the first editions, as they appear, of a large number of American and English writers of the present day, with the idea of ultimately weeding out those which do not stand the test of time. A collector may be sure, in this way, of getting the most desirable editions of that minority of authors who will maintain or increase their prestige. But this method of collecting is not one that commends itself to those of limited means. Moreover, it is

almost sure to result in mere speculation—book buying on the chance of financial gain. We all know collections which have been made for the sole purpose of putting them into the auction-room when conditions seemed favorable. That is not book collecting. The dealer who pays a large sum for a first edition in the hope of selling it again at a profit is working within his province. That is his business, and in it we wish him success; the literary merit of a work is of little consideration to him, and properly so. But the private collector should have a more substantial motive for collecting than the hope of profit. Too many men are buying the first editions of modern authors on the theory that when Jones is dead and produces no more first editions the works of the popular Mr. Jones will be scarce, and it will then be a good time to put his collection into the auction-room. The theory is sound—if Jones's popularity holds out. But Joneses come and go, and the fame of this one may prove as unsubstantial as that of Martin Farquhar Tupper, once the drawing-room favorite, whose works are now found under "Miscellaneous, 200 vols."

Painting

THE AMERICAN PAINTER

BY GUY EGLINGTON

"**A**ERICAN ART," says Mr. Royal Cortissoz, in the preface to his new book, "flows not from tradition but, in a specially marked sense, from the individuality of the artist". And he proceeds in a few words to propound the accepted theory that while most American artists receive their training in Europe, they apply it in a manner so fresh and personal that their art achieves nationality. Unfortunately, he leaves the matter there, as have all his predecessors, with the result that we have no opportunity of judging just how much water the theory will hold. The observer is faced with something like a paradox. On the one hand, there is the indubitable

national strain running through our finest (and they are finer than we yet know) productions. On the other, there is the no less undoubted domination of foreign schools.

On the face of it, it seems obvious that American painting has been subjected to successive waves of foreign influence, though the existence at every point of figures who remained outside any school makes the word domination inexact. The English gave place to the Dutch, the Dutch to the Barbizon, the Barbizon to the Impressionist. And now come the Post Impressionists, fighting with the Russians for mastery. The first questions, therefore, which the future historian of American art will have to answer are: At what point does Stuart cease to be an English portrait

painter? What precisely distinguishes Inness from the Barbizons? Is Childe Hassam something more than a French Impressionist? Before he answers these questions he will do well to examine the manner in which American painting has responded to these invasions.

America is, I think, at the same time the most conservative and the most radical country in the world. Its conservatism is shown by its almost instantaneous and unanimous rejection of any new idea that is brought it; its radicalism by the almost equally unanimous acceptance and wholesale application of that same idea, the moment its novelty has worn off. It is not the idea itself which repels at the start; it is simply the *insanity* (how familiar the word has become!) of proposing a new and subversive criterion. In other words, it is the image which they have made of the new thing that they fight. One remembers the howl that arose over the first Gauguins exhibited here. "Duffer" was good enough for Cézanne, but Gauguin . . . ! Well, not so long after, I had the pleasure of showing a particularly fine example,—the "Maternité," which Mr. Lewisohn now owns,—to a friend who abominated these "moderns." "Ah," said he, "but he doesn't belong with that crowd." Nor does he. Gauguin was fortunate enough to die before the "crowd" was invented.

But the matter does not stay here. Slowly, imperceptibly, the tide changes, until one morning we wake up to find that the same epithets are being hurled at other names, other tendencies. The insane of yesterday are set in judgment on the outlaws of today. One by one the great Post Impressionists, and with them all the mediocrities who make up the "movement," are being hoisted to pedestals. In a few years the Academy will be full of their followers. Nothing more fatal to our own development could be devised. Every impulse in art has its periods of growth, fruition and decay, and of these only the first can be life-giving. For that is the period of research, when men instinctively

turn back to what they are sure is firm ground, discarding the overgrowth of previous generations. In its earlier stages a movement is nothing more than an impulse to fresh thinking along a certain series of lines roughly parallel. Only later, when genius has set its stamp upon it, does it tend, so to speak, to look like itself. Then follows the period of decay, when fundamentals are buried under a mass of sophistication.

It is our misfortune that, by virtue of our position and our peculiar nature, we never become aware of a new impulse until it has long passed its zenith and started on its downward path. For us, therefore, it appears as nothing but a formula which we try to apply with more or less success. As an example one may take Impressionism, which, in France, culminated in figures as widely divergent as Monet, Pissarro and Seurat, to say nothing of Manet and Degas. In America, if we except Twachtman, who is too big to be claimed by any school, Impressionism has but one face; it is hardly more than a receipt for sunlight.

Now, if there is ever to be any helpful coöperation between Europe and America in matters of art, it must first be laid down as an axiom that a movement that is genuinely alive cannot be built on the remnants of a foreign movement that has lost its motive power. There might have been hope for an Impressionist movement among us, could we have breathed the air with Pissarro at Pontoise. There might still be hope for our Post Impressionists, could they have worked with Gauguin in Brittany, with Van Gogh and Cézanne at Auvers. These things might have been. But they were not.

No; I incline more and more to the belief, which for the moment I must propound only as a belief, a possible hypothesis, that the vital impulse in American art has been and will be primitive in its manifestations. I believe that the American man, artists included, is not only by nature and if left to himself, simple, but of a very childlike, primitive simplicity. The

trouble is that he never is left to himself. He lives in perpetual terror lest the child in him be found out. Watch the same man who yelled himself hoarse at yesterday's ball-game, in a Fifth Avenue Gallery, best at one of those amazing parties where the "art lover" imbibes punch and an "artistic atmosphere." All the frank boyishness of his nature is crushed out of him. The pictures seem to be exercising a morbid fascination over him. He hates them, yet he dares not run away. His eyes stare at them as though trying to bore holes in the canvas. He is enchanted by the magic letters A-R-T.

And if the man in the street is enchanted, so too is the collector. In nine cases out of ten he buys, not for any pleasure he will get out of living with his pictures, but for a thousand other reasons, above all, that he may leave abiding proof that he *was* of the élite, loving art and knowing it. Nor does the hoodoo stop short at the collector. I hear its chuckle at the Academy; it stands beside me at the New Society. Do you believe that Mr. Glackens or Mr. Kenneth Hays Miller really *saw* everything that they painted into those magnificent pictures of theirs? I doubt it. But Renoir told them they were there, and *they didn't dare to leave them out*. You can take a train right across America and meet hardly a man who will dare to paint what he sees, just that and nothing more. Here it is Renoir, there Gauguin, elsewhere Cézanne, Sisley, Monet, back as far as Daubigny; everywhere you will find the hoodoo standing at the painter's easel, telling him what he shall paint.

But there are signs that the reign of the hoodoo is passing—faint signs, but reassuring. I believe that the growing passion for primitives, a particularly American passion, is one of them. Few, not so long back, would have dared to show enthusiasm for a hooked rug, a piece of Pennsylvania Dutch sgraffito ware, a Scandinavian peasant's table, decorated with his own naïve phantasy. On the surface there is still, of course, ineffable

twaddle about æsthetic values, but back of it all, I am sure, is a sincere pleasure. Child responds to child.

Among painters, too, there are signs of a return to fundamentals. Not among the big names, to be sure, but here and there, in dark corners, in the vast waste paper basket that is called the Independents, one finds men who respect the limitations of their vision, striving to effect a mastery over the things they actually see. Understand me, I am not saying that America has nothing to learn from Europe. The point is that she *cannot* learn much. A young man cannot and must not learn from an old philosopher who has been through it all and has attained to that wisdom which knows the futility of everything. He must go on, making mistake after mistake, until he learns for himself. For the most elementary truth does not become actual to a man, does not become a vital part of his knowledge, until he has discovered it for himself.

Europe, as I see it, is in a period of temporary decline. The summit of the Post Impressionist impulse, the most vital in modern times, was reached over twenty years ago. There are thousands of Post Impressionists today, but their work is no longer constructive. What began as a great structural idea has become no more than a decorative pattern. The ball which the Post Impressionists threw up with so magnificent a gesture is dropping to earth. It is nothing short of pitiful to see the energy of good artists wasted in a futile attempt to catch it and fling it up a second time. Let them have faith in themselves and build on their own foundations. Let the rest of us encourage the painter to do his own seeing. Let it be forbidden to praise a picture in such terms as: "It is as fine as Monet," or, "Corot never painted better." Let us rather say: This is *seen*, this is *actual*. Above all, let us not demand of the artist a complete vision of the world. The American's vision of life is bound to be partial. But it has been, and I think will be, very intense.

HEREDITY AND THE UPLIFT

BY H. M. PARSHLEY

IN THE most primitive human society and in the associations of animals and plants in a state of nature Darwin's struggle for existence is real and unmitigated; food and safety are won for the individual by a superiority that is demonstrated by the shouldering out and destruction of the weak, the incompetent, the unfit. This austere and beneficent process, acting through millions of years, has brought about a gradual advance toward perfect adaptation to mundane conditions in those species which possessed at the start the requisite potentialities, and at the same time it has destroyed ruthlessly all such as lacked any essential quality. Let it be clearly understood here that the successful types were *not* produced from inferior stocks through improvements imposed from *without*. There were no vice-crusaders among the apparently unpromising archaic mammals of the Mesozoic Age and compulsory education was unknown to the little five-toed horse of the Eocene, yet these benighted creatures were able to found the lines leading down through geologic time to the noblest animals of today. Thus evolution took its course, with the survival of the fit and the elimination of the feeble and botched, until man, developing with the other creatures, attained to his present stage of civilized social life—which, if it offers the spectacle of Bryan, the Fundamentalists, and the University of Tennessee as evidence for the prosecution, nevertheless presents in rebuttal Galton, the geneticists, and the Carnegie Institution at Washington.

But civilized humanity, grown soft with ease, now finds it impossible to view with

equanimity the painful struggles and hopeless sufferings of the unfit in free competition with their betters; the immemorial struggle for existence affords too disagreeable and disquieting a spectacle to be tolerated in the public gaze. Hence charity, philanthropy, the Uplift. Begun and long carried on in the laudable spirit of Holy Writ, charity has now become a necessary part of our complex social organization; its purpose is to heal or hide the sore spots and so make it possible for the fortunate minority to enjoy life unharmed by the sight of the sanguinary struggles and pitiful tragedies characteristic of feral existence. From it, however, has developed a monstrous growth, the Uplift, perhaps the most threatening enemy that civilization has to face today. Of the many counts against the Uplift that might be readily submitted to the intelligent reader, let us consider but one: namely, the utterly false hopes for the race which it bases upon measures that are, at best, nothing but temporary means of relief for the individual. It is here that the biologist and the social reformer come into irreconcilable conflict.

Since Darwin's day the greatest advances in biological knowledge have been made in connection with the experimental study of heredity—that is, of the transmission of inborn traits as opposed to the handing down of customs, property, and environmental materials in general. As a result of this study, it is now clear that the basic characteristics of every individual depend primarily, not upon any training that he has received or is capable of receiving in this life, but upon the protoplasmic units