

The Artist's Point of View

Three New Art Books

WOODCUTS AND WOOD ENGRAVINGS: *How I Make Them*, by HANS ALEXANDER MUELLER (Pynson, \$9.00).

It is important news when an artist writes a book. Hans Alexander Mueller has added to our too small list of artist authors what is probably the most important book on the art and technique of the woodcut and wood engraving so far printed in English.

Mr. Mueller's presentation is not merely technical — there are dozens of books on the technique of the wood block; it explains all techniques from the point of view of the artist with a great creative vision and a remarkable versatility in execution. "No artist of our time," says Lynd Ward, who went abroad in 1926 to study with him in Germany, "so far as my knowledge and judgment go, has explored the possibilities of the medium so widely or in it achieved so much."

The picture cut into wood and printed on paper is the most visually rewarding of all printed pictures. This book reveals the vast range of such prints, from the beginner's first tool marks to printings in two, three, four, and five colors, with all steps fully explained and illustrated. It makes the woodcut come alive for the child, the grownup, the amateur, and the professional.

Finally, the book itself, the love child of Elmer Adler and the Pynson Printers, is a work of art of pure delight.

GIST OF ART, by JOHN SLOAN (American Artists, \$3.75).

It is a useful service the American Artists Group is performing in bringing out books written by artists about their own work. This first one of a projected series facilitates an understanding of John Sloan the artist and of the art which he and we have inherited.

Sloan is the product of the naturalistic standards of the last century plus the liberating humanism of Robert Henri, his teacher, and the pictorial revolt from studio to life which Henri and his students initiated. The liberation, however, never included the break from

naturalism later achieved by the modern movement. Sloan is a master of academic drawing and painting. His characterizations of humans are Rembrandtesque. He paints life in its limitless range (without bedecking himself in fancy titles about American Scenes) instead of only still lifes and posing nudes. This was a healthy growth in the first decade of the century. But it has not been enough since then. Sloan has learned nothing from the revolution in standards which is the revitalizing gift of the moderns.

Years ago Sloan said to me, "Design is not important. You stress it far too much." In his book he says, "Painting is drawing with the additional means of color. Painting without drawing is just 'coloriness,' color excitement. To think of color for color's sake is like thinking of sound for sound's sake. Who ever heard of a musician who was passionately fond of B flat? Color is like music."

Sloan does not know design, in the modern sense. He does not know the plastique of painting. He does not know the excitement of colors played in chords for their sensory harmonics. No one need be fond of one color or one sound; all people should be fond of chords of color or sound. "Color is music." Yes, when it is played like music and so adds values to human experience which are equal to the values of subject and its drawing. If Mr. Sloan knew that and other related design knowledge he would be one of our great contemporary artists.

THE SCULPTURE OF AUGUSTE RODIN, by SOMMERVILLE STORY (Oxford, \$3.00).

These excellent and copious photographs of his sculptures reveal Rodin as the great romanticist and, perhaps, as the "greatest thinker in stone of modern times." But the works themselves definitely contradict the assertion of the author, Sommerville Story, that "Rodin was the greatest sculptor since Michael Angelo." The reason is simple. Rodin did not know form design.

RALPH M. PEARSON

Touring the Empire State

by A. A. McCURDY

NEW YORK STATE—the great Empire State—has been endowed by nature with innumerable scenic splendors, which the energy and resourcefulness of the State government and residents have made comparatively easy of access with a maximum of modern comforts and conveniences. Within her boundaries, in addition to the multitudinous attractions of New York City, are many world-famous spots to lure the traveler. The State's geography ranges from seashore to mountain wilderness and includes rolling countryside, inland lakes and dells, and thriving cities and industrial communities. Renowned resort areas are scattered throughout the State.

Premier natural scenic attraction of and one of the wonders of the world is Niagara Falls—mecca for honeymooners for many generations. Nearby is historic Fort Niagara, built in 1726 by the French to prevent control by the English of this "gateway to the West."

The beautiful Finger Lakes region, with its six large lakes and many small ones, awesome glens and wondrous waterfalls—one (Taughannock) fifty feet higher than Niagara—has long been recognized for its scenic glamour as well as historic associations dating back to colonial days.

The Mohawk River Valley, running from the Finger Lakes eastward to the Hudson River north of Albany, attracts the traveler seeking historic sites mingled with scenic grandeur. This is the land of the Iroquois and the Mohawks, immortalized in the tales of James Fenimore Cooper.

Just south of the Junction of the Mohawk with the Hudson River is Albany, capital of the State and second oldest chartered city in the United States. This ancient Dutch trading post possesses many points of scenic and historic interest. The State Capitol and other State buildings; the State Museum; the Philip Schuyler mansion; Fort Cralo, in Rensselaer, where *Yankee Doodle* was written and first sung, are of particular interest.

Northward lies the Saratoga-Lake George region, where are the famous Saratoga battlefield, the State-owned Saratoga spa (only one of its kind in the Western Hemisphere), and the beautiful "Como of America,"—thirty-three-mile-long Lake George.

The Adirondack Mountain region, containing the great Adirondack Forest Preserve—2,165,151 acres of primeval wilderness, with hundreds of resorts, camp sites, trails, and lakes—annually is visited by thousands of nature lovers. Forming the eastern border is historic Lake Champlain—the "Old Warpath of the Nations."

Where Lake Ontario converges with the mighty St. Lawrence River is the picturesque section called the Thousand Islands, though there are actually some 1,700 islands.

South of Albany the traveler finds the Catskill Mountains, land of Rip Van Winkle, a noted summer-resort territory and famed for beauty of scenery and historic associations. Here is also a State Forest Preserve of 230,000 acres.

The majestic sweep of the Hudson River southward from Albany provides

a continuous panorama of eye-filling scenery, highlighted by a number of celebrated attractions. Along its course lie historic West Point, site of the United States Military Academy; Kingston, home of the old Senate House, the oldest public building in the United States, erected in 1676 and first capitol of the State; and, at Newburgh, Washington's onetime headquarters.

On the eastern side of the Hudson and over toward the Connecticut and Massachusetts State lines, lie the Taconic Mountains, with noted spots of beauty and summer-vacation opportunities, containing also some important industrial and resort communities, including Poughkeepsie, Yonkers, and White Plains.

New York City, at the mouth of the Hudson, annually is visited by millions of persons, and is recognized, strange as it may seem, as the greatest summer resort of the country. New York City's attractions alone would require a book to enumerate.

Long Island, with two of the largest boroughs of New York City on its territory, provides one of the finest scenic and resort areas of the State, with splendid ocean beaches along the 127 miles of its southern or Atlantic shore. These include the celebrated Jones Beach State Park and many others. On its north shore, along Long Island Sound, are more fine beaches and several State parks. The interior of the Island is rolling countryside and wooded hills, with fine farms and numerous large estates. At Easthampton is the boyhood home of John Howard Payne, author of *Home, Sweet Home*; at Southampton is the "Hollyhocks House," erected in 1660; and at Sag Harbor is the Whalers' Museum. At Huntington is the Nathan Hale Monument and the birthplace of Walt Whitman, while at Oyster Bay are the grave and shrine of Theodore Roosevelt.

Forum Quiz Answers

1. (a) "The smaller is drawn to the larger and often completely consumed, dear, like the moth in the flame." [Cause: gravity.]
2. (b) The U. S. will resist the efforts of any European nation to conquer or control the destinies of any American country. [Originator: President Monroe, in 1823.]
3. (b) curling
4. (c) "Wind, Sand and Stars," by Antoine de St. Exupéry
5. (e) Chicago
6. (b) Wilbur Cross [called Uncle Toby after a character from Lawrence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, on which he often lectured]
7. soliloquizing [Should be "soliloquizing."]
8. (d) fish are a little hard of hearing [But this is no great handicap,

considering the low level of conversation at the bottom of a creek.]

9. (c) Cromwell
10. (d) At the breakfast table a clergyman's wife need not call him "Reverend." [Score two points for any other answer.]
11. (a) Germany as yet has no death ray capable of annihilating large numbers of troops. [See February FORUM.]
12. (c) Carlsbad Caverns, New Mexico
13. (c) bobsledding
14. (d) Mme. Albert Lebrun [All but President's Wife Lebrun are fashion designers.]
15. (e) "The Man Who Came to Dinner" [Two other companies now playing on the road, one with Woollcott himself in the leading role.]
16. All answers correct. [This is a matter of personal opinion.]

17. (d) machine-tool
18. (a) the melody
19. (d) moaning of the bar
20. (c) sounded like the ideas Art was trying to convey
21. (b) Johann Rudolf Wyss [a Swiss professor, of over a century ago]
22. (a) Benjamin Franklin
23. (c) Nylon [will be used mainly for hosiery but also for textiles, etc.]
24. (c) Martha Berry [founder of Berry Schools at Mt. Berry, Georgia]
25. (b) "It means to block the wheel." ["Sprag" is a block or stitch of wood; "trundle" is a low wheel. Two points for other answers.]

The Quiz Editor is embarrassed and apologetic over having said, in February, that Colonel Batista was the new President of Cuba. But he would have been, if the election hadn't been postponed at the last minute!