

posed thought is he capable of devoting after that to his real duties? He may determine to forget the slander, but its poison will work on his nerves, sap his strength, lower his vitality. Yet he can't spend his time issuing statements, demanding investigations, hurling challenges. So if he is wise

he does not react, lets the rumor play itself out and die, as rumors do, for lack of nourishment. Only if the rumor crystallizes can anything be done about it. Only when the gossip has taken public responsibility for his gossip can the victim strike back.

WALTER LIPPMANN.

Prints and a Frame of Mind

Catherine: What is our business to-day?

Naryshkin: The new museum, Little Mother. But the model will not be ready until to-night.

Catherine: Yes, the museum. An enlightened capital should have a museum. I must have specimens, specimens, specimens, specimens.

—The Great Catherine.

George Bernard Shaw.

HOW true a picture this may be of the founding of museums in Russia historians can dispute with Shaw. But it is a vividly accurate picture of how museums must inevitably be founded in any community determined to have artistic taste and without a rich artistic heritage, notably the United States.

In Europe even minor museums have an essential and intimate relation to the life of their communities, for they are a community's visible memory of itself. As ancestral beauties are menaced there is a desire to conserve them, as instinctive as your desire to keep a photograph of your mother when a girl. The weather-beaten carvings on the cathedral begin to crumble, the altar paintings grow blackened by incessant candle smoke, and a museum grows to preserve them. The pikes and halberds which created Swiss independence are themselves objects of art; and the blue and white legends on the tiled hearths which successive generations of warriors saved, the museums at Zurich or Geneva save again. Even the Louvre is not an art museum only, but a monument to the glory of France, a record not of art alone but of conquest. Its gallery of Rubens celebrates Henry of Navarre and his white plume, the Salon Carré is a reminder of "la gloire de l'empereur" who could exact from Italy some of her greatest masterpieces. You feel that even Sunday strollers are moved by the thought. They never forget, I feel certain, that the emperor's crown is only a few rooms away. When the Louvre cannot awaken their love of beauty, it revives their love of France. Its relation to them is a warm, human thing able to minister to them without exacting more knowledge or taste than they happen to possess.

But in America the art museum can be only an art museum, and you go not to realize America but to learn of every corner of the world that America has ransacked for specimens, typical specimens, great specimens, beautiful specimens, rare specimens, the best specimens money could buy. You go only to see art, reluctantly—though you may not admit it—to the weary business of understanding art by staring at it piecemeal, art which stares at you through a thousand masks, persistently reminding you that they have been brought together for no other purpose than that you should understand them. Millions have been spent, lives have been given, uniquely for you and your growing understanding. And you go finally perhaps to see the Riggs collection of armor, with a sudden conviction that you ought to know more about art, akin to the sudden helpless conviction that you ought to do something for the poor, when, impulsively, you mail a check to some charity.

Such is the American art museum, originally an unpretentious brick building founded at a time when only kindly and far-sighted cranks thought of art at all, now transformed into a Corinthian palace of many marble wings, admonishing us that art is with us.

The Boston Art Museum recently opened its new wing, doubling its size, but the occasion has greater significance. For the first time an American museum has looked not only at itself but over its shoulder at the public who must be made to need it, and has achieved a radical reorganization of its methods. A Renoir, a Monet, and a Chavannes, lost as usual on overcrowded walls of marble and damask, were lent for the occasion. But the occasion is made memorable not by particular masterpieces but by one masterpiece of arrangement: the prints under Mr. Fitzroy Carrington.

"Humanizing an art museum," is his phrase. "Of course," he added, "a print department at best is a minor department. It can never contain a museum's greatest treasures. But it can come closer to life." And the department does, because Mr. Carrington possesses not only the necessary psychological insight, but a rare type of executive imagination as well.

The first problem, as Mr. Carrington sees it, is the problem of presentation. A curator with his material (I am paraphrasing a morning's talk with him) is in the position of a manager with a newly accepted play. He must stage it. The psychology of attention is preliminary to the psychology of appreciation. The problem is how to secure the sort of attention that ripens naturally into interest and enthusiasm, and the first concern is the setting, for there is a physical limit to what the eye can take in. "Put too many etchings on a wall and they become so many postage stamps." What frames a picture is not its frame but its relation to the wall space that bounds it. When will curators of paintings realize that all pictures are subject to the same law?

You may have wondered why plaster casts of the Venus of Milos are so omnipresent in the world, until you remember that the statue is shown in a room alone. So Mr. Carrington, given two large rooms, divided the space into six, none larger than the ordinary living-room of a private house, compact in two adjoining rows of three with a larger room across the end. The whole group is no larger than a small flat. There is rarely more than a single row of prints, and as few as possible on each wall, every wall being broken into smaller units by a door, with the result that each room contains so little that you grasp it as a unit.

Pironesi's engravings of Rome strung along the entrance hall lead you, like an overture to an opera, into the first room of engraved and etched portraits, which embodies part of Senator Sumner's collection of prints with which the department was founded. "They represent," Mr. Carrington remarked, "what Sumner would have done to-day with greater opportunities." Observe this first departure from traditional museum policy; a donor's gift is not enshrined, his intentions are realized. The room of contemporary etchings institutes a more revolutionary departure. With Brangwyn, Zorn, Lepère and Steinlen are hung unknown younger men. Mr. Carrington knew nothing more of them than these single prints, but he hung them to let the public know of a new man and to "size him up," whether or not the dealers thought him worth patronizing. Compare this with the traditional museum policy of stamping only established reputations with official approval, and hanging them, eternally unchallenged, occasionally long after they are obsolete.

A room containing Meryon's etchings of Paris, from whom the cult of picturesque Paris dates, adjoins the men of 1830, his contemporaries. From Turner's mezzotints you enter a room of Dürer's wood engravings illustrating the life of the Virgin, and from one corner before his "Flight

into Egypt," through the door leading into the last little gallery devoted to his predecessor Schongauer, you catch a glimpse of Schongauer's etching of the same subject almost identical in composition. You observe the formative influence at a glance, and have instinctively realized the meaning of comparative criticism.

If nothing you have seen yet interests you, it is a step into the enormous library of prints where you may browse for hours over other original Dürers and Rembrandts. There are complete facsimiles of all prints not originals, and a growing file of modern magazine and book illustrations which will presently be as complete. In the basement below are two presses, one for etchings, the other for woodcuts, where the co-director of the department, an expert in the technique of printing, has office hours twice a week and will aid anyone in pulling off experimental proofs.

You have strolled through these rooms as pleasantly as through the rooms of a friend, and realized a short history of etching with as little fatigue as if you had taken down a few books from his shelves. And as the exhibit in one room is changed on an average of every three weeks, you are tempted back as naturally as you are to a succession of "one-man shows." Prints have been humanized because they have been related to your needs and mine, alike to the connoisseur's who comes to compare a rare proof of a Meryon with one he owns, and to the embryonic collector's, eager to find younger men he can afford to buy. The department reaches not only the etcher with his own press but the beginner without one, not only the painter but the illustrator forming his style, and eager to see Charles Dana Gibson in a recent number of *Life*, as well as Charles Keene in an early number of *Punch*.

Etching became more real to me than it had been since a summer afternoon seven years ago, when I sat beside a country road, my burin a needle stuck into the end of a lead pencil, scratching the outlines of Marsden Hartley's cabin on my first plate. It was "bitten" in front of the barn with a chicken's feather to spread the acid, while a bottle of acid fumed in the shade of an elm, and hens skipped about it restlessly like tourists at the edge of a volcano. I wanted to etch again more keenly than I wanted to see the other Dürers in the library, and I regretted returning to a city where, although Dürers are exhibited, presses for one's own experiments are less accessible. With me, as with anyone, Mr. Carrington had accomplished his purpose. He had not only shown me art, he had brought me back to life again, even to my own.

LEE SIMONSON.

The Stout Lady Buys A Dancer

THIS morning I sold an etching to a stout lady with a dog. I liked the picture, and was sorry to let it go. The subject represented an Oriental girl invoking the gods before the dance. She kneels, praying perhaps for a renewal of that primitive ecstasy of which the dance was born in some jungle long ago. Or—who can tell?—she might be praying to find favor in the eyes and imagination of a king. At any rate, I am convinced that her prayer will be granted. No divinity, at least no eastern god, could forget the vital essence of things so far as to separate youth and grace and desire from their consummation. Ah well, adieu; the mystery of your beauty still glows and charms; perhaps it is better that I have lost you so soon.

But the stout lady with the dog. What will she do with the little dancer? How much is that scene a reflection of her own thought or emotion? Does it express and make manifest a secret mood within her own life? Does it interpret a personal experience, providing a more romantic setting to some episode, or at least some desire, which the commonplace days would otherwise drag down to oblivion? Away with your critics who set the worth of a picture upon any arrangement of color and line. They are scientists, not men; and may I never sell canvasses except to those finding in them something contributive to their own inner life—something explaining, or confirming, or renewing, their hold upon self and the elusive spiritual world. So if the stout lady with the dog feels her stoutness the less and her capacity for vision the more, we have both done well. Perhaps hers is the one nature for which the sketch was made, herself the very mate in experience to whom the artist sent forth his work, when in the fulness of inspiration he let it go. I hope that she is.

But that is not all. For a long time I held the check by which this exchange was made, and pondered over it. The figure was less than the market value of the dog, but that may not matter. What caused me to ponder was the reflection that the wrong person might easily have bought the etching for the same price and thereby deprived the stout lady not of an object merely, but a joy; not of a possession, but of an increased sense of life.

As a picture dealer I meet with many people and opinions. I meet the "practical" man who gets no impression from art; I meet the enthusiastic woman whose impressions are second-hand, taken from a dead critic or a passing mode; the opinion that art, like faith, is dead forever; that art is essentially parochial and will decay with the fusing of nationality in commerce; that art is this, that or the other tech-

nical achievement; but the only person who really makes me feel that handling pictures is different from handling motor-cars or canned meat is he who accidentally discovers some canvas which gives him a sharp personal impression, as of a page recovered from an old forgotten diary. This is the only kind of transaction which makes me actually believe in art as something unalterably opposed to industry.

But there is always the question of money; usually the right man cannot afford the picture. The artist, I am almost certain, would prefer to give his work freely to the man who truly and passionately desired it for the sake of a personal benefit, and who knew its inner meaning by reason of its affinity to his own experience. Studying these different attitudes I have grown convinced that pictures and sculpture and music are created only from personal experience in the artist's life, and have no general value save as they can isolate similar experiences from the monotonous context of things in the lives of others, serving to interpret them more fully or in some way to impress their importance more firmly upon another's self-consciousness. And by studying natures indifferent to art I realize that art has no meaning for them precisely because they have little sense of personal significance, little power to create or retain those centers of thought and emotion corresponding to the moods that artists express—because, in short, they have too little of that self-consciousness which alone, from the human as opposed to the biological point of view, is life.

But this takes me back to the check I held in my hand so long and pondered over. What manner of world is it we have made, this modern world dominated by the idea that gold is currency between man and man? For we have not one currency, but two. It is money indeed which transfers the ownership of things from one person to another, without respect to the real relation the thing owned bears to its possessor; but art is the medium for transferring the fulness and meaning of life from one to another personality. As things are, both currencies necessarily persist, and the question is not whether they contradict each other but on what terms they should be made supplementary. Shall the transfer of life by art proceed as incidental to the transfer of things by money, or the transfer of things be made to serve the creation of life? The poverty of civilization, from the point of view of being, is obviously due to its wealth as power of material exchange. Everywhere the creative nature is compelled to observe a standard and a law applicable not to men but to things. And more and more, in consequence, the purchasing power of money decreases with respect to its control of knowledge and enthusiasm. I am not an economist, and I apolo-