

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

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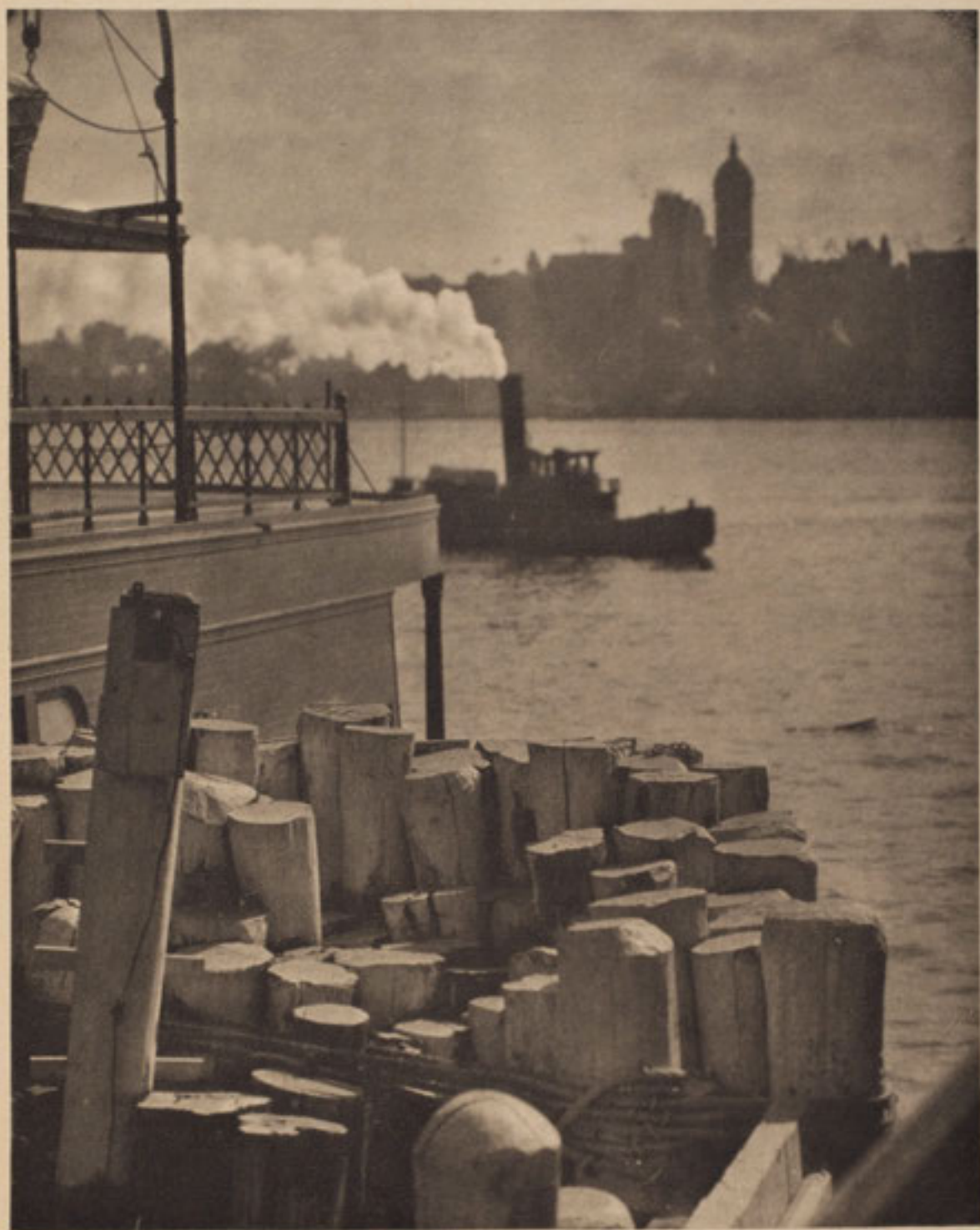


PLATES

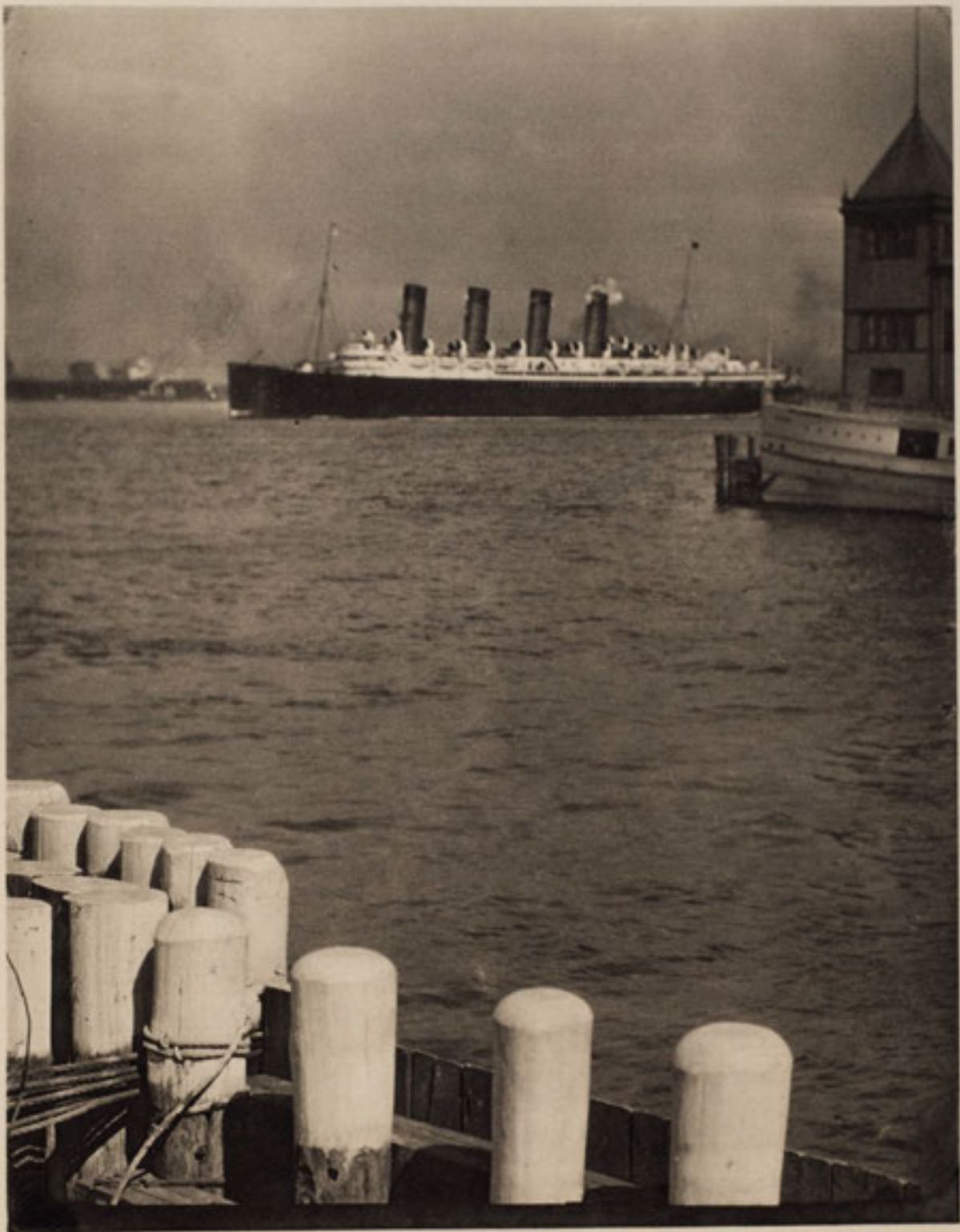
ALFRED STIEGLITZ

- I. The City of Ambition (1910)
- II. The City Across the River (1910)
- III. The Ferry Boat (1910)
- IV. The Mauretania (1910)
- V. Lower Manhattan (1910)
- VI. Old and New New York (1910)













THE UNCONSCIOUS IN ART

A WORK of art that we can understand at sight is mediocre or worse. Genius stirs our ignorance first. That which comes out of the deeps must make its appeal to the deeps. It is the unknown, the indefinable, the thing that "worries" you in Rodin, Whistler, Matisse, Rops that fascinates you. It brings you back again and again, and each time that we know more of them we know less of them. That is the paradox of the Infinite.

Every thought has its corresponding emotion; no thought, no emotion—that is a philosophic axiom. But there are aesthetic emotions for which there are no corresponding thoughts; emotions that awaken the Unconscious alone and that never touch the brain; emotions vague, indefinable, confused; emotions that wake whirlwinds and deep-sea hurricanes.

Before the Beautiful some of us are in danger of aesthetic catalepsy. Thought knows not what to paint on these states of aesthetic subconsciousness. There are no idea-pigments that correspond to these emotions, these nostalgic shadows that never quite come out of their tombs.

Monet, Poe and Blake were three types wherein the Unconscious tried to render itself intelligible. And the world always questions the sanity of this kind of art, but the sanity of the world is the sanity of common sense and common sense in art we can dismiss.

So profoundly is the mind of genius rooted in the Unconscious that it never has a clear idea of just what it is doing. It obeys. From this the idea of "having been chosen" is born in the brain of the great painter, the great sculptor, the great musician. Who knows the exact effect or worth of his precious work? What great artist knows what he is doing at any particular time? He is a tool in the hands of the Unconscious. He brings a message to the world that he himself does not know the import of.

Conscious effort, conscious willing, the open-eyed act is always the *last* of a series, and not the first. It is the flower of preceding incalculable sowings in the Unconscious. Consciousness in art is only the antenna of the blind unknowable Force and intelligence is only its nerve.

Imagination is the dream of the Unconscious. It is the realm of the gorgeous, monstrous hallucinations of the Unconscious. It is the hasheesh of genius. Out of the head of the artist issues all the beauty that is transferred to canvas, but the roots of his imagination lie deeper than his personality.

The soul of the genius is the safety vault of the race, the treasure-pocket of the Unconscious soul of the world. Here age after age the Secretive God stores its dreams. And the product of genius overwhelms us because it has collaborated with the Infinite.

BENJAMIN DE CASSERES.

STRUCTURAL UNITS

“ART is opposed to general ideas, it describes only the individual, it desires only the unique,” is Marcel Schwob’s definition of modern art. We accept it as a comprehensive phrase that summarizes the aspirations of contemporary aesthetic activity.

Undoubtedly, most modern art workers adhere to it. It is their purpose to create or recreate individual life.

The same definition occurred to me as I looked at Max Weber’s strange architectonic structures of human forms that, despite their extravagance and strangeness, impress us with an indescribable something such as we may feel before some old mural painting. My first thought was that also this artist belonged to the aesthetic anarchy of youthful enthusiasm which indulges in atavistic idealizations merely to appear original. But on more careful reflection I changed my opinion. This man does not parody the moribund poetry of life, I argued with myself. He searches for some big truth underlying the outward appearance of torso and limbs, of facial expression, the play of muscles and the moulding of flesh. He dissects the human form into geometrical ratios and color patterns and apparently proceeds like a primitive bent upon conquering his own knowledge of visual appearances.

This battle has often been fought; it is an old doctrine, but a more profound one than the individual theory of modern artists.

For has it not been the mission of all great painters and sculptors to reconstruct archetypes! The harmonious proportion and movement of nature determined the rhythm of their harmonies. A salutary greeting to those who revive it in the art and thought of today, as it is merely a memory among the adventurous enterprises and prodigious exploitations of modern art.

Modern art is too conscious, too scientific and legitimate, too persistent and self-important. Ancient art is more abstract, inexplicable, a vague conception of life, of the wholeness of nature rather than the individual absorption of one man’s emotion. In former periods of art, style was the product of national pride, religious fervor and universal sentiment. Art today is entangled in modern thought, but the artist remains an alien in the midst of it. Homer’s “Penelope” and the “Venus of Melos” are symbols with a whole country and civilization as a background. A character of Ibsen or a single figure by Whistler are individual interpretations of realistic vision. They attempt to typify, but do not go beyond a concentration of facts.

Nearly all modern painters deal either with sensuous forms, traditional allegory or finite imagery. The art of Boecklin and Thoma, as Meier Graefe has so aptly argued, is little more than skilful stage managing. Their paintings resemble spectacular masquerades and dances, not unlike the Masques of Ben Jonson, for the delectation of an educated mob; while the tentative work of Marées, whose pictorial visions always seemed unmanageable, expresses a truer artistic ideal. Glance over the ranks of modern painters, analyze them from this precipitous viewpoint, and you will realize how few will survive this

criticism. The art of Millet, Chavannes, Rodin, Cézanne, has the ambition to generate some rare composite type of beauty. With them beauty becomes distinguished, individual, a noble evocation of intellectual and emotional life. But they all express solitary inventions. There is no supreme harmony that links them together. There seems to exist in our time no need of pure and fixed fundamental forms.

In that sense Blake went farther than any. To him line was an illusive phantasmagoria that gleamed in an underground world. He gathered his live inspiration from the primitive elemental ideas of beauty. He felt vaguely that art had to be drawn back to its source to be classified and corrected, and that from time to time it must burst through the surface of conventions with irresistible natural power.

Max Weber is such a visionary. He has a fine sense for unusual color combinations and a keen perception of form construction. Nothing would be more futile than to assert that this young artist cannot draw. But, like Blake, he shrinks from the notion that the form the eye apprehends is all, and for that reason entertains a proud disdain for the cold correctness of academic draughtsmanship. He has the analytical mind for investigation and that revolutionary desire to create a new world out of himself. A futile dream, as Goethe has told in his Faust. Art is a spontaneous growth out of the influences of contemporary society. If the ideals of society are crude and narrow, art cannot expand to its highest sense of beauty. One mind, however inexhaustible, cannot be the fountain of youth that rejuvenates the mildewed conventions of art. Every man of genius has to go back to something that is outside of him.

A painter's defiance of academic form may lead him to the many-headed gods of the East, the twisted limbs of Polynesian idols, the grotesque carvings of Totem-poles, the overcharged symbols of Mexican reliefs, and the disturbing, incomprehensible, almost shapeless figures of sanguinary divinities of some mysterious black race. But he needs must dive into some world of shadows where material facts dissolve; and images, without losing their spiritual motive, whirl and stretch into the infinite. He must be an iconoclast and shatter the traditions which cling about the relics of former artistic ideals. He must see the past and present with fresh eyes and translate these manifestations in a new, untrammelled fashion.

The Impressionist changes local values to suit his own exceptional color schemes. Why should a similar privilege be denied to the interpreter of form? Why should he not pursue it to its structural units, and discover in them a new flavor of beauty? Does not form possess the same themes of variations, amplification and admixture as color? Geometrical shapes form the intelligent and austere understructure of all arts, in a palace as well as a poem, in a symphonic movement as well as in a monument or a mural decoration. A rhomb, an isosceles and ellipse are beautiful in themselves. The painter who pursues this path of the harmonic relation of parts will have the big conception of the generality of things, without which art lacks the sense of proportion and inner harmony, no matter how enchanting it may appear to the casual beholder. To

fix in drawn or painted outlines and planes the truly statuesque element of the human figure, to discover its plastic attitudes and gestures that, however complicated and dissonant, have been eternally the same, is surely a more vital vocation than to make an accurate copy of some professional model and to pass it for a Job or Danaea.

All great art expressions are extractions, typifications, symbolizations of general laws and apparitions, composite expressions of such concentration and breadth that they reflect unconsciously our noblest emotions about man and his relation to the world. It is this vagueness of thought endeavoring to sound the foundation of all things, this want of definition, hinting at ideas that cannot be precisely expressed, that give to art its ultimate and finest significance.

SADAKICHI HARTMANN.

AN EXTRACT FROM BERGSON*

"Instinct is sympathy. If this sympathy could extend its object and also reflect upon itself, it would give us the key to vital operations—just as intelligence, developed and disciplined, guides us in to matter. For—we cannot too often repeat it—intelligence and instinct are turned in opposite directions, the former towards inert matter, the latter towards life. Intelligence, by means of science, which is its work, will deliver up to us more and more completely the secret of physical operations; of life it brings us, and moreover only claims to bring us, a translation in terms of inertia. It goes all round life, taking from outside the greatest possible number of views of it, drawing it into itself instead of entering into it. But it is to the very inwardness of life that intuition leads us—by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely.

That an effort of this kind is not impossible, is proved by the existence in man of an aesthetic faculty along with normal perception. Our eye perceives the features of the living being, merely as assembled, not as mutually organized. The intention of life, the simple movement that runs through the lines, that binds them together and gives them significance, escapes it. This intention is just what the artist tries to regain, in placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy, in breaking down, by an effort of intuition, the barrier that space puts up between him and his model. It is true that this aesthetic intuition, like external perception, only attains the individual. But we can conceive an inquiry turned in the same direction as art, which would take life in general for its object, just as physical science, in following to the end the direction pointed out by external perception, prolongs the individual facts into general laws. No doubt this philosophy will never obtain a knowledge of its object comparable to that which science has of its own. Intelligence remains the luminous nucleus around which instinct, even enlarged and purified into intuition, forms only a vague nebulosity. But, in default of knowledge properly so called, reserved to pure intelligence, intuition may

*"Creative Evolution," by Henri Bergson.

enable us to grasp what it is that intelligence fails to give us, and indicate the means of supplementing it. On the one hand, it will utilize the mechanism of intelligence itself to show how intellectual molds cease to be strictly applicable; and on the other hand, by its own work, it will suggest to us the vague feeling, if nothing more, of what must take the place of intellectual molds. Thus, intuition may bring the intellect to recognize that life does not quite go into the category of the many nor yet into that of the one; that neither mechanical causality nor finality can give a sufficient interpretation of the vital process. Then, by the sympathetic communication which it establishes between us and the rest of the living, by the expansion of our consciousness which it brings about, it introduces us into life's own domain, which is reciprocal interpenetration, endlessly continued creation. But, though it thereby transcends intelligence, it is from intelligence that has come the push that has made it rise to the point it has reached. Without intelligence, it would have remained in the form of instinct, riveted to the special object of its practical interest, and turned outward by it into movements of locomotion."

THE LIBERATOR—A FABLE

ONCE upon a time there was an ass. He was a very peculiar ass; for he had an *idée fixe*. He was a frog and, instead of "Haw-he, he haw" he brayed nothing but "Quock, quock."

The most distinguished among the learned asses cudgelled their wits in vain over their co-ass—"this psychopathic phenomenon in the stream of consciousness." Everybody bewailed his mental derangement. For he was still young, and seemed, otherwise, a most promising ass. Yet exhort or humor him as they would, they could get no answer from him but a haughty "Quock, quock."

So in a little while he grew from an object of pity into the stock butt of asinine humor. For, by this time, he had become exceedingly proud of his art of quockery, and as blown up with conceit as a college president.

The older generation of asses vanished, and their descendants inherited the day and spirit of the day. But still the psychopathic ass continued to sing "Quock, quock."

Then Thistle-tide came along—the time when all Asininia was wont to hold its great singing contest, and the foremost asses of all lands flocked to that Olympia. Its heralding was heard in every nook and cranny of the world, even unto the confines of Asininia; and admission to the arena cost an incredible number of thistle-heads.

Now the rumor spread like wildfire that the quock-ass had announced himself as a contestant. "Haw-he-yaws"! But it caused a sensation!

The mouths of some watered with a foretaste of the treat, others were almost apoplectic with indignation at the quocker's presumption. But from now on his name was on every ass's tongue.

On the day of the meet the arena was crowded to bursting point. Some enthusiasts even attempted to climb trees, so as to see a bit of the excitement. Nothing was spoken of but the *début* of the quocker.

The singing began, but—amazing!—the most famous asses received no attention whatever. Ears and eyes were closed to them by eagerness for the event of the day.

At length HE stepped forward. Frenzied applause, hisses and cat-calls as furious greeted him. Quite serious-minded and respectable asses came to loggerheads with one another over him, and bandied Billingsgate. "Faker—Ignoramus—Scoundrel—Grafter—Academician—Degenerate"—were the mildest of the compliments.

Sweet as the twittering of birds, clear as a battle-cry, tuneful as "Natoma," the quocker's song rang out above the din.

Scarcely had he finished, when the two parties came to blows. First, long ears were whipped across opposing pates, until the straw flew. Then, all decorum was cast to the winds and hoofs came into play. Many the jaw-bone cracked across! Many the tail torn from its socket! Many the costly thistle trampled under foot! Finally, the quockians carried the day.

Then was their hero borne aloft by his youthful followers, and whosoever ventured his native He-haw—albeit ever so faintly—was driven forth from communion with all true and right-minded asses; and all his doings were as mush.

Sir Jack Quock, however, remained the "Liberator of Art"; until—— it occurred to another ass to bray "Ba-aa, ba-aa."

R. SCHUMACHER.*

* Translated from the German, by Herbert Small.

PLATES

ALFRED STIEGLITZ

VII. The Aeroplane (1910)

VIII. A Dirigible (1910)





THE EXHIBITIONS AT "291"

THE season which closed last May with an exhibition of the work of Pablo Picasso has been such as greatly to strengthen the position of the Photo-Secession in the art world, and has been, in a way, the culmination of the work carried on for three seasons in the reduced quarters of the Secession.

After the series of exhibitions held this year, it is felt that although much of interest remains to be shown, the future exhibitions of the Photo-Secession will hardly, for some time, exemplify any decided advance along the lines which have been followed for three years. It must have been plain to anyone who has followed with care the exhibitions held at the Little Galleries, that their sometimes surprising sequence was not the result of chance, but that every move was made with some definite purpose in view; was indeed part of a logical development; and was always made at the psychological moment.

In CAMERA WORK, No. XXXIII, we reviewed the exhibitions of lithographs and drawings by French artists, the paintings of Henri Rousseau, and the drawings and etchings by Gordon Craig, all of which had been exhibited in the earlier part of the season of 1910-1911.

MAX WEBER EXHIBITION

The month of January was devoted to an exhibition of paintings by one of the young American artists, Mr. Max Weber, a graduate of Pratt Institute and a pupil of Henri Matisse. His work shows that he has done much original thinking, and is remarkable for the blending of emotional pictorial qualities with rational construction. Form, with him, is not the reproduction on canvas of the image formed on the retina. It is analyzed into its constituent parts, its bulk is emphasized, the relationship of lines and masses is explained. Mr. Weber shows that he possesses thoroughly the technique of drawing and painting. His compositions are logical and forceful, his mind is creative, his color is pleasing—and yet his work worries one. It appeals so much to the mind that it challenges criticism, and one cannot quite relax in front of it. This show was a preparation and an introduction to the work of Paul Cézanne and of Pablo Picasso, which followed respectively in March and April.

MARIN EXHIBITION

The water-colors of John Marin, which decorated the walls of the Little Galleries during February, following the exhibition of Mr. Weber, were like a breath of fresh air or a field of flowers to one who has just left the classroom after working out an arduous problem of trigonometry. One relaxed with pleasure before these refreshing transcriptions of the wonder and grandeur of the Tyrolean Alps; and a few views of New York city which were shown whetted our curiosity for a more comprehensive reflection of the attitude of this master of water-color towards this wonderful product of commercial and industrial giants. This was the third exhibition of Marin's held at the Little Galleries, this distinction being fully warranted by the importance of his work.

The former exhibitions were reviewed in Nos. XXVII and XXX of CAMERA WORK.

CÉZANNE EXHIBITION

During the month of March the Secession gave the American public its first opportunity to become acquainted with Paul Cézanne. On first glancing at the few touches of color which made up the water-colors by Cézanne, the fount of inspiration of the younger school of painting, the beholder was tempted to exclaim, "Is that all?" Yet if one gave oneself a chance, one succumbed to the fascination of his art. The white paper no longer seemed empty space, but became vibrant with sunlight. The artist's touch was so sure, each stroke was so willed, each value so true, that one had no surrender to the absolute honesty, sincerity of purpose and great mentality of him whom posterity may rank as the greatest artist of the last hundred years.

PICASSO EXHIBITION

In the month of April, Pablo Picasso was introduced to the American public. Picasso, a young Spaniard living in Paris, is one of the leading influences among modern painters. His work is analyzed with great acumen in CAMERA WORK, Nos. XXXIV—XXXV, by Mr. Marius de Zayas, who also contributed to the "Forum" a valuable essay on modern art in Paris, which will also be found reprinted in the pages of the same issue. Mr. de Zayas's exposition of Picasso's work was printed as an advance sheet of CAMERA WORK and distributed with the catalogue of the exhibition, to satisfy those who sought enlightenment as to the aims and purposes of an artist who is breaking virgin ground.

It was intended to wind up the season with a show of photographs, original prints of D. O. Hill, whose work is well known to the readers of CAMERA WORK and also to the visitors of the Photo-Secession galleries. But in view of the strenuousness of the season and the prolongation of the Picasso show, this exhibition was postponed until some future date.

It was the consensus of opinion of the live critics, the live art-loving public and the live artists, that the series held in the Little Galleries (1910-1911) was without question the most stimulating influence of the season in the so-called art world of New York—in other words, it was a rich and powerful force. It is well to remember that the exhibitions held at "291" are looked upon by those who arrange them as nothing more than a series of mere demonstrations, each demonstration being of unusual value in itself, but of greater value in its relationship to the underlying idea which has brought forth "291."

As is our custom, we reprint for the sake of record, some of the newspaper notices which appeared in New York on the above shows. We furthermore reprint in full, Mr. Fitzgerald's two-column editorial on the new art criticism. This editorial refers to de Zayas's exposition of Picasso which was printed in full in the last number of CAMERA WORK.

Mr. Arthur Hoeber in the *N. Y. Globe*:

It used to be a basic principle in art that one could go as far as one liked, make all sorts of experiments, diverge in various ways, but always the work should have a superstructure of truth, and while facts after all are relative, there are certain underlying conditions that may not be ignored, no matter what vagaries the painter undertakes. The features of the human face, for example, must bear some relation one to the other, and there are demonstrable laws of anatomy that cannot be ignored. Yet the new movement that seems to have taken Paris by storm and certainly raised no end of a storm in London, inaugurated by, shall we say, Matisse, Cézanne, and others, goes its own wayward course—by no means a cheerful one, either—and would seem to make ugliness its aim, while it defies all known laws of construction, balance, color, form and texture. We are asked to see charm of suggestion, given by crudity, awkwardness and repulsiveness, and we are calmly told that our eyes hitherto have been badly trained, that we have seen wrong, that the things we have admired lack character, vitality, force, suggestiveness—all, in short, that the advance movement now gives. In other words, these revolutionists would change every previous point of view and substitute therefor a humanity of their own, not as God has made it, and which to ordinary mortals, as well as Himself, seemed good, but a humanity in which grace, beauty, conformity, balance and obedience to natural laws shall have no part. They would take away our ideals and substitute therefor dreariness, heaviness, desolation.

Just at present the newest exponent of this art nouveau, one Max Weber, holds an exhibition of a score of his work at the Photo-Secession Gallery, 291 Fifth avenue. Time was when these delightful rooms were decorated with photographic prints of which Mr. Stieglitz is easily the most competent authority in this—or perhaps any other country. As a connoisseur of painting, however, we cannot speak so highly of his endowment—that is, if we are to take much of the work he has admitted into his gallery as justifying his art knowledge. The more the work is strange, crude, awkward, appalling, evidently the more it is in favor with him. The present display marks the high-water mark of eccentricity. If it has any reason to exist, then the eyes of the world in general are wrong, which, by the way, is just what these men insist. We are shown females with eyes looking for all the world like two black clam shells slapped on the face, with a mouth the size of a pea, and a nose unrecognizable to the average authority on noses. We are told the psychology of the performance compensates for all other lackings, and we are asked to see therein a thousand and one attributes that are explained with a gush of meaningless words. One is reminded of the father of the late Augustus Saint Gaudens, who used to remark, "When you say that, it sounds like nothing at all." Here are travesties of the human form, here are forms that have no justification in nature, but that seem for all the world like the emanations of some one not in his right mind, such as one might expect from the inmate of a lunatic asylum, and the landscapes have an equal relation to nature as the world generally sees it.

It is difficult to write of these atrocities with moderation, for they are positively an insult to ordinary intelligence, and presuppose, most of all, on the part both of maker and spectator an utter lack of humor—the one unforgivable sin. We are told that such pictures are the rage abroad, that they make all other efforts seem impossible beside them, which we can well understand, for if these are right, then surely all the rest of the world is wrong. At any rate, by the side of these offerings by Max Weber, the Matissees seem academic, conventional, commonplace, and we are sure before long the French innovator will be relegated to a back seat. If these have any significance, then Michael Angelo, Leonardo, Titian, Rembrandt, Veronese, and the rest of the men hitherto regarded as among the princes of art, become not only back numbers, but ignoramuses, charlatans, whom it were well to consign to the awful obscurity they richly merit. Yet we make bold to believe that some of these Italians and other Europeans who flourished long, long ago, will somehow manage to get along and still to have a crowd of foolish admirers, and that this new school will finally take its place with other fads that have had their brief day and have finally been put where they belong as curious manifestations of unbalanced minds that sought to obtain notoriety by novelty that which was denied them because of their incompetence when they worked along sane and logical methods. We only recommend this display as a freakish manifestation of unrest in art, perhaps as a protest against the conventional, if you will, but a protest which serves no purpose, spreads no new facts, that only in the end makes more confused all principles of truth and beauty.

Mr. J. Edgar Chamberlin in the *Evening Mail*:

Mr. Stieglitz's catholicity and inclusiveness, at the little Photo-Secession Gallery, have been commended in this column. Radicalism and originality should have their forum, because genius is always dropping in upon us like a thief in the night, and we never know what strange guise it may take. And many beautiful and significant things have been shown at the Photo-Secession.

But we are inclined to think that Mr. Stieglitz has gone too far in admitting the pictures of Max Weber. Here is an artist who has done very strong work, indeed, but who has reverted to a rude sort of Aztec symbolism which seems to be without significance to any soul but himself. Grotesque profiles, enormous eyes, bodies like jointed dolls, barbaric patterns in the place of landscapes—these are the elements of Mr. Weber's pictures, and their ugliness is appalling.

On the mysterious rock temples of the Mayas, these figures may have possessed significance. To us they signify nothing except a strange, insane obsession on the part of an artist.

Mr. Tyrrell in the *Evening World*:

Alfred Stieglitz, the unterrified virtuoso of the Photo-Secession Gallery, No. 291 Fifth avenue, has given Mr. Max Weber a show, to the extent of hanging thirty-one of the latter's alleged drawings and paintings, and admitting the public free to see them (if they care to) from 10 a. m. to 6 p. m. daily, Sundays excepted, during the remainder of this month. There is no numbered catalogue, but a printed "list of pictures" gives the titles all in a bunch, and you are supposed to guess which is which. It is a lot of fun, and almost any title will fit almost any picture. For example, here is a greenish thing which may be either "Water Pitcher and Apples" or "Connecticut Landscape." It is next to impossible to distinguish "Portrait" from "Congo Statuette," or the "White Horse" from the "Soprano Soloist." In fact, the name "Vaudeville," instead of being applied to one unidentified comic valentine, ought to be used to designate the whole lot—for instinctively you feel that the name Weber is incomplete without Fields.

Yet Mr. Stieglitz insists that this exhibition is no joke, but dead serious and on the level.

Is it contended that Mr. Weber really knows how to draw, if he chose to? you ask. Sure! Here are some charcoal drawings of his that won prizes at the Paris art schools, only they are not shown with the other things. There is no distinction in mere draughtsmanship, you know. It is the freaks that get the attention nowadays. They are conjectured to prove independence of convention, and a naïve, fresh and primitive way of seeing things.

No one is going to believe, however, that nature alone ever made anybody so bad an artist as all this. Such grotesquerie could only be acquired by long and perverse practice.

Mr. B. P. Stephenson in the *Evening Post*:

We have long followed the exhibitions of the young artists who make the Photo-Secession Galleries at No. 291 Fifth avenue their headquarters. We have listened to their own explanations of their views and tried to understand. At times we have thought ourselves on the point of comprehending when something still more extravagant than anything that had appeared would be exhibited on the walls of the galleries. What we believed we had learned was shocked out of us. But never have we received so many shocks in such quick succession as from the exhibition of paintings and drawings by Max Weber of this city, now being held at the Photo-Secession rooms. We had suggested that the exhibition of Post-Impressionists, which caused such a sensation in London, should be brought over here, so that at least New Yorkers could learn something about what was moving in the air of art of the European Continent. We are content now that that collection shall remain abroad, for Max Weber's pictures are said to be a good example of what a Post-Impressionism exhibition should be.

The catalogue contains some thirty-two names of pictures, but no numbers are given. So the visitor must fit the names to whatever paintings seem to suit them best. That is what any one who has a liking for intricate puzzles might enjoy. What title shall be fitted to what is presumably the head of a woman, whose skin is bright orange, while the shadows are an equally bright green? Shall it be "Portrait" or "Bananas?" It might well be the latter, for the extraordinarily long neck, if it is really a neck, and an arm, if it be an arm, are not unlike brown bananas. Is a group

of forms, made up of angles with circular eyes that fill more than one-half of the profiles, the "Jardin de Plantes" or an "Indian Vase?" There is one piece of landscape which is an attempt at sanity, but that is the only interesting thing about it. There is one group of nudes where the central figure suggests something like a human being, but, outside of these, the pictures are a lot of extravaganzas in art.

Mr. James B. Townsend in the *American Art News*:

At the Photo-Secession Society, 291 Fifth avenue, some thirty examples in oil and water-color, and a few pencil and crayon drawings by Max Weber, of this city, are on exhibition through January 31. Mr. Weber is a Post-Post-Impressionist, or in other words, Matisse, Gauguin and the late Henri Rousseau—plus. If the best definition of art is that it is an expression of the emotions, one must marvel at the emotional side of Mr. Weber's make-up. He is an admirer of Henry Rousseau and says that he is proud to be the owner of the curious productions by the dead man, recently shown in this gallery. But Mr. Weber, to whose vision a young woman singer appears to have a neck like a badly turned piano leg, triangular eyes, purple arms and a green forehead, would seem to have gone beyond Rousseau in the weirdness of most of his productions. They cannot be called pictures—these presentments of distorted vision on canvas or paper—but productions or expressions of an emotion and a vision that are not shared by other human beings. A future generation may call this "art," but the present writer cannot conscientiously give it that term. Some other works, and notably a decoration with figures, have a certain sense of form and decorative quality. The experiment of the exhibition of these weird works is interesting. It is another ripple—following preceding ones made by Matisse and Rousseau, under Mr. Stieglitz's catholicity of view, at these galleries, in all probability—of the wave of Post-Impressionism soon to break upon these shores after its arrival from France and England.

Mr. Israel White in the *Newark Evening News*:

In the little Gallery of the Photo-Secession, Max Weber is showing as strange a lot of canvases as have ever been gathered together in America. That they are naïve we will not deny, nor will we claim that naïvete has ever sufficed to produce serious art yet. Mr. Weber wishes to be taken very seriously and he must be taken that way or not at all. Occasionally a suggestion of grace is found—probably an accident, as that is contrary to this painter's notion of aesthetics—and more frequently a juxtaposition of color that delights the eye, and this is not accidental.

Beyond this the pictures will be of little interest in themselves. But because they represent a novel idea and what is recognized abroad as a new movement, it may be spoken of here; for already the name of Paul Cézanne has become familiar and the Post-Impressionists have been given their name. In justice to Mr. Weber, however—and to Cézanne—it should be explained that these canvases were painted in this country during the last two or three years and so do not reflect any one but Weber himself.

The spirit that lies underneath Mr. Weber's experiment is one that commends itself even after it has been christened "The Revolt Against Respectability," for the stamp of "respectability" may be and often is placed upon that which merits no serious respect. The trouble with "respectability" is that it usually relates only to the outward appearance of things and easily becomes a mere formality with its artificial rules and conventions. In fact, as the word is often used, it signifies very moderate praise, denoting that the object in question will pass muster according to a medium standard that has been arbitrarily set.

The necessity for such standards is very obvious. Taking human society as we find it, the unwritten laws of conventionality become conservative forces without which the social fabric would soon go to pieces. Within certain limits there must be a standardizing of morals, behavior, literature and other forms of art, for these standards respect the elemental laws which even a genius cannot ignore, and there are religious as well as aesthetic geniuses. Chesterfields as well as Dostoievskys.

"The idea of perfection," said Morris Llewellyn Cooke in his recent report on academic and industrial efficiency, "is not involved in standardization. The standard method of doing anything is simply the best method that can be devised at the time the standard is drawn"—by

those that draw the standard, of course, though some one else might do very much better. But whoever may set the standards, there is a great danger that anything done by rule will soon lack spontaneity, sincerity and originality; for the letter still killeth while the spirit giveth life. The painting of respectability always tends to become a conventional sort of picture-making, inoffensive but uninspiring. And very many of the collections of this and other countries hardly deserve the name of collections since they consist simply of representative works of standard artists and bear no impress of the collector's individuality and personal taste. There is no particular reason why they should be kept together. One understands how far the process of standardization has gone when he hears a dealer say: "A representative 18 x 24 canvas by So-and-So is worth so much money." It sounds a good deal like making and selling pictures by the yard.

Now, the complaint of the Post-Impressionists is that the modern painter is solely a technician expressing nothing in his art. As they look back over the whole period of painting they note that the old masters expressed religious feeling with unexcelled fervor; that the seventeenth century masters painted the human face as well, perhaps, as it can ever be done, and that our contemporaries have reproduced the external appearance of things as accurately as a camera. Then they inquire, as has been done on this page, "What next?"

If we understand Mr. Weber at all, it is his aim to produce, first of all, a decoration, and secondly, to express feelings and emotions he has either witnessed or experienced, and that have left their impression upon him; in a word, to visualize the invisible. In constructing his decorations he adopts an impersonalism, endeavoring to fill a certain space with geometrical designs, and to this end he contorts and distorts the human figure as expediency may require. He does not aim to paint portraits or figure compositions; indeed, he is not of the "make-like" school, and realism has no place in his aesthetics. This is the phase of art that we have likened before to modern program music, and it would not be surprising to find a Post-Impressionist painting mustard red, not because it is red, but because it is hot in the mouth and red is the color of fire.

If anything is ever to be accomplished along this line a very great genius must arise to do it, and we are not convinced that he has arrived. And if we cannot swallow Post-Impressionism "hook, bait and sinker," we may at least say: "Let it alone; perhaps some good will come out of it." We are not at all persuaded that Mr. Weber is on the right road or that humans can ever lay aside their consciousness of pain at the sight of malformed bodies long enough to enjoy his canvases. Arthur B. Davies has done much the same thing in a way that entertains both the mind and the senses far more and without breaking so openly with "respectability" and the public opinion that is, after all, the product of centuries of growth and progress and that need not inspire a radical revolution. It would seem to us more promising for these revolutionary spirits to acquire the superb technique of their ablest contemporaries and consecrate it to an art that satisfies the spirit more completely. Nothing ever survives built on a foundation of falsehood, so we fear that Weber has not found the path that leads from "respectability" upward.

Miss E. L. Carey in the *N. Y. Times*:

Visitors to the Grafton Galleries during the recent Post-Impressionist exhibition and readers of the London newspapers will certainly be interested to see what impression such an artist as Max Weber, who is now showing his work at the Photo-Secession Galleries, makes on America.

The impression made upon the visitor accustomed to the academic conventions and to the bland tenderness of modern ideals in art inevitably will be deeply shocking. Visitors familiar with the old masters of secondary fame will no doubt find certain resemblances to those restless, tortured spirits who, like Tura, molded their material into vital and barbaric forms, or who, like El Greco, strove to render the mystical spirit of the age through methods of expression dictated by their own powerful personality. Mr. Weber, together with the rest of the Post-Impressionists, rejects the idea of representation as a true function of art, and those who are inclined to see in his distorted forms and his faces, contradicting all our preconceived ideas of the normal human countenance, only the incoherent expression of a painter untrained in the grammar of his language, will do well to prepare themselves by a glance at the charcoal drawing in the smaller room, an "academy" drawn according to the usual conventions of the life class, but of extraordinary, of truly surpassing merit. Obviously it is the choice of knowledge, not the accident of ignorance, that has tempted the artist into these new paths.

PLATES

ALFRED STIEGLITZ

- IX. The Steerage (1907)
- X. Excavating—New York (1911)
- XI. The Swimming Lesson (1906)
- XII. The Pool—Deal (1910)









To a certain extent, as we have indicated, they are not new. It is not a new thing—only an elementary thing—for an artist to force his arrangement of masses in a given space into architectural and geometric forms. Not only have all decorators done this, but all the painters of the smallest easel pictures which possess the beauty due to intelligent space composition. It is a commonplace of criticism to recognize that Raphael's pretty peasant girls owe their effect of large and tranquil beauty not so much to his delicate rendering of their type as to his knowledge of how to place them in relation to their surroundings. Therefore Mr. Weber is following a well-established tradition in arranging his perpendiculars and horizontals, his spheres and cubes, and his Gothic arches, with uncompromising severity of structure. His gross forms, also, simplified until they resemble primeval beings hewn out from rock, and enigmatically a part of the earth, are not without ample suggestion of the past. In his distortion of the features to emphasize certain characteristics he seems to us to be not merely traditional, but archaic. In a logical analysis the exaggeration of an eye beyond its natural boundaries to express intensity of vision springs from the same impulse that caused the painters of an earlier time to characterize types by writing their names on scrolls coming out of their mouths. In neither case does nature supply the material. It is this touch of archaism which seems to us to be the real menace of the movement, and not, certainly, its novelty or its originality. These, so far as they exist, are bound to be its salvation, but no very great artist is ever a reactionary, and it is in this harking back to the treatment of the human features as a formal mask that we find an ominous significance.

In the effort of the Post-Impressionist to express as simply as possible what he feels, or as in the case of the feebler members of the school, thinks he feels, about the visible world and its elements is the germ of a most interesting theory, and the fact that Mr. Weber's feeling and our own are for the most part diametrically opposed has very little to do with the question. All of us who have worked in art schools know how a pupil will start in unashamed to put on paper or canvas his conception of the model with results as grotesque from the initiated point of view as anything ever produced by a Bosch or a Breughel. Then comes the sacrifice of that enchanting and absurd simplicity to canons and conventions that weaken sensation and vision and make the work of the advanced student look like the work of all the other advanced students. Then, if the student is destined to be even a very little master, comes the mighty struggle to regain the lost simplicity, and, all panoplied with knowledge, to achieve again the free movement of unimpeded ignorance. Mostly this ends in failure, a failure deftly concealed from the public, but not from the artistic conscience which needs a great deal of soothing syrup in the so-called "maturity" of an artist's powers. Well, the Post-Impressionists are prepared to sacrifice everything to this intensity of feeling and of simplification, and they propose not to lose the first force of their impression, the most difficult thing possible to keep. We are not Post-Impressionists and we must express the honest conviction that they are going the wrong way about it. But it is not an incomprehensible aim, and whether they turn out to be martyrs to an impossible ideal or leaders of a new and powerful movement in art, they are trying hard to get away from the formulas that have satisfied a previous generation, and they are entitled to that respect which always should be paid to the courage of conviction. It appears to be necessary, moreover, that many should do forcibly the wrong thing in art before one single person can do forcibly the right thing.

Mr. Harrington in the *N. Y. Herald*:

Central Park, seen from a new angle, has been taken by Mr. Max Weber, a disciple of the school of Post-Impressionism, as the model for one of the remarkable canvases which he is exhibiting in the Photo-Secession Gallery, at No. 291 Fifth avenue. His viewpoint seems to have been that of Mr. Roy Knabenshue when he soared over the park in his dirigible balloon. In a guarded path may be seen a man, who appears of about the size that he would be if he were walking in the depths of the Grand Canyon. The work bears the name "Trees in Central Park."

For those who cannot quickly embrace Mr. Weber's advanced ideas in art there is a landscape called "Connecticut Hills," which is pleasing from the point of view of old fashioned folk who believe color and drawing are not fetiches. There are also several paintings of fruit which will commend themselves to those who assimilate radical ideas in art more slowly than does Mr. Weber.

Mr. Weber's paintings of figures, judged from the standards which still obtain, would be regarded as coarse, but in this world of change some one a century or so later may stand in front of them and tell where Michael Angelo fell below the standard in draughtsmanship and anatomy. The figures by Mr. Weber, however, do not purport to be anatomical verities, but forms as he sees them.

This exhibition, as the first show made by an ambitious young painter with a firm belief in his own mission, is worthy of attention and study, and in any event is interesting as evidence of the fancies of the human brain.

Mr. R. Cortisoz in the *N. Y. Tribune*:

When the noise made in London by the recent exhibition of Post-Impressionistic pictures reverberated across the Atlantic, there were doubtless inquisitive souls who wished that they might see just what all the fuss was made about. They may get some idea of the subject by visiting the Photo-Secession Gallery, where there is a quantity of paintings and drawings by Mr. Max Weber. He is a painter of nude figures, of landscape and of still life. His intention, it is to be presumed, is more or less decorative. His paintings tell no particular story, allegorical or otherwise, and it hardly matters that the catalogue contains no numbers, so that one is left to guess at the title belonging to a given picture. Mr. Weber would appear to have one promising faculty lying dormant in his character as an artist—an instinct for movement, a sense of the beautiful effect to be got out of a figure, mobile in space, out of a gesture, out of the pose of a head. But his people have strangely articulated bodies, they stand about in attitudes made doubly mysterious by his crude sense of form, and matters are finally made worse by his even more peculiar notion of color. Perhaps, for the rigidly conventional folk who live in dread lest they be suspected of want of sympathy for the new thing, these pictures may possess esoteric charm. To the merely disinterested observer they are untrue to nature, ugly, and quite uninteresting. The discipline of the schools might develop in Mr. Weber a modest talent. His work as it stands, however revolutionary in aim it may be, has nothing really stimulating about it. Post-Impressionism in the light of this exhibition need cause no alarm; it is only a bore.

The excitement about it in London has begun to die down, but in some quarters there a little amusement is still provided. Mr. Roger Fry, one of the most ardent defenders of the quaint pictures at the Grafton Galleries, sought to answer one of his critics by citing the names of several distinguished persons as sharing, to some extent at least, his feeling for the Post-Impressionists. Mr. Sargent was included in this group, whereupon the American painter sends to the London "Nation" this interesting disclaimer:

My attention has been called to an article by Mr. Roger Fry, called "A Postscript on Post-Impressionism," in your issue of December 24, in which he mentions me as being among the champions of the group of painters now being shown at the Grafton Gallery. I should be obliged if you allow me space in your columns for these few words of rectification.

Mr. Fry has been entirely misinformed, and if I had been inclined to join in the controversy, he would have known that my sympathies were in the exactly opposite direction as far as the novelties are concerned that have been most discussed and that this show has been my first opportunity of seeing.

I had declined Mr. Fry's request to place my name on the initial list of promoters of the exhibition, on the ground of not knowing the work of the painters to whom the name of Post-Impressionists can be applied; it certainly does not apply to Manet or to Cézanne. Mr. Fry may have been told—and have believed—that the sight of those paintings had made me a convert to his faith in them.

The fact is that I am absolutely skeptical as to their having any claim whatever to being works of art, with the exception of some of the pictures by Gauguin that strike me as admirable in color, and in color only.

But one wonders what will Mr. Fry not believe, and one is tempted to say, what will be not print?

Yours, etc.,

JOHN S. SARGENT.

The force of this communication is the more to be appreciated in view of the fact that Mr. Sargent has long been known as one of the most generous of modern artists in everything that means sympathy for new ideas. He is broadminded and quick to recognize merit, no matter where he may find it.

Mr. James Huneker in the *N. Y. Sun*:

John Marin's color stains are still in the little Gallery of the Photo-Secession. Any one who thinks that this characteristic collection is like a chamber of horrors will be agreeably disappointed. Mr. Marin is an artist who knows how to spot paper so sincerely that the illusion of atmosphere, the illusion of a woman sitting, the illusion of a general reality, is evoked with non-essentials eliminated. If you can't understand his elliptical execution, take the trouble to study it. Order will soon reign where you fancied chaos; eventually you may discover that your own eyes were at fault, not the artist's. Marin has a supple talent, he makes short cuts in his statements, and while he is not as original as Max Weber, his color sense is richer, more harmonious. We fail to understand wherein is the enigma of his impressions. The lower end of the island, the harbor, the Singer Building, are admirably interpreted. Even Herr Baron von Stieglitz may admit that these swift colored views are as truthful as the "new photography," with its soft pedal vagueness and its mezzotint effects.

Mr. Tyrrell in the *N. Y. Evening World*:

Alfred Stieglitz, of the Photo-Secession shrine, No. 291 Fifth avenue, presents another paradox of purest ray serene. This time it is a group of Cézanne's water colors—or rather, fragmentary drawings washed in here and there with spots and patches of flat tint. Where does the paradox come in? It lies in the fact that this is the first show given to the American public of works of an important artist whose name stands as a sort of historical landmark on the borders of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, yet it falls flat and insignificant, and students who know nothing of Cézanne except what they learn here, will go away knowing even less, because they will have a one-sided and dead wrong idea of the man's real significance.

Although Cézanne was sixty-six years old when he died in 1906, and possessed a vague natural power which might have developed into positive genius, though it didn't, he never really arrived. His ideals and training were conventional until middle life, when suddenly he saw the powerful light of the luminists and Rodin, and started to grope for it. He was still groping when the end came, although lots of people in Paris own paintings of his in which he came vastly nearer to being an important Cézanne than he does in these few pale memoranda so piously cherished by Alfred.

Mr. James Huneker in the *N. Y. Sun*:

The Cézanne water colors at the Gallery of the Photo-Secession are mere hints rather than actual performances, yet finely illustrative of the master's tact of omission. These thin washes tell the student secrets by reason of what is left out of the design, and some of them are bald enough, it must be confessed. "The Boat in Front of Trees" is worth close attention. It seems a pity, however, that we have thus far seen no representative Cézannes in New York. The late H. O. Havemeyer has a remarkable gathering, but they will never be publicly exhibited. Whenever the Durand-Ruels find a Cézanne in America they buy it and immediately send it to Paris, where it will command a big price. We are, nevertheless, indebted to Alfred Stieglitz for his pioneer work in the matter of bringing to the ken of art lovers the more recent art manifestations of Paris, Hades and Buxtehude.

Mr. Arthur Hoeber in the *N. Y. Globe*:

Again Alfred Stieglitz and his little Photo-Secession Gallery come to the front, this time with an exhibition of the work of the Frenchman, Cézanne, who, we are told, is more or less the inspiration of the Post-Impressionists. From a cursory view of his water color drawings we are inclined to make it "less" for there is a lot of sanity here, even if it be mingled with eccentricity, and our objections take the form of a protest at the painter stopping just where the real difficulties of art begin. Here are innumerable delightful suggestions, beginnings, indications, or spottings-in, but stopping there when the spectator has a reasonable right to ask for a logical conclusion. Thus we have the "Boat in Front of Trees," and the "boat" might be a log in a stream for any indicated form of craft it has, while there are no trees or even suggestion of them, though there is a bit of green shadow. As it stands the work is meaningless, and hundreds of

clever students could obtain an equally dexterous swish-in of color. There are other drawings, in front of which the present writer was unable to make out the intention, mistaking a landscape for a branch of blossoms until corrected by the ever-cheerful cicerone, Mr. Stieglitz. However, in these galleries, one must start out to find certain things, and then only, with the aid of a powerful imagination, duly prompted by the guide, and an utter subordination of all one's preconceived notions of nature, one may arrive somewhere, as long as the hypnotic influences of these agreeable rooms prevail, for the Photo-Secession's offerings are an acquired taste, an obsession, as it were, for the full enjoyment of which one must be of the cult. Mainly the present display seems like a Barmecide feast. You are solemnly told of the beautiful qualities present, of the lovely things to see, and you look—but, alas! in vain. To the man hungry after art they fail to supply nutrition; on leaving you have your appetite still with you!

Mr. Rockwell in the *Brooklyn Eagle*:

The art of the Post-Impressionist, Cézanne, about which Europe is talking, may be seen for the first time in this country at the Photo-Secession Galleries, 291 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan, where twenty examples are on the walls. As the water colors have no backgrounds and as the brush seems to only have swept the paper, in some cases, the first impression is that the pictures are marvelous for delicacy, lightness of atmosphere, suggestiveness and simplicity. Any one can admire the way Cézanne painted "A Curtain of Trees," and such examples as "Chestnut Tree," "Tree Trunks," "Hortensia" (hydrangea) and washerwomen at work at one end of a flatboat on a river, as well as "The Fountain," with deeps of forest opening behind it. But to ordinary eyes the landscapes seem to be on the point of disappearing from the paper. To show how Cézanne is considered abroad, this, by Roger Fry, in the current *Burlington Magazine* may be of interest:

"Cézanne's work, 'Les Maisons Jaunes,' is in a very different category. Without any reminiscences of the classic tradition of France, Cézanne is, in fact, one of the most intensely and profoundly classic artists that even France has produced, and by classic I mean here the power of finding in things themselves the actual material of poetry and the fullest gratification for the demands of the imagination. Certainly nothing at first sight could appear more banal, more trivial, less worthy of an artist's deliberate care than the little wayside scene in the South of France which Cézanne has taken for his motive. A short strip of road crossing a small gully and turning the edge of a hill by some houses which are without any picturesque interest, a few trees, telegraph posts, the slope of a wooded hill, and the sky beyond—there is the material, in itself so matter-of-fact and apparently insignificant, out of which Cézanne's magic art distills for us this strange and haunting vision. The composition, apparently accidental and unarranged, is in reality the closest, most vividly apprehended unity. Out of these apparently casual rectangular forms, from the play of a few bare upright and horizontal masses, a structure is built up that holds the imagination. To the inquiring eye new relations, unsuspected harmonies continually reveal themselves; and this is true no less of the subtle, pure and crystalline color than of the linear construction of the pattern. In the history of painting one comes but rarely upon pictures which have, like this, an inevitable unity that baffles all analysis and explanation. However different this may be in the absence of all direct suggestion of romantic imagery, it has for me at all events something of the fascination, something of the inexplicable mystery of Giorgione's 'Tempest.' The building of a design upon horizontal and upright lines is a task that has rarely been successfully accomplished, but when, as here, it has been achieved, the result is of surpassing beauty. Cézanne has produced many landscapes of more striking and obvious beauty than this, but few I think which reveal more truly the intensity and the spontaneity of his imaginative reaction to nature."

Mr. Arthur Hoeber in the *N. Y. Globe*:

Pablo Picasso is his name and he is the high priest of the Post-Impressionists, so we learn, the guiding spirit and the inspiration of that band of innovators in Paris who are holding the limelight of the artistic scene. When there came to us from the Photo-Secession Gallery, through Mr. Stieglitz, a circular by Marius de Zayas, beginning with the statement that he did not believe in art criticism, then we feared the worst. Those people who really care little for criticism maintain a discreet silence! It is the person who, with a flourish of trumpets inveighing against public print, makes the strongest objections when the newspaper ignores him. Also when it becomes necessary to explain pictures by vague words and protests it is a certainty that the work needs all the assistance literature can give it. So, when we are told that "Picasso seeks in form the psychic one (manifestation), and on account of his peculiar temperament his psychical manifestations inspire him with geometrical sensations," and that he "does not limit himself to taking from an object only those planes which the eye perceives, but deals with all those which according

to him constitute the individuality of form, and with his peculiar fantasy he develops and transforms them," and "that he has a different conception of perspective from that in use by the traditionalists," then did we know there was something out of the commonplace.

Surely M. Picasso does not use the planes the eye perceives. That is, the eye of the world. He certainly has a "particular style" and a "peculiar fantasy." The display is the most extraordinary combination of extravagance and absurdity that New York has yet been afflicted with, and goodness knows it has had many these two seasons past. Any sane criticism is entirely out of the question; any serious analysis would be in vain. The results suggest the most violent wards of an asylum for maniacs, the craziest emanations of a disordered mind, the gibberings of a lunatic! By the side of these all previous efforts seem academic, sane, conventional, well ordered and acceptable. It is almost worth a visit to these galleries to see how far foolishness and imbecility will go and what colossal and monumental egotism can accomplish! There are several things here that even Mr. Stieglitz cannot comprehend, but which, he maintains, delight him, and when he shall have discovered the artist's intention, he is prepared to admire extravagantly. Such are blind faith and confidence. Really and truly, there remains little to say, save that one regrets a man otherwise so sane as Mr. Stieglitz should thus connect the name of this enjoyable little room with so idiotic a display. But the limit has been reached. Nothing after this can well surpass this show, and we doubt if anything will subsequently equal it. But the poor "Independents" must look to their laurels. Already are they back numbers and we shall look soon to see them amalgamate with the much-abused old National Academy of Design.

Mr. Tyrrell in the *N. Y. Evening World*:

Unless you are ready to receive the artistic jolt of your young life, don't go to Mr. Stieglitz's Photo-Secession Gallery, No. 291 Fifth avenue, where Post-Impressionism is exposed in a collection of early and recent drawings and water colors by Pablo Picasso of Paris. And yet, on second thought, we should not take the responsibility of advising any earnest truthseeker to stay away, as the announcements declare that "this is the first opportunity given to the American public to see some of Picasso's work," and from the fierce notices the show is getting we fear it may be the last.

There is no catalogue—it wouldn't help much, anyway. But there is literature by Marius de Zayas, explaining what the Picasso kind of art is not.

"As it is not Picasso's purpose," says Marius, "to perpetuate on the canvas an aspect of external nature, by which to produce an artistic impression, but to represent with the brush the impression he has directly received from nature, synthesized by his fantasy, he does not put on the canvas the remembrance of a past sensation, but describes a present sensation. * * * Instead of the physical manifestation he seeks in form the psychic one, and on account of his peculiar temperament his psychical manifestations inspire him with geometrical sensations."

Now will you be good!

But we are not going to try to make fun of these Picasso things. That would be too easy. The obvious, though difficult, course is to study this Parisianized Spaniard seriously, and try to get the occult message he has to convey. For when an artist who can draw and paint with the consummately beautiful mastery of a Millet or a Degas—and Picasso unquestionably can, as you may see in the exquisite full-length drawing of a peasant woman hanging at the entrance to the gallery, or the Moorish head in color within—when such an artist deliberately throws off this traditional technique as a worn-out garment and exposes himself to the martyrdom of misunderstanding and ridicule by perpetrating childish wooden images, Alaskan totem-poles and gargoyles smeared with green paint, or weird geometrical jumbles which even Mr. Stieglitz confesses he cannot make head or tail of, then there must surely be something doing of large import for the future.

In the *N. Y. World*:

There is a new thrill in town in the world of art, and it may be experienced at the Photo-Secession Gallery in Fifth avenue, which is conducted by Alfred Stieglitz.

The exhibition is a collection of drawings and water colors by Pablo Picasso, a Spaniard by birth, although he is announced as from Paris.

Here is an artist who disregards all formulas of art—that is, as practised by the tradition-ists—and here if one chooses they can be enlightened by a lesson in the last word of Post-Impressionism, which is so much in vogue abroad just now.

"In his paintings perspective does not exist; in them are nothing but harmonies suggested by form and registers which succeed themselves, to compose a general harmony which fills the rectangle that constitutes the picture," says Marius de Zayas, who is evidently an ardent devotee of the art of Picasso.

The studies of Picasso are indeed rectangular. Some of his figures suggest the early Egyptian type, and have been executed without any consideration of draughtsmanship. In fact, correct drawing does not appeal apparently to Picasso, who according to de Zayas gives synthetic expression of his emotions in his compositions.

Among the studies one can, by power of imagination perhaps, make out here and there a figure. Here are fantastic shapes, and one drawing in particular which suggests a fire-escape.

Picasso has outrivalled the insurgents in his art, and after a visit to this ultra-Impressionistic show one can return to the Independent exhibition with greater appreciation.

Mr. B. P. Stephenson in the *N. Y. Evening Post*:

The latest word in Post-Impressionism has reached the Photo-Secession Galleries, No. 291 Fifth avenue. The speaker thereof is Pablo Picasso, a Spaniard by birth, who sought Paris because, to quote Marius de Zayas from an advance proof of *CAMERA WORK*, there "art has succeeded in conquering an independence which permits all sorts of attempts at new expression." This Picasso attempt at new expression confounds us even more than the earlier ones seen at the Photo-Secession. We will not go so far as a physician, brother of Alfred Stieglitz, owner of these galleries, who, when he saw the Max Weber pictures, said: "Why, these fellows are suffering from paresis and I will bring a noted alienist to prove it."

It may be our own brains are "out of gear." At latest advices the alienist had not arrived—"too busy looking after other sane persons," as Stieglitz remarked—so we had not a chance of proving whether the generally persuasive Alfred or the writer was better fitted to seek Bloomingdale. The worshippers of Picasso say they feel sensations over what has been cleverly described as his "emotional geometry," and having forgotten most of their geometry since they left school, are bent on studying it again to find out by what process their sensations are produced. But they do not seem to understand whether Picasso begins with a geometrical sketch and ends with an unexplainable painting, or begins with the painting and ends with a turbulent mixture of cones and cubes. The writer heard two of Picasso's interpreters, who raved over the sensation his work produced, discussing which was the beginning and which was the finished product of four studies, the unexplainable figures or the geometrical confusion. They feel sensations, too, over a crayon drawing that looks to anybody who does not understand "emotional geometry" like a design for a fire-escape, and this is no exaggeration. They feel sensations over a horribly drawn lay figure, a girl with a nose clumsily cut from a block of wood standing at an angle of about thirty degrees across an almost full face, one side of which has been twisted out of joint. But let them have the last word: De Zayas, having explained that in Picasso's works no perspective exists, that in them "are nothing but harmonies suggested by form and registers which succeed themselves to compose a general harmony which fills the rectangle that constitutes the picture," writes:

Those who have studied Egyptian art without Greco-Roman prejudices know that the sons of the Nile and the desert sought in their works the realization of an ideal conceived by meditation before the mysterious river and by ecstasy before the imposing solitude, and that is why they transformed matter into form and gave to substance the reflection of that which exists only in essence. Something of this sort happens in Picasso's work, which is the artistic representation of a psychology of form in which he tries to represent in essence what seems to exist only in substance.

Mr. J. Edgar Chamberlin in the *Evening Mail*:

The limit of esoteric anti-traditionalism has certainly been reached in the pictures by Pablo Picasso, a Spaniard domiciled in Paris, which are shown at the Photo-Secession Galleries. Perhaps we might call this work ultimate-Post-Impressionism; the force of anti-traditionalism can surely go no further.

And yet it would be an error to apply to Señor Picasso's method any term that implied progress, or advance, or development. The work is rather a reversion to the extreme of primitivism. If the pictures of Alfred Maurer, lately shown at the same gallery, were properly described as neo-Aztec, these things of Picasso's are neo-African. They remind one of nothing so much as of the carvings in ebony or blackened wood, rudely representing the human figure, made by the natives of the west coast of Africa.

They are supposed to be the result of a sort of geometrical obsession in the soul of the artist, but the ungeometrical eye sees nothing in them but a rude, primitive attempt to represent the human and figure in blocks and slabs. A man's or a woman's face, as Señor Picasso sees it, looks almost exactly like that of a football player with a headguard and a nose-guard on.

In his very interesting account of these things, which is printed in the catalogue, Marius de Zayas says that Picasso's paintings are "the coefficient of the impressions that form has produced in his spirit." Mr. de Zayas also says that the most that he himself can do, as a critic, is to say a thing "pleases or displeases him," and to "express the personal motives of his impressions."

Good! We stand absolutely with Mr. de Zayas, and say that form produces in our spirit impressions resulting in a totally different coefficient from that produced in Picasso's case, and that his pictures displease us radically and violently. There are some sketches in his collection that are, indeed, very pleasing. But they are more or less traditional. They are not neo-African at all. Neo-Africanism jars our "personal motives," and we think it jars the personal motives of 9,999 out of every 10,000 Americans and Europeans.

Mr. Harrington in the *N. Y. Herald*:

Señor Don Pablo Picasso, who presses beyond the Post-Impressionists, is represented by a disquieting array of drawings and water colors in the Galleries of the Photo-Secession Society. Persons entering this domain receive what is practically an injunction signed by Mr. Marius de Zayas forbidding them to criticize anything which Señor Picasso has to offer, on the ground that Mr. de Zayas himself would not dare to pass sentence on anything which he has ever seen. Mr. Alfred Stieglitz has taken this array into his gallery, which he calls his laboratory. He looks upon the study of this hideous assemblage as necessary to research work. The chemist, by dint of experiment, may produce most delicate perfumes and delightful flavors, yet much of the material in the intermediate process may not be alluring to the senses. The Spanish painter presents semblances of human heads covered with green hair and figures which have hexagonal legs.

Miss Elizabeth Luther Carey in the *N. Y. Times*:

As to Picasso, whose geometrical emotions are boldly on view at the Photo-Secession Galleries, there can be, of course, but one opinion. He is shocking, he is reactionary, he is schematic, he is *le dernier cri*, and the general public stops its ears to that discordant sound. Nevertheless, it is a sound that is quite apt to precede revolution of one kind or another, and Picasso is one of the painters whose work indicates the stirring of rebellion against the academic influences of the past, which, if it does nothing more, is pretty certain to wake up the academies. We heard the other day an extremely clever characterization of the group of men who may be called Expressionists, if you choose, certainly anything else than Impressionists or Post-Impressionists, both of which are crass misnomers. They were compared to explorers on uncharted seas, starting out as the early discoverers did, with only the assurance that the little world about them had been so thoroughly investigated that no surprises were forthcoming in that field, with the profound conviction that there were new worlds to conquer beyond the seas that might be found, if some mariner had courage to set sail.

There is no sign as yet that Picasso or any of his companions has found the Northwest Passage, although they come back with tales enough and to spare of the strange monsters encountered on their travels. When, like Picasso, they hark back to primitive symbols for the expression of their exceedingly sophisticated feelings and ideas, they are merely wearisome in their lack of anything like true originality. When, like Cézanne, they use their principles and formulas to support a direct and simple personal vision, when they use their intellectual instrument as he did his, to give form to the idea conceived in emotion, and not for the solution of purely abstract

problems, they have more of the genuine pioneer quality from which we may expect discoveries that will stir the imagination.

In any new movement, however, are hundreds of frenzied spirits who lose their bearings and go down before their legitimate goal is reached. One after another claims the moving epitaph:

A shipwrecked sailor buried on this coast
Bids you set sail.
Full many a gallant craft when we were lost
Weathered the gale.

Mr. Israel White in the *Newark Evening News*:

A little book lying on my desk has the simple, yet profound title, "What Nature Is." Charles Kendall Franklin, the author, goes pretty well to the root of things and offers a plausible theory of the universe. He describes the solar system as beginning with a maximum amount of radiant and a minimum amount of gravitant energy and effects a transformation of these two kinds of energy "until, finally, after billions of years, the conditions are reversed and there exists the maximum amount of gravitant and the minimum of radiant energy." Then the system collapses or collides with another and the maximum amount of radiant energy is again developed; and all the matter is once more distributed throughout the system and the process is begun over again.

We have not read far enough yet into this little book to see what applications the author makes of his theory, but we have no doubt that, eventually, he will apply it to art. But, if we have understood at all clearly what our most advanced contemporaries are doing, we imagine that he will think a collapse or a collision has occurred and that the process of aesthetic development has begun over again.

Surely no one will go to see Pablo Picasso's pictures—if they can be so designated—at the Photo-Secession Gallery, if he is in search of beauty. They cannot be criticized; for there are no canons of art with which to judge them. Indeed, no attempt should be made to judge them. They are simply experiments, attempts to carry the idea of the Post-Impressionists a step forward and to build up a new artistic process. But as experiments they are exceedingly interesting and no one who purposes to keep in touch with the flux of current thought and the currents of his time can well afford to ignore them.

Hardly more than half a century has passed since Manet and the Impressionists were shaking artistic Paris with their new ideas in paint. It has taken the world all this time to catch up with and understand them; to realize that they, with their scientific use of color, were producing realism such as the world had never seen. Through these intervening years they have learned to reproduce the actuality of appearance in every difficult circumstance.

To this idea of producing "the actuality of appearance" the Orientals—mainly the Japanese—contributed the idea that a picture is a decorative unit, and under the inspiration of Whistler, the supreme purpose of art became decoration. Such a picture, for instance, as Whistler's famous "Falling Rocket" is distinctively a decoration. He set the fashion of naming his pictures symphonies in pink and green, in this color and that, whatever they might be.

But it soon became evident that mere color harmonies do not satisfy the human spirit and form came to be treated by the painters less for its actuality than as a symbol of expression. It became the habit of their minds "to view the particular in relation to the general, to see the type in the individual, to regard the personal and local as manifestations of the universal."

"In his nocturnes," Mr. Caffin wrote about Whistler, "forms lose their concrete assertiveness and become as presences, looming athwart the infinity of spiritual suggestion." To simplify, to express essential qualities, to render abstractions, that was his purpose. How evident it is in his lithographs and etchings with their wonderful abridgments and elisions! They indicate so little yet suggest so much!

After Whistler, Cézanne. An exhibition of his water colors has just closed at this same little gallery. They did more than strip to the naked hide; they showed the very marrow inside the bones. Everything superfluous, incidental, particular, local, was left out. It was the very antithesis of the detailed, elaborated art of, say, E. L. Henry and Meissonier.

I hardly need to say that the Japanese art, being so largely decorative, was geometrical in its designs. Plane geometry, however, was as far as the Japanese went. Cézanne and his followers

progressed to solid and spherical geometry, making the cylinder and the cone the bases of their patterns. Now I find Picasso using cubes and crystals, the very elements of pictorial design, and so arranging and expanding his crystals as to suggest natural forms and faces and figures. No effort is made to present the actuality of appearances, yet the most striking impression of this exhibit of experiments is the character and expression Picasso succeeds in imparting as he gropes after a new and impersonal use of form.

In a sketch of Pablo Picasso, a Malagan living in the freer air of Paris, Marius de Zayas, the caricaturist—also Picasso's countryman—has explained some of Picasso's aesthetic ideas.

"Picasso has a different conception of perspective from that in use by the traditionalists. According to his way of thinking and painting, form must be represented in its intrinsic value and not in relation to other objects. He does not think it right to paint a child in size far larger than that of a man just because the child is in the foreground and one wants to indicate that a man is some distance from it. The painting of distance, to which the academic school subordinates everything, seems to him an element which might be of great importance in a topographical plan or in a geographical map, but false and useless in a work of art.

"In his paintings perspective does not exist; in them there are nothing but harmonies suggested by form, and registers which succeed themselves, to compose a general harmony which fills the rectangle that constitutes the picture.

"Those who have studied Egyptian art without Greco-Roman prejudices, know that the sons of the Nile and the desert sought in their works the realization of an ideal conceived by meditation before the mysterious river and by ecstasy before the imposing solitude, and that is why they transformed matter into form and gave to substance the reflection of that which exists only in essence. Something of this sort happens in Picasso's work, which is the artistic representation of a psychology of form in which he tries to represent in essence what seems to exist only in substance."

Rebels against tradition and respectability, these very modern men are trying to express something in their own way. Whether anything will come of it, I don't know. But the effort is sincere and they deserve a hearing; from those even who can only laugh in the presence of their work.

Mr. James Huneker in the *N. Y. Sun*:

Ten years ago Pablo Picasso arrived in Paris, having an excellent equipment with which to conquer the world artistic. He was a superior draughtsman, a born colorist, a passionate harmonist; he incarnated in his production the temperament of his Iberian race. Mr. Stieglitz will show at the Galleries of the Photo-Secession a few drawings of that period; they are supple, alert, savant, above all charged with vitality. Then the spirit of Henri Matisse moved across the waters of his imagination, as did that of Debussy in the misty, wild regions of Ravel and Dukas. To-day Picasso has surpassed his master in hardihood, as Matisse left lagging both Gauguin and Cézanne, St. Paul the Minor and St. Paul the Major, in the rear. At the present he is exhibiting in the Galerie Volard, Paris, and critical commentary makes one gasp; he is either a satyr or a Hyperion; there is no middle point in the chorus of execration and exaltation. We believe this is wrong and makes for critical confusion.

In his recent illuminating address Mr. W. C. Brownell remarked that "every important piece of literature, as every important work of plastic art, is the expression of a personality, and it is not the material of it but the mind behind it that invites critical interpretation." Precisely so, though we do not believe that either to the reason or to the imagination of this distinguished critic the pioneer Picasso would make much of an appeal. And even this opinion we put forth diffidently, remembering that when the name of Rodin was still anathema Mr. Brownell had written almost a book about the sculptor. Picasso is miles away from Rodin, yet he is striving for a new method of expression, one that will show us his new vision of the powers and principalities of the earth. (At present Satan is chanting the chief rôle in his composition.) It's anarchic, certainly; that's why we tolerate it despite its appalling ugliness; anything is better than the parrothee repetitions of the academic.

What is meant by the new "vision"? Why shouldn't the vision that pleased our great-grandfather content his great-grandchildren? You must go to Stendhal for an answer. Because

each generation, whether for better or worse, sees the world anew, or thinks it does; at least it is "different" in the Stendhalian sense. For a keener definition let us quote D. S. MacColl: "This new vision that has been growing up among the landscape painters simplifies as well as complicates the old. For purposes of analysis it sees the world as a mosaic of patches of color, such and such a hue of such and such a tone of such and such a shape. The old vision had beaten out three separate acts, the determination of the edges and limits of things, the shading and modelling of the spaces in between with black and white, and the tinting of those spaces with their local color. The new analysis looked first for color and for a different color in each patch of shade or light. The old painting followed the old vision by its three processes of drawing the contours, modelling the chiaroscuro in dead color, and finally coloring this white and black preparation. The new analysis left the contours to be determined by the junction, more or less fused, of the color patches, instead of rigidly defining them as they are known to be defined when seen near at hand or felt. Its precepts were to recover the innocence of the eye, to forget the thing as an object with its shapes and colors as they are known to exist under other aspects, to follow the fact of vision, however surprising, recognize that contours are lost and found, that local color in light and shade becomes different not only in tone but also in hue. And painting tended to follow this new vision by substituting one process for three; the painter matched the hue and tone at once of each patch, and shaped a patch on the canvas of the corresponding shape, ceasing to think in lines except as the boundaries by which these patches limit one another." Elsewhere MacColl also asserts that the true history of man would be the history of his imagination. It would prove, we think, a more stupendous undertaking than Lord Acton's projected history of ideas.

For over a quarter of a century the Impressionists did cease to think in lines and modelled in patches, but curiously enough the return to the academic, so-called, was led by the least academic of painters, Paul Cézanne. Strictly speaking he was not a genius, though a far better painter than his misguided follower (Cézanne's own words), Gauguin, who, despite his strong decorative talent, never learned how to handle paints as a master. Cézanne was for returning to the much-neglected form. "Don't make Chinese images like Gauguin," he cried; "all nature must be modelled after the sphere, cone and cylinder. As for the colors, the more the colors harmonize the more the design becomes precise." Cézanne is the father of the Post-Impressionists, and it is a mistake to suppose that they are Impressionists with the "new vision" so clearly described above by MacColl. They have gone on and consider the division of tones men, Monet included, as old-fashioned as Gérôme and Bouguereau. And as extremes meet the contemporary crowd are primitives, who have a word of praise for Ingres but a hatred of Delacroix. They also loathe Courbet and call the first impressionism mere materialism. Manet is "old hat." To spiritualize or make more emotional the line, to be personal and not the follower of formulas—Ah, mirage of each succeeding artistic generation!—are the main ideas of this school, which abhors the classic, romantic, impressionistic schools. It has one painter of great distinction, Henri Matisse; from him a mob of disciples have emanated. Among the Americans are Weber, Maurer, Marsden Hartley, John Marin and others.

Picasso is also one, but a disciple who has thrown off the influence of the master. He goes his own way, which is the geometrical way. He sees the world and mankind in cubes or pyramids. His ideal form is pyramidal. There is on view at the Photo-Secession Gallery the back of a giantess corseted. Her torso is powerfully modelled; no dim hint of indecision here. The lines are pyramidal. Tremendous power is in them. Obsessed by the Egyptians, Picasso has deserted his earlier linear suavity for a hieratic rigidity, which, nevertheless, does not altogether cut off emotional expressiveness. There are attitudes and gestures that register profound feeling, grotesque as may be the outer envelope. He gives us his emotion in studying a figure. And remember this is a trained artist who has dropped the entire baggage of a lifetime's study to follow his beckoning star. To set it all down to a desire to stir up philistia would be to classify Picasso as a madman, for there are easier routes to the blazing land of réclame than the particularly thorny and ugly one he has chosen. There is method in his wildest performances, method and at times achievement even to the uninitiated eye. His is not the cult of the ugly for the sake of ugliness, but the search after the expressive in the heart of ugliness. A new aesthetic? No, a very old one revived, and perhaps because of its modern rebirth all the uglier, and as yet a mere diabolic, not divine, stammering.

PLATES

ALFRED STIEGLITZ

- XIII. The Hand of Man (1902)
- XIV. In the New York Central Yards (1903)
- XV. The Terminal (1892)
- XVI. Spring Showers, New York (1900)









The best, or worst, of Picasso is not at this little exposition. Our objection to it and to others of its kind (though we are grateful to Mr. Stieglitz for his unselfish impresarioship in these affairs) is that such drawing and painting are only for a few artists. It is all very well to say that the public will learn later to appreciate; we doubt it. It either gasps or mocks; sympathy it seldom develops. To a vision like Picasso's the external of the human form is only a rind to be peeled away. At times he is an anatomist, not an analyst; the ugly asymmetry of the human body is pitilessly revealed, but as a rule he abstracts the shell and seeks to give shape and expression to his vision. Alas, nearly always do we shudder or else smile. Those inanimate blocks, kindergarten idols of wood and bronze, what do they mean? You dream of immemorial Asiatic monsters and also of the verses of Emile Verhaeren: "The desert of my soul is peopled with black gods, huge blocks of wood"; or of Baudelaire's spleen and ideal beauty: *Je bais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes; et jamais je ne pleure et jamais je ne ris.* Benjamin De Casseres in his brilliant summary of the poetry of Leconte de Lisle shows us the genius of immobility, and his description would fit Gustave Moreau's picture as well: "When he walked he left abysses behind him. Where his eye fell objects relapsed into rigidity. There is no motion in his images. The universe is static, all things are turned marble. Motion is spent. * * * Silence, impassivity, sterility, France, in a few magical strokes the universe of living things, is caught in the sin of motion—vibration is seized *flagrante delicto*—and stiffened in its multicolored shrouds. The organic and inorganic worlds have stopped at high tide, turned to adamant as at the sudden vision of some stupendous revelation." Will Pablo Picasso restore form to its sovereignty in modern art?

His art is not so significant as Moreau's, yet with all its deformations, its simplifications, the breath of life does traverse the design; as for his color we must imagine what it was formerly, as Mark Twain's German musical public loyally recalled the long time dead voice of their favorite tenor. One Parisian critic accused Picasso of painting the portraits of anthropoid apes that had been inoculated by M. Metchnikoff. Gracious Apollo! Is this irony? To paint a counterfeit of a monkey, sick or otherwise, is sound art; certainly art of a more comprehensible character than the divagations now at the Photo-Secession. Remember, if you go there your gibes and jeers be upon your own head. We have only attempted to blaze the trail for you.

What havoc has been wrought by what Mr. MacColl calls the "camera vision" on our way of seeing will be appreciated on entering the gallery of the Society of Beaux Arts Architects. There is evidence there of more normal vision than at many an Academy show. Yes, this work of twelve men who call themselves or have been erroneously called the Independents. We are tempted to ask, "Independent of what?" did we not recall—gooseflesh on our backs—the exhibition of last season which bore the same title. At least this year's show is independent of a lot of half baked amateurs and immature students' stuff, though such first class men as Robert Henri, Ernest Lawson, Glackens, Sloan, Jerome Myers and a few others are absent. With politics in art we are a little concerned; all politics as well as politicians belongs to the subterranean world, and politics in matters artistic wears a peculiarly sordid aspect. If you don't like the Academy then cry out with George Luks, "Hang the Academy! I don't need it!" Nor does any other good artist. But don't carry water on both shoulders and secretly seek the Academy while openly reviling its ways. After all, the Academy is a pretty good picture shop. A big fellow can get along without the Academy, and the Academy has as a rule managed to get along without the big fellows.

The first thing that occurs to you as you enter the gallery is, What vile lighting! We recall, not altogether in a mood free from petty malice, the rude comments made when Señor Sorolla y Bastida came to the Hispanic Museum. His success was at once set down to the ingenious artificial lighting of his pictures. One might have supposed from the current criticism, made by fellow artists, that Sorolla was a charlatan, who colored photographic snapshots and called them "impressions," instead of being an impressionistic painter of the first rank with an enviable Continental reputation. To be sure, we better liked Ignacio Zuloaga, a liking that the general public did not share. When we visited the Hispanic Museum, usually during the morning hours, no lights were used, though in the afternoon they were. But only if the Independents had such an ingenious system as that employed by Mr. Huntington! The general impression aroused is of dull, muddy paint, blackest of shadows and a depressing absence of reverberating sunlight, such as you find at the exhibition of The Ten in the Montross Gallery. Yet there are many

interesting if not very new pictures on view. The average of excellence is high. (Arthur B. Davies, who is so absolutely out of place as to be, artistically speaking, *bors concours*.) But the poor lighting smashes all values and ends by getting on your nerves.

Mr. Davies is always chivalric, but he belongs in his own class, which is uniquely Davies. A master draughtsman, he makes the rest of the black and white too minified for comparison. And this is not fair, as truthfully speaking, the drawings are the best part of the exhibition. George B. Luks, good old Grandpa George, has fifteen canvases, none new except the "Glowing Bowl." His work is veritably ancient in company with so much paint slashing and individual drawing. But it is in line with the good old tradition which believed in humanity and a mellow style of interpretation. Luks is not one of the new Uebermenschen. He is a solid painter and a poet who loves the lowly, the simple of heart and also the humorous in life. But he is shockingly hung. The strong man among the younger generation (that knocks) is Rockwell Kent, and Kent is no stranger at academic functions. He is the only painter in the room save Davies and Maurer who sends shafts of sunshine through his canvases. Homer Boss grows, so Julius Golz; we admired the sketches of Guy Pene Du Bois, and his "Girl Sewing" is an ambitious effort full of atmosphere. A talented young man this. Glenn Coleman is an illustrator who contrives to record in his drawings the irony and misery of the East Side poor. Faithful to his elaborate tapestry, Maurice Prendergast of Boston still woos and disconcerts the retina—but not the latter in his water colors, which are delicious. The name of John McPherson is new to us. Not novel to us, yet always welcome are the water colors of John Marin, evanescent notations of the real, informed with beauty, withal Japanese in feeling. Alfred Maurer, another facile painter, who left the primrose path for the stony road to Damascus, exhibits his flowers, poppies in bewildering coruscations and that superb evocation of a table and chair almost pulverized by sun rays. Marsden Hartley completes the list. If there is too much string and wood wind in the orchestra of The Ten, the brass and tympani preponderate at the concert of the Independents. But they make stirring music, all the same.

Mr. Fitzgerald in an editorial entitled "The New Art Criticism," in the *N. Y. Evening Sun*:

Criticism by rule has long been out of fashion in the domain of art. The commentator whose judgment in aesthetic affairs is forever tethered by laws and guided by tradition has fallen into well-merited disrepute. We are tolerant enough of hypotheses as long as they serve a useful purpose, but they must still be held lightly and never paraded as ultimate systems. No critic to-day can impose upon us with established conditions or safely undertake to condemn any new thing by an appeal to authority. A modern is at liberty to quote the lawmakers if he will, but not after the manner of the older critics. A passage from Aristotle may at times be acceptable as a decorative embellishment; in an aesthetic argument, however, it is about as conclusive as a passage from Galen in a current treatise on therapeutics.

The disappearance of the dogmatist from the field of art is unregrettable and would be wholly beneficial had not his place been taken by a new and equally pernicious sort of critic with a method ostensibly the opposite of his. As the old sort undertook to judge things by comparison with certain fixed standards, so the critic of to-day professes to expound them without any comparison at all, and with the least possible use of his own understanding. An inane humility is the prime quality of the modern critic, as insolent assurance was of the earlier type. The very word "criticism" is generally eschewed by him because it seems to carry a certain suggestion of judgment. For this reason he prefers to call his discourses "appreciations," and his whole endeavor is to make them as spineless and impersonal as possible. Above all, he strives to eliminate the least hint of opinion because opinion might possibly color and modify the thing he sets out to interpret without prejudice.

Some drawings by a new painter, Pablo Picasso, have lately been brought to town by Mr. Stieglitz, that enterprising maker of exhibitions to whom we are all so much indebted for keeping us more or less informed of certain unfamiliar phases of art in other lands. It may be gathered from the comments in the daily papers that for the most part our journeymen critics found Picasso's art wholly indigestible; but with their opinions we are not concerned. The official expositor of the occasion is M. Marius de Zayas, the very type of modern critic. The paper he has written for *CAMERA WORK* is supposed to describe the art of M. Picasso, not as the critic sees it or understands it, but in strict accordance with the conception and purpose of the artist himself.

Now, as all artists worthy of the name are in a broad sense inspired by a similar intention, so it is manifest that this sort of criticism must of necessity be given over largely to commonplace. A critic at liberty to speak freely of his own emotions may be entertaining or even inspiring when he deals with a work of art, just as a painter may be in dealing with his vision of nature, or as any reasonable companion may be in any circumstances whatever. But it is a condition of modern criticism that the personal element must be excluded as rigorously as the dogmatic; hence such deplorable platitude as the following:

Picasso tries to produce with his work an impression, not with the subject but the manner in which he expresses it. He receives a direct impression from external nature, he analyzes, develops and translates it, and afterwards executes it in his own particular style, with the intention that the picture should be the pictorial equivalent of the emotion produced by nature. In presenting his work he wants the spectator to look for the emotion or idea generated from the spectacle, and not the spectacle itself.

If it were not against the rules of modern criticism to think, it must upon a moment's reflection have occurred to the author of these lines that painting is invariably a matter of equivalents, and that what he says would apply as well to the pictures of a Sorolla or a Bouguereau. When he goes on to speak of "the psychology of form" and to make distinctions between "psychic" and "physical" manifestations he is merely indulging in the sort of loose thinking that critics of the emotional school have always employed in their writings; the debatable point is reached only when he tells us that the "psychical manifestations" give rise in Picasso's mind to "geometrical sensations" and result in the discovery of invisible planes "which according to him constitute the individuality of form."

Here, at last, is a really interesting question; it is here that the business of the critic should begin, and if M. de Zayas were of the old school the question of geometrical equivalents might serve as an occasion for all sorts of fanciful if more or less futile speculations. Being a modern, however, he dare not give us so much as a hint of his own thoughts, and so he dismisses a difficult subject with the question-begging and obvious remark that "in these paintings the public must see the realization of an artistic ideal, and must judge them by the abstract sensation they produce, without trying to look into the factors that entered into the composition of the final result." Having delivered himself of these "musts," which are altogether delightful in a critic who professes such a perfect hatred of dogma, he condescends to enlighten us a little concerning a few of Picasso's postulates. In the matter of perspective:

He does not think it right to paint a child in size far larger than that of a man, just because the child is in the foreground and one wants to indicate that the man is some distance away from it. The painting of distance, to which the academic school subordinates everything, seems to him an element which might be of great importance in a topographical plan or in a geographical map, but false and useless in a work of art.

And regarding light and color:

Following the same philosophical system in dealing with light, as the one he follows in regard to form, to him color does not exist, but only the effects of light. This produces in matter certain vibrations, which produce in the individual certain impressions. From this it results that Picasso's painting presents to us the evolution by which light and form have operated in developing themselves in his brain to produce the idea, and his composition is nothing but the synthetic expression of his emotions.

That this "philosophical system," in so far as it is not nonsensical, is the common property of all painters is a circumstance which does not seem to have occurred to the commentator. So overwhelmed is he by arbitrary deviations from current custom that he dwells with admiration upon Picasso's conventions as if they had some peculiar quality making them essentially better than the academic. He seems to forget that it is only 500 years since Paolo di Dono was crying, *Oh! che dolce cosa è questa prospettiva!* Perspective was in those days a novelty, and we are apt to smile at Paolo's enthusiasm; but is it to be compared in point of simplicity with the modern painter who "does not think it right," but insists that it is "false," to use such devices? As if in abandoning them he were not obliged to adopt a new and equally "false" convention!

The modern school of criticism, however, is essentially unphilosophical. Our simple-minded friend states the case clearly enough when he says:

I have devoted my life to the study of art, principally painting and sculpture. I believe I have seen all that is worth seeing, and I have never dared pass sentence on a work declaring it good, even if signed by the most renowned artist; nor declare it bad, though it bears the name of a person totally unknown. . . . Each epoch has had its artists, and must have its art, as each also has its men of science and its science; and any one who intends to oppose a dike to the floodtide of human genius is perverse or a fool.

The confession does more honor to his amiability than to his understanding. We are inclined, however, to suspect his sincerity. It is very well to use pretty phrases like "the floodtide of human genius," but are we to understand that human judgment is therefore a thing to be stifled and suppressed? Suppose he were confronted with something of this sort:

I'd rather sit on you proper
Than say medicine dropper,
You dirty old stopper.

I don't mean you; that's Bill's hat; in it is a tomcat. No, I am not a tomcat, I am a tomboy. She said she would teach me to paint. I love fresh air and flowers, sunset and winter. No, sir; she was right and I was dead. . . . The doctors are pluperfect Perfecto, but they can't fool me. Rivers run rubies and rubies run red. Tra-la, you heard what I said. I'm a riddle, you're not; I'm a drunkard, you're a sot. Riddle-de-rot.

This inspiring passage occurs in the report of a case in one of the current medical journals, and of course the reporter has his own peculiar opinion of what it indicates. Not being a modern art critic but only a psychiatrist, he talks of "distractability" and "flight of ideas," nor does he hesitate to put a label on what he conceives to be a psychosis. But what would M. de Zayas say? Would he dare to deal with the matter in such a disrespectful way? Oh, no. Having devoted his whole life to art he might possibly perceive that the poet's method and manner were somewhat different from the method and manner of, say, a Shakespeare, or a Milton, or a Whitman; but that, he would tell us, indicated a commendable freedom from "school prejudices." For the rest, as a modern, he would not dare to declare the passage either good or bad, for fear of checking that delicate floodtide of human genius which in these modern days appears to be so feeble and so easily controlled by the Canutes of criticism.

The old-fashioned critic was bad enough. He had but one theory for all modern manifestations of art—the theory of insanity. The new-fashioned critic is no better, for he makes it a matter of conscience to approach all things with the innocence of an imbecile. His only merit lies in the singular skill with which he plays his part.

PLATO'S DIALOGUES—PHILEBUS

PROTARCHUS: But what pleasures are those, Socrates, which a person deeming to be true, would rightly think so?

SOCRATES: Those which relate to what are called beautiful colors, and to figures, and to the generality of odors, and to sounds, and to whatever possesses wants unperceived and without pain, yet yields a satisfaction palpable, and pleasant, and unmixed with pain.

PROT.: How, Socrates, speak we thus of these things?

SOC.: What I am saying is not, indeed, directly obvious. I must therefore try to make it clear. For I will endeavor to speak of the beauty of figures, not as the majority of persons understand them, such as those of animals, and some paintings to the life; but as reason says, I allude to something straight and round, and the figures, formed from them by the turner's lathe, both superficial and solid, and those by the plumb-line and angle-rule, if you understand me. For these, I say, are not beautiful for a particular purpose, as other things are; but are by nature ever beautiful by themselves, and possess certain peculiar pleasures, not at all similar to those from scratching; and colors possessing this character are beautiful and have similar pleasures. But do we understand? or how?

PROT.: I endeavor to do so, Socrates; but do you endeavor likewise to speak still more clearly.

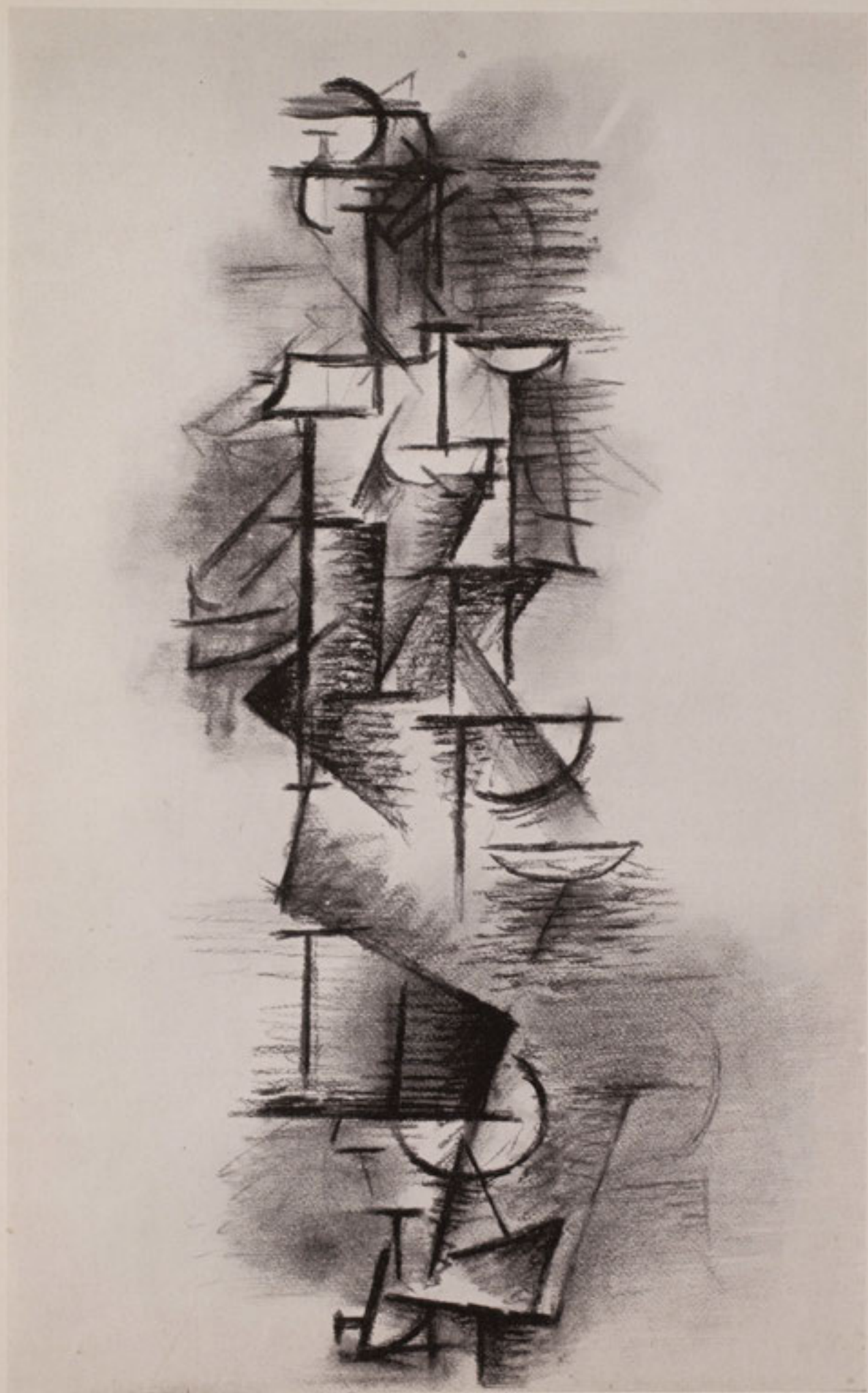
SOC.: I say then that sounds gentle and clear, and sending out one pure strain, are beautiful, not with relation to another strain, but singly by themselves, and that inherent pleasures attend them.

PLATE

PABLO PICASSO

I. Drawing

ORIGINAL EXHIBITED IN THE PICASSO EXHIBITION,
PHOTO-SECESSION GALLERY, APRIL, 1911



THE RELATION OF TIME TO ART

AFTER living constantly for two years in the quiet and seclusion of a London suburb, and then suddenly being plunged into the rush and turmoil of New York, where time and space are of more value than in any other part of our world, this consideration of the relation of time to art has been forced upon me.

As photography has, up to the present time, been my sole means of expression, I can best understand and attempt to explain my meaning by consideration of the part time plays in the art of the camera.

Photography is the most modern of the arts, its development and practical usefulness extends back only into the memory of living men; in fact, it is more suited to the art requirements of this age of scientific achievement than any other. It is, however, only by comparing it with the older art of painting that we will get the full value of our argument plainly before us; and in doing so we shall find that the essential difference is not so much a mechanical one of brushes and pigments as compared with a lens and dry plates, but rather a mental one of a slow, gradual, usual building up, as compared with an instantaneous, concentrated mental impulse, followed by a longer period of fruition. Photography born of this age of steel seems to have naturally adapted itself to the necessarily unusual requirements of an art that must live in skyscrapers, and it is because she has become so much at home in these gigantic structures that the Americans undoubtedly are the recognized leaders in the world movement of pictorial photography.

Just imagine any one trying to paint at the corner of Thirty-fourth street, where Broadway and Sixth avenue cross! The camera has recorded an impression in the flashing fragment of a second. But what about the training, you will say, that has made this seizing of the momentary vision possible? It is, let me tell you, no easy thing to acquire, and necessitates years of practice and something of the instinctive quality that makes a good marksman. Just think of the combination of knowledge and sureness of vision that was required to make possible Stieglitz's "Winter on Fifth Avenue." If you call it a "glorified snapshot" you must remember that life has much of this same quality. We are comets across the sky of eternity.

It has been said of me, to come to the personal aspect of this problem, that I work too quickly, and that I attempt to photograph all New York in a week. Now to me New York is a vision that rises out of the sea as I come up the harbor on my Atlantic liner, and which glimmers for a while in the sun for the first of my stay amidst its pinnacles; but which vanishes, but for fragmentary glimpses, as I become one of the grey creatures that crawl about like ants, at the bottom of its gloomy caverns. My apparently unseemly hurry has for its object my burning desire to record, translate, create, if you like, these visions of mine before they fade. I can do only the creative part of photography, the making of the negative, with the fire of enthusiasm burning at the white heat; but the final stage, the print, requires quiet contemplation, time, in fact, for its fullest expression. That is why my best work is from American negatives printed in England.

Think for a moment of the limitations of photography. You are confined to what a friend of mine sums up in the high-sounding words, "contemporary actuality," and now I find that my vision of New York has gradually taken upon itself a still narrower range, for it is only at twilight that the city reveals itself to me in the fulness of its beauty, when the arc lights on the Avenue click into being. Many an evening I have watched them and studied carefully just which ones appeared first and why. They begin somewhere about Twenty-sixth street, where it is darkest, and then gradually the great white globes glow one by one, up past the Waldorf and the new Library, like the stringing of pearls, until they burst out into a diamond pendant at the group of hotels at Fifty-ninth street.

Probably there is a man at a switchboard somewhere, but the effect is like destiny, and regularly each night, like the stars, we have this lighting up of the Avenue.

ALVIN LANGDON COBURN.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS

The Plates in this number of *CAMERA WORK* are, with one exception, devoted to the work of Mr. Alfred Stieglitz. There are sixteen in all, and they represent a series of "Snapshots" most of which were made in and about New York. The number appearing after each title refers to the date when the original negative was made. The photogravures were produced directly from the original negatives. The Manhattan Photogravure Company who are responsible for the editions deserve a word of special praise for the sympathy with which they have done their work.

The other Plate in this issue of *CAMERA WORK* is a reproduction of one of Picasso's drawings, the original of which was exhibited in the Picasso exhibition held in the Photo-Secession Galleries during last April. At some future time it is planned to devote at least part of a number of the magazine to the work of this most interesting artist whose exhibition at the Secession Galleries is referred to in "Photo-Secession Notes". The excerpt from Plato reprinted elsewhere in this number has seemed to us interesting in connection with the latest phase of Picasso's evolution.

CAMERA WORK NUMBERS IN PREPARATION OR ABOUT READY

With this number of *CAMERA WORK* the ninth year of its existence comes to a close. The January issue of 1912 will begin a new volume. There are in the course of preparation or about ready:

BRIGMAN NUMBER; a second series of this gifted photographer's pictures.

STEICHEN NUMBER; will include portraits of Bernard Shaw, Gordon Craig, Anatole France, Henri Matisse, Yvette Guilbert, Isadora Duncan, landscapes, Venetian studies, and a number of reproductions in color of several of his paintings. It had been hoped to have this number ready before this, but it has been impossible to rush the plate-makers without sacrificing the quality of the reproductions.

DE MEYER NUMBER; will include about one dozen photogravures of his portraits, landscapes, still-lives, etc.

HILL NUMBER; a new series of nine photogravures of this classic's work; Mr. J. Craig Annan has outdone himself in these photogravure interpretations.

PAUL B. HAVILAND, and **KARL STRUSS NUMBER**; will contain a series of photographs by these younger workers.

There are also in preparation reproductions in color of some of John Marin's water-colors; Manola's drawings, etc., etc., which will duly appear in some of the above numbers.



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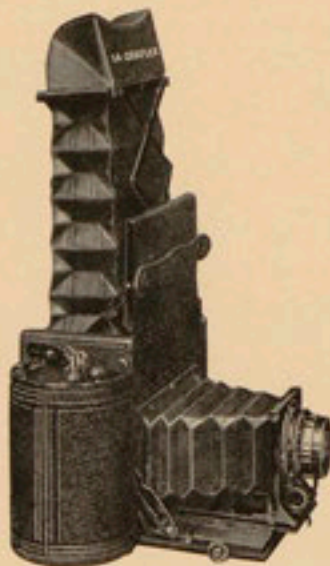
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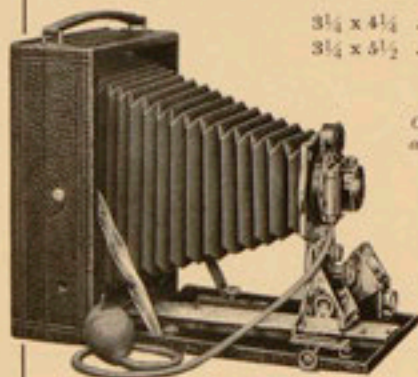
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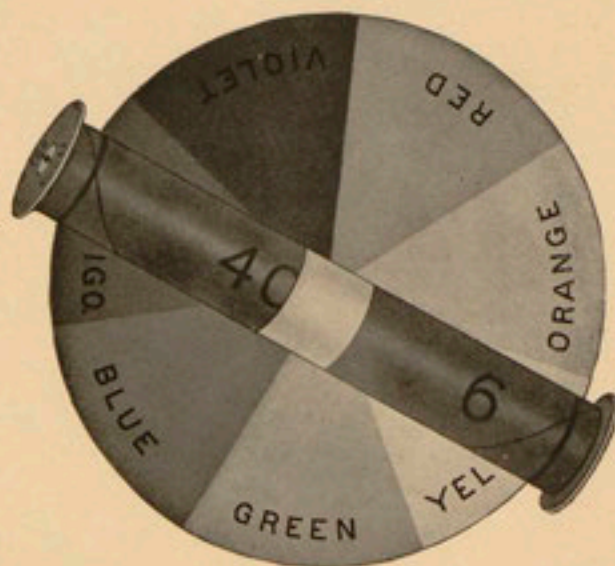


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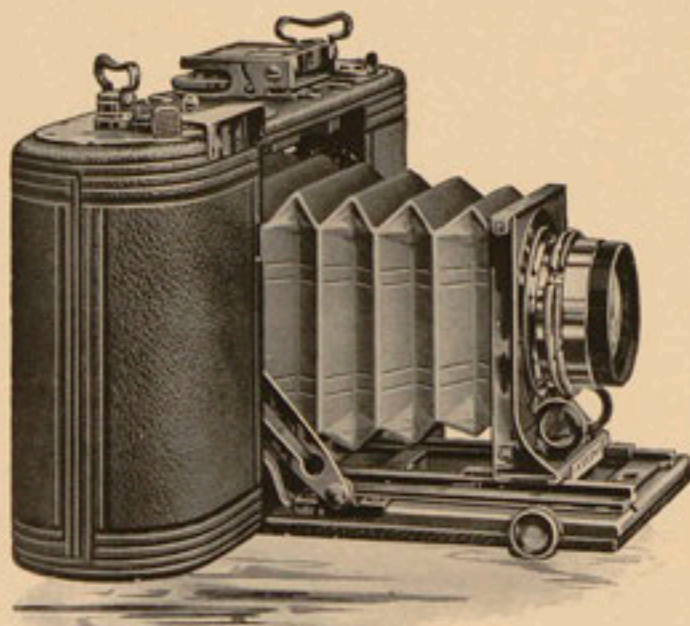


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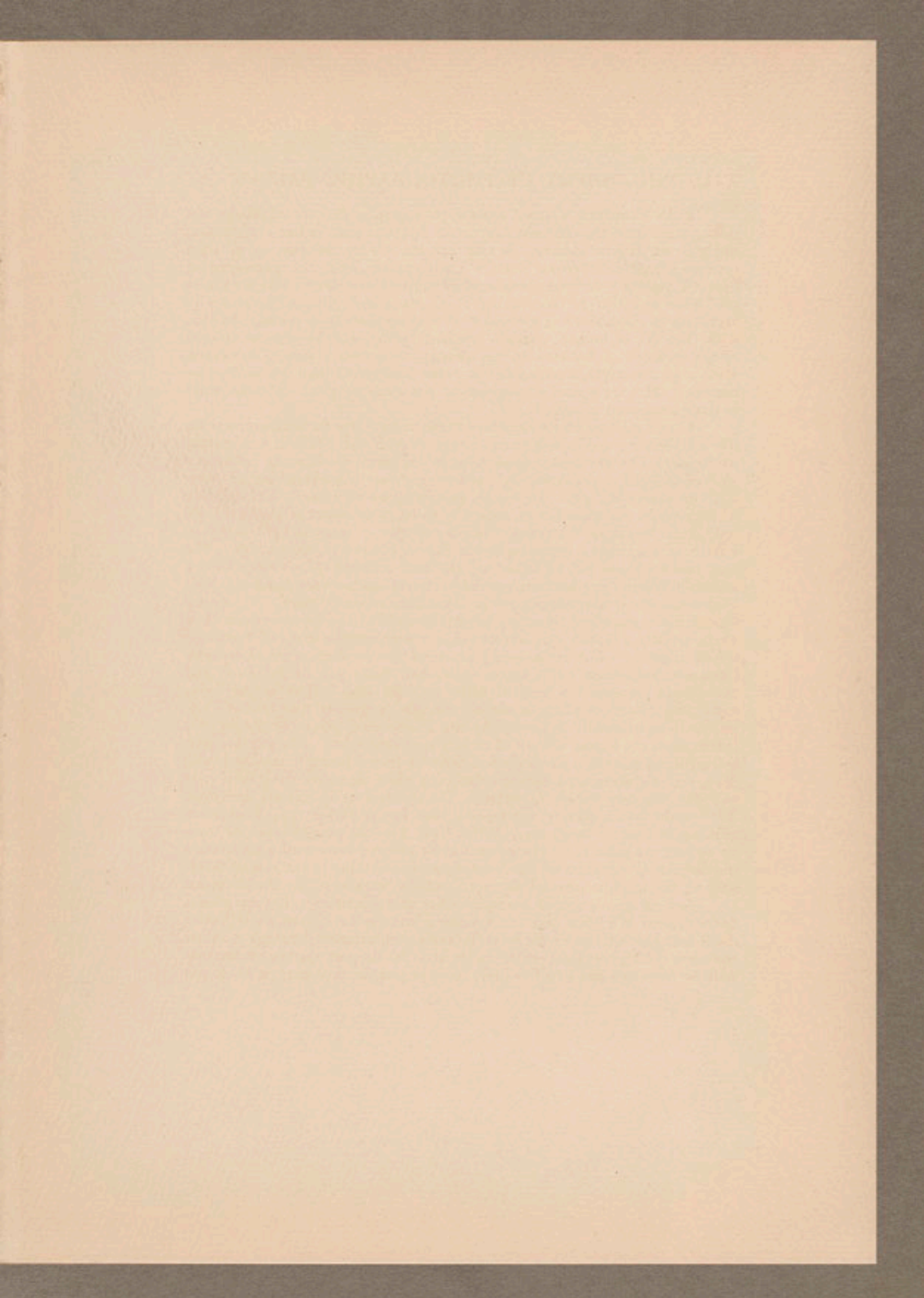
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