



THE PARIS EXPOSITION.

NOTES AND IMPRESSIONS.

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I.



It was fitting that one of the very greatest events of modern history should be celebrated by one of the greatest spectacles of modern times; but it is a little curious that the political should exceed even the spectacular interest of the latter. This was, nevertheless, true of the recent Paris Centennial Exposition, I think. At least its political importance was very great, and that a mere world's fair should have had such an importance is a phenomenon positively unique. The Exposition, in fact, appealed to the mind as forcibly, as brilliantly, as it did to the eye. Its significance was as salient as its splendor, and it was very splendid indeed. It was a great national reassurance, the embodied triumph of the Republic at home and abroad, the witness of the present Republic's soundness and strength, and the attestation of the practical puissance of, in general, the republican ideal.

The Republic and republicanism were very fortunate. The commemoration of 1789 is a very different thing from a commemoration of 1793. Only to a pedant, one would say, can even the fall of the Bastille seem typical of anarchy, and really the celebration might have been taken as the apotheosis of constitutional gov-

ernment—a fête in which every nation of Europe, but that of Russia, might, one would think, cordially join. Every cabinet of importance, however, held aloof; and the effect of the monarchical abstention was very dramatic. It gave France at once a position of relief and distinction. Her isolation in reality placed her on a pedestal. It gave her the same position in the impartial imagination that she occupied a century ago, when she was preaching the emancipation of "the people" everywhere, before she had begun to enslave the nations they composed. European hostility, in a word, did her the very great service, in this practical age of politics, of rendering her politically interesting. And republicanism shared the benefit of this service with her.

The opposition and the lukewarmness of the monarchical world, moreover, gave a distinctly French aspect to the Exposition. It was not so much universal as national. Except the exhibits of South American republics, and the sensational Oriental contributions, there were in the general and cursory view of the grounds and buildings, almost no elements that were not French. Speaking loosely, wherever one wandered idly, or whatever department he inspected closely, the most interesting and admirable objects were French. And, of course, in mere mass, French preponderance was overwhelming. In this way a very strong

impression of French superiority was very subtly instilled. So that by frowning on the Republic, Europe not only gave it relief and interest, but indirectly magnified France herself in every civilized and impressionable mind.

The domestic opposition was equally maladroit. There can be but little doubt but that, could they have divined the great success of the Exhibition, the conservatives and anti-parliamentarians would have united with the Government in its support, in order to have reaped a share of the credit for it. Had they done so they would certainly have minimized it as a political event. As it was, when the enterprise was in its inceptive stages they "gambled on" its failure. They withdrew a support which would have assured success at the outset (though, as the event proved, it was really needless), and thus, instead of discrediting the government with the sober classes for extravagance and display, it demonstrated not only how admirably the government could get along without them, but how well France herself had got along all the years that she had been deprived of the benefit of their direction. With such resources, and such an admirable development of them as the Exposition witnessed, the demand for a "saviour" of the country, in the person of either the Comte de Paris or of General Boulanger, became ridiculous. The country appeared to have been already saved, and the monarchists and anti-parliamentarians did their best to prove that it had been saved by the Opportunists. The electors seemed, at all events, to take this view on September 22d, in the result of which election the success of the Exposition, made as it was by Europe and by the domestic Opposition the test of the parliamentary Republic's efficiency, was a factor whose importance it is probably difficult to exaggerate. Defamation and detraction at home and abroad, the necessity of keeping "authoritative measures" within the limits of republican liberty, of preserving order and freedom together, of washing in public a certain amount of soiled linen, dissensions in the ranks of its own followers—all these phenomena, from which in countries less alive or more despotic government is free, had had an un-

doubted discrediting effect on the prestige of the government. The success of the Exposition, by demonstrating a national prosperity and improvement wholly inconsistent with inefficient administration, restored the people's faith in its representatives and its system.

It is interesting to note, furthermore, that the Exposition's success throws a good deal of light on our habit of applying certain principles of our own Anglo-Saxon political philosophy to French politics. These principles clearly have not the *a priori* universality which we attach to them if what we deem "stability of government" is not necessary to a nation's progress and prosperity. To many foreign observers—especially to England, the old ally of Napoleon III., from whose journals we hear the most about French politics—the state of French affairs during the past few years has seemed extremely alarming on account of the "instability of the government"—a phrase referring partly to the short life of French ministries, but particularly to the existence of large and powerful political parties opposed to the very form itself of the government. A country in this condition—to say nothing of M. Zola, whose eccentricities fascinate English attention—must be in rapid decadence, it is argued, because this is what decadence is. Yet the Exposition is a monumental demonstration of the contrary. In its five months of existence it probably convinced many per cent. more Anglo-Saxon political philosophers than any amount of written exposition could do, that if France is in decadence her decadence is one which it would be grotesque in any other European country to commiserate—certainly in one which has still to settle its land, its social, its religious, and its Irish questions. What is "stable" in France is *institutions*, and the Exposition is a convincing proof of the comparative unimportance of the "very form of the government itself," important as this is, and as Frenchmen feel it to be, as is witnessed by the heat and violence of their discussion of it. Owing to the Exposition, as I have implied, the so-called fundamental differences between French political parties will seem less significant than they have seemed. This is witnessed by the recent

elections, with the consequent disappearance of the grosser side of Boulangism. And if there should also result a practical acceptance of the Republic by any considerable share of the reactionary party, of which there are now some signs, the political effect of the Exposition would be in the highest degree sensational. But what it has already proved, and proved abundantly, is, that these differences are in reality much less fundamental and significant than we are apt to fancy them.

For no such concrete exhibition of a nation's power and civilization could have been created by one political party alone. The Republicans deserve the credit of it, in the way I have indicated: because it was abandoned to them by the Opposition, and because they conceived, created, and administered the enterprise. At the same time it was pre-eminently the work of the whole nation, politicians apart, and stood as a monumental attestation of that prodigious force, French patriotism. Whatever differences might divide it as to the form of government best in itself, or best adapted to the needs of France, the great mass of Frenchmen forgot these so soon as the project took shape and the honor of France was engaged. The politicians apart, there were no abstentions. Every class, from the artist to the artisan, contributed its best, and the result was the product of national enthusiasm on a grand scale and carried into minute detail. The hostility of Europe probably served only to fan the flame of this enthusiasm among even the ranks of the reactionaries; French royalists are essentially more democratic than most European liberals who are liberal through conviction merely, and not interest, and they have found the rule of the Republic so elastic that practically they have little fault to find. Doubtless, had the *régime* been monarchical instead of republican, there would have been the same striking consensus of patriotic effort, the same evident predominance of patriotic over partisan feeling. But the *régime* had been republican, truly republican since 1877, and the result not only proved the prosperity and progress of the country under it—not only proved that very great

industrial and intellectual eminence could be attained under it in the face of quite unparalleled difficulties; that a nation, eschewing militarism on the one hand, and making of every citizen a soldier on the other, might nevertheless excel nobly in the arts of peace—but proved also that under it French patriotism was as puissant as ever, and could so show itself in rational, and, so to speak, routine, as well as in dramatic impressiveness.

II.

As a spectacle the striking feature of the Exposition was the Exposition itself—the *ensemble*, the general *coup d'œil*, its unity, in a word. The advantageous side of the French passion for subordinating the detail to the mass was never better illustrated. One need only think of the enormous scale on which this was done, the dimensions of the elements of the gigantic organism, to appreciate how grandiose must have been the effect of composition, scrupulously manifest in every part. Such an effect is the end and aim of whatever is truly pictorial, of course. And such a picture as the Champ de Mars and the Trocadéro in this sense presented can never have been composed. The sense was constantly impressed by it, even in moments of special study of particular exhibits. Interesting as these were in detail, there was always something more interesting, more absorbing, namely, the whole to which they contributed. The Tour Eiffel itself took its place tranquilly and sedately among the members of the organism.

It need hardly be said that this effect was not fortuitous. It was, of course, very carefully calculated; and this calculation, as felicitous as it was careful, was distinctly and sensibly one of the chief elements in the delight of the eye which it produced. There was probably never so large a space of the earth's surface, covered by works by the hand of man, from which the element of the picturesque was so definitely absent. One felt that everything had been arranged, considered, combined, composed, as I say—that nothing had been left to itself, to the inequalities of the

ground, to the necessities of hampered means, to the chances of conflicting interests, to the whim of individuals or the notions of cliques, to the haphazard of independent initiative and private enterprise. This is the first, and perhaps the most essential, effect of a work of art, and an international exhibition is, as a whole, a work of art or it is nothing; constructed picturesqueness on the one hand, or a mere convenient medium for the display of industrial and æsthetic objects on the other, can never attain the effect of unity which gives to a composition its attractiveness and its independent *raison d'être*.

You entered the grounds anywhere, and were in the presence of this picture. At first, and remembering the convenience of the little railroad at Philadelphia in 1876, I was inclined to moralize on our superior sense of utility and necessity. There was a steam tramway, to be sure, which united the Champ de Mars with the Esplanade des Invalides, but it was useful chiefly to convey persons from one end of the Exposition to the other when they found the grounds between them and home. It conducted no one to "points of interest." There were, I soon found, no points of interest. There were, that is to say, no interstitial waste places. Large as the grounds were, the buildings were not scattered over them in isolated individual interest, but were interdependently combined. They fringed the great parallelogram of the Champ de Mars in almost unbroken succession; a fence was needed only to secure places of entrance and exit; the only view was, like that of any other theatre, from the inside. On the Esplanade des Invalides they were arranged in files and ranks like a town, with outlying suburbs of cafés, and the slighter colonial structures. Standing under the great arch of the Tour Eiffel, with your back to the Trocadéro, stretching its enclosing and concentrating wings around one end of the quadrilateral, you faced the Central Dome, which rose some two hundred and twenty-five feet into the air, with a diameter of over one hundred feet. On either side of it were the wings of the Palais des Industries Diverses, of which it formed the central entrance. At

their lateral limits the porticos which bordered these joined those of the buildings devoted to foreign industries, which came toward you till they reached on either hand the Palais des Beaux Arts and the Palais des Arts Libéraux. These, identical in general structure, and thus contributing a very marked effect of symmetry, extended nearly to the Tower. Around and back of you were numberless buildings, mainly the special pavilions of the Spanish republics, those of the French aquarellists and of the French pastellists, of the different theatres and casinos, deftly distributed among grassy mounds and clumps of trees. The lawn between the Tower and the Central Dome was a carpet of brilliant green bordered by broad gravel walks, and accented by gleaming sculpture, glistening fountains, and a decorous profusion of flowers that seemed to have strayed down from the Trocadéro gardens, where they formed an essential part of the display. The concentric effect of the spectacle, the manifestly contributory function of each part, may be readily imagined.

This effect of unity was powerfully assisted by the general excellence of all the structural details of the Exposition. There were no jars, no discordant notes of eccentric taste, nothing to break the agreeable uniformity of a high level of competence and cultivation. The color effect was particularly charming. The Central Dome was a dusky gold bronze, heightened by the brilliant bits of burnished gold and primary color which decorated the portal it surmounted. It left, in color, something like the general impression created by the interior of St. Mark's at Venice. The twin domes of the Fine Arts and Liberal Arts Palaces were of a delicate blue-green faience pricked out with fretwork of yellow and white, not unlike Persian tiling, and, indeed, bearing a strong resemblance to the color of the Dieulafoy find recently set up in the Louvre. The palaces themselves were of masonry, made of large bricks of terra-cotta delightfully mottled in tints of gold and fawn and salmon, and flecked here and there with the white of sculptured figures in relief and in the round, the piers carrying the sumptuous entablatures running along the build-

ings on either side of the arcaded portals being of skeleton iron painted a pale flat blue, and inclosing light terra-cotta tiling decorated in relief with much structural sense. So that in color as well as in form the great mass of buildings was a composition indescribably bright and gay as a whole, and in detail exhibiting a crescendo of gravity and richness, from the clear transparent notes of the extremities to the sober sumptuousness of the Central Dome.

The architecture was architecture in the sense in which few modern buildings are, namely, perfect expression of purpose—the style developed out of the necessities of the problem rather than a conventional style arbitrarily adopted and adapted. Its origins were traceable enough, of course, and it was clearly enough French. But it was, as one may say, of the Universal Exposition style. It was open to strict criticism here and there, no doubt—as, for example, the unstructural impost of the central portal, which seemed more like mammoth modelling than true construction, and such a building as the pavilion of the aquarellists, which was a trivial even if a dainty bit of pistache stucco. But ordinary criticism was hardly in order, so important an element of the general expression was the transitoriness that is so essential a trait of a Universal Exposition. If the architraves of the Liberal and the Fine Arts Palaces were carried on piers of skeleton iron-work filled in with terra-cotta, their portals made of brick and decorated with plaster, and if terra-cotta garlands and cupids ornamented their friezes; if the imposing building of the War Department was of plaster modelled in forms consecrated to lasting stone; if much of the purely decorative sculpture of the grounds was of the same material; if the Central Dome was too laden with gold and color to serve as anything but the focus of a prodigious fête—the sense of nice adjustment of form to function was so much the greater. Just such a light and gay and airy effect was in this way secured as the inner feeling of fitness demanded. Everything was simply as solid, as substantial, as thorough, as complete as its motive demanded, without the excess

of simulating a permanence foreign to its idea.

And yet so lavishly had the oil in the “lamp of sacrifice” been burned, so little compromise had been made with inevitable impending demolition, that, to an American at least—accustomed to a much more radical expression of transitoriness—perhaps the liveliest impression to be obtained from the Exposition was that it was as fine as the French people could make it. If it had faults or shortcomings—and I believe Mr. Edison found the machinery ill-arranged in some respects—their conception and not at all the execution of it was responsible. They, at all events, illustrated their ideal of a world’s fair. They had just what they wanted. No expense of time, care, patience, talent, or money had been spared. In these regards the consideration that a building was to be erected for only a temporary purpose had manifestly been allowed no weight. Attention had obviously been concentrated on the end to be attained. No detail was neglected, no general effect deemed too costly. Had the Tour Eiffel sprung from the motive of the Tower of Babel it could not have been constructed and decorated with severer scrupulousness. Had the twin palaces of the Liberal and the Fine Arts been designed for the permanent housing of the treasures that for less than half a year filled their spacious halls, they could not have worn a more unstinted and exuberant aspect.

The buildings, indeed, were decorated with a freedom and fulness of fancy in the highest degree creditable to French architects, who certainly do not usually err on the side of the *rococo*. Not only were they decorative and festal in color and general conformation, but they were ornamented with a gay profusion of gala whose prodigality was nevertheless strictly subordinate to decorum and good taste. There was no hint of the note which German, Italian, or Spanish Universal Exposition architecture would be sure to strike. One need hardly speak of the decoration which the French sculpture of the past ten years, variously distributed about the grounds, constituted; or of the special decorations of the grounds and buildings by

the numerous and cultivated guild of French sculptors and painters, except to chronicle the success of the monumental fountain by Coutan—a work full at once of *brio* and of elevation, besides being immensely clever in more conventional respects. One need only mention that the façade of Machinery Hall was decorated with a group representing "Electricity," by Barrias, and one personifying "Steam," by Chapu; that the Central Dome was surmounted by a "France Distributing Crowns," by Delaplanche; that Rodin contributed a heroic "Architecture" to the Fine Arts, and Aubé a "Printing" to the Liberal Arts building; and that the interior of the Central Dome was decorated by Lavastre with a fine frieze representing the procession of the nations. Few of these works were to be regarded as masterpieces. It is, indeed, difficult to conceive of a masterpiece by M. Delaplanche. But as decoration of a world's fair they, of course, far surpassed the result that any other people could hope to obtain. And the lavish work of the well-known sculptors and painters aside—though it should be added that this was often invoked by private exhibitors as well as by the administration—the taste displayed in the general framework of the Exhibition was very noteworthy. The exhibits were classified with that order for which the French are famous. Each department of art or industry counted as a separate whole in the general spectacular composition. Each had its own kind of portal, hangings, cases, and canopies, all designed with the taste obtainable only where this sort of thing is a tradition, and thus, even in the most industrial portions of the Exhibition, contributing to the general effect of unity and excellence.

III.

IN ability to secure these qualities the French have, it will hardly be denied, an advantage over any people in the world. As one of our commissioners remarked to me, "the French are naturally exhibition 'sharps.'" Doubtless the Exhibition of '92 will be an extremely interesting one. It may attest

our progress, and indeed our eminence, in many fields besides the industrial and material ones. It will, of course, offend those who have the interests of art deeply at heart more than did even the Tour Eiffel at Paris. If it is representative it will have its share of corn-palaces and butter-women; perhaps the slight success obtained at Paris by our reproduction of the Venus of Milo in chocolate will not discourage those to whom Parisian taste seems deficient in imaginativeness. But these may very well be taken as superficial incidents in what may very well prove a truly important, interesting, and significant display. I hope, however, it will be deemed neither supercilious nor unpatriotic if I suggest that, should the Exhibition of '92 as a spectacle possess the unity and excellence of the Paris Exposition, we shall certainly have cause for congratulation.

There are three disadvantages against which, as compared with the French, we shall be compelled to struggle. One is the disadvantage of possessing no site which can be compared for fitness with that which Paris possesses *en permanence*, and the impossibility of our constructing one. A fit site for a Universal Exhibition is not a *belvedere*; nor are topographical inequalities and sylvan potentialities pertinent features of such a site. We have been talking for the past few months as if they were; but the moment we get down to practicality we shall discover that we have been using the word "site" as if it were a universal "norm," so to speak, and that a "site," and a site for a Universal Exposition are two different things. The site at Paris is in the latter sense an ideal one. The Trocadéro palace, with its tall towers and wide sweep, dominates a large acreage of gardens which decline toward the Seine and communicate by the Pont d'Iéna with the vast space of the Champ de Mars immediately opposite. Along the left bank of the river extends, as far as the large Esplanade des Invalides, a sufficient width of unoccupied ground to prevent any interruption of the Exhibition, so that whether you are in the Trocadéro gardens, the Esplanade des Invalides, or the Champ de Mars, you are merely in a part of a compact exhibition divided formally rather than really into

three grand divisions, which thus furnish opportunity for grouping in a large and effective way without the disadvantage of mutual isolation. But the great advantage of this site is that it is within so few minutes' walk from the centre of Paris that it may be justly called central, and the advantages of a central site in Paris are simply incomparable. No site in the world for a world's fair can compare with that which makes it the nucleus of Paris. And this by no means because of accessibility by land and water, by tramway, cab, 'bus, and walking—which nevertheless means that the Exhibition may be as much an evening as a day exhibition—but because Paris itself is a perpetual spectacle, and merely incloses in its inner *enceinte* the spectacle of the moment. The parks, the boulevards, the theatres, the museums—everything in the way of distraction and instruction for which Paris is famous—border a Universal Exhibition at Paris with a zone of far greater attractiveness for a world's fair crowd than can elsewhere be obtained. A Universal Exhibition in Paris, in a word, has not only the interest of being for the moment the nucleus of the greatest spectacle in the world, but the advantage of sharing the burden of entertaining its guests with surroundings which are in themselves of unequalled attractiveness and interest.

A second spectacular disadvantage which it would be greatly to our credit in any substantial degree to overcome is the fact that, unlike the French, we have no competent organization, directed by a long and splendid tradition of æsthetic dignity and taste, to create and control the Exhibition of '92. For everything but formal initiative we are dependent on that immense, that salutary, but in some respects that ineffective force known as "private enterprise." There is no need to praise the manifold beneficence of private enterprise. An American can hardly open his mouth on this subject without uttering commonplaces. And we may maintain that not only in such matters as building ever so many more miles of railway than we really need, or in fighting a gigantic war on an essentially militia basis, we have demonstrated the utility of private

enterprise, but also that officialism is very disastrous in the sphere of æsthetics itself—and at the same time appreciate the fact that, for the creation and control of an immense spectacle whose worst dangers are dissonance and heterogeneity, officialism with a conservative and cultivated æsthetic tradition has an immense superiority. In such a matter officialism is not divorced from general enthusiasm, it directs it. It is not an artificial but a co-ordinating influence. Compared with a world's fair due to the "private enterprise" of a number of public-spirited plutocrats and interested business houses, one born of "government interference" is intensely popular, and has a rational and natural sanction. The French Government, in the case of the Paris Exposition, was eminently a "popular exponent," as our phrase is, and merely organized the national enthusiasm, which its machinery, in already perfect condition for such a function, enabled it to do with admirable ease and efficiency. It was not embarrassed by the selection of a site, nor by the question of raising funds, nor by the best means of employing the funds at its disposal. Sure, like ourselves, of the national and popular support, but able to dispense with the cumbrous and snail-like necessity of assurance of it, it could attack the problem of organization with directness. All it had to do was to call together the engineers, architects, sculptors, and decorators, and lay the general problem before them. To say that a "committee," however representative, enthusiastic, and intelligent, can do this as easily and effectively, is like saying that training and experience are of no value in the conduct of enterprises of this kind. The architects of the Exhibition of 1892 will doubtless be the last functionaries appointed.

The absence of any body of engineers, architects, sculptors, and decorators at all commensurate in numbers, solidarity, and æsthetic tradition, is the third, and perhaps the chief disadvantage, the recognition of which is a first step toward overcoming it. We are famous for our engineering feats, and no doubt we can look forward to something as interesting and impressive in this sense as either the Tour Eiffel or the Palais des Ma-

chines. But spectacular composition is quite another matter (and it will be understood that it is of this exclusively that I am speaking) and it may certainly be doubted if to this end our engineers and architects would pull together as sapiently and harmoniously as the famous corps of the Paris Exposition. Possibly the engineers would feel that they had little to learn from the architects, even in the direction of æsthetic adaptation. Speculation aside, however, and engineering apart, it is clear that the city which in architecture, painting, and sculpture is the world's school at the present day, must, for that reason, possess an amount of "talent" to be drawn upon far in excess of that existing elsewhere. If we had anything corresponding in amount, we might argue advantages from our freedom from the dry and sapless character of "official art." We certainly have no "official art," and certainly what art we have is free as the air of heaven. But it happens that not only is "official art" the ideal kind for the construction and decoration of a Universal Exhibition, up to a certain point, but that beyond that point Paris has the advantage of the free art which the present extremely liberal Ministry of the Fine Arts is doing so much to encourage. Still, "the greatest poem," says Scherer, speaking of "Faust," "is not that which is most skilfully constructed, but that in which there is the most poetry;" and however little a poem and a world's fair resemble each other, perhaps in 1892 the contents of our Exhibition will atone for any possible shortcomings in form. We may be sure they will, in any case, in the eyes of persons who think it will need no great effort to eclipse the Paris spectacle even as a spectacle.

IV.

So much had been said against it that a visitor to the Exposition might have been excusably surprised not to find the Tour Eiffel vulgar. But the unprejudiced visitor must have been still more surprised to find it a positively agreeable object. It was, however, not only not vulgar, but agreeable. *A priori* objections to it were certain-

ly reasonable enough. Everyone must have sympathized with the protest of the Paris artists made before the Tower was begun. The chances were entirely against the æsthetic success of something that was supposed to aim exclusively at height; though after all, nowadays, since we have discovered that motive is of no importance in art, what does it matter if the motive of a work of art be height? Do we not all know—certainly, if we do not we are not "modern"—that technic is what counts? If technic be generally competent and specifically admirable, the result must be successful. And technically the Tour Eiffel was superb. It may have been intended merely to be astonishing, but in reality it was in the highest degree impressive.

Height, indeed, was not its sole motive. M. Eiffel has said, I believe, and there are advocates of essaying such an enterprise at our Exhibition in 1892, that it would be perfectly easy to erect a tower twice as high. The English, as usual perhaps not quite seizing the point of view in a non-utilitarian and foreign matter, consoled themselves by reflecting that it would take two Tours Eiffel to make a single span of the great Forth Bridge. Its motive was impressiveness. To the end of impressiveness size is certainly an important consideration. No one would pretend that a model of the Brooklyn Bridge would be as impressive as the original, any more than people who care chiefly about the looks of things (and who were the chief critics of the Tower in advance) would maintain that its utilitarian function is an element of its impressiveness. And size rather than height, was the main source of the Tower's impressiveness as an extraordinary structure. It did not appear extraordinarily high; probably it would not have done had it been double its actual height; everyone who saw it for the first time expressed disappointment; its height was something which had to grow on one, so largely had the imagination discounted it. But it appeared from the first extraordinarily big. The immense anchorage and piers, the tremendous spans of the lower arches, the enormous mass of iron wreathing upward, the vast platforms, containing spacious

cafés and promenades and a large permanent population, hardly required the reflection that all this was a mere mechanical necessity to the end of placing a stationary point a thousand feet in the air to impress one with a sense of the grandiose in pure construction such as few other works can.

Impressiveness on this scale and of this unique sort seems to me, I confess, all æsthetic theorizing aside, an extremely laudable end for the main feature—the novelty—of a universal exhibition. There is a certain dignity in a mammoth object of the kind erected solely for a commemorative purpose, provided it be kept within the limits of taste and sense, provided, that is to say, it be, although a monster, distinctly not a monstrosity. The mere fact that the Tour Eiffel was a prodigious structure, and gave to thousands of people, through its mere size and height, such a sensation as they had never experienced in their lives, without appearing architecturally absurd, is, I think, its very sufficient excuse. But in addition to this the tower was, as I have said, a distinctly agreeable object. Its lines were fine, its proportions harmonious, the entire structure agreeable in its evident slenderness and obvious strength. From some points of view—sufficiently distant for one to lose the sense of construction—the curve of the outline seemed perhaps weak, owing to the spread of the base and the tenuity of the top. But it should be remembered that it is particularly true of architecture that the mind has always to come to the assistance of the eye, or, in other words, that the eye should be a trained one. In the numerous reductions of the Tower the base undoubtedly appears too heavy for the top; but in looking at the Tower itself one instinctively recalls the tremendous service the base has to perform, and the curve becomes thus truly a line of beauty. If the essence of architectural beauty were, as is sometimes maintained, the complete expression of function, then the Tour Eiffel would rank high as a work of architecture. This is not, however, the essence of architectural beauty, but only an essential condition of it; and perhaps the most that one can say of the Tower, accordingly, is that it is a beautiful work

of engineering. But it can be said of it with entire sobriety that in virtue of its obviously logical structure it far surpasses in beauty such works of architecture as are essentially constructed decoration instead of decorative construction. Eliminate the pleasure to be derived from association and from the sculptures and mouldings and foliations—the thousand felicities which belong to stone and belong to stone alone—and I am not sure that the delight to be obtained from looking at the myriad thrusts and points of resistance, the bolts and rivets, the long upward-springing shafts, the manifest communication of accumulated power from tier to tier of rods and girders, was not in its way worthy to be compared with that to be derived from standing before the façade of a cathedral.

Moreover, the Tower was eminently a part of the Exposition. It dwarfed nothing. It composed delightfully. It dominated easily, but not arrogantly, the buildings and landscape, and though you were generally, when out-of-doors, half conscious of its presence, it did not obtrude itself. In a word, it took its place—the place that had been provided for it in the general plan. It was a central point of interest from its character, and of observation from its prominence; but it distinctly contributed to the *ensemble* rather than formed an eccentric and discordant note. Its eminence had nothing exclusive and egoistic about it. It helped, indeed, to decorate, to embellish the Champ de Mars, which was by no means merely its abject environment. This effect was due partly to the interest of the other constructions, the beauty of the Central Dome, the charming color and delightful aspect of the lateral palaces, the brilliance of the lawns, the fountains, the groups of sculpture, the scores of isolated structures scattered about; but it was due also to the sobriety and good taste with which it was itself decorated.

V.

No part of the Exposition was more conspicuous than that contributed by what it is convenient to call the Orient—though in this case the Orient ex-

tended to the Pillars of Hercules. Paris, especially artistic Paris, was delighted with these examples of an exotic civilization. Cairo Street was in some respects the centre of the Exhibition, though it only fringed a portion of one of its sides. It was very well done; the illusion was as complete as possible. There was nothing cynical about the reconstruction of an Egyptian or other street—nothing obviously superficial and clumsily imitative. The street was, to use the current slang, manifestly sincere. The bronze Egyptian donkey-boys, clad in long blue tunics, were very genuine. They thumped and shouted to their beasts, laden with most incongruously Occidental freight, as it is probable they do on the banks of the Nile. The carved jalousies and oriels, glued to the perpendicular walls of whitewash, and hanging over and just out of the reach of the bustling, elbowing, clamorous crowd below them, were express importations. The caves and cellars and gloomy recesses, redolent of perfumes and dusky with pastilles, contained indubitably genuine carpets and trinkets, and were presided over by genuine, if polyglottic, followers of the Prophet. Genuineness must have been the only excuse for the hoarse cries, the strident calls, the orchestral cacophony, which bewildered the sense of hearing even more than the barbaric color and form did the eye.

But in spite of the genuineness of it all—in spite, moreover, of the typical nature of it all—it was impossible, I think, for the wholly sane sense to avoid being depressed by a feeling of its essential artificiality. Is this, after all, what Islam has to give us? Is this the sum of its contribution to the delight of the eye, the pride of life, or the gayety of nations? These raucous girls and decrepit men pressing upon our attention filigree, little boxes, scent-bottles, cigarettes, pipes, bits of lacquer, beads, bangles, slippers, embroideries, and the thousand Oriental “notions” of their trivial bazaars are melancholy in direct proportion to their reality and representative character. Pass on to the stucco India Palace, filled with Hindostan stuffs and inlaid gewgaws, varied, marshalled, and commercially organized by English commercial tact, and the

same sensation—the same impression of the Orient—oppresses you. It is picturesqueness run to seed, the scum of a civilized decadence, the flotsam and jetsam of a worn-out world, the frivolity and cynical puerility of a taste grown absolutely mechanical, the sordid squalor of an intelligence utterly disillusionized.

This effect was of course immensely heightened by the incongruousness of the whole Asiatic exhibit. Over all hung the gray sky of Paris, the white mud of the Champ de Mars was underfoot, the crowd was a crowd of *badauds* and foreigners from the three remaining quarters of the earth, Paris showers sprinkled the court-yards and pattered against the chiselled lattices—in the fairest of fair weather the Paris atmosphere was cruelly indiscreet and uncompromising beside the intense sunlight and warm blending of the Eastern air. Apart from its environment, at any rate, one concluded, the things that Cairo Street and its dependencies stood for were not properly to be appreciated. Just what they need, namely, a subordination and absorption into an *ensemble* which retreats and retires and does not justify itself in such emphatic and defiant fashion as here, here is lacking. Judged by the criteria which the *rue du Caire* supplied, Gautier, Fromentin, Regnault, Pierre Loti are incomprehensible. The grime was more salient than the color, the chaos more prominent than the picturesqueness. Perhaps, indeed, the reason why the Orient pleases artists so much is because it furnishes only the elements of a picture; because it is magnificently heterogeneous and haphazard; because, in a word, it is so truly unpictorial. Perhaps, even in the Orient, as well as in the *rue du Caire*, it is the imagination that is stimulated rather than the sense that is pleased. But so far as the ordinary amateur is concerned I don't know that it makes much difference in the resultant effect on the sense and nerves whether the barbarism that one is experiencing be rudimentary or decayed. We may say, perhaps, that crudity is more refreshing morally, because one is accustomed to think of it as the beginning of better things and unconsciously credits it with the virtues of a fancied future. On the other hand,

there is undeniably a certain harmony in the *débris* of elements once composed and still united which is æsthetically a shade more agreeable; the picture has tone, however the parts may lack distinction, and however purposeless and puerile the *ensemble*.

But to appreciate how utterly lacking in distinction was all this vaunted picturesqueness, this fancied romanticism of color and costume and custom which made up the *rue du Caire*, one had only to turn into the neighboring rooms of the Japanese exhibits. The contrast afforded one of the acutest and most elevated sensations of æsthetic pleasure it is possible to experience. One was at once in a rarer atmosphere, and exchanged tumultuousness for serenity, a ragged and dishevelled disorder for intelligence, refinement, elegance; the dregs of a dissipated relaxation for the true tension of cultivated exertion; an abandoned orgy for the repose and sanity of the pursuit of perfection. This general effect of the Japanese rooms was perhaps more remarkable than the excellence of the special exhibits, though this was, of course, very great indeed, and—as the tickets on bronzes and porcelains disclosed—many museums and private collections will be the richer for treasures of delicate and sensitive art. Outside and right and left was glitter and tinsel—the gaudy *grotesquerie* of Siamese imagination, the trumpery trinkets of Egypt, Morocco, Asia Minor; within, space and quiet; beautiful objects grouped, without sacrifice of individual interest, in tall black and glass cabinets; wide passage-ways between these, the courtesy of civilization manifest in the demeanor of the attendants, and the purely decorative features of the framework of the whole distributed with a chaste abstention from profusion and a dignified reserve in display in the highest degree impressive. It seemed difficult to fancy the *danse du ventre* going on amid the abominable cacophony of gongs and castanets a dozen steps away.

Going on, however, it was the live-long day. Every hour, every half-hour of the afternoon and evening, in half a dozen grimy cafés the Terpsichorean ideal of the Orient was illustrated anew, and so absolutely mechanical and list-

less was the spirit that infused the performers that, to a reflecting person, it was the audience that was really the spectacle. The audience was at all events a study. The number of women was ludicrously disproportionate, and the number of American women was noticeable. Some of them seemed slightly pensive, but all were interested. Their large eyes grew larger still. They almost forgot decorum in crowding for a better view, in leaning over the backs of chairs, in concentrated, absorbed attention. They seemed to be making the acquaintance of a new world of phenomena, to be learning something—which it is well known is the state of mind most exciting to the American girl. But it is perhaps doubtful if their acquisition was capable of formulation. In most cases it must have remained in the state of pure impression; and probably most of them will agree that, important as impressions are, this one was, on the whole, unsatisfactory.

If there were anything distinctly sensuous about the *danse du ventre* it might be more reprehensible, but it could not fail of being more interesting. Greater reprehensibility would have secured what was, in fact, most lamentably lacking, namely, a *raison d'être*, and a *raison d'être* always makes a thing more interesting. Doubtless, in its origin, its primordial idea, this series of contortions had significance, just as much of the symbolism of more spiritual ceremonial which now subsists in equally empty though more decorous fashion was once full of meaning, however esoteric and Eleusinian. At Paris and to-day it is absolutely hollow and dull. Fatima had the air of a bored contortionist. Her movements were extraordinary, and I was not surprised to hear that one of her comrades, forced to perform them from morning till night, and thus robbed of the recuperating repose which undoubtedly she enjoyed in Cairo or Salonica, had died of peritonitis at one of the hospitals. But anatomical paradox has in itself really no excuse for existence if it be both ugly and insignificant, and if in addition there be no heart in it.

There was, on the contrary, "heart," and little else, at the other end of the

Champ de Mars, where the *Gitanas* were—appropriately—installed in the Palais des Enfants. These Spanish gypsies, mainly female, with enough of a masculine intersprinkling to give variety and conventional point to their performances, seemed veritably to have *le diable au corps*—which is perhaps merely a modern rendering of the old phrase “possessed of the devil.” Their entertainment seemed the incarnation of caprice. Nothing more riotous, formless, and abandoned can be imagined. It was impossible at first to get the thread of it, to reduce it to anything like coherence. After a time one became habituated or demoralized enough to fancy he could divine the point of view. But this point of view once seized appeared all the more wildly extravagant, all the more impudent and atrocious. The noise was deafening. The music, to whose accompaniment the antics of the dancers were adjusted, was furnished by little tambourines absolutely echoless and non-vibrant, the national castanets, and a remorselessly persistent handclapping, which was first mystifying, then maddening, and finally, by dint of tireless continuance, stupefying. Its measures were marked at irregular intervals, suggested by the whim of the individual members of the company, by shouts and cries of the most epileptic violence. Happily, to most of the audience they probably seemed inarticulate. The dancing was mostly of a kind whose essential indecorousness was no doubt essentially modified by its calm deliberation and technical correctness. But I think the fondness for it of artistic Paris was an acquired taste.

The Javanese dancers were a troupe of an altogether different character, and it is only just to credit the *goût faisandé* of the Parisians with preferring them to the flagrant and turbulent contortions just mentioned. They were neither noisy nor abandoned. The music was slow, regular, and savage only in *timbre*. It tortured the nerves in an insidious and unsuspected way only—like certain forms of Chinese punishment, which at first seem wholly bearable—and did not assail them violently, as did that of the Spanish and Egyptian *virtuosi*. And to its unphrased, unmodulated monotony

the dancers moved with trailing steps in slow—ininitely slow—curves, wreathing their arms, or rather their hands, with the wrist as a pivot, in a sinuous sedateness quite impossible to characterize or describe. As they circled about the little stage, a solemn-visaged youth in—perhaps—full canonicals, surrounded by a group of attendant girls, they seemed to be performing a series of barn-yard evolutions, as of a slowly strutting cock encircled by his harem of hens. It was decorous to the point of solemnity, and the sense of measure was certainly preserved to an almost measureless degree. The dancers were never carried beyond themselves by the *entrain* of the dance, but very visibly and agreeably controlled and regulated their gestures and poses. In this sense the performance was clearly an artistic one. But at the end of a half hour the observer who did not find it monotonous must have been a determined seeker after sensations. The elaborate but limited sinuosity of the waving hands and flexible wrists seemed at last perfectly insipid, and, instead of being intentional, merely the reduction to a factitious appearance of order, of movements in reality hap-hazard and fortuitous, by a slowing of the pace to such an extent that the sense of slowness disguised the lack of character in the design. After the *Gitanas* any exhibition of decorum was agreeable, but before long the emptiness of pure decorum made itself dismally perceived, and one could not help thinking that the Parisian amateurs who went into ecstasies over the Javanese did not analyze their sensations with sufficient assiduity. They must have seemed a little *naïfs* to the Javanese themselves, whose resigned expression was now and then apparently varied by a shade of amusement at the simplicity of their audiences.

In themselves, however, the dancers were more interesting than their serpentine posturings. There was one, especially, a girl of fourteen or fifteen, but evidently at the acme of maturity, over whom all artistic Paris was excited. Her skin, of which a great deal was visible, was of the most beautiful golden hue, with citron shadows, and her arms were modelled with an extraordinary delicacy.

Her face was decidedly of a moon-like character, with eyes wide apart, and a rudimentary nose of concave outline. But, as a venerable and philosophic Frenchman who sat behind me remarked, "What difference does it make—a line like this or a line like that? What is really beautiful is youth." And this young woman was the incarnation of youth. It seems that our noses appear ridiculous to Javanese connoisseurs, and that the unvarying mark of a Batavian caricature is an exaggerated nose; perhaps it was our noses as well as our *naïveté* that amused the performers. It is well to have a standard, an ideal, even of noses, however; it is a great simplifier; and one reflected that even people who believe in concave noses have an advantage over those who believe only in "youth." In the first place, they have more "youth" themselves. In this sense the Parisian delight in all this transplanted irrelevance seemed extremely old.

VI.

THE industrial display was doubtless very good, though special competence is required in order to speak of it intelligently. Our own exhibit made a poor showing, for example; but judging by the *grands prix* and medals it obtained it must have been a valuable contribution to a world's fair, considered as an institution for the development of industry and manufactures. No one, however, could fail to note the immense commercial preponderance of Great Britain in these respects over the protected countries of the Continent—even that part of the Continent which enjoys the superiority over England of artistic instincts, a tradition of culture, and the *Code Napoléon*—and as at Philadelphia, in 1876, the English exhibit constituted a vast object-lesson in political economy which the dullest might learn by mere dint of looking. The educational side of the Exposition, too, was extremely prominent. Everyone has read of the street of the habitations of man in all ages, of the history of labor series, of the scientific congresses held in almost unbroken succession from the opening to the close of the Exposition, and of such conspicuous importance as to induce the London *Spectator* to speculate in a long article on the worth of such congresses after all. But for the ordinary observer, of all the contents of the Exhibition, the art therein gathered was the most interesting—whether this be or should be the case at a world's fair or not.

Naturally here France reigned unrivalled, both because the French attach so much value to art, and the Exposition was so eminently French, and because there is, comparatively, so little modern art outside of France. But the French display was rendered far more impressive than otherwise it would have been, more impressive indeed than its warmest admirers could have expected it to be, by the happy idea of the retrospective exhibition of French masterpieces in painting and sculpture executed during the past hundred years. The *Centenaire* was, in truth, the very core and centre of the Exposition. The Louvre and Luxembourg together give no such vivid sense of the value of French art, of the title of French schools to rank with those of Italy and Holland, as the splendid array of sculptures and canvases spread out under the spacious blue dome of the Fine Arts Palace and overflowing into the contiguous galleries on either side. Here only could one get a just notion of the richness, the long career, and the vitality of distinctly French art after its emancipation from Italian leading-strings. For Fragonard, who was painting in 1789, almost carries it back to the days of reaction from Italian influence, and from Fragonard to Rodin stretched a line of works illustrating every phase of its later evolution amply and splendidly. How much, too, there was in each successive phase was a lesson in catholic appreciation hardly otherwise to be obtained. The *Centenaire* was almost a demonstration of the truth of Mr. Henry James's wise remark, that "art is only a point of view, and genius mainly a way of looking at things." Prudhon, David, Ingres, Delacroix, Couture, Corot, Millet, Courbet, Manet, Puvis de Chavannes—how much to say for itself here had each of these interhostile points of view over which

such fierce battles have been fought, and such heated intolerance exhibited. Fragonard's witchery and abandoned *insouciance*; Prudhon's grace and lambent color; David's sense of self-control and perfect power of expressing what he deemed worthy of expressing; Ingres' linearly beautiful demonstrations of his sincerity—his *samity*, indeed—in proclaiming that drawing was the "probity of art;" Delacroix's splendid proofs that color and action are alone worth attention; Corot's triumphant assertion that blithe serenity is nature's truest note; Courbet's superbly stated proposition that only the petty lies without the domain of artistic subject, and that one motive is as good as another—even elegance itself—provided you take it largely enough—all these various points of view seemed invincible when you stood before the splendid illustrations of them that the *Centenaire* contained. You might theorize at your leisure, and note among other things the steady evolution of technic which these masterpieces of French art attested during the past hundred years; but philosophizing in their presence seemed professional and almost priggish.

Both the *Centenaire* and the exhibition of current French art, the paintings and sculpture of the past ten years, showed one tendency or trait of the utmost significance, namely, a perfect catholicity of official selection. Canvases and statues figured in each which had either been rejected at the *Salon* or treated with contumely there. Courbet and Rodin had apparently become the head of the corner. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of this apparent divorce between the Government and the Institute, this enthusiastic adoption, and not mere countenancing, by the former of "free," in spite of the frowns of academic art. It is not fanciful to say that it would never have happened under a monarchical *régime*, that the republican faith and its triumph have broadened the artistic as well as the political horizon, and in the field of æsthetics as well as of politics now reigns the genius of liberty and an ideal impatience of restrictions and conventions so far as these tend to hamper, hinder,

or exclude *talent* of any kind. The careful cherishing of salutary, the careful curbing of dangerous influences, the timid and perhaps selfish trades-union spirit, which hitherto the Administration has more or less warmly supported in the Institute, have for the moment given way. Ultramontanism has indeed given place to radicalism, one may say, and possibly the pendulum has swung over far in the direction from which it has so long by main strength been withheld. But no one can doubt that whatever extravagance may be considered to accompany the change will, in its turn, be sufficiently curbed by the great forces of conservatism always at work in French art, and in the public to which French art appeals, and that the Institute knows its trade too well, and really possesses too fine a sense of sobriety and measure to lose more than the surplusage of power which official aid once gave it and gives it no longer. So that the change I speak of cannot fail to be as salutary as it is notable. Much dissatisfaction was expressed at the prominence of Manet and the presence of Monet at the Exposition, and there need be no fear that any school of "free" art will permanently receive the government support which will make it in turn "official."

This, however, does not imply acquittal of the "modernists" themselves of the charge of intolerance, and in their contributions to the exhibition of current art there was, I think, abundant evidence of the fanaticism which is perhaps an inevitable accompaniment of the energy requisite for effective Protestantism. What can you accomplish in attacking any system unless you attack it systematically? And the French *plein-air* painters, as a rule and in the mass, seem really to paint as if nothing else in the world were worth a moment's thought except the just reproduction of out-of-doors "values." These painters made the most vivid impression of any of the various French schools to whose works gallery after gallery was devoted, perhaps owing to our having grown familiar with the Bonnats and Benjamin Constants, and Henners and Laurenses and Detailles. They are the painters not, I think, of the indefinite, but prob-

ably of the immediate future. They date from Manet as a matter of fact, though, as so often happens in a movement of this kind, Bastien-Lepage's modification of Manet's uncompromising attitude has been adopted by most of them. Monet and *luminarisme* are yet to come, perhaps, and though it is hard to imagine what phase of nature will be left after that upon which a "school" may concentrate its attention, yet as the phases of nature are infinite the succession of schools will doubtless continue.

No one not a traditional adherent of the academic conventions can fail to appreciate the excellence of the *plein-air* painters. It is not to be doubted that their procedure is worthy of a scientific age, and mathematical to the last degree. The doctrine they advocate and illustrate simply demands an exact *correspondence* in the light and dark scale of a picture to that of the natural scene represented, exact *imitation* both of local tints and general tone being impossible, owing to the difference between nature's highest light and lowest dark, and the potentialities of the palette. In other words, as you can squeeze absolute white out of no tube, you must first determine the scale of your picture, and then make every note in it bear the same relation to every other that the corresponding note in nature bears to its fellows in its own different scale. And what this "value" of the note should be, you can figure out with mathematical precision. Only in this way can the effects of light and air—those two most pictorial of nature's effects—be caught, it appears; and some of the painters, indeed, sketch in figures instead of colors, marking the values of their different notes; for example, "65," "80," "45," etc., instead of endeavoring to match local tones. Color? One scheme of color is as good as another; it is light that brings colors into harmony, and harmony is the end to aim at. Form? Get the "value" right, and let the object model itself. Chiaro-oscuro? An antiquated artificiality! Sentiment? Mere literature! Pedantry here naturally results in the phenomenon known as *trompe l'œil* (optical illusion is hardly so good a term), but it is undeniable that the *plein-air* painters have established a technical

standard by their undivided attention to "values" which must prove of very great importance in painting. They have spoiled for everyone the old, hot, studio-painted works. They have raised the standard of naturalistic representation by still another degree, and have accordingly performed a service comparable with those associated with the names of the great technical innovators in the same line of development—Giotto, Signorelli, Ghirlandaio, Claude, Rembrandt, Velasquez. And they have imposed their view everywhere—Germany, Norway, Russia, America most of all—and even England.

At the same time much honor as is the due of reformers who raise the standard of technic in painting, it is impossible not to reflect that technic is, after all, machinery, and that in art what a man says is of importance, as well as how he says it. We may hereafter require of painters that in attempting naturalistic representation they commit no solecisms, and that to that end they pay as much attention to atmosphere as to form, color, and chiaro-oscuro. We may come to find M. Gérôme as *naïf* in this sense, as we do Cimabue in drawing. But something else may be demanded as well, something besides machinery, something besides good painting. In this something the French painters who are now the leaders in their art are distinctly lacking. They show you how nature looks to you, if you have looked closely at her manifestations. What *they* think and feel, how *they* are impressed, seems a matter of no importance. Their art is objectivity reduced to system, and consequently to artistic barrenness. For what permanently interests and attaches in art is personal impression, or, in the case of a "school," the sharing of some personal impression, some way of looking at things by a number of artists that is not *the* way, the scientific way—the way in which Raphael and Michael Angelo were impressed by line and form and mass; Titian and Tintoretto by color; Velasquez by reality; Rembrandt by chiaro-oscuro; Corot by the morning; Millet by toil and resignation; Delacroix by energy; the "school" of Leonardo, of the Della Robbia, of the fifteenth-century Floren-

tines, by some spiritual view of life, appealing indirectly to the mind through the eye, as formal poetry appeals to it directly. In a word, the essence of painting is poetry and not science. And the French painting of the day, with its preoccupation with the niceties of naturalistic representation, can be regarded only as a powerful agent in perfecting the medium through which the painting of the future will have to express itself. This in itself is a very honorable distinction, it need not be said, and perhaps it is inconsistent with a more spiritual accomplishment. But it was impossible to avoid turning with pleasure, and, indeed, with a certain sense of relief, at the Exposition, from the galleries of clever and sapient current French art to the *Centenaire*, where from every canvas you got a personal impression, a definite and distinct "point of view;" where, in fine, every picture was a synthesis instead of an exhibition of impersonal cleverness, and where imagination counted for more than observation.

After the French galleries the American rooms I should think would have been found by an impartial spectator the most interesting, partly because they were interesting for other than purely æsthetic reasons. They furnished subject for much discussion that was really of an ethnological character. Whatever we do in an æsthetic way interests Europeans in this way first of all perhaps; their attitude to it is one of curiosity. To the mass of the French especially, perhaps, Chateaubriand is still an authority on America; America still suggests to them red-skins and virgin forests, an environment of wildness and savagery modified in these later days by an enviably successful philistinism. As a matter of fact our artists are infinitely less attracted by wildness and savagery than theirs, of course; but the very natural reason for this is something they quite fail to comprehend. They are constantly reproaching us with our imitativeness and demanding originality of us, quite forgetting that a certain objectivity, necessary in order to secure artistic appreciation, depends solely on unfamiliarity, and that originality in art demands art even before originality.

Our material may have immense potentialities — though I confess to a feeling sometimes that Europeans exaggerate these — but "the point of view" demands a perspective that intimate association to some extent forbids.

It was inevitable, at any rate, that as soon as we began to pay any systematic attention to painting we should be preoccupied with the endeavor to learn how to paint rather than to be original. Painting is, after all, a difficult matter, and painting well is as necessary as it is difficult, if you are to satisfy any interest more abiding than that of mere curiosity. The American exhibit showed at any rate that Americans have learned how to paint, and French critics who object to their cleverness in imitation modestly forget that it is difficult to paint well nowadays without imitating the French *plein-air* painting. It would be as rational to object to the adoption by a European War Department of the latest invention in arms or ammunition. France has been the pioneer in the progress of realistic rendering of nature, and as nothing but the realistic rendering of nature is thought of nowadays — by Frenchmen at all events — it seems a little superficial in them to reproach artists of other nationalities with a prompt and elastic recognition of the fact. It is true that the defects of the great and distinguished French quality of "modernity" appear rather sharply accentuated in the work of the Franco-Americans, as, artistically, the Americans who paint in Paris may be called. You feel, I am bound to acknowledge, the limitations of this quality more in the Franco-American than in the French rooms. It is a little more express and external, a little less spontaneous and native as exhibited by Mr. Charles Sprague Pearce or Mr. Alexander Harrison than it is as illustrated even by Manet himself. You are more obsessed by the preoccupation with values, *et præterea nihil*. The illusion is more striking and therefore less illusive. The effect of *trompe l'œil* is more arrogant and unabashed. But this is perhaps due to the exaggeration of objective enthusiasm, and as soon as things take their places a little better, as soon as *plein-air* painting becomes as conventional among the Franco-Ameri-

cans as it has among the Frenchmen themselves, we may fairly expect to see less of the machinery of their work. Meantime the machinery is in admirable order, and is the best machinery to be had. It does not so much matter, after all, who invented it.

As to specific imitation, the imitation, that is to say, by certain Americans of certain French masters, that, I think, was greatly exaggerated by the French critics. To say, as M. Maurice Hamel does, in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, that "Cabanel and Manet, Gérôme and Carolus Duran, Bouguereau and Dagnan, Whistler and Munkacsy, Jules Breton more than Millet, are in turn or simultaneously consulted" by American painters is clearly confused and mechanical rhetoric. Mr. Whistler is himself more of an American than anything else, and much more so than Mr. Sargent, who may be accused of being an imitator of Carolus Duran only in so far as a pupil who far surpasses his master may be. No one imitates Bouguereau or Jules Breton or Munkacsy. But in saying that American painting as exhibited at Paris showed "the gift of assimilation, a quick eye, manual dexterity, the assurance of precocious virtuosi, a liking for effect and sensationalism, little meditation in the presence of reality, slight reflection upon phenomena, few passionate confidences, resulting in æsthetic gymnastics and samples of pure cleverness," and that, finally, it appeared "alert, adroit, and superficial," M. Hamel must be admitted to be on surer ground.

Still, the French critics made the mistake of judging of the American exhibit by the room kept for themselves by the Franco-Americans, to the neglect of that devoted to American painters painting at home. There were three very sufficient reasons for this. Probably we should have to put first of all their *a priori* conviction that America is a veritable Nazareth in art matters, and therefore it would pay only to inspect the work of Americans painting in Paris, whence the induction that as these painters showed more imitativeness than originality, America must be a Nazareth indeed—a kind of symmetrical and circular logic especially French perhaps. In the second place, it was impossible

to see any of the paintings in the purely American room as satisfactorily as all of those in the Franco-American gallery, and impossible to see many of them at all; the Franco-Americans had had everything their own way. In the third place, the Franco-Americans paint so much better than their stay-at-home compatriots that anyone to whom, as to French critics, insufficient technic is a dispensation from any scrupulous examination of motive, would naturally devote himself principally to the works of the former. All the same, it is, I think, regrettable that these gentlemen were not as generous as they could well have afforded to be. Our exhibition would certainly have gained had there been no such arbitrary and unpatriotic division of forces in the presence of the enemy. I think, indeed, the French critics would have been more impressed had the Franco-Americans surrendered the better room to their less fortunate fellows, though doubtless that would have been a refinement of patriotic feeling not to be exacted of "foreign colonists" of any kind.

The Dutch pictures were not the most interesting of the Exposition, but I think possibly they were the most sincere. A serene atmosphere pervaded the rooms, a tranquil sense of haven-like aloofness from the storms and whirling eddies of technical discussion; something of the placid quiet that pervades as a decorous mist the tree-lined avenues of the Hague, where most of the distinguished Dutchmen have their studios, and catches up the soft and sober reflections of the low-toned objects it enshrouds; something of the breezy reaches and gusty dunes of Scheveningen and of the sedate picturesqueness of Amsterdam streets. After Manet's staccato how soothing is Mesdag's utmost animation! After Mr. Melchers's astonishing *trompe l'œil* how large and free seem Mauve's stretches of plain and cool gray cloud-filled skies! This is what it is to be in harmony with nature, one reflects, as he remarks the absence of all effort to spy out her secrets, to solicit over-anxiously her intimacy, to treat her as a model and make of her a spectacle. What good sense, what good taste

every canvas attested! How markedly absent any trace of vulgarity, of intellectual fret, of insecurity, of special and urgent appeal, of pose of any kind!

And at the same time it need hardly be said that the impression made by the Netherlands galleries was very far removed from that produced by an art essentially *bourgeois*. Dutch technic has always saved Dutch art from that reproach; and though it had more power in the days of Van der Meer of Delft, and De Hooghe, to say nothing of such strenuous personalities as Rembrandt and Franz Hals, it never had more distinction than it has at the present time. Distinction is, indeed, one of its very salient characteristics. Clear, cool color, firm and free drawing, a nice instinctive sense of values, without over-emphasis in this regard, never separating, as it were, space and the air that fills it in order to show that you appreciate both, and a certain deft precision of touch bordering on elegance were noticeable in scores of canvases. But, on the other hand, what the Dutchmen, too, seem really lacking in is imagination. Their attitude toward nature is very fine, but it is a trifle tranquil. They sacrifice, efface themselves in nature's presence. They are impressionable, but half-consciously so, by assimilation and absorption as it were, rather than through positive enthusiasm. Enthusiasm, indeed, is a word hardly to be found in their vocabulary. They are rather sympathetic even than impressionable. One feels that they have lived long in the environment they paint, that they were born in it, that they have never left it, that they love it as the son who was not "prodigal" must have loved his home—appreciatively, affectionately, but a little unemotionally. And they might, of course, show far more impressionability than they do and still show a defective imagination; the impressionable and the imaginative genius being so different as sometimes to seem mutually exclusive. They exhibit less temperament, less personal feeling, even than the Frenchman, who is given over to technic, and whose great

defect is the sacrifice of temperament to technic, because the latter, however impersonal and unsympathetic his attitude toward nature, nevertheless pursues technic with a personal ardor quite absent from the composed competence of the Netherlands painters. But how triumphantly they rise above the defects of their admirable qualities must be one's last reflection as he turns from the Netherlands rooms to those wherein he will find more imagination, more enthusiasm, and more perturbation.

The French appreciation of the English pictures was significant—both of the catholicity of French appreciation and of the merit of English pictures. The extreme unlikeness of the American and English contributions struck everyone, but it was curious to note how much more the French cared for that foreign art which differed most from their own than they did for that which resembled it most. The reason clearly was the individuality of the English pictures which as a whole, however they might witness either antiquated or elementary technic, nevertheless testified to a belief in the imagination as the most important factor in the production of fine art. And it would be difficult to conceive a more striking attestation of the value of imaginativeness in painting than the manifest respect which the French showed for works which in many other respects invited their clemency. Elsewhere the French ideal reigned supreme. Madrazo and Rico illustrated it in the Spanish rooms, though, of course, a decided trace of Fortuny was noticeable in the canvases of each of them. The Germans, too, and Russians, who were nevertheless very impressive—especially counting the striking street-studies of Marie Bashkirtseff—were more careful about expression than about idea. Finally, and I confess that to me the fact was disappointing, both Segantini and Nono showed that Italy is still occupied mainly with technical problems. That, after all, one must conclude, is the "note" of the moment in art.