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PLATES

BARON A. DE MEYER.
I. Still Life.
II. Still Life.
III. Still Life.
IV. Still Life.
PHOTOGRAPHY has a very undesirable reputation amongst the artists of our times. They know only the faults of its extremely mechanical precision, its ordinary, commonplace results, and the absence of feeling and of life which are shown in its modern representations. They remember, too, much of its distortions; of its impotence to render certain values, and of its lack of sensibility; they do not suspect that many of the faults which they attribute to photography should be assigned to the photographers, nor have they any knowledge that there is today a very well developed movement in pictorial photography existing in many countries.

The artists know nothing of the many clever men who have made photography a medium of art expression, flexible and with convincing results. They have not been familiar with the two or three principal magazines devoted to the researches of pictorial photography; nor have they seen the frequent international salons held in the different countries. Photography for them is a source of scientific precision; an ideal method of quick reproduction; which, when it develops pretensions to art, gives in certain hands special proof of an absolute ignorance of the first rudiments of art, and of a mind and education truly lamentable.

The critics and the writers are in the same predicament. If one excepts Maeterlinck, the author of the most profound essay which has been written on this subject; and M. R. de la Sizeranne, the convinced champion of this question in his fine book: "La Photographie est-elle un Art?" ("Is Photography an Art?")", then there are no men of letters that have thought or written on this subject. All over the world practically the same conditions prevail. If we except the learned Bernard Shaw and a few other brilliant and rare minds, it is perhaps in the United States, with Mr. Charles H. Caffin and a number of other earnest defenders of pictorial photography, that the most convincing perspicacity has been shown.

It was with the idea of remedying these conditions a little, that I thought it would be interesting to visit and to talk on this subject with certain artists, men of letters and important critics in France, and to interview them on the following questions:

First: Do you believe that by means of photography, works of art can be produced?

Second: Do you approve of interpretation by means of photography, and the intervention of the photographer by the different means at his disposal, to realize, according to his taste and in his own personal style, his emotions?

Provided with various specimens of different styles of work, original prints or American reproductions from Camera Work, of Mr. Steichen's amongst others; and with some beautiful examples of gum and oil prints by Demachy, Puyo, and others, I saw successively men of varied talents and of widely
different opinions, the best men of our times, I believe; from Gustave Geffroy, the best writer on French art; Rodin, the greatest sculptor of many centuries; down to Matisse, one of the most discussed artists of the younger set, a fauve, to use the expression that a certain critic applies to the most revolutionary searcher in the new school of painting. I would have liked still further to have enlarged this little inquiry; if certain material difficulties had not arisen; to have visited again, for example, Besnard, who was able to appreciate some of Steichen’s work; to have met M. Leonce Bénédite, curator of the Luxembourg, who had, with the greatest amiability, put himself at my service; and finally to have consulted an academician “like M. Bonnat or M. Flameng,” if the latter, for example, would have lowered himself even to think about photography.

The following, without special order, is a report, to the best of my ability, and above all without partiality, of the frank opinions I have received:

**RODIN**

After the Greeks and the builders of cathedrals, after Michael Angelo, the Venetians, and Rembrandt, of the past; with, in our times, Puvis de Chavannes, Carrière and Monet, Rodin is the most intense, the most prolific realizer of Life, of total Beauty. His chief works include: “L’Age d’Airain”; “St. Jean Baptiste”; “les Bourgeois de Calais”; “le Baiser”; “le Penseur”; “la Porte de l’Enfer”; “Victor Hugo”; “Balzac”; and so on.

“I believe that photography can create works of art, but hitherto it has been extraordinarily bourgeois and babbling. No one ever suspected what could be gotten out of it; one doesn’t even know today what one can expect from a process which permits of such profound sentiment, and such thorough interpretation of the model, as has been realized in the hands of Steichen. I consider Steichen a very great artist and the leading, the greatest photographer of the time. Before him nothing conclusive had been achieved. It is a matter of absolute indifference to me whether the photographer does, or does not, intervene. I do not know to what degree Steichen interprets, and I do not see any harm whatever, or of what importance it is, what means he uses to achieve his results. I care only for the result, which however, must remain always clearly a photograph. It will always be interesting when it be the work of an artist.”

**GUSTAVE GEFFROY**

Journalist, art critic—the first of the day—and novelist of exquisite feeling, Gustave Geffroy has assembled in his eight volumes of “La Vie Artistique” his ardent studies on modern art; his clear-sighted essays in favor of the impressionism of Rodin, of Carrière, of all the artists “misunderstood” and independent. The volumes of “Notre Temps”, a collection of articles which have at various times appeared; his monograph on Blanqui; “l’ Enfermé”; his
studies on the European museums; on Brittany; “l’Apprentie,” his masterpiece, a novel of sweet pity and of paternal tenderness, all are from one of the most admirable altruistic thinkers and poets of our epoch.

“Most of these works undoubtedly contain an amount of art that no photography had ever shown up to date. Before such portraits one can dream of Whistler, of Carrière; and the works which I prefer are those that remain photographs, but with that beautiful modelling, those great deep shadows that give them an extreme power. Others resemble reproductions of paintings, and while I appreciate their qualities of envelope and their texture, I am somewhat repelled by their exaggerated marks of intervention, as if one had wished to make you believe that they had been done by a different process. Many of these proofs show a fine sense of composition. They are works finely thought out.”

FRANTZ JOURDAIN

The most combative of the art critics; president of the Syndicate of the art press; the most independent and the leading French architect; president of the Salon d’Automne. His career in his different functions has been one constant, beautiful, armored and courageous battle against “Académism,” the Art of the School, the official teaching of the Fine Arts.

“Why should photography not produce works of art? Of course I do not mean the intense and deep art of a Carrière, of a Monet, but of certain personalities who by divers means have known how to represent their epoch.

Look at those landscapes, those very suggestive impressions, those portraits, and tell me whether they do not contain more art than a painting by Flameng.

Pure photography can produce, I believe, beautiful results; but after all it is interesting sometimes to see the signs of intervention. Is it not the definition itself of art, this adjunction of man to nature with a view to a personal proof, no replica of which shall be exactly similar. Pure photography may be compared to an ordinary newspaper report which when properly interpreted may develop into a work of style. My most serious objections are to those very simple tricks used to simulate certain processes of drawing, “bavures,” “reserves,” “silouettages,” etc. Why simulate when one can do so well with one’s own resources? And I see another tendency, at trying to be too distinguished, too pretty, too much on the professional model. These are the breakers to avoid; one feels a conventional tendency to render perfect the person who poses. It is no longer nature; the faults and personal traits are things that must be preserved.

On the other hand, many of the pictures are unreservedly admirable. I knew a long time ago the capabilities of photography. I appreciated its value when, as president of the Salon d’Automne, I insisted that it should be admitted to the Grand Palais. The trial was incomplete; we were discouraged too quickly, for we were swamped with productions of the profes-
sionals—you know, the usual kind!—all the actresses retouched, and the "soups" of all kinds. I regret that they would not follow up the experiment. I remember the interesting works of M. Demachy, and those of M. Harveis, since a painter. Today I know the portraits of Mr. Steichen. Would they not be in their place at the Salon d'Automne?

I am happy to have been given the opportunity to examine these pictures. It seems to me that the reproductions of these portraits, of these beautiful landscapes would have their place in the solution of that question of "L'Art à l'École" ("Art at the School") that I am so passionately eager for. They could replace the too costly gravures and especially the usual trash that official and commercial art spreads everywhere.

STEINLEN

By means of painting, engraving, lithography, crayon, Steinlen has rendered with truthfulness, with a depth before unknown, the scenes of the street and of the workman's life. Immense decorations, easel-paintings, sketches, illustrations for newspapers, reviews, books, posters, tell of the abundant labor of this great social depictor, sensible to the miseries of the crowds, as well as to the more delicate sentimentalities of the feminine soul.

"Why should not photography in the hands of intelligent and artistic men produce works which have an art value? One has long forgotten what photography might give us, so much have its practitioners claimed to possess an art of their own, as well as an education of their own. They are persons of special mentality, that think only of the horrid perfection of their retouching. But the works that you show me are admirable. I haven't seen any portrait that may be compared to those of Lenbach, of Mucha, and others. They are living, and have the sculptural beauty, the envelope of works of masters. They are beautiful documents of life. The landscapes in fat inks, they too are beautiful. Were your processes only to allow putting planes into their proper places, that itself would be a beautiful conquest; but they allow the interpretation of the negative, and I am no foe of it. Indeed you show me pure photographs having an indisputable charm, but it seems to me that one must reserve to one's self the right to be able to simplify annoying parts, to drown others in shadow, and to make obligatory sacrifices. I am afraid that the examples of pure photography which you show me do not give a sufficient proof of art, notwithstanding the aesthetic sense of the photographers and their care of composition. I am happy to see a proof saved from the commonplace by a well-placed high-light, by some values transformed. In spite of that, I am not in favor of exaggerated interpretation, and that is what happens sometimes. For instance, why make a moonlight of a morning effect? This is only trickery, virtuosity, and virtuosity is detestable in anything. Also skies made from many pieces shock me; I see first the clever trickery of the photographer and then I see the perfectly harmonious texture produced by the
sun; this uniting of the negatives has killed the picture. One must stop at a certain limit of rectification, which should be amply sufficient, and which leaves to the work its sincerity, its charm of nature, which above all must never be forgotten.”

ALEXANDRE CHARPENTIER

He is par excellence the sculptor of our modernity, which is realized in his vast bas-reliefs relating to the crafts: “Les Boulangiers”; “Les Menuisiers”; his innumerable plaquettes, portraits of contemporary celebrities; his busts and his monument of Zola. He has been a marvelous renovator in the designing of modern furniture and of decorative art. His pieces of furniture, his objects of everyday use, formed a series of unique works of art extremely new and distinguished.

“I find what you show me exceedingly interesting. Those prints have a decided art value. I find the interpreted works interesting. Their authors have shown artistic taste, but though I admire them, I nevertheless prefer those that have remained more strictly photographs and which show qualities of art, of emotion and of thought. All these results, all these experiments are very interesting to the artist and on account of their remarkable qualities. It is time for him to study them more carefully, in view of the greater things which photography undoubtedly promises.”

COTTET

“The most impressive of all the printers of sombre Brittany. He has been able to delineate with true feeling its characters, types and customs, in a large number of paintings of the highest class; scenes of maritime and peasant life, landscapes, marines, and so on. Savoy, Spain, and the Orient also have given him inspiration for works which have made him one of the glories of the French school.

“These photographs reveal a great deal of intelligence, and artistic temperaments in the authors, but I must say that the greatest pleasure is given to me by such as are purely photographic. I am not fond of those prints which are retouched and transformed to death by processes of interpretation, for then I find myself in the presence of a shocking clash between two different methods. They show a confusion of planes, a lack of unity; on the one hand the supple grandeur of drawing and on the other, and immediately adjoining it, the smallness and dryness of photography. Photography, if it be an art, is above all an art of precision, of representation; it is going against its very essence, against its qualities, to first obtain this precision in order to destroy it immediately afterwards. To make the combination of the two methods interesting, it would be necessary for a very great artist to take up photography in its entirety, and then to intervene in all its parts, so that there should be no lack of homogeneity; but then he would be a big enough
artist to be a painter or a designer and the photograph would be only the basis to be worked upon. The result would never have the savor of a direct work, a creation which is a manifestation of unaffected sentiment. I believe that photography can have a value in art in sounding the laws of lighting, of composition, and of avoiding distortions."

CHÉRET

In a delightful play of color, of glistening harmonies, with a constant search for gayety, light-heartedness, and joyousness between heaven and earth, Chéret has evoked his beautiful, mad, moving personations of laughter, love, and beauty. This accomplished pastelist, this learned decorator, this rejuvenator of the artistic poster, is perhaps today—so much has he appealed to all classes—the most popular and unquestioned leader of all colorists.

"I have already seen some very interesting photographs but never any revealing so much intelligence. There are in these superb prints qualities of art which it is impossible to deny; it would also be unjust to deny to their authors the quality of artists, who knew, by one manner or another, to lift photography out of all its usual banality and dryness. There are in some of them defects which an artist acting with his pure will would have avoided; softness here, hardness there, but these works are certainly for me a very pleasing novelty and give me genuine pleasure."

BARTHOLOMÉ

A master of contemporary sculpture, a thinker, of refined and melancholy sentiment, such is he shown in his mysterious masterpiece of restrained passion, resignation, and sorrow, "Le Monument aux Morts," in the cemetery of Père la Chaise. He is an exquisite poet of youth and of the awakening of love, in his nudes in marble.

"I am irritated by most of the photographs in which the authors have intervened to create works that are no longer photographs and are not drawings. They suggest to me only imperfect imitations of etchings or of reproductions of paintings. Undoubtedly there are prints thus interpreted that give a certain pleasure and which reveal artistic education, but they always lack cohesion; and what difference do you often find between the photographer who works thus on his prints, and one who paints a photograph, or tints a gelatino-bromide with water-color. When one is capable of handling his subject, is it not preferable for the photographer having an artistic taste to take up his pencil, for the merest sketch will be a hundred times more interesting. I do not mean to say that one cannot produce fine works with photography, but one should stick to composition, to selection, to the variety of lightings, to his own preferences in arrangement, and I assure you, that if he lets it go at that, then gradually the machine and the light will give him results entirely personal. Think, compose, prepare your subject in all pos-
sible ways, use feeling, then open the objective and put your hands in your pockets, or else have someone put handcuffs on you."

WILLETTE

A humorist, full of go, a painter of Pierrot, his favorite hero, and of any infinity of graceful and imaginative drawings, of daring nudes, Willette is a decorator, original, full of individual qualities, of impulsive freshness and spontaneity.

"The question is very simple. Be it pure photography or otherwise, if the print produces a satisfactory feeling of pleasure, the result is art, and the photographer an artist. I believe that it is necessary to intervene on the proof, by any process, every time that the print from the negative does not give us what we want; then it will no longer be the detestable retouching of a professional whose aim is to give to the flesh the texture of the "baudruche," but an interesting transformation which can be varied in every print made. But once more I must repeat that the result will not be a success unless it is obtained by a true artist, and not by the first-comer, who gets only the horrible effects which were gotten by the primitive, banal photographer. However, one must intervene in such a manner that there must not be too brutal differences in the modelling between the photographic drawing and the simplified drawing.

RAFFAELLI

A contemporary of the first impressionists, Raffaelli called into being, in painting of a kind until then unknown, all the strange life, the miserable aspects, and sad atmosphere of the Parisian outskirts, and the poor at their work in all their every-day attitudes, in their familiar surroundings—new visions of modern Paris. He is also a portraitist (as in "Clemenceau au Cirque Fernando"), a sculptor, a lecturer, a writer and critic of infinitely sensitive temperament.

"Photography so conceived may, to my mind, have qualities of art. The works before me are in all cases personal because one sees the expression of an idea, of a sentiment—that there has been reflection, thought, intelligence, and because the photographer has intervened in the composition, in the choice and in the synthesis of the light. The author may interpret his subject by the modern processes, gum-bichromate, oil, etc., provided that the transformation be effected by a true artist and that the work lose none of its unity by an exaggerated or only partial intervention. I am much interested in the experiments that have been made; I remember, however, having already seen, some years ago at the Otto studio, a number of photographs by Mr. Steichen that impressed me as very convincing."

CAMILLE MAUCLAIR

One of the best endowed of the generation called symbolists. A poet, like his colleagues, Maeterlinck, Gustave Kahn, H. de Regnier, a prolific
writer, his novels and his stories are original in their style, throbbing with
inward life, with passionate and music-like lyricism. He has written much on
all the arts. He has been the lecturer and the endowed critic of Ibsenism;
the historian of impressionism; the commentator of the work of Rodin and
of all the great artists, painters, sculptors, musicians and poets, for which his
keen intellect has been so well adapted.

"I am reminded of modern painters that I admire above all others,
when looking at these beautiful, stirring portraits. They reveal to us the
intimate being of the individualities, which they represent with a quality of
art absolutely unquestionable. They are visible pages of psychology, and I
admire their grandeur—their intensity of expression, for these photographs
are complete. In spite of all the restrictions which one could make on
account of certain details, and which are in fact only the result of the personal
knowledge of the subject, one is forced sincerely to admire their beautiful
and interesting variety. All these photographs are attractive, some by the
impressions, the masterful memories that they suggest; others by the ingen­
iousness of their decorative qualities. Besides, there are many very cleverly
interpreted, full of beautiful effects and of the assembling of beautiful
material."

FRANCIS JOURDAIN

A clever decorator, one of the first promotors of art researches in mod­
ern furniture; but above all a nature sensitive to very touching poetry and
somewhat retiring; a painter interested in quiet glimpses of the streets, little
shops, show-windows of dealers, chaste façades, and landscapes of the Ile de
France, rendered with naivety by a colorist of talent, in compositions of
always novel arrangement.

"There can be ‘art’ only where there is an artist. Be it either by
pure photography or by the interpretation of the negative, a real artist will
always produce an interesting page, whereas the vulgar workman will pro­
duce something horrible in either case. I consider, therefore, that only the
result is of importance. I am not opposed to some modification. It is in­
deed often useful, on the understanding that it is necessary to use care to
preserve in the work its well defined character of a photograph. I know
very well that from the moment one interprets, one runs the risk of obtain­
ing effects analogous to those of the arts of drawing. However, it must be
possible not to fall into an unfortunate confusion. Let photography remain
as much as possible photography; etching, etching; water-color, water-color.
It is no more a compliment to say of a photograph, ‘it looks like an etching’
than to say of a pastel, ‘it looks like a painting.’ Each process must keep
its character and qualities peculiar to itself. The photographs that you show
me are beautiful, they are living—and it is this life that photography does
not always give. I do not believe that one can ever attain great art with
photography. As between man and nature there will always be the machine,
no matter how skilfully, how well it may be manipulated; and the maximum of art reveals itself only where the communion between art and nature has been most direct.”

POINTELIN

A painter—a specialist in landscapes, sometimes in monotone, but with much charm of their own. He prefers, above all, twilight effects and the somewhat savage melancholy of the hills of the Jura.

“There is in some of these prints a beautiful envelope, a laudable synthesis that makes them akin to works of art and makes one appreciate their authors. I prefer those that have preserved the modulations, the qualities of the half-tone of photography. In some prints simplified with the brush, I find certain parts of the picture which offend the eye of the painter, by defects in modelling, breaks in continuity, lack of precision and weakness. Others, on the contrary, are very happily synthesized, and I approve of the intervention every time that it permits the getting rid of the essential dryness of photography, in order to make a synthetic work. But it must be done by a perfect artist, for instead of a good photograph one takes the chance of merely producing something which looks a reproduction of a bad painting. Photography can give remarkable results, but it lacks artists, just as painting does, for that matter. While on this subject, I believe that color photography, having finally become practical, will rid painting of all the detestable and finicery daubers who know nothing of nor understand nature. The exactness, the dryness of the work of the lens, the exact reproduction of color, the deception of the eye, that will settle them.”

GABRIEL MOUREY

Novelist, critic, poet, playwright, translator into French of the poems of Swinburne and of Poe. Gabriel Mourey was the founder of an interesting review, “Les Arts de la Vie,” militant and independent, whose principal object was the acquisition of Rodin’s “Penseur” for the people of Paris. His volumes of criticism, his monograph on Besnard, his articles of all kinds, are those of a fine artist; his last volume of verses “Le Miroir” and the libretto of the coming opera of Claude Debussy “La Mort de Tristan,” prove Mourey one of the best of modern poets.

“Photography produces works of art only when it remains photography. It is better for it to remain true to itself than to risk attempting the imitation of drawing. I am only moved before such results as—keeping the characteristics proper of the process employed—contain also the qualities common to everything which is a work of art. The photographer, following his conceptions, must prepare the composition of his subject, arrange everything to his taste, and then interpret his negative; and if he wishes, intervene on the print in any way which may prove useful. All this is indifferent to me provided that these operations are sufficiently unobtrusive and well-judged,
so that one does not see the mixture nor be conscious of it. One must
keep the drawing of the lens, the special qualities of modelling that light
creates on the gelatine, without being stopped suddenly by a scratching which
destroyed the line or by a simplification with the brush which becomes a dis­
turbing spot.

Having been produced on these lines, a photograph may turn out or
value or not. If it moves us the author is an artist. I own that certain of
the prints interpreted to the extreme are pleasantly effective, but after all our
admiration is incomplete. We would like to see photography remain abso­
lutely itself with all its characteristics.”

MATISSE

A modern, a revolutionary, undoubtedly the most gifted of a group of
modern painters who, with him, give themselves up to audacious attempts of
style and of a new expression of light. He has painted—pushing to the
extreme some discoveries of Gauguin, Cézanne and Van Gogh—curious
paintings in still-life and other subjects, the works of a very brilliant colorist.

“Photography can provide the most precious documents existing and
no one can contest its value from that point of view. If it is practiced by a
man of taste, the photograph will have an appearance of art. But I believe
that it is not of any importance in what style they have been produced;
photographs will always be impressive because they show us nature, and
all artists will find in them a world of sensations. The photographer must
therefore intervene as little as possible, so as not to cause photography to
lose the objective charm which it naturally possesses, notwithstanding its
defects. By trying to add to it he may give the result the appearance of an
echo of a different process. Photography should register and give us docu­
ments.”

CONCLUSION

An examination of these opinions allows us to a résumé of
the opinions of the artists we have consulted.

On the first point, “Can photography produce a work of art?” there is,
I believe, a decided unanimity for the affirmative and this first question is
readily condensed in the sentence of M. Francis Jourdain, “There is art
wherever there is an artist.”

As to the second question, more complex, relating to the intervention
of the photographer, to transform his print in order to interpret it according
to his intention, there is, if not unanimity, at least an important majority in
favor of permitting such interpretations. Indeed, except M. M. Cottet,
Matisse and Bartholomé, and especially the two latter, most of the other
artists declare:

“Intervene as you like, transform according to your fancy, only the
results are of importance;” but it is nearly with the same unison they add:
"Transform under the condition that your print remains (without an evident mixture of drawing) a photograph, and that the final result does not remind you of anything else." And these appreciations are not, as one might be led to believe, a total condemnation of all the experiments made by a group of artist searchers with a view to establishing photography as a new medium of expression, of liberating its possibilities for art, in spite of its limitations. Notwithstanding the efforts towards improvement which are sometimes carried to extremes, there are a great many prints done in "gum" and "oil" which contain to perfection the beautiful modelling which can be achieved solely by the action of light on the gelatine, the qualities of soft modulations, of the half-tones, qualities above all photographic and carefully preserved by the artists. Their authors have possibly gone to the extreme in some of their researches, while others at the other extreme have failed to achieve a photographic style. If, through disgust at the servility of the camera, through excess of desire to liberate, they have gone beyond their proper range, to a virtuosity objectionable to some, one must remember that several artists, especially Rodin, do not hesitate to declare that there are in the attempts of today but the hesitating preliminaries of an art from which one may expect anything, because it is still in its infancy.

Soon, perhaps, new processes, certain discoveries, will allow those who are not satisfied with the first attempts, to realize their thoughts more exactly, in a manner less crude than today, less suggestive of foreign means, more intense, more allied to the "spirit of the process."

George Besson.

THE CAMERA POINT OF VIEW IN PAINTING AND PHOTOGRAPHY

A few months ago three exhibitions were held in New York simultaneously; of oil-paintings at Eugene Glaenzer's gallery, and of photographs and autochrome color-plates in the rooms of the Photo-Secession. They were all the work of one man, Eduard J. Steichen. However, it is not so much of his personality that I am for the present thinking, as of the fact of his operating in three mediums; in painting and photography with fairly equal facility; and in the newly invented color-plates, with an originality and comparative success that are full of promise regarding the ultimate possibilities of this medium. The exhibitions, indeed, brought to a head what had long been brewing in my mind: the analogy between painting and photography in respect to the point of view and technical motives.*

A great many painters still refuse to photography the recognition of being a medium of artistic expression; just as, I am told, there are certain conservatives among the mountaineers of Georgia who believe that the Civil

*Since writing this, I find that Steichen himself has essayed the same subject.
War is still in progress. Yet, notwithstanding, the war of the Union, whether of North and South, or of Photography and other mediums of the fine arts, is really and truly finished, the fact may not be even now admitted in New York, but assuredly is in some scarcely less considerable centers of culture, such as Paris, London, Venice, Dresden and Vienna. For my own part—and in the conflict I have borne my little part, making myself ridiculous or of timely service, according as you choose to regard it—the question is no longer, whether Saul also is among the prophets, but whether painting is not in certain aspects of itself, as photographic as photography; whether indeed, to cite specific instances, Mr. Kenyon Cox is not as rudimentally a photographer as Mr. Herzog; or Corot or Velasquez as Clarence H. White or Mrs. Gertrude Käsebier.

Since writing the above I have read Steichen's copy in advance, and will, therefore, pursue the tenor of my own thought, without encroaching upon his. He, as the readers of the previous number of Camera Work will remember, makes the point that all artists who set out to represent the world as it is have the eye photographic. Whether or not they see and render as much as the lens of the camera is capable of recording, is but a question of degree. Their point of view corresponds to that of the camera. They may have the microscopic vision of a Holbein or Meissonier; or the generalization of Giotto or Puvis de Chavannes; or, again, the synthesis plus sentiment of Corot; or the objective analysis of Velasquez and Monet—these are but subdivisions of a field, well nigh inexhaustible in its varieties of difference. But the single center to which all these innumerable radii converge is that the point of view of all painters who affect truth to nature is photographic and has always been so.

What, further, is impressionism but a more natural way of seeing and rendering; in other words, a point of view more scientifically photographic? The impressionists may have been influenced by Velasquez and the Japanese in seeking to record an impression of the momentary aspect of a scene; but for the knowledge of how to render it they have been chiefly indebted to photography. Ever since the appearance of Edward Muybridge's prints of horses in movement, attracted the attention of painters, the latter have been more scientific in their application of the principles of photography.

They have become still more scientific and literally photographic since they have given increased attention to the phenomena of light. Luminarists, in their analysis of the qualities and conditions of light, and in their efforts to make lighted atmosphere the basis of harmony and of expression in their compositions, are but emulating the action of the camera. They are making a great effort to do what the camera cannot help doing and in many cases does, not only more readily, but also more effectually and expressively than is possible for a painter to do.

Similarly even the methods of the painter, so far as he represents nature, approximate to the photographer's. If he views it microscopically, as Meissonier did, he emulates the detailed results of the camera; if he aims at syn-
thesis, he corrects his excessive capacity of eyesight, as a photographer cor-
rects that of his camera. He flattens the forms, reduces them to masses, and
brings the latter into relations of color and light values. He does it with
a brush on canvas; the photographer either by regulating the exposure or by
controlling the printing; or, through both. In the gum-process the photo-
graher can so completely exercise control over the result that he practically
paints the print. He has been blamed for this, as if to paint were a disgrace,
and told by painters that he should confine himself to his own medium.
Painters, on the other hand, have decried the painter-like method of the
photographer, because he was trying to do something that could be much
better accomplished in painting.

Well, there's the question! Some painting having become more than
ever photographic in its point of view and in the character of its methods, and
some photography having approached closer and closer to the qualities of
painting, where are we to draw the line between them? No satisfactory an-
swer was possible until there should arrive some one man, proficient in both
mediums. Steichen fills that requisite. It cannot be said of him that he
photographs because he cannot paint. Some people may not care for his
paintings, that is beside the point. Also it may be true that he has not
shown much capacity to paint the figure. But, in a moment, I will suggest
why. Meanwhile there is no gainsaying the fact that he is an artist; with
an originality, subtlety, and range of artistic feeling that are quite uncommon.
When, therefore, he not only says, but demonstrates by his practice, that
some subjects suggest to him the camera, others the palette, as the more
natural and ready means of realizing his conception, we are bound to respect
his conclusion. We cannot disprove it; we are not in a position even to
doubt it, unless we also happen to be a photographer and a painter in one.

We observe that Steichen's figure-subjects in paint have been inconsider-
able. There is no reason, however, to suppose that if he had given as
much study to this branch of painting as he has to landscapes, the results
would not have been as satisfactory. But, as a matter of fact, the figure-
subject that has chiefly interested him is portraiture; and for the purpose of
obtaining a truthful representation, suggestive of the character of the subject,
he has used photography as at once the more spontaneous and more readily
expressive medium. Time and again he has justified the choice. The Rodin
portrait, for example, with the head forming a dark mass against the white
mass of the marble of the Victor Hugo, is far and away the most significant
portrait of the master one has seen, and it involves a union of qualities—
stability allied to spontaneity, and force combined with luminosity—that,
only an unusual master of painting could rival. That it also involves a high
degree of imagination in the way of seeing and representing the facts, is a part
of its maker's personality; yet the result shows what photography can
accomplish when thus inspired. Or take Steichen's portrait of William M.
Chase. It presents a more sincere and dignified rendering of the subject
than does Sargent's. The latter has exploited his own virtuosity, somewhat
at the expense of the sitter. And there you have it! The chief value of the Sargent portrait is its display of brush-work, with which, as Steichen admits, photography cannot compete. If you are in love with brush-strokes, you must seek them in painting; but, if, on the other hand, your preference is for a memorial of the sitter’s personality, full at once of character and artistry, the camera in the hands of an artist is more reliable than brush-work. It will generally produce a more truthful likeness; and can produce a composition that is decorative, as well as expressional, in form, color, and tonal relations. The only thing, indeed, in which the camera falls short of the possibilities of brush-work, in the case of a portrait that aims, as do most modern ones, simply at truthful representation, is its lack of brush-work virtuosity. And surely, as Steichen pertinently says, we have not reached the ground of regarding virtuosity as the sole test of a work of art!

A little while ago another limitation affected the camera; it could not reproduce the colors of nature. But this, since the invention of autochrome color-plates, is in process of being removed. It is well to state the matter thus moderately; for these plates are but a step in the direction of enormous possibilities, at present undeveloped. Yet, in view of the progress of black and white photography during only sixty years, who shall say to what and how soon this new discovery will lead? Already, in a few examples, such as the portrait of Dr. Raab, by Alfred Stieglitz, and that of Moncure D. Conway, by Steichen, results of natural truth have been reached, that it would be impossible for the painter with his brush to equal. Again, Steichen has produced a few plates, which despite more or less imperfections, demonstrate how the process may be controlled by an artist. It will lend itself, as ordinary photography and painting do, to all degrees and varieties of the commonplace; but on the other hand can, by those who have the real feeling of the colorist, be made to yield color-harmonies of extraordinary beauty.

At this time, it is to be repeated, we have been considering the artist, whether painter or photographer, as occupied with representing the actual appearances of nature. To do so, whether with brush or camera is to have the photographic vision and to render the subject photographically. There is, however, that other field of art which is occupied, not with facts of sight, but with ideas of the imagination. This is outside the range of the photographic point of view. The camera is as powerless to explore it as is the photographic method of painting. Its problems and their solution are alike evolved from the imaginative consciousness of the artist. The photographic method, neither with camera nor palette, can produce a “Mona Lisa,” or a Boecklin’s “Isle of the Dead.” These had no objective existence; they were creations of conceptions existing only in the inner vision; and the means of rendering them had to be invented by the artist. It is because he recognizes this that Steichen lays aside the camera at times, and experiments with the palette; returning, however, to the camera, when objective facts are to be recorded.

Charles H. Caffin.
PLATES

BARON A. DE MEYER.
V. Mrs. Brown Potter.
VI. Guitar Player of Seville.
VII. Study of a Gitana.

WILLIAM E. WILMERDING.
VIII. Over the House-Tops—New York.
OUR ILLUSTRATIONS

THE first seven plates in this issue of Camera Work are photogravure reproductions of some of the well-known still-life subjects and portraits by Baron A. de Meyer, of Dresden and London. Baron de Meyer has been a regular exhibitor for many years at the London Salon of the Linked Ring, of which he is a member; in short, he is no new comer in the field of pictorial photography. Nevertheless, according to his opinion his real serious work may be said to have begun after he had come into touch with and under the direct influence of some of the leading Photo-Secessionists and their work. For that reason it is not unnatural to hear him frequently classed as belonging to the "American School." His work is original, full of individuality, has strength and delicacy combined, and above all is distingue. De Meyer is a strong believer in pure photography and his printing medium has so far been platinum. During the spring of 1907, and of 1908, he conjointly with Mr. Coburn held in London important exhibitions of their individual pictures; these exhibitions won much attention and favor amongst the better classes of that metropolis.

In the United States de Meyer's work is not unknown, for in February, 1907, a collection of his prints was exhibited at the Photo-Secession Galleries. As since that period his advance has been quite remarkable, another exhibition has been arranged to take place during the winter at the new gallery of the Photo-Secession.

The reproductions in this number, although reflecting de Meyer's spirit, fail to give more than an approximate idea of the actual quality of his large platinotypes. The plates of the figure subjects were made in London, under the personal direction of Mr. Coburn, by the firm of J. J. Waddington & Co. The other plates, and the printing of all seven subjects, are by the Manhattan Photogravure Company, New York.

"Over the House-tops, New York," by Mr. William E. Wilmerding, of New York, Plate VIII in this number of Camera Work, is a reproduction made directly from the original five by seven negative. This picture is one of the most charming and sincere bits of New York photography that we have seen in some time.

Plates IX and X are photogravure reproductions of two photographs by that popular and productive Italian worker, M. Guido Rey, of Turin. The two pictures herewith published are characteristic of the kind of work of which he has made a specialty and with which his name has become most closely identified.
EXHIBITION NOTES

THE NEW PHOTO-SECESSION GALLERY

It is expected that the new Little Gallery of the Photo-Secession will be ready in time to open the 1908-1909 season of exhibitions, toward the end of November. A series of interesting exhibitions, photographic and otherwise, has been planned, and we feel confident that the new gallery, which is at 291 Fifth Avenue, on the same floor as the old one, will make as many friends for the Photo-Secession's cause as did the old one. As heretofore, the exhibitions will be free to the public upon presentation of visiting-card.

THE LONDON SALON

As we go to press word reaches us from London that this year's London Salon is of unusual interest and that the standard of the pictures shown is unusually high. It is the first time in several years that many of the Photo-Secessionists again show at the Linked Ring exhibition and their work plays no small role in making this exhibition what it is. As Mr. Keiley is in London he has consented to let us have his impressions of the salon in the next number of Camera Work.

LECTURE COURSES ON PICTORIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

The experiment made by the faculty of Columbia University last year, in having Mr. Clarence H. White deliver a series of forty lectures on pictorial photography, met with such success, that for the year 1908-1909, the University authorities have decided that Mr. White give two courses, one in the afternoon, the other in the evening.

The Brooklyn Institute, Fine Arts Department, has fallen into line in recognizing the claims that the Photo-Secession has battled for, and Mr. White has also been engaged by the authorities of this institution to deliver a series of lectures there similar to those given at Columbia.

The authorities of the two seats of learning have so arranged the hours that Mr. White's private work will not suffer through these lectures.

Those interested in the courses of lectures may address either institution.
PLATES

GUIDO REY.

IX. The Letter.
X. A Flemish Interior.
CAMERA WORK FOR 1909—

WITH this number of CAMERA WORK the sixth year of its existence comes to a close and the January issue of 1909 begins a new volume. In the numbers of that volume we hope to present our readers with: A series of pictures by Mrs. Annie W. Brigman, of San Francisco; a series by Miss Alice Boughton, of New York; a series by Mr. Herbert G. French, of Cincinnati; a series by Messrs. Clarence H. White and Alfred Stieglitz in collaboration; a series by Mr. Heinrich Kühn, of Innsbruck, Austria; a series by Mr. George H. Seeley, of Stockbridge, Mass. Furthermore we expect to reproduce pictures by Mr. Frank Eugene, of New York and Munich; Miss Ema Spencer, Newark, Ohio; and also some of the newer work of Messrs. Steichen, Coburn, and others.

Subscribers to CAMERA WORK can help us materially by showing their copies to their friends.

CHANGE OF PRINTER

Owing to a combination of circumstances the printers of CAMERA WORK Numbers One through Twenty-three were recently forced to close their doors. As Mr. Frank Fleming, who was the active and practical head of that business, has taken charge of the bookmaking and art departments of the well-established firm of Rogers & Company (New York Branch), that house will now do our printing. This insures no break in the quality of the letterpress of CAMERA WORK.
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