

on epigraphic grounds in the early part of the third century B.C.⁸

Some important fragments of painted glass from the later Roman occupation in Egypt have been recently placed with the Roman glass; these will be fully described in a future publication, pending which they are here briefly noticed. A large conical beaker of which two adjacent fragments remain (fig. 4)⁹ had scenes from the arena arranged in several zones, of which the best preserved is nearly two and a half inches high. In this zone are pairs of gladiators in combat. Below are the wild beasts of the

RENOIR

Pierre Auguste Renoir, whose paintings can be seen throughout this summer in a magnificent exhibition at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York,¹ was the greatest of the French Impressionists, and one of the greatest artists that France has ever produced. He was one of four painters—the others being Claude Monet, Alfred Sisley, and Frédéric Bazille—who met as young men in a Paris art school about 1860 and formed the nucleus of the Impressionist movement, which was to revolutionize mod-



FIG. 5. ATHENIAN GEOMETRIC BOWL

arena—a lion bringing down one deer while another flees, in the presence of a leopard painted blue. The colors—blue, green, yellow, brown, brownish red, and white—are brilliantly preserved; the glass is colorless and thin. In the same technique as the preceding is another fragment (fig. 3)¹⁰ from the Museum's Egyptian excavations carried out in 1907–1908 at 'Ain et Turbeh in the Khargeh Oasis, a site which is dated by coins to the fourth century A.D. This shows a tiger attacking an antelope. Four small fragments from the same source are also shown.¹¹ CHRISTINE ALEXANDER.

⁸ F. Heinevetter, *Würfel- und Buchstabenorakel in Griechenland und Kleinasien* (1912). I owe the reference to Dr. R. Zahn.

⁹ Acc. nos. 22.2.36, 37. H. $3\frac{7}{16}$ in. (8.7 cm.).

¹⁰ Acc. no. 15.1.1. $1\frac{1}{16}$ by $1\frac{1}{16}$. (2.7 cm.).

¹¹ The objects described above have been placed as follows: the bowl in Gallery J 2, the fragment and the gem in J 3, the polyhedron in the Daily Life section of K 7, the glass in K 6.

ern painting throughout the world. The official French art of the day was a cold and dull affair, with its frigid pseudoclassic subjects and its highly polished photographic style. Rebelling against it, these young men turned to the everyday life around them. They went outdoors and painted direct from nature, rediscovering sunlight and air. The dark indoor tones of the old school they replaced with such brilliant color as painting had not known for generations. Instead of the unchanging light of the studio, they captured the ever changing effects of nature.

¹ This address on Renoir was given on May 26, 1937, over Station WABC by Lloyd Goodrich, of the Whitney Museum of American Art. It is printed here by permission of the Columbia Broadcasting System and Mr. Goodrich. The exhibition is held in Gallery D 6 and will remain open through September 12. An exhibition of Prints by Renoir and His Contemporaries has been arranged in Galleries K 37–40 and will be on view through the summer.—Ed.

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BULLETIN OF
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LE CHAPEAU ÉPINGLÉ, A LITHOGRAPH BY RENOIR
IN THE EXHIBITION OF
PRINTS BY RENOIR AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

So we find Monet, the most extreme of the Impressionists, painting twenty pictures of the same haystack, in different lights, weathers, times of day.

The public, the academic artists, the critics called them madmen, charlatans. Visitors to their exhibitions were convulsed with laughter. Few were bold enough to buy their work. The young innovators almost starved, and pictures which are now the pride of museums and collectors were sold for a few francs to pay for food and rent. It was many years before the Impressionists were accepted as entirely sane and genuine artists.

Of this group Renoir was the youngest. Born in 1841, son of a poor tailor, and brought up in Paris, he had earned his own living since the age of thirteen by painting porcelain and decorative screens, finally saving up enough money to study art. His first subjects were the life around him that he knew so well—Paris, the gayest city in Europe—her boulevards, cafés, dance halls, theaters—boating parties on the Seine, picnics in the suburbs—all that sociable semipublic life that the French love and that they practice so gracefully. Always in Renoir's pictures people were enjoying themselves. There was no note of tragedy or conflict. It was a time of great events—far-reaching scientific discoveries, growing industrialism, social unrest, nationalistic rivalries that in his young manhood broke out in the Franco-Prussian War, followed by the long-drawn-out agony of the Commune. None of this found its way into Renoir's art. Although he was completely a modern, picturing the life of his own day, it was everyday pleasures, the good things of life that go on in spite of war, tyranny, social upheaval. There were singularly few ideas in Renoir's painting, no literary element, no attempt to tell a story or express a creed. What he expressed was simply love of life as he found it. His was a happy art, delighting in the sensuous beauty of the world—in women, children, sociability, sunlight, nature. Sane and healthy, it maintained a happy balance between the animal in man and the civilized human being. It was a large and generous art, affirmative, saying yes to life. It had a sweetness that never became oversweet, because it

was always alive and fresh, with the freshness of flowers and fruit and the things of nature.

In Renoir's temperament there was a strain of naïveté, such as many great artists have possessed—a quality of perennial sensitiveness and wonder that saved him from becoming too much used to things, that kept him always young and alive and permitted him to say elemental truths with a large simplicity. It was this glorious naïveté that enabled him to see the beauty in everyday life—to take a commonplace occurrence like a picnic and create from it that eternally youthful masterpiece *Le Déjeuner des canotiers* in the present exhibition. Along with this naïveté went an extreme sophistication in everything that concerned painting or matters of taste. Renoir once said of the French sculptor Jean Goujon: "What purity, what naïveté, what elegance, and at the same time what solidity!" It was a precise summing up of his own style.

Renoir's art was a deeply sensuous one, founded on the delight that can be given by color, line, and form. He was one of the greatest colorists in modern painting. This was the time of the discovery of oriental art, and one can see the influence of Japan, China, and Persia in the new splendor that he brought to painting. His color was at once rich and brilliant, extraordinary in its variety, ranging from the most subtle nuances of muted color to an almost barbaric force. It reached the utmost in sensuous magnificence, but always remained deliciously fresh, never cloying.

He was pre-eminently a painter of women, and in his pictures of them he combined a happy sensuousness with the utmost delicacy, reminiscent of such eighteenth-century painters as Watteau or Fragonard. He was a master of flesh tones; flesh in his pictures was alive, sometimes with a porcelain-like refinement and transparency, sometimes with a ruddy, earthy glow. Few painters have had such a feeling for clothes. The feminine styles of the 1870's and the 1880's seemed to be made to order for him—the tight waists, the leg-of-mutton sleeves, the enormous hats with their accumulation of feathers and ribbons, and the general outrageous overdecoration, judged by our mod-

ern streamlined standards. All this frivolity he transformed into fantastic and captivating structures of form and color, rivaling the creations of a Boucher or a Nattier.

Renoir was an Impressionist of the Impressionists; but from the first he stood out from his fellows. Gifted with greater wit, subtlety, and sense of life, he was not long content to follow in the path that his friend Monet trod all his life. Primarily a figure painter, in his very earliest work he showed a sense of form that the others lacked. Even a landscape by him was not merely a record of a particular place in a particular light and weather but a fully composed work of art. This sense of design was with him from the first. Doubtless in the beginning it was instinctive rather than conscious, for Renoir never intellectualized about his work. When an academic friend once solemnly told him that he must *force* himself to draw, he replied: "I am like a cork thrown into a stream and tossed about by the current. When I paint I let myself go completely."

But when he was just past forty he came to a turning point in his career. As he later said to his friend Vollard: "I had wrung impressionism dry, and I finally came to the conclusion that I knew neither how to paint nor draw. In a word, impressionism was a blind alley as far as I was concerned." He had come to realize that painting was much more than the simple recording of impressions or even the expression of personal emotion. So he returned to the old masters. He had reached the realization that every genuine artist ultimately does—that he can no more afford to neglect the art of the museums than a musician can afford to be ignorant of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms. In a reaction from Impressionist vagueness and momentariness, he sought art that was solid, precise, classic. For a time he went through what has been called his "dry" period, when he tried to paint like a fifteenth-century Italian fresco painter—as he said, "on account of my hatred of impressionism." But Renoir could never remain dry, as is proved by the delicious absurdity of his *Battledore* and *Shuttlecock* in the present exhibition, where the figures, painted with the precise hardness of a Masaccio, are set in the soft luxuriance of a typically Renoir landscape.

After this temporary reaction he returned to the sumptuousness of his earlier style—but with a difference. His style had matured; from now on he paid less attention to the temporary effect, to naturalistic light and shade, to all that Impressionism had stood for—more to the solid and permanent qualities.

In these later works Renoir's sense of form reached its full development. His forms were large, ample, sculptural; one feels their roundness and volume; one realizes them from every side, as one does sculpture. They were never static; they possessed movement, they flowed with an ordered rhythm. Renoir had that rarest of all artistic gifts—the emotional comprehension of form, the ability to create form that is as moving as color and more satisfying. What he created was all pure form; it was not a dull copy of nature but an original plastic creation, based on natural facts but using them with the utmost freedom. Out of all these elements—colors, textures, lines, forms—the artist created a plastic whole which satisfies one's sense of harmony and order as does a piece of music. In this quality of design Renoir transcended impressionism, taking his place in the long line of classic French artists that included Poussin, Watteau, Ingres, Delacroix.

As with every great artist, the older he grew the better his work became. The forms grew fuller and more ample, the rhythms flowed more freely, the color was more luxuriant. He threw off naturalistic limitations, and his later pictures blossomed out into extraordinary inventions of form and color. This later work is a poem in praise of the earth, of women and children, of trees and flowers, of the richness and fruitfulness of nature, pervaded with a heavy, drowsy ripeness like that of fruit on the sunny side of a wall.

The man himself was a complete refutation of the popular fallacy that an artist's life is all wine, women, and song. Happily married, with a family of children, he led the most normal existence imaginable—quiet, orderly, domestic—painting from morning until night, going to bed early so that he might be fresh for the morning's work. Painting was his greatest pleasure,

his greatest recreation. The voluptuousness that one sees in his work was reserved for his art. When he was an elderly man, lying in a hospital waiting to be operated on, he sent his wife out to get canvas and brushes, and painted the flowers friends had sent him, until he was taken to the operating room.

Physically, he was slender, sharp-eyed, nervous. The innate sweetness and gentleness of his disposition was balanced by shrewd common sense and a malicious wit. His tastes were of the simplest, and he had a horror of pretense and snobbery. His models were his own family and servants. He never read reviews of his work, and was always astounded and amused by what the critics read into it. "Why do people always look for ideas in painting?" he asked. "When

I look at a masterpiece, I am satisfied merely to enjoy it."

When about sixty he had the first of a series of attacks of rheumatism which later confined him entirely to a wheel chair. His hands became so twisted that he could not hold a brush, and he had to have his brushes tied to his fingers. But he never for a day gave up painting. Now there was nothing to distract him; he said to a friend: "Really, I am a lucky one!" A farm was found in the sunny climate of the South of France, and here, amid his orange and olive trees, Renoir passed a green old age. When he was over seventy, working on a portrait that took him many sittings, in hot weather, he said: "I pay dearly for the pleasure that I have with this picture, but it is so delicious to give oneself up to the sheer delight of painting."

LLOYD GOODRICH.

NOTES

PRINTS BY RENOIR AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES. The illustration on the cover of this BULLETIN is reproduced from a lithograph by Renoir in the exhibition of prints by the artist and his contemporaries in Galleries K 37-40. This group of prints is shown in connection with the exhibition of paintings by Renoir, which will continue through September 12.

MEMBERSHIP. At the meeting of the Board of Trustees held June 14, 1937, the transfer of the Fellowship in Perpetuity of John Hudson Hall 2d to John Hudson Hall 3d was authorized. Mrs. Flora E. Whiting was elected a SUSTAINING MEMBER. Seventeen ANNUAL MEMBERS were elected.

GIFTS. The Board of Governors of the Art-in-Trades Club has presented the sum of \$533.82 to the Museum for the acquisition of books on textiles to be deposited in the Library. The gift is made in memory of Harry Wearne, and the works purchased will bear a bookplate setting forth this fact.

A gift of money has been received from Mrs. Harry Harkness Flagler.

MEETING OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. The fifty-ninth annual conference of The American Library Association was held in New York from June 21 through June 26, and the Museum arranged a program of lectures for members of the association who attended this conference. The program included an address by Professor Frank Jewett Mather, Jr., of Princeton University, on Art Bibliography—Some Needed Refinements, and the following gallery tours conducted by Museum Instructors: Typical Paintings from Italy and the Netherlands, by Miss Abbot; Modern French Painting, by Mrs. Fansler; and The Egyptian Collection, by Mr. Taggart.

The Museum also printed for association members a brief list of books on art with annotations by members of the staff and a list of sources of photographs of American painting, sculpture, architecture, and decorative arts prepared by Miss Alice L. Felton, assistant in charge of the collection of photographs. An exhibition of Museum publications was arranged at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, the headquarters of the conference.