Charles Fabri

An Introduction To EUROPEAN PAINTING

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DIRECTORATE OF
GENERAL EDUCATION READING MATERIAL PROJECT
ALIGARH MUSLIM UNIVERSITY

AN INTRODUCTION TO

EUROPEAN PAINTING

Dr Charles Fabri

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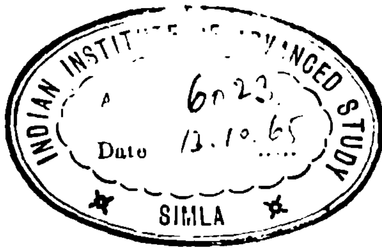

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Foreword

THE VITAL role that general education can play in our universities is now being gradually recognised in academic circles. The Radhakrishnan Commission Report published in 1950, first emphasized the need for general education and made certain recommendations for its provision. The Ministry of Education organized Conferences and Seminars and drew the attention of universities towards its significance. A number of teachers and scholars drawn from various universities visited the United States and the United Kingdom to study the working of general education at various centres and to get first hand knowledge about the progress of various programmes of study. The University Grants Commission has now engaged the services of an expert to advise Indian Universities on the implementation of general education programmes and fifteen universities have already made these programmes a part and parcel of their regular course of studies.

Aligarh Muslim University was among the first to adopt a full and integrated programme of general education courses. Experience showed clearly the need for reading material to be especially prepared for the purpose of this new type of teaching which differs from the traditional one in method as well as in content. When approached, the University Grants Commission entrusted Aligarh Muslim University with the task of preparing reading material suitable for general education courses at Indian universities.

The series here presented, like general education itself, may not find agreement among all concerned. It is not meant to serve as a text which would be completely digested, let alone memorized or crammed. On the contrary it is intended to arouse curiosity, stimulate thinking and broaden the outlook of our students. The selec-

tions and samples are expected to enable students to use their intelligence and widen their understanding and appreciation. They may lead to a sense of values urgently needed today.

Another important and accepted aspect of general education is its complementary character. In our country, there is a great and urgent need for more people who are properly trained and educated to earn a living through performing competently the many functions on which our society depends. It is equally important, however, that colleges and universities also impart an education which enables students to live a fuller and more rewarding life. To quote the Report of the University Education Commission (pages 118-119): "The interests and opportunities and demands of life are not limited to any few subjects one may elect to study. They cover the entire range of nature and of society. That is the liberal education which best enables one to live a full life, usually including an experience of mastery in some specialized field. . . ." To a student, "a general education course should open windows in many directions, so that most of the varied experiences of his life and most elements of his environment, shall have meaning and interest to him."

The task, then, in preparing reading material for general education purposes was clear as well as complex. On the one hand, the mounting walls between the ever-increasing number of compartments of specialized knowledge had to be disregarded, so that fragments could be re-assembled into that unity of knowledge which exists in human experience. On the other hand, it was necessary to present only so much content as students in all traditional branches of knowledge could be expected to manage and to understand as an integrated whole. For, as Whitehead rightly remarked, "a student should not be taught more than he can think about."

Furthermore there is agreement that integration cannot be achieved by providing students with readymade opinions concerning questions that arise in the course of general education. On the contrary, if they are to be encouraged to think for themselves and to seek their own answers, they have to be confronted with errors of the past or doubts of the present, with divergent judgments or open alternatives, as well as with the beauty of scientific proof or the force of moral conviction.

FOREWORD

The complete scheme of this series will be found on page *ii* where a systematic list of the publications is shown. While it adheres to the traditional division into Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities, many of the expository volumes straddle more than one field, and most of the source material touches upon problems not easily assigned to any one area only.

No student is likely to read and absorb all volumes ; but every student will find instruction and inspiration in several of the volumes if he uses them properly under the guidance of his teachers. Large though the collection is, it cannot possibly aspire at complete comprehensiveness. Since "selection is the essence of teaching" (Whitehead) it had equally to be the principle of planning of this series. And since choice implies omission, many important disciplines had to be somewhat neglected, and others to be left out entirely. Unavoidably, what is here regarded as the result of careful consideration, may elsewhere appear as arbitrary.

The readers of these volumes, teachers and students alike, are the ones whom this publication wants to serve. From them, too, the authors, compilers, editors and advisers of this project hope to hear. It represents a co-operative effort in preparation and publication. Its success depends on further co-operation between "producers and consumers." Comments and criticisms are invited, to be addressed to : The Director, General Education Reading Material Project, Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Since it is planned to translate the series into Hindi and Urdu, changes which may seem desirable, can easily be introduced when this is done.

In the end, the University acknowledges with gratitude the services rendered by the various contributors, reviewers, and the members of the Advisory Committee and all those due to whose keen interest and ready co-operation, the Directorate has been able to complete the Project. We are particularly grateful to the U.G.C. who entrusted us with the task and assisted us liberally in this venture.

Aligarh Muslim University
1962

B. H. ZAIDI
VICE-CHANCELLOR

Preface

WHEN IT was first suggested to me that I should write a book on European painting—from the Greeks to Picasso—in fifty pages, I laughed and said : it could not be done.

But then I accepted the commission to write such a book, for I realized that it was of very great value to Indian students, and at the same time a great challenge to a scholar.

It took me almost two years to complete it. In the same time I could have written a much larger book, with much less difficulty.

What to leave out ? What to keep in ? That was the problem. My answer, as will be seen in this book, was that thousands of facts, hundreds of names have to be left out. What must be kept in are outstanding examples of stylistic attitudes : every important style through these 2500 years of art history must be represented. If there is no Leonardo da Vinci and no Raphael among my illustrations, there are two Botticellis ; if there is no Cézanne, there are two Renoirs : anyone else would have chosen others. But I firmly believe that my selection serves my purpose fully : to lead the reader into the essence of the changes in attitudes, to show him how the painters in each period expressed their own notion or ideal of beauty. We are so much given to vague generalizations about "European art" that it is essential to point out the enormous differences between one European style and the other. It is through these picked examples that I hope to appeal to the sensitivity of the reader and to develop in him a keener feeling for the styles ; for art is for enjoyment and elation, and the keener our sensitivity, the greater our joy and excitement.

CHARLES FABRI

New Delhi
March 1963

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Sincere thanks are due to those who were good enough to provide the illustrations in this book, especially the National Gallery, London; the Courtauld Institute Gallery, London; the British Museum, London; the Municipal Museum, Amsterdam; Mijnheer J. E. Schaap, First Secretary, Cultural Affairs, Netherlands Embassy, New Delhi; to His Excellency, the Baron Gaspar de Villelume, and M. Bernard Parlier of the French Embassy, New Delhi; the Government of Belgium; to the officials of the German Federal Republic's Embassy in New Delhi and the Max Muller Bhavan, New Delhi.

The author also wishes to record his gratitude to Sir Kenneth Clark and to Sir John Rothenstein who encouraged him in a task that seemed almost impossible: to tell the history of European painting from the Greeks to Picasso in some fifty pages and twenty-four illustrations.

Finally, an apology to those great Masters, whose work I have passionately loved for many decades, and who are, alas, not included in this all too brief survey.

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INTRODUCTORY

THIS LITTLE book is addressed to students and lovers of art, mainly Indian, not well acquainted with the history and the values of European painting. Such an introduction can only be sketchy, for the history of European painting ranges from the ancient Greeks, say the 6th century B.C. to the present day : a parcel of 2600 years of artistic endeavour. It is of immense range, with hundreds of thousands of paintings still in existence; it is also of immense variety.

It cannot be emphasized enough how great this variety is. Far too often, ill-advised people suffer from the delusion that all European painting is characterized by a certain approach; and I have heard many times in India (and read many times in articles and books) the remark that *all* European painting is realistic or materialistic, whilst, by contrast, Indian art is *all* spiritualistic and idealistic. I can think of no more foolish mis-statement possible; and this book, if it does nothing else, will show that European painting, like all other painting in the world—Japanese, Persian, Chinese, Egyptian, Indian—is of endless variety. Nothing could be more idealistic than classical Greek sculpture, nothing more spiritual than Medieval European Church art or the religious paintings of the Spanish master, Domenico El Greco, and nothing could be more removed from realism than the modern painters of Europe who have gone in for abstraction in a grand way.

It is, perhaps, useful to state at the outset, therefore, that *the history of art is the history of changes.* This is so much true that anyone who would search for some permanent characteristic, some abiding feature, some constant element in European painting, would find that his task can only end in fiasco. There is very little in

common between a miniature painting in a 10th century hand-illuminated codex and an oil painting by the great French impressionist landscapist Pissarro; and it would be ridiculous to suggest that there is a marked kinship between the style and the aesthetic approach of Leonardo da Vinci, the great Italian master, and Paul Klee, that Swiss-German genius who created a style all his own. Pheidias, the celebrated ancient Greek sculptor, would be shocked to see a sculpture by Signor Brancusi of today, though I am ready to wager a bet that he would grasp the intentions of the ultramodern master sooner than the philistine who does not like the works of either.

Are we then to try and look at works of art "as those would have looked at them for whom they were made," as the French essayist, M. Malraux puts it? This is an impossible task. We cannot turn ourselves, by some internal magic, into Greeks or medieval churchmen, we cannot see even the impressionists as those must have seen who saw them when they first exhibited their "messy" works in 1875. No doubt, it is wonderfully revealing to know about the attitude to artistic work in every age, and a fascinating exercise to put ourselves into the place of a worshipper, coming up, in deep reverence, on the steps of the Akropolis in Athens, to make an offering of incense and flowers to the goddess Athene: but knowledge, interesting as it is, remains of much less importance than an aesthetic view; and when we look at a lovely marble statue of Athene, we cannot, let us be sure about this, look at that statue with the religious feeling that had inspired those ancient Athenians for whom this image of a goddess was made. We are not ancient Greeks, and we do not believe in the Olympian gods and goddesses; neither can we, I am positive, re-feel the awe and horror and the shudder of the medieval churchgoer when he cast his eyes on an image of the Devil: for him a reality almost completely beyond our comprehension, for he saw Satan lurking round his house, and many a good citizen went to bed after putting a broom across the door, so that the Devil should trip over it if he attempted to enter.

What we must try to do is to look at works of art with *our own fresh vision*, with *our own capacity to delight in things of beauty.*

Every generation sees these works of art somewhat differently;

and the European of today has a rather indulgent smile for the aesthetics of his grandfather's times. We find it difficult to be enthused about some Roman works of art that our grandmothers raved about ; whilst a much broader vision allows the European of sensitivity to find exciting beauty in African negro carving or the Chinese scroll paintings that no one once valued in Europe.

The humanistic Greeks of the 6th to the 3rd century B.C. looked upon the human body as the finest creation of the gods ; not only did they depict their gods as supremely handsome young men and women, but demanded that all competitors in the Olympic games, men and women, should compete in the arena entirely nude. There followed periods of reaction, early Christian dislike of the body (which was "of the Devil"), and it was only in the Renaissance (the rebirth of Greek values) that brought back the nude into painting. But whilst in ancient Indian sculpture and painting the nude or semi-nude was a truthful portrayal of the way people went about in this warm climate, the nude in Europe is an artistic creation of sensitive minds ; for everyone went about in life suitably dressed for a cold climate. Yet there is much in common between the lovely nude nymphs of Mathura and the nudes of the Italian renaissance : in both cases the artist looked upon the naked body as one of the most beautiful forms in nature.

Landscape painting, the delight in the beauty in nature, is one of the great discoveries of European painting, only matched by the Chinese painter's love for the same theme. Though there are beginnings in medieval times, and landscape had been used as a background in Roman (if not Greek) mural paintings, the Italian renaissance, with its wide-open eyes of wonder and its love of enquiry brought to the fore a new art that found its greatest exponents in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The student who is absorbed in a study of "-isms" is likely to loose sight of the main purpose of art. Art is to delight the eyes. Paintings are made to ravish your sight with a beauty you may not have observed yourselves. The painter wants to shout at you when he has painted his canvas : "Look ! Look how beautiful are these lines, these shapes, these colours !" All art is a communication ; the artist has something to sing or tell or paint about, and unless

you are willing to listen or to look, his message is lost on you.

Paintings, therefore, are things to be looked at. Not to be *known* about, however fascinating all knowledge may be. The first and the last thing to do when you are confronted with a painting is to use your eyes ; to drink in, as it were, the lines and shapes and colours that the painter has limned, to watch and observe how he went about to express what he was feeling, and how he has arranged his matter to make an impression on you or to convey to you his feelings, his excitement, his love of forms and colours.

But when we use the word "beauty" we must not misunderstand it. Beauty here does not mean the subject-matter, the theme. The ugliest subject in the world can make a masterly painting, and, indeed, a superb composition of the Devil can be a more beautiful painting than a bad canvas that shows an ill-painted god. There is a marvellous portrait of "The Ugly Duchess," a repugnant old woman, but a masterly painting ; Goya, the Spanish painter, has shaken generations of people by his pictures of war, massacre, rape and arson ("Los Desastros de la Guerra," the disasters of war) : an ugly theme, a beautiful series of etchings and drawings. Daumier, the great French painter, could turn an overcrowded, filthy third-class railway carriage into a work of telling beauty ; and M. Picasso made few more moving works than his "Guernica," in which the horrors of the Spanish civil war and the barbarity of the troops find dramatic expression.

Beauty in painting, then, is something very different from the beauty that walks around, the prettiness or attractiveness of the world that surrounds us. Aesthetic enjoyment is more difficult to define in so many words than to acquire. Sensitivity to beautiful combinations of lines, colours and forms can be developed the same way as the ability to run fast or to hit a ball. *The best way to become sensitive to the beauty of paintings is to look at them.* To look at them often, to look at them for a long time.

Books like this can only help you by drawing your attention to points to be considered, to details worth looking at. But ultimately it is you, the spectator, who must look, discover, and fall in love with the paintings. Remember that some of these paintings have taken many months, some even years to be completed ; you do scant

justice to the master who put all his heart into it if you give it a casual glance. For the true lover of art is like the true lover: he fills his eyes with the object of his love.

A MINIATURE LEXICON OF ART TERMS

IT IS not necessary for the enjoyment of art to be well up in technical terms, or to be able to use a kind of "artistic lingo" in order to be taken for a connoisseur. The most important equipment of an art lover is a sensitivity and an awareness, a wide awake passion for art.

The following terms, nevertheless, will be found useful for the student, who may wish to turn to these pages in the course of his reading. They could be greatly extended, and would then be much less useful.

They are given here in alphabetic order.

ABSTRACT ART. In its purest sense abstract art represents nothing seen around us ; in this sense the term NON-REPRESENTATIONAL is equally correct. It is a weaving of patterns from lines, colours and imaginary forms, and it disowns, as it were, the real world ; like music, to the condition of which all art aspires (as Walter Pater said), it gives scope to the artist's imagination to let his fancy roam freely ; and the abstract artist may well be compared to the carpet weaver who creates patterns that have nothing to do with the real world, but are pleasing to his eye. In other words, abstract art, in a less complete sense is so greatly removed from the reality that it depicts, the artist changes the reality that he took for his subject so much that the connexion can be discovered only with difficulty. But as long as a painting has any theme rooted in nature, however abstract it is, it would be wiser to call it "semi-abstract," and reserve the term "abstract art" to works totally divorced from any representation whatever.

ACADEMIC. Plato taught in a garden called after Akademos, a mythical hero. "Academic" thus gained, much later, the meaning of an accepted, classical, old-fashioned, unalterable kind of teaching, especially in France, where the Academy of Fine Arts became in the 18th and early 19th century an almost totalitarian institution, where old-fashioned painters, frequently imitating the "Masters" of the Italian renaissance, laid down the rules and canons of what was to be considered good art. It is against this stale, lifeless, repetitive, unoriginal art that the impressionists revolted (*see* IMPRESSIONISM) ; but it is a revolt that continues up to the present day, for academies everywhere (the Royal Academy in London, for example) tend to be conservative, old-fashioned, devoted to preserving tradition, and almost exclusively run by older painters opposed to innovation. This is often true also of those other "academies" that devote themselves to the teaching of art.

ARCHAIC. Archaic is the art of the early period in those cycles of art history that can be found again and again in all civilizations. It is the dawn of an awakening people, new to art forms, and is marked always by a deep sincerity combined with primitive knowledge of how to express these feelings. The requisite skill to show, *e.g.*, the human body in movement is still lacking, and archaic human figures are noted for their rigidity, stiffness, frontality and, very often, symmetry. A clumsy handling of face (there is often the "archaic grin") and hands and feet gradually gives way, through constant experimenting and search, to greater and greater ability to master these difficulties, until the archaic period evolves, step by step, to the mastery of the classic period (*see* CLASSICAL).

BAROQUE. Baroque was a word used, mockingly, for a style in Europe that followed the classic and mannerist periods in the 17th century. It is still taken by some Frenchmen to be the equivalent of "bizarre," but wrongly. Baroque is the natural sequence of the mannerist period in any cycle of art development, and is the reaction to the severely restrained, serene, anti-emotional, dignified and noble classical style. Baroque is romantic, loves the unusual, the surprising, the dramatic element, and is characterized by an abundance

of ornamentation, a love of multitudinous riches, of sensuous delight, and it often turns voluptuous and luxurious. Whilst it is true that the baroque artist "wears his heart on his sleeve," it is also true that he is a superb craftsman, a master of forms, and a decorative artist of consummate skill ; and if he has a penchant for excess and overstatement, he knows exactly how to express his feelings with dramatic power.

BYZANTINE. Byzantium, an ancient name for Constantinople or Istambul, from the time of Constantine the Great to the fall of the city to the Turks in 1453. Byzantine art is essentially an early Christian art of the Eastern Empire, in many ways a successor of late Roman art in those parts. In the art of "painting" it excelled in mosaics, some superb examples of which survive in Istambul and in Ravenna (Italy) and in murals, of which few remain. It is an archaic style, usually of imposing dimensions, with figures in rigid poses arranged on one line, and very little attempt at either depth or perspective—both of which had been mastered by late Roman artists at Pompeii and Herculaneum. It is, in many senses, part of medieval art (*see* MEDIEVAL).

CLASSICAL. The term Classical has two distinct meanings. Classical antiquity means "what was taught in classes" in old universities of Europe, *i.e.* Roman and Greek antiquity. There was a time when the admiration for Greek and Roman antiquity (and art)—based on an almost amazingly scant knowledge of true Greek art—was so great that no other art could be measured except by comparison with these "models of excellence." This view is not held by anyone any more. The other meaning of Classic is a phase in the cycle of art development *in any country* that follows the archaic phase (*see* ARCHAIC), and is marked not only by a complete mastery of form but also by a *restrained* use of this power, in order to conform to a high degree of idealism and *idealization*, an accepted canon of what is in "good taste," conforming to rules of harmony, and aiming at perfection. Excess, exaggeration and overstatement must be as much avoided as emotionalism; and "classical" is opposed to "romantic" (*see* ROMANTIC). It may be said, hence, that in classical art feeling is held within bounds by the use of intelligence and

intellect. Dignity and nobility are essential qualities of classical painting.

CUBISM. One of the several schools that arose against the realism of impressionism (*see* IMPRESSIONISM), about 1907. Already Cézanne saw geometric forms in his landscapes, and the cubists broke up the forms they saw into facets, organized these geometric elements into a new composition, in which several sides of the objects or figures painted appeared, even those you could not see from one side, but you *knew* they were there. "You paint not what you see, but what you know is there," said Picasso. (Many primitive arts used this method, *e.g.* Gujarati miniatures, in which the far eye, not visible to the observer, is made to protrude.)

EARLY. In the cycle of art development early means archaic (*see* ARCHAIC) ; but it is also used in any phase of the cycle, in such expressions as "early classical," "early baroque," etc. The expression "early Christian" indicates the period from the 2nd century A.D. (when the first Christian paintings in catacombs occur) to about, roughly, the 9th century.

EXPRESSIONISM. A term invented to oppose the term impressionism (*see* IMPRESSIONISM) for the schools that followed it ; but actually a correct and happy term. For, all the varied schools that followed impressionism are marked by a high individualism in which the artist, undoubtedly, *expresses* himself rather than depicts what had *impressed* him when he looked at reality. It is, thus, an intravert art, rather than an extravert art ; the artist turns inwards, searches in his own emotional life, and brings to the canvas the harsh reality not of the outer world, carefully observed, but of his inner struggle and discord, more often than his inner harmony. Most modern schools are, in one sense, expressionist, based on individual utterings, though the largest number of expressionist artists, from about 1890 onwards, were Germans, Norwegians (Edward Munch) and Frenchmen.

FAUVE. The French word "fauve" (pronounce: fōv) means "wild beast." It is a term invented by some French expressionists (*see* EXPRESSIONISM) who delighted in the use of simplified forms, derived no doubt from Gauguin's style, with violent colours that they

used symbolically, expressing their emotional life in these simplified forms and in these brave, wild tints. (Matisse, Derain, Vlaminck).

FLAMBOYANT. A French word, meaning "flaming." First used for a certain Gothic type of architecture in which lines formed flame-like, soaring forms, it is now frequently used for the splendid baroque excess, in which rich decorative motifs and glowing colours shoot flame-like, fiery forms in bursting abundance, often with sinuous curves, boldly undulating drapery and a multitude of decorative detail.

FUTURISM. Signor Marinetti and his followers were, in many ways; cubists, but they looked for aggressive modernity, believing in the beauty of machinery, movement, violence, revolution and war. To a cubist divisionism of surfaces they added the representation of speed in movement. A short-lived movemen t,started about 1909.

IMPRESSIONISM. Started about 1870 (first exhibition in 1874), the impressionists broke the heavy-handed tradition of academic painting. Not only did they use a much brighter palette to achieve the admirable freshness of the open air (they were the inventors of *plein-air* painting), but they built up their paintings *on the canvas.* stroke by stroke, with their brush, and did not mix their paint on the palette before putting it on. They aimed at catching the moods of nature and the liveliness of the human figure by looking at it with an open eye, instead of accepting old-established conventions ; and it was with this fresh eye that they saw that the scintillating light lent "local colour" to the objects in which they were caught, and that shadows were not brown and black. Their experiment with optics (building up colours by strokes) was carried to its extreme conclusion by the pointillistes (Seurat) who constructed their paintings from innumerable minute dots, of pure, basic colours.

LATE. In the cycle of art development it usually means post-classical, *i.e.* baroque or rococo. It is, however, also used in a relative sense, *i.e.* late classical, late archaic, late baroque, for any one period of the art cycle.

MANNERIST. When classical art (*see* CLASSICAL) had run its course, a reaction set in that turned against the strict conventions and tradi-

tions of the classical mood. There is more emotionalism in mannerism than in the classical style, and the artist turns to unusual subjects and searches for more effect. Though not fully baroque (*see* BAROQUE), the mannerist artist likes richer compositions and more ornamentation, surprising angles and striking attitudes. Mannerism is, hence, an early and undeveloped form of baroque, without the latter's exuberance and hard-hitting dramatization.

MEDIEVAL. Medieval art, more strictly speaking, follows early Christian art (*see* EARLY) and ends with the Renaissance (*see* RENAISSANCE). It stands, thus, between the archaic forms of early Christian painting (*see* ARCHAIC) and the fully classical forms of the Renaissance (15th and 16th century A.D.), and its latest manifestations both in miniature painting and in large scale painting (altar pieces, murals) are precursors of Italian renaissance pictures. Most medieval painting is religious in content, but by no means all.

NABIS. From the end of the 19th century (Bonnard, Vuillard). A Hebrew word that means "prophets." Nabis are impressionists (*see* IMPRESSIONISM) whose main attention is turned towards the uneventful, intimate life of the home, and who find beauty in a well-laid table, in a room with a view, the interior of a studio. The treatment is bold, the angle of view often unusual.

NATURALISM is the style of painting in which the artist aims at an accurate rendering of things seen, an almost photographic exactitude.

NEO-PRIMITIVISM. A modern movement that aims at looking at the world with an almost child-like eye, and paints the things seen in the manner of primitive observers, not with the highly skilled artifice of trained painters. It has many followers since it was started by the French customs official, the Douanier Rousseau.

NON-REPRESENTATIONAL ART : *see* ABSTRACT ART.

PLEIN-AIR. A French term for "open air." The plein-airists are painters who take easel and paint, and actually paint landscape on the spot, and not in the studio, as was the custom before the impressionists tried to catch the moods of nature. Though now it sounds a very ordinary thing to do, it was a revolutionary innovation around the year 1870, though many artists before that time

used to make sketches on the spot. It was the impressionists who first thought of painting completely in the open air.

POINTILLISM : *see* IMPRESSIONISM.

PRIMITIVE. In the cycle development of art this term is used as the equivalent of archaic (*see* ARCHAIC).

REALISM. Used often as the equivalent of naturalism (*see* NATURALISM), it is also used sometimes in a stronger sense, meaning the aim of representing nature in all its sordidness and roughness. The distinction is not useful.

RENAISSANCE. The movement in Italy (later spread to other countries of Europe) especially in the 15th and 16th century that was considered to be a revival, a rebirth of the Greek spirit of humanism. This humanism was opposed in the minds of the renaissance man to the religious spirit of the Middle Ages that looked upon God as the central theme of all art ; for the man of the Renaissance *Man was the centre of all interest*, even though he remained religious. The newly aroused curiosity and spirit of enquiry bore, indeed, much resemblance to the main quality of Greek thinking ; not only did learning and the sciences develop phenomenally in those two centuries, but the artist too, like the scholar or the voyager who sailed to discover new countries, wanted to discover the world around him, and to conquer nature. Classical renaissance art possesses all the characteristics of classic art (*see* CLASSICAL), and in subject matter ranges from portraits of poets and princes to Greek and Roman mythology, historical subjects, biblical themes and everyday life. Landscape, slowly tackled in later medieval miniature painting, is painted for the first time with an eye filled with wonder for the beauty of nature, and perspective is discovered.

ROCOCO. Rococo follows the baroque (*see* BAROQUE) and is marked by such an excess of decorativeness in style that the central theme is obscured by profuse ornamentalism. Affected poses and mawkish sentiment are other characteristics of this style.

ROMANTIC. Opposed to classic, romanticism is suffused by sentiment, appeals to the emotions. The romantic artist searches for literary effect, invents an idealized image of the blessed villager and

shepherd, romanticizes the rocky landscape, the stormy cloud, populates his world with legendary fancies (fairies, nymphs, swan maidens, sylphides) and believes in the beauty of by-gone ages, a golden past. Dark and mystic colours are favoured.

SOCIAL REALISM. Started, probably, in Germany, in recent times (Käthe Kollwitz), though had its ancestors in the mid-19th century in a Daumier in Paris. Since 1945 it has a political angle, and is preoccupied with the life of the people (as literary contents), whilst in style of painting it insists on realism and accuracy, intelligible to the man in the street. As such, it is a reaction to every other modern movement (in which the artist's personal reaction and individualism take the upper hand).

SURREALISM. Under the impact of Sigmund Freud's revelations about the subconscious in us, the surrealist painter delves into his dream world and rejects intellectual control. His aim is to evoke images deeply hidden in the memory, often (as in Salvador Dalí) depicting strangely combined objects, each painted with great accuracy and photographic realism, but in combination creating a world of fantasy. Paul Klee and Marc Chagall, however, use bolder methods of painting to achieve these dream-like apparitions.

SYMBOLISM. This term is used for Gauguin and many successors, and is not unrelated to surrealism (*see* SURREALISM). Here too, with different means, states of mind are evoked, though in a manner more closely akin to impressionist, fauvist and nabist art (*see* IMPRESSIONISM, FAUVE, NABIS).

TACHISM. The French word "tache" (pronounce : tăsh) means a spot, a dab, a blot. Tachists dab the canvas with dots or strokes of paint in total freedom from any rule, their aim being to create, like the musician with his notes, new images that have no relation whatsoever to anything seen. Whilst this has close kinship with abstract art (*see* ABSTRACT ART) it claims much greater liberty for almost automatic or completely automatic painting, and some tachists splash their paint on their canvas without any scheme or plan. In other words, the tachist does not paint on the canvas an image that is ready in his mind, whilst the abstract painter does. Tachism dates from about 1950.

THE ANCIENT GREEKS

THE TWO main sources of western civilization—and art—are ancient Greece and the Bible. The latter is Asiatic ; but Greek civilization itself was deeply rooted in Asiatic sources of inspiration. The Greeks came from Ionia, in Western Asia, to go, "island-hopping," to the European mainland, where ultimately they created a civilization that left an indelible mark on all history. But their art was first strongly Asiatic in character, for this shepherd folk from the steppes learned all about painting and sculpture from the declining high civilizations in Asia Minor. What this remarkable "great little', people did was to learn quickly and brilliantly ; and their early' archaic art developed rapidly (within about 250 years) into a classic art, in which superb draughtsmanship and perfect craftsmanship were combined with an extraordinary feeling for *harmony, proportion* and *idealization*. That was in the classical period, in the 6th and 5th century B.C.

Unfortunately, very little remains of their painting, though there is ample reference to its excellence in Greek literature. Most of what survives by way of wall painting is either almost destroyed by age, or is later than the classic times ; a few examples of provincial art (*e.g.* in Bulgaria) give some indication of what Athens, the capital, might have produced. Late examples, nevertheless, show an astonishing mastery of the medium, a superb understanding of colouring and shading, and a wonderful power for truthful rendering, as in the funeral portraits excavated in Greek graves in Egypt.

There remain, then, the vase paintings, of which there are plenty, and of all periods. Classical Greek pottery was often painted by great masters, many of whom are known by name. And though

these are outline drawings, only rarely painted with tints, they are eloquent testimony of the Greek ideal in the classic times.

The subject-matter of these vases is mainly mythological. Religion and the great epic poems (the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) predominate ; and one meets such legendary personages as Herakles (Hercules), Oedipus, or Achilles, besides the gods and goddesses of Olympus.

The composition, as one may expect on a vase where the figurative drawing runs round in a frieze-like ribbon, is all on one level ; objects, such as a sword or a shield or a harp, hang on the wall imagined to be behind the figure. But there is no attempt at a three-dimensional representation or what is called in French *trompe-l'oeil* (trying to "deceive the eye" by realism). Rather is Greek classic vase painting comparable to the calligraphy of the Chinese : every line is drawn to perfection, often with a single stroke of the brush, all unnecessary detail is eliminated, and the use of a plain background brings the figure into dramatic relief. Black and white (sometimes red is used instead of black) is handled with the skil of a masterly etcher who uses lines only. A love of rhythm is often shown by the brilliant use of lines on the drapery. The figures move with dignity and restraint, and violent, great gestures are studiously avoided. Proportions are carefully observed, and the drawing of hands and arms is most sensitive and beautiful. It is different with the faces. They are idealized. The Greeks evolved, early in the history of their art, a facial ideal, one that they considered the sum total of beauty and dignity. To this convention they stuck, most specially when they depicted divine and semi-divine beings. No doubt they also produced portraits of their great men and women ; but the realism (even there often softened by some idealization) of these human portraits did not fit, in their view, with the idea of immortal gods and goddesses, or the great heroes of their legends. One of their conventions (accepted in the Buddha-image of the Gandhara School in India) was that there should be no break between the forehead and the nose; they avoided to show the bridge of the nose, and in all Greek idealized heads there is a straight line running from the roots of the hair to the tip of the nose. This made an unbroken and handsome profile, and is one of the characteristics of Greek art. That this was not a "racial," characteristic

is certain; for in more realistic portraits one comes across heads which show the bridge of the nose. More probable is that the high chin, shown in most Greek classical heads, was an actual fact.

Most noteworthy in these classical paintings, both on vases and on walls, is the admirable disposition of figures. The large empty spaces of the background are used to set off the vivid lines of the figures, and there is a carefully, consciously used arrangement of harmoniously distributed personages. And when the empty space was too much, the artist skilfully introduced some such device as an object hanging on the wall, or a plant that breaks the monotony of the plain background, nevertheless without crowding it.

It is a pity that we do not possess any of the great paintings to which such enthusiastic and critical reference is made in Greek texts. Judging from mosaics and extant fragments of mural paintings the classical Greek master knew everything about the use of paint; not only did he use colour to perfection, not only did he possess all the colours necessary for great painting, but he knew how to use shading and highlight, some of it with surprising boldness. The portraits from Fayyum in Egypt show a mastery of brushwork that may well be compared with the works of Frans Hals, the famous Dutch painter. These are very late works.

It must be noted that the head of the rhapsode (the wandering reciter of epic poems) in PLATE 1 appears shorter than it is, owing to the curvature of the vase, on the shoulder of which the head is painted. The figures on the side of PLATE 2, Triptolemus with the Eleusinian goddesses Demeter and Persephone, are also distorted because of the curvature of the *skyphos* (bowl).[1]

[1] The best surviving example of ancient Greek mural painting has been discovered n a tomb at Kazanluk in Bulgaria.

EARLY CHRISTIAN AND MEDIEVAL PAINTING

LONG BEFORE the collapse of the Roman Empire, the Christians in small scattered communities, often persecuted, worshipped in catacombs, hidden from the view of the persecutors ; and it was mainly in these underground vaults that the first mural paintings attempted to depict what was dear to the Christian. There are a number of such paintings surviving, from the 2nd to the 5th century A.D., and in most of these Christ is shown as a handsome young shepherd, not, as in later painting (though even there not always) as a man with a beard. In fact, the image of Christ is purely an artistic conception, as is that of the Buddha ; no one knows what Jesus looked like, and up to modern times he is depicted sometimes without beard, sometimes with black, sometimes with red, sometimes with blond beard, long, short, of all shapes. Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" shows Christ as an athletic young man without a beard ; whilst Rembrandt painted a Christ after a model he found in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam.

The early murals are deeply indebted to Roman art, but are much more primitive ; they were evidently painted by faithful Christian laymen, not fashionable artists. In the Eastern Empire, Byzantium, the main source of inspiration was late Greco-Roman art, and the magnificent mosaics of Ravenna and the Santa Sophia mosque in Istambul are outstanding examples of archaic style, with their static, rigid, erect figures, composed in a linear way, *i.e.* all standing in a row, facing us.

With the triumph of Christianity, a much greater scope was open for the artist in the newly erected churches. The sculptor and the

painter were not separate artists, as all sculpture was tinted. But enough remains of mural painting to know that from the earliest times of church buildings the walls were painted, partly with patterns and religious symbols (the cross, the lamb, the rose), and partly with representational frescoes, showing scenes from the life of Christ, biblical stories, and the lives of the Saints of the Church.

It was, however, in the Christian monasteries of the later centuries, especially in and after the 10th century, that much greater scope was given to artistic expression, when the monks devoted themselves to the writing of books. These laboriously handwritten and painted books ("codex" books) were made into things of exquisite beauty, ornamented with decorative margins, ornate initial letters for chapters, inside which, gradually, small pictures appeared. With the passing of the centuries, larger and larger illustrations were employed to illuminate the text, and entire pages were devoted to delicately painted miniatures. The vast majority of these deal with religious matters; though by no means all. There are also chronicles of kings and princes, and didactic tales; and, moreover, as many books describe the lives of the saints, the illustrations often have occasion to depict the ordinary lives of the world around us whilst following the vicissitudes that befell these holy men. Towards the 14th century not only is the art of miniature painting vastly advanced; it also turns with growing interest to landscape, perspective and realism. These are true precursors of the Renaissance, and even when their theme is nominally religious, it does not demand much perspicaciousness to discover a growing humanism in the painter. He now obviously delights in excursions into the open countryside, to depict the occupations of men in peace and war; and a careful observer can find in these medieval book illuminations—however deeply religious their content on the whole is—ample documentation of every walk of life. There are pastoral scenes depicting the tilling of the soil, portraits of famous monks among their books, carpenters and masons erecting a building, scenes of battle and derring-do, and the harvesting of grapes in the vineyards. The infinite patience with which all detail is observed and penned is a matter for wonder; the most exquisite colours are used—all prepared in the monasteries themselves—and gold and

silver is added to enrich the lavish beauty of miniatures done in brilliant colouring. By the 14th century the primitive and clumsy drawing of the earlier centuries gives place to a marked understanding of such matters as the human figure; though we have to wait for the full Renaissance for a complete grasp of accurate perspective. The charming scene of Glass-making (PLATE 3) is one of 28 miniatures illustrating the travels of Sir John Mandeville, and it dates from the beginning of the 15th century. The perspective is childish, the trees are smaller than the men, and what appears to be on top of the hut is intended to show distance; yet the farthermost placed men are the same size as those in the foreground. On the other hand, there is valid observation of the human body and its movements, the limbs are cleverly shown in action, even if the man in the left bottom corner is less successfully drawn. Grouping is intelligent, and the use of the two huts in front makes a fine composition, only spoilt—in a sense—by the clumsy background.

It is when you compare this with an earlier religious easel painting that you feel the remarkable development that had taken place. In the English Crucifixion of the Courtauld Institute (c. 1380-1400) the composition has no depth at all (PLATE 4); the figures are all shown standing on a single level. And though there is a small amount of gesticulation (one of the soldiers raises an accusing finger towards the Christ on the cross), there is hardly any movement except an awkward bending of a head this way or that way. The two thieves are, no doubt, distorted in their pain on the cross, one looking at Christ, the other turning his head away, but among the rest of the actors in this heart-rending drama there is no movement at all, none even remotely comparable to the agility and liveliness in the Glass-maker's miniature. The facial features too deserve to be observed: most of them are of one mould, with long noses, and, in fact, the expression of the good thief and his features are almost identical with those of Christ. Notably good is, nevertheless, the anatomical representation of the three men on the crosses; and it is interesting to see the fascination of the artist in the accurate rendering of costumes.

All over Europe, but nowhere more than in Italy and France, the art of book-illumination develops in the 13th and 14th centuries immensely. Not only the Church, but mighty princes and well-to-

do merchants too, are ready to pay a great deal of money for beautifully illustrated manuscript books. The size of the pictures grows larger and larger, until it covers the whole page; more ambitious subjects are attacked, and the lives of the saints become an excuse for the most brilliant artists to show their growing skill in depicting scenery and pageantry, often in colours as lovely as jewels. Borders and initial letters are painted with a delicacy and originality not matched in previous centuries; and the knowledge in depicting the human body in movement develops simultaneously with an increasing skill in showing perspective.

The beautiful page from a French manuscript book (PLATE 5) dealing with the life of St. Louis was painted in Valenciennes, in France, around the year 1385. There is a bold effort to show the architectural setting in front in perspective, with every brick and every stone seen; but above and behind this setting is a splendid landscape in which a battle goes on between two armies locked in combat, set against a lovely receding world of an estuary, with fantastic rocks, a picturesque castle, and a sky of exquisite azure colour. There is life and movement everywhere, depicted in glowing, jewel-like colours, among which blue and pink dominate. Every detail of brocade and embroidery on the dresses is shown—very much as it would be in a Mughal imperial miniature. Even the border is reminiscent of Persian and Mughal miniatures, though the atmospheric effects in the background, in which the distance is felt through the softening of the tints, gives a foretaste of later European landscape art.

THE RENAISSANCE

THE RENAISSANCE in Italy is a phenomenon difficult to explain in a few words. Though it grew its roots slowly in the last centuries of the Middle Ages, it may be described as an almost volcanic eruption of sudden brilliance. During the two hundred years, or less, that it lasted, the flame of human intelligence and sensitivity was burning with an intensity hardly paralleled by any other period in the history of man. This was the period when invention followed invention, discovery followed discovery; men sailed to the farthest, unknown limits of the seas; Christopher Columbus reached America, a way was found to India; China was visited; the strangest islands were seen by sailors of Genoa or conquered by Spanish soldiers; tradesmen brought to Italy and Western Europe the spices and silk brocades of the Orient, and missionaries and adventurers penetrated into countries the very names of which were unheard in Europe before.

The literature of the Greeks and Romans was dug out from musty libraries; a man named Gutenberg invented the printing of books with movable type, and made books in hundreds of copies ; other inventors constructed a telescope, and the secrets of the stars and planets were unfolded by great scholars: the earth was no more flat, and a man could sail west to reach the Orient. Botany, anatomy, zoology, astronomy, mechanics, geology and geography suddenly burst into fresh activity, and unknown tongues were learned and taught by a new generation of philologists. An Italian painter could travel to Constantinople to paint a Sultan, or to Cairo to depict Egyptian architecture; fresh laws of the universe were discovered at the same time as fresh rules of architecture. Poetry, music

painting, sculpture and architecture became the passionate pursuit of the people: never in the history of man was the artist as honoured as in Italy between the years 1350 and 1500.

This intense curiosity, this great spirit of enquiry, that, surely, was one of the characteristics of ancient Greece too, resulted in the search for truth in painting. The same spirit that made renaissance man explore the earth and the heavens, pry into the secrets of nature, reveals itself in renaissance painting by a passionate desire to capture truth. "The conquest of reality," as Roger Fry called it, is not, however, a slavish realism, in which the artist's aim is no more than the exact reproduction of what he sees. The man of the Renaissance was essentially an idealist, brave and adventurous, ready to risk his life for greatness, passionately interested in the higher things in life, and much given to philosophy and to religious reform.

Renaissance painting, then, is a highly idealistic painting of classical perfection. The artist searched for perfection in drawing, composition and colouring; studied the appearance of things with this distinct aim, having these high ideals before him. Beauty and Perfection were to be found in a close study of Truth; and it is not incidental that the greatest painters of Italy were also great sculptors, great architects, and some of them great scholars and inventors too. None was more accomplished than Leonardo da Vinci, whose fantastic many-sidedness has never been matched in the recorded history of mankind.

In these hundred and fifty years there were over a hundred great master painters in Italy. We pick out of this impressive array Sandro Botticelli (from about 1444 to 1510), who worked in famed Florence, one of the most brilliant of painters, in whose work tenderness and force combined to make pictures of moving perfection. Whilst the *Nativity* shows Botticelli the man of faith, in *Mars and Venus* (PLATE 6) we meet the typical renaissance man: the mythology of the ancient Greeks is revived, not because any Christian in Italy in the year 1485 believed in the existence of the Olympic gods, but because it was a splendid excuse to turn to non-religious subjects and to glorify the beauty of woman, man and nature. In this particular painting by Botticelli it is obvious that the subject had been made use of simply as a peg on which to hang the painter's love for

idealized beauty. Venus is a lovely young lady of Florence, delicate, exquisite, in a fancy gown (never worn by any Roman or Greek), her blonde hair done in a way that frames her beautiful head in the most attractive manner; and her hands by themselves are expressions of the most delicate feminine beauty, painted with a sensitiveness, a love for graceful lines, admirably shaded. And behind her, to set off in a dark hue the beauty of her white skin, is a shady grove. Mars, asleep, is again the idealized form of the handsome male, relaxed, yet with great muscular strength, full of that close observation that is so characteristic of the enquiring, researching mind of the renaissance painter. The little fauns that play with the weapons of the God of War, make, as it were, play of the horrors of warfare; they smile and are up to mischief . . . whilst the God of War is sleeping. Force, beauty, charm: these three are admirably combined in this marvellous painting, the technical perfection of which can be seen even in a photograph. But it is Venus who dominates the painting: one of Botticelli's superb depictions of young female loveliness, delicately, tenderly presented.

We know from Vasari's contemporary biography that Botticelli became in late life a follower of that great religious reformer, Savonarola. When this saintly man was burned at the stake in 1498 by that Borgia pope, Alexander, Botticelli felt that this was a devilish wickedness; he became passionately religious, and the *Nativity* (COLOUR PLATE I) is an expression of this intense, burning otherworldly passion. This is an unearthly painting, in which all Botticelli's superb knowledge of reality is used for a deeply spiritual purpose; anyone who wishes to understand what spiritualism is in art should look at this masterly work, in which everything earthly is wrapped, as it were, into heavenly garb. Here are the angels, in earth as in heaven, rejoicing in the birth of the future saviour Christ, embracing each other and dancing . . . but doing it all with a marked melancholy. It is known to them, as it is known to Botticelli, that Evil has not been conquered; Christ will be crucified, the Devil will stalk the earth, and the most saintly men can be burned at the stake. An inscription on top of the painting refers to Savonarola's death and expresses the hope that the Evil will be thrown into chains one day. The superbly beautiful face of Mary, Mother of Christ, expresses

not joy, but agony; Joseph, the Father, hides his sorrowing head, bending down, between his arms; and the angels that kneel around or those that embrace each other in front, are more in tears than in joy. In this grandiose, enchanted composition, in which heaven is earth and earth is heaven, joy and sorrow are movingly presented as going hand in hand: happiness is somewhere in heaven, the golden hue of which beckons sorrowing mankind that brought forth a Saviour only to crucify Him. Even the gorgeous colours of the foreground are set off by the dark and sinister looking forest behind the stable.

Botticelli died in 1510; Leonardo da Vinci, who lived up to 80 years, died nine years later; Michelangelo in his older years (he lived up to 1564, when he died 89 years old) started mannerism, and the classical spirit of the Renaissance may be said to have been dead by 1519.

THE BAROQUE

THE DIGNITY, the nobility of conception, the ideal of perfection and the striving after a harmonious whole in which every detail is subordinated to the grand total, the painting being as restrained and carefully considered as an intellectual man can achieve: these ideals of the true classical renaissance rapidly give place to new notions in the 16th century. The mannerist painter of the first half of the 16th century already aims at effect, not perfection; restraint is abandoned for a more dramatic and telling effectiveness and sentiment, romanticism creeps into the painting. This brings in exaggeration (shunned in all classical work) and exuberance (unknown to the restraint of the true classic spirit). Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel paintings are among the first works to display this striving after a stunning effect (and achieve it).

But towards the end of the 16th century, but more especially in the 17th, mannerism gradually changes into baroque. In Venice and in France where the renaissance of Italy was emulated with admirable avidity; in Germany, where a brief renaissance centred round that remarkable painter and etcher, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), and in the Low Countries of Flanders and the Netherlands, where a vigorous religious movement in painting was tinged with the earthiness of a peasant society, the new liberation from the classical canons that the baroque brought was hailed with joy. Romantic conceptions quickly gained ground, with a love for riches, splendour, exuberance, and turbulence in movement.

Venice, which painted in the most pellucid colours during the 15th century, was opulent. The Republic lived on the vast income of trade, especially with the Levant; and rich merchants vied with

each other to be considered cultured men and patrons of art. Gorgeous palaces and richly endowed monasteries demanded large canvases and huge mural paintings; and the palace of the Duke (Doge, pronounce: do-jay) as well as the palaces of the wealthy patricians were embellished with portraits and compositions. That giant of painters, Titian (*c.* 1480-1576) was so passionate a painter that he would paint for no more than what his materials had cost him; but others, Tintoretto or Veronese, were well rewarded for their work.

Paolo Caliari (1528-1588), always called Veronese (because he was born in Verona) turned every painting into a gorgeous festival. If he painted a biblical subject such as Christ at *The Marriage at Cana*, it was difficult to discover that this was a village marriage in poor Palestine. In Veronese's handling this became a vast and splendid feast in Venice, in a magnificent renaissance palace, where hundreds of people sit down to an opulent celebration, servants running to and fro with richly laden dishes, enormous pillars framing a background, behind a marble balustrade, of Venice's blue sky and its churches. Everything is agitated movement, full of life and colour.

PLATE 7 is supposed to represent *The Family of Darius before Alexander*. But actually we are in a magnificent renaissance palace in Italy, the superb white marble arcade at the back giving dramatic prominence to a lovely group—observe the marvellous grouping, culminating in the figure of the emperor—everyone dressed in rich Venetian dresses, of oriental brocade and silk, covered with jewellery. It is like a well-rehearsed scene from a stage play, with a backdrop and Alexander himself makes a grandiose gesture, like an actor. Horses, monkeys and dogs add to the vast number of servants and retinue, admirably distributed over staircases and balustrades and terraces.

But whilst this magnificent and grandiose drama, as it were, this scene from a heroic play, is not classic any more, it would be wrong to call it full-fledged baroque. For the figures have still that dignity and calm that we associate with classic restraint, even if the emperor's gesture is more stagy than anything a 15th century painter would have liked to paint. We do not have here the agitated, turbulent, seething movement that the full baroque likes, and which comes,

in fact, in the seventeenth century. The gradual exaggeration of the *emotional* contents grows towards 1600, and in the middle of the 17th century we find one of the greatest exponents of Flemish baroque in that marvellous painter, Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).

Flemish (like Dutch) painters have always kept close to their people, and there arose, even before Rubens, a number of painters who delighted in depicting the peasant in their pictures, even if it was a religious subject. Christ appears in their paintings as living among Flemish farmers, and Mary and the women around Christ are in reality peasant girls from Flemish villages. Now Rubens, when he came back from his studies in Italy, had learnt all the lessons he could from Michelangelo, Raphael and Titian, and soon became a favourite at courts, a painter of the great princes of Spain, France and England. The remarkable fact is that with all his elegant surroundings of diplomatic and court life (he was knighted by Charles I of England), Rubens stuck to his love of earthy, Flemish women ; and few people if any have succeeded in depicting the tints of the flesh as Rubens succeeded in his nudes. He often painted his own wife, Helena Fourment, for his nudes. It is probably she who appears in *The Outbreak of War* (PLATE 8), one of two paintings illustrating Peace and War.

The picture is saturated with emotion, a great, seething mass of turbulence and excitement, full of movement and violent passion. The demon of war, with his flaming torch, pulling the warrior away from his wife, is rushing forward at a sharp angle; men and women throw themselves in despair in front of the man marching into battle, the wife tries desperately to keep him back, grabbing his arm, forgetting that she ran out of the house, as it were, undressed, whilst the children, screaming, cling to their mother—little angels of peace, defeated ; the mother of the warrior throws up her arms to heaven as she sees the approaching doom ; and the arts of peace, symbolized by a book, are trampled upon. Clothes and clouds and smoke seem to fly to emphasize the rushing forward of everything, and the shining beauty of the woman's lovely skin contrasts sharply with the dark horrors of the looming war, the armour of the warrior, the billowing garments of the torchbearer.

The painting, as everything done by that brilliant and dexterous

craftsman, Rubens, is a *tour de force*, a veritable feat of skill. Arms and hands in particular are superbly painted, and so are the beautiful little children and angels; but the picture is dominated by the magnificently painted soft body of the nude wife, marvellously contrasted with the hard, steel-armoured husband. Here are the typical characteristics of baroque painting: full of emotion, full of movement, exaggerated emphasis on bending and rushing, yet all done with superb skill, with a wonderful feeling for decorativeness and dramatic effect.

Few countries favoured the baroque as much as Spain. Here the renaissance came late, and had little effect: almost at once Spain turned to the baroque, as perhaps more suitable to express the religious fervour, the intensity of the Spanish emotional attitude to faith. It was Spain where the Church ruled supreme, and where Toledo was almost like Lhasa, monastery next to monastery, priest next to priest. Religion in Spain in the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries was a matter of utmost seriousness and of tremendous passion. It was Spain that invented the Holy Inquisition, and burned thousands of people at the stake, on the flimsiest grounds such as that they were not faithful enough to Church teachings. But this intensity resulted in religious painting that is suffused with spiritualism, and no painter in the history of painting was, I believe, more spiritual than that wonderful man, Domenico Theotocopuli, who, because he was born in Greece (Crete), is always called El Greco ("the Greek").

El Greco (1541-1614) came from Greece via Italy, where he learned his art; and soon after he had settled in Spain, he was swept away by the passionate religiousness that dominated Toledo in his days. Though he painted occasionally portraits, towards the end of his life his work became more and more drawn towards the supernatural, his brush strokes became violent, his faces and bodies elongated and unearthly, and an other-worldly, unrealistic storm seemed to inhabit his crowded canvases.

Christ Driving the Traders from the Temple (COLOUR PLATE 2) is a splendid example of El Greco's masterly work. The colours are iridescent, like jewels, the red cloak of Christ dominates the picture, a great deal of which is in variations of golden hues. Diagonal lines make the scene into a violent and vigorous spectacle, in which the

great figure of Christ smashes the money counting tables and drives the moneylenders out of His Father's house; they fall right and left, in confusion, unable to resist the spiritual force of this commanding personality, their billowing clothes adding to the rush of movement. The distortions here used (small heads, long legs and bodies) are characteristic of the creative design of El Greco: he has been hailed lately as a precursor of all modernity, and when you look at this crowd of people, their arms and legs intertwined, their bodies melting as it were into each other, you see something that is, structurally speaking, akin to some of M. Picasso's work, as Sir Kenneth Clark first observed. The glorious colouring, well set off by the dark background of the temple and a heavily overcast sky, is typically El Greco. He shocked his contemporaries when he said that colour was more important than drawing: but he had a follower in as modern a painter as Gauguin.

In this intensely felt, emotionally charged picture there is one earthy touch, characteristic of many Spanish painters: the serving woman on the right side, an ordinary child of the streets of Toledo, carrying a basket on her head, and going on her errand, unaware of the drama that is played in the forecourt of the temple.

In Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) we have the other side of the Spanish baroque. A court painter, a favourite of kings and princesses, Velázquez painted the luxurious, rich and sensuous life at the Court. His marvellous capacity for characterization led him occasionally to the streets and by-lanes of the city; but most of his work was portraiture and he was profoundly interested in humanity. *The Toilet of Venus* (PLATE 9) is an excuse to paint a beautiful reclining woman, looking at herself in a looking glass held by a pretty Cupid. The undulating lines of her nude body are repeated in the drapery, creating an attractive and sensuous image of idle luxury; the shading of the soft flesh of Venus is admirably rendered, once again proving that the baroque artist, whatever he did, he did with skill and conscious calculation. The curtain at the back is crimson, the silk counterpane is fawn-coloured, with a whitish sheet below.

It was in France that baroque art was used to titillate the senses. There idealized and romanticized beauty (shepherdesses, nymphs) led gradually to a rococo art, that lost all touch with reality.

Every portrait is a superb characterization; but the parts are subordinated to the whole. And we, who do not know the actors in this play, for they are long dead and gone, feel that the scene is throbbing with life, and that we are transported to the year 1642, and watch this important event in the town of Amsterdam. There is an intimacy and a homeliness even in this grandiose painting that a more baroque treatment, such as Rubens would have given to it, would have lacked. Here is light-and-shade used as an important component of composition; and though the dominating colours are browns and reds, the canvas seems to be more colourful than glaring tints of many hues could have achieved.

In the Netherlands the Church, being Protestant, and thus against painted effigies, was not the great patron of arts that it was in Flanders ; public bodies, such as guilds and civic guards as well as well-to-do merchants were the great patrons. Nevertheless, the Dutch were (and are) most deeply religious people, and a large number of Rembrandt's paintings and etchings deal with religious subjects. All have the strong homely touch that characterizes most Dutch art ; many of them are illustrations to scenes in the Old Testament, such as *David Playing the Harp before Saul*, a moving painting, in which (as in so many paintings of biblical subjects) Rembrandt dresses his figures in oriental clothes, with turbans and cloaks. For these, as for many other pictures, Rembrandt found models among the Jews living in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam, which he often frequented. His dramatic and deeply felt paintings of Christ are made after Jewish models.

Towards the end of his life, Rembrandt's brush-strokes became bolder and more nervous. In this he was in many ways a precursor of modern painting techniques.

In his prosperous days Rembrandt was a great collector of works of art ; and, in fact, ruined himself financially with the lavish sums he spent on these. Among his treasures was a large collection of Indian miniature paintings.

PLATE I. Detail from an Attic Red-figured Amphora. About 480 B.C. A rhapsode reciting an epic poem. British Museum.

PLATE 2. Attic Red-figured Skyphos, 490-480 B.C. Triptolemus with the Eleusinian goddesses Demeter and Persephone. British Museum.

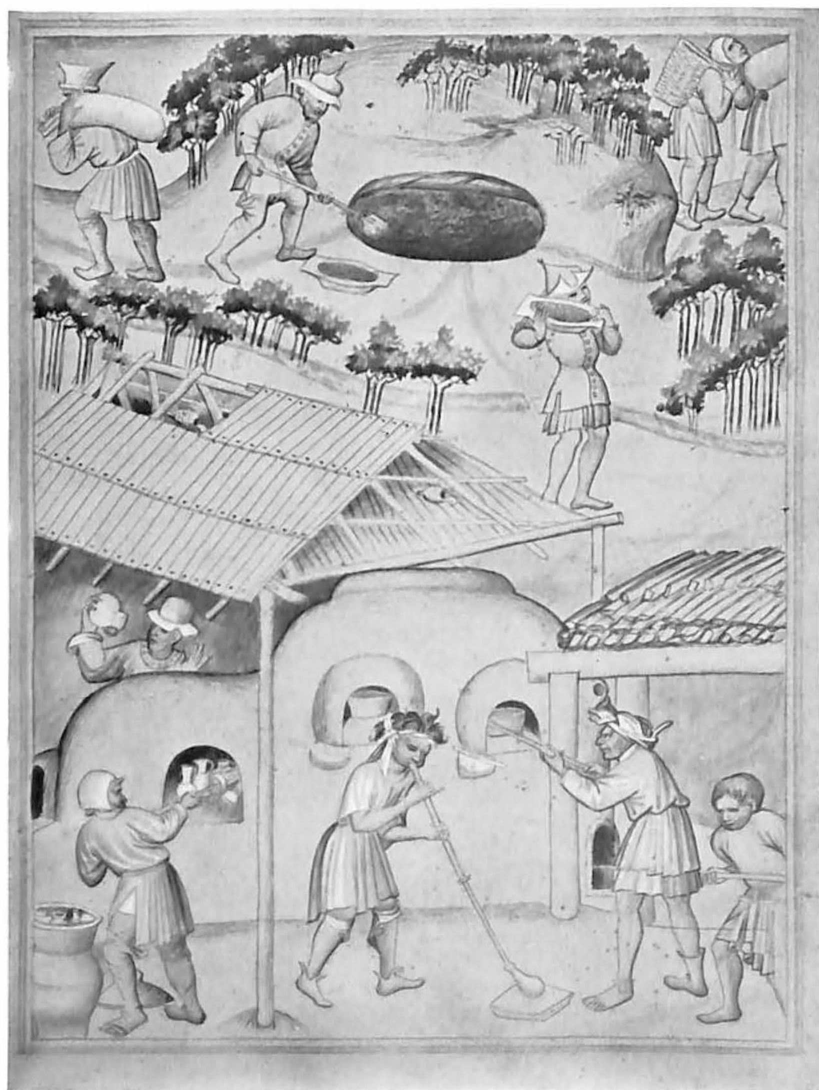

PLATE 3. Miniature from a book illustrating the travels of Sir John Mandeville. Early 15th century. British Museum.

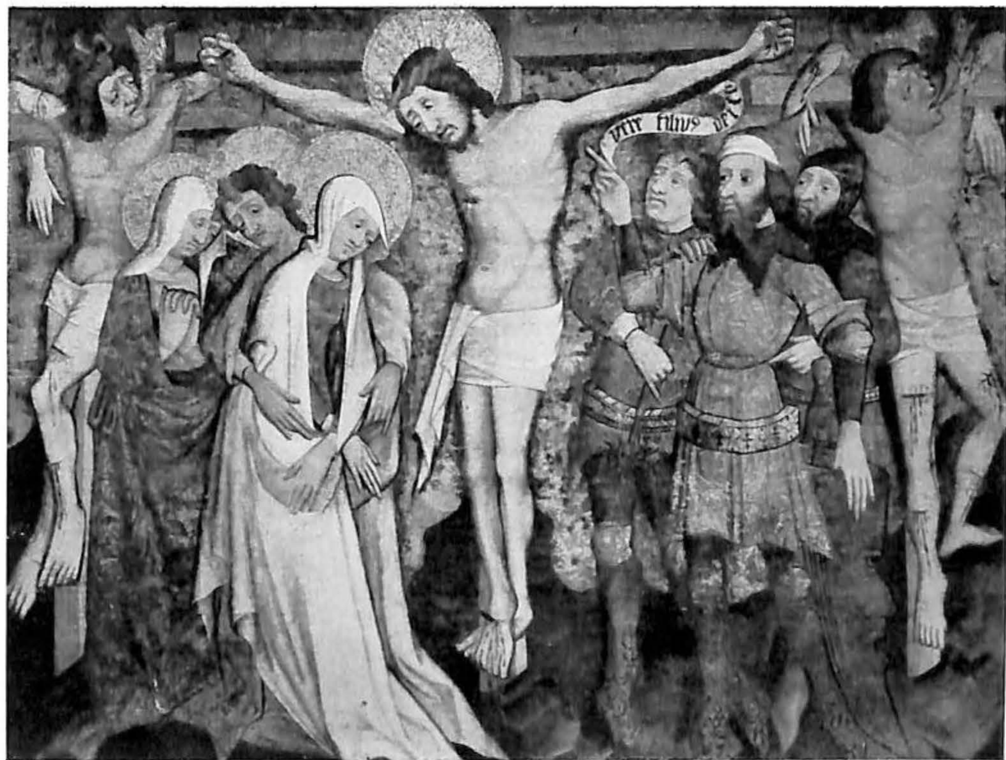

PLATE 4. *Crucifixion*: East Anglian, *c.* 1380-1400. Courtauld Institute Galleries, London.

PLATE 5. Episodes from the Life of St Louis. Page 388 from an illustrated manuscript made at Valenciennes, in France, before 1400. Royal Library, Brussels. The first two lines, in French, read: *Le bon roy saint Loeys qui si loyaulment*

PLATE 6. Sandro Botticelli: *Mars and Venus*. Painted about 1485. National Gallery, London.

PLATE 7. Paolo Caliari, called Veronese: *The Family of Darius before Alexander*. About 1560. National Gallery, London.

PLATE 8. Peter Paul Rubens: *The Outbreak of War*; one of two paintings illustrating Peace and War. Painted between 1637 and 1638. National Gallery, London.

PLATE 9. Diego Velázquez: *The Toilet of Venus* (or, Venus and Cupid). Painted after 1657. National Gallery, London.

PLATE 10. Pierre-Auguste Renoir: *The Umbrellas*. National Gallery, London.

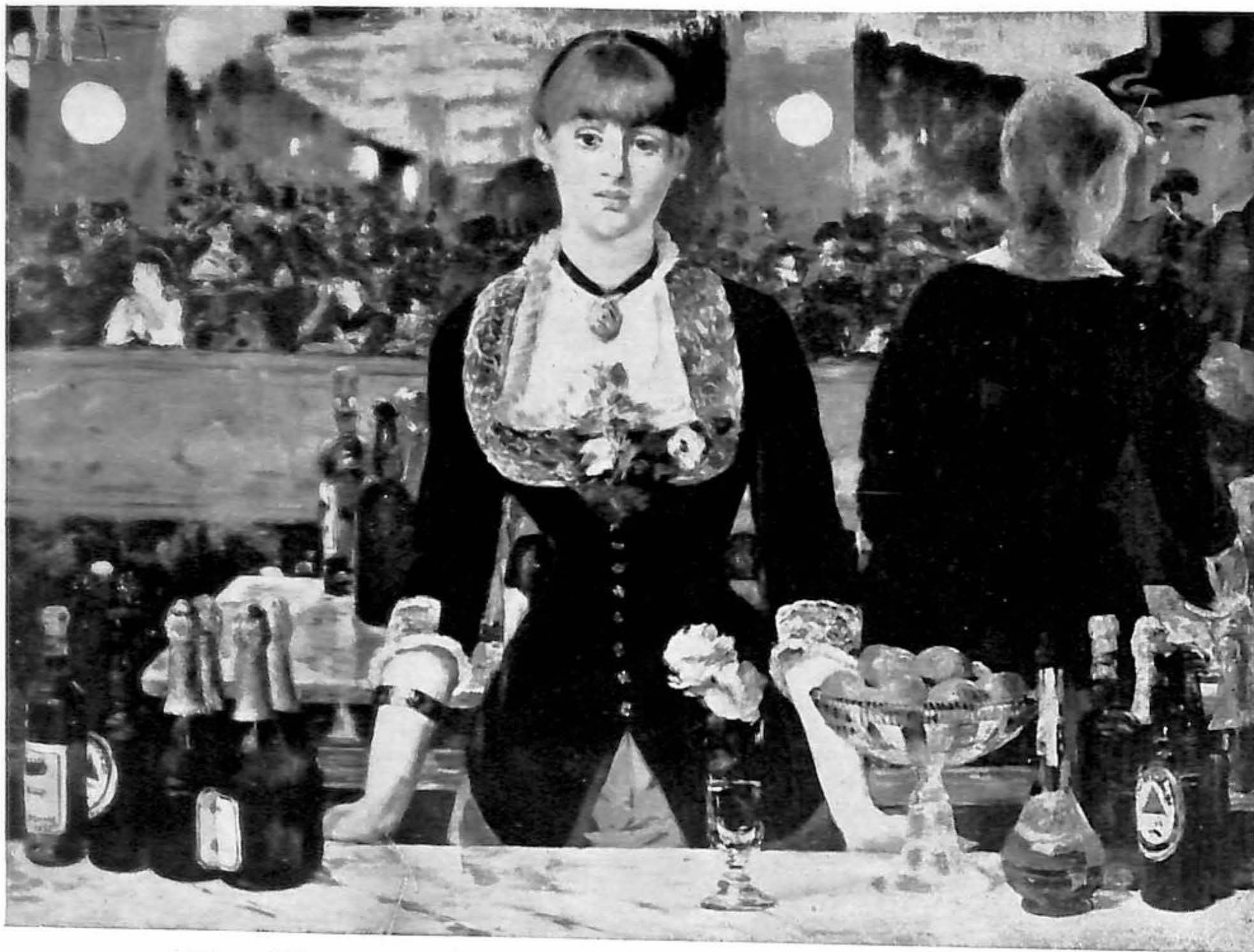

PLATE II. Edouard Manet: *The Bar at the Folies-Bergère.* Painted in 1881 (dated 1882). Courtauld Institute Galleries, London.

PLATE 12. Marc Chagall : *Red Sun*. Municipal Museum, Amsterdam.

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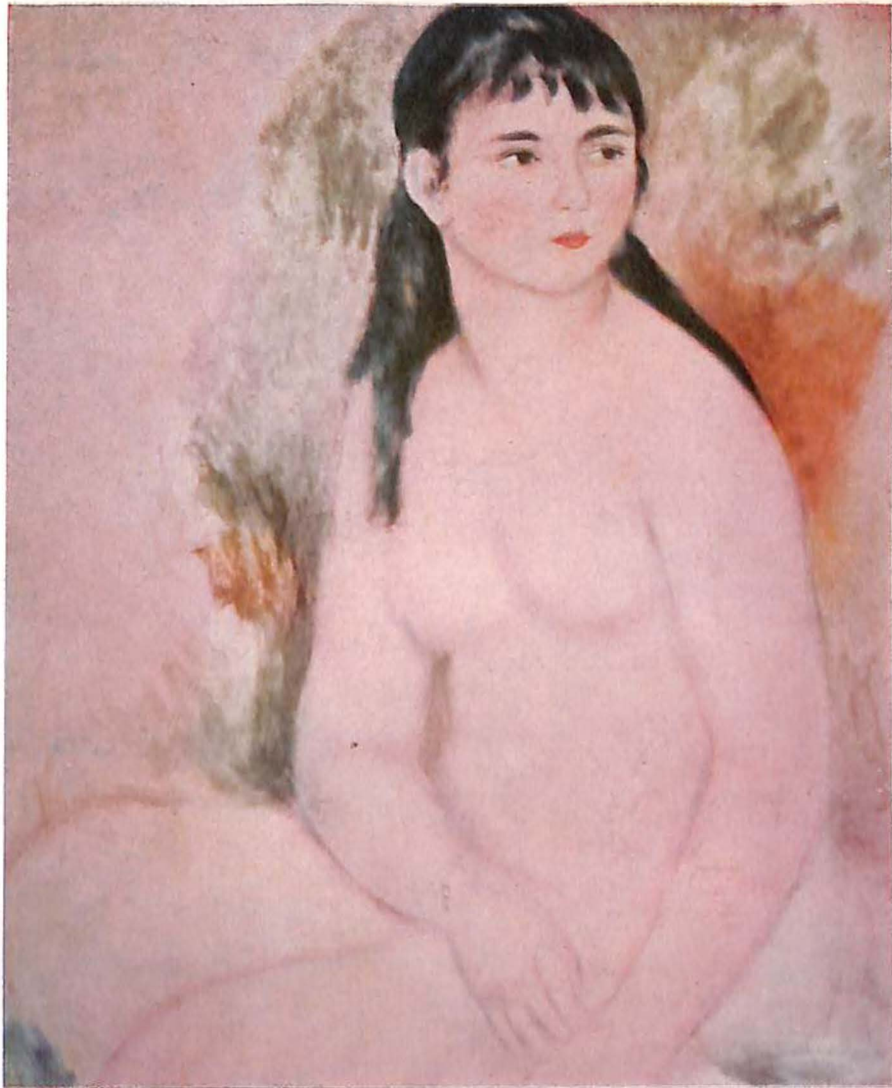

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An Introduction To European Painting

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In this book Dr. Fabri has achieved the almost impossible task of compressing in some fifty pages the story of European painting from the 6th century B.C. to the present day—a period of about 2600 years of artistic endeavour. He takes the reader through the different schools of painting and gets him acquainted with the changing values of European painting. A special chapter "A Miniature Lexicon of Art Terms" introduces the reader to the "artistic lingo"—the language of art or the artists' jargon.

Picked examples of twenty-four paintings (twelve in colour) have been included with a view to developing in the reader a keener sensitivity for styles.

Distinguished archaeologist, art-critic and scholar, Charles Louis Fabri (born 1899) began his career as an assistant conservator at Kern Institute of Indian Archaeology, Leyden University, Holland, under Professor J. Ph. Vogel. His first contact with India was in 1931-32 when he came here with the British Museum-Harvard University Expedition team led by Sir Aurel Stein. After a brief period in a responsible position at the British Museum, Dr. Fabri returned to India as visiting professor in art history at Santiniketan in 1934.

Between 1935 and 1938, Dr. Fabri was an officer in the Archaeological Survey of India; reorganized the Central Museum, Lahore; and was director, Punjab Exploration Fund. During 1949-50 he was lecturer at the National Museum of India, Delhi.

Dr. Fabri has been a guest lecturer at many universities in India and Europe. A regular contributor to leading journals, he is the author of the following books: *The Stone Age*; *Indian Flamingo*; *A History of Indian Dress*; *Khajuraho* (with Stella Kramrisch and Mulk Raj Anand); and *An Introduction to Indian Architecture*.

Dr. Fabri, a resident in India for the last 29 years, is the art critic of *The Statesman*, New Delhi.

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