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PORTRAIT HEAD

Græco-Egyptian, 2nd Century, A.D.
Gift of Mrs. GUSTAV RADEKE

GRÆCO-EGYPTIAN PORTRAITS.

THE student of the Hellenic spirit usually finds the Periclean age, with its brilliant group of architects, artists, statesmen, authors, poets and other leaders, so interesting that he gives but little attention to the Hellenistic expression, especially that which he finds in the Greek colonies. Yet there is much of great interest to be found in the study of these frontier posts of Greek civilization, particularly those which were in Egypt. The Greek colonists spread around the Mediterranean in accordance with the idea expressed by Plato (*Laws* 740), "Last of all, if there be any excess of citizens and we are at our wit's end, there is still the old device of sending out a colony." This, however, was done systematically and with organization. Thus were built up important cities and communities whose interests were commercial and agricultural.

In Egypt the names of Alexandria, Naukratis, Arsinoë, Heliopolis and others are indicative of the importance of the cities which were established, while the rich agricultural oasis of the Fayum early attracted the Greek colonists. Here in the second century A. D. were to be found, in addition to the Greeks, Hellenized Egyptians, Romans, Jews or Phoenicians, and negroes. The evidence of such a cosmopolitan population is found in a series of painted portraits on wood and realistically modeled plaster busts, an example of each of which has lately been added to the permanent collections.

It had been the practice of the Egyptians for centuries (since the Fourth Dynasty, at least) to mummify their dead, and to place on the mummy-case a mask of wood or cartonnage which, although originally it was doubtless intended to be a portrait, soon became most unrealistic and conventional. When the Græco-Roman colonists adopted the Egyptian practice of preserving their dead in the form of mummies they gradually made several changes in practice. In the Fayum, in the first and second centuries A. D.,* they inserted

in the linen wrappings and directly over the face a wooden panel of sycamore or some similar wood on which was painted a startlingly realistic portrait of the de-



PORTRAIT IN WAX-ENCAUSTIC
Græco-Egyptian, 2nd Century A.D.
Gift of Mrs. JESSE H. METCALF

ceased. While these are not to be considered as masterpieces they well merit our consideration since they give us almost the only surviving examples of painting in wax-encaustic, a process which is described at some length by Pliny (*N. H.* XXXV). Also they show the tenacity with which the colonists in Egypt adhered to the Greek standard and expression, since the style, workmanship and technique is in no sense Egyptian; and furthermore, they with the Greek vases and fragmen-

*For the dating of these portraits see C. C. Edgar, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, vol. 25, 1905, p. 225 sq.

tary wall decorations, give us the only evidence of Greek painting at present, aside from literary sources. It is known that there was a strong Alexandrian school of painting, and these paintings may with certainty be regarded as reflections of the work of this school. These panels, in the Fayum at least, supplanted all other forms of mummy-decoration for a period.

The example owned by the Museum shows a portrait of a young woman, three-quarter body and full face view. The arrangement of the hair is similar to that worn by the Roman ladies in the second century. The large open eyes give evidence of the eastern practice of the use of kohl.

The method used in its manufacture was that of wax-encaustic, or ground color mixed with wax and blended by means of a hot iron. This process was common at the time and offers the unusual advantage

tails of the individual, and for the spirit and vivacity which is to be found in all these portraits. Its provenance is unknown, but it must be considered with the group of portraits which came from the Fayum.

The plaster mask in the permanent collections is of even greater interest. As a portrait, it must have been a striking likeness. In subtlety of modeling, finish of surface, and general feeling of life it ranks with the best of the large series of masks which have been found. Many of the others have inlaid eyes, of glass or other substance, but our specimen shows the eyes modeled in the plaster, thus eliminating the stare which is so pronounced with the inlaid eye.

The chaplet of flowers is made up of rose-colored hyacinths, a flower which was common to Mediterranean lands, and which was apparently much used for garlands, as it is often seen in other masks of like nature. Whether it was especially reserved for funerary wreaths is not clearly established. As in the case of the preceding portrait-panel the provenance of this mask is not known.

Alike for the period of art they represent, the opportunity to come close to the people of the times, and for comparison with later portraiture, these humble examples of Græco-Egyptian work will always be of interest.

L. E. R.



SIDE VIEW OF PORTRAIT HEAD

of permanent color. While the portrait is not as carefully drawn as some which have been found, it has the feeling for direct realism, for the characteristic de-

ART AND ARCHÆOLOGY.

THE phenomenal growth of the American Art museums in the last forty years has produced many problems difficult of solution. One of these is so to exhibit and present the material in the collections that the full artistic and archæological value is brought to the attention of the interested visitor. As the collections have increased, and our buying committees have realized the importance of acquiring works of art of all periods from the Egyptian to the present, and

from the Orient as well as the Occident, it has become correspondingly obvious that some more detailed classification of the inherent interest of the material is necessary.

There are two features which make this problem more or less difficult. The first is the fact that not every visitor or museum official has clearly in mind the points of similarity or difference between art and archæology, and the second is an unfair standard by which the object in question is judged.

The subjects of art and archæology have much in common up to a certain point, and then there is quite a sharp divergence, the one in the direction of æsthetic appreciation alone, and the other towards the historical. Each has its devoted followers, who seek the museum for inspiration and enjoyment. On the one hand, there are those who say with Sir Walter Armstrong that, "True works of art are the things in which we enjoy the real emotions of those who make them." If this point is emphasized to the exclusion of all others, the æsthete will agree with George Santayana in saying, "If we approach a work of art or nature scientifically, for the sake of its historical connections or proper classification, we do not approach it æsthetically . . . If the direct effect were absent, and the object in itself uninteresting, the circumstances [of origin] would be immaterial." On the other hand, there are those who find with Mr. C. T. Newton that archæology is, "The collection, classification and interpretation of all the evidence of man's history not already incorporated in Printed Literature."

Between these two definite positions there is found an increasingly large group of intelligent visitors who do not care to follow either line of specialization, but like to see in an object in a museum something that appeals to their æsthetic sense and at the same time presents a certain human interest because of its historical background. While such a position would not meet with the approval of either enthusiast,

as not leading directly to the interests which they have most at heart, it has much to commend it.

So far as the institutions themselves are concerned, the far-sighted art museums have been giving the question a great deal of attention. It was in answer to such a problem that the idea of a study-series in a museum was carefully developed. To this might be relegated, in the judgment of the museum authorities, such objects as were of lesser importance or were more interesting to the student. Thus everything is accessible and yet much needed space is gained in museum galleries for better installation of the chief treasures, or the possibility of showing new and important acquisitions.

It is also with the desire of establishing proper values in the minds of those especially interested in the collections, from whatever point of view, that the live museums have docent service, special lectures, Sunday talks and illustrated bulletins. Through these mediums, both artistic and archæological interests are presented.

The confusion is also enhanced by the mistaken point of view whereby everything is judged from a graphic standard, no matter what the date or conditions under which it was created. We certainly have no right to apply the standards of painting, Renaissance or modern, to objects of art interest from Greece or Egypt, nor may the Occidental standard be applied with justice to the Oriental expression.

Keats could write his "Ode to a Grecian Urn" and revel in its graceful shape and superb artistry, but he could at the same time appreciate its historic background and all the wealth of suggestion which it called forth. One does not, however, need a poet's vision to appreciate the interest of both art and archæology.

If in our consideration of the increasing wealth and importance of the collections in American museums we seek first to develop a proper standard of quality and judgment, and then try to appreciate the artistic and archæological interest of the object in question, our visits to the mu-

seums will be sources of increasing delight and profit. The power to realize the artistic side comes from repeated observa-

be limited, but that the example chosen shall be the best attainable. Such an example of the work of Mary Cassatt was



MÈRE ET DEUX ENFANTS

by Mary Cassatt (1855-)

JESSE METCALF FUND, 1903

tion, while the historical background and the human interest involve a certain amount of literary research.

PAINTING BY MARY CASSATT.

THE Jesse Metcalf Fund has secured to the permanent collections a number of very representative paintings by American artists. It is a feature of this Fund that its range of date shall not

be secured in 1903, and is called "Mère et deux enfants."

Miss Cassatt has become known to us as the "Painter of Children and Mothers," and probably few other painters have presented so beautifully the intimate and tender relationship between mother and child.

She was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1855. Although her family was of French origin, her parents were born in America, and in spite of the fact that her life has been

spent mainly in Paris, she considers herself purely American. She began her art study in Philadelphia, and before settling permanently in Paris, traveled extensively in Spain, Italy and Holland.

Certain paintings sent by Miss Cassatt to the Salon in 1872 and 1873, attracted the attention of Edgar Degas, one of the leaders of the new Impressionist School. Later several of her paintings were refused and this led Degas to invite her to exhibit with his friends in the group of Impressionists. Even before Miss Cassatt knew anything of the personality of the painter, she had a decided fondness and profound admiration for the works of Degas, to whom she turned later for advice. From the beginning, Miss Cassatt has been attracted by strong and original works, but it is remarkable, nevertheless, that a young American girl, at the start of her career, should choose to become affiliated with such a group of artists, rather than follow the course of art followed by more conventional painters. While associated with this group she was able to work with absolute independence and was not bound down with convention. Her choice of subject gives her a place entirely apart among the Impressionists, most of whom are landscape painters.

In Miss Cassatt's early paintings, while there is a delicacy of vision and a natural grace, there is a lack of that tenderness, which is so salient a quality in her later work. Realizing the natural tendencies of women toward the beautiful and the sentimental in art, she chooses as her source of inspiration the severest realists. She is in the habit of placing her models before her and painting directly from nature, often out of doors. Her subjects are taken from life, peasant and aristocrat alike, and though restricted in her choice of motive, her range of expression is wide.

In the drama of child life, it is the intimate and sacred relationship between mother and child, that Miss Cassatt has chosen to represent. Her children are always healthy, happy and radiant, never puny or weak. In her groups, composed

usually of two or three figures, her interest is centered in the baby, especially in the infant under five years, as in the painting reproduced. André Mellerino says, "What she has sought and found in the woman, or mother, is less the delicate grace or fragile feminine side, than the austere, and it is this side which ennobles maternity." As a rule the artist seems to be interested in the mother on account of her relation to the children.

Miss Cassatt does not consider herself a portrait painter, although some of her faces bear such a striking resemblance to the models that we feel inclined to wonder whether we may not justly call them portraits. Her work is characterized by vigor of drawing and the elimination of all superfluous detail. She paints as she sees things, using no tricks of light and shade or of decorative effects. Her color is daring, especially the combination of colors, in which quality she resembles Degas.

She has created an art distinctly American, despite the fact that her work-shop is in Paris, and her models, for the most part, are French. Her paintings to-day make a universal appeal and will continue to live because she has grasped the fundamental qualities of good painting.

M. S.

STILL-LIFE BY GARI MELCHERS.

THE painting of fruits and flowers has been for centuries a favorite pursuit of painters from the days of Zeuxis of Greece, at least, to the painters of today. The purpose of this study has been varied. Sometimes the still-life has been subjected to a decorative purpose, and in consequence, more or less conventionalized, or again there is the joy of painting the flowers in themselves. The Japanese and Chinese have surpassed all the European artists in their grasp of inherent beauty, appreciation of natural form, in the happy combination of color sense and feeling for line with the decorative value.

But the Dutch and Flemish masters of the seventeenth century found in the painting of still-life, especially flowers, a remarkable opportunity to exercise their artistic abilities.

Many of the contemporary artists in America have enjoyed the painting of still-



STILL-LIFE

by Gari Melchers

Purchased with the JESSE METCALF FUND, 1917

life, and an interesting example of this class has recently been secured through the Jesse Metcalf Fund, in the painting by Gari Melchers which is reproduced.

Gari Melchers was born in Detroit, Mich., in 1860. His mother was of Dutch ancestry, while his father was German, and a sculptor of uncertain merit. The son began his art career at seventeen. After a sound training at Düsseldorf, he studied in Paris under Lefébvre and Boulanger. Success came early, for in his twenty-ninth year he received the Grand Medal of Honor at Paris, an honor conferred on but two other American painters—Whistler and Sargent. Success, however, did not spoil his art, for instead of falling into mannerisms by constant repetitions of the style of his first successes, he has treated each problem only after a

searching analysis of the subject at hand, and in a way best suited to bring out its individual character.

Melchers early went to Holland where he studied the people and their customs, and where he doubtless came under the influence of the old Dutch masters of still-life. He attacked the problem, however, in his own way, and with a spontaneity and decorative effect that is often lacking in the older masters. The Still-Life owned by the Rhode Island School of Design is a splendid example of these qualities. Painted with a full brush and with little striving for small detail, the result is amazingly fresh and individual. The composition, while carefully worked out and extremely pleasing, gives one the feeling that it happened by chance, and that the artist was so attracted by its beauty that he could not refrain from portraying its joyous freshness and glorious color.

Loyalty to America and its ideals has been splendidly shown this year by the older students and the recent graduates of the Rhode Island School of Design. Many are engaged in national service either at home or abroad. This has affected the number registered in the more advanced classes, we are proud to say. The registration up to October first has fallen one hundred and twenty-nine behind that of last year. The students who are working in the classes also show an earnest purpose to prepare themselves for the serious and difficult tasks that lay before every citizen worthy of his country at this time. They feel that they can best do their part by this preparation. America can well be proud of the courage and devotion of its young men and women in this tragic year of its history.

“I should like to say here that if before starting to make a collection you can make up your mind that its ultimate destination is to be some public museum, it will not by any means detract from your pleasure in making it.”—W. P. JERVIS.

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ADMISSIONS.

HOURS OF OPENING.—The galleries are open to the public on every day of the year, with the exception of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and the Fourth of July. From July 1st to September 15th the hours are from 1 to 5 P. M. on week days and from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays; from September 15th to July 1st the hours are from 10 A. M. to 5 P. M. week days and

from 2 to 5 P. M. Sundays. The Pendleton Collection is open from 2 to 5 P. M. daily.

Twenty-five cents admission to the museum is charged on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the museum is free on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays.

Free transferable tickets admitting four persons on pay-days are sent to all members of the corporation. Art students and artists, on application to the authorities, may obtain free tickets of admission for any pay-day. Teachers with pupils of both public and private schools will be admitted without payment upon application.

PHOTOGRAPHS ON SALE.

Photographic copies of many of the objects belonging to the museum, including photographs of the Pendleton Collection of furniture, are on sale at the entrance to the museum.

PUBLICATIONS.

Four quarterly bulletins are issued and are sent free of charge to the members, and, on written request, to alumni of the institution.

The year-book of the school containing detailed information regarding its many activities, and presenting conditions of admission and a list of the courses given in its several departments, will be forwarded free of charge to prospective students and others who are interested in the institution and its work.

COPYING.

Permission to copy or photograph in the galleries of the museum may be obtained in the office. Such permits will not be issued for Sundays or legal holidays.

LIBRARY.

The Library contains 3,330 volumes, 16,039 mounted photographs and reproductions, 2,571 lantern slides, and about 3,250 postcards. During the months of June, July and August the library is closed.