

ADVENTURES IN THE ARTS

found, of course, in Pater's passages on *La Gioconda* and Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*. But these belong to a different realm, in which literature rises to a height independent of the pictures themselves by means of the suggestion that is in them, the power of suggestion being a finer alternative for crude and worthless description. We shall always dispute with the writer on art as to exactly what symbol is inherent in the presence of a rose in the hand or a tear upon the cheek, but we cannot quarrel when the matter is treated as sublimely as in the case of a literary artist like Pater. It is in the sphere of professed critical judgment that the literary authorities so often go astray.

Thus between the entertaining type of writer like Meier-Graefe and the daily reporter there is no middle ground. The journalist is frank and says that he doesn't know but that he must write; the other writes books that are well suited for reference purposes, but have scant bearing upon the actual truth in relation to pictures. Are there any critics who attempt seriously to approach the modern theme, who find it worth their while to go into modern esthetics with anything like sincerity or real earnestness of attitude? Only two that I am aware of. There is the intelligent Leo Stein, who seldom appears in print, but who makes an art of conversation on the subject; and there is Willard Huntington Wright, who has appeared extensively and certainly with intelligence also, both of these critical writers