

ADVENTURES IN THE ARTS

that it is not a trick, not a habit, not a trade—this modernity—and that with fashions it has nothing to do; that it is explicitly a part of our modern urge toward expression quite as much as the art of Corot and Millet were of Barbizon, as the art of Titian, Giorgione and Michelangelo were of Italy; that he and his time bear the strictest relationship to one another and that through this relationship he can best build up his own original power. Unable to depend therefore upon the confessedly untutored lay writer or even the better class essayist to tell him his place, he will establish himself, and his place will be determined in the régime of his day by precisely those qualities which he contributes to it. He will not rely too insistently upon idiosyncrasy; the failure of this we have already seen, in the post-impressionists.

The truth is that painters must sooner or later learn to express themselves in terms of pure language, they must learn that creation is the thing most expected of them, and, if possible, invention as well. Oddity in execution or idea is of the least importance. Artists have a more respectable service to perform than this dilettantist notion of beauty implies. Since the utter annihilation of sentimentality, of legend, of what we call poetry has taken place, a richer substance for expression has come to us by means of which the artist may express a larger, newer variety of matter, more relevant to our special need, our modernity.