

SCIENCE AND ART AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY, 1942

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WHEN reviewing last year's Summer Exhibition at the Royal Academy, I ventured to say that since intellectual honesty is at the foundations of both science and art, there is no fundamental distinction between them, and that apart from the objectivity of the one and the subjectivity of the other the differences are mainly those of design, of technique, and of the medium of expression. I did not attempt to define what art is because there is so much difference of opinion among professional critics, to say nothing of the disagreements to be found among painter-writers, that it seemed presumptuous for a zoologist to try to do so. On the other hand, it is but just to the artist that the critic should explain his methods so far as in him lies, and this entails an effort to define his terms.

Now a painting, a drawing, or a piece of sculpture is a report on its maker's activities. It differs from a scientific report because it records the emotions of its author, and also reveals his personality. The more sincere it is, the more complete will be the revelation of the artist's emotional personality; if this is not so the result is meaningless. When looked at intelligently, and there is a great difference between looking at an object and understanding it, it becomes a work of art to the degree in which it succeeds in conveying the artist's meaning to the mind of the beholder.

For example, at the present Exhibition "Stone Walls, Yorkshire" by Sidney Lee (No. 103) is to me a work of art because it conveys the feeling and spirit of the landscape in the Millstone Grit regions of the Pennines; but if another fails to respond to the picture, then not all the technical merit in the world will make it a work of art for that person. Again, "The Coaster" by Arthur B. Cornwell (No. 323) is likewise a work of art for much the same reason; it makes an immediate appeal to all sailors and also conveys a vivid impression of stormy coastal waters of Great Britain to those unfamiliar with them in a way that no photograph could ever do. The artist has succeeded in capturing the mood of the storm and recording it in paint. These are simple examples, but what is to be made of "Wet Fish on Tilted Tray" by Frank Gouling (No. 332)? Here we are confronted with the adumbration of a number of forms which the artist avers to be fish; fish, be it said, such as no fisherman ever saw. What then was the intention of the artist? It may be that this is a report on some experiment which I cannot understand, but it is certain that it conveys nothing to me, and therefore is not a work of art for me.

Art, then, depends on the co-operation of two persons, the artist and the spectator. When the artist succeeds in expressing the emotional imagery conjured up in his mind by a given set of circumstances in such a way that their depth and intensity are communicated to the spectator, he has achieved art. But the spectator, too, must do his share, for, to quote Sir Joshua Reynolds, "It is the lowest style only of the arts that may be said in the vulgar sense to be naturally pleasing. The higher efforts of those arts do not affect minds wholly uncultivated". Which is not so far removed from Mr. Roger Fry's

dictum that "In proportion as art becomes purer the number of people to whom it appeals gets less and less. It appeals only to the æsthetic sensibility, and that in most men is comparatively weak".

If the current Exhibition is approached in some such frame of mind as that indicated in the preceding paragraphs; if the scientific man will visit the Royal Academy with the intention of examining the pictures instead of just going to see them, he will find plenty to interest him. For the zoologist it is easy, and not very clever, to walk round noting that "Peregrine Falcon" by C. F. Tunnicliffe (No. 397) is not correctly coloured; that the pochard in "Good Companions" by Jessie Hodge (No. 391) has a lack-lustre eye; and that a Suffolk Punch, or what appears to be intended for such, is scarcely an appropriate mount for a cavalryman (No. 752). The botanist will find numerous flower pieces to criticize but very little fruit or vegetables. As for the war pictures, they are of general interest. There are portraits for the social historian; aeroplanes for the aeronautical engineer; ships for the navigator; bomb-scarred buildings for the architect and town-planner; and so on. Many of these reach a high level of competence, indeed as reporting they are often first-rate, but the damning entry "Painted for the Nation's War Records" attached to some of them explains a lot, and probably "Painted as a War Record" should be attached to the majority. They often lack inspiration and feeling.

Two war pictures are an exception. Ugly in themselves, unpleasant in colouring, and inaccurate in drawing as they are, they are perhaps the most successful works in the whole Exhibition. These pictures are: "Clydebank; a Tribute", by Hugh Crawford (No. 108) and "Military Objectives" by Louis Duffy (No. 183). The first conveys the doggedness of the civil population in war-time, and the second the dull misery of the bereaved. These are symbols, poignant symbols, of the horrors of aerial bombardment, and as such their essential truth is startling and vivid. Where these two artists have triumphed, Charles Wheeler has failed. His allegory, "Wings" (No. 128), is confused alike in message and design. The winged figure to the left does not carry the conviction of the angels of Fra Angelico, or, for that matter, of the devils of Dürer and Martin Schongauer, all three of whom believed in their images; but one doubts whether Mr. Wheeler believes in his.

On the whole, however, the psychologist probably has the lion's share of this Exhibition, as of many others. He will soon discover that A. J. Munnings is so interested in figures, particularly horses and their riders, that almost any sort of a smudge will do for the rest; "Start at Newmarket" (No. 1) and "A Swimming Pool" (No. 115) illustrate this point. Gerald Kelly is obviously interested in people, but not to the detriment of their setting; indeed the care with which the quiet backgrounds are painted only serves to emphasize the importance to be attached on the subject, and the unobtrusive prominence accorded to the hands indicates his confidence and skill. Augustus John shows himself still to be a romantic at heart, more at home with a subject such as "The Mask" (No. 106) than with an official portrait (No. 110). So one might go on through the catalogue, and so the visitor should go on for himself.

Most of the exhibits in the Architectural Room are of public buildings. The most interesting are the

drawings of some portions of the Anglican and Roman cathedrals at Liverpool by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and Sir Edwin Lutyens respectively; they are hung side by side (Nos. 704 to 708) so that comparison is made easy. Plans for domestic dwellings are few, but protest must be made against No. 666, "War-time Housing on the Wirral"; not even war-time can excuse the mechanical dullness of these brick boxes.

Much of the sculpture is pleasant and intimate although not profound. Particular mention may be made of "Head of Young Bull" by Georg Ehrlich (No. 817), the "Leopard" by Hermon Cawthra (No. 796), and "Siamese Cat" by Margaret Heaton (No. 820). "Cart-horse Lying Down" by Tonie Brignall (No. 818) is stylized but not unsuccessful.

On the whole, then, there is little of primary scientific interest in this year's Academy, but this is all to the good. The natural reaction to a picture of 'scientific interest' is to examine it for its accuracy—the science comes before the art; but this year science takes a back seat and her devotees can give themselves up to the pleasure of getting on good terms with the exhibits and, through the exhibits, with their authors. Viewed in this light, the Summer Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, 1942, is very much to be commended.

OBITUARIES

The Rev. T. E. R. Phillips

IT is with great regret that we record the death of the Rev. T. E. R. Phillips, so soon after the University of Oxford had conferred on him an honorary D.Sc.

Theodore Evelyn Reece Phillips, the son of the late Rev. Abel Phillips, was born on March 28, 1868, and was educated at Yeovil Grammar School. He proceeded later to St. Edmund Hall, Oxford, and graduated B.A. in 1891, in which year he was ordained to the curacy of Holy Trinity, Taunton. He took his M.A. in 1894 and two years later, while curate at Hendford near Yeovil, he used a 9½-inch altazimuth reflector for the systematic observation of the planets, especially Mars and Jupiter. This work was continued when he moved to Croydon, and when he was appointed curate at Ashted in 1906 a 12¼-in. equatorial reflector by Calver was substituted for the 9½-in. An 8-in. refractor by Cooke, which was lent to him by the Royal Astronomical Society in 1911, was used for about thirty years, chiefly for double-star work.

In 1916 Phillips was appointed rector of Headley, and he set up an observatory in the rectory glebe where, in addition to the instruments referred to, an 18-in. reflector (mirror by With), lent by the British Astronomical Association, was mounted on the equatorial stand which had previously carried the 12¼-in. reflector. This 18-in. reflector was used mostly for planetary work and especially for investigating the surface currents on Jupiter.

A short record of Phillips's work on the planets, double-star measurements and light curves of long-period variables appeared in NATURE of February 28 (p. 241), and it is unnecessary to repeat this. Some reference may be made to his analysis of the light-curves of long-period variables, which he undertook on the suggestion of the late Prof. H. H. Turner about thirty years ago. He conducted a harmonic analysis

of the light-curves of nearly eighty stars, and a full account of this appeared in his second presidential address to the British Astronomical Association (*J. Brit. Ast. Assoc.*, 27, 1; 1916). In this address he referred to his work on *S. Herculis* (*Mon. Not. Roy. Astro. Soc.*, 75, 7), where he had gone as far as the fifth harmonic. He felt that certain assumptions were adding encumbrances to the problem and remarked "... we have now reached a stage when the theory of stellar variation calls for reconsideration and revision".

In addition to his interest in planetary features, variable stars and double stars, Phillips was a keen meteorologist and was elected a fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society in 1918. He kept an unbroken record of daily temperature and rainfall at Headley for twenty-five years and was working on the results before his death. He was analysing harmonically a large number of temperature curves for the British Isles and hoped to publish the results after the War. He was also interested in botany, more especially in British and Alpine flora, as well as in sketching, and he took an active part in the preservation of the countryside.

Phillips was a member of Commission 16, which is specially concerned with the physical study of the planets, of the International Astronomical Union, and was president for some years. In 1922 he was appointed by the late Archbishop Davidson as his representative on behalf of the Church of England to consider the stabilization of Easter. Later he sat on the special committee of six formed by the International Union to consider calendar problems in general. For many years he was a university extension lecturer for Oxford, Cambridge and London, and also Gilchrist Trust lecturer. In connexion with the British Astronomical Association he was director of the Jupiter Section, 1900–33, director of the Saturn Section, 1935–40, president during 1914–16, and recipient of the Walter Goodacre Medal and Gift in 1930. In 1918 the Royal Astronomical Society awarded him the Jackson-Gwilt Gift and Medal. He was secretary of the Society during 1919–26 and president during 1927–29. In February of this year, Oxford conferred on him the degree of D.Sc. *honoris causa*, an honour which he greatly appreciated.*

His published works include his revision of Ball's "Popular Guide to the Heavens", and "Astronomy and Modern Thought". In addition to these, he collaborated with Dr. W. H. Steavenson in editing "Splendour of the Heavens", 2 vol., and he contributed articles in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" on "Planets".

Phillips's genial disposition made him very popular in astronomical circles, where he will be greatly missed. During his illness many anxious inquiries were made about his progress and there were hopes that he might rally and attend the meetings again, but early in May it was known that his condition was extremely grave, and he died on May 13. The interment took place at Headley on May 16, when a number of astronomical and other friends were present. In 1906 he had married M. H. Kynaston, who, with a son, survives him. M. DAVIDSON.

Mr. W. A. Douglas-Rudge

WE regret to record the death, on February 14, of Mr. W. A. Douglas-Rudge, late science master of Rugby School. Mr. Douglas-Rudge was a scholar of