

April 30, 1921.

ART.

MR. WYNDHAM LEWIS is an artist who is very anxious to convert people to his point of view, and to this end makes the preface to the catalogue an important part of his exhibition at the Leicester Galleries. He tells us that in his view the idea of "art for art's sake" or "pure art" is all wrong, and that "our present great general movement must be an emancipation towards complete human expression." To this end the artist has set out on a path of satire, and the present exhibition shows us what he calls *Tyros*. These people are explained in a note to be "Elemental. Usually known in Journalism as the Veriest Tyros," or, in other words, fundamental types of people the artist dislikes, whether about to breakfast (19) or read Ovid (26). Among these Mr. Wyndham Lewis has included a portrait of himself. This is, of course, a joke, but it raises an important question: Is a large and heavily painted canvas the proper way to express a satirical joke? I think not; it is too much like the cracking of nuts with steam-hammers, or the Scotsman who joked "with deeficulty." If Mr. Max Beerbohm, that prince of caricaturists, had done all his things with a heavy hand in oils, should we have held him as dear as we do?

Perhaps the final test of the artist is that he knows instinctively how to choose the method of expression best suited to his subject. The point might also be raised whether Mr. Wyndham Lewis should ever use oil paint. It is a medium for which he seems to have little capacity and no sympathy, as may be seen in the large portrait of Miss Iris Tree (9). The first effect of a picture ought not to be to raise in our subconsciousness the complex of "Wet Paint!" Really Mr. Wyndham Lewis is a draughtsman, and his natural means of expression line. This may be seen here in several fine drawings, such as the *Study of Miss Iris Tree* (1), *Girl Asleep* (2), *Lady Reading* (30), *The Writing Table* (37)—all of which have accomplished power and high artistic qualities.