

INTERVIEWING A CUBIST

IF YOU DON'T "feel" a cubist picture, give it up. But above all things don't ask anybody who is supposed to know, or who insinuates that he knows, to explain anything. It puts him in a bad humor. If you should ever chance to meet Picasso, the Spanish painter and arch-Cubist, you would be put upon your honor not to mention the subject to him, for it would spoil the whole evening for him, and he would become morose and wouldn't talk at all. Kate Carew, the clever correspondent for the *New York Tribune*, met him recently in Paris, but had to be put under bond to keep the peace before the door was opened to this vision. Her hostess who arranged the meeting confessed that she understood all about these squares of canvas that emulate the paving-stones of the street, but she, too, refused to be drawn into any net of revelations. Only she did it "sweetly." "One can't explain these things. You must simply find them for yourself. . . . I always understand, of course." The correspondent tried to acquire the understanding mind before she encountered Picasso in person, and, under the benign smile of her hostess, exercised her ingenuity upon one or two pictures of Matisse, the first of the innovators:

"I was out in the cold. That was all there was to it, and me with such an eager, inquiring, young mind, too!

"I looked at the biggest Matisse.

"It showed gentlemen and ladies, old enough to know better, very lightly clad for the time of year or any time of year.

"They appeared to be eating fruit and thinking.

"'Anything to do with the Garden of Eden?' I inquired, tentatively.

"It had.

"My first step in the right direction. I was getting on, and my head swelled a little.

"Thus encouraged, I progressed still further. I went and squinted at some pink and blue and yellow chrysanthemum-like splotches.



From "The Evening Sun."

THE RUDE DESCENDING A STAIRCASE.

A near-Cubist interpretation of a daily subway demonstration.

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" 'Do you know,' I said dreamily, 'I seem to get a kind of Japanese feeling here,' and I put my head a trifle to the side and gazed.

" 'There you are!' exclaimed my hostess triumphantly. 'That's just it. That's what I mean. One can't explain these things. One must feel. One must not look for details, one must get an impression, an emotion. That is a portrait of Matisse's wife in her Japanese kimono.'

"It seemed to have been an excellent guess. I was in luck.

"Now, between ourselves, I never did find Mme. Matisse in the picture, but I am practically sure that I traced the kimono; I found that among the chrysanthemum splashes.

"My stock jumped up with alacrity after that brilliant effort. I was treated as an equal."

This interchange was only by way of filling in time until the Cubist painter arrived:



From the New York "Tribune."

PICASSO AS SEEN BY KATE CAREW.

"A short, stocky, boyish figure with one hand on the head of a huge snow-white dog.

"Amid a chorus of welcome he came further into the room, nodded amiably to every one and was presented to me, the only outsider.

"He looks very young. He is thirty-one, really, but he does not seem anywhere near that. He is built like an athlete, with his unusually broad shoulders and masculine frame, and his hands and feet are a contradiction, as they are very small and delicately formed. His hands look older than his face, for they are veined and knotted like the hands of the aged; yet they are artistic, with long, pointed fingers and sensitive, delicate finger tips.

"His face is another contradiction.

"It is the face of a Spanish troubadour.

"You instinctively long to see him with a sombrero and a cloak and a red rose between his lips, twanging a guitar.

"He has a smooth, olive skin guileless of hair on cheek or chin or mouth. His features are perfect. A Grecian nose, beautifully formed mouth, eyes set rather wide apart under well-arched brows, and thick, black hair cut short except for one lock which will come straggling down over his forehead.

"It isn't the face of a fanatic or a dreamer.

"It isn't the face of a practical business man who sees possible sales in sensationalism.

"It isn't the face of a humorist who would enjoy spoofing a guileless public.

"No; it is the very handsome face of a simple, sincere artist, without much sense of humor, perhaps, but with conviction and strength.

"How he can ever paint such ugly figures as he does, when he has only to look in a mirror, copy what he sees, and turn out something worth the trouble, I can't understand.