



IS THERE AN AMERICAN ART?

THREE artists have lately expressed themselves in somewhat discouraging fashion regarding the present and future of American painting. The first is Cecilia Beaux, our woman Academician, who was quoted as saying, at the recent International Art Congress in Paris, that America has no national art and must continue for many years to go to France for inspiration. The second is the English painter, C. R. W. Nevinson, who asserts that our idea of art is a well-appointed bathroom and that our "Raphael is the plumber." The third is Harry B. Lachman, native of Chicago and successful French painter, who has made, in a speech before the Chicago Business Men's Art Club, the triple-barreled statement that "American painting is not representative of Americanism"; that "American artists' self-satisfaction is holding them back artistically"; and that "it is a mistaken idea that in our smug, self-satisfied American manner we think we have an American school of art."

On all of which the *American Art News* (New York) makes the comment; "The contention of Miss Cecilia Beaux is wrong. The assertions of Harry B. Lachman are pretty much nonsense. The satirical observations of C. R. W. Nevinson are merely 'sour grapes' and not entitled to any more consideration than the sayings of a peevish boy." The *Art News* continues: "Our American school of painting does not lack in dis-

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tinctive characteristics. An American picture can be spotted as an American picture usually as far as you can see it. Often enough it can be readily identified as the work of some particular artist." The *Art News* concludes:

"We have had some immortal painters in America. We honor certain names and feel glorified in contemplation of them. These men owed almost nothing to European training, but much to the tradition of European art, which is our heritage as much as it is anybody's. Did Winslow Homer learn the principles of 'true art' abroad? Did Albert P. Ryder? Did Blakelock, did Inness, did Wyant, did Fuller, did Murphy? Was Twachtman a slavish follower of Monet, or was he an altogether 'American Impressionist'?"

"And when it comes to contemporary American painters, can anybody deny the intense Americanism of men like George Bellows, Wayman Adams, Robert Spencer, Frederick Waugh, George Luks, Arthur B. Davies, Robert Chanler, Albert Groll, Rockwell Kent, Daniel Garber, Samuel Halpert, Ernest Lawson and scores of others?"

"Why can't we be let alone with our pride in our artists and in our American school? It is a good thing for us. It is leading us to form art associations in all our cities; it is leading us to organize 'Friends of Art' to buy paintings for our schools; it is leading us to found and to haunt museums; it is leading our wealthy citizens to endow art schools and to form collections for the benefit of the public.

"In the name of Michelangelo and Vincent van Gogh, gentlemen, what is the matter with you?"