

THE 20th-CENTURY  
REVOLUTION

(Taken from Stendhal's "History of Painting in Italy" and translated into English by Francis Kloeppel.)

The world has never seen anything more novel than a body of twenty-eight million men speaking the same language and laughing at the same things. How long, in the arts, will our character lie buried under imitation? We, the greatest people that ever existed (yes, even after 1815), we imitate the tiny tribes of Greece, which altogether could scarcely number two or three million inhabitants.

When shall I see a people reared solely upon a recognition of the useful and the harmful, without talk of Jews, Greeks, Romans?

Moreover, without our being aware of it, this revolution has already begun. We think of ourselves as faithful worshippers of the ancients; but we have too much sense to accept their standards, with all the consequences, in considerations of human beauty. Here, as elsewhere, we have two beliefs and two religions. With the prodigious growth, during the last two thousand years, in the number of ideas in circulation, human heads have lost the faculty of being logical.

Women, in our society, will scarcely voice a detailed opinion on beauty; otherwise a woman of wit would be in a decidedly perplexing situation. In the museum she ~~admires~~ the statue of Meleager; and if this Meleager, which sculptors understandably regard as a perfect model of male beauty, should walk into her salon with the face he has, and exactly the mind indicated by that face, he would be clumsy, and even ridiculous.

The sentiments of well-bred persons simply are no longer the same as among the Greeks... .

Among the ancients, the great passion, after their ardor for the fatherland, was a form of love it would be ridiculous even to name; among us, at times the passion is love, and in default of love what we can find that most resembles love. I realize that our clever men, even those who have a soul, give many a moment to ambition, either public honors or the pleasures of vanity. I know too that they have few intense interests, and that rather their lives go by in an amused indifference. Then the arts decline; but from time to time public events do away with indifference.

In the midst of all this, it is the tender passions that direct taste... .

I do not believe that even the most zealous enthusiast for the ancients can

deny that love, as we experience it today... is a modern affection. It is one of the most curious and unexpected fruits of the advance in civilization.

Modern love, that beautiful plant shining from afar, like the manchineel, with the glitter of its enticing fruit, which so often conceal the deadliest poison... .

(Editor's note: manchineel - a poisonous tropical tree, having a milky juice and apple-shaped fruit.)

(This essay is taken from: Romantic Art; Arts Year-book 2.)

\*\*\*\*\*

NEW PICTURE IN LIBRARY

Our thanks to Professor Andrew Kafka, who recently donated a picture of the Hundred Great Books to the Highacres Library. It is an interesting and welcome addition to our Campus.

This picture is also a timely donation, for the Highacres Campus is again sponsoring an informal adult evening course on Great Literature, and among the 5 books tentatively selected for this year's course are two from the Great Books list, Berkley's "Principles of Human Knowledge", and Dante's "Divine Comedy".

Mr. Robert Hutchins and a group of scholars from St. John's College in Maryland selected the 100 books as a basis for their Liberal Arts course.