

Joseph Pennell's War Lithographs on Exhibition

RECORDS of the war and its activities have been made by artists in the trenches and at the front, and our human egoism finds most interesting those pictures in which a hero untwists barbed wire at the risk of inconceivable sufferings, or sits in his cave nonchalantly playing cards, with the implication to the observer that chance has become the only god he recognizes in the hideous war game he has been called upon to play.

Mr. Pennell, in the lithographs now on view at the Keppel Galleries, takes another point of view. His subjects are taken from the munition works, and he shows you the might of the machine and the comparative insignificance of man. In his brilliant little preface to the catalogue H. G. Wells discusses this phase. "Nowhere does a man dominate in all these wonderful pictures," he comments, adding: "You may argue, perhaps, that that is untrue to the essential realities; all this array of machine and workshop, all the marshaled power and purpose, has been the creation of inventor and business organizer. But are we not a little too free with that word 'creation'? Falstaff was a creation, perhaps, or the Sistine sibyls; there we have indubitably an end conceived and sought and achieved; but did these inventors and business organizers do more than heed certain unavoidable imperatives? Seeking coal they were obliged to mine in a certain way; seeking steel they had to do this and this and not that and that; seeking profit they had to obey the imperative of economy. So little did they plan their ends that most of these manufacturers speak with a kind of astonishment of the deadly use to which their works are put. They find themselves making the new war as a man might wake out of some drugged condition to find himself strangling his mother."

Apart from the social message of the munition works, their pictorial message is unmistakable. The smoky grays and salient lights, the deep mysterious shadows, the splendid rhythms of machinery in action, the strongly accented foregrounds and vaporous distances, offer an opportunity of which any artist in black and white might be envious.

Mr. Pennell has been especially successful in those subjects which ask for the translation of the incandescence of the furnaces and the blinding light that comes from white hot ingots ready for the press. And he again is especially successful in the silvery subjects wrapped in delicate tone with here and there sharp, fine accents of line. Examples of the first type of subject are "The Perambulator" in which, to quote his own note: "From beneath a fiery floor—from a fiery furnace—this monster drags the glowing ingots and carries them off to other furnaces or presses or rolling mills or hammers, and the workmen tell you as the policemen do in America, 'Mind your step; safety first,'" and "The Presses" showing the way in which the body of a shell is formed.

"From the Tops of the Furnaces" is one of the most impressive of all the subjects. The artist compares it to the scene from a top of a skyscraper with the difference that you look down here upon trains and cranes instead of little dots of men. In the foreground the barrows wheeled by men and women seem to be whirling as in a rapid dance. The "Munitions City," set upon the hills, is a beautiful example of close values and pale shapes in subtle pattern against a gray background. "Peace and War" with its shining abbey above the towers of which circles an airplane is as silvery and fresh as a Summer morning. "Five o'Clock" showing the swarming of the work people from the mills is an example of the feathery penciling in which the artist's sensitiveness of touch conveys the impression of motion and light by the slightest means and finest gradations.

The notes written by Mr. Pennell as a running accompaniment to the titles in the catalogue are not confined to the pictorial aspect of the subjects, but give amusing incidents of experience and many a comment on the spiritual effects of the war and the industrial conditions. He notices the pitiful and depressing character of most of the munition towns that are springing up all over England,

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and remarks that a little more money would have made them as decent as the workmen's dwellings in Panama. When he draws the "Altar of the War God," which is being prepared to roll more armor plate, he compares it to a cathedral, and adds that "art today is joined to science—not religion, but the effect is just as fine." Drawing a gantry, he registers a complaint that he was not allowed to draw the naval yards, and thus make his series complete; "no secrets would have been given away, but a record would have been made." Now and then he notes the criticisms made by the work-

men on his drawings. Thus, in his note to "The Bay of the Thousand Girls," he says: "One of nine or ten bays and other rooms besides, in this huge factory, the site of which, they tell you, was fields a few months ago. There was scarce a man about the place—only those setting up and adjusting machines. The women were doing everything, as I have tried to show. And one of the foremen said I showed too much. "'Now you've drawered 'em 'uggin' 'emself; now I've told 'em they wasnt to 'ug theirself, and you've gone and done 'em a-doit' it.' 'Well, they were,' said I."



"Young Girl," by Nan Watson. (In Exhibition of American Painters at the Knoedler Galleries.)

technical interpretation, as when he paints a mountain hamlet against the background of the mountainside, and gets a tapestry of good color without reaching the level of distinction. In his "Cornish Coast" the water climbs toward the background, disconcertingly, although the march of the color from green to blue is vigorous. It is in the pictures that have most definite patterns that Mr. Cook wins his triumphs. Such a delightful composition as "Snow and Rocks" shows him a true master of design, as interested in the part played by the white as in that played by the darks in his emphatic patterning. His water colors are more rewarding than his oils. He uses the medium with the brusque certainty of touch that calls out its most exhilarating quality, and he thinks easily within its clear limitations. Altogether the exhibition is one to be applauded as showing an individual talent struggling courageously with difficult problems.

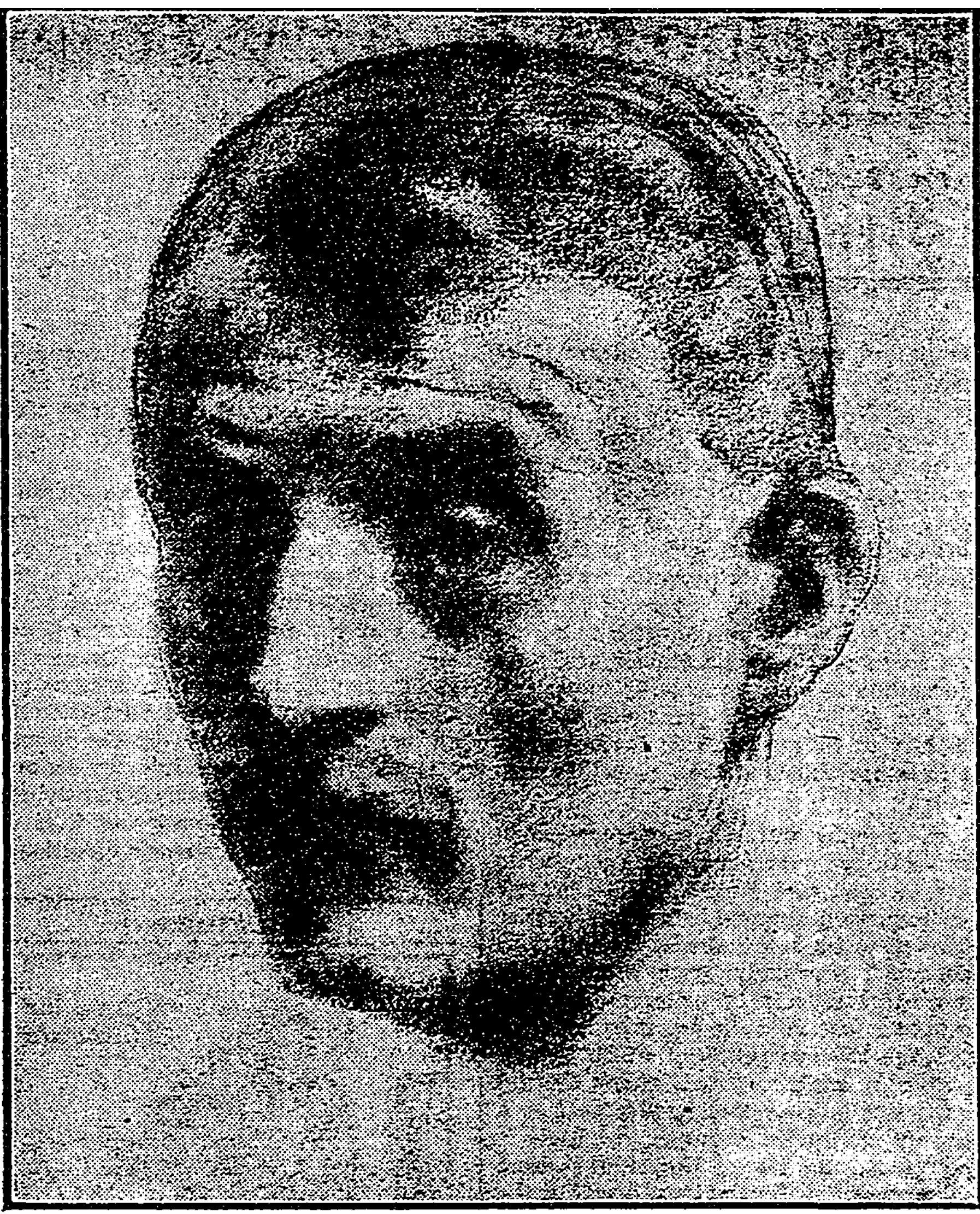
Current Exhibitions.

The friends of the portrait painters are zealous this season. The series at Mrs. Whitney's studio has attracted wide attention, and now at the Ralston Galleries an exhibition exclusively of portraits is open until March 4. Sergeant Kendall's science of design appears in his picture of Dr. Ransom S. Hooker and Maurice Molarsky is briskly alive in the ruddy portrait of R. H. Davis, Jr. Pierre Tartoue is frankly mannered in his portraits of Miss Phyllis de Young and Mrs. Sullivan. A. Muller Ury pays especial attention to the dog in his sitter's arms in his portrait of Mrs. Dilworth. There are portraits by Gustav Brock, Mme. Lenique E. de Francheville, F. Luis Mora, W. J. Whitmore, and S. J. Woolf that fairly represent the several talents. John de Costa shows his dark dancer and Sidney E. Dickinson his very interesting portrait of Giuseppe Trotta. The accent of the collection, however, is Robert David Gauley's portrait of Pedro de Cordoba. Where the artist might

this century, but there are signs that we are making ready for others. Although the Orange Gallery group fails to create an impression as vivid as might have been gained by the introduction of an artist more sharply differentiated from the rest, it is a great step forward to find in rapidly increasing numbers exhibitions so agreeable in their setting, so well framed by the rooms in which they are placed, and so peaceful in mood.

At the Knoedler Galleries is an exhibition of drawings from which the public sympathetic to this spontaneous form of artistic expression will derive great pleasure. The conscience of an artist is measured by the quality of his drawings. If he stabs to the essential of his subject and gives you what he sees with the joy of the discoverer vibrating in his casual light line, he is the real thing whatever may happen to him during the cruel researches of his elaborated work. It is interesting to see, also, how often an artist, for whom method is profoundly alluring, shows positive relief in giving himself up to the simplicity of charcoal or pencil. Kahlil Gibran, whose color washes on paper that crinkles and stiffens and forgoes part of the total effect have the look of preparedness that takes off the first keen edge of one's delight in their sensitive clever felicities, appears elsewhere with drawings as solid and quiet as those of a good student before the atelier model.

A drawing of a recumbent nude figure by Albert Sterner has passages of beau-



"Drawing of John Masefield," by Kahlil Gibran. (From photograph by G. W. Harting.)

tiful construction alternating with passages spoiled by ill-placed accents. Paul Burlin is happiest and best in the nude figure of a man where he suggests neither Davies nor Cezanne, but his competent self. Bryson Burroughs is represented by a number of studies for his paintings, in which the first clear running of the inspiration is an enlivening element. There are drawings by Peixotto and Mielzner, by James Preston, Stirling Calder, Randall Davey, Leon Kroll, Hugo Ballin and Helen Jacobs, each revealing indebtedness and original thought, all stamped by an authority as indisputable as the little red seal that sets the mind of the agitated collector at rest when he buys a masterpiece from the salesroom. That is the beauty of a drawing. There is no need to stamp it "Vente Burroughs," or "Vente Burlin." The proof is in the style, and if you are not convinced let it go. Look, for example, at the group of drawings by Carl Sprinchorn and fancy yourself deceived by an imitation of that caustic, witty, deeply initiated style—so clever as almost to seem simple, but not quite clever enough for that. The drawings about which you can be cheated you are better without. That is the message of an exhibition such as this one.

At the Daniel Gallery are paintings by Gus Mager and paintings and drawings by Rockwell Kent. Mr. Mager adds to his familiar flower and landscape subjects a study of an old woman with remarkable merits and not less astonishing defects. The character is read with sympathy, and the color is entertainingly arranged, but the local brown of the face is not in the scheme. Elsewhere Mr. Mager seems to have been coerced in the same way by a strong patch of local color. His "Dahlia's" are relieved by a bit of mahogany furniture, which is conscientiously and laboriously realized, with the result that the flowers are mahogany also, the murky brownish red neighboring them on such an overwhelming scale having drunk up all the life and vivacity of their pure hues. Cut off the mahogany and you have a beautiful flower picture; cut off the brown shadow on the old woman's face and you have a handsome piece of portraiture, plus a color composition.

Rockwell Kent's is an imagination with incomplete powers of expression. His work at its best is a noble utterance of deep emotion. At its worst it stammers and breaks painfully. He has been working in Newfoundland and these are pictures of his mental experience there. His figures are not real figures, his landscape is not real landscape, but he evolves both from the elements of reality and drives them with his personal force into

a kind of spiritual action. There is the "Newfoundland Dirge." Heroic figures in the foreground lie wrapt in deathlike sleep, the distortions and rigidities of pose those of the cadaver and not of the living. Beyond is the water, heavy and dark, and above the heavens are ominous. Everything in the composition speaks of awe and woe. It is tragedy, but not a tragedy in which you can bring yourself to believe. Still, an old fishwife's song is recalled by the stern rhythms:

"Wha'll buy my caller-herrin'?"
"You ca' it vulgar farin'!"
Wives and mither's maist despairin',
They ca' it 'lives o' men."

The dangers of the sea and the sorrows of a community of fishers turn for the artist to an epic of grief into which no joy breaks.

The School Art League.

The following account of the aims, activities and needs of the School Art League by one of its members is well worth publishing. The organization has worked quietly and steadily for the children of the public school with a result that cannot definitely be measured, but that must count in the mental equipment of the young generation. The league is designed as an organization for all interested in the training of the young to the appreciation of Fine and Applied Art, for all interested in the preservation and development of talent in gifted pupils, and in the creation of beautiful school surroundings.

The School Art League was organized in February, 1911, with John W. Alexander as its President. It is a development of the Art Committee of the Public Education Association, appointed in 1896. This committee from 1896 to 1911 collected and spent over \$11,000 in pictures and casts for the decoration of some twenty school buildings. In 1909 one gift alone of \$1,000 was expended in placing eighty-five pictures in Public School 65, Manhattan, in memory of Mrs. John L. Wilkie.

In 1909 a bronze medal for fine craftsmanship was established. This medal was designed by Victor D. Brenner, and has since been awarded semi-annually, at the close of each school term, for the best piece of work done by a member of the graduation class in each of the school workshops. These shops now number over 250, thus requiring the society to distribute 500 medals a year. A few lectures were given at the Met-

ropolitan Museum of Art in 1910. After the organization of the league the number increased, story hours for elementary pupils were begun, and a course at the Brooklyn Museum was inaugurated.

The first awards of industrial art scholarships were made in June, 1911, when four girls of the Washington Irving High School were given a year's tuition in either the New York School of Applied Design for Women or the New York School of Fine and Applied Art. The courses followed are either costume illustration or commercial design. Four scholarships have been similarly awarded each January and June since. The Scholarship Committee, under the Chairmanship of Mrs. Laurent Oppenheim, has raised special funds for this work, including an endowment of \$2,500, which assures one scholarship in perpetuity. Some of these scholarship winners are earning very substantial incomes.

In 1914 the league engaged a visiting teacher, or docent, who speaks in an elementary school every day, and then takes a group of children to visit either the Metropolitan or the Brooklyn Museum.

To stimulate interest in drawing in the high schools during the first two years a medal was offered in 1915 in each of the twenty-four high schools by John W. Alexander. This medal, designed by John Flanagan, has since been endowed as a memorial to the league's first President.

Sunday story hours at the Metropolitan Museum for children and parents were tried as an experiment in the Autumn of 1915, and proved so successful that in the Spring of 1916 it was found necessary to use the large lecture hall, seating 500 persons.

The league now gives a Spring and a Fall course of lectures for its members and its junior members, (high school pupils, who pay nominal dues of 10 cents a year.) It secures free admission for its junior members to all art exhibitions in the Fine Arts Building. It gives many simple illustrated talks on Saturdays to elementary pupils in the art museums, and employs its docent to visit schools and to take classes through the museum galleries every school day. It gives a number of popular Sunday talks to parents and children in the auditorium of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Nearly 500 bronze medals are given each year in the elementary school workshops; forty-eight bronze medals are similarly given in the city high schools; an art trophy is maintained and contested for twice each year by advanced pupils, and four scholarships are awarded every six months to talented graduates of the high schools, whose fees are thus paid for a year in an industrial art school.

Since the death of Mr. Alexander the work of the School Art League has been carried forward by Dr. James P. Haney, Director of Art in the city high schools, who, since the foundation of the society, has acted as Chairman of the Executive Committee.

The records show that the activities of the School Art League during 1915-16 reached a total of 41,129 persons. The income for 1915-16 was \$3,764.45. Expenses were \$3,463.42. The society has invested funds of \$4,100. The budget for the coming year is \$3,800, including the salary of the docent.

A fund of \$5,000 is needed to endow the Fine Craftsmanship Medal. A fund of \$3,000 is needed to continue the services of the docent in the elementary schools for an additional three years. A carefree fund of \$200 a year is needed to pay expenses of children who come to the museums from a distance. Funds are needed for an Industrial Art Scholarship to be offered in each high school in New York City.

The Boston Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin.

A portrait of a man by Copley has been bequeathed to the Boston Museum by Mr. Morrill Wyman. An article in the Bulletin says: "Tradition identifies the subject as Mr. Rogers of Salem, and extensive investigation has made this identification no more definite. The portrait bears so close a resemblance to the miniature by Copley presented to the Museum in 1906 by Mrs. E. M. Staigg that it seems certain that both are portraits of the same individual. Unfortunately there was not even a traditional identification of the subject of the miniature. Mr. Rogers, if it is he, seems to have been a happy and hearty bon vivant. He is represented seated by a table, his left arm over the back of the chair, his