



ARTS & DECORATION

The Foremost Magazine of the Fine and Industrial Arts

ARCHITECTURE SCULPTURE MUSIC PAINTING
DRAMA INTERIOR DECORATION



THIRTY-FIVE CENTS A COPY

NEW YORK, JANUARY 20, 1920

THE JOSEPH A. JUDD PUBLISHING COMPANY
INCORPORATED

Art in the New Books

East is West

TWENTY DRAWINGS by KAHILIL GIBRAN. With an introductory essay by Alice Raphael. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

"I KNOW of no one else in whom drawing and poetry are so linked together as to make him a new Blake." It was the great Rodin himself who paid this tribute to the art of the Syrian-American Kahlil Gibran. Mr. Gibran, as Miss Raphael suggests in her reverent introduction to the present handsome volume of drawings, blends successfully the art of the poet and the painter.



"UPLIFTED."

In the technique of the West, he gives us something of the mystic poetry of the East. He is a modern in the sense that he attempts to depict, in the terms of spiritual beauty, the struggle between the old and the new. He attempts to synthesize the Classical and the Romantic spirit in art. To follow the account of Miss Raphael: he has surrendered his position as a leader in the world of the Near East in order to bring the tradition and the genius of the Arabic people to the attention of our eclectic and cosmopolitan world.

"It is at this dividing line of East and West, of the symbolist and the ideationist, that the work of Kahlil Gibran presents itself as an arresting type in our conception of painting. He has accepted both the tradition of form and the inner meaning of the idea, and he exhibits both a new type of work and another method of approach to fundamental truths.

"The qualities of the East and the West are blended in him with a singular felicity of expression, so that while he is the symbolist in the true sense of the word, he is not affixed to traditional expression, as he would be if he were creating in the manner of the East; and though he narrates a story as definitely as any pre-Raphaelite, it is without any fanfare of historical circumstances or any of the accompaniment of symbolic accessories. In his art there is no conflict whether the idea shall prevail over the emotion or whether emotion shall sway the thought, because both are so equally established that we are not conscious of one or the other as dominant. They co-exist in harmony and the result is an expression of sheer beauty in which thought and feeling are equally blended."

The drawings presented in the present

volume are mostly in wash and at times are strongly suggestive of the drawings in water-color by Gibran's master, Auguste Rodin. At times also there is obvious the influence of the great Leonardo and Michelangelo. His studies of movement are akin to those of the latter genius. In fact, one feels in gazing upon these imaginative visions of the twentieth century Gibran that the romantic masters of Occidental art have perhaps been a deeper influence upon his mind than any of the philosophies of the East. Of these influences none has been more intense than the art and the imagination of the Rodin. The very titles—"Towards the Infinite," "The Greater Self," "Innermost" and "The Great Aloneness" convey the essentially mystic and romantic color of Mr. Gibran's vision. Miss Raphael, in her introduction, ventures in the coming renaiss-



"VEILED FACE."

sance of the arts in America, "Gibran will occupy a similar position to that of Giotto and Ghirlandaio in relation to the Italian Golden Age. . . . To Gibran, human life is divine. The body reflects and represents the spirit, and art arises out of the interplay between the inner and the outer world."

The Child in Art

FLORA: A Book of Drawings with Illustrative Poems by WALTER DE LA MARE. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company.

NOW that the mystery of Daisy Ashford has been cleared up, and Miss Ashford herself, a charming though mature Miss Ashford, has appeared in person before a London audience, let us turn our attention to this new child of art, Pamela Bianco. Little Miss Bianco, we read, is twelve. Her remarkable talent for decorative imageray and poetic invention drew crowds last spring to the Leicester Galleries in London, and aroused the interest of the most fastidious critics. Now Pamela's book of drawings reproduces for us the best examples of her art and is illustrated in just the right spirit by the exquisite poems of Walter de la Mare. It has been a most sagacious and happy selection of an "illustrator," and makes this book by the little sister of Aubrey Beardsley a thing to possess and to cherish.

Let us not be unfair to Pamela by comparing her work too closely to that of nine-year-old

Miss Ashford. There is a vast difference. Pamela at 12 has lost much of the naïveté of Daisy. She is a most sophisticated child. She is a very wise child. That economy of means, that deft handling of the pen, that strength and power and subtlety of line—all indicate the precocious prodigy rather than the unadulterated exuberance of the child mind as it expresses itself in "The Young Visitors," or the drawings of Romano Dazzi. No less an authority than the great John Sargent, Miss Bianco's publishers confide, has said that these drawings reveal as certain a genius as that shown in the first sonata of Beethoven, written when he was eleven years of age. However, we have not quite made up our mind that this little volume is "worthy of a place beside Botticelli, Pietro della Francesca, Giotto and some few other examples of primitive inspiration," as the publishers suggest. But it is not absolutely necessary to drag in the names of the great ones to appreciate this charming, precious and precocious talent.

It is a curious phase of the art and writing of children, which happily we are coming more and more to delight in and appreciate,



"BABES IN THE WOODS."

that it is not as "original" as it appears on the surface. It is not primitive, not naïf, not crude—at least those examples that are put forth for the public. Mr. Stieglitz, Mr. Coady, the Bureau of Educational Experiments, and a number of others, have exhibited in this country interesting collections of drawings and paintings by children. These drawings are of quite a different character from Pamela's. One cannot admit that they were less interesting. But the interest they aroused was a different interest—rather, one is inclined to think, a more legitimate interest in an art that is more truly an expression of the child mind.

Romano Dazzi's drawings were "derived" primarily from the hectic unnatural world of the "movies." Daisy Ashford's fiction—in no derogatory sense—was also derived. Daisy, we are almost certain, acquired at an early age the dreadful vice of reading fiction and beautifully and charmingly distorted it in her reflection of it. Pamela Bianco is more mysterious. She reflects the pre-Raphaelites. In some drawings the technique of Beardsley is skilfully adapted. Had she studied the

(Continued on page 198)