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## Aberdeen Press and Journal

20 Broad Street, Aberdeen.

23 APR 1924

Cutting from issue dated

*Royal Scottish Academy* 1924

### Portraits of Aberdeen Artist.

None of the portraits are very thrilling among the most notable are Mr Fiddes Watt's "Lord Ashmore" and "Portrait of a Gentleman," mentioned in our previous article of last Friday. They do not quite hit it off in the interplay of fresh colour tones, but they are marked, as are all his character studies, by sound modeling and interpretative characterisation. The last-mentioned quality is one that belongs essentially to another Aberdeen artist, Mr John M. Aiken, who still resides in his native city, unlike Mr Watt, who prefers "Auld Reekie" for his home.

Three of Mr Aiken's portraits are hung on the line, and of the trio the simplest yet most complete, "Elaine," has a prominent place in the principal gallery. It is the three-quarter length portrait of a lady in a robe of orange velvet, with black bobbed hair and dark eyes and eye-

brows—a telling and very attractive work. The half-length canvas of the Rev. Dr Alexander Spence is a dignified representation of the emeritus-minister of Udney, who is painted in the St Andrews D.D. robes. This portrait, it may be recalled, was the gift of the Udney parishioners on Dr Spence's retirement after forty-seven years' service in the Parish Church. Of Dr Kelly's portrait by Mr Aiken, it is unnecessary to say more than that it is a striking example of character drawing. The scheme is in grey with a luminous dark background.

Mr Philpot's "Sir Ludovic Grant" is redeemed from the commonplace by its almost Fraus Hals-like manipulation in the blacks and greys of the dress. Mr de Lazlo's "Mrs Blackie" is one of the most elegant portraits on view. Lavery has caught the very poetry of action in the study of Pavlova dancing, and Mr W. O. Hutchison has submitted a charming rendering of a child in white in his "Mary Heather."

### Robots in Art.

A significant sign of the times is shown in the admission of Mr William Roberts' "Dock Gates" and Mr Claud Chambers' "Pastoral Symphony." Both pictures are painted in defiance of all academic routine and convention, and have exaggerated a Ganguinesque scheme of humorous intent into almost grotesque violence and crudeness. Mr Roberts has a mordant wit and capacity for broad, Dickensian characterisation that gives a certain curious rhythm and hint of disquieting power to his company of Robots at their dock work. These figures of his, fashioned not of flesh and bone, but of brilliantly coloured metal tubing, may be new to those still unfamiliar with modern tendencies, but the bulk of the people informed in art have known that for these four years past cubism and futurism have been dead, and were best forgotten. "Dock Gates" is certainly brushed over with mordant humour, and Mr Chambers' grotesque "Pastoral Symphony" is even funnier. The tall lamp-post headed man with the portfolio, the country lads, the excited geese, the cow that mows to be milked on the spot, the apples, the coiled serpent, and the rest of the piled-up paraphernalia constitute a pseudo-rustic scene that arouses the risible faculties.

### The Sculpture.

Reference has already been made to Dr Macgillivray's contributions to the sculpture section. Of the more important works there—a few are attractively placed in the balcony also—the most accomplished in its design and technique is Professor Derwent Wood's "Abundance," which stands out graciously and clearly in the centre of the hall opposite the staircase. There is a simplicity and beautiful expressiveness in Mr Alfred Gilbert's "Charity," with the naked child held against the broad masses of the sweeping garments of the matronly draped figure. There is something coldly intellectual in the poise of the "Eton Statue" of Sir Bertram Mackennal, in which a youth steps out with outstretched arms to offer himself unto death in his country's service. On the other hand, vitality, artistry, and charming naïveté are all unforcedly expressed in Mr Benno Schotz's "Little Betty," which has secured an instinctive beauty not always possessed by the work of this talented young sculptor.

### Aquarelle and Prints.

The water-colours and black and white rooms also deserve a visit were it only for the large number of etchings by local artists in the latter and the fine drawings of Mr Edwin Alexander in the former. His "Bullfinch" on a berried sloe branch is irresistible, while he has expressed a wealth of character in "The Crofter's Hens." The former's

irresistible, while he has expressed a wealth of character in "The Crofter's Hens." The farmer's hens may be youthful, spry, and not too fat; the crofter has too often—through the vicissitudes of hatching and the small number of his flock—to retain obese old layers, which, after they have exhausted themselves in egg output, are fit only for the Sunday dinner. Miss Katharine Cameron is steadily advancing in her use of the etching needle, Mr Ogilvy Reid continues to show a propensity for North, and particularly rustic scenes, and Mr. Muirhead Bone and his eidetic follower, Mr Rushbury, show that they have not exhausted the possibilities of black and white, either in subject or in treatment.

N. T.