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*Malik 'Ambar**School of Jahangir*

Mughal Painting

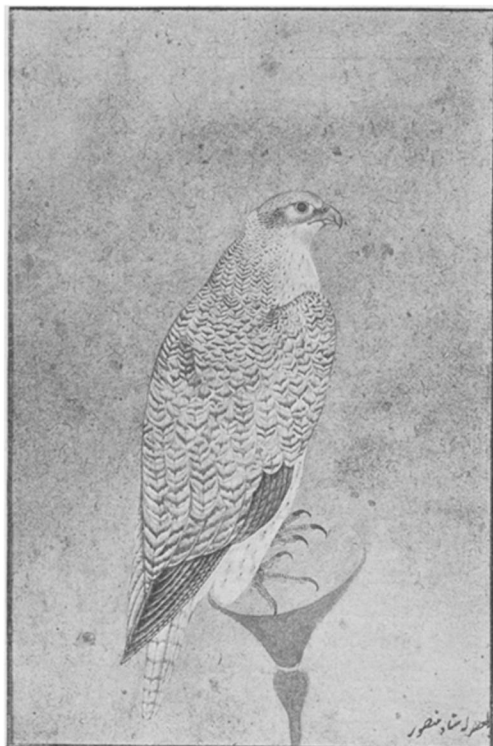
(*Akbar and Jahangir*)

MUGHAL* PAINTING owes its existence entirely to the patronage of the "Great Moguls" who held their court at Delhi and Agra. The dates of these emperors are as follows: Akbar, 1556-1605; Jahangir, 1605-1628; Shah Jahan, 1628-1658; Aurangzib, 1658-1707; Bahadur Shah, 1707-1712; Muhammad Shah, 1719-1748. The painting covers a period of about a hundred and fifty years, approximately from 1580-1730 A. D., attaining its greatest perfection about 1620. It is fairly easy to classify the individual paintings as belonging to the "school" of one or other of these emperors, though naturally there are numerous individual painters whose work covers more than one reign. The names of many of the painters are known. The Museum possesses many fine examples from the Golubew Collection, supplemented by others, chiefly from the Ross Collection and the Coomaraswamy Collection, also presented by Dr. Denman W. Ross.

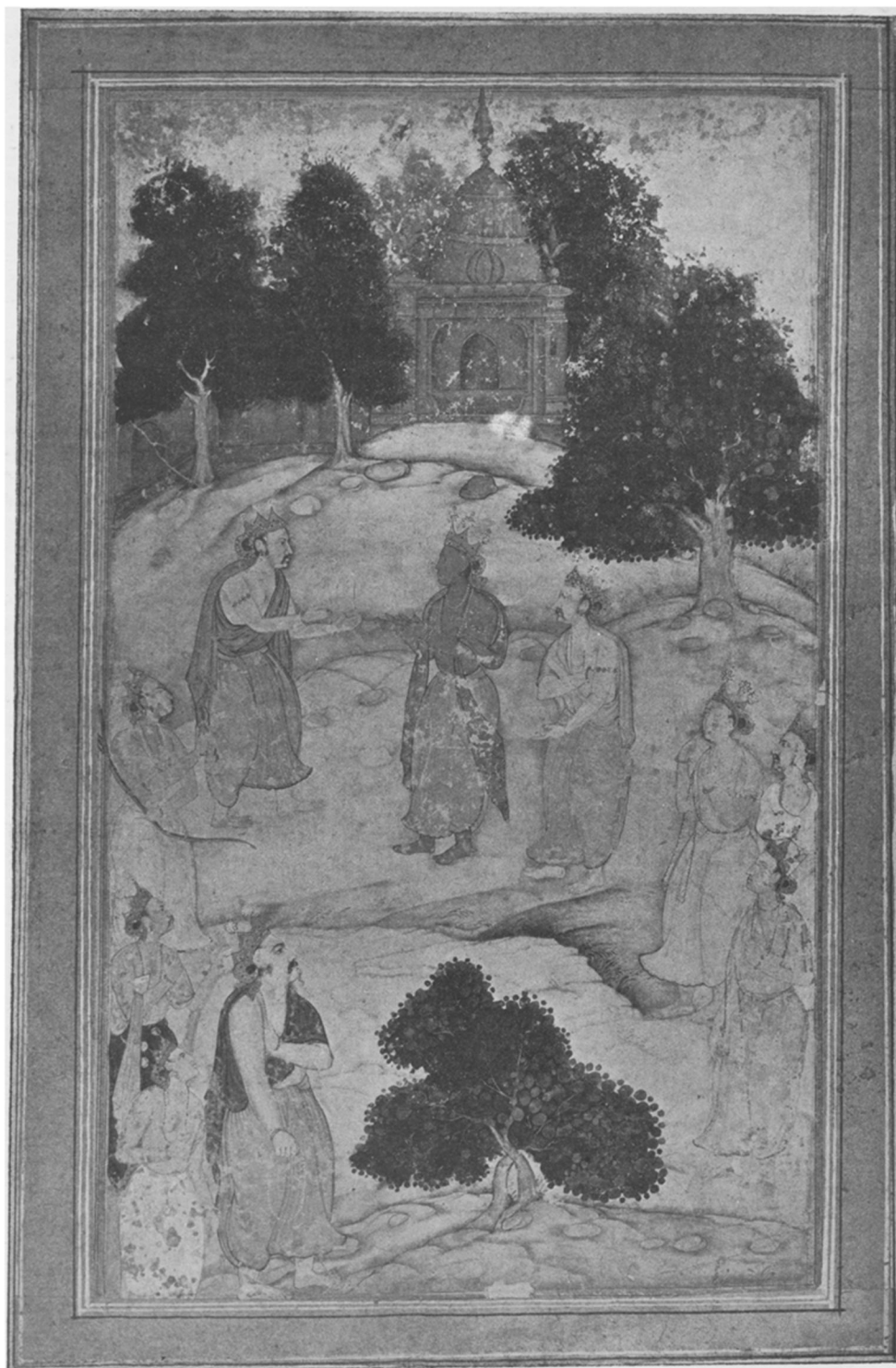
Mughal painting forms a dramatic episode in the history of Indian art, remote, it is true, from the expression of Hindu thought, and yet distinctively Indian. Its aims and standpoint are secular and realistic: it is interested in passing events, and most typically in the exact delineation of individual

character in the portraiture of men and animals. It is dramatic rather than static, aristocratic more than universal, and academic rather than vocational. It is full of curiosity and observation and ready to assimilate. Indirectly through European influence it is interested in modelling and chiaroscuro. The names of the painters afford material for attribution and discussion. In all these respects it is distinguished from Rajput painting, the traditional Hindu art of Rajputana and the Panjab Himalayas, which is an art of ideas and of pure emotion, religious and popular. Mughal painting is much more nearly related in its aims to European Renaissance art than to Asiatic art as a whole, or even to the pre-Renaissance art of Europe, and it is easy to see that this is why it has attracted until lately the almost exclusive attention of European collectors. It is very easy to understand and admire.

Mughal painting has been generally described as "Indo-Persian," or even in many cases as Persian. It possesses, however, its own cycle of development and decline, and exhibits an individuality which precludes us from treating it as a mere appendage to any other art. It attains, moreover, its greatest virility at a time when Persian art is already effeminate and ingenious. It should be observed, too, that a majority — about three-fourths — of Mughal painters are Hindus, as their means indicate, and even of those who were Musalmans by no means all were foreigners. It is, however, frankly an eclectic art, in which the principal

*Falcon**Ustad Mansur, School of Jahangir*

*Popular spelling, "Mogul."



Scene from the Mahabharata

School of Akbar



Jahangir About 1615-1620

elements are indigenous Indian, Persian, and European, and indirectly Chinese, united by the common character of Indian Mughal psychology. It differs most obviously from Persian in that the latter is essentially an art of book illustration (though this is also largely true of Mughal painting under Akbar), while the former produces typically portfolio paintings, which are definitely pictures rather than illuminations, and though associated with calligraphy (which the Indian Mughals continued to rank with painting as a fine art), remain organically independent. The traditional themes of Persian art are likewise more or less neglected in favor of contemporary events. In this connection it is instructive to remark the attitude of Prince Daniyal, Akbar's son, who is represented in the *Suz-u-Gudaz* of Nau'i as very

tired of the "old wearisome tales of Laila and Majnun, the moth and the nightingale," and as saying to the court poet (whom he commissioned to relate the tragic story of a Hindu girl who became a "suttee"), "If we read at all, let it be what we have seen and heard ourselves."

To a certain extent also we find purely Hindu themes adopted by Mughal painters, especially in the later period; but such themes are treated no longer from the standpoint of ideas, but as material for picturesque and romantic representation. There may be exceptions to this, however, in certain volumes illustrated for Akbar, whose interest in Hindu thought was real and serious.

The development of Mughal painting is really due to Akbar and Jahangir. The former possessed a library of 24 000 MSS., many of which were illustrated, and his biographer, Abu-l-Fazl, records him as saying (with special reference to the orthodox Musalman prejudice against the representation of living things):

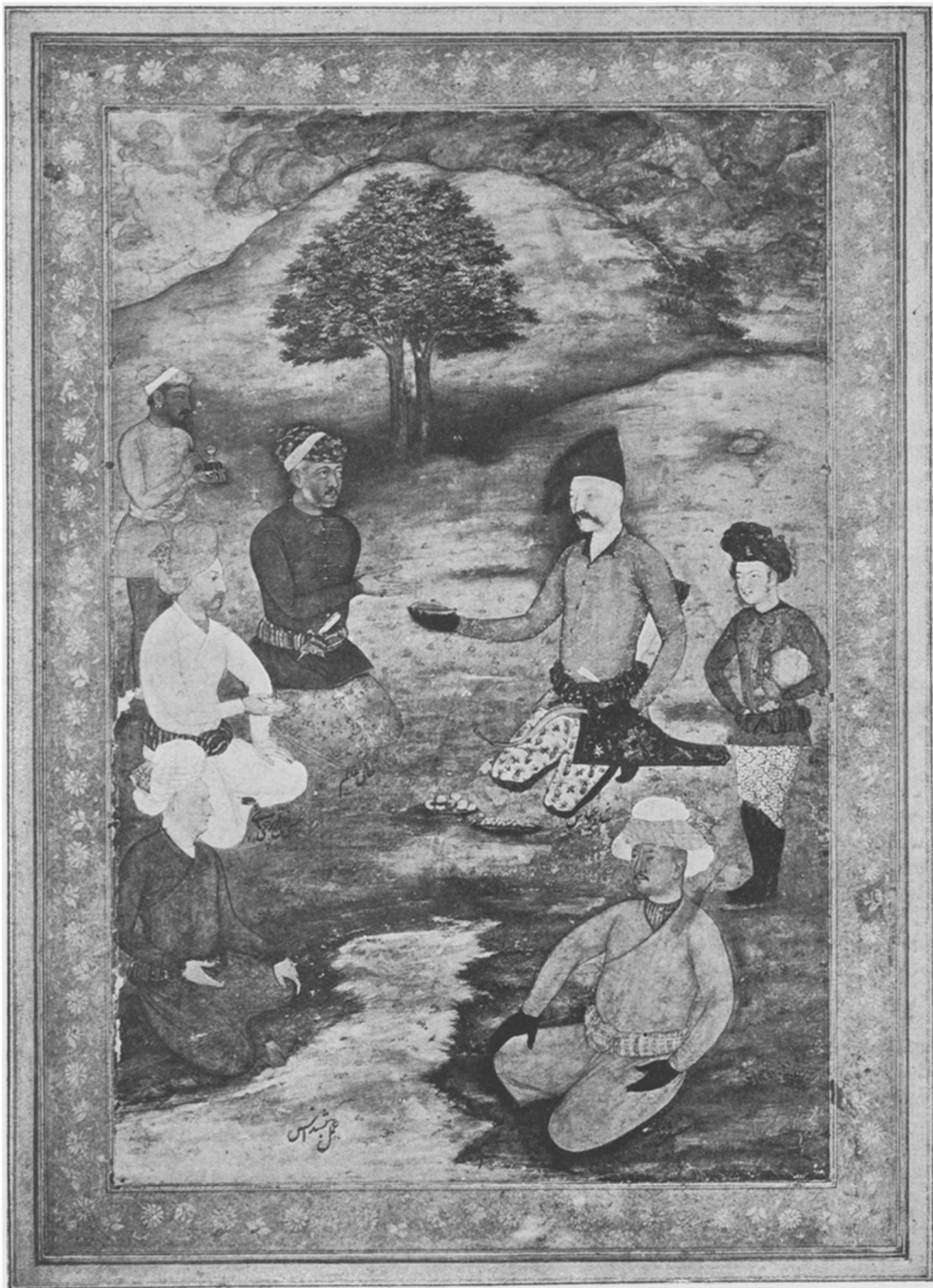
"There are many that hate painting, but such men I dislike. It appears to me as if a painter had quite peculiar means of recognizing God, for a painter, in sketching anything that has life, and in devising the limbs one after another, must come to feel that he cannot bestow a soul upon his work, and is thus forced to thank God, the giver of life, and will thus increase his wisdom."

Abu-l-Fazl adds that Akbar had taken the greatest interest in painting from his earliest youth, regarding it both as a means of study and an amusement. "The works of all painters," he says



The Dying Man

School of Jahangir



Shah 'Abbas and Khan 'Alam

Bishndas, School of Jahangir

— employed, that is, in the court *ateliers* — “are weekly laid before His Majesty by the *daroghas* and clerks: he then confers rewards according to excellence of workmanship, or increases the monthly salaries. Much progress was made in the commodities required by painters. . . . His Majesty himself sat for his likeness and also ordered the likenesses to be taken of all the grantees of the realm.” Abu-l-Fazl gives a list of painters celebrated at Akbar’s court, the most famous being Mir Sayyid ‘Ali of Tabriz, Khwaja ‘Abdu-s-Samad, Daswanth, and Basawan. Ustad Mansur was also at work in the time of Akbar.

The Museum possesses several good examples of the Akbar period. Amongst the most important of these are two pictures of the Birth of a Prince,* zenana interiors at Fathpur Sikri (Akbarabad), crowded with figures of women and exquisite in color and detail; a splendid “portrait” of Maulvi Rumi; and a fine page from a *Shah Nama*, showing Bahram killing two lions. Besides these there are three complete leaves of a Hindi MS. — the *Rasikapriya* of Kesava Das — as well as eighteen detached pictures from the same MS., which are in a characteristic Mughal style of about 1600 A. D., notwithstanding their purely Hindu subject-matter; and this also applies to a fine illustration of an episode from the *Mahabharata*, where Krishna is shown acting as mediator between the Kauravas and Pandavas. There are also some interesting drawings of camels and some pictures based on or copied from European originals (paintings or engravings), of which a good many seem to have reached the libraries of the Mughal emperors. In the best works of this period the influence of the school of Bihzad is still conspicuous,† while in many others the level of accomplishment is not remarkable; we must regard the patronage of Akbar as making possible rather than as actually creating what is best in characteristically Indian Mughal art, and this is especially true of the portraiture.

It is under Jahangir that Mughal painting attains its greatest perfection. Jahangir constantly refers to the court painters in his *Memoirs*,‡ and mentions the valuable presents and the honors which he bestowed upon them. The Museum collection is rich in works of this period, and two of these pictures are very possibly amongst those that are specifically mentioned by Jahangir himself.

Two of Jahangir’s painters are specially praised. One of these, Abu-l-Hasan, who received the title of Nadiru-z-Zaman, according to Jahangir, had “no rival or equal,” and he was the recipient of endless favors. His father, Aqa Riza’i of Herat, had entered Jahangir’s service while the latter was still a prince, but the son was far better than the father. It is very possible that this Abu-l-Hasan,

who was a “khanazad” of Jahangir’s court, was one of the two or more khanazads who, according to what remains of the signature, collaborated in producing the splendid picture, the Darbar of Akbar, in the Museum collection,* a work of equal historical and artistic importance. In this picture there are sixty-seven figures, all portraits (amongst others, Akbar, Jahangir, — as Prince Salim, — Jahangir’s grandsons, and Mahabat Khan); in many cases the names of the subjects are inscribed, and these can be identified as prominent officials and noblemen of Jahangir’s court. A picture of this kind is based on original sketches, — often by many different hands, — and the final work itself may be, as in this case, a product of collaboration. In this connection Jahangir makes the following claim to connoisseurship: “If there be a picture containing many portraits, and each face be the work of a different master, I can discover which face is the work of each of them.” It should be noted that the picture, although ostensibly historical, and actually reliable as far as the individual portraits are concerned, contains many anachronisms, of which the most evident appear in the fact that Jahangir’s grandsons were not born until at least ten years after Akbar’s death, and that the courtiers are Jahangir’s men rather than Akbar’s. Many other Mughal paintings exhibit similar composite groupings.

*Handbook, page 226, wrongly described as Jahangir, as also in many of the published accounts; correctly, however, by Schultz, *Die persische-islamische Miniaturenmalerei*, Pl. 193.



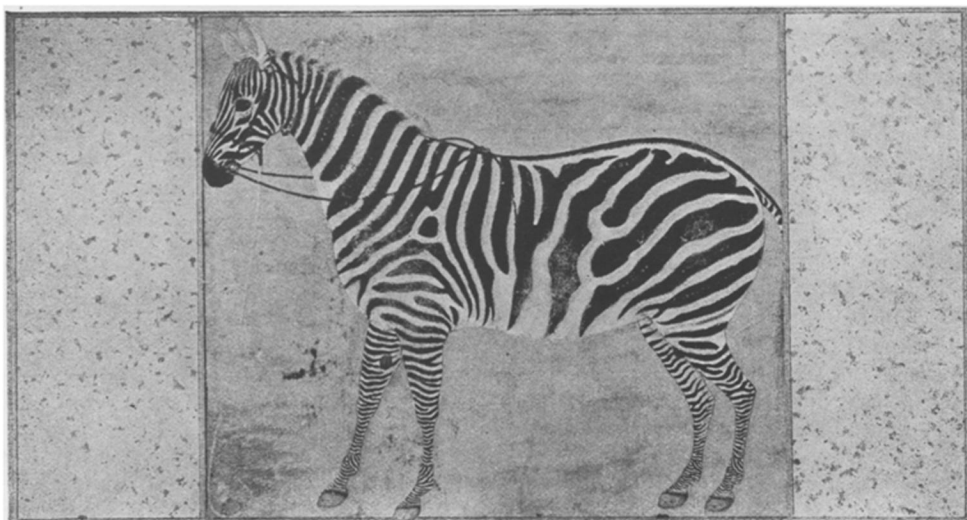
Raja Man Singh

School of Jahangir

*The princes Salim and Murad were born at Fathpur Sikri in 1569 and 1570.

†The term Indo-Persian, if used at all, should be restricted to works of the school of Akbar.

‡*Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, translated by Rogers and Beveridge.



Zebra

Attributed to Ustad Mansur, School of Jahangir

Closely related to this picture is an uncolored drawing, perhaps by Raja Manohar Singh, which represents apparently the reconciliation of Akbar with Prince Salim (afterwards Jahangir) and the investiture of the prince with the sword of Humayun.*

It seems that about 1620 Jahangir must have had painted for himself a series of court scenes in which he had been a prominent figure. In his *Memoirs* he mentions one such by Abu-l-Hasan, representing his accession, and this was done as a frontispiece to a MS. of the *Jahangir-Nama*.

The second of the two painters whom Jahangir names as "having no third," is Ustad Mansur, who received the title of Nadiru-l-Asr, and in the art of drawing "was unique in his generation." Mansur is well known to modern students as a wonderful painter of animals. The Museum possesses a signed picture of a falcon, which is possibly the very one referred to by Jahangir in the *Memoirs* for the fourteenth year of his reign (1619 A. D.): "What can I write of the beauty and color of this falcon?" he says. "There were many beautiful black markings on each wing and back and sides. As it was something out of the common, I ordered Ustad Mansur, who has the title of Nadiru-l-Asr (wonder of the age), to paint and preserve its likeness." Paintings of a zebra and a ram in the Museum collection, although unsigned, are probably by the same artist.

A third painter praised by Jahangir has the Hindu name of Bishndas (Vishnu Das), and a signed work in the Museum collection,—representing Shah 'Abbas I of Persia receiving from Khan 'Alam, Jahangir's ambassador, a crystal cup, which was sent to him with other gifts in 1617,—is probably

*It is like a drawing by Raja Manohar Singh in the India Office, London (reproduced but wrongly dated in my *Indian Drawings, I*), the inscription on which identifies the *mis-en-scène* as the Divan-i-Khas at Akbarabad. This is not, however, the building with the throne supported by a circular single capital, which is traditionally called the Divan-i-Khas.

one of the pictures referred to in the "Memoirs," as follows:

"At the time when I sent Khan 'Alam to Persia I had sent with him a painter of the name of Bishndas, who was unequalled in his age for taking likenesses, to take the portraits of the Shah and the chief men of his State, and bring them. He had drawn the likenesses of most of them, and especially that of my brother the Shah, exceedingly well."

In our picture, which is signed by Bishndas, Khan 'Alam is attended by a servant bearing his *hukka*, and in this connection it is interesting to note that Jahangir mentions that his ambassador was "without control in continual smoking of tobacco," and notwithstanding that he himself and also the Shah of Persia had endeavored to suppress tobacco smoking on account of the "mischief arising from it," Khan 'Alam received from the Shah a special dispensation permitting him to smoke as much as he liked.

Of other paintings of the Jahangir period in the Museum collection, the magnificent portrait of Malik 'Ambar, the Abyssinian leader of the Marathas in many successful conflicts with Jahangir's forces, is especially noteworthy. This portrait has immense vitality, and reveals a man of forceful and determined character, if we may judge by the forward thrust of the whole figure, the curious hooked nose, and the pursed-up lips. In very much the same style are the portraits of a very stout nobleman leaning on a copper staff—almost certainly Raja Man Singh of Jaipur, a prominent figure at the Courts of Akbar and Jahangir, and a close friend of the former, though called by Jahangir "one of the old wolves and hypocrites of this State,"—and the portrait of a falconer, both in the Museum collection. Strongly contrasted with these two is a very sensitive and refined uncolored drawing of a Seated Maulvi, very grand and dignified in manner,

notwithstanding the scale is minute and the detail almost incredibly delicate. There is also an excellent small Head of Jahangir. Beside these there is the very important drawing of a Dying Man, the original sketch for a picture now in the Bodleian, Oxford, a work truly remarkable for its relentless realism and passionate intensity, and perhaps the finest Mughal painting extant.*

In the time of Shah Jahan Mughal painting is already overripe; it begins to lose its grip on actuality and becomes an art of flattery, luxurious and effeminate, rather than vigorous and splendid. Under Aurangzib it has become already conventional in the sense that it uses long accepted and even hackneyed formulæ, with less reliance on individual research and direct vision. Nevertheless there are individual works even from the end of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth which are admirable productions, and almost equal to many of the earlier creations. One of the best of these in the Museum collection is an equestrian portrait of Nawab Shuja' al-Mulk Husam al-Daulah 'Ali Viridi Khan Bahadur Mahabat Jang, governor of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa, who died A. D. 1756. But Mughal art is really finished by the middle of the eighteenth century, and all that remains of it now is the Delhi trade in ivory miniatures, the productions of which, for the student of art, are entirely negligible, though they satisfy the somewhat romantic taste of the tourist. A. K. C.

Print Collector's Quarterly

Discontinuance for the Duration of the War

ON January 2 the following notice was sent to all the subscribers to the *Print Collector's Quarterly*:

"In view of the claims of the times upon institutions and individuals alike, the Museum has reluctantly decided to suspend the publication of the *Quarterly* for the duration of the war. The December number just issued will be followed by a full index of the entire series. Notice regarding subscriptions will in due course be given by the publishers, Houghton Mifflin Company.

"The Museum acknowledges with satisfaction the support which the *Quarterly* has received among lovers of the art of engraving in this country and abroad, and hopes at a happier moment to renew the service which the *Quarterly* has rendered for the past seven years."

This announcement needs no comment other than that afforded by the events of every day. Many friends in Europe and America have already expressed their regret at the suspension of the *Quarterly* and their appreciation of its value to students of the art of engraving. The field occupied by the *Quarterly* has been represented by no other publication in English, and will demand cultivation again upon the return of peace. In this labor the Museum hopes to perform its due share.

*Coomaraswamy, *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, Fig. 169.

Museum Ideals*

AT a moment whose overshadowing duty is to destroy, a purely constructive book like the volume just issued by the Museum seems a birth out of due time. How has the writer been able to pursue his placid themes and how can readers of the present be expected to follow him? In 1914 the book was nearly completed, and it has now been brought to an end, not without difficulty, to take its place upon library shelves until, and if, a peace ensues that will give relief from wars and rumors of them.

Studies purposely undertaken with deliberation in order to touch upon the wider bearings of a narrow field will hardly appeal to any single reader from cover to cover. The inquiries with which the book begins and on which it is based (*The Nature and Place of Fine Art, Popular Education in Fine Art*) would in a time of quiet have interest for most thoughtful people. As man is a half being completed by woman, so the artist is a half being completed by the true beholder, the critic in the modern French sense, he who sifts out (*κρίνω*, to separate; *κριτικός*, one able to discern) the intention of a work of art from our blunders over it and blindnesses to it. An inference from this view assigns museums of art primarily to a new category among institutions of the humanities—that of foundations for culture instead of foundations for education (*The Ideal of Culture*). A further corollary places historical and technical students of art among dilettanti, and the mass of those who "know what they like" among connoisseurs in the making. Discussions occupying most of the book relate to museum growth, to a new type of museum architecture based on the clerestory instead of the customary skylights and windows (*The Ideals of Diagonal Lighting and Radial Expansion*), to new devices for gallery installation and instruction (*The Ideals of Restful Inspection, of Official Companionship and the Interpretative Catalogue*), to the expansion of museum activities, and to a possible future metamorphosis of museums. In these pages there is meat only for the comparatively small number of persons who are responsible for existing museums or engaged in founding new ones. The final section, that on government, contains a suggestion for current politics drawn from the field of institutional management (*The Ideal of Composite Boards*). All corporate life, governmental as well as social, demands a return to the exact text of the charter of our national liberty. In declaring men created equal, Jefferson denied all claims to distinction derived from a life antedating ours. No rights are divine: all are human. The century after Jefferson misapplied to this world the equality he had asserted beyond it. His doctrine—that there are no valid distinctions

*"Museum Ideals of Purpose and Method." Benjamin Ives Gilman. Printed by order of the Trustees of the Museum at the Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1918. Octavo, pages XXII, 434, with 99 illustrations. Price, \$3.00 postpaid. On sale at the Museum and by Houghton Mifflin Company, 4 Park Street, Boston.