

ADVENTURES IN THE ARTS

should, for the benefit of you as reader, interpose here a little information from the mind of Francis Picabia, who was until the war conspicuous among the cubists, upon the subject of dada-ism.

"Dada smells of nothing, nothing, nothing.

It is like your hopes: nothing.

Like your paradise: nothing.

Like your idols: nothing.

Like your politicians: nothing.

Like your heroes: nothing.

Like your artists: nothing.

Like your religions: nothing."

A litany like this coming from one of the most notable dada-ists of the day, is too edifying for proper expression. It is like a window opened upon a wide cool place where all parts of one's exhausted being may receive the kind of air that is imperative to it. For the present, we may say, a special part of one's being which needs the most and the freshest air is that chamber in the brain where art takes hold and flourishes like a bed of fungus in the dark.

What is the use, then, of knowing anything about art until we know precisely what it is? If it is such an orchidaceous rarity as the world of worshippers would have us believe, then we know it must be the parasitic equivalent of our existence feeding upon the health of other functions and sensibilities in ourselves. The question comes why worship what we are not familiar with? The war has taught us that idolatry is a past virtue and can have no