

INTRODUCTION

a feast. We have a fare that needs no metaphysical sauce (such as must transform the product of the Critic). Here is good food. Go to it and eat. The asides of a Baudelaire, a Goethe, a Da Vinci outweigh a thousand tomes of the professional critics.

I know of no American book like this one by Marsden Hartley. I do not believe American painting heretofore capable of so vital a response and of so athletic an appraisal. Albert Ryder barricaded himself from the world's intrusion. The American world was not intelligent enough in his days to touch him to an activer response. And Ryder, partaking of its feebleness, from his devotion to the pure subjective note became too exhausted for aught else. As a world we have advanced. We have a fully functioning Criticism . . . swarms and schools of makers of the sonorous complacencies of Judgment. We have an integral body of creative-minded men and women interposing itself with valiance upon the antithesis of the social resistance to social growth. Hartley is in some ways a continuance of Ryder. One stage is Ryder, the solitary who remained one. A second stage is Hartley, the solitary who stands against the more aggressive, more interested Marketplace.

You will find in this book the artist of a cultural epoch. This man has mastered the plastic mes-