



Pascin

A PROPOS DU DÔME, ETC.

Written especially for the Querschnitt and to Alfred Flechtheim

That cafes have created history is a truism with which we are all familiar. It is a custom which still lingers despite the vast changes since the time of taverns and public restoration places, where men and women of various sensibilities gather to talk of esthetic issues, or, as is the marked case often, of themselves as chiefly conspicuous. There are numberless cafes in Paris where history has been made among artists and poets alone.

We need only mention in more or less our time the Nouvelles Athenes where Monet, Manet, Pissarro, Degas, and the younger disciples gathered such as Van Gogh and Gauguin, the younger to listen to the older men, and from all accounts Pissarro was a great spiritual and esthetic stimulant to those who listened to him, while Cezanne, disgusted with Paris and all the nonsense he had heard hurried back to Aix to learn his constructive secrets from St. Victoire and the other landscape adjoining.

There was the Cafe d'Harcourt with Verlaine sitting hours on hours over the green glass from which so much sick green sentimentality sprung, spreading over the years of which he was to be the sad and very wise father, with Rimbaud sometimes at his side from whom he learned much, the older sophisticated in material experience listening to that younger sage in poetical experience fagged and worn from knowing to much about life before he came to it.

And that host of others who gathered in their own special cafes making the walls resound with rhythmic perfections now become famous in literature that endures and gratifies.

I come with the vision here in Berlin of Ernesto Fiori, that gothic looking young sculptor who has retained all of his cathedral like decorative simplicity, in the company of Rudolph Lévy with the appearance of an archbishop having attained and served all of his early orders with distinction, with Alfred Flechtheim and some others to a period with which I myself am somewhat familiar, and to which I was affiliated though from a vastly different angle, a period of much debate, much accomplishment and much esthetic scandal in the modern time.

The recent gratifying exhibition of Rudolph Lévy at the Galerie Flechtheim in Berlin corroborates this period with respectable vividness. It was the period of my own, spiritually speaking, triumphal entry into Paris, namely the period of nineteen hundred twelve, and thirteen. It was the period when Matisse was the startling "bête noir" upsetting everybody outside of Paris and certainly most everyone in it. The impressionists and the post impressionists had become old clothes, and here was a new and still more terrible fauve to encounter. It was the period likewise of the Tuesday evenings of Paul Fort at the then most attractive cafe in Montparnasse, the Coserie de Lilas.

As for Picasso, Bracque, Derain, Gleizes, Leger, Metzinger, Delaunay, et Cie., only the rarely understanding were taking them on and disposing of them, for there was the terrible beast Matisse still to encounter and overpower in his own jungle. At the Lilas there was Blaise Cendrars just beginning to disturb the settlers around the Prince des Poetes and probably several others whose names I did not then learn.