

ART AND MAN: COMPARATIVE ART STUDIES

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Art and Man: Comparative Art Studies by Edwin Swift Balch & Eugenia Macfarlane Balch

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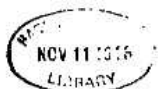
COMPARATIVE ART STUDIES

BY
EDWIN SWIFT BALCH
AND
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INTRODUCTION.

ALL my life I have been interested in art and in geography. My studies in both fields remained as separate pursuits until about the year 1890, when I began to make a small collection of Japanese pictures. At about that time also I paid several visits to the Musée de Saint Germain and studied the French prehistoric remains. Shortly afterwards, I received from Dr. Vincent, surgeon of the third Peary Arctic expedition, a gift of several little Eskimo statuettes. Gradually I became impressed with the fact that there are certain resemblances between these arts, and this led me to an attempt to find out whether there were any such resemblances to other arts. The matter expanded continuously, but it took some years for cold facts to teach me that the fine arts were a tremendous field, covering the entire earth, and that, apparently, no one had realized this before.

In the year 1904, I published a paper *Savage and Civilized Dress* in "The Journal of the Franklin Institute;" in 1906, a book *Comparative Art*; in 1907, a paper *Art and Ethnology* in "The Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society;" and in 1908, a paper *Art in America before the Revolution* in the publications of The Society of Colonial Wars of Pennsylvania. Up to that date and until the publication of those monographs, archæologists and art critics as a rule fought shy of dealing with the arts of the African, Australasian and American native races, from the art standpoint which they used with the arts of Europe or even the arts of Asia. The word "art" appears to have been under a sort of

tabu in ethnological museums, just as works of the primitive arts were only sporadically admitted to art galleries.

After the publication of *Comparative Art* the eyes and minds of ethnologists and of art critics seemed to open. In ethnological and archæological institutions frequently now the lectures are about art and have the word "art" in their titles: an open recognition by ethnologists that art is an important part of ethnology. Art critics likewise slowly are becoming aware that the arts of the races of America, of Australasia, and of Africa deserve recognition just as do the arts of Europe and of Asia. And in answer to the new demand, we find the Archæological Institute of America publishing a magazine *Art and Archæology*. 'Tis but the edge of the wedge which has penetrated so far, but nevertheless it has cut a slit which will widen in due time.

The present work is really a much enlarged revision of the theoretical portions of *Comparative Art*. It is an attempt to present the theories and ideas which my wife and I, working hand in hand, have developed since 1906 from innumerable observations in museums and galleries. As the observations multiplied, the ideas and theories expanded and needed continual alteration. The book itself therefore is not finished and never could be finished. A hundred volumes would not cover the subject of comparative art. Our aim, in brief, has been, by the examination and comparison of as many art specimens from as many places as possible, to find out whether thruout the world art is one whole or whether there are several arts, to trace resemblances and differences between the arts of every nook and cranny of our little globe, and to formulate therefrom the most apparently accurate deductions about art and man. In certain respects therefore,