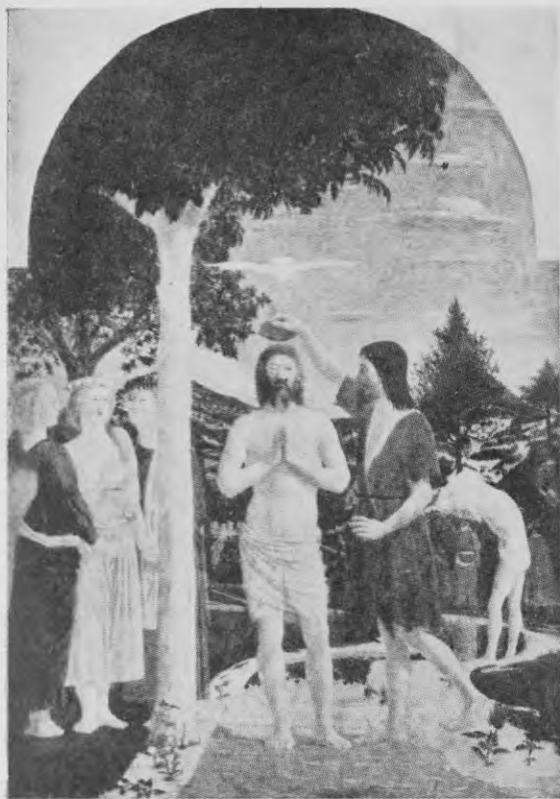




Piero Della Francesca (1416-1492).
"Baptism of Christ." (London :
 National Gallery.) "Cool and
 lovely colour and though remote
 in conception has the integrity
 of an eye-witness account."
 "Makes you think."

that has passed since then has shown a lengthening list of interests pursued, to which art now looks like being a settled and popular item.

I can only speak of what I know, and although my experience as a lecturer is restricted to a small section of this vast organization, it is enough for me to write enthusiastically about all I have seen and heard.

If any civilian artist in the last war had been invited to give a lecture to the "Old Contemptibles" on contemporary art, I think he would have been forgiven for suspecting a leg-pull. I know that when the Educational Corps first approached me in this respect I accepted only with a sense of misgiving, and consoled myself with the fact that the ordeal shared by me and my audience would be for one performance only!

Judge of my surprise when I arrived at the Education Centre to find the walls hung with a loan show of contemporary prints and a well-informed audience of all ranks waiting to give me a really friendly hearing. An excellent epidiascope was at my service, and during the interval for refreshments questions were asked (and very pertinent questions, too) by officers and men who not only appeared to find the art fare much to their liking, but to whom the subject was far from being an exclusive topic for the "high-brows."

Since that first talk we have managed to cover a wide field, and many personalities in paint and many varied schools of painting have been discussed. How

has such a happy and enlightened state of affairs arisen? The editor of *The Studio* sensed a story and prevailed on me to dig out some facts. I have done so, and here they are. And if the story does not add up to the required standards of journalism, the blame must rest on the writer for being an artist first and a reporter only by persuasion. By the convulsive impact of war, and its necessary corollary of destruction, it is natural that the soldier as much as the artist should turn to seek mental refuge in the creative arts and thence to hope. When the world is seething with death and despair, the man in the street and his brother in arms crave for such antonyms as expressed by life and faith: art provides such nourishment for such longings. The truth that war, however tremendous and long drawn out, is but a visiting pestilence gives birth to the absolute certainty that art remains for ever.