

But it must be good art, it must be progressive, it must be the art of to-day, that which impinges on the life around us. No better way of demonstrating this postulate can be found than a retrospective survey of past achievements throughout the world.

A working knowledge of such a comprehensive background can alone explain and justify the aims of our contemporaries in both painting and sculpture. With the necessary aid of coloured reproductions I have been able to demonstrate the ever-widening spiral of progress in various schools of painting under such headings as —Religious, Secular, Historic, Romantic, and Classic, with their sub-headings of Still-life, Genre, Portrait, and Landscape Painting. Thinking along such lines, a series of talks has developed which I hope are proving of both æsthetic and educational value.

Discussing pictures is worth-while talk. Looking at great masterpieces, if only through the medium of reproduction, is stimulating to the eyes and provocative afterwards; while trying one's hand at drawing and painting, for which soldiers appear to have a marked propensity, is splendid occupational therapy. Tuitional classes in drawing and painting are proving popular.

Such questions as, why does one picture immediately attract while another of equal technical merit fails to appeal? What

is it in one painting, apart from its subject-matter, that excites and in another that disturbs the beholder? What was the revolutionary aim of the Impressionists and why did it all but fail? What is the future of abstract art, and why does purely representational painting fail to satisfy?

These are but a few of the questions which the Army authorities hold as important, in so much as they evoke discussion and open the mouth of the dumb soldier. They are right. It is a familiar principle that the good soldier is one who knows what he is fighting for and what he loves. The more he knows how to discriminate between the good and the false, the greater his ability to act in the right way at the right time.

The illustrations are selected from some of the favourite paintings chosen by my Army audience, with the reasons for their choice. A questionnaire for the purpose of ascertaining their reactions to the pictures is supplied to the audience at the end of each lecture, and it is these very reasons that fully endorse the importance which the A.E.C. places on art talks, which not only incite the soldier to form his own opinion, but prompt him to express these thoughts both aloud and on paper.

NOTE.—The commentaries under the captions are extracted from replies to the questionnaires referred to in the last paragraph of this article.

Vincent Van Gogh (1853-1890).
"Landscape with Cypress
Trees." (London: Tate Gal-
lery.) "Intense feeling for
life." "Makes you feel what
the artist must have felt."
"Something behind, bursting
through." "An obvious joy
to the painter whilst he was
painting it." "It depicts
nature as seen by the artist
and has no additions in an
effort to increase its value as
a painting." "Is as virile as
nature itself."

