

# Art and Artists

## Ainslee Opens With Clivette

THE Ainslie Galleries of New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles opened in Detroit yesterday in three handsomely appointed galleries in the Fisher Building.

For their opening exhibition they show old masters, fine American paintings, flower paintings by Gustav Wiegand and the astounding Clivette.

The old masters and the American paintings lend solid respectability to the venture. The flower paintings will be eagerly sought by people who appreciate beauty—but the bringing of Clivette is a master stroke of showmanship.

For Detroit has never seen the strange impelling tempestuous figure who, when nearly 80 years old, took New York by storm and later made even Paris gasp.

A LITTLE more than two years ago, George S. Helman, a New York art critic was walking along a street in Greenwich village when his eye was attracted by a painting of such vigor that he went inside the little shop and asked the price.

"Five thousand dollars," was the nonchalant reply. Here was an unknown old man, unheralded and unsung in an obscure little shop in the village, blandly asking five thousand dollars for his paintings.

But that, it seemed, was a little too high for the purchaser, so he bought it for a trifle.

In fact, "the old man volunteered," I would have sold it to you for \$1, for you are the man I have been looking for all my life. You will tell people about my paintings."

And that is just exactly what Mr. Helman did, in a series of highly colored broadsides, announcing the discovery of Merton Clivette in big type like a dodger for a fire sale.

The thing was so astonishing that New York opened its eyes.

"Clivette is an individual who dares, and who from the point of beauty, succeeds," said Maurice Stern.

"God, how beautiful, fantastic, wonderful," exclaims Paul Manship. Paul Burpin says, "At his best he is stupendous," while Edward Bruce observes, "A fantastic capacity for movement and color."

Who is Clivette, this old man who at eighty emerges as a painter? From whence this daring dramatic quality, this swirl of light and color, this broad modeling?

FITTINGLY enough he comes out of the background of the stage and the circus, an ex-magician, acrobat, poet, printer, newspaper man and pamphleteer. A character so strange, so forceful, so free that he dares to paint what he feels.

So he gives us swirls of light and color, and calls them flowers, sea-scapes, tropical fish, tropical birds, Indians, Black Swan, and in a tremendous exposition of action, a panel of horsemen, which he calls "Out-Riding the Blizzard."

The horses, it is true, are hardly more than daubs of the brush, the riders roughly modeled, but there is the blizzard and the thumping gallop of the horseman bearing down against the wind.

Clivette is undoubtedly a thrilling experience. You may not like him, but you can't very well escape him. And certainly he offers a sensational talking point for the opening of a new gallery.

Perhaps this notice should, by rights, have been devoted to some account of the history of the Ainslie Galleries, of the 40 years of interesting experience in the buying and selling of fine paintings by George Ainslie, the founder of the galleries, or even the quality of the beautiful Fragonards which are brought to Detroit for the opening. All of these things will become known to Detroiters who welcome the opening of the Detroit branch of an established New York gallery as an evidence of the city's increasing importance as an art center.

But Clivette, with his swirls of color, and his sense of daring and youth and strength and his tousled old gray head, offers a more exciting introduction.