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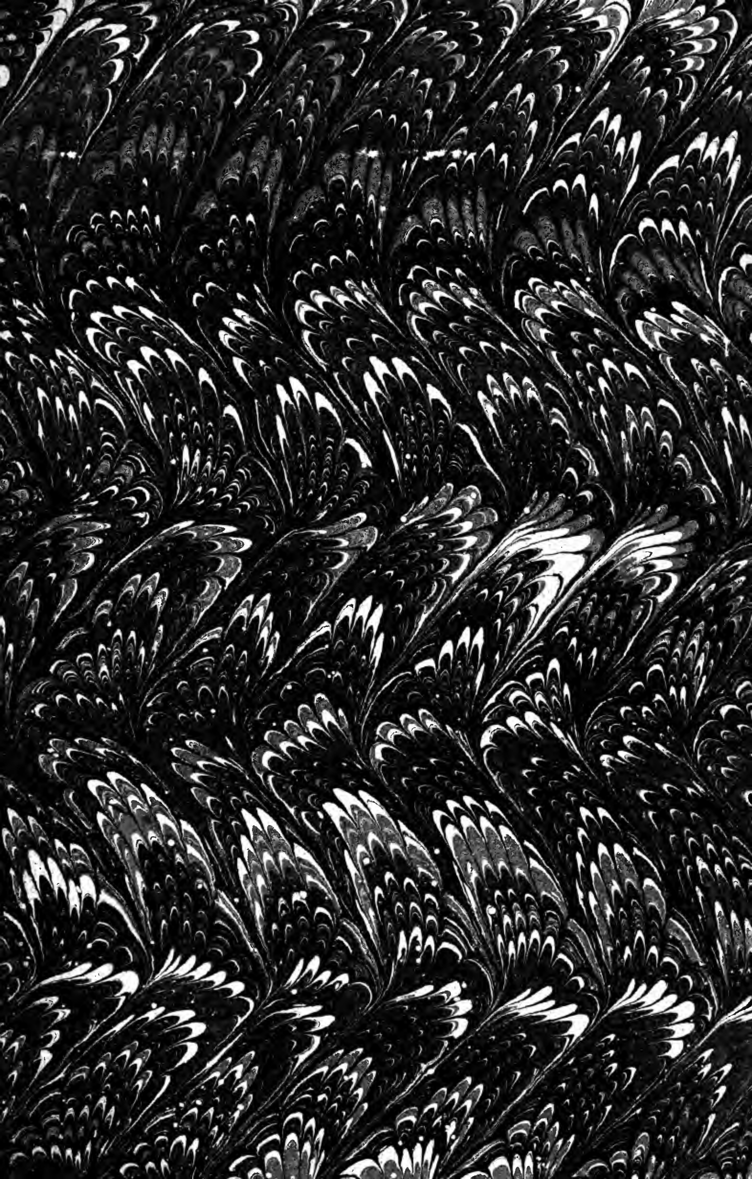

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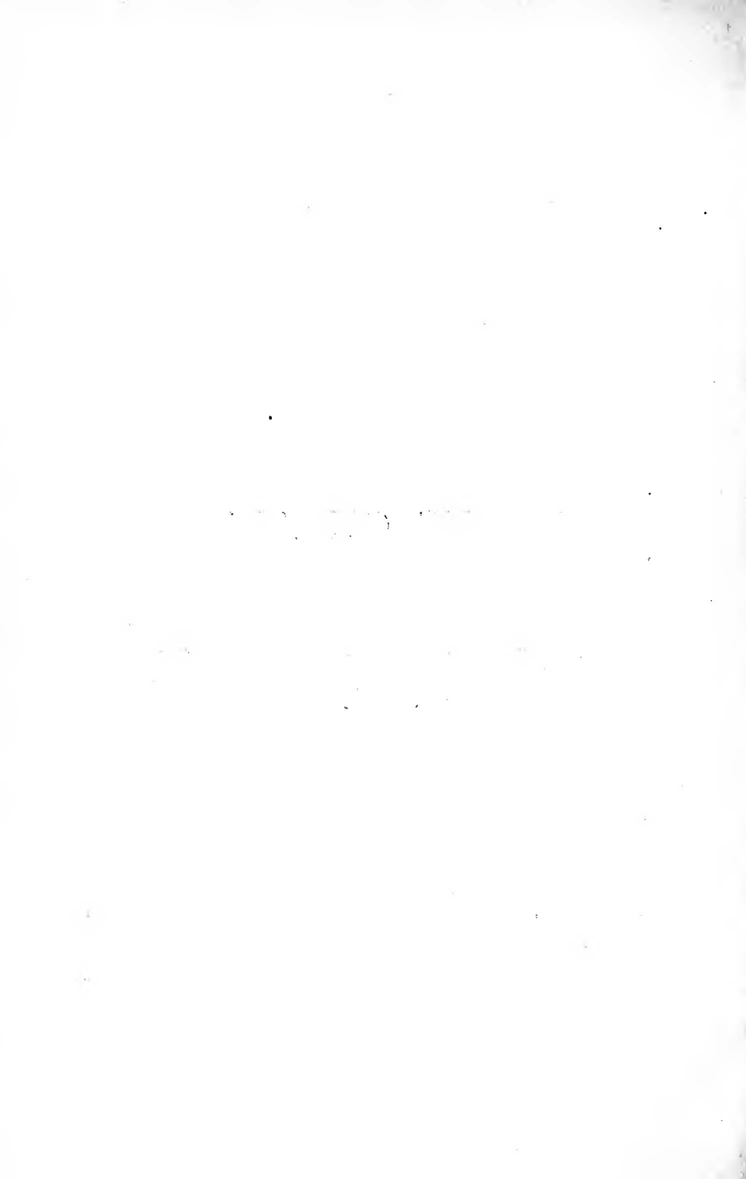
ESSAYS ON ART

BY

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

Late Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford



ESSAYS ON ART

BY

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE

Late Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford

C'est à ce lendemain sévère que tout artiste sérieux doit songer.

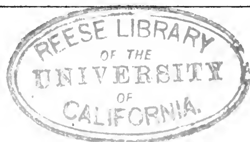
C.-A. SAINTE-BEUVE

The Royal Academy of 1863, 4, 5 :

Mulready: Herbert : Holman Hunt:

Poetry, Prose, and Sensationalism in Art: Sculpture in England :

The Albert Cross, &c.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1866

Ἐν πᾶσι τούτοις ἔνεστιν εὐσχημοσύνη η ἀσχημοσύνη· καὶ ἡ μὲν ἀσχημοσύνη καὶ ἀῤῥυθμία καὶ ἀναρμοστία κακολογίας καὶ κακοηθείας ἀδελφά, τὰ δ' ἐναντία τοῦ ἐναντίου, σώφρονός τε καὶ ἀγαθοῦ ἤθους, ἀδελφά τε καὶ μιμηματα.--PLATO: REP. III : XI

44541

PREFACE

DURING the last five-and-twenty years the criticism of Art in England, with one memorable exception (to which, whether we agree or not with Mr. Ruskin, we are all signally indebted), has been mainly confined to newspapers. Meanwhile, in France, besides more elaborate writings, reviews of the chief exhibitions of the year are now annually collected in a permanent form. It has been thought that a similar attempt might be found interesting at home. Most of the following Essays have appeared in the *Saturday Review*, and elsewhere; but they have been minutely revised, and in some cases almost re-written. The aim in this has principally been to exclude matters of temporary interest, and to soften down (perhaps not always with success), those asperities of censure, a bias towards which is one of the most besetting temptations of anonymous literature.

The main object of the book is, by examples taken chiefly from the works of contemporaries, to illustrate the truths, that art has fixed principles, of which any one may attain the knowledge who is not wanting in natural taste, and that this knowledge adds greatly to our pleasure, by giving it depth, permanence, and

intelligibility. The more we test and weigh our enjoyment, the more we make it rest upon fact, the stronger and the more uniform does it become. There is little dispute about the works which really interest the human mind. *Tastes* only *differ*, or *are not matters for discussion*, as people sometimes say, when they are grounded upon arbitrary liking. Judgment of Art, (if the writer may repeat words which much subsequent study of the subject has confirmed,) is a matter which simply resembles other branches of human knowledge: a certain natural faculty or bias must always be presupposed; with this, as in case of mathematics or of language, taste is obtained by study and observation; and, as in those sciences, leads to a practical power of decision. Some few strictly technical qualities remain, on which the artist alone is a judge. But this exception does not invalidate the criticism of spectators. Art, like poetry, is addressed to the world at large, not to a special jury of professional masters: the technical qualities are only means to the public end, and the question which remains always is, how far do they tend to the object of all the Fine Arts, high and enduring pleasure. To point out the degree in which a work fulfils this condition, and thereby to assist the artist in fulfilling it, and the spectator in feeling it, is the province of criticism.

F. T. P.

LONDON: *Mar.* 19: 1866

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ESSAYS ON ART

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF 1863

CERTAIN complaints have been made this year on the mode in which the Hanging Committee have exercised their inevitably ungracious function; and, although the difficulties of arranging several hundred pictures on walls not really able to admit one-third of the number should be liberally allowed for, yet there is some reason for the remark that original merit of the "unprotected" class has been placed too high or too low for sight, whilst privilege may have asserted itself over-conspicuously on the "line" of comfortable visibility. Having relieved ourselves by this growl, let it be added that, "if much be taken, much remains." So well situated is the country at present in regard to art, in certain directions—so imperative are the claims of several artists to a position in which their works can be not only paid for as part of a spectacle, but actually seen—that it will be found that the Ninety-fifth Exhibition of the Academy affords much which may please, and not a little which may delight, an intelligent spectator.

Before taking in hand the principal pictures shown, it is proper to note certain conspicuous deficiencies in the collection. Owing principally, we believe, to the pressure of other work connected with Art, neither Mulready, Eastlake,

Maclise, Dyce, Landseer, nor Foley, is represented. In these men we lose some of the most attractive, and some of the most original, of our ordinary contributors; and others, from whom we have often, on previous occasions, received works of merit—for instance, Phillip and Watts—are by no means seen to the fullest advantage. From most of those now named we may fairly hope for recompense hereafter; but the loss which the English school has sustained by the death of Mr. Egg will not be supplied so easily. This is not the place for biographical details in regard to this justly-lamented artist; yet it would be an inexcusable omission were we to be silent upon all that we have suffered by his early removal. The experience of foreign art gained at the "International Exhibition," appears to have impressed English spectators in general with the knowledge that, in some highly important matters, we are unequal to our Continental contemporaries. We do not draw so well; we do not hit the point so dexterously; we are not so skilful in telling a tale without the aid of minor bits of humour or sentiment; we do not concentrate the interest of our landscapes with such frankness and facility; we are more given to mere manufacture in our portraits. Now, in some of these points, Mr. Egg was amongst the few, comparatively, who could best stand the test of French and German competition. There was a high and unaffected aim in all that he did; his command over design in the human figure was large, and he laid out his canvas with a dramatic power which was always increasing in clearness and simplicity. If this brief summary of what he was leads any readers to do him justice in their remembrance—still more, if it should lead some of our existing artists to emulate his career—what we have here attempted to perform will be no *inane munus.* But we now pass to the living.

I

Ever since his fine "Procession of Cimabue" startled us some eight years ago, Mr. Leighton has been one of the "rising men" of the day in figure-painting. Two or three others—as Marks and Calderon—have, during this interval, fairly made their reputation, and we find on these walls proof that, before any long period has gone by, as many more will be "household names" to all who care for English art. But Mr. Leighton has embraced a wider range than most of his contemporaries, both in the quality of his subjects and the size of his designs. He has apparently set before himself the lofty but hazardous example of those who in the last century were spoken of as the "great masters" of the Bolognese school; and it must hence not be considered unreasonable or discouraging if we still have to look upon him as a man who has not yet finally completed his style, nor secured his reputation. This year, two serious and two ornamental pieces display the versatility of his powers, nor has he shrunk from attempting three on the arduous scale of actual life; whilst one, the "Ahab, Jezebel, and Elijah," appears to be of larger proportions. Excepting (if they be exceptions) Mr. Herbert's uninspired and cold, though careful "Judith," with Mr. Dobson's sweet but sentimental "Return of the Holy Family," Mr. Leighton's is the only serious Scripture subject in the exhibition. In the Jezebel and Elijah we see that the artist has endeavoured to unite the "style" of the sixteenth-century men with that more individual rendering of character and more strictly chronological aspect of scene which familiarity with the real East has rendered, in a manner, obligatory on our modern

Scripture painters. In this difficult aim he has not attained complete success. The colouring is not free from heaviness, owing to the large unbroken masses into which it is divided; the action of the Ahab is a little uncertain; and the smooth surface of the painting combines with the gloss and newness of the dresses to deprive the scene of the air of picturesque veracity. But the arrangement is striking; the lines of the Queen's drapery are large and beautiful; and her head, though less original than that of the prophet, is well drawn and imagined. Leighton's power in seizing character is better shown in the half-length of an "Italian Crossbowman" who has, we suppose, registered a vow, sure to be kept, to avenge the death of the comrade whose withered hand is nailed to the city wall above him. Here the gloomy colour corresponds with the sentiment of the scene, although the force of purpose is so strongly marked on the archer's face, that the artist might have given glow and richness of tone to the whole work without compromising its dramatic effect. Of Leighton's two ornamental pictures, the larger one, a "Girl with Peacock" has an air of brilliancy, but strikes us as empty and shadow-like in proportion to the amount of work bestowed on it. The "Girl with Fruit" is gracefully drawn, and free from affectation.

If the aim of this painter gives him a right, in 1863, to the place of first notice amongst those who devote themselves to figure subjects, the place of popularity must be reserved for Mr. Millais. And it will probably be agreed on all hands that the distinguished artist has made a nearer advance towards resumption of his earlier and more forcible style this year than in several preceding Exhibitions. At least, the execution of his "Child's first Sermon" is carried to a high point of technical completeness; and though the painting of the face, as usual with the artist, is not propor-

tioned in its thoroughness to the treatment of the accessories, yet the life, and earnestness, and simple beauty which he has thrown into the child's features, render the little canvas one which spectators are long likely to remember with pleasure. In the "Wolf's Den" the details are not quite so satisfactory, and there is evidence of over-haste in the hands and face of the child on the right, and in the rather coarse patch of light which falls on the bosom of the prisoner. We presume, at least, that this little creature, lying so demurely on her back, and absorbed in her snowdrop, is meant to be the victim of her brothers, who are crying "wolf" in different tones of energy from beneath the grand pianoforte. One charm of this pleasing work is, in fact, the truth with which Millais has apprehended the *inconsecutiveness* of young children—their inability to act a part completely, or for more than a few moments—their deferential, but imperfect, imitation of the eldest amongst them. Thus, here the biggest boy is the leader of the party, and the gradations of intelligence descend through the child who can only roar "wolf," to the child who has totally forgotten that she is in the den at all. Child's play has been seldom more pleasingly represented than here; and there is an originality and look of ease about the picture, a power of painting, in short, in which Millais has perhaps no rival.

As a *tour de force*, Mr. Millais's picture from Keats is unequalled in this exhibition. The general *tone* of moonlight is given throughout with astonishing power; although we must confess to some doubt whether due gradation has been observed in the background; would there not have been more of "clear obscurity" throughout the room, when the light is strong enough to bring out so forcibly the table and its ornaments close to the eye, with the blue and

silver of Madeline's robe? But a graver question remains, when we pass from the surprizing effect of the picture to the subject and sentiment which it professes to render. It would be but a poor compliment to Mr. Millais to say, that it was enough to paint moonlight so magnificently, when he has aimed at illustrating a scene of such high poetical and human interest as the "Eve of St. Agnes." And, in this respect, we must own that his success does not appear equal. Nothing but the daring dexterity which the picture shows could save it (we think), if indeed saved it be, from leaving the impression of ghastliness. Keats has placed his scene in winter, and has, poetically, endued the cold moonbeams (which, in fact, would take no such splendour in their passage) with the sun's full power of carrying the rich colours of a painted window with them into the maiden's chamber. All lovers of poetry know the splendid picture of the kneeling heroine which he thus produced. This was, perhaps, a just licence in the artist who has only words to paint with. But the artist who paints in colours has, with equal justice, corrected the effect, and cast over his figure such pale lurid rays as would really have been thrown by the moonlight. This is managed, on the hair especially, with singular skill. But we must venture to urge, that Mr. Millais's amended version of the great Poet—and of the great Poet in his greatest work—should have stopped here. If the name of "Madeline," and the lovely images suggested by the famous lines quoted in the Catalogue, were to be associated with his picture (without stopping to require the far minor veracities of mediaeval costume and architecture), modest tenderness of expression, blending with passionate impulse, and grace of form, and beauty of colour, even if subdued, were essential. These are the elements of Keats's "Madeline;" but the images

called up by the wan face, blackened lips, and blue-stained bosom of Mr. Millais's figure, aided by the look of the dismal-looking bed, seem to us rather of the spectral order than of the maidenly.

> ——In glided Margaret's grimly ghost
> And stood at William's feet—

Name the picture thus, and it would be accepted as a powerful rendering of the old ballad; and even the coarse wrists and attenuated arms of the model, and the inelegant details of fringed corset and petticoat-strings, would have the appropriateness in which we venture to think them now deficient.

Mr. Millais's children have no equal in the Exhibition, except in Mr. Holman Hunt's "King of Hearts." This is one of those brilliant little works, true and complete in every touch, which we know will speak as clearly to spectators five hundred years hence, if paint and canvas keep together so long, as in 1863. It represents a noble little boy who, after the fashion of Reynolds's "Master Crewe," is enacting a young Henry VIII, and is about to send his china ball with sure aim, under the patronage, like a knight of old, of the device (a heart *gules*, the old Douglas bearing) from which the picture takes its title. The child's eyes are full of life and light, and the sunny smile on his face seems to presage success. His features and dress, with a lovely landscape background, are handled with Mr. Hunt's well-known faithful delicacy. Not far from this work in fidelity—though different in art and finish—we should place Mr. Darvell's little "Orange Girl"—one of the many meritorious pieces sacrificed by the peculiar style of this year's arrangement. In this the child's face, and dress, and attitude, are truly, though rather stiffly, caught. It is much nearer nature than Mr. Faed's version of a similar subject (273),

although it cannot compete, in force and richness of tint, with his "Orange Seller." Mr. Clark reminds us too forcibly of his popular "Sick Child" by a somewhat blurred and morbidly-coloured repetition of very similar models and arrangement in his "After Work." Of Webster's contributions, the aged man seated alone (165) is the most original. It has a pathetic feeling, and, as usual with this artist, is unaffected in character. In good scenes from everyday life this Exhibition is not peculiarly rich. Mr. Horsley, in place of the pretty pictures of this nature which at one time he gave, seems to have retreated into the dressy, artificial period of the corrupt cavalierism of Charles II; and Mr. Faed's cottage interior (213), though a successful specimen of his picturesque and spotty manner, has not the dramatic interest of his "From Birth to Death," or the "Life in the Backwoods," of two or three years back. Mr. Martineau's single picture—a girl who has knelt down to catch the last rays of firelight whilst she finishes the last chapter of some absorbing book (568)—is one of the most satisfactory pieces of design and execution on the walls: what we rather miss in it is the sentiment of beauty. Beside the expression of the young lady's face, thoroughly given in its girlish unconsciousness, the skilful gradation of the *chiaroscuro*, as the room recedes from the light, and the skill with which the cool colours have been harmoniously carried into the centre of the piece by aid of the cover of the book, deserve especial notice. Another work which may be fairly set by this is the "Sailor's Return," by Mr. A. Hughes, remarkable for delicacy of feeling, but whose modest canvas has not thereby escaped condemnation to the region of boots and crinoline edges. Even this treatment, however, cannot prevent us from observing the tone and tender feeling which Mr. Hughes has thrown into the head of the

young sister who watches the passionate grief of the lad, as he throws himself on the grave of the parent or sweetheart whom he has returned to find missing. The drawing of these figures is firm, and the details of the church and trees skilfully managed. Mr. Barwell's "Reconciliation," wants greater finish, but tells its tale with clearness. The grandfather (who hardly looks his age), offended by a child's marriage, has been induced to relent towards the now widowed mother by the sudden introduction of her child, effected through the affectionate *ruse* of his two maiden daughters. The gradations of hope in their heads, and in that of the widow, who grasps the hands of one, and looks only to *her* face for indication of what is passing, are caught with great dexterity; and their whole bearing and expression is that of true gentlewomanliness. In these points this work forms a noteworthy contrast to the manner of Mr. Frith, whose lady-figures, as in the "Ramsgate Sands" and the "Railway Station," are apt to have the air of housemaids in kid-gloves; or to that of his only too faithful follower, Mr. Hicks, in his "Woman's Mission." Yet this last gives promise of better things. The dexterity and feeling for grace shown will, we hope, be one day carried by Mr. Hicks into pictures of a more undemonstrative and genuine quality.

II

Most of the figure-subjects hitherto noticed belong to the domestic class. We turn now to a series—beginning with those by our younger men of promise—which draw their incidents from the past, and hence range themselves, more or less, in the historical. These works, amongst which it is impossible to mention all that deserve notice, by the increasing evidence of study shown in the figures, and by the

reliance which they display upon the simple setting forth of their story, not lesss than by their number, testify to the growth of our school in a direction which has not, hitherto, been so much followed in England as elsewhere. Our national liking for pictures of children and lovers, household jests, and drawing-room tragedies, has its good side; yet the art which lends itself decidedly to subjects of this range, although popular for the moment, is apt before long to lose its hold on the purchasing class, and, by iteration within a somewhat narrow and facile field, to relax the energies of the artist. The determination to have something humourous and something pretty in every picture has been the ruin of many a man who, by a wider and manlier selection of subject, might have done us good service; and the English addiction to the commonplaces of home, has often exposed us to the somewhat contemptuous, though good-humoured, criticism of French and German observers. We do not mean that the foreign schools of "high" or "historical" art have not produced many vacuous and theatrical designs. But it seems to be a law of life—at least in art—that no man does anything thoroughly well who cannot do whatever analogous work stands in the next stage of difficulty above it. The best figure-schools produce the best ornament. The best books on logic come from metaphysicians. No doubt it is much better to paint a baby well than to fail in a Saint. Yet he who has made earnest effort to represent the Saint will probably paint the better baby—witness Raphael and Velasquez, Rubens and Reynolds. Thus, on more grounds than one, we rejoice to see the enlarging and meritorious band of our historical incident painters, and regret only that, for their sakes as well as the nation's, some of the fresco-spaces at Westminster were not saved for them from

less able hands. But we trust that there is still opportunity to introduce new blood into the series of Parliamentary commissions. One or two works a-piece by Messrs. Cope, Ward, and Herbert, would have supplied ample verge and space enough for their powers, and have spared room for artists of more capacity for historical work—let us name Mr. Madox Brown, Mr. Holman Hunt, Mr. Millais, and Mr. Armitage, without exhausting the list,—who have not yet gained admission.

Calderon's "Day of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew" represents the interior of the English Embassy, where the great name of Elizabeth and the presence of the wise Walsingham kept open a single harbour of refuge from the bloody storm of persecution without. The Ambassador is a well conceived figure. He walks, without raising his eyes, across the room where a crowd of retainers and fugitives are gathered, in the meditative humour of a brave man who must witness the crime which he is unable to check. Alarmed women and indignant men, in different modes of passion, fill the rest of the State-room; we see that something fearful is transacting below in the street, but what it may be is untold except by the expression of the beholders. This picture is full of light and air, firmly, though drily, coloured and drawn. A few hard outlines have been left here and there. Perhaps this is the most complete and original thing of the kind exhibited; although the "Parting of Sir T. More and his Daughter," by Mr. Yeames, gives promise of similar merits when the artist's style is a little more matured. In this carefully-studied work, the attendant figures, sympathizing with or officially indifferent to the pathos of the situation, are more satisfactory than the daughter. More himself, however, is well imagined, although the expression of his features—

familiar to us after three centuries in the immortal delineation of Holbein—might have been strengthened. There is a serious aim, combined with moderately careful work, in Mr. Stone's "Napoleon between Waterloo and Paris;" and the features of the French cottage have been well caught. This subject, however, and that of Mr. G. Leslie's "War Summons," call for maturer powers than their designers have yet reached, although honest attempts at a good style, and at themes neither sentimental nor melodramatic, deserve our sympathy. The latter work represents a family group disturbed from a summer afternoon's enjoyment on their terrace, by a summons delivered to the head of the house to join the campaign of 1485. We must own to thinking any real and unaffected bit of mediaeval life a better subject for art than the mystic and fanciful themes of the Arthurian cycle of legend which have been lately selected by some of our painters: Mr. Archer being this year's instance. Words can deal with a story so unearthly and far-sought more safely than colours, which almost inevitably fail when they try to render the vague visions of Sir Thomas Mallory's fascinating prose-epic; for the romance and the illusions are apt to disappear when dragged thus "into the light of common day." A true aspect of this "common day," as it may have looked in the time of Chaucer, is rendered by Mr. Pettie in a cleverly conceived and handled little work, the "Trio." Here three Wandering Minstrels of old are seen swaggering in comic gravity through mediaeval London, joking with the girls as they pass, yet so penetrated with the sense of time and song that one feels they lose neither step nor note as they make their transit: certainly one of the best bits of humour in the Exhibition, though Mr. Nicol's scenes from Irish life—especially that

of the thirsty wretch who has taken off his "dthrop of the cratur," and displays the emptiness of his breeches pocket with admirable drunken solemnity—rank with Mr. Pettie's work in *vis comica.* This quality, in Mr. Marks's former productions, was apt to run into broad, but effective farce. His "Shakspeare studying humours," in some street near the Port of London, is handled in a more quiet key. The poet's dog is a capital idea; we commend him, his name and pedigree, to the researches of Mr. Halliwell and our other industrious Shakspearians, in whose eyes even Shakspeare's "second best bed" has a sacred significance. Might not his descendants be traced somewhere about Stratford or Shottery? The poet's own family are all extinct; but this would be a compensation.—In the other groups we see a blending of ranks, not now so frequent within the Tower Hamlets—the "ruffling" courtier, the picturesque merchant, the demonstrative good wife of Elizabeth's day. Barring the locality, the scene might be a preliminary sketch for the *Wives of Windsor.* The painting of this interesting work is rather thin and inharmonious, and the sky tint obtrusive. Mr. Hodgson gives us a scene of a different nature from the epoch of Shakspeare's youth—the lighting of a beacon-fire on the alarm of the Armada (569). The hostile fleet, dotted in endless file along a far horizon, is imaginatively heralded by a sunset of that crimson brilliancy which Wordsworth and Turner painted more than once, but which is here only sketchily rendered. A crowd has run down to the edge of the cliff, led apparently by an aged crone, who may be supposed to have prophesied of the evil day, and now summons the inhabitants of some manor-house and village to the accomplishment of her vision. Although Mr. Hodgson's drawing is not yet strong, there is some vivacity and truth in the action of this group,

and the whole arrangement of the picture, if rather straggling, is unconventional. The value of this latter quality will be felt if Mr. Hodgson's work be compared with Faed's "Silken Gown," with its skilfully, but studiously, posed figures; or with O'Neil's "Power of Music," where the disposition is studied but not skilful. The Civil War has furnished two not dissimilar scenes to Mr. Hayllar and Mr. Goldie (628 and 565). Both have selected the execution of a Royalist by a file of Cromwellian soldiers, for whom our gallant Volunteers have manifestedly supplied the models. We think Mr. Goldie's the better painted; but it is more painful and not so dramatically worked out as Mr. Hayllar's, in which a child is unconsciously drawing the lots of life or death for two Royalist prisoners. The artist appears to have lapsed, in his system of execution, into the ways of the "blottesque" school, as Mr. Ruskin named it; we trust he will resume his earlier and more careful manner. A French Fishwoman, which he exhibited a few years ago, was a capital piece of painting.

Mr. Armitage appears to be our solitary English painter in a class of subject which the French have followed with much success. His "Burial of a Martyr" represents what may have been a not uncommon scene in one of the Imperial persecutions. So far as we can judge from the position allotted to the work (below which on the line hangs a showy and meretricious picture from the history of Bruce), it is most carefully drawn and worked out, and the sentiment of the occasion—grief almost subdued by calm exultation—truly rendered. This picture would be well suited for reproduction in fresco, and may be commended to our liberally-minded churchmen as an excellent and appropriate decoration for one of the new churches.

From Mr. Armitage's careful and truly artist-like canvas,

it is a great, and not altogether a gratifying, contrast to turn to those of Mr. Phillip. His style, probably too far formed to allow hope for alteration to those who are unable to rank him amongst the great, or even the thoroughly satisfactory, artists of the day, is well known for picturesqueness and force of colour. These are precious gifts ; and, when the subject has happened to lie well for the painter's hand, as workmen say, they have issued in clever scenes of Spanish life : although life must be here mainly limited to a theatre for beggars and flirts, priests and smugglers. On this occasion, Mr. Phillip has been unfortunate in his larger subject ; the upper end of the House of Commons supplying but little which can be classed under the superficially picturesque, although he has, even here, made forcible use of the disorderly boxes and paraphernalia of the table. In the rest, he has substituted a lustrous brown background for the true, but difficult effects of light and shade beneath the gallery and the Speaker's canopy, merging even the heads of the less distinguished members in what is, we presume, a symbolical cloud of London fog. The nearer heads have had just sufficient work bestowed to render them recognizeable ; the likeness in each is carried about as far, allowing for the difference of the material, as in the woodcuts of *Punch;* but what is enough for a joke or a satire, is below the mark of historical painting. Let any spectator, after examining this work, place himself at once before the little "St. Jerome in his Study," ascribed to the great Bellini, and lately added to the large room of the National Gallery, and he will, we are confident, at once feel the kind of conditions under which a true interior is to be rendered. All good art need not be like Bellini's in style ; but all good art would be as like nature. It would, however, be unfair to judge Mr. Phillip by a picture

such as this, produced to order, and in which he has consequently not been allowed the artist's indispensable privilege of selection. When he treats one of his own Spanish subjects, his great popularity, like Mr. Frith's in scenes from English life (even if, as we should think, it outruns what the facts strictly warrant), is intelligible. Women in mantillas, muleteers in rags, a free out-of-doors existence and an Andalusian sky, appeal to our sense of the picturesque in foreign lands. The "Derby Day" and the "Railway Station" appeal equally to our sense of the melodramatic elements in common-place life. We suppose that those who admire Mr. Ward's historical style, and have watched his career from the beginning, would rank him as equal in ability with the painters just named. Yet it always strikes the younger generation of spectators as curious that he should rival them in popularity. For although Mr. Ward chooses telling incidents with much skill, yet they are chosen generally from the history of England in the seventeenth, and France in the eighteenth century,—times which are rather of literary than of popular interest: and though there is generally a certain force in his way of arranging the scene, yet it seems to us regarded from the external and theatrical point of view: giving neither intensity of human passion, nor powerful realization of detail: nor are there compensating attractions in colour, or in mastery of design. In his "Charlotte Corday" Mr. Ward has attempted a subject which hardly any power in art could render pleasing: and, conscientiously as he has studied the period, one cannot help feeling that these decisively foreign historical subjects are dangerous ground; that a Frenchman, for instance, could not help viewing the scene not only differently, but more truly. In his larger picture, "The Foundlings visiting Hogarth's Studio," the artist has selected

what the result proves to be a better field for the exercise of his inventive powers. The execution is, indeed, harsh and grating; it is almost like wind instruments played out of tune; but the vivacity of the children, and the pretty natural action shown in some of their figures, would render the design attractive in a print. When this is on hand, we hope that Mr. Ward will add more force to the features of Hogarth. Many traces of this artist's manner are naturally seen in Mrs. Ward's picture—"Mary of Scotland giving her Infant to the charge of Lord Mar." This work is firmly painted, and tells its tale with clearness; the child is pretty; and,—if we must have more pictures from the history of Mary,—there are few actions in her life which we can look at with so much pleasure as the one selected. The rather feeble and hesitating air of Lord Mar seems to us quite true to nature. It is at least recognized and answered by the look and gesture of the Queen, expressing some natural doubt whether the charge would be loyally carried out.

We have already noticed the most important life-size figure-scenes when speaking of Mr. Leighton. Mr. Lucy's "Reconciliation of Reynolds and Goldsmith," like other pictures by this thoughtful and conscientious artist, interesting and unaffected in idea, does not aim at richness or relief—qualities which a painter can, however, rarely afford to dispense with. Mr. Goodall appears to be making some progress towards obtaining them. His "Arab Widow and Child," though wanting in the glow and sunlight which put an artist high among colourists, and "painty" in execution, is forcibly put on the canvas, and the lines are managed with grace. Grace would be also the word which Mr. Watts's "Ariadne" naturally calls up, although it is in this instance, and in several of the artist's recent works, grace too near

sentimentalism. Except that the colouring is more tender, and the drapery more beautifully studied, this Ariadne recalls what were once held the masterpieces of Cipriani or Angelica Kauffmann. And the pervading sentimentalism may be seen, not only in the languid air and shadowy execution, but in the idea of the picture, which converts the noble Greek heroine, already half-deified, into the fatigued and voluptuous mistress of some ancient tyrant, recovering from last night's revel by the shore of the Ionian Sea. Not so did the great Catullus paint his Ariadne :—

> Saepe illam perhibent ardenti corde furentem
> clarisonas imo fudisse e pectore voces ;
> ac tum praeruptos tristem conscendere montes,
> unde aciem in pelagi vastos protenderet aestus ;
> tum tremuli salis adversas procurrere in undas,
> mollia nudatae tollentem tegmina surae.

III

Landscape-painting, hitherto the most decidedly national thing in our art, is less fully represented in this Exhibition than figure-subjects—partly, perhaps, from the rapid development of the latter branch, partly from the arrangements of this year, which seem to have excluded from the Academy, or dismissed to floor and ceiling, the works of our younger and less known aspirants. The composition of the Hanging Committee, which contained no landscape-painter, may have unconsciously tended to this result ; and the fact that it was thus unequally constituted has not failed to attract the attention of those who aim at a reform of the Academy itself. We shall endeavour to do the depressed and the exalted artists more justice than they have received at official hands, whilst, at the same time, it must be fully acknowledged that in no branch of the art have the Academicians done them-

selves so much credit as in the landscapes which bear the respected names of Stanfield, Hook, and Creswick.

Several small landscapes, by a fused or blended manner of colouring, and an aim at general effect of tone, give signs of the influence of contemporary French art upon our own. Amongst these, none is more successful than the beautiful little picture called "Catch," representing a boy who, whilst his horse is standing at a brook's edge, throws an apple to a village school-girl below (619). The colours are uncommonly tender and bright, the grays are managed with a skill which all who have handled a brush will envy, and every line in the little work shows that fresh originality of invention, or that first-hand recurrence to nature, which give an unmistakeable air of masterliness to landscape. The children and horses, although on so small a scale, are studied with a truth and feeling worthy of the fine "Landscape in the Campagna," by which the painter, Mr. G. Mason, won himself distinction at the International Exhibition.—Mr. H. Davis appears to have selected Northern France for his field of labour. His "Ambleteuse" is very happy in its broad diffusion of setting sunbeams over the downs and reaches of the Picard coast, so unduly depreciated by tourists impatient for Paris or Geneva. Here also the cattle, driven homeward at evening, are not only as carefully drawn as Mr. S. Cooper's, but are coloured with a warmth and animated by a life to which those of the latter have no pretension. Another capital little work, by Mr. C. J. Lewis, presents Ambleteuse from a different point of view, giving us the village churchyard with its wild weeds and scattered crosses, and the dry, bright flora of the sand-hills. A black-robed and veiled nun concentrates the effect (373). A fourth example, perhaps less markedly French in quality of work than the foregoing, but of much merit in

a modest way, is the little "Bird-Minder" by Mr. Dearle—a boy very well placed upon a stile, and the crop beyond and weeds in front faithfully and tenderly given. We are confident that no candid judge, looking at art not through Academic glasses, would deny sterling merit to each of these four small works, which, however, like the Holy Stairs at Rome, are accessible only upon the knees; and what we have seen on many previous occasions of the painting of W. Davis of Liverpool, of Mr. Inchbold, Mr. H. Moore, Miss Blunden, Mr. Danby, and several more, gives similar ground for ascribing merit to pictures of which all that the naked eye can discern is that they are pendant, like the swallows' nests at Forres Castle, from different "coigns of vantage" beneath the ceiling. On the other hand, Whistler's effective rough sketch of Westminster Bridge (352), only painted to be looked at from a fair distance, has been put where effectiveness is lost, and roughness alone visible. A nearly similar measure has been dealt to Mr. Anthony's "Castle," to Mr. M'Allum's "Forest-scene," to Mr. Dillon's "Nile Sunset," with its beautifully drawn foreground rushes, and rosy bars of African vapour; and to what, if we could only see it, must be the very remarkable South American view, "Lagoon of Guayaquil," by a French artist, M. Mignot. The misplacement of this work is the more to be regretted, from the extraordinary scarcity, long ago noticed by Humboldt, of truthful and artist-like representations of tropical scenery. Lee's clay-cold landscape, with its flat skies, mechanical foliage, and colourless rocks, and the feeble mannerism of Witherington, meanwhile occupy places to which it is difficult to find any better title than the Academical position of the artists. Of course, no censure or criticism whatever is due on this account to the painters just named, whose productions, like

all the rest, are under the control of the Hanging Committee. But such, in all ages and all countries, is the inevitable result of the bad spirit of monopoly. In support of our remarks, we must particularly instance Mr. Lee's view of the "Pont du Gard," where—besides an entire and absolute absence of the atmosphere and local tones of Provence—the noble ruin is made to look like a modern railway-bridge, and coloured in a style which would do little credit to a pupil's first year's studies.

Several landscapes, besides Mr. Dillon's, are taken from the East: the "Well in the Desert" (336), by Mr. W. V. Herbert, and the "View in Cairo," in which also the figures predominate, by Mr. F. Goodall. Neither of these works, however, catches the peculiar qualities of Eastern atmosphere. Indeed, the strange intensity of that broad sunlight, and the pearly brightness of the shadows within streets and houses, are facts so difficult to render, that they have been only attempted within the last few years, and are probably hardly yet recognised as true by spectators to whom they are unfamiliar. One creditable and clever attempt at reproducing the open sky effect may be seen in the little view outside an Algerian village, by Mr. Robertson (26), near the floor. This work has that unmistakeable stamp of truth upon it which we noticed above, when speaking of Mr. Mason's "Catch." The scarcely less difficult phenomenon of Oriental *shadow-light* has been most elaborately and delicately dealt with by Mr. Gale and Mr. Lewis. Indeed, the handling of the "Weeping-place in Jerusalem" has been, as in other pictures by the same elegant pencil, almost overfinished in its minuteness. The figures are drawn with great care, and the strange architecture of the ancient wall is skilfully discriminated. Mr. Lewis's "Frank Halt in the Desert"—substantially a reproduction in oil of

his magnificent drawing in the Water Colour Exhibition of a few years back—is wrought out with such subtle truth of design, and coloured with a skill so extraordinary, that one can hardly help wishing these powers devoted to a subject of larger interest. Here almost the whole scene is in shadow, yet full of pervading light. If the spectator cares to isolate it from its gaudy neighbours, he will find that very few of the sunlight pictures exhibited can bear competition with this in real inner brilliancy. When will any one do similar justice to the thousand astonishing subjects offered by our Indian scenery? Two excellent barn-door fowl pictures by Mr. Carter and Mr. Huggins (226 and 548), with the "Wassail" of Mr. J. E. Newton, are among the most finely-wrought and richly-coloured canvasses on the walls, and bear all the signs of honest execution.

Mr. Wolf has two animal designs, exhibiting the well-known accuracy and feeling which have given him so high a rank amongst our naturalists—viz. "Wapiti Deer," not very pleasant in colour; and the clever and humourous "Row in a Jungle." This last is a water-colour sketch in the ante-room, representing the tiger taking his walks abroad, accompanied by a vast retinue of monkeys who are swinging along from bough to bough above him, shivering and grinning, and wondering, we presume, what the royal brute will do next, like so many courtiers in attendance on a Caligula.

When such members of the Academy as Hook or Stanfield crowd the line, no one need grudge the space, or address indignant remonstrances to the Royal Commissioners. There is no need to attempt pictures in words of the three scenes from the Scilly Islands which we this year owe to Mr. Hook—the "Sailor's Wedding," "Prawn Catchers," and "Leaving at Low Water." Each of these charming

works has qualities at once so refined and so obvious to common admiration that there is little room for criticism. The "Wedding" is, perhaps, the most successful in its poetical, yet not unreal, representation of human feeling. The "Low Water" may have the most tenderness in the sky, and the most of beauty in the green and azure waves of the lovely bay between Bryher and Tresco. A want of perfect accuracy in drawing the figure (and, in the "Low Water," in the proportions of the boat at the pier's end) may be observed; but the freshness and charm of the idea and the execution appeal to us (almost too strongly?) to overlook what may be incomplete, before the sight of so much excellence. Few, however, but those who have visited this interesting group of islands, in many points reminding us of the islands of the Aegaean, can do justice to the admirable fidelity with which Mr. Hook has caught the peculiar features of the little Cornish Archipelago. One wide bay, shallow, and hence calm, is enclosed by the low green masses of the larger islands; long peninsulas of sand and rock run out into this, and are here and there ended by loftier cairn-like hills; whilst, on the outermost circuit, stretch towering or jagged lines of scattered reef, against which the Atlantic beats in almost constant wrath. White cottages, like a flock dispersed for feeding, are scattered over hill-sides clothed with fern and heath, interspersed with gray boulders. Many of these features will be seen in Mr. Hook's three pictures, and we heartily rejoice that he has transferred his easel to so new and picturesque a region. It is by such changes as this that poets, amongst whom we class him, renew their strength, and fulfil their office of interpreting Nature. But Mr. Hook has left much, and that of grander and sterner character, as yet untouched. We hope that this summer may find

him employed amongst the strange pinnacles and bulwarks of granite beyond the village of St. Mary's, or the wild Titanic castle piled beyond the high crest of Bryher, where the great bay lies open to the west, and the sun sinks in the Atlantic behind vast towers of insulated rock, scattered along the horizon like a fleet, and fringed with a white girdle of incessant breakers.

Mr. Cooke's work exhibits his usual precision ; but the gorgeous sunset of his Venetian picture (585) is heavily coloured. His most remarkable contribution is the fine view of "Catalan Bay, Gibraltar," which, for amount of natural detail and for careful drawing, probably has no equal in this year's exhibition. Here the artist has had the courage to take as his central feature a vast slope of sand, which runs in a delicate curve from the lofty crag till it meets the green sparkle of the sea. The conchoidal ripplings of this sand cataract, with the varied features of the cliff, and the magnificent masses of rock which have apparently found their way to the beach in the convulsion which caused the slip, are rendered with Mr. Cooke's well-known and almost scientific accuracy. He has been equally successful in the drawing of the boating-gear and the nets strewn for drying, which lead the eye from the foreground by long and subtle sweeps to the centre. It is, however, the weak side of this "topographical" treatment of landscape that the interest often fails to be centralized, and the minute and hard finish which the artist gives to every part of his work, with the almost entire absence of charm in colour, rather adds to this defect. Mr. Beechey's "Bay of Biscay," is a good specimen of firm and careful sea-painting :—the dreary drifting waves faithful and impressive. No seas in motion, however, seem (in point of drawing) to equal those which Mr. Stanfield has so

often painted, and painted with such increasing tenderness and truth that the work of his advanced years ranks far higher, in poetical quality, than the admirably drawn but rather cold paintings with which his name is generally associated. Those fine qualities which placed his "Abandoned" so high are seen in the "Morning of Trafalgar" and the "Worm's Head." The latter is a noble rock, rising like a tower above the Bristol Channel, on the coast of Caermarthenshire; but the interest of the picture lies more in sky and sea than in the Head itself. The light gray of the nearer waters (though wanting transparency) is beautifully managed. Over this comes a dark and troubled sea-horizon, and then a haze of drifting rain-clouds, in which the approaching shift of the wind is expressed with much skill. The "Trafalgar" shows the same breadth. We cannot help expressing a strong wish that Mr. Stanfield should be employed to paint this or some similar design amongst the frescoes at Westminster. It would be mere pedantry which would refuse to such a work the title of Historical, in the truest sense of that often-abused epithet. And it is difficult to overrate the value which such a monument of our present landscape art would have, centuries hence, if executed in the durable process which Mr. Maclise first introduced, and has employed with so much effect in his magnificent works.

Roberts, Creswick, and the elder Linnell send pictures of the quality with which they have for many years familiarized us: yet it may safely be predicted that, whatever limitations in skill must be recognized in their respective styles, their absence would be greatly missed. Two Surrey landscapes, by Mr. Redgrave (220 and 311), and the "Autumnal Evening," by Mr. V. Cole, are good specimens of English landscape, delicately felt and painted. The figures in

Mr. Redgrave's work are apt to interfere with the general effect. We wish that the solemn and glowing "Sunrise over St. Paul's," by Mr. A. Severn, had been hung so as to permit a comparison with Mr. Roberts's picture of the "Cathedral, seen from the West," the best, in our judgment, of the rather hasty and superficial series by which he has lately illustrated river-side London.

IV

No one seems satisfied with the present state of English portraiture. Year by year we have the complaint, regular as May itself, that the Exhibition walls are crowded with huge figures of people about whom we know nothing by artists about whom we care nothing. Various reasons have been given to account for this unsatisfactory state of things; and the cause why the heads of our contemporaries do not strike or please us so much as the portraits of people long since dead or forgotten, by Titian, Velasquez, or Gainsborough, has been sought in the commonplaceness or the inartistic quality of modern dress, or even in the commonplaceness of the faces which (it has been alleged) are chosen, we presume by some misdirected principle of "natural selection," for the express purpose of portraiture. It cannot but suggest itself that a much simpler reason, which the critic must not veil in silence, may be nearer the truth; and that, if heads by the "manufacturers" of the day do not please like those of great artists, it is to the palette, not to the dress or features, that we should look for the element of inferiority.

It is not difficult to suggest some cause for this confessed inferiority; and although we cannot expect that the steady production of a low type of portrait will be checked by any

discussion, yet the circumstances in which it arises may lead to a more lenient judgment on the art than many of the pictures themselves would seem to justify. The demand for likenesses is immense. But this demand does not conform to the common laws of human production, and call forth an adequate supply to meet it. For genius is one of those elements which are classed, in political economy, as limited. Like land, it cannot be increased at our liking. Cultivated it may be, but it may also be overcropped. And the truth is, that nothing but first-rate genius will produce true or excellent portraiture; and first-rate genius is probably as rare, or hardly less rare, here, than it is in other branches of art. Nothing can be more false than the notion which, from their number, we conclude, is almost as common amongst portrait-painters as amongst sitters—that imagination and invention are not required for the work. On the contrary, portraiture, in the necessary limitations of the effect, resembles sculpture in calling for the most intense and concentrated force of the imaginative faculty. Any clever sketcher may catch enough likeness to be recognizeable; for any man who can draw and colour at all can produce a face more like the sitter's than anybody's else, as we constantly see at fairs and in public houses. But such work must not be mistaken for portraiture, in the high essential sense of the word. In this, not only should we have severity of design and beauty of colour, but the likeness, in common with those which are drawn in words by the great masters of the craft, must be one that, in some mysterious way, gives not only the man as he may look in common life, when he comes into the room or stands by his hunter, but the whole substance of his character, the "form and pressure" of his mind, so far as these inner features are stamped on the outward. We have seen portraits,

(the head of Sir W. Hooker, by Mr. T. Woolner is an example,) executed thus, and so admirably that hardly the most intimate friends could remember the presence of that one comprehensive look which the artist had divined, but which really seemed to render the man's whole individuality. In these cases, comparison was possible between the picture, or the bust, and the original. But so wonderful are the powers of genius that every one may remember portraits of those long dead or unknown which left on him the irresistible impression of similar verisimilitude and depth of representation. A head by Titian, exhibited by Lord Elcho a few years since in Pall Mall, and the Andrea del Sarto, lately added to the National Gallery, are examples which many readers will be able to recall. And, coming nearer home, we would venture to specify two heads, on which we shall presently have more to add, as instances, in their degree, of a similar quality—the Mr. Preston, by J. Robertson, and the Dr. Lushington, by W. H. Hunt.

If, however, this standard were resolutely kept in view, as in reason it should be, by those who give a commission for a portrait, not only would more genius be directed into this noble branch of the art, but men of less marked ability would be led to do fuller justice to their own faculty and to the features of the sitter. Several of those artists, whom we cannot praise as we heartily could wish to praise them, would, in such circumstances, have produced creditable work. We have often wondered why it is not so. It does not seem too much to expect that educated and wealthy persons should reach, by comparison with acknowledged types of excellence in portrait, and by the still more trustworthy and facile comparison with nature, a fair measure of judgment in regard to so comparatively simple a form of art. Nor does it, again, seem too much to expect from

popular common sense that, when excellence in any branch of human industry is not attainable, we should be content to do without it. When we have no Milton alive, no sensible man wishes to receive an epic from Montgomery. It is just the same with fine art. Nothing but a good portrait, which is necessarily a good painting, is worth having. But, so far from judging thus, the idle, insatiable wish to be painted oneself, or to put a likeness of a friend in a public place, is so predominant in modern England, that the goodness of the picture, without which it is simply canvas wasted and features caricatured, hardly seems to occur to the patron as an essential point in the business. It is to this cause, far more than to any radical deficiency in able artists, to modern dress, or to the absence of characteristic faces, that we ascribe the manufacturing aspect of the art which the newspaper press justly notices. When everybody will be painted, public taste corrupts itself and the painter's. Commonplace and superficiality become the rule, and withdraws attention from really good work; whilst, besides the crowd of incapables who inevitably rush into the field and advertise themselves, men born for better things yield to the temptations of facility and fashion :—

> ——rem facias; rem,
> si possis, recte; si non, quocunque modo, rem !

Who would spend weeks, as Mr. Hunt or Mr. Sandys must have spent, on works which, when the name of painter and original have perhaps perished, will be looked at with undiminished interest, when they can cover a fathom of canvas with a group like Mr. Weston and his hack (34), or the two ladies of No. 379, in less time—to judge from the slight quality of the painting—than the artists above named must have given to the mental conception of their subjects, or to the widely-different, but equally refined and original,

backgrounds of the Dr. Lushington and the Mrs. Rose? We know how easy it is to point to the practice of Gainsborough and Reynolds, and to say that these great artists painted, not only quickly and slightly, but even carelessly. The only reply is, that we excuse their carelessness, and accept their slightness, because they were Reynolds and Gainsborough. And nothing would delight us more than that Messrs. Pickersgill, Grant, Swinton, Buckner, Weigall, G. Richmond, and O'Neil should furnish equal claims for a similar acceptance.

First-rate portraiture will always be rare, although it is only such that is likely to command spectators on the sole ground of its merits as art, or that can strictly be thought a worthy subject for criticism. But even portraiture of less pretensions demands an eye for form and colour, and a complete cultivation of design, in which too many fashionable limners are sadly, but it would seem unconsciously, deficient. Most people were struck, last year, at the International Exhibition, by the thoroughness which the French, German, and Scandinavian artists showed, in comparison with ours: and it is difficult to believe that all our popular favourites would receive on the Continent that place in art to which they are here held entitled. That admirable artist and charming writer, Mr. Leslie, in his book for Young Painters, tells a story which we may appropriately quote. "A nobleman said to Lely, 'How is it that you have so great a reputation, when you know, as well as I do, that you are no painter?' 'True, *but I am the best you have*,' was the answer." It is probable that no one who remembers some of Lely's really beautiful portraits, as those at Hampton Court, will be disposed to rank any one of the artists just referred to with the English successor of Vandyke. Except as forming part of

a series, as an Archbishop or a Speaker, the portraits they exhibit are not likely to arouse the interest of spectators a hundred years hence. Yet it would be equally unjust, let us add, to apply the "nobleman's" words in their full extent. Mr. Grant's "Speaker," though thinly painted in the head, and wanting in the attractions and the truths of colour, like the same painter's "Lady Fife," is well put on the canvas. Mr. Weigall's smaller work, as his "Lady R. Montagu," has simplicity in an insipid and conventional key of colour. Mr. G. Richmond's "Rev. H. Venn" we think superior in its look of likeness to his "Archbishop of Canterbury," which does not escape a certain awkward and feeble effect, rarely avoided when a person is painted moving apparently across the canvas. Is it to be ascribed to over-haste that Mr. Sant's colouring, never his strong point, has lately become not only thin and garish, but in some parts quite opaque and ungradated? These defects go far to balance the praiseworthy attempt at varied action and novelty of *pose* which his portraits exhibit. The attempt is not, indeed, always free from some affectation and some constraint, but it takes his work out of the common range. Mr. Macnee's colour has some of the quality of Sant's; but the lines in his "Lady and Child" are very graceful, and the drawing much more careful than is generally bestowed on our portraits.

Messrs. Gordon and Macbeth represent the Scotch school, in which the traditions of Raeburn as yet retain predominance, with the result of a certain manly power, and a marked reliance on deep shadows and indoors effect. The "Archibald Bennett" and "Dr. Cunningham" are good examples in this manner of work—grave and forcible, if not rising above the atmosphere of the bank-parlour or the College-hall in point of attractiveness. The latter quality has

been more aimed at and attained by Mr. Watts in his highly-coloured child's head, "Virginia," wherein, however, the sentimentalism of the artist reappears, and in the Lady (84) by Mr. Wells. This, though not a painting of such promise as the three girls by Mr. Orchardson, which we shall presently notice, is the most completely studied portrait of its kind exhibited. The figure is well placed, the very copious ornamental furniture of the room carefully arranged, the light and colour pleasingly managed, and the features natural and unconscious. Perhaps, indeed, a more animated look would have improved the effect by concentrating the eye on the principal point. Fenced in and about by drawing-room fortifications as she is, the lady appears now almost *minima pars sui*. Mr. Wells has also a good half-length of Sir H. Ross, which, though rather low in tone, appears well drawn and painted. Mrs. Newton's small Head (464), has a true charm of colour and expression; and a similar remark may be made in favour of Mr. W. Richmond's full-length of a little girl (rather hardly hung in the North Room), and the pretty "Child on the Rocks," by Mr. Eddis. These are the most satisfactory pictures in their class. Mr. A. Thompson's portrait (705), is careful and life-like, but rather defective in "putting together," from the artist's wish to give his work an unstudied air.

Mr. Orchardson, already referred to, is, we suppose, like Messrs. Thompson and W. Richmond, one of our younger artists. As such, we hold it to be of good augury that in his Group (952) he has aimed, above all things, at a true representation of the heads before him, even if the resolute attempt not to conventionalize has left the heads in question rather *set* in expression, and given his whole work an awkwardness of arrangement. The large space to be covered is probably one reason for the incompleteness of the nearer

and the most distant portions, as, in the same artist's small subject—a Girl Singing—the details are beautifully finished in a style which suggests that foreign masters like Plassan and A. Stevens may have been studied with success, whilst preserving an English character. Mr. Sandys, though, we believe, known as the author of some noteworthy drawings, must be also reckoned, as a painter, amongst the men of promise in whom this Exhibition has been unusually fertile. His head of "Mrs. Rose," has struck every one as a remarkable example of execution, in which careful drawing and characteristic expression are set off to the best advantage by significance in the accessories and care in the finish. There is a strong tendency to hardness in handling, and to archaism of style; we trust that Mr. Sandys will not allow these temptations to divert him from what bids fair to be a career of unusual success. Mr. Dickinson has produced so many conscientious pieces of portraiture in former years, that we class him with the scanty band of those who show merit in fulfilment rather than in promise. Of the works which he exhibits this year, we prefer the animated "Major Powis Keck" to his portrait of Mr. Kingsley, which is somewhat gloomy in colour and over-weighted with allusive details.

We have already indicated our reason for the high rank assigned in this criticism to the portrait by Mr. W. H. Hunt (612). It takes this place not by virtue of its execution, which is not free from a look of painful care; nor of its colour, which, though very fine in conception, has also suffered through its elaboration;—but by virtue of attaining the first, second, and third essential in portraiture, namely, masterful grasp over human features as the embodiment of human character. Mr. Robertson's full-length, which, so far as it can be seen, appears worthy to be

classed with Mr. Hunt's work, shows (with no advantages in the figure and the dress) a true largeness and power in arrangement, which are very rare qualities in this branch of art. As an illustration of them, compare the figure with Gordon's "Mr. Baird" nearly opposite, or with the angular and distracting lines of Mr. Weigall's "Sir G. Lewis." The head is too distant for detailed criticism; but if equal (as it looks) to the general style of the picture, Mr. Robertson must be placed high on our list of portrait painters. Mr. Holman Hunt's "Dr. Lushington" is fortunately better hung. In the colour of the flesh, and in some portions of the execution, it betrays (as we have said) the overlabour which a powerful and conscientious artist cannot help throwing into any form of art with which he is comparatively unfamiliar. But it would be a superficial criticism which confounded this with the incurable defects of a careless or commonplace painter. We cannot expect that the work will be popular; the English spectator has been trained so long to admire the easier manner of Lawrence's followers, and the "Lushington" is a first essay by the artist in an opposite direction. Yet we venture to think that it makes an epoch in our school of portraiture, by possession of those qualities of intensity and severity in style in which we have been most deficient. This year's Exhibition has nothing equalling it in the power and the refinement with which the features have been modelled. Such art may not commend itself at once even to those who, justly admiring Reynolds, know the vast difference between him and the ordinary portraiture of the day; but the qualities it has are precisely those by which the *vera effigies* of a distinguished man can be perpetuated. Is it not this which we want in a portrait?

V

What has been said above on portrait-pictures seems to apply, but, unfortunately, with greater force, to portrait-busts. In this region, we are truly *en pleine manufacture*. Everything attests it. We rarely hear sculpture mentioned without words of apathy or disparagement; and the emptiness of the room in the Academy shows how little hold the noblest of the fine arts has on the mass of spectators. If in the case of portraits a blind and uncritical demand has operated to lower the standard of painting, the same influence acts here with so much greater intensity that, until diminished, there is no chance for the art. Many causes combine to produce this result. From the more abstract nature of sculpture, judgment on its merit is more difficult; there are fewer typical examples of excellence to train the eye; and in England, which has never yet possessed a real native school, we have not the advantage of appealing to a Reynolds or a Gainsborough. Chantrey—who, in fashionable rather than in popular estimate, holds or held something of this place—was confessedly without command over the human form in ideal work, and, though the author of some striking busts and some naturally-modelled figures (amongst a crowd of what is merely conventional), he gave a vogue to that practice of superficial manufacturing which has, since his time, almost become the rule in England. Mr. Noble's work, which has done so much to disfigure Manchester, is the ideal of this degraded Chantreyism. With the low level in the art which has been established, the natural functions of public judgment appear to be almost suspended; our journals, in place of the careful criticism which they supply on painting, too

often allow each public work in its turn to be announced by what is less a review than an advertisement; and a few sculptors, obtaining a run often for no better reason than that they have gained a footing among the *coteries* of Rome, or found their way to some noble or mercantile patron, are literally overwhelmed with more commissions in a year than could be executed in a real style of art in twenty. We confidently ask our readers, whether the slovenly manner in which our public and memorial statues are generally turned out does not afford a full and convincing proof of the truth of these remarks. Meanwhile, originality starves undiscovered, does the work for the fashionable man, or falls into negligence through despair. This unwholesome state of things is promoted by minor circumstances which must not be passed over. It is within the knowledge of those who conduct the business, that when any public work is on hand, downright personal applications for the job come in after a fashion to which painting supplies no parallel; whilst from the nature of the processes in this art, large opening is left, as in any other manufacture, for the employment of other hands, not only for the final execution, but for the first design, than those which the patron imagines are stamping his work with its brief immortality. Chantrey's famous "Sleeping Children," in Lichfield, we know now, were really designed by Stothard, and any one who takes the trouble to compare the sketch and the marble (engraved in the Life by Mrs. Bray,) will see that wherever the sculptor left his original, he deviated from truth and beauty. There is a widely-spread belief, to which we cannot refuse credence, that even more liberal appropriations have been made by more than one of the most largely-employed sculptors in England: and the talk of artists names a dozen similar instances in which our Molières in

metal have "taken their goods where they could find them;" nor do we presume to criticize what is done under the sanction of such high authority. Only we ought to have Molières to do the "conveyance," as Bardolph calls it! As it is, one bad statue or bust is so like another, that it matters little who is the real author. People unconsciously express this: every one can tell whom his picture is by, or whom he wishes to be thought the painter; but it is ten to one that the owner of a bust does not know the sculptor's name. Other causes of depression will be noticed hereafter: let us now endeavour, by a plain-spoken analysis and comparison of the good and the bad visible in the Academy of 1863, to illustrate the general positions above stated.

To take first the scanty contributions to the ideal or poetical class. If these present little excellence, it is no cause for wonder. When portrait-sculpture is at its present low ebb, we cannot have good work in the more arduous regions of imagination. Well-wishers to the Academy must regret that the sculptor last incorporated should have exhibited a figure so little satisfactory as the "Ariel" (1044). Its style reminds one of the old Annual illustrations to "Lalla Rookh," and, with its flying drapery and appurtenances, it makes a perilous approach to the sensational tricks of the modern Italian school, which excited the wonder of the uneducated classes at the "International Exhibition." This artist's "Girl and Dog" (1040) attempts that compromise between classical draperies and a modern portrait which has been so often attempted with no better success. Mr. Durham's models of "Africa" and "America" are careful specimens in that commonplace manner which is to high art what Mr. Edmund Reade's verse is to high poetry—"most tolerable and not to be endured." They

form part of the "Monument to the Exhibition of 1851," and raise melancholy anticipations (since only too well realized) regarding that latest product of the Horticultural Gardens. Mr. Leifchild's two Scripture statuettes (1038 and 1041) show the wish to recur to a better standard. Echoes of Flaxman, and of those whom Flaxman studied with such admirable results, are discernible in the drapery and arrangement. There is good intention here, which we hope may ultimately lead to corresponding performance. Miss Durant's "Shepherdess," though revealing the same kind of study, is took weak to encourage such hopes. To copy Phidian style is simply damaging, unless the artist have first mastered that which made Phidias great—knowledge of human form. The "Margaret," "Head of Mirth," and "Maternal Affection," by Messrs. Birch, Hancock, and Papworth, have each pleasing features in their different ways, and, though not carried far in execution, or exhibiting severity of study, contrast favourably with the "Ariel" above noticed. Mr. Philip's basso and alto reliefs do not rise in any respect above the quality of mere "architectural" sculpture, such as is turned out to order for our new churches by several well-known firms, and ranks as decoration rather than as art. They are rude and yet tame in modelling; the heads and draperies are poor and unlike nature. The larger series looks, in fact, like a rearrangement from West's scripture designs; it resembles a bad picture modelled in relief, rather than a piece of sculpture. Yet this work has actually been commissioned for St. George's Chapel at Windsor! Surely a building of so much national interest might have been spared the intrusion of such weak and inartistic decoration. The prevalence of cheap mason's work in carving, more or less, in this style, which is particularly common in Mr. Gilbert Scott's buildings, does

serious injury to the cause of Gothic in England, and justifies the sarcasms of those who decry it as ineradicably mediaeval. On the opposite wall, but unfavourably placed for the light, is another scriptural subject, by Mr. Redfern (1069), which though stiffly modelled in parts, shows some originality. A pleasing and delicate alto-relief of a child, by Mr. D. Davis (1089), may be also noticed here, its treatment giving it a fair place among poetical designs.

From the small display in sculpture of ideal aim, we turn to the formidable array of busts, not without a sense of discouragement at the results which the low *status* of the art, already discussed, inevitably stamps on its annual manifestations. How can we expect many good works, when we all confess that the school is feeble? One's criticism here must necessarily be fault-finding, from the simple fact that not one bust in fifty has been executed by an artist really entitled to the name of sculptor. A thorough bust, like a thorough portrait, should, first and last, bear on its front the unmistakeable rendering of human character. This can only be given by the genius of the sculptor. To catch it is his secret; but the material ways which he has of expressing it are within our analysis. He is, properly, without the resource of colour; and we are glad to see that Mr. Gibson's paradoxical attempt to blend two distinct arts has hardly shown itself in this Exhibition. Without colour, however, form is the sculptor's only vehicle—form brought out by light and shade, the absolute contour by that which the background supplies, all the rest by the variety of surface which he gives to the material. The phrase, "breathing marble," rarely realized as it is in modern work, expresses exactly the lifelike look which surfaces truly modelled and textures truly rendered—as the tense or the soft masses, the skin drawn closely over the bone or undulated by the

muscles, the hair and the drapery—always give. An infinity of half-tints, arising from truly followed subtleties of curvature and planes of surface, is an unvaried accompaniment of first-rate work, and an easy test of its presence. Sculpture, having only these modes of doing its task, must not claim to be judged successful unless they are practised, which, it will be obvious, will not be unless the sculptor has not merely made a rigorous and accurate study of human form, but is able and willing to finish his marble with thorough care—putting in a thousand fine touches and delicate planes, which only tell in the general effect, whilst he refrains from the easy but coarse and inartistic expedients that strike an ignorant observer.

We are justified in trying sculpture by its own high standard, not only because the essential conditions of the art are severe, but because, unless they are complied with, from the absence of subsidiary modes of attractiveness, it is an art which gives little pleasure. A commonplace bust is the least agreeable of all works of art. But very few of those before us can be said to rise above this level. Such heads as the "Mr. Hallam" (1054)—so awkwardly sawn, in a block, as it were, out of Mr. Theed's bad figure of that great man in St. Paul's, and here placed, with the same defective taste which that statue exhibits, on a pile of quartos—the "Lord Herbert" (1165), the "Lord Elgin" (1059), with the full-length "Lord Lonsdale" (1013), are samples. With these we must class Mr. Philip's feeble recumbent figure of Lord Herbert, which does not rise above what has been called the "New Road style," and presents an unfortunate piece of archaism in the baby angels, if such be their meaning, which flank the pillow. This imitation of early art is not less puerile in sculpture than we all feel it to be in painting. More directly unpleasing, because more violent and angular

in style, are two military busts by Mr. G. Adams (1019 and 1197), which grapple so ineffectually with the exigencies of the uniform, moustache, &c. that they look more like caricatures on the profession than monuments to the gallant originals. These heads are by the same hand as the Napiers of Trafalgar Square and St. Paul's, which have awakened such loud protests from the press, and should have served as a deterrent to patrons. Nor can we assign higher rank to the "Col. Gladstone" by Mr. A. Munro. This is throughout defective in the modelling. What anatomists term the "osseous structure" is here apparently absent from the upper face and forehead, which rise and fall in vague undulations, whilst the neck and jaw are blank surfaces. Hence the bust equally lacks firmness in the frontal region, and the air of mobility in the flesh. The eyes, which perhaps present the greatest difficulty to the sculptor, in this and in Mr. Munro's other busts, are without character or life. The "General Shirreff" resembles the military heads by Mr. Adams, above noticed. Mr. Lough's "Captain" has more force, but the hair again has been a difficulty which the artist could not fully conquer. It here rises into horns, which remind one of those given to the Satyrs of ancient art. The treatment of this feature is, indeed, the most recurrent *crux* of our sculptors. If conventionalized, one point of the likeness is sacrificed; if realized without taste or style, it is apt to give a vulgar air —witness the "Mr. Marshall," in which there is some clever effectism. We give the quality this name, because "effect" may be better reserved for that which is obtained by legitimate means of art. Here, as in M. Marochetti's heads generally, the features are made to tell, not by truth or subtlety of surface, but by suppressing all minor details in favour of those points which first strike the eye; and then by

opposing to the flesh a coarse and heavily-handled mass of drapery. The drab-coloured surface, the marking of the eyes, the colour thrown in here and there, are all ingenious tricks of the same kind: expedients for concealing the absence of the ever-recurring necessities of sculpture—mastery over form, insight into character, and power to put them into marble.

Some true sculptural spirit is shown in the heads by Messrs. Mégret and Evey (1172 and 1184). They may be compared with the terra-cotta by J. E. Boehm (1175), which greatly exaggerates the "picturesque" mode of treatment,—allowable within certain limits in this material. The little statuettes by the same modeller are similar in manner to the "Mr. Marshall" just noticed, and, like it, belong to the class of work in which dash and cleverness are substituted for style and accuracy. We trust that this artist will not be satisfied with the comparatively facile and slight reputation of the successful sketcher. Mr. W. Davis's "H. Owen," Mr. Lawlor's head of a boy (1154), Mr. J. A. Miller's "Dr. Cureton," and Mr. Butler's "Jacob Bell," may be instanced as pieces of sound, unshowy work. The latter, perhaps owing to the subject, is not throughout equal to other busts we have seen from the same conscientious and able artist, though the drapery is perhaps the best executed bit of the kind here exhibited.

Sculpture has at no time numbered many successful followers amongst women. We have, however, in Mrs. Thorneycroft, one such artist who, by some recent advance, and by the degree of success which she has already reached, promises fairly for the art. Some of this lady's female busts have refinement and feeling. We think "Mrs. Wallace" the best which she now exhibits; it is sweet and truthful in air. This work, however, with all the rest in marble

which the imperfect lighting of the rooms has enabled us to examine, yields in general excellence to the truly noble bust of Mountstuart Elphinstone, which we owe to an artist who has given us formerly many first-rate portraits, Mr. Behnes. Those who care to test the grounds of the foregoing criticism, and ascertain whether there are reasons of fact for determining what is good or not good in sculpture, should examine this head, in which, as a posthumous likeness, it may be supposed that the artist had to meet the maximum of difficulty. And yet with what ability has he met it! Here the elementary requirements—life-like appearance and individuality of character—have been fulfilled in a degree which would strike even the casual observer; and when the work is examined in detail, it will be found conformable to the more strictly artistic requirements before indicated. It is modelled with firmness, accuracy, and delicacy; the many planes and fine flexures of the human face are carefully followed; and hence some measure of that air of mobility and lightness—life, in one word—is imparted, which we all recognize, but are not often called on to recognize, in modern sculpture. The management of the hair and modelling of the neck may be noted as special points of merit. This combination of truthful treatment (for into truth goodness in art always resolves itself) gives the whole, although in some points the highest standard has not been reached, that indefinable quality which is often spoken of as "style," and renders it an excellent standard of comparison.

Now, if from Mr. Behnes' bust we turn to its neighbour, by Mr. Marshall Wood, we shall be aware that the criticism which applies to the "Elphinstone" would be quite inappropriate if applied to this representation of the Prince of Wales. Indeed, there could hardly be a more marked

contrast. We are aware that plaster never does complete justice to marble ; yet, making full allowance for this, and for the difficulty of a colossal size, Mr. Wood's work must be ranked among the least successful and least promising productions here displayed. Putting aside all points of mere taste, and keeping to obvious facts, it is throughout heavily and unfeelingly handled. The modelling of the finer details (the upper lip, which appears confused with the moustache, the ears, and the hair, may be instanced) resembles a pupil's rather than an artist's performance; while the drapery, broken into ungainly and distracting angles, strikes us as a peculiarly unfortunate compromise between the real and the ideal, having neither the grace of the one nor the significance of the other. In short, much as one would prefer to find so interesting a subject worthily handled, it is impossible not to see here a bust with no claim to spirit, veracity, or sculpturesque style. Royalty in England, from the days when Reynolds was rejected for West, has been rarely fortunate in selecting its Apelles or its Lysippus. No artist, to our thinking, did half justice to the Prince Consort whilst he was still ours. It is not impossible that the almost official obsequiousness with which our journals generally eulogize likenesses which appeal so strongly by their mere name to Englishmen, may be partly responsible for a misfortune which we are now unable to remedy. And if Mr. Marshall Wood's bust of the Prince Consort's son had not already been greeted with this cloud of deferential incense, we should have gladly passed it over in the silence which, when a conspicuously bad case is in question, may be often the most expressive comment on a failure.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF 1864

One's first impulse, when the Trafalgar Square doors open and the chief pictorial harvest of the season displays itself to the crowd that rushes in, all eager and some anxious, is to compare at once this year's with last year's Exhibition. This impulse is so common that most of the journals which give a notice on the Saturday of the private view make the comparison in proper form. And it is natural that the verdict thus framed, with a crowd of fresh bright things before one, the eyes not yet satisfied with seeing, nor the ears dinned with the gossip of dinner-tables and drawing-rooms, should almost always be in favour of the show of the year. Rumour, also, during this winter, prepared us for a good gathering. It was likely that the Academicians, rather severely handled in the evidence given before the Commission and in the reviews of last year, would put forth their strength and justify their good places on the line; and whether they should do so or not, the Exhibitions of 1862 and 1863 showed that there was a new rising school of younger artists determined to prove themselves fit for public honour, and anxious to vindicate for English art that higher style and greater breadth of subject in which, it was felt, foreign artists had gained an advance upon our insular security.

We are not going to dispute the fulfilment of the pleasant view which we were thus invited to take by anticipation, and which most of the oracles that have hitherto

spoken appear to confirm. But it may be proper to point out, before beginning our survey, that the difficulties which seem to us to make the comparison between one Exhibition and another arduous, if not rash, after a first hasty and crowd-hampered view, do not much diminish even after frequent and careful explorations. This summer's thunder-storm, do what we may to gain an impartial estimate of it, inevitably seems louder than last summer's; and the oldest inhabitant of the parish will always confirm the opinion. So the fine things of former Royal Academies have passed from our eyes, and are, perhaps, too often remembered through a mist of confusing and trivial criticisms, or the caricatures of wood-cuts and bad coloured copies in the popular illustrated papers. Meanwhile, the efforts which some three or four hundred hard-working men have been making, during a twelvemonth, to please and edify us, appeal for judgment rather on their own merits than by way of comparison with standards no longer in view. At the most, without trying to weigh the harvest of 1864 against that of years immediately preceding, it may be safe to point out what appear to be cases of improvement, and to say that this Exhibition gives fair grounds of confidence, and just cause for pleasure, to those who watch the progress of English art with affectionate interest. There is, certainly, more soundness than greatness displayed. Some few men do not show the advance that had been hoped for. Some popularities are injuring the cause of the art with the public, and some with the artist. Others, again—and we may here, not to the exclusion of names which we shall hereafter notice, specify Sir Edwin Landseer, Mr. Armitage, Mr. Marks, and Mr. Whistler—delight us with a marked step forward, even beyond former merit. And it may probably be said with truth that, if the painstaking study

of fact is not sufficiently represented, there is a greater attempt than heretofore to try fresh ground, and especially to escape into more varied and more intellectual regions from those easy vices of the English school—the pinafore and sentimental styles in figure-painting, with the cow-in-the-meadow and purling-brook species of landscape. These remarks refer, of course, to the oil-pictures. The water-colours, miniatures, chalk-drawings, and architectural designs shown are all lying in the cold shade from which, until the Academy is properly lodged, they are little likely to escape. And the sculpture-room not only exhibits an absence of good work which we believe to be unprecedented, at least for many years, but contains even more than usual evidence of the deplorable condition to which ignorant patronage and popular apathy have brought that noble art in England; whilst the fair and satisfactory arrangement which on the whole, though not without exceptions in landscape, marks the picture-gallery, is totally wanting in the department consigned, we presume, to Mr. Weekes.

On all this, more hereafter; *sine odio et affectu*, but with such plain speaking as can alone render any attempt at criticism worth a moment's attention. But, before estimating our gains, a few words must be also given to our losses. Last year we prefaced our review with a short notice of what English art had been deprived of in the death of Mr. Egg. We shall not attempt to do the same for Dyce and Mulready. Without comparing these eminent men—whom death, if he has not equalized, has withdrawn from the noise of human rivalries—we may at least add that they were not such as we could easily afford to spare, or expect to see soon replaced. We have not even the melancholy pleasure, which the Water-colour Exhibition

affords in the parallel case of William Hunt, of seeing any last expression of their art on the walls of the Academy. And with them we find the names of Maclise, Foley, Frith, Frost, Herbert—with those of Holman Hunt, F. M. Brown, W. Davis, Inchbold, and other good men and true, absent. Some of these artists have been engaged on public works. Some have, perhaps, not met with favour in the eyes of the Committee of Arrangement. Watts, Ward, and Gibson, again, whatever their respective abilities, are insufficiently represented ; whilst Millais, though fully preserving the place which, for better and for worse, he has latterly taken, has reserved for another year his powers of astonishing us, and gives even the pleasure which he rarely fails to afford after a somewhat monotonous and superficial fashion. But we now turn to the long series of figure-painters, beginning with those whom, on different grounds, it is difficult to bring under any classification.

I

Amongst the half-dozen pictures here exhibited which we should be inclined to range highest, looking to their merits in thought or in design, a fair claim for admittance may be made by Mr. Armitage's "Ahab and Jezebel." It is not, however, in the execution, technically speaking, that its superiority lies. The drawing, although accurate and refined much beyond English wont, and this on the life-size scale, has an air of Academical style ; and the colouring, perhaps from the artist's frequent practice in fresco, or from his training in the great French school of mural decoration, wants power and richness. But the scene is dramatically conceived and the expression is fine and unforced ; the details are wrought out with correctness, yet

without archaeological pedantry, and the whole has that general air of completeness in training (so far as form is concerned), which is, unhappily, so uncommon in English art, that Mr. Armitage has been long vainly spending his ability in the effort to gain fair recognition. Jezebel leans over Ahab, who is stretched on a long couch; his face expresses indecision, but the reverted eye, like that of a vicious horse, has already conceived the set purpose of mischief, aroused in him by the promises of the wicked queen behind him. The action is powerful and skilfully imagined in itself; but the group would have gained considerably in force had the two figures been brought into greater nearness. We do not think that modern painters, at least in England, sufficiently feel that two figures, in any dramatic scene, require in some degree to be treated like a group in marble, and that the concentration of lines may be here brought, with great advantage, under the laws which render it imperative in sculpture. We shall meet with Mr. Armitage again, and again highly to his credit, in portraiture. Let us once more express a hope that some of our many liberal patrons of church architecture may select his pencil for mural decoration. There cannot be a greater error than the employment of a mere decorator in colour or stone, whether his style be the flowing or the angular, to give completeness to a building. Such work may, indeed, harmonize sufficiently with the commonplace design and imitative details of a mere fashionable architect; but anything less thorough than the painting of Mr. Armitage is fatal to the effect of those amongst our modern churches which are marked by the noble feature of originality.

Mr. Watts, who by some of his works has put in a claim to rank amongst our decorative artists of the larger order, does nothing to support it by the design which he now

contributes. His allegorical group of "Time and Oblivion," although drawn in a large, if a somewhat loose and extravagant style, seems to us an utter failure in expressing its story, and is, besides, encumbered with accessories which suggest the direct antithesis of the sublime. Time, to whom youth, here given by the artist, has no greater propriety as an attribute than old age, appears to be dragging Oblivion along as his prisoner, and is about to plunge with her into a vast gilded semicircle, which may be taken, with equal probability, for the Sun or for Eternity. As a real master in tender colouring and admirable delicacy of touch, Mr. Watts does his gifts better justice in the beautiful girl's head, named "Choosing." Surely a work like this, with the many charming specimens in the same style which we have received from the artist, may be admitted as evidence in what direction his genius really lies,—not force, thought, imagination, but refinement, grace, and fancy. It is his work in the latter manner, which will, at any rate, be preferred by all the world to his attempts in the "terribil via" of life-size allegory.

Perhaps the unusually interesting pictures which Mr. Leighton has sent suggest some lesson of a not dissimilar nature. He is, at least, most successful at present in work which, although above mere ornamentalism or sensuousness, yet is not of the strictly historical character. Such is that fine group—a youth at the harpsichord, watched by a girl with an intensity of gaze which we feel, but cannot see—felicitously named "Golden Hours," which will remind some spectators of those eight exquisite lines by Shelley which Mr. Savage Landor prefers to all the Elizabethan lyrics. Although labouring under a double disadvantage—that we do not see the girl's face, and do see the youth's, which is feeble and voluptuous—Mr. Leighton has thrown

such an atmosphere of music over his picture, that it "vibrates in the memory" like Shelley's stanzas. We fear that the accomplished artist may not think it praise if this design be preferred to his two other pieces. The "Orpheus and Eurydice," beautifully as Eurydice is drawn, and ably as the intended expression is given to the hero, strikes us, however, as not equal to the elevation of that wonderful legend. The human struggle and the human features are alone brought forward; it is rather a *mythe vivant* than the sublime agony from which, even in the late narrative of Vergil (let us throw off the barbarous mis-spelling of the poet's name!) all traces of the divinity of the actors have not disappeared. The smoothness of execution and academical, rather than natural, arrangement of the drapery to which occasionally Mr. Leighton shows a leaning, are also rather prominent in this picture.

The "Dante in Exile," as a piece of refined drawing (with some little mannerism, perhaps, in the proportions) and of carefully studied attitude and character, finished to the best of the artist's manner, has little to fear from English rivalry. This subject was a noble one to attempt, and we are glad that Mr. Leighton has had the courage to undertake it. Only we could wish he would take it up again, and then give us (as he assuredly might), not the mask of Dante placed on a stiff and unimpressive form, but the poet in his stern vitality. There are several skilfully devised points of by-play as the poet passes from the palace steps amongst a crowd of courtiers and servants, and the veracity and interest of the scene are not impaired by the objection raised by some unpoetical critic, that the known facts of Dante's life do not record this scene of mockery. He must, however, have endured it; or how should those immortal lines, in which the very extremes of tenderness and bitterness

touch with almost overwhelming power, have been written by the most realistic of poets?

A foreign artist, M. Legros, may be lastly mentioned among the life-size figure-painters. His "Ex Voto," a lady offering up prayers before a memorial tablet on the edge of a wood, with some religious women and a servant attending, has a look of reality and a powerful daylight effect which even the height at which the picture has been placed cannot efface. It is probable that, if nearer to the eye, some feebleness in drawing and an over-naturalism of expression amongst the heads would be found; and it was surely a mistake in art to use actual gold on the votive tablet. But the whole effect, as we have said, is very striking, and the painter seems to have skilfully combined unity of feeling in his worshippers with diversity of attitude and expression, without overstepping the modesty of nature. We shall hope to see M. Legros again in a less unfavourable position.

II

Among the older figure-painters belonging to the Academy, the loss of Mulready for first-rate rendering of common life in its humourous and poetical aspects, and of Dyce for the intellectual conception of his subjects, seems likely to be long felt. Mr. Elmore hardly comes up to the power shown in his "Lucrezia Borgia" of last year by the return which he makes now to his favourite painting-ground, the cloister. "Within the Convent Walls," although not so brilliant an opportunity for colour, is however a pleasing and graceful work, and painted with a greater completeness than the artist showed in former days. The avenue to the left, where nuns are walking in chequered shade, strikes us as

the successful bit of this work. In the life-size figure, Excelsior,' Mr. Elmore, whilst exhibiting the same command of the brush on a larger scale, has been hampered at once by the weak sentimentalism of the ballad and by the selection of an inappropriate model. An Italian youth is here seen rather vaguely stepping upwards through a studio-snowstorm, seriously impeded in his course by a banner bearing that familiar dog-Latin inscription to which young ladies, looking more to the idea than to the grammar of "Excelsior," are so partial. Mr. Elmore's picture is, however, preferable to Mr. Cope's "Contemplation," whose overwrought expression and theatrical air might qualify her to act as Mr. Longfellow's "interpreter" for the ballad above in question. The boy studying in the country for university honours (335), is a more favourable specimen of Mr. Cope's art—although the effect is rather thin and garish, and the room overcrowded by tempting apparatus for studies in a contrary direction. A second class, we hope, is the highest ambition of the parents. Mr. Dobson seems to us to show some advance this year towards a larger style. While prettiness holds, as it always will hold, its place in art, we can hardly ask for prettier faces and attitudes than his two fair damsels with their flowers and their book (4 and 265). The former is almost as bright as the child with the story-book which did Mr. Dobson credit in the International Exhibition. A love-scene by Mr. F. R. Pickersgill (123), and "Jane Shore," by Mr. Redgrave, belong to this division of our survey; and here—as Royal Academicians are before us—we may place that *cento* from the old masters which Mr. G. Richmond names "The Measure," from Milton's *Comus*. Figures from Titian and Poussin, misapplied and enfeebled, with reminiscences of Bellini and Blake, are brought together in this work without unity of

composition or definiteness of purpose. Mr. Hart and Mr. H. Pickersgill it may be enough to name. The latter takes his turn this year to murder Desdemona again in a life-size work which the Committee has, very justly, made the pendant to the miserable portraits of the Prince and Princess of Wales by a Danish painter, and the even more profoundly miserable figure of the Duchess of Wellington by Mr. Walton, which is a perfect example how a lady should *not* be painted.

We suppose that a time comes in the career of many artists after which a deficiency, although often pointed out and observed, cannot or will not be amended. The carelessness of Mr. Poole's drawing, and the evidences of haste in his work, may perhaps fall within the scope of our remark; and it is impossible not to regret that the artist thus does injustice to a poetical invention and a feeling for beauty, both in expression and in colour, in which English art is not very fruitful. Within the limitations indicated, his "Greek Peasants" have much to praise. The skilful management of the blue dresses, which do not interfere with the dominant warmth of the composition, is especially commendable. Mr. Poole's "Lighting the Beacon" (320) has the disadvantage of recalling the more picturesque and truthful design from the same subject, which Mr. Hodgson exhibited in 1863. The carefully painted "Princes in the Tower," by Mrs. Ward, labours under the same disadvantage; it is well imagined, and picturesquely disposed; but we think we have seen the principal figure (the young Edward) before, in a well-known work by Paul Delaroche. A small portrait of Mr. Thackeray, sketched twenty years ago, is Mr. Ward's single contribution to the walls.

Let us here group together several artists who have

sought their subjects in the East, although in other respects exhibiting a great variety in style and power. In his Diploma-picture (294) Mr. F. Goodall has presented one of the best things he has hitherto produced to the Academy, which seldom obtains such really good specimens from those who pass the strait gate and narrow way which lead to that kingdom—witness Mr. Hook's disappointing "Lane." Mr. Goodall has here drawn a fair Egyptian girl, of pleasing features, listening to the song of a swarthy Nubian slave, with an air of feminine compassionate interest. A woman in blue bears a water-pot behind—scene, the courtyard of a house. This, although the besetting painty look of the artist's work has not been conquered, is bright, solid, and effective. We greatly prefer it to his larger "Messenger from Sinai at the Wells of Moses," in which the same inevitable blue-robed female hands water to a thirsty Arab, uncomfortably, although no doubt truthfully, perched upon the summit of a gigantic camel. The animal's neck and head have been here carefully studied, and the drawing, the difficulties of foreshortening considered, is meritorious; but we miss the quality of the real East. Something of the same want diminishes the interest of Mr. Bedford's otherwise interesting "Hagar and Ishmael." Here the grouping (although the figures, as we noticed when speaking of Mr. Armitage, might have been brought closer with advantage) is novel and striking; and we may specially commend the truthfulness of the *motif*. The boy is so eager to drink that he alarms his mother, whose arm is vainly trying to restrain the wrathful impatience of the young savage. This, in a modest way, is a good example of the new effects which a thoughtful artist may find in an old theme. The drawing of these figures might, however, be improved. A new Orientalist, whose work is more in the style of

Mr. Lewis than of Mr. Goodall, appears amongst us this year in the person of Mr. Webb, the "Travelling Student" of the Academy. The appointment, which is one of the very few advantages of the kind hitherto open to English artists, had, we believe, been for some time in abeyance. Mr. Webb now gives the Academy good grounds for satisfaction with their choice. He has sent two or three small works, all of them careful and thoughtful, and showing a powerful style in colour united with sound, if not at present striking, draughtmanship. We take all this as of good omen in a young artist on his probation; it appears to give reason for hoping that Mr. Webb will follow that longer and more complete course of study to which no little of the success of his French contemporaries is owing. The "Lost Sheep"—an Arab shepherd in striped robe bearing it home to the fold at evening in a mountainous scene like those near Jerusalem—has also, as will be conjectured, that second symbolical sense which an artist working in the Holy Land is naturally inclined to put into his picture. Everything there may, in truth, be said to have a double meaning; so many ancient Scripture texts are brought to mind by the common ways of life, as yet little changed in Syria. The execution of Mr. Webb's work is delicate, and the effect of the sinking sunlight well imagined and rendered; although the colour has not the force and glow which we find in his "Shop at Jerusalem;" where the picturesque details of the Eastern bazaar (almost too familiar, perhaps, to the spectators of the present day), are well set forth. "Treading out the corn, Jerusalem," is the third picture sent by Mr. Webb, to whom we shall look in future with interest. The very delicate, perhaps sometimes over-refined work of Mr. Gale, "Girl with Turtle Doves," and "Syrians journeying," leads us to the masterpieces in

this style which we receive this year from the unwearied hand and sure eye of Mr. Lewis. On the really marvellous qualities of this painter we need not enlarge. Practice only appears to deepen them; but they are united here with greater interest than, except as pieces of highly-wrought art and intimate rendering of Oriental character, he generally has given to his pictures. "Caged Doves," a beautiful girl of Cairo, herself "caged" with her favourites, is the most attractive work which Mr. Lewis exhibits (577). Her crimson under-robe is partly covered by a rich yet delicate green mantle, figured with a pattern over which—by a skill of which the artist has the secret—the shadow of a latticed window is again figured by the mid-day sunbeams. A sofa, crimson of another tone, and covered also with a graceful pattern, catches the rays at another angle; behind is the window and a wall of exquisitely managed gray. The gemlike richness and purity of this picture reduce everything near it—including even Mr. Millais's most pleasing child's portrait—to paint. The place of honour in the chief room might, indeed, have been justly claimed by Landseer's extraordinary Arctic scene, on which we shall have more to say hereafter. This apart, we think it has been fitly assigned to be the most important work which, since his "English Travellers at Sinai," Mr. Lewis has exhibited. This gives us the court-yard of the house of the Coptic Patriarch at Cairo. His aged figure is seen, on a seat of honour beneath the verandah or covered portion of the court, whilst he dictates a letter which an Arab is about to carry to some convent of the desert. Nearer us, a tank—no doubt the Oriental pattern which gave the idea for the *Impluvia* of the Pompeian houses—is crowded with brilliant birds; whilst a flight of the splendid Egyptian pigeons, which appear with such effect in Mr. Holman Hunt's new picture of the

"After Glow," perches on the chequered marble pavement, or wheels around the vast acacia that fills the upper portion of the courtyard with a cloud of tremulous verdure. Servants of the house, in their bright Eastern dresses, are about, engaged with the pet birds and animals of the place. We have here the materials for a work of unusual compass; but the conscientious patience of the artist has not been content to leave an inch of his canvas neglected; and he has painted the charmingly inventive details of a Cairene mansion, with the effects of light pouring in directly from above, or entering by reflection through the lattices of the lower wall, with the same loving fidelity that he has bestowed upon the figures. This is altogether a work *hors ligne*, and, without disputing the not inferior merit and attractiveness of that broader style in which the scene might have been treated by a man like Mr. Whistler at home or by more than one contemporary painter in France, we should add that Mr. Lewis has managed his material with such skill that the whole composition is properly "kept together."

Mr. Fisk, who last year, if we remember rightly, sent a powerful though unpleasant scene from the prison-tragedies of the first French Revolution, sends now a subject from Scripture which may be properly noticed here. In his "Last Night of Christ at Nazareth" (551) he has not, indeed, escaped something of the quality which we have indicated in the other work, the principal figure being deficient in dignity both of form and expression. There is also some awkwardness, hardly redeemed (as we think), in such a subject, by its truth to nature, in the attitude of the Apostle who lies prostrate in sleep by his Master's side. The picture is, however, well worthy careful attention at once from the originality of the idea and the fearlessness

with which it has been worked out, and for the really noble drawing of the mountain valley over which we look. The foreground figures are dimly lighted by a low and, probably, a waning moon—at least, this is the effect given—whilst the first anticipations of the daybreak are casting their cold light over the furthest horizon. There is no marked attempt at reproduction of the past in Mr. Fisk's picture. Messrs. Solomon and Poynter, on the other hand, go back into the East in its earliest phases. The latter sends a careful study (277) from Egypt under the Pharaohs. A soldier is here keeping guard on the turret of some walled seaport, with a huge flagstaff by his side; whilst below we see the strange perspective of an Egyptian city, its avenues, temples, and broad fortifications, such as they may have been seen by those primitive Greeks who entered the sacred land in the age of Psammeticus. Mr. Solomon's "Deacon," a youth holding a censer, is handled with great skill, although with some tendency to blackness in the making out of the forms. We wish that this clever artist would do himself justice by selecting some more important subject.

Character-scenes from contemporary Continental life are not numerous in this Exhibition. One small and thinly, but gracefully, painted work, "Winnowing Corn at Capri," has been sent by that unequal, though always interesting, artist, Mr. Wallis. Four or five peasants are engaged on their picturesque employment, ranged in a line along the threshing floor almost with the severity of a bas-relief. The varieties in attitude are rendered with skill and grace, and the sculpturesque quality in the design which we have indicated is well balanced by the disposition of the accessories and the landscape, which runs down obliquely behind the line of figures. Mr. Boughton's "Interminable Story,"

a group which tells its little tale with easy humour, is a specimen of that delicately-broad and subdued style of which Mr. Thom's "Returning from the Wood" must be, if we could only fairly see it, a good example. The action of the figures has that naturalness which we look for in a pupil of M. Edouard Frère. Less genuine, though more effective, is the art displayed by Mr. Phillip in his large Spanish Wake or "Gloria." This represents that strange Southern custom which lays out the corpse of an infant with lights and flowers, whilst a merry company assemble to celebrate its passage into another world from a life, which the neighbours, at any rate, appear under no anxiety to be relieved of. This subject, repulsive in itself, although not perhaps on that account entirely beyond the pale of art, would require, however, to render it endurable, greater seriousness of conception and a more thorough execution. The tragic demands either a slight indicative sketch, or loftiness and completion in treatment. Here we have a brilliantly-coloured scene, filled with those characters in Spanish life which are within Mr. Phillip's range, amidst whom, in spite of the as yet unmirthful mother, we have some difficulty in discovering the child who is the heroine of the drama.

III

We have now to consider, with the painters of domestic life, those noteworthy younger artists whose figure-subjects form the most interesting, and perhaps the most advancing, section of English art. These painters differ too much to be brought under one definition ; but on the whole, besides the increased regard for drawing, colour, and brilliancy which they show, they may be said to have introduced a

new series of incident-subjects which cannot be classified under the two ancient heads of common life or history—being more poetical, and of wider scope than the first, whilst they rarely answer, either in style or in the choice of incident, to the old conventional idea of the grand or historical school. We must, however, give Mr. Millais a place here rather on the score of his great former achievements than of anything that he now sends. His single invention —a pert Jacobite damsel perched on a mounting-block, in a green velvet riding-dress, with appropriate symbols of her political creed about her—is enough to convert one to Hanoverianism at once. This, however, is the most completely and delicately coloured of any of his pictures; although, for its charming naturalness of air, we prefer the little head of a boy (135). The three other girl subjects hardly require description. In each of them we find that powerful painting in which Mr. Millais has no equal; in each of them, also, we must confess to finding a lack of that delicacy and grace which such subjects seem especially to demand. The child in the studio chair is the least open to the latter remark. In the "Second Sermon," the importance of the furniture compared to the child—and of the dress, again, to the child's figure—strikes us as disproportionate; and the perpendicular legs are a piece of unnecessary and unpleasant truth to nature. The two girls with gold fish are the most effective, if not the most harmonious, piece of colour which the artist gives; although here the want of refinement in the features and limbs, with the vulgar dressiness of the children, seriously interfere with enjoyment. The painting of the bowl and fish is admirable; but, for the due balance of the whole as a work of art, should we not either have had these accessories alone, or not have had them? In some of the points above

suggested, Mr. Archer's "Infanta sitting to Velasquez for her Portrait" may be profitably compared with Mr. Millais' work. More finely modelled, and more delicately handled, this little figure seems to us to have thus more of the essentials of childhood in it. Mr. Prinsep, if he does not this year try any subject of powerful interest, has gained in mastery over his art. His "Berenice," though not exactly the "lady" of whom Mr. Browning speaks in the verses quoted, is a grand piece of decorative colouring, though rather coarse in design. The same artist's lady of the last century, in her full court dress and fan, sweeping gracefully by, shows command over colour, motion, and life. It is a more satisfactory work than his "Beatrice and Benedick," where the heroine is rather plain and awkward, and the lively bachelor, although his attitude is well imagined, does not seem quite equal to the brilliant things which Shakspeare has put into his mouth. Messrs. Stanhope, Halliday, and Sandys all appear devoted, at present, to that modernized mediaevalism in which Mr. E. B. Jones of the Water-Colour Society is a professed master: a fancy which (we trust) will not be long allowed to hamper their capacities for a more natural style. We can only admire the technical qualities of the female figures by the two latter. In Mr. Stanhope's "Rizpah," the idea is original and picturesque. This is a subject which, we would suggest, might be advantageously worked out again by the painter. Greater force in the widow's features, and more roundness in her figure, would relieve the composition of a certain embarrassment which the confused though effective lines of the background now throw over the scene.

An expressive female head—the figure shown in half-length—by Mr. Martineau, represents the queen of some tournament prepared to reward her own true knight, and

looking with well-rendered anxiety on the combat. This is firmly and completely painted, but we entertain a hope that the artist of the excellent "Last Day in the Old Home" will not allow that to be his solitary success in dramatic invention on an impressive scale. Such work, perhaps, is hardly to be expected from Mr. Whistler. There is obviously an excess of fantasy in his nature; yet we must express a deliberate conviction that our school has no artist by whom, in respect of some of the highest and the rarest technical gifts, so much might be given us. Eccentric as may be the idea of that long Chinese maiden who is appropriately bestowing her own proportions on the "*lange lizen*" of her vase, this is the most remarkable thing exhibited for exquisite richness and of subtlety of colouring, combined with total absence of elaboration in laying the colours on. Every touch here has been struck in, apparently, with that directness which has long made Velasquez the envy of all artists; the coloured-paper labels on the right above the figure should be especially noticed; and we may fairly suppose that if in this picture, and in the view of Wapping near it, the figures had been free from some obvious negligences, Mr. Whistler might have obtained from a jury of oil-colour painters the first prize for mastery over the technicalities of his profession.

Mr. Arthur Hughes maintains the place which he has long taken as one of our best poetical inventors within the range of idyllic art by the three pictures now sent—a music party, a scene within a village church, and a group in which a girl leads her grandmother (it may be) through a garden rich with the golden greens and purples of spring. This latter appears to us the most complete of the three. The contrast of youth and age could not be more tenderly expressed. A peculiar mannerism in colour interferes with

the popular recognition of the merits of this artist, and gives a kind of monotony to his work. We cannot but wish that Mr. Hughes would quit for a time that delicate and graceful line of subjects with which he has familiarized us, and try his powers on rougher or stronger scenes. There is such a mark of individuality on all he does that he need not fear he would lose himself. We are glad to see, by the crowd around it, that his graceful "Sunbeam in Church," in which the quality of homely force is less represented than the elements of charm and thoughtfulness, has found its way to the hearts of spectators.

Turning now to artists whose genius lies rather more in the invention of incident, or the illustration of history, than those we have just touched on, an encouraging advance may be noted in more than one of the younger contributors. Mr. Hodgson leads the way with his carefully-designed and very delicately-coloured "Review of the English Fleet by Elizabeth"—a picture which has been hung rather unfavourably in the Fourth Room. The Queen, with her famous group of courtiers, is proceeding slowly along the cliff, beneath which Lord Howard's squadron is riding. A want of animation in the crowd detracts from the effect of this promising work, and the heads, familiar to us through so many contemporary portraits, require more character ; but in the management of the painting, and in the total absence of showiness and studio effect, this is one of the most genuine things of the Exhibition. Like Mr. Hodgson, Mr. Crowe has also made a step onward. His drawing is a great advance upon what satisfied the world of art twenty years ago, before the Westminster Hall competition gave us a start ; and his colouring, although not so tender and transparent as Mr. Hodgson's, is vigorous and firm. His principal picture—Luther posting his anti-indulgence theses on

a church door—cannot, we are sure, satisfy so thoughtful an artist in regard to the central personage. Perhaps the Luther should have been brought nearer the eye; as it is, he is an ineffective and inappropriate figure. Tetzel on one side, on the other the honest German citizens who sympathize with Luther's onslaught against abuses and hypocrisies, are animated and characteristic. We might repeat the principal part of this criticism in regard to Mr. Crowe's "Only a Woman's Hair"—Swift's bitter endorsement on the paper which contained Stella's. Everything here in the room, the accessories, and the attitude, are so good, that more force, and especially more warmth of colour in the Dean's features, are felt as wanting to stamp the work with unity and central interest.

The "Meeting of Arabella Stuart and Mr. Seymour" (Mr. G. A. Storey) is another work full of good character-painting; a little too smooth in execution, and not in all parts drawn with evenness of care (as in the lady's dress and some of the further figures), yet successful in so genuine a way that we hail it as a picture of a certain promise. Between those men who succeed by a happy trick, and those who succeed by instinct for their art, one of the eternal lines is drawn which separate the men capable of growth from those who cannot step beyond their little circle. Here the three chief figures—Seymour taking the Lady Arabella's hands, and James (as history shows him, crafty, selfish, and odious) advancing stealthily towards them with the air of a cat watching the mice at play—are excellent. The action of Seymour when he recognizes his youthful favourite, now grown up to woman's height and beauty, is uncommonly fine and gracious. Mr. Calderon's "Burial of Hampden" ranks with Mr. Storey's piece in interest, although it has some signs of haste, if not in the execution, at least in the

design; the nearer row of figures might especially, we think, have been made more characteristic and interesting. With some correction, this work would be very well fitted for a place among the frescoes at Westminster; the series would gain much in interest if a larger number of hands were employed. "La Reine Malheureuse," by Mr. Yeames, represents Henrietta Maria taking shelter in a snow-filled lane from certain Commonwealth vessels in Burlington Bay. We do not know with what feeling the clever artist approached this work; he has certainly not given it an air of serious calamity. The Queen and her gaily-dressed company seem to have come out for a day's pleasure, and are surprised by finding the snow on the ground. We see next to nothing of the danger of cannon-balls or capture; and the only figure awake to the gravity of the situation is a priest, whose alarm is humourously enough expressed. In this point Mr. Yeames reminds us of Mr. Pettie, whose "Tonsure" is a clever and very comical rendering of the real, everyday aspect of monastic life. The barber of the convent is operating on the head of a novice, who shrinks in horror from the rough razor-work of "religious" life, and is obviously regretting the village Figaro. The details of this little picture are also capitally conceived; it has a completeness which we miss in Mr. Pettie's "Fox refusing to take the Oaths," where the space is insufficiently filled, and the whole picture, although it has good points, looks rather like a made-up sketch than a finished painting. There is much danger of mannerism here. In Mr. Marks, again, we note a steady advance. Each of his three pictures reaches its aim; and the grace of the child in his "Beggar-scene," with the truth and character of the blind musician whom she leads, and the comfortable baker whose bread she covets, remind us, although without traces of undue imitation, of

the Flemish painter Leys. There is also some improvement in the colour, although here the difference between the two artists is, perhaps, most conspicuously felt, and the remaining figures in Mr. Mark's story do not add to the story.

Whilst making these remarks, we are not ignorant of the vast difficulty of the subjects with which these artists are now dealing. That they should select them, and then work them out as they do, is a proof of immense advance in our school, whether we compare their pictures with the historical designs which twenty years ago brought reputation to the artists, or with the domestic sentimentalities which have been so over-frequent in England. Within the latter class, Mr. Faed (if we do not reckon in it Mr. Millais, in deference to his much higher powers) is this year supreme. His pleasing children's faces, his bright though patchy colour (rich, thick, and treacly), the somewhat studious and elaborate picturesqueness, easy sentimentalisms, and allusions which no one can misunderstand;—all these qualities show no signs of falling-off, and in the "Mitherless Bairn" will exert their usual effect over the passing spectator. Mr. Faed's work generally pleases for the moment, but seems to us deficient in the simplicity and thoroughness without which scenes from common life of the pathetic order cannot maintain a lasting interest. Meanwhile he pleases!—and should hence be encouraged to do more justice to his powers. Mr. Faed is not, however, so happy in his principal subject as on former occasions. It is only discoverable by the catalogue that the cobbler fitting a glove on a pretty girl's hand acts both parents in one to his motherless child. There is nothing to indicate this in this action, or in the row of children who look on; and as it would have been easy to select some *motif* which would have conveyed the idea, we suppose that the name has been thrown in by way of senti-

mental make-weight. This habit of trying to fill out a picture, as it were, by some little matter of feeling or humour, in addition to the bit of nature, whatever it may be, selected for the subject, is a common weakness in the English school, and seriously hurtful to that unconsciousness of air and modesty in appeal which make a picture charming. Mr. Orchardson's "Flowers of the Forest" appears to us a better work, because it relies only on its own sentiment for effect. The little maidens marching gaily as they sing over the high moorland to the ewe-milking, are as pretty a group as anything in the Exhibition; but we are sorry that the colour is less pure, and the details less delicately wrought, than Mr. Orchardson's work last year led us to anticipate. We trust he will not allow the tricks of style from which Mr. Pettie and Mr. Nichols are not free, to grow upon him. The latter sends one rather broadly humourous but clever thing—an Irish peasant shown into a drawing-room amongst the "Old Masters," in waiting for his landlord. The perplexity of the man, who is so confounded and abashed by Rubens and Titian that he hardly knows how to sit steady, is excellent. Mr. Nicol's "Waiting for the Train" is too much in Mr. Faed's manner. The "Battle of Waterloo," by Mr. Webster, is a more complete and important specimen of his style than has been exhibited for some years. Mr. Horsley and Mr. Rankley, painters who have formerly attached themselves each so devotedly to his little class of subjects as to run no small risk of mannerism, now do themselves credit by the bolder and less made-up style of their chief pictures—the Doctor visiting a Gipsy Child, and the little girl showing her new frock to her grandmother. The courage with which Mr. Rankley, in this gipsy-scene, paints actual rags, deserves notice; they appear to frighten people as much on canvas as on the stage, or in the

street: they symbolize (we suppose) the opposite principle to that which in England, receives, perhaps, a sometimes too devoted worship,—Respectability.

Mr. Leslie sends a baby on a river-barge receiving an apple from a young lady on the bank. The long line of the boat is painted with good feeling for tone, and the whole has an unaffected air, although the scene is deficient in subject, and the drawing and colour still leave much—very much! to be desired. Artists like Mr. Leslie, or the younger Stanfield and Cox, stand in a peculiarly difficult position; the world being always at first more sympathetic and afterwards more exigent with regard to the sons of distinguished men. We trust that the praise which has been partly called forth by the former of these feelings will not lead Mr. Leslie to relax his efforts till he has fairly created an independent manner of his own. And we may venture to extend this remark, with more emphasis, to Mr. Marcus Stone, whose "Village Deserter" of this year is much below his last year's "Napoleon in Flight," both in idea and in execution. This is only imitation work—Creswick without his grace, and Frith with little of his cleverness. There is a measure of the latter quality in Mr. O'Neil's "Landing of the Princess Alexandra"—a subject of so impracticable a nature that nothing short of the genius of Gainsborough could have managed it with success. Mr. O'Neil was here sadly hampered by the flaring red cloaks of the girls who strewed the way of the Princess with the conventional flowers, and by the exquisitely frightful decorations characteristic of English railway or steamboat buildings *en fête*; but he might have varied the type of his young ladies more. State ceremonies of this nature done to order, and mainly with the view of appealing to the least educated popular taste by a showy print, such as we are threatened with in the

case of Mr. Frith's Marriage of the Prince, are not only apt to deteriorate the artist's style, but must be also considered a real injury to the public appreciation of art.

IV

Figure subjects predominate so decidedly in this Exhibition that, brief as have been our comments on the more important works of this class, and numerous as are those which we must perforce pass over, we have but a short space left for what used to be popularly reckoned the speciality of the English school. And even in landscapes, figures are still prominent—from the cold common-place of Cooper and Ansdell, to the idyls of Hook and the tragic force of Landseer. The last two, with Stanfield, honourably support the character of the Academy in landscape, whilst it is decidedly among the young men and the outsiders that, as we have seen, the strength of the figure-painting lies. This style admits of more detailed description than landscape, and there is also clearer evidence in it whether the artist is on the forward tack or not; for the lovers of nature are apt to move their easels year by year a few feet onward within their favourite and well-studied haunts, whilst those who travel through a wider range, with one or two noticeable exceptions, are at present working up their foreign experiences too clearly in English studios, and paint Spain or Italy in tints which have little or no "local colour" in them. Such at least appear to us the Spanish peasantry of Mr. Ansdell, the view of Gibraltar which Mr. Lee sends, and the Castle of St. Angelo by Mr. Roberts. The last two, as usual, have chosen their points of view with skill, and show in this respect a dexterity which our younger, and we must add, our better artists do not often exhibit;

yet it is impossible to accept the Rome as more than a skilful piece of panoramic effect, or to look with pleasure at the clay-cold monotony of tints, interspersed with a few coarse and heavy touches of brown, into which Mr. Lee generalizes (we believe that is the word) the endless wealth of varied beauty that nature spreads over the coast scenery of Andalusia. A calm at sea by this Academician, again, presents us with a surface so dead and solid that, as some one has observed, we wonder why the boat's crew becalmed on this huge unyielding plain do not disembark at once and walk across it.

Should we class Mr. Cooke's sea-pieces in the same category with Mr. Lee's? They show, indeed, greater power, and are obviously drawn and painted in a much more thorough way, the vessels in particular being always rendered, in all their details, with unusual knowledge; but they give no sense of the poetry of the waves. From the hard and definite style of the artist, they seem also deficient in sea atmosphere, and hence fail in conveying the idea of liquidity. Mr. Cooke's powers are shown to better effect in his "Roman Bridge near Tangier." The effect of this is rather hot and over purply—it is more of an evening than a dawning atmosphere—but the great size of the ruin, half lighted by the rising sun, has been brought out in a really skilful way, and a picturesque range of hills behind is well drawn and coloured. We cannot understand how the small side arches have assumed the narrow, almost Gothic forms, which we see here; no dislocations above explain the compression of their curves, nor does the perspective account for it. Were they originally pointed?—Mr. Sidney Cooper, like Mr. Ansdell, by the iteration,—is it for the tenth time? who shall number?—of his flat meadows, toneless cattle, and uninteresting sky rolling up without repose or dignity

(though not without some expression of air and space) from the horizon, reminds that in art, as in life, not to advance is to go back. A Highland snow-scene which Mr. Cooper exhibited a few years ago gave us the hope that he would use his dexterity to less mechanical purpose. As it is, we can only suggest to our readers' remembrance the variety of fine and truthful effects which Cuyp and Paul Potter in the old days of Flemish art, or Mdlle. Bonheur and De Haas now-a-days, draw from similar subjects. Or, if a contrast before the eyes be preferred, take Mr. G. Mason's little "Return from Ploughing," or Mr. W. H. Davis's "Valley of La Liane," as proof how small a portion of nature is required for charm of effect when drawn and painted with feeling. In the last we have a storm-cloud melting away in white, peaceful *cumuli*, from which all the thunder and nearly all the rain has gone—the sun breaking out again, and flooding the lovely sweeps of the Northern French landscape with tender brilliancy. In the foreground, a drove of farm-horses are coming wildly along a rough field road. This difficult open-air and sunlight effect has been treated by Mr. Davis with skill and truthfulness. Mr. Mason, who has on former occasions shown his power of dealing with somewhat similar tones, has this time pitched his picture in a twilight key; and yet, whilst resisting firmly the temptation to put his figures in a brighter light than his landscape, has filled the whole with subdued clear obscurity. The horses are moving slowly up a bit of hill-side; beyond, the ground falls, and we see the lights in the farmstead, and two children who have come out for water. Behind all, the last streaks of sunset are spread over a line of purple moor.

Mr. Mason's seems to us the most distinctively poetical landscape of the year; yet it has near rivals in Mr. Stanfield

and Mr. Hook. Two companion pictures, "Peace" and "War," by the former, show this quality in a degree which has not often been found in Mr. Stanfield's earlier work. In the "War," ships are lying off a coast where a fort has been blown to pieces; in the distance, a town is on fire. The sky is here beautifully drawn and painted, with a mysterious glimmer and vague tenderness of tint. "Peace" shows a noble harbour, divided by a central mass of cliff and trees; old hulks lie near; beyond, in the dock, frigates are hoisting sail. The painting of the water-surfaces, almost calm, yet indicating the set of the tide by slight ripples, reminds one very closely of Turner, although without his subtlety and brightness of tint. A view on the Dutch Coast is more in Mr. Stanfield's former style. Two other sea-pieces may be noticed here, which, like many of the landscapes, have been unfavourably hung, although, even at their present height, enough is seen to show their merit. These are "Crawley Rocks," and "The Morning Watch," by Mr. C. P. Knight. Both are full of light and air, and the perspective of the water is excellent. From Mr. Knight's former works we can also infer that these pictures are delicately finished. Mr. Hook, like Mr. Millais, enjoys so great a popularity that, a month after the Exhibition has opened, it is almost superfluous to name his annual contributions. The series of Cornish Sea Views fully maintain his reputation for tender brightness of colour, and a peculiarly attractive mode of blending the figures with the sentiment of the scene. The two inland pictures appear to us less successful; especially as they are, this year, exposed to severe competition from Mr. Creswick, whose "Welsh Valley" and "Across the Beck" are landscapes of much scope and effect. Returning to Mr. Hook, let us say that, of his mining pictures, the most novel and powerful represents the iron-stained truck which has just

been drawn up from the deep sea-caverns of Botallack, with its load of sturdy russet Cornishmen. The effect of this group, brought right against a vast wall of blue sea (the horizon being placed, as often in Mr. Hook's works, at a picturesque height), is very striking; hardly less so is the delicacy and sweetness of tint with which he has painted the mine woodwork on the cliff above. Another picture shows us women and children returning from some less severe branch of their labour; two girls washing their arms and arranging their hair at a pool are eminently graceful. Always natural in his figures, Mr. Hook appears apt to take them too much in their first attitude, which is not uniformly felicitous; nor does he succeed uniformly in balancing his composition in their arrangement. The shining sea, which lies beyond a range of grassy hill-tops, interspersed with rock, lights up this picture admirably; and, without stopping to dwell on his other Cornish scene, the "Milk for the Schooner," we would draw attention to the beautiful indication of a rising breeze which has been given by the faint white streamers of mist, hardly seen and yet distinctly felt above the horizon. It is rather a severe test which Mr. Naish's "Last Tack Home" has to undergo, placed just below Mr. Hook's "Miners leaving Work;" yet it bears the trial well. A grizzled sailor and his son are here seen picturesquely sheltered beneath the rigging of their boat, and looking with fixed eagerness on the scattered roofs of the famous village of Clovelly. Everything is drawn with that conscientious fidelity to which Mr. Naish has accustomed us in his work, whilst he has given it greater interest by his introduction of the human figure.

Our modern elaborately finished school of landscape does not in general appear to find more favour now with the Arranging Committee than it did in the days when we heard

so much about Pre-Raphaelitism. The unfavourable position of Mr. Knight's sea-pieces we have already noticed; as brothers in misfortune, we must join with him Messrs. Edwards, Anthony, and Maccallum. The first sends (to the ceiling) three or four views of the North Cornish Coast, taken from that noble region which forms the background to part of Mr. Tennyson's Arthurian Idyls, which have a truthful look, and are remarkably unconventional in their points of view. The colouring appears firm, but wanting (at least as the pictures are hung) in variety. A harsh green is rather predominant in Mr. Anthony's foliage; but his landscapes are painted in a manly, original way, to which, for some reason, justice does not seem alive in Trafalgar Square. At least Mr. Anthony's exclusion from a favourable place has been commented on for many years, and must surprize all who remember his charming "Hesperus" in the International Exhibition. Amongst landscapes hung too low, but within reach of sight, we may point out Miss Blunden's view near the Lizard (520) and Mr. Brett's "Massa, Bay of Naples" as worth careful study. These are admirably faithful little pictures. As a true rendering of terrestrial anatomy, Miss Blunden's appears to us perfect. The drawing of the soil and turf, which, in rock districts like the Lizard, lie over the bones of old earth, and soften whilst they follow her ruggedness, could not be better given. Mr. Brett's view is unpleasing in colour, but the individuality of the innumerable trees which here clothe the cliffs, and the long recession of the beautiful coast, deserve the praise above given to Miss Blunden. Mr. Brett has also an excellent little water-colour drawing of the sea beneath a passing rain-storm (607), which in tone and in drawing is equally remarkable. A bright and elegant forest glade above a brook bears the name of Mr. Dearle (582); and

Mr. Mote's "Gap in the Hedge," although a little—not too bright, which a sunlit landscape can never be—but too uniformly vivid, shows some very refined passages of detail, and a true sense of the complexity of nature. Truth of effect may be reached by artists who work thus, as by those who, like Mr. Mason and Mr. Whistler, or Mr. F. Dillon in his little sketch from Suez (500), prefer a broader style, in which tone is more sought after than preciseness of detail. What can never be true or valuable in art is such work as Mr. Ansdell's "Lytham," where we have a dull and conventional monotone of tint over everything, whilst the grass and sandhills and sea-pebbles are painted with a few careless and unmeaning touches.

We remember no landscape by Mr. Oakes so powerful or so well brought together in effect as his "Mountain Valley" —otters catching salmon in the foreground, whilst behind a sudden gleam of angry light, succeeding rain and snow, smites the fractured face of a huge slate cliff. This work has a real solemnity of effect—praise in which Mr. Walton's view of the Pyramids may also share. This is a gorgeous scene of southern sunset, in which, however, the artist has successfully managed to balance his brilliancy by the hazy atmospheric tints spread over the horizon and the foreground. Some want of this balance of colour detracts from the effect of the otherwise commendable English sunset by Mr. V. Cole (346). Here the tone of the whole strikes us as too purely green and golden; a passage of cool gray in the carefully drawn sky would be of great value. We are glad to see the artist working on this scale. Mr. Leader's "Country Churchyard," taken apparently at Bettwys-y-Coed, deserves notice for its brilliancy, and for the very truthful study of the architecture—a merit which, by the way, we omitted to specify in Mr. Crowe's "Luther at Wittemberg."

Many small landscapes of genuine merit in their kind—as Mr. C. E. Johnson's vigorous "Launch," and Mr. Mogford's "Watergate Bay"—are unavoidably passed over in this brief review; but we must reserve space for two others of our rising men, who seem to us to show no common merit, both in the originality and in the poetry of their conception. Mr. H. Moore, whose painting is rather too thin and scattered in effect at present, appears to deserve this praise in virtue of his "Whitby Sands" and "Cottager's Cow Pasture." The latter is full of air and sun; the delicately curving field-surfaces and light sprinkled trees in the "middle distance" are beautifully touched; the foreground cattle carefully drawn, and so arranged as to compose well with the landscape. This little work has all the amenity of Birket Foster, together with what his designs generally want, sincerity—that irresistible air of what one would be inclined to call unstudied truth, were it not certain that such truth comes only through hard study. For the "Storm approaching Outside a City," by Mr. J. R. Lee (not the Academician), we have reserved the last place in this series, thinking it one of the most genuine landscapes, in point of true observance of natural effect, combined with really good execution, that are here exhibited. A thundercloud is rolling itself up above a city on the horizon; we are in the fields without, over which the peculiar hot shade of a summer storm is gathering. The electric power in the cloud, wreathing it in light wrathful masses, is admirably rendered. Another landscape, by Mr. J. R. Lee (375), where low clouds, as if after such a storm, are piled like vast towers along the horizon, looks fully equal to the picture just noticed, but is hung too high for further remark.

Every one is familiar by this time with the two fine works by which, with Mr. Hook and Mr. Stanfield (as we have

noticed before), Sir E. Landseer has done so much to uphold the credit of the Academy in the style of animated landscape. The Squirrels and Bullfinch are touched with all his ancient skill. We have painters who could have put more of the real drawing into their forms; but very few, except perhaps Mr. Whistler, who could have laid them in with such a delightful appearance of ease. Yet even the skill shown here seems to us a very little thing beside the tragic poetry of Landseer's Polar Scene. We might, indeed, dwell here again on the masterly handling by which so much effect has been gained with a touch, and on the animal drawing, which has some points of likeness to that of the great Saxon animal modeller, Julius Haehnel, in its singular power and truth to ursine nature. But although in these points we believe that this picture may be without rashness placed amongst Sir Edwin's very best works, yet what, to our thinking, gives it supremacy in rank is the force and height of the idea. True, this is indeed one aspect of the terror of death—one which almost touches on the horrible. From a too powerful sense of this the artist has saved his work, in part by the poetical feeling thrown into the desolate landscape, in part by the total freedom from sentimentalism; but most, perhaps, by the skill with which the idea of the actual human suffering has been effaced from the blanched bones and relics, obviously exposed to many Arctic winters. Yet no one is likely to look unmoved on this tragic vision:—the last scene in the life of Franklin and his gallant crew. These, however, are among the things "which have been, and may be again;" and it is right that, when an artist can set them before us with such sublimity of sentiment, the memory of the brave men whose lives were sacrificed to the noble pursuit of knowledge should be thus honoured. Great art cannot be better employed than on great actions.

V

There is little in this year's portraits requiring special remark. The majority of those exhibited have been produced by that process on which we commented last year,—rather as matters of steady manufacture than of art—which seems to satisfy the demands of the market. The Scotch school, represented by Gordon, Macbeth, Macnee, and others, pursue mainly the track long since marked out by Raeburn; and, dark and blotchy though the pictures are apt to be, yet there is a sort of force in their work which, despite all Academical and other honours, neither Grant nor Weigall, Richmond nor Buckner, succeed in putting into theirs. It is, however, just to Mr. Buckner to add that his "Mrs. Bischoffsheim" is less mannered than his wont; whilst Mr. Weigall shows a sense of female grace which his dull colouring and monotonous style of drawing (the latter probably the result of fatal popularity) threaten to render valueless. Such work, on the other hand, as we see in Mr. Grant's Beaufort group, or in the lady's bust, No. 278 (let us call attention, with all the delicacy possible, to the drawing and colour of the ear), proves, so far as paint and canvas can, that the right to the title of artist, for the present at least, is in abeyance. Whatever may have been the case in former years, few reputations are now less forcibly supported than this painter's.

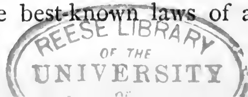
We are more interested by the portraits which bear the names of Mr. Boxall, Mr. Dickinson, Mr. Laurence, and Mr. Sant. The latter has resumed, with great advantage, a more telling style in his colour. Mr. Sandys again exhibits, though this time on a larger scale, that marvellously precise and finished delineation of which he gave an example in 1863. When he has overcome the natural impulse to show

his mastery over accumulated detail, this artist ought to hold a place of his own for which people, a century hence, will be grateful. Mr. W. Richmond, also, sustains his last year's reputation by another graceful and effective child-portrait (119), to which we may add a head in chalk which looks unaffected. Until, however, greater space allows the Academy to hang all its creditable portraits upon the line, we cannot hope to do justice to their merits. No true work of art in the way of figure-painting (unless the figures exceed life-size) can, we submit, be really seen at a greater height. Even the well-drawn and carefully-coloured pictures by Mr. Wells (38 and 290 in particular), and the two graceful ladies by Mr. Baccani, in which the gray tints are especially delicate, cannot be fairly judged as they hang; whilst the details of Mr. Phillips' interesting group of Messrs. Grant and Speke are as inscrutable as the veritable and final source of the Nile has hitherto proved itself. And, for the same reason, we can only speak of the figure by Mr. Armitage (229), as apparently the most thorough and well-considered piece of portraiture here exhibited.

A Nemesis in art, to the infinite pain of loyal subjects, appears to have fallen upon our Royal Family. From an Albert Memorial to a statuette, they are sacrificed to want of power or want of skill, with their inevitable accompaniments, want of effect, or effect worse than none. We have noticed the singular inefficiency of the portrait-pictures exhibited of the Prince and Princess of Wales—Mr. Weigall's, in some degree, excepted; but we fear that no such exception can be honestly admitted on behalf of the sculptors who have here served them to so little purpose. It is not in portraiture that Mr. Gibson has won his English reputation. There is, indeed, what cannot strictly be named "style," but still a certain echo of style, in his

head of the Princess. The flesh is smooth and insipid; and the hair, by a common device, has been left unworked in order to make a contrast. Yet there is here some reflection of the grace of the original, which will be looked for to little purpose in the head by Mr. Marshall Wood, which, although intended for the same, varies from it in almost every point—features, ears, and bust. The crude attempt to express the lateral recession of the forehead — that exquisite piece of natural form—is here very unpleasing in effect. The Prince has fared no better than his beautiful wife. Mr. Marshall Wood's bust is hardly above his last year's model. What ugliness, again, is there in that by Mr. M. Edwards, with its parallel lines of lace stretched over the tight uniform! we cannot class it above the military busts exhibited by Mr. G. G. Adams. It may be alleged in excuse, that regimental dress is deficient in grace and beauty; yet the defect does not strike one in real life, because the eye is always drawn away from it to the living features. But this predominance of the head is precisely what feeble sculpture cannot give. An even more conspicuous exemplification of these remarks is afforded by the central figure of the group before us: the life-size "Prince Consort" by Mr. Theed. Those who have visited Blenheim will remember what the housekeeper points out with pride as a "dressed statue" of Queen Anne. We had thought that sculpture of this kind was now a recognized barbarism; but Mr. Theed appears to have imitated it to the best of his ability in the figure before us, in which every item of dress and shooting apparatus has been reproduced with stiff and elaborate minuteness. This might serve, like the "Queen Anne," as a valuable study of costume; but the human figure, and above all, the head (as one of the best-known laws of art

G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would lead us to expect), have been sacrificed to the accoutrements. Indeed, in spite of excellent opportunities and repeated trials, Mr. Theed, so far as we have seen, has never yet succeeded in doing tolerable justice to the intelligent features of the Prince; a result which will not surprise those who remember how difficult an art is portrait-sculpture, and what large demands it makes on the genius and knowledge of the few who have been eminent in it.

Etiquette, we believe, has promoted these works to places where they are cruelly in sight, and may perhaps have hampered their authors. It is not, however, by etiquette that the general mal-arrangement of the Sculpture-room can be excused; nor need we have recourse to this explanation to account for the favourable positions allotted to Mr. Weekes, the Academician sculptor on this year's Arranging Committee, or for the bad light to which a few good works have been consigned. We cannot avoid noticing this, because the arrangement of sculpture obviously affects its visibility even more than it affects pictures.—There is a sprinkling of tolerable likenesses, which, though very far from expressing what can be rendered by sculpture, may pass muster. Such are the Lady B. Clinton, by Mr. Durham, and two busts by M. Marochetti, which, though superficially modelled, and not free from the artist's passion for trick, we are glad to notice as a contrast, in their way, to the debased style of his life-size figures. We must also name "Henry Fielding," by Mr. Woodington, a fairly careful work; a graceful head of a youth (898) by Mr. M'Dowell (whose bust of Mr. Pender is, however, one of the worst exhibited); a pleasing figure, "Penserosa," well felt in the lines, by Mr. Hancock; Mr. Burnard's boy with a rabbit; and a child asleep, by Mr. Munro, which, though it has the

air of being modelled up from a painter's sketch by an amateur at an early stage, deserves a word of praise from the prettiness of the *motif*. Mr. Vanlinden's "Mother's Treasure" (876) may be also commended for grace; and Mr. Boehm, although his bust is in a bad, exaggerated manner, sends some statuettes displaying a cleverness that might be turned to purpose. "Erinna," by Mr. Leifchild, a careful work, falls below the "height of his argument." It is very heavy in the draperies, and wants feeling in the face. English architectural sculpture, as we have before noticed, is lamentably below par. Mr. Phyffer's bas-relief for the Farm Street Church looks tame. The "Last Supper," by Mr. Ruddock, designed for Ossett, is in the most unsatisfactory style of such work. It is a feeble picture mechanically modelled, such as those exhibited by Mr. Philip in 1863, and which look even worse at St. George's, Windsor, than the models did in the Academy.

One bust in the grand and thoroughly sculpturesque manner of Mr. Behnes is sent by Mr. Butler—"Professor Narrien." This, like other heads by Mr. Butler that we have seen, is careful and conscientious in every detail, and appears to convey a genuine likeness. The recent death of Mr. Behnes has made a serious gap in our exhibitions, which is rendered more sensible by the scanty appearances of our other sculptors of merit. Mr. Foley sends nothing; and the two works in plaster by Mr. Woolner have been so placed that we can hardly observe the refined and powerful modelling of the features in his bust of Mr. Combe, which is remarkable also for that thorough and, as we might say, anatomical rendering of the hair, in which good art has always taken special interest. Mr. Woolner's medallion portrait (1049) is almost invisible. Another example of scandalous misplacement — scandalous, be-

cause the space in each instance admitted easily of proper disposition — may be seen in the case of the charming girl's head by M. Mégret (905). This, so far as we are allowed to judge, is tender in feeling and in handling. The style, though with modifications proper in marble, resembles strongly the present manner in oils adopted by the French painters of common life. Another French sculptor, almost equally ill-treated—M. Poitevin—sends what seems to us the best ideal work exhibited, in his "Joueur de Billes." This, whilst perhaps almost over-ingenious in its arrangement, is a brilliant and faithful study from life, and, so far as we know, is original, not less than graceful, in its motive. The masterly under-cuttings and through-cuttings in this work, and the skilful touching of the drapery, should be studied by those who care to see what sculpture may be—an ideal which the long reign of manufacture in England has done much to efface from the public mind.

Meanwhile, it is certainly no pleasant task to go through the Sculpture-room and note successive failures. It is very difficult to draw lines of distinction here, or to specialize the particular deviations from truth, feeling, and knowledge of form, when so large a proportion of the busts, and even some full-length figures, have so slight a claim to these qualities that we doubt whether a French jury would class them as works of art. Such, then, we will name with the fewest words of comment; absolute silence would be an injustice to the cause of art and to our better sculptors. Mr. M'Dowell's bust of Mr. Pender we have already noticed. Mr. Weekes, also R.A., sends a head of Sir G. Lewis, which has the air of being simply a reproduction of Mr. Weigall's picture exhibited in 1863, with all the features exaggerated. The down-drawn eyebrows and tapir-like

projection of the upper lip render this as unpleasant a caricature of a fine head as any we can remember; and although modelled expressly for Westminster Abbey, the sculptor has not been at the pains to give his work the slightest monumental character. The style is merely that of a bust for a hall or drawing-room. If the Chapter allow it to pass, this will be one more of the tasteless incongruities which deform the Abbey. Why does it never seem to occur to the guardians of our Cathedrals, that the one thing to be seriously considered about the admissibility of a monument, is *whether the art of it be good?* Without this, it will do no honour to a great man, or to a great building.

No better is the full-length of John Hunter, also by Mr. Weekes. This has been placed in the best light the room furnishes, and no connoisseur can hence fail to observe that here again the Academician has thought it enough to reproduce a picture—which, in this instance, is Reynolds' portrait. But that justly famous work, the most vivid head by the great painter, has suffered a sad transmutation. A theatrical attitude and scowling expression replace the rapt concentration of the original; whilst (where this aid was less available) the modelling of the legs is inaccurate and tasteless: they are like poor Lord Clive's, whom M. Marochetti has put on his pedestal at Shrewsbury, in the attitude of a gentleman performing an eternal *pas seul* before all the market-women of the city. When these qualities are shown in marble work of the highly-paid order, it is natural that a figure executed under less exigent conditions should display even less felicitous characteristics; and accordingly, Mr. Weekes' full-length of Harvey, with its strangely distorted features, will rank amongst the too numerous bad statues which disfigure Mr. Woodward's beautiful Museum at Oxford.

The fact that Mr. Weekes is one of the Academicians of England has imposed upon us the duty of analyzing work which, if passed over without protest, might be supposed by foreigners to be accepted as a legitimate expression of English art. The remaining sculpture may be more briefly characterized. What we observed last year of the modelling shown in the busts by Mr. G. G. Adams and Mr. A. Munro, applies with equal force to the heads of Mr. Henry Taylor, Mr. Barker, Lord Seaton, and Archbishop Sumner, which they now exhibit. What is to be said of busts so low in artistic quality as these, several of which appear to be meant for memorials of the dead? One can only condole with the survivors. No wonder that spectators hurry by what is recommended by so little of beauty or fineness; indeed, a criticism which we have seen on these works, to which Mr. Matthew Noble's "Lord Canning" must be added —that they are enough to "add a new terror to death"— appears to us not too severe. Several heads by Mr. C. Summers afford proof that our colonies are willing as yet to put up with the lowest standard of native manufacture.— When will friends and corporations learn that to be unsuccessfully done on a large scale is no compliment to any man? We must hope that the design for another Albert Memorial by Mr. Durham is not destined to reach this stage. His model shows a heavy figure of the Prince, all tags and tassels, as we see him over the conservatories of the Horticultural Society, placed on a circular plinth, to which four winged females are backing, as if in performance of some mystic dance. These figures are exactly alike, just as the similar ostrich-feathered angels were in M. Marochetti's expensive Scutari Memorial.—Surely a great want of taste, invention, and labour is displayed by such a monotonous repetition! Imagine four stanzas in an ode precisely the

same!—We do not know whether the Mr. Brodie who here exhibits a deplorable little figure, sentimentally styled "The Mitherless Lassie," be the sculptor who some years since sent a bad bust of Mr. Tennyson. This is modelled in a manner imperfectly imitating what has been called the "naturalistic" school of modern Italy, in which the sculptor's aim is to do in marble what Madame Tussaud does in wax.

The tame and textureless medallions by the Wyons, with the style of which our coinage has made everybody familiar, afford further examples of the state which the plastic arts have reached in England. But we must here quit this melancholy chapter. To see where we are wrong is said to be the first step towards doing better; and we have hence not shrunk from a confession which it is no pleasure for an Englishman to make. Our school has fallen lamentably low, and is the derision of foreigners; most of our sculptors display but little genius or knowledge; we have but one or two men of practised skill and original gift:—such must, for the present, be the ever-recurring burden of the criticism on English sculpture.

The sculpture-room contains also a remarkable fresco by Mr. A. Moore, which, notwithstanding some inaccuracies in drawing (notably in the lower limbs), is both full of beauty and highly creditable to one of our youngest figure-painters. Four females, representing the Seasons, are seated side by side, symbolical accessories and attitudes indicating at once their interdependence and their individuality. The work is too much cut up into thin lines, the manner of the antique fresco or of the broken marbles of Greece having apparently been in the artist's mind; but the lines show an unusually fine instinct for grace, which we hope Mr. Moore will mature into perfect work. This

design, and an oil-picture from a Scripture subject which did not find a place in this year's Exhibition, appear to us, meanwhile, to justify hopes for the realization of which only study, and the mind that has *Forwards* for its motto, are required. Only! . . . But there is more in this than we have now room to preach on.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF 1865

A GOOD average Exhibition; a more than common number of interesting subjects; fewer of glaring failures, except in the sculpture; two or three instances of steady advance, and more than as many of abilities mistakenly directed—such might be given as the summary of the year's Royal Academy, if an individual impression of this nature have any value. Or we might look at the Exhibition from another point of view, and say that the advance of the English School is so smooth and steady as to be almost imperceptible. Pre-Raphaelitism, whether in its genuine or its imitative form, is now little to be seen; and all the painters whose work could not come near the "Huguenot" in precision and delicacy, accompanied by a chorus of Academical critics, are congratulating Mr. Millais upon the change, much as the young lady in that masterpiece, with her good father confessor, would have blessed her lover had he reconciled himself to Holy Mother Church. Examples of Continental influence are also rare, and all that we heard, two years ago, of the recognized necessity for improving our design and toning down our colour has apparently gone back across the Channel, leaving indigenous merit to make its way after its well-known insular fashion. Great artists in France have their scholars, who are trained for years, as M. Paul Flandrin, for example, was trained by Ingres, in all the difficulties of art, before the pupils produce any inde-

pendent work of their own; but in our more favoured island, where art grows of itself, this laborious process is happily dispensed with, and every fashionable painter, or favourite of a close coterie of initiated flatterers, has at once a tail of imitators as long and almost as brilliant as the comet. Failures of the glaring sort, on the other hand, as we have said, are growing rare. We never see any picture now which, like Turner's "Slaver" (at the time when we know he had so sadly fallen off), the Hanging Committee begin by putting upside down. Indeed, a curiously fair average level of work is characteristic of the present rooms; a result due in part to the uncommon taste with which the Executive of this year has performed its onerous functions, and never conspicuously interfered with, except when the "line" has been claimed by certain among the Academicians. Meanwhile, undecorated originality makes its way as it can in that which conservative optimism assures us is the best of all possible Englands. Here and there, under favour of a painter who has shown himself liberal in proportion to his distinction, it comes in this year for a little visibility; but in general it has to content itself with remaining without the consecrated walls—we will not say, left out in the cold, but at any rate exercising little more influence than the once celebrated *vox clamantis in deserto*, whilst it is "taken down," taught the errors of "realism" and the glories of the "ideal," by Academical criticism. In short, the lesser world of the Academy, as it ought in a civilized age, represents pretty accurately the course of the larger world about it; and advances, as Mr. John Stuart Mill has it, more by the general elevation of the mass than by the force of leading and powerful individualities, who are rather suppressed than otherwise in favour of those gifted with the faculty for catching the common eye.

Enough of these general remarks. Only we would premise that it is of painting that we have been speaking hitherto—an art to the comprehension of which the public has educated itself up to a certain creditable point, and over which the public exercises consequently a very wholesome influence;—profiting itself in turn by the lessons in good art which the painters, encouraged and upheld by national taste, give it. In sculpture, unhappily, the same comprehension and the same check appear to be still almost wholly wanting. More money than ever, it is credibly stated, is now in course of expenditure upon marble-chipping and smoothing; and artists of the calibre of Mr. Bell and Mr. Philip rival Phidias in the size and importance, at any rate, of the work they are executing for an Albert Memorial, being hence unable—witness also Mr. Theed and Baron Marochetti — to contribute their common quota of masterpieces to the Academy. And yet, in fact, we all know, and sadly have to confess it,—nobody believes in or cares for English sculpture, except the prosperous few who fall thus within range of the genial shower which, if it cannot transmute ignorance into artistic skill, performs at least the more tangible metamorphosis by which bronze refines into gold, and bank-notes freely form themselves upon the surface of the marble. In short, we can here only echo the verdict which we hear current on all sides, and pronounce the sculpture of 1865, if not intrinsically worse than the sculpture of many former years, yet less redeemed by any productions of merit, and even more provokingly than in general crowded with pieces which attest at once the carelessness of the producers and of their patrons. But we shall return to this subject, and, like history, try to teach our philosophy, such as it is, by examples.

I

Figure-subjects, as usual, hold so predominating a place among the pictures that we begin to wonder whether there ever really was a time when success in landscape deserved to rank as the special characteristic of the English school. Several pieces this year belong to the religious class, although indeed the artists rarely endeavour to take a Scriptural theme and fairly work it out, contenting themselves rather with proceeding by way of parable or single figure. Mr. Millais, whose versatility is one of the many "notes of genius" which he gives us, has tried both modes, exhibiting in the latter class a girl sweeping through a marble doorway, and clothed in a gorgeous robe of yellow silk, embroidered with a velvet pattern, which reminds one of Japan. The Catalogue names this figure—which, as a study of drapery and of forcible colour, leaves little to be desired—"Esther;" nor should we hold her English features, Japanese dress, and Greek palace serious impediments to a representation of that Queen, if the appropriate character had been in any notable way impressed upon the figure. But in this respect, in company with so many saints and holy people by the old masters, the "Esther" lays no claim to individuality, and, like an apostle by Guido who has lost his emblem, we can only identify the figure by the inscription. An "Esau," by Mr. Watts, although unlike Mr. Millais' "Esther" in painting, being artificially low in tone and mostly slurred over in the execution, lies under the same disadvantage. This work has a somewhat grandiose character, and merits praise as a figure built up with well-considered lines; but the keen force, the Oriental sharpness of feature—the Arab, in a word—is wanting. Mr. Watts has some rare and precious gifts as a painter, and might easily, one would

think, raise himself high above a mere *succès d'estime.* Why does he not put out all his force, and take the place to which his powers entitle him?

By the "Esther" hangs the "Enemy sowing Tares," which Mr. Millais has now painted on a much-enlarged scale from the woodcut in that striking series of the Parables which we fear has not been so popularly appreciated as it deserved to be. More than in the case of the "Woman Seeking for Treasure," similarly adapted by the artist two years ago, something appears to be lost in this process. At any rate, the drapery and the landscape details, even when seen under twilight, would have borne with advantage a more careful study from nature, and more fulness in execution than were sufficient for the woodcut. It remains now to be added that a more forcible and vigorous piece of effect has rarely been produced, even by our most forcible Academician oil-painter. The lurid light in the sky behind, which forms a kind of diabolic halo round the "Enemy" (who is doing his bad work with an almost humourous energy), is astonishing. We should not be surprised if critics complained, as they did of the sunset in Turner's "Napoleon at Saint Helena," that it "put their eyes out." Light, whether from Heaven or elsewhere, is apt to do this; and the imaginative relation of the sulphurous gleam here to the subject is so fine and so sufficent for effect, that we must take the liberty of entreating Mr. Millais to subdue the animal with fiery eyes who is grinning horribly in the background. Why people should raise (as they have raised) quasi-metaphysical difficulties, and dispute the aesthetic propriety of painting a parable, we cannot imagine. One would rather have been inclined to say that he who puts such a fable into colour does again precisely what he who puts it in words does. All we have to ask is, that the parable shall not suffer—that the new

rendering shall be adequate. It is at least only on these grounds that we are dissatisfied with Mr. Herbert's "Sower," which, besides some defects in drawing, and a careless treatment of the nearer landscape, is weak and affected in its general air. This genteel "Sower," elegant as is the poise of his figure as he crosses the field, we fear can never hold his own against the "Enemy." The impress of the Scriptural story seems to us as little here as in the "Delivery of the Law" at Westminster. Mr. Herbert's "genteel style" is, in truth, not less alien from the Biblical spirit than the old Academical manner, with its carefully-selected attitudes and dresses laid out in irreproachable folds, of which M. Signol has this year given us a specimen. This is not unpleasing in its way, but the way is one nearly exhausted.

Mr. Leighton may enjoy every year the pleasure of knowing that few pictures excite so much "questioning of heart" as those which he annually tries in the high or historical field. Public opinion upon them appears regularly to oscillate between admiration and its opposite. We accept this as a sign that there is at once much merit in these works, and that they want that something which is essential to success; otherwise, in the course of the seven or eight years since the accomplished artist first made himself known, he would have secured a more definite place in general estimation. It is also worth noticing that, the larger the picture is in scale, the less appears to be its effect on the spectators. This is exemplified in the present exhibition, where Mr. Leighton's "Helen," in spite of the singular and spiritual beauty of the heroine's head, and the obvious refinement visible throughout, only adds one more to the many unsatisfactory translations of Homer, from which no number of failures appear sufficient to deter Englishmen. Mr.

Leighton appears, in fact, to have followed in his Helen the famous "Palinode" of the poet Stesichorus, and in defiance of Homer himself, has here painted the living human creature for whom the war was waged, as a shadow who walked the streets and walls of Troy, whilst the real Helen was meanwhile detained in Egypt at the Court of Proteus :—

οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος·
οὐδ' ἔβας ἐν νηυσὶν εὐσέλμοις,
οὐδ' ἵκεο πέργαμα Τροίας.

With a greater degree of success, yet still leaving the sense that the artist has attempted more, far more, than he has succeeded in realizing, Mr. Leighton has treated his "David." The King sits in a dim twilight on his terrace, and watches the birds as they fly westward to that brighter land beyond the hills, which is reflected on the further side of the clouds that overhang the landscape. This, it will be seen, is in its idea a genuine piece of poetical feeling; it is a true embodiment of the Psalmist's phrase, eminently pathetic amongst many that are so, "O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest!" But David's head, although well studied, does not embody the grandeur and intensity of the Royal poet; and the landscape, unreal in tints and in outline, requires the text to explain its well-intended significance. In other points, also, the picture is not up to its mark. The hands are strikingly fine; more expressive, to our fancy, than the features. The older painters used to repeat a subject ten times till, we may presume, they had "satisfied their ideal." And we should like Mr. Leighton to take up this beautiful theme again, and not be contented to rest till he had done justice to its high capabilities. One picture so wrought out would surely be a better lesson in art than fifty subjects half-mastered; it would also be an enduring treasure.

Mr. Barwell's "Christ watching the Hypocrites" is another striking, though, more manifestly than Mr. Leighton's, imperfectly realized design. The Saviour, a boy of twelve, has been suddenly struck at the sight of the demonstrative piety of the Pharisees, who are painted as literally "blowing the trumpet" before them, whilst they turn the poor away unaided. He seizes his Mother's arm with a well-caught natural gesture. The figure of the Virgin is too small for effect, and there are other points open to criticism; but the whole, with all its naïveté, shows a real originality of intention which would arrest one at once in a gallery of the early Italian or German masters—men who (a modern artist must sometimes think) often gained their reputation with but small expenditure in the way of thought or invention.

Mr. A. Moore's "Sacrifice of Elijah," rejected last year, has now found a place in the Exhibition. This picturesquely and originally designed work shows a row of worshippers kneeling opposite to Elijah, whilst the fire from heaven descends upon the sacrifice in the trench. Adoration and awe are admirably painted in the attitude and expression of these figures; the prophet is less forcibly conceived, being too little above the common Arab type; but the landscape is well imagined, though coloured in a low key, which strikes us rather as an attempt in the modern French style than as a true specimen of that gradation which the French artists have reduced to system. This peculiarity in the colour also puts the picture to a disadvantage among the glaring conventional tints of its neighbours, but enough remains to make it one of the marked things of the Exhibition. We trust that the gifted designer will rather take this work for his point of departure than the classical scenes of which he has also given specimens, which seem rather

to reveal study of the Elgin marbles than of that nature on which Phidias, if ever any artist, based his transcendent excellence. We are very glad, however, to find that we have again in Mr. Moore a painter keenly sensible to that beauty of line from which the pursuit of other qualities has in some degree diverted his contemporaries. Let him only not be satisfied with the easy praise which has ruined so many beginners, but put his gift on the sure foundation of truthful study, and he may do good service in the cause of our art.

The "Haman and Esther," by one of our best trained designers, Mr. Armitage, may properly close our brief list of Scripture pieces. If he can add greater warmth in colour and dramatic intensity of conception, the painter ought to take the place in our school left vacant by Mr. Dyce. Mr. Armitage has never, in our recollection, done his powers more justice than in this fine work, which is so admirably disposed in its masses, and so skilful in its lines, that there would be no risk of failure if it were repeated in life-size on a church wall. The details are also studied with that accuracy which modern archaeology demands, and furnishes. Why, let us ask again, is a real painter or a real sculptor almost never employed to decorate any important building? Putting Westminster aside, we hardly know an instance, except what Mr. Watts, Mr. Dyce, and Mr. Woolner have respectively done at Lincoln's Inn, All Saints, and the Assize Courts of Manchester; and whilst these artists, with others of similar standing, are persistently ignored, quackery and quaintness run riot in our memorials and churches. Nor is the evil we are complaining of likely to be remedied until patrons recognize that they cannot decide on these matters without definite and practical knowledge on their own part, or until, on the

other side, our architects are trained as artists, and our artists take their share in architecture.

II

Incidents from history, or incidents which might have occurred, have for some years held an increasing space in the Exhibition, and seem to mark a transition from scenes of domestic life and contemporary manners, while at the same time there is a scarcity of historical subjects strictly so called. The deficiency in the last class may also, perhaps, be partly due to accident this year; Mr. Maclise and Mr. Calderon having sent no pictures, whilst Mr. F. Madox Brown, whose power in the high historical style is that which grows upon us in renewed visits to his collection, (described further on), exhibits elsewhere. Our history-pictures are accordingly represented now by works treated in what one may, without disrespect, speak of as the older manner, in which theatrical and melodramatic sentiment is apt to be predominant, while the dress has a tendency to be elaborate without strict or valuable accuracy, and even, in its effect, to overpower the wearer. Such seems to us to be the way in which the "Night of Rizzio's Murder" has been dealt with by Mr. Ward, who has combined these elements with considerable skill, and, by concentrating his subject within a comparatively small space, has told his story effectively; although we would venture to remark that, without a clear recollection of the actual facts, the cowering figure of Darnley (who was cognizant of the murder) would appear to be the intended victim of Ruthven, rather than Rizzio himself. Perhaps no scene in history presents a more odious combination of characters and passsions than this; and although Mr. Ward has suc-

ceeded in seizing on the one feature in the "bloody business" which is not altogether beyond human sympathy, in the gesture and expression of Mary, yet it must be owned that the general impression is intensely unpleasant. Art here, in fact, trenches so closely on the morally frightful, and suggests so much of physical horror, that only a rigidly earnest and untheatrical representation could avoid failure in this respect. It would be hard, on all accounts, to try Mr. Frith's "Royal Wedding" by the true historical standard, or even by the standard—poor as we cannot help rating it—of his own natural style. This large picture ranks in art with the "Coronation" by Martin, Mr. Salter's "Wellington Banquet," or the "Reform Meeting at Glasgow" by we forget whom; but, from the nature of the subject, it falls below them in point of pictorial interest. Few however, indeed, and far between, have been the painters who could lift a pageant of this nature, despite the deep human interest which lies far beneath the wedding finery, above the level of the hotel-parlour gallery. We will content ourselves with reminding those who care to examine the work in question from the side of art, of the refinement which Leslie threw into a nearly analogous scene from the life of our honoured Sovereign, or of the grace and gorgeousness displayed in the ceremonial pieces of Veronese. Mr. Frith's colour is chalky and spotty; his figures are like dolls from a first-rate toy-shop, not like life on a reduced scale: other artists seem to paint from models, he from *marionettes*. There is also a general missing of character in the heads, and one looks to little purpose for the elegance of manner and feature which must have been the dominant characteristic of the real scene. A vulgar dressiness pervades the court; one would think it a crowd from Epsom or the Railway Station. Let us add one more technical remark on the quality of

Mr. Frith's work, that the nearer dresses are here elaborated with not less minuteness than in what we now so often hear of as the erroneous "pre-Raphaelite" style—only, unhappily, without gaining thereby any of that effect of truth and richness which Mr. Millais or Mr. Hunt could produce by their mode of elaboration.

Without entering into details it may be sufficient to enumerate the names of Messrs. Elmore, Horsley, C. Landseer, Redgrave, Ansdell, and Faed as attached to pictures which do not differ in any marked way from the styles to which they have accustomed the spectator. We do not, of course, mean to class these artists together as men of equal power; but they all appear to have so definitely fixed their manner, that their admirers need apprehend from them none of those perplexing changes with which creative genius is apt to distance its first lovers, as it passes, with a Raphael or a Milton, from the "Florentine" to the "Roman" period—from a *Comus* to a *Paradise Lost*. It is not from want of matter, but of space, that we forbear to analyze the style of the painters named, and to describe their present works. As it is, however, *Non ragionam di lor, ma guarda e passa;* and those who go by will, truth to say, find much to amuse and something to attract them. Let us note also that Messrs. Poole and Webster reappear now with a power and a freshness which are rarely shown when a man's gifts have been for some time in abeyance. The latter has a scene of village gossip, instinct with character, finely felt and marked. Although not strong in the execution, it is a better picture than the more powerful affectations of certain among our younger artists. Mr. Poole's drawing, we fear, will be to the end of time a stumbling-stone, not only to his friends, but to his reputation; but his scene from Pompeii during the eruption is filled with well-imagined

incident, and renders vividly the effect of that lurid and preternatural light which would arise when a midday southern sun is veiled by clouds of ashes, and reddened by "stealthy interminglings" from Vesuvian fire. Mr. Poole's ready and poetical inventiveness should substitute another figure for that which too decidedly recalls one in Raphael's "Incendio del Borgo."

We look with somewhat mixed feelings on what may, we suppose, be termed the rising schools of English and Scotch incident-painters. Among the latter, Mr. Orchardson has at present the air of losing ground; the less promising qualities in his work of the last two years having obtained in 1865 a certain prominence over the merits visible in his earlier productions. His "Hamlet and Ophelia" has many clever points, and the scene has been properly imagined as off the stage, but we do not gain so much as might have been expected; the two heads, especially Ophelia's, being poor and unsatisfactory in character. Mr. Orchardson's execution appears also to be verging on the flashy sketchiness of Mr. Pettie's; the shadows especially are monotonous and conventional in colour, and a clay-cold tint predominates. Both these painters have shown qualities of invention which make us hope that they will not lose themselves in mannerism or sentimentality. Mr. Noel Paton always aims at a higher province of art than the common class of incident, and his pictures are full of minute detail, not only natural, which he paints with great delicacy, but of that antiquarian character which cannot be obtained without pains and study. All this makes us regret that, like Mr. Edmund Reade in verse, Mr. Paton persists in attempting subjects which, judging from the results, must be pronounced quite above his abilities. He is an example of the intellectual illusion which mistakes interest in an art for power in it. The

pathos of his works (as in the Cawnpore picture of some years since) passes into the horrible; the fancy shown has the cold, yet stilted, character peculiar to that imitation which a cultivated but unimaginative mind is so often led to attempt under the influence of great models. Meanwhile any real gift which he may possess loses its value through the juxtaposition of work which has no true life in it. The picture now exhibited—a child in a little valley arrested by a vision of the Fairy Queen and her court—exemplifies the above remarks. The foreground is full of beauty; the child carefully though rather affectedly painted; but the fairies are simply a row of dolls with waxen complexions. There is nothing aerial, or spiritual, or imaginative, about them; they are as pure prosaic nineteenth-century as Mr. Sandys' awkward personification of "Spring," or Professor Aytoun's ballads. Such must be inevitably the failure of those who, with whatever other qualifications, (in Plato's phrase), "approach the gates of the Muses without inspiration."

The rising school of figure-painters whom one might call "semi-historical," in spite of Mr. Calderon's absence, musters this year in considerable force. Mr. Marks heads the list, with a lively and amusing scene of "The Beggars coming to Town," the best composed and painted work which we remember from his pencil. The humours of the ragged troop are cleverly discriminated; some have already assumed their part, in others the twinkle of the conscious mendicant eye has not yet faded. The town-dogs have come out to learn the news, and one sees the opinion upon the intruders which their sagacity has already formed. Other examples of advance may be found in the clever Henry VIII challenging a village clown to a cudgel match (Mr. Storey); in the "Young Knight armed" (Mr. Yeames),

which has, however, rather a studio-quality in the painting, and is unequally worked out, the "business" being hardly sufficient to fill the canvas; and the "Preaching of Whitfield," by Mr. Crowe. This artist has a dry and hard handling, and appears to take little pleasure in his colour, although what he gives honestly attempts to render natural lighting—a rarer quality than one might imagine amongst oil-painters, sorely tempted to get effects by ingenious devices which they know will often pass muster. The scene which Mr. Crowe has painted affords a curious illustration of England during a century when, if religion had, as we often hear, sunk to a cold and worldly pitch, the counteracting impulse towards self-sacrificing enthusiasm existed after a fashion now little exhibited. The preacher, in full dress, is haranguing a small audience whom he has withdrawn from the rival attractions of a fair. Girls press forward eagerly; one hands him notes from inquiring sinners, another has thrown herself on the ground in the ecstacy of awakened conscience. Soldiers and merry-andrews are playing off on the preacher their practical jokes, in which the grimness very much exceeds the humour. We would suggest that this picture would engrave well, and be likely to succeed. A name new to us in this style is that of Mr. Clay. In his large interior, "the French Court watching the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew," the artist appears to have introduced more material than he could successfully penetrate with the dramatic intensity of the moment; but there is evidence of much pains and some good grasp of attitude, although the work is hung too high for seeing how the heads are painted. The figures stand back in a row from the opened window, through which comes the uproar of the massacre; a lady's pet-dog smells a stain of blood on the floor, in suspicious contiguity to Cardinal Guise—a

well-imagined incident. At a still more unfavourable height hangs another elaborate scene by Mr. P. R. Morris, who has represented the wreck of an Armada vessel off the Western Island of Tobermory (Argyllshire), on which a nunnery was, or may have been, existing in 1588. The nuns, with two or three priests, have come out with torches and fire-signals to aid the distressed crew; their faces appear too much alike, and there is a want of the firelight look about the group, which is treated with care and some animation. We are disposed to wish that this work had changed places with Mr. Hodgson's sixteenth-century scene of "Taking Home the Bride," which, with a certain charm in the colour and arrangement, leaves much to be desired in the drawing, both of the faces and the figures. We hope that this artist, who has given true promise of better things, will not relax in his endeavours, nor be satisfied with a half-success only. A little group of fisher children dabbling in a pool (T. Armstrong, 455) deserves notice. It has a strong air of unaffected truth in the drawing and expression of the children, and the colour, although in a rather low key, is effective. Mr. Wallis, again has made a step forward. His execution, singularly conscientious and elaborate, appears to be still in some degree in advance of his powers of combination. The figures in his larger work, "Sir Philip Sidney sitting for his Portrait to Paul Veronese," have too much the air of isolated groups, and, although bright in colour, do not form that complete and satisfying harmony which the very name of the great Veronese calls up. Hence Mr. Wallis perhaps succeeds more thoroughly in the smaller piece where he has painted the "Introduction of Spenser to Shakspeare." The older poet advances with a consciousness that he is in the presence of the mightier genius; Shakspeare receives Spenser on the

other hand, with the look of one for whom a long-cherished wish is at last fulfilling itself :—an excellent piece of character-painting, involving no common difficulties.

Remembering the more delicately executed and more carefully composed scenes with which Mr. Phillip, some years ago, founded his reputation as a painter of Spanish life, we doubt whether the brilliant "Early Career of Murillo"—which forms, we suppose, the most popular success of the Exhibition—will be rated quite so highly when its first charm has passed. The interest of the picture, together with the best of its painting, lies on the left side, where the bulky priests who inspect the young artist's canvas, with Murillo's own figure, have a power and a sobriety in colour not unworthy of a scene which inevitably recalls Spanish art itself to one's remembrance. The interest, however, is not adequately diffused ; a lusty peasant in red, who pushes forward in the middle, staring like a savage, and carrying a rather coarsely-painted child, being unequal to the central place in the composition. The figures behind and beyond, on the other hand, are insufficiently wrought out, although the muleteer is very dexterously placed. A group of rough earthenware, of those charming tints and forms which civilization and "block-printing" seem destined to destroy, with a heap of fruit, enriches the nearer foreground. On the whole, whilst cordially admiring the work, we feel that this is rather a case in which, according to the old proverb, "accident helps art," than an example of advancing excellence—a hint which may be also suggested in regard to the clever scene from a Spanish bull-fight by Mr. Burgess, "Brava, Toro." This, in its common-place way, is an effective piece of work ; but one feels, as with Mr. Goodall's well-grouped Egyptian scene, that a native would, in either case, have dealt very differently with the

subject. In the latter, the impress of local atmosphere is altogether wanting: it is Egypt with English effects. But the choice of themes such as these is a real gain above the pretty child and pinafore school; they lend this Exhibition that *interesting* character which is the quality most strongly marked upon it.

III

We have now a group of figure-painters who exhibit a marked originality, and divide public interest with the older artists already noticed—attracting, no doubt, more especially their own contemporary generation, and hence not altogether free from the ill effects of coterie worship. Eccentricity is apt to be developed in the forcing-house air of flattery, and some specimens of it have found their way to Trafalgar Square. This quality displays itself, indeed, in the most conspicuous manner in Mr. Whistler's works; but it is an eccentricity accompanied in him by such singular gifts and graces in art as to command forgiveness, even from commonplace spectators. Struck with the eminent beauty in colour and the *naïf* inventiveness in design displayed by the Japanese, Mr. Whistler has not only studied their decorative painting till he has made its secrets his own, but seems now impelled to endeavour to reproduce it in England. Beautiful as are the studies he has thus given —the "Gold Screen" above all—and useful as such practice may be in technical points, it is of course when the artist chooses his subject from English life that he can not only astonish, but arrest us. Such is Mr. Whistler's "Little White Girl," a young lady in transparent muslin, standing with one hand—most gracefully felt, but less than half-

painted—upon a common mantelpiece. There is nothing in the rooms, not even by Mr. Millais, which can stand its ground against the soft purity, the full undertone of exquisite tint, in this sketchy picture. The tenderness, for instance, with which the girl's arm, as it were, warms the sleeve, is something that, as Mr. Ruskin once said of Turner, can rather be felt than pointed out ; and it is worth while comparing this (only one of many such evidences of genius which might be named) with the complete failure to reach the same effect in Mr. Sandys' elaborately wrought "Spring." But, though finish may only make a picture worse, when ill employed, this does not render slovenliness virtuous ; and until Mr. Whistler chooses to put heads and hands at least on a level with screens and dresses, we fear he will not rank above that class which the French name *amateur-prodige*. He has a landscape, however—all English gray and damp, in place of Oriental brightness—in which, hung at least as it is, there seems little for his admirers to wish added. This view of Old Battersea Bridge has nothing equal to it here—little like it, except Mr. Mason's work—in its palpable and delightful truth of tone. It is, what every landscape should be, rather an inlet into nature through a frame than what we commonly mean by a picture.

Refinement in tone is Mr. Whistler's "speciality." Although Mr. Leighton strives after it, and has given examples proving that he appreciates it, we do not think that he will be held successful in this province of his art. His colour-system is peculiar—never commonplace, rarely pleasing, more often taking from the effect of his works than adding beauty to beauty. But Mr. Leighton has another species of refinement, which those who know how absolutely this quality, in some one at least of its different manifestations, is the mark of the true artist, will value highly. In comment-

ing on the artist's "Helen," we noticed the delicate beauty of the principal head. The same quality reappears, where the scope and size of the works do not so much neutralize its effect, in several of his small pictures. The infant caressingly gathered up within reach of its mother's arms (120), and pressing cherries upon her with a young child's assiduity, is exquisite in its refinement; nor is the sentiment of the whole scene less so, although the frequent inequality of this painter's work appears in the mother's figure, which is rather languid in pose, and does not sufficiently explain itself in its action. Two little scenes, both apparently placed in St. Mark's, Venice (though the colouring does scanty justice to that lovely building), and both repeating a mother and child, are more thoroughly brought into harmony; the "Widow's Prayer" having the most of subject, the other the greater charm in linear arrangement. The child in the latter has the free play and gracefulness of the Gainsborough or Stothard style, now, as we remarked when speaking of Mr. A. Moore, rarely seen in English art.

The Millais of the year so soon becomes everybody's talk, that, a month after the Exhibition has opened, there is no need to describe it. What a publication, we may remark, is that which a powerful and popular painter obtains from the Academy! Hardly any book, of a kind fairly comparable with art of this nature, now approaches it in the speed and vividness of the impression excited. The diffusion of Mr. Dickens' tales, when at their best, or of a new volume by Mr. Tennyson, may perhaps have come the nearest. Our readers will all have seen the Roman soldier leaving England and his long-haired British wife, or have read descriptions of it. With or above Mr. Phillip's "Murillo," it is the success of the year in figure-painting. Much more effect and passion might, indeed, we venture to think,

have been thrown into the scene, had portions of the nearer landscape (the slightness of the ably designed distance is rather apparent than real), the subsidiary figures, and, above all, the dresses and heads of the principal group, been carried even near the perfection of the "Huguenot." Yet, as it is, the idea of the picture, the force and simplicity with which it renders one of those elementary phases of feeling which never lose their charm, and the fine treatment of parts—notably the soldier's outstretched arm—put it into the higher circle of English art. Observe here, also, the truth and originality with which Mr. Millais has kept the girl's right hand close to her lover's head; a commonplace artist would have flung the whole arm around the kneeling figure. The suppressed fury of heart-breaking, half grief, half impotent rage, is equally well indicated (though, as with the hand just noticed, indicated only) in the swelling throat and compressed lips of the British wife. It must be remembered that the retiring flood of Roman garrisons left the natives of England to no merely personal sorrows. "The Picts drive us on the sea, and the sea drives us back upon the Picts." One would have thought the natural and historical truth of this would have "leapt to the eyes," as the French say, at once; yet we have seen criticisms which seemed dissatisfied that this wild creature did not express her grief and shame with the devotional decorum of one of Vandyke's Magdalenes.

Mr. Hughes and Mr. Lewis rank also among the artists who add signally to the charm of this Exhibition. The "Turkish School near Cairo," by the "Academician Elect" (looking at the excellence of Mr. Lewis's work, one would be inclined to reverse the order of the words), is a marvellous piece of genuine Orientalism, as true to Egyptian local colour as Mr. Whistler's is to Japanese, and wrought out

with a power over varied character in the heads which the artist just named does not aim at. Drowsiness pervades the place; the bright dresses, furniture, and casements glow and flicker in the sunlight; but sleep is the only lesson learned, except by the cat, who is making free with a child's stock of provisions. Mr. Lewis, as long ago noticed, appears to have a peculiar power in rendering the lower phases of human activity; and he is hence seen to most advantage when, as in the "School," nature falls in with art. In his lovely garden of Eastern flowers he is not so happy. A girl may indeed look less animated and brilliant than the rose or the lily, but in that case she should not, we think, be the central flower of the garden. Her dress is managed with singular mastery, at once broadly and delicately painted; and the skill which has brought the gathered flowers in the vase sufficiently forward before those growing just beyond should not be overlooked. An inequality in his work, showing itself sometimes in the proportions of the figures, sometimes in the colour, still impedes Mr. A. Hughes from taking the place in art to which he is entitled. We have no painter who throws more tender and poetical grace into subjects of the incident or domestic class, or who seems so little indebted to others for the idea of his work. A modest originality! The single figure of "Beauty," from the famous old legend, is the most complete of the three pieces which he now exhibits. A little more relief and roundness is only wanting to its delicacy of feeling and translucent brightness of colour. The hands have that refined quality mentioned above; there is more of the lady in them than in the whole of Mr. Frith's wedding-party, although the best-born of our beauties are included in his list. Men paint, not what they see, but what they feel; what is in their minds tells itself through their fingers. Compared

with Mr. Hughes' colouring, that of M. Ribot, in his French tinkers at work on a coffee-pot (547), looks artificially dark and grim; but this picture is full of power and character. The arms are singularly well drawn, and the whole has that look of trained completeness in which the school of France contrasts so favourably with ours—a confession which considerations both of honesty and of good policy must compel an English critic to venture on.

A striking scene from the Roman Amphitheatre by Mr. Solomon has attracted an attention which its original power well deserves, although some portion of its effect is, we think, due to quaintness—indeed, perhaps, even to that incompleteness in the drawing, and that conventional monotone prevalent in the colouring, which assist in giving the whole a character unlike ordinary work. The heads of the women are too much alike, and one does not distinctly see where the light comes from; perhaps the diffused daylight produced by the "velarium" is here intended. Allowing, however, for some deficiencies which a strong and conscientious painter will correct as he advances, enough remains to leave an impression of real power. We see the ladies of the Imperial household as they might have felt for the thousandth time when the order to despatch an unsuccessful gladiator had been given. The Empress has a languid air; by her side a fierce and fair woman turns down her thumb in sympathy with the order for death. A black-haired lady who looks on with some horror strikes us as the best head in the group. If the besetting temptation of our rising men to yield to the first flush of praise be overcome, and this work be regarded rather as a promise than a fulfilment, Mr. Solomon may reach the place in English art which some not less gifted contemporaries, we fear, will now never "cast aside self" sufficiently to master. Lastly, we should men-

tion Mr. Wynfield's "Last Days of Queen Elizabeth" as ranking amongst the best of the smaller quasi-historical works exhibited.

IV

The excellent general arrangement of this year's Exhibition has been already incidentally noticed. The favour with which the public have accepted it, and the satisfactory result to the display as a whole, may serve to silence, if not to satisfy, those Academicians who incline to believe that the frequent criticisms on this subject are altogether the outcries of disappointed outsiders. The comparative weakness of our Landscape School is, however, rather brought forward by the fairness of the hanging. Styles also (as we have before noticed), change less here, except in a few very highly gifted hands, than in figure-painting, and hence leave less need for comment. Mr. Creswick, the Linnells, Mr. V. Cole, with others reaching a good level in landscape—such as Mr. Leader, who shows increasing delicacy and brightness in some very pleasing Welsh scenes, and Mr. M'Allum, who falls considerably below his usual mark—may be included under these general suggestions, in which inevitable brevity implies no disregard of the artists' contributions. Mr. Stanfield has a beautifully-felt passage, including Tantallon Castle, in the middle distance of his "Bass Rock;" and an Italian scene by him is also tenderly handled. The sentiment which he thus gives supplements what may have been wanting to the greater precision of his earlier handling. With this distinguished veteran, whose seas, though spacious and grandly drawn, are deficient in liquidity of colour, sea-painting as such appears to be at present in abeyance. Mr. Lee and Mr. Cooke here follow

their old paths, the former also repeating, in his views on shore, those crude touches for effect and that cold emptiness of tone which are disagreeably conspicuous in his landscapes. The "Hastings Trawler," by Mr. Johnson, has better sea-painting in it: but it is from shore that our oil-colourists now treat ocean best. Mr. Hook has now transferred his easel to the shores of North Brittany: lingering still, it will be observed, among those Celtic races whose ways and characters appear to have a peculiar attraction for his idyllic genius. His four views now exhibited give each a version of wave, beach, and sky—individualized indeed by slight and refined differences between the effects chosen, yet, as is the painter's wont, never going far from the same aspect of summer serenity, and peopled with groups who may all have been members of one family. The arrangement of these figures, with that happy look of nature which Mr. Hook can always give, is free this year, some minor points excepted, from the want of balance which has been noticed sometimes in his work; the complexions are rather uniform; the back grounds occasionally come rather too forward. In point of sky or water it would be difficult to choose between these works; but the effect of the "Sea-weed Gatherer"—a girl walking by a sweep of coast, and trailing the weeds after her with a rake, whilst a child imitates the action behind—appears to us the most complete and harmonious. The green line of fresh weed thrown up and left by the last tide is effective in binding the composition together. Another beautiful bit of sea-coast scenery, also including a shining curve of bay, is Mr. J. P. Knight's "Oxwich." The water is here seen through a graceful half-circle of lightly leaved trees; a bank of clouds rests on the horizon. The headland to the right and the upper sky might have more relief. Mr. Naish and Mr. Hemy send

some careful studies from the Clovelly district. The latter works in a style of great delicacy, and has drawn the pebble-strewn beaches with accurate refinement; might he not now gain greater force by varying the scene of his practice? We would suggest the same to Mr. Naish, whose sailors watching the boat wrecked in winter and now repaired for a fresh cruise (288) have that look of actual life which never fails to make its way to the mind. A pretty group of women and girls making nets in a Breton cottage (F. Smythe, 281) hangs near Mr. Naish's picture, and seems to promise well. It is gay and animated, and bright without tawdriness. Notice is also due to Mr. Carrick's "Ogmore Castle," a careful study of a little Welsh valley and ruin, very true to the rich, the almost crude, effect of brightness in the air and greenness in the grass when summer rain clears off; to Mr. H. Moore's vivid woodland scene, "Near Hartland Abbey;" to the prettily grouped and painted "Midsummer Day," a row of children at dinner in a hayfield (W. Field); to Mr. Burke's "Connemara Valley;" and to Mr. Mawley's two views of a marsh edged by trees, which want more roundness (118 and 278). There is some good foreground painting, and a well-drawn hill-distance, in Mr. W. H. Paton's "Lochaber;" pretty colour and sentiment in Mr. R. Butler's "Autumn Scene;" careful study of waves breaking in over a long range of low rocks in the "Dunnottar Castle" of Mr. Oakes; a good solid tone and power of making an uncomposed scene look well in Mr. G. Sant's "Middleton Meadow;" and highly studied detail bestowed on a rather ungrateful subject, in the "Morant's Court" of Mr. Brett. A fine tropical view by M. Mignot (565) has the qualities which we have often noticed in this interesting artist's work.

No one fails to be interested in Sir E. Landseer's portrait of himself between two favorite dogs. They have often sat

to him before, and now sit by him in their turn, and criticize the sketch on which he is at work. The animated head deserves to be brought more forward, from the pale colours in which it has been grounded. Compared with the imposing air which painters are apt to give themselves in their own portraits, Sir Edwin's is humorously characteristic of the artist. The companion pieces—a lady's hack in gloss and glory (and admitted, by the bye, to tread her croquet-ground itself—he must be a spoiled favourite), and a cab-horse, worn, wrung, and reduced to low company—rank with the artist's best efforts in painting the horse. They will, no doubt, be known before long, through engravings, on the Continent hardly less than at home—a privilege accorded to few of our insular celebrities.

We are glad to see that Mr. Wells varies the practice of portrait by landscape—a union of styles for which he can easily find great precedents. His "Farmyard at Evening" has an impressive sobriety of tone which wants more gradation to achieve the effect aimed at by the artist. The trees are well discriminated. Mr. Anthony's best picture, a village church seen between tall trees (526), is manly and unaffected, and skilful in the use of gray. Here a last gleam of crimson light rests for a moment on the upper battlement of the tower; the evanescent look of this faint flicker is well suggested. There is a feeling in both these works which approaches the poetical; a remark under which we would also include the noble view over the Dunes of Artois, by Mr. W. B. Davis. This painter, whose work, by its subjects and its treatment, attests foreign influence, has given a remarkable proof of that prudent progress which is commoner in French than in English art. Having painted small-sized scenes for several years with great care and delicacy, he now gives the fruit of his study in a well-con-

sidered and successful picture on the fullest landscape scale. This view of low sandhills, covered with the arid vegetation of the sea, over which a strayed herd, drawn with great variety and truth of attitude, are coming, seems to want, like Mr. H. Davis's former works, some centralizing interest, whether in the figures or in the colour effect. It hence rather approaches the poetical (observe the exquisite golden glow on the further hills and in the truly laughing sky, a quality of tint gained by sheer good painting) than absolutely deserves the epithet. Mr. Mason, like Mr. Whistler, seems to us to reach poetry on canvas through the harmonious unity which marks each of his three scenes. All these have the air of effects at morning or at twilight taken from the same wild piece of nature. They appear to stop a little short of completion, as if the gifted painter had feared lest the bloom of his delicate transparent atmosphere should be injured by further touches. The figures—children in two of the pieces, a traveller with a pony in the third—are sketched with singular beauty, truth, and refinement; we doubt whether anything in the Exhibition fully equals them in this respect. They are also better placed, fall more naturally into the scene, than Mr. Hook's. It is pleasant to see that Mr. Mason, whose merits were long neglected, has now found admirers both among the public and his fellow-artists. Few landscapes will be more sought after than his in future years.

V

A strict observance of the salutary rule to notice only works which rise above the average level, or display evidence of new aims on the artist's part, would confine our criticism on Portraiture within narrow limits. Men here crystallize

early, and, if they keep to this branch of the art, seldom exhibit any development except a too-often increasing want of care and variety. Something of this is due to the monotony of the work ; the proper study of man may be man, but not man (we presume) as he looks when stereotyped in a studio chair. An even more powerful source of degeneracy must be also traceable to that want of training in the figure under which most of our painters labour, and which, when once the lucrative tide of portrait popularity has set in, leaves as little time for the Academician to make himself a thorough artist, as (it may be feared) to recognize that he has perhaps never yet been one. Add to these depressing causes, that in England the art of Reynolds and Gainsborough—imperfect in some respects, though exquisite in everything—pitched the key for our portraiture, which has gone down through gradations of flimsiness, want of ease, want of drawing, and want of force, until some such determined protest as that which Mr. Holman Hunt has made in the able group exhibited in Hanover Street under the name of "The Children's Holiday," becomes necessary to redeem the style from total decadence. Mr. F. Grant and Mr. Knight may be regarded as good typical examples of a manner which, whatever ability may be assigned to, or may once have been shown by, the artists, must still be judged by the results to be a thoroughly false direction. Mr. Swinton, Mr. Hart, and Mr. Buckner belong to lower stages. Something different, if not better, is aimed at by Mr. G. Richmond ; but here long practice in water-colours would alone have been a serious impediment to success in oils, whilst want of power over figure-drawing becomes unavoidably more detrimental in life-size work. These defects come saliently forward when, as in the sketch exhibited of an Indian Princess (207), a thin and garish colouring, which

in the flesh is laid on in lines, not in masses, suggests by contrast what might have been made of a subject so naturally rich. Even the jewels here look like cheap glass imitations. The forms are also weak—a defect which reappears, with cruder colour, in the portrait of the Bishop of Oxford, whose versatile and intellectual features have been very poorly grasped. This was described as an "idealized treatment" in contemporary criticism—a use of the word from which we venture to dissent altogether. "Idealized" is simply that which most deeply and essentially renders the idea of the thing represented—strength where the man is strong, ambition where he is ambitious—which makes him look devout if devotion be the leading quality, subtle if it should happen to be subtlety, and so forth. To take a powerful head, and render it with weak features and expression, so far from "idealizing," is rather to miss the idea. Mr. Weigall is the rising artist in the field which the above-mentioned portrait-painters have so long occupied. We might describe his work as standing in the same relation to real portraiture in which fashionable gossip stands to real conversation; and among those who prefer the former kind of talk, will be found the best admirers of the portrait-painters in question. Returning to Mr. Weigall:—Tolerable in its way, and not often or always so mechanical as success generally renders fashionable portraiture, there is little promise in his work—none of the struggle to improve which Mr. Sant and Mr. Wells, with varying success, exhibit. The latter artist sends an elaborate group of portraits in action, three girls making up a *tableau vivant*. With much merit, the difficulty here (a difficulty which has foiled many artists) is, on the whole, rather turned than conquered.

Mr. Boxall, by his thoughtful grace and truthful air of character, rises very much above the average level, wanting

only more force and decision in colour and expression to take the place which he seems always to approach without quite attaining. The heads he now sends are good specimens of his style. Two portraits by Mr. Robertson (246 and 319), which have the look of good drawing, life-likeness, and cold colour, are hung beyond range of sight. A delicately painted girl's head, by Mr. Poynter (335), and the spirited "Mr. Bowman," by Mr. Watts, have properly gained accessible places. The animation and brightness of the latter head deserved more careful drawing in the dress; and what does the brown shadow upon the left cheek stand for?

Three artists, Messrs. Ercole, Baccani, and Lowenthal, send portraits which all point to the great advantage of that foreign training in art to which reference has been made. This gives to work which, like that of these painters, may possess no marked power, an air of style; nor, we imagine, can that often-discussed quality be otherwise obtained. The excess of such training, on the other hand, appears in the smooth finish of M. Lehmann's "Girl with a Distaff:" for Art, like morality in Aristotle's scheme, lies in a mean between opposing errors.

The present time will probably be looked on in future years as the *nadir* of English sculpture, just as the lowest point of our imaginative poetry is assigned by Mr. Hallam to the reign of William and Mary. Perhaps, to the patrons of that age, ignorance or personal acquaintanceship may have represented Blackmore or Fenton as great poets, as Garth was put above Dryden, and Boyle was preferred to Bentley by the aristocracy of Christ Church. Such patrons, whether in the Court or the city, would have complacently smiled or sneered at the critics who were not wanting to predict the collapse which a very few years would bring,

and actually did bring, upon the writers in question; and those who make a similar prophecy now with regard to the leading favourites of the sculpture-patronizing class can afford to confront the same fate. Yet there is really no rashness in asserting that ignorance of nature and want of skill in art can produce nothing of value, and that the brief gust, hardly so much of popularity as of patronism, which supports our Spratts and Blackmores in marble will not survive them. We have more than once shown, by reference to actual fact, why it is that English sculpture rouses but a languid feeling at home, and has no recognition among foreigners. The story is told in two words. The modern practice of putting up public statues and monuments, with the demand for portrait-busts, has called into activity a number of patrons who commission sculpture without having taken the pains to learn its first elements, and a number of practitioners whose work shows more or less incompetence for the difficult art which they profess. Want of knowledge of natural form, want of effect in modelling, want of mind and of cultivation, are conspicuously marked upon nineteen out of twenty works exhibited. One would think them the productions of journeymen or of schoolboys. Whether the general incompetence might not, in some instances, have been exchanged for skilled labour under a better training and a more educated and exigent public taste, it is no part of our business to ask here. What we have to do is to protest against any further waste of money, and further infliction of deformity on our cities, through the slovenly style of work now prevalent.

Let us illustrate these remarks by examples in Trafalgar Square. Sometimes the low state of our school is shown in simple commonplace, reflecting a few ancient types

without force; as in the life-sized "Eve," by Mr. MacDowell, R.A. a statue in which figure, attitude, and features, present not one single trace of conformity to the intended subject. Mr. MacDowell has done better things; here his work is really little above the level of Mr. Noble's "Purity." Sometimes it appears in an imitation of the corrupt modern Italian style—witness the boy by Mr. J. Adams (Il Giuocatore), with his curiously-shaped legs and right heel a good half-inch too long, grinning with all his might at a frightful dog; or a lady's head (928), by the same hand, her eyes so magnificently large as to leave no space for the frontal and cheek bones, and her expression that of a waxen beauty in a perfumer's window. Or we descend to (perhaps) worse modelling, combined with similar sentiment, in the marble confectionery of Mr. Trentanove (Flora), or the "Violet and Henry," by Mr. Alexander Munro, where the limbs and faces are so shapeless and boneless that the group looks as if it were already decomposing, in Tennyson's phrase, "into lower forms." This artist appears bent upon sacrificing the sense of grace which was a redeeming point in his earlier works. Or—power to model the human form remaining still in abeyance—we reach the stiff lifelessness of Mr. Lawlor's "Captive," or Mr. J. Bell's "Cherub with Primroses," where the aim appears to have been simplicity, but the result emptiness. Nor, although his work gives evidence that some care has been taken, can we honestly make an exception here in favour of Mr. Durham, who sends a group of two children (904) which one would really think was carved in what geologists call lignite—wood converted into stone; with a vacuous-looking boy holding a wreath, his limbs embarrassed how to place themselves, and apparently on a journey nowhere, which the

catalogue assures us is a "reduced model of the statue of Alastor, commissioned by the Corporation of London, and placed in the Mansion House." A boy's prose paraphrase could not miss out the imagination and beauty of Shelley's wonderful poem more perfectly. But there is nothing in this to surprize those who know the after-dinner patronage of art which prevails in Corporations and "commercial centres."

We have not exhausted our list of attempts, all demonstrating, in different ways, what must be the result when the most arduous and the most intellectual of the arts of design is approached without due training. The imperfect imitation of the French style in Mr. Leifchild's "Pensiero," where the drapery reveals the same elementary inattention to nature which we have marked as characterizing the works just noticed; the penmanlike curves and chisel sweeps in Mr. Woodington's Lady from "Comus;" the extravagance of Mr. Boehm's terracottas, or of his marble bust (Lord Stratford), where,—exactly as in M. Marochetti's busts,—a spurious effect has been gained by the brilliant device of suppressing every natural detail except the leading features—all are warnings of a similar kind. And yet from this exhibition are wanting other familiar names, dearer to their patrons than to art, who are all essentially, and we must fear by this time irrecoverably, ranked among those whose place as artists, in Mr. Ruskin's outspoken phrase, lies "somewhere in the abyss." Nor are matters improved when we turn to so comparatively simple a field as portrait-busts. Here, in addition to two or three already enumerated, we may name, and content ourselves with naming, Mr. Weekes, R.A., Mr. G. G. Adams, Mr. Marshall Wood, and the Messrs. Papworth, as prominent exhibitors of exactly what (if the art of better

hands or times, and the nature which never varies, be any standard for judgment) busts should *not* be. One asks oneself where the proprietors mean to conceal this series of careless surfaces and misshapen forms, which, to eyes trained by the standard of nature, have the repulsive effect of skulls ranged within a mortuary chapel. Worse perhaps than any, not so much for its greater intrinsic badness as for the magnitude and indignity of the failure, is the head of Mr. Gladstone by the Mr. J. Adams whose "ideal" work we have above spoken of. A boy whose first attempt at a face should be no better than this would receive small encouragement to touch clay again from any rational schoolmaster. Mr. J. Adams, by a sort of inversion of Mr. Darwin's theory, uppears to lie under the impression that the human species is rapidly returning to the gorilla type. He has selected Mr. Gladstone, of all people in the world, as a leading instance of this process, and has in turn been selected by the patrons of art in Liverpool to perpetuate his idea in a colossal figure of the Chancellor! In the interests of the great western port, let us hope that a commission which threatens so ill will be revoked, if there be any sense among Mr. Gladstone's fellow-townsmen of what is due to his features, taste, or wishes.

We have devoted the more space to this surprizing bust, as we did a year or two since to one by Mr. Marshall Wood, because, from reasons which we shall fully explain in a later Essay, there is so little free criticism of sculpture in England that those who value the welfare of the art are compelled to protest frankly against the inroads of fresh incompetence. In certain cases, however, such protests are less likely to have due effect; and if the liberal donor of Mr. Durham's "Prince Albert" to the Framlingham College be satisfied that the robed and tas-

selled effigy here exhibited in the model resembles the lamented Prince, or indeed resembles the "human form divine" in any degree beyond what we ordinarily find in a ship's figure-head, really there is nothing to be done for it but to bow and look another way. As we turn, however, let us call attention to the anatomy of the left arm, which starts from the shoulder as if meaning to go behind the figure, and is then found presently falling straight down—a position for which only a compound fracture could account. Even the hand which professes to hold the hat cannot perform so simple an action, the thumb having been so carelessly modelled as not to touch it!—We forbear criticizing the likeness.

Some of the very least competent artists who now exhibit or are absent (no doubt employed on the Royal commission) are the principals to whom has been entrusted the most important effort in English sculpture yet attempted, the Memorial in Hyde Park. One artist only who is *reliable*, whose work, though wanting in imagination, is thoroughly sound and conscientious, appears, so far as we know, on the long list of *employés*, architectural, ornamental, or sculptural. And then people wonder why English monuments fail, and why English sculpture is the standing derision of foreigners!

It may not be worth a nation's while to have sculpture at all; but, if we are to have it, it is worth doing well.

THE MULREADY EXHIBITION AT KENSINGTON, 1864

In every true genius there will generally be one or two leading qualities which either sum up the man or express what he most aimed at. There is a word, if we could only find it, which would define the poet, or painter, or statesman. A genuine criticism is that which endeavours to divine this word. Criticism, like philosophy, must thus begin with a definition; but, like philosophy, it will recognize at the same time that the definition, though essential to a grasp of the subject, must be only provisional and tentative—that the truth of it must be proved by the facts embraced, and will only be felt when they have been looked at in orderly sequence. Let us attempt to do this in the case of the great artist whose works, alike for our pleasure and our instruction, are now collected at South Kensington.

The ancients said of Phidias that "he combined greatness with accuracy." We think it might be said of Mulready that the combination in him was accuracy with refinement. There are, indeed, certain limitations to his accuracy in regard to form, whether human or landscape. These limitations, as in the case of most English artists, may be partly traced to the imperfect training of a self-developed genius, partly to something tentative and fastidious in his own nature, which reminds us of what we read of Leonardo da

Vinci. Yet Mulready must be unhesitatingly placed amongst the few really eminent and thorough draughtsmen of the British School. His power over form was almost as complete, though not so wide in range, when he painted "The Rattle" in 1808, as when he drew "The Bathers" in 1849. His refinement is not less marked in the "Gravel Pitt" of 1807 than in the "Toy Seller" of 1862. If we might, for the sake of definition, call refinement with accuracy the artist's method or principle in art, the results of it were principally marked by grace combined with humour. Of these qualities we will presently speak. Over character his grasp is less powerful and certain—failing at times (as in certain among his designs for the "Vicar of Wakefield," and, more or less, in the "Seven Ages"); but, especially when it is a class-character that he is drawing—as the "Travelling Druggist," the drunken man in the "Hustings," or his idle boys everywhere—he ranks with the highest of his art. Something of the same uncertainty belongs to Mulready's colouring. He seems (if we may venture on the suggestion) to have been influenced in this more than in any other respect by other artists—by Jan Steen and De Hooghe, for instance, during his youth; afterwards by Wilkie. He seems also, at times, overpowered by his design, and unable to bring the colour into perfect harmony with the composition. The fine "Careless Messenger," and "Dog of Two Minds," seem to us examples of this in regard to a certain hardness or want of blending in the tints, as the earlier "Sailing Match," the "Forgotten Word," the "Seven Ages," do not possess the solidity and force of his most complete pictures. It is curious that an analogous uncertainty occasionally interferes with the subtle skill of his composition; witness the attitude of the lower limbs in the left-hand sitting figure of his

"Bathers," and the tallest girl on the right in his "Last in School." Here, again, we are reminded of Leonardo.

What we have indicated as Mulready's most eminent gifts require a few more words before we endeavour to characterise the gradual development of his art,

—votiva . . . veluti descripta tabella—

on the walls of the Museum. In the peculiar turn which his humour displays, we would class Mulready with his admirable contemporary, Leslie. Without weighing these great artists against each other, it may perhaps be observed that, whilst in both the speciality of their humour lies in its close union with grace, in Mulready the grace is based in many instances on beauty of line and finish of drawing, whilst in Leslie's humour the beauty and elegance lie more distinctly in the thought or situation selected for the picture. One reason for this may be that Leslie in general derived his inspiration from books, whilst Mulready's designs are as frequently inventions of his own from the suggestions of real life. There is something of Jan Steen in the one, as of Stothard in the other. It is probable that Mulready, as the "Boy's Canon" indicates, was not uninfluenced by Wilkie, whose name is naturally suggested when modern humourists in art are spoken of. Much as Mulready was superior in technical skill and thoroughness as an artist, there is considerable resemblance between the style of the two in a few subjects; but Wilkie's main early aim was to set forth a dramatic exhibition of national, and especially of Scotch, humour—Mulready's, to render individual points of humour, especially as shown by children. Sir David paints the Pensioners receiving the news of the Battle of Waterloo; Mulready chooses the convalescent soldier watching the goodhumoured strife in which his two boys

are enacting the (unhappily) endless game of Englishman and Frenchman. If less dramatic and representative as a humourist, Mulready is more gracious and poetical; less sly and grin-provoking, but more imaginative, and more tender in his appeal — more universal, we might say, if less "national." Irish as he was by birth, it is indeed curious how little of the broad Hibernian element appears in Mulready. Compare his beautiful "Hustings" with Hogarth's electioneering pictures. But this opens another chapter, and we have already perhaps said enough on the special point before us.

If Mulready's earliest aim in his figure-subjects was humour, in his later it was grace. In its essential purity no English painter can, we think, be set above him. Great as are the claims of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Stothard, and Leslie, none of them equalled Mulready in that refined accuracy which has been noticed as his primary characteristic. In mastery over design, no artist, we imagine, would hesitate to rank him as the highest; and he was thus able to give a fuller expression to his sense of the beautiful. It is true that Mulready wants a certain spontaneity and air of ease which eminently mark Gainsborough and Reynolds. His works are sometimes laboured, always profoundly studied; each one appears to be an experiment in advance; they evade no difficulties, and are hence liable to occasional fallings-short from the artist's idea of perfection. The "Last In," and the "Seven Ages," with one or two of the latest pictures, appear to us, in different ways, examples of ability which has not attained its mark. Something has jarred; although even here there is much in harmony. But the artist's earnest aim at refined accuracy never fails. From first to last, throughout the gallery, it may be doubted whether there is a line without

its purpose. Every little group is like an Athenian bas-relief reproduced in colour. Mulready's dogs, as Mr. Ruskin said, might have been types for Hellenic coinage. His compositions dwell on the mind, amidst a thousand which we have admired, and dimly remember, like some of the airs of Mozart or Beethoven compared with other men's sonatas. To use an old scholastic phrase, they are "essential forms" of grace. Perhaps this may be one reason why, in the widest sense, Mulready has never been a popular artist. We do not expect that this exhibition, complete as it is, will make him such. For this fine point of grace is so very rarely shown in English art, is in itself a matter calling for so much attention from the spectator, that it is not likely to meet with common appreciation. The fit audience for such an artist will be inevitably few, at any rate in the modern world. An Athenian tribunal is required for men like Mulready, Flaxman, and Ingres.

Yet even if our estimate on the point of common popularity be correct, Mulready is not likely to fail in preserving that place in the foremost ranks of English Art which he has long held. Though the highest men in painting, as in poetry, will rarely be widely popular, yet, as Mr. Ruskin has remarked in one of his most striking criticisms, there is a kind of halo round their works, a dim sense of greatness about their names, which affects and awes the least impressible or least cultivated spectators. And the class of subject which became gradually the favourite with Mulready, (to define lastly, not only how he was gifted, but what gift he has left us) is not only original in itself, but is one which touches nearly our national sympathies. We have ventured to reckon grace as dominant over sense of character and power of humour in his mind. Hence we look for the speciality of his style in what, taking a phrase now common,

we might call the English Idyl. In refined common nature, and humour united with tenderness, Mulready's later works stand alone: although, as our contemporaries in France may prove to us, so wide is the field here open that it may be hoped he may find many fit successors. The three pictures from the *Vicar of Wakefield*, with the "First Love," and the "Child and Lascars," may be noticed as amongst the most perfect of these idyllic compositions, alike in idea, in drawing, and in colour.

We would now briefly attempt to mark out the development of Mulready's genius in the series exhibited. Skilfully as it has been selected by Mr. Sketchley and arranged by Messrs. Redgrave, the space disposable has not allowed them to preserve a complete historical sequence on the walls, although, beginning on the left as the spectator faces the entrance door, the pictures answer sufficiently to their order of execution—the only rational and pleasing ordonnance, by the way, in any national gallery. The preparatory stage in the artist's career may be said roughly to extend towards 1811. Born in Ireland (1786), he studied at first under Banks the sculptor. None of the figure-subjects which he then painted are here. Mulready's next aim was landscape. In the examples shown, refinement, skilful arrangement, and force combined with tenderness of colour, appear almost from the outset. The two views in Kensington are well known. "Heston" and the "Cottage" exemplify the painter's command over delicacy and atmosphere. But we are disposed to rank the "Gravel Pit" highest, from its union of simplicity with grandeur, and its exquisite refinement and subdued power in colouring. The skill in composition which has been here exercised, whilst it is entirely concealed, puts this little work amongst Mulready's finest performances. In figure-subjects, he was

now obviously influenced by the great Dutch painter, Jan Steen. Perhaps it is to this that we owe, in the "Barber," almost the solitary example of a coarse ugliness in the whole series exhibited. Mulready, on the whole, in the figure-subjects of this period, has not found his way to his peculiar grasp of humour, nor to his later command over tone and quality in colour.

"Punch," painted in 1812, is the first important work in which the artist characterized himself. It is full of incident and points of character, but the colouring is slight, and the figures want that unconscious air which greater practice alone could give. During the ten following years, Mulready, whose diligence in study was almost proverbial, formed his style. The "Idle Boys," "Last In," "Fight Interrupted," "Wolf and Lamb," "Careless Messenger," mark the stages of this advance. The ways of boyhood have certainly received no other such powerful and amusing illustration. Visitors will notice how the colour becomes at once more firm and more subtle, the drawing more complete, the natural air more happily attained. We have one interior, in 1821, "Lady Dartmouth," worthy of De Hooghe in the exquisite lighting of a room; but, in the main, the artist's aim is to render open daylight. This, indeed, is the principal excellence of his "Waterloo Convalescent," a scattered figure-composition, redeemed into unity by its magnificent sweep of landscape (1822). Henceforth the humour of Mulready is increasingly tinged by tenderness and grace. Compare the "Travelling Druggist" (1825) with its neighbour, the "Fight." With this increased poetry of aim came the wish for greater glow and fusion of colour—a wish to which, as already noticed, the result did not always happily respond. Yet at last he reached a wonderful power in expressing even the glow of sunlight—a

quality, it need hardly be remarked, amongst the rarest in painting. Mulready, it should be remembered, like Turner, was always a tentative artist, a student through life, not content to stay his hand at a point of skill already reached, but pressing on to further excellence. Hence occasional half-failures; but no quality more decisively marks off the great and real artist from lesser men than this constant struggle onwards. The little "Father and Child" (1830), is perhaps the sweetest among the pictures of this period; the "Dog of Two Minds" (although, to our thinking, the dog has clearly but one, that of saving his hide) the most important.

Between 1839 and 1849 fall the artist's most consummate works. To this period belong the "First Love," perhaps the most purely and tenderly poetical of English pictures from common life, for the canvas of the "Sonnet," beautiful as it is, does not realize all the exquisiteness of the design; the "Whistonian Controversy," by common consent the most gorgeous piece of colour united with perfect drawing, produced by our modern school; and the "Bathers," which in refined accuracy of form is almost the only—perhaps the one only—English picture which we can fairly match with Ingres. The Lascar-group, with the landscape behind, has been singled out by artists as probably Mulready's highest achievement in his art; but a mannered air, from which the girls with the child are not quite free, and the over-refined limbs of the child himself, prevent us from ranking the work exactly with the three just noticed. The two other Goldsmith scenes, the "Butt" and the "Ford," belong to the same elevated series. We have already tried to indicate the aim and quality of these works. Tennyson's English Idyls are not more finished, glowing, and poetical.

One great picture, the repetition in life-size of the "Toy

Seller," designed in 1835, belongs to the last years of this noble Student, as we would, in his own phrase, emphatically name him. It is the only life-size work, portraits excepted, here exhibited. Mulready, it is well known, sent it, not quite complete in some details, nor coloured up to the intended pitch, to the Academy Exhibition of 1862. Yet, in the beauty and originality of its subject, and the wonderful handling of its leading and important features, it is one of the most interesting of his works. It is worthy of notice how Mulready has here indicated at once the fear of the negro's black face, and the youthful spirit which resists that fear, in the expression of the child's eyes and mouth. It is remarkable that in one of the small sketches the child's mouth is distorted with alarm. This pleases lovers of the obvious. But Mulready worked to please those who love refined accuracy and subtle grace. There is hardly one of his works which does not afford similar instructive lessons. This picture might, we believe, have been purchased at the time for a very moderate sum. Like Turner's "Téméraire," which was priced at 400*l.*, it left the Academy still in the artist's possession.

This was a curious example of that deficiency in independent taste which is, it may be feared, in some ways characteristic of Englishmen. In picture-buying, at any rate, precedent and fashion are too often dominant. Because Mulready was famous for cabinet-pieces, no one of the many who must have appreciated his art, and have also seen this picture, was found,—with courage to take it home. England, in fact, was probably not the country where he could be best appreciated. Even at the Parisian Exhibition of 1855, when the French jury were ready to give Mulready the great medal of honour, English influence, it is stated, transferred it elsewhere. Neither the very dis-

tinguished artist who received the Great Medal, nor Mulready, were, it is true, likely to care much, or perhaps at all, for a kind of distinction to which English artists, to their honour, are in general profoundly indifferent. The fame of the painters of the "Sanctuary," and the "Man proposes, God disposes,"—of the "Wedding Gown," and the "Lascar Beggars," is beyond augmentation by the best of juries. Yet the story is worth recording. Whether it be fact or legend, the moral is the same; the full appreciation of Mulready's genius remains for the next generation.

WILLIAM DYCE AND WILLIAM HUNT

(FEB. 1864)

THE present year has been sadly fatal to English art in its principal branches. Whilst we were discovering or lamenting how much we had lost in Thackeray, the best of our older sculptors was taken from us in Mr. Behnes. Within another fortnight the deaths of "old William Hunt," as he was affectionately called, and of Mr. Dyce, the Academician, have made serious gaps in our schools of water-colour and of historical painting. We notice them here, reserving Behnes for a separate paper.

I

William Dyce, the son of a respectable physician, was born at Aberdeen in 1806, and went through a complete academical course in the Marischal College, receiving the degree of M.A. before he began his education in art within the schools of the Royal Scottish Academy. These circumstances shed light over Dyce's subsequent career. He was pre-eminently an educated artist; and although at first he wisely set his hand at portraiture, the basis of all sound historical art in all ages, yet it is probable that his father's position gave the son a certain independence, which before long enabled him to show the bent of his nature in his work. After two visits of considerable length to Italy,

where he studied with diligence, Dyce, returning to Scotland, adopted at once a choice of subjects and of style by which no English artist has ever succeeded in making his livelihood. A "Madonna and Child" and a "Bacchus Nursed by the Nymphs" were significant proofs that the young painter had already devoted himself to the scholastic or severe side of his art; and fortune, more favourable to him than to John Cross or David Scott, his great contemporaries, allowed him to carry out the aim of his youth on a scale proportionate to its importance.

Dyce appeared in the Academy Exhibition, then just moved to Trafalgar Square, in 1836; and henceforward, we believe, his life was mainly spent in England. Indeed, whilst a literary aim, probably impressed on him at Marischal College, is throughout evident in his work as an artist, his style retained no impress of the modes of art in fashion within his native country. It is rather to the eminent historical painters of modern France, or perhaps to the learned school of Germany, that we must look for those contemporaries who influenced him. Soon after he had taken his place in English art, it will be remembered that, owing to many causes, amongst which the development of a living and picturesque style in architecture was perhaps the most important, the pictorial decoration of our public buildings, especially by fresco-painting, became an object, if not of popular, at least of intelligent interest in England. This movement found an earnest and cultivated advocate in Mr. Dyce. Already, in 1837, he had written one of those skilful and sensible pamphlets, treating art as a matter of intellect and education, of which we were to receive several from his pen; and, by a felicity of choice which does not always attend the Government when it takes a share in such matters, he was appointed to the superintendence of the

newly-established Schools of Design, and in that capacity he prepared an elaborate report on the foreign systems of aesthetic education. This, we believe, was not without its influence in promoting a movement which, amongst many reverses and shortcomings, has continued always to engage the deep sympathy of all who wish well to English art.

Dyce, if a born painter, was long in finding his way. His career is a remarkable illustration of Reynolds' maxim, that success in art may be largely due to persevering industry. In his practice it is not so much the spontaneity of genius which he exhibited, as the soundness derived from good traditions and established academical rules. Especially in drawing, always the weak side of English artists, he held a distinguished place. As typical specimens of the painter, three oil pictures, amongst those shown in the Academy, may be quoted—a "Madonna and Child" (1846), "Jacob and Rachel" (1853), "Joash Shooting the Arrow of Deliverance" (1844). These are thoroughly and firmly drawn, and soberly coloured, whilst the last-named rises to great force in expression and in archaeological truth. There is also a peculiar tenderness about his style, severe as it is; a kind of reserved grace,—a modesty which wins its place in the beholder's mind, and retains it. One or two groups of the "Virgin and Child," left unfinished at his death, were models of an elevated beauty. Later on in life Mr. Dyce threw himself more into the school of minute realization. To this manner belong a few striking religious compositions, with the highly-finished scenes from the lives of Titian and of George Herbert which provoked much contemporary criticism (1857 and 1861). Whatever judgment we may be disposed to pronounce on the general merits of the style to which Dyce thus gave in his adhesion, it will be confessed that the pictures thus executed did not

reach the force or completeness of effect exhibited by his earlier works.

It is, however, as an "historical" painter in fresco that Mr. Dyce is likely to be best remembered. Here his works had the merit of leading the way in a style which the French artists have brought to noble results in the churches of Paris. To judge from the drawings, the great series of chivalrous subjects which his death left incomplete within the walls of the Palace of Westminster, will be found, when opened to public view, to raise the artist's reputation. The large work of this class by which he can best be judged is the cycle of subjects from the Life of Christ which fills the end of All Saints Church, in Margaret Street. Here the artist had to labour in an honourable, but a most difficult field, contending as he did, by pictures which from their position must be regarded as the leading or central decoration, against architectural designs carried to a very high point of elaboration and of beauty. Putting Mr. Armitage's frescoes for a Roman Catholic church out of the argument, Mr. Dyce still holds the highest place amongst those who have attempted to add the charm of sacred art to our own churches. The sobriety of this work realizes the ideal of ecclesiastical art much more truly than the flimsiness and the stiffness of some more recent attempts in London. The All Saints designs, although, from the stonework in which they are framed, restricted in composition, have a grave and thoughtful quality both in drawing and in colouring, with a subdued and refined grace of line, which are eminently suitable to religious paintings. Mr. Dyce was admitted Associate of the Academy in 1845—a full Academician in 1848.

In estimating Dyce's place as an artist, we must not pass over his other rare accomplishments—rare in painters as

a class, and perhaps unprecedented in an English painter. He was a profound and learned musician, and not only in the history but in the practice of vocal music he displayed much learning and industry. To him, perhaps, and to his early efforts in calling attention to choral music and to the compositions of the great English and Continental musicians, especially to the school of Palestrina, the Church of England is mainly indebted for its improvements in choir and anthem singing. Dyce's sumptuous edition of the Prayer Book with Marbecke's notation was the starting-point of the revival. Ecclesiastical and theological subjects were a favourite study with him; and the school of divinity which he cultivated corresponded to the scholastic and academical character of his art. He is perhaps the only painter of modern times who was familiar with the whole range of patristic as well as classical literature. He was in the habit of contributing occasionally learned articles to the theological periodicals of the Church; and when we add that his earliest success at College was a Prize Essay on Electricity, we are allowed to connect the memories of Leonardo da Vinci and Raphael with that of the artist who loved their work so well, and trod in their steps so diligently.

II

Great as William Hunt undoubtedly was—in his way, indeed, unique even more than all genius is wont to be—his life and works do not call for detailed criticism. Like Turner, though fifteen years later, Hunt was born in London (1790), and, like Turner, he also was destined to illustrate by his art that pure and unalloyed Nature of which almost every trace is shut out from the five-and-twenty square miles covered by the "great city." Hunt's bent towards painting showed itself betimes. The period of his early youth coincides

with what may be roughly defined as the second stage of our water-colour school. Some thirty years before, the art had begun in the brown and gray-washed drawings of Turner and his earliest contemporaries, Girtin, J. Chalon, and Cozens, who opposed their simple style, magnificent in its broad effects and delicate appreciation of the truths of space, to the conventional colourists of the day. But, having laid this secure foundation for success, already these men, with Havell, Cotman, and others, were attempting further advances. Colour was more fully employed; and whilst we recognize that in this stage of water-colours, already antiquated to us, the effect is often slight and tinted, yet with this were united a sweetness and transparency which are not only the characteristics of all good art, but in a more special manner are the characteristics of good water-colour painting.

Varley was one of the most conspicuous of that early group. Under his charge Hunt was placed for a full seven years' apprenticeship. Until a strict chronological series of his works shall be collected and shown, it will be impossible to fix with accuracy the stages of Hunt's practice, or to settle the time when he introduced into the art those novel elements with which his name is connected. It is, however, clear that, after some years' experience in landscape-painting (frequently in oil), the bent of his genius displayed itself firmly in the two main directions which he was so long to follow—figure-subjects from rustic nature, and pictures of what is absurdly called "still life." His final decision in favour of water-colours as his medium may, perhaps, be dated from about 1820, when he began that endless series of contributions to the original Water-Colour Society which has formed no small item in the attractiveness of their exhibitions. He was elected a member in

1827. The exclusive rules or practice of the Royal Academy practically denied this great artist admittance to their body; nor, distinguished as he was by modesty and simplicity of nature, is it likely that he resented the exclusion. At any rate, to the Society just named he continued faithful, and his last works appeared at their recent winter exhibition of sketches.

Hunt's style was marked by the simplicity and modesty which we have mentioned as characterizing his disposition. From first to last it was the same quiet, incessant, humble-hearted obedience to the nature which he wished to reproduce and to fix in art. Readers will remember the charming anecdote which Mr. Ruskin tells of him—how, when asked why he laid on this or that tint in one of his exquisite water-colour paintings, he said, "I am trying at it." This earnest "trying" led him to those enlargements of the technical methods of his art which we have referred to. Flowers and leaves, fruit and moss, the plumage and scale of bird and fish, the flush on the cheek of youth or the gleaming hair of childhood—all these, with indeed whatever else fell within the range of his pencil, required richer tints, more varied transparency, more solid modelling, than the limited range of colours then in use could supply. Without entering on technical details, it will be enough to say that the skill and industry of Hunt succeeded in supplying these deficiences. Passing from the materials of his work to the artist's power in applying them, Hunt may be said to have united in a very rare degree the two great elements of painting. His absolute command of drawing (within a certain range of subject) enabled him to lay on colour with certainty of effect. His natural instinct for colour enabled him to give the fullest expression to the subtleties of the natural form which he had so completely mastered. A

peculiar refinement of feeling and sense of the poetical in nature led him, lastly, to give his subjects, whether in their idea or in their execution, a grace, we might almost say an elevation, in which he stands almost alone. There are and have been many skilful painters of fruits and flowers; but whom shall we place before Hunt in the loftiness and exquisiteness of quality which he gave his groups? Others, again, may have seized fine curves and delicate surfaces with similar skill in draughtsmanship; but few indeed have been those whose skill has been employed with such subtle discrimination. Everything in one of these groups looks like accident itself. Yet, try to do the like, and the artist will quickly find that the composition is as studied and as perfect as the composition in Raphael's "School of Athens." It is the same with the colour. Hunt's pictures, which at first sight seem formed of the elementary tints in their simplest purity, will be found on examination everywhere gradated with indescribable delicacy, and everywhere, when we take an inch and look at it separately, filled with passages of colour which we cannot bring within any named in the catalogue. Yet the total effect of these curiously broken and "stippled" tints is a soft and translucent brilliancy which seems beyond the range of art and her imperfect materials. And it should be specially noted, that whilst the force and relief of Hunt's work are beyond that of any other work in his province, yet he never carries it to the point of deception. His grapes and plums are marvels of golden and purple plumpness; they have the fullest salience which is consistent with the rest of the composition; yet they do not tempt us to think that we can take them from their places.

Within this narrow circle Hunt moved supreme through an almost innumerable series of small masterpieces. It is

certainly to them that we look for the true and complete manifestation of his genius. But, besides his early studies in oil, he occasionally painted indoor scenes with much largeness and picturesque effect; and he carried his fine eye for simple nature into the designs from rustic life which have given the English public so much innocent pleasure. We do not indeed think that he can be classed with our great figure-painters. For this he seems to us to want range, force, and completeness in drawing. He occasionally deviates into rather overstrained characterization. Yet, in this sphere, Hunt's healthy nature, sense of humour, and profound feeling for simple life have given his works a very marked and individual place. Both in these respects and in their execution—large, subtle, and simple at once—they may be a useful (though hitherto a little regarded) warning against the errors to which water-colour art, when applied to the human figure, is apt to fall. But the painter speaks still in the masterworks which he has left us. If we might attempt to characterize his genius in one phrase, we would say that William Hunt has been unsurpassed amongst our artists in one of the noblest functions of art—that of exalting lowliness, and giving greatness to little things.

HIPPOLYTE FLANDRIN

Accustomed as we now are to hearing and saying that Paris is perfectly familiar to Englishmen, it is curious how little appears to be known in England of the great decorative works which, during the last twenty years especially, have been carried out in the churches of Paris. Eight or ten years ago, a writer in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* (we think it was M. H. Delaborde, editor of the *Lettres et Pensées d'Hippolyte Flandrin;* Paris: Henri Plon; 1865.) gave a full and animated account of some of the most important of these works, the impulse to which, arising from the intellectual activity called into life through or under the Orleanist Government, has not been checked or at any rate stifled, by the subsequent political revolutions. Indeed, a scheme was adopted under the brief Republican *régime* for the decoration of the Pantheon by a series of pictures representing the whole moral, intellectual, and religious progress of mankind, which, in completeness of idea, might have satisfied Goethe himself. We do not know how far the ability of the artist who made out the programme (which will be found at length in one of M. T. Gauthier's volumes), M. Chenavard, would have been pictorially equal to so vast a labour; but the reconversion of the building to ecclesiastical purposes put a stop, tem-

porarily at least, to this comprehensive project. The Pantheon is, in fact, the most suitable building of the kind in Paris for mural painting; and one reason why the very remarkable series undertaken in the other churches has received less attention than it ought to have done, may probably be found in the defective light and awkward architectural arrangements to which the artists have often had to accommodate themselves. The subject may, however, be warmly commended to the notice of visitors interested in art and in church ornament, and we are sure that no readers to whom the suggestion may be a novelty will accuse us of having led them to waste their time in Paris. Nor is the lesson of the successes, or of the comparative failures, which have been produced by the combined action of the Imperial and of the local administration without much value for our own guidance. It is absurd to think that we can afford to neglect any well-considered and long-continued efforts of that nation which, with our own, exhibits the strongest and keenest intellectual life at present stirring in the human race. France and England now lead the world. In a certain intelligible sense (*en attendant* the United States), they *are* the world. Perhaps most Englishmen would assent to this remark. But, so far as France is concerned, almost all Englishmen practically ignore it.

To quit, however, these general reflections. Among the artists who have satisfactorily achieved the decorative tasks entrusted to them, M. H. Flandrin stands in the first rank. It is so difficult to put into words the distinctive qualities of any genuine painter, especially when his works are not familiar to the world, that we can only deal with this portion of our notice in a tentative way. To those, however, who have seen Flandrin's long procession above the columns in the basilica of S. Vincent de Paul, the large

biblical subjects in S. Germain des Près (both at Paris), or the smaller but almost more perfect groups within the old Ainay church of Lyons, we think it will appear true if we define his style, in M. Delaborde's words, as "the effort to give Greek art Christian baptism," or as "the expression of refined feeling (*sensbilité*) under forms of singular purity." Or we might say that he did what M. Ary Scheffer wished to do, but with a mastery over technical resources, and a clearness and simplicity of idea, in which his contemporary was wanting; or we might compare his work to what our own Flaxman produced (too little) in the domain of Christian art. These images, rather than direct criticisms, which one might multiply with ease, may serve also to suggest, with due diffidence, what appears the weaker side of Flandrin's genius—at least to English Protestantism. With great delicacy of feeling and truthfulness of intention, seconded by a power of drawing such as might be expected from the favourite pupil of the great Ingres, Flandrin made a singularly attractive and interesting compromise between the religious art of Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and the secular or quasi-classical art of France during our own age. This compromise extends to the idea of his pictures not less than to their execution. In a certain degree, probably, due to a native want of dramatic force and energy in the artist, we trace it mainly to a wider cause, which is worthy of much deeper examination than can here be given. Under the operation of that all-pervading and inevitable spirit which Mr. Lecky terms the spirit of "Rationalism," even Hippolyte Flandrin, though so devout a Catholic as to delight in the bayonets on which the Papal throne is still content to find an uneasy foundation, has gracefully toned down or eliminated from his sacred subjects the *naif* supernaturalism, with the not less *naif* fanati-

cism, which marks the proto-Catholic art. We have pointed out, elsewhere, how curiously Mr. Herbert's large fresco of "Moses bringing down the Tables of the Law" is devoid of the miraculous or supernatural impress. What in that work is probably due to want of vital power and imagination in the artist, was due, in the case of Flandrin, to that spirit of the age from which no one can escape by any process short of mental suicide.

The circle of those in England who are sufficiently cultivated to care for foreign art (unless it comes before them with such a directly English appeal as Madlle. R. Bonheur's) is so small that we cannot recommend M. Delaborde's *Life, Letters, and Thoughts of Flandrin* for translation, although the book deserves it not less than *Mendelssohn's Letters*, But those who read French, and care for biography, will find the book well worth attention. Flandrin's letters, which form nearly four-fifths of the volume, may be compared with those of Madlle. de Guérin, not only in respect of the comparatively uneventful story of his life, but of that long and devout struggle to work always onward and upward through difficulties, internal and external, which they set vividly before us. These two admirable examples of the religious mind of modern France might be compared also in the warmth and purity of their affections, in that intense love for home and all that goes with it which we vulgarly take for a sort of English entail, and in the graceful sketches of scenery or sentiment interspersed among the details of "human nature's daily food":—

I must tell you [Flandrin writes to his aged mother in February, 1846, four months after the birth of a first boy] that to-day it was almost hot. We had opened the windows. Aimée was holding the little darling in her arms, and through the window, across the courtyard, he had an interview with a young person one year old, who kept sending him kisses. I do not know whether his modesty was offended by these

coquettish advances, but he made her a very chilling return, and his mother had to put him up even to that! One must allow, however, that he is very young, and has still many things to learn,—together with politeness.

No man could deserve more thoroughly than Flandrin the kind of happiness painted in this charming sketch, but it was not gained till after a series of years in which the labour and privation through which elevation in art too often has to be reached held an unusually severe portion. The poverty and discouragement of Flandrin's youth, and the noble spirit of simple magnanimity with which he confronted these obstacles, form a picture very similar to that which Mr. Gilchrist's vivid biography draws of our own William Blake, and will be, no doubt, the consolation of many among the "poor, and sick in body, and beloved by the gods." Certainly no true artist is ever found standing on what is called "his dignity," or declining the smallest work which really belongs to art; yet it is curious that the severest religious painter whom France has produced since Eustache Le Sueur should have begun life by drawing *bonbons* for confectioners, and should have imagined that his future career lay in painting the gallant privates of the French army, who are not commonly supposed to have much of the severe or the Scriptural about them. After some years' training in the Lyons School of Design, Flandrin moved to Paris. What looks almost like an accident sent him to work in the study of M. Ingres. This was the turning-point of his life, and to the end of it Flandrin always treated his great master with the reverence and affection of a son rather than of a scholar. M. Delaborde traces, in his graceful biographical sketch (which, if he will permit us the phrase, appears only to want greater firmness or clearness of outline), the differences which divide the

styles of these two eminent artists. But we think him quite correct in arguing, in opposition to opinions which have lately gained ground at Paris, that the great principles of art were alike in Ingres and Flandrin, and that the pupil legitimately and strictly carried out, within the Christian sphere, what the master taught and practised in regard to more secular or more classical subjects.

The brightest portion of Flandrin's life seems to have been the years which, before his health began to fail, he spent as "pensionnaire" of France in that famous Academy which her liberal and enlightened spirit maintains at Rome. The letters written thence are, at any rate, the most hopeful and interesting of the series. The city exercised over him that attraction which it has long held over minds rather of the meditative and receptive than of the energetic class. Rome suited Flandrin where he was strong, and (as we have above tried to indicate) where he was not so strong. In regard to his art, perhaps it gave him too marked a bias towards "eclecticism," as he attempted to unite admiration for the religious style of Giotto or Angelico on one hand, and Domenichino on the other (*res olim dissociabiles*, as Tacitus, in his humourous way, said of liberty and imperialism), under one theory. Flandrin's reputation preceded him on his return to France, and henceforth his career was assured. To quote the neat phrase which his countrymen employ, he was, now "un homme *arrivé*."

We have already indicated the direction which his talent took, and the principal works to which he devoted years, too few indeed for art, but more than enough for glory. Like his high-spirited countrymen in general, Flandrin, modest and religious as he was, had no indifference towards fame, to value which should be reproach only when glory is sought in things not of high or enduring quality. But his

years of activity were also sufficient to secure for him what he valued much more—pure happiness at home, and the reputation of an artist second to none for devoted conscientiousness and thoroughness in all he set his hand to do. We should have liked to pursue this side of his character further, and to point out, in particular, its bearing on the singular success which he reached in simple portraiture. But for elucidations on this and on many cognate details we must refer our readers to M. Delaborde's interesting volume. Whether we look to its tone, its clearness and elegance of style, or its completeness, it affords a lesson how the biography of a great painter should be written, which might, as recent examples prove, be studied with advantage both in Germany and in England.

MR. HERBERT'S "DELIVERY OF THE LAW"

(JULY, 1864)

THE "praise of friends," which some Oriental proverb, with an unkind veracity, ranks as more pernicious than the censure of enemies, has been lavished so indiscriminately on Mr. Herbert's new fresco that it cannot have been without an unfortunate influence on many who see the work. It is, no doubt, a considerable performance, and is, we may at once say, before analyzing it, better than anything hitherto produced by the artist; but it is hardly possible that those who read some of the eulogies on this work, should not have felt a certain disappointment when they found themselves before a picture which "meets the charge of plagiarism from the French" (brought by we know not whom) "by its lofty and reverent spirit, and by the predominance of its men and women over the clothes they wear," being, in fact—as we are told—"not only unequalled by anything of the same kind ever executed in this country, but rivalling the greatest works of the same order *in any part of the world.*" This wide-sounding phrase designates, we presume, the Italian cities, with those half-dozen in France or Germany in which frescoes by Raphael and Michel Angelo, Giotto and Ghirlandajo, Ingres, Delaroche, and one or two others exist. We are sure that any artist in his senses would prefer visitors fresh from the most censorious critic of

the day to those who, on the faith of such easy laudation, expect to find a fresco equal to the "Stanze" of the Vatican or the ceiling of the Sistine, superior in loftiness and character-drawing to the "Hemicycle" of the Ecole des Arts, or the "Apotheosis of Napoleon." *Pessimum inimicorum genus, laudantes.*

It may be presumed that the testimonies of members, freely given in the House of Commons, as well as that of the *laudator* just quoted, who even "feels justified in pronouncing this the highest achievement in the noblest walk of art that any English painter has yet given to the world," were partly drawn forth by the amiable wish to convince the keepers of the national purse that the labourer was worthy of a more liberal hire than that originally assigned to him. In this wish we most heartily concur; as we think that industry and conscientious care should have the reward which in modern art goes too often to showy slovenliness. But, whilst well satisfied that attention should have been drawn to the insufficient sums allotted, before the conditions of the experiment were or could be fully known, to Mr. Herbert's task, let us also speak a word on behalf of the indubitably great artist who has said not one syllable for himself, but has equally toiled for years at those noble frescoes of Waterloo and Trafalgar, which do not need the illiberal depreciation of any other pictures as a reason why Mr. Maclise also should benefit by the better-proportioned scale of remuneration. It is right that art should be paid by a nation at a little above its exact market value. So much we gladly yield to justice; yet we may be excused if we reserve not less interest for the painter who, whilst sacrificing largely in point of income, gives his best work—as Delaroche gave his famous fresco of the "Hemicycle"—in the spirit of simple devotion to his art, let

material reward come or not as it will. But this is no sort of excuse for national stinginess :—

> *Μῶσαι μὲν θεαὶ ἐντὶ, θεὼς θεαὶ ἀείδοντι·*
> *ἄμμες δὲ βροτοὶ οἵδε, βροτὼς βροτοὶ ἀείδωμες.*

We may now turn from the temporary and confusing considerations which have been imported into the subject, and try to form a more impartial estimate of the interesting production which Mr. Herbert has given us as the fruit of several years' almost continuous labour. As is probably well known, he has selected for his subject not that more humanly dramatic and exciting scene when Moses first came down from Sinai, and heard the shouting of the camp as the people worshipped their golden idol, and cast the tables of the law from his hand, "and brake them beneath the Mount," but his second return, after the slaughter and the repentance of the nation, the proclamation of God in the Mount, and the recommunication of the moral law. Yet this subject, if less arduous in its demands upon the artist for the representation of earthly passion, is one hardly inferior in difficulty to the other, which was chosen by Raphael for one of his smaller Vatican frescoes. The general disposition of the scene, as Mr. Herbert has correctly assumed, must have been the same. The people have been waiting, though without their former relapse into idolatry, during the forty days' sojourn of their leader ; the guards, as we see them here, would naturally have been maintained about the skirts of Sinai ; and the return of Moses, if not a similar cause of wonder and alarm to his unfaithful followers, must have been accompanied with the heart-shaking awe and speechless reverence which would surround one who was believed to have just come down from the immediate presence of Divinity. It is, indeed,

upon this second return that we first read of that light about the Prophet's face which struck the people as the attestation of his supernatural message. "They were afraid to come nigh him. And Moses called unto them; and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned unto him; and Moses talked with them. And afterward all the children of Israel came nigh. And till Moses had done speaking with them, he put a vail on his face." This is the moment, apparently, selected by Mr. Herbert, who has, however, so far deviated from the history that he has brought a number of the people, and even a crowd of camp-followers, forward, together with Aaron and the "rulers of the congregation," whilst at the same time, he has dispensed with the vail which (it would rather seem) was worn during the whole period of the colloquy. Moses stands at the foot of the mountain, holding the tablets, which in structure and colour are properly made identical with the surrounding rocks. Aaron has stepped forth nearest; in a line behind stand Joshua, his father Nun, Nadab, and Abihu, with the Princes of the people. Four or five figures, including Miriam, kneel or lie in front. On the other side are grouped Caleb and a Midianite shepherd, with Bezaleel to the extreme right. Two figures are pointing upwards to the Mount; some girls and children, and a mixed multitude, are also scattered round to complete the composition. A distant view of the Israelite camp, with banners and the coffin-shrine of Joseph, leads the eye to the further valleys, glowing at the approach of sunset.

There are in this all the elements of a picture second to few in the variety and intensity of its emotions, and Mr. Herbert has not overlooked whatever incidents or characters are suggested by the sacred story. Thus, beside what the Athenians would have called the Protagonist of the drama

—Moses illuminated before all the people by the emanations of the Divine presence—we have faith, mingled with a sense of shame, in Aaron and the chiefs of the nation; faith pure and unbroken in Joshua; scepticism or hesitation in Abihu and Nadab; ignorance blended with belief in the Midianite and other strangers, who may be naturally supposed less prepared than the children of Israel to understand or to accept the mission of Moses. What a varied drama is here, yet what a noble concentration of feeling and unity of idea! what a stupendous contrast between the Prophet, returned to common life from a second forty days' sojourn on high, and the crowd to whom he is now to reveal a law which has survived every other system, and is accepted as the rule of life over a whole world!—It must have been a strange and a solemn moment when Solon placed his brazen tablets within the treasury of Athens; when the ten tables were set up at Rome; when Charles the Great promulgated his code before the German Assemblies; when the Barons attested the Charter in the riverside meadow below Windsor. Yet even the most sceptical of critics will admit that, putting aside the supernatural elements of the occasion, here was a giving of a law more overpowering than all those we have mentioned taken together, in its influence on the fate of man. Add to this the singular picturesqueness, in its mere external adjuncts, of the whole—remembering also that not only is the presumed actual scene unaltered, but that, in the hitherto changeless East, the actual dress and appearance of the actors have in great measure survived—and we shall then have a bare and imperfect idea of the facts of this great occasion.

It is hardly rash to assume that Christendom has not yet produced the painter who could do full justice, even within the limited sphere of art, to a moment at once so rich in

interest and so difficult. Men like Michel Angelo or Tintoret might have declined the commission with prudence, arguing, as artists of their calibre probably would argue, that anything short of high success in the case of such a theme would be failure. We will now give our reasons for thinking that, when the little halo of immediate popularity has faded, it may be regretted that Mr. Herbert did not more accurately measure his powers with the demands of his undertaking; but the above brief indication of the inevitable and inherent arduousness of the task, may meanwhile indicate also the large forbearance due to the attempt, if, looking at these requirements, we must entirely decline to hold the result, in essential respects, successful.

There is, indeed, much which does credit to the painter. There is drawing, if not powerful, yet more careful than the English school generally reaches; a well-balanced distribution of masses, with a skilful conduct of the lines; and as elaborate a study of Oriental dress and of characteristic figures as could be made by a painter who had not visited the East. The landscape is also a conscientious reproduction from the photograph, but managed with considerable skill so as to increase the general effect. There are some truly graceful groups of girls and children, and altogether an absence of mere Academical display on the one hand, and of vulgar effectism on the other, which shows that Mr. Herbert has, so far, rightly comprehended the conditions of "historical" art. In these respects his picture stands in favourable contrast to the sentimentalism and the superficial treatment which some of the frescoes at Westminster exhibit. It has been only after many years of effort, and in conjunction with a system of artistic training much more complete than England has hitherto furnished, that the modern French school has reached that excellence which Ingres, Delaroche,

Flandrin, and others (despite the sentence which we have quoted above) have displayed, and as a step in that direction we hail this latest of our frescoes. This must not, however, relieve us from the necessity of adding, in the interests of art and of truth, that those good intentions on the artist's part to which we have tried to do justice have been, we think, but imperfectly carried out. The central idea of the story of Exodus appears to us totally wanting. That idea, every one will admit, is the Supernatural revealing itself to man. No closer or more imposing contact between the Creator and his creatures is spoken of in Scripture. But the impression of the supernatural—except so far as it may be conveyed by the conventional rays which glitter round the head of Moses—is nowhere in this picture. Moses here is simply a fine Arab chieftain (though most inappropriately clothed in a common camel-driver's dress, not such robes as are worn in the East by any man of high-bred or religious pretensions), wrapt seemingly in thought, but rather fatigued than lifted up by the vision he has just quitted: rather perplexed than enlightened. Those to whom he conveys the law direct from God are equally uninspired by the peculiar solemnity of the moment. Aaron's air is that of a submissive companion. Joshua is moved by no more ecstatic faith or reverence than those who had lately apostatized to idolatry. It is only when we learn their names that we recognize the future infidelity of Nadab and Abihu. Miriam, who covers her eyes, and one or two more figures, are the sole persons who seem cognizant of what is passing. A circle of figures, arranged above the door, we are told, is symbolical of human life; it consists of a careless child, a mother, a shepherd, a Nazarite, and a Levite. We cannot find any peculiar ingenuity or propriety

in this idea; but, allowing it to be in place, we fail altogether to see how the thought is realized by this juxtaposition. In the crowd, a vague curiosity seems the prevalent feeling. The women nurse, or give water to, the children with graceful indifference. To borrow a phrase of Beckford's, these are "well-bred people, and quite accustomed to miracles;" or rather, as we cannot help feeling, there is nothing of the miraculous in the design. In a word, singular as it may seem, this "Moses returning from the Mount" might almost have been the work of some disciple of Voltaire or of Renan, anxious to bring before us Arab life and the Sinaitic landscape, and at the same time to express, not only the comparative unimportance of the event historically, but its freedom from supernatural intervention.

We should be very sorry to be understood to imply that Mr. Herbert's work is deficient in reverence. Yet we cannot think that his hand has justly seconded his heart. It is as if he had, in Plato's phrase, "approached the Gate of the Muses without inspiration." Hence the coldness which we feel, whilst recognizing the lofty aim of the work, and its technical merits. Looking at it as a whole, it has a certain well-posed elegance, and, as we have said, never offends by theatrical or vulgar sentiment; it is thoroughly "genteel" painting, to put our criticism into one word. These are negative merits; yet—

Est quiddam prodire tenus, si non datur ultra.

Nature strictly and severely defines the limits beyond which, say what we will, and be complimented as we may, we cannot go. Nothing in any previous work of Mr. Herbert's that we have ever seen has pointed to better things than what we find here. He seems to us one example of that

common and innocent miscalculation, which leads a man to attempt what is beyond his natural faculty. There is no use in it however; *Non datur ultra.*

We cannot conceal our impression, for which the preceding analysis contains the apology, that, as a veritable representation of a given event, Mr. Herbert's fresco completely fails. But, at the same time, we would, in conclusion, remind our readers once more, not only of the worth of his conscientious labour in other respects, but of the amazing, the almost insuperable, difficulties of this subject. One cannot name in fancy above three or four men who would have been likely to succeed here, and these would be simply the greatest men in the art. Mr. Herbert's own modesty would, we are sure, be the first to refuse endorsing the lax language of that flattery which speaks of him as their rival.

ON SOME RECENT PICTURES BY MR. HOLMAN HUNT

(June, 1864)

Pictures from Scripture subjects, especially when they are dealt with in an entirely original manner, have so powerful a hold on English sympathies that Mr. Hunt's "Christ in the Temple," when shown by itself three or four years ago, we believe actually rivalled the Royal Academy in the multitude of its visitors. We do not know whether the two works which he now exhibits—an Egyptian Girl, and a View of London Bridge on the night when the Princess Alexandra arrived—with Mr. Martineau's "Last Day in the Old Home," can equal that work in attraction; but the peculiar merit and interest of these pictures deserve at least as full a recognition from the lovers of English art. And we wish the artist all success in that course of separate exhibition by which alone, whilst Trafalgar Square is crowded as it is, and under all circumstances is likely long to be, the spectator is enabled to see a work of serious art with the sense of present pleasure, and the hope of lasting profit.

It is an advantage that—the gloss of novelty having worn off what used to be called the Pre-Raphaelite school, and the school itself (so far as the term ever had any true meaning) having taken different directions, according to the bias of the artists whose first apparent co-operation

gave it a species of unity—we can now speak of art such as Mr. Holman Hunt's and Mr. Martineau's without arousing those sectarian feelings which, whether for praise or for blame, stand so much in the way of sound and satisfactory appreciation. The four or five men of genius whose doings began to create such a curious stir fifteen years ago set out, as genius eternally must do, with an energetic protest against conventionality. The "respectable sham," as the great belligerent of the day in this warfare might have called it, which the young artists first encountered was that careless style of working and that commonplace selection of incident which had become rather prominent in the English school. Art is always, and in all countries, apt to get away from Nature, and to try to persuade herself and the public that the comparatively facile artifices of the studio—false lights, and theatrical attitudes, and showy colour, and generalized details—are her legitimate methods. These conventionalities, after a time, are sure to establish themselves amongst the painters and the public. Then comes a period of inferior art, and then some such reaction as that we have spoken of. Whether the reaction appears in the way of protest in favour of severe drawing of the human figure (as with David in France), or of return to the eternal principles of classical art (as with Flaxman), or of profounder study of natural effects, and determination to do the utmost for every detail (as with the Pre-Raphaelites), does not appear to us, ultimately, of consequence. The fact of the reaction, the sincerity of the protest, is the great thing. In this case, we might briefly describe it as the endeavour to repeat, for the benefit of English art, what Wordsworth and his allies wished to do for English poetry. And as, a few years after the "Lyrical Ballads" and "Joan of Arc," with their rebellious prefaces and not always successful novelties of style,

the Lakists diverged, by the course of nature, into their own individual ways, even so already has it been with the Pre-Raphaelites. A few foolish critics behind their age, with one great poet who, at a distance from home, continued to work out his boyish experiences of England in powerful verse, maintained the cry against the Lakists; but meantime English readers, in place of a school working to a common end, knew only of Coleridge and Southey and Wordsworth as men united in aim solely by the bond of that genius in which they all more or less shared. The origin of the Pre-Raphaelite school must similarly, we think, be sought in a very few young painters of real ability, moved at first in some degree by a single purpose in their reaction, but capable, whatever line that reaction might take, of making themselves eminent in art. In one word, (as may be true of other reformers also), the creed was of much less importance than the protestation. All of them may not have been equally faithful to their genius, but several have secured their fame. And now what remains in common between men like Woolner, Millais, Hunt, F. M. Brown, Hughes, Inchbold, Davis, and Boyce (if they will allow us to group them together in what we mean as a first-class, though not an exhaustive list), is the signal ability which in general marks their work. Their protest, in short, has had its effect, and it is as individual artists of power that the world at present accepts them.

Brushing aside then, at once, as altogether secondary in importance, questions how far the art before us is "realistic," microscopic, "idealized," or not, the primary motive qualities in Mr. Holman Hunt, if we rightly read his genius—intellectual force and artistic intensity—are shown with undiminished power in the little Exhibition now on view in the Hanover Street Gallery. These are

qualities which go home to every spectator; whether he likes the work or not, he is sure to be penetrated by it; and the artist has hence secured a hold upon his generation perhaps not inferior to that possessed by Mr. Tennyson. With these qualities the list of Mr. Hunt's works—although numerically small if we compare them with the productions of many amongst his contemporaries—shows that he combines unusual intellectual and artistic versatility. We doubt whether any of our living artists has tried and succeeded in subjects so widely apart as the "Isabella," the "Hireling Shepherd," the "Awakened Conscience," the "Scapegoat," and the two sacred pictures by which he is most widely known. Besides landscapes, we may now add the "Egyptian Girl" and the "London Bridge," as additional proofs of this uncommon range of power. It is to the head—to what is in the man—that we must in all cases look for the result of his hands, whether they give us a statue or a sonata, a picture or a poem, "Maud" or the "Light of the World." In all the fine arts, instinctive as their operation may appear (as especially in music), we think that this law holds good; everything does not *spring* from the intellect, but everything is *bounded* by it. When this faculty is not only powerful in itself, but flexible and versatile, we may fairly expect results of no common interest. At the same time, these conditions of the mind will be apt to lead an artist a little in advance of his executive power, especially if the intensity with which he conceives and sees his picture renders him unwilling to stay his hand before he has put the maximum of thought and expressiveness into the work, and finished every inch of it to the utmost. Perhaps certain of Mr. Hunt's works, in his earlier days, like some of Turner's, have not been free from these influences; although, so rarely do we find an English

artist who fulfils the conditions under which they act, that we cannot be sure whether what looks like intellect in excess of execution may not be rather a new phase of art which perplexes the spectator by its novelty. At any rate, there has been an air of almost too strenuous and perfect elaboration about some of his greatest pictures. It is true that the finish was never what ignorant spectators or merely literary critics supposed it, photographic or microscopic in its character, and that every added incident and touch increased the total effect through the imaginative intensity of the painter's mind; yet we have wished that he would not always concentrate so much on a single canvas, but give the reins more frankly to his invention, and employ his force of idea and his mastery over art on more numerous, if less highly wrought, productions.

Mr. Hunt's new pictures show that he is capable of such a development of his practice. The "After Glow" (that last burning flush which seems to rise as if from the heated earth, after sunset, in equatorial regions), as he has named the Egyptian Gleaner, is painted altogether in a broader and larger style than anything he has before produced; whilst, at the same time, the fine delicacy of work by which, and by which alone, the *whole* truth of nature can be given, is not abandoned. The girl, as if resting for a moment after crossing a pool, stands in a blue dress, which we see to be half transparent where it crosses the light, and which, through its delicate folds, reminds us of what beauty of female form is invisible to the present generation, throughout all the streets of Europe. The drawing of the figure, both under the dress and where the flesh is shown, appears to us worthy of Mr. Hunt's reputation for thoroughness in his art. The arms are particularly good. Round the girl's head is a series of Oriental veils and ornaments, which we

leave to be named by the learned in Coptic; in one hand is a splendidly-coloured green water-vase; on her head a sheaf of corn, upon which a pigeon is perching. The action of this bird, half slipping down and turning round his tail for equilibrium, and the effect of golden glow given to the sky seen through the long-bearded ears, are each admirable. The painting of the sheaf itself strikes us as not quite equal to the rest in force of colour and complexity of detail. Around the girl fly or hover a cloud of the same noble pigeons, of every variety in tint and attitude; behind we see a long level of corn, interspersed with the feathery palm. The faint purple-pink of the Nile valley hills closes the horizon. Above is the unbroken sky, carried down into the picture by a pool behind the girl, the steady surface of which bears yet traces of her progress, or of the ruffling flight of the pigeons who are tracking her sheaf by its fallen grains. It is impossible not to believe that we have the full local colour of Egypt, seen when it is most rich and most tender, in this beautiful and impressive work.

Strongly contrasted with the "After Glow" is the "London Bridge," here somewhat too fancifully called "The Sea King's Peaceful Triumph." We do not think that the explanation suggested in this title was wanted to render Mr. Hunt's idea clear. He seems to have wished, in this curious work, to hand down as faithful and unexaggerated a picture of that singular and unique thing—a London crowd bent upon pleasure, obedient to law, and almost able to manage itself—as his art would convey. This it was, we believe, which so moved General Garibaldi on his visit to England, and it is carried out in every part of the picture. Law is only broken here by the ragged vagabond handing a watch over to his better-dressed brother who acts the gentleman in the crowd; and justice is at once vindicated by the never seen

but ubiquitous policeman. We need not describe the numerous well-devised incidents of the scene. They are not of that melodramatic order which a weaker artist would have been compelled to choose in order to give his work interest and to make out the composition, but precisely such as might have been seen during any single hour of the night selected. All that art has done has been to give us a rather more typical choice of figures than we should generally have seen together. In this aim, we think Mr. Hunt has achieved a success not less noteworthy than his success in more ideal or inventive pictures. A representation of the Londoners of our age so profoundly faithful, giving the whole, without caricature, yet without commonplace, we have never seen. We are glad that high art—for such, and only such, we should consider all really good art—has been employed for once on such a subject as this, which, three centuries hence, will perhaps be looked at in London or in Australia with an interest quite irrespective of the artist's powers. Yet, as in all pictures representing artificial light, there is a glare and a hotness about it which, though very powerfully managed where it recedes into the back-ground, renders the nearer portions not so pleasant in effect as a daylight picture. Spectators also can hardly escape perplexity when an artist chooses so unusual a scene. We are not sufficiently familiar with illuminations and with the strange refractions which they here seem to throw over the sky, nor with the limitations under which alone art can paint such objects, to feel at home readily in such a work. The union of clear and coloured artificial light has also added to the artist's difficulties. He has used the darkness of the river and the clear obscure of the sky, with its floating clouds half tinged by earth and half by moonlight, to great effect,—but we fear that the civic decorations of the

bridge will convey a melancholy impression of British bad taste to the New Zealander of the future.

Of Mr. Martineau's "Last Day in the Old Home" we can now only remark that it has been judiciously added to the present exhibition. Although not a new work—having appeared with great *éclat* in the International Exhibition, where it won the first prize amongst our latest figure-pictures—it is now seen to so much better advantage that spectators can give it the study which its merits, already fully recognized, deserve. This, again, is one of the truthful leaves from contemporary life in which our century is fertile. Satire no longer grows on this soil. We have no public for Fielding or Hogarth. The great Cruikshank illustrates fairy tales. Leech was "oh-oh'd" when he went beyond the drawing-room and the kitchen. Whatever happens, we are only allowed to bow and look bland. We may no longer shrug our shoulders. Even "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" would be now voted *mauvais goût*. In return, our writers and artists furnish us with pictures of the world as it may be spoken of in society, of rare fidelity. This style began with Miss Austen, and she still remains in her own line absolutely unrivalled. But Mr. Thackeray and Mr. Dickens have enlarged her range of description by painting deeper passions and more homely life; and Mr. Hunt and Mr. Martineau have here contributed two first-rate illustrations to the great Novel by many hands which is thus building itself up about us.

THE PICTURES OF MR. FORD MADOX BROWN

(March, 1865)

This exhibition of works by a single artist has a marked character of distinction about it, from the display which it affords of undeniable creative originality—that quality so evenly balanced between attractiveness and repulsion, according to the spectator's frame of mind. All originality, by the nature of the thing, must be displeasing, we might almost say odious, to the commonplace temperament; and even the most open and cultivated nature can rarely, without an effort which approaches the painful, expand itself, and make room for novel ideas.

> To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new,

was a motto, one would fancy, more suitable for Milton than for the "uncouth swain" to whom he has assigned it; for some portion of original faculty must be found in the mind by which originality can be effectively appreciated, as we must be unconscious poets to sympathize truly with poetry. But, the effort once made, what intellectual impulse can rival this in the freshness of life and power which it gives us? What mental pleasure can be equal to draughts from some fountain of genius hitherto undiscovered? Sir Bulwer Lytton spoke once of that reinvigoration of the bodily frame which the "transfusion of blood" is said to

produce. Yet, striking as the effect may be, this affords but a faint image of the genial power which belongs to transfusion of intellect. The artist whose works are now before us has thought proper to enable us to trace his career upwards from youth, apparently, to maturity. Hence his gallery contains several pieces which attest imperfect strength and unfixed purpose. Even his maturest work shows occasional symptoms that, in the unusually high and difficult ideal at which he is aiming, there is still something to be conquered before the elements of success which he largely possesses meet in perfect fusion—some beauty to be added—some quaintness to be submitted to rule—some phases of natural truth to be brought, it may be, into more harmonious subordination. We shall touch on these points again; what we wish here to enforce is that Mr. Madox Brown's art goes home to the mind with the penetrative power which belongs only to first-hand transcriptions from nature. His gallery startles one into the belief that we have in him an artist of singular truth, soundness, and originality; whilst so strong is the evidence which he gives of intellectual insight at once into the spirit of the past and of our own day, and of vividness in the dramatic exhibition of character, that we must henceforth assign him one of the leading places among our very small but honoured company of genuine historical painters.

Mr. Brown has given examples of pictures belonging to this class from several phases of history. "William the Conqueror on the Field of Hastings" represents that which commonly monopolizes the name; but we should equally class as historical "Wycliffe reading his Bible to John of Gaunt, in presence of the poets Chaucer and Gower," and the largest picture exhibited—a rather roughly-painted, but effective and well-composed scene from the later days of

Edward III, before whom Chaucer, standing high in the centre of the composition, is reciting a poem. Old Gaunt, Chaucer's patron, stands behind. The Black Prince, wasting under the mortal disease which he brought back from his French campaigns, is listening intently to the poet. The struggle between mental vigour and physical pain, giving the face an expression of strange earnestness, is here admirable. By him appears the lovely face of his young Princess — contrasted with the cunning looks of Alice Perrers, that highly-questionable female who plays so singular a part in the tragical death scenes of the great Edward. Many other persons of the Court are seen, and Mr. Brown has here given a larger share to beauty than his works generally present. As a whole, this would form a mural decoration of which the sole equals hitherto produced in England (if we except the great oil-paintings by Mr. John Cross, which are not exactly in point here) would be the two magnificent frescoes by Mr. Maclise at Westminster. The "Willielmus Conquistator" may, indeed, deserve to be rated higher than the Chaucer, both in intrinsic interest and power as a composition; but this work the artist has not received sufficient encouragement to carry beyond a careful sketch. The sound and well-understood painting which generally marks these pictures, their dramatic quality, and the force with which the scene has been always grasped in its central point, when compared with the pompous failures and flashy popularities over which the trumpet has been recently blown so much, are enough to make an impartial spectator, valuing art for art's sake, despair of our public commissions. Perhaps it may not be too high a price to pay: but it seems a hard bargain that one honest success should have to be purchased by a dozen pieces of unsound or mediocre character.

Subjects from the Bible do not ordinarily rank as "historical," and this is easily accounted for by the curiously conventional way in which they have been painted—from the symbolism of the catacombs, through the monastic mysticism of the middle ages, to the theatrical style of later artists. But the modern mind has now decisively set itself to the attempt at representing Scripture scenes with the greatest attainable fidelity to the actual fact. To this school, of which Mr. Holman Hunt has been hitherto the main English representative, Mr. Madox Brown seems to have given his full adhesion. As a man of intellect he could not do otherwise, and we are glad to find his abilities employed upon the side to which the religious tendencies of modern Europe assure triumph. Mr. Brown's most complete Biblical subject appears to us the "Elijah bringing the Widow's Son to the Mother." The aged prophet, thickly robed in rich striped Arabian garments, is bearing the youth, crowned with funeral flowers, swathed in his cerements, and still languid with re-awakened life, from the upper room. At the foot of the rude ladder the mother kneels in an ecstacy of passionate thankfulness. The picturesqueness of this arrangement, which may be conjectured even from our description, is increased by the skilful use of details, and by the subdued brightness of the colour. Only the prophet's features do not appear to us of a sufficiently high type. This little scene has the sort of dramatic intensity which Giotto threw into his designs. A drawing from one of the wild incidents recorded in "Judges" exhibits the same singular power, to which the choice of subject (Eglon stabbed by Ehud) may add. Mr. Brown's largest sacred piece, "Christ Washing St. Peter's Feet," might, we think, be taken up again with advantage in regard to the figures behind, which appear to us awkwardly crowded, and not

happy in the cast of features chosen. The St. Peter is here the point of most success; in expression, colouring, and design, this is, again, one of the figures which cannot be forgotten.

We must pass the powerful, but unequal, "Lear and Cordelia" (which may be remembered in the International Exhibition), and two later and more tenderly coloured quasi-mediaeval scenes ("Sir Tristram's Death," and "René of Anjou"), with a hope that the artist will not allow his remarkable command over archaic picturesqueness to carry him too far, and proceed to notice what, after all, has a stronger hold on our sympathies than any scene from the poets—the pictures taken from modern life. One of these, the "Emigrants leaving England," was also shown in 1862. "Work," the other, is the artist's latest production. We may at once say, that did not these pictures reach a remarkable success in the qualities displayed by those just noticed—power of characterization, energy in dramatic idea, mastery over human form, and (generally) a rich and truthful system of colour—we should not have held Mr. Brown's place amongst true historical painters securely maintained. It would, indeed, be but an arbitrary rule which confined the painter or the poet, in his choice of subject, to contemporary life. Yet we may safely affirm that only the artist who can grasp the present can vivify the past. Now what, we are convinced, will most strike visitors to this Gallery is that the painter not only, as above remarked, grasps contemporary life, but that he grasps it with an intensity which is very rare in any of the fine arts. He strikes home, where we all can measure the blow. And to do this with success implies, not only the man of technical ability, but the man of mind. This, to us at least, appears to give Mr. Brown his place—to be his "note," as theologians say. A curious

analogy is here presented to Mr. Tennyson, who would not have been so great in the more obviously poetical region of the Arthurian Idyl had he not been (in our judgment) greater in the more profoundly poetical elements of "Maud." Yet Mr. Brown's idea, or mental colouring, if we may pursue the comparison for illustration's sake and without desiring that it should be pressed far, is more essentially that of Wordsworth in the poet's earlier phase: when higher power and pathos appeared sometimes negligent of beauty, or were blended with phrases of almost prosaic naïveté. So in Mr. Brown's great picture there are points which jar: some crude tones in the sky; an overabundance of suggestion; a want of character, singular to note in a painter of so much force, in the figures of Mr. Carlyle and Mr. Maurice, who are looking on at a group of stalwart navvies hard at work under a midday sun, on the Metropolitan Main Drainage Works at Hampstead. We do not hold with those who argue that it is illiberal to notice minor shortcomings when a work has real first-rate qualities: believing that the first, second, and third thing in criticism is to speak the truth, due pains having been taken to find it. Hence the above remarks: after which let us add, that they are truly minor shortcomings, and that Mr. Brown's "Work" is, so far as we know, the most truthfully pathetic, and yet the least sentimental, rendering of the dominant aspect of English life that any of our painters have given us. Pictures in this key of feeling cannot be—probably ought not to be—common; they hence demand a more than usual seriousness of examination when they have been successfully handled. The idea is to set forth together the "labour that is under the sun," as shared in, or sought, or put aside, by rich and poor. With the Labourers are contrasted different phases of work and idleness: the mincing steps of one lady who thinks it

a nuisance that the pathway is interrupted for works which ensure health to millions; the ill-guided officious piety of a second, scattering tracts broadcast over the pit; the policeman whose work, as guardian of that propriety which England sometimes worships with cruel sacrifices, is to drive the orange-seller from the walks of the "respectable classes;" the Irishman who hardly cares to look for a day's job, the wandering herbalist whose labour is but one step above vagrancy; and many more, whom the artist has described in a catalogue, which will assuredly be bound up and preserved by all lovers of the curious in literature. In justification of our allusion to Wordsworth, we may further refer to a group of children in the foreground. Here a neglected orphan girl of ten, dressed in the ragged frock of some older child, which she has not had time or skill to adjust to her own proportions—an "Alice Fell" in brief, but unhappily before the famous "new cloak"—is acting guardian to a little family. The baby, put into some poor mourning for its mother, and the child of four who is solemnly sucking a carrot by way of a sugar-plum, show even in the depths of poverty an innocent cheerfulness, a decent orderliness, such as we have often seen in St. Giles's itself; and which—bespeaking, as such appearances do, an effort of strenuous home affection such as only the very poor can measure in its full difficulty—are perhaps not less pathetic to the passer-by than the more marked exhibitions of human misery. "These," as Lamb said in his exquisite way about Hogarth, "are the *lacrymae rerum*, and the sorrows by which the heart is made better." Diffidently and sparely as such approximations should be risked, we may at least recognize here some community of genius between Mr. Brown and his mighty predecessor. And we are not surprized to learn, that the picture in question excited the

quick sympathy and received the hearty praise of Mr. Gladstone.

Our notice, if the view here taken be correct, is enough to prove that a very striking exhibition of little suspected power in art, alike in regard to quality and quantity, to range and to force of representation, has been brought before us in this Gallery. Beside the figure-subjects, there are some single heads and a series of small landscapes worth careful study. These all testify to the same determined attempt on the painter's part to put on his canvas nothing but the truth, and all the truth, which his art can master. The detail of his execution varies, we may add, in proportion to the degree in which that maximum is attainable. Character has been mainly aimed at in the portraits; absolute veracity of light in the "Windermere," "Hayfield in Twilight," "Walton on the Naze," and the other landscapes; both in the Coast-scene visible in the "Lear." Hence their singular merit in general tone. Whilst the intellectual and creative power of the artist must of course, from one point of view, be rated as the most important of his capacities, he shows himself aware also that the first duty of a painter is to be able to paint. Mr. Brown has empowered us, with a courage which has some justifiable self-confidence in it, to judge of his course in both directions, by fairly showing specimens of his work from youth upward. Looking now at the result thus exhibited as a whole, a marked and steady advance in thought and in execution may be deservedly noticed. At the same time, the unusual number of the elements that constitute high art in the strict sense, which Mr. Brown has attempted to combine, have rendered his success unequal. He will probably require no critic to make him aware that, when so much has been aimed at, the elements can with difficulty be brought into

perfect harmony. These are the points which afford an easy opening to lovers of the commonplace and hangers-on to the skirts of "roaring popularity," to lecture gaily upon lapses which the art that takes things easy never meets, or has no trouble in evading. In the vigour and success of his protest against the false light and false colouring, the facile sentimentalisms and conventionalities, to which weaker men are compelled to have resort, a brief descent into crudity and quaintness, an occasional want of ease and of charm, may be here and there remarked, and forgiven. The artist, as we judge from the dates affixed to his works, is now in the strongest years of life. We have already indicated the field in which, for public advantage, he eminently deserves employment. Let us add the expression of a hope, in return for the high pleasure which he has given us, that one lesson from the older—let us say the nobler—school of art will not be lost upon that Gothic imagination which, as we find everywhere in the art of modern Europe, has moulded, and is stamped upon, his productions. He shows that, in what we have called an intense grasp of contemporary life, he has a share in the "note" of all that was best in Grecian fine art—poetry, sculpture, and painting. We think that his attempt should now be to add to this, Hellenic moderation.

THE CRUIKSHANK EXHIBITION

(July, 1863)

Old George Cruikshank has been old George Cruikshank any time during the last thirty years to those whose nursery days date so far back. Indeed, we have heard his illustrations to *Grimm's Fairy Stories* spoken of as the delight of their youth by some whose childhood dates forty years ago, whilst the similar labour of love which he has devoted to *Jack and the Bean Stalk* is the thumbed and tattered darling of many who do not yet aspire to rank in the rising generation. He must, in fact, be old George Cruikshank, we are afraid, in the number of his years; yet our century has seen no better example of that ever-youthfulness which is one of the most frequent and least doubtful signs of genuine genius. That the name of Cruikshank deserves to be coupled with this epithet has never been dubious to those who, looking beyond certain mannerisms and limitations in his power as an artist, can appreciate high gifts to move both tears and laughter, exhibited on however small and unpretending a scale; or who can value downright originality, expressing itself in its own manner, irrespective of popular fashion; or who are aware what peculiar skill he has reached as an etcher. But when a great man comes before the world in a modest way of his own, working often in the by-places of art or literature, and addressing himself to illustrate children's

books with the homely, healthy purpose of only making them laugh at a giant, or look frightened at a ghost, people are apt—in this age of sensation and worship of the muscular—to take him at his quiet valuation, and pass by sterling excellence with slight or grudging recognition, as they turn to some loud trumpet-blowing hero of the hour. Especially may this happen when a man's work has been spread over half a century, and must be sought for in a hundred stray volumes, or studied in the portfolio of a collector. And we are, therefore, glad that a large proportion of the *opus Georgii* has been put together at Exeter Hall in time to let his countrymen make themselves aware of his merits, whilst he is still alive to enjoy a reputation which none of his contemporaries have laboured more conscientiously to win, or have deserved more thoroughly.

His saltem accumulem donis.

Every true artist, from the close relation in which his art stands to his mind and nature, is sure to have two or three modes of expressing himself, which answer, more or less, to the main divisions of life. Cruikshank's works, as exhibited at Exeter Hall in more than a thousand etchings, appear to obey this law, and may be distributed in a general way into distinct styles. As in the case of Beethoven or Turner, there is a kind of prelude before the young designer had fairly found his path, and whilst he was trying his first steps in a lawyer's office; but the bent of his nature at last had its way, and like Horace, *non sine diis animosus infans*, he entered on the field of political and social caricature, modelling himself after the fashion of Rowlandson, Gillray, and other celebrities of sixty years since. We must own that in Cruikshank's first style, even as partially represented here, there are some proofs how difficult it is to treat coarse

manners without lapsing into coarseness ; and we are astonished at the general change in our ways which the artist has lived to witness and to perpetuate. Art, like Poetry, was in Opposition during the Regency, and the manners of the Court and of the "fashionables" and "Corinthians" during the Castlereagh and Caroline period are roughly handled by Cruikshank, in a rather crude and violent style of engraving ; although from the first his execution has a directness, a meaning, and sense in every stroke, which at once reveal the imaginative artist, and separate his work by the "line of life" from such ignorant dashing about after effect as we see in many etchings.

Returning to Cruikshank, his large early coloured prints look not less foreign to us as pieces of art than as representations of reality. Will any gentleman undertake to assert, on his honour, that he, or his father, ever dressed and turned out bodily, in the fashions of 1804 and 1805, as the artist reveals them? One can hardly help thinking that these queer disguises of the "form divine" should have been catalogued under the title "Monstrosities," appropriately enough given to the fashions current from 1816 to 1826. One of the best of the designs of this period is "Coriolanus and the Plebeians." In these portraits of the primitive Radicals of 1820, the element of caricature, over-predominant in Cruikshank's first style, is united with a fine rendering of expression in the faces, and the crowd is drawn with the artist's peculiar skill. We know very few indeed who can be set beside him in this peculiar faculty. Cruikshank's crowds give one exactly the impression of reality. They show a certain monotony, from the common impulse of the mob, yet they are full of characteristic figures, no two exactly alike. There is also all the due sense of air, and motion, and fluctuation about them. They are penetrable

crowds, especially the Irish, which he delights to draw—true *mobiles*, ready to break out into new mischief, or disperse before the onslaught of the Saxon. The twenty spiritedly touched and delicately handled illustrations for Maxwell's *History of the Irish Rebellion* are excellent samples of the artist's skill in managing a mob, and, by the refinement of the work and the greater delicacy and humour of the ideas, point to what we may venture to call his second style.

Under this we class by far the larger number of the delights of our and everybody's childhood—beginning, perhaps, with the famous fairy scenes from Grimm, and thence onward, through a vast series of "wonders of the needle," to the illustrations of Scott and Shakespeare, of Dickens and Ainsworth. Cruikshank has now quitted politics, which, in fact, he had in the first period of his activity looked at mainly from the social point of view, without taking a distinct side. Hatred of meanness, cruelty, and injustice, has been throughout the motive principle in his satire, and this has been alone sufficient to render him but a poor political partisan. The "Bank-note not to be imitated" is one of his latest essays in this direction. This curious paper, covered with grim emblems, and signed by Jack Ketch, is a monument of that cruel phase of the law when wretches were hung in crowds for the simple passing of a forged note—an occurrence naturally frequent whilst paper for small amounts was current. Well may the honest-hearted artist take to himself some pleasure in the belief that his admirably-timed satire led to a correction of the abuse. The "Knacker's Yard, or Voice of Humanity," another appeal against human oppression and cruelty, is, in point of art, perhaps the most striking illustration here of Cruikshank's tragic power, which Mr. Ruskin, in his brief but excellent criticism on the artist, justly places on a level

with his comic genius. This little plate is scarcely below Rembrandt in force and largeness of style, and it is informed with an earnestness of purpose which the art of Rembrandt's time never aims at. In this respect, Cruikshank has a close affinity to Bewick. As an example of his range of power, it is instructive to compare the gloom and horror of this last refuge of too many a noble animal with the humourous presentment of a somewhat similar idea in the plate of Horses out of work, stretching their lean necks to criticize the train which passes their stable in the infancy of the railway system. Much as we admire that command of tragic power and that earnest simplicity of mind which, though sometimes taking forms not free from exaggeration or onesidedness, render Cruikshank decidedly the first illustrative designer of the time, yet we must be glad that his pencil and his etching-needle have been generally employed to rouse our laughter rather than our seriousness. Innocent mirth has never had a patron more effective. The World going to the Great Exhibition—a title which that of 1851 has not yet surrendered—a certain series of the "Adventures of Mr. Lambkin," the "Housemaid and her Followers," the "Female Jury trying a Breach of Promise of Marriage"—these, and a hundred other exquisite pieces of Fun (whether Wit or Humour we leave North Britons to decide) crowd before us; and we feel that we can hardly be too grateful to the skilful hand, simple heart, and inventive intelligence which have given us so much wholesome and unworldly pleasure.

There is yet another phase of Cruikshank's art which deserves peculiar attention. Every artist is sure to have his speciality, and, perhaps, if it were needful to select Cruikshank's, it would be rather his gift for rendering the fairy supernatural world than even his directly comic or

tragic designing. No one has so singularly penetrated into the soul of popular superstition. Cruikshank's witches are, so far as we know, absolutely unrivalled. They exhibit exactly that mixture of anility and malice, of half wicked, half inexplicable fun—and all with a certain strange dash of superhuman power, not quite devilish, but decidedly not quite *canny*—which the fairy legends of Grimm or Scott ascribe to them. The illustrations to Grimm and to the *Demonology* are examples. In the latter, the "Witches' Voyage" is a perfect masterpiece of humour, satire, and supernaturalism. It is only through a true gift of imagination that the artist can have reached this success. In this respect, what a contrast he offers to the once-fashionable art of Retszch! although we have not space here to do more than indicate the difference between the penetrative insight of Cruikshank and the mechanical agglomerations of horror which Retszch has substituted for imaginative witchery. Nor should the excellence of the landscape features and other accessories, in these and similar etchings of Cruikshank's later period, be overlooked. His little bits of background and sky are handled with wonderful truth and spirit. There is an extraordinary unity of effect in the tone of the landscape, reached by the simplest means; whilst, in giving a picturesque air to these portions of his subject, he may be again fairly compared to Bewick.

To this great artist—for to that title, due consideration given to all sides of his work, we think his claim fully made out—we have devoted these brief notices, not because he is among the unknown men of genius, but because his popularity does not appear to us to have been hitherto justly measured to his deserts. We do not mean that Cruikshank has not gained a very considerable share of favour and admiration. But this he has mainly received from the

young, and those whom we may, without offence, call the unliterary classes. The value of such suffrages is, indeed, not to be rated low. They are given honestly and simply "on the merits;" they are far more valuable than the reputations due to art-puffery, fashion, and partisanship. But George Cruikshank has not, we think, taken rank in ordinary parlance amongst the great artists of the day, and in this respect he deserves a different, if not a higher kind of popularity. Many causes have probably led to this. One may be that, in his earlier days, Cruikshank, as the lifelong foe to cant and quackery and injustice, was in opposition to the dominant classes. Though not strictly a politician (judging these things rather through the light of sentiment than of fact), he had more sympathy with Cobbett than with Carlton House. Another reason may be sought in certain curious mannerisms which run through his designs, and which are probably due to some want in youthful training to art. His idea of a young lady is rarely successful, and his drawing of the face has never quite cleared itself of its first dedication to caricature. A third cause is the fugitive quality of many of the books which he illustrated—a fact to which the Exhibition catalogue bears curious testimony. Cruikshank, like Flaxman, or Stothard, or Turner, seems to have worked throughout life with singular modesty, content to take whatever business offered itself, and never inquiring whether he was to illustrate a *Tom Jones* or a *Jack Sheppard.* Another reason may be that, in later life, his high tragic power has been exercised mainly against those abuses by which the poor and the helpless suffer. His sympathies are clearly those of a man of the people for the people; and this excludes a drawing-room popularity. Like Thomas Hood, whom in this respect, not less than in humour, he resembles, he has compelled an entrance; but he is not familiarized—

not "court qualified," as they say at Vienna. He has not condescended merely to amuse, to glide gracefully over the surface, to be sensuous with elegance, or hit us only where we do not mind, like his witty contemporaries. Exquisitely comic as he is on matters fit for comedy, he has told stern truths too plainly; and he is hence not one of whom the *omnes omnia bona dicere, et laudare* &c. can be expected. Lastly, satirical and humourous designing lies still, in some degree, under that Academical censure or depreciation which led Horace Walpole to deny the name Painter to Hogarth. Time has done justice to the artist of the "Rake's Progress." We do not doubt that he has a like reparation in store for George Cruikshank.

JAPANESE ART

Mr. John Leighton, a well-known student in the daily enlarging field of decorative art, has printed a brief but interesting lecture on the art of Japan, which he delivered lately before the Royal Institution. The limits of a single discourse did not afford scope for an exhaustive treatment of this curious subject; but Mr. Leighton has given several valuable suggestions. A fashion—which, we trust, may ultimately become a real liking—for newer and more varied decoration than we have lately been accustomed to receive at the hands of the mere commercial upholsterers, is decidedly growing up in England, and taking somewhat the same place in regard to our dwellings that Gothic has already taken in public works of an ecclesiastical or civic order. People are no longer satisfied to repeat that stock of Greek ornaments, scanty though exquisite, to which the genius of our century appears unable to make any essential addition. The pomps of Louis Quatorze and the vanities of Louis Quinze—the world, the flesh, and the devil, as we might call the art of Lebrun and the art of Boucher—are happily out of date; whilst Italian and Gothic decorations are, at present, practically confined to a few wealthy experimentalists. In this state of things, men have naturally turned their eyes to the only living schools of decorative art in existence; and many circumstances having latterly brought the productions of the far East easily within our

reach, a useful service would be conferred upon us by any one who, with competent taste and knowledge, should now make us acquainted with the principles which underlie the excellence attained (within certain limits) in India, China, and Japan.

Whilst we have indicated, by our last suggestion, that this work has yet to be done, and may add that, except by some one who has personally visited the countries named, it can hardly be done with thoroughness, a few hints on the subject may be given, on the strength of the materials already before us. One of the most curious facts in relation to Japanese art is well brought out by Mr. Leighton. We are apt to think of Indian designs as wild and varied in comparison with European. But Japan, further East, carries to still greater lengths the same passion for *irregularity.*—Pause one moment, my reader, and reflect how marvellously this is opposed to British sentiment, from the duchess to the housemaid!—Patterns which, in idea, are common to both countries, in Japan assume a less symmetrical arrangement. In fact, the law of Japanese ornamentation appears to be, that exact repetition of parts, and perfect balance of form, should be reserved for the expression of religious feeling; whilst, in the common-life regions of art, the pains taken to avoid symmetry and evenness are as great as the pains we take to secure them. The commonest little boxes of this singular people, such as may be bought for sixpence each in Regent Street, are studiously divided from angle to angle by oblique lines of colour; often a bit of pattern strangely comes in at the corner, cutting across the main design; whilst the birds and flowers, in direct opposition to the truly barbarian rules of heraldry, are carefully placed in the unexpected and unsymmetrical portions of the "field." We hear tales of the Japanese feudal nobility which are close

counterparts to what we know of their Western brethren during the ages of "faith" and "chivalry"; but we cannot imagine anything which would seem more barbarous in Japanese eyes than the quarterings of a great French or English family, parted into its dexter and sinister, and coloured in equal defiance of taste with its arrangement.

This peculiarity of Japanese decoration, however it may have been reached—probably by true instinctive judgment—might, we think, be summed up by saying that decorative art in Japan is based on the same principle as pictorial art. The same avoidance of identical forms or symmetrical arrangements, the same desire to conceal the art beneath a look of nature, guides a painter amongst us, as a decorator amongst them. In other words, they draw no sharp line between art pictorial and art decorative. And we cannot too highly commend, or too carefully study, this idea. No sounder canon was ever laid down by the best writers, or worked out by the best artists. It is, in fact, the course followed by all the European schools which have been really great in ornament—being true of Greek, Italian, and Byzantine decoration (the latter inheriting directly from the old Hellenic traditions) not less than of Romanesque and Gothic. Artists have succeeded in decoration, as Mr. Ruskin ably pointed out in one of his lectures, in exact proportion as they were arduous and successful in the study of human form and of natural facts. You cannot have good designing in patterns for your dress, unless the designer can draw the figure beneath the dress as well. It is impossible to set out a diaper, or devise figures for a wall or a carpet, unless the artist is familiar with actual leaves, and boughs, and flowers—nay, unless he habitually lives in the study of these, and only gives his less numerous hours to drawing ornament. Hence, amongst other reasons, the want of life

and feeling in most decorative details in our new buildings, as is conspicuously the case in the Palace at Westminster, where the indescribable badness of the figures which people the niches prepares us for the failure in much of what is meant for simply ornamental work. And we are sorry that most of the money spent since on decorative detail in the vast majority of our new churches has called forth carving, colour, and glass, of hardly better quality. But of this, more hereafter.

To avoid introducing a digressive argument above, we confined our remarks, it will be seen, to *European* decorative art. And it is possible that readers may have thought that our limitation proved the law which we stated to be partial or one-sided. A superficial knowledge of Oriental art would, indeed, appear to confirm this, especially if bastard and mechanical Moorish decoration, such as that of the Alhambra, be tacitly referred to. But not the least curious part of our more extended acquaintance with the East shows that, under certain peculiar conditions, the same law holds good there, and that success in decoration stands in a close ratio to success in studying natural form. Thus, in India, the magnificent ancient architecture which Mr. Fergusson has illustrated and explained was filled with figure-sculpture, whilst the capitals and cornices show careful study of the native flora. In China, we have long known in some degree, through the earthenware of the country, that the representation of human subjects holds a high place in their art; and although comparatively fewer specimens of Chinese pictures have been imported, yet these have received emphatic praise from judges like Leslie and Stothard. Japan, lastly, the most perfect of the three countries in decoration, is that in which all the other branches of art have been carried furthest. The small ivory carvings

and castings in brass are by far the most natural and vivid work of the kind which we have seen from any Oriental source; whilst the fine and true feeling of the Japanese, not only for birds, and beasts, and vegetation, but for landscape in its larger features, is shown with equal clearness in the lacquer-work and the popular coloured books which have been lately brought over. In these, besides a certain limited but decidedly marked sense of humour, there appears to be considerable dramatic power in the human figures; and the landscape backgrounds are not merely characteristic in themselves, but seem also, so far as we can decipher the plot of the stories, to take their place in illustrating the sentiment of the scene, as they do in the pictures of Hogarth or Leslie.

Whilst, however, we feel high admiration for Japanese and other real Oriental art, and, in comparison with the decorative work of any existing European school, think it markedly superior, it is at the same time right to notice the limits beyond which it seems unable to pass. As we observe something in the Greek sculpture and poetry which seems to restrain even Hellenic genius by laws imperative as those of nature, and to prevent Phidias or Sophocles from exactly reaching modern sentiment, so the best Oriental artist finds his hand stayed—if not always, yet apparently with the rarest exceptions—at that stage in art which, by a rather misleading phrase, we call decorative, in opposition to pictorial. A more correct definition might be, that the Oriental work does not go beyond conventional rendering of natural forms, and does not seem animated by much of human feeling or intellect. It thus falls essentially, with all its excellence, into a secondary rank, although it owes, as we before said, that excellence to the fact that it does not aim at being simply decorative, but is the best form of art which

the craftsmen can compass, and is successful exactly in proportion to their power over human form and the facts of nature. It was with reference to these qualities that we spoke of the Alhambra decoration as bastard and mechanical. Nothing could be more unlucky for French and English taste than that this, by the accident of its locality, should have been brought before the public as the type of Oriental art, since it has little to recommend it except a certain ingenuity of linear arrangement and pleasantness of colour. These qualities are what we should theoretically expect of a school of decoration not founded on the study of natural phenomena; and the rare occurrence of any natural forms in Arabic ornament, with their unskilful handling when attempted, appears to us (in the dearth of detailed illustration or trustworthy criticism on the matter) to confirm our view. From such wretched figures as the lions of the Alhambra we should expect that even the fine Oriental taste in decoration would go no further than the labyrinthine networks of the court enclosing them. In fact, if we may venture on a conjecture, we should be disposed to think that the Moors —who, so far as blood and race are concerned in national characteristics, are not, it must be remembered, of the stocks which peopled India or the Transindian regions— were as little gifted with originality in art as in intellect. As they took what science they had from Greece, so we should look for the elements of their art in Byzantium and the little-known Armenian and Iranian provinces. But we leave this to the decision of such of our Oriental travellers, if such there be, as may think the relics of the wonderful civilization which those countries reached when the world was young, better worth the study of an educated European than the gossip of the harem, or the ten-times-told adventures of the jungle.

In truth, the qualities of Oriental art—its unaffected *naïveté*, its limited and childlike grace, and its unfailing success in colour—are or seem like what we vaguely, but intelligibly, speak of as gifts of instinct, rather than manifestations of the human mind. But this should not deter us from valuing Eastern technical skill. It gives high pleasure within its degree—pleasure high in proportion to the intellectual cultivation of the spectator, who can trace its qualities to their origin, and can compare it with the loftier, but often less perfect attempts, of the Western Indo-Germanic races. As a contrast and a lesson to us, not less than as a thing complete and admirable in its way, the productions of India, China, and Japan deserve our most careful study. Indeed they have many minor points of tasteful execution and idea which we have not noticed, because, even with the indispensable aid of illustration, they would, we fear, hardly be even recognized by English eyes, wearied and blunted as they are by the everlasting succession of mechanical and mindless decorative failures which encumber us in every direction, from chromoliths and machine-ruled prints to patent marbles enamelled on slate or *papier-maché*, wood painted to look like stone, and stone painted to look like plaster. As a contrast and a remedy to this side of our civilization, Oriental art has a peculiar value; and we are in no danger of adopting the special tone of character and grade of faculties, so far as these are lower or less intellectual than our own, in which Oriental art has its origin. The works of the Bengal School of Design, exhibited at the Exhibition of 1862, with some pieces even of Japanese ware, show rather that the danger is in quite an opposite direction. Letting alone the risk of war, there is great and imminent danger lest the fine traditional craft of the East should be marred or ruined by imitation

of the worst Occidental types. Several of the specimens alluded to were in the most debased and unmeaning English style. So far as this is done officially and on system, we trust it will be put down by public taste. In the region of art there could hardly be a greater evil than an importation, not from Japan to South Kensington, but of South Kensington into Japan.

1863

SENSATIONAL ART

It may be objected to the above title that, as all Art is intended to work on our feelings, so all Art must, by its own essence, be sensational. And it is indeed probable that the style to which we give the name has grown from this common groundwork, and represents, or answers to, some popular tendency which may flow, with varying force, through the currents of civilized life. Ever shifting as they are, these currents run, after all, through limited channels; the thing which has been is the thing which will be again; we go from pink to blue, and from blue to pink again, with an intermediate transit, it may be, through crimson. The elementary tastes of man are not more numerous than the elementary tones of nature. We have our sentimental and our passionate, our physical-force and our intellectual-grandeur tints—and she has her seven colours; only in her art they are always disposed at once moderately and effectively. These primary conditions cannot be changed by criticism or by chemistry; but as philosophers analyze the spectrum, read between its lines, and compel it to give up the secret of its colouring, so by a little close examination we may perhaps discover the causes underlying the social tone of the day, and point out in a philosophical spirit the laws and limits which govern the prismatic splendour of our civilization.

These remarks show that we cannot turn to the derivation of the word for a definition of what we mean, and what everybody will understand, as Sensational Art. What order of sensation is thereby intended is more to the purpose of our criticism. Some of those feelings which can be addressed by the painter are deep, and these in general are not lightly to be stirred, but, when moved, retain the impulse long. Others are open to more immediate appeal. They float, perhaps, more on the surface of common experience, or they belong rather to the physical than to the spiritual side of our nature. The first class of feelings speak from the depths to the depths; *de profundis clamant;* they spring from thoughtful or strongly-excited minds; they cannot be conceived or represented with facility; they call for patience, knowledge, and delicacy in the artist. The more immediate class require rather vivacity, facile force, dramatic power; they touch us rather strongly than lastingly. Mr. Hunt's illustration of *Measure for Measure* is an excellent example of the first—Mr. Solomon's "Waiting for the Verdict," of the second. Each phase of feeling is required to complete the pleasure which we may receive from art; each has been the province of great painters; each, however, is liable to its peculiar exaggerations. Dominance of sentiment is apt to become sentimentalism. Vigour of representation is ready to decline into sensationalism.

If this theory be correct, it will be obvious that the evil of the latter form of degeneracy is the more active. For not only must we admit that the style of art is, in a certain intelligible sense, lower, but it also tempts the artist, by its very nature, to dash and coarseness, to careless drawing and violent expression, and the other many forms of mere effectism. This, in turn, leads him to subjects of a comparatively vulgar order, in which the divergence from true

art will be less perceptible. Even an imperfectly educated taste would reject the sensational representation of a Scripture scene; and although examples of such are not wanting, and that in the older days, yet the treatment was adopted, not for effect, but for a supposed religious object. Hence the artist now turns to scenes from contemporary life—such especially as contain features of vulgar humour or vulgar crime. He will reject love for flirtation, dwell on the bride's wreath rather than her expression, and choose the forger or the *traviata* for the tragic elements of his drama, if some degree of sentiment mingle with his art—taking the repulsive rather than the terrible, and shocking us where he wishes to be sublime. Perhaps he will attempt history; and then his favourite age may be the first French Revolution, with its revolting contrasts of a degraded Court and an infuriate mob. Or, if the selection be wider, it will be of "easy things to understand"—contrasts as striking as black and white, or "telling incidents" which would make a hit at the Adelphi. Meanwhile, his audience will be fit, though numerous; until the highest stage in the sensational career is reached, and the newspapers and walls are placarded with advertisements that 5,000*l.* 10,000*l.* 20,000*l.* have been given for the last masterpiece. The work has a green-baize Exhibition-room to itself, and the aid of popular counsel, skilled in art-puffery, is called in to glorify its merits and its price, and to assure the world that—as the case may be—the Rubens or the Giorgione or the Hogarth of our century is now before them—the wonder of the day, and already secure of immortality!

> —The earth hath bubbles, as the water hath,
> And these are of them.

It must, of course, be readily allowed that art of the sensational order can hardly, if ever, draw the mob without

some measure of proved ability. Even universal suffrage does not elect a blockhead as an emperor. Nor, further, are the limits of such art marked out by definite lines. Pictures may be more or less sensational. Vulgar appeal and deft commonplace may predominate, as in the two or three recent pictures by Mr. Frith, in favour of which the puff, in every fine gradation, has been put to no common exertions. In another mode, as the Cremorne party passing a drowned girl, exhibited a few years since, sentiment of a rough kind may display itself; whilst in a third—we may name Gérôme's "Masquer's Death" or the "Chatterton" of Wallis—the conception may be so powerful, and the execution so masterly, that though it may be questioned whether art does not, in so painful a scene, abandon her proper province, yet we can no longer apply the term "sensational" to the work in a sense of disparagement. Nor, again, would it often be correct to use the epithet as the distinctive property of certain artists. Gallait, for example—the Belgian painter so popular amongst those who are satisfied without refinement of idea or sincerity of treatment—inferior as he is in the great qualities of art to Gérôme, like Gérôme has not confined himself to such subjects only as the execution of Egmont, or the madness of Tasso. Mr. Ward—whose Parliament House frescoes must be mainly ranked, owing to a style of treatment which we will presently analyze, in the sensational class—gave in his "Hogarth's Studio," a picture which, if exhibiting those deficiencies in high artist-like feeling and execution which detract seriously from his powers, was free from mere appeal to commonplace effect or vulgar humour. On the other hand, good artists may be named who have touched the limits of sensationalism. Hunt's "Awakened Conscience," the picture we have named by Gérôme, Turner's "Slaver" and "Ulysses,"

are magnificent examples, to which those who know modern French art can add several more.

There is, however, no special need to trace the course of Sensational Art upwards. Reverting to our definition of it as that which deals with subjects calling for vivacity, facile force, and dramatic power, although not the form of the drama which moves the deeper feelings, it will be easily seen that where subjects such as these are skilfully handled we should not think of applying the epithet to them. They are then simply telling pictures of incident, humourous or gloomy as the case may be. Wilkie's "Distraining for Rent" and "Chelsea Pensioners," Millais's "Fireman," Maclise's "Wellington and Blucher," Martineau's "Last Day in the Old House"—to take examples from the chance supplies of memory—are all pictures which depend for much of their effect on sensational elements, but which, nevertheless, would not accurately be called sensational. Similarly, in literature, the Waverley novels and Shakspeare's plays contain far more striking points and moving incidents than the very best-devised melodrama. Their popularity with the unthinking, as Charles Lamb pointed out admirably in the case of Shakspeare, rests indeed, in no small measure, on these elements. Yet we give the name sensational, not to the *Heart of Mid Lothian* or to *Othello*, but to the dramas of the Victoria or Miss Braddon's novels. So again, whilst Millais's "Fireman" would be spoken of simply as a powerful dramatic scene of physical emotion, his "Nun's Rescue" was at once recognized as belonging to the coarser style. More decidedly, and less excusably such, considering the subject, was his Moonlight scene from Keats in the Exhibition of 1863. And even in case of a genius so magnificent as Scott's, one or two of the later novels, as *Anne of Geierstein*, written when that noble hand

had lost much of its cunning, are not free from distinct sensationalism. To inquire why we recognize these differences may assist us towards a clearer idea of the subject of our paper.

We have said that sensationalism is the exaggeration of vigour. But by this must not be understood that this phase of art is simply extreme vigour. Even those who are strongly moved by it would not claim for it the great feature of strength—enduring interest. Rather, as sophistry was defined by Plato to be that which, not being philosophy, aimed at seeming to be such—so Sensational Art pretends to the vigour which is beyond the ability of the artist. Thus, had the dramatist of the *Colleen Bawn* the intellectual power, we will not say of Shakspeare, but of Shakspeare's contemporaries under Elizabeth and James, he might, so far as the idea of the story was concerned, have given us a fair rival to the plays of Beaumont or Massinger. Lacking this, he was compelled to obtain vigour and vivacity by recurrence to a lower order of sentiment, and to compensate, by physical incident, for the effect which might have been obtained by really vital characterization. A similar mode of treatment is not uncommon in the writers of the "muscular" school. When Mr. Kingsley's confidence in the force of his philosophy fails him, he has always a shipwreck or a good run with the hounds at hand to take him through. When the author of *Guy Livingstone* feels a little conscious that the reader may not quite sympathize with his theories on blood, or his references to Homer, he calls our attention to the fact that no one could hit out so straight as his hero. So in the fine arts. With all his melodic genius and spirit, Verdi cannot write an air like "Batti, batti;" but he can easily put more trombones and trumpets than Mozart into his orchestra. With all his great command

over drawing and fertility of invention, Maclise was unable —who could, indeed, hope to succeed?—to place Shakspeare's Lady Macbeth authentically on the canvas. Yet he produced a great effect, not so much by the truly excellent portions of the picture as by the shadowy management of the ghost. Thus, also, in the frescoes at Westminster. Take Mr. Ward's "Sleep of Argyle." Here the main point, the *nodus* of the design, was to paint the tranquil rest enjoyed upon the verge of death by a patriot conscious he had played his part as a man. This the artist has tried to give, not by the expression of Argyle himself, but by the contrasted figure of a courtier, whose attitude is that of vulgar surprise, which the slipping down of his hat is intended to render emphatical. So, again, in the "Alice Lisle," where the emotion of the moment, as she steps forth to cover the retreat of the fugitive from Sedgemoor, is lost sight of in a painful exhibition of feeble old age, and a confused demonstrativeness amongst the chief figures. Even in the "Flight of Charles from Boscobel," our attention is drawn, not to the conflicting passions in the mind of the King, but to the commonplace awkwardness of the situation, and the coarsely-painted splashing of the horse's feet. Allowing the difficulty of the subjects—nor can we, in justice to the requirements of a national work, carry allowance far in this case—what has placed this series of pictures on the sensational level seems reducible to insufficiency in intellectual grasp for meeting the "high argument" of historical painting. The requisite vigour of expression for the heads, the necessary force of insight which could penetrate to the moral aspect of the scenes, were not forthcoming. These qualities have been, therefore, supplemented—and, so far as popular estimate goes, we believe not unsuccessfully—by recurrence to physical emotion, and appeals to the external and easily-seized

features of each occurrence. Vigour which cannot reach its end in the most really powerful way, and hence reaches it by an inferior road, is thus the essence of sensationalism. Bodily emotion takes the place of intellectual. There is no need to discuss why such art will share a transient popularity with the cognate phase of sentimentalism. Nor do we here seek to deny that it has a place; but only to point out what that place really is, and how sensational art reaches it.

Even Sculpture, though by its nature moving in a more abstract sphere, has not been exempt from the sensational element. That want of repose which we feel when passing from the Parthenon figures, or the (so-called) Venus of Melos, to the Laocoon, is in a great measure due to the too manifest effectism in the later work. Still more marked is the change when we turn to the mighty Buonarroti. Great as Michel Angelo was in penetrative and vivifying imagination, profound in mastery over the form, and potent in dramatic characterization, his impetuous nature did not always, or often, allow him to maintain that balance of sobriety, that fine and golden moderation, which Sculpture has exacted from her most consummate followers. The nervous element, as it would be expressed medically, is over-powerful in his works. Even had he not thus led the way, by an example *splendide mendax*, it is probable that other causes were in existence which would have drawn the Italian school of sculpture into that degeneracy to which the International Exhibition bore such conspicuous proof. Yet it is probable also that the influence of the great master has not been without a considerable share in the bias towards the sensational and the spasmodic which Italian sculpture, with comparatively few exceptions, has manifested for three centuries. It is, indeed, difficult to find a more absolute contrast than

that which lies between the greatness and the science of Michel Angelo, and the feebleness which tries to escape from itself in the contortions of Monti and Marochetti. Yet, without taking the artists just named in their lowest phases, works such as the "Dream of Joy," or the "Angel of Victory," are startling examples how far Sculpture must fall, when it has once admitted any taint of the sensational.

POETRY AND PROSE IN ART

By classing art as poetical or prosaic, we mean simply to draw the broad intelligible line which the words in their plain sense convey. People may dispute for ever, and with the smallest advantage, on what constitutes High or Low Art. Indeed, these are epithets so constantly on the lips of mere literary theorists that we shrink when we hear them. Realist and Idealist, which are occasionally used as equivalent to the words we have selected, are not more satisfactory. But everyone understands what is meant by poetical and prosaic. The distinction here does not lie in the technical execution or in the subject of the picture, but in the sentiment which inspired it. Poetical or prosaic may be epithets true of works executed in the "broad" or the "literal" manner. They characterize equally the Flemish and the Italian art. There is no more solid, definite, honest prose than one of Domenichino's scenes from the mythology of Ovid. A hay-barn by Rembrandt will be a masterpiece of solemn poetry. So of the style of execution. Every touch in the finish of men like Van Eyck or Veronese, or the two Hunts, our contemporaries, adds feeling to their design, whilst it completes it. But the minuteness of Denner in his portraits, or of Frith in his

"Ramsgate Sands," only brings out with more distinctness their essentially prosaic quality. David Cox, again, was recognized by common fame as a magnificent poet in colour; whilst the hundred imitators of his broad, sketchy manner have totally failed to place themselves on his level in popular estimate. Turner, on the other hand, a greater poet even than Cox, has a minuteness of execution which can only be felt—appreciated it cannot be, except by another Turner—by aid of the microscope. "There are many ways," according to the proverb, "but all of them may lead to Rome."

This very simple and (if the reader will) prosaic result is what we appear to reach—that the quality of all art depends, finally, altogether on the quality of the artist's mind. We say *finally*, because, if we look at his work, not as completed and appealing to those who see it, but as it exists whilst he is producing it, the power of technical execution is the first and chief point of importance. These two elements—factors or functions mathematicians might call them (and we suggest the terms, as one cannot illustrate too fully a matter which perplexes many people of taste)—must be always kept in view together. They hold good of every art. There can be no good generalship without accurate knowledge of roads, and horses, and drill, and forage. But there can be no good generalship also without imaginative foresight, and power of organization, and political discrimination. So in poetry. Without intensity of insight, and innate sublimity, and tenderness without limit, we cannot have Milton or Goethe. But Milton and Goethe, when at their work, were thinking of words and syllables, and how to write English and German; and without this we should have had no *Comus* or *Faust*. And what we observed above of choice in subject and manner in execution applies equally to all

art. These in no wise determine the poetical or the prosaic quality of the result. Sir R. Blackmore or Professor Aytoun have written metrical prose on the most stirring themes, and reduced Arthur and Montrose to commonplace. We hardly know a surer sign that a poor and feeble type of intellect is prevalent in a nation, than the popularity of that species of verse in which the jingle of measured syllables does duty with the reader for thought or spirit. Prose is not so prosaic, in the bad sense of the word, as this debasement of what is lofty at the hands of poetry. Almost every genuine poet will furnish instances of the contrary process. The field-mouse of Burns, the daffodils of Wordsworth, the sparrow of Catullus, are familiar instances; though to specify them, so common is this elevating or ennobling function of art, is needless.

Why should people find it so hard a matter to accept this doctrine, that the quality of all art depends on the quality of the artist's mind? In stating it, we have felt it almost necessary to apologize for its utter want of novelty or strikingness. Yet, when we look at general criticism on the Fine Arts, in lieu of such intelligible language, we find ourselves in a fairy land peopled with High and Low, Historical and Naturalistic, Real and Ideal, Generalization and Particularity, and other phantoms of the sort; and amongst them all we see the Fashionable and the Commonplace stalking like things of flesh and blood in the region of shadows, and naturally, by their own proper and real force, guiding the crowd of spectators into the limbo of popular taste. Meantime, Dante and Vergil go by unobserved, and pass on to write an *Aeneid* or a *Commedia* with a

Lascia dir le genti!

Such artists know, unconsciously perhaps, that, as it is

by his mind that man is superior to animals, so it is ever by the quality of that mind that one man's work differs from another's. The reason why those who are not Dante or Vergil try to deny and conceal this must be a consciousness that it would be fatal to their own pretensions. The gods have not made them poetical, but they may get Fashion to accept them as masters, if the public eye be fixed on their "breadth," or their "idealization," or the jingle of their metre, or the thrilling interest of their subject. What they cannot bear to hear said is that the power of a man's hand is limited by the power of his brain. What they also do not see is that they too, if they would accept it, have an equally useful and indispensable part to play, and that it is wiser to produce honest prose than sham poetry.

Let us illustrate these remarks by a few examples—adding, first, that whilst the world would always rank poetical art as the higher thing, in the same way as poetry ranks at the summit of literature, yet prosaic painting or sculpture has also a recognizable place amongst those diverse purposes which art fulfils. If it be granted that poetry in colour or carving springs from the poetry of the artist's own mind, we have an easy explanation of many failures and successes. Nothing in all art has yet equalled the sculptures of the Parthenon in poetical quality of the very highest order. But this will not astonish any one acquainted with Athenian history, when he finds that Phidias was the intimate and equal friend of Pericles. Michel Angelo has left poetry which of itself explains the intensely imaginative and creative character of his statues and his frescoes. Flaxman—to take one of the few moderns who may rank with such men in point of intrinsic capacity—displayed the poetry of his own mind in those endless illustrations which are rather

like a comment on Dante or Homer, than simple reproductions of his original. In a better age, or amongst a more congenial people, he would, no doubt, have been appreciated—as indeed he was by Rogers and by Canova, whose astonishment at finding Flaxman totally neglected for Chantrey is well known. Yet even in the few works he was able to execute—as in those left by a somewhat similar genius, Watson—he showed the truth and tenderness of his nature. What a satire on our taste it is that hardly one public work of high character was ever given to the only Englishman of that time whose faculty was capable of serious poetry in bronze or marble!—just as, in our own day, we have twenty failures by Noble, Theed, the Adams', and others of similar imperfect gifts or training, for one work exhibiting the soundness of Behnes and Foley, the conscientiousness of Butler, or the imagination and force of Woolner. But here faith never comes till it is too late; as Tacitus said, *post eventum credidimus*. Meanwhile the public, in answer to any appeal, cry always, *Tastes differ!*—and so they do, indeed, as the next generation discovers to its sorrow.*

Sculptors of high calibre, it is true, will always be rare; that a nation should have one or two such, is matter for fair pride; but the moral is, *such should do our work, or we*

* What would we *now* give, that Flaxman, R. Wyatt, and Behnes should have been the decorators of the Abbey in place of the fashionable sculptors who, for the last fifty years, have done, and unfortunately have been of late again permitted to do, their best in disfiguring it? *Tastes differ*, no doubt: for tastes here mean individual likings; but Taste, which is impartially-gathered knowledge, comes always at last, in course of time, and is not found to differ in essentials. Who differs about the greatness of Phidias, or Michel Angelo? The real difference is, that Athens and Florence did not wait to be wise, *post eventum.*

should leave it unattempted. If a monument of high quality be required, it is suicidal to give it to any but those few who can put true poetic life into it. Otherwise we have such failures as those which provoke yearly wrath from aesthetic and independent M.P.s—fated often to pass by the Napier of Trafalgar Square, or the Wellington of Constitution Hill, or the Guards' Memorial of Waterloo Place, or the Coeur de Lion in such injurious juxtaposition with the Houses, or the poetical fountain of Hyde Park, where a fat boy is doing his best to set a dolphin on its head, apparently that he may see the water run well out of him. The Horticultural Gardens have been, perhaps, the most unfortunate theatre of *fiasco* in high monumental art, embracing the extremes of extravagance and tameness; from Baron Marochetti's "Victor Emmanuel"—happily not a permanent inhabitant—to Mr. Durham's recent Albert Memorial, in which the lamented and intellectual Prince, heavily swathed in the cumbrous robes which his practical character rejected, surveys the refreshment rooms of the Society from a pinnacle, whilst four dusky Allegories, representing the quarters of the globe, sit in patient hope to symbolize an Exhibition which mainly recals European art and English manufactures. Like the rest of the world, we do not criticize the worthy sculptor for this prosaic and imperfect rendering of a very difficult idea. We are only sorry when Pegasus has to fly without wings. There is no conceivable contrivance by which a poetical work can be obtained from any but a poetical mind, a truth which we would respectfully submit to the many patrons who annually undertake the difficult task of choosing a sculptor.

That our conclusions may not seem only negative, let us take an example pointing to what sculpture should be even under the difficulties which, in this art, blind the perception

of patrons to goodness. England has produced a few monuments of highly poetical character. We might name Wyatt's memorial of the Princess Charlotte at Windsor, where the discordance of the style with the style of the chapel should not blind us to the extraordinary merit of the group; or the little reliefs by Flaxman in Chichester Cathedral,—one, a personification of Christian Hope, so tenderly beautiful, that we hardly know where to look for its equal;—but it will be best to find an instance in contemporary art, and one in which the poetical instinct which confers its merit is not so obviously borne upon the surface. We take the bronze statue of Mr. Godley, by Woolner, recently on view in the South Kensington Museum previous to its shipment for New Zealand, for analysis. Mr. Godley was one of the principal founders of the well-known "Canterbury Settlement," and is said to have been a man of unusual energy and simplicity of nature; such a leader, in short, as might have been selected in the old days of Greece to conduct colonists from Corinth or Phocaea to the coasts of Gaul and Lybia. Now what we have first to notice, is the success with which the artist has stamped this character upon his work. The head is full of vivacity and firmness; the face looks keenly forward, the mouth set, the eyes fixed on the horizon with the air of a man who foresees at once the immediate labours of the settlement, and its long future. The man's character is the central idea in every portrait; and to seize and render it is the function of poetical insight, whether this works in colours, or words, or marble. But, further, nature requires that the expression of the features shall give the keynote to the expression of the figure. Here, again, the work fulfils the required condition; every line in the dress, and of the figure shown under the dress, carrying out the idea which we have above indicated, by its character of

compressed energy and simple resolve. These are what may be called the demands of nature on the artist. At the same time, the demands of art have been met by the manner in which the free and unrestrained action of the limbs has been bound into harmony by the disposition of the drapery; the result being that the figure, although instinct with life and motion, retains the statuesque character. The man is ready to move and speak, yet there is no sense that he will, as it were, leave his station. In other words, the golden law of moderation has been duly kept; the figure stands on the delicate pause or crisis between the two opposing dangers of sculpture—immobility or heaviness, and over-display of motion or spasm.

A word may be added upon the dress. We often hear modern fashions quoted as the excuse for modern failures in portrait-sculpture. Here the artist has had the courage to model a more than life-sized figure, not even in any robes of state, but in the sheer ordinary dress of the working colonist. He is hence without one element of obvious beauty which is (inevitably) lost by modern manners. Yet we are convinced that no one who looks at the statue (unless he look with the pseudo-classical spectacles of the last century) will feel any deficiency in this respect. The eyes are not drawn to the dress; one thinks of it no more than if the real man were before us. This we take to be one sure test of excellence in a portrait. When we ask why Mr. Woolner has succeeded in a point in which success is notoriously so rare, the reason will be found to lie solely in the truth of representation, as governed by imaginative power in the artist's mind. The power of the head concentrates our attention on the leading point. The faithful rendering of the limbs makes us conscious of the form rather than of its coverings. The dress itself, though finished

with a minute truth which is very uncommon, yet never draws attention to the petty details; it strikes us what our friends wear, not as suggestive of their tailor. A "realist" would have afflicted us with a consciousness of seams and buttons. An "idealist" would have given a dress which nobody could put on, or put off. But the poetical instinct gives just the right amount of truth, and of truth in its right place and measure. The result is a work of which its possessors have a full right to be proud, and about which we can only regret that, like Mr. Foley's fine "Lord Hardinge," it is not English patrons who have had the good sense to commission, or the good fortune to retain it.

(1865)

LOST TREASURES

ENGLAND, according to Dr. Waagen, the learned explorer of our myriad country-houses, is absolutely peculiar and pre-eminent in Europe for the amount and the value of the treasures of art in the hands of her wealthy private proprietors. France has the Louvre and the Luxembourg, each separately richer than our corresponding national collections. Germany has the famous galleries of Vienna, Munich, and Berlin. But, beyond the capital cities, these vast countries are almost deserts in the matter of art. Here and there, perhaps, a few provincial museums remind the traveller of the fuller feast provided for him in the capital. But in England, besides the many special collections within London, any country-house we pass may contain its Titian or its Turner. Royal galleries of sculpture are housed in Bowood and Wilton, Woburn and Ince Blundell. Dr. Wellesley at Oxford, and the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth, possess collections of original drawings by the great masters which only three or four foreign cities at the most can rival. Elsewhere are rooms filled with frail wonders in china, or cases heavy with the gems and coins on which the art of Greece has stamped in miniature the lines of her immortal beauty.

Who, we ask next, are practically the guardians of treasures such as these? They are practically under the guardianship

of the housemaid. She is assisted in preserving them by the plumber. Most of the houses, consecrated thus to men of taste by contents for which the gold of Australia has no equivalent, are of large size. Some of the richest in art are of palatial extent. In every one are endless open fireplaces. In every one are furlongs of repair-requiring gutter. In no one that we know of are the collections placed within rooms fireproof in any valid sense. In most they are enshrined between floors of the oldest and most invitingly combustible of timber. When we see Petworth or Manchester House, Chatsworth or Blenheim, Hamilton Palace or Castle Howard, we are always reminded of some delicate maiden who, in the old legends, walks abroad through forests or cities at nightfall, presuming that she is under the protection of her guardian angel. Housemaids, pages, and plumbers are the guardian angels of our national treasures. The visitor looks with all his eyes, and vexes the housekeeper by returning once more to study that exquisite bit of Raphael. For he thinks it may be a cinder before he comes again.

What we have here dwelt upon is no fanciful idea. Taking the most cursory retrospect of the last two hundred years, England alone has lost, in the fires which ravaged Whitehall and Sir R. Cotton's house, treasures whose value it would be difficult to over-estimate. Hardly a winter passes but with it passes away some vast country-house, including, more or less as the case may be, a long-gathered series of family relics. Even the famous illuminated manuscript which King Alfred gave to the Archbishop of Canterbury was burnt, as we are writing, under the chief librarian's eyes at the British Museum,—where the commonest precautions would have ensured its safety. Sometimes what the world loses are those things of beauty which

the poet idly boasted are a joy for ever. Sometimes it is the reliquary, if we may employ the phrase, of one of our great historical families, which is left, as it were, *parvenu* in the country by the annihilation of ancestral heirlooms. It is certain that no small part of the original records of Wales has perished, within the last ten years, in the ruins of Wynnstay and Pengwern. People in general hardly know within how small a space, and in how few repositories, lie the main links which actually connect us with the past history of mankind. They are certainly little aware of the responsibility which the possession of things valuable for art or for antiquity brings with it. We hear often of the duties of wealth. We wish we heard oftener of the duties of proprietorship. Much as Europe has been robbed of by war, it may be doubted whether the annual steady consumption of private houses through simple chance or negligence does not equal war itself in the long run. England is crowded with wealthy or cultivated men who are heaping up treasures—to their destruction. It is crowded with offerings which may be said to be already dedicated to Moloch. We are resigned to the full conviction that none of those who are guardians of what are really public monuments, and who read these lines, will pay the slightest heed to our warning. We know that we are *vox clamantis*. The fatal hour always comes at last, between *Nothing can be more improbable* and *Who would have thought it?* And yet the remedy is a matter of no real difficulty. It would rarely cost so much as a contested election, where one of the candidates will be repaid by nothing except the "gratitude of his party." All that is wanted is that every one who builds a new house should require that it shall be built with fireproof floors, thus at once improving his comfort, securing his valuables, and saving his insurance;

or that those whose houses are already in existence should place their treasures within a detached and fireproof chamber. What great lord, or commoner ennobled by his collections, will take our advice, and, when he next hears of the destruction of a Hatfield or a Crewe, be thankful that the, a least, showed common sense in time?

This practical and, we believe, almost unqualified private insecurity would seem to suggest that it is cause for rejoicing, if only for safety's sake, when treasures are secured from loss by deposition within one of the national museums. In a certain degree, this indeed is so. The special risk of the private, and more particularly of the country-house, is the number of fires kept up in what we may call the unguarded parts of the building. There is always some out-of-the-way stove, or some forgotten flue, which ends, or will end, in burning down the sedulously watched gallery. It is only a question of time. Public collections are more or less free from this source of destruction. Yet even amongst these there are often (as at Trafalgar Square) one or two sets of rooms used for private residents. These subsidiary dwellings were the ruin of the Old Palace of Westminster and of the Pordenone (miscalled Titian) Gallery at Blenheim. Yet this evil would be comparatively unimportant if the buildings were fireproof. Will it be believed that, after centuries of experience of fire and of experience in construction, there is not one of our public galleries or libraries, the Record Office excepted, which can be called strictly fireproof? Even the British Museum and the National Gallery are only approximately so. A combustible roof (we believe) protects, till it destroys, the marbles of the Parthenon—as another such roof covers, till plumbers will it otherwise, the almost equally priceless treasures of the Abbey. Other repositories, notably those of the two

wealthiest Universities in the world, invite the flames by every feature of their construction. But it is in vain to try to move the sluggish guardians of this more than national property. The new Library at Cambridge is ceiled with a lath-and-plaster mimicry of vaulting. All the efforts of that distinguished Professor of Greek to whose devotion Oxford is so deeply indebted, have failed to obtain protection for the world-famous stores of the Bodleian.*

Educated men who pass that library or the Abbey at Westminster must often think, with a union of pride and reverence, how large a portion of English and of universal history, in the form either of record or of relic, is laid up within those walls. Let them add to the reverence with which they regard these sanctuaries, and to the pride they take in them as Englishmen, another feeling—a sense of humiliation, not unmixed with wrath, that an hour's neglect or a minute's wilfulness may at once and for ever do for Abbey and Library what Omar is said to have done for the Museum of Alexandria. Nor should they forget that, wherever they see one of those great churches which are the glory of European capitals, a similar holocaust is preparing. Every day, in France and England, we hear of vast sums devoted, and in England, at least, rarely except under the guidance of commonplace and inartistic hands, to the restoration of Cathedrals. At this moment, the

* What makes the matter worse at Oxford is that, within a stone's throw of the Bodleian, stands the Radcliffe Library: a building nearly fireproof, and capable of containing all the unique treasures of the Bodleian. It contains actually a scientific collection and a reading-room, both which might and ought to be elsewhere. Whether apathy or jealousy be at the bottom of this really criminal absurdity (often pointed out at Oxford), neither will, of course, have yielded to the claims of sense and duty, before the Bodleian manuscripts have been shrivelled to the condition of the Cottonian.

Chapter of St. Paul's is appealing for aid to decorate Wren's masterwork. The Abbey has received lately several gifts from private liberality. We would suggest, with all respect, that a truer liberality and a wiser prudence would have dispensed for a time with the glass of Munich and the mosaics of M. de Triqueti ordered for St. Paul's, and with the pulpit of Messrs. Scott and Philip in the Abbey, till the structures themselves, by the substitution of metal for wood in the roof and dome, should have been put into some decent state of security. The intention of these decorations, however small the confidence we may have in their effect, is at least good; but surely the first step of the promoters should be their safety. At any rate we venture to press this, before the restoration of the Chapter House, upon the Board of Works and the Chapter. It is a case of what, in the old French Assembly, used to be proclaimed as *Urgency*.

And now the reader may put the subject to sleep,—till he hears of the next great fire.

WILLIAM BEHNES

WHAT is Fame, and how shall we weigh its substance, or satisfy ourselves of its being? We think of it as of something definite and recognizable. We imagine that a man may work for Fame, as he might for wealth—fail perhaps, and die bankrupt of glory, or succeed, live on it in competence, and leave it as an inheritance to his kindred or his country. Is Fame, indeed, this substantial entity, or rather is it a little dust which the wind raises and disperses again, why or how or whither we know not? Here, whilst all our journals have justly raised their memorial to our lamented Thackeray, and made his epitaph *publica cura*, we have the death of one of the best English working sculptors, if not the best (for Flaxman was essentially a designer), during the first half of the century, noticed in a few papers without even a record of the day when he departed (January 3, 1864), as if the incident were already too far gone and too trivial to deserve commemoration. "We regret to hear of the death of William Behnes the sculptor. His eyes were closed, we are sorry to add, in the Middlesex Hospital." So writes one of the journals. They tell a story to the visitors of a church in Lucca, that on a gridiron which hangs up in the nave a bundle of flax was, in old times, lighted when Popes or Emperors came by, as a symbol of human glory,

and burned before their eyes with a cry of "*Sic transit.*" We see such a symbol, and hear such a cry, in the obituary of William Behnes.

"The best judges, however," the writer adds, after saying that his genius did not obtain a fair trial, "thought very highly of his work. He possessed natural talent sufficient to have raised him to one of the highest places in his noble calling." Whilst it will presently be pointed out that Behnes may claim a very honourable position in that forlorn hope of English art to which he was devoted, we are not disposed to agree unreservedly in the above estimate. If he did not obtain one of the highest places, the fact cannot be adequately accounted for by urging that his genius was not appreciated. Sculpture has indeed been hitherto, in comparison with painting, so little studied or understood by the mass of English spectators and patrons, that, in the most important sense, it may be said that no modern sculptor of ability has had a fair trial. For a fair trial can only be obtained if the man's contemporaries are in some degree his equals in taste, and are educated enough to comprehend his art. But this deficiency presses upon all our sculptors alike. Had St. Paul's, for instance, been miraculously filled with master-works, in place of such monuments as those lately placed there to the Napiers, to Lord Lyons, to Mr. Hallam, or to Lord Melbourne, the masterworks would still, at the present day, have been in a language "not understanded of the people." The simple fact that, beyond a slight sketch in one or two biographical series, we have no Life of Flaxman, is a sufficient proof of the popular indifference. But, in the commoner meaning of the term, Behnes could not be said to want a fair trial. For more than twenty years (roughly, we might say between 1820 and 1840), he was, we believe, in large practice; and during his life several important public

works were entrusted to him. Irregularities in his private career barred his admission to the Royal Academy; although it is well known that the rule so sternly enforced against Behnes has not been applied with undeviating rigour in all subsequent instances. That these irregularities held Behnes back from doing all that might have been expected from his great natural and acquired gifts, there is no doubt. But such errors pointed, as they almost invariably point, to an unequal balance of his nature—to something incomplete or jarring. And besides a certain want of earnestness and, if we may use the phrase, of faith in his own art, proved by his private life, we must allow that he did not possess that rarest and highest quality in the rarest and highest of the fine arts—poetical inventiveness as a sculptor.

Behnes, however, had much which almost compensated for the gift that was lacking. A delicate feeling for the beauty of childhood, united with modelling of exquisite truth and a great power (when he was willing to exert it) in the rendering of texture and of surface, raised to real poetry such a figure as the "Child and Dove," which shone out almost alone in its excellence amongst the ornamental figures in the great English Picture Gallery of the International Exhibition. Lovers of art often paused before that little statue; it stood there like a graceful thing of life amongst the cold and distorted marbles around it. Portrait-figures of Mr. Hope's and Lord Munster's children exhibit similar qualities. It will be seen that the poetry of such works is of the graceful, but not of the deeply penetrating, still less of the sublime or highly imaginative order. Behnes's style in marble might be characterized as picturesque. Now, when it is correct to characterize one art in the terms proper to another, it may be suspected that, however great the merit of the work in other ways, it does not reach the highest

place. Thus the praise which we sometimes see ignorant writers give to woodcuts, that "they are like etchings or engravings on copper," betrays that the art in question has, so far, taken a false direction.* The merit of a woodcut is simply that it should be like a design cut in wood. The merit of sculpture is that it should, above all things, be sculpturesque. The undue prominence of this picturesque element in certain works by Behnes was probably due to his own early training. As a youth he had practised drawing with such assiduity and success that a series which he executed from Raphael's Vatican frescoes drew forth the most emphatic praise from so good a judge of this branch of the art as Benjamin West. The same result appears to have followed which may be noted in the case of Michel Angelo or Ghiberti. The sculptor, to the end of his life, treated his own art rather with picturesqueness than with severity. The draperies, for example, in Behnes's grand portrait-figures are, to use the painter's phrase, rather too much "cut up" into brief lines. They have not the flow and continuity that we observe even in the common fourth-rate antiques; for, however small the positive merit of the work, rarely, if ever, do we find specific rules of art ignored by any Greek artist.

The criticism which takes as its motto *nil nisi bonum* is simply valueless. We have, therefore, endeavoured fairly to set forth the limitations of Behnes's genius. It remains to point out the striking excellences which counterbalanced these limitations. His fine feeling for grace—nourished, it may be, and developed, as it was with Flaxman, by constant study with the pencil—enabled Behnes to preserve with rare success that leading exigency of sculpture "in the round," a good bounding outline. Thus, whilst the conception of the

* The landscapes engraved from Birket Foster, and the New Testament lately published by Messrs. Longman, are examples.

work, with the details, might be partly governed by pictorial ideas, the whole preserved the character proper to sculpture. The figures already quoted are examples. But the most important of Behnes's works in this direction was probably a mezzo-relievo, with figures about half life size, illustrating Shakspeare's Seven Ages of Man. It would not be possible without a woodcut to convey to readers an idea of the ingenuity and the beauty which, as a whole, characterize this design; and it is another proof of our national inappreciation of sculpture that Behnes should never have found a patron disposed to order the execution of his model. Further, in a really thorough mastery of form, and in a penetrative appreciation of character, he possessed two of the powers most obviously requisite for his art, although, in the present position of English sculpture, powers rarely displayed. Behnes's portrait-busts and figures are hence his best works. Busts of Edward Stanley, Bishop of Norwich, of Lord Lyndhurst, Follett, D'Orsay, and the Queen whilst Princess Victoria, are amongst the most felicitous. A head in the Academy Exhibition of 1863 has been already noticed as beyond comparison the finest bust in marble there exhibited. It was placed near a huge bust of the Prince of Wales by Mr. Marshall Wood, and we well remember how marked was the contrast between it and Behnes's modest and admirably-wrought likeness. Mr. Butler was, indeed, Mr. Woolner not exhibiting, the only sculptor whose marble-work could stand in competition with Mr. Behnes's in the vitality impressed upon the stone, and in that look of likeness which, when once caught, is irresistible, even to spectators who do not know the artist's original.

Busts are, however, rarely accessible works, and those who are interested in Behnes may therefore be directed to one or two easily-found examples. Amongst these we do

not include his Peel or his Havelock. Produced, the latter in particular, at a time when (in addition to private causes) the artist's zeal for his art had sunk before the sight of the successful jobbing and charlatanerie to which London owes so many recent disfigurements, he hardly rose above the level of Noble or Theed, although the bust just noticed proves that the old fire still burned vividly within him. A beautiful specimen of the artist's better days will be found in his monument to Dr. Bell, within the Abbey, on the right hand immediately on turning from Poet's Corner westwards. It presents a relief of boys standing by their master. Some details are conventional, but we know no other similar work within the building of equal grace, *naïveté*, and naturalness. It should be compared with the tame relief on Chantrey's Herries monument, a little further on to the left. The Follett of the Abbey (north transept) is also by Behnes. Here the drapery is wanting in expressiveness, but the head is full of life and sweetness, and the whole figure has a look of genuine and well-understood art, if, again, we compare it with the inanimate treatment of Horner's features by Behnes's fashionable contemporary Chantrey, or Gibson's tasteless and unresembling Peel in a *toga*—that warning against pseudo-classical art. Yet the "Follett," in turn, wants poetry and mastery when contrasted with the magnificent Mansfield of Flaxman, beyond rivalry the finest modern group in our central mausoleum. In St. Paul's—and there, even more than in the Abbey, conspicuous by its ability amongst contemporary monuments—is the fine statue of Dr. Babington, the model of which will have given to attentive visitors of the International Exhibition some idea of Behnes's power. And, if the original be compared with the mass of figures around it in St. Paul's, we are convinced that no one will be at a loss to perceive why so much modern sculpture, what-

ever the reputation of the sculptors, must be frankly pronounced unsatisfactory. The drapery, though not carried far in realization, is beautifully and, on the whole, truthfully treated; the attitude is eminently characteristic of a great scientific lecturer, whilst the details are faithfully suggestive of his aim and method. We do not know any other likeness of Dr. Babington; but the head has that impressive air of truth above spoken of, and the modelling (although much has here been lost by unskilful carving) is at once grand and delicate. We would especially draw attention to the quivering and mobile quality of the lips, as one of the most difficult points that sculpture has to seize. The statue of Colonel Jones (we believe in Greenwich Hospital Chapel) is equally successful in its rendering of energetic action.

We commonly speak of the chisel of Nollekens or Flaxman; but the phrase, in England, has been long little more than a metaphor in the case of most popular sculptors. Very few, we believe, since the system of manufacturing for effect was established by Chantrey, have been thorough masters in finishing the marble. Some well-known artists hardly even attempt it. No first-rate sculpture is, however, to be had without. It was the touch of Phidias which gave the true and consummate expression of the design of Phidias. We must regret that Behnes did not, in this respect, rise above the level of his contemporaries, especially since his natural feeling for surface was so refined that he might otherwise have given his works not less superiority in their rendering than in their grace and truth of conception. It must be confessed that a finished sculptor might scarcely care to expend the vast labour of pure chiselling (by which alone a truthful surface can be reached) for exhibition before a public which was in ecstasies before the waxen

gloss of the "Greek Slave," the china-tinting of the "Venus," or the tricky dexterities of the "Reading Girl." But the true artist would be superior to such discouragement, and, working his marble up to the highest point, would rest secure in the knowledge that it is such work only that commands the homage of future centuries, when the vaunted performances of the drawing-room pet and the merchant's *protégé* have been long judged on their merits, and forgotten.

To try to fix Behnes's position in English sculpture, except in a rough suggestive way, would be here impossible. But it may perhaps be said that, taking 1840 as the close of his most successful efforts, his were the best series of busts which the English school had produced up to that period. Nollekens, indeed, gave us a few which, for spirit and skill, though not, perhaps, for largeness of style, rank with the best of Behnes. But Nollekens, like Roubiliac, is hardly to be reckoned altogether English. Banks, Flaxman, and Robert Wyatt belonged to the poetical province of the art; and we know of no other portrait-sculptors who, as a whole, can compete with Behnes before his old age, when the high qualities of his art were taken up and carried, in some respects, to a greater excellence by his favourite pupil, Mr. Thomas Woolner. Behnes is not so successful in full-length work, from causes already indicated; although in this very difficult style it must be owned that we have little to show superior to his serious efforts. And in the less frequent attempts to which he confined his practice of the ideal or inventive side of the art, he has left an example how far, in the absence of direct creative and poetical faculty, the instinct for grace and the mastery over form may carry sculpture.

A few words must be added on the influence of this distinguished artist upon the English school. Those who

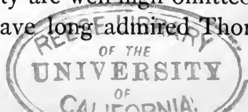
knew him speak strongly as to the openness with which he gave instruction to others, and describe his studio as the last in which the old system of frank tuition was practised. There must have been certainly an unusual power of attraction in the master who, undecorated by the Academy and unglorified by fashionable prestige, could collect around him almost all the younger men whose works do credit to English sculpture, and can stand the test of foreign competition. Watson and Gatley are the most salient exceptions we can call to mind in a list containing Carew, Lough, Burlowe, Weekes, Timbrell, Burnard, Edwards, Davis, the Foleys, Butler, and Woolner. Some of these men died young, and there are of course, amongst the rest, very marked degrees of merit. It will easily, however, be recognized by connoisseurs that a general character of soundness or proficiency in art belongs to Behnes's pupils, and marks them off from other names which, to the detriment of English art at home and of our reputation in Europe, are sometimes put prominently forward. But in these Essays sufficient indication has been given to readers who may care for the writer's judgment, as to which are the "good men and true" in English sculpture, and which deserve no further trial. That the line thus drawn would put on the wrong side a large number of highly-patronized practitioners must be frankly avowed. But if it be truly, as it is impartially, drawn, such a delimitation is a necessary precondition of improvement. Slovenliness, bad modelling, voracious charlatanerie, "shams" and "windbags" of all kinds, must be got rid of before sculpture can start fair. Whether, however, these attempts at criticism meet with assent or not, one thing may be confidently stated :—This art admits of no "middle way;" except upon really good work, money spent is money wasted.

THORVALDSEN'S LIFE

A BIOGRAPHY like that of the sculptor Thorvaldsen, lately translated from the Danish of Herr Thiele, reopens the often-debated question as to what the world may fairly expect to learn on the lives of men who have been distinguished, not by deeds, but by works of imagination. In case of politicians or warriors, the details of what they did are clearly essential to judging their career. In case of artists, or men of creative genius, much may be urged in defence of that course for which Mr. Tennyson, in some powerful lines, has quoted Shakespeare's epitaph as his authority. "Their lives are their works: let the man be." The world, however, is not willing to accept this silence on its greatest men. It has a just conviction that the acts and thoughts of the artist correspond to the quality of his productions. If then, we are to have lives of poets, painters, or philosophers, we submit that there is no honest course open but to tell the truth about them. Should this disclosure diminish the reverence or affection with which we regard their works, it is an inevitable loss for which the satisfaction of biographical curiosity must be taken as the compensation. It has indeed been sometimes argued, that the biographer of a great man commits a sacrilege if he unveils the errors of the departed. Not to dwell on the fact that our decision on his greatness depends,

or should depend, on how the man lived, if the proposition be nakedly stated, we think none but fools or knaves would support it. It simply is, that the biographer shall tell us only what makes in favour of his hero. He is great and good; *ergo*, his life was great and good; *ergo*, all that was mean and base in his life is to be reverently concealed. If not a hero, he is to be made one! We scorn this argument in a circle, and maintain that the world has but one choice in the matter: either no biography, or a true one.

Assuming the book now before us to be of the latter class, a more unsatisfactory piece of work we have seldom met with. Brief as the record is, it consists in the main of anecdotes without spirit and facts without interest, of details of commissions given to the artist, or of the triumphal journeys which he performed across Europe. We do not suppose that this is the fault of either author or translator; for the man, as he is painted with a *naïveté* almost rising to humour by Herr Thiele, exhibits at every turn a mean, money-loving, and licentious character. He is represented as unfaithful to his mistresses, and, we may add, enviously hostile to his professional rivals; whilst throughout the volume, from the first page to the last, not one solitary trace of intellect or feeling for art is recorded about him. There is really nothing in him out of which a true artist could grow. For all this, we repeat, neither Herr Thiele nor Mr. Barnard is responsible. Of such materials does this "Son of God," as an Italian poetess called him, appear to have been made. But the reader may with more justice complain that, beyond a few vague words here and there, he can find no attempt to characterize Thorvaldsen's genius or place in sculpture, and only a bare description of a few of his works, from which some of the greatest celebrity are well-nigh omitted. We may confess at once that we have long admired Thor-



valdsen the sculptor little more than we are now able to admire Thorvaldsen the man; but it seems to us rather hard that he should have met with this treatment at the hand of an idolizing biographer.

Thorvaldsen was born in 1770, the son of a ship's figure-head carver, whose skill may be judged from the fact that his best efforts to hew out a lion's head invariably ended in a poodle's. Addicted to what, in Hamlet's time, was the national vice of drinking, he gave his son scarcely any education, except in the technical portion of his art—a circumstance which must be remembered in our estimate of his works. The young Thorvaldsen was simply sent to the Art School of Copenhagen, where he gradually worked his way from the sketching to the modelling-class, and from the "small" to the "great" gold medal in 1793; in 1796 obtaining a three-years' travelling studentship, on the strength of which he sailed for Rome. A few essays in modelling are noticed during this long period, but they only employed a portion of his time, as he also painted portraits (of what quality we are not informed), and made looking-glass frames. We further learn that he was gloomy in temper, "could not understand how a grown-up person can laugh," and was fond of music, smoking, drink, and pet dogs, "who occasionally won a share in his immortality." This elevated lot, whatever it may be, seems to have been best deserved by Thorvaldsen's prime favourite *Primong*, who had the notable trick of smelling out a creditor in the streets, and biting his legs—by way, we suppose, of a "refresher."

Reaching Rome in 1797, his first friend was the learned antiquarian Zoega, who probably fixed him in that direction towards the pseudo-antique in sculpture which he rarely quitted, and then only with infelicitous results. The sculptor

hired the studio where Flaxman had lived in high-spirited poverty. Of Thorvaldsen's own studies in Rome we are told nothing; but we learn instead how he speedily forgot his vows to a fair Margarethe whom he had left in Denmark, and fell in love with Zoega's housemaid. Marriage, in the good old times of Italy, was a convenient screen for such an "unfortunate connexion." The maid married accordingly, but the husband, by bad luck, proving refractory, was ungallant enough to resent the great Dane's continued attentions, and soon left Anna Maria on his hands. The history is henceforth silent as to the unworthy *beccajo*, who, we presume, forfeited his "share in Thorvaldsen's immortality;" but we are often indulged with glimpses of the quondam housemaid, and hear much more than enough of her anger when Thorvaldsen deserted her for a new charmer. Years after these mistresses have disappeared from view, how Thorvaldsen gained and threw away the affections of a Scotch lady of high birth, in order to pursue another licentious amour—how nobly she endured a sorrow which she never forgot, and forgave his cold and callous baseness as only such a woman could—all this is detailed with a blunt indifference to the feelings of the living which an English editor, we think, would have done better to modify.

Not more satisfactory is Thorvaldsen's attitude toward his contemporaries. Compare the disparaging remarks on Canova reported in this volume with the warm support which he received from that truly generous-hearted sculptor. A young artist from the North, named Kessels, excited Thorvaldsen's jealousy, and he is reported so to have contrived that the unlucky rival never obtained any success, and died in utter neglect. But the "Discobolos" which Kessels left, and which was exhibited in England in 1862, was much superior to the works of his depreciator. We

give this anecdote on the authority of the late eminent English sculptor, Gatley, who lived in Rome: where Thorvaldsen, it may be added, left a personal reputation exactly answering to that conveyed in this biography.

Herr Thiele—who has, it must be allowed, a hard task of it with his odious hero—labours with more zeal than success to disprove the belief that Thorvaldsen was mean and miserly about money. It is unfortunate for the biographer's theory that no sooner did Thorvaldsen begin to succeed at Rome than we find him sanctioning the removal of his father to an asylum "for aged and decayed people," whence the old man addressed his son in a letter pathetic enough to move a statue, but which seems to have produced no effect whatever on the successful and illustrious sculptor. The excuses given for this piece of shabbiness are simply puerile. But, to leave the man, and turn to the artist, we are in justice bound to add that the subsequent feats of Thorvaldsen are recorded ingenuously enough. How he cunningly substituted a figure of Aesculapius for one of Truth (which he found himself unable to design), (p. 81); how he managed to "do" the Danish Government with a duplicate when they fancied it was an original (p. 109); how he broke his word (which the biographer calmly surmises he never meant to keep) to the Crown Prince (p. 90); how he bundled a sick child out of doors because the coward thought she had the cholera (p. 185)—all these anecdotes, which are in perfect artistic keeping with the rest of the man's character, Herr Thiele recounts with an impassive *naïveté* which will divert the wicked, and stagger the devoutest hero-worshipper in Great Britain.

From the side of Art, we cannot pretend to regret that these disclosures have been made. There is a stretch of stoical virtue in the argument above noticed, imposing

silence as to the poet's or painter's life, which we are unable to follow, even when the artist's creation, like the child described by Wordsworth, "to itself is all-sufficient." When the works, however, are of a lower order,—nay, as in Thorvaldsen's case, open to the question whether they have not been altogether misesteemed on narrow but explicable reasons, it is perfectly legitimate to enquire whether the inferiority which we see in the sculptures is not supported by the inferiority which may be naturally suspected in the sculptor. An artist's heart and head are reflected in his works—we should rather say, are his works—just as much as a poet's. So far as he is an imitator, his works repeat his education; so far as he is an artist, they reproduce his nature. What sort of art, then, shall we obtain from such a character and training as Thorvaldsen's? Exactly what that character and training would naturally generate in the circumstances of European civilization sixty years since. Utterly uncultivated when he reached Rome at twenty-seven, and with a mind—at least according to the evidence of his biography—ennobled by no high thought, capable of no vivid insight, but keenly alive to the value of money and of good society, he instinctively turned the very considerable faculty for modelling which he possessed, and the elaborate training in technicalities which had been his only education, to the service of the pseudo-antique school, which was at that time the leading idea of the patronizing classes. On the fallacy of putting on this Graeco-Roman disguise, and endeavouring to galvanize the Pantheon of an extinct world, we shall not here enlarge. Even the genius of Flaxman—the most inventive, the most graceful, and the most tender among the sculptors of modern Europe, a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian—was unequal to the hopeless task. How, then, should such a man as Herr

Thiele's Thorvaldsen succeed? He did not even bring to his attempt veneration for the ancient art; for he grumbled at the honourable work of restoring the marbles of Aegina as "a thankless task" (p. 92). He did not bring belief, for, when accepting a commission for a Scripture series, he treated his scepticism in Christianity as no hindrance, answering his wiser friends with "Neither do I believe in the gods of the Greeks, and yet for all that I can represent them" (p. 140). In diametrical opposition to the "connoisseurs who hailed him as the regenerator of the long-lost antique world"—as Mr. Barnard expresses it—we hold that a calm examination of Thorvaldsen's once celebrated designs, and a comparison between them and the real antique, will produce simply the impression that what he has left is a dead, second-hand series of imitations. There can be no reasonable doubt, from what we now read of the artist, that, for whatever antique *thought* he reproduced, he was indebted to the excellent Teutonic scholars who then formed a colony in Rome. The *execution* only is Thorvaldsen's. How, then, are they executed? Here and there, as in the "Ganymede," or the "Mercury," he has grasped a really new-looking and graceful motive. But take his "Venus," his "Graces," his relief of the Muses, or those from the Iliad, with many more, and we find one character unmistakably stamped upon them. They want freshness. They are Lemprière at second-hand. Turn from the huge volume of engravings after Thorvaldsen even to the Pompeian frescoes—turn to any collection of ancient gems—and we feel at once the gulf which separates the living and the dead, while we are surprized that the modern imitator could not avail himself more skilfully of such inexhaustible materials. It may be added, that the pose of the figures is generally heavy and awkward, and the draperies without evidence of study from

Nature. As for the greater Hellenic sculpture, such as we see it in our Museum, a comparison between him and his originals would be like one between Milton and Robert Montgomery. Yet this is the sculptor whom Prince Louis of Bavaria addressed as the inheritor of the art of Phidias :—

Phidias hohe Kunst ist Dir verliehen!

The preceding criticisms have been founded on acquaintance with engravings and with works which are not generally accessible. We will now take some more familiar examples. Three of Thorvaldsen's most celebrated statues were conspicuously placed in the International Exhibition of 1862. Another is at Cambridge, in the College Library of Trinity, and has been well engraved in the "Traveller's Edition" of Lord Byron. Thorvaldsen, it must be remarked, in common with many inferior artists of his class, was almost unskilled in touching the marble, and may hence be presumed (for on this, as on all other details of his practice, the Life is almost silent) to have relied in the main upon the unsound carvers in whom Italy is fertile. Hence, part of the defects perceptible in the portrait-statue exhibited at South Kensington may be, perhaps, attributed to the incompetence of his assistant. It was slovenly in execution (like his monument to Raphael in the Pantheon), almost to rudeness; but the general design was also unsatisfactory, being deficient in style and dignity; whilst a portrait of Thorvaldsen, also exhibited, enabled one to see that the likeness was poor and unlifelike. The "Jason" was a better work. It might, indeed, have been the figure of any Greek warrior, and the drapery was conventional; in movement, however, and in the modelling of the forms, it was probably the best on the whole, as it was the first, of the sculptor's "regenerations" of the antique.. Yet even here

he had been unable to avoid the absurdity of representing a warrior going to battle with nothing but a helmet to cover his nakedness! The "Mercury"—which in rendering of form, and in a finished, though mechanical execution, was popularly ranked highest in the Exhibition—failed precisely at the point which always parts genius from commonplace. Mercury is drawing the dagger which is to slay the monster Argus. His own life depends on his being able to do this at once silently and with lightning speed. Every one will see that to do this the weapon must be grasped with the utmost strength. But Thorvaldsen has put the hand that draws the dagger into a curve of graceful languor; there is no force or wrench, only stealthiness, in the wrist. This shows that he failed to conceive his subject in its central point—an unerring test of a second-rate ability, which can combine but cannot create. It is noticed in the "Life," that Byron was dissatisfied with Thorvaldsen's bust. This will not surprise those who have seen the life-size statue in Trinity Library. The face and air are those of a sentimental shepherd-boy, and as remote as possible from the fiery force and passionate irregularity of the great poet, familiar to us through so many portraits. The features are tame and chill; the dress conventional; it is a sort of impersonation of an "Hour of Idleness," though Byron, even as a school-boy, could never have looked so weak. Even the pretty bas-relief below, symbolizing the Pilgrim, is a literal reproduction of a similarly-intended design which occurs on one of the Imperial *denarii!* This second-hand invention is almost too general in Thorvaldsen's works to deserve comment: it is, however, an unerring evidence of the commonplace artist.

We have already noticed the spirit in which Thorvaldsen undertook a large series of Christian subjects for a church

in Copenhagen. Where he has repeated in relief the designs of Italian painters, the effect is pleasing; Thorvaldsen's skill in modelling having saved him from the unsculpturesque blunders into which the school of our modern Gothic architectural sculptors perpetually fall. In the rest we can rarely find grace or character. One or two groups in the pediment representing the "Preaching of St. John the Baptist" are pleasing, though the composition lacks unity, and would be taken at first sight for a series of accidentally juxtaposed figures. Thorvaldsen, in this sphere, had not the antique to imitate, and betrays poverty of invention and absence of imaginative insight at every turn. The Evangelists, each of them flying upon his symbolical creature, have the awkward look which such an arrangement can hardly escape. The Apostles are pompous inanities; the Redeemer's figure is meagre.—Of Christian sentiment there is what might be expected from the artist's creed and practice.

Thorvaldsen's life has been now unveiled by an ill-advised idolator, and the sketch above drawn from these (we presume) authentic memorials is not open to question. But we have no doubt that the estimate given here of his genius as a sculptor will seem heretical to readers trained in the Roman traditions of forty years ago. Such traditions do not accept the trial of a reference to truth and nature, but repose securely on the ground of authority or of the ideal, where they are impregnable to the attacks of the sceptic. It may, however, be well to remind those who, in regard to this latest of the celebrated pseudo-antique revivalists, still retain the classical creed, of the singularly uniform fate which has attended those reputations in art which have rested on the verdict of Roman dilettantism or of fashionable connoisseurship. Without overpassing the last

century, Battoni, Raphael Mengs, Canova, Turnerelli, and David, are names that, in 1865, represent little more than collapsed or inexplicable celebrities. Sculpture has been peculiarly fertile in this charlatan glory, in the tinsel crowns of a so-called "European reputation." And Thorvaldsen, as many of our readers will be aware,) is not the only instance in which plausible manners and adroitness in conciliating the goodnatured members of high society have made the fortune of a worthless man and an indifferent artist.

THE FARNESE ANTIQUES

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

We doubt whether there be any article of the purchaseable kind to which it is more difficult to affix any measure of price than to specimens of ancient sculpture. So rarely do they now occur for sale, so limited and yet so powerful are the competitors, and, above all, so singularly artificial is the value which they hold, that Mr. Mill himself, although we know of no one more likely to give good reasons for rating them high, might be puzzled to assign an estimate. The fancy of the buyer, and the fear of the owner to lose all by asking too much, have been probably the main elements in those bargains which, more often during the eighteenth century than the nineteenth, were concluded between the Italian owner and the English nobleman; and it would be as difficult as idle to try to decide whether the treasures of Wilton or Ince Blundell, Lansdowne House or Woburn, were acquired too dearly. At that time, it must be remembered, although the taste of men of wealth was, in proportion to their numbers, much more refined, especially in regard to sculpture, than it is now, yet some great elements which may assist us in judging ancient art did not exist. Our appreciation of Greek and Roman work has been quickened by the modern study of mediaeval, especially of early Italian sculpture. Much more, however, has it been aided by the discovery, or the importation into Western Europe, of actual

productions of the best Hellenic age. The far closer and more accurate knowledge of the mind and the history of Greece herself which is open to us all is another advantage. Scholarship—and it is no contemptible portion of its functions—here enters into taste. Taste, indeed, rests primarily and essentially upon sheer knowledge. In the case of sculpture, this will of course be knowledge of the human form, and of the possibilities and properties of bronze and marble. Hence it is not impossible to comprehend Phidias or Polykleitus without appreciating the *Iliad* or the *Antigone*. But it is unquestionable that, sufficient elementary knowledge being present, the ancient poetry will be the best interpreter of the ancient art. In the three points here noticed we have a decided position of superiority over even the best informed and most sensitive judges of the last century. And we may be hence enabled to assign a more accurate value to the "antique," both in its merit as art and its importance as a relic of antiquity. Hence, also, though this is a far lesser matter, we may make some approach to a rational valuation of such a collection as that just added to the Museum. The rarity of the articles and the purchasing-power of the buyers remain as two of the factors in the price. We have to ask if the importance of the Farnese figures, either as works of high art, or as illustrating the history of sculpture, justifies the congratulations which one or two journals have ventured to offer the country on obtaining them for 4,000*l.*

There is a short but careful notice of our new acquisitions in the elaborate guide-book to Rome, prepared, we believe, under the auspices of the historian Niebuhr. It is stated by Professor Gerhard, to whom this portion of the book is due, that the Farnese collection came from the Thermae of Caracalla. Gerhard's list enumerates nine statues and some

fragments. We are sorry to find that two of the items—a large sarcophagus with Bacchic representations on the four sides, in high relief, and "the fragment of a relief, representing an Amazon fight, in a beautiful Greek style"—do not appear among our acquisitions. The Museum is very poor in specimens of the Roman sarcophagi, which are among the most characteristic of their works; and the "beautiful Greek style," if we may trust Gerhard on the point, would have given the collection an attraction which it now wants. If the taste of modern Italy were more intelligent and informed than it is, we should have been inclined to suspect that the best thing in the gallery, in point of art, had been retained. To pass on, however, to those which the exertions of Mr. Storey have procured for us. Three or four belong to the mythological sphere of ancient sculpture. A group "defaced by recent renovation" ("entire renewal" might, perhaps, be the truer interpretation) is conjectured to represent Hermes and Hersé. Another group, a satyr holding an infant in a fawn-skin, and raising his left arm with a long staff above his head (the left arm, with the staff, being modern, and other portions mended), although tolerably effective as a piece of ornamentalism, stands low as a work of art. The forms are here unpleasantly exaggerated. We seem to see the well-known rule by which the artists of Greece modelled the figure, in accordance with what religious and poetic feeling assigned as the character of the deity represented, caricatured by some unskilful Roman hand, whose anatomical knowledge was unable to give propriety to the elongated limbs of the satyr. The child is even more rude; one might call it "primitive," if the overloaded ornaments which support the figures did not betray a late and tasteless era.

This group may lead to a conjecture which, on several accounts, we should think rational—namely, that, in furnishing his vast and hastily-constructed baths, Caracalla would not compliment them with sculpture of a fine quality, but may more naturally have had recourse to what one might call the "New Road" of Rome, to supply the marble population of the Thermae. Such groups would probably consist of copies, more or less tolerable, from popular originals, with here and there the portrait of the Emperor or other celebrities of the day. The collection before us, at any rate, supports such a theory. A finely-posed figure of Apollo has the air of reproducing the motive, if not the exact type, furnished by some skilful hand in the days—long since passed at the date of Caracalla—when sculpture was sculpture. So much of this figure is, however, supposititious, that it is difficult to do more than point out these general characteristics. "The left leg and both arms are new," says Gerhard. They are, indeed, obviously in the wretched style of Italian statue-restorers, and to these the appearance both of the marble and of the work compels us to add the head. If not modern, it is so smooth, ill-modelled, and weak in expression, that we conclude the restorer's hand has ruined it. Were it worth while, for the sake of the torso, which exhibits remains of great beauty, to attempt a second restoration, the position of the left arm should be corrected.

A figure which (after bearing the name of Antinous at the time when it was not known how small a portion of antique sculpture was due to Roman inspiration, and then of Meleager), was finally identified by Visconti with Hermes, appears to be regarded by the authorities of the Museum as the gem of their collection. We cannot, indeed, find adequate reason for connecting it with the famous names

of Greece; but the uncommon grace, ease, and dignity of the attitude afford fair warrant that we have here a reproduction of some famous original. The numerous repetitions of this figure (one in the Belvedere Gallery of the Vatican, and one at Lansdowne House, are the most celebrated) serve to confirm this conjecture. Our specimen, although unfortunately damaged in transit, is well preserved, if compared with the usual lot of the antique. People read in a statue, as in a landscape, not only what they find, but what they bring there; and thus, if we add that the quality which our "Hermes Enagonios" appears most to present is grace balanced by strength, we would not wish to define this as the only characteristic that it embodies. When it has been duly adjusted on its pedestal, the view on entering the gallery which it closes will display, even to uneducated spectators, something of what Mr. M. Arnold terms the "noble style." Seen thus, the figure seems worthy of one of those shadowy, though immortal, names which we would gladly bestow on it. It has something of Polykleitus or Praxiteles. A nearer approach brings the statue within that class to which we have ventured to assign the Farnese collection. It is only a copy—a copy, we must think, removed at an immense distance from its great Hellenic original. The surfaces are empty, and feebly modelled; the treatment of the knees and bust will serve as proofs. Hence also the outlines—witness the curve where the right thigh joins the trunk—are poor and incorrect. The original portion of the drapery, though bold and intelligent when compared with the wretched modern-Italian addition below the left hand, is rude; the eyes are irregular; the hair wants flow and softness. Compare the "Hermes" in these points with the "Aphrodite" and the "Discobolos" at the entrance, and the difference between a good repeti-

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tion and an inferior one will be felt at once. We cannot fancy this to be much nearer the original than a shilling coloured lithograph is to Raphael's "San Sisto." And yet (as with such a lithograph) so marvellous is Hellenic art that even its copy at tenth-hand arrests and delights us.

Although rather rudely worked, and more rudely treated by its Roman owners, the "Athlete" binding his brows has a much grander style about it than the "Hermes." This little figure appears to be executed in a Greek marble, and may be conjecturally accepted as a specimen of the monuments dedicated to successful *agonistae;* although we cannot find enough in it to justify the assumption of those critics who confidently regard it as a repetition of the famous "Diadumenos" by Polykleitus. The representation of an athlete crowning himself was likely to be an extremely common motive amongst Greek sculptors. A similar type occurs on a monument in the Vatican dedicated to the memory of a person who happened to bear the name Diadumenos, and one or two more minor repetitions are said to exist. It is thus just possible that we have here a copy of the statue above named. Yet the fact that our acquisition is probably of rather early Hellenic work adds little to the presumption; and, without rating Pliny's authority high, it is doubtful whether his words (speaking of Polykleitus) *Diadumenum fecit molliter puerum* can be applicable to this Diadumenos. Looking, further, to the quality of art displayed, although we have here a vigorous and well-proportioned figure, yet the comparison with such works as the "Discobolos," or the "Pugilist" of the Louvre, or the authentic originals of the Elgin room, will leave no place for it amongst the representative specimens of Hellenic art. It is also on an unfortunate scale; less than common life, yet too large for a statuette. Altogether, if we try to make an

impartial estimate of the evidence for this particular work, remembering also how long and widely Hellenic sculpture was practised, the number of schools almost unknown to us, and the very few verified specimens that exist, it will be safest to allow that the "Diadumenos" must rest on its own merits, without adding to it the halo of a doubtful ascription.

The mutilated figure of a man (also apparently in Greek marble) is in a grander manner than anything we have hitherto noticed. We can find no identification of the person represented. It is a great pity that the barbarous method in which the Imperial Administration ransacked Greece for statues, and then put them up at random in the spirit of upholsterers fitting up a house with old oak carving, should have rendered it impossible to assign even a conjectural name to many of the portrait works discovered at Rome.

While thus indicating our opinion that the Farnese collection contains little that adds to the Museum from the side of art, there is sufficient value in it to render the purchase justifiable. Indeed, the immeasurable gulf between these Imperial *collectanea* and the marbles of the Parthenon is in itself an excellent lesson of discrimination in art, and, incidentally, of the way in which it may be affected by the political situation of a country. But on this allur ing subject we cannot dwell here. One group, however, remains for notice, which may seem to point the moral of the difference between art as practised by freemen, and art as turned-out by Imperial order. This represents a male figure on horseback, and if we may consider the head to have been correctly restored as that of Caligula we have probably here one of the statues which com memorated the Imperial family within the walls of the

Thermae. The comparative freshness of the work, which is excellently preserved, is just what we might expect on this conjecture. It has all the look of an Emperor done to order by one of the favourite court-sculptors who, no doubt, filled Rome with their jobs after a fashion with which England is not altogether unacquainted. The head has, indeed, rather more character than our own contemporaries generally give; but the modelling of the naked parts, the forms of the animal, and the tame unmeaning drapery, all betray the hand of the hasty manufacturer. No Greek artist would have selected so unmanageable a material as marble for a group of this nature. Compare the head and neck of this horse, and the seat of the rider, whose knees show little sign of grip or tension, with the Athenian cavaliers in the Parthenon relief. This group is a great curiosity in its way; it illustrates how, in all ages, similar causes produce similar consequences. Like the coarse figure of Mausolus, from the Halicarnassian monument (of which the cast, by a truly British ingenuity of arrangement, may be seen planted in the Elgin room, where it looks like a ploughman at court, whilst the original, despite all the Curator's efforts, is stowed away out of view), it warns us that good art is never to be had to order; that true genius will not labour except for those who take the pains to understand, and have the heart to enjoy, it; that commonplace work will always be the portion of uncultivated patronage. But why are warnings, like examples, never appreciated until they are unavailing?

ON THE POSITION OF SCULPTURE IN ENGLAND

A CENTURY and a half ago, the relations between what was called the polite world and literature were of a peculiar and intimate kind. It was the age of patrons. Their influence was predominant. Vergil could hardly be held a recognized poet till he had been admitted beyond the ante-room of Maecenas. Horace was not Horace before he had dined with his Grace. Our Caesar indeed, it is well known, was hardly equal to his part. William III neither turned to English literature for pleasure nor for instruction. Anne was engrossed with "Sarah" and Mrs. Masham. George I was a German, and, in those days, to be a German was not to admit any Teutonic speech within the province of literature. His son, most characteristic of the race, "damned boetry and bainting;" but our nobility made it a point to compensate for Dutch or Hanoverian apathy. Virtue, according to Pope, fled from kings to dwell with St. John. Swift himself paid homage to Harley. Holland House was sung by Tickell in verses to which the taste and fine feeling of Macaulay gave a second and a truer meaning. Even Johnson waited amongst the valets of Chesterfield, and spoke of the patronage which he could not obtain, as of that love which Tityrus sought to no purpose from Amaryllis :—

Nunc scio, quid sit Amor !

Patronage, for good and for evil, was then the inevitable

support of literature, and, if it could not exactly make genius, yet might make or unmake fame and riches at its pleasure.

It would be very curious if we could trace the real results of a system which, in literature, has totally passed away. Some light, indeed, is thrown upon it by the lives of our writers in that age, and some by the panegyrics which so often amaze us in their writings; and one would say that the system must have been unsound at the core which could lead Dryden to compare James II to Hercules. But the difficulty is, that whilst the spurious genius and charlatan ability which my lord was flattered into supporting have died completely out, the real excellence which he occasionally patronized recommends itself to us, not through what society then thought of it, but by its own intrinsic merit; nor can we now guess how far it would have forced its way without that peculiar mode of support. The patron and the *protégé* have changed places. Bolingbroke takes his lustre from Pope. The *Beggar's Opera* preserves the memory of Queensberry. Walpole is comparatively obscure because he had no "holy poet" to commemorate him. All this, however, in the absence of a history of patronage, increases our natural suspicion against the system in general. It may, indeed, have been a necessary evil, or at times have aided a true genius. Society at that period, though, as a whole, probably less cultivated than now, contained a few men of really refined and original taste. The Queen of George II is a rare example of a woman capable of patronizing with insight. Yet we cannot doubt that the general condemnation of literary patronage is well-founded. True ability has rarely made its way thus. Even in the most cultivated periods, the patron, distracted by a thousand conflicting cares of politics and fashion, can seldom

have the faculty of "discerning the spirits." Not only is merit overlooked or humiliated, but the favour and popularity conferred on inferior or worthless men are of particular force in depressing the excellent. We wish to draw especial attention to this aspect of the matter. Life is so constituted that men cannot take interest in very many things. The time and money spent on bad poetry, for example, are a direct loss to good. They are so much subtracted from the limited fund available. To take pleasure in, and to bring forward, inferior or false merit, is not, as people sometimes argue, a proof of catholic or liberal taste. It simply shows ignorant or feeble discrimination. Every Bavius of fashionable circles fills the place of a Vergil. But this is not the whole of the mischief; for Bavius, by the fact that his gift in poetry is small, is on that very account able to recommend himself much more efficiently than Vergil to brilliant patronage. The more elegant and *bien placés* the patrons are, the worse will be the evil. For, in the case of very elegant and *bien placés* people, their approval is taken without examination. The nod of the Marquis is unquestioned. The smile of the Countess (and no wonder) creates genius in its own right. Only when the evil is done does a foolish world allow itself to turn round and break its former idols. And the evil reaches its maximum when Royalty is the fountain of these honours. We may have to show that England is not quite free from hurtful influences of this nature. But it is enough to point to Lewis the Fourteenth, and his patronage of art and literature, as a culminating example.

It is singular that this ancient system, alien as it may seem to the public of the nineteenth century, is still in force amongst us in relation to one of the Fine Arts. Sculpture in England remains mainly an affair, not of

publicly recognized ability, but of polite patronage. The sculptor is commonly discovered and brought out, not by the public voice, like the painter or musician, but by the patron's. The reason for this may be partly found in the same cause which, under good Queen Anne, produced the patronage of letters. Knowledge of sculpture now, as of poetry or scholarship then, is not a thing generally diffused. A few people—set aside for the purpose by a kind of natural selection on the score of connoisseurship and rank, or money and commercial position, or, occasionally, of simple interest in the subject—have long practically made the position of sculptors in England. Where real knowledge has happened to co-exist with the proper *status* of the patron of plastic art, the results have of course been serviceable. Such a patron, fifty years ago, was Lord Egremont to Flaxman. But he stood almost alone in appreciating the greatest genius who, since the days of Michael Angelo, has given himself to sculpture. Perhaps we ought to add Mr. Rogers; but it is curious that, popular as the poet was in society, and well known as was his exquisiteness of taste, his opinion was almost totally disregarded. For one patron who appreciated the grace and severity, the marvellous invention and pathos of Flaxman, there were fifty who lauded to the skies Signor Turnerelli and Sir Francis Chantrey with epithets which no one now cares to read, or which the critic reads, if he must, with smiles of astonishment. For it is now generally known that the latter fashionable artist, although born undoubtedly with a certain faculty for his art, never carried his faculty out either by professional study or by care in finishing his works. His best heads, lost already amongst the hundreds which came as from a vast manu. factory in Pimlico, are hardly more than clever suggestions. When we look closely into them, or compare them with

careful contemporary likenesses, we find them filled also with inaccuracies of the kind which betrays want of taste as well as deficiency in knowledge. The singular additions which his busts made to the forehead of Scott and the chin of Wordsworth have been often noticed. His full-length figures set that example of heaviness and want of life which has remained as an inheritance to our own days. The reason is simple. Although enjoying a thousand fashionable patrons, Chantrey could neither mould the human form nor carve his marble. There are no signs that he had ever learned these primary requisites for sculpture. He had so little cultivation that he has represented Sir Walter Scott in a tartan plaid. He had so little power in dealing with what he saw that he has dressed Mr. Canning, as Mr. Gibson has more recently dressed Sir Robert Peel, in a kind of fancy toga. Chantrey's name, owing to the real gift, however incomplete, which he possessed, and to the excellent places which patronage procured for his works, is not yet forgotten. But where is Signor Turnerelli? Echo answers, that his name is where the names of his present fashionable representatives will finally be—buried in the bosoms of his fair and noble patrons. A "consummation," no doubt, "devoutly to be wished."

Perhaps the reader expects that an exposure of some recent abuses of patronage in sculpture is to follow. If we do not intend to prove our point thus, it is certainly not for want of authentic material. Nor, inasmuch as the patrons of this unlucky art make no secret of what, so far as intention goes, is conduct often not to their discredit, would there be any reason against such publicity. We would, however, rather hope to lead these liberally-minded persons to a more satisfactory employment of their patronage, by simply pointing out its want of success with those to whom all art

refers for final judgment—the public at large. We would remind them that patronage, ill-directed, secures what are less monuments than laughing-stocks for the patron's liberality. If we see public statues arising in every direction, each, as it is successively displayed, a new popular failure, we may conclude at once, with tolerable certainty, that we have here misplaced private patronage at work. People in general do not commission what will not please them. It is clear that those who selected the artist must have been in fault. There is "something rotten" in the system; and the arguments against "patronage" in literature are equally valid against "patronage" in art.

That we have been drawing no fancy picture, but that the mass of the sculpture lately produced by favourite *protégés* is below the right level, requires no elaborate proof. Undoubtedly, English art, in this province, is not in that hopeless state which might be inferred from the long list of public failures. But the true artists (as we have already indicated) are precisely those who have not the talent which recommends men to a patron. They are thinking of art, not thinking how to trade on the traditions of the Court, to gain favour in smart circles, or to commend themselves to convivial men of business. Hence our following remarks must not be understood to imply a general criticism on English sculpture; indeed, not one of the sculptors is a Royal Academician. We confine ourselves to such works as (in London) the Sir Charles Napier of Trafalgar Square, with its companion figures in St. Paul's (all by Mr. G. Adams), to the Guards' Memorial by Mr. John Bell, to the figure of Mr. Hallam in St. Paul's by Mr. Theed, to the Sir F. Buxton in the Abbey by Mr. Thrupp, to the Exhibition Memorial in the Horticultural Gardens by Mr. Durham, the

Prince of Wales by Mr. Marshall Wood, the Melbourne monument in St. Paul's, and the Coeur de Lion at Westminster, by Baron Marochetti. Let us briefly add the Wellingtons at Norwich and at Glasgow (Messrs. G. Adams and Marochetti), the Ingram at Boston and Philosophers at Oxford (Mr. Munro), the Wilson at Edinburgh (Mr. Steill), with several bronzes at Manchester (a city full of diverting commentaries on the taste of the patronizing British man of business), by Messrs. Theed and Noble. A walk through St. Paul's, or through our chief country towns, will supply many more of like quality. Now, without attempting here the unenviable task of dissecting in detail the works mentioned—and we might treble our list—we would simply ask whether, from the day that these and similar figures by the same artists have been set up, they have given pleasure to any human creature beyond the small patron circle? Have they not, individually, whenever free public criticism has had room, been condemned as feeble, or ugly, or lifeless? Have they not, year after year, received a general and uncontradicted censure from the House of Commons? We do not, of course, include all the above figures in the same degree of censure. Their "imitation of humanity" is more or less imperfect. Yet we are convinced that we have not exaggerated the impression they have produced. Indeed, some of the evidence given by artists before the Royal Academy Commission would have justified less qualified language. What can we infer from this, but that we have here results similar to those with which we are familiar in literature—the manufacture of an undeserved reputation by personal interest—in a word, the encouragement of bad art by private patronage?

It is true that the curious in advertisements may discover certain periodical laudations, probably of all the productions

enumerated. This is another of the unfortunate results of the patronage system. Sculpture, being an art reserved, as it were, for the initiated, has barely come yet within the field of free-thinking and free-speaking criticism. It is so much a matter of personal favour that it seems a reflection on the distinguished patron to criticize above one's breath. *Procul este, profani!*—it is in bad taste that their rude voices should presume to question that "European reputation" which exists, and alas! exists only, within the precincts of an English drawing-room. We have no doubt that those well-meaning patrons who think, for example, Mr. Theed's figure of a Royal Duchess in her full dress charming, or who speak of Marochetti's Melbourne Monument in St. Paul's as *ravissant*, will consider our remarks highly "provincial." *

* Questions of price do not necessarily fall within the range of criticism, unless where works are executed for and paid by the nation. Holding, therefore, as we do, with French judges on the quality of M. Marochetti's art, we must add our protest to those which have been frequently made in England on the vast sums which he has received for certain public works. We do not here allude to the fact that for the often-noticed Coeur-de-Lion, or the Lord Clyde, with which London is (rather unnecessarily) threatened, M. Marochetti's price has very largely exceeded that paid for Mr. Foley's famous Lord Hardinge, a statue which is the reverse of M. Marochetti's work in knowledge, spirit, and finish. If friends like to give these prices, or to send the hat round the world for subscriptions, we leave it cheerfully to them. But public work stands on a different footing, and we shall exercise in regard to it the well-established right of the British tax-payer. It is only seven or eight years since that not less than £15,000 were handed over to the Franco-Italian sculptor in question, for what was called the Scutari Monument. Few people will remember this, for the display of the model at Sydenham called forth such unfavourable comments, that it was rapidly withdrawn. It consisted of four sentimental-looking women with long wings placed at the corners of a large block of stone, and as these angels were exactly alike, we can perfectly believe what we have been told on professional authority, that from £3,000 to £4,000 would have been considered an ample price by an English

We can only plead, that to give full-dress in marble requires the violation of every natural law of the material, as well as of every long-recognized law of style, and that the French critics, the most accurate and tasteful judges whom we have now, have long ago disposed of the Baron's art as puerile and slovenly. We are not careful to answer wrathful patrons and offended artists in this matter, and regard the law of compliment and reserve as one great reason why the art has fallen to so low a pitch among us. But we are aware how useless it is to contend with that species of partisanship which is developed between sedulous flattery on one side and graceful favours on the other. Those who know

artist. And this year we learn, that for simply casting the Nelson Lions modelled by Landseer (within M. Marochetti's studio), another exorbitant sum—nearly double the offer made by a respectable English company—has been asked and promised. This statement (with which an official account of the votes expended upon the monument is in accordance), has been publicly made, and has met with no denial :—a silence to which we are, of course, at liberty to assign our own explanation. The Baron (to whose art we could allow no exemption on the irrelevant ground that he is by birth an Italian, even if he were not naturalized by reception into associateship with the Academy), once advertized himself in the *Times* as capable of undertaking national monuments on a large scale. We think he should have said, on a large scale of prices. We repeat, that a man may freely set what value he likes on his own work. That is his affair. But, having done this, bystanders are free to criticize it. And if they discover that the price is not only out of all proportion to the artistic value of the article, but equally in excess of what is asked by professional brethren,—and all this to be charged on the national purse—it is not surprizing that the phrases in which English artists express themselves are too plainspoken and too true for the hearing of "ears polite." We will, however, add one general remark which may be admissible. There is no sign which, from the age of Greek art downwards, has more uniformly and clearly marked the good artist, as distinguished from the bad, than the absence of voracity in the price set upon his works. The "artistic nature" has weaknesses of its own, but meanness in money matters is not one of them.

the secrets of ateliers describe more than one fashionable sculptor as the head of a firm of anonymous modellers and carvers who do the work, whilst the professed artist is running about, carrying his plaster for moulds to the houses of great people just dead, and making court for commissions. Not in vain is such courtship made. A patron, like a theologian, is a man who has taken up his position. "His siege is written." Arguing with him is like arguing with the country clergymen who refused Professor Jowett his wages. However it may arise, the fact remains, that each public eyesore of the description noticed, as it appears, is described by some paragraph which bears the same relation to ordinary criticism that Mr. Moses' advertisements do to ordinary poetry. Specimens of praise will be readily found in contemporary journalism which tempt one, in another sense than that commonly expressed by the phrase, to describe them as virtually the *laudes viri laudati*.*

Patronage, when its fruits are the disfigurement of private houses, does, indeed, a certain general injury to art by

* Let us add two of the latest examples we have seen.

"The Committee entrusted the execution of the statue to Mr. Matthew Noble, of London. The earl is represented in his uniform of lord-lieutenant . . . . and his peer's robe thrown loosely across the shoulders supplies the needed drapery (!) The posture represents, &c.; the likeness is most faithful, and the expression caught by Mr. Noble is very happy."—*Daily News*, Oct. 24, 1865.

"Yesterday, Mr. Adams, sculptor, had the honour to submit his bust of —— for Her Majesty's inspection. The Queen was much pleased with the work, and thought it an excellent likeness. It really is, perhaps, as good a resemblance, in inanimate clay, ... as could be produced. It may be remembered that Mr. Adams was successful in his posthumous bust of the late Duke of Wellington."—*Times*, Nov. 29, 1865.

The *News* and the *Times* give regular criticisms on English art, and we are sure that their managers cannot be aware of the mischief done to its interests by the admission of such paragraphs.

consuming what we have called the limited available fund. But when "our circle," as we once heard it called by a fair enthusiast, extends its operations without, and fixes its partisan judgment before the public eye in the form of some large obstruction in our streets, or some further disfigurement of the Abbey, the influence of society on sculpture becomes a serious nuisance. The most enchanting of *petits-maîtres*, the most genial after-dinner man for joke and anecdote, may be—indeed, the experience of the world shows, generally will be—remote indeed from the possession of such abilities as alone entitle an artist to public places. Free trade in sculpture, as in the other arts, will do away at last with these evils. But, meanwhile, it is the duty, though decidedly not the pleasure, of independent criticism to expose them. It is lamentable, in its way, that the memory of the Prince Consort should be weighed down by such figures as those which have, hitherto at least, been modelled by Messrs. Theed and Marochetti. Even the natural wish to look with favour on the results of Court patronage has not been sufficient to prevent some explosions of vexation, or even more significant silence, amongst contemporary critics, in regard to their performances. We cannot but believe that the distinguished person thus commemorated would have raised his protest against this additional "terror of death," if he had anticipated it. He is gone, and in days when his loss is peculiarly felt. But it is hence the more fitting that the public voice should endeavour to shield from defacement even the outward image which he has left upon our memories.

II

One great reason for British failure in sculpture we have traced to ignorance in private patronage. A second lies, of course, in the imperfect training of the sculptors, and the number of men, incompetent from want of natural gift and of acquired knowledge, who take advantage of this public ignorance to pass themselves off as artists. Enough has been said for the present on these obstacles. The first will be removed or diminished when those who order a bust or a group learn to train their eyes by reference to nature and to existing standards in art, and give commissions, not from private kindness or on the strength of fashion and puffery, but with a sincere wish to obtain money's worth for their money. Taste in sculpture, as in all the arts, although it does not grow of itself, but requires some little trouble to learn, is simple matter of information, and of information the learning of which differs from many forms of study in its pleasantness. If any readers are induced by this criticism to open their eyes and judge for themselves, they will be surprized to find how quickly the dormant power of distinguishing good from bad awakens in the mind. Fifty years ago this process began in case of painting, and now, although some ill-founded popularities exist, yet even these are kept up to a level much above what passes muster in sculpture. A similar elevation of taste will be soon met by a parallel advance among our sculptors; and fifty years hence the tawdriness of M., the commonplace of N., and the inanity of X.Y.Z. (it would not be hard to make up the four-and-twenty), will provoke the smile of wonder with which we now look at the Fames, Victories, Britannias, and the like in St. Paul's or the Abbey. And when it is

then asked, as we sometimes ask about the said Fames, Victories, and Britannias, how such ugly encumbrances came to find their way into the squares and streets and churches of the land, a reason will be given, on which we propose now to say a few plain words.

Partly from the expense of sculpture, partly from its inherent commemorative quality, it frequently happens that works in this art are not prepared by the artist according to his own invention, but commissioned from him by a combined order. Hence arises a second form of patronage, which has been often justly complained of by our better artists, and which is, indeed, open to every kind of abuse that ignorance, personal vanity, and jobbing can perpetrate to the injury of art. This mode is the Committee. Why a committee works so badly may be easily explained. All "patronage" of art ends in an act of choice. When a single person is the patron, mistaken as he is apt to be in case of an art which is little studied or criticized, he will, however, often act from some pleasure or interest in the subject. But that selecting body which we call a committee is not one chosen for its power of selection, but from connection with the person or deed to be commemorated. It is a thousand chances to one if a single member of it has the very slightest knowledge of an art like sculpture. They are gallant sailors or officers, country gentlemen or merchants, politicians or scientific men. The tone in which the whole thing is commonly spoken of proves that such bodies do not grasp the point in hand. When a statue has been decided on, and a prospect of funds is in view, ninety-nine people out of a hundred appear to be quite satisfied. Anything will do between a Phidias and a figure-head. The friend is sufficiently honoured by the fact. A bronze in the Square! a statue in the Abbey! the job

seems finished—when unluckily, in both senses of the word, it has only just begun.

It is curious to watch the details of the process by which a hero mounts his pedestal in England. The very wish to set him there rises sometimes from the desire, not to commemorate merit, but to find a job for some distinguished and voracious artist of "European reputation." This is the worst case. Generally, however, there is a genuine impulse to put up a statue, combined with a vague idea of what a statue ought to be like, and who is fit to do it. We pause for a moment here. Everything really turns on this, for what honour is it to be perpetuated in grim ugliness, like poor Napier in Trafalgar Square, or Wellington at Hyde Park and at Glasgow? How is the heroism of Balaclava figured by the three grenadiers standing at ease in Waterloo Place, or the losses of the Crimea by four similar women in feathers, backing to the four corners of a pedestal at Scutari? It is the same with poetry. Who would care to be sung of by a Blackmore or a Montgomery, or to

> Live in Settle's pages one day more?

Only a master can give the "monument which outlasts bronze"; if we cannot find him, the honour will be worse than worthless. So in the choice of the sculptor. Every thing really turns on the fitness, truth, and beauty of the monument; but nobody much minds it on our committee.

The sculptor, however, must be chosen, and as in England the idea is that we have some twenty or more, each and all capable of a task which Michel Angelo found almost too much for him, the committee feel an *embarras des richesses.* Perhaps they propose a competition, to which no good, and few even of the established, artists ever send. But

there are always some ready to compete, or who have not yet learned by bitter experience how merit fares in these "gambling transactions," as they are properly termed by Mr. Burges in his amusing *Lectures*. In due time the models come in, neatly got up by the knowing ones, who are perfectly aware that, on the miniature scale, only the trained and skilful eye can distinguish chaff from grain, and that the average mind is always ready to take a sand-papered surface for the fine finish of real art. The committee meet, and walk round them, and meet again; and although the competitors are supposed to be as unknown as under-graduates writing for a prize-poem, yet it has been observed that some one member possesses a happy instinct by which he detects his *protégé* amongst the crowd. Perhaps a suspicion has sprung up by this time that the committee is getting out of its depth. Even the common refuge of the indolent, that, "there is no disputing about taste," loses its virtue when the members reflect on the reception which a black bronze generally meets with in England from the discerning public. But the models have come all around them, like demons called up by an unskilful magician, and somehow they must decide. As nobody has any genuine grounds to go on, every one is thankful for the help of a decided bias, and—the result is, let us say, the Nelson Column. Or we have heard that matters occasionally take a more diverting turn, and an artist on the committee has been known to descend from that high judicial function, enter the ranks with the modellers, and secure the monument. And the reader will not need to be told what kind of work has been the result of the arrangement.

Things hardly go more happily when the committee selects its own artist. There is always the radical diffi-

culty—twenty people trying to choose, with no more special aptitude for choosing a good sculptor than (let us say) for selecting the best treatise on Concomitant Variations. Mathematics are matters of knowledge, and sculpture is just as much so; but neither knowledge comes without proper study. If we have not studied mathematics, we generally leave concomitant variations alone; but the committee must choose its sculptor. Then, perhaps, some artist, or man of reasoned and real taste, helps it to a choice. This is of course the best chance; for although the general degradation of English sculpture has lowered the standard terribly, so that people who can be trusted about painting blunder sadly about the other art, yet to this intervention we owe (it may be safely presumed) the few truly fine monumental works which have been produced within the century—Flaxman's "Mansfield," Wyatt's "Princess Charlotte," Watson's "Eldon and Stowell," Behnes' "Babington," Foley's "Lord Hardinge," "Woolner's "Godley," and the like. But generally there is no such intervention in favour of merit. The invariable committee-man with a friend outside proposes that a select body (one practically to be a *quorum!*) shall make the choice; and, too happy to be delivered from these "questions of taste," which ignorance naturally fancies have either no solution, or may be solved by instinct, the selecting body is named at once. But, from the same reasons which generally have collected the great committee without the least reference to their ostensible business, the little committee is no better qualified to select. The friend, of course, hands over the job to the excellent outsider, who has always done something for the Mansion House, or the Court, or is a favourite with Lady —— (you know), or is, lastly, the "local man" who gives such agreeable dinners, or makes yours go off so brilliantly. We are

drawing no fancy picture, as some readers will know only too well; nor do we mean to blame the well-intending committees in question. How should they help it? They have to choose, and they know next to nothing about choosing! Indeed, they receive no help from the right quarter in their task; the good artist being invariably and notoriously incapable of putting himself forward. It is the other kind that practises the arts by which a man *se fait valoir*, and gets laudatory paragraphs in the papers; *he* has only one art, . . . and that is enough for him! Were the case different, it is bad work that would be the exception.

But the committee meanwhile proceed. Their serious business is beginning. A few friends put down their names from a sense of respect. The committee subscribe from a sense of duty. The public are invited to aid in setting up what, they are invariably informed, good judges have pronounced an admirable work of art. In extreme cases, what the profane speak of as "the screw" is called in. Pressure is put upon subordinates—a process to which the subscription for a military hero, as the advertized lists occasionally suggest, is tenderly susceptible. Vague intimations are held out that defaulters will be exposed. We have even known one very bad case, where the hat was sent round to all the noblemen and gentlemen whom the sculptor had "cultivated," with a solemn appeal to their sense of art. The process had a kind of tragic seriousness, but the result has been fruitful in broad grins ever since. In another case, equally bad, the name of a deceased husband has been brandished, as it were *in terrorem*, over the widow. Meanwhile the nominee is labouring in private; subordinates, it is not unfrequently rumoured, doing the work of which the head of the firm is incapable. At last we reach the closing scene in the play. The committee meet; a speech is made,

in which the speaker will be observed curiously reticent on the question of art, the honour being always supposed to lie, not in the goodness of the statue, but in the fact that it has been set up; the figure is unveiled, and one more masterpiece is added to those which have done so much for the adornment of London, Manchester, or Edinburgh. "It is impossible to describe to those who have not seen them," says one of the latest and most intelligent French writers on England, "how Lord Nelson looks with a cable between his legs by way of a tail, or the Duke striding over an archway, with his hat and feathers done in metal." Nor shall we attempt to describe the more recent performances which we owe to the too familiar pseudo-sculptors of our time. They are before our paths, and in our way, and M. Taine himself has found them too dismal for joking.

But enough of this negative criticism,—always in itself an unsatisfactory thing, although necessary as the only prelude to improvement. Our moral must be that the committee system, as in general it exists, is radically wrong. It selects men for one reason, and then requires them to perform functions which have no sort of connection with it. We conclude that it should be abandoned, by people of sense and modesty. Nor—personal vanity or the wish to job apart—is there any reason why the system should be adopted. When a scientific question comes before a court, the court calls in an expert. A committee, except in the rare cases where it contains some one who has made sculpture his serious study, should do the same. To advise on such matters, as has been more than once suggested, should be one function of a Royal Academy. Or, without confining the selection to that body (which is decidedly not fortunate in all its sculptors), a kind of recognized

tribunal would soon form itself, if memorializers in general were alive to the bad results of their proceedings, and the absurdity of extemporizing judgments on a technical question. Public taste would, meanwhile, advance in regard to sculpture, as it has advanced in regard to painting. The charlatan and the ignoramus would gradually drop out of sight. And if no modern race is likely to equal Athenian taste in these matters, we might then at least see England brought to the level of France or of Germany.

SCULPTURE AND PAINTING

Lovers of art have been long looking with some impatience for the four Lions which Sir Edwin Landseer has been modelling for the base of the Nelson monument. The great reputation of the artist, the novelty of his task, the importance of the figures, which will be placed in the most conspicuous place of the capital, all render the experiment one of unusual interest. That it is also an experiment of unusual difficulty might he safely inferred from the somewhat tedious delay which has occurred since Sir Edwin accepted the commission, and has provoked comments in the House rather of a nautical than of an aesthetic character. But it is possible that the peculiar nature of these difficulties may not be generally known. The interconnection of all the fine arts is recognized by every one; but we think that the possibility of practising each in turn, with the amount of success hitherto realized in this direction, has been hence exaggerated.

Although suggested by the Nelson Lions, it may be proper to add that no reference is intended to them in our remarks. Great as the difficulties appear to us in this case, they are scarcely such as may not yield to united patience and genius. We know that Landseer has brought these powerful allies to his aid; and we believe, further, that the practice of modelling has been more or less familiar to him, as it is said to have been to Correggio, during many

years of his career as a painter. Thus, whilst desirous to avoid an idle flourish of trumpets, we may fairly add that we look forward to the final result with that hope which the name of the artist warrants. Should our expectations be unfulfilled, we shall find, in the laws of art—laws too large and powerful for man to contend against in even battle—an explanation of anything less than success. Meanwhile, if there be any truth in our conception of the peculiar and inherent arduousness of the task, even when undertaken under the most favourable circumstances, it is probable that we may turn to this for the main reason of delay, and may find, in the delay itself, so much complained of by those who perhaps have not fully put themselves in Sir Edwin's place, the best security for the future.

We do not attach great value to the phrase that Sculpture is the noblest of the arts. The expression has probably been handed down by some vague tradition from the Roman world, and, like the phrase "high art," is too misty to signify more than the prepossession of those who use it. If, however, *noblest* be explained as *most difficult*, the propriety of the word, we apprehend, will be less open to question. Sculpture, it has often been argued, is the most difficult of the arts of design, because, depending as it does on light and shade alone, and limited by its materials to a narrow range of subjects, it not only drives the sculptor to prefer the most difficult class of themes within that range, but requires at the same time the greatest skill and refinement in representing them. Painting, indeed, finds more than half her motives in the human form. But, commanding colour, she is able to satisfy the eye with far less accuracy in the general delineation of form, and to give the expression sought with much less labour. Attitudes in a picture are simply unlimited. Their meaning may be elucidated

by subsidiary figures, or by accessories almost without number. The sky may give half the significance to the hero's features. The brilliancy of her dress may denote the heroine. All these aids are wanting to him who works in bronze or marble. If he has not, as may be urged, the extra difficulty of colour, this is balanced by the perfect knowledge of human form essential to his success. Probably it is easier to model a little than to paint a little, at least in oils, where the routine of manual processes is so complex. But we are supposing our sculptor to aim at excellence. Besides, he must, anyhow, have a Rembrandt-like command of light and shade, for these are his colours. Indeed, as if his requirements were not already more than sufficient for most human powers, he sometimes calls in colour itself, and we cannot be surprized if so rash an ambition meets with failure. Without, however, discussing this point, it is already clear that the sculptor will have enough on his hands. And we must add the further difficulty that his materials not only restrict him in the nature, but in the variety and composition, of the groups possible in modelling; whilst, lastly, by requiring an enormous length of time in their manipulation, the chance that the first idea and first flush of feeling may pass before the work is complete is immensely increased.

Such an art as this may be acknowledged, we think, to be the most arduous, and at the same time (for in the Fine Arts the words are convertible) the most intellectual. At any rate, perfection in it has been certainly not so comparatively common as in painting. And let us here remark, before returning to our main subject, on the ludicrous impossibility of effecting anything in sculpture that can in the very least deserve the name, by any mere mechanical process, be the means never so ingenious. We would apply

this criticism to what is named "Photo-Sculpture." Those, indeed, who "patronize the invention," as the phrase goes, from the petty passion for novelty, deserve no better fate than to throw away their cash. We cannot pretend to pity them, if the ugly stare of the photograph—which it is happily hopeless to secure from fading—be perpetuated in the distorted and lifeless plaster or "Parian" images which the Art Union Societies, no doubt, will eagerly disseminate amongst their customers. But to those who are accessible to higher motives than the lust for cheap art or a novel kind of article, we would say that every one who gives his aid to such an invention as this does so much to the injury of some real artist, and to the increase of the depression under which sculpture has so long languished. A true likeness is something caught from the mind of one man by the mind of another; and this cannot be done by twenty times twenty cameras, all working together. In the nature of things, "Photo-Sculpture" is a sham art. And every sham art, as English manufacturers are beginning to discover, is the death of a genuine art. "These are things," as old Blake said of something similar, "that we artists HATE." And all true lovers of art will hate them likewise.

Even should it not be allowed that Sculpture is harder than Painting—one of those points on which it is probably hopeless to expect agreement—it will be confessed that those conditions which render sculpture difficult, and divide it from painting, explain why it must be enormously hard to step from the practice of one to that of the other. It is true that form and specific character are the study of both; but the study must, in general, be infinitely more rigorous that qualifies a man to carve than to paint. This is an obstacle which, no doubt, would not exist for a painter whose design had the precision which we admire, for instance,

in Ingres or Mulready. But, supposing the knowledge at hand, the attitude of mind under which Form has been contemplated during a sculptor's whole life differs essentially from the painter's. The one has thought of figures, probably dressed, at any rate in every attitude and variety of motion, grouped in perspective, surrounded and brought out by foreground and distance and atmosphere, assisted and emphasized by colour. The reader will not require us to complete the contrast. Let us draw attention, however, to one special point of more technical difference. The sculptor has had to consider by what elevations and sinkings of surface, by what refinement of curve or brilliancy of angle, he can secure effective light and shade within the limits of truth to nature. To gain this knowledge, it is not too much to say, has been rarely found to require less than many years of sedulous practice. Few Englishmen, at least, have learned it in tolerable perfection. And we are sure that if any such sculptor had been invited, meanwhile, to acquire as great a command over colour, he would have rejected the proposal as fatal to progress in his own art. There is a single statue in the Louvre, ascribed to Agasias the Ephesian, which displays anatomical knowledge so great that Reynolds is said to have remarked, "To learn that alone might consume the labour of a whole life." The supposed exceptions to our statement shall be presently noticed. But we have not yet exhausted the peculiar perplexities of the subject. Not only is this burden of study imperative on the true sculptor, but the manual process of employing it must also be conquered. He must acquire the exact skill how to impress, first on the clay, and then on the stone, the due amount of configuration, the exact balance of surface, which shall express form under the conditions of light and shadow. So laborious is this, that it is well known

that many famous sculptors have never mastered it; whilst other men, again, have devoted their lives to execute the figures which go down to posterity under the names, perhaps, of Behnes or of Flaxman. Let us note, also, that this technical difficulty is increased by the diversity in treatment required when bronze is substituted for marble. A clay model, from the non-transparency of the plaster in which it is to be reproduced and preserved for carving, necessitates a slight difference in detail of manipulation from the marble; but there is a wider interval between the surface which will tell in plaster and that which will have its effective light and shade when translated into bronze. Bronze also, as is probably better known, admits—and, by admitting, may be said to require—a bolder style in attitude and grouping, and a more complex system of lines and folds, than stone can carry. It is physically impossible to render a horse, for example, satisfactorily in stone. But the greater cohesion of the metallic particles, especially when iron is called in to aid the bronze internally, allows the supports to be much smaller and more distant, and permits a far wider displacement of the centre of gravity in the figure. Bronze, to use the proper phrase, allows of a more open or extended attitude than marble; whilst, at the same time, certain textures can be more closely imitated in it. Hence arises a great temptation to reproduce such features as hair too literally, and thus to sacrifice inevitably the prominence of the highest elements in sculpture—form and expression. A conspicuous example of this wrong bias in art may be seen in Baron Marochetti's "Coeur de Lion," which we call an essentially vulgar and low-class work, precisely on the grounds that call forth the wonder of uncultivated spectators; the loose portions of the harness and armour being completely realized, the mane and hair next, whilst the forms

are weak and inaccurate, and the features a blank. This is a practical anti-climax in art; it shows, however, that the designer (having been educated in France) was not ignorant of the properties of bronze. These have been hitherto very little studied in England. Our sculptors could hardly help discovering that a horse in metal can stand alone; but beyond this, the equestrian groups of recent times in London rarely show a trace that the characteristics of metal have been taken advantage of, or even observed; whilst the treatment of our bronze standing figures, from Chantrey to Behnes, is all but identical with the style which the fragility of marble renders necessary. The contemporary life-size statue of James II, said to be by the Fleming Gibbon (better known by his imitative feats in wood), which is *perdu* behind the Banqueting House in Whitehall, though conventional in style and already much wasted by the weather, is the only marked exception, in serious art, that we can remember; none of the figures in bronze by Foley or by Woolner having been placed in the capital.

We have entered into some details upon this curious subject, because, although we have no novelty whatever to claim in setting them forth, yet the common language in which sculpture is discussed in England—and the remarks, we may add, which the delay in Landseer's Lions has called forth—seem to show that even common and obvious points about the art are little familiar to the public. Hence, in a great degree, that degraded condition of our sculpture which every one confesses. There is no truer sentence than that of Mr. Ruskin:—"There is but one way for a nation to obtain good art—to enjoy it." And to such enjoyment there is no enemy so fatal as ignorance. Had these much-desired beasts been sooner forthcoming, we should have known that they had been "modelled up," at six shillings

a day, by those worthy underlings of the studio who, alas! have more than a lion's share in the works of certain living celebrities. There is no limit to the time which, in any circumstances, true art may require. We saw the other day, exhibited at Mr. Holloway's, of Bedford Street, Covent Garden, (who acts, we believe, as agent for the sculptor, and is able to offer his bronzes at a very moderate price,) a small bronze lion, the study for which alone (but then it is a masterpiece) had taken more than six months' labour, from Haehnel, the Saxon animal sculptor—an artist whose work, we may add, is highly appreciated by Landseer. But, without pursuing the subject further, we think we have made it clear that for an artist, be he never so skilled in painting, to take up serious sculpture, is likely to be a task of no slight difficulty. We can give a close illustration from music. A thorough knowledge of music, and a natural instinct for it perfected by study, are essential to success for every performer. Yet we know that, unless each had practised his great contemporary's instrument incessantly from childhood, Joachim could no more change places with Mme. Schumann than any one in the concert-room could take the place of either. We think it must be the same with the sister Muses of the pallet and the chisel.

Degrees, however, of familiarity with the nearest-related form of art may exist, and, as we have indicated in case of Landseer, may lessen the labour of bridging the chasm. It is to the existence of such interchanged practice that we may attribute the partial success which three or four artists (we question whether more can be named of any distinction) have obtained as painters and as sculptors. A few little bas-reliefs are assigned to Giotto. Verocchio left some scanty specimens in casting and in painting. Raphael's alleged "Dolphin and Child," Dürer's cabinet carvings, and the

like, are curiosities rather than examples. Da Vinci's equestrian group perished in the model. Of the ancients we have no specimens remaining in the more fragile art. In fact, man is an animal who lives but few years, has only two thumbs, eight fingers, and one head, and is hence fated to spoil the beauty of philosophical theories by not completing the circle which they trace out for him. When critics rhetorically assert that the greatest men in the art have been great both as painters and as sculptors, Buonarroti is the one real exception on which they are founding their rule. And, astonishing as was his genius, we must yet agree with those critics who have argued that in him the profoundest of Christian painters was sacrificed—in all but that one magnificent instance which renders the Sistine Chapel the Parthenon of Christendom—to an attempt to master sculpture. Of his figures, how many are unfinished—how few of those that he completed are satisfactory! But this is too large a subject to be noticed casually, and we must shelter ourselves under the example of Reynolds, when terminating his Lectures, if our last words on the difficulty of success in these two arts are the lesson (really, though not ostensibly) conveyed by "the name of Michel Angelo."

BARON TRIQUETI'S "MARMOR HOMERICUM"

It is a curious proof of that indifference to art which for more than two centuries appears to have progressively marked our countrymen, that appropriate indoor decoration of houses or of public buildings should be now almost unknown among us. One would have said that a country where the damp and dulness of the climate, and the coal-smoke of our almost perpetual open fires, oppose terrible obstacles to success in rendering external architecture seemly, ought to be pre-eminently one in which the inhabitants would develop abundant forms of beautiful ornament for the interior. So far, however, from this, we find, curiously, that the most elaborate and lovely systems of internal decoration have been hitherto produced in Southern Spain under the Moors, in Southern Italy whilst occupied by its Hellenized population, and in Syria even to the present day; whilst no nation, at any rate no civilized nation, presents such a want of invention, so much money spent to so little purpose, as the English. Enter a "first-class mansion;" the walls are invariably covered with bald stucco, glistening beneath a fat coating of smooth white lead, or disguised by sheets of paper pasted over the plaster. We walk over a dust-collecting carpet of moss or flowers beneath a sky of melancholy whitewash, as guiltless of meaning or beauty as the "tabula rasa" of the mind of a metaphy-

sician's baby. And very rare is it to find any kind of colour ornament on paint, paper, or plaster, beyond machine-made figurings of inappropriate or commonplace character, or a few lines and scrolls of the poorest style from the upholsterer's pattern-book.

If by chance the owner or the fitter-up, hearing art and academies and taste talked of commonly as matters to which deference should be paid, wishes to show himself not behind his age, a few stereotyped tiles in the hall—manufactured with that mathematical faultlessness which always proves deadness in art, and awkwardly notched into their places, never made for the situation as taste demands—or a gorgeous ceiling covered with nosegays and ribbons by some Italian decorator, is the highest flight. Even in our churches and large buildings matters are hardly better. Here and there a fresco has been attempted, and in a few churches we see tiles used with some sense of art and appropriateness, or incised patterns figured on the stonework. Beyond these spasmodic and tentative endeavours, all is a blank in decoration, so far as art is concerned. Oil-paint from its glistening, smooth, heavy uniformity of surface, and its general house-painter look, can never be redeemed from vulgarity, let it be done fresh every season. Paper, besides the difficulty of getting any pattern that does not positively jar on the eye (a point on which Sir G. Wilkinson has some excellent remarks), presents the great inappropriateness of being a non-architectural substance. There is a sort of discordance in pasting a vegetable film over a true building material; it always reminds us of the biblical hay and wood on a stone foundation. The old hangings of stuff or leather, and panelling, have almost disappeared. Meanwhile Moors and Syrians, and we doubt not Japanese and Chinese also, ignorant of "Schools of Art," Royal Aca-

demies, "ideal," "real," and the rest of it, decorate their dwellings, if not always with work showing mind, or conformable to European rules of taste, yet with work which never fails in beauty of colour, and is often pleasant in regard to form. Above all, appropriateness of subject and material is never wanting. We wish to draw especial attention to this point; appropriateness being the very first element essential to all good decorative art, and precisely the one which is most often absent in the civilized countries of the West. Our vast number of materials is one reason which may stand in our way here; but a much more serious obstacle is found in that indifference to beauty in its simple forms which modern ways have developed in Europe, and the ready acquiescence in shams and pretences of all kinds which has hence followed. Everything that our art-decorators turn out, if we except a few mediaeval attempts which can never naturalize themselves in nineteenth-century life, has to be approached with suspicion and fear, lest it should not be the thing it looks. Nay, we often see an ingenuity in employing good materials in a false sense which must have been more laborious than using them as nature meant. Slate is coloured to look like marble; stone painted, we presume, to look more like stone; leather mocks wood; paper simulates plaster. The climax is reached when some ingenious official (Lord Llanover we believe it was) orders all the *interior* stonework of the Houses of Parliament to be smeared and choked with heavy lead paint, or when the monolithic pedestal of Mr. Bell's grim Guardsmen at Waterloo Place is blocked over with frightful lines, that it may look as if cheaply constructed of small pieces of granite! What a satire, when we think of it, do these two proceedings—and we could name a score of such off-hand—form on the aesthetic development of Englishmen!

This absence of appropriate architectural decoration for indoor places makes it a ground for satisfaction that so much attention has been lately called to certain Italian attempts to supply the want which we regret. Salviati's glass-mosaics are one of these, and we think the more promising. M. Triqueti's work is substantially a reproduction of that *intarsiatura* in marble of which occasional examples are found abroad, and notably in the Cathedral of Siena. The plan there adopted was, at first, to let figures in white marble into a ground of gray, defining the internal details of the figure by incised lines filled with black. This process was, we think, beyond all question the safest and most legitimate; it was exactly that of the Greek vases of the best time (where the groups are in red on a black ground), and could hardly be elaborated without risk to architectural propriety or pictorial effect. The next stage, ascribed to an artist named Beccafumi, was to let into the figures pieces of an intermediate tint, by way of representing the shadowed portions of the object; the chiaroscuro being further aided by a more liberal introduction of dark incised lines. The later vases present a kind of parallel to this in the white colour which it became usual, about 300 B.C., to lay on by way of increased effect. Baron Triqueti, so far as we can judge from the rather vague description hung up in the London University corridor where his "Marmor Homericum" now stands, and from inspection of the work, has carried the process of development to a further, but we think a lower, because a less severe, stage, by using red pigment in the flesh of those portions which he has executed after Beccafumi's fashion; and, in his central scene, by overlaying large portions of the marble with coloured cements. These are rather heavy in texture, wanting the transparency of the crystallized limestone; and although the description

referred to speaks of the coloured in- or on-layings as having "the same hardness, adherence, and durability as the marble itself," yet certain portions, where the lines have disappeared during the process of fixing the tablet raise a doubt on this point. It is always premature to claim permanence for a new application.

As we are looking at the "Marmor" in the light of decorative capability rather than as a piece of art, we may be content with adding that the Baron's designs, like all the others we have seen by him, do not rise beyond the ornamental order. Imitations of the antique, either from vases or from modern French reproduction, abound in his draperies and accessories. The kneeling Priam seems to have been "conveyed" bodily from Raphael through Marc Antonio; but the figures generally are poorly drawn in a second-hand sort of style, and although they show a considerable feeling for grace, yet the feeling has been very imperfectly realized. The central group, where Homer is reciting the woes of Andromache to a few youths and maids at Delos, fails in dramatic power. Homer is a declamatory old man, and the hearers, though the women decorously veil their grief and the men stand in quiet attention, exhibit no further correspondence with the peculiar emotions of the moment. The warriors seem to listen only from a sense of propriety; the girls are picturesquely overwhelmed; it is more like the audience of a preacher in modern Italy than of a bard in Hellas: how different from Raphael's treatment in his "Paul Preaching at Athens!" There is the same want of grasp, the same reliance on narrow Ionic folds, broken lines, and little bits of cleverly imitated ornament in the subsidiary scenes of the "Marmor;" and some smaller attempts in bas-relief introduced at the corners of the tablet, by their sentimentalism of style and over-finish in

handling, approach the manner of the *Book of Beauty.* There is something tasteless also in the contrast which these reliefs make with the flat surfaces everywhere else employed; the effect resembles the projecting portions which one sees in Byzantine church pictures. Even the archaeology, upon which so much stress has been laid, is not sound; the Delian temple being in a style (the Doric of Ictinus) at least two centuries later than the most convinced believers can place the date of Homer. This is like painting St. Bernard in a Flamboyant cathedral. But we should not have dwelt on these points had M. Triqueti confined himself to a less lofty theme. A classical subject does not necessarily bring with it a classical style, as a comparison of M. Triqueti's ornamental grace with the works of the great Flaxman, also preserved in the University, will easily demonstrate.

Returning, however, to the point on which M. Triqueti more seriously claims our attention, we should be inclined to believe that his peculiar process of mural ornament would be found much more available for simple decoration than for properly pictorial work. We would have compared the development of the Siennese *intarsiatura* to that of the antique vases, and the many colours and ingenious devices for effect which are employed in the "Marmor Homericum" bear a real analogy to the polychrome painting and intermixture of relieved ornament which distinguish the latest period of the Hellenic earthenware, known as that of the Basilicata. This has always been recognized as ornamental art, in contrast with the severe style which preceded it. The inference is, it should keep within its limits. Applying the same rule to M. Triqueti's invention, it competes at once too overtly and too imperfectly with painting to allow it to be safely employed on the same class of subjects,

whilst these qualities mark it out as eminently adapted for pleasing architectural decorations. In this direction it has a real value. The green and brown cements, the pink lines for the flesh, blue and green for the draperies, bronzed imitation of metal—all, in short, that makes the "Marmor," in our judgment, inadmissible as a picture—renders the process full of promise for patterns, emblems, or framework for art proper. An ample field of high and much needed usefulness is open to it within this sphere. But it would be a fatal blunder to push the style beyond its natural capabilities. Appropriateness, as we observed above, is the first mark of goodness in art. All violations of it are punished by a double calamity; the aim pursued is missed, and the beauty which might have been legitimately obtained is sacrificed. There is no stronger instance of this law than the results which have uniformly followed the frequent endeavour to stretch an ornamental or decorative art into an intellectual or representative art. And should M. Triqueti be so ill counselled as to attempt this at Windsor, we do not see how he can escape adding one more to the many recent failures which have gone far to injure St. George's Chapel. Good intentions have been here but poorly seconded by the results hitherto attained.

THE ALBERT CROSS AND ENGLISH MONUMENTAL SCULPTURE

I

It is not to be regretted that the decision on the Albert Memorial is the result of a year's delay and discussion. The course of our public monuments generally runs with an ominous smoothness, suggestive of a pre-arranged job, and issuing too frequently in a work as far from art as from nature. Hastily planned and hastily executed, it is praised by the artist's friend in a neat newspaper paragraph, and stands henceforth as an eyesore to the passers-by and as the butt of aesthetic M.P.s. True art rejects this raw haste. The sublime matures itself slowly. The beautiful takes its own leisure. Phidias and Michel Angelo produced during their lifetime not more statues than the "eminent artist" of to-day advertizes as on hand together in his studio. But the Parthenon was addressed to quick and educated eyes, and the legend of the sculptor's imprisonment, whatever its historical correctness, shows at least that his works were regarded as the common interest of Athenian citizens.

We should be glad to think, that in the long discussions and experiments which have been suggested by the memorial to the Prince Consort, we might trace something analogous to that old close relation between art and the national feel-

ing, without which the Fine Arts never flourish. Her Majesty has taken the public as it were into her confidence; the different schemes have been debated openly; and in full accordance with the well-known principles of the good Prince, the popular voice and the popular sympathies have been throughout appealed to. It is pleasant to find that this course has apparently met with success. Putting aside, on different grounds, the schemes for an obelisk, a monolithic cross, a hall, a group of sculpture, there is a general satisfaction in the choice of an architectural cross after a pattern which, we believe, is almost if not entirely peculiar to old England. Our Gothic style at the date of Edward I had reached what was probably its highest and purest point; it then *marched even* with the great architecture of Northern France: and the sentiment of the monuments dedicated to Queen Eleanor is one which commends itself, on the present occasion, with a fitness which needs no comment. There has been also a just feeling throughout, that in this case we should not pay due honour to the great person to be commemorated by any monument which combined other objects with its single commemorative character. These considerations, with the comfortable feeling that a great difficulty has been turned, and an imminent disfigurement of the Park avoided, have united all suffrages.

Whilst, however, we are disposed to join in the general verdict, several points remain which appear open to question or which demand careful watching, as the scheme advances. The fact that the Prince had entertained the wish to see the monolithic construction attempted, with the beauty of the form of cross known as that of Iona, lent much weight to that idea; but it was pronounced hopeless on the score of expense. Considering even the obvious

costliness of a carved tabernacle, 150 feet in height, as now proposed—the well-known rule, that, in building, the expenses increase in a ratio out of all proportion to the height—and the difficulty of supplying estimates for a work so abnormal as that proposed, we must confess to certain misgivings whether we can, indeed, have so much, and be so fine for our money. Even the grant of £50,000 by the House of Commons, in supplement of the £60,000 subscribed by the public—and the understanding which seemed to prevail that a further sum would be voted if required—do not satisfactorily set at rest the question of expense. Other considerations, also, not less grave, arise when we turn to the question of art. Those who favour the cause of the Gothic style in England are grateful to Mr. Gilbert Scott for the impulse which, some fifteen or twenty years ago, it received from the steadiness with which he pursued it. We owe to him many buildings which, compared with the common-places of second-rate designers in Palladian, or with the imperfect utterances of his own predecessors in the Pointed style, deserve credit. But our progress in architecture has moved lately with accelerated speed; and it must be honestly pointed out that later men, falling on better days, and gifted with genuine power to create, have left fairly behind the worthy pioneers of what we might call the Peel or Melbourne age. The Albert Cross is a monument which imperatively requires high faculty for the beautiful. It is nothing for use—altogether for honour; and it hardly less requires decided originality in design, that it may not, like Mr. Scott's own Martyrs' Memorial at Oxford, at once remind us of King Edward's crosses by likeness and by unlikeness—by servility to the ancient idea, and by want of the ancient poetry and feeling.

The more, in truth, we consider the plan adopted, the

more we shall see that it calls for no common skill. It must not only, in its larger lines and masses, show grace combined with a certain austerity; it must also be clothed in ornament of exquisite detail, and accented by first-rate figure-sculpture of a very peculiar kind. It is probable that we have no single living artist capable of succeeding in a task which would have severely tried even the mighty genius of Giotto. And in this portion of the work Mr. Scott's existing productions hold out less encouragement to hope for a high triumph of art. His merit as a designer lies rather in the whole than in the details. Carefully and correctly drawn, the main outlines of his more important buildings are sometimes satisfactory. We see that he has had excellent originals to follow. But a nearer approach reveals that the ornament is cold and unimaginative: compared with what the higher Gothic demands and gives, it is dead decoration. His chapel at Exeter College and his restorations at Ely are instances in point. Nor has he been happier in the figure-sculpture with which he sometimes completes the effect. To those who know what has been done in this sphere of art, the Pulpit of Westminster Abbey is a melancholy specimen: surrounded by characterless Apostles, and fronted with a medallion (by Mr. A. Munro) as painful to look at as to criticize. The Westminster School column supplies, in its sculptural details, a similar example. We are aware that these bad sculptures are not modelled by Mr. Scott; we believe that they are often the production of firms which turn out architectural art by the lot, as per order; but, in justice to him, the unfortunate effect which they have exercised over his designs must be noticed; and we trust that in selecting the artists who shall work with him on the Albert Cross, a more judicious choice will be made. Even

those admirers of Gothic—and there are many—who would join with us in inability to recognize original power in this fashionable architect, will agree that excellence in the sculptural portions may do much towards a satisfactory monument. It should be, however, a not less important matter in the eyes of those who entertain a high conception of his skill. Not only must the figure-work inevitably be the central point of interest in the Albert Cross, but it will also inevitably be the arbiter of the whole effect—for triumph or for defeat. For sculpture is too powerful an art to subside into mere ornament. It must either kill, or vivify.

April: 1863

II

In speaking of the Albert Cross, we have hitherto touched lightly upon the figure-sculpture with which it will be decorated. The style adopted for this must be a point of the highest importance, from its bearing on the success of the work: but until Mr. Scott's design be published, it is impossible to discuss it in detail. Two hopes we shall, meanwhile, venture to entertain,—that the monument may not be planned for a statue placed between four piers, and within a large open chamber at the base,—and that the sculpture, whatever its amount, may be of the best quality the country can produce. Our reason for the first is, that a treatment like that of the Scott Monument at Edinburgh, or, still worse, that of the unfortunate Tower of S. Jacques in the line of the new Rue Rivoli at Paris, is a contradiction in stone to the essential idea of all tower-like buildings;—placing the greatest weight on the points of least apparent strength, rendering awkward or unstructural expedients for support

necessary, and suggesting that we see the fragment of a cruciform cathedral, which has been eased of nave, choir, and transepts, by the efforts of the Liberation Society. On the reasons for the second hope, we now wish to say a few words to those who are jealous for the glory of English art, and see in the Albert Cross the elements of a great failure —or a great success.

An indefinite idea is afloat, that architectural sculpture differs in kind from what, in opposition to it, might be called domestic or ornamental sculpture. Whilst the pseudo-classical styles prevailed, the phrase probably implied that figures and bas-reliefs intended to form part of a building should be worked out in a severer manner, as to subject and execution, than if they were to take their place in a collection. Since what seems to us the more rational re-sumption of the Gothic styles, architectural sculpture has, however, been understood in a sense which, until lately, has gone far to neutralize the effect of our modern Gothic buildings. A few words will explain how this has taken place. Modern Gothic was, in its beginning, like the Lombard itself from which it was originally developed, essentially an imitative style. In the hands of Woodward, Butterfield, Street, Burges, Waterhouse, and others not yet so well known, it is rapidly passing from this first phase into an architecture as closely adapted to our wants as that of the thirteenth century to mediaeval requirements. But there has hitherto been a tendency, from which few of our architects have been able to free themselves, to treat the *details* in an imitative manner; although it will be familiar to many of our readers that important steps to a true and living revival have been taken by all those who deserve to be classed as artists. They have been aided in this way by the admirable and devoted efforts of a great writer, and, finally, by that

aid without which nothing of high excellence can be obtained in architecture, the all-important co-operation of intelligent workmen, carrying out with a freedom and a delicacy worthy of the best times the ideas of the designer. Hence, in the lesser details of decoration, amongst many inevitable instances of failure, we see already a high success which (as in the case of the famous Museum at Oxford) has provoked a corresponding energy of censorious criticism. This is always the fate, as it is the sign, of originality. But in the loftier region of sculpture (which must be held almost always to include the representation of animated life), many causes have combined to retain us in a false mediaeval bondage. The low technical state of the art in England —the too prevalent fancy to reproduce subjects from ancient mythology,—with the natural result of these things, a deep-seated popular ignorance and apathy, have united with our natural sympathy for what are imagined romantic ages, to render us blindly, and we are compelled to add, feebly, obsequious to the forms of old Gothic statuary. Because the sentiment which inspired the workmen of Lincoln was exquisite, or the invention shown by the designers of Wells powerful, we take them as models, not for these qualities, which are simply inimitable, but for what is little better than mechanical parody. Because in the mediaeval times the human figure was imperfectly and rudely rendered, we are satisfied with work which has almost all their ignorance, with hardly an atom of their inspiration.

We should not think it needful to notice, in these terms of condemnation, sculpture which rarely professes to be by artists, if the evil were not one which, as the renovated Gothic style makes daily progress, threatens to be the most serious stumbling-block in the road of its practical triumph. But whilst those trained in the classical era can reasonably

ridicule such carving as that of the lions and the St. George on the Westminster Column, or the many disappointing saints and scripture subjects in our noble new churches, it is necessary to state emphatically, that such sculpture as this is false to the real requirements of Gothic architecture. It has been submitted to, because, in this province, we are still under the bonds of mechanical imitation which in the architecture at large we are rapidly leaving,—and because, in the existing state of the art, sculpture is accepted by the nation as a necessity, not regarded with intelligent eyes as a source of elevated pleasure. If it were not so, we cannot understand how any one who had a voice in passing the estimates would have endured the figures which, manufactured by the dozen as they turn out idols for the African trade in Birmingham, decorate the Houses of Parliament. These are not, indeed, worse than the average, but we quote them as familiar examples. Anything angular in the folds, and loaded with ornaments, seems to satisfy the easy conditions of modern Gothic carving; we have even seen specimens which appeared to be magnified missal-designs executed in relief. Such work is as false to the true spirit of Gothic as the composition Caryatides on the Vestry of the St. Pancras church are to the true spirit of Athenian architecture. Let the reader think for a moment of the thought and labour which Phidias bestowed on every square inch of the Parthenon marbles,—how he summed up here the leading religious and political traditions of the country,—with what exquisite care he carried out every detail; and then turn to the dolls in stone which fill the niches of the Palace, without truth, or interest, or character. It will be a useful lesson in architectural sculpture.

It is in considering this form of the art something distinct and antiquarian, something which may be safely entrusted

to hap-hazard carvers who have received no proper training in art, that the error seems to lie. Nothing can be simpler than the real laws of the subject. What was true for the Greek styles is true for the Gothic; in each, what is required is simply and solely the *best* possible sculpture. Except for the imaginative incongruity in the associations which it rouses, the frieze of the Parthenon, and the glorious groups of the pediments, would be in keeping with the severe loveliness of Lincoln Cathedral, or the majestic splendours of Rheims. What speciality belongs to architectural sculpture, technically considered, lies in the close observance which, from its immobility of place, it requires to the material laws of effect. These have been analyzed by Sir C. Eastlake in a paper, printed originally in the third Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts (1844), and since republished. And to the study of those who are interested in our subject we strongly recommend this essay, which, within the compass of a few pages, defines the laws of effect in sculpture with equal taste and knowledge. The remarks on works in high relief are especially worthy of attention, as this style, too much, perhaps, to the exclusion of bas-relief, prevails not only in its most proper situation, namely, on the exterior of our Gothic structures, but withinside on fonts and pulpits, where the light is rarely adequate to its due display. We conjecture that the favour shown to the high relief arises partly from a greater facility in obtaining thus a certain effect without the more careful design and modelling required in the flatter styles, partly from its frequency in the original Gothic, which did not fully recognize the finer laws of sculpture observed by the ancients. Excellent examples, however, of low relief executed during the best mediaeval periods may be found in some of the ivory carvings exhibited at South Ken-

sington, which we trust will not have been lost upon our artists.

Sculpture is indeed so difficult an art that the most gifted and intelligent nation can never expect to possess much excellence in it at any given period. This, however, is no reason whatever why we should be satisfied without excellence. Should this not be forthcoming, we must be content to wait for better days, as we do in case of the other imaginative arts, which no one thinks can be had to order. Mediocre carving is much worse than mediocre poetry. It is probably true that but little of our recent architectural sculpture, for the reasons just given, is of high merit. Yet, even in this field of art, we may apply to our age the words which Tacitus employed with a wider meaning—*Non adeo virtutum sterile seculum, ut non et bona exempla prodiderit.* We fervently hope that the Albert Cross may supply another instance.

May: 1863

III

The author has left the two preceding papers as they originally stood, although what has subsequently been allowed to come to light in regard to the Albert Cross does not support the hopes above expressed. Whether we look at the structure, the sculpture, or the decorations, we see everywhere adverse omens which it is impossible to neglect, because they are given by the former works of a majority among the artists employed. If criticism can have any effect in regard to the work, it should speak out now, before the evil is irremediable and the disappointment final.

Without entering here on the larger question of Mr. Gilbert Scott's rank amongst our Gothic architects, beyond

expressing the opinion (resting upon examination of his work) that his style wants originality and imagination, it is indisputable that he has had but little practice in that species of ornamental designing of which the Cross will be one of the most elaborate examples ever yet attempted. Yet, without high natural capacity and much acquired skill, how can we have success in so difficult a work, unless the architect were favoured with that miraculous assistance of which the Gothic legends tell us? Much as it is to be regretted, there are no signs of such assistance at present. Not an "Eleanor Cross" at all, in the sense always hitherto expressed by the words, Mr. Scott's monument has the air of being a highly magnified form of the Italian canopy tomb, such as may be seen in its most finished examples at Verona. Even the famous Scala monuments in that city are a little too large for this form of design, which, by its structural not less than its decorative features, is properly suited only for the common scale of mediaeval tombs within churches. But Mr. Scott's cross takes this pattern, and enlarges it about twelvefold in cubical dimensions: literally extending a canopy into a steeple. As, however, the laws of matter are not subject to a similar extension, the mode of construction which suits the canopy, fails in the spire. That opening which at Verona was cut from a single stone, in the Albert Cross has the span of a cathedral arch; and as the piers could not withstand the outward thrust of four such arches, loaded with a hundred feet of steeple, it is stated that an iron framework, passing up at each angle, and tied together above the crown of the vault, aided by a fifth column thrust awkwardly by an afterthought beneath the canopy, will in fact do the work of support. We know that some structural deceptions must be admitted in all architecture; but they become dangerous to effect (if not to stability) when carried out on so vast a

scale, and, as in this case, are at the same time obviously required and elaborately concealed. We can take pleasure in a small and visible artifice (as the pendants of a Tudor vault), or we can ignore an important but invisible artifice (as the timber upper-roof which keeps such a vault from expanding); but where the eye demands a source of structural support which it cannot see, it is impossible to avoid one of the worst faults which can be committed in architecture—the impression of insecurity. But this is a natural result, if our estimate of where the architect's abilities are limited be correct. In all the arts, want of imagination will always be found accompanied by want of practical insight. Nor is this surprizing; for imagination is precisely that quality by which the inner fitness of things, propriety, and harmony, are perceived.

Leaving the general design, it is with much regret that we observe certain signs of want of fitness, propriety, and insight in the details, so far as the scheme has been made public. It is indeed impossible yet to speak as to the exact style in which the lofty spire will be carried out, and any judgment as to the distinctly architectural ornaments in which it abounds must follow the reader's general estimate of Mr. Scott's skill in these matters. Fair work, though rarely inventive or really fine work, with much that is commonplace, may be found in his buildings; and it is therefore still allowable to indulge in a moderate hope as to this feature of the monument. The same criticism may apply to the paintings, mosaics, and inlayings, of which mention has been made. Yet here it must be added, that the bronze or gilded metal which the design exhibited, copiously distributed over the exterior, are open to the same objections on the side of common sense which bear on the main structure. In our rainy region, as the pedestals of our statues are apt to show,

the gradual corrosion of the metal produces prominent and ineffaceable discolourations. These are less important in case of a statue, but would tell with fatal effect when the bright green of copper rust competes with coloured marbles or glass-work. Again, there are not many marbles (and those, also, little studied hitherto in England) which appear able to resist our climate without a rapid loss of polish. The surface has already disintegrated in the serpentine disks, for example, put up in London during the last fifteen years: as the Purbeck shafts have perished, even within our cathedrals. In any case, the foulness of the London atmosphere, we fear, will soon disfigure the coloured decorations; not merely obscuring all alike, but leaving the more durable or vivid portions standing out like patches of colour among dirt. The truth is, that the Cross is an Italian design, imported whole into Hyde Park. It wants that first and last thing in architecture, appropriateness. It fails, not because much in it is copied from older sources—for in all architecture copying holds a great place—but because it is *unimaginative* copying, and hence neither fused into harmony with itself, nor appropriate to its situation. Imagination is the vital quality in art; and the want of it will always be found to resolve itself into want of intelligence.

IV

We have, however, as yet touched only on the lighter grounds for apprehension which beset this great work. Sculpture, from its direct appeal to human feeling and intellect, is invariably, by a natural law, the governing element in any building which introduces it, even sparely. But sculpture forms the principal feature in the Albert Cross; and it is sculpture, further, employed on subjects as lofty

and as difficult as any artists have tried to deal with, since the days when Phidias carved the religion of Athens upon the Parthenon. But on what English sculpture now is, the writer is hardly aware of a single dissentient opinion. It is true that every patron, or little clique of friends, have their own sculptor or two, whom they except from the common sentence of contempt and censure. And we have taken pains to show, not by unsupported epithets of praise or blame, but by proofs resting on a careful examination of all works within reach, and examples which cannot be set aside without violence to natural fact, that only four or five men, within the last few years (nor, as the art is situated in England, is the number small,) have given authentic claims to rank as sculptors in the high, strict, and (we may add) practical sense of the word. Let us here take a brief glance at the best of our modern practitioners. Flaxman and Wyatt, who rank as the glories of sixty years since, the first through tenderness and inventiveness of design, the other by virtue of a very few works of great beauty and finish—with Chantrey, who, throwing away great opportunities in exchange for money and fashion, became the conspicuous pseudo-success of the age, fall beyond the period of this survey. Chantrey must, however, be noticed as the founder of that coarse and careless style in modelling and execution which—occasionally effective in his hands—when more or less followed by Noble, Weekes, Marshall Wood, the two Messrs. Adams, and (latterly) Macdowell in our own day—has gone far to destroy the credit of English sculpture on the continent. To proceed: Watson, who wasted the best years of his life as an executant for other men, left a few pieces which unite lofty feeling to singular dignity of line. Behnes we have elsewhere attempted to characterize at some length; and it may be here enough to note, that much of his ability in

busts has been preserved by his pupil, Butler. Foley, who does not seem to us equal to these artists in treating a head, and who, like Behnes, has not been conspicuous for poetically-creative faculty, has a truly sculptor-like command over human form, manages his designs with great taste, and, it is to be hoped and expected, will not suffer his present well-earned popularity to detract from the singularly conscientious execution of his work. He is also the only living sculptor in England who has shown power to model the horse. Of Gibson's work the writer has not examined sufficient specimens to justify attempting a general estimate. If judged by such pieces as the large allegorical group in one of the rooms contiguous to the Lords' Chamber at Westminster, by the Peel in the Abbey, or the portrait-statue of Her Majesty exhibited a few years since, it would be impossible to speak favourably, whether of the idea, the modelling, or the execution of his sculpture. If the *Venus* and *Cupid* of 1862 (putting aside the colouring), or the *Young Hunter* of 1851, be taken as the standard, the sculptor will rank with those who have shown a fair knowledge of form, and a considerable sense of grace, although rather that grace which belongs to external elegance, than that higher and deeper kind which springs from the workings of a "beautiful soul." These gifts he has, however, consecrated so liberally to the unintellectual reproduction of the Graeco-Roman mythology, that his art has little hold on actual life, and (as was curiously shown in case of the statues exhibited in 1862) commands no sympathy from the contemporary mind. One must, in this case, regret a real gift and a remarkable industry misapplied. The treasures of the Vatican, admirable as guides, are fatal as models.

With Woolner's work the writer is more fully acquainted than with Gibson's, having watched his career from an

early stage to the time when he has reached acknowledgment as entitled to rank with our best artists. This rank is due to poetical invention combined with power of lifelike resemblance; and, on the executive side of the art, to thorough mastery of the human form, with unusual command over the practical processes of modelling and carving. The sculptor's group of two children, exhibited in 1862, another group of a mother and child, and a bronze figure of Puck, may be specified as examples of the first quality named: of the second, a series of busts, some of them already widely known, Mr. A. Tennyson, Sir J. Brooke, Professor Sedgwick, Mr. D. Sassoon, Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Cobden, Mr. Gladstone, and other heads which would have baffled less mature powers. Mr. Woolner's success in dealing with modern dress has been already noticed; the imaginative skill he has shown here is of particular value in regard to memorial-statues of our contemporaries. The writer had, indeed, framed the above estimate of Woolner's place in our sculpture without acquaintance with more than his name; but having since been honoured with his friendship, he has always felt bound to submit Woolner's work to the utmost rigour of judgment which he is capable of applying, in order to escape those misleading influences of personal regard of which patronage has, at all times, afforded too many examples. On this account, also, he adds the following judgment, extracted from a very able criticism of British Sculpture which appeared, some years since, in one of the leading magazines:—"In portraiture we are not acquainted with any works which, for consummate study and art, for life and power, can at all stand beside Woolner's. The labour which he expends upon his busts is out of all proportion to that of other men, but not out of proportion to the effect produced: it is labour of the brain as well as

the hand; exquisite art as well as determined study and finish. His modelling of flesh in all its delicate niceties may well be termed perfect, and is indeed carried so far that nothing but the real intellect and fire of his work would suffice to sustain it. With less of these highest qualities in combination, it would be overfinish; these keep it in its place, and preserve it from transcending the bounds of true sculptural art."

Let us briefly recapitulate the elements which are essential to success in sculpture. Taken roughly, in natural order, these might be (1) imagination, representing force of intellect and of feeling, and under which will come most markedly power of poetical invention, whether exhibited by forcible work or, as suits sculpture better, by figures embodying grace and reserved passion; (2) power of characterization, which calls into play the former gifts within a narrower field, and exerts them under the direction of distinctive interest in living human creatures; (3) knowledge of form, both in itself and as required by sculpture—including not only mastery over the mysteries of curve and plane, truthfulness in surface, and the special adaptations or conventionalities which separate sculpture from the other arts of design, but also the sense of beauty in general outline, of light and shade in mass, and all that belongs to sculptural propriety; lastly (4) executive faculty, a rare and difficult attainment, to deal with the actual marble, or, in case of bronze, to adapt the model to the peculiar conditions of metal. These are a severe series of tests, although none can be omitted; we hope we shall have some readers who will have the courage to apply them to the leading or the fashionable sculpture of England, with perfect indifference to any previous opinion or judgment (the writer's included), and frame their estimate accordingly.

It must be remembered that this Essay is throughout on Monumental Sculpture, and that a few artists, rather of promise than of commanding merit, with some very much the reverse, have been omitted from our review. Grouping, then, the men named above together, a vast mass of modern sculpture remains—including most of what satisfies the two chief divisions of fashionable or mercantile patronage—which we may spare ourselves here the unpleasant task of particularizing by the names of its producers. They will be found by those who care for the writer's estimate scattered through our pages. But we shall attempt to define what we think the bad side of this art in a few words which may explain why we must call it such. Reversing the conditions of success just enumerated—want of imagination, want of character, ignorance of form, inability to carve or model finely, more or less must be the marks of indifferent sculpture. They are precisely the marks which have been for years attributed to the great majority of our monumental works, when they have been criticized at all, as in the House of Commons. Within these general limits we may discern three main branches: (1) that which has been already noticed as the corrupt school of Chantrey, which tries for effect by an imitation of his "generalized," or as it would be more correctly called, his slovenly mode of modelling and carving; (2) that more miscellaneous class of work, in which imitations of the antique, or sometimes of modern dress and subjects, predominate. These classes of work are marked by clumsiness and immobility. "Breathing marble" is the last word that one would think of applying to them. A reaction from the first class, though unhappily not a healthy reaction, has produced the third, which is a bad copy of the modern French or Italian "picturesque" style. As this style, at its best, is the one most remote from the technical conditions

of sculpture, and, as such, has always appeared in an age of decadence, so this third class, imitating it unskilfully, might be ranked the lowest. It is characterized by theatrical showiness, spasmodic action, and slovenly pretence.

As we have been throughout speaking, not of men of promise, but of sculptors who have formed and matured their style, there is no more ground for doubting that what they each and all henceforth design will be generally similar in quality to what they have already designed, than in the case of literature. Tennyson will be Tennyson, Tupper Tupper, to the end of the chapter. And when, therefore, we have added, that the list of sculptors selected for the Albert Memorial lies (so far as we are able to frame an estimate) almost entirely within the three latter classes, with one or two mere architectural decorators, whilst, on the other hand, the subjects required are of the first order in difficulty,—we are already not far from the poet's, *Lasciate ogni speranza.**

To those who care for English art, or for the advance of the sound and honest artist, or for the great memory to be thus honoured, or for the sympathies and feelings which go with the monument, nothing can be more melancholy than to confess the possibility of a failure. Yet the rigid laws of fact seem to render it not improbable. Better far to leave the Memorial as it now is, a vast pyramid of clay, than to perpetuate commonplace in architecture, or enshrine poverty of art in marble. Otherwise, there is danger that this will be another case of the *post eventum, credidimus.*

* To those who know the enormous difficulties of a colossal statue, and the demands which it makes on the artist for the highest knowledge and style, the choice of M. Marochetti for the figure of the Prince will seem simply disastrous.

JULY: 1865

THACKERAY IN THE ABBEY

WHAT to do with Westminster Abbey and the monuments in it has been a question debated at least since the revival of our interest in ancient architecture. No one disputes that it is, if not overcrowded with statues, yet full to repletion, or that the more recent monuments, more or less, interfere with ecclesiastical and architectural propriety. But of the plans proposed for dealing with the question none appears to be satisfactory, or to have commended itself to public feeling. It would be equally barbarous to add a row of figures between the columns, as was once suggested, or to expel all modern work, and "restore" the Gothic shrines and canopies, in accordance with the wishes of what one might call the extreme-pointed party. The first scheme would put the last touch of ruin to the effect of the building; the latter would be not less destructive to the unrivalled historical value and imaginative associations which consecrate the tombs of our ancient princes. Any one who, adequately acquainted with mediaeval work, examines the process of renewing it in our cathedrals,—from the restoration of Salisbury sixty years since, to the restoration of Lincoln and Ely, still proceeding, will cry out with Mr. Ruskin, *Restoration is destruction.* Hardly better is the proposal to remove the mass of later monuments and place them within what has been somewhat affectedly called a *Campo Santo.* If this be a Gothic build-

ing, the existing discrepancy of styles will reappear; as nothing can look worse than the later monuments within the cloister at Pisa, on this account; if it be in some Italian style it will itself be a most unfit accompaniment to the Abbey. Besides, tasteless as the memorials often are, they are more or less adapted to their sites; whilst it is difficult to imagine the wall-tombs and the single figures so arranged in a cloister as not to expose still more their general intrinsic feebleness. Lastly, such a removal would, in many men's minds, do away with the distinction which, whether deserved or not, burial within the Abbey was intended to confer. There is, perhaps, something rather natural than heroic about Nelson's famous exclamation: but at any rate *The Campo Santo or a Peerage!* would not replace it.

In short, the plan of gradually withdrawing a few monuments (should this course be legally or morally possible) commemorative of names to which Time has not proved propitious, partly in order to clear the main architectural features of the building, partly to find space for that very select and first-rate number who should henceforth be alone admitted, seems the only one feasible It is needless to observe that such an operation requires the greatest discretion, and must be left, in each case, to justify itself. What a curious field for speculation does this suggestion open! how much so-called greatness, genius, and what not, would vanish from that Palace of Truth!—how singular the contrast between the contemporary eulogies of a Prime Minister, even, or a poet, and the voice of history, commanding some marble of "heroic size" to come down, and take a lower room! After a fair time, *Lord —— to the cloister*, we might fancy hearing it, *and Byron to the Abbey*—only, not in Thorvaldsen's feeble effigy. This would be a worthy subject for a new Meditation among the Tombs, had we an Addison to

imagine it; but our Addison is dead, and we may wait fifty years before truth, undismayed by fashion, and delicate pathos, and value for intellectual refinement, and the sense of cultivated humour, are sufficiently alive once more in England to impersonate themselves in another Thackeray.

It is, however, with Thackeray's image that we are now concerned. When it was announced, a year ago, that the bust for the Abbey was placed in the hands of Baron Marochetti, great doubt was felt, whether the choice was judicious. Nothing is rarer than for an artist to succeed in the portraiture of any man not of his own nation. No English portrait of Napoleon would be accepted in France; and who ever saw a foreign picture of Nelson which was endurable? The sculptor had, moreover, been tried in this particular field, and had signally failed: witness his Wellington and Victoria at Glasgow, or his Prince Albert at Perth, to which several more might be added. As, however, it was especially put forward by the Committee that M. Marochetti "had the advantage of being Thackeray's intimate friend," it was hoped, we presume, by the subscribers, that all sentiments of honour to the dead would combine with what power the sculptor could bring to his aid, and result in a vivid likeness, embodied in a truly careful and artist-like work.

The bust has been placed in a tolerable light, and we are now able to judge how far these hopes have been realized, or how far those natural limitations of success have had their way, over which no man can triumph, however committees desire it, or fashion endeavour to suppress failure. A few lines would, indeed, be enough to deal with a single head of the ordinary kind. But this is not quite the case here. The Abbey is our Pantheon; it is a national concern. We are all interested in what is done to change or improve its appearance; in this sense every Englishman may say of

himself what Dean Stanley is reported to have said at a recent meeting—"*Westmonasteriensis sum; Westmonasteriense nihil a me alienum puto.*" The intrinsic badness of the sculpture within the Abbey, and its injurious effect on the look of the building, are grievances of long standing and public notoriety. Architects and sculptors cannot fail now to be well aware that they work under the surveillance of a strong popular feeling upon this subject. There is a kind of implied compact, that if more monuments are to be allowed, they must be nothing short of first-rate. Non-success therefore, in such circumstances, should the facts disclose it, must inevitably be more closely scanned than when the interests involved are not of a national order.

Thackeray's features are so well-known that we may, we think, anticipate that they will be before the reader's remembrance. They were not such as would have presented an easy task, even to an intimate friend and an able sculptor. Quiet power and pensive sweetness were the two chief elements in the face; these were, however, modified in some degree by the active, searching character of the eye, and by a certain nervous quickness in the region of the lips, betraying that the great painter of our manners possessed that gift of humour and sarcasm without which he could not have painted us so truly. The forehead was a noble piece of the modelling of nature, full of fine curves and lines and subtly-combined planes of surface; the nose, from the day when the young writer dubbed himself *Michel Angelo* to his last playful sketch of himself, we all know was the subject of Thackeray's own amusing humour. The accident was so identified with the man that it almost became characteristic of him; no one could wish him otherwise; Lamb would have said he must have been born so, if he had not been made so; it was one of the little

blemishes which make a face dearer to friendship. Let us add, as a minor though still a not unimportant touch, that no more thorough specimen of the Englishman of our century existed than was presented by Thackeray in his bearing and dress. He was classical, as Molière or Aristophanes were classical, by virtue of high genius employed on contemporary subjects, not in any way by look or manner. The image of such a head, modelled to occupy the place of honour near Addison, called certainly for no common skill, and would at any rate deserve to engage the greatest amount of diligence, finish, and taste on the part of any one who should undertake it.

Disregarding questions of abstract taste, let us ask simply how far this bust fulfils its purpose? how far is it a true memorial of that countenance and character which we have above attempted to sketch? The impression it has given us is one which we shall be very glad to see reversed by the opinion—when it has been calmly formed—not of those too nearly interested in the management of the memorial, but of Thackeray's friends, and of those at large who knew him. We do not mean that it is a complete failure, such as most of the busts, for example, by Messrs. Noble, Theed, Wood, and Adams, or even M. Marochetti's own life-size statues, appear to us. The sculptor has reached a certain point. Thackeray's features were not only subtly, but strongly, marked; and we have before us a superficial likeness of those points in his face which would be remembered by a casual visitor. But we must ask for no more. Thackeray is not here in the intellectual modelling of the forehead, or the keen insight of the eye; the mouth wants the graciousness of his smile, and the quick mobility in which one saw his satire. These, however, were the points which marked the man, and these are the province

of the artist; to give the general contour is next to nothing. It might be enough to sum up by saying that this is a weak, external kind of portrait; that, despite the advantages of the artist and the importance of the work, it no way rises above his ordinary level, and has been turned out in what appears a perfectly offhand and careless manner; that it conveys about as much of a likeness as an amateur manages to secure—a kind of art of which M. Marochetti's always reminds us. But in this instance it may be worth while to give such grounds for our criticism as can be offered without the aid of a print. To gain the amount of likeness specified, the visitor will find that a double process has been cleverly followed. The forms of the salient features—mouth, nose, and forehead—with the forward set of the chin, have been coarsely exaggerated; the minor details have been altogether suppressed. Nature generally puts her fine intellects into a corresponding framework; and in a man who had reached even the years at which this great genius was prematurely taken from us, all the region of the forehead above and around the eye, and all that lies round the mouth, are carved and channelled with the memorials of a thousand thoughts and impulses:—In the beautiful phrase which Wordsworth applied to the mountains, they look "familiar with forgotten years"; they record a life's experiences. Only the detail about the eye differs greatly from that about the lips in quality; the former being mainly a tense surface over bone, whilst the lips have of course a much greater softness and mobility of texture. One hardly likes to dwell on these intimate points in the case of such a man as Thackeray; it seems like over-familiarity towards the dead; and with what tender and faithful care should they have been worked out and perpetuated by the true friend and true artist! What, turning now from nature

to art, is Sculpture unless she can render these things? But from this bust they are absent. M. Marochetti has not given the vital details we have imperfectly enumerated; he has not marked the distinction between the different qualities of texture. Bone and flesh are much the same in his art. All in the bust are smooth, rounded surfaces, which follow each other like the waves in a bad sea-piece. This gives a superficial air of finish; but it is at the sacrifice of truth to nature; it is just the quality, as we have said, of an amateur's work; he suppresses and smooths because he cannot model and complete. We make no extraordinary demand on a sculptor when we require the qualities which are here neglected. "These conditions are so elementary," said the great French critic, M. Planche, of the sculptor before us, "that I am at a loss to comprehend how M. Marochetti has neglected them. We have here no question of style; nothing beyond the mere alphabet of art. To break these conditions is the same as to be ignorant of spelling." Twenty years have passed by since M. Planche wrote, but they have brought with them no improvement.

It would be easy to carry our analysis further, and point out in detail why the eyes in this bust, despite the unsculptural trick by which the eyeballs are indicated, are without light or vivacity; with what a passing glance to the laws of natural form the chin has been placed on the neck, and the neck on the shoulders; what negligence of good feeling is shown in the naked breast trimmed round in an awkward flap, and brought harshly down upon a square pedestal; with what slovenliness the hair has been smoothed down, and with what zeal every little *ruse* adopted, by which a sculptor can expedite his work at the least labour to himself. But we think we have given Baron Marochetti as full a hearing as the case demands, and, if the verdict go

against him, it will be upon sufficient proofs of hard and undeniable fact. If those who treat taste as a matter of individual fancy or unreasoned preference answer them, they may justify the work. Something more, however, remains. We have hitherto spoken of this bust as a work of art. We have now to ask how far it is a fit decoration for the Abbey. The sculptor's part, we believe, ends with the white marble plinth or base just noticed, which he has decorated in a commonplace way with a sort of double scroll, decidedly Roman in character. Below this Mr. Gilbert Scott (the Abbey Architect) has put a dark serpentine base cut with a coarsely profiled moulding, which, though presumably intended for Gothic, is so undetermined in character that we hardly like to pronounce it such. Underneath this, again, is a heavy bronze bracket, on which the name is inscribed in common Roman characters. The reader may almost judge without an engraving what the effect of this singular combination is, and, as lovers of Gothic, we are sorry to think of the impression it will leave upon men of taste, trained in the classical camp. As our wish throughout has been to discuss the question before us with reference to fact (upon which we take Taste, in the permanent or real sense, to be altogether founded), let us add that the unsatisfactory look of the pseudo-Gothic pedestal arises, not so much from the want of delicacy and finish in the work, or the curious jumble of styles, as from the manner in which it has been imagined. Mr. Scott seems to have done little but copy, in bronze, one of those brackets which the Gothic architects often used to support a wall-shaft, when it was not wished to bring the shaft down to the pavement. But the solid form which was proper for stone, being a material of small tenacity, is on that very ground improper for metal, being a material of great tenacity. The bracket, again, which is massive enough to

sustain fifty feet of shaft, is idle when it props two feet of marble. This again strikes us, to repeat M. Planche's terrible phrase, as ignorance of grammar. How differently would the mere common workmen of old have dealt with their bronze! How they would have revelled in its ductility, and sported with its tenacity!—In short, if we may alter the well-known words of Macaulay, the sculptor and the architect have so managed things between them, that they could have hardly produced a result less worthy of the occasion. We had a right to require a first-class work, both on account of Thackeray and the Abbey; * and the most lenient judgment, we fear, can in no way reckon this such. If it be not for the admission of art quite different in quality, the Abbey doors had better not have been reopened. It is no honour to the illustrious dead to be thus commemorated.

* From a recent number of the *Quarterly Review*, we regret to find that the inefficient and slovenly work of which we complain is not confined to the Abbey.

"Almost as bad," says a writer in the number for October, 1865, "as the destruction of ancient monuments, is the introduction of new ones in violent want of keeping with all that surrounds them. Such is the extraordinary memorial of the 9th (Queen's Royal) Lancers, which covers the wall of a bay on the north side of the nave of Exeter Cathedral, and which, from its size and obtrusiveness, is necessarily the first object to catch the eye of the entering visitor. The design (two mounted lancers and two palm-trees—it is by Baron Marochetti) is utterly without meaning, and is precisely such as a child would draw on a slate."

NEW PARIS

How much soever there may be in the existing Government of France on which Englishmen cannot look with satisfaction, it cannot be denied that, during the last ten years, commercial advances and "strategical exigencies" have, between them, given an impulse to architecture in that country which has called forth noteworthy results. Even our insular vanity, impervious as it is on so many points alike to ridicule and to reason, has been lately compelled at once to admire much of what has been done in Paris and to give up most of what has been done in London. And those who are aware of the taste and skill which place the French, in most forms of art, really and truly in their favourite position as the "leaders of European civilization," and who remember that, during the middle ages, they were the greatest and the most inventive architects of Christendom, will be ready to believe that, amongst many failures or partial successes, they cannot have half rebuilt the main streets of their capital without producing much which may make us dissatisfied with Tyburnia and Kensington, with what has been done in Cromwell Road, with what is doing in Downing Street,—with what will, we fear, be done in Grosvenor Place. We will give but one example here, but it shall be a decisive one. It is enough to look at their Exhibition Building—at once graceful, massive, appropriate, and original—and at the huge block which so long lingered of our own, and to recognize our superiors.

Whilst, however, we confess all this to the full, we are not disposed to hold up the recent works, in Paris and elsewhere, as either thoroughly satisfactory in themselves or as models for our instruction. Things during the last ten years have been done too rapidly, and on too large a scale, to admit of that thoughtful study and careful execution which are at the bottom of good work in architecture, as in everything else. Above all, they are uniformly in a style which, treated with whatever skill, is radically inferior in convenience and in beauty to the true modern Gothic. Already it is impossible not to perceive that the limits of the Gallo-Italian have been nearly reached. Perhaps the very best of the modern houses of Paris, such as those engraved by Mr. Fergusson in his invaluable architectural History, are amongst those erected at the beginning of the period of reconstruction. It is impossible to escape the conviction that, since that time, the architects, skilful and thorough as they are, have been overtasked; although even a hasty survey shows that they rarely produce anything absolutely tame, or fall into that mindless commonplace, that fixed and deeply-seated clumsiness, which the barbarous builders to whom our contractors entrust the new regions of London seem as little able to escape from as to be sensible of.

We will name a few noticeable specimens, in the hope that readers who happen to visit Paris may be induced to examine them, and then, recalling for a moment Belgrave Square, or Queen's Gate, or Albert Road, or Westbourne Terrace—anything and everything, in short, that has been built on system in our ugly capital—may ask whether our criticism be not only too just. Such are the Restaurant de la Belle Gabrielle, the corner house of the Rue Nicolas Flamel (elegant), and the Maison Tour (more severe)—all instances in the best part of the Rue Rivoli. Number 43

Boulevart de Sebastopol (rive gauche), and the corner house of the Rue Réamur and Rue S. Martin, exhibit graceful and original treatment of the balcony; number 10 in the other half of the Sebastopol Boulevart is an instance of the felicitous management of pilasters. It would be easy to treble our list. Almost everywhere we find some at least of what may be called the fundamental principles of domestic architecture followed—elegant and varied decoration, individuality of design (few houses being absolutely like their neighbours), and, so far as strikes the eye, truthful and solid construction. Where a space has to be bridged over, as in the windows of a shop, the French architect either throws an arch at once, which is certainly the most satisfactory mode to the eye and the stablest for the building, or he makes the upper line of the shop-front flat, and places a graceful low window beneath the arch, which then spans two stories. In England, we generally have a dead uniformity of ugliness, each house as like all the rest of the row as if the very Demon of Monotony had cast them in mould; whilst, even in our more elaborate attempts, the front wall of a shop almost always appears to rest on sheets of plate-glass, the real supports being a couple of thin iron columns, which the builder absurdly tries to conceal. Our decorations are either absolutely nothing—the bald wall and the square hole—or vary between the eternal triangular pediment and bracket-heading, and the diseased efflorescence of badly-modelled garlands which breaks out in the neighbourhood of Queen's Gate or in the Victoria Terminus hotel. Of the materials which nature has given us we make, in nineteen cases out of twenty, no appreciable use whatever. We cannot even bake our excellent clays to a lasting surface; we cannot model the most plastic substance on earth into any form but an ill-shaped lump. The

plasterer, in league with the house-painter, then persuades us that bricks look gloomy, and forthwith—in place of facing the wall with one of the endless varieties of bright and durable covering—daubs it with a dismal gray, which must henceforth be smeared with white lead every other year, like a door or a cupboard. A marble façade would, we believe, in fifty years (and fifty years are the youth of a building), prove a cheaper thing than this abominable arrangement.

People in France would not put up with such shabby work as this. They prove it in the best possible way, by doing the contrary. It is no wonder that their universal verdict, when they come to London, should be a condemnation of its ugliness. Provoking and humiliating as this is, or ought to be, to us, it is more humiliating still to be forced to allow that the cause is mainly our own want of taste and sense in our architecture. For our churches, sometimes for our public buildings (as the admirable new Assize Courts at Manchester by Mr. Waterhouse, we have architects equal to, or even better than, the best Frenchmen. If the building speculator never, and the private person rarely, employs them for our houses, the sole reason is, that they do not care to do so. To confess the truth; from the late Lord Palmerston downwards, we love domestic ugliness; we are enchanted with architectural commonplace; we think it a proud boast, fit for a Briton, to contrast the cold, angular, and forbidding look of the exterior with the comfort inside. Other nations, meanwhile, have comfort and beauty too; for that the taste shown in the French dwelling-houses and railway-stations does not impair their comfort, the dissatisfied Englishman readily confesses, when he compares his inn or terminus with those across the water. Indeed, the idea that beauty and comfort

are in any sense opposing or competing qualities is in itself, often as we hear it, the simple confession of complacent ignorance. It is like fancying that geology is opposed to cookery, or that common sense is hostile to the rule of three.

Almost everybody feels the force of this vexatious contrast when he returns from Paris to London; it is the burden of every traveller's story. And we have here dwelt upon it because those who have the credit of England at heart must wish to see this consciousness of our inferiority in domestic architecture utilized for our improvement, not idly referred to anything in the materials employed in France, or in the Imperial system. Improvement here is, strictly, a matter *publici juris*. Every one who builds, or allows to be built for him, an ugly house, perpetuates an eyesore to annoy or deaden the taste of thousands. And that ninety-nine out of every hundred houses recently built in London are eyesores is hardly open to denial. On the chapter of materials we cannot further enter now. But, returning to our more immediate subject, an examination of recent French architecture will show that the excellence of it, so far as it goes, is due to what Governments can but remotely influence—the general taste of the people. In fact, the least satisfactory things at Paris are precisely those which the Administration has undertaken. The Emperor—of whom it is no injustice to say that he is not an exception to the old rule that *le goût militaire* is naturally incompatible with taste in art—has hardly been more fortunate in the selection of his architects than the House of Commons or the Board of Works. Everything, for instance, that we have seen by the once celebrated Visconti bears the stamp of line, rule, and precedent, rather than of invention or feeling. And the completion of the Louvre, Visconti's

main performance, was urged on with such speed, that the chance of remedying in the details what was deficient in the design was not allowed to that admirably skilful school of architectural sculpture which France has so long possessed. Some, indeed, of the carving, we have been told, was so hasty and indifferent that it was found necessary to remove it—an eloquent fact! When public opinion insists on a similar purgation in Trafalgar Square, St. Paul's, the Palace of Westminster, and elsewhere, the day of taste will have dawned in England.

The Emperor has not been more successful in two more recent structures—the great barrack, Caserne Napoleon, behind the Hotel de Ville (that of Prince Eugène, Boulevart S. Martin, is better), and the Tribunal of Commerce, now building on the Island of the "City." In the barrack we have a phenomenon as rare in Paris as it is common with us—the old worn-out design where large windows are divided by stories of meagre pilasters, while the roof has no variety in sky-line, and no depth of cornice. The Hôtel de Commerce is not sufficiently finished to admit of judgment on the final effect; but the dome with which it is crowned is heavy and inelegant, and nothing can be more unlucky than the selection of the style (a kind of Louis Quatorze) for the situation. Every one who knows Paris will remember the peculiar picturesqueness of the Island. From the west, it is the great enlivening feature in the view over the Seine. It owes this almost entirely to the fact that on it are concentrated nearly all the Gothic buildings of Paris—the Sainte Chapelle, Notre Dame, and the round conically-roofed towers of the Palais de Justice. With this graceful and effective group, taste imperatively required that any new building should harmonize; and it is seriously to be regretted that the occasion (which was not unlike that

which has just been similarly dealt with at Montague House and the Public Offices) should have been thrown away.

Our notice of this Hotel leads us to the main circumstance which we referred to at the beginning as rendering the new architecture of Paris less than thoroughly satisfactory. Varied and tasteful as it is compared with what we have in English towns, it is, as a whole, deficient in force and individuality. It wants the pliancy and vigour—in one word, the *life* of the Gothic style. In saying this, we make allowance for the peculiar difficulties of designing large shop-fronts and rows of private dwelling-houses. Yet we think that a walk through new Paris will impress even those who, like ourselves, feel painfully at every step our own failure in the same class of structures, with a sense of want of relief and accent in the street façades. What the French have now almost everywhere adopted is, indeed, a style of their own creation—a style dexterously and tastefully developed from what is rather vaguely called Italian, but free, in general, from the common-place and the unmeaning structural devices (window-triangles, columns, pilasters, and the Orders at large) which in England are still dominant. The ingenuity and skill with which these modifications have been devised, the invention and spirit shown in the ornaments, are worthy of all praise. But this Gallic style is nevertheless so far limited by its laws, and restrained by its antecedents, that it cannot compete with the Gothic in force and accentuation. It cannot allow such variety of design, whether in the apertures, or the sky-line (almost the most valuable element in town architecture), or the decorations, as its earlier and, we may add, its more essentially French rival. Into the "battle of the styles" we shall not here enter. But we would

venture, with much diffidence, to suggest to the able architects who have latterly done so much to beautify France, that even an occasional employment of one of the forms of Pointed architecture would have a very telling effect in a street or a boulevart. We trust it is unnecessary to add that, in suggesting this, we do not contemplate the mere imitation of their own or of any other ancient examples. But the ability with which, as we have indicated, the far less pliable and, in our judgment, less vital and truthful "Italian" has been modified in France, gives the surest promise that a similar result would attend the resumption of Gothic. For this, it is easy to see how not only France, but England, Italy, and Belgium, would afford motives of inestimable value; and something would of itself enter into it which would infallibly bring the style into full accordance with the wants and tastes of our own age. In a word, what we would plead for in France is a Nineteenth-century Gothic. And, for some admirable examples of this—and that equally in domestic, civic, and church building—it is a pardonable pride to think that we can honestly direct our intelligent and high-spirited neighbours to England.

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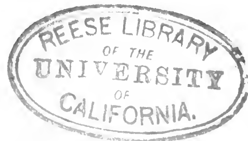

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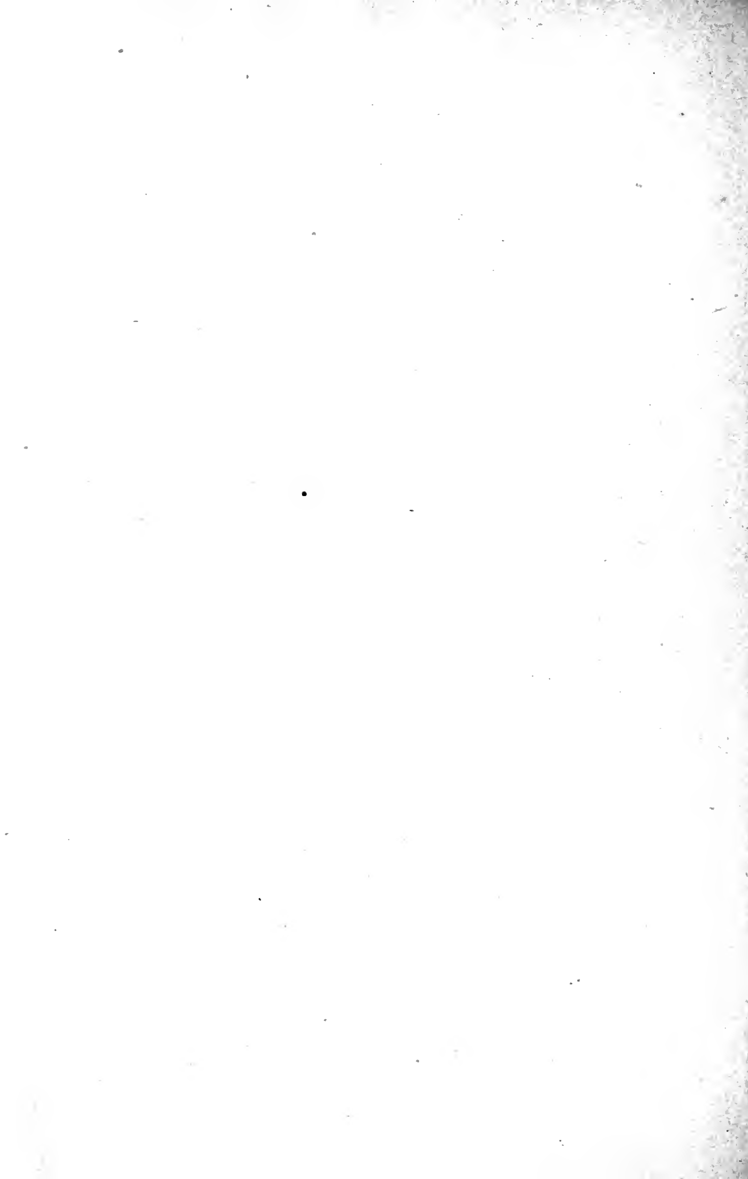

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