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THE NEW PATH.

PUBLISHED BY THE

Society for the Advancement of

TRUTH IN ART.

No. 9.] "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things that shall be hereafter." [Jan., 1864.

SCULPTURE.*

WHAT we call Gothic sculpture is the carved decoration of the buildings and furniture of the nations of western Europe, which was produced between the middle of the twelfth and the close of the fifteenth centuries. The best of it was produced in a more limited area, namely, in northern and central Italy, northern and central France, and in England; and in a more limited space of time, different in different countries. But while all attempts at Gothic work outside the territorial limits mentioned, show marked inferiority in every way, the temporal limits are not so absolute; for a century before the best time the work was strong in spirit and purpose, and was gallantly pushed forward towards perfection, and for a century after the best time its forms were retained and its life simulated. This work thus widely scattered over time and space, is varied enough in character, as we shall discover: its materials, sentiment and purposes all differ widely in different places and times.

But it is all of one school, when we consider the Art of the world, and differs as completely from the Greek work which we have been considering, as sculpture can differ from sculpture.

Until within a few years it would have been impossible to speak with any confidence of the principles that govern Gothic sculpture. Its amount is so great, its manifestations are so many and so varied, its spirit so subtle and so removed from the spirit of our nineteenth century work, that, up to the middle point of the century, now only thirteen years over-past, all discussion of it took the form of puzzled half-admiration of this or that carving or series of carvings. The careful examination, abundant recording and generous criticism of very recent times have given us new insight into the middle ages, and have made ascertainable the principles of their work. We propose only such statement of these principles as will be agreed to by all lovers and students of Gothic Art.

Gothic sculpture began like all sculpture, in the desire felt by all people called barbarous to decorate their buildings and utensils, a desire which is more or less weakened, it seems, as the people become what is called civilized. Feudal and ecclesiastical Europe was fond of decorating its walls reared for shelter, defence, and pride, and the merchant towns rivalled in their splendor, the priests and barons whom they rivalled in arms and diplomacy. Churches built with the slowness of lavish expense and care by wealthy and leisurely chapters, were carved all over, of course. But also castles and cloisters hurried to completion for protection against weather or foe, had their square cushion capitals softened by the lines of suggested

*Continued from December number.

leaves, or animated by rude semblances of birds and beasts and men.

Thus far, and through the earliest times, the Gothic builders agreed in their practice with the Greeks of the earliest times, and with all those child-like young nations who have loved beauty well enough to buy it with a price in labor and thought. But with advancing merit appears the great and marked divergence of Gothic and Greek, for the Gothic builder subordinated his sculpture most sternly to Architectural effect, but the Greek subdued his architecture into a setting and foil for his sculpture. A Greek temple afforded a fine display for colossal statues and continuous bas-relief; beyond these its forms were studiously simple and formal; the shallow fluting of shafts, the delicate shaping of mouldings was all the Greek desired to worthily surround and display his marble gods; the lower creatures, animals and plants, he hardly regarded, in his best work not at all, save where horses are introduced to lend dignity to men. There was no consultation of Architectural effect in the sculpture, other than such as this, that figures in a temple pediment would stand erect in the middle and recline in the angles. But the Gothic sculpture was set to help the building. No merit of its own would exempt it from its duty of being an architectural decoration.

This subordination of the Gothic sculpture to the whole effect of the building to which it belonged, was partly caused by the vastly greater importance of buildings, as such, among the mediæval nations of Europe than among the Greeks. Consider the difference, in this respect, between the greatest of Grecian temples, and even second-class Cathedrals of the Middle Ages. The Parthenon was a vast and splendid open portico, having within it a small and rather gloomy apartment, not entered by the people. There were no windows, no doorways of importance; the wall surface in which the two doors were pierced, was almost unseen by any one whose sight was fixed upon the ranged columns without, no division into smaller parts, each having its own natural decoration, no interior. Compare with this a mediæval cathedral, much greater in length and breadth, and vastly higher, varied in outline, both of plan and against the sky, multifarious in division, all its parts differing one from another in form and purposes; with vast windows, around whose jambs rich detail seemed naturally to gather, whose space was divided by fanciful tracery of carved stone, with generous and stately doorways, under whose arched heads the sculptured ornament would culminate in Bible history and saintly legend, with capitals of a thousand forms and sizes, surmounting single shafts and clustered piers, and needing all the leaves of the forest to rightly decorate them; inviting the people within, to a vast and many-angled interior, shut in by walls of stone, divided by columns of stone, skied by groined vaulting of stone; not one, nor several, but every part demanding the sculptor's aid to turn its rugged utility into a beautiful and speaking service.

As the cathedrals were, so, on a scale of less size and magnificence, were the churches. And so were the civil and domestic buildings, baronial castle, royal or ducal palace, town hall, burgher's house, all solid, enduring, added to and embellished by succeeding generations, all giving as good occasion as the cathedrals for the display of the sculptor's art, while all trace of the residences of the nobles of Athens has passed away, and what little we can

infer about them tends to show that they were mainly of wood, very perishable, large perhaps, but only large by the bringing together of many small and low apartments.

It is evident, therefore, that the natural impulse of a Gothic artist could never be that of a Greek. The mediæval sculptor must needs work in a different spirit, under the influence of the multiform and stately building under whose arches and crowning whose gables his work must stand, from that of the Greek whose work itself would give to the temple its only beauty beyond that of the disciplined craftsmanship which it had in common with easy-running chariots and delicately-forged armor.

This subordination is the main distinction of the Gothic from all other sculpture, and it is so, and we would impress it upon the reader as being so, because all other peculiarities of temper and practice depend upon this one. Some of these peculiarities we must now consider.

First, love of inferior nature.

The builders of the eleventh century received from their Roman and Romanesque predecessors a conventional system of ornament which they tried hard to follow. For instance, their capitals were fashioned for a long time almost entirely on the model of the Corinthian, the well-known conventional Acanthus leaf of that order being copied at first as well as the science and skill of the carver could do it. But these carvers loved the leaves of their own fields. Very soon the reign of the acanthus was disturbed; one builder fashioned his capitals with especial reference to the growth of the acanthus itself, appealing from the Grecian decision,—another combined with his conventional acanthus some other plant which he knew better and carved more naturally—another tried hard for capitals to be Corinthian but varied in character, and set his classic leaf in a score of fanciful positions. Some foliage from the fields and forests began soon to be freely used; but, during the transition, human heads and animals are more readily employed than real leaf-forms, and in many cases the first step from the strict Corinthian type was to meaningless scroll work and interlacing bands. Frequently in the same row of piers there are all these styles of carving to be found. Thus in the nave piers of the great cathedral of Tournai the whole first step in advance can be seen at once. There are none that can be called Corinthian, the capitals are not of a shape to allow of such ornament, but there are some with merely scrolls and faint suggestions of leaves, some with grotesque and some with serious heads of men within scrolls, some with leaves, more or less conventionalized, all well and completely cut.

With the complete establishment as a style of building of the Gothic of the pointed arch and gabled roof, came the complete victory of the realistic Gothic carving. All over western Europe the forest leaves were woven into archivolts, set fairly around capitals, laid quaintly on the spurs of bases. Field flowers blossomed and spread their delicate leaves for the service of the sculptor: the rose, the oak, the hawthorn, the aspen gave him their flowers, their acorns, their angular or flowing, or prickly leaves. Delicately outlined on thin alabaster slabs, at Venice; carved as for jewelry in the hard red marble of Verona; inlaid in green serpentine and white marble, at Lucca; hewn boldly out of sandstone at Strasbourg; of limestone at Paris; moulded in brick and hammered out of iron and carved in wood everywhere—the herbs and the trees, their leaves, blossoms, and fruit, were given to men for their constant admiration and delight, remaining unwithered when winter stripped the world of its green robe, and cheering the crowded towns over whose streets summer could not spread it.

This most admirable and healthy love of the forms of vegetation, was accompanied by a close observation of animals, and a thorough sympathy with their nature and habits. The carving and inlaying was not of plants alone. Birds were among them, sometimes quietly occupying the corners of capitals, or, with their outspread wings, filling the spandrils above window arches, sometimes pecking at fruit, or otherwise in action, freely displaying their graceful forms in apparent motion among the leaves. Beasts were there, associated with men, as horses and dogs in hunting scenes on the Lombard

churches, or as the foxes and nondescripts whom they hunt; or fighting and gambolling together, as constantly in northern work; or used symbolically, as the griffins and lions who bear up the porch columns at Verona and Bergamo; or put to do menial work as gargoyles, to spout rain water out of their ever-gaping mouths.

In all this is shown not merely love of nature, but a most thorough understanding of natural objects; only a complete and careful examination will serve to show, in any case, the complete knowledge of their models displayed by the thirteenth century sculptors. In this knowledge of the nature of the lower creatures they are alone among sculptors, and all this knowledge is the result of their love for and observation of the facts of nature, for there was no science to help them. Moreover they are alone among sculptors in this, that they make, on suitable occasion, the plants and animals the principal subject of their work, unassociated with man and his needs.

Second, Varied Design.

Gothic sculpture of any good period proposed to itself many different objects, and sought to reach its varied ends by means as varied. In every large Gothic building there were scores of places where carving was needed, and where it was always set, when there were money and peace for the work. The sculpture was different for each occasion, different in subject, in treatment of the subject, in style of work, in completeness of execution. Down in the church porch, between the columns of the jambs, are niched and canopied statues, portraits of kings and queens, or of nobles who enriched and of bishops who governed the church, or else symbolically representing saints and apostles ranged on either side of the crowned Madonna with her child. These, and all statues set close to the eye, meeting face to face those who enter or pause to look at the church, are finished as perfectly as the sculptor's science and skill enabled him to finish them. So also is the sculpture of inferior nature that may be associated with them, the roses that twine around them, the leaves that stiffen themselves into capitals above their heads, are all worked to a likeness of nature as perfect as the material would admit.

Along the front, above the porches, in the capitals of massive and stout-shafted work, and in separate niches between tower buttresses are figures again, of life-size these, very often, portraits very often, expressive and full of meaning always, portraits of visions of the sculptor, if not of men and women he had seen. But these are not so minute in workmanship, nor carried so far toward realization. The leaf and flower ornament around them is broader and simpler in its masses. Delicacy and subtlety of form are sacrificed for vigorous shadows and emphasized lights, which appeal to the distant spectator, and are as readily understood by him as the finer carving within reach of his hand.

As we ascend, we find the same careful observance of the fitness of the design for its place. The crockets which ascend, like flames, the Italian gables and the northern spires, seem rude and unsightly things to him who climbs to them. They were not meant to please the workman whose scaffold lifted him to their side, nor the inquisitive tourist who climbs the cathedral roof, but to delight the gazer from the square below.

Design is as carefully adapted to the material, in Gothic work, as to the place and purpose. Carvings in wood are different in their whole spirit and nature from carvings in stone, and smiths' work different from either. There is nothing more noticeable about Gothic work, than the frankness with which they admitted the imperfections of their material, and the strict observance, in their designs, of the limits thus imposed. An andiron, for instance, of which a drawing is beside us, is as faultless in design as can be imagined, for it is a hard-worked andiron, perfectly answering its purpose, and the upright part of it is obviously an iron bar hammered into what shape it has, and yet its forms are full of a certain sharp-edged beauty, and the dragon-head at the top, two inches and a half long, has more real, savage, wild-beast nature about it, than all the Renaissance lion-heads in America. Every traveller in Belgium and Italy, who is "curious in such matters," will recollect the wonderful locks and knockers he saw, every reader of Architectural books will remember the

splendid hinges which at once swing and hold together the oaken doors of some fortunate English churches.

Again, Design is varied, in Gothic work as in no other, by the differences in temper of the workmen. The great facts of the freedom of the inferior carvers, their position, different from that of the greatest designers only in the degree of merit to which each had attained, the fact that the sculptor esteemed the best was put in charge of the whole building, as "master of the work," (magister operis) or architect, having, of course, such aid of skilled constructors and watchful superintendents as he might need,—all these make up the most vital point of all to be considered, in the present revival of Gothic Architecture.

That result of it in which we are at present interested, is the wonderful variety in the sculpture they produced; two capitals of oak leaves being as different as statues by Story and Magni in the last Great Exhibition, or as drawings of the same tree by any two artists you choose to name. For, observe, the whole nature of the oak leaf or sprig of oak leaves is not expressible in marble or sandstone, any more than it is in a pen drawing or an oil sketch. And of two sculptors, both seeking the true expression of the oak leaf, each will select what seems to him of the most importance, and render that as well as he can, probably depriving his work in so doing of the expression of some truth sought by the other sculptor.

Third, Interest in and attempt to record important truths.

Especially the truths of Christian revelation, as embodied in those passages of Scripture history and those legends of saints and martyrs most capable of being rendered into sculpture. This was a principle of all Gothic art, for there was so much to say, so much to teach, and such insufficient means of teaching, where few could read, and books were so hardly procurable. And it is characteristic of Gothic art, for no other school of sculpture has ever tried to teach religion, but only to display its own grand ideas of the godlike, or to record the ceremonies of priestcraft.

Nor is it alone the truths of religion that this sculpture had to do with, but truths of nature also, as we have seen, and portraiture constantly, and domestic incident of all kinds, and the daily occupations of men. The thirteenth century carvers were as much given to narrative of all kinds as the contemporary illuminators of manuscripts, or painters on glass, and evidently thought that their business was to tell their neighbors all about the world they lived in and the world they were going to, and to tell posterity all about themselves and their neighbors. The Fall of Man is as solemn a subject as could well be chosen by a sculptor, but the greatest sculpture of it adorns a palace of unequalled magnificence; hunting, with horse and hound and horn is a pursuit as free from religious interest as we can imagine,—but the best hunting is carved on church fronts in Lombardy; shoemakers and carpenters at their work must have been familiar to those who saw those sculptures new,—but these and the other trades are honored by a bas relief apiece in England and again more than once in France, and a capital apiece in Venice.

Fourth. Preference for the draped over the naked form of man. It seemed at first that we should say "dislike of the naked form," but it is not such dislike, it is the need of the drapery. And this for several reasons. Firstly historical truth, for the business of the sculptors, we have seen, was record, and not ideal perfection of body, and scripture history or facts of daily life were only to be set forth by groups of clothed figures. Secondly, artistic truth, for the artists lived among people who wore much heavy and sweeping drapery, and not fluttering and gauzy robes, only half covering, and no way concealing the body, and they knew the play of the folds which showed the muscular action below better than they knew the naked limbs in their freedom. Thirdly, architectural lines, for the draped figure can be a help to the architecture, when the nude figure would only injure it.

We have thus briefly noticed the four peculiarities of Gothic sculpture, which seem the most important to onr examination. It is necessary that we should briefly consider the statement made above, that all these peculiarities

depend upon the subordination of the sculpture to architectural effect.

The love of lower nature, which we found so characteristic of Gothic work, was directly fostered by this subordination; for, the first duty of sculpture being to decorate, forms of vegetation were the most natural resort for the decoration of a capital or an archivolt, animals were found easier to carve than men, the inferior creation generally was more readily used as a purely ornamental feature. Had the perfection of the sculpture ever become the first consideration, we should have had no more ornamental buildings, piles of "associated sculpture," but formal and plain buildings with perfected sculpture set upon them somewhere; we should have had no more leaves and flowers, vines and sprays, graceful birds, sportive and savage beasts,—sculpture that knew no object but its own merit would never have spent its strength on these.

For similar reasons all variety of design must have disappeared, had architectural effect not been the primal consideration. For, where sculpture alone is considered, perfection in it is aimed at, in which case the thousand artists who can produce good and useful art, but can never attain perfection are taken from their true work, and are set to carrying out the ideas of the greater men, or to smoothing mouldings and shaping conventional and reiterated ornament. The ingenious blacksmith, the wood-carver with a fancy or two of his own, all such men must follow the rules; no hammering out his own rude and quaint devices, he must imitate the designs of the great masters of the day, and give his whole thought to getting his edges sharp and the four sides of his bar just alike.

No man can tell stories or preach in stone, if he has perfect human sculpture to produce; grandeur of form is his aim.

No man will long drape his figures, except partially and slightly, if he is studying figure sculpture as his principal pursuit in life.

In brief, but for the subordination of sculptural greatness to architectural greatness, mediæval art would have tried to follow where Greek art led, could never have succeeded, and the world would not have known what architecture might be.

Observe, we have never said that sculpture was subordinate to architecture, but to architectural effect. Sculpture so subordinated, with painting so subordinated, added to good building makes architecture of it. Sculpture cannot be subordinated to architecture, except in the sense that a part is less than the whole.

Do not suppose that the work must needs be bad, or inferior, because subordinate. In speaking, above, of the varied design of Gothic work, we alluded briefly to the limitations that govern representative art. These limitations are always present. Titian would have failed, had he tried to imitate a man so as to deceive, failed and spoiled his picture besides. Sculpture in sandstone has certain limits which it must not overpass; sculpture in marble feels them less. Work fifty feet above the eye has limits of completion not confining silver ware for the cabinet. Carving that must stand the weather must be guardedly designed, carving to go under the arcade may be worked more freely. Capitals that bear a heavy weight must not be deeply cut, in slender shrine work strength need not be so much considered. You would hardly improve the west front of Chartres by working up its slim and stiffened statues into the perfect form of man;—at least we do not want to see it tried;—build another church for your anatomically correct statues, you may surpass Chartres, and you may not.

The Gothic sculpture was going on towards perfected science, when elements of decay within itself and the revival of classical learning without, overthrew it. We can gather hints of what it might have become from ivory carvings, caskets and shrines in silver and bronze, the painting of Giotto, the mosaics of his campanile, and the work of the earliest Renaissance artists, Ghiberti, Donatello and Verocchio. We have it in our power to do all that the Gothic artists might have done, if we will first do what they did, not otherwise. If the world still care for art, this will be done, sooner or later. Work is doing in Europe which ought to settle the question, before long, whether art is wanted any more or no.

To be continued.

THE CHURCHES OF RESERVOIR SQUARE.

WHEN it was determined to have a Crystal Palace and the projectors were looking for a site for it, the important discovery was made that New York rejoiced in a public square, before that time almost unknown to its citizens, called, after its hydrocephalic neighbor, Reservoir Square. As it was thought to be good for nothing else, our Common Council indulged in an exercise of magnaminity heretofore unknown, and gave it freely, for the erection of an exhibition building. In the course of time it was adorned with a graceful structure (lately mentioned in this journal) which in the course of *its* time passed away as the grass withereth under the fiery ordeal, on the night when the great comet was in its greatest glory. This beautiful flower was not without rank and noisome attendant weeds, for around the new building grew up such a besieging army of sheds, booths, and outlandish buildings as have never been seen or heard of before or since. These, too, have had their day, and nothing remains but some charred ruins to remind us of them.

Thus we record a ten years' history.

All these material creations now live only in memory, awful reminders of the transitory nature of human work. But now the ruins have been cleared away, children play on the blooming grass where once the eyes of the world were directed,—and where dissipation, gaming and trade once ruled, now stand three churches.

There is nothing very remarkable about these structures; they will have very little connection with the history of architecture, and in the course of a few years they, too, will pass away. But they will furnish us the occasion for some suggestions which may be profitable to some of our readers, or which may pass unheeded as the subjects that call them forth. The Third Unitarian Church was dedicated with solemn ceremonies, on Christmas day, to the worship of Almighty God. There is nothing remarkable about it to the passer-by, or even to him who enters, and we would not disappoint the reader if he expects praise of its parts, for of praise we give it none. But when a worshipping, and as we believe, intelligent congregation, under the guidance of an earnest and truth-loving pastor, dedicate a house to the God of Truth and Holiness, we deem it our duty to inquire whether the house be a mirror of truth, and whether it is conceived in the spirit of devotion. And therefore we say not so much about what it is but what it should be.

It is a rectangular building on a lot fifty by one hundred feet, with a basement for lecture, school, and vestry rooms, and over it an auditorium for about six hundred hearers,—with a gallery across the front, a recess for pulpit opposite and another recess for the organ on one side of the pulpit. The side walls being on the extreme sides of the lot, are of plain rough brick, and without windows. With this the plainest of the work we find no fault, for the neighbors may build against these walls any day. But the front stares us in the face, and always will, as it is seen across the square from all directions. It is of Connecticut stone, and assumes to be Gothic. We can state authoritively that it is not the New Gothic that we are fighting for, and if it be the old, we confess our inability to fix the period of the style. It has buttresses, but does not seem to need them any more than the side walls, which stand alone very well. It has arches both pointed and segment which are good construction but nothing more It has wooden traceries which we are told are stone, for they are painted to imitate it. It has three sharp gable walls on the front which we know are not gable walls, for the roof has one gable and that is a flat one. It has windows of stained glass, coarse and vulgar in design, in which what are intended for *fleurs de lis* resemble more the Prince's feathers. But why have *fleurs de lis* in a church window? The question, we fear, is an idle one, for we are talking about a building in whose design the faintest evidence of thought is wanting.* In various places on the

* It may be a matter of surprise to some, that a journal, devoted to the revival of Gothic architecture, should see nothing in this front to which a word of approval can be given. We hold that in buildings of this particular class is found the most de-

front are carved capitals and finials which strongly remind us of Acanthus leaves.

We enter through a vestibule with plastered walls, painted and lined off to imitate stone, trimmed with pine wood painted to imitate black walnut; walk along an aisle carpeted with more *fleurs de lis*, and sit in a pew painted to imitate walnut, of which wood the top rails and arms only, are made. Before us, on the right of the pulpit, is an imitation walnut door in an imitation walnut casing, and over it a window with imitation stone tracery and trimming. Over our heads is an imitation vault, (which would not stand if it were a real vault, even though the walls were ten feet thick,) painted imitation of panels with tints of French grey, (a mixture of blue, carmine, whiting, and gum water,) after the most approved manner of cheap "fresco painters." This great flat vault appears to be supported on plaster columns, which appear to stand upon plaster corbels, all of which are stuck upon the walls in the most approved manner of modern stucco decorators. The side walls and chancel are painted, like the ceiling, with imitation cusped panels, the whole forming what a morning paper calls "a chaste and elegant design."

Here we have a description, not only of this, but of half a dozen other churches, all of which have been built within a few years, with the sole idea that they are "cheap," that is, that this style of house gives the most show for the money. Congregations, with limited means, believe with all conceivable docility that this is economy, and we give them all credit for their good intentions. But, in their ignorance of what true economy is, and with a certain amount of vanity running through all their ideas, they shut out all inquiry as to whether they are indulging in architectural falsehoods or not. And were it not for the fact that the Third Unitarian Society formed the laudable resolution to build a house that should be, from the first, free from debt, and therefore, sought to husband their means, and devote them only to that which would be useful, we would regard their wasteful expenditure for all the trickeries and falsehoods with which they pretend to decorate their house of worship, with less reproach and condemnation. But not content with simplicity, they have sought to keep up an air of "respectability,"—a species of vanity which makes people ashamed of their poverty—by making an external show of something beyond their means. The unthinking part of the world will, perhaps, call this a very "respectable" church, but the lover of truth, if he be not deceived by the transparent imitations that gaze upon him from every side, sees, in almost every part of it, blatant, heaven-defying lies. There is no palliation for the acts of church trustees who, making pretensions of economy, expend thousands of dollars for decorations which are not only worthless as ornament, but false in every line. Yet we would not even have their money devoted to good carving, or painting, or brain work of any kind, until their building is strong and durable. Rather let them build four bare walls and a roof of the roughest material, than suffer one outrage upon truth. Then, if their work be honest, let them ornament it in such manner as will afford instruction and enjoyment to the beholder; for thus, only, can the house of God become a fit place for the preaching of the truth. Until these principles are recognized, and our architects, clergymen, trustees, vestry-men and all who have influence upon the design of any church, agree that a church-building should have some relation to the use to which it is applied, yea more, that it should have just as much to do, in its way, in instructing the minds and softening the hearts of men, as the minister has in

based form of modern architecture, beside which the would-be Renaissance rises into comparative respectability. For, assuming to give a sort of general outward form of Gothic building, they show not the least perceptible knowledge of the facts of the old Gothic work now existing, or of the principles of construction or decoration acknowledged in any past time. To copy the Gothic work, even of a debased period, implies some little knowledge and a disposition to return to old things; but this Carpenters' Gothic which believes that all we want is pointed arches, pinnacles and gables, is conceived only in vanity, ignorance and lying duplicity. A Renaissance architect is entitled to the credit of following models in which he has some faith, but he who does this kind of work believes in nothing,—he defies knowledge, and grovels in the darkness of his own ignorance.

his holy office, we can hope for little real progress. This, we know, is called high-church doctrine, and the lovers of dim religious light, and devotees of forms and ceremonies may think we are on their side, but we assure them we mean not what they do. We hold that a church should be a living exemplar of the truth, and every appearance of falsity or worldliness in it should be guarded against as religiously as the minister would avoid heresy or infidelity; we believe, also, that the Architect should feel that he has just as sacred a duty to perform, in his work, as the minister has in his, and should so do that all his labors may tend to the glory of God and salvation of man.

How far any such idea has been carried out in the Third Unitarian Church, our readers will readily judge by the context. We have taken this building to illustrate some ideas on church building and not because it is better or worse than a dozen others that could be pointed out, hoping that these suggestions may be profitable to those who may contemplate similar undertakings in the future.

There are two other churches on Reservoir Square. That which is on the Sixth Avenue side attracts our attention by having over its central window, following the line of the arch, a sign with these words in large gilt letters, "Prot. Episc. Church," and under them in very small letters, these words "of the ," —— "Advent." On the ground floor, on one side, we behold another sign, "Practical Upholsterer." The opposite side, we believe, is occupied as a real estate office. The cellars are to let, and will probably be devoted in course of time to beer and oysters.

In this building we have another kind of poverty, but with this honorable distinction, that the vestrymen are not ashamed of their poverty, and seek not to hide it with cheap imitations. So they go into business, set up a commercial sort of a church, which though it is much after the manner of ordinary shop buildings, has nothing in it to offend the eye, but on the contrary is modest and unpretending, as it should be. We trust that this congregation will make money with their shops and thus be enabled some day to build a church worthy of the name.

The third church, on the forty-second street side, is, to use a Hibernicism, a chapel. But as a church edifice is now being built in front of it which promises in a few months to obscure all that we now see of it, we take this occasion to call attention to a simple and unpretending yet truthful piece of architecture, in which we rejoice to see some good effects of color even with rough materials, and which we believe was conceived in the true spirit. It shows, perhaps, better than anything else that we have, how much can be produced by ordinary materials at small cost. It is designed by Foster and Babb, who show by their work that in many respects they are with us in spirit.

A LETTER TO A SUBSCRIBER.

New York, December, 1863.

Mr. ——, Baltimore, Md.,

Dear Sir,

Your letter, enclosing the price of subcription for the "New Path," for one year, was duly received, and your words of good cheer were read with pleasure. We have been greeted, in certain quarters, by very different voices from yours, some of them altogether offensive and scurrilous; others cold and unsympathetic; and then, again, there have hailed us, from the great ocean, where our little craft is sailing with the myriad others, small and great—ours, surely, among the smallest—voices, of which yours is the echo, voices of good, kindly and brave men, who have sailed long and far, and known all weathers, and all the dangers of the way,—welcoming us as comrades, cheering us with hope of a good ending, and bidding us God speed.

For all these greetings,—and why not for the gruff as well as the kindly? we are, we trust, rightly thankful; and yours, too, would have been of unmixed cheer if that unlucky post-

script had not been written. If you remember, thus it ran:

"Should you ever conclude to bring Politics within the scope of the 'New Path,' you will *immediately*, thereafter discontinue my paper."

This word, "Politics," puzzled me exceedingly for the space of thirty seconds, or less. Taken in its ordinary signification, why you should suspect us of any intention to make politics a leading topic in our journal, or, why the introduction of that particular subject should be so curiously offensive to you, would have been inexplicable if I had not suddenly remembered that your letter was written in Baltimore, a city in what used to be a slave-state, and that, when you said "Politics," of course you meant, "Slavery." It was at once evident that the postscript itself was a veritable curiosity, being, perhaps, one of the last existing specimens of the sort of missive which used to be sent, regularly, by every Southern gentleman to the editor of the Northern journal he subscribed to, dictating what he should say, and what he should not say, and which always commanded implicit obedience from the subservient editors aforesaid, a habit of obedience which some of them have not been able, even at this late day, to lay aside altogether.

This explanation, of course, set me at ease at once, and made clear why you laid such stress upon the omission of what you facetiously called "Politics," putting a capital "P," which, when you see the joke, has really all the effect of a wink; and underscoring the "immediately," so as to let us know that there was to be no delay, whatever, in stopping the paper the very instant that the ill-savored topic should be introduced. For, you will see, that so long as I thought that, by "politics," you meant only politics, I could not understand why you should object to our leaving Art for that, rather than for Religious Controversy, or Metallurgy, or Homœopathy, or Discussions concerning the Lost Tribes, or any other matter that might wean us from our first love; but, so soon as I saw that, when you said "Politics," you meant "Slavery," I understood the whole matter.

It will never do, therefore, to send you the "New Path" without having first set you right as to our position and the position of the journal itself. The explanation I offer is not impertinent; it is plain that you need it, and there will be many who need it as much as you.

The "New Path," then, is not published as a money-making speculation, nor with any hope, or even urgent wish that it may pay its way. We should as soon expect, if we were soldiers, that the enemy, after every discharge of our musketry, would politely advance and draw from their pockets the amount of cash necessary to pay for the ammunition which had just decimated their ranks, as that picture buyers, in general, or the artists, would care to expend their small change for such a plain-spoken, meddling asker of unanswerable, or, not-to-be-answered questions, as this same "New Path." We exist for the purpose of stirring up strife; of breeding discontent; of pulling down unsound reputations; of making the public dissatisfied with the work of most of the artists, and, better still, of making the artists dissatisfied with themselves. We refuse our respect to popular verdicts, or rather, to what are called such, but which are, in fact, the verdicts of friendly or interested cliques, and we utterly deny the value of the greater number of Academic laws, believing that they and the Academics which made and uphold them have done harm, and only harm, to the sacred cause of true Art.

Then, again, we are sufficient to ourselves. We neither ask for people's money nor for their praise. At all events, we will not stir a hair's breadth out of our appointed way to gain a copper or a smile. We do not care to be attractive; we have no famous contributors; nobody is paid anything to write for us, and nobody will be, and we make no effort to cater to the love of amusement. We have no "Art Items," and if you wish to know where all the artists are going for the summer, how much Jones got for his painting of A Pair of Nutcrackers, which "for tenderness of tone, harmony of color, delicacy of drawing and carefulness of composition has seldom been surpassed," or what unfinished work Smith has on his easel, you must go somewhere else, for it will never be

our business to tell you. If you like us, it must be for something very different from that which draws you to your favorite newspaper or magazine; you must like us because we are in earnest, because we *are* iconoclasts, because we will not budge from the stand we have taken, and because it is plain that we have made up our minds to be heard.

This is a plain statement, you will admit, and you will understand from it without difficulty how impossible it would be for us to take your money, or any man's, on conditions. What we shall say, and what we shall leave unsaid is decided without the slightest reference to anybody's opinions but our own.

"But," you will exclaim, "this is a very uncomfortable, truculent, waspish vein, and does not in any way answer to my notion of what an Art Journal should aim at. I look at pictures to be amused, soothed, calmed; to be lifted above these dull, harassing earthly scenes into a realm of pure imagination, and, while I can tolerate a reasonable amount of fault-finding, which acts, in fact, like a sort of titillation to the moral nerves, and, so, produces, in its way, a species of pleasure,—I find, on the whole that praise is better; search for all the good there may be in the picture or statue, and talk of that; after all, you know, 'tis only a difference of taste: the moral law has nothing to do with these matters, and a blessed thing it is that there is one subject, at least, that gentlemen can discuss over their wine and cigars without the danger of raising more than a ripple on the surface of polite conversation."

Just here, my friend, is where you and we part company. See, now, the reason why you can never thoroughly sympathize with us, and why we can never condescend to you. Our views of the nature and end of Art are fundamentally different from yours. For you it is an amusement; to us it is profound study. To you, it is a trifling pursuit, meant for trifling minds, or, at best, for men in their lightest moods; to us, it is one of the most serious of human pursuits, demanding the full service of the best powers. The men whom you call artists are, with comparatively few exceptions, and of these not more than two or three are in America,—persons who have adopted this profession merely as an easy means of making a living: men of little general culture, or accomplishment, without any particular aim in the world, or any message to their fellows, of importance enough to excuse their leaving the ranks of active mechanical workers to deliver it. For the most part, too—and here the American exceptions are painfully few—our painters are men who have never thoroughly mastered their trade—have never given time and study enough to learn to draw or to lay on color; they are mere tyros, without learning, outside of their profession or in it, and yet laying claim to all the respect and consideration which ought to be the hard-earned reward of long and patient devotion to a work held little less than sacred.

Now, I assert that the Artist must be a man of a very different stamp from this. You cannot well put the standard too high. The more culture, the better intellect, the higher moral nature, the more knowledge—the greater the Artist. The greatest artists—Giotto, Angelico, Durer, Raphael, Angelo, Leonardo, Titian, Reynolds, Turner—were among the best intellects of their time, men of varied learning and accomplishment. There was scarcely one of them who would not have filled, with credit, any part that might have been assigned to him. They were not only painters, they were sculptors, architects, engineers, ambassadors, authors, the companions of princes, the friends of the greatest and best men of their times, leaders in society, held in the highest public honor,—men, in the fullest sense of the word.

What is the work of the Artist? Is he to cater to our amusement, to feed our idle mirth, to charm us with sensual delights, to make himself a superior sort of mountebank, only a little higher than a Blondin or a Leotard? Is he a designer of elegant ornaments, to be classed at the head of those who make our carpets, invent our furniture, paint our china, and set our precious stones? Is there any incongruity in finding in the same shop, Raphael, Angelo, Frère and Holman Hunt for sale along with cuckoo-clocks, watch-cases, and paper-folders, or, do they all belong, pictures, Swiss carvings, bon-bons and potiche-

manie, in the same inventory with "*objets de luxe*," "*articles de vertu*," and "*articles de Paris*?"

No, by Heaven! The Artist is leader and teacher, nothing less! He ranks with Homer, and Dante, with Chaucer and Milton and Shakspeare; and all the true artists, great and small, lift up their grand and beautiful, but silent, voices in sweet accord with all the poets of the race. There are artists to-day, and shall be more, who are nobly carrying on the work begun by great men in the past, and helping the race forward by their teachings, and we are working, feebly it may be, but with what might we have, to hold the high aim that animates these men before the youth of our own conntry, that they may follow in the path of the true artists who have gone before them, and shed such gracious light about our darkling human ways.

We would have the young men, who to-day are moved to follow Art, believe, first of all, that they are entering upon a work in which, to win an honest, enduring name, all their best powers must be exerted to the full, for the task is not easy, but one most difficult. They will see about them many men calling themselves artists, and called so by the world, who gain their living, more or less easily, by covering canvases with colors dissolved in oil. On these canvases they portray the likenesses of things in the heavens above, and on the earth beneath, and in the waters under the earth, with much or little fidelity. Some of them hit most nearly, and with the readiest response in cash, the figures of water-fowl, others, of four-footed beasts, others, of men and women. Others, again, without a blush, declare that the colors, which they have smeared over the pure canvas, do verily stand for the fair face of nature herself, and that this part of the smearing is a mountain, this a tree, and this a rock, and that unlike as they may be to the facts of mountain, tree and rock, as we have observed them, they are "developed from the idea," and, therefore, to be accepted. Others, again, draw upon what they call the Imagination, and portray impossible people in improbable attitudes, doing unlikely things. These last call themselves exclusively imaginative or creative artists, and though they do not, on the whole, get as much cash as the others, which with these men is the sole criterion of excellence, yet they assume for themselves, and are granted generally, greater importance and a higher rank, which make up for a less plethoric purse.

Our young neophyte will find these men not only in one country but in all where Art is cultivated. As many in France, in Germany, in England, as in America. He will find that Art is looked upon as a trade, as a money-making profession, one which, in the aristocratic countries, has this great advantage, that a gentleman can enter it, make money, and still remain a gentleman. And, as is legitimate in trade, he will find the division of labor complete. Jones has painted a picture of a grouse that sold: henceforth, he will paint grouse by the gross. He becomes known as the man who 'does' grouse. He cannot, or will not, paint anything else, and so long as the grouse sell faster than he can paint them, why should he risk his bread and butter in doubtful experiments? Brown has painted a portrait of a lady that looks like any pretty woman, and immediately the carriages of sitters besiege his door. "My fortune is made," cries the lucky painter, "I will paint only pretty women, and all shall be pretty alike!" and, henceforth, Brown paints nothing but one eternal face in one eternal way. Robinson has painted a landscape, in which the rocks, taking some person's fancy, get praised, and the picture sells, and now every picture of Robinson's must have one of his rocks in it, no matter whether the rock could have been there in nature or not. 'Tis Robinson's mark, like Wouverman's white horse, or Teniers' boor.

Robinson may paint his rock as often as he will, only let him not meddle with Smithers' "sunset," or Briggs' "glow," or Driggs' "white birch-tree." The new-comer will observe these men and their ways with wonder, but their success with greater wonder still. Let him not, however, believe that they are in any sense of the word, Artists; they are nothing but more or less successful tradesmen, men with a knack, painters of grouse, blue-berries, coats, gowns, rocks and white birch-trees. The Artist is not a man who paints

pictures for a living, only, and who cares little what he paints, nor how, so that it sells. He is a man with thoughts which he burns to express in form and color; with knowledge of nature that he has gained by long and patient, loving study, and which he yearns to impart, that we may be sharers in his deep delight; with large love of his kind, and warm faith in human goodness in which we must perforce be led to share as he sets before us his strong and tender transcripts of the sad, sweet human story; in a word, he is one who sees far and deep into man and nature, and who is trained and instructed to make true report of what he sees. The Poet and the Artist have the same errand in the world, and while one sings his message to the ear, the other paints his to the eye. Only, this condition is common to both; each must have something to sing that is worth the hearing, and he must be thorough master of his instrument.

But what, you exclaim in despair, has all this to do with my not wishing you to meddle with politics? Nothing at all, if by politics you meant tariffs, internal revenue, public improvements and the like; much, if, as I shrewdly suspect, you mean slavery. For, it follows from what I have tried to set forth as the work of the Artist, that every human experience from which he can draw lessons for the teaching of the race belongs to him as much as to the Poet, and if he is moved by a right understanding of his work, he will see in the deepest human experiences subjects of the highest and most enduring interest. He will confess that it is time, at last, that Christianity, long since admitted to the mastership of man's highest as well as lowest field of work, to the law, to medicine, to the merchant's counting-room, to the mechanic's shop, should enter into the temple of Art, and consecrate its votaries, who have so long made it a house of merchandize, to an office worthy of the large respect they claim.

When, in the Introduction to the "New Path," the writer asserted that after forty years of work our elder artists had given us nothing that we care to keep, what answer did we get, coming it is true from a source of no authority, but well enough representing the conservative class? We were reproached with having made a statement wilfully false, or unpardonably ignorant, and were called unintelligent and unjust for consigning to oblivion the best portraits of Stuart, Allston and Inman, and, Heaven save the mark!—the skies of Cole! The coarseness of the terms with which these illustrations of our ignorance were ushered in might well be forgotten in the drollery of the illustrations themselves, but the comical climax was reached when we were gravely informed that these earlier names in the history of our Art could no more be lightly set aside by us than the names of Reynolds and Gainsborough could be treated with disrespect by Mr. Ruskin! Did the writer of these words ever see a Reynolds or a Gainsborough? We must believe not. If he had, surely he would have hesitated before making the treatment accorded to two of the greatest Painters that ever lived, a standard for the judgment of four men of whom three had, perhaps, a little merit, and one was the veriest dauber that ever spoiled good canvas.

We repeat our words. American painters have produced no work for forty years that is worth keeping, unless it may be for historical purposes. There never has been one of them sufficiently master of his technics to make his mere painting valuable without reference to the subject treated, nor has there ever been one who had so much to say, and of such high import, that we could well afford to listen, though he stammered and hesitated in delivering his message. We say this boldly, because truth is best, and the time is come when it can hurt but few to acknowledge what every disinterested observer has long known. Art in America has been pursued on wrong principles. Its aims have been misunderstood; the Artist's work has not been comprehended. And beside that Art has suffered from the provincial character of all our culture, the moral atmosphere at home has been deadly to all high aspiration or achievement. We have been under the ban of a great national sin, concerning which all the religious teachers, all the literary men, all the best society, all the schools and colleges were, apparently, leagued together by a silent compact to utter no

word of remonstrance, rebuke or complaint. More moral cowardice has been shown by people in the front rank of our society, by clergymen, authors, school-teachers, professors, merchants, gentlemen and ladies, towards the sin of slavery than is good for the moral health to think of, or remember. Now, when a man is mastered by a great sin, everything he does feels the influence of that sin, and the same is true of a nation. So, our moral weakness infected everything. It gave a coward air to our Senate, to our churches, to our private manners, to our social intercourse. We were always avoiding something, which, of course, was always coming round the corner. Could Art hope to escape the general contagion? No, it felt it, as everything else did, and never to this day has an American painted a line that could be construed into a reproach to American Slavery, nor even into a suspicion that he was hostile to the system.*

And yet, what a work Art might have accomplished if there had been a man with a warm heart, and a clear brain, and a skillful pencil, to seize the golden opportunity! The day is gone by for the deed, but, what a splendor of fame, with what consciousness of desert, might have been won by him who should have held this infamy up for our loathing and our tears of burning shame, in marble or on the canvas. A woman's lightly-moving pen, a brave young singer's light, satiric rhymes, a star-bright poet's falchion strokes redeemed our Literature from the wholesale charge of recreancy, but Harriet Stowe and Lowell, and Emerson have no fellow-laborers with mallet and pencil. Yet what subjects were there, lying in broad sunlight, for him who would, to seize! Tragic, pathetic, satiric, where was there ever such another field? Think what Dante would have done with it, with his eye that saw through all disguises, his tongue of fire that spared neither friend nor

*Note. A friend, looking over my shoulder as I write, demurs to this statement as unjust to at least three men, Collier, Gray, and Ward, who have, within a year, executed works avowedly directed against slavery. But I had not forgotten either of these performances in looking over the whole field, carefully, as I did, before writing. In the first place, my remark seems to me directed clearly enough against the men who did not strike slavery when strokes were needed, but I cannot give gentlemen, however well-meaning, credit for crying "stop thief" after the culprit is in the hands of the proper officers, and on his way to prison. It is very easy to be an abolitionist now; it is *la mode*, and every gentleman disapproves of slavery, but when Mrs. Stowe wrote "Uncle Tom," and Lowell wrote the "Biglow Papers," and Emerson delivered his Lecture on Daniel Webster, and Phillips and Parker preached their fiery crusade, Abolitionism meant social ostracism, and could only be avowed at immense personal sacrifice.

Still we would not be churlish, and if these artists had given three separate blows that must have killed slavery if it had not been dead already, we would have taken the will for the deed, and modified our criticism in their favor. But surely Gray and Collier's pictures and Ward's statue could never have made the most pro-slavery man that ever breathed, uneasy in his mind for the space of ten seconds. As for Mr. Collier, we are grateful to him for his practical anti-slavery work of the past three years, but we cannot add to our debt his picture of the last Academy Exhibition, which was suggestive of nothing but petty larceny on the part of the little black boy therein depicted. It was plain he had been robbing the till, and was anxious to be round the corner expending his ill-got pennies in peanuts. Mr. Gray's picture had no force, directness, or point of any kind, and was by no means as well painted as he can do.

Mr. Ward is by far the best sculptor in America, and there is no man calling himself American, at home or abroad, who could have made the figure of the negro which Mr. Ward contributed to the last Academy Exhibition, but Mr. Ward himself. As a blow levelled against slavery, however, it was most ineffectual. The most pro-slavery of plantation overseers could have taken only a pure satisfaction from the contemplation of such a "splendid nigger." With such a model on his mantel-piece how his imagination would have glowed over the fancy price to be obtained for such a display of bone and muscle. Only one thing in the statue would have roused his indignation. That any blacksmith could have been found stupid enough to make handcuffs that would fall to pieces of their own accord, would have been too much for his credulity or his equanimity. His admiration for the "likely fellow" would have been over-balanced by his contempt for the blacksmith—Yankee, of course. As for any moral impression, it could never have been produced by Mr. Ward's admirably scientific performance. It requires different work from any that we have been considering, to stir the hearts, convince the minds or rouse the consciences of men.

foe, his heart that beat for humanity, his intellect that saw the subtlest relations. What subjects for Angelo, fit for his mighty wrath; what scenes to move the divine tenderness and pity of Angelico; what food for Swift and Rabelais; what a tale Chaucer would have given us, in which Southern chivalry and Northern cowardice would have been pricked to death by his laughing satire, or, some slave's experience of cruelest wrong would have touched the heart with deeper ruth than his Griselde or Huguelin of Pise can move. But, these men are dead, and the sin has been repented of, and punished with no help from Art, and but little from Literature. The rude instinct of the people has at last battered down, by the bloody hand of war, that awful House of Sin, which would have melted like ice if only the sunbeams of Art and Literature, and the culture of the rich and wise had flamed steadily against it, all these long years of prosperous peace. But they would not, and God took away from them the glory of the victory, and gave it to others.

In modern art, two men, and, so far as we know, only two, have recorded their witness against this sin. Ary Scheffer, a Frenchman, put very prominently into his best picture—the "Christus Consolator,"—a negro slave, from whose limbs the fetters are falling, in the presence of the Christ. The engraving from this picture has been largely sold, and has been disseminated far and wide, in copies more or less faithful, photographs, &c., but all carrying with them this mute testimony to the unchristian character of slavery. Doubtless it did much good; we know it pricked some consciences. A publishing firm in Philadelphia wishing to adorn an edition of the Prayer book, which they had printed, with Scheffer's picture, and knowing that, if the slave were left in it, bearing his silent witness to the emancipating force of Christ's teachings, Southern Christians would be unable to pray—engraved the picture and left out the negro, and the book, with that omission, exists to-day, to their everlasting disgrace.

Within a few weeks, we have received in this country J. Noel Paton's "Bond and Free;" copies in photograph of a set of drawings made for distribution to the members of the Glasgow Art Union. They represent scenes in the life of the slave;—the Capture of the Slave Ship by English Sailors;—the Auction Block at New Orleans; the Chase with Bloodhounds; the Colony of Freedmen; and Christ the Avenger of His Little Ones. These drawings should be re-produced here, and circulated, widely and cheaply, under arrangements with the Artist or the Art Union, for they are capable of doing a mighty work even yet. Had they been published when "Uncle Tom" fell into the tender conscience of the nation like a seed into gracious earth, they would have trebled the influence of that wonderful book. As it is, they come somewhat late, when God, working with such influences as He could find, has nearly broken up the sin that wasted us, and there is little left to do. But, still, I wish they could be circulated, for they are drawings of extraordinary beauty, clearness and power, by a leader among the Pre-Raphaelites.

I have endeavored, I am afraid in a clumsy way, to make clear to you some of the notions of the men who publish the "New Path" as to what is the domain of Art, and what is the Artist's work. We do not mean that he should be necessarily a preacher or a pedagogue, or that he should always have a moral tagged on to his pictures and statues. But he ought to be a power in the world, and one of the most effective of the powers. What he does ought to make men better and happier, or enlarge the circle of our knowledge of nature and of man, or feed the deep, strong craving of the race for beautiful things, with mighty, satisfying food. The Artist's work comprehends the naturalist's, the judge's, the priest's, the historian's, and sets their teachings in subtlest line and tenderest color before our eyes. The painter who is a sensualist, or a trifler or a buffoon, or who paints to boil his pot, has no right to the name of artist. To be that, he must have a lofty ideal, he must be true to himself, and master, more and more, of the technics of his profession.

To hold up this standard, and to excite the young to follow it, is our work in the world. But, to do that work

thoroughly we must be free; free from favoritism, free from prejudice, free from outside dictation, with no private ends to subserve, and not afraid to speak out, clear and bold, whatever we think ought to be said.

At the last, and looking over what I have written, I am struck with a suspicion that this very letter will subject us to the loss of your subscription. If this should, unhappily for you, prove true, would you be so good as to let us know by the earliest mail, and your money shall be immediately returned.

Yours, respectfully,

THE "NEW PATH."

[ADVERTISEMENT.]

THE want of proper illustration of what we so often allude to as "faithful study from nature," has so long been felt that the proprietors of this journal propose to publish a series of ten photographs from drawings and paintings by men of the Realist School, provided a sufficient number of subscriptions are received to warrant the undertaking. The photographs will vary from five to eight inches in extreme dimension, and will be mounted on uniform cardboard, fourteen by twenty-two inches in size. The price of the set of ten will be six dollars; of single copies, seventy-five cents. Specimens can be seen at the store of A. Brentano, 708 Broadway, N. Y. Persons intending to subscribe will please send word to that effect, as soon as possible, to the New Path, Box 4740, New York. Due notice will be given when the money is required.

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