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THE NEW PATH.

PUBLISHED BY THE

Society for the Advancement of
TRUTH IN ART.

No. 6.] "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, [Oct., 1863.
and the things that shall be hereafter."

FALLACIES OF THE PRESENT SCHOOL.

AMONG the present painters in this country there is perhaps, originally, much deep, pure, healthy love of nature, and a great deal of sincerity and earnestness; but they inherit the mistaken ideas of art which are the fault of the influences under which they are educated. These false ideas gradually destroy the purity of their love of nature; for a pure and devoted love of nature leads to keener perception and more thorough representation of her truths.

The out-door studies of these men are infinitely more faithful and valuable than any of their pictures which are painted in the studio: and as a general rule, their early studies are better than their later ones. Their perception of truth, instead of growing more and more refined and subtle, becomes on the other hand more and more coarse and false. This is the natural result of their training; it comes of that prevailing notion that artists must necessarily alter and arrange everything according to certain principles of art.

It is indeed true that in this, like most errors, lies couched a truth: but the truth is made of no effect by misapplication. It is supposed, and young artists are taught that they must try to compose and arrange—they must give us the ideal. Now the

root of the whole error lies in supposing that they must try to do anything more or less than to give the *exact truth* of what they see. The true ideal is based upon, and grows out of, the real. It is the artist's first duty to be true to the real. He may be sure that the greatness is in the thing that God has made, and if he keeps his heart and eyes open it may please God to reveal it to him. If he studies faithfully, he will see in nature, shape after shape of delicate tracing and subtle gradation; which, the more it is loved, the more it reveals. As the perceptions are cultivated, the more exhaustless God's work is seen to be; so that no true lover of nature can ever look away from her for the ideal. The true and noble ideal comes of that penetrating perception which, by love and long discipline, sees at once the most essential qualities of things and records these with emphasis. Such perception is not possible to all men; it is perception of the heart, a special gift, refined by love and constant watching.

To the passionless observer nature only shows her face; but she answers sympathy with revelations of her soul: yet her soul can only be seen *through* her face. And so whatever a man may be, whether possessing more or less of this high and deep sympathy, he ought to try his utmost to be *real*. Naturalism is the *basis* of all true art, which

is "the expression of man's delight in God's work."

Now the present system of art education is in direct opposition to this; its tendency is to exalt man's work above God's. The modern Pre-Raphaelites are exerting a counter influence on this morbid state of things. They are believers in God and His creation, and love art only as a means of expressing to others their delight.

Of these principles Ruskin says, "the wholesome, happy, and noble, though not noblest—art of simple transcript from nature; into which, so far as our modern Pre-Raphaelitism falls, it will indeed do sacred service in ridding us of the old fallacies and componencies, but cannot itself rise above the level of simple and happy usefulness. So far as it is to be great, it must add—and so far as it is great, has already added—the great imaginative element to all its faithfulness in transcript." This is the exact truth; *we do not believe that mere faithful transcript from nature can ever be the greatest art*: but we believe and positively affirm, that there can never be any degree of greatness without this for a *basis*. The mass of opponents are so blind by prejudice that they do not understand the principles; yet still, are constantly insulting them.

An instance of this unintelligent censure is to be found in a work lately published by Mr. Jarves, called "Art Studies." We quote the following as an example:

"As harmonious relation of accessories to principles is highly important (in art,) no cleverness in details can absolve inattention in this respect. The mis-called Pre-Raphaelites of our time, exaggerating the law of fidelity in parts and losing sight of the broader principles of effect by which particulars are absorbed into large masses, pro-

trude upon the sight with microscopic clearness the near and the distant, delineating the tiniest flower in a wide landscape, of which in nature, it would form, at their point of sight, but an uncertain speck of color, with the minuteness of an isolated object close at hand.

"With them, pebbles and petals are made of equal importance with the human countenance, and the texture of garments with the play of features. Consequently, while conscientiously laborious on the lesser truths and values of nature, they exalt them so high in artistic manipulation and relative position, that they have no commensurate force reserved for more important facts. All things being equally indicated, foregrounds and backgrounds, and middle distance alike distinct and defined, the spectator is as likely to find himself admiring the clever imitation of a cobweb, as taken with the proper motive of the composition."

This is a fair average of the knowledge which exists concerning these principles. If Mr. Jarves has found such specimens of art as he here describes, they were indeed the works of "miscalled Pre-Raphaelites." The *true* Pre-Raphaelites never exalt lesser truths over greater ones; but give each truth as far as possible—its proper relation. It is true that they will not cover their canvasses with meaningless dashes of the brush in order to attract attention to some principal object. They feel the nobleness of the greater truths and paint them with the utmost possible fidelity—truths, not only of external matter, but of the Divine or human spirit within. They feel also the precious loveliness and divinity of the least thing of God's creation and will do their utmost to give it its own right place where God has put it, knowing that if faithfully rendered it

will not make the greater truths any less. They will paint the great mountain in its strength, but will not despise the little flower at its foot for fear of its attracting too much attention.

Such works as Mr. J. speaks of, in which "all things are equally indicated, foregrounds and backgrounds, and middle distance alike distinct and defined," are either mimics by shallow men of what they do not understand, or else the awkward work of students. It would be no more absurd to judge principles of religion by the tenets of individual professors, than to judge principles of art by the works of men who do not know what they are about.

The revival of the Pre-Raphaelite principles is only beginning to dawn, and therefore much that is awkward must be expected before the "perfect day," yet, some works of consummate excellence have been already accomplished. Who feels that the leaves and flowers on the wall in the background of Millais' "Huguenot Lover," detract anything from the expression or superior importance of the figures? Are "pebbles and petals" here "made of equal importance with the human countenance?" or the "texture of garments with the play of the features?" Or in Holman Hunt's picture, is too much attention drawn from the "Light of the World," by the faithful painting of the weeds and fruitless corn?

This criticism of Mr. Jarves shows that his mind is so soaked in conventional doctrines, that his perception of the nobler works of God is secondary to them. Who cannot see that this state of mind is opposed to all true growth? Must not reverence, humility, and love for God and nature be at the root of all art that can flourish? And must not that art which is inspired by vanity and ostentation sink to the ground?

It may be a question with some, whether we have a right to judge art by our opinions of what is true. To this we answer that our opinions are not the standard by which we judge; we judge by *clearly demonstrated facts*, facts, upon which all are agreed. And the difference between us and the present school is, that we see it necessary to give pure facts and nothing else, while they do not.

Truth is a "two-edged sword," and must cut wherever it finds anything to oppose it, and we put the works of others to the same test by which we also expect to be tried.

Naturalism is not *all* we believe in, but we know it must come first. We are called by some "weak mockers of Ruskin," and it is said that our principles are not born of original conviction. Be this as it may, the *principles* are not affected either way. By the mercy of God, Ruskin has been sent to open our eyes and loose the seals of darkness. He has shown us the truth and we thank him and give God the glory; and the truth once clearly shown becomes ours if we will receive it. It also becomes our imperative duty to proclaim it. Of course it will be opposed by men who are considered intelligent in these matters: indeed those who have most knowledge of false art will be our bitterest enemies, because their own self-love blinds them.

It is said that we are bold in setting aside the works of men whom the public have been taught to cherish. This is true; but let it not be supposed that we do this from any spirit of uncharitableness, much less from ignorance. We may feel great respect for men while we must condemn their principles. We also *know* what we do: we have not looked at the principles we condemn, with a prejudiced eye blind

ed by ignorance and conceit, though our opponents would seem to think we have. We have most of us been educated in those principles and have thoroughly understood them; we have "come out from the unclean thing" and intend to be "separate," because it is a sin against God. The world has had enough morbid fiction, it now

needs healthy fact. God's truth must come in and take the place of vanity.

Now in the present school, what there is of love for God and nature, and reverence for, and careful rendering of, truth, will live, and we believe there is much of it; but it must purge itself from falsehood or it will die.

C. H. M.

Charles H. Moore

NATURALISM AND GENIUS.

IN a recent Article* we tried to show that the uninteresting character and small influence of most of our painting are not, as seems to be supposed, the natural condition of the art, but the result of the deliberate refusal of the painters to attempt the representation of natural fact. It seems almost unnecessary to demonstrate that pictures which mean something, which reproduce something worth seeing often, or preserve for us some evanescent beauty, are better worth painting and buying, and more apt in the long run to secure credit and influence to their authors, than the meaningless oblongs of colored canvas which make up nine-tenths of our popular art. And indeed we have been gratified to find that many of our readers have rightly understood what we meant to say, and think with us, that a picture ought always to represent things as they exist or might exist in nature, rather than the foliage and the inhabitants of an inorganic and ungraceful realm of the fancy.

But, inasmuch as that Article did not state the whole case, nor classify and describe and rate all sorts of pictures, it follows of course that it has been misunderstood by hasty readers, who suppose that we claimed for pure and plain transcript of nature the

rank of greatest art. Now, this is so far from being the truth, that we prefer not even to give it the rank of great art, but to use the term *great* for that art only which is the work of the imagination of a great man.

We urged that faithful representation of nature is possible to men who are not great and who never will be great, that such representation is needed, and that it is a worthy and noble mission of art. It is not easy, it requires faithfulness and diligence and reverence and perception such as fall to the lot of few men, but these gifts are given to some who are not men of transcendent genius, and these gifts will make true and useful painters.

But genius is a thing apart. In no possible way can the work of a clever or talented man resemble the work of a great man, except in the direct imitation by one of the other,—an imitation easily seen through, and forever destructive of all merit in the work of the imitator. A bad time for art is beginning when it becomes the fashion to imitate the works of genius.

Do not suppose that all work that is not highly imaginative is reduced to a dead level of uniform merit. There is wide diversity in the natures of men, and large differences in the power of

men who are none of them imaginative. And every man's nature may show itself forth in his work; there is room enough for the painter's mind even in copying nature.

If a friend goes a journey through an interesting country, and on returning has a great deal to say of the general features of the scenery,—of the rolling hill that filled the landscape until a higher ridge ended the prospect,—of the clusters of softly rounded trees that stood scattered over the hill-sides,—of woodbine that hid the stone walls, and was beginning to turn red,—of distant mountains to the south which were very blue,—we listen with a certain amount of interest, thinking that we have seen all that often, that we are getting no new ideas from the conversation, but that it is pleasant to hear of such pleasant things. If our friend should see more deeply than this,—if he should tell us how it was all a slate country, for the rocks constantly showed themselves on the hill-sides and were often traceable when not to be seen, so thick was the dry, spongy, gray moss upon them, and sharp edges of their slabs peeped here and there out of wayside grass, and thick masses of the rock cropped out at every bank-side where the road was cut down into rising ground, showing the section of the vertical layers in alternate stripes of gray and white, wavy as the hair of a quadron, and the distant hills had curious curves in their profiles, suggesting the abruptly twisted strata below:—how every steep bank was moist with trickling springs, feeding luxuriant growth of fungi in the shady hollows;—how there were two varieties of maple not seen near New York, with leaves like this pressed one;—and how the sycamore, which ten years ago, we all thought was dying out of the land, was coming again, for fields were full of the young bushy saplings, growing as thick together as the trees of an ornamental shrubbery, and waving their great green banners, luxuriant and shapely;—if he should tell us all this, we should listen with more interest, as hearing of something we had not seen, and might never see, and certainly should see better, if at all, since he had called our attention to its important features. And if the same

friend, visiting a romantic mountain country, should rise with the occasion, see the greater landscape as he had seen the smaller, grasp the White Mountain Notch as he had the hills of Vermont, and give us the truth of it in words that needed the photograph only to confirm them,—we should consider our friend a man of most unusual perceptive power, and be glad of his friendship.

You will see all this difference, and more than this, among the painters. There are hundreds of men trying to paint, who never do anything better than he of the first supposed case, above; men who really do not see much, and who show in their painted landscape only the same "insight into nature" that a child of ten displays in his composition giving an account of "what he saw in the country last Saturday." These men are only wasting their time when they paint "landscapes," for they add nothing to the world's stock of knowledge, and give no one any rational pleasure, even if the general forms of tree and hill are tolerably correct. Let them be set to painting the wayside weeds, one at a time, trying only for faithful portraits of what they are representing, so that the farmer's children can recognize the particular burdock bush off which they mean to get the burrs when they are a little riper. Not worth doing, you say? That is not indisputable, but at all events they can do nothing better. This may bring them to something better—or it may not—let them try, or else give it up and take another craft.

There are other painters who, like our friend in the second case, belong to a higher order of things,—men of perception and grasp, who can show us in nature that which some of us would hardly see without. These men have only to be faithful, and to shut their ears against temptation to paint to please the public,—in other words they have only to do as well as they know—to be useful and honored. Their position among artists is conceded. And, if they will give bonds to slur nothing through impatience and haste, and to keep at their portrait painting of men or of mountains, until it involuntarily becomes something greater than portrait painting, they may be allowed to paint what they choose, having full

right of selection and rejection. There are a few artists among us thus talented and faithful, a very few; and there are others who ought to be with them, but who are painting what the public buys and praises.

Most of our readers probably remember Mr. Ruskin's "Study of a Block of Gneiss," which was in the first English Exhibition in New York, in the winter of 1858-9, and which is now in the possession of an intimate friend of the great critic, in Cambridge, Mass. It is only a "study," being one lesson in the course of study which Mr. Ruskin has followed, and is by a man who is not a professional artist. We mention it, and not another, because it is probable that there is no other work at all known to Americans, which is nearly so thorough. Direct copying of nature could not be carried further. The great boulder is, as it were, photographed in color, every hue of its wonderfully varied colors, every irregular split and crack and broken surface, every substance inlaid in its mass, like a precious stone in Florentine mosaic, every incrustation is given with faultless, mirror-like accuracy. Unexaggerated, natural shadows veil its brightness. There is no attempt at "general effect," the truth is told about each square inch, and therefore the truth is told about the whole. There is the sun-lit rock, and the beholder probably ever after sees more in gneiss boulders than before, since he has been shown so much in one. In this drawing the surroundings and the distance are only indicated; it is a study of a stone, and not a "drawing." Suppose it finished with equal care (as it assuredly would be if finished at all) into the corners of the paper, so that our prospect would be as if we should hold up a frame and see through it rock and trees and distant *Aguilles Rouges*; well, it would not be great art, but it would be most precious and instructive art. Its owner might be willing, as far as its artistic worth is concerned, to exchange it for a Turner drawing of equal size and finish, but there is no American landscapist, living or dead, whose work would be at all an equivalent.

Readers who have not seen or do not remember this drawing, will see work very different in kind but equal in knowledge and power, by the same

hand, in the marvellous mountain drawing in the fourth volume of "Modern Painters."

Now let us look for a moment at work in which the poetical element exists, work of real genius. Let us take something of admitted poetic merit, and try to explain the reason of its worth. For a written poem let us take a very short and very well known one, Tennyson's *Eagle*.

"He clasps the crag with hooked hands,
Close to the Sun, in lonely lands,
Ringed by the azure world, he stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls."

The poem consists of five brief and severe statements, and yet is a description not only accurate but highly poetic. Why?

We notice, in the first place, a thoroughly accurate use of language; exactly the right words are used, none are wasted, but there are none too few. Moreover these compact phrases are made to chant a faultlessly measured music, the slight irregularities in the beginnings of the second and third lines only adding variety without injuring the melody. "But all this might be, and the whole not be a poem." Certainly, but observe that, being a poem, this is characteristic of it. We notice, in the second place, an accuracy of perception somewhat beyond that of a common observer. "Hooked hands,"—remember the *Eagle's* foot has one toe that is set backward, so that his clutch is like that of the human hand, surrounding his perch, having a double hold, which cannot slip. Remember, also, that these parted toes are fleshless, hard, and terminate in claws which seem part of them, not springing abruptly, as in quadrupeds, from cushions of fur, but forming with the toes, sharp pointed hooks. The expression "hooked hands" is, therefore, not only correct, but complete and perfect, and seizes the most important peculiarity of the *Eagle*. "The wrinkled sea;" Again a piece of accurate observation, and again put into two words. Look down from a height upon a rough sea near the shore, where the rollers are dividing themselves into long, parallel

ridges, as they go on to break on beach or rocks, and you will see what seems a ploughed field. "Wrinkled sea," yes, or "furrowed sea," one might suggest, but wrinkled sea is best, because the lines of wave are not straight enough for furrows, except close in shore,—further out they lose themselves in one another, and make acute angles with one another like nothing but "wrinkles." "Beneath him crawls," because distance is unperceived while looking on the sea; only the effect of distance is felt, the apparently slow motion. "Ringed by the azure world;"—that is a brief statement of the fact that he is high up, that the horizon, unbroken by other peaks as high as this one of his perch, is seen all or nearly all around him, that the distant landscape, which most fills the eye, when at a great height, looks like a blue belt. All that a long circumlocution would give but vaguely, the trenchant line gives in five words. "Close to the Sun;" this might be considered a blemish, as of the nature of that "poetical license" which is least used by the greatest men, being unnecessary to them. But remember that, whether he is or is not above the lower clouds, the sense of being high up in a sunny and cloudless air, gives a sort of assurance that nothing can come between us and that sun of which we almost seem a part. We consider this, then, as adding to the sense of lovely isolation high above the world. Finally, the last two lines remind us that the creature we are watching is a great and powerful bird of prey, with an eye that sees from his mountain walls as a sentinel's from the thirty foot fortress parapet; they point us to him patiently waiting; they launch him forth on his errand of destruction; and the picture is finished.

We have, then, as the merits of our poem, or picture, accurate description, involving not the most easily perceived but the vital characteristics of all described, of elements enough of the scene to put it all before us;—and all expressed in forcible, well chosen, musical words.

But the main fact to be noticed, is this. Mr. Tennyson did not draw this picture standing by the eagle. He *saw* an eagle, perhaps, high above his head, on a crag; he stood on the low ground

below, but something in him was looking not through his bodily eyes, but out from the peak above him. This something we call imagination. The imagination, then sees, with the same accuracy as the eye, what the eye cannot see. But, observe that the imagination in this case is acting only through memory of what has been seen before. Tennyson had seen eagles and knew what their feet were like, he had seen mountain landscape, he had looked upon the sea from a place high above it:—his imagination assembled together all these memories, selecting the fitting ones from the rest, and pictured forth for us what we should see if we could climb where the eagle was.

Now let us take a painting, one known to some of us in the original, to all of us by the engraving, "The Huguenot Lover," by Millais. It is not like the poem, but we shall find points of comparison. We notice, first, a thoroughly accurate use of language, that is, of the painter's language, form and color, the drawing of figures being correct, that of the wall, the leaves and flowers and the drapery not less so, the colors moreover being those of reality, and the shadows and lights even as in nature. Moreover, the lines and colors form a subtle harmony, as pleasing to the eye as Tennyson's verse was to the ear. "But all this might be, and the whole not be a work of genius." Certainly, but observe that, being a work of genius, this is characteristic of it. We notice, secondly, an accuracy of perception somewhat beyond that of a common observer. Millais, it seems, has observed subtleties of expression which we hardly should, and seen them so plainly that he can reproduce them at pleasure. Also, he has so studied the human face that he can draw it at pleasure with such expression as he desires. Moreover he has so comprehended certain manifestations of human character, that he can think now from cause to effect, "such a man, having such feelings, would do so"—and not otherwise. Strange! here we can read the whole story, can see how the woman is pleading with her lover that he may consent to save his life for her, knowing, the while, that his refusal is final—how the lover is tenderly explaining to her that he

must not be saved by dishonor, even for her sake. Faces and gesture combine to tell the tale of impending death, of strong and tender love, of stronger integrity. The costume and the announced title of the picture are like an appended date, "Paris, 1572," which tells us merely where the scene is laid, and what tragedy is imminent.

But the main fact to be noticed, here as in the Tennyson, is that Millais did not paint this picture as he stood beside the lovers. He was not there, but his imagination was. The picture was sharp and brilliant in his mind before brush was put to canvas. He invented the story, saw how the group must be, and the faces, and the lady's hands trying to tie a knot, and her lover's hands preventing her with a motion that is also a caress. And his imagination also chose and combined the accessories, which he either remembered or studied anew, drapery, jewels, wall, leaves, flowers, so that all the forms and colors should help one another in that harmonious "composition" which he desired.

Here then are two works of genius, not of the highest order, but true and right. In both of them we find the imagination at work, creating something not seen by the eye. In both of them we find a minute insight into natural fact and a thorough grasp of it—whether it be emotion as shown in the human face and gesture, or of the external appearance of the sea, the distant landscape, flowers, leaves, drapery, animals and man. And in both of them we find such a mastery of the mode of expression, of the language used, as enables the artist to perfectly convey the idea he wishes.

Creative imagination is, probably, always accompanied by the power of giving expression to its creations. This gift may be cultivated or neglected. There is many a splendid genius wasted, because not put to its right work, and many another whose greatness is hampered by false teaching. Nothing that instruction can do will in any wise make genius greater, but instruction can give it freedom to act. In like manner no striving nor taking thought will enable a man to produce works of genius, but labor will give him the knowledge, and develop the power of expression, which will afford what

genius he has the means of expressing itself.

Now it seems that the greatest men are the most constant workers, and strive the most faithfully for the knowledge and the power of expression that they need. Consider for one moment the labor of the immortal Turner. Not to allude to the finished pictures and drawings, made for sale or for engraving, or else forming part of his own collection, and since bequeathed to the English nation—not alluding to these, consider the work he did merely for his own instruction. Nothing he has left behind him is more wonderful than that series of sketch books in which he collected that inexhaustible treasury of all the facts of out-door nature. These books are as big as would go into his coat pockets, sometimes too large for coat pockets, and contain from fifty to ninety pages each, and are filled completely with sketches, generally in pencil—not one to a page, but crowded together, on both sides of the paper, running well into the corners, and into the insides of the covers. And of such books there are two hundred and forty-seven in the national collection alone. These were only the short-hand books—color not often used in them, but the pencil only, and the names of the natural colors written down, "grey," "rose-pink," "blue-cloud," "orange-sleeve and black hood." Beside these are the host of colored sketches on thin paper, folded afterward in four with a precious sketch on each side, or rolled into a tight bundle with others. And from boyhood to old age this accumulation went on. He was never unoccupied, but daily and hourly was adding to his store of knowledge, in some way. Letters and reminiscences of his friends tell us how, on excursions, Turner would make his "memoranda" while dinner was preparing—or while the dancing boat was occupying the minds of his companions with fear or sickness; how in traveling, he made sketches when the diligence stopped, or as it toiled slowly up a long hill, or before breakfast when he walked up the road.

Turner was the most imaginative of landscapists, with more genius than they all put together. But it seems as if diligent work in the right direction had also something to do with his

greatness. Not that even his vast knowledge and skill without genius could have made him the painter he was; but then, neither would his genius without his work. The imagination does not act without materials. Turner's was free to act, for his material was as inexhaustible as Nature's resources.

A lover of nature who looks at a Turner drawing feels at once its wonderful truth to nature. He never saw the scene it represents; very likely no man ever saw it but Turner, and he not with his bodily eyes; but it is nature. There is a chestnut tree which Turner made to grow as suited the lines of his picture—his composition—but it grows as chestnuts grow, you know it is a chestnut. If you go to a place you never were in before and never heard of, you do not hesitate to say "those are chestnuts yonder." Are you sure? No two chestnuts are alike, so you never saw any altogether like these. "No, but that is the way chestnuts grow." You are right in your certainty, and so it is with the Turner drawing. Turner perfectly understood the chestnut nature. If some one had given him a commission to paint a chestnut of three feet girth, with a beech beside it of one foot girth, both growing in a thin soil and poor situation, browsed by cattle, and one of them struck by lightning and split three years before—he could perfectly well have executed the commission in his house, so that no one could say, from any deficiency or error, that it was not a copy from nature.

As great was Titian's knowledge of the human body and its accessories, and of their appearance under all circumstances—of flow of drapery, sparkle of jewel, glow of deep color, play of reflected light. Such was Michael Angelo's knowledge of the form of man, in its dignified quiet, and in its most vigorous action. Without this knowledge they would have been like great souls without power of utterance. And this knowledge was gained by constant work in copying natural fact; by which work the two-fold result was gained of increased knowledge and increased power of representation.

The inevitable conclusion is, that the duty of a young painter is to constantly copy nature. He can never do

enough. To his dying day he will still find new things to observe and record for his own use; but at first this observation and record is the one essential work which he must do, or be lost to art. He cannot begin too humbly. He cannot draw too many of the humblest weeds and most commonplace rocks. There will be more in any one of them than he can represent, until he has worked through a long apprenticeship.

Then, if he is a man of observation and memory, with some feeling for graceful form, his work will soon become valuable; he may, as he leaves his term of apprenticeship and becomes a painter, exercise some choice and selection, may even venture to banish from some fair scene a blemish that deprives it of its due effect. Then he will give us lovely landscapes—like Brett's; or sea-pieces as vigorous as Edward Cooke's; or cottage scenes like Edouard Frere's. All his work will be instructive and precious, though not imaginative. And if he never rise beyond that point, let him be well content—he will do what very few have yet done in America.

If he have genius in him, it will make itself known, to other men perhaps more quickly than to him. It will modify every stroke of his brush, and be seen in every drawing, unsought, perhaps unsuspected by him. But if he know and realize his power, let him still work on. Is he willing to do less than his best? And can he hope to do his best with less preparation than Turner took? Turner's preparation, we have seen, was constant copying nature to the close of his long life. Great merit as a painter cannot be bought with a less price.

And let us all, in our picture galleries and wherever pictorial art is exhibited, try it by Turner's standard—not of genius, but of truth. Let any man compare any picture he sees with nature, and then a Turner with nature—and think for himself. Has an artist any right to try to compose pictures when he cannot represent nature as she is? Has an artist any right to ask us to buy his autumn landscapes, when he cannot rightly draw a cluster of three of his scarlet maple leaves? Look for evidences of knowledge, before you look for anything beyond it; ask for

truth before power; judge pictures, first, by the amount of truth in them. But do not expect too triumphant a verdict for the picture under consideration, for remember that the painters in America who could draw a scarlet maple sprig could be counted on your fingers.

I. S.

NOTE.

A critic in an evening paper objects to our comparison between American painters and American poets, that it is much more work for a painter than for a poet to tell the truth about nature. Of course, but we ask no man to be a painter, we only insist that he paint, if he will paint, something and not nothing. Will any artist confess that he

does unfaithful and untruthful work because it is so laborious to be faithful and true?

Remember that the painter and the poet both speak the language of their choice—form and color, or ordered words. It is more of a task to say anything worth the saying in one than in the other, and takes longer. But no painter is therefore excused in talking mere nonsense, because he can say more of that in a month than he could of sense. If a painter sees nature as Emerson sees her, he will surely try and tell us what he sees; and not reason that it is impossible for him to describe as many scenes in the same time and with the same labor, and that therefore he won't try.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND WHAT CAN BE DONE.

I.

Concluded.

ABOUT seven years ago, if we recollect aright, that large class of persons who, though illy informed concerning architecture, are very fond of making seemingly wise and witty comments upon everything new, were treated to an entirely new sensation, and one which was destined to gratify to the fullest extent their yearning for a fruitful object of criticism. "All Souls' Church" (Dr. Bellows'), was built, and the first attempt at color decoration on the exterior of a building was hailed with shouts of derision, in which New York architects were not backward to join. Those who assumed to be witty exhausted their powers of ridicule and christened the building "immaculate beef-steak," "holy zebra," "Joseph's coat," "fat and lean," and many other names. The grave and puritanical shook their heads with much doubting, said it was frivolous and gaudy, and that it spoke badly for the times that our churches should deck themselves in such gorgeous array. The *orthodox* affected to be not surprised, and declared it to be the natural result of *liberal* doctrines. But the few who at first appreciated the work, saw in it the first budding of a new era, which is destined

to make our houses of worship places to encourage rather than repel the cheerful thought and gladness of heart which are found alone in true repentance.

All Souls' Church is an offshoot of the revival of Christian Architecture which has taken such firm root in England during the present century. It illustrates many of the striking points in the new Architecture, though not by any means to be regarded as perfection. The exterior presents strongly marked color in bands of red and white, and in its portico we have precious marbles brought from abroad and polished, and fine marble used for the more delicate carvings. It is not our purpose to enter into an extended criticism of the church at this time, but yet we dwell upon it with pleasure, for we cannot help but admire the boldness of the experiment, especially as the colors of the building are so decidedly radical. It required no small exercise of intellectual power for an architect, new to fame, to use the most violent contrast that our building materials afford, in the first building in the country thus decorated. We assume to be radical in our way of thinking and

practicing, yet we think the choice of colors and materials in All Souls' Church most unfortunate—for that which by its predominance is so striking at first sight, has blinded the eyes of many appreciative persons to a perception of the many beauties that this church possesses in common with its color. It has demonstrated also, what is sad to contemplate, but what we must accept as a stern and unchangeable fiat of the elements—that precious marbles, in which this country is so rich, will not endure in the open air.

Though the ornamentation in stone on this building is cut with great care and expense, and is moreover novel and ingenious in design, we do not wish to be considered as giving it our approval. It is strongly Byzantine, and is more of the nature of imitative than of inventive work. The Caen stone as it was predicted, has herein been proved to be unfit for exteriors in our climate, and will hereafter be devoted to interior decoration only. We close our brief notice of this very excellent edifice with the suggestion that it be made even yet the subject of careful study both by the architect and the amateur. The time thus bestowed will doubtless develop beauties which we only regret the limits of this article will not permit us to dwell upon. We accept it, notwithstanding the sneers of the ignorant throng, as the stepping stone to greater things. It has defects which one will gladly pass over, for we regard them only as the results of a state of affairs against which the architect was doubtless obliged to contend with all his strength.

We cannot expect this church to be entirely appreciated until the spire, which is the principal feature of the design, is completed; which we fear will be at a time yet far distant. But the New York public take things as they are and pass judgment accordingly. If a church is built and the steeple unfinished, the cruel multitude will persist that it is a church without a steeple, nothing more nor less, and will criticise it as such. So the only way in which the church officers can fight popular opinion is to hurry up the subscriptions, and with the fund thus obtained and what is now being expended in endeavoring to preserve the

stone, make some effort to build the spire.

A Unitarian Chapel has been built on Clinton St., Brooklyn, by the architect of "All Souls' Church." In it the same general treatment is followed, and though it is a less pretentious building, is equally worthy of careful observation.

But perhaps the best specimen of the Revived Gothic that we can point to is the new parochial school of Trinity Church, adjoining Trinity Chapel on Twenty-fifth Street near Broadway. It resembles, more than any other building that we have, the efforts that have recently been made in England. Here we have the pointed and segment arch used, and traceries of stone as used in the *Decorated* period. Though the colors of the material used in the external walls are not as brilliant as those in "All Souls," yet the color decoration generally is carried out more completely. The stones are red and drab, with Caen stone for the traceries, and the more brilliant colors of the inserted tiles and painted iron work are concentrated. This is a genuine Gothic building in everything except the carvings, which, like those of "All Souls' Church," are strongly Byzantine in effect, and like all the carving that has thus far been done in this country are evidently copies of drawings by clever workmen, rather than original conceptions thought out by the brain, and wrought under the chisel of the designer. Unless our architectural decoration is thus done, and our art workmen are encouraged by architects and capitalists we may expect little progress to be made in the decorative part of our architecture.

We can point to no building in New York that gives better evidence of progress in architectural design than this little school. We take all the more interest in it when we observe how strongly it contrasts with the school houses built by the Board of Education, and upon which so much money has been lavished by a generous public, under the misdirected guidance of ignorant officials.

We are too apt to point with pride to our new and commodious schools, without asking if in the artistic as well as practical point of view they answer the purpose for which they are intend-

ed. For notwithstanding the perfection of interior conveniences, and the abundant light, heat and ventilation, in which school building for great cities has been brought so near to perfection, we fail to see the least attempt to make the architecture itself have any influence upon the youthful mind. We give our school boards and superintendents credit for doing everything for the pupils that their heads can conceive, and where they fail to do so, with all charity for their good intentions, can only attribute their failure to make the architecture and decorations of the school buildings conducive to instruction and entertainment, to their ignorance of the necessity for it, and of the means to adopt in doing so. We do not want them to expend one dollar more than they do, but to turn what they do expend to good account; how, it would take some time to explain, but we hope, on a future occasion, to have time to make some suggestions upon the subject.

Said Mr. Ruskin, while addressing the people of Manchester, "The first and most important kind of public buildings which we are always sure to want are schools; and I would ask you to consider very carefully, whether we may not wisely introduce some great changes in the way of school decoration. There certainly comes a period in the life of a well-educated youth, in which one of the principal elements of his education is, or ought to be, to give him refinement of habits; and not only to teach him the strong exercises of which his frame is capable, but also to increase his bodily sensibility and refinement, and show him such small matters as the way of handling things properly, and treating them considerately. Not only so, but I believe the notion of fixing the attention by keeping the room empty, is a wholly mistaken one. I think it is just in the emptiest room that the mind wanders most, for it gets restless like a bird, for want of a perch, and casts about for any possible means of getting out and away. And even if it be fixed, by an effort, on the business in hand, that business becomes itself repulsive, more than it need be by the vileness of its associations; and many a study appears dull and painful to a boy, when it is pursued on a blotted deal desk, under

a wall with nothing on it but scratches and pegs, which would have been pursued pleasantly enough in a curtained corner of his father's library or at the lattice window of his cottage. Nay, my own belief is, that the best study of all is the most beautiful; and that a quiet glade of forest, or the nook of a lake shore, are worth all the school-rooms in Christendom, when once you are past the multiplication table; but be that as it may, there is no question at all but that a time ought to come in the life of a well-trained youth, when he can sit at a writing table without wanting to throw the inkstand at his neighbor; and when also he will feel more capable of certain efforts of mind with beautiful and refined forms about him than with ugly ones."

It was the fortune of the writer to be a pupil of one of the common schools of this city in which a clumsy attempt had been made to decorate the walls; and it is the only school in which anything of the kind has been done. The walls, being in colors, gave the room a cheerful appearance, of itself, as compared with plain white plaster, and there were appropriate mottoes and proverbs wherever a space would offer, as well as mathematical instruments, and even maps painted on the wall, in the usual common manner of modern fresco painters. But as crude as they were, and as far from what might have been done with a little more trouble, they were objects of pleasurable contemplation during the moments when children are usually required to make temporary statues of themselves while preparing for some new exercise—at a time when silence is constrained and books are temporarily banished. The house has now been remodeled and white walls have taken the place of painting.

A block of Gothic buildings lately erected on Fulton Street, Brooklyn, and known as St. Ann's Stores, has attracted considerable notice and have justly been the objects of much praise. It is particularly interesting to us, as it is the first attempt yet made to adapt the new Architecture to shop fronts, the application of it which is most calculated to excite opposition. It is a common saying that the Gothic is very good for churches, but the use of it must end there. But we contend

that, if there is any good in it, it will supply our necessities everywhere, for if its principles were not thus universally applicable we would reject it altogether. In looking at these buildings it were best to glance but casually at the first story, for there is every reason to suppose that whatever false construction occurs there is due to the tyranny of a building committee; but the upper stories are an admirable piece of design. It is encouraging to think that this first attempt to revolutionize the style of our business buildings has met with even a limited amount of popular approval, and the designer has every reason to feel grateful for the opportunity he has had to inaugurate a new order of things.

In mentioning examples of Early English Architecture we have promised to say something about the new Trinity Chapel. We rejoice to have an opportunity of now doing so; for if there is any edifice of which we have reason to be proud, and which indelibly points to the fact that we have made some progress, it is this building. We desire to mention it more particularly as illustrating a sentence in the Articles of Organization of the Society whose principles this journal advocates. "The exact reproduction of mediæval work is only desirable so far as it may be necessary to regain the lost knowledge of the vital principles that controlled it." "Out of the careful study and application of these principles, a true and perfect Architecture, is sure to arise." Here we have an example of just what we mean; for the Chapel of which we speak is almost an exact representation, in all its carefully selected details, of the best Architectural work that has ever prevailed in England, not inferior in spirit to the original (Lincoln Cathedral, the thirteenth century part.) It is not a base imitation, but a most faithful study from one of the grandest piles that it delights the eyes of man to behold. In it we see many of the vital principles of the old Architecture re-asserted, and out of the careful study of those principles, the nearest approach yet made in the country to a perfect church Architecture.

Six years ago, after the repeated exertions of a few influential citizens, the people of New York were gratified

in seeing the commencement of that which is destined to afford more pleasure and instruction than has ever been given by any public undertaking. The rapid, yet careful work of improving the Central Park was then commenced, and is now gradually approaching that completion which human intelligence is capable of giving it; henceforth to be beautified with every heavenly gift which God and nature, by those infallible laws which govern the dispensation of blessings, can give to it. We shall speak particularly of its strictly architectural features, the most prominent being the bridges. As for the practical end they are intended to serve, they are generally as perfect as it is possible to be, and we can say naught against them as far as construction is concerned. Much popular clamor has been made about the number of bridges, but time will show not only that they are all of them necessary, but that their multiplicity will not be obvious when the shrubbery is sufficiently grown; until when they will never be seen to proper advantage. It is a great mistake with us to form hasty opinions about unfinished works. Much harm is done thereby and very often the current of popular opinion has been guided by the rash judgments of misinformed people.

In sculptural decoration the architects of the Park have exercised their greatest powers, and indeed there is no reason why we should not expect that the results should be the best possible under the circumstances. With almost unlimited means, with the best mechanical talent engaged, and the unlimited range of all the material that the country afforded, we had reason to expect that, with efforts properly directed, the new age of decoration should be initiated.

And how is the result? The lines, mouldings, proportions and materials of the bridges are perhaps as near perfection as anything that has yet been attained; but in the carving of floral forms, where we would expect to find the expression of an earnest and faithful study of that nature with which they were destined to be forever afterward associated, we are generally disappointed. A park teeming with all the floral beauties of the season, is

a dangerous place to display bad carving which assumes to be based on natural forms. Here we see nature and art side by side and it is not difficult to form a judgment upon the latter. What we see are merely clever copies of office drawings, by men who are degraded by being made the machines to carve other men's designs; men who with proper encouragement could do a thousand per cent. better if left to work out their own ideas in their own way. It is only lately that the workmen have been allowed this privilege, and it has happened more, we think, on account of the exhaustion of the designers, than from any desire to elevate the workmen. The result has spoken well for the credit of the men, and in the carvings of the water terrace we see more good work than in all the rest of the park together. The terrace is a very interesting object in which to study the progress thus made. The idea from the first was that no piece of carving should be repeated. This was all right and proper, and just as it should be; but as everything was done from drawings, the designers seem to have soon exhausted themselves and at last appealed to the workmen to help them along. Moreover all the architect's work is not only very conventional but much of it borders upon the grotesque; in some of it the conventional is mixed with natural ornament and the result is simply ridiculous. Of course the carvers could take no enjoyment in such work, for they never knew nor cared where such forms could be found in nature, and if they could take any interest, it was only in the anticipation of approaching pay day. But where the workmen were given freedom to carve their own designs we see an entirely different character given to the work. (The reader can see this all along the balustrades leading down to the plaza and on the pedestals at the foot of the stairs.) Here what was cold, contorted and conventional is now easy, graceful and natural. We have fruits and flowers and berries which we know at first sight. Any one visiting the terrace on a day when the park is crowded will see little knots of people tarrying on the stairs and gathering around the pedestals where the four seasons are sculptured.

Who has ever seen any such admiration of the ugly pedestals on either side of the roadway? We are glad to see that the public appreciate the good work and detect it from the bad, for though we would not always be governed by popular opinion in such matters, yet we believe that the majority of people can appreciate that which is true and lovely and appeals to their best feelings, unless their minds have been poisoned with false notions of art, which blunt all their perceptions of what is beautiful in nature,—those false theories which make them judge what they see by rules of art, and not by its fidelity to nature which is above all art.

We can fearlessly pronounce the carving on the pedestals at the foot of the stairs to be the best work that has ever been done in this country, and as nearly as we can find out, the first and only attempt yet made in any architectural work to reproduce natural forms in stone faithfully and earnestly. It is the first opportunity given to workmen to exercise their own powers of conventionalization, and work out the result with their own hands. Now if any one wants to know what we mean by Gothic carving, let him go to the Central Park and see for himself. Let him examine carefully the bosses in the balustrades on both sides of the stairs, and then the pedestals with their birds and flowers and insects—with trees, vines, birds' nests, fire and water cut in solid stone, and he will see work done as only the mediævalists did it. Gothic we call it for want of a better name, but no matter what it be, it is good and beautiful, conventional, but rightly conventional, and as true to nature as it can be made.

We are not without hope that it is yet possible to do better work than this—but it requires the encouragement of those who yet know little about it. It demands a sacrifice—it demands that our art workmen should be educated—it demands that they should be encouraged and told that they are something more than machines, that they are men endowed with reverence and love for all that is beautiful and good—it demands that they also should make a sacrifice, and should act in such spirit toward those who desire to advance their position and influence as

will best bring about such a result. We Americans who assume to be in advance of the world in most things, are behind in this. In England, with the revival of Gothic Architecture, a new school of naturalistic carvers has grown up, and a society of ornamental carvers for mutual encouragement and education has been in existence some time. It is no longer usual for English Architects of the new school to furnish designs for ornamental work in stone, for all such is done by the workmen themselves. True they have an advantage over us in having mediæval architecture to study, but yet we have, with all others, the boundless field of nature, to which the mediævalists also had to go for instruction and inspiration.

We have sketched as briefly as the subject would admit the progress of building in America from the first settlement of the country to the present time, and have been obliged to go over a great deal of ground, some of which we have found a tedious task, wearisome we fear both to the writer and and reader; while again we have touched upon others which it were better to have dwelled upon at greater length. We have found our architecture to have been rather chaotic than systematic and progressive. We proposed to inquire how far our public and private buildings have served our uses and necessities, and have found that we used them because we needed them, and have derived very little more benefit from them than the supply of an absolute want. We certainly have convenient dwelling houses provided with every convenience and all material luxuries, and generally in the planning,

heating, lighting and ventilating of all classes of buildings have made as much if not more progress than any other nation. Our buildings have not generally served our uses in point of time, for we have not built durably. There is a too general impression that everything we do is merely temporary, or only to last as long as a certain fashion, and then pass away. We must remember that the only way to make any style of house lasting is to build it substantially, and there is no doubt that even if it were merely a house in some prevailing fashion, and not built according to the principles of eternal truth, it would have a strong tendency to establish that fashion. Hence knowing the temporary nature of the buildings of the present we may raise high hopes, that if with a revival of good design we also commence an era of constructive building, we will establish the new architecture on such firm foundations, that the ravages of time will efface neither our works, nor the principles embodied in them.

As to the mental health, pleasure or instruction to be derived from our architecture, we must confess that except in a few late works, we are under no obligations to our architects.

And now that we have reviewed the past, the field of duty for the future spreads out in its vast extent inviting earnest work and patient sacrifice. We will endeavor hereafter to find the path upon which our journey lies, and ascertain the topography of the country that it traverses; and though it be a New Path to most of us, let us hope that it will be the true one, and that God in His Providence will help us onward.

W.

" A THING of beauty is a joy forever :
 Its loveliness increases ; it will never
 Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.
 Therefore, on every morrow, are we wreathing
 A flowery band to bind us to the earth,
 Spite of despondence, of the inhuman dearth
 Of noble natures, of the gloomy days,
 Of all the unhealthy and o'erdarken'd ways
 Made for our searching ; yes, in spite of all,
 Some shape of beauty moves away the pall
 From our dark spirits. Such the sun, the moon,
 Trees old and young, sprouting a shady boon
 For simple sheep ; and such are daffodils
 With the green world they live in ; and clear rills
 That for themselves a cooling covert make
 'Gainst the hot season ; the mid-forest brake,
 Rich with a sprinkling of fair musk-rose blooms ;
 And such too is the grandeur of the dooms
 We have imagined for the mighty dead ;
 All lovely tales that we have heard or read ;
 An endless fountain of immortal drink,
 Pouring unto us from the heaven's brink.

Nor do we merely feel these essences
 For one short hour ; no, even as the trees
 That whisper round a temple become soon
 Dear as the temple's self, so does the moon,
 The passion poesy, glories infinite,
 Haunt us till they become a cheering light
 Unto our souls, and bound to us so fast.
 That, whether there be shine, or gloom o'ercast,
 They always must be with us, or we die."

KEATS.

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