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# THE NEW PATH.

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TRUTH IN ART.

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No. 8.] "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are,  
and the things that shall be hereafter." [Dec., 1863.

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## SCULPTURE.

WHAT ought our sculptors to do for us?

There is, perhaps, no general question about art requiring more care to answer. It is easy to see what sculptors have done of old, and in what manner they reached their greatest triumphs. It is not difficult to see what circumstances now would produce much good sculpture, with constant possibility of great. But how, under the present circumstances, our sculptors should work, is not so clear. If the architects were doing their duty, the question would never need to be asked; as they do not, we must ask it, with but little hope of an entirely satisfactory answer.

Having such a question before us, the perfectly logical and proper thing to do is to go back to those times when good sculpture was common, and see what circumstances those were which produced it. It is peculiarly necessary that we should do so in the case of sculpture, for there is no art at present so undefined in its aims, so far removed from its greatness in past time, so utterly abnormal in its condition.

The limits of this article will not allow an account of sculpture in all ages, nor is such necessary to our purpose. Let us consider only the three great periods of the Art, that of the Greek school, during the independence of Greece and during the dominion of Rome, that of the middle ages, and

that of the Renaissance immediately resulting from both. Even of these we propose no exhaustive analysis, but only such statement of well ascertained facts and inevitable conclusions as may help us in our future inquiries.

The awful perfection of Greek sculpture is such, that inquiry by us into the principles of the work, seems almost as if Australian savages should try to ascertain the principles on which Steers modelled the "America." One great difference, however, between the civilized and the savage man is in the former's unlimited power of inquiry. Though no living man can do what the Greeks did, yet any one can find out how they did it, if he will be modest and content to learn from observation.

The Greek "ideal" was a worldly one, as splendid as dwellers on the earth only could make it. The world was to them a glorious place, and they who dwelt upon it glorious and powerful beings. Their country and climate made living itself a pleasure. Their life was healthy, enterprising, full of interest; their bodies strong and delicate, vigorous and beautiful; their minds clear-sighted and acute, if narrow; their souls resolute and patient. This life was to them full of pleasure and satisfaction, pain mingled with it, but momentary and local pain, soon passing away, leaving little trace behind. All beyond this world was vague, mere matter of speculation,—

speculation for which they had little taste.

As this world thus limited their vision, so themselves, as the noblest things in it, were most worthy their regard. Superior beings, with power beyond that of man, and controlling him, they knew of, indeed; but they knew them only in their intercourse with man, when they assumed human forms, and were, to the most subtle perception, perfected man and no more.

At a very early period of Greek art, sculptors arose who were capable of carving the human form with an accuracy never before approached. Such work as this seemed to the Greeks perfect and sufficient. They cared little except for representations of gods and men and their deeds, and they demanded perfection of workmanship at any cost or hazard. These they secured, and their art, limited to this single purpose, soon reached inimitable greatness.

The so-called "Ilissus," from the Parthenon pediment, is a colossal statue representing a man reclining on his left side, and supported by his extended left arm, a few folds of drapery falling around the left arm from the shoulder, increasing the strength of the marble column supporting the statue's weight. The feet, hands, right arm, neck and head are wanting, and the surface of the marble is chipped and broken away in many places. Such is a statue which all artists, all critics, will agree in calling very great. What are the merits which command such praise? Let us see.

The falling of the muscles on the under side of the raised right thigh, showing a curious hollow in its inner surface, is pointed out by art professors to their pupils, as a marvellous piece of faithfulness to nature; and it startles anew every observer—a statement surprising to him, and yet which he at once feels to be true. There is a massing together of the waist muscles on the right side, a stretching of those on the left side, and a falling in of the walls of the abdomen, of all of which the same is to be said. Reproduction of natural forms is then the wonder and the merit here. And yet,—is this statue the faithful copy of any man who served as model? It is hard to say. The Greek sculptors could

procure models easily of form more perfect than we can imagine, and had daily under their eyes forms more perfect than we can procure; such were the results of careful bodily education and healthy lives. And yet if, by combining the beauties of more forms than one, the artist could create a form more beautiful than either, without doubt he did so. Observe, he was perfectly free to copy or to combine. He sought to give to his countrymen the image of a hero or of a god. He required for this purpose the most admirable form of man possible to find or to imagine. If he found a living man whose form was, in his eyes, perfect, he copied him exactly. If, in the best form he could find he still saw imperfections, he modified his work by study from another model, or by his memory of many. These sculptors gained such knowledge of the human form that they could carve the ideally perfect human form. There is only one way by which such knowledge could be gained, constant exact copying of the human form as they found it. In short, they studied the body, learned thence what its highest beauty was, and carved such highest beauty.

Did they seek to express anything more than the outside of the body? Our modern sculpture proposes to itself the representation of all manner of sentiments and thoughts, did theirs? Let us see.

To the "Venus of Milo" or Melos, so called from the island where it was discovered, seems to be generally conceded the rank of greatest female statue. The figure may be described as perfect. Probably no man of uncorrupted taste has ever imagined a possible improvement. It is the faultless form of woman, neither too voluptuous nor too severe. It does not seem possible that this statue can have been an accurate copy of any woman. We cannot conceive of a woman uniting such beauty of form with so queenly a carriage, and so grand a face. It is safe to assume that the expression of that face is "given" by the sculptor, not copied, line by line, from any human countenance.

What then does the face express? calm, does it not? But calm can exist only with the great, it is quiet

greatness, the still ocean, not the smooth pond. If the physiognomists have analyzed the face and head, they have found no particular signs of intellect, mathematical or executive or other. In like manner if the student of human nature tries to read thoughts in her placid features, he will be baffled. The statue is generally supposed to have been a "Venus Victrix," holding in the hand the golden apple, the prize awarded by Paris "to the fairest." And it is a triumphant statue, no doubt. But there are no signs in the face of human exultation, that is, of triumph that was not assured before. There is nothing there but greatness which makes triumph certain, and such greatness is quiet, and quiet greatness we call calm. Give to a lovely and noble woman

"Undying bliss  
In knowledge of her own supremacy."

And you will see on her features the expression of the Venus of Milo. Suppose that, like Æneas, you should meet a goddess in a wood; at first, you would think her a woman, then you would see in her face something more than woman, and if you should try to analyze this "something more," you would find it to be freedom from all signs of weakness, or suffering, or temporary and partial triumph. The Venus of Milo is just such a being—a woman without the shortcomings of humanity.

This statue may serve us as a representative of a large class of Grecian statues, the noblest of all; the gods, goddesses and heroes in placid repose, more beautiful, more stately, every way greater than man.

Another class is of those in action, but expressing no strong emotion. Such are the Diana of the Louvre, stepping quickly forward, while drawing an arrow from her quiver; the Jason at Munich; the various disc-throwers and fighting gladiators, studies these, of the human body in violent action; the Sleeping Fawn, the Silenus and Infant Bacchus, and other such; also, perhaps, the Belvedere Apollo, in which the expression of face is too slight to be legible, but for the archer's attitude.

The majority of existing Greek statues belong to these two classes. To

offset these and form a third class, we have only such groups as the Laocoon, the Niobe, and the Farnese Bull; even the Dying Gladiator belonging rather to the second class, and being one of the best statues in it.

To our first class belongs all the work of the best periods, and the best work of all periods. In the time of Phidias, and of the great sculptors immediately succeeding him, the purposes of art were—after anatomical truth, which was universally the first aim—splendor and costliness of material, (as in statues of ivory and gold, and of cast "brass" or bronze, also in the jewelry freely used as decoration); colossal size, (much greater than life in all that is left us, many times greater in much that is gone); architectural arrangement and grouping, (each being carved for its especial place, in or about a temple); a general repose, the result of self-restraint in the artist, showing not lack of power over the figure, but a chastened sense of the grand; and always and everywhere the highest beauty of form and grace of attitude. In later times, when art begins to minister to pride as well as to religion, and to decorate the noble's court as well as the temple's front, the spirit is changed, and the grand quiet of the early gods is sacrificed to skipping grace and agile posturing. Still later, and the required display of anatomical knowledge is made no longer in the exercises of the running ground and circus, but by contortions of tortured muscles in the folds of impossible and nugatory serpents; and peaceful beauty is abandoned for features distorted by grief, or writhing in agony of dissolution.

In all this, the greater is given up for the less, the beautiful for the startling, the enduring humanity for the temporary emotion, true art for *tours de force*. This seems to have been perfectly understood among the Greeks themselves. "As distorted as Myron's Quoit-Thrower," was a proverb which has come down to us, the statue named being a very model for truth in anatomy; and all statues representing violent action were ridiculed and opposed by the best taste and knowledge of the time. But the desire to display anatomical science, once awakened, was too strong for opposi-

tion, and the movement went on until this knowledge was lost with all other knowledge and all art in the corrupt later sculpture.

One branch of Greek art requires separate mention, however brief, sculpture in relief. This is always noticeably different in treatment and feeling, and from good cause. The flatter the relief, the nearer it approaches to picture-making, that is to the suggestion of the solid on a flat surface. And, as it thus approaches the art of drawing, so the restraints of the sculpture more and more disappear. The Panathenaic Frieze, for instance, is in the lowest possible relief, that it may be seen by the light reflected steeply up from the marble pavement below; and this frieze gives us, among its varied

life and action, horsemen in triumphal procession, the horses prancing in unconventional freedom, the stately riders without armor or trappings keeping easily and naturally "the warrior's seat."

There are necessary limitations, however to bas-relief sculpture, of which one is the uniform representation of the human face in profile. In marble or on coins the face is never shown otherwise than in profile, until the most corrupt periods. The disagreeable results that would follow from the contrary practice must be evident to all, and the prohibition of it must always be absolute in all cases of *realized* or perfect sculpture in flat relief.

To be continued.

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## THE ARTISTS' FUND SOCIETY, FOURTH ANNUAL EXHIBITION.

EVERY new collection of American pictures gives reason, if only here and there, for some suspicion that the methods of teaching and working which have been in vogue for the last century are becoming as unsatisfactory to the artists, as they have long been to that small portion of the public which thinks about Art at all. It is true that the thinkers are, as they have always been, insignificant in point of numbers, but they have slowly educated the better portion of the public, with whom, although far removed from them in culture, in depth and delicacy of perception, and in aspiration, they have, nevertheless, always sympathized more than with the class of connoisseurs, or knowing ones, a class which has never been able to go beyond mere technicalities, and the material surface of works of art. It is to the persevering praises of the connoisseurs, repeated from generation to generation with not a little assumption, that a great many of the so-called old masters owe their reputation. The thinkers have always refused their homage; the people have maintained an attitude of incredulous indifference, but the worshipers of the Renaissance and the Dutch have carried the day,

without opposition, by mere brag and bluster. The potency of a name, every day of our experience bears witness to, but in no field is its power more overbearing than in the Arts. Once let the connoisseurs decide that a man is a great painter or sculptor—let him decide for himself that he is great, and convince a small knot of personal friends that he is so, and you may almost as well batter at Cheops as try to prove that the public is mistaken. We seriously doubt if, after all John Ruskin's sledge-hammer blows at Domenichino, Carlo Dolce, and others of their tribe—those painters have lost a half dozen of their old admirers. He may have prevented many from following after such idols, but, has he ever converted one confirmed devotee?

The only hope of the thinkers has been, after all, with the very masses who have so quietly submitted to the rule of the connoisseurs. To educate a connoisseur, to lead him to the truth, is a sheer impossibility. You may as well try to raise the dead. The multitude, on the other hand, is never to be despaired of. It is not only teachable, but, out of it come perpetual inspiration and incitement. One great disadvantage under which the artist of the

present day suffers, as compared with the older men, is, that he does not have the large opportunity which they had of working for the public, and appealing to it for judgment and reward. Our artists no longer work for the church, for the public square, for the portico, but for the parlor and the chamber, and have exchanged the hearty, warm and unaffected comment of the crowd for the smatter, the conceit, the learning and the knowingness of the connoisseur and the dilettante. Yet, in the long run, the instincts of the people have been proved true, and the names it has crowned have become the idols of the world. Connoisseurs, indeed, have made the fame of such men as Domenichino, Carlo Dolce, Salvator, the Carracci, with fifty names as empty, in England and America, but it was the people that gave Giotto and Raphael and Veronese and Gainsborough their crowns. Sooner or later, all men yield to the large decisions of the past, and we will rather believe that any man, however learned, or any clique, however high in place or dazzling in reputation, is misled by some mere technical trick, or by some affectation of singularity, or whim of fashion, than that the whole world of men, that persists in not admiring, is ignorant and wrong. There is no great poet that the world does not hold to its warm and mighty heart, no great painter to see whose works it does not gladly make yearly pilgrimages, no good book that is not continually getting out of print, no Homer for whose birthplace seven cities will not wrangle, no Shakspeare whose ever increasing fame and love and reverence do not keep some little, musty Stratford from mean decay. The proprietors of no end of farthing candles run hither and thither, and declare that they hold the fee simple of the sun, but the world knows the sun without their help, and refuses to turn out of bed until the true master of the day smiles back their welcome from over the hills.

The thinkers, then, are the advance guard of the people; they foresee what it must some day inevitably admire and love. They are in sympathy with the deep heart of the world, with its joys, its sorrows, its passions, its struggles, its aspirations, its hopes. They can teach the world, and direct its eager,

questioning eyes, because they and the world understand each other, and men gladly follow where the interpreter leads. Yes, the public is teachable, but the connoisseurs can teach it nothing. They live on the surface, and delight in processes, in manipulations, in obedience to arbitrary rules, in conventional methods of treatment, in short, in the mechanism of the shop. The results they produce are, it is true, often dexterous and attractive, but they cannot long hold a world which, however it may seem to the idle, the careless and the unbelieving, to be shallow and giddy, is, in truth, a world of serious and awful realities, resting, even in its frolic, its crimes and its ferocities, on nothing less than the deep consciousness of God. The world of Art is divided into two spheres; the one light, trifling, fantastic, superficial, melo-dramatic, in which the connoisseurs live and move and adore, and with which the great world of men amuses itself, or at which it stares in awkward curiosity;—the other, sublime, mysterious, pathetic, trembling between deep laughter and deeper tears, a sphere in which great souls in their higher, happier moments gladly ascend, and to which the whole world of men comes for deep refreshment after its toils and cares, but into which the dilettante, the connoisseur, the virtuoso—veil his shallowness and conceit by whatever learned name you will—never once glances, or glances only to sneer and misunderstand.

But, bad as connoisseurship has been in the Old World, nowhere has it proved itself so empty, so wrongheaded, so impudent as in America. In the Old World, there was always something great in the past, to which the people could easily refer, and which kept the class of self-appointed teachers in check. Works of art abound there, and learning abounds, and it is not easy for ignorant, conceited or prejudiced men to deceive the whole public, or to deceive any portion of it, long. Even supposing the common enough case of a clique determined by much writing and talking to force the world to admire the performances of a certain man—the works of the really great men are before the people in galleries and churches, standing witnesses against foppery and medioc-

ity. But, here, we have always been without such defence. Our artists have been comparatively few, and their works not widely diffused. We have no permanent public galleries; we are a Protestant people, and do not like pictures in our churches; we have a government bent on economy, and no money has, until lately, gone to squares, gardens and public buildings; the people, therefore, have had but a slender chance to be educated in the arts. Here and there, a second-rate public statue; in a public building or two, some of the worst specimens of the poorest men; this has been all that we have had, thus far. This state of things is rapidly mending; private galleries are on the increase, as accessible as is necessary; the Jarves Collection, with the Gallery of the Historical Society, and the Bryan Gallery are open to the public, and contain many good and valuable pictures. Collections of pictures are being made in our smaller cities and towns; young men are beginning to see the use and the delight of study, and the next twenty-five years will, we firmly believe, find us in a very different position from the one we now occupy. If people can only be interested and set to thinking, we have no fears for the result. They would be interested, and would think, hard enough, if the knowing ones had not disgusted them with the whole matter, and made them believe themselves incompetent to tell good from bad, or to believe their own eyes. The people must be educated, therefore, and emancipated from the control of the so-called connoisseurs. They must learn to think for themselves; to respect their own decision, and to demand that a man shall give them reasons for the admiration or contempt he bestows upon pictures and statues, or, at least, that he shall convince them of their own incapacity, as yet, to judge, and of his right to demand a suspension of their judgment.

It is interesting to watch the rise among us of two schools, if so pretentious a word can be applied, as yet, to either of them. One is led by men either French or taught in France; the other is American. One is sentimental, dreamy, and struggling after that it calls the ideal. The other is hard-working, wide awake, and struggling

after the real and the true. The schools are at swords' points, and, if the men were equal in attainment, there might be doubt as to the result, but, so far, there is every prospect that the Realists will carry the day, because they are basing their work on hard study and thought. The general public care little for the contest; it looks only for results: but it is good to know that the struggle has begun, that discussion is aroused, and that the party of the Realists is getting strong recruits. The Idealists have already secured the sympathies of most of our artists, of the class of knowing ones, and of the misled portion of the public, but they will never finally prevail against the real lovers of truth, although they may long seem to do so. Hard work, enthusiasm and the truth are a strong team, and mere grace, prettiness and sentimental feeling, especially if there be no knowledge to back them, must pull against them in vain. Still, we are glad the Idealists, —this is their name, not ours, it is a name we should never have allowed them, for it grants too much,—we are glad the Idealists are in the field, and show fight. They have an atom or two of truth in their theory—let them make the most of it. Meanwhile, that atom belongs as much to us as to them, and when our men are ready, they will add it to their work, and make it perfect. But, all ideal work worthy of the name is built upon knowledge of the truth, and none but men who have given loyal service to the truth can produce it. It is the result of labor, of suffering, of the devotion of the whole man to his work. Who does less than this, is no artist, great or small; and what is produced at less expense than this, is not art, but only more or less ingenious trifling. All art need not be great, but it must all be good, and must found its claims to respect and preservation on its sincerity, earnestness and knowledge. A single square inch of Holbein's work is worth an acre of Lawrence's or Cole's, and the world will always hold it so. The one gets more and more precious with every year; the other sinks, steadily, deeper into forgetfulness. Some of our young men are learning the essential truth of this lesson, and are beginning to find out that the name

of artist is of somewhat more value than that of Hair-dresser or Ballet-dancer.

S. J. GUY.—"CATCHING RAIN DROPS."  
No. 20.

Mr. Guy is one of the new names, although this is, of course, not his first nor second appearance. He is evidently a careful, practiced worker; one of the most careful, perhaps, that we have, and able to do good work. His color is very disagreeable; it is pale without being pure; and while it cannot be called inharmonious, is neither sweet nor tender. It is without tone, and, like the expression of his faces and figures, lies wholly on the surface. He belongs to that unhappy class which likes nothing that is not new and clean, but if he chose *only* such excessively clean little girls and boys to paint, this objection would fall to the ground. Dogs, however, unlike little boys, will occasionally get their feet soiled, and such an immaculate dog as Mr. Guy has painted in No. 43, plainly belongs to another and a better world than this. However, all this enjoyment of dirt and of the marks of use and service which give as much value to dogs, and furniture, and clothes, as sorrow and experience do to human faces—will come, or may come, to this artist in time; meanwhile, Mr. Guy is learning to draw and use his colors, and appears to be in earnest, which, for the present, are matters of greater moment. How deep he will ever go, is another matter; he evidently has some power to seize transient expression of fun and humor—the face of the boy who is being made the victim of the sly girl with the cherries, is capitally painted, and the attitude of the other boy, who is suffering martyrdom at the hands of his baddish sister, is very natural. Perhaps, after all, Mr. Guy cannot get beyond this field of clever painting of domestic incident, in which case we earnestly beg he will not try to, but will be content with just this, holding firmly to nature, striving to see more and more truth, perfecting his drawing, studying nature's color, and keeping theories at arm's length. The result cannot fail to be good. If, however, having reached the point where he stands at present, knowing how to draw better than is

common, and able to lay his colors on smoothly, he shall continue to study and improve, making, every year, some steps visibly forward, he will furnish a rare exception to the general, we had almost said the universal rule.

WINSLOW HOMER.—"PLAYING OLD SOLDIER." 108.—"THE SUTLER'S TENT." 144.

Mr. Homer is the first of our artists—excepting Mr. McEntee, in his "Virginia"—who has endeavored to tell us any truth about the war. True, he has looked only on the laughing or the sentimental side—and yet, the "Home, Sweet Home," of the last Academy Exhibition, was too manly-natural to be called sentimental—but what he has tried to tell us has been said simply, honestly, and with such homely truth as would have given his pictures a historical value quite apart from their artistic merit, whatever that might have been. In technical qualities of painting, if he does not prosper too well, and, in consequence of the nature of his subject, sell his pictures too easily, he may make—doubtless, judging from his excellent beginning, will make—great progress, but he will never paint more real soldiers than these, and those which he sent to the Academy last year. Having shown his metal, what he now needs is patient, untiring study from nature and from nature only, and with grim determination, or glad, if he can reach so high, let him resist every effort and persuasion to lead him into false ways. Let him shun the "ideal" as he would the plague, and build his right to be ranked one day with the poets, on his knowledge of human nature, and the mastery of his material.

Let those who care to know just the difference between the "ideal" and the "real" treatment, take an illustration close at hand. Mr. Homer's two pictures, Nos. 108 and 144, hang near two of Mr. Guy's, Nos. 102 and 143. Compare the drapery in each; the boy's trowsers with the soldier's. You see that Mr. Guy is true up to a certain point; he follows nature as long as she is graceful, and does not offend his eye, but, once let her make what strikes him as a discord, and which is a discord, of course, for she,



the great poet, makes no music without discords—and, straightway, Mr. Guy takes out the offending note, smooths it down, and thinks he has bettered nature's work. Then, look at the landscape in the two pictures; see how vague and unreal are the trees, grass and earth in Mr. Guy's. There is no reason for this, for the strong light on the gate-post shows that the sun is shining clear, but there is nothing else in the picture to tell us so, and although we can see every wrinkle in the boy's face as he distorts it, the foreground weeds, and stones, and grasses, nearer to us by four feet, at least, are as dim and pale as if there were a mile of air between us and them. Now, look at Mr. Homer's No. 108, and see how faithfully he has tried to draw and paint the branch of pine against the sky. In ten years he will both draw and paint it better, no doubt, but, insufficient as it is, it is perfectly right in intention now, and has more truth in it, and can give more honest enjoyment than all Mr. Guy's theoretical work. Compare the pictures of these two men, inch by inch; Mr. Homers' you will find signed all over with truth—truth in the conception, worked out with faithful striving after truth; Mr. Guy's, you will find—not wholly false, but only true as far as the artist thought would be tolerated. When Mr. Homer can draw and paint as well as Mr. Guy he will, if the expression be not too Hibernian, paint a great deal better, for he will use the knowledge he will then have gained, not in the service of convention and a false idealism, but in the service of that truth at whose altar he has laid his first, immature offerings.

W. J. HENNESSY.—“BREAKFAST TIME.”

111.—“THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER.” 120.—“FIELD FLOWERS.” 54.

If the scorners and the foolish folk had their way, we should put No. 54 first in the list of Mr. Hennessy's works, for that class of people has pronounced this little picture a pure piece of Pre-Raphaelitism, which, of course, it is not, nor was meant to be; it is only a study, which Mr. Hennessy would have done better to keep in his studio—painted, we are confident, partly out of doors, and, partly, in the house, a fact in itself quite sufficient to

settle its claims, if it had any, to be considered a Pre-Raphaelite work. 'Tis a slight, unimportant thing, and only valuable as showing that Mr. Hennessy has found his true studio at last, where if he will have the courage to stay and work, Art in America will have something to thank him for. But, pray, let no one take this No. 54 for a Pre-Raphaelite or Realistic picture, where the foreground is left muddled and indistinct, and the distance is painted clearly and sharply; and where not a single truth is thoroughly told.

Mr. Hennessy can, however, paint cleverly and sweetly, as witness his “Breakfast Time,” and the “Gardener's Daughter,” which, by the way, is not Tennyson's. A little Frenchy, both of them, but not offensively so, and well worth studying. How natural is the action of the little girl with the saucer of milk; she will spill it, presently, as her mother is telling her, because she is thinking of the cat, and looking at her, instead of at what she has in her hand.

E. BENSON.—“THE AUTUMN WALK.” 176.

This is curious work. Out of ten persons who examine it, at least nine think this must be what is meant by “Pre-Raphaelite.” They think so, because it looks queer to them, and wrongly-right, or rightly-wrong, they can't make out which, but they half like it, and pass on, hesitating. A plain solution of their difficulty is this, that it is meant for the portrait of a real place and of a real young lady, and is painted by a man who believes nothing in particular, and who therefore imitates coarsely and ignorantly, the last thing that appears to take the public fancy. If John Everett Millais had not illustrated Orley Farm and other English novels, Mr. Benson would never have painted this picture. It looks real to many people, and they like it, because, instead of the “ideal” mountains, hills, foregrounds and so forth of ordinary painters, they can make out a field, and a fence, and trees, and something, which by the sheaf of corn near it, they take to be a patch of corn. Then, the young lady has a round hat, and a veil, and a dress made in modern fashion, and looks, on the whole, like the young ladies they

know. All this is very well, and shows that people are glad to have artists paint what they can understand. But, let the same scene be painted by a man who not only looks at it through his own eyes and not through another man's, but who adds to this the power to draw and to lay on colors, and people would have been justified in looking long, and returning to look, again and again.

Mr. Benson's stock in trade as an artist consists in a weak vein of sentiment, and a still weaker way of expressing it. He might draw, of course, if he would try; it is possible he might color, but we have no proof of it, and he shows no improvement from year to year. In plain words, he has underrated the requirements of his art, and thinks that easy, which is in truth, supremely difficult. Mr. Millais' work looks easy to do, but even the coarsest and most careless of his illustrations of Orley Farm has a great fund of experience and knowledge at the back of it, and could only have been drawn by a man who had served a long apprenticeship of labor and study. This apprenticeship, Mr. Benson has, evidently, resolved not to serve. He can paint pictures that will sell, without it, and he can sit on two stools and eat his bread in tranquillity, being an "ideal-ist" in his ability to shirk details and tell as little truth as he chooses, and yet contriving to get counted as a "realist," by telling the little truth he indulges in, in as disagreeable a way as he can contrive, or copy.

GEO. C. LAMBDIN.—"MAY FLOWERS."

161.—"HE LOVES ME, HE LOVES ME NOT." 187.

It cannot be too late yet, Mr. Lambdin, but it will be, soon! This picture of "May Flowers," is the worst thing you have done yet, but, if you will now do as you promised five years ago, and paint a good picture, it will show to double advantage by the memory of this. Is it possible that you, too, have sheathed your sword, and given in to the prevailing notion that there comes a time when study may cease, and art begin? You are working as if you believed it, but we are very sure you do not. These pictures make us sorry more than angry. Only one thing we will

say, that your work, such as it is, is not copied, but is your own, and, even now, if, instead of dreaming and theorizing, you would draw diligently, and let color go for a year or two, there is hope. But drawing is essential, and you do not know how to draw anything; hand nor foot, nor arm, nor face, no, not the least fold of a gown. A picture of the size and apparent importance of No. 161 ought not to have been attempted until after, at least, ten years of thoughtful, varied and unintermitting labor. And, even after such a service, only one picture of this size should have been painted in a year. It would take a year's hard thinking, and the result of a number of years' experience to fill so large a canvass with ideas enough, or sufficiently beautiful color or truthful drawing to make it worth its price. You smile, young artist! Well, so do your gray beard friends, A. and B. and C., who sell their works with less trouble than it took to paint them, for whatever sums they choose to charge; who never work, and never did work; who think only how many pictures they can paint and get rid of in a year, and would think you a hare-brained fanatic if you put a bit more conscientious labor into your picture than will suffice to make it sell.

EASTMAN JOHNSON.—"A PORTRAIT."

114.—"THE VILLAGE BLACKSMITH."  
52.

Welcome, Mr. Johnson, with these two excellent pictures. There has not a sweeter bit of work been painted for many a year, than this portrait of a dear little girl, who looks as contented and quietly happy as only a good child can be. And, when we have looked at her so long that we begin to feel as if we must be making her uncomfortable, what a pleasure to look about the room, and examine the carefully and solidly painted furniture. Solidly, we have written; if we hesitate, it is only because there is a hazy look over the whole picture that Mr. Johnson seems to aim to get in all his work, and which detracts from its solidity and reality. But he draws well, and there is always a firm, clear purpose behind every picture, so that this fault—it seems a fault to us—can only

detract from his absolute merit, not seriously jeopard his right to be considered one of our very best painters.

Here we must stop, for the present, but much remains to say. We suppose we must give up Mr. Huntington as incorrigible, and let his work pass, but we cannot help referring to his picture called "The Widow's Son," for it is one in which we think he has even surpassed himself. If the boy has been decapitated, and his head sewed on by an inexperienced person, was it necessary to make it so painfully prominent an object in the picture? If the horrible sight has paralyzed the dog, and deprived the widow of all power of expression—what must be the effect on the unwary spectator? In France, they manage these things better, and the best established laws of taste forbid that such ghastly scenes should be represented either in pictures or on the stage.

The defenders of Mr. Cole must thank the contributor of these specimens of their idol's work! As for Mr. Cole's enemies, supposing him to have had them, they must indeed be pitiless, if they can exult over these three pieces of hopeless imbecility. We rejoice, however, at their exhibition, and wish there were more, that disinterested spectators might learn, once for all, how empty are this man's much vaunted claims to high artistic rank. They cannot stand in the light of to-day, and in twenty-five years will not be worth the canvass they are painted on.

Allston, too, is represented here by one of his most famous works, but it is a gigantic failure. What we lost in Allston from the radical defects of his training, and the bad teaching of his times can only be estimated by those who have carefully studied all his works, in literature as well as in art, and read his character in the reverent praises of his friends. A spirit more tender, delicate, sensitive and holy has rarely entered a human form, but, in his pictures, he was constantly thwarted and restrained by subjects beyond his powers, and by the uncertainty of his methods. He was hindered, too, by idolatry of the great masters, who shone so bright before him as to dazzle his eyes, and make him grope and falter in his work. Had he never seen Europe, he might have been saved, but, as it is, he has left us only a great regret for powers misdirected, and a life, as far as its influence upon art is concerned, almost wholly thrown away.

We commend to our young men the foreign work in this exhibition, from the dash and vigor of Rosa Bonheur to the severe and careful work of Willems, an excellent painter, of whom No. 93, "The Toilet," is a good specimen, though hung too high. Plassan, Duverger, Frere, Guillemin, will, all, teach him who can learn, lessons of real value. These men have studied nature, and she has rewarded them.

LIONEL.

## PICTURES ON EXHIBITION.

GEO. INNESS. "THE SIGN OF PROMISE." SNEDECOR'S GALLERY.

This picture has been painted as a direct protest against the teachings of the naturalists, and is so declared by a printed description which is distributed at the place of Exhibition. Except for this description the painting would hardly be noticeable, but would pass as nothing more formidable to naturalism than is many another picture equally artificial in principle, and of far greater power. The sting of Shelley's "Queen Mab" lies in the notes thereof, and the critic naturally assails the notes as his most formidable antagonists. In like manner, the most needed criticism of Mr. Inness' Work can be written without seeing the picture, but with the printed pronouncement only. And the spectator ought to consider this before he judge the picture.

The statement of principle comes first. In all our extracts we shall print directly from the printed description, mistakes, italics, and all.

"The public taste in Art for some years past has been led to desire what *is called* the real in landscape, that is to say, the local and particular, and not the universal or the ideal. Such is unquestionably, at present, the prevailing tendency of American landscape painting. Mr. Inness, on the contrary, has long held the opinion that only the elements of the truly picturesque exist externally in any local scene, or in any aggregation of scenes, and that the highest beauty and truest value of the landscape painting are in the sentiment and feeling which flow from the mind and heart of the artist."

As regards these opinions of Mr. Inness we have, at present, nothing to say. If they need notice at all, they need a fuller discussion than there is room for, here. An artist's work is of more importance than his opinions, and may well be contrary to them, as has often been the case. We look to his *practice* for our edification.

After this, and a few words more about the picture, there comes a notice from the "Evening Post" of the original study for the picture, which, however, cannot be the same study which is exhibited near the picture, for in that there are no signs of the "pure azure" and "golden grain-fields" which the notice mentions. Of the exhibited study there is no oc-

casional to speak; for the picture has, of course, succeeded it, and made unnecessary its testimony to the doctrine which the artist wishes to teach.

The rest of the paper, being about half of it, is occupied by extracts from a notice of the picture, contributed to the Boston Transcript by James Jackson Jarves; we quote.

"Inness's example, therefore, is the more valuable, based as it is upon the higher principles of art. It develops the fact from the idea, giving the preference to subjective thought over the objective form of its fundamental *motive*. With him the inspiring idea is principal; form secondary, being the outgrowth of the idea. His picture illustrates phases of mind and feelings. He uses nature's forms simply as language to express thought. The opposite school of painters are content with clever imitation. This calls for no loftier tribute than admiration of scientific knowledge or dexterous manipulation. As appeals to the soul these works are lifeless. Being of things that perish in the using, they can never become a 'joy forever.'"

Developes the fact from the idea! But whence comes the idea? From the fact? If not from some fact, whence can it come? Are there any ideas not derived from fact? Are we never to stop laughing at the German painter in the story, who, while his French and English rivals went respectively to the menagerie and the desert, "developed *his* camel from the depths of his inner consciousness?" Here he is again, aided and abetted by Mr. Jarves, developing facts of nature from ideas, while the rest of the world is busy developing ideas from facts.

But what school of painters is that which "are content with clever imitation?" The school most "opposite" to Mr. Inness' work and Mr. Jarves' teachings, and which, of all others, Mr. Jarves most denounces, is that of the English naturalists, once called Pre-Raphaelites, and of their few school-fellows here. Let us assure Mr. Jarves that they were never "content" with anything they ever did, never limited their aspirations to anything short of universal achievement, and, as for "clever imitation," that they disclaim and abhor all attempts at imitation, as their great apostle has repeatedly declared.

As to things that appeal to the soul and things which are a joy forever, there seems to be some disagreement

between Keats and Mr. Jarves, and we prefer to err with Keats.

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever,  
Its loveliness increases, it will never  
Pass into nothingness."

But Mr. Jarves tells us that things which perish in the using do not so. Does he mean that they cannot be things of beauty? Does he really mean that no form of nature can appeal to the soul?

"The 'Sign of Promise' reveals the aspirations and sentiments of the artist. It is a visible confession of his theory, faith and aims. Outwardly, a beautiful composition of mingled stream, meadow, field, hillside and forest, with its rich associations of harvest and human labor, overcast by storm, through which gleams the rainbow, of hope; inwardly an eloquent symbol of a struggling soul. This double sense ranks it as inventive art, to be judged rather from that high aspect than from a merely material point of view.

But its excellence in this respect is also striking. It renders broadly and vividly the qualities of air, earth, vegetation and water. We feel their genuineness, because they do not catch the eyes as a dexterous imitation of form and substance, but as it were suggest nature."

Reveals? to whom? It is a very old comparison, that of a storm to a "struggling soul." But how is this picture more expressive of this "double sense" than is Cole's Storm, now in the Historical Society's Gallery, or Turner's "Wind, Rain and Speed," or any other picture of tempest? Is this "sentiment of the Artist" better expressed by work which carefully avoids "clever imitation," or even a distant resemblance to natural forms? It seems to be Mr. Jarves' assumption that bad painting and drawing are better expressions of thought than good.

There is very great danger that the shrewd spectator will suspect the "theory" to be that work should not be too faithful, because such would be too arduous; the "faith" to be in the ignorance and gullibility of the public; —and the "aims" to be the making the painter's life as easy and careless as possible.

Then it seems that it is because of this "double sense" that the picture ranks as inventive art. But is all symbolic art, all metaphorical art, to be so classed? Even when the symbol or metaphor is of venerable antiquity and in constant use? The penny-a-liner who calls fire "the devouring element" is just as much an inventive artist as Mr. Inness in getting up his brilliant comparison of storms without with storms within.

Moreover, much of the worst art that the world has seen, has been very full of double meaning, especially that wretched seventeenth and eighteenth century work, the characters of which were not men and women nor angels, nor animals, but personified virtues and vices, and genii of all sorts. Is this all ranked by Mr. Jarves as "inventive art," and judged by him "from that high aspect," whatever those words may mean?

But we are told that the success of this picture in a material point of view is also striking. The consideration of this is our next business. Let us remark in passing that "suggestion," we are told, is more like the "genuine" qualities of air, earth and water than "imitation." Indeed!

Whatever a landscape picture is intended for, it must certainly be intended to give some of the beauty; or, at least, some of the meaning of nature. It is surely impossible to conceive of any painting which is not meant to give some idea of the character of the things it represents. It seems fair to compare all pictures of nature with nature herself, for they all pretend to reproduce either the forms or the "soul" of nature.

In the case of this picture, whatever there is good in it, is the occasional resemblance of its painted to the real natural forms. There is a mountain on the right whose slope from the plain will remind the spectator of mountain sides he has seen, and thus will give him a moment's pleasure. There are clouds resting on this slope, near the top, which will remind him of the steaming columns of vapor he has seen climbing the slopes of Franconia and Catskill after a storm. Such pleasure as he can thus get from the picture we do not wish to deny him.

But this pleasure is soon exhausted, as the eye grows familiar with the picture, and the thought asks, "Why painted? What is meant?" Mr. Jarves says that the painter "uses nature's forms simply to express thought." But what if they are not nature's forms? Is there any success in the attempt we have supposed to tell the world *something* of nature? Is this ragged tree in the foreground capable of telling any truths or expressing any

thoughts about trees or human souls? Of course the artist does not wish to give any truths about any particular oak (it appears to be an oak,) nor about any particular species of oak, nor, perhaps, about the oak genus at all; but he must have intended to give us some "general truths" of tree nature. Has he done so? In those straggling and contorted limbs? In that ragged and formless green membrane which clings about them? No, the search is in vain for anything more suggestive of trees than greenness and ramification. The tree drawing is disgracefully bad; is it on that account better fitted to represent the artist's thought? Perhaps it is this tree that represents the "struggling soul" above spoken of. But a real tree tossed by the wind, "caught and cuffed by the gale," is vastly more impressive and expressive than this. Why not then have tried to draw one from the "local facts" somewhere?

Or, what means that dark, mottled belt beyond another belt of dark lead-color? Can this be water, and that a distant forest? It must be so, as they resemble those facts of nature more than others, yet, what is there in them of the "universal and ideal" of water and of woods? Really the public ought to be told if this strange, marbly surface, like dark soap, is better in a picture than what the artist saw when he looked at a distant forest.

Why is the sky made darker than much of the earth? In nature it is the brightest thing except the sun. Is this "rendering broadly and vividly the qualities of air?" Indeed, attempted imitation, bad as it is, is better than such suggestion (*suggestio falsi*) as this.

The gauntlet is thrown down before Church in this clumsy sentence.

"The one school, of which Inness is as much a type as is Church of the other, believes; the other sees."

The fault that we find with Church is that he is not natural enough, misusing his great powers by frequent slightness of work and recklessness of aim. But if you want to see "natural forms" whether "used to express thought" or not, go to Church, not to Inness. Whatever you find of good in Church, come to Inness to see the opposite evil. Whatever shortcomings or

deficiency you find in Church, come to Inness to find it in its worst and most unbearable form.

But, as it is of the picture and not of Mr. Inness that we wish to speak here, it is right to say that we don't consider this the best he can do, but the *worst* he can do, even when led astray by false teaching and false dreams of greatness.

JAS. M. HART. "A SUMMER'S MEMORY OF BERKSHIRE." KNOEDLER'S GALLERY.

We cannot help being pleased with this picture, it is such a beautiful combination of color, and of sparkling lights and shadows. It is a great pleasure to come to it, after seeing the "Sign of Promise." In comparison with Mr. Inness' picture, the tendency of this is certainly to the real and true, as opposed to the conventional, in landscape painting. And yet it is not Nature, it comes very near the truth, but always stops a little short. Every part of it tempts us to look more carefully, and when we so look, disappoints us. We say to ourselves, surely this in the foreground is the truth of weeds and grasses; but, upon closer examination, we find that not a weed nor a single leaf is rightly drawn. It is finished suggestion. Now, we do not object to partial drawing of nature, if that which is given be rightly given; we do not object to suggestive work, if that which is suggested be the truth. In this picture there is a great deal of finish, but it is not "added fact," and therefore is false. It all goes to make the picture smooth, but tends to the completion of nothing.

Nature never looks so perfectly clean and pretty, even in her sunniest and brightest moods. She is always grander and more solemn, more real and solid, with more scars upon her face—the signs of growth and struggle—the shadows of years of storm and sunshine.

This is a studio picture, painted according to the rules of Art. That is, the largest masses, strongest light and best finish are in the centre, the hill-sides and trees in the middle distance are very soft and misty, gradually losing themselves in the sky, and dark shadow covers all the near foreground,

the white cow by the brookside in full sunshine giving a strong central light.

By the way, the brook itself, whose clear water ripples over the round, brown stones on its bottom, is the truest piece of painting in the picture.

Mr. Hart is a master of his materials, a very skillful workman; he shows a great deal of feeling for graceful form and pleasant combinations of color, and his work is much better than the pictures painted after the Art Rules by the French and English artists. We should have no particular objection to the rules, were they always backed by deep and subtle knowledge of the facts of nature. Otherwise they are a dead letter;—or rather a positive harm to those who believe that they can make artists. We know that nature often shows us a beautiful composition with the strongest light in the foreground, thus utterly violating the rules. Turner, the greatest of modern landscape painters, preferring nature to rules, has followed her in this also, and has put the strongest light in the foreground in some of his noblest compositions.

There is nothing strange in this picture. All is just as we might have expected, very pretty and very cleverly painted. There is nothing surprising or unaccountable,—except the fogginess of the distant trees, and the bright sunshine in the centre of the picture, and these effects result from the Rules of Art. Now, in all the scenes of nature, great or small, brilliant or gloomy, there are always spots of color, and bright lights or mysterious darks in places where we never should have looked for them; things that we cannot account for, and do not understand. So, if a picture be not in some respects surprising to us, asserting positively some things which we had never thought of and which we find it hard to believe, it can hardly be true to nature, and will certainly not be in any sense great.

If Mr. Hart would go out next summer with the determination to paint such a scene as this, just as it is in nature,—doing every tree, weed and cloud with all his might,—he would produce work that would surprise himself. And he would soon produce work that not only this present time but all future generations would be grateful for;—work that every year of enlarged knowledge and riper civilization would enhance in value. Now Mr. Hart is a pleasure to the world, then he would be a benefactor. Now he gives us a pleasing picture, then he would give us noble truths and lasting beauty.

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We wish to call attention to the beautiful picture in the same gallery, "La Guitarre, by Willems, of Paris."\* Of all the pictures sent us now-a-days from France, none are more admirable in execution, and few or none so simple and natural in feeling. The masterly painting of the accessories, furniture, piano cover and walls, is quite beyond praise; it is almost faultless, and worthy of study by all our painters.

When will our painters learn that they all need power of execution; that no delicacy of feeling, or depth of perception, or knowledge, or wit, is of its proper use without it; that *with* it, a painter can express all that is in him, and continually find there more to express? We are not especial admirers of the present French school, which lacks terribly in many things, but it can do our painters very great good if they will copy its power of drawing and painting, without its sentiment, except now and then.

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\* Since the above was written this picture has been sold to a well-known amateur of this city, and removed from the Gallery. We congratulate our readers that it is to remain in America.

THERE are several poems by D. G. Rossetti, the head of the English Pre-Raphaelites, very much loved by those who know them, but very little known in this country, although three of them were printed some years ago in "The Crayon." In compliance with numerous requests, we reprint, from the Crayon, one of the finest.

THE BLESSED DAMOSEL.

D. G. ROSSETTI.

THE Blessed Damosel leaned out  
From the gold bar of heaven;  
Her eyes knew more of rest and shade  
Than waters stilled at even,  
She held three lilies in her hand,  
And the stars in her hair were seven.

Her robe, ungirt from clasp to hem,  
No wrought flowers did adorn,  
But a white rose of Mary's gift,  
For service meetly worn;  
And the hair lying down her back  
Was yellow, like ripe corn.

Her seemed she scarce had been a day  
One of God's choristers,  
The wonder was not yet quite gone  
From that still look of hers,  
Albeit to them she left the day  
Had counted as ten years.

(To one it is ten years of years.  
... Yet now, and in this place,  
Surely she leaned o'er me,—her hair  
Fell all about my face. ...  
Nothing,—the autumn fall of leaves.  
The whole year sets apace.)

It was the rampart of God's house  
That she was standing on,  
By God built over the sheer depth  
The which is space begun,  
So high that looking downward thence  
She scarce could see the sun.

It lies in heaven, across the flood  
Of Æther, like a bridge;  
Beneath, the tides of day and night  
With flame and blackness ridge  
The void, as low as where the earth  
Spins, like a fretful midge.

She scarcely heard her sweet new friends  
Playing at holy games,  
Softly they spoke among themselves  
Their virginal, chaste names,

And the souls, mounting up to God,  
Went by her like thin flames.

And still she bowed above the vast  
Waste sea of worlds that swarm,  
Until her bosom must have made  
The bar she leaned on warm,  
And the lilies lay as if asleep  
Along her bended arm.

From the fixed place of heaven, she saw  
Time, like a pulse, shake fierce  
Through all the worlds, her gaze still strove  
Within the gulf to pierce  
Its path, and now she spoke, as when  
The stars sung in their spheres.

The sun was gone now, the curved moon  
Hung, like a little feather,  
luttering far down the gulf, and now  
She spoke through the still weather,  
Her voice was like the voice the stars  
Had, when they sang together.

"I wish that he would come to me!  
For he will come," she said.  
"Have I not prayed in heaven? on earth  
Lord! Lord! has he not prayed?  
Are not two prayers a perfect strength?  
And shall I feel afraid?"

"When 'round his head the aureole clings  
And he is clothed in white,  
I'll take his hand and go with him  
To the deep wells of light,  
And we will step down as to a stream,  
And bathe there, in God's sight.

"We two will stand beside that shrine  
Occult, withheld, untrod,  
Whose lamps are stirred continually  
By prayers sent up to God,  
And see our old prayers, granted, melt,  
Each like a little cloud.

"We two will lie in the shadow of  
The living, mystic tree  
Within whose secret growth the dove  
Is sometimes felt to be,  
While every leaf that his plumes touch  
Saith his name audibly.

"And I myself will teach to him,  
I myself, lying so,  
The songs I sing here, which his voice  
Shall pause in, hushed and slow,  
And find new knowledge in each pause  
Or some new thing to know."



(Ah, sweet! just now, in that bird's song,  
 Strove not her accents there  
 Fain to be hearkened? When those bells  
 Possessed the midday air,  
 Was she not stepping to my side  
 Down all the trembling stair?)

"We two," she said "will seek the grove  
 Where the lady Mary is  
 With her five handmaidens, whose names  
 Are five sweet symphonies,—  
 Cecily, Gertrude, Magdalen,  
 Margaret and Rosalys.

"Circlewise sit they, with bound locks  
 And foreheads garlanded,  
 Into the fine cloth white like flame  
 Weaving the golden thread,  
 To fashion the birth robes for them  
 Who are just born, being dead.

"He shall fear, haply, and be dumb,  
 Then I will lay my cheek  
 To his, and tell about our love,  
 Not once abashed or weak,  
 And the dear Mother shall approve  
 My pride, and let me speak.

"Herself shall bring us, hand in hand,  
 To Him, 'round whom all souls  
 Kneel, the unnumbered ransomed heads  
 Bowed with their aureoles;  
 And angels meeting us, shall sing  
 To their citherns and citoles.

"There will I ask of Christ the Lord  
 Thus much for him and me,—  
 Only to live, as once on earth,  
 At peace, only to be,  
 As then awhile, forever now  
 Together, I and he."

She gazed, and listened, and then said,  
 Less sad of speech than mild,  
 "All this is when he comes," she ceased,  
 The light thrilled past her, filled  
 With angels in strong level lapse,—  
 Her eyes prayed, and she smiled.

(I saw her smile) but soon their flight  
 Was vague in distant spheres,  
 And then she laid her arms along  
 The golden barriers,  
 And bowed her head upon her hands,  
 And wept; (I heard her tears.)

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