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THE NEW PATH.

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Society for the Advancement of
TRUTH IN ART.

No. 2.] "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, [June, 1863.
and the things that shall be hereafter."

"A FEW QUESTIONS ANSWERED."

An Essay Read before the Society, Tuesday, March 31, 1863.

BY THOMAS CHARLES FARRER.

ART, according to ancient tradition, came to us through love. A young girl having parted with her lover, as he left the house, saw his shadow on the wall, and was seized with the very natural desire to fix and keep it there. Acting on this impulse, she took a stick of burnt wood from the fire, and chalked out the form of her lover. So, you see, in the very birth of Art, we have painting in its right place, on the walls of a building. The story may be a fiction, or it may be true, but, true or false, I like it. The right practice of Art, and the study of it, is essentially a work of love. In the artist, it is the love of beautiful forms, and lively colors, and the overbearing desire which he feels to give it expression, that first sends him out into the fields to work; this work being the greatest enjoyment he finds in life. And, now, let me say a few words about this "work," and I speak on this point from personal experience, so it is not my opinion, my ideas, or my thoughts that I tell you, but, simply, the facts, the things which I know; for I am sorry to say, I too, wasted a great deal of time, working in the old way, before I knew any better. Oh, I wish I could express in words, and make you feel how much happier I have been since I have been working rightly, doing the truth, and what a glorious conscious-

ness it is, after a summer of earnest effort, to know that however faulty your work may be, and whatever its shortcomings, yet, it is absolutely right, that you sought God's truth, and sat down and did it. The critics and Art public generally, used to coarse, bad work, and having had their natural right feeling for delicate drawing, fine colors, and beautiful forms, deadened by an artificial and long continued admiration of false work, when they see artists doing their simplest duty and drawing leaves or trees in such a fanatical manner, that you can really tell, by looking at their pictures, whether it is an Oak, an Elm, or a Pine, and painting rocks with such "painful fidelity" that you can actually see the difference between Trap Granite and red Sandstone—"What!" say the discerning public, "are painters to become botanists and geologists! If this sort of thing comes into fashion what will become of the ideal!" The public, instead of opening their hearts and receiving these signs of vitality and life with joy and gladness, receive them with a howl of scorn and disdain, and the works in which the artist has been true to his calling, and made trees look like trees, and rocks like rocks, and moreover has had the awful audacity to paint the summer trees green, think of it! are characteriz-

ed as finished with the "painful fidelity of the Pre-Raphaelites." "Its details are wrought out with agonizing fidelity," "The cold remorseless fidelity with which every detail—" &c., &c. These expressions are literal quotations from some of the best Art criticism that New York has yet produced. Poor, weak critics, how it must shake their delicate nerves to see honesty and truth! I feel anxious to know whether they are consistent men, whether truth and fidelity in their servants and housekeepers, can be so painful and agonizing; if so, I should advise them to die at once, and save themselves further pain; for truth and fidelity being on the increase in the world, and all the nations and people, by God's providence, advancing in that direction, their milky minds and soft nerves will not survive it long.

"Painful fidelity" is a silly, absurd paradox, and I wish, now, to assert most positively, that painful labor in good works of Art, is an utter impossibility, and if the signs of careful, earnest drawing, and deep love for the Creator's work, in an artist, afflict you with any sense of agony or pain, look to yourself, for be sure it is you, who are wrong, not the artist or his picture. And if a young artist find that it is "agonizing" to him to draw nature as she is, and painful to be faithful, then most certainly he has mistaken his calling, and the sooner he gives it up and finds some more congenial employment, the better for himself and the world.

I should like some of these would-be critics, to prove logically, how work, that is a man's best enjoyment, and noblest pleasure, can be "painful or agonizing." All works of Art, whether pictures, statues, poems or novels, must eventually stand or fall according to the amount of truth in them, as Mr.

Ruskin says, "There are some faults slight in the sight of love, some errors slight in the estimate of wisdom; but Truth forgives no insult, and endures no stain." Those works that give to the world no facts at all, will sink into deserved oblivion, will travel from the gallery to the garret, from the garret to the kitchen, from the kitchen to the rag-pickers, from them to the fire. Amid all the revolutions of feeling, changes of climate, sentiment and ideas, truth remains the same, is easily ascertainable, unchanging and eternal; this is what we have to stand upon, these are our foundation stones, for by the nature of things, truth is of God, and leads to God; falsehood and faithlessness are of the devil, and lead to death. Do you suppose that the generations that follow us, continually increasing in wisdom and knowledge of truth and fact will care one straw for our fancy notions of Greeks and Romans, or for Mr. Lampblack's notions of subordinations of parts, the proper place for strong darks, and the texture and tone, that all pictures should possess; all of them, tricks that mean nothing, represent nothing, and are nothing—things that can be learned out of bad books, by any man that chooses to look for them? But, if we discover any new facts about the Greeks and Romans, or paint the facts of our daily life, which is our plainest duty, it must be valuable to all time.

Suppose, for the sake of illustration, that the face of Nature should entirely change, that trees were to grow differently, rocks be formed in a new way, and all the facts be altered, the generations that follow us would have nothing but our landscapes to tell them what the world looked like in the nineteenth century; think you they would form a very bright idea of i

from the works of Cole, Durand, Allston or Geo. L. Brown? If a few Pre-Raphaelites had lived and painted before the flood, do you not think we should value their works very highly? Do you suppose, for a moment, that we should fight about the "painfulness" of their fidelity, or, if they had painted the Saviour's life and acts, think you we should quarrel with them and refuse to be instructed simply because they were carefully drawn and faithfully painted? I am inclined to think this would be our principal cause of admiration and belief. Time and future generations will ask of our Art and our Literature, "Is this the way the people of the nineteenth century worked, dressed and acted? Are these their passions, principles and feelings? Is this the Palisades, and the North River, and the Catskills in the year 1863? If not, they are valueless to us, however perfectly they may conform to rules of Art in texture, tone and central light; for Nature is absolutely right; it makes no difference to her whether Durand looks upon her, or W. T. Richards; an Elm leaf is still oval and pointed, and a Hickory leaf long and sharp, and summer's foliage still green, and shadows on tree stems still purple, and rocks still stratified, although Geo. L. Brown and Wust continue to insist upon it that they are not.

Another of the objections made against us is, that we draw every leaf on a tree that is three miles off, with all the careful precision with which we draw leaves right in the foreground. It is true that we draw every leaf, and yet there are no leaves—only masses of light, and shade, and color, produced by the leaves; and we insist on these masses being drawn with the same "painful fidelity" that every weed, leaf and stone in the foreground is, for these masses tell the specific characters

of the tree or rock. An Elm tree, in the distance, takes a particular form, and produces a mass of light and shade that is entirely different from any other, and could not, by any possibility, be produced by an Oak, or a Chestnut, or a Pine; but some artists seem to think that any lumpy mass of light and dark will do for trees or rocks in the distance. How much better would it be for the persons who make such objections to tell the plain, simple truth, and say, we have never thought about the matter or looked carefully at a naturalistic picture, and therefore are not competent to give our opinion; for what they say amounts to nothing more nor less. A noble work it would be for us who talk so much about truth, and insist on the absolute facts of everything, and for Mr. Ruskin, who has devoted his whole life to ascertaining the positive facts in Nature and Art, to come forward to the support of a set of men, who were painting uncompromising falsehood, under the pretence of painting uncompromising truth. It is just as wrong for a man to paint leaves when he cannot see leaves, as for the old fogies to paint trees and weeds that are close to the spectator, with a few careless daubs of the brush, that mean nothing but imbecility, and look like nothing but the paint-pot.

I suppose the next argument that will be brought to bear upon us is, that every one sees differently. "What right," it will be said, "have you to set up your sight as the only right, when, every individual being differently constituted, every man sees things differently from every other." And yet, would you believe it, these very same people that defend the old school on this ground, are continually expressing positive opinions on pictures! They will go and get their portraits

painted, and have the audacity to say, positively, it is not like them; or, they will have the old fogies paint their pretty wives, and when the picture is finished, and looks like a pasteboard doll, they will dare to say, "This is not my wife;" instead of being consistent, and saying, "Ah, I see; this artist did not see as I do; I saw in my wife a woman with a good deal of character and loveliness, and he saw nothing but a pasteboard inanity. Well, I am sorry, but it is natural; of course, everybody sees differently, so I must pocket the insult, and pay for it, and never hope to get what I see in her painted."

What poor, weak, inconsistent mortals we are. We go about, looking at pictures, and saying, this is not like Brown, that is not like Jones, this is not a good view of Irvington, that is not a good picture of the White Mountains, at the same time, believing as we do, that men see things so differently, that a rock that we see stratified horizontally, it is perfectly right for them to paint perpendicular; and a tree on which we can see a great number of very lovely leaf forms, it is quite legitimate for them to paint one stupid, round, meaningless mass of brown. Is this consistent? If men are allowed to see so differently, we have no earthly right to give an opinion on Art matters, except to say, I see this tree green, the artist saw it brown, it is all *right*.

It is, to a certain extent, true that men see differently. A near-sighted man does not see near so much in a landscape as I do; but I do not think many sensible people could prefer the near-sighted vision to the strong one. But, in men of good average vision, there will be a slight difference in their sight of things. The sight is affected, of course, by the mind and the feelings.

One man will see more of the gracefulness of things, another, more of the strength and growth, and the last, more of the light and shade; and yet, if three men, who could draw thoroughly *well*, were set to work on the same subject, the difference in the forms of things drawn would be so slight as hardly to be recognized by the general public; yet there would be a very positive difference, and yet it is not only right, but the *duty* of everybody who buys pictures, or expresses an opinion on Art matters, to insist most positively, that a leaf that is round, shall not be made oblong, or a shadow that is on the left, put in the centre, or a tree whose stem lines curve gracefully, be made straight and even, or a man whose nose is crooked, be made straight, or a woman who has noble character, be made weak and moonlighty, for they are just as much on one side as on the other. It is the absolute facts of everything that we are fighting for, and not for smoothness, not for execution, but for truth and reality. It is also believed by some rather sensible people in other respects, that all we wish to do or to teach, is painting in a small manner, covering the canvas all over with little touches, consequently when they see a picture in an Exhibition, fiddled all over with little niggling spots of paint, and looking as smooth as a Japanned tea tray, (as seen in the works of several of the modern Germans,) they say, "Oh, there is a Pre-Raphaelite picture!" they never stop to think, (thinking on Art matters being at a decided discount,) or ask whether it is the facts of any given place, or whether it was all manufactured in the studio, it is all the same to them, it is little work, and therefore must be Pre-Raphaelite. Now little niggling work or great abundance of work, is *utterly*

valueless, unless it expresses the absolute facts of the things represented. Fine delicate execution, is valuable, (not for itself at all,) but only because it enables an artist to tell more truth, and to paint a thing more completely, than coarse, clumsy execution; but a truth told in a coarse, clumsy manner, showing all the signs of paint, and human weakness, is infinitely more valuable to the world than inane nothingness, or absolute falsehood, painted with all the marvelous skill, and delicacy of touch, of a Mieris, or a Gerard Douw.

It is said by connoisseurs, who have been in Italy, have studied art, and learned from man the lamentable mistake the Creator made in putting leaves on trees, and making them *green*, instead of brown, and making rocks purple instead of black,—“Yes, I know it is nature, but when I buy pictures, I want *Art*; we see nature every day. The artist's duty is to improve nature, and serve her up in soft dishes, plentifully diluted with man's mind and the studio”—but this shows such a lack of feeling and common sense, that it is altogether too absurd to need any answer. In all the other objections made against us, there is *some* reason, they are formed of perverted facts, but this is the lowest depth of degradation. Oh, that people would take the trouble to think on this subject, but they will not do it, they say, “it is a mere matter of opinion, I like brown trees, my neighbor likes green ones, we are both *right*, and the pictures are all right.” Oh, if the picture buyers and Art patrons would only insist on a young man being able to draw, before they would buy a picture of him, and that, if he painted an Elm tree, it should be like an Elm tree, what a reformation they would bring about; they hold the Arts of the

country in their pockets, they can influence the artists in any way they please, they could make all the artists draw well, and study earnestly, or they can shut them up in the studio to pander to their own ignorance of God's work, which latter they do most effectually.

But Art is not dead yet, nor the artists entirely depraved and lost. There is some vitality and life in it yet. In spite of dash and boldness, creeds, conventions, and the trammels of misguided patrons, it overflows and finds expression in the intensely-earnest painting of the fields, trees, and weeds and the noble love of little things, found in the present reaction, rising in Europe, where the culture is largest, it rolls steadily onward, until it breaks on the American shores of the Atlantic, and spreads over the whole continent, and all the cities of the world feel the shock of the great truth that is sweeping over them, shaking the old conventional ideas and superstitions to their very foundations; dropping its beautiful seeds like daisies on a lawn, and soon you see them poking up their heads fresh and very green, and they grow apace and flourish, putting out their slender strong roots, and seizing on everything that is good and true. If ever a body of men stood on a foundation of granite, it is the Pre-Raphaelites, and if ever a cause was absolutely sure, it is their cause, for it is God's work they are doing, and the more the world advances in civilization and knowledge, the more they will appreciate and admire the work of these men. It is the Art of the future, the Art of progress, the Art of Science and of Religion;—as Ruskin so well expresses it, “This Art is the expression of man's love to God, and the other the expression of man's love for himself.” All that is necessary is

patient perseverance, strong faith and determination to do the *truth*, and be true at any and every sacrifice, conscious that all opposition must cease when faced by fact, and as time

goes on, and civilization advances, the men who would live *must* be with us, and those who will not sail in our boat, must sink to rise no more.

OUR "ARTICLES" EXAMINED.

An Essay Read before the Association, at the Regular Meeting, Tuesday, March 17th, 1863.

BY RUSSELL STURGIS, JR.

Concluded.

This peculiar Art of the Greeks remained the governing Art of the European world for centuries after the time of its highest glory. The era of Rome's ascendancy presents this phenomenon, that the conquering nation was without art, and with no religion nor literature self-asserting enough to be independent of the conquered. Rome was as great a lawmaker as a war maker, and organized into an homogeneous strength the multifarious nations she subdued, nations having nothing in common but their forced obedience to the great central brain power of the Latin aristocracy. But Egyptian Art was left to run its course, so that people forget, as they see Egypt preserved in the dreary London Gallery, that those statues of this or that god, which are so alike to the casual observer, and of the same block, seemingly, of speckled granite, are older and younger by three thousand years. And Greek Art was called on to expand itself to meet the new requirements, to beautify the colossal palaces of popular or imperial luxury, and to wed itself to systems of building never dreamed of by the easily-satisfied and uninventive Greeks. The attempt hopelessly failed. For a while the Greek sculptors worked for their imperial patrons as they had worked for the even more absolute Demus, and, amid a host of inferior statues and groups, a few remain to us of unapproachable greatness, produced during the reigns of the earlier Emperors. But nothing more was achieved, the Art could not or would not decorate the round-arched and vaulted Roman work, had no rules for making *architecture* out of this new sort of *building*, finally left it to itself, to go on to such triumphs of constructive excellence

and of naked ugliness as it might choose.

Remember what was said above of the limited range resulting from the Greek demand for perfected human sculpture, and see, now, how helpless this Greek Art is when it is called on to solve these new and mighty problems, propounded to it by Roman wealth and grandeur. What Phidias would have done if called on to build a Colosseum we do not know; genius has an answer of its own to all sorts of questions, and sure to be an answer that you and I would *not* think of, but what his disciples would say to it is evident enough.

Not that the Romans were very pressing in their demands. It was rather the fashion to have a statue by some great Greek master, probably a portrait of some famous ancestor, possibly a Venus, or a bas-relief of mythological legend. Moreover their lamps and lamp-stands, tripods and vases of bronze, were carefully enough designed by Greek artists who made it their business, or copied after what were to them antiques. The great public baths, moreover, and the palace halls of the gorgeous Emperors, were receptacles for great groups; Laocoons, and Belvedere Apollos, and what not. And the Triumphal arches, and trophies like Trajan's column, were encrusted with commemorative bas-relief; telling its story plainly enough, though hopelessly devoid of artistic merit. And these lordly Romans were the first to bethink them that a hero looked more heroic on his horse's back, and so set up equestrian statues. Still, I repeat, they were not pressing in their demands. Because, when the sculptors did all this, and declined to do more, the indifferent Romans went

on and built amphitheatres and temples with only such conventional carving as the Rules of architecture, then first heard of, ordered and provided for; Corinthian capitals namely, and Ionic spirals, and festoons with bulls' skulls to hang them to, and the entire stock in trade which has since been found so handy by modern classicists.

In short, the Romans, as *builders*, began modern times, all architecture since having sprung from their systems of building; but as artists they were simply without importance. Their influence on Art has been directly nothing, except where moderns have believed them to be great, and have imitated them accordingly.

Mr. President, I know all this is more or less dry. For I cannot go into detail, and it is detail that is interesting, not rapid sketching of general truths. I hope the Association will realize that I am but paving the way, and pointing out where we can all explore, with more entertaining results.

The huge mass of the Roman Empire vanished from the earth; not heroically, amid resistance to overwhelming power, not blown into fragments and scattered, but *devoured*, that is assimilated with, and affording sustenance to the forces that worked its destruction. It is like Baron Munchausen's adventure with the wolf; the wolf you know, devouring the Baron's horse, ate himself into the traces, and made, I believe, a good draught animal. So the barbarous tribes as they settled in the fair provinces of the Empire, called themselves Romans, filled up the Roman legions, and tried hard to speak the language and conform to the customs of those they were dispossessing. Out of these efforts of barbarians to talk Latin, came the languages we call French and Spanish, and Italian and Portuguese, and Wallach and Provençal; together with half our own. Out of their efforts to build as the Romans had done, came first the early Christian Basilicas, very like, in arrangement and construction to the Roman courts of Justice, from which they took their fashion and their name, but showing the new race in the abundant and various ornament and in the unskillful

work; second, the cognate, and nearly cotemporaneous styles called Byzantine, Pisan Romanesque, Round arched German, French *Romane*, and English and Sicilian Norman; third, what we call Gothic. The Roman race had passed away, and all its subject races with it; the great national fabrics of modern Europe founding themselves on the mingling of northern vigor and savagery, with southern effeminate refinement. The Roman indifference to beauty, and contempt of sentiment were gone, in their place were imagination, enthusiasm, love of the beautiful, and still more of the mysterious, the heroic, and the inspiring, and an overmastering religious sentiment. The Art of the middle ages was built of these materials.

The tenth century saw a perfectly organized style of work prevailing in every nation of Western Europe, but a general slackness of building, to be attributed, perhaps, to the belief, then very prevalent, that the world was to end with the year 1000. But the millennial year went by without any such overturn of existing arrangements, the world drew a long breath, and, in a few years, was building with wonderful energy and devotion. The eleventh century saw a cathedral built in almost every considerable town, every monastery rebuilt and re-embellished, every baron luxuriating in new halls and raising new fortifications, and every little burgh indulging in a triumphant bell-tower. Then a short season of less earnest work, and then the great thirteenth century begins, and Europe is once again rebuilt. It is wonderful to see. How it was possible to do so much in a century, with the sparse population, the divided energies, the irregular government and frequent wars of this period, is to us a mystery. How it was possible to set enough men to these works without starving the continent, we cannot understand. Take any county of England, any Province of France, take Lombardy or the Marches; go to Venice or Florence or Rouen; go even, to little third-rate towns, like Tournai—Bamberg, Cremona, as you will; see what still exists, ask the records what once existed, and feel your wonder grow day by day as you discover more and more of the truth. The more you compare this with the

work of modern times, the more surprising does it seem, for the nineteenth century has now and then tried to finish a cathedral, as at Milan, and at Cologne, and found it a herculean task enough. Somebody might amuse himself by ascertaining all the facts about the attempted completion of Cologne, how many years of collecting subscriptions, how many royal donations, how much commotion and stirring up of all Germany, have gone to the work already done. It is little enough, in proportion to the whole task. What then shall we think of the times and the nation in which were begun and successfully and rapidly carried on a score of such churches all at once? It is not our business now to inquire into the spirit and the systems that produced such works; when it is, we shall find ourselves in communion with a splendid era of enthusiasm and power.

Now, let us see of what nature was all this work of theirs. For if they were only *builders*, we shall think Christianity in Europe much less aspiring and purposeful than heathenism in Egypt. Let us take the earliest type of Christian Architecture, one of those Basilicas which the early Church built for its own worship, but which were modeled after the civic buildings which had constantly been appropriated to religious services.

There is a great central nave, the entrance at one end, and a semicircular apse at the other; and on each side is an aisle, separated from the nave by a row of columns, which supports what is called the clerestory wall, which wall rises above the roof of the aisle, and has windows in it which light the central nave. At first the clerestory walls rest on lintels, long stones spanning the space from column to column, but soon round arches are used to bridge these intervals. (The type has been preserved in all subsequent periods. Trinity church has a nave and two aisles, the clerestory walls resting on pointed arches, which spring from clustered piers.)

The design, you see, is simple enough. The windows are small and not elaborately molded. The roof is not high, and is simply framed of wood with a tie-beam and king post, there are no marvels of construction, But, if I could photograph on that

wall, in its colors as Dante saw it, Samminiato al Monte which looks over Florence; or the desolate church that lies moldering at Torcello among the Venetian Islands, you would realize that this nineteenth century does not so much as understand what these early builders meant by a church.

Recall the most elaborate mosaic tiled floor you have ever seen. Make it ten times more elaborate, substituting for its regular octagons, triangles and squares, every geometrical figure, in every sort of combinations; then, instead of uniformly colored bits of earthenware, use pieces of every precious marble, get your purple with porphyry, your green with serpentine, your blue with lapis lazuli, your colors generally with costly stones of which we hardly know the names, Onion stone, and Antique Black, and Peach Blossom Marble, (as Robert Browning translates the Italian names) then floor a church as large as Trinity, from end to end, with such mosaic as this. That is a weak and partial description of the floor of Torcello, built in 1005, and of like nature is that of St. Mark's at Venice, built 50 years later, with others now gone, and some still remaining.

Or, see what the Florentines did, not having the quarries of Greece and the East to draw from. Get Digby Wyatt's book, or Waring and McQuoid's, and see what was meant by a floor, for it is quite indescribable, this pavement of the Baptistery, or that of Samminiato, traceries of flowers and grotesques of animals, inlaid in black and white marble, infinitely varied in design, exhaustless, apparently, in fancy, delicate and careful in execution.

Let us go back to Venice a moment. Do you know what the walls of St. Mark's are like, within and without? They are sheathed with slabs of alabaster, lustrous, richly veined, semi-transparent, assuming with age always richer tints of golden brown, faint but warm. The great columns of the nave, fourteen in number, are, if I recollect aright, two feet in diameter and fifteen feet high, the shafts alone—and each shaft is a single piece of alabaster. Do you know what such a piece is worth, in the market? No, you do not, nor does any one, for such pieces have not been seen in Europe

since we have any record; there are none such above ground. And outside, the columns rank around the church, at first porphyry and serpentine alternately, then variously veined and clouded Greek marbles; there are five hundred of them, and all have white marble capitals, all of different designs. Going inside again, we find the ceiling vaulted and domed, and sheathed in gold; mosaics on a gold ground, of sacred subjects, the enduringness of the colors quite sufficiently assured by their material, for they are composed of little cubes of glass, showing gold or bright color on one face.

I do not mean to describe St. Mark's, for it has been thoroughly done already, and it would take too long. I wish only to call your attention to a building, the richness and variety of which the mind accepts as it does the infinite beauty of a mountain landscape, content to be overwhelmed.

Observe, that all this splendor was not different in *kind*, but only in *degree* from the daily surroundings of all the multitude of Venice, as they threaded her dark alleys, floated in carved and gilded gondolas along her canals, (they were not *black* boats until Venice herself began to lose her rainbow hues,) or entered her silent and incense-filled churches. St. Mark's was beautiful, but not strange to them. The canals reflected everywhere the colors of rich marbles and more brilliant mosaic. The houses of the city were rich with decoration, and blossomed into delicate carving of the plants and animals of the Lombard plains and the shores of the Adriatic.

The infancy of Venice was so gorgeous; her maturity graver and more restrained, but splendid and perfect beyond our power to imagine. Florence was stern and solemn in her youth, being vexed with constant broil and battle, but arrayed herself in beauty as she grew into strength and quietness. Verona, at war or at peace, was always adorning herself, and with the most faultless taste and inexhaustible imagination; and so stands the record with Mantua, and Bergamo, and Ferrara, and Parma, and every town in Italy.

They were all independent republics, and needed council houses, municipal palaces, or what not. They required

bell-towers, also, and the nobles built for themselves palaces around the market-place. Moreover, every principal city was a Cathedral town, and was crowded with smaller churches as well. In fact, they had nearly the same needs that we have; and their buildings were not larger, except a few churches, than many of ours; but they were, in many respects, more noble, the mere building itself, I mean; it is quite easy to see why. In the first place, the prevalent style gave, of necessity, more beautiful lines; through the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the pointed arch was universal; the windows were gathered into groups of two, or three, or four, divided by shafts of polished marble; the system of cusping commonly employed, made every window-head beautiful in form, a suggestion of the triple leaves that nature seems to delight in. Tracery being sometimes necessary, fell naturally into pleasant forms of opening, and called the attention of the most casual observer to its lovely contrast of purple shadow with sunlit marble. It was advisable to fortify cities and castles, and battlements were set along the walls, and battlements were not of necessity square, but fell easily into graceful ways, and were forked and swallow-tailed. The picturesque effect of the walls of Verona is quite indescribable. I think the loveliest bridge I have ever seen is the Ponte Vecchio, of that glorious city, and all because of its rather startling group of three unequal arches, and its fringe of forked battlements on either side.

I could spend the evening multiplying examples of the beauty which seems inseparable from all this work; as the Egyptians had all that could make mere building grand, so these mediævalists had all that could make it lovely. But all the achievements possible, in building, were unsatisfying to the one as to the other race of builders. They made the frame beautiful when they could, but it didn't annoy them much to have things go a little unevenly with it, it was only a frame, beautiful as it might be.

Of what they put into the frame I propose to speak at length at other times, with such illustrations as I can have prepared on a large scale, that we may all see them at once. It is

almost useless to hold up or to pass around these photographs. Barnum and some Brooklyn Barnum, are exhibiting splendid effects of stereoscopic art, I understand, by illuminating glass views, magic-lantern-wise, and throwing the image in large on a screen. When our photographers find it profitable to take pictures of details as well as of distant groups, of sculpture in its place, as well as of sculpture out of place, because *having* no place in this world, we shall begin to understand what the word "architecture" really means.

For forty years or thereabouts, there has been going on, throughout Europe a certain revival of natural and Christian architecture, which has taken form and consistence, during the past fifteen years, and become a power and a success. The practical effects of this have been the reproduction of mediæval forms, and, as resulting from it a certain amount of design in the mediæval spirit, but perfectly consistent with modern requirements, original and true, moreover the restoration and repair of monuments of the middle ages, which had, before, been sadly neglected or abused. This process of restoration, though badly enough managed sometimes, and frequently destroying what it was meant to help, has brought to light many things which would not else have been known to us. Lumber being removed, there have appeared carved capitals and archivolts, whitewash being carefully removed; wall paintings

come to light, and carving that was hardly known to exist, appears in sharp perfection.

We find the architecture of the middle ages the richest in adornment, and the most universally adorned of all. Like the Egyptians, they possessed a system of building well calculated to engross the thoughts and satisfy the ambition of the builders; and, like them, they made it the servant to their abundant, varied, and significant decoration. All material became ornamental in their hands, marble and limestone they carved into studies from nature, plants, and birds and beasts, men and their deeds, and called *this* their ornaments; brick they molded, and made it as rich as the carved stone; iron they hammered into climbing vines and tracery of foliage; wood they shaped and colored into beauty and meaning. Within doors they painted what most interested them, the Bible History, legends and miracles of saints, martyrdoms, and visions of heaven; the whole record of the church; and with such deeds of their own or of their admired ancestors as the engrossing subject of religion could allow room for.

An abrupt ending is as good as any. I have tried to illustrate certain clauses of our article of belief; when we discuss other clauses there will be a demand for close analysis and accurate description in the discussion of mediæval ornament. The inspiration we most need is to be found therein.

GOOD WORK IN THE ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

408. SPRING LEAVES,

BY ARTHUR PARTON.

THIS is the second time that the work of this young man has appeared before the N. Y. public. He has been working in Philadelphia, and shows positive evidence of the influence of W. T. Richards. He seems to be very sincere in his work, and evidently *believes* in nature; there is a great deal of growth and grace and good drawing in the large weed in the centre of this little study; the other weeds are not so carefully painted and are made dark, I suppose with the unfortunate

purpose of giving prominence to the large one, and the work is marred by the careless way in which some little tree stems, and a little pool at the top of the canvass, are painted. Then the color, except perhaps in the centre of the picture, is not natural, it is a very dark, dead green in place of the Creator's gorgeous, glowing green and gold. Do not let us be afraid of Nature's brilliant color, it is one of the noblest things she does for us.

It gives me real pain to see a young man whose intentions seem to be so right, painting the centre of his picture so faithfully and then deliberately falsify-

ing the other beautiful parts of his subject, to give a false, superficial prominence to some one point. Nature doesn't work in that manner. The Creator, if He wishes to give more prominence or importance to one weed or tree than to another, makes it nobler in form, bends its leaves into more lovely curves, which of necessity produces more beautiful effects of light and shade, or He decorates it with color. He does not deluge one weed (in the centre of a mass) with all the golden glories of His sunshine, and leave all the rest to exist without it, in dark, grayish green. We also wish very much to warn Mr. Parton and all young men who mean *rightly* not to be too easily satisfied with their drawing. There are more wonders of light, and shade, and color on Spring leaves, Mr. Parton, than you have yet drawn or painted. You must not suppose that because you see little or no good drawing around you, and are conscious that you are able to draw pretty well, you are, therefore, a master, and that there is no necessity for further effort in that direction. Drawing is the business of a true artist's life; it is the foundation of everything good in Art; without it there is *nothing*, and with a thorough knowledge of it everything is possible. No man can ever give too much time and effort to its study, or do too much work in simple light and shade. Never compare your work with the productions that are bought and sold around you every day, by men without purpose, who pander to an uneducated public, but take it out of doors, if, indeed, it is not painted in the open air, which it ought to be—compare it continually with His work whose infinite love and beauty you are earnestly striving to understand and interpret. We sincerely hope that some intelligent Art patrons will have sufficient knowledge and perception to encourage Mr. Parton in the right path by buying his work and giving him commissions for faithful studies from nature. There is a depth of possibility in him; it is not so much what he has accomplished as the promise he gives of future good work; like one bright, glittering star on a dark, stormy night, we do not look up to it and enjoy it so much for the light it really gives, as for the promise it brings of the coming of

other bright stars. We must now bid him farewell for the summer, in hope and confidence, trusting that he will go to nature during the coming summer months, in all sincerity and earnestness, "selecting nothing and rejecting nothing, seeking only to express the greatest possible amount of fact," fearlessly and lovingly painting just what he sees, thinking not of the public who must follow the artist when he works rightly, but following nature and listening only to the advice of his conscience and his God.

297. FRUIT.

BY MISS WENZLER.

The best fruit painting in the Exhibition. The nuts and apples, are very carefully drawn and earnestly painted, and what is more remarkable, Miss Wenzler seems to see color easily and truly and is not afraid to paint it as she sees it; the color in this picture is remarkable for its delicate brilliancy and truth, the drawing is strong and penetrates to the heart of things, the only fault in the picture, is a little too much softness; she is slightly tainted with that weak conventionality of softening off the edges of all her objects to make them melt into the background, which originated in France and was brought over here with pastel and others chalky trivialities, and at once adopted by a number of ladies and weak men who cared but little for truth, as the essence of prettiness. Yes it is, very pretty, but the absolute truth is much prettier and far more noble. Had it been better and nobler for the edges of apples, grapes and peaches to melt into the background, depend upon it, Nature would have made them so. But however, we will not dwell too long upon faults, where there is so much good, and for Miss Wenzler or any one that can draw so well and manage colors with such skill and delicacy, such faults are easily overcome, she must be an earnest student and in all probability knows her faults as well as we can tell her. Many artists pretend to paint fruit, but Mr. Hill and Miss Wenzler are the only persons who do it. We wish her every success, she cannot give us too much of such work, it is very much needed. From such faithful work people may again

learn to see the fingers of God in apples, peaches and grapes, altogether a very noble and necessary feeling, now almost lost by the world, from its continual looking at and purchasing of fruit pieces in which peaches and plums and grapes, are painted just as though they were nothing but lumps of soft plaster with a little emerald green rubbed on this side and a little vermilion on that.

303. DEAD GAME.

BY JAMES L. SCUDDER.

Not a very interesting subject, but exceedingly well drawn, and (of course) hung high up. We should very much like to have it down on an easel and examine it carefully, but that cannot be. We must content ourselves with such unsatisfactory sight of it as we can get by stretching our necks. The birds are very carefully drawn and look feathery, and all the little facts surrounding the birds are painted with a sincere love of truth, the branch of oak leaves is a pleasant incident, and reminds one of the summer, when "grass is green, and skies are blue." It is very faithfully painted, the stiff curve and bend of the leaves truly given. But in one point, and that an important one, we can give it unqualified praise, viz. there is no attempt to make a *picture*, or to make the truth soft and pleasing; there were the facts, such as they are, birds, wall, oak leaves and he seems to have painted them, simply for love of the facts alone.

We cannot find the first sign of softening off of edges to make them pleasing, or careless painting of one part, to give more importance to another; no tricks of Art in it, all is painted equally well, and consequently keeps its place. This is nature's law of subordination, there is no other, the larger and nobler objects are more prominent than the smaller and less beautiful, but all is complete, a nail in a wall is a nail, and not a dab of paint, and by the nature of the thing itself cannot be as important as a beautiful bird. We hope to meet Mr. Scudder again, and trust that he will continue to work thus faithfully, and grow in strength and earnestness of love of truth for itself alone.

Before closing this notice, we wish to call public attention to the unqualified truth and careful finish of 244 and 424 by J. W. Hill. These are the veritable unconditional facts of Marsh Mallows, just so they grew, and in just such a spot. There is no compromise in this work, but the faithful striving after truth of one human soul untrammelled by convention and false public opinion. "On the Hackensack," is a faithful little drawing, very true and rich in color. The summer trees in sunlight are veritably so; I know the spot well, it is as true as a photograph; the figures are well drawn and introduced with judgment and give life and character to the subject; the gradation of the sky is tender and beautiful. We hope to do some justice to Mr. Hill's faithful life in a future article.



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