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## The new path. Vol. II, No. 6 June 1865

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# THE NEW PATH.

VOL. II.]

JUNE, 1865.

[No. 6.

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN—FORTIETH ANNUAL EXHIBITION.

## INTRODUCTION—INTERIOR OF THE NEW BUILDING.

THE fortieth exhibition of the National Academy of Design is open in the new galleries. These galleries are finished, and stand as they are to remain. The casts and models are arranged in the rooms of the schools of design below. The other rooms of the building are ready to serve the purposes for which they were intended. The exterior is also complete; the outer staircase or "stoop" is finished, the iron railing is set and painted, the drinking-fountain flows, the iron gates of the main entrance are hung. The last touches have been put to the building, and the workmen are gone.

It is evident that the architect looks forward to an ultimate completion more perfect than the present. There are many parts prepared for carving, which have not been carved. The spandrels of the principal story, on the Twenty-third street front, the brick-filled circles and surrounding panels of the same story on the Fourth Avenue front, and the panels of the great gable, all require sculpture or colored mosaic to show the design in perfection. The tympanum over the main doorway, now filled with what is meant for the shield of the United States, draped in mourning for the nation's lost chief, is to be rich with mosaic or with carving. Within, every visitor to the exhibition has noticed that one of the great columns of the central

hall has a richly carved capital and base, while the capitals and bases of the other columns remain undecorated blocks.

The citizens of New York should be interested in this building, for it is their gift to the institution, of which it bears the name. We must allow the people the credit of caring something about art who have made so splendid a present to a private society, because it was thought to be working for the advancement of art. It is already a far more splendid present than the givers expected to give, or the Academicians looked to receive. Neither donors nor recipients looked for so beautiful a building as this which Mr. Wight has built for them. Within the year the people ought to complete their good work, and give the building every grace and adornment that the architect intended, or can devise.

But since the work, for the present, is done, the time has come to fulfil our promise made a year ago, and to consider the interior and the completed exterior of this important building.

In our former article,\* we considered at length the principles which have governed the design of this building, both of the whole and of its details. The design of the exterior at the time we wrote lacked of its present condition the great double flight of steps to the main door, with the drinking-foun-

\* See page 17 of this volume.

tain beneath, the colored squares of tile in the cornice, and patterns around the drinking-fountain, the iron railing and iron gates of the entrance; also, of course, the window frames and sashes and doors of the ground floor. The addition of the more important of these features has added much to the beauty of the building. All that we said before in praise of it sounds weak now, for the design, as it has advanced toward completion, has shown the same unity and grace which it showed at an earlier stage, and with larger variety has larger interest and higher merit. The outside in its present state of quasi completion, is even more beautiful than, at any former stage of its being, it promised to be. The steps outside of the building are practically a misfortune, as they will find who have to ascend them to some future gathering or exhibition in winter, as they have found who have had to ascend them in a spring rain. They save room in the interior, where the room was all needed, if the building were limited to three stories, and they are supposed to deceive the public with the fancy that it ascends one flight of stairs only to reach the galleries from the street. These reasons, or others not known to us, must have persuaded the Academicians to insist upon the unusual expedient. By resorting to it, they have provided a good place for a thing rarely seen and much needed, a public drinking-fountain, and the whole structure, drinking fountain, steps, and all, is a fine piece of architectural detail. But these things were probably not foreseen; drinking fountains were not known to New Yorkers, and fine architectural detail not expected in any secular building.

The same carving of natural plants which has covered the rest of the building with beauty is continued here, the circumstances being generally less favorable, but the result proportionally good.

Each capital, three inches high, of a baluster, of which balusters there are hundreds, cannot be treated like the capital of a window shaft. In this case two patterns only are selected, and these used alternately. This is well, perhaps it is would have been even better to have given plain turned or purely conventional capitals to these, and to have kept the carving of leaves for places where it is at once needed and well placed. The projecting caps of the newel posts give the leaves a better chance to be as beautiful as they will; the caps themselves are too heavy for beauty, too projecting, and rising too high in those on the upper platform, but the leafy mouldings around them, and little capitals at their angles, are sometimes beautiful, and always appropriate and in place.

Fault has been found with the luxuriant plants in the spandrels over the drinking-fountain. Here a great tiger lily, a wild marsh lily, an "arrow-head," and a "cat-tail" flourish in unchecked luxuriance. It is thought by many that this is not conventional enough, that these plants should be less vegetable and more architectural. This might be alleged of much architectural sculpture which has won the world's regard. Pictorial sculpture is dangerous, constantly leading astray, but there has been beautiful and eloquent pictorial sculpture, and the sternest purists in art cannot forbid it in all cases. In former articles the *NEW PATH* has considered this question,\* and it seemed that bas-relief might have a freedom from restraint and limitation which could not be granted other sculpture. These plants of which we are speaking are of the nature of bas-reliefs; there is a broad, smooth, white marble surface, out of which the leaves and blossoms emerge—there seems nothing in the laws of true art to restrict them to stiffer

\* See Article on Sculpture, in vol. I., particularly vol. I., page 92.

lines and more formal arrangement. That some of them might have been so designed as to be more beautiful, we can believe; the lily on the left is not at all well designed; we are also ready to admit that some capitals of the building are less good than others; all of which is merely saying that the art of architectural sculpture is in its first childhood, and that to make a small part good, and all pleasant and interesting, is a most meritorious achievement.

We cannot leave the drinking fountain without commending it to the favor of all. That it is beautiful is much; that it is, at all, part of a public building and architectural in treatment, is more,—is the essential thing. These fountains have, of late years, become somewhat numerous in English cities, bearing generally the names of the public-spirited individuals who have given them to their fellow citizens. This is an English architectural fountain, even to the useful dog-troughs on both sides, but more beautiful than any English one which we have seen, in reality or in representation. We see, with pleasure, every day, the passers-by using the free gift of water. We hear, with pleasure, kind things said about it in the crowd. Let the reader observe, as he may pass, that the cups are always set carefully on the broad rim of the basin. The drinkers might drop the cups to the limit of their chains, and no harm would come beyond possible bruises to their rims from striking against the wall behind; but the free fountain itself, and the beauty and richness of all around seem to be a little awe-inspiring, and the cups are always nicely set upon the shelf. The fountain is a good thing, and should be imitated; who will be found to honor himself and his name forever by the gift of such another,—not an iron hydrant, but a beautiful basin of marble into which the water shall continually trickle? Who will

honor the memory of his father, or his brother or friend killed in battle for his country; by a monument at the corner of the street, such as all men will see? Let the monuments to our lost President, which will arise in every city, draw the people about them by this means. There is no such time to read an inscription, look lovingly at a piece of sculpture, or study reverently a bas-relief, as when one has found fresh water on a dusty day, and stops a moment, having drunken. So if any sculptor set up a bas-relief in public, let him have a basin with cups, and running water below it. And if any architect love his monument, and desire to see the people notice it and love it too, let him set a drinking fountain running on each of its four sides.

The iron railing around the building, and the iron gates to the main doorway deserve more notice than we can give them. They are the first important example we have of iron used properly for ornamental purposes. A cast-iron railing is a brittle and worthless thing, and can by no possible expedient be made sightly, except by such multiplicity of small parts, and such delicacy of workmanship as will make it at once too costly and too fragile for use. This railing is of wrought iron rods, except the ornamental leaves, which are of thin sheet iron cut out flat and connected with the body of the railing by thin stems of wrought iron. The railing seems to us better in design than the gates, which latter we do not like, rich as they are with color and with gold, and beautiful and always satisfying as are the ivy leaves.

We pass between the open valves, and enter the building on the first floor, at the foot of the stairs within which lead to the exhibition galleries, and at the head of less important stairs which lead down to the school of design and other rooms on the ground floor.

Pause one moment, as you pass the

threshold, and notice the pavement on which you tread. It is of beautiful marbles. The design of it is good, for it fits well the square vestibule, and while it is sufficiently elaborate, the parts of it are not so small as usual, not too small to show the lovely veins and cloudings of the yellow, purple and gray marbles. Trodden under foot at first entering, it is hardly noticed by eager ticket buyers and gay groups who chat as they enter; if this is all the Academy can have, it might perhaps have been in a better place. Citizens of New York! you will not have done your whole duty until the whole entrance hall,—ay, and all the exhibition galleries, are paved with such mosaic as this.

The floor within is handsome, though, of hard wood in narrow planks, alternately walnut and chestnut, laid to form diagonal squares.

While the exterior of this building demands a careful and detailed description and criticism, far beyond anything that it has as yet been within our power to give, the interior can be much more easily considered. It is good, but not admirable. There is but little artistic design about it, but little imaginative treatment, no richness of color, no carving at all, no representative or decorative art at all. The workmanship is perfect, the materials are for the most part used constructively, the wood is delicately wrought and highly finished, showing the natural color and grain, the plastered walls are smooth, the floors are like a bowling alley, the windows cheerful and bright with their invisible plate glass; but we have no business with these things. We can see that the architect has shown by the interior that he is a practical builder, even as he showed by the outside that he is an artist, but into the consideration of these merits of convenience and comfort we cannot enter.

What then is the cause of the great

difference between outside and inside? The cause is manifold. In the first place there was large discretion allowed the architect in the one case, none in the other. If the interior were as rich as the exterior, in carving and in color, what would the owners think? We cannot believe that any society in New York would cheerfully accept a building properly, richly, beautifully decorated within. Go, reader, and see how the members of the Produce Exchange have used their building, noticing that the painting of the ceilings of the upper room was contemporaneous with the building and part of the original design, and that the painting of the ceiling of the lower floor is new. There is no reason to suppose that the artists of New York, as a body, love interior decoration any better than the corn dealers of New York, or any other class of our citizens; nay, there is every reason to suppose the contrary. The not too emphatic contrast of oak and walnut has been allowed, and this has been freely and well used,—it is not in itself a very good combination, and much needs a third color, but, such as it is, the best use is made of it. The bit of marble pavement noticed above, the tiles in the exterior, and the iron gates of the main door show what the architect likes; and we are safe in saying that he has not been allowed discretion in this matter of interior ornament.

In the second place, it is less easy to decorate within than without, in this city and at this time. Without, if a designer cannot have contrast of rich marbles, he can use red brick and white marble and gray bluestone, or, at all events, tile. If a timid employer objects to red and white, the architect can use red and black. If he cannot have carved marble, he can have carved brownstone. If he cannot have floral carving, he can have geometrical friezes and archivolts, very good and effective. And we might

catalogue his resources at great length. All these things the workmen can execute, and of them all the designer has existing and accessible examples. But for the interior there is less opportunity. Let any one, not having been a close observer in Europe, or a student of the best books, try to imagine a rich and variedly ornamented interior, and he will find it difficult. Let any architect try to design one, and, unless he has a knowledge of the past and its achievements very unusual to our architects, he will find it difficult. In this case there has been no attempt to do anything beyond securing good workmanship and finish. It is as well,—unless there should be money and time to spare for slow elaboration and careful thought. The lovely outside need not be confirmed, but should surely not be contradicted within.

But, in the third place, the design is really not so good within as without. The wood is not so well used as the stone. The rich and elaborate screen of wood work filled with plate glass, which surrounds the vestibule at the entrance, is not thoroughly good, it is not in this way that glazed wooden doors ought to be designed. The tracery that fills the head of the archways between the rooms on the principal floor is not good; it is not *bad*, but it is not thus that wood is to be used in the noble architecture which we hope to perfect in the future; there is plenty of fifteenth century Gothic no better, but it is not to fifteenth century Gothic that we look for guidance.

Of the galleries, the most important part of the building, we have little to say. Considerations of lighting by day and by night, of filling the walls with pictures annually, for a few months, of convenient exit and entrance, have governed the arrangement and the design. Perhaps no decoration is desirable where

the walls are never to be seen, except covered with works of art.

Some one with more space than we have, should confer this boon upon the public, should gather the various published criticisms upon this building, and criticise them. Many mistaken notions, now held by many persons, might thus be corrected, many false statements shown to be false, many foolish inferences demolished, much sound knowledge of art given to the reader.

This solidly and admirably built, richly decorated building, a noble design well carried out, will remain for ages, unless fire destroy it; its lesson ought not to be lost upon this generation, it will not be lost upon the next.

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#### NOTICES OF THE PICTURES.

##### A WINTER MORNING, No. 411—C. C. GRISWOLD.

This is a truly excellent picture, showing the same simple truthfulness and earnestness of purpose that it was our pleasant duty to point out to our readers in this artist's work last year. The great simplicity of subject is quite delightful to us, surrounded as it is on every side by the most tremendous and complicated subjects treated in the modern sensational manner. In this we see what an impressive picture can be made out of the most simple subject, provided it be treated reverently and recorded faithfully.

If this picture is a composition, it doesn't seem like one. The arrangement looks like the actual portrait of a real scene, without alteration. If it be composition, this is the best compliment that can be given it, viz., that it does not look like composition. All the parts and incidents are perfectly consistent, and might exist just so. The purple-gray rocks, and the rich red

cedars, cropping out in every direction, are very characteristic of the Hudson River country. All true and real composition, which comes from long study of nature, and not from pictures and books, has this same quality. The instant we see the composition, "the way it is done" in an artist's work, that moment composition ceases, and manufacture begins. The mountain forms are very natural, and give a right idea of their size and geology. The solemn stillness of the twilight hour, and the rich bronze color of the dry vegetation, are excellently rendered. We have often admired the cold quietness and solemn beauty of the country in winter, and we are glad that they have at last found a painter, and one of considerable power. The color and gradation of the sky, difficult things to do well, are very successful, as also the character and growth of the red cedars, although we could wish for more delicacy of drawing. Thus far, we have found it a very impressive picture, good and true in color and natural in arrangement. It gives an excellent impression of certain truths in nature with which few persons are familiar. We are sorry that we cannot go farther, and say it is a perfect picture, complete in every part, as thorough as it was possible to make it. We have to mark the same lack of thoroughness and of good drawing that so seriously marred his picture of "December" in the last exhibition. The "Winter Morning," like the "December," will not bear close examination. It gives us a true and right impression of the time and place represented, when we see it for the first or second time; but, when we come to study it long and carefully, instead of growing upon us, as all good pictures will, we begin to feel the commonness of the drawing, the almost manufacture of the dry grass in the foreground and the trees on the mountain sides. Examine the distant trees in

Mr. Moore's picture of the "Catskill Valley." The longer we look, the more they grow upon us and satisfy us. Why? Simply because they are completely, thoroughly drawn. They are no mere dabs of paint, but, although covering less than a quarter of an inch of canvas, they are full of gradation, full of change, and variety of color. We cannot think of paint, but only of the trees. There they are in all their fullness and beauty; they will repay all the time and study we can give to them. The more we study Mr. Griswold's picture, the more unsatisfactory the drawing of it becomes. We see the marks of the brush, and the signs of paint. The grass and weeds are scarcely better in drawing than Bierstadt's yellow carpets of chaotic nothingness.

We have reason to be dissatisfied that Mr. Griswold, with his real power, should be painting second-rate pictures, when with a few months' stern application and hard practice in drawing, he might paint first-rate pictures. Perhaps he thinks his drawing excellent, and quite good enough; and this would not be surprising, surrounded as he is by men who do not believe in drawing at all: if so, we advise him to study long and diligently the drawing of Mr. Moore's picture. We think that will convince him that he has much to learn before he can draw a tree or a mountain side completely.

But, let not worse painters than Mr. Griswold, men who have neither his perception nor his power, think that in qualifying our praise of him we hold out any hopes of even moderate praise for them. Mr. Griswold can well afford to listen to our objections, because he is in earnest; he means something. There is in his picture evidence of more imagination than in any other in the exhibition. And imagination is, of course, the highest quality; no picture can be great without it, and it will ennoble any sub-

ject however simple, any theme however humble. It is spiritual, and, being so, it is of more importance than the material, which, however, in its efforts to express it, necessarily rises and becomes ennobled in its turn. Mr. Griswold has seen much in nature; he loves her, reverences her, studies her. It is not possible for a man to be so minded, and to devote himself, with even so much zeal as he has displayed, to reporting what he has seen without producing good work. This work is good. If we do not admit that it is the best, no one, we are sure, knows better than the artist the measure of its deficiency.

STUDY OF ROCKS, MOUNT DESERT, No. 420—A. W. WARREN.

A strong and vigorous study of a real pile of rocks, in which the artist has dared to paint the sky blue, the sea green, and to put all the powerful and varied colors in the rocks for which this spot is remarkable. It is not difficult to tell that the sun is shining on these rocks. The sharp purple shadows and the masses of bright light tell the story completely. The picture grows upon us; every time we see it we like it better. There is a fresh, breezy, out-of-door look about it which is most refreshing in a picture, and what we ought to find in every picture, but, alas, there is scarcely one in a hundred that has it. As we were studying and enjoying this picture, the other day, a cultivated clergyman, of New York City, with two ladies, came along. When they reached this picture they stopped short, evidently amazed at the audacity of the artist. Gentleman to his companion—"Did you ever see such an astonishing picture as that 420?" Lady—"No! I never did. Such color!" Gentleman—"Yes, it looks like a study of rock candy." Lady—"Rock candy! oh, excellent!" We wish such people would go and look at the place before condemning a picture

which is really more truthfully and carefully painted than any landscape in this gallery, except Mr. Griswold's and Mr. Moore's. We have enjoyed it very much: the blue sky, the green sea, and the color of the rocks, knowing them to be true. We wish there were more delicacy of drawing and subtlety of light and shade. The execution is rather coarse and painty. But we are very glad to see it, and heartily wish there were more such "astonishing" pictures in the exhibition.

BIG STREAM POND, SENECA LAKE, No. 431—W. C. POTTER.

Almost literally, hung on the ceiling. Through the intervening space, which is great, this looks like a real scene, conscientiously and carefully painted. It is such a distance from the spectator that it is quite impossible to distinguish the quality of the work or the measure of its truthfulness; but it looks real and natural, which is much more than can be said for most of the landscapes in the exhibition. If the committee will hang pictures on the ceiling, why do they not provide ladders for those who wish to see them? One ten-foot ladder in each gallery would not be a very great expense, and would be a great convenience to the public. It would save many a stiff neck and aching eye.

STUDY ON THE SUSQUEHANNA, No. 541—C. W. WATERS.

Another simple, natural-looking landscape by a new name, also on the ceiling. This artist has evidently been trying to paint nature as she is, and not to make a "pleasing picture." It is earnest, but crude in color, too blue and gray for nature's sunlight. These three pictures, simple and unimportant as they are, relieve the painful barrenness of this splendid wall, spoiled as it is with the glaring vulgarity of Bierstadt, the laughable weakness of Louis Lang, and the Germanesque conventions of De Haas.



STUDY OF AN OLD GARDEN, No. 488—  
JEROME THOMPSON.

If this is study, what must the artist's sketches be? It is a beautiful subject, but badly drawn and carelessly painted. What a picture Mr. Hill would have made of these rhododendrons, and cabbages, and leaves, and vines! It is presuming pretty largely on the ignorance of the public to call such careless work "study." Mr. Thompson will find to his sorrow that the public know more about roses, and cabbages, and garden-vines than he gives them credit for. This being the character of his studies, it is no longer surprising that he paints such pictures as the "Home in the West," "Indian Maiden's Toilet," &c., &c. And yet, this little picture, poor as it would look by the side of one of Hill's studies, is much better than anything we ever saw from Mr. Thompson's hand before. It is really a very pretty subject. Was it drawn from nature? It must have been, we think. If it were, we are disposed to rate the artist soundly for not taking more time to make his picture as perfect as he could. The very choice of such a subject shows taste, and even the coarse execution does not prevent our hoping that Mr. Thompson will not persist in destroying the value of another such a one by work without due thought and worthy care.

ADIRONDACK MOUNTAINS, No. 566—  
HOMER D. MARTIN.

There are many bad pictures in this exhibition, some quite unaccountably bad, but few that are quite so null and negative as this. Indeed, it is difficult to recall any canvas covered with such a thickness of dirty paint, and absolutely without form and void. Doubtless it will be said that this is a very sweeping assertion. We are sorry we cannot make it otherwise. "You cannot extract blood from a stone," says the old proverb, nor can you compare chaos with

nature and point out the measure of conformity; and yet, strange as it may seem, this artist has shown signs of life, almost of earnestness. In last year's exhibition there was a study of the "Peaks of Madison and Adams from Randolph Hill," in which the distinct individuality of the two peaks was clearly and well given, and the snow—for they were covered with the first autumn snow—delicately drawn, and with the exception of the bad color, looking just like the mountains under that effect. Alas, how many young men there are who mean to be true, who make every spring fresh resolutions to work hard and to paint nature as she is; but, when they find themselves in the country, the temptation to sketch a little in the old careless manner, and spend the rest of the time with their friends, enjoying themselves, or going on delightful excursions with the ladies, is so strong that they want the moral courage to resist it, and so the summer slips away, and with it the good resolutions, and the artist finds himself in his studio without material enough to make a single good work. But pictures must be made, otherwise he cannot live, so the old conventional methods are resorted to, the pictures are made, and here is one of the results. So the years go by, and the man grows old with his good resolutions, sinking every year deeper into falseness and mannerism, and there is never any improvement or progress to be noticed in his work. But these men know, in the depths of their own hearts, that what they do is not true, is not like nature, and that they might have done, and would have done much better, if it had not been such hard work. This is the greatest obstacle in the way. If good pictures could be painted in the same space of time, and with the same *dilettante* sort of study, ah, how many would be doing the truth! But it requires a great deal of resolution and

patience to sit out in the burning July sun from six or seven in the morning until six or seven in the evening, using every minute of time, and letting nothing escape, working as hard as you possibly can. This is not pleasant. This is not easy; and we have all been brought up to understand that an artist's life is, first, genteel, second, easy. An artist can be a gentleman, can make money if he pleases the public, and, most delightful of all, can live without work. This has been for years the common belief; but this is not the fact, and, thank God! every day makes it less and less possible for artists to live without work, and make pictures without hard and long and patient study of nature. Art, to be of any service in the world, *must* faithfully represent *nature*, otherwise a picture is not a whit better than a polished mahogany bureau or washstand; nay, it is worse; the furniture is honest and has a use, while the picture is a cheat and humbug, pretending to be what it is not, and is perfectly useless except to degrade the taste and corrupt the feelings of every honest person who looks upon it.

STUDY BY A BROOK, No. 184, SHELburnE MEADOWS, No. 139—R. J. PATTISON.

Welcome, Mr. Pattison, to the Exhibition! Thrice welcome your two earnest little pictures. Here is another man who believes in hard work; who, although an artist, seems to have accepted the inexorable and wise laws of Providence, by which it is arranged that man shall obtain nothing good or great without hard striving and earnest effort. We have seen in Bierstadt, in Gignoux, and others, the results of the old, idle system; now let us see the result of hard work. Here is Shelburne Meadows, with the ever beautiful, always cold and clear Androscoggin river running through it, all painted on the spot. Look at this lovely river: how clear, and

transparent, and deep it looks, with every bush, and weed, and little shadow perfectly reflected in it, just as well drawn and complete in form as the bank itself, only a little darker. Then, examine this beautiful flat meadow, with all its variety of color and bright sunlight, and the distant blue Bethel hills, known and loved by so many. Truly, it is inspiration to look at it, almost as good as a visit into the country. This picture is a better criticism upon the large and false landscapes in the exhibition than anything that will or can be written. To all who wish to learn to tell the true from the false, we say study this picture, study Mr. Moore's picture of the Catskill Valley. An hour given to the study of these, will give more lasting satisfaction and more knowledge, than a day given to the others. A few more such pictures will soon lead the public to discriminate between right and wrong, to see the poverty and barrenness of the old school, and the simple beauty and truthfulness of the new. The sky of this picture, although very good in light and color, is rather heavy and painty. Some of the nearest foreground bushes are rather hard and metallic, but these are very small faults, that time and close study will remedy. "The Study by a Brook," although it shows the same hard striving and close study, is not quite as successful as the other picture. Some parts of this are excellently painted; for instance, the evergreen vines and grasses on the right, and some of the leaves on the left; but there is a want of the grace and softness of nature; all the leaves are too hard, and look as though they were cut out of tin. It is a very natural shortcoming, and is a fault in the right direction. Still, Mr. Pattison ought to determine at once that his pictures shall be entirely free from such faults in future. It rests entirely with himself. In every leaf in nature, even against a dark hole, as in this study,

there would be much more gradation and subtle change and mystery in the lines, which is only to be got by the most complete and thorough drawing. Mr. Richards's work often errs in this respect, and gives foundation for the popular outcry that the works of the new school are hard and flat. They ought not to be hard nor flat, and if each little leaf, or twig, or whatever it might be, were completely drawn, with all its variety and gradation of light, shade and color, it would not be flat nor hard, but would be just like nature. Some of the little openings, where you can look between the large leaves, are sadly wanting in fulness and mystery. Nature never looks as though she had been covered all over with Vandyke brown, and a few little leaves put on afterward, but all such little nooks in her greenery are full, and deep, and rich. There is a never-ending profusion and change. All these faults Mr. Pattison can overcome; we feel sure he will overcome them. He only needs more practice in drawing in black and white. Draw! draw! draw! It is what we all need. We can never do too much of it. To make ourselves perfect masters of form in black and white, is what everybody aspiring to artistic honor should make his first and exclusive ambition. All our young men need it, and the old men need it ten times more. The summer is almost here, and the trees are putting on their rich garments; the mulleins are growing tall, and stout, and soft, and there is work before Mr. Pattison. We wish him good subjects, and good weather, and sensible people to appreciate the results of his study. We shall expect to see some excellent works from his pencil in the fall, and, above all, one or two very thorough drawings in black and white. If it is only a few leaves, or a single weed, done as thoroughly as possible, he will find his knowledge of nature's gradation and mystery, and his

power of expressing it, greatly increased by this sort of practice.

THE SINGERS, THE LISTENERS, Nos. 210, 204, AND THE CIRCASSIAN, No. 226—  
WM. M. HUNT.

It is a long time since Mr. Hunt has contributed to the Academy Exhibition. We do not quite like to think how many years it must be since everybody, almost, was admiring his "Marguerite." We had hoped that his withdrawing himself meant study, practice, growth; and that, when he did send us something, it would explain and justify his long seclusion. But neither of these three pictures shows either study or growth. The sentiment of the "Marguerite" degenerates in "The Singers" and "The Listeners" into mere sentimentality; the color has become more bricky and clayey; and what was allowed to pass in his earlier work as a youthful imitation of Couture, excusable as the natural, involuntary homage paid by a student to his master, has become in these later pictures nothing less than an abject, and we fear, irredeemable slavery.

What is the reason that we have so often to record and lament this falling off in our artists from the promise, sometimes from the achieved excellence, of their earlier works? Is it something in our society; or, is it that art is a forced product, any way, among us, and dies down after a short season of unnatural growth, because there is no deepness of earth? Or is it, simply, because art is long, and certain artists want to make it short; that it is hard, and they want to make it easy; that it is serious, and they find serious art unremunerative? In many cases it may be owing to one or all of these causes; but, it is easy to imagine instances where the failure must be accounted for in other ways. A man may believe art to be long, difficult, and earnest, and may wish to pursue it in that spirit; and yet, the social influences

which surround him may be against him. They may be frivolous, or mercenary, or, as bad as either, dilettante, æsthetic, and so over-refined as to enervate and relax the intellect, to drive a man into affectation and morbid ways of looking at life.

Some fatal influence, we do not pretend to know what, is depriving us of whatever simplicity, tenderness, grace, may have been promised by Mr. Hunt's earlier work. Surely, there is nothing of either of these in the two smaller pictures on these walls. What can a healthy, simple-hearted, unaffected American find to enjoy in these figures? We should like to know what they are doing? How comes that boy to have on that queer ecclesiastical-looking dressing-gown, with the embroidered shirt underneath? Is he an acolyte, or only playing at being one? And, if he is one, on what occasion do altar-boys sing out of the same book with mere lay girls? "The Listeners" is a companion to this puzzling picture. Where are these young women? What are they doing? Why does one of them betray so much emotion at what does not in the least affect the other? And what is the matter with that other's eyes? There is no speculation in them, although they excite a little in us.

Now we see, as plainly as the artist would have us, what he did mean to convey by these pictures. Two choir-children are singing, and two of the congregation are listening; that is all, and that would have been quite enough for a subject if it had been truly conceived, carefully studied and thought out, and well painted. Della Robbia and Van Eyck have given us singers and players in a bas-relief and paintings that the world loves and cherishes; but it does not give its love, nor bestow its cherishing on unreal, crude and slovenly workmanship. Mr. Hunt did not care enough about his pictures to make them

tell any intelligible story, in the first place, or indicate any possible circumstances. Then, he did not think it worth his while to trouble himself as to detail. How altar-boys in the Romish church are dressed, and whether they ever sing with the girls of the congregation, were things of no importance; to have admitted any limitation to his right of representing affairs as he took the whim, would have been to clip the wings of poetry, forsooth; to rein in imagination, and to interfere with effects of color, tone and other things which are on no account to be interfered with! Finally, when it comes to the painting, can any one look at either of these three pictures and not confess that Mr. Hunt has turned his back deliberately on nature? Is this flesh-color? Did he ever see such eyes in any created thing higher than a fish? What are these people's dresses made of? Is the Circassian's scarf made of his skin? Or, is his skin made of his scarf? Look at the architecture of the two smaller pictures. Is it wood or stone? and, if we cease wondering how it was induced to get built, can we cease wondering why it holds together? And when you look at the lectern the two girls are standing at, remember the beautiful one in Van Eyck's "Singing Angels," and the many other beautiful ones in old Italian pictures, and see how men work when they are in earnest and love their work. But, really, we suppose it was not expected that these pictures would be thought worth taking to pieces, and in truth they are not. But the hand that painted "Marguerite," might paint pictures that would be.

COMING NIGHT, No. 10, THE FADED FLOWER, No. 259—EUGENE BENSON.

Mr. Benson's work, also, shows, this year, no step in advance. On the contrary, it has gone many steps backward.

Every exhibition, thus far, shows this gentleman imitating two persons—himself, and some one else. It used to be Mr. Farrer; this year it is Mr. Vedder, on whose style, certainly his own, No. 610, "Cloud Towers," is a palpable parody. We would not hold this a serious objection in a beginner, but Mr. Benson is rapidly becoming a veteran, and can no longer claim the immunities of the tyro. He has imitated himself until we are heartily tired of the monotony of his subject, and his treatment of it. He no longer makes a pretence of painstaking, either in his drawing, or his use of the brush. This is at least one natural result of narrowing his mind to the perpetual contemplation of the same model. He has exhausted whatever element of thought there was in it; he has exhausted all its possible combinations, and we hold it is not carping to say that he ought to have done with it. No man, if he were ten times the painter that Mr. Benson is, could paint the same model over and over again, and not get tired of it; and when an artist once begins to get tired of his work, he cannot hope to conceal the fact. Mr. Benson is tired, and every stroke of his in this year's gallery says so, from the "Faded Flower," with its ill-dressed, awkward figure, with the made-up, impossible, or, at all events, improbable accessories, to "A Mood of Spring," with her face as unmeaning, as her head is too large for her body. All is bad;—face-drawing, dress-drawing, tree-drawing, cloud-drawing, wave-drawing, dog-drawing; and nobody, probably, knows it better than Mr. Benson. We do not mean that he meant to make it all bad, nor even that he was aware it was so while he was doing it; but, that, now it is done, removed from him, and put where it is obliged to stand comparison with other works, he must have penetration enough to see how utterly wanting in all the essentials of good painting it is. Compare it with East-

man Johnson, with Kraus, with Vedder, with C. C. Coleman, with Miss Oakley; this work will not stand the trial. Can Mr. Benson have studied the cumulus cloud with so little thoroughness, with so little wondering admiration, as to think that this heap of soiled linen, in No. 610, is like one? We believe he thinks nothing of the sort; but that he has painted it on a theory that its looking like the real cloud is a matter of no importance, so that the effect, whatever that may mean, of the cloud, is given. That is to say, you can eliminate from the cumulus its shape, its size, its variety (almost infinite, and changing all over, in every square foot, with every minute), its complexity of light and shade (however minutely subdivided, yet never detracting from its grandeur of unity), its movement, felt if not perceived,—all these essential elements can be eliminated, and yet a substantial residuum of 'effect'—an algebraic  $x$ —be left for the satisfaction of the spectator. For our part, we avow our decided dissatisfaction.

Mr. Benson attacks great things as if they were trifles, and he makes trifles of them. One would think the human face might call for a little care, but there has gone more pains to the painting of one of the goblets of water in Mr. Farrer's "Home Scenes," than to all the faces in Mr. Benson's pictures. After what we have said about Mr. Farrer's pictures, no one can accuse us of any partiality, and we ask the reader to examine for himself. Ruskin says that Turner has tried hard, once or twice, to give the crash of the breaking wave on the shore, but it will not do! What Turner, the mighty master, failed at, Mr. Benson will give us in at least two pictures, in, say, five minutes divided between the two! And the clouds,—the cumulus may be, as Ruskin says, the easiest of all clouds to paint, but it cannot be easy, for all that. Mr. Benson

however says it is, and with a brush loaded with white, paints us a "méringue à la crème!"

We are unwilling to give Mr. Benson up, for he needs only to devote himself to hard work, of which he, apparently, does not, as yet, know the meaning, to make himself an artist we should all value. We have said before, and we repeat it, he has a delicate vein of sentiment and fancy, not great nor very striking, but sufficient, with good, faithful work, to make his pictures sought after. These gifts he deliberately sacrifices. He will not be at the pains to do anything thoroughly. He paints a dog with just enough likeness to a dog to make us ashamed to take it for a door-mat. We know his clouds are not meringues, while we are equally sure they are not good clouds. And so with all that he paints; things are suggested; nothing is frankly, truly said. Meanwhile, the little skill he has thus far shown diminishes as his thought and interest in his work diminish; and unless there is marked improvement soon, we shall have to chronicle a lost painter.

APRIL, 1861, No. 161, HOME SCENES—  
MORNING, No. 526—T. C. FARRER.

These two pictures are the most important part of Mr. Farrer's contribution to this exhibition. His other works, five in number, are small, and, however valuable, are not of the sort which most appeal to visitors to a public gallery; so that the painter's principal message to us this year is committed to these two pictures. Both are carefully and minutely painted, and there are no signs in either of slighted or hurried work.

They are not attractive. It is very hard to look at them. The eye is apt to wander away in search of something pleasanter. Neither picture enchains the attention, or repays, by any freely-given or easily-won pleasure, the attention which is fixed upon it. It requires an effort, which few

lookers will make, to look long enough at either picture to find anything pleasant or instructive.

Conscientiously making such effort, we find in No. 161 a pleasant enough subject. "April, 1861," the Seventh regiment marching, on its way to the war, through the street without, while a lady within turns away from the window through which the street and the soldiers are seen. The lady wears a blue silk dress, the drapery well drawn and true in color and lustre. The lace curtain at the window, seen against the sky, is true and good. The pot of stone-crop is capital, and the other plants in the room—the ivy, for instance—are nearly as fine. The houses without have a sunny, out-of-doors, *real* effect, not common in pictures. Other of the accessories are, in themselves, well drawn, the *Tribune* on the floor, particularly.

We can find nothing more to say in praise of the picture, faint as this praise has been. We can find little more to say that is not positive blame. The picture has many faults which would not have been looked for in a picture by Mr. Farrer, and has all the faults, in an exaggerated and painful degree, which are usual in his work. The conception is unreal, unimaginative, and feeble, and the execution generally bad. The lady's face is hard and uninteresting, neither lovely, nor expressive, nor intelligent. Her attitude and action have neither grace nor any meaning; no grace, the vertical *pose* of the figure has nothing to make mobile humanity of it; the arms are stiff and awkward in drawing, especially the right, and the whole figure is so badly put into the picture that it floats in the air, dress and all some inches clear of the floor; no meaning—for we are not helped to any inference as to the cause of her turning her looks within, except that her forehead wrinkles in the middle as if the brilliant sunlight had hurt her eyes.

The criticisms of the many are not in this case unimportant, because it is evident from them that no one can be sure that he reads the picture aright. It has evidently given pleasure to no one, nor caused thought, except wonderment. It has made no impression, except to attract a crowd of guessers at the unsolved riddle of its meaning.

The furniture is evidently brought together and arranged to be painted—badly arranged, too; the half-life-size copy of the Venus of Milo, well known in New York, stands under a light table, and apparently on its under shelf, making the table four feet high in appearance; the flower pots are much in the way; the placing of the books and framed drawings help the unreal look of all the interior; the extraordinary shape of the room, and appearance of the carpet, complete this unreality, and make all a nightmare—one of those dreams where all slides down a never-ending hill together. This carpet is the worst thing in this picture. Its fault is ludicrously exaggerated perspective, in draughtsmen's phrase, but it is so bad that much careful looking is necessary before any one dare say that it is only bad drawing. If elastic carpets were made in any mill, capable of being stretched at pleasure to fit floors of any shape, this would be thought one of them. The curiously mistaken drawing of this carpet is heightened in effect and noticeableness by the fact that it is not square with the room, that it makes the room look triangular; in fact, the evidence of the diagonally-set houses across the way, added to the evidence of the carpet, the lines of whose pattern are parallel to them, *prove* the room triangular. This carpet, moreover, is not in texture of surface like any known woollen fabric; it has exactly the surface and gloss of painted wood.

The picture No. 526 is in some respects better. There is admirable work

in the table-cloth, the pretty blue china, the ground-glass dish of red apples, and the glasses filled with water. Mr. Pattison's picture, No. 184 of this exhibition, stands near on an easel, and looks natural. Mr. Farrer's pen-and-ink portrait of a lady, No. 126, is also present and easily to be recognized. There is much of the same bad drawing in this that we found so much of in No. 161. There is the same difficulty about the shape of the room. There is the same defiance of truths of perspective. There is entire uncertainty as to where the floor ends and the walls begin. There is a bad and inexcusable blunder in the drawing of the easel. The face of the lady is wholly out of drawing in one most beautiful and delicate part of the face—the joining of the nose and forehead. The hands, between drawing and color, are hard and wooden-looking. The attitude is constrained, as of one holding one position a long time, sitting for a portrait.

The tone of color is worse than in No. 161. The great prevalence of gloomy greens—for the pale tea-green of the wall paper is as far from being bright and cheerful as the olive-green chequers of the matting, and the curtains are the duskiest and dustiest of all—make the whole picture cold and sad. The pretty table-cloth does not help the tone of color, for the contrast seems to make the gloom yet more profound. And this green darkness finds its echo and culmination in the most unpleasant shading of the lady's face and neck. All that is bad in the picture, indeed, both of drawing and color, culminates here in its most important part. Face and neck are alike ugly in color, and certainly not truthful.

There are other curious mistranslations of fact into painting. Let the reader ask himself if that be butter in the dish. Except for its shape he would not think it was intended to be butter—

except for its shape it would be an omelet, for the yellow is exactly the yellow of eggs. The lady's morning wrapper is inexplicable. The ladies who look cannot understand either the make or the material, and boldly say that the painter has drawn it wrongly. This decision may not be with authority, though it seems well founded, but the folds are those of silk, the lustre rather that of some woollen fabric; the whole unsatisfactory, in spite of the evident care that has been given, not wholly in vain, to the drawing of folds and creases.

The conception of the picture is utterly unreal. We cannot discuss this too evident fault; our space fails us; we mention it only because we have learned to expect naturalness from Mr. Farrer, and not made-up pictures such as are these.

There is one matter, comparatively trifling, but very annoying to those who care for interior decoration of houses. The design for the wall paper would not need to be noticed, except that the fault in this repeats the fault in a valuable drawing of Mr. Farrer's of two years ago. The unit of the pattern, a sort of cross made of three little leaves and their stalks, is good; but this pattern is applied in a tipped-up way at no particular angle, and is not arranged in any lines either vertical, or horizontal, or oblique, but spattered on at random. There is no fear that this will ever be copied, because wall papers could not be so printed, and no stencil-painter of walls would do so unworkmanlike a job. The ugliness of the effect would not be imagined by any one who does not see it.

Both these pictures are coarsely and thickly painted, and in harsh, hard, violently contrasting colors. There is no gradualness, nor delicacy, nor tender passages of true because subtle gradation. If they are painted according to any theory, it would seem to be this—

that all the French system of color is wrong, and that, therefore, the extreme contrary to it must be right. Space does not allow us to more than hint at this matter, the proper discussion of which will require at some other time careful comparison and analysis; but we do not propose to take Mr. Farrer as the teacher or his works as the example of any system of painting as vicious as that of the pictures before us. No, it is a fault of these paintings, not, we trust, a permanent fault of the painter. He suffers from it enough to mend it. The thickly-spread pigments of No. 161 are treacherous, and their colors can hardly be seen in any unobtainable light.

Mr. Farrer has two other paintings in the exhibition, "Evening in New Hampshire," No. 9, and "Mount Washington under Three Feet of Snow," No. 361. These are delightful bits of the old beloved, out-of-door realistic painting from nature again. No. 9 is not a portrait of any scene, and we cannot vouch for it that No. 361 is, except the mountain itself, which is actual; but it is painting from nature, for all. The "Mount Washington," in its blue-shadowed robe of snow, lit fiery red on one side by the setting sun, a golden sky behind it, and two glorious red clouds floating over the mountain, is our favorite of all Mr. Farrer's works this year.

Whatever of good Mr. Farrer has done yet, has been done by faithful painting from nature. The more direct and at first hand this has been, the better has been the work. Out of doors he tries, untroubled by theories, to paint the colors of nature, and succeeds. Out of doors his work is simple, loving, and strong.

No. 126 is a most faithful portrait of a pleasant pen-and-ink drawing, made three years ago.

Nos. 133 and 154 are two of those marvellously delicate and truthful pencil



drawings in which Mr. Farrer has pointed the way to others who would learn to paint nature. The "Pumpkin Vine," 133, is an old friend, one of those photographed for the series of photographs issued by the management of this journal. It was described in a former number of the *NEW PATH*. The "Dandelion" is a better drawing still, and should also be photographed, that copies may be sold at a low price.

GIRL FEEDING CHICKENS, No. 76, THE GLOOMY PATH, No. 125, A LOST MIND, No. 601—ELIHU VEDDER.

Mr. Vedder has eight pictures in this exhibition, every one of them of interest, all but one, in our judgment, better than his much praised picture last year, "The Lair of the Sea Serpent." It will be well for every one who is interested in the possibilities of American art, and its probable future, to look long and thoughtfully at each. We propose to consider them one by one, but of necessity in the fewest possible words, before speaking at all in general terms of his works.

No. 76 is the first, following the order of the catalogue, and one of the best. Noticeable, first of all, is the singular realism of conception. Realism of conception is often but another expression for sympathy. It is so in this case. And his sympathy has guided the painter aright, making him paint reality in a real way, simplicity in a simple way, and all without affectation or apparent self-consciousness. This little girl is not quite pretty, nor is she at all graceful in her attitude, according to academic laws of gracefulness, nor is her dress picturesque; yet is she the best little girl, save one, in all this exhibition. For real little girls are human, which painted ones less often are; and this child is as near reality, and as human, as painted children are, anywhere out of the work of Edward Frère. We say as real and

as human—not altogether as good. Mr. Johnson's little girl is better, and nearer perfection, because equally real and human, and of a higher order of humanity. Mr. Furness's portrait of a young lady is higher and better art than either, because of a higher order of humanity still, and still as real, still as human as either. But we choose sometimes the pathos there is in poor little bare-foot girls feeding chickens, not showing much intellect, only interest in the chickens, not affording very beautiful subjects, only interesting subjects that we stop to look at every time we pass.

We shall have more to say of this picture in comparing it with others.

Here in "The Gloomy Path"—125—a monk muffled close in gown, and with hood drawn over his head, walks away from us through a dreary country enough, his brown gown blown about by the wind. Well, we do not know much about monks here, and care for them even less. It is not saying much, to say, that we should know and care more if they often were truthfully represented, as Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Browning and Mr. Vedder have done once and again.

This is only a sketch, but there is loneliness in it, and degradation, and frowzy discomfort—modern monkery, in other words. If Mr. Vedder should read this, perhaps he will disclaim having meant so much, and protest that it is the observer's imagination that invests the picture with thought not his own. It may be so; but it is the province of sketches like this, to excite imagination in the observer which a more crowded picture would not. And if he, or any one, say that it is pleasing only to one who knew about monks before, that also may be so, and rightly, it is to them that Mr. Vedder speaks the most forcibly, as did Mr. Longfellow and Mr. Browning. It is for these previously-in-

formed ones to point out to the less informed the excellence of all these portraits.

The "Fort near Cadiz, Spain"—292—has been painted for the sake of the bright sunlit white walls and golden and red flag against a black and stormy sky. Evidently a reminiscence of fact.

The line of coast—a difficult thing to draw—is well drawn. The boats, high up on the beach, surely not more difficult, are very badly drawn. The artist should realize how much he injures his picture by such a fault. A word is needed on this matter. Here is a picture of medium size, which will cost somebody, perhaps four hundred dollars, for Mr. Vedder's pictures sell well. It contains one single idea—brightness against gloom; a beautiful idea, and one that nature never wearies of, but still only one. It is extravagance to buy such pictures. It is extravagance to paint them. The same length of time would have sufficed to paint a picture with two or three ideas; the same money would buy it. We should say to the would-be buyer of a "Vedder," "Don't take this, it will not last six months; take one that you will not weary of—take the 'Girl and Chickens.'" Now, it would have added to the value of the picture if these had been actual portraits of Cadiz boats. These lay-figures on the beach are nothing, not boats at all. They look mere pieces of painted plank.

"The Arab Slave," No. 583, "Jane Jackson, formerly a Slave, Drawing in Oil-Color," No. 589—two life-size heads in circles, are both hung too high, and the unfortunate staining of the wall has brought the pine boards to the color of the Arab slave's face. But how good these two heads are, and how powerful! Jane Jackson is our favorite, partly because we know her better than the Arab, but mainly because the head itself is won-

derfully fine, full of expression and full of truth.

A cedar-tree, somewhere on the sea-coast, very much abused by the sea-winds, has been partly broken down at last, and forced against a great rock. It has plenty of life, and flourishes under the untoward circumstances. The picture "The Lonely Spring"—597—seems to be a portrait, and is, no doubt a faithful one of the tree, at least, whether the landscape beyond is so or not.

It seems that Mr. Vedder dislikes to paint minute details. The life and struggling against difficulty of the tree are seized and quickly and strongly painted; but the tree itself is not painted. It is a sort of caricature; by which we mean that one quality is taken and alone represented, all other truths being suppressed. If one were to see the tree in question through a mist or in imperfect light, he might well see all that Mr. Vedder gives us. He would enjoy it, but would be glad to return the next morning to see it by full daylight. Seeing it so, he would see delicate tracery of foliage, subtle and almost untraceable intermingling of little verdant spikes, little changing lights and shadows—all beautiful, all necessary to the whole truth of the tree, but none of them in this picture. Now, let the painter observe this; the men who can give detail, now, are few, the men who can give general effect are few, the men who can give both are almost unknown. There are two or three who do it now and then. Therefore we praise his success in getting truth of general effect, and appreciate his evident sympathy with the tree. But this is not good tree painting; and we hold it wrong to exhibit such inadequate work. This is not a study, but was painted from a study. Men who can paint well ought not to paint slightly and insufficiently. We do not ask Mr. Vedder to paint landscape, but we ask that he shall paint as

well as he can what he paints at all. The same insufficient work is very observable in other pictures, especially in our beloved No. 76—the “*Girl Feeding Chickens* ;” but is nowhere more injurious than in the picture before us.

No. 601, “*A Lost Mind*,” is a powerful picture, and deservedly attracts much attention, but seems to be not rightly understood by many of those who look at it long and feel its power. Many intelligent people feel, as they feel when reading “*Instans Tyrannus*” or parts of “*Sordello*,” that it is fine, but they hardly know why, and hardly understand what is meant. It is a fault in a work of art to be too obscure; it does not necessarily argue want of meaning, but it does argue an imperfect clearness of conception. Concerning “*Sordello*” a wise friend once wrote—“It misses one of the aims of art, which is, to be intelligible to the intelligent.” And without hesitation we assert it to be Mr. Vedder’s fault that many who would understand do not more clearly understand what he has meant to say to them.

Our own understanding of it may be briefly stated. The title means not that the woman has lost her mind, but that the mind is as a person is who has lost the right road. The mind is gone astray from peace and truth, as a sinner is gone astray, when he or she also is said to be “lost”—a lost sheep which only one Shepherd can find. The woman’s mind is lost to usefulness—lost to thought; the world seems gray and gloomy to its sight; it sees nothing but sterility and discomfort, is scarcely conscious, indeed, of anything but itself—walking so in the gloomy ways of life, stumbling over obstacles of its own placing, shadows of arid cloud going with it and shutting out the sun—a lost mind knows not its own needs and seeks not its own safety, hoping nothing from the world, where all seems as sad without as within.

A handsome and stately woman, with loose and straggling locks of golden hair escaping in front—she wears a brown robe, a white long scarf passed over her head and knotted in front, and a heavy gray cloak over this. This is probably not the costume of any age or country, but devised by the painter, who wanted a dress at once picturesque and solemn, with heavy fall of drapery and gloomy color. The landscape is a sort of hollow, perhaps the sunken bed of a dry lake; in the distance are steep banks of clay with sand drifted against them and into their crevices—the flat land around is sand, out of which appear rounded masses of soft volcanic rock. Dry yellow grass grows all about in crevices. Hot mid-day sun seems to glow upon the more distant landscape; but near at hand the brilliancy of the light is softened; the foreground is not in full sunlight; the shadow cast by the woman’s figure has neither edge nor form.

The landscape powerfully helps the one central idea of the picture—reckless grief. According to Mr. Vedder’s standard it is good. Every beholder feels sadder for it.

If there is room in a picture for only one idea, this picture is very good. To us, believing that such a picture, painted by so able a man, should contain many harmonious ideas, it is only very clever.

CHRISTMAS TIME, No. 376 — EASTMAN JOHNSON.

We do not know if it was with a purpose that the Hanging Committee placed directly opposite one another two pictures so strongly contrasted as Eastman Johnson’s “*Christmas-Time*,” and Kraus’s “*Chess-Players*,” No. 335. Perhaps it is best to think that they do nothing with a purpose; we shall then be able to exercise charity with regard to their not infrequent blunders, and to admire the occasional happy accidents.

We consider the juxtaposition, if it may be called so, of these two pictures, a happy accident; it brings out the excellencies of each work more clearly, and enables us to prove by direct comparison the superiority of our countryman to an able and not unworthy rival.

It is not to be denied that the painting in Kraus's picture is excellent. There is really nothing in Mr. Johnson's picture so satisfactory, as mere painting, as the porcelain jar on the Berlin mantel, or the painting of the stamped leather on the walls. The tone of the picture is, if more artificial than our American master's, more harmonious and pleasing, and the flesh painting of the lady's face, at least, a good deal more natural and pure in color. There is, also, an air of culture and refinement in the accessories of the foreign parlor which is wanting in the American; this is owing partly to the fact that the furniture and decorations are really better in the former, and partly to the greater simplicity of Kraus's composition. The one artist paints as if he had centuries of experience, convention and elegant leisurely life behind him, and had both profited by them and been cramped by them; the other paints as if he had never seen another man's picture; as if the culture and refinement he found about him was good enough for him; and as if there were nothing he liked better to paint than his Americans.

Kraus's picture is extremely artificial; or rather, it is the exponent of an extremely artificial style of life. Mr. Johnson's is not only naturally painted, but it reflects spontaneity and simplicity in manners, an unaffected and cordial way of living; and yet, a single incident in his picture gives it a shade of artifice, and just destroys the purity of the presentment. The Affghan blanket thrown over the chair and sweeping over the floor, is evidently put there for

effect, to get the bright color, an expedient the like of which we never knew Mr. Johnson to employ before. The arrangement of his compositions has always been singularly free from trick, and we are sorry that it came into his head to injure the finest picture he has ever painted by so unnecessary an expedient. As we have said, Kraus's picture is really an artificial production, and yet there is not in it a single bit of declared and unmistakable trickery.

But, when we have made every allowance in Kraus's favor that the admirers of this picture claim, it will be found, we believe, that they are all on the side of its material excellence, its execution. We are glad, for our part, that the experiment has been tried of putting a clever foreign *genre* picture in the same gallery with our American work. It is curious to mark the result on the visitors. Kraus's canvas attracts immediate attention and is almost universally liked. People enjoy the elegance of the room in which these rich, comfortable people are sitting; perhaps without knowing why, they enjoy the firm, solid way in which the picture is painted. It satisfies the senses. The best American picture in the galleries has not such good technical work in it as this foreign one. We do not on that account prefer it to Johnson, Coleman, Vedder, Miss Oakley, or even, faulty as Farrer's work is this year, to Farrer himself. Because, with all his cleverness, with all his skill, there is a want of naturalness, of freedom; it is a learned, not a spontaneous cleverness; it suggests a school, a system, other men whose work is like it and as clever.

We have admitted a certain material superiority in this work over Johnson's. But, this superiority is only in certain points. It is better in color, but it is far from being rich, or delicate in color itself. The texture and surface of things are in some things better given. The lady's satin dress, her lace collar, the

porcelain vase, the stamped leather on the wall, are better than the corresponding things in Mr. Johnson's picture. But the carpet, the child's dress, the maid's dress, her cap, are no better done than by the American. *None* of Johnson's detail is in this picture well done as far as surface and texture are concerned. Several things in Kraus's *are*. That is all that we can allow on this point.

But now, we are faced with this question, and it will have to be answered: Are we to demand anything more from an artist than excellence of execution, or, is one picture more valuable than another by reason of its greater amount of thought, its deeper meaning, its power to excite in the mind of the spectator what is best and highest in him? Strange as it may seem, there *are* two answers to this question. There are those who deliberately assert that technical excellence is all we are to look for,\* and who would say in this case that if Kraus's picture is proved better painted than Johnson's, it *is* better. And we suppose there are men among ourselves, artists as well as critics, who would say the same.

But we are of a very different way of thinking. While we do not believe that any good or great thought ever utterly fails to get itself sufficiently well expressed, and while on the contrary we think experience shows that really worthy ideas create a style of speech for themselves which is often the best that could be devised, we yet think that the first thing we are to look at, to consider, is, the matter, not the manner. If the study of art is to lead us to a different view, we shall think we have lost, not gained. Art is to us, the expression, in a material form, of thought, of feeling. The highest art is a consummate expres-

sion of the highest thought, the deepest feeling. Looked at from the other point of view, art seems to us to degenerate to mere mechanism, and to become a matter only fit for the consideration of connoisseurs. It is not worthy the attention of intellectual or spiritual men and women. We cannot discuss this matter at length, in this place; our only purpose in touching upon it is to indicate the point from which we wish to judge such pictures as the two now under consideration, and decide between them.

We have seen that, even as a technical performance, the superiority does not lie wholly with Kraus. His adherence to certain formal rules and conventions gives him an apparent advantage, and there is enough of the conservative element displayed in his picture—conceived, as a friend remarks, "in the very spirit of the stiff," to make it agreeable to fashionable and formal people. But these externals are easily seen through, and if Johnson's work has faults, which it certainly has, Kraus's has also faults. But, now, putting technical details aside, Kraus's picture makes, at once, the impression of something unreal, untrue, got up for effect, a tableau, in short. Johnson's looks real; you believe the people live; you are not surprised to meet those who know and love them. Not that Kraus's scene is impossible; it is no ridiculous travestie on humanity, like Louis Lang's "Reminiscences, &c.," or Rossiter's "Piazza at Riverton," or his "Pic-Nic in the Highlands."\* On the contrary, it is possible, perhaps, but something primmer and more formal than we often see. We do not say it *is* untrue, only that it makes the impression of being so; it looks like a good and striking tableau, as we have said; it has the same air of unreality that Meissonnier's and Fichels' and their im-

\* Mr. Tom Taylor asserts this in the plainest language in his little pamphlet on the Art Gallery of the Exhibition of 1862, at Brompton.

\* All these three pictures, utterly, irredeemably bad, hopelessly inane, are hung in first-rate places on the line.

itators' work has; we admire it, wonder at it, but it takes no hold on us. The curtain will drop, the lights will be put out, the actors will put on their every-day dresses, and we shall go home, and go to bed, and sleep, and wake, and forget all about it.

Not so with Johnson's picture. Were you to meet it anywhere you would say, "This is true, these are real people." Just as, in walking through the British Museum, you pass Minerva and Venus, Bacchus and Jupiter, and find it hard to fix the attention upon them; their impassive faces give back no answer to your asking; but, on a sudden, you pause before the Clytie, and as you look into that rich, ripe face, whose noble beauty the tenderest melancholy touches with its hallowing grace, you know that this woman once really lived, stood, walked, loved, died on Roman earth, and, admire the other as you may, nod assenting to the guide book's learned but studied praise—the Clytie takes your heart; she is your friend henceforth, who makes the gallery no longer a gallery, but a home.

These Americans are not only real, but they are clearly of a nobler type than the Berlin people. We are morally sure that this chess-player is really a tailor, a worthy but impracticable person, who never played a game of chess in his life, and is becoming rapidly demented in consequence of his detention from his bench, whence, the curtain being about to rise, he was summoned while finishing the last buttonhole on a pair of trousers needed by a customer at this very moment. He has got his hair into a painful state of rumple, in consequence of his endeavor to settle whether he shall go on with the game, and let this stout, imperturbable lady take all the rest of his men; or drink this coffee which the malapropos maid has brought just as he was choosing between two ways of being checkmated; or rush

home, and finish his trousers; and, his intellect is of that calibre, that he will never make up his mind, in season, to do either. The lady's face is the best in the picture; which is only saying that it is better than the man's, for, the painter has given us neither the maid's nor the child's, which latter little personage seeing that the stupid maid is bothering her papa, has adopted similar tactics toward mamma, and we may easily believe that the game is not likely to prosper.

Now, see how much more natural, consistent and satisfying is the American picture. What a deep impression of domestic love, and of the best training, of high accomplishment, of worthy aims, of large hope for the future, against whose smiles or frowns, surely, wise guiding is guarding these children! How fine all the faces are; even the boy's, which is only half seen, is so truly drawn that it can easily be imagined; and the action of each one is wonderfully natural and easy; there is not the slightest suggestion of the lay-figure, nor could they have been seized by a man who was not a close observer, and full of human sympathy. If there be a best figure, it is that of the little girl, which is, indeed, more nearly perfect in its way than anything we ever saw painted. She is the centre of the picture; the whole Christmas-time is for her, without a doubt, and as she draws us day after day to where she smiles that holy smile of childish wonderment, and we watch the father's face filled with his deep delight; the mother's quieter but perhaps not deeper pleasure; the sister's watching eyes, half child, half woman; the boy's rollicking delight in the fun he makes and shares—all these bright notes unite into a harmony of love and human sympathy, and we feel it must be true that the picture which can touch chords so many and deep, has a right to a higher place in

our regard than one which only takes the outward eye and has no hold on heart or mind.

We regret that want of space forbids our speaking at due length, in the present number, of many other pictures in the Exhibition. Mr. Jervis McEntee's large landscape is deserving of a far more thorough analysis than we can give it in the few lines that remain to us. It is, to our thinking, the best picture that the artist has ever exhibited. It shows much greater knowledge, especially of trees, than we had given him credit for. The sky, too, is fine, and the gleam of light on the distant hills very true and lovely. Mr. McEntee's sympathy with nature is, apparently, not wide, but it seems to be direct and earnest. We know no painter either with pencil or pen who has better caught the spirit of the landscape through whose falling leaves and naked branches, and low-brooding clouds the dying year passes away in sighing winds and sobbing rain. We do not press our demand of last year that this artist shall try another theme than the one which he has so often painted, and of which this is the finest embodiment. The song is one, and the singer sings it sweetly. It is, no doubt, ungracious to withhold our 'encore,' when the public seems determined on a repetition, and the artist is ever ready to comply.

Mr. G. Wood's "Clearing off Cold," No. 584, has much merit; the sky is faithfully studied; the painter has evidently enjoyed the hour, and has enjoyed putting it on canvas. The cedar tree is also well done, and the whole picture full of promise.

Two pictures by Mr. Wyant, 502 and 604 have interested us; they have a good deal of nature in them. They are hung too high to be seen well, and we cannot, therefore, speak for tree-drawing or rock-drawing, but they look as if

the artist were trying to be true, and that is the one thing needful.

We had hoped that Mr. C. C. Coleman would have given us something this year better than last, but we do not think he has. His large subject, "The Antiquary's Room," is very elaborate and very clever; but, except for purposes of study, we cannot see that it is worth the time it must have taken to paint it. The difference between the drawing of the detail in this picture and that in Mr. Farrer's two subjects is so striking that it must be apparent to everybody. Mr. Farrer's, with the exception of some of the articles on the table in the "Home Scenes," is that of a novice;—one would think that instead of being, as he is, a really able draughtsman, he had only taken a quarter's lessons; whereas Mr. Coleman's picture is every square inch of it, well and faithfully drawn. In color too, he shows no less perception of the truth, and ability to record it. Even the want of tone in parts is an evidence of his faithfulness, to which we had not thought Mr. Coleman would have sacrificed his 'effect.' This want of tone is the fault of the room itself and its decoration, in which there is as little feeling displayed for what is beautiful as one would have judged from the exterior. As far as our experience goes, antiquaries are a careless race; they never value things for their beauty, but only for their curiousness, and the uglier they are, the better they seem to like them.

There never was a more superfluously abundant illustration of this statement than this room full of rubbish, and we can't forgive Mr. Coleman for wasting his valuable time over it. He will find a subject some day; at present he and Mr. Vedder are hunting in company for one; if they paint *no* subject at all, so cleverly, what will they do when they find a theme that shall touch their hearts and ours?

Miss Oakley, Miss Granberry, Miss Wenzler and Miss Rose are all on the right road, and promise to do excellent work in time. Miss Oakley's "Scrap-Book" is very pretty, and most carefully painted. Her fault is, too much daintiness; there is a want of force, which is owing, we think, to too little depth in the shadows. It is one thing to be quite indifferent to the dogma of 'central lights,' and another to decline believing in shadows at all. Miss Granberry's pictures show as much painstaking and determination to do good work as any artist in the Exhibition; but, though her style is stronger than Miss Oakley's, she seems as timid in her choice of subject, as Miss Oakley is in her manner. A glass of violets with a rose-bud or two, a tomato now and then—this is the extent of her daring. Suppose she should venture next year on something with more strength of color; we will lend her this glass of pansies that is on our table, as we write, if she would like them; we should enjoy seeing their freakish, tawny gold and purple kept fresh for us by the pencil of such a patient, serious student. Miss Wenzler we have often praised, but we do not like her work so well, this year, as usual. Not that she is a whit less earnest, or has taken less pains, but her manner is getting hard and artificial. Her fruit to-day is not tempting, it has an unreal look. She ought to seek out soft, mushy, knerly apples and pears, two-for-a-cent things, that no respectable fruit-dealer would sell, and no judge of fruit would buy. We don't say the subject would be attractive, only that it would be good practice for the artist, who is, just now, expending all her faithful hours on fruit as faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null as Maud herself.

Miss Rose is a dashing, daring wielder of the brush, who can very well afford to do nothing for the next year but

draw in black and white. She does not, at present, draw at all well. She enjoys vastly, strong, rich color; one fancies her walking all aglow down the garden walk, ablaze with hollyhocks, rank behind rank, purple and crimson, scarlet, black and gold; or tulips dashed with fiery dew; or rhododendrons and azaleas, rosy bonfires, banks of glowing snow;—but, she is too impatient to articulate her delight, and becomes incoherent. Her "wreath of roses" shows the defect of her drawing when she cannot disguise it with color; but she has the material in her of too good a painter to rest satisfied with anything that will not bear the severest scrutiny and the frankest exposure.

Our readers will, we dare say, wonder that we have only alluded here and there to Mr. Moore's admirable work; work which is, so far as our experience goes, acknowledged to be admirable by those who have not, as well as by those who have, heretofore been known as admirers of the 'school' with which the artist is supposed to be identified. We still hope to do his pictures justice; meanwhile we venture to suggest that the only 'school' to which Mr. Moore can with reason be said to belong, is that which teaches, first, that the artist's work is a noble and serious one, the double object of which is to make the artist himself more and more thoroughly acquainted with nature as one of the revelations of God to his creatures, and thus to enable him to draw us to the love of God by the contemplation of his fairest works. So much for the object; and, it being such, and of so high a strain, it follows that any man who really sets it before him, will labor with earnestness, with self-sacrifice, and with unwearied patience, to tell what he is learning, in the most truthful and conscientious way. His work will not be painful, either to him or to the beholder, because every stroke of it will bear witness to the



heartily, deep delight he took in it; and however small it may be, or delicate, it cannot hang the season through on the Academy walls without its quiet voice being heard, and its persuasive beauty winning many doubting, timid hearts to accept its lofty teaching.

'Tis a pity not to have a page left for praising Mr. Homer, whose "Light and Shade" is excellent. His larger picture

is not so good, but there is much in it that is not unworthy of the painter of the first. There is a point in the "Playing at Quoits" which shows a little carelessness of observation. The pitchers are pitching with the sun in their eyes, and even such tough fellows as these would hardly be able to hit the mark under such a disadvantage.

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#### A WORD ABOUT THE STATUES.

THE Sculpture Gallery is unusually poor this year, and yet, in Miss Whitney's colossal "Africa," it contains a work which under any circumstances would command attention and respect. With the exception of Henry K. Brown's "Striking Indian," and, perhaps, Mr. Thompson's somewhat exaggerated bust of Bryant, it is the only work in the room that looks as if it had been done by a man. Compared with Mr. Kuntze's unfortunate "Columbia," it looks almost grand, but we presume the artist would prefer a different standard. The conception, or the intention, rather, is praiseworthy; the conception is neither true nor forcible, and the execution is so feeble and unskilful that we wonder the artist's friends ever allowed it to leave the studio. The intention was to represent "Africa" wakened to new life by the spirit of the age and the great movements of our time working her regeneration and the reception of her children to Christian brotherhood, stretching out her hands to God. The conception presents us neither with the race personified in a woman's face and figure, nor with the action that the motto describes. The face is not the negro face nor any variety of it, nor is the head the negro head. Miss Whitney has only half dared, and between realism and idealism has made a woeful fall. She has shrunk from the thick lips, the flattened nose, the woolly hair, and in striving to suggest forms

which a great artist would have accepted with a brave unconsciousness, she has succeeded in making only a debased type of the Caucasian breed. The African nose is flat, but it is a nose, and is capable of expressing all that our noses can. Angelo would easily have made it sublime. Phidias would have made it the type of beauty. But Miss Whitney's Africa has no nose. It is still in the undeveloped stage of the infantile cartilage. So with her lips. They are not the African, nor do they suggest them. And the hair is simply a wig of frizzled hair, such as our ladies deform their beauties with.

Doubtless these comments will provoke a sneer, perhaps many sneers. But they are surely grounded in truth. Call a statue "Africa," and it is the first essential that the forms should suggest, at least, the African race. Nay, call it by that name or not, if the artist meant "Africa," the statue should proclaim itself to every eye and mind. Certainly this figure is far from doing so, nor can any candid person give a reason for its name. Yet, crude as it is, feeble as it is, it is stronger and better than anything ever done by Palmer, or Powers, or Greenough, or Crawford, or Miss Hosmer. It needs only that the artist should search it through and through, find out for herself its defect, and holding fast to what she feels is good in it, press boldly on to better work.

*Error.*—The name of Mr. BIERSTADT's picture in the Mutual Art Association Gallery is, by an unaccountable oversight, printed "Mt. Hope." It should be "Mt. Hood."