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THE NEW PATH.

VOL. II.] OCTOBER, 1865. [No. 10.

A YARN BY AN OLD SALT.

(CONCLUDED.)

THE material for study to be recommended for both artist and critic, is properly his own personal experiences and observations; if he feels pleased by anything seen or heard, let him analyze his pleasure, find its true cause, and he will then know how to produce the same pleasure in the minds of others, or at least as near it as his individuality will permit. This may be illustrated by the statement of one who had learned the "mystery of the sea," in—as nearly as possible—his own words: "When a small boy, I was riding in a carriage, got sleepy, and closed my eyes, and suddenly thought the carriage was going backward, and looked; no, all was right; but, by repeated trial, I found that, with my eyes shut, the motion felt like the reverse of the fact; the feeling could not be reasoned away, and puzzled me much. About the same date, while standing on a solid stone-and-earth wharf, looking at the waves passing, it seemed as if the wharf moved and the waves stood still; reason could not overcome the feeling except by a mechanical effort of the nerves and muscle of the eye, and so perfect was the impression on my mind, of the wharf's motion that I stamped and jumped on the stones to assure myself of their immobility; again I sought the 'why,' and was puzzled. A few years later, a-going down the bay in a sailing craft, of scarcely perceptible motion, as I lay in the cabin almost asleep, I *felt* the sloop turn; I looked, but there was not even a ray of sunlight, not an appearance altered, yet I knew that the sloop had turned; I went on deck; our course was altered several points, though such alteration involved no noise, no change of the relative position of the parts of the vessel. The thing often occurred afterwards, but 'Why?' These feelings are as strong now as ever; thus, when walking the street, if I close my eyes, I seem going backward; when the ferry-boat starts it looks as if the piles of the 'slip' were in motion, not the boat; when asleep in my berth on the 'Sound boat,' I always awaken with the swing around the New London light boat; or, going the other way, get disturbed at Sandy Point, awaken fully around Throg's Neck, and am restless from there around the Battery. This is not mere habit; it acts in the cars, over roads travelled for the first time; and in all manner of conveyances, ashore and at sea, whenever the mind is settled and calm enough to perceive the impression. I have read no author who correctly explains these things, but I have spent much of my life in a way that compelled me to be awake o' nights; to walk the deck, in situations where books and newspapers could not disturb the action of the brain; where the officers we saw little of, took all the care and anxiety of navigating and commanding the vessel, and one's companions all calm, unexcited like myself, invariably fell into similar trains of study, and their influence favored my meditation rather

more than the solitude of a hermit could. There—where I got the better part of my education, from the mystery of ropes and knots to the art of architecture and laws of the 'fluents'—came up these things; memory supplied a plenty of material, and thought went to work upon it. The process was long, irregular and impossible to follow out, by any one who sees Barnum's burnt one day and reads of a murder the next; such excitement wearies the nerve and confuses the brain; but the result obtained was this: Suppose the connection between mind and matter to consist of a surface capable of receiving impressions through 'senses,' but more delicate and refined in degree than the impressions we work by in common life, the sense of touch being so subtile in this surface as to perceive influences more delicate than light, even as immaterial as thought itself. This surface having throughout its extent communication direct—but independent of each other—with the mind proper.

This surface receiving the impressions may be compared to the face of a brush, the connections to the bristles, the mind to the handle; then, if the brush be passed over any object, from right to left, the bristles, bent back by the object, each and several exert a force pulling on the handle—representing the mind—from left to right, giving the reversed impression felt when moving with the eyes closed. Again, suppose the brush held still, but something passed over it, the bristles are bent precisely as before, giving the same impression on the mind which feels pulled in a direction the reverse of the fact. This is the case of the wharf or ferry-boat, when the portion of this surface allotted to the service of the eye is not able to cope with the more subtile feeling of mere existence; for, with only a single object in sight the eye can tell that the distance between itself and that object increases or decreases by the apparent change of size, but the eye alone cannot tell which it is that moves; with more than one object in sight the eye works an instantaneous 'traverse table,' purely geometrical, demonstrating that because A and B hold the same relative position, and are trees and rocks, therefore C, which changes its relative position with both, and is a bird, is the really moving article; hence when on the wharf or boat, and seeing only the water or wharf, the eye alone cannot decide which is in motion. Now, twist the brush; the effect on the handle—the mind—will be a pulling by the bristles in a direction contrary to the reality; but in this case, observe, the handle receives an impulse in one direction, in another part in another direction; the mind learns by experience that, in such cases of curving motion, the impression received is the reverse of the truth, as it knows that visible objects stand erect, although on the retina of the eye they are represented reversed; this is the case of the vessel's turning." Now, of what use are such studies to the artist? Patience, reader, listen to him a little farther, for he "has been there."

"Now, take the brush face up, that we may see our experiments. Carry a small object across the face of it; as the object moves, the bristles are bent one after another, and although the object may be a point so fine as to hardly touch more than one bristle at a time, and will never be in actual contact with more in number at any one instant while moving than while at rest, yet, a bristle bent, requires an appreciable space of time to recover its natural position; so that the object may pass over several bristles before the first ones recover themselves; hence, the impression on the mind is not lost immediately; so that, if two points follow each other swiftly over the brush, the effect is nearly the same as if one continued line, of length a little more

than the distance between them were held upon the brush without moving; this is the natural line of motion, it is the reason why the spokes of a rapidly revolving wheel are indistinguishable, are a blur; it is seen in the falling rain; it is beautifully illustrated by sparks and bright lights that leave strong impressions on the brush, the nerve. The same thing is noticed by all the senses; strong impressions require *time* to fade, that is, for the connections between mind and matter to regain their natural quiet. Motion, then, may be represented by the artist by a line however short, and the effect on the mind be the same, or nearly so, as that of the moving itself would; but the mere line may show motion towards either end; therefore to give it direction requires something to call attention to, or to emphasize one end of it; and any such attraction, either an increase of thickness, or depth of color, a crook, or cross, or dot, or any other mark in connection with the line, either by actual outline, or apparent relationship, will cause the impression on the mind of the moving of such dot, crook, or what-not, through the space shown by the line; and by the form of the line, whether straight or curved, will be shown the form of the motion; and, as nearly all natural or artificial motions are curved, so curved lines of motion please the eye best. Water, in waves, requires that the artist should give motion, by lines, not blotches of color, spotty, or doughy, representing form without movement; waves, spray and currents are in this respect more absolute and uncompromising than any other object in their demands upon an artist, for the reason that no man ever sees waves and himself both at once, stand, even apparently, perfectly still, and the effect of motion must be produced upon the mind before the artist is approved. It is interesting to see how all things that grow take outlines that are lines of motion in the direction of their growth; thus, grass grows upwards, the curves of its outlines are 'fluents;' the shorter part of the bend being the upper part,—true lines of motion, and well shown in grain; but, in drawing grass, the artist by means of little dots with gradually diminishing lines from them curving downwards—each dot and line having upward motion—drawn close together, and regular in size and form, gives a correct impression on the mind uneducated; in animals, the curves of the natural body show lines of motion. We speak of a 'swelling bust,' do we mean a case of actual increase of size? By no means; we only mean that its outlines are lines that produce the impression of upward and outward motion on the mind of the observer. Once while taking a walk I made some casual remark about 'that old horse'—an animal some twenty rods off; my companion, neither an artist nor professed critic—immediately demanded 'How do you know that is an *old* horse?' 'Oh! I can see he is *old;* can't you?' 'Yes, I can see it plain enough; but, he is in good condition, and does not move much; now, how would you, as an artist, judge and draw him to *be* an *old* and *not* a young horse?' I could not explain; but I remembered, and thought; now for the result. In the young animal the growth is, from a low stature to a high one; the tendency is up; the vessels, the membranous tissue, are firm; the fluids tend to rise; the curves of the form take lines of upward motion; the shortest part of the bend—that is the part of the fluent where the radius is the shortest—being the upper end thereof. In the full vigor of middle age the lower part of the vessels are filled as well as the upper, and the motion is stopping; in old age, the tendency is downwards; the membranes grow weak; the fluids

descend; the curves of outline sag; and there is an apparent downward moving effect produced upon the mind by the whole contour of the object. I have seen an artist take a half-life-size profile of a girl about fifteen, and trace it, letting no line vary from the original to the distance of a sixteenth of an inch, yet crowding all the curves and lines to a little more upward motion; then, take another tracing within the same limits, but crowding all the curves into downward motion, or rather to less upward motion. He preserved likeness and expression, but changed the apparent age so that common people—that is, without 'cultivated taste'—never failed to call the first, about ten years of age; the second, over thirty; though, when one was laid on the other—being clear paper, this test was applied—those who had drawn much could scarce define a difference of line. In this case no shading was used; had there been, it should have varied as the line did. The artist who does not know the 'lines of motion' is not fit to color photographs; for on the same photograph may be shown the 'rising thought' of the maiden in her first love, or the downward 'humility' of the nun in her self-abasement, yet the colors and outlines scarcely changed, the difference is given mostly in the manipulation; a difference hardly to be discerned by the 'educated eye,' but plainly to be *felt* by common folks. By these same 'lines of motion' the architect gives to his building any desired expression or appearance, as in the old Gothic cathedrals the lines of the shafts, the moulding, and groining of the ceiling; in fact, all the lines visible on the interior, nine times out of ten have a strong upward motion, and the 'lifted feeling' on entering these places is proverbial, even to the aid of superstition, as being thought supernatural. The matter is simply and easily within the control of the architect who makes a building, room, or design, appear longer, or broader, or higher, than it really is, at pleasure, or *vice versa*, or he has not learned his trade!" The old seaman above spins his yarns without any end, and they tangle into every subject that comes near. The only way to stop them is by cutting; but he shows the manner of study whereby artists may easily improve their work, albeit he does not sell pictures; there are men who make a business of that; leave it to them.

EXTRACTS FROM THOREAU'S "EXCURSIONS."

"October is the month for painted leaves. Their rich glow now flashes round the world. As fruits and leaves and the day itself acquire a bright tint just before they fall, so the year near its setting. October is its sunset sky; November the later twilight.

"I formerly thought it would be worth the while to get a specimen leaf from each changing tree, shrub, and herbaceous plant when it had acquired its brightest characteristic color, in its transition from the green to the brown state, outline it, and copy its color exactly, with paint in a book, which should be entitled, '*October, or Autumnal Tints*;'—beginning with the earliest reddening,—woodbine and the lake of radical leaves, and coming down through the maples, hickories, and sumachs, and many beautifully freckled leaves less generally known, to the latest oaks and aspens. What a memento such a book would be! You would need only to turn over its leaves to take a ramble through the autumn woods whenever you pleased. Or if I could preserve the leaves themselves, unfaded, it would be better still."

"As I go across a meadow directly toward a low rising ground this bright afternoon, I see, some fifty rods off toward the sun, the top of a maple swamp just appearing over the sheeny russet edge of the hill, a stripe apparently twenty rods long, by ten feet deep, of the most intensely brilliant scarlet, orange, and yellow, equal to any flowers or fruits, or any tints ever painted. * * * * One wonders that the tithing men and fathers of the town are not out to see what the trees mean by their high colors and exuberance of spirits, fearing that some mischief is brewing. I do not see what the Puritans did at this season, when the maples blaze out in scarlet. They certainly could not have worshipped in groves then. Perhaps that is what they built meeting-houses and fenced them round with horse-sheds for."

"Surely trees should be set in our streets, with a view to their October splendor; though I doubt whether this is ever considered by the 'Tree Society.' Do you not think it will make some odds to these children that they were brought up under the maples? Hundreds of eyes are steadily drinking in this color, and by these teachers even the truants are caught and educated the moment they step abroad. Indeed, neither the truant nor the studious are at present taught color in the schools. These are instead of the bright colors in apothecaries' shops and city windows. * * * Our paint-box is very imperfectly filled. Instead of, or beside, supplying such paint-boxes as we do, we might supply these natural colors to the young. Where else will they study color under greater advantages? What School of Design can vie with this? Think how much the eyes of painters of all kinds, and of manufacturers of cloth and paper, and paper-stainers, and countless others, are to be educated by these autumnal colors. The stationers' envelopes may be of very various tints, yet not so various as that of the leaves of a single tree. If you want a different shade or tint of a particular color, you have only to look farther within or without the tree or the wood. These leaves are not many dipped in one dye, as at the dye-house, but they are dyed in light of infinitely various degrees of strength, and left to set and dry there."

"I am again struck with their beauty, when, a month later, they thickly strew the ground in the woods, piled one upon another under my feet. They are then brown above, but purple beneath. With their narrow lobes and their bold deep scollops reaching almost to the middle, they suggest that the material must be cheap, or else there has been a lavish expense in their creation, as if so much had been cut out. Or else they seem to us the remnants of the stuff out of which leaves have been cut with a die. Indeed, when they lie thus one upon another, they remind me of a pile of scrap-tin.

Or bring one home, and study it closely at your leisure, by the fireside. It is a type, not from any Oxford font, not in the Basque nor the arrow-headed character, not found on the Rosetta stone, but destined to be copied in sculpture one day, if they ever get to whittling stone here. What a wild and pleasing outline, a combination of graceful curves and angles! The eye rests with equal delight on what is not leaf and on what is leaf,—on the broad, free, open sinuses, and on the long, sharp, bristle-pointed lobes. A simple oval outline would include it all, if you connected the points of the leaf; but how much richer is it than that, with its half-dozen deep scollops, in which the eye and thought of the beholder are embayed! If I were a drawing-master, I would set my pupils to copying these leaves, that they might learn to draw firmly and gracefully."

ALBERT DÜRER—A LESSON.

In the series of designs which Albert Dürer made to illustrate the life of the Virgin Mary there is one which represents, in a quaint fashion, the Repose in Egypt. The Virgin sits at one side plying her distaff with both hands, and rocking with her foot the rude cradle where the child, tightly swathed, and strapped into his nest, is sleeping soundly. Over his head two angels are leaning; the one with a youthful, joyful face scatters flowers over him, symbolical of the blessings that await him, whether they be mother's love, or friends, or the higher joy of doing and being good;—the other, a sad and dark-browed messenger, looks down with distress upon the little innocent, unconscious sleeper, and wrings his hands in agony as he sees, in vision, the evil that is to befall him. Meanwhile, the happy mother, dreaming of no ill, smiles with as sweet a mother's smile as ever painter drew; and, neither looking forward nor backward, enjoys with calm delight the present bliss; safe in a friendly land, her child beside her, her husband near, and feeling, perhaps, the presence of the angelic visitants, but without exultation as without fear.

In the centre of the foreground, old Joseph is busily engaged in hollowing out a large log, apparently for the purpose of making a water-trough; whether to earn some money from the Egyptians by the exercise of his proper craft, or to accommodate his own beast—that faithful ass on which, if we may believe the old painters, Mary rode comfortably from Jerusalem to Egypt with the babe in her arms, while her husband trudged by her side with all their worldly effects in a small bundle—we can only guess; we may smile in passing, if we will, at Dürer's notion of Egyptian Architecture, which looks, for all the world, like what we know of German house-building of the fifteenth century. But, smile we must, whether we will or no, at this busy company of mischievous little angels, mere fledglings, who are swarming about the patient, plodding Joseph like so many earthly children. Some are raking up the chips with which his adze has plentifully strewed the ground; others are piling them into baskets; one has, in a humor of quiet mischief, donned the great beaver hat of the unconscious Joseph, and industriously works away, clad in the hat and in very little else, unless it be his wings, before the very eyes of that excellent person, who is apparently so intent on his task that he sees nothing at all—if, indeed, it be not wholly invisible—of what is going on about him. Evidently, other angels in the immediate vicinity have heard of the new comers, and are on their way; one has just entered, having run himself quite out of breath, and is greeted with a hearty shake of the hands by a boisterous little urchin who has just made himself a whirligig out of two of Joseph's most successful chips!

This subject of the Repose in Egypt was a favorite one with the old painters,* but this design of Dürer's is the most delightfully fresh and poetic we have ever seen. Dürer himself was a simple-hearted, hard-working man, the son of hard-working people, bred origi-

* There is a very pretty conception of this subject by Lucas Cranach, a contemporary of Dürer (Dürer died twenty-five years before him), in which the holy family is quite eclipsed by the swarm of little cherubs who are engaged in the most active way in making themselves useful. Their principal occupation seems to be, cutting down branches of trees for firewood, Cranach probably thinking it as cold in Egypt as it is in Germany. One little urchin has become so immoderately thirsty by reason of overheating himself in his endeavors to hew down willow twigs, that he is plunging head-foremost into a brook, after the fashion of a duck. But this of Cranach's is mere play of fancy. There is nothing deeper in it.

nally to a trade, and going on his apprentice journey like other young men who had served their time. He was not born, however, to be a mechanic; he had not the right make for it. He was industrious, worked hard and continuously, leaving an amount of work behind him that proves he could never have been idle; was able to do a great many things; could paint and draw, after a marvellous fashion, with all sorts of materials and implements; engraved on steel, wood, copper, iron; carved some of his designs in hone-stone as finely and delicately as if it were chalk; wrote books—a work on Fortification, in which is all that was known of that art in his time, and much that he contributed himself to the stock; another on the Proportions of the Human Figure, in which he makes many singularly acute observations; and though the book, like almost all he did, is whimsical in parts, yet it is still respected by scholars; and lastly a work on Perspective, in which, also, he has embodied all that was known of that science, which just then was interesting all the ingenious people of Europe, artists most of all, and making them fill their pictures with buildings, colonnades, niches, and whatever could give them a chance to show what they knew, and sometimes as it proved, what they did not know. Dürer took hold of this study with eagerness; he was never tired of it, and being of a most ingenious, inventive turn of mind, he made many discoveries, and devised several clever expedients for overcoming practical difficulties.

You would say, perhaps, that such an ingenious, industrious man would have made an excellent mechanic; and so he would, perhaps, if industry and ingenuity were all the requisites; but Dürer was restless; he did nothing systematically; his books have no plan; his designs are full of thought, full of incident, they are wonderfully interesting, but they are often crowded and confused; he had so active, teeming a brain that he could never have worked at any one trade all his life, doing the same thing over and over again. What calms and balances other men—the mass of men—and makes them love steady work, and so keeps the world moving orderly by settled laws—would have never done for him; to have been tied to a bench, would have killed him. It seems strange at first sight, inconsistent, almost, to say this, with one of his wonderful copper-plates before us. We look at, study it, go over it inch by inch, and the impression of the patience of the man, his skill, his untiring steadiness of hand, his matchless fineness of sight, and then again his patience, sinks deep into our minds, and we wonder at ourselves for writing of him as we have; but the inconsistency is only apparent; he did work steadily while he worked but he worked at an immense variety of things, and he had to do so; he did not begin things and leave them, but he sat down with his German phlegm to a task that would make an American or a Frenchman quail, and went at it with a cheerful plodding enjoyment, worked at it with all his might, put his whole heart and his whole brain into it, made it as perfect as he could—and that means, perfect!—and then put it aside, and went, with equal courage, patience, enjoyment, at something very different.

He never cared for money; made it and spent it, squandered it on the silliest trifles; the wonder is, that he left anything behind him. No wonder that his wife's love cooled toward him, that her temper soured, that they grew ever wider and wider apart. Dürer was a pious, God-fearing man; goodness ran in his blood; he lived a life of virtue, but this foible made his home unhappy, and perhaps it was more easily made so because his Agnes became his wife by that infernal, old European system of

barter and sale; and, not sweet love brought them together in their spring-time, but two old men chaffering over their money-bags.*

Dürer was, indeed, no mechanic, although born of a father who was one, surrounded by a family of brothers who were mechanics, and, for the most part, associating entirely with people of that class, which was, indeed, at that time, in Germany, a class in which a man as able as Dürer could find good company in plenty. He was, however, all his life a deep and sincere sympathizer with the class to which he belonged by birth and breeding. He had, apparently, no ambition to get out of it; took easily to the society of rich and titled people, if need be, but as easily came back again to his old house, and his wife, his maid Susanna, and the plain people of his town. Over and over again, he shows his sympathy with toil, and suffering, and poverty, and honest sweat, and throws himself with his whole heart into scenes that bring them before us. His series of wood-cuts—"The Life of The Virgin," "The Passion of our Lord"—are simple-hearted, sincere, and, sometimes, rude, but strong, glowing, passionate hymns in which suffering and poverty and patience are made holy and beautiful. These designs of Dürer rightly stand apart from all others that ever were made, by their earnestness alone; for there is in them something far higher than their art; they have touched the heart of the world, because here, for once, it finds an artist striving to infuse into his designs, or, rather, not striving, but simply expressing with a fervor, before which everything dilettante and conventional shrivels up and is burnt away—the deep Christian sympathy with humanity that was the basis of his being.

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One of the facts connected with the history of Art that has, for us, the strongest interest is that, it has always sprung up—like a blade of grass in a prison floor—in the homes of the poor. It is true that we find this the case with many other things; with learning, science, discovery, invention, and the crafts that keep the world alive; poverty is the great reservoir which God keeps always filled, and out of which he has ordained that his best gifts to the race shall flow; poverty is, without a figure, a salt that keeps the world sweet; it is an incentive, a spur, a breeder of transforming desires; riches are a shining goal, a fruit that hangs golden and splendid on the tree of life, but they are only a goal; attainment is a weariness, and the fruit is gold without, ashes within. Many good things we owe to poverty—that nurse of inventions—but the others than Art were to be expected. They are for the body's health mostly, they are to feed it, clothe it, warm it. We dig into the earth, and are not surprised to find there, coal and iron, lead and tin; but, good as these are, God seems a thrifty provider only, a prudent husband, as we uncover these stores laid up for us in by-gone centuries; it is only when, deep down in the earth, we find the emerald lying, which God's fingers placed there before man was made—a sweet prophecy of grass and leaves before such things were—a thing whose only use is its beauty, made for the pleasure of man's eye alone—it is then that we begin to feel the warmth of the Divine heart which loved us, before his thought of us took shape, with a love that had deeper, sweeter pulses in it than beds of coal or mines of iron could show.

And so, when we find quick-witted,

* Some day, if we live, we will strike a chivalrous blow for Agnes Frey, who, certainly, can be righteously defended against that old pedant Pirkheimer's evil tongue; and we dare say that Dürer himself, if there be any truth in Spiritualism, will help us, now that he knows himself and her better, to some good arguments.

thoughtful boys inventing safety-lamps, thinking out steam-engines; a poor negro hitting upon the notion of a needle; a peasant, or some unknown one, struck with the happy thought of printing; poor men of all degrees of poverty inventing cotton-gins, and carding machines, and a hundred other useful things, it seems all right and reasonable; we are glad they did it, are pleased when they are well rewarded, sorry when they lose, as they too often do, the fruit of their toil, but it stirs no enthusiasm in us. Enthusiasm comes, the deep glow of the heart, the feeling of God's presence, when we see the artist-impulse stirring Giotto as he tends his sheep on the hill-side; or Turner catching sight of the immortal beauty of the world through the foul London fogs, and out of the squalor of the London streets. And, not these alone, but many, many more have felt the breath of the haunting beauty on their cheeks, have heard the motion of her hovering wings, have caught her whispered words of cheer, and seen her face, if only in their dreams; and the inspiration of her presence has made the narrow walls a temple, the scanty food forgotten, or tasting like the bread of God, has turned the draught of water to wine, and laid a hand of consecration on the head that poverty, and want, and care had marked as their own.

Let any one read the lives of the great artists, and he will find that the large majority of them sprung from poverty and want; at the very least, from humble life. Many of them were thwarted in their efforts to pursue art as a vocation; many of them had to fight against opposition, to tear themselves violently away from the ordered ways marked out for them, and struggle from the confinement of shops, and counting-room and trades, to the free air of the life they loved. In the earlier days of art, in Italy, this was less often the case, because in that country art was recognized as a distinct profession, easily made lucrative, especially as the influences at that time predominating seemed to stimulate the artistic creative power, and feed the love of beauty. But, though a calling, it was a trade, not a profession. It had no dignity in itself, and we doubt if any amount of genius, any commendation bestowed on his work by church or people would ever have reconciled a noble house to the adoption of that trade by one of its members.

Still, it was a means of advancement, and offered good prizes to the children of humble people. If a boy proved a clever painter, first one, then another convent would send for him to come and paint its walls; then, a neighboring nobleman must have some frescoes; and the church of his native village, or perhaps that of some larger and more important neighboring place would demand an altar-piece at his hands. And thus fortune might grow, and trade thrive, for a good deal of it was trade and nothing more; though much of it, also, was more than trade, and in the early time there was undoubtedly a great deal of real religious feeling and earnestness in the practice of the art.

Artists, however, were, in the days we speak of, poor men. They earned their living, and were treated with respect, but they came of poor people, and for the most part left little behind them when they died. Poverty had nursed them at her breasts, had blessed them with all the blessing she had to give: they shared no exclusive fortune, but they belonged by birth and education to the great, common brotherhood of man. What it suffers, they had suffered; what neglect in childhood, what ignorance, what want, what nakedness, what sense of estrangement from the rich and fortunate. What it enjoys they had enjoyed, and the joy was as deep as the sorrow; the sense of

freedom, the rough, but, on the whole, kindly nurture of nature, the rude health, the alert mind, the sharpening of all the faculties in the keen strife for life itself. They ought to have been more human than their fellows; they ought to have been broader, nobler, better; they ought to have stood upon their experience of the dark side of life as on a platform, and preached the good and evil of that experience to the world.

But, how was it? Certainly, the sum total of the result is other than this. Artists have, indeed, exerted a wide influence on the culture of the race, but they have done very little to teach or elevate the race. This, after long reflection, is the conclusion we have come to. Nothing seems to prove to us the inferiority—intellectual and spiritual, of the artist class—so much as the fact that they have not known how to use their splendid opportunity. There was a brief period when they did know how, and when they used it fitly and fully. But, even then, there were few men with great ideas; hardly one, the greatness and richness of whose thoughts has immortalized him. Of the older men there is no Shakespeare, no Dante, hardly a Chaucer. Even the whole cycle of picture—we mean all the works of all the men taken together—is it equal to the work of either of these men?

True, these men were religious, and they devoted themselves to the perpetuation and dissemination of the history and teachings of the Church. Let us not be bigoted. We admit that, what stood to them for highest, many of them, especially those earlier painters of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, passed their lives in embodying, with all their skill, on the walls of churches and convents, where those who could not read the written word—and then, books were not—might read the sacred story with their own eyes—a painted Gospel for young and old. Praise them and thank them for it. It was a good and pious work, and it was well and worthily done.

But, remember, that the men who worked in this spirit were few, and those who came after them forgot their work, and wandered into other more attractive paths. And even their work is not rich in great or fruitful ideas; the path they trod with firm step was narrow, and the altar at which they worshipped was never destined to be the altar of a race. Born in an age of religious enthusiasm such as the world had never seen, an age in which Europe seemed to palpitate in the glow of a passion for God, which raised the whole nature to the height of its inspiration, and made every faculty creative, these men could share in the universal enthusiasm, and make their voices heard in the thunder-burst of tumultuous music. But it was a measured strain they sang, and the highest works of painting pale beside the splendor of the thirteenth-century's architecture, and the poetry of Dante. Life seemed to have but lightly moved these artists; experience stirred no depths in their nature; they had no utterance meet to chime with the hymn that burst from the lips of a race that saw the light of its new morning streak the skies; no answer meet for the wild questioning cries that wandered in the doubtful light of that, as yet, unrisen morrow. For all reply, they could but count their beads, and patter their prayers.

And, as time went, art in all its branches steadily declined in spiritual power, even as in some it grew strong and proud in its material resources. Even the slim pretence of prophecy and inspiration, and a desire to play a part in the elevation of the race, was abandoned. Art became more and more sensual, and time-serving, and impoverished in ideas.

At the very time when artists were men of remarkable intellectual power, and possessed a degree of skill in many arts and sciences that is to us still a matter of astonishment, we find them using all this power and all this skill in tasks so trivial, so base, so devoid of all spiritual life, that never any waste of strength seems to have been so complete. The world was the poorer for these men having lived in it, when, if we had looked at their attainments, their ability, their power of brain, we should have prophesied that the works of such men must exercise a world-wide power over the hearts and minds and souls of their fellows.

One man only, living in this latei time of debasement, when these mighty watch-towers of intellect and learning and skill gave out only a flickering light, or, at best, a flame that spired to heaven and lured the wanderers to rocky deaths —Albert Dürer—was true to a nobler ideal. Amid much that is unsettled, much that is of a whimsical strain, the great drift of all his work is spiritual. He claimed no peculiar insight, seems hardly conscious that he had it, certainly never writes as if he knew the deeper meaning of his work; but, his is one of those cases where it cannot reasonably be denied that the artist had deep thought—deeper, often, than we can read. Read as subtly as we may, a deeper meaning seems always to underlie.

For Dürer was in earnest. He would not play with life, nor make a toy, or merchandize of his gift. With no asceticism, no fanaticism, showing only a simple German piety in his daily life, and not knowing that he showed even that—God was yet his great regard. His work is often playful, often of a rude, uncombed, hairy strength, that repels fine people. But he is never coarse, never lewd, has no double meanings. He lived in a strong, masculine time, when a spade was always getting called a spade; and, sometimes in his letters, he blurts out a word that cannot be translated, must be left in the friendly disguise of the old German; but this was all external; a purer heart, a more pious nature—God-ward and man-ward —never lodged in a human breast.

So, his work is like him, and alone of all that late fifteenth, early sixteenth—century—art grows dearer and dearer to the world. Men are wearying of Raphael and Correggio and Leonardo of Del Sarto, and even of Angelo; they admire them, pay ample homage to what greatness there was in them,—and, surely, as powerful an intellect as ever was on the earth was Angelo's—but a fatal influence was on him, and the world's heart throbs before no work that he has left behind him.

But Dürer was true to humanity. He had suffered, and he rejoiced to know that he had shared the lot of his Master. Humanity was dearer to him, more worthy, that Christ had borne its image; Christ was dearer, because he had shared the humanity that he reverenced and loved. And, with a simple, childlike reverence, but with a sympathy that burned and glowed, he set before his fellows the suffering that Christ had endured for them. He had been happy; he was of a mild and cheerful temper, and he enjoyed the world, and this feeling continually sweetens and enlivens his work, and crops out in unforeseen places, and harmonizes the otherwise too great severity of his designs. This playful humor makes another link to bind him to the heart of our time, that is searching everywhere for men in the past, who lived, who loved their kind, who lived a worthy, manly life in their day and generation, and whose names are to be set in the temple that we are building, consecrated to the earnest workers of the world.

Thus, at the very threshold, we

are met by these questions, as to the real value of art to humanity, the relative worthiness of these widely different careers. Is Art worthy to be placed by the side of Religion, of Science, as a regenerator of mankind, a teacher, a helper? Is the work of all these men, moved by different purposes, aiming at different goals, all alike Art, and to be judged irrespective of the ideas, the motives that underlie it? Is Art never to be more than this, never to be other, never able to command the free, untaught homage of the race, to be the friend of manly men, of noble women, or is it to be always as now, in America as in Europe, the minister to luxury, the friend of pride, the feeder of vanity, the splendid toy of the idle and the rich?

These questions will have to be answered, are, in fact, getting answered in some quarters, savagely enough. There are signs of an awakening among those who live outside of the charmed circle where artists and amateurs and connoisseurs live in a sort of Fool's Paradise, snugly ensconced from heat or cold. The world wishes to know, once for all, whether this is the end of the artist's existence. Will he stand up like a man and say, clearly, what he is here for? These many generations he has been left undisturbed, doing his pleasure. He claimed immunities, privileges, rewards. He said that his work was a great, spiritual, religious, civilizing work. He talked an intolerable deal of jargon, and was listened to, hat in hand, by the humble, low, work-a-day world. That patient, stolid, large-hearted creature, listened, we say, to all this, without so much as saying a word by way of demur. It had its suspicions, now and then a bold doubt, but it went on its way and did its serious, common-place, wearying work day after day, year after year, while the artist sauntered in his pleasant paths. Now, the world has made up its mind to ask a question, and have it answered. It asks in plain English, of the artist—"What is your use? What do you do for me and my children? What do you do for yourself? Can you help me in this fight I am waging with sin, with ignorance, with folly of all sorts; or, are you only a bummer in the battle?

For our part, we have not the shadow of a doubt that the world will do well to trust the future of Art. A new spirit stirs in it to-day; new blood runs through its veins. Christ, the great reformer, who in our day has knocked at so many doors, has at last knocked at the studios, and here and there he has entered and taught. Can we be allowed to say this without fearing the charge of Pharisaism or arrogance? It seems to us plain truth. Art was rapidly reaching a point where it would have been no longer possible to draw the line between it and other sensual gratifications. Already some of the trades counted lowest were striving to lift themselves to a better position by taking the name of artist; and, the right could not well be logically disputed. Go through the academy even to-day, with a keen, shrewd, common-sense man, who shall have a large receptive nature, and culture enough, and ask him to point out the pictures that are higher in the scale than hair-cutting, tight-rope dancing, opera singing; how many do you think he will find? Surely he will find some; surely he will find enough to make us hope strongly for the future; he will find few, but on those few we build a lofty anticipation.

For not in England alone, nor in France, but here, in our own America, artists begin plainly to acknowledge that they recognize their duty to do a more serious, worthy work in the world than hitherto—work that shall make them respected, and give them a title to at least something of the position they have claimed and had freely accorded them. They have manfully accepted

criticism, and have given up their childish theory of their immunity from the risks that other men run. We have probably heard the last of Art being "a delicate personal vocation," which no gentleman will interfere with by asking troublesome questions; and, in good time, artists who wish to confute the critics will prefer to do it by painting good pictures rather than by writing angry letters to the newspapers. This state of things is healthy, and is the first stage of progress. The artist must be content to work. He must throw himself wholly into his vocation, as if it were a vocation. He must absolutely refuse to make a trade of it. Only by an utter refusal to let the question of money enter into his calculations, can he sustain the claim of his profession to sit side by side with the highest ministers to human culture. He must be content to work for years, if need be, poor and unknown, nourished by the faith which is built on a large experience, that good work, really good work, is as sure to sell as the air is to be breathed. Let him accept poverty as his bride; let him take courage to kiss the lips of that wrinkled, scarred and hideous hag, and when the morning dawns he shall see her, in that rosy light, transformed, at his side, to an immortal beauty, whose love shall more than pay him seven-fold for his desolate hours, his bitter tears.

SONNET.

To the Fringed Gentian.

Oft had I heard thy beauty praised, dear flower;
And often sought for thee through field and wood;
Yet could I never find the secret bower
Where thou dost lead, in maiden solitude,
A cloistered life, until, this autumn day,
Beside a tree that shook her golden hair,
And laughed at death, flaunting her rich array,
I found thee, blue as the still depths of air
Seen, leagues away, between the pine-wood boughs.
Oh, never yet a gladder sight hath met
These eyes of mine! Depart, before the snows
Of hastening winter thy fringed garments wet!
Thine azure flowers should never fade nor die
But bloom, exhale and gain their native sky.

C. C.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

"But though we are thus compelled to disallow several of the claims which have been put forward in support of the scientific character of the middle ages, there are two points in which we may, I conceive, really trace the progress of scientific ideas among them; and which, therefore, may be considered as the prelude to the period of discovery. I mean their practical architecture, and their architectural treatises.

"In a previous chapter of this book, we have endeavored to explain how the indistinctness of ideas, which attended the decline of the Roman empire, appears in the forms of their architecture;—in the

disregard which the decorative construction exhibits, of the necessary mechanical conditions of support. The original scheme of Greek ornamental architecture had been horizontal masses resting on vertical columns; when the arch was introduced by the Romans, it was concealed, or kept in a state of subordination: and the lateral support which it required was supplied latently, masked by some artifice. But the struggle between the *mechanical* and the *decorative* construction ended in the complete disorganization of the classical style. The inconsistencies and extravagance of which we have noticed the occurrence, were results and indications of the fall of good architecture. The elements of the ancient system had lost all principle of connexion and regard to rule. Building became not only a mere art, but an art exercised by masters without skill, and without feeling for real beauty.

"When, after this deep decline, architecture rose again, as it did in the twelfth and succeeding centuries, in the exquisitely beautiful and skilful forms of the Gothic style, what was the nature of the change which had taken place, so far as it bears upon the progress of science? It was this:—the idea of true mechanical relations in an edifice had been revived in men's minds, as far as was requisite for the purposes of art and beauty: and this, though a very different thing from the possession of the idea as an element of speculative science, was the proper preparation for that acquisition. The notion of support and stability again became conspicuous in the decorative construction, and universal in the forms of building. The eye, which, looking for beauty in definite and significant relations of parts is never satisfied except the weights appear to be duly supported, was again gratified. Architecture threw off its barbarous characters: a new decorative construction was matured, not thwarting and controlling, but assisting and harmonizing with the mechanical construction. All the ornamental parts were made to enter into the apparent construction. Every member, almost every moulding, became a sustainer of weight; and by the multiplicity of props assisting each other, and the consequent subdivision of weight, the eye was satisfied of the stability of the structure, notwithstanding the curiously slender forms of the separate parts. The arch and the vault, no longer trammelled by an incompatible system of decoration, but favored by more tractable forms, were only limited by the skill of the builders. Everything showed that, practically at least, men possessed and applied, with steadiness and pleasure, the idea of mechanical pressure and support.

"The possession of this idea, as a principle of art, led, in the course of time, to its speculative development as the foundation of a science; and thus Architecture prepared the way for Mechanics. But this advance required several centuries. The interval between the admirable cathedrals of Salisbury, Amiens, Cologne, and the mechanical treatises of Stevinus, is not less than three hundred years. During this time, men were advancing toward science; but in the meantime, and perhaps from the very beginning of the time, art had begun to decline. The buildings of the fifteenth century, erected when the principles of mechanical support were just on the verge of being enunciated in general terms, exhibit those principles with a far less impressive simplicity and elegance than those of the thirteenth. We may hereafter inquire whether we find any other examples to countenance the belief, that the formation of science is commonly accompanied by the decline of art.

"The leading principle of the style of the Gothic edifices was, not merely that the weights were supported, but that

they were seen to be so; and that not only the mechanical relations of the larger masses, but of the smaller members also, were displayed. Hence, we cannot admit as an origin or anticipation of the Gothic, a style in which this principle is not manifested. I do not see in any of the representations of the early Arabic buildings, that distribution of weights to supports, and that mechanical consistency of parts which would elevate them above the character of barbarous architecture. Their masses are broken into innumerable members, without subordination or meaning, in a manner suggested apparently by caprice and the love of the marvellous. 'In the construction of their mosques, it was a favorite artifice of the Arabs to sustain immense and ponderous masses of stone by the support of pillars so slender, that the incumbent weight seemed, as it were, suspended in the air by an invisible hand.'—(Mahometanism Unveiled, ii. 255.) This pleasure in the contemplation of apparent impossibilities is a very general disposition among mankind; but it appears to belong to the infancy rather than the maturity of intellect. On the other hand, the pleasure in the contemplation of what is clear, the craving for a thorough insight into the reasons of things, which marks the European mind, is the temper which leads to science."—*Whewell's History of the Inductive Sciences, Vol. I. page* 260.

NOTES HERE AND THERE.

"THE READER" speaks the following sensible words, which all of us who are trying to establish the right sort of criticism in this country, will do well to read. We by no means quote it as wishing to cast a stone at anybody; we fear our own house has too many windows to make the experiment a safe one.

"While noticing the works of the younger painters, we cannot refrain from confessing a regret that it is the fashion in England to accept any successful effort on their part as a thoroughly accomplished performance. We can recall many instances of young men who, after having been too hastily invested with honours, have failed to realize the anticipation of well-meaning friends, and after a season or two have sunk into comparative oblivion. The press has much to answer for in this matter. Two or three years since, a severe onslaught was made upon the hanging committee of the year for a disposition of the pictures which was neither better nor worse than that of previous or subsequent exhibitions; only it so happened that the works of young painters which stood well in the eye of the critic had been either indifferently hung or rejected. The works of some of these painters are hung in most favourable situations in the present exhibition; but we observe that current criticism has either altered its tone, or maintains a decorous silence respecting them. The French press, which is a far more efficient organ of criticism than our own, is, at the same time, the mouth-piece of a better-informed public, and instead of confounding originality with eccentricity, and mistaking promise of good work for good work itself, detects the signs of culture in a young painter's picture, and applauds his success; but forbears, on the strength of a single performance, to indicate the artist's position among his brethren. With us the press, the public, and the dealers combine to make the position of a successful young painter more difficult to maintain, through an exaggerated estimate of his merits."

Happening to be on Staten Island the other day, and, stopping at Eltingville Station, we were surprised to see a new church that had sprung up in the most extempore manner since our last visit, only a few weeks before. It is an Episcopal Church, and we believe Mr. Upjohn designed it, although, as usual, nobody could be found who really knew who was the architect.

We presume that Mr. Upjohn does not think this little edifice of any great importance. But we do. For, in the first place, it is a sensible, convenient building, built, we should think, in the very cheapest way, thoroughly well constructed, and with a very pretty result. And in the second place, here is a congregation that has actually been willing to build such a church; cheap to begin with, not pretending to be more costly than it is, constructive, and pretty. Small as it is, cheap, mean, as some would call it, it is a good deal better architecture than Trinity Church, and we presume nobody knows this better than Mr. Upjohn. What we need is, architects who can design small houses and small churches that shall be well built, cheap and pretty; we want furniture on the same principle; but, as it is, both architects and cabinet-makers do all they can to foster extravagance and expenditure. They breed luxury, just as lawyers do quarrels.

Mr. Knoedler has received a number of interesting pictures lately, and is expecting more. A very beautiful Tissot —"Margaret and Faust in the Garden" —will make many Americans acquainted for the first time with a great modern master. The only picture of Tissot's that has been brought to this country before the one in Mr. Knoedler's gallery is one of "Margaret by the Fountain," at Mr. S. P. Avery's rooms. But powerful as that is, it is surpassed in interest, we think, by this one. The exquisite clearness and truth of the details, and the sympathy of the artist with the tenderness and delicacy of Margaret's character, which has made her the subject of so many of his pictures, must interest all those who are not deterred by his strong individuality of manner from looking closely at his work.

We shall have pictures enough this winter to keep us busy, if all the promises that have been made are kept. There will be the Artists' Fund Exhibition, which is to be held in the New Academy; and there is a collection of French and English pictures on the way from over seas, which we are to see, we believe, in November. Meanwhile, Mr. Knoedler has pictures worth seeing, and will have, all the winter; and Mr. Schaus has now and then one which is a relief to his too-much Germanism. He has just now a really bewitching bit of Toulmouche's work—a young girl playing solitaire—which we have taken great delight in. Toulmouche is a clever portrayer of character; wonderful as are his silks and satins, his faces are always worth as much or more. There is a specimen of him at Knoedler's which is cruelly true; a tint from the many-colored woof of modern European life, a pure bit of comedy which will be tragic enough for one of the parties before all is done.