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NOTES ON THE
ROYAL ACADEMY
EXHIBITION, 1868.

Part I., by

Wm. Michael Rossetti.

Part II., by

Algernon C. Swinburne.

LONDON:
JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN PICCADILLY.

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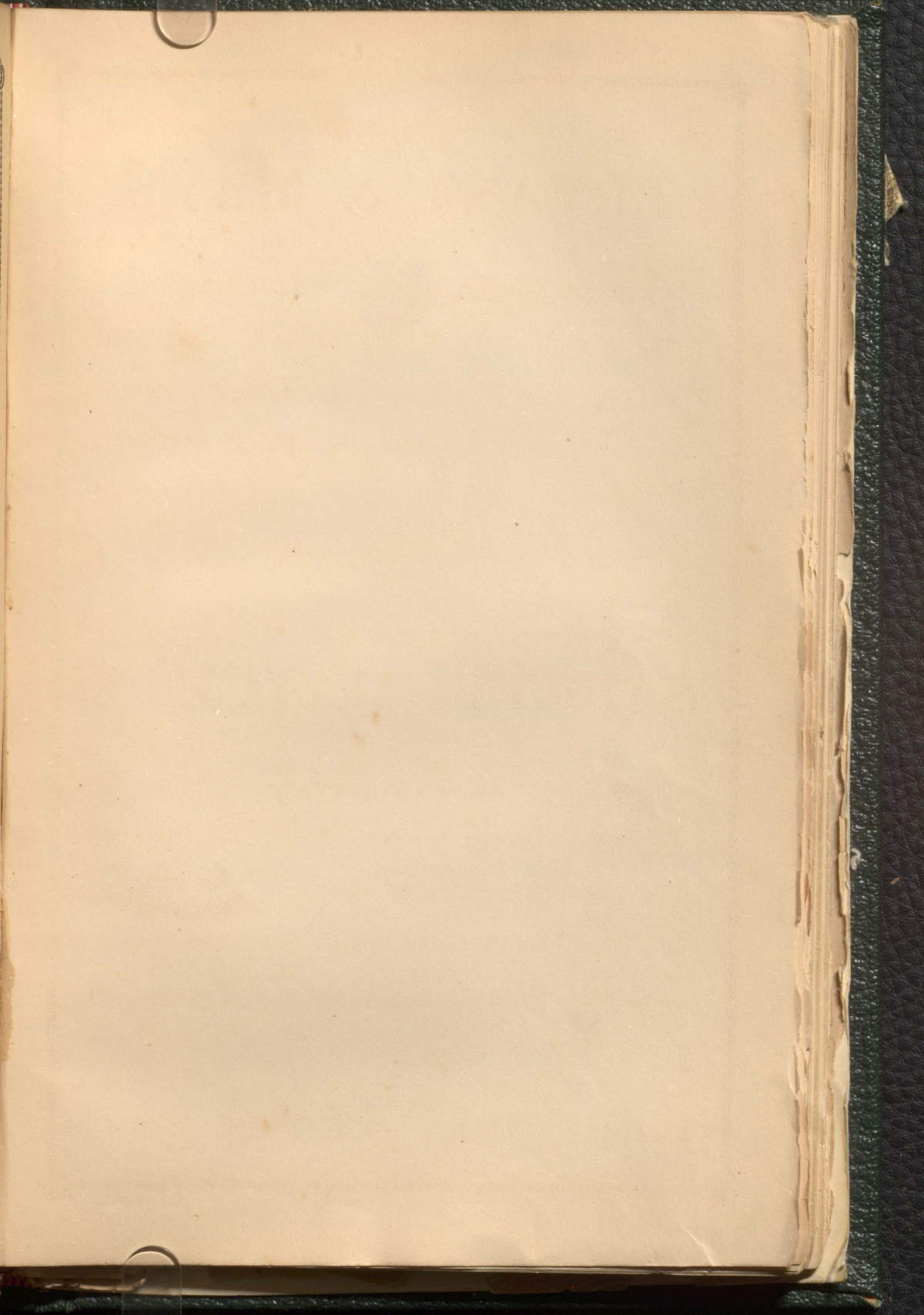
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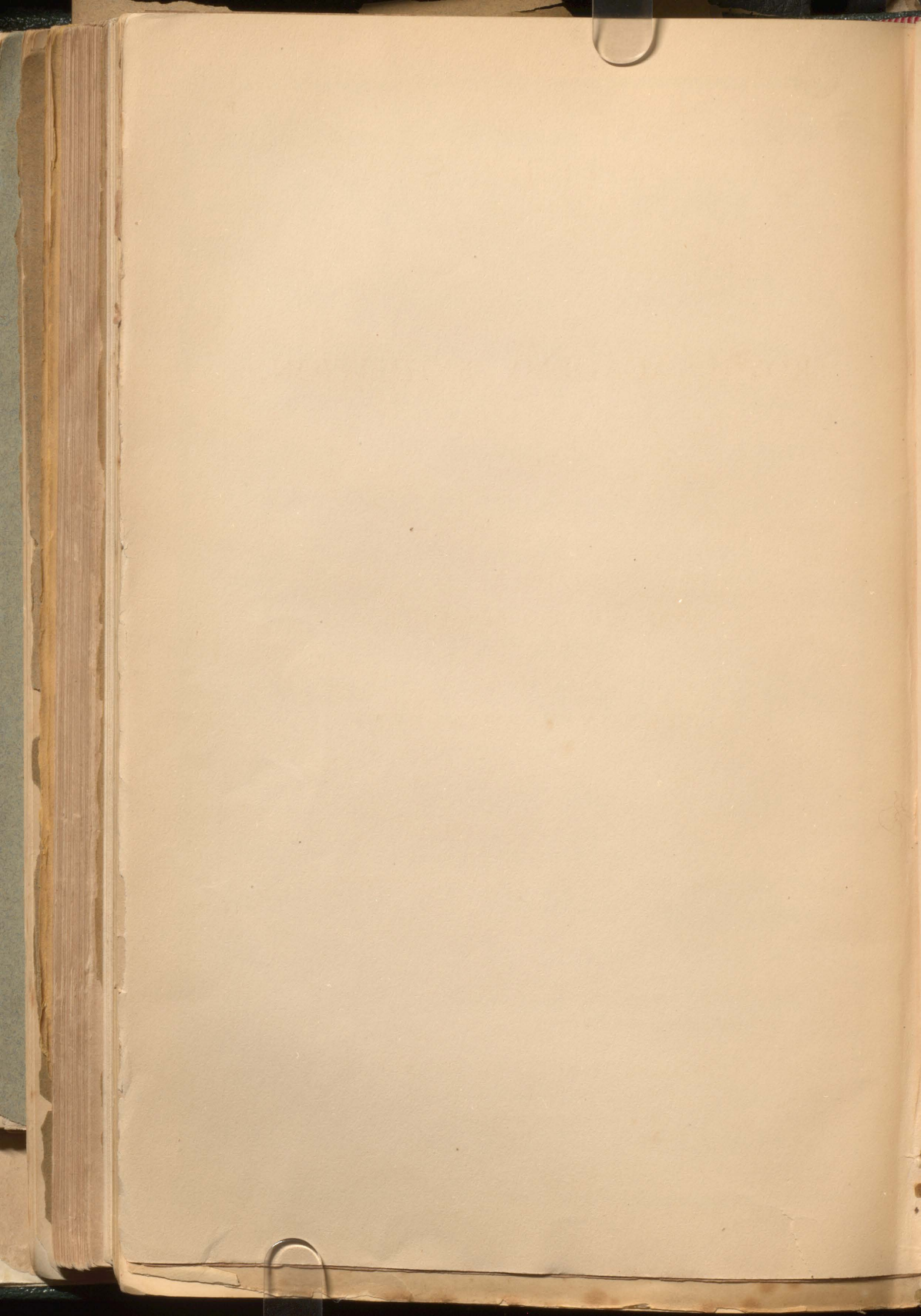
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NOTES

ON THE

ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION,

1868.

PART I. BY
WM. MICHAEL ROSSETTI.

PART II. BY
ALGERNON C. SWINBURNE.

“Desiring this man's art, and that man's scope.”—SHAKSPEARE.

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THE reader of this pamphlet will be apt to understand, from its very arrangement, the fact that each of the writers speaks solely for himself. Each chooses his own point of view, and expresses his own opinion, and in his own way. If the opinions happen to diverge, it will be for the reader to select, as he pleases, either or neither.

A. C. S.

W. M. R.

A PERSON who undertakes to express to the public his opinion of any such Exhibition as that of the Royal Academy is not unreasonably liable to the imputation of presumption. For that imputation I am prepared; I admit it to be, within certain limits, just; and must bear it as I may.

But there are two forms of possible and probable censure which I should respectfully decline to accept as well bestowed.

The first is censure of a signed critical pamphlet, *rather than* an unsigned newspaper or review article. The pamphlet expresses the opinion of an individual: the article does or ought to do the same. So far they stand on the same ground; anything which may be presumption in the first is presumption in the second also. The difference is that the first does, while the second does not, lay bare the writer to the retorts of any person who may hold himself aggrieved: that may be more open, more equitable, and more bold, but it is not more presumptuous.

The second form of misleading censure is that which makes a point of reprobating omissions. The limits of this pamphlet, as to dimensions and as to the time and facilities available for its preparation and composition, are manifestly narrow. All that the writer professes is to say straightforwardly whatever he does say: he by no means implies that nothing else remains to be noted concerning the works of art commented upon, nor that the works wholly omitted are undeserving of mention. If anybody, therefore, tells me that the picture of A, of which

this pamphlet says nothing, merits criticism, or that the picture of B, praised for colour, claims praise on the score of drawing also, I shall have no difficulty in admitting the probable correctness of these remarks; but, if he adds that I am blameable for the omissions, I shall feel entitled to reply that A's picture and B's draughtsmanship were not in the bond. What *is* in the bond is liberty of selection and candour of statement on my part: if my selection is stupid, or my statement unfair or erroneous, be that the charge. Let the censure concern itself with something wrong that *is* done; not with something right that might have been done.

W. M. R.

ROYAL ACADEMY EXHIBITION,

1868.

PART I.

SOME twenty years and more ago, the ingrained fault of the British School of Painting was that it painted flimsy pictures. They were not exactly sketchy, having little of either the merits or defects proper to the phase of art termed sketching: pictures they were, but flimsy pictures. Then came the thick-and-thin revolution of Præraphaelitism; which aimed at treating substantial subjects, thinking them out deeply, and painting them with abnormal thoroughness. That revolution scarcely exists now otherwise than in its results: certain works executed according to the principle in question, and representing it; many others parodying or maiming the principle, and traducing it; a vast number of works, still in course of active production, which owe their genesis to the principle, but have metamorphosed it beyond recognition. So that now we have come round to a condition of the school more analogous to that of twenty years ago: only that the present staple product is, instead of flimsy pictures, works executed with a valuable reserve-fund of knowledge, efficiency, and material, but in the feeling and with the aim proper to sketches. Critics have long been beseeching for "breadth." That is now supplied to them in handsome measure; but it is found that breadth, like frittering, may overlie a considerable surface of commonplace and inanity. The very skill of our current generation of painters is one of their chief perils; for it enables them to indicate with ease, and often indeed with mastery, what less

dexterity could only strive for with labour. Rapid gains and the tumult of competition conduce towards the same result. The upshot, to some critics, is, in the present Academy exhibition, a sense of no little dissatisfaction, mingled with unstinted recognition of telling and well-diffused ability. One perceives that many artists can now do a good deal, if they choose; but the more sound one sees the attainments of the painter himself to be, the less one is disposed to accept with implicit faith the rather cheap outcome of those attainments. Sketches may be excellent things, and they testify to the ready availability of the artist's gifts: but sketches magnified into pictures cloy upon one. They betray in especial a self-complacent unconcern for higher efforts. In general character the present Academy exhibition, the hundredth of the series, is very like that of 1867: that was a particularly clever display, according to its own standard, and this perhaps is nearly on a par with it.*

With these few remarks, I turn at once to the walls, and begin with—

6. MILLAIS—*Sisters*.—It is a great satisfaction to find Mr. Millais in force this year—in very superior force, for instance, to what he displayed last year. This group of three girlish sisters—the painter's daughters—shows him in pure, unforced, untrammelled possession of his mastery throughout. The arrangement of the group is so far artificial that one clearly perceives the sisters are posing for their portraits: no effort is made to disguise this fact, and it cannot, I think, be counted as a blemish—rather as one legitimate method of portrait-painting, though not so popular now as the contrary scheme. All the three girls are dressed in white muslin, with azure ribbons, and hair combed out. The background is composed

* To estimate the comparative merits of successive Exhibitions is always to me a difficult matter. The sentence in the text expresses what I felt about the present Academy show while I was in the rooms and as I began writing; but, on treating of the pictures individually, I so often have to say that some painter is this year quite at his best that I infer the display of 1868 may probably be fully as good as that of 1867. I leave the text, however, unaltered, as faithful to a general impression.

of azaleas, which, in the left-hand* corner of the picture, seem to change from crimson-pink to vermilion-pink; but the latter colour is scrubbed about with no appreciable traces of form.

10. LEYS—*La Famille Pallavicini de Gènes réclamant le droit de Bourgeoisie des Bourgmestres et Echevins de la Ville d'Anvers, 1542.*—When our Royal Academy is honoured by a contribution from one of the first magnates of European art, it becomes us to accept his work in a spirit of gratitude, with much desire to study, and very little to cavil. It is by way of study that I venture to note some of the leading characteristics of that mediæval style which has made Baron Leys famous throughout the civilized world. 1st. He identifies himself with the period he paints—not only in a general way, as a good scholar might do, but especially in respect of its concerted outer demonstrations, and its social aspects, and this with all the more zest when a spice of patriotism is involved. 2nd. Working from this solid basis of mediævalism, he is never afraid of individualizing his personages to the very uttermost: they are actual men and women whom he might—and for anything I know does—pick up in the streets of modern Belgium. An extreme instance appears in the present picture, in the furthest right-hand figure, whose portrait-like aspect is unmistakeable. This, however, being an obviously modern head, differs from the generality—which, with their personal actuality, are somehow *projected back*, by the imagination and skill of the painter, into the mediæval period, and thus come to be even more like what one conceives of the sixteenth than what one knows of the nineteenth century. Hence an air of startling realism: the personages are as real as if they were painted in coats and trousers; and the mediævalism is as real as any modern man can make it. The very uncouthness and hard-featuredness of the figures is a powerful element in this realism: it looks as if the painter had seen them actually there, and depicted them as in duty bound—had he been selecting, one would expect

* “Left-hand” and “right-hand,” in this pamphlet, will always be used to designate the portions of the pictures opposite to the *spectator's* left and right respectively.

more of positive beauty or semi-idealism. 3rd. Baron Leys paints with a remarkable mixture of force and slightness, detail and unfinish. He gives an extraordinary number of items, and with singular strength of definition, yet with little that can, on close inspection, be called elaboration. Everything is done so as to solicit the eye at a little distance, and up to a certain point to satisfy, never to satiate it. The style of execution has even a good deal that might be termed rough and ready; and (what is of great importance) it is quite unlike any handiwork of the Middle Ages themselves. Moreover, the painter (in the present phase of his style) very seldom gives any mere *accidents* of light and shade—direct or flickering sunshine, contrasts of natural and artificial light, or the like. It may seem fanciful to say that this also subserves the historical impression; and yet I think it does so powerfully—the scenes and the actors in them tell upon the mind, through the eye, as having passed out of the momentary into the permanent—out of the region of chance and change into that dim lumour and remote subsistency of the past. Having said thus much, by way of study, of Baron Leys's pictures in general, I shall not endeavour to analyse the particular work before us. It is a *replica* of one of his frescoes in the Townhall of Antwerp, and illustrates the value which distinguished foreigners were wont to set upon the right of citizenship in that great commercial and privileged city. It is to be regarded as an important and excellent specimen of the master, though some others might deserve the preference in point of executive completeness.

17. LINNELL, SEN.—*English Woodlands*.—A very characteristic and fine example of the painter's style: one might use it as a text-book wherefrom to develope his specialties in the English school of landscape.

30. WATTS—*Landscape, Evening*.—A small work, but conspicuous by its broad, strong colour, very warm and mellow: it has power both of hand and of sentiment. The sky is especially luminous.

44. HEMY—*Tête de Flandre, near Antwerp*.—There is a great deal of space in this picture: and the tone of green-grey colour is finely felt and solidly sustained. A sense of the ripple in

the estuary is given by a curious sort of sleight of hand—an actual ridging or rucking in the surface of the paint.

52. COPE—*The Life's Story*.—This is the subject of Othello relating his adventures to Brabantio and Desdemona. The lady hangs upon the words of the Moor with a demonstrative interest that fully justified his inference that she must be in love with him. The picture cannot, I think, be counted among Mr. Cope's successes.

64. GRANT—*The Duke of Cambridge at the Battle of the Alma, leading the Guards up the Hill in support of the Light Division*.—The weak point of this picture is the isolated figure of the Duke himself, which has more the character of a likeness by a portrait-painter than of a leading agent in the event. The Guards in the foreground are happily treated; with sufficient individuality in the several figures, not made singly over-prominent. The general execution is not unlike that of Sir Edwin Landseer; which is as much as to say that it has uncommon ability.

70. MILLAIS—*Rosalind and Celia*.—A picture full of sunny light and masterly celerity of execution. The faces have great sentiment, and ample charm of beauty: the confiding self-subordinating character of Celia speaks in the lines of her mouth. Touchstone is older than one would infer from the drama. It is a pity that Mr. Millais did not set himself to reflect what Rosalind would probably have done with her hair and costume in order to sustain the disguise of a young man. The upper portion of the dress is absurdly feminine, and hardly recedes even from the nineteenth century. On the stage one pardons the paraded sex of the actress—it is partly unavoidable, and partly a device of her profession: but in a picture one fairly expects a greater conformity to the common sense of the situation. Mr. Millais, however, never *will* pay any attention to his costume. With all the signal merits of the execution, the texture is not free from woolliness.

87. FRITH—*Before dinner at Boswell's Lodgings in Bond Street, 1769: present, Johnson, Garrick, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Murphy, Bickerstaff, Davies, and Boswell*.—We have heard only too often about Goldsmith's "bloom-coloured coat."

This is the scene of its exhibition before Boswell's guests. The picture may be termed a self-respecting one: the humours of the personages and the incident are indicated without being made to stare one out of countenance. *Per contra*, it must be said that strength is deficient throughout: common weakish mouths prevail in this distinguished company. Goldsmith and Reynolds are indifferent likenesses; and Johnson's clothes fit almost as accurately as Goldsmith's.

123. EDWIN LANDSEER—*Rent-Day in the Wilderness*.—“After the defeat of the Stuart army in 1715, at Sheriff Muir, Colonel Donald Murchison, to whom the Earl of Seaforth confided his confiscated estates in Ross-shire, defended them for ten years, and regularly transmitted the rents to his attainted and exiled chief.” The picture shows the rent being thus collected under difficulties. A bearded clansman, attended by his daughter, is in the act of paying; a friar kneels close beside Colonel Murchison; and a number of other Highlanders have assembled for the occasion. This large and crowded picture has a peculiar look, in consequence of the stealthy and crouching action of most of the figures: they are keeping close amid the brushwood on one side of Loch Affric, while some of the Government soldiers are patrolling the opposite bank. The work has thus—besides the generic merits which any large painting by Sir Edwin Landseer is sure to possess—plenty that is both peculiar and interesting, not unmingled with a certain impression of discomfort.

138. HERBERT—*The Valley of Moses in the Desert of Sinai*.—This picture (as Mr. Herbert is stated never to have been in the East) is somewhat noticeable in point of eclectic, and at the same time diluted, study. The light and tone are agreeable, and free from that hardness which besets many Eastern pictures; but, on observing the comparative faintness of the shadows upon the blazing sands, one sees at once that the avoidance of hardness has involved some sacrifice of truth.

150. WARD—*Royal Marriage, 1477*.—The detestable humbug of a sham contemporary “MS.” is resorted to for the purpose of informing the reader of the Academy catalogue that this painting represents the marriage of the Duke of York,

aged four, son of Edward IV., to Lady Anne Mowbray, aged three. A bishop of almost decrepit old age officiates, and Gloucester is naturally made a prominent witness. Mr. Ward's style of painting, chiaroscuro, and handling, is universally known; it may be termed the overblown style, with about as much retirement and repose as a peony the hour before it falls to pieces. But this should not blind us to his solid merits of thought and invention, always exercised in a direction which tells with the public, and for the most part felicitously in other respects as well. The present picture is an instance. Besides any amount of fine dresses and demonstrative infancy, it boasts a power of association which must take hold of every spectator: the infant bridal, the gorgeous dawn of promise to the little sons of King Edward, and the crash of fate reserved for them within the cerebral convolutions of the future King Richard. We may afford, while we are about it, to recollect that this effective subject pertains by right of priority to Mr. Houghton, who designed it for a woodcut.

167. FRITH—*Sterne and the French Innkeeper's Daughter*.—The imperfectly Reverend Mr. Sterne is looking at the damsel as she knits a stocking, and pondering upon its neat adjustment to the shape of her leg. On general grounds much the same may be said of this picture as of No. 87: both are superior examples of the easy certainty with which Mr. Frith can strike the key he wants, just as loud as he wishes it, and no louder. Sterne (as Goldsmith and Reynolds before) appears to me anything but a good likeness: the young woman is more French in feature than in the *ensemble* of the face.

172. T. FAED—*Worn Out*.—This ranks with Mr. Faed's best pictures: it is very skilful, and has more equality of painting than usual—somewhat less of obtruded knack and flourish. The various small accessories are well related to the main incident of the hard-working father who has fallen asleep while watching his invalid boy.

188. POOLE—*Custawnce sent adrift by the Constable of Alla, King of Northumberland*.—This moonlight picture has rather the character of a manufacture; yet it is manufacture by a poetic eye and pictorial hand. There is some clever handling

in the water of the foreground; and the entire absence of red from the picture—which relies for colour upon iridescent tints of grey-blue, green, yellow, and so on—is observable.

209. HOUGHTON—*H. Bassett, Esq., in his Laboratory.*—A capital piece of peculiarity. Great pains and intelligence have gone to the depicting of the scientific plethora of the laboratory; and the sense of the shut-in, moderately-lit room, not lightly to be intruded upon, is vivid. Mr. Bassett is represented smoking a pipe. This may seem a trivial or purposeless incident. Yet it may have been introduced to indicate some enforced pause in his work while an experiment is maturing; and, if so, it is certainly not unsuggestive.

223. ORCHARDSON—*Mrs. Birket Foster.*—This seems to me about the best work Mr. Orchardson has yet exhibited: it is a small full-length—more a subject than a mere portrait. The artist has a certain streaky or gauzy touch which amounts to mannerism: here the handling and colour have almost a *souçon* of Gainsborough. The bright face, the quiet lighting of the dusky-boarded room, and the untumbled white muslin dress, make up a picture in which elegant and artist-like taste verges upon quaintness.

235. ELMORE—*Ishmael.*—An accomplished study, perhaps (within its limits) unsurpassed by any work of its author.

236. G. D. LESLIE—*Home News.*—An English lady in her remote Asiatic home is reading a letter from the old country. The half-hovering smile, and the long-drawn regard of the eye as though she were in contemplation back across the measureless ocean, are delicately caught; also the coolness of the matted interior, jealously excluding the sun itself, but not the sense of how it is blazing outside.

242. MILLAIS — *Stella.* — A single figure, three-quarter length, and perhaps the very best Mr. Millais has done of its class. The name *Stella* naturally suggests Swift's *Stella*; and Swift's *Stella* holding a letter, with a countenance of subdued long-suffering, suggests her receipt of the letter from Vanessa inquiring whether she and Swift were in fact married. If this is the incident really intended, the sympathizing spectator may be startled at being reminded that *Stella* was at that time

about forty years of age. But Mr. Millais is not the man to mind much whether he does or does not represent a particular incident, or whether or not any such representation is enduringly correct. He has painted delightfully a very loveable woman, and that will probably suffice him and us. The tint of flesh in the arm appears hardly so pure as the rest of the colouring.

247. O'NEIL—*Before Waterloo*.—This picture will certainly have critics of two sorts. One set, incurious of artistic subtleties, will batten upon such a purveying of British military heroism, gushing young creatures, and harrowing family partings. Another set will turn with æsthetic distaste from so much of ball-costume and regimentals, and such a cross between the leaden and the garish in colour. An intermediate set ought also to find a voice, and to aver that the scheme of arrangement in the picture is very ingenious, and successful in turning a serious difficulty—that the story is told with great emphasis and much well-considered variety of detail—and that, when one faces the picture with deliberation, one can hardly refuse it the praise of being interesting. If Mr. O'Neil could but get somebody else's colour to exude through his brush, with texture and surface to correspond!

248. SIR C. LINDSAY.—*The Earl Somers*.—It is only fair to cite this picture, by an amateur and a Baronet, as one of the best portraits on the walls. The steadiness of the figure on his feet, without compromise and without bravado, is alone a considerable merit. A spectator may be struck by the great number of sitters who elect to be painted in shooting costume, or in some other dress and with other accessories of sport. "Manly exercises" will of course account for most of this; and knickerbockers and black velvet have their share of influence.

260. LEGROS—*The Refectory*.—The eye finds repose and satisfaction in this broadly and firmly painted picture, free from the last suspicion of *ad captandum* appeal. Three monks and a tabby cat have assembled to make a meal off a mackerel—the board laid with a perfectly clean white cloth. The monks are all men of dignified and thoughtful presence: two of them still pause over a book of orisons or meditations before they begin

the refectation. It might not be unfair to say that there is a good deal of space to let in the large-sized canvas: but one need not exactly quarrel with that. The painter, a man now of reputation equally confirmed and well deserved both in his own country and in ours, knows perfectly well what he is about; we may safely accept his point of view, and find in the result that, if he has not done precisely what we might have bespoken, there is nevertheless a definite value to be got out of his method of treatment, not to be slighted because a different method would have given some other and counter-vailing value. If anybody wishes to learn (among graver things) what amount of executive short-hand suffices for making a cat tabby, Mr. Legros's picture will inform him.

268. R. BUTLER—*The Lost Path*.—This artist's name is unfamiliar to me. His little picture of children astray in a copse has great merit of naïve expression, rendered as well by action as by countenance.

273. STOREY—*The Shy Pupil*.—The painter has here attained to a high point of force in simplicity of work. The subject is a budding girl learning to dance in her father's presence. With nothing that can be called elaboration, the execution would, for purity of lighting and directness of hand, bear comparison with many a choice Dutch picture. If we went to Mr. Legros for a tabby cat, we may consult Mr. Storey for a small dog peering through a door; a few twirls of the brush have, by a species of legerdemain, produced a surprising amount of characteristic form. This work, with much effect of solidity, is nevertheless amenable to my opening remarks as to sketchiness: but, in so simple and semi-humorous a subject, that need hardly be objected to.

283. DICKINSON—*George Peabody, Esq.*—A very honest good piece of work, and a most unmistakable likeness, to be remembered among the portraits of the year much to Mr. Dickinson's credit.

288. COPE—*The Disciples at Emmaus*.—Mr. Cope's method of art unites remarkable defining power with a certain thinness of the primary material; it reminds one of good wood-

carving—strong and accurate modelling bestowed upon a substance which, after the utmost has been done for it, retains an aboriginal crudity. In the present picture, the artist has planned out all forcibly and distinctly—he has left nothing vague to his own mind or the spectator's eye. Yet no corresponding impression of reality is produced; the work wants *imaginative* reality, and therefore its other elements of reality do not tell as they were intended to do. To attenuate the form of the risen Christ, and to make his drapery transparent to the evening light, is not the way to remove him from the regions of fleshiness.

302. HORSLEY—*Kent-day at Haddon Hall*.—Considerably the best picture Mr. Horsley has exhibited of late, or perhaps at any time. A very moderate proportion of adult good sense may have sufficed to discriminate it from his staple commodity.

311. G. RICHMOND—*Mrs. Brereton*.—While Mr. Richmond can put into a face so much feminine candour and amiability as we see in this likeness, no one need be surprised at his eminent standing among portrait painters. To look at the face seems to be like making Mrs. Brereton's acquaintance—or like wishing to make it.

316. CALDERON—*The Young Lord Hamlet*.—Yorick is on all-fours on the pleasure of the Danish palace, with little Hamlet riding on his back; Queen Gertrude and some of her ladies looking on; and an infant, presumably Ophelia, not yet "taking notice." This is strictly a sketch; no doubt a very able one, and only to be done by a man of long training and solid acquirement in art. Not only is the thing full of sparkling animal spirits as a whole, but each point, when one attends to it, is pertinent and telling: except indeed the face of the lady who holds Ophelia, and who exhibits a smile as hard as her teeth. This is not the only time that Mr. Calderon has made considerable play with teeth, and not, I think, successfully; nothing is more difficult to manage in a picture.

323. WATTS—*The wife of Pygmalion, a Translation from*

the Greek.—This is one of the few works of poetic elevation in the gallery: it is beautiful with a noble beauty, which one hardly knows whether rather to call womanly or impassive. It rests midway between coldness and warmth, without being lukewarm. It should be added that the merit is not exclusively Mr. Watts's, the head being truly "a translation from the Greek," *i.e.*, adapted from the fine antique bust pointed out not long ago for admiration among the Arundel Marbles in Oxford.

328. LEIGHTON—*Ariadne abandoned by Theseus. Ariadne watches for his return; Artemis releases her by death.*—This also is a picture which claims to be of the poetic order, and sustains the claim; it may without rashness be pronounced the loftiest work Mr. Leighton has produced, reckoning together subject-matter, scale, and the result attained. To ignore the limitations of his style, or the symptoms of them which this picture also presents, would be futile. One might sum them up by saying that there is a certain hiatus between his perception of the poetic in art, and his power of expressing it; and that, though he bridges this over with a readiness of resource which is to himself almost as natural as the first perception, yet to others the artificiality of the bridge is glaringly and even irksomely apparent. But the picture of Ariadne is sufficiently noble to keep these considerations in the background, as soon as we have once for all fairly stated or implied them. The face is wrung with sorrow, yet is free from what we mean to condemn in a work of art when we term it "painful." One might say that this woman has died of the very weariness of daily renewed grief. But the calm now is as profound as the yearning heretofore; profound as the blue sea violet-tinted in its distant intensity, or as the lulling oppression of its clang in the sultry meridian, barely audible as a faint murmur at the dizzy height of Ariadne's rock-seat. There is a sensation of stationariness, as if Phœbus Apollo might be pausing in heaven to see how his sister Artemis has accomplished her mercy upon the outworn Ariadne. As I looked at the picture, a divine reminiscence of Shelley intervened:—

"Yet now despair itself is mild,
 Even as the winds and waters are.
 I could lie down like a tired child,
 And weep away the life of care
 Which I have borne and yet must bear,
 Till death like sleep might steal on me,—
 And I might feel in the warm air
 My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
 Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony."

329. MASON—*Evening Hymn*.—Again a very poetical and beautiful picture, one of the enduring glories of the present exhibition. It reaches higher than anything Mr. Mason had hitherto done; and shows him qualified to paint figures on a fair scale of size, and with an amount of positive beauty which, in his previous productions (though well traceable), was to some extent overlaid by the *picturesque*, as that is popularly understood. This work glows with the light of a spring sunset, and with the unbidden fervour of a group of young village-girls who are carolling the Evening Hymn as they saunter homewards. It seems almost churlish to object to a leading point of treatment in so delightful a picture; but I confess to some suspicion that the men who are shown listening might with advantage have been missed out of the subject altogether—and more especially the youth who comes close behind a girl in white, holding a rose in her hand. Mr. Mason is a painter who never loses sight of facts in his pursuit of the beautiful; this is the one of his works which goes nearest to merging all other its material in a general ideal of loveliness and solemnity.

331. PETTIE—*Tussle with a Highland Smuggler*.—Here we revert to the category of sketchy work; and we see in this picture and in another by its author (No. 484, "*Weary with present cares and memories sad*"), an unpleasant and unrepaying development of style which might be described as "the offhand squalid." No. 331 shows extreme—indeed, excessive—cleverness: but its unsightly violence of action embodies a subject of little consequence to any one, and of less still to the cause of fine art.

347. EDWIN LANDSEER—"Weel, sir, if the deer got the ball,"

sure's death Chevy will no leave him."—A masterpiece of Landseerian art: the good hound Chevy is seen couched amid high mountain ice and snows, by the side of a dead deer, which the ravens have already scented from afar.

356. MILLAIS—*Pilgrims to St. Paul's*.—A more rational title would be "Greenwich Pensioners at the Tomb of Nelson." One of them has lost his left arm—a very resolute, bluff old seaman, whom "foreigners" may have been shy of tackling in his time; the other halts upon two wooden legs, more senile and commonplace, but also, in his undemonstrative way, one of those who, like his hero, "never saw fear." His face is most triumphantly painted; whether regarded as a mere study of a head, or as a piece of character, or with reference to its intense lighting by the flare of the sepulchral lantern. Indeed, the picture is quite admirable throughout, and in power of painting not to be surpassed by Mr. Millais, nor approached by any competitor. There is in its materials something which verges towards a *tour de force*; but all is so manly, and so free from sentimental overdoing, that no charge arises against it on this ground.

363. YEAMES—*Lady Jane Grey in the Tower*.—An able satisfactory picture; perhaps the best of its author. Lady Jane is in a controversial colloquy with the Chaplain Feckenham: her face expresses very successfully that she is weighing his arguments in her mind, and considering what may be the true answer to them, but with no prospect of her coming to the conclusion that answer there is none. Feckenham also is appropriately conceived and painted, without any exaggeration. Of costume and accessory there is enough, and not overmuch.

369. HOUGHTON—*In the Garden*.—A very handsome boy of eight is lifting his little sister of five to smell a rose upon its bush. A kitten which has already made some advances towards cat-hood is romping around the stem. The feeling of the subject would be improved were there more of a look of smelling in the girl's face; and the colour is hardly on a level with the other merits of the picture. It is, however, a very choice and complete little work; fine in design and draughtsmanship, and charming in general impression—quite free,

moreover, from that sort of nursery silliness which has infected some canvasses of late, and has even been aptly enshrined in a title reproducing the broken utterance of babes. Mr. Houghton knows that "ta-ta" or "tootsicums," whether written with the pen or rendered into the language of the brush, is a mild effort of art.

401. G. D. LESLIE—*Kate Leslie*.—This artist is almost always attractive, and often most engagingly so: the present work may be cited in proof. But he is "painty" (as the profession terms it) in the generality of his work, and especially in his flesh-tints. Here the face has far too much of a tawny or ligneous hue; which is the more to be regretted as the work, on the whole, comes nearer than usual to ranking Mr. Leslie among colourists.

402. POYNTER — *The Catapult*.—Great knowledge, great power of combination, and much disciplined artistic capacity, have gone to the making of this picture. It has more effect, and is on the whole more pictorial, than the very striking work which Mr. Poynter exhibited last year—*Israel in Egypt*. Some people may refuse to take much interest in a scene in which the work of the artificer or mechanic plays so large a part; but, bating this objection (which to many will be no objection at all), it is difficult to award anything but praise to the picture. The event is the use of a catapult as an engine of war in the siege of Carthage: we see written on one of the beams "Delenda est Carthago, S.P.Q.R." The officer is supervising; archers are shooting; the monster hand of the catapult is about once more to launch a red-hot bolt against the doomed city: pots of blazing pitch are being hurled by the defenders at the assailants. The solidity and good balance of all parts of the subject, the agreeable tone of colour in flesh and otherwise, the sound drawing, unfaltering and unpretentious, command high respect.

410. WYNFIELD—*Oliver Cromwell's First Appearance in the Parliament*.—To find this picture uninteresting would be difficult. Hampden is represented introducing his cousin to Cromwell; Pym, Elliot, Sir Robert Phillips, Strafford, and many other famous men, are present. The arrangement pleases

one from its obvious adaptation to the more important demands of the subject, irrespectively of artistic conventions. The method of the painting, however, is so excessively opaque and heavy that, until Mr. Wynfield shall manage to correct this blemish, one cannot expect his pictures to get cordially accepted by the public, or to please critical eyes.

424. T. GRAHAM—*The Dominic*.—Mr. Graham has powers of a high order; but he has seemed of late only too likely to be led away by the offhand practice, semi-grotesque picturesqueness, and rapid success, of some of his compatriots from beyond Tweed. *The Dominic* is about the least laudable picture he has exhibited—tending much to caricature, and to coarseness of handling. Of course, along with this, there is a deal of ability; and the figure of the boy still attests a genuine sense of beauty. Let us trust that Mr. Graham will have “pulled up” by next year.

434. HOOK—*Are Chimney-sweepers Black?*—A most delightful picture, fully equal to the best productions of its distinguished author. There are two others in this gallery (Nos. 48 and 270) also excellent: but so little remains now-a-days to be said about Mr. Hook's works, except that they afford deep, pure, and vivid pleasure, and show their painter to be one of the most artist-like colourists and executants of the British school, that I have passed them by, and limited myself to specifying the present one only. A begrimed (not *over* begrimed) chimney-sweeper, with the implements of his craft, presents himself to the startled eyes of a naked infant, as fresh and bright as a Cupid, who has just been bathing on the margin of the sea: he is still paddling in a sand-pool, and takes refuge against his young mother's dress, hardly so scared as not to be a little amused. This group of the mother and child is most charming; and all other parts of the picture are worthy of it.

439. MACLISE—*The Sleep of Duncan*.—The first aspect of this work, as of so many of Mr. Maclise's, gives an impression of unreality, huddled, and oppressed with decorative exuberances. A more deliberate inspection shows that it possesses, in ample measure, the fine qualities which rank him so high in our school—qualities of invention and design, associated with

remarkable, though bounded and monotonous, gifts of execution. The moment is when Lady Macbeth, having drugged the guards, and "laid their daggers ready" (one of these lies within the circlet of the crown), relinquishes any thought of herself assassinating the old king, who "resembles her father as he sleeps." The tragic air of crime in Lady Macbeth, her superfluous stealthinesses of action, are grandly given; though it cannot be said that her face differs much from the type so constant and familiar in Mr. Maclise's productions. Duncan and the two guards are all three fine figures. The lighting of the picture is not obvious: it would appear to be the union of soft moonshine and pale diffused grey dawn-light which comes through the loop-hole at the back; but this does not seem to account for all the light in front, as on the figures of the guards; while neither can one discern, on the other hand, that much (if any) influence of artificial light has been intended by the painter. Real the picture would, of course, never be made to look; but I think it would look considerably less unreal at one point if Duncan's head lay deeper in the silken pillows.

440. WELLS—*Letters and News at the Loch-side.*—A landscape with portraits and incident. I pick it out from among the contributions of its able painter, for the sake of noting the great amount of space, light, and air, which he has got into this picture, although there is no single glimpse of sky: the ground rises all round from the lake-side. This is no small thing to have managed.

449. LEIGHTON—*Acme and Septimius.*—Remarkable for its elegant skill of concentrated composition. The knee of Acme's left leg—the foot of the same leg being set underneath her right thigh as she sits—appears to me to project too much laterally. This may be a convenient place for calling attention (with implied apology for not speaking of them with the detail they properly claim) to Mr. Leighton's three remaining pictures: Nos. 227, *Jonathan's Token to David*; 234, *Mrs. Frederick P. Cockerell*; 522, *Actæa, the Nymph of the Shore.*

453. HODGSON—*Chinese Ladies looking at European Curiosities.*—A quaint and amusing notion, and a pleasant picture. A Chinese gentleman is exhibiting to his wives and their

women a pair of European white satin slippers, which the small-footed fair (or rather dusky) ones regard as elephantine eccentricities. An Englishwoman looking at a Chinese "six-marker," or at a Japanese masterpiece of woodcut design or colouring, is not more tickled. Perhaps the best head of all is that of the elderly woman to the right. The peculiarities of Chinese physiognomy are not at all overdone—indeed, I doubt whether the eyes are quite sidelong enough. It would have been admissible to make one of the wives prettier, and (if I am not mistaken) clearer-complexioned also.

461. LEGROS—*Sir Thomas More showing some of Holbein's Pictures to Henry VIII.*—Without tampering with his own style, Mr. Legros comes more than hitherto, in this picture, within the same general lines as English art. The work, in essentials, is extremely good; and simplicity of execution does not interfere with its keeping its place well and solidly amid those which surround it. Sir Thomas More does not strike me as much of a likeness. Henry is excellent: he sits (if a bull may be excused) as he would sit in a contemporary portrait, though not as he *does* sit in any of those I remember. Perhaps his eyes are less small than in the likenesses. Holbein looks the best man of the lot: well able to have done the fine things Sir Thomas is displaying, and to do as many more as bluff Harry may commission. Three ladies are also present. One of them gives her head a turn in which the manner of a connoisseur is dimly anticipated; and one might fancy her to be saying to herself, "Really, most excellent; but, were I to sit to him, should I come good-looking enough?" Capitally as the whole subject is kept together, I think a single little touch would still improve it in this respect: one of the ladies might be glancing from the picture to Holbein, and so helping to identify the work with its worker.

477. WALKER—*In the Glen, Rathfarnham Park.*—This is a halt of gipsies, who are lighting a fire; and perhaps there is something more of incident implied than I happen to catch. Mr. Walker's pictures have a certain mottled look and grainy surface which might be called mannerism, though not too confidently. At any rate, after making some abatement for this,

and for a too easily contented choice of subject, one is fairly surprised at a sureness of hand which seems to have at its finger-ends the power of realization without labour, and at a sturdiness of work which yet picks up (as it were) at every stroke refinements of drawing and colour. The evidences of ability are so profuse that a non-practical critic like myself may well, in modesty and self-knowledge, feel his mouth shut to objections. I should doubt whether there are in Europe many artists more accomplished than Mr. Walker, within his own sphere of work.

494. H. S. MARKS—*Experimental Gunnery in the Middle Ages*.—Mr. Marks has done nothing better than this picture; probably nothing equally good. The subject involves just the sort of out-of-the-way humour which is his *specialité*; and he has made this the informing spirit of a full composition without condescending to any burlesque. There is much varied and capital by-play of incident and expression; and the subject is so treated as to allow one, even in these days of Armstrong guns and Chassepots, to feel a good-humoured respect for the primitive artillerists.

499. PRINSEP—*A Venetian Lover*.—The gist of this subject is made so evident that we could dispense with the motto—"De deux amans, il y en a toujours un qui aime, et l'autre qui se laisse aimer." Handled with marked fulness and breadth, and with a very painter-like choice of the *tints* of colour, the picture proves once again that Mr. Prinsep is well qualified to work on a large scale; having at command a fund of really pictorial material, on which he may draw with full stress of faculty, secure that it will not fail him at his need. As a matter of sentiment, the picture leaves a certain feeling of discontent; the impassivity of the woman is so extreme as to provoke one first with her and next with her impassioned adorer. But no doubt this is only what the artist intended. In some parts the surface may be considered too smooth—as especially in the lady's face, which has hardly the pulpiness of flesh. Possibly, however, this impression would be corrected could one examine the picture closer.

510. A. HUGHES—"Sigh no more, Ladies, Sigh no more."—

120
 Mr. Hughes's pictures are always full of refined sentiment; and this is eminently so, and in all respects one of his best successes. The lady is so tender, uncomplaining, and beautiful, that one takes her part on the instant. Happily, she seems, after an interval of disconsolate dejection, to be dimly awaking once more to the interests of life; and soon she will be taking the advice of the song, and tempting fate with another affair of the heart. She is at once sentimental to the romantic point, and domestically feminine. It was a happy thought to introduce the thrush at her window, trilling a cheerful ditty, which one can imagine that her heart translates into the spoken language of the song. This picture has in it a gentle but real poetry which places it on a very different footing from most of the work in the exhibition.

511. STOREY—*Saying Grace*.—The small denizens of a nursery have seated themselves with impeccable propriety for their early dinner, regulated by (as one might infer from her physiognomy) a foreign nursery-governess. The baby has joined his hands with dispread fingers, and enacts (he is too young to pronounce) the grace with a solemnity which would do credit to a parish-clerk. No doubt the children are all portraits, with inordinate heads of hair; but the baby's irregularity of contour seems to exceed infantine bounds. Let us trust that his mamma will insist upon his growing up with a modified profile, and that "'tis his nature to." The picture has a genuine distinction of quaintness and zest.

513. CALDERON—*Enone*.—Mr. Tennyson, with the magic fetters of genius, has enslaved all Englishmen to the conviction that *Enone* can only be contemplated as in a state of heartbroken dereliction; and I suppose that Mr. Calderon intends his nymph to be so understood. I cannot, however, perceive that sentiment in her face or action; she appears to the eye rather in a mood of rampant laziness and florid self-display. This is a very singular piece of colour. White or whiteish tints occupy a considerable space; the extremely blue hills are the second important constituent; and the pea-green mantle of *Enone* is the third. The pea-green appears to me a discord, though some other hue of green, along with a tex-

ture more like drapery, might have proved much the reverse. On the whole, I should say that, in its colour as in other respects, the painting has much boldness, with no corresponding proportion of felicity.

517. R. CARRICK—*After the Sortie*.—This is a very large picture, hung so high that one cannot fully estimate it in detail. It represents a wounded knight borne up the winding castle-stairs by three of his retainers; his wife, with a horrible sinking of the heart, totters and clings about for support as she follows. It seems to be a strongly designed and carefully executed work, of very superior merit; the most important production of Mr. Carrick, and about the best.

524. H. W. B. DAVIS—*A Summer Forenoon*.—A landscape and sheep-piece, warm, gentle, and genial. Landscape and the allied forms of art occupy a very small space, comparatively, in the present exhibition. There are nevertheless several works of this kind which call for examination and praise: their being left unnoticed in this pamphlet does not imply any indifference to their merits.

540. MISS M. E. FREER—*Red Roses*.—Coquetry is the predominant spirit of this work. But it is not painted with the slightness which a coquettish picture from a fresh female hand might be expected to display. On the contrary, there is a good deal of careful realization, and an amount of general skill and force which places Miss Freer high among lady artists. No. 446, *Margaret Wilson*, by the same painter, hung too high to be scrutinized, seems to be equally good, or better.

585. MACLISE—*Madeline after Prayer*.—The useful adage which Mr. Maclise will never lay to heart is that "Enough is as good as a feast." We find Keats's Madeline encumbered with items of furniture and ornamentation. Moreover, the painter's decorative taste is anything but chastened; witness the horrible pattern which she has begun in her broidery frame. A graver objection is the want of any real luminosity in the moonlight which Keats has made so resplendent; the painted window itself is the very maximum of opacity, and the light (if light it can be called) seems to fall upon it, not to be transmitted through its panes. Whatever his failings in execu-

mean felicity

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tion, Mr. Maclise can depict light vastly better than this when he chooses. So much for objections. After any quantity of them, it remains that the picture is highly attractive, and the Madeline a very beautiful creature—perhaps the sweetest woman Mr. Maclise has painted. She is a personage *not* made

“For human nature’s daily food,”

and yet she is sympathetic. To be that, she must be poetic also.

589. BURCHETT — *Measure for Measure*. — Mr. Burchett follows up his remarkable work of last year with another of corresponding importance. Matured consideration, and strong powers of working and of development, have gone to the making of this picture; which represents the great crisis in the action of *Measure for Measure*, where the Duke of Vienna, disguised as a friar, is revealed by the unwitting Lucio to the eyes of the abashed Angelo and Escalus, and of the now almost hopeless Isabella and Mariana. The story is told with much judgment and penetration (so far as such a complicated story can be told) by the Duke’s vacated chair of state, with coronet and sceptre laid upon it, between the seats of Escalus and Angelo; the young courtier, facing the just uncowed Duke, and recognising him on the instant, and raising his cap; the frothy bluster of Lucio dying out on his scared visage as he gasps to see whom he has been mauling and traducing; and other well-chosen and well-combined incidents. The countenance of the Duke is German and searching; that of Escalus true to the good-natured cynicism of the substantially upright old man; Isabella has much of the nun about her. Angelo is, I think, too much the burly insolent oppressor; for we must understand from the drama that he really looked and was an abstinent Pharisee, led on by temptation and opportunity into vilenesses quite unlike the man that all others and himself supposed him to be. There is much able and accurate painting in this work, though it would benefit by more breadth of general harmonizing.

600. PARSONS — *The Wayfarer*. — A peculiar and delicate piece of subdued execution, deserving of inspection; so peculiar in its

Angelo is
burly insolent
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granulated texture that it hardly proclaims itself to be oil-painting.

613. HICKS—*Escape of the Countess of Morton to Paris, with Henrietta, infant Daughter of Charles I.*—The most important and best production of Mr. Hicks. Like Mr. Burchett's picture, its incidents require to be analysed one by one: when that process has been gone through, one finds a great deal of ingenious skill standing to the painter's credit.

614. PRINSEP—*A Study of a Girl Reading.*—Mr. Prinsep deserves real thanks for this painting. The girl is an exquisite person, and the picture also may without flattery be called exquisite. It has a most charming sense of the womanly in the maidenly. The fair one is about to sit down to luncheon, but holds and reads her book up to the moment of drawing in her chair. Perhaps she will violate etiquette by persisting in "reading at meals:" and who will not forgive her?

621. A. MOORE—*Azaleas.*—This will be remembered as one of the *illustrations* (as the French phrase it) of the Exhibition of 1868. It presents, in life size, a Grecian lady (or at any rate Grecian-robed), at a pot of azaleas, some of which she plucks and drops into a basin. Whether or not azaleas were known to Grecian ladies, whether or not they came from America, are questions not difficult of solution, but of sublime indifference to Mr. Moore. (The flowers in Mr. Watts's Grecian picture, No. 323, are also, I apprehend, azaleas.) The study of the blossom-loaded plant is most delicate and lovely; and the lady has elevated classic grace, though her face hardly sustains comparison with the rest of the picture. For a sense of beauty in disposition of form, and double-distilled refinement in colour, this work may allow a wide margin to any competitors in the gallery, and still be the winner. On the other hand, it is proper to remember that such a painting as this presupposes certain *data* in art, which *data* some people not wholly unworthy of a hearing demur to: chiefly, it presupposes once for all that that innermost artistic problem of how to reconcile realization with abstraction deserves to be given up. How much could be said on this question from differing points of view, I need not here indicate. You linger long to look at Mr. Moore's picture, and

again con medium
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return to it again and again : and that justifies him in taking, individually, the benefit of one of those points of view. He unites with singular subtlety of grace a phase of the evanescent to a phase of the permanent : colour and handling which withdraw themselves from the eye with a suggestion (or, as one might say, with a whisper), to statuesque languor and repose of form.

624. BRETT—*Christmas Morning*, 1866.—In scale combined with subject, this is far the most important picture Mr. Brett has produced. We see a manned boat and a wrecking ship upon the immense ocean, with its swirling drift blown across like a tongue of tormented flame ; and huge volumes of grey cloud over the horizon, walling out from the sea the gorgeous dawn of a new day, on fire with the blaze of sunlight. The painting of the vast sea-surface is a very great effort of knowledge and mastery, and a very successful one.

629. A. GOODWIN—*The Dead Woodman*.—A picture of highly remarkable effect, and poetic perception. A blue-grey bloom of sunset broods luminously over all. The work has a kind of intellectual analogy to the *Dead Stonebreaker* which Mr. Wallis painted years ago : but in all points of externals it is entirely different.

632. MILLAIS—*Souvenir of Velasquez (Diploma-work deposited in the Academy on his election as an Academician)*.—It is not for an outsider to surmise whether or not the Academicians court the deposit of diploma-pictures which may have cost their painters, working with the quick-handedness of a Millais, perhaps a couple of days' labour. However this may be, they have here got a diploma-picture of that description, and an admirable one in its way it certainly is. The resemblance to Velasquez is hardly such as to justify the title.

685. WATTS—*A. Panizzi, Esq.*—That this is about the finest portrait of the year need scarcely be specified, Mr. Watts being its author. It was presented to Mr. Panizzi by the Officers of the British Museum, on his retirement ; and happily expresses, in the sitter, great powers of work, long in active exercise, and now in well-earned repose. A sketch-plan of the Museum reading-room forms an appropriate and not undecorative device in the right-hand upper corner.

735. SANDYS—*Study of a Head*.—We have now got out of the oil-pictures, and have come to the drawings. This is an excellent study of a wilful, tameless-spirited beauty, who bites her hair in her gathering mood. Further on (816) is an equally well-done head of *George Critchett, Esq.*, a head that seems to teem with defined calculation. It will be known to many besides myself that Mr. Sandys sent to the Academy an oil-picture of Medea in an act of incantation, not only worthy, but more than worthy, of his highly disciplined powers and determined accomplishment. It has dropped out of the Exhibition when the pictures came to be actually hung; leaving some food for pondering to those who care for the higher and completer forms of pictorial work. They may feel—and the feeling would be only enhanced by some other things they may have heard, and a great deal of what they see on the Academy walls—that an off-hand style of painting, now predominant, has interests of its own clashing with those of some graver phases of art; and that judicial equity in adjusting these interests may sometimes be in default. Sir Francis Grant, detailing after-dinner statistics, may fancy that the whole question is settled by saying that there is space for so many pictures only, and that so many more were sent in; but this is far from being the *dernier mot*. Efficiency No. 1 and semi-efficiency No. 2 may be contending for a residue of space, and the admission of either is obviously the exclusion of the other; but he would be a very innocent President, non-academician artist, or private and unprofessional person, who should thence conclude that the Pompey and the Cæsar have coequal claims, especially the Pompey. Anybody, who has experienced, written, read, heard, or seen, even a little of this ever-recurrent hanging controversy, loathes its very atmosphere, and gladly retreats from it, seldom without a sense of protest, and a chafing at injustice.

753. J. F. LEWIS—*Bedouin Arabs*.—One of the very finest studies of the kind produced by a hand unrivalled in its own way.

943. MUNRO—*The Sisters*.—We are now in the Sculpture Room. Mr. Munro has earned great popularity and a defined position by works of this class, in which groups of children are

treated with some graceful incident and execution, and very genuinely graceful feeling. The present group counts among the best of them.

948. WOOLNER—*Elaine with the Shield of Sir Launcelot*.—The maiden loves and muses, and pines as she muses; but as yet her doom only hovers over her pityingly. The feeling of reserve and purity, of the new experience of love timidly entertained, and yet already permeating her whole life, and absorbing all her forces into its own surging and resistless current, is predominant in this figure. Along with this, and with much simplicity of pose and motive, one readily perceives that the whole thing is uncommonly treated—*uncommonly* rather than *unusually*. The face has more of personal individuality, the turn of the figure more shades of variety within unity, the execution throughout more distinction, than British sculpture accustoms us to. So also with the hands and feet: their peculiarities are all significant and forecast, though to my eye they do not sufficiently partake of the beauty of delicacy. Compare—or contrast would be the word—this statuette with

981. J. S. WESTMACOTT—*Elaine*.

984. ARMSTEAD—*Astronomy*.—A bronze colossal figure, destined for the Prince-Consort memorial in Hyde Park. It has a good decorative look, and adequate grandeur of pose and line. It might fairly (so far as one can judge before it is placed *in situ*) be termed a *proportional* work; one, that is, in which the conception, treatment, and general force of impression, have relation to its scale, and to its destination as one in a series of impersonating figures.

987. LEIFCHILD—*The Dawn*.—The sentiment of this figure is well expressed in two lines from the MS. quotation:—

“The Dawn, whose splendour is a promise still,
Heralding more than Day can e'er fulfil.”

It is the sentiment of an ushering-in, an announcement, something to come. Mr. Leifchild has produced several sculptural works eminent for thoughtfulness in concentration. The present figure belongs to a different order of work, yet something of the same spirit can be traced in it.

1007. WOOLNER—*Thomas Carlyle*.—The strong, emphatic, penetrating style of Mr. Woolner, who searches under the surface of his sitter's face, and records on its surface what he has found beneath, gave him the best of rights to deal with such a magnificent head as Carlyle's—marked as that is by a most powerful dominating expression, with abundant points of subordinate detail and individuality. Mr. Woolner had, indeed, done a medallion of the great writer many years ago; now we get a bust worthily recording so memorable a man.

1027. WOOLNER—*Reliefs from the Iliad (pedestal of the Bust of the Right Honourable W. E. Gladstone)*.—Here are three subjects executed on a small scale, with a singular amount of original force. The third, *Thetis consoling Achilles*, does not appear to me, in composition and suggestion, so remarkable as the other two. *Pallas and Achilles at the Trenches*, where the hero shouts to the Greeks a superhuman cry, while Pallas overshadows him with her ægis, is a most vigorous and admirable composition; indeed, but for its small size, one would be minded to call it the finest thing Mr. Woolner has yet exhibited. *Thetis praying to Zeus on behalf of Achilles* is hardly second to it. The sea-goddess rises on tiptoe to stroke the beard of the omnipotent cloud-compeller; and no single touch perhaps could have given the amplitude and primitiveness of the Homeric Pantheon more keenly than this. It is not exactly *naïveté*, and still less exactly humour, but something happily between both.

1053. WATTS—*Clytie; Marble Bust, unfinished*.—This is an experiment in sculpture by our distinguished painter. I find it a very interesting one, and (*pace* the professional sculptors) a remarkable success. The head reverts over the right shoulder with a graceful and energetic turn; and these qualities, especially that of energy, are preserved in all points of view. The modelling of the bust and arms is pulpy and creased—more comparable in tendency to that of the Elgin Marbles than of later Greek sculpture. Indeed, I should surmise that the thoughts of Mr. Watts, as he worked, were mostly shared between Phidias and Michael Angelo. The spectator who finds some parts lumpy or rude should bear in

mind that the work is avowedly "unfinished"—even if he does not deem the general conditions under which the experiment has been made sufficient to abate the picking of holes.

Possibly some readers of this pamphlet may use it to be referred to as they range through the Academy rooms, examining their contents. If this is the case, I should regret to pass over without a word of mention several works which, according to the scope and limitations of the pamphlet, I have not found an opportunity of reviewing in any detail in their proper order. After all, a great number of works against whose skilfulness and merit I neither raise nor suggest any imputation will be remaining totally unnamed. Meanwhile, a simple numerical list of contributions may be added to which I would rather direct attention thus barely than not at all. Some of them are productions of leading importance: others have modest graces which should not pass unobserved. The visitor must form his own opinion of whether and why they deserved specification.

28. SWINTON—*The Earl Bathurst.*

29. T. S. COOPER — *Descending from the Rock Grazing, East Cumberland.*

49. MAC WHIRTER.—*Old Edinburgh, Night.*

67. GRANT—*Miss Grant.*

68. FLEUSS—*G. Makgill, Esq.*

120. GRACE—*The Curfew tolls the Knell of parting Day.*

124. GRANT—*The Earl of Bradford.*

158. EDEN—*On the Thames near Pangbourne.*

160. HARVEYMORE—*The Point, near Walton on the Naze.*

168. J. B. BURGESS—*A Portrait.*

170. H. MOORE—*Ebb-tide, Squall coming on.*

176. CATHELINAU—*The Nurse.*

184. HALLE—*Miss Jessie.*

199. E. GILL—*Storm and Shipwreck on a Rocky Coast.*

205. ELMORE—"Two Women shall be grinding at the Mill."

206. ZUCCOLI—*Wine Gratis.*

208. Ditto — *Preparing to cook Indian Corn.*

222. YEAMES—*The Chimney-Corner.*

241. LEHMANN—*Portrait of a Gentleman.*
251. NICOL—*A China Merchant.*
267. GOODALL—*Mater Purissima.*
272. ARCHER—*Burial of Guinevere.*
290. WATTS—*The Meeting of Jacob and Esau.*
298. V. COLE—*Sunlight Lingered on the Autumn Woods.*
303. WELLS—*James Stansfeld, Esq., of Halifax.*
321. POTT—*The Minuet.*
322. G. D. LESLIE—*Mrs. Charles Dickens, Jun.*
327. PRINSEP—*A Portrait.*
340. FRITH—*Scene from "She Stoops to Conquer."*
344. PERUGINI—*Daphne.*
345. MRS. ROBBINSON—*The Firstborn.*
346. RADFORD—*"No Man that Warreth" &c.*
348. LUCY—*The Forced Abdication of Mary Stuart.*
367. MISS A. THORNYCROFT.—*Study of a Head.*
378. BOUGHTON—*A Breton Pastoral.*
387. WYLLIE—*Dover Castle and Town.*
390. CALTHROP—*The Last Song of the Girondins, 1793.*
400. ORCHARDSON—*Scene from "King Henry IV."*
403. STANHOPE—*The Footsteps of the Flock.*
416. WHAITE—*Harvest on the Mountains.*
420. WADE—*A Stitch in Time.*
452. H. MOORE—*Weather Moderating after a Gale.*
467. MRS. WARD—*Sion House, 1553.*
474. CROWE—*A Chiffonnier.*
478. WELLS—*The Earl of Strathmore and Kinghorne.*
490. E. FRÈRE—*La Sortie de l'École des Filles.*
503. HEMY—*By the River Side, Antwerp.*
504. NICOL—*Waiting at the Cross-roads.*
520. ARMITAGE—*Herod's Birthday Feast.*
521. LIDDERDALE—*The Exiled Jacobite.*
523. PRINSEP—*A Greek Widow at a Tomb.*
529. HILLINGFORD—*Before the Tournament.*
531. ARMSTRONG—*Daffodils.*
532. OPIE—*The Musical Genius.*
542. HAYLLAR—*Midsummer, Parham Hall, Suffolk.*
551. GALE—*Nazareth.*

552. GOLDIE—*A Child Martyr borne across the Roman Campagna to one of the Catacombs.*
571. MISS SANDYS—*Enid.*
579. CALDERON—*Whither?*
580. MASON—*Netley Moor.*
615. HODGSON—*Off the Downs in the Days of the Cæsars.*
616. A. HAYWARD—*The Haunted House.*
636. J. E. WILLIAMS—*The Bishop of Gloucester.*
646. ARCHER—*Bringing home Fern, Evening.*
648. MCCALLUM—*Near the Buck Gates, Sherwood Forest.*
656. TOURRIER—*The Cloisters.*
657. G. D. LESLIE—*The Empty Sleeve.*
671. BRENNAN—*Via della Vita, Rome.*
673. CROWE—*Mary Stuart, February 8th, 1586.*
683. A. HUGHES—*Mrs. Edward Rhodes.*
689. LOBLEY—*Fancies in the Fire.*
727. R. DOYLE—*The Enchanted Tree.*
754. A. C. H. LUXMOORE—*Searching for Treason.*
763. J. F. LEWIS—*Camels.*
764. COUNT G. V. ROSEN—*A Street in Cairo.*
833. HARDWICK—*The Woods in Early Spring.*
908. E. EDWARDS—*Four Etchings, Wells, &c.*
915. C. N. LUXMOORE—*Pen and Ink Sketches from Nature.*
1001. WOOLNER—*Hon. W. E. Frere, late of Bombay.*
1029. Ditto —*The late Robert Leslie Ellis.*
1040. BÖHM—*Miss Cumberbatch.*
1052. APGRIFFITH—*Cain preparing his Sacrifice.*
1106. G. A. LAWSON—*The Maiden's Secret.*
1164. TUPPER—*Dr. Hyde Salter.*
1169. G. MORGAN—*Study of a Head.*
1194. LEIFCHILD—*The Rev. Thomas Jones.*

PART II.

BY

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

I HAVE been asked to note down at random my impressions of some few among this year's pictures. These I am aware will have no weight or value but that which a sincere and studious love of the art can give; so much I claim for them, and so much only. To pass judgment or tender counsel is beyond my aim or my desire.

Returning from the Academy I find two pictures impressed on my memory more deeply and distinctly than the rest. First of these—first of all, it seems to me, for depth and nobility of feeling and meaning—is Mr. Watts' "Wife of Pygmalion." The soft severity of perfect beauty might serve alike for woman or statue, flesh or marble; but the eyes have opened already upon love, with a tender and grave wonder; her curving ripples of hair seem just warm from the touch and the breath of the goddess, moulded and quickened by lips and hands diviner than her sculptor's. So it seems a Greek painter must have painted women, when Greece had mortal pictures fit to match her imperishable statues. Her shapeliness and state, her sweet majesty and amorous chastity, recall the supreme Venus of Melos. In this "translation" of a Greek statue into an English picture, no less than in the bust of Clytie, we see how in the hands of a great artist painting and sculpture may become as sister arts indeed, yet without

pseudo
Watts
Watts
Watts

Watts

direct literary association

invasion or confusion ; how, without any forced alliance of form and colour, a picture may share the gracious grandeur of a statue, a statue may catch something of the subtle bloom of beauty proper to a picture.

The other picture of which I would speak, unlike enough to this in sentiment or in tone, has in common with it the loftiest quality of beauty pure and simple. Indeed, of all the few great or the many good painters now at work among us, no one has so keen and clear a sense of this absolute beauty as Mr. Albert Moore. His painting is to artists what the verse of Théophile Gautier is to poets; the faultless and secure expression of an exclusive worship of things formally beautiful. That contents them; they leave to others the labours and the joys of thought or passion. The outlines of their work are pure, decisive, distinct; its colour is of the full sunlight. This picture of "Azaleas" is as good a type as need be of their manner of work. A woman delicately draped, but showing well the gentle mould of her fine limbs through the thin soft raiment; pale small leaves and bright white blossoms about her and above, a few rose-red petals fallen on the pale marble and faint-coloured woven mat before her feet; a strange and splendid vessel, inlaid with designs of Eastern colour; another—clasped by one long slender hand and filled from it with flowers—of soft white, touched here and there into blossom of blue: this is enough. The melody of colour, the symphony of form is complete: one more beautiful thing is achieved, one more delight is born into the world; and its meaning is beauty; and its reason for being is to be.

subject

We all owe so much to Mr. Leighton for the selection and intention of his subjects—always noble or beautiful as these are, always worthy of a great and grave art; a thing how inexpressibly laudable and admirable in a time given over to the school of slashed breeches and the school of blowsy babyhood!—we owe him, I say, so much for this that it seems ungracious to say a word of his work except in the way of thanks and praise. I find no true touch of Greek beauty in the watery Hellenism of his Ariadne: she is a nobly moulded model of wax, such a figure as a mediæval sorceress might set

impet

to waste before a charmed fire and burn out the life of the living woman. The "Actæa" has the charm that a well-trained draughtsman can give to a naked fair figure; this charm it has, and no other; it has also a painful trimness suggestive of vapour-baths, of "strigil" and "rusma," of the toilet labours of a Juvenalian lady; not the fresh sweet strength of limbs native to the sea, but the lower loveliness of limbs that have been steamed and scraped. The picture of Acme and Septimius is excellently illustrative of Mr. Theodore Martin's verse; it is in no wise illustrative of Catullus. I doubt if Love would have sneezed approval of these lovers either to left or to right. As for detail, surely one arm at least of his and one leg at least of hers are singular samples of drawing. In his two other pictures Mr. Leighton has, I think, reached his highest mark for this year. The majestic figure and noble head of Jonathan are worthy of the warrior whose love was wonderful, passing the love of woman; the features resolute, solicitous, heroic. The boy beside him is worthy to stand so near; his action has all the grace of mere nature, as he stoops slightly from the shoulder to sustain the heavy quiver. The portrait of a lady hard by has a gracious and noble beauty, too rare even among the abler of English workmen in this line.

The genius of Mr. Millais is of course a thing indestructible; but all that can be done to deaden or distort it the Academy has done. "They have scotched the snake, not killed it"—being as it is a "Serpent-of-Eternity." There is nothing here to recall the painter of past years. There is no significance or depth, no subtlety of beauty; there is the fit and equal ability of an able craftsman. The group of three sisters is a sample of this excellent ability; no man needs to be told that. There is no lack of graceful expressive composition; there is no stint of ribbons and trimmings. There is a bitter want of beauty, of sweetness, of the harmony which should hang about the memories of men after seeing it as an odour or a cadence about their senses: and this beauty, this sweetness, this harmony, all great and all genuine pictures leave with us for an after-gust, not soon to pass or perish.

The picture called "Rosalind and Celia" gives us graver and deeper offence. Of the landscape nothing evil shall be said, and nothing good; but the figures cry aloud for remark and reprobation. These women are none of Shakspeare's. Think but in passing of the fresh grace, the laughs as of April, the light delicate daring, the tender and brilliant sweetness of the true "Ganymede;" what is left of all this? She figures here as a fair-faced ballet-girl, with a soul absorbed by the calf of her leg. And this dull, sickly, stolid woman huddling heavily against her is Celia; this is the purest rarest type that Shakspeare could give of heroic and sweet devotion; this is she who alone even among his women could not live but in another's life. And Touchstone—can this sour ape-cheeked face be the face that Jaques "met i' the forest?" these the lips that rallied Corin and wooed Aubrey? "Bear your body more seemly," Touchstone. And with all this debasement and distortion of Shakspeare's figures, we do not even get by way of amends a well-wrought piece of work; forget if you will the names attached, this is still but an unlovely picture. It seems that Mr. Millais has forgotten how to paint a lady; his women here all smack of the side-scenes or the servants' hall. Admirable for its strong sure power of painting, the "Stella" is, nevertheless, pitiably vacuous. If the sailors at Nelson's tomb appeal somewhat overmuch to popular sentiment of no deep or delicate kind, the picture is yet a noble one and impressive. The faces are full of simple and keen feeling, of tacit and loyal reverence. There is a superfluous ugliness in the two wooden stumps; and perhaps the knack by which the light is arranged so as to strike out severally from each pane of the glass lantern is too like one of those petty feats which are as lime-twigs laid to catch the eyes and tongues of the half-trained sightseers who jostle and saunter through a gallery, pausing now and again to "wonder with a foolish face of praise." The worst of these pictures, painted by a meaner man, would justly win notice and applause; but it is no small thing that a great man should do no greater work than some of this. The clear eye and the strong hand have not forgotten

powerless
 widows
 painter's
 picture

their cunning; it is a master whom we find too often at work fit only for a craftsman. Surely a painter who has done things so noble will not always be content to take for his battle-cry, "Philistia, be thou glad of me."

I return now to the works of Mr. Watts. His little landscape is full of that beauty which lives a dim brief life between sunset and dusk. The faint flames and mobile colours of the sky, the dim warm woods, the flight of doves about the dovecote, have all their part in the grave charm of evening, are all given back to the eye with the grace and strength of a master's touch; the stacks that catch the glare and glow of low sunlight seem crude and violent in their intense yellow colour and hard angles of form: natural it may be, but a natural discord that jars upon the eye. "The Meeting of Jacob and Esau," though something too academic, has in part the especial, the personal grandeur of Mr. Watts's larger manner of work. In the pale smooth worn face of Jacob there is a shy sly shame which befits the supplanter: his well-nigh passive action, as of one half reassured and half abashed, bares to view the very heart and root of his nature; and the rough strenuous figure of Esau, in its frank grandeur of brave sun-brown limbs, speaks aloud on the other side of the story, by the fervid freedom of his impetuous embrace. Far off, between the meeting figures, midmost of the remote cavalcade, the fair clear face of a woman looks out, pale under folds of white, patient and ill at ease; her one would take to be Leah. It is noticeable that one year, not over rich in excellent work, should give us two admirable pictures drawn from the Hebrew chronicles. What they call scriptural art in England does not often bear such acceptable fruit. I know not if even Mr. Watts has ever painted a nobler portrait than this of Mr. Panizzi; it recalls the majestic strength and depth of Morone's work: there is the same dominant power of hand and keenness of eye, the same breadth and subtlety of touch, the same noble reticence of colour.

Before I pass on to speak of any other painter, I will here interpolate what I have to say of Mr. Watts's bust of Clytie. Not imitative, not even assimilative of Michel Angelo's man-

Watts
to be Leah

F N

ner, it yet by some vague and ineffable quality brings to mind his work rather than any Greek sculptor's. There is the same intense and fiery sentiment, the same grandeur of device, the same mystery of tragedy. The colour and the passion of this work are the workman's own. Never was a divine legend translated into diviner likeness. Large, deep-bosomed, superb in arm and shoulder, as should be the woman growing from flesh into flower through a godlike agony, from fairness of body to fullness of flower, large-leaved and broad of blossom, splendid and sad—yearning with all the life of her lips and breasts after the receding light and the removing love—this is the Clytie indeed whom sculptors and poets have loved for her love of the Sun their God. The bitter sweetness of the dividing lips, the mighty mould of the rising breasts, the splendour of her sorrow is divine: divine the massive weight of carven curls bound up behind, the heavy straying flakes of unfileted hair below; divine the clear cheeks and low full forehead, the strong round neck made for the arms of a god only to clasp and bend down to their yoke. We seem to see the lessening sunset that she sees, and fear too soon to watch that stately beauty slowly suffer change and die into flower, that solid sweetness of body sink into petal and leaf. Sculpture such as this has actual colour enough without need to borrow of an alien art.

The work of M. Legros is always of such a solid and serious excellence as to require no passing study. His picture of Henry VIII. and courtiers is, I must think, an instance of absolute error; it has no finer quality of its own, and the reminiscence of Holbein is not fortunate. "The Refectory" makes large amends: he has never done more perfect work than this. The cadence of colours is just and noble; witness the red-leaved book open in one monk's hand on the white cloth, the clear green jug on the table, the dim green bronze of the pitcher on the floor; beside it a splendid cat, its fur beautiful with warm black bars on an exquisite ground of dull grey, its expectant eye and mouth lifted without further or superfluous motion. The figures are noble by mere force of truth; there is nothing of vulgar ugliness or theatrical holiness. As good

but not so great as the celebrated "Ex-voto" of a past year, this picture is wholly worthy of a name already famous.

The large work of Baron Leys stands out amid the overflow all round it of bad and feeble attempts or pretences at work in all the strength of its great quality of robust invention. It has the interest of excellent narrative; in every face there is a story. A great picture is something other than this; but this also is a great thing done. It is a chapter of history written in colours; a study which may remind us of Meinhold's great romances, though the author of "Sidonia the Sorceress" may stand higher as a writer than Leys as a painter. All the realistic detail is here, but not the vital bloom and breath of action which Meinhold had to give. Rigour of judicial accuracy might refuse to this work the praise of a noble picture; for to that the final imprint and seal of beauty is requisite; and this beauty, if a man's hand be but there to bestow it, may be wrought out of homely or heavenly faces, out of rare things or common, out of Titian's women or Rembrandt's. It is not the lack of prettiness which lowers the level of a picture. Here for imagination we have but intellect, for charm of form we have but force of thought. Too much also is matter of mere memory; thus the clerk writing is but a bastard brother of Holbein's Erasmus. Form and colour are vigorous, if hard also and heavy; and when all is said it must in the end be still accepted as a work of high and rare power after its own kind, and that no common kind, nor unworthy of studious admiration and grave thanksgiving.

It is well to compare this with the work that passes for historical in many English eyes. Doubtless it may be said that such things as some of these are not worth mention in a study so imperfect and discursive as this must be; that they were better passed by in peace and left to find their level. But it has been well said, "Il est des morts qu'il faut qu'on tue;" and though undesirous in general to take that duty out of abler hands, I will choose but one sample at random, on which I came by chance, looking up from Sir E. Landseer's dog and deer, a work of brute ability, excellently repulsive as all brutish pain must be if duly rendered.

This select sample of historic art in England is a picture of Mary Stuart about to sign her abdication. Posthumous parasites have often libelled her with praise of pencil or of pen ; but retribution never yet fell heavier on her memory. She, the woman of such keen clear wits, such indomitable nerves, such pitiless charms and such tameless passions, that the very record of them can yet seduce and daunt men as she daunted and seduced them of old—the fairest, subtlest, hardest among women, with a heart of iron and fire—she shows here a fool's face, doubtful between a simper and a sob, raised in pitiable appeal to a ring of stagestruck ruffians. The picture is worth notice as a tangible piece of proof that certain men do really accept this as the historic type of a figure so famous as hers. Another hand has drawn her portrait, perhaps somewhat nearer life, to this effect; (I take leave to cite the lines as a corrective, being reminded of them at sight of this picture. They may perhaps find place here, as the Queen of Scots figures thrice in this year's show :)—

“Nor shall men ever say

But she was born right royal; full of sins,
 Dyed hand and tongue with bloody stains and black,
 Unmerciful, unfaithful, but of heart
 So high and fiery, and of spirit so clear,
 In extreme danger and pain so lifted up,
 So of all violent things inviolable,
 So large of courage, so superb of soul,
 So sheathed with iron mind invincible
 And arms unbreached of fireproof constancy—
 By shame not shaken, fear or force or death,
 Change, or all confluence of calamities—
 And so at her worst need beloved, and so,
 (Naked of help and honour when she seemed,
 As other women would be, of their strength
 Stript) still so of herself adorable,
 She shall be a world's wonder to all time,
 A deadly glory watched of marvelling men
 Not without praise, not without noble tears,
 And if without what she would never have
 Who had it never, pity—yet from none
 Quite without reverence and some kind of love
 For that which was so royal.”

Having delivered my soul as to this matter, I return not un-

relieved from historic ground, with some hope that this aberration may prove pardonable when the provocation has been taken into account.

I have compared Albert Moore to Théophile Gautier; I am tempted to compare Mr. Leslie to Hégésippe Moreau. The low melodious notes of his painting have the soft reserve of tone and still sweetness of touch which belong to the idyllic poet of the Voulzie. Sometimes he almost attains the gentle grace of the other's best verse—though I hardly remember a picture of his as exquisite for music and meaning as the "Étrennes à la Fermière." His work of this year has much of tender beauty, especially the picture called "Home News;" his portraits have always a pleasant and genuine quality of their own; and in the picture called "The Empty Sleeve," though trenching somewhat nearly on the obvious and facile ground of family feeling and domestic exhibition, there is enough of truth and grace visible to keep it up on the proper level of art.

The "Evening Hymn" of Mr. Mason is in my mind the finest I have seen of his works, admirable beyond all where all are admirable. A row of girls, broken in rank here and there, stand and sing on a rough green rise of broken ground; behind them is a wild spare copse, beyond it a sunset of steady and sombre fire stains red with its sunken rays the long low space of sky; above this broad band of heavy colour the light is fitful and pale. The raised faces and opening mouths of the singers are as graceful as those carved by Della Robbia or Donatello in their choral groups; nothing visible of gape or strain, yet the action of song is made sensible. Their fine features are not over fine; they have all an air of the fields and the common country, which is confirmed in the figures, cast in a somewhat ruder mould, of the two young peasants who stand listening. One girl stands off a little from the rest, conning the text with eyes set fast upon her open book; the rest sing freely at large; the middle group of three girls is most noble and exquisite. Rich at once and grave in the colour, stately and sweet in the composition, this picture is a model of happy and majestic temperance.

Mr. Walker's picture of "Vagrants," has more of actual beauty than his "Bathers" of last year; more of brilliant skill and swift sharp talent it can hardly have. The low marsh with its cold lights of grey glittering waters here and there; the stunted brushwood, the late and pale sky; the figures gathering about the kindling fire, sad and wild and worn and untameable; the one stately shape of a girl standing erect, her passionate beautiful face seen across the smoke of the scant fuel; all these are wrought with such appearance of ease and security and speed of touch, that the whole seems almost a feat of mere skill rather than a grave sample of work; but in effect it is no such slight thing.

In Mr. Armstrong's "Daffodils" there is a still sobriety of beauty, a quiet justice and a fine gravity of manner, far unlike the flash and flare of obtrusive cleverness which vexes us so often in English work of this kind. The sombre sweetness of a coming twilight is poured upon hill and field; only the yellow flowers wreathed about the child's hat or held by the boy kneeling on the stile relieve the tender tone of sunless daylight with soft and tempered colour. The action of the figures has all the grace of simple truth and childlike nature.

"The Exiled Jacobite" of Mr. Lidderdale is full of the noble sadness of the subject, excellent also as a genuine picture, a work of composed harmony. The noble worn face of the old man, stamped with the sacred seal of patience and pain, looks seaward over the discoloured stonework of the low wall, beyond the dull grey roofs of a low-lying town that slope to the foreign shore. His eyes are not upon the dusky down sweeping up behind, the rough quaint houses and deep hollow, veiled all and blue with the misty late air; they are set, sad and strong, upon things they shall never see indeed again. From the whole figure the spirit of the old song speaks:

"Now all is done that man can do,
And all is done in vain."

The pathos of the picture is masculine and plain as truth;

the painter might have written under it the simple first words of the same most noble song :

“It was a’ for our rightful king.”

Mr. Poynter’s picture of “The Catapult” has an admirable energy of thought and handiwork; the force and weight of faculty shown in it would be worthy remark if the result were less excellent. Excellent of its kind it is, but not delightful; surprise and esteem it provokes, but not the glad gratitude with which we should welcome all great work. The labouring figures and the monstrous engine are worthy of wonder and praise; but there is a want on the whole of beauty, a want in detail of interest. The painter’s “Israel in Egypt” had more of both qualities, though there is this year a visible growth of power; it left upon our eyes a keen impression of gorgeous light and cruelty and splendour and suffering; it had more room for the rival effects at once of fine art and of casual sentiment.

The two pictures of Mr. Hughes show all his inevitable grace and tender way of work; they are full of gentle colour and soft significance. The smaller is to us the sweeter sample; but both are noticeable for their clear soft purity and bright delicacy of thought and touch. In the larger picture the bird singing on the sill, delicious as it would be anywhere, has here a double charm.

There is a genuine force and a quaint beauty in Mr. Houghton’s picture—portrait it can hardly be called—of a gentleman in his laboratory. His other picture, of a boy lifting up a younger child to smell a rose on the tree, while a kitten bounds at his feet, is admirable for its plain direct grace of manner.

The head of a priest by Mr. Burgess has a clear air of truth and strength; its Spanish manner recalls the style of Phillip, whom the painter, it seems, has sought to emulate. Among the few portraits worth a look or a word, is that of Mrs. Birket Foster by Mr. Orchardson; though the showy simplicity be something of a knack, and the painting of wood-work and drapery rather a trick of trade acquired than a test of

accomplished power, the work is so well done and the action so plain and good as to bear and to reward a second look.

The show of this year is noticeably barren in landscape. Nothing is here of Inchbold, nothing of Anthony. The time which can bring forth but two such men should have also brought forth men capable to judge them and to enjoy. Even here however the field is not all sterile: there are two studies of sea by Mr. H. Moore, worthy to redeem the whole waste of a year. One of these shows an ebbing tide before the squall comes up; the soft low tumult of washing waves, not yet beaten into storm and foam, but weltering and whitening under cloud and wind, will soon gather power and passion; as yet there is some broken and pallid sunlight flung over it by faint flashes, which serve but to show the deepening trouble and quickening turmoil of reluctant waters. The shifting and subtle colours of the surging sea and grey blowing sky are beautiful and true. The study of storm subsiding as the waves beat up inshore, though vigorous and faithful, is in parts somewhat heavy; but the jostling breakers muster and fight and fall with all the grace and force of nature.

In these stray notes I had meant to set down nothing in dispraise of this picture or that, but merely to say of such as I found good the best I had to say; passing by of necessity many well worthy of praise or blame, and many more not wholly worthy of either. Of these indeed the main part of an exhibition must usually be made up; of mediocrities and ingenuities which art must on the whole ignore and put aside without rebuke, though they may not call aloud for fire to consume them. But a word may here be said of M. Edouard Frère; a name that carries weight with it. He has been likened to Wordsworth; it must be a Wordsworth shorn of his beams. In the large field of the poet there are barren and weedy places enough; he may at times, with relaxed hand and bedimmed eye, drop from the hills to the quagmires, and croak there to children, instead of singing to men; but the qualities which at such times a great poet may have in common with a small painter are not the qualities which make him great. When we find in M. Frère the majesty and music of thought, the

stately strength and high-toned harmonies, the deep sure touch and keen-edged pathos of the poet, then only we may grant the kinship. To the rags and tatters, the stubble and sweepings of Wordsworth, he meantime is more than welcome. What is there in this year's picture well conceived, well composed, well painted? what of effect, of harmony, of variety in these crude monotonous figures? A great artist in verse or in colour may assuredly make some great thing out of the commonest unwashed group of dull faces; but the workman must first be great; and this workman, without force of hand or delicacy, without depth or grace of painting, would pass off on us, in lieu of these, such mere trickeries of coarse and easy sentiment, fit only to "milk the maudlin" eyes of M. Prudhomme and his wife. Turn from his work to that of M. Legros, and compare the emasculate with the masculine side of French art.

Among the drawings here are two studies by Mr. Sandys, both worthy of the high place held by the artist. One is a portrait full of force and distinction, drawn as perhaps no other man among us can draw; the other, a woman's face, is one of his most solid and splendid designs; a woman of rich, ripe, angry beauty, she draws one warm long lock of curling hair through her full and moulded lips, biting it with bared bright teeth, which add something of a tiger's charm to the sleepy and couching passion of her fair face. But of that which is not here I have also something to say. Exclusion and suppression of certain things in the range of art are not really possible to any academy upon earth, be it pictorial or literary. It is natural for academies to try, when any rare or new good thing comes before them in either kind; witness much of academic history in England as in France; but the record of their ill-will has always been the record of their impotence. Mr. Sandys' picture of "Medea" is well enough known by this time, wherever there is any serious knowledge of art, to claim here some word of comment, not less seasonable than if it were now put forward to grace the great show of the year. Like Coriolanus, the painter might say if he would that it is his to banish the judges, his to reject the "common cry" of academics. For this, beyond all doubt, is as yet his master-

piece. Pale as from poison, with the blood drawn back from her very lips, agonized in face and limbs with the labour and the fierce contention of old love with new, of a daughter's love with a bride's, the fatal figure of Medea pauses a little on the funereal verge of the wood of death, in act to pour a blood-like liquid into the soft opal-coloured hollow of a shell. The future is hard upon her, as a cup of bitter poison set close to her mouth; the furies of Absyrtus, the furies of her children, rise up against her from the unrisen years; her eyes are hungry and helpless, full of a fierce and raging sorrow. Hard by her, henbane and aconite and nightshade thrive and grow full of fruit and death; before her fair feet the bright-eyed toads engender after their kind. Upon the golden ground behind is wrought in allegoric decoration the likeness of the ship Argo, with other emblems of the tragic things of her life. The picture is grand alike for wealth of symbol and solemnity of beauty.

The present year has other pictures to be proud of, not submitted to the loose and slippery judgment of an academy. Of one or two such I am here permitted to make mention. The great picture which Mr. Whistler has now in hand is not yet finished enough for any critical detail to be possible; it shows already promise of a more majestic and excellent beauty of form than his earlier studies, and of the old delicacy and melody of ineffable colour. Of three slighter works lately painted, I may set down a few rapid notes; but no task is harder than this of translation from colour into speech, when the speech must be so hoarse and feeble, when the colour is so subtle and sublime. Music or verse might strike some string accordant in sound to such painting, but a mere version such as this is as a psalm of Tate's to a psalm of David's. In all of these the main strings touched are certain varying chords of blue and white, not without interludes of the bright and tender tones of floral purple or red. In two of the studies the keynote is an effect of sea; in one, a sketch for the great picture, the soft brilliant floor-work and wall-work of a garden balcony serve in its stead to set forth the flowers and figures of flower-like women. In a second, we have again a gathering of women in a balcony; from the unseen flower-

concept
beauty

Whistler

land below tall almond-trees shoot up their topmost crowns of tender blossom; beyond and far out to west and south the warm and solemn sea spreads wide and soft without wrinkle of wind. The dim grey floor-work in front, delicate as a summer cloud in colour, is antiphonal to the bluer wealth of water beyond: and between these the fair clusters of almond-blossom make divine division. Again the symphony or (if you will) the antiphony is sustained by the fervid or the fainter colours of the women's raiment as they lean out one against another, looking far oversea in that quiet depth of pleasure without words when spirit and sense are filled full of beautiful things, till it seems that at a mere breath the charmed vessels of pleasure would break or overflow, the brimming chalices of the senses would spill this wine of their delight. In the third of these studies the sea is fresher, lightly kindling under a low clear wind; at the end of a pier a boat is moored, and women in the delicate bright robes of eastern fashion and colour so dear to the painter are about to enter it; one is already midway the steps of the pier; she pauses, half unsure of her balance, with an exquisite fluttered grace of action. Her comrades above are also somewhat troubled, their robes lightly blown about by the sea-wind, but not too much for light laughter and a quivering pleasure. Between the dark wet stair-steps and piles of the pier the sweet bright sea shows foamless here and blue. This study has more of the delight of life than the others; which among three such may be most beautiful I neither care to guess nor can. They all have the immediate beauty, they all give the direct delight of natural things; they seem to have grown as a flower grows, not in any forcing-house of ingenious and laborious cunning. This indeed is in my eyes a special quality of Mr. Whistler's genius; a freshness and fulness of the loveliest life of things, with a high clear power upon them which seems to educe a picture as the sun does a blossom or a fruit.

It is well known that the painter of whom I now propose to speak has never suffered exclusion or acceptance at the hand of any academy. To such acceptance or such rejection all other men of any note have been and may be liable. It is

not less well known that his work must always hold its place as second in significance and value to no work done by any English painter of his time. Among the many great works of Mr. D. G. Rossetti, I know of none greater than his two latest. These are types of sensual beauty and spiritual, the siren and the sibyl. The one is a woman of the type of Adam's first wife; she is a living Lilith, with ample splendour of redundant hair;

She excels

All women in the magic of her locks;
And when she winds them round a young man's neck
She will not ever set him free again.

Clothed in soft white garments, she draws out through a comb the heavy mass of hair like thick spun gold to fullest length; her head leans back half sleepily, superb and satiate with its own beauty; the eyes are languid, without love in them or hate; the sweet luxurious mouth has the patience of pleasure fulfilled and complete, the warm repose of passion sure of its delight. Outside, as seen in the glimmering mirror, there is full summer; the deep and glowing leaves have drunk in the whole strength of the sun. The sleepy splendour of the picture is a fit raiment for the idea incarnate of faultless fleshly beauty and peril of pleasure unavoidable. For this serene and sublime sorceress there is no life but of the body; with spirit (if spirit there be) she can dispense. Were it worth her while for any word to divide those terrible tender lips, she too might say with the hero of the most perfect and exquisite book of modern times—*Mademoiselle de Maupin*—"Je trouve la terre aussi belle que le ciel, et je pense que la correction de la forme est la vertu." Of evil desire or evil impulse she has nothing; and nothing of good. She is indifferent, equable, magnetic; she charms and draws down the souls of men by pure force of absorption, in no wise wilful or malignant; outside herself she cannot live, she cannot even see: and because of this she attracts and subdues all men at once in body and in spirit. Beyond the mirror she cares not to look, and could not.

"Ma mia suora Rahel mai non si smaga
Dal suo miraglio, e siede tutto 'l giorno."

So, rapt in no spiritual contemplation, she will sit to all

purely physical
impoverished
contrast
of the
texture

technical parallel

time, passive and perfect: the outer light of a sweet spring day flooding and filling the massive gold of her hair. By the reflection in a deep mirror of fervent foliage from without, the chief chord of stronger colour is touched in this picture; next in brilliance and force of relief is the heap of curling and tumbling hair on which the sunshine strikes; the face and head of the siren are withdrawn from the full stroke of the light.

part of description in context

After this faint essay at an exposition, the weighty and melodious words in which the painter has recast his thought (words inscribed on the frame of the picture) will be taken as full atonement for my shortcomings; I fear only that the presumption and insufficiency of the commentator will now be but the more visible.

LADY LILITH.

Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
 (The witch he loved before the gift of Eve)
That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
 And, subtly of herself contemplative,
Draws men to watch the bright net she can weave,
Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

Rose, foxglove, poppy, are her flowers: for where
 Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
And soft-shed fingers and soft sleep shall snare?
Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
 Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent,
And round his heart one strangling golden hair.

Conceptual response



The other picture gives the type opposite to this; a head of serene and spiritual beauty, severe and tender, with full and heavy hair falling straight in grave sweet lines, not like Lilith's exuberant of curl and coil; with carven column of throat, solid and round and flawless as living ivory; with still and sacred eyes and pure calm lips; an imperial votaress truly, in maiden meditation: yet as true and tangible a woman of mortal mould, as ripe and firm of flesh as her softer and splendid sister. The mystic emblems behind her show her power upon love and death to make them loyal servants to the law of her lofty and solemn spirit. Here also the artist

alone should first be heard; and I, having leave to act as his outrider, give him the due precedence.

SIBYLLA PALMIFERA.

Under the arch of life, where love and death,
Terror and mystery, guard her shrine, I saw
Beauty enthroned; and though her gaze struck awe,
I drew it in as simply as my breath.
Hers are the eyes which, over and beneath,
The sky and sea bend on thee,—which can draw,
By sea or sky or woman, to one law,
The allotted bondman of her palm and wreath.

This is that Lady Beauty, in whose praise
Thy voice and hand shake still,—long known to thee
By flying hair and fluttering hem,—the beat
Following her daily of thy heart and feet,
How passionately and irretrievably,
In what fond fight, how many ways and days!

Pat. approach
utterance of
Beauty
Pat. Pat.

After these all weaker words must fall flat enough; but something of further description may yet be allowed. Behind this figure of the ideal and inaccessible beauty, an inlaid wall of alternate alabaster and black marble bears inwrought on its upper part the rival twin emblems of love and death; over the bare carven skull poppies impend, and roses over the sweet head with bound blind eyes: in her hand is the palm-branch, a sceptre of peace and of power. The cadence of colour is splendid and simple, a double trinity of green and red, the dim red robe, the deep red poppies, the soft red roses; and again the green veil wound about with wild flowers, the green down of poppy-leaves, the sharper green of rose-leaves.

An unfinished picture of Beatrice (the Beata Beatrix of the Vita Nuova), a little before death, is perhaps the noblest of Mr. Rossetti's many studies after Dante. This work is wholly symbolic and ideal; a strange bird flown earthward from heaven brings her in its beak a full-blown poppy, the funereal flower of sleep. Her beautiful head lies back, sad and sweet, with fast-shut eyes in a death-like trance that is not death; over it the shadow of death seems to impend, making sombre the splendour of her ample hair and tender faultless features. Beyond her the city and the bridged river

are seen as from far, dim and veiled with misty lights as though already "sitting alone, made as a widow." Love, one side, comes bearing in his hand a heart in flames, having his eyes bent upon Dante's; on the other side is Dante, looking sadly across the way towards Love. In this picture the light is subdued and soft, touching tenderly from behind the edges of Beatrice's hair and raiment; in the others there is a full fervour of daylight. The great picture of Venus Verticordia has now been in great measure recast; the head is of a diviner type of beauty; golden butterflies hover about the halo of her hair, alight upon the apple or the arrow in her hands; her face has the sweet supremacy of a beauty imperial and immortal; her glorious bosom seems to exult and expand as the roses on each side of it. The painting of leaf and fruit and flower in this picture is beyond my praise or any man's; but of one thing I will here take note; the flash of green brilliance from the upper leaves of the trellis against the sombre green of the trees behind. Once more it must appear that the painter alone can translate into words as perfect in music and colour the sense and spirit of his work.

VENUS VERTICORDIA.

She hath it in her hand to give it thee,
 Yet almost in her heart would hold it back;
 She muses, with her eyes upon the track
 Of that which in thy spirit they can see.
 Haply, "Behold, he is at peace," saith she:
 "Alas! the apple for his lips—the dart
 That follows its brief sweetness to his heart—
 The wandering of his feet perpetually!"

A little space her glance is still and coy;
 But if she give the fruit that works her spell,
 Those eyes shall flame as for her Phrygian boy;
 Then shall her bird's strained throat the woe foretell,
 And her far seas moan as a single shell,
 And through her dark grove strike the light of Troy.

Another work, as yet incomplete, is a study of La Pia; she is seen looking forth from the ramparts of her lord's castle, over the fatal lands without; her pallid splendid face hangs a little forward, wan and white against the mass of dark deep hair; under her

hands is a work of embroidery, hanging still on the frame unfinished; just touched by the weak weary hands, it trails forward across the lap of her pale green raiment, into the foreground of the picture. In her eyes is a strange look of wonder and sorrow and fatigue, without fear and without pain, as though she were even now looking beyond earth into the soft and sad air of purgatory: she presses the deadly marriage-ring into the flesh of her finger, so deep that the soft skin is bloodless and blanched from the intense imprint of it. Two other studies, as yet only sketched, give promise of no less beauty; the subject of one was long since handled by the artist in a slighter manner. It also is taken from the Vita Nuova; Dante in a dream beholding Beatrice dead, tended by handmaidens, and Love, with bow and dart in hand, in act to kiss her beautiful dead mouth. The other is a design of Perseus showing to Andromeda the severed head of Medusa, reflected in water; an old and well-worn subject, but renewed and reinforced with life by the vital genius of the artist. In the Pompeian picture we see the lovers at halt beside a stream, on their homeward way; here we see them in their house, bending over the central cistern or impluvium of the main court. The design is wonderful for grace and force; the picture will assuredly be one of the painter's greatest.

Wide and far apart as lie their provinces of work, their tones of thought and emotion, the two illustrious artists of whom I have just said a short and inadequate word have in common one supreme quality of spirit and of work, coloured and moulded in each by his individual and inborn force of nature; the love of beauty for the very beauty's sake, the faith and trust in it as in a god indeed. This gift of love and faith, now rare enough, has been and should be ever the common apanage of artists. *Rien n'est vrai que le beau*; this should be the beginning and the ending of their belief, held in no small or narrow sense, but in the largest and most liberal scope of meaning. Beauty may be strange, quaint, terrible, may play with pain as with pleasure, handle a horror till she leave it a delight; she forsakes not such among her servants as Webster or as Goya. No good art is unbeautiful; but much able and effective work

no to
comparison

12
but says perhaps was perceptive
but
conjectured

his credo

may be, and is. Mere skill, mere thought and trouble, mere feeling or dexterity, will never on earth make a man painter or poet or artist in any kind. Hundreds of English pictures just now have but these to boast of; and with these even studious and able men are often now content; forgetful that art is no more a matter of mere brain-work than of mere handicraft. The worship of beauty, though beauty be itself transformed and incarnate in shapes diverse without end, must be simple and absolute; hence only must the believer expect profit or reward. Over every building made sacred to art of any sort, upon the hearts of all who strive after it to serve it, there should be written these words of the greatest master now living among us:—

La beauté est parfaite,
La beauté peut toute chose,
La beauté est la seule chose au monde qui n'existe pas à demi.

THE END.

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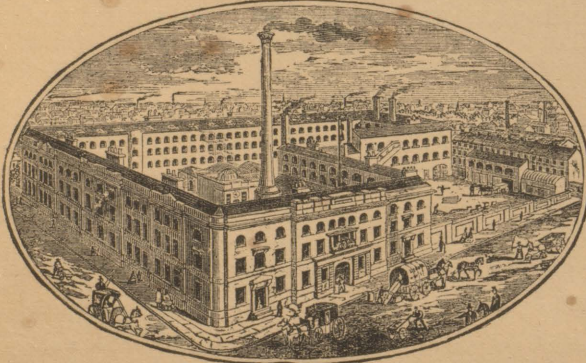
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