also guided the magic brush capable of expressing so great a theme. He who at the sight of this lofty work does not feel all the hardness in him melting in joy stands outside humanity. Moreover, there is not a trace of declamation, or purpose, or *tremolo* in its execution; no prettily pietistic rhetoric. Not a single adjective, but only neuter substantives, as in Roman inscriptions. That is precisely the receipt, which holds good in all times and in all places, for monumental works: eternal feelings expressed in eternal forms.

"The Engaged Couple," like "Maternity," like his portraits of a married couple, a young maiden, etc., etc., are unapproachable works. His grasp of the essential in phenomena, his economy of form, are of supreme craftsmanship. It is in this direction, I think, that the future development of painting lies. It will soon be over with mere transcription of nature, however clever; certainly, on the not very distant day when colour photography will be handed over from the experimental laboratory of the physicist, to professional use. Then the individual standpoints of observation will alone hold good. People will want views, not as the mechanically reproducing, dead object-glass, but as the inspired eye of the artist sees them. Pictures will have to be a selection, an interpretation, an emotional excavation of the optic phenomenon; every picture an anthology of vision; and the personality of the artist revealing himself in it, will be the fascination of his work, its value and

its beauty. Let no one say: "These are trivialities. It has always been so since plastic art existed." The plastic artist was hitherto always in the first place a depictor. His soul revealed itself only discreetly in his works. Carrière goes far beyond what he sees: he paints souls; he paints feelings. In his representation the inexpressible becomes an incident. A fugitive movement, a pose, a line of head, neck, shoulders, or hand in which unconsciousness is manifested, when self-control is relaxed for a moment; these treacherous means of expressing mood, which the will is not always able to influence—these are the elements with which he works. He discloses the impulses, up to their most delicate moods, which are the causes of movements and deportment. To such a spiritual art must painting be developed. And this is why I call Carrière's pictures the art of the future.

X

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES is dead, and his influence is dying; his School is desolate, and I see now hardly any stragglers worrying themselves to paint with his palette of pale moonlight. So it is no longer necessary to attack him. It is enough to explain his spiritual transformation and his successes.

When he attained the maturity of his powers, that Naturalism was the trump-card in painting, of which Bastian Lepage's abominable "Reaper," whose brutalised grimace grins at the visitor to the Luxembourg Museum, was admired as the highest achievement. The young critic had eyes only for this art. The multitude dared not question the fulsome praise squandered on the works of the naturalists; but their inner voice was not mute. They had qualms of conscience about their culpable cowardice, and were quite well aware that naturalism, which was lauded to them as Progress and the Future, was in reality the negation of all art. Then Puvis de Chavannes stepped forward with his big

wall-paintings, which put symbolism, sacred legend, and history on the stage, on a literary background, and reunited them to tradition, which had been disowned or scoffed at by naturalism, out of barbaric ignorance or vulgar arrogance. The multitude, whose inward feelings partisan criticism outraged, turned forthwith to the painter who seemed to them a deliverer and an avenger. He was a living protest against the art of the vulgar, the hideous, and the commonplace; against the art of the mechanically dull copying of a soulless reality. He took pains to serve beauty. He showed unmistakably the object of his spiritualising his figures and actions. Before his pictures one could once more dream. After prose, after vulgar, slangy prose, it was verse. People did not even ask if the verses were good; people were satisfied with mediocre verses, provided they were verses. To Puvis de Chavannes his fundamental, academic instincts had given the direction; but whilst he followed his bent, he became, without intending it, and without previously knowing it, the file-leader of the right-about turn, which began in "the 'eighties" and has now long ended.

In a period of idealism he would have been one of the many. People would not have noticed him or would have found in him much to take exception to: the banality of his symbols, the impersonality, smoothness, and polish of his draughtsmanship, the intentional incoherence of his compositions. During the predominance of naturalism, his academic banality

itself seemed a courageous act, and seekers after the ideal even accounted his most obvious faults and weaknesses as excellencies in him.

He got his faded, spectral colours by imitating the fresco painters of the Quattrocentro. His ideal of picturesque beauty united in inseparable association the stateliness of the old monumental wall-paintings with their fadedness; and when he wished to paint in their style and produce their æsthetic effects, he at once gave his pictures the faint coloration which had never been intended by the Quattrocentists, but which their works have suffered through the devastating force of five centuries. The obliterated, remote, ghostly qualities of this faded type of painting came to meet a morbid mood of the time. This mystic coloration harmonised with the prevalent mysticism. The decadents were thankful to him for his moon-stricken colouring; those athirst for beauty for his conversion to classical tradition; and so he became a great man through the sins of the naturalists and their critical heralds.

Puvis was the first academical and recognised master in France who began to paint the morbid. His whim is chalk-wash. He covers, on principle, his pictures with a white, semi-transparent broth that extinguishes all the colours. His eye detests colour. His glance has a sort of chloridising effect; it takes the colour out of everything it ranges over. With him, however, morbidity is natural and not an affectation. He has that horror of all that is loud, full, and

impressive, which marks the nervous man, whom every rough touch pains. It is well with him only when nature whispers, when her looks are veiled in a fine mist, when all life in her is motionless. In his soul reigns a melancholy absence of sound, and he likes to carry this into the outer world also. Moreover, the multiplicity of living forms confuses and repels him; it is too full of motion and gaudiness. He simplifies, therefore, all lines which thus lose their distinctive individuality. He retains only what is typical of the phenomenon; he infuses his style into all that his brush and pencil touch, and this cold stylisation is then called by people his "idealism."

Has Puvis laid himself open to the reproach that all his figures are awkwardly typical because he cannot draw? We might almost think so. It is only as a reply to such a reproach that we can understand his exhibiting in 1896 several hundred drawings, preliminary studies for all his chief works. After a minute inspection of these smaller and greater sheets of sketches scarcely indicated or industriously executed, of figures scarcely outlined or carefully shaded in lead-pencil, Indian ink, red and other coloured chalks, we are bound to feel every respect for his industry and conscientiousness. For the originality of his talent, too? That to me is questionable. If I gaze on the studies of Leonardo and Albrecht Dürer, I am, in a very short time, overmastered by an inexpressible emotion. A holy of

holies is revealed: the most secret feelings of an artist's soul which would fain become conscious of itself whilst seeking to give shape to the emotion that is urging it. You can see the struggle with the resistance of the material, the mustering of all his forces, in the majority of cases the artist's victory, ofttimes his despairing confession of impotence. A feature of the phenomenon—a fugitive yet expressive movement has made its impression on the artist. He hastens to fix his conception. At first in a few hasty strokes, which are then strengthened, deepened, emphasised, and developed. Five times, ten times, till the artist desists disheartened, or till the vision is overcome and fixed by a spell in its whole force and verity, in its distinctive character that is never to be repeated. In Puvis I observed with astonishment the contrary process. The first sketch has always the greatest individuality, every later state of the figure shows it less differentiated, and more reduced to an average type lacking expression. He never ascends, he goes down. The artist's emotion in face of the phenomenon—the impulse to produce in the rapture of an intuition is never traceable in him. None of the sheets is the arena of that awful fight waged by talent against the hostile demon of the material, which reminds me of the night-long struggle of Jacob with the spectre at the ford Jabbok. The starting-point of the work is correct, ice-cold *métier*. It progresses to simplifications that are just so many evasions of difficulties,

and it finally arrives at insignificant puppets. "That was intentional," cry the painter's eulogists. So much the worse if it was intentional. But was it really intentional? That is the question. Often enough, as an afterthought, a person imagines he is exercising volition, whilst, as a matter of fact, he is constrained. For him who has learnt to see in all works documents bearing on their creator's psychology, the drawings of Puvis are proof positive that this highly famous man never glanced at the world with an artist's eye, but that he was originally a cold, academical technician, who, later on, by pure reason and without attaining the slightest fervour, has subtilised a peculiarity: the imitation of faded frescoes in colour, archaic indifferentiation in drawing, abstract literary symbolism in his subjects.

In fact, what is unreal and dream-like about his vision is not only determinative in regard to his archaically simple, almost poor drawing and his pallid colour, but also the choice of his subject. He likes best to portray allegories, in which the figures are reduced to the *rôle* of symbols. When he cannot be allegorical, in his famous wall-paintings at the Pantheon, for instance, which tell the legend of St Géneviève, he satisfies his craving for spectre painting by spiritualising the given historical figures into fleshless, bloodless denizens of the ballad of the land of Thule. In individual and very rare instances, he finds a material organically suitable for his moon-struck style of painting. In

such cases, of course, he strives after extraordinary effects; for instance, with his "Poor Fisherman" in the Luxembourg Museum. This dreadfully poor, emaciated man—more a shadow than a human being—who, sorrowfully but resigned, stands in his old patched boat, drops his wretched net into the sluggish, greyish-yellow water, and is surrounded and, as it were, fixed by the dead lines of a flat melancholy landscape, breathes a disconsolateness and abandonment that, at the sight of him, "humanity's whole sorrow" seizes the beholder.

Once again, in his last period, Puvis lighted on one of those rare subjects which not only bear, but demand his peculiar methods of execution, and out of this lucky encounter came forth a masterpiece, viz., the fresco which concludes his Géneviève cycle.

St Géneviève has stepped out of her cell on to the balcony of her convent and lets her glance roam over Paris. At her feet lies the slumbering city; in the foreground surge the red-tiled roofs, between which soar a few tree-tops in the luxuriant verdure of midsummer; in the distance stretch the soft hill lines of a cheerful landscape, the green of whose meadows is interrupted, here and there, by the white mass of a convent or abbey. Slender lilies and *gladioli* bloom in noble vessels on the balcony. In the bare cell, the door of which is wide open behind the saint, the smoking flame of a lamp of antique pattern smoulders. At the summit, in a deep blue sky, hangs the full moon, which softly illumines city

and landscape, and casts an eerie gleam on the curled leafage of the tree-tops. Immersed and bathed in its soft radiance, the saint stands there, unearthly with her thin, ascetic countenance and her white nun's habit, which from her headcloth to the trailing hem of her garment flows down in unbroken, perpendicular lines, and seems to lift up her soul in a quiet, ecstatic prayer for the slumbering town, whose peaceful prosperity is a work of her solicitous love. Here Puvis's peculiar method triumphs in every feature. Here his temperament needed only to give itself its natural scope to attain the highest astistic result. What elsewhere is intolerable affectation becomes here the honest revelation of a mood. The subdued harmony of violet and blue in different gradations of intensity that blend softly into one another is legitimate in the picture of a summer night, which takes its sole spectral light from the moon and an oil-lamp. The paleness of the flesh is understandable in the aging nun who mortifies herself by prayer, vigils, and fasting. The simplicity of the drawing, which is reduced to a few straight and slightly though expressively curved lines, finds its defence in the dusk of the semi-transparent night which suppresses all individualities of forms; and leaves only for us general, essential features, and these rather surmised than clearly seen. Thus here a special subject finds its special and fully adequate means of expression, and the work becomes a model of what is termed style in the highest sense.

A rejuvenation seemed to come over Puvis when he seized once more on the Géneviève theme which had occupied him from the days of his youth. This theme was to him what the theme of Faust was to Goethe: while the octogenarian was engrossed in it, something of the flame that glowed in the young man of twenty fired him, and the last cry of *Una pœnitentium*[1] is still an after-thrill of Gretchen's passion. Puvis, too, appears to have thought or felt "*Ihr naht euch wieder, schwankende Gestalten!*" when he set about painting this concluding picture of the Géneviève cycle; and for the last strophe of his ballad, which dies away so sadly, he found again some of the power and unction which secures to its predecessors their glorious place in the century's Art.

If the brazen foreheads of the babblers who have the chief say in the art criticism of the time were at all capable of a decent blush, they would turn red with shame at his series of frescoes in the Pantheon. People had the audacity to claim Puvis for some "modernity" or other, in which certain moods of our time were said to be incorporated. The only time when one can wholly surrender oneself to him, he is absolutely of no time. What, in that instance, fascinates in him is nothing relating to the present, and still less to the future, but the past and the remote past, the atavistic. His life's great work is a legend of a saint, which he has treated after the manner of a legend with the feelings

[1] Faust: II. Theil; *sub fin.*

of a primitive who, in the manner natural to him—the manner of about the fourteenth century—tells a story that is to him a living verity, in which he believes, as those souls believe it for whose edification he presents it, and which moves and touches him as it does the beholders who will fold their hands devoutly before his work. Puvis cannot reckon on such a reception from his contemporaries, for whom he designs his creation. To us the legend is strange; it is a bit of learned literature which we look at critically, and in which we cannot be expected to plunge believingly. If Puvis, nevertheless, overcomes our opposition, and can suggest to us for moments the child-like faith and all the emotions of dead and gone times that are connected with that faith, he has achieved something more difficult than the primitives, for whom the spirit of their time was no opponent, but a confederate.

Blessed are the ignorant. Their lack of suspicion secures them, whenever they glance at the world, the enthusiasm of discovery and invention, and every phenomenon delights them as something unprecedented. During the lifetime of Puvis de Chavannes his peculiar style was particularly extolled by his eulogists. They exhibited him as a God-sent foundling; as a Moses of painting, without ancestors, himself an ancestor; as a great solitary wandering apart from the multitude through the history of contemporary art. Such phrases can be uttered only by one who rejoices in the most refreshing ignorance

of the historical continuity of things. Puvis is of a family. The expert can name his forefathers and relations; he finds their lineaments repeated—often coarsened and disfigured—in him.

Puvis, this great, original genius of his admirers, is an impoverished descendant of Cornelius. He represents the worst aberration in art that this century has seen, viz., thought-painting. Nowadays it is no longer necessary to prove that abstraction is the negation and abrogation of plastic art. This maxim, fortunately, has become an æsthetic commonplace. Painting has to do only with sensuous phenomena; abstraction distils from the sensuous one quality, which, since it is common to many phenomena, is reminiscent of many phenomena, yet is itself not phenomenon. He who feels the impulse to paint not views but thoughts, proves that in his innermost soul he is not a painter, but a rhetorician, and that he has deceived himself marvellously as to the method of expression natural and organic to him. Cornelius's painting presented thoughts, religious, philosophical, and historical dogmas, in a picture-language considerably less clearly than might have been done in well-ordered words. It pleased all those whose soul was seven times sealed against understanding what really constitutes painting. As long as the Cornelius tendency was dominant in Germany, that country was depressingly behind in the art life of the period. As soon as Cornelius and his school were overthrown, a sound development of German painting

began. And now, at the close of the nineteenth century in France, in the France which has produced, in landscape, Corot, Rousseau, Diaz, Harpignies: in figure-painting, Millet, Courbet, Bonnat, Roll: from which has come the return to nature and the renaissance of art, the allegorical thought-painting of a Puvis has been praised as the greatest advance, as the latest step in development! The snake biting its own tail still remains the truest symbol of human activity that the self-knowledge of the race has as yet discovered.

And how far, in his special direction, Puvis lags behind his obsolete predecessors! A Cornelius, Kaulbach, and Stilke, displayed, after all, in the invention of their symbols, a rich power of imagination which might have been worthy of better things. Their two-legged abstractions were so honestly drawn that they deceived with regard to their phantom-like nature, and could give themselves out to be real creatures of flesh and blood. Puvis's invention, on the other hand, is so poor that it whines pitifully for alms. The representations which kindle his imagination seem derived solely from an illustrated handbook of mythology for girls' schools. For an example of this, one has only to look at the wall-paintings for the Boston Library, which are among the most important work that Puvis has done, at least so far as their range and claims are concerned. The first represents the inspiring Muses "greeting with acclamations light carrying the Genius." From a

schematic landscape with sickly pale meadows, a sea of ultramarine blue, and spanned by a sky the colour of autumn foliage, nine female figures are flying to meet a delightfully insignificant naked youth striding on clouds of wadding. This youth holds in each hand a powerfully brilliant electrical lamp, evidently the Teslasch alternating current light, as wires are nowhere visible. The least fault of this picture is that the Muses are not aspiring in voluntary, independent flight, but hang motionless in the air in a passive attitude, like Giotto's angels and saints, who have not yet learnt to fly. Its mortal sin is that it wishes to represent in painting a vulgar, rhetorical arrangement composed of a number of abstractions.

Beside this allegory, Puvis opens five windows on his world of dreams. Naked shepherds observe, in a southern night, the course of the stars, and are themselves observed by a young woman who is creeping out of a lowly leafy hut. A man in a sort of Roman dress looks thoughtfully at some bee-hives, whilst peasants in the distance are busy working in the fields. A greybeard is sitting by the sea, from which a steep cliff emerges. On its summit a man is chained almost in the attitude of the Crucified. The shadow of an approaching vulture falls on him. Maidens emerging from the sea hover round him with disconsolate gestures. We must necessarily recognise Prometheus and the Oceanides in the scene. Another old man,

who is blind, receives laurel branches from two young beauties. A haughty dame stretches her arm with magic gestures over a mysterious abyss that has engulfed mighty marble buildings, pillars, and woodwork. Behind the woman stands a youth with a torch and book in his hand. I have described in brief what one actually sees. Puvis means the star-gazers for Chaldæan shepherds; the Roman for Vergil; the greybeard in front of the Prometheus-rocks for Æschylus; the blind man for Homer receiving the laurels from the hands of the Iliad and Odyssey personified; the enchantress for history conjuring up the past. We are to read still more into it. The Chaldæans signify astronomy; Vergil bucolic poetry, Æschylus dramatic, Homer epic; the conjurer up of the dead and ruined, Clio. Thus we have before us five polished planes of the prism of man's spiritual activity, five domains of the Muses —a fitting decoration for a library. These abstractions are painted in an abstract style. The human beings are schematic drawings as if taken from statues for illustrating an academic canon. They live psychically only through their artificial gestures —not through their mask—visages without mien of glance. The landscapes are geometrical combinations of rocks which a Cyclopean stone-mason has hewn in ancient style; of mountains whose ridge stretches in architectural lines; of evenly-coloured masses of deep-blue sea, pale-green sky, and sap-green grass country. The land is called Utopia, and

is inhabited by Outis: in English, Nowhere and Nobody. The indigo, emerald, and turquoise tone is pleasant to the eye, especially as Puvis has here, contrary to his murderous habit, not massacred the living colours. But nothing except the harmony of colours appeals to me in these pictures. It is not painting: it is writing. It does not presuppose in me any feeling for art, but only a decent, classical education. It taps on my school satchel. Before these five Puvis de Chavannes pictures, I think of a highly-educated Japanese, learned in all the wisdom of his country, with the most delicate feelings for line and harmony of colours; an appreciator of Hokusai and the other great masters of Japan: he will receive no impression at all from Puvis's works; he will look upon the figures as phantoms, the scenes as so much childishness; he will not have an inkling what these forms, remotely resembling human beings, are doing, or what they mean. For he is not acquainted with the Greek and Latin classics, and without this hypothesis the works of Puvis are dead symbols, incomprehensible to any one unprovided with the special key, and without the natural constraining power of plain human truth and beauty. The provoking over-estimation of his work by corybantic critics justified every severity against Puvis de Chavannes in his lifetime. Now his appreciation no longer requires polemical pricks, and we can say that his Géneviève cycle secures him a permanent place in the history of art; that his

great allegorical frescoes are cold, dead, sprawling, pretentious subtleties; and that neither his drawing nor his colour sanctify him as a master and model. His importance consists in this, *i.e.*, that in his time the longing for beauty took him as a cloak for a passionate confession. The Puvis cult was, in the main, a reaction against Realism. By the exaggeration with which he was honoured may be measured the greatness of the disgust which his contemporaries felt for naturalistic art.

XI

BRIGHT AND DARK PAINTING

CHARLES COTTET

A GENERATION ago opposition arose against gloomy painting. Down with the twilight cellar painting! Down with the studio sauce! Hurrah for the open air! Long live free light! With this war-song a brave, hot-blooded band stormed art academies and studios of masters, and, shouting for joy, planted their silver and violet banner on the posts they had taken. For two whole decades the art exhibitions presented a cheerful, festive aspect. It was always Sunday. The glow of a southern noon rested over whole walls. From the hundreds and thousands of canvases, big and little, streamed the gleaming sunlight in its full glory. Men, beasts, things, landscapes—all swam in luminous splendour which, at most, patches of violet shadow subdued timidly. Nature seemed to know no other conditions of light than those of Capri in July. About the turn of the century this suddenly began to change. In some pictures the light went out.

Certain painters again discovered the darkness of evening, of leaden-clouded winter's day, of thickets, of rooms. On some palettes the eternal white and violet was replaced by the old brown, black, and olive-green of our fathers. The phenomenon became, year by year, more marked. To-day the change is accomplished. Free light is thrown away after the old moons. Painting has grown sick of noonday There is an atmosphere of twilight in all the pictures. The young painters—the victors of the day—use as much asphalt, mummy, and umber, as did the old ones thirty years ago. Whole ranges of walls in the Paris *salons* lie as in deep shadow, and we may go through several rooms before finding a creature represented as "breathing in rosy light."

What satires these *salons* are on the consequential, high-stepping, deep-thinking drivel of professorial and other chatterers, who, to hide their dearth of thoughts, turn out new words, discover in our days a particular "charm" in painting as in other arts, and prove by $a+b$ the necessary, logically offered expression of new spiritual needs of the present generation.

Now what has become of the "charm" that calculatingly demanded "free light" and nothing else? And how is it, then, with the spiritual needs of the present generation, to which free light and nothing else corresponded? And how does it stand with the new way, in which favoured artists have taught us to contemplate and to feel nature?

Was the "charm" four or five years ago inclined to brilliancy, and is it changed during the night to an insatiable longing for gloom? Did white and violet correspond five years ago to the spiritual needs of the present generation, and does this generation now need black, brown, or olive-green tones? Have we just as quickly again unlearnt to contemplate and feel nature in sun-gold and violet, as favoured artists have taught us to do?

Living art goes her way according to her own laws and impulses, and leaves in the lurch the babbling empty heads, with their pretentious threshing of phrases, who tramp after her, expounding and talking wisely interpretations and clever chatter. Not by a particular "incentive" of the period, not from its alleged spiritual needs and currents of thought, are the changes of art creation to be explained, but solely by the psychology of the artists, by their very human, very weakly prosaic needs, by the material and moral conditions under which they are nowadays condemned to work.

The *salons*, the art exhibitions, are in our time the annual marts of success for painters. In these they have to seek fame and its train-bearer—payment in cash. In these they must strive amongst a thousand or two thousand competitors to astonish at any price. By special beauty or special nobility? This means will be chosen by the very fewest. Firstly, not one in a thousand has it in his power. In the second place, even an artist not in the front

rank has enough Philistine contempt to be convinced that nobility and beauty are the last things for which the crowd has a taste. His hunger for success — a fitting form of his instinct for self-preservation — gives the artist sense and understanding of the psychology of the multitude, whose elementary law is that it is obtuse to that which is common and reacts on what is uncommon. The artist who works with an eye to exhibiting where his work will be one of two thousand, has only one endeavour, viz., to be as different as possible from these, and by this means possibly to make a striking impression amongst them. The contrary is the greatest difference possible. That is the polar line, the angle of 180 degrees. Logic, which unconsciously proceeds geometrically, brings the artist to this. He also looks sharply at what the others are doing; puts himself to trouble to find out what they have in common, and in what respect they resemble each other; and when he has discovered this, or thinks he has done so, he proceeds to do the exact reverse.

If he has properly recognised the predominating element and has hit the exact opposite, the victory is gained with a weight that overthrows all before it. Professional associates, critics, and public stand in front of something new. The novelty-hating majority feels the disturbance in their lazy mental habits as an insult and discomfort, and sets up a yell. The minority of unsatisfied gainsayers,

morbid bread-hunters, vain coxcombs, and enthusiasts longing for the glorious Unknown and Unprecedented, passionately take side for the novelty. This serves as an excuse for a conflict of those eternal conservative and radical tendencies, whose battle may be seen throughout the whole history of human development; and the artist who unchains these tempests sees himself honoured as one of the embodiments of contemporary thought, as a power in civilisation. Only quite exceptionally is a cool analyst found to say with smiling tranquillity amidst the bluster of the war of minds: "Dear children, don't excite yourselves like that; the word 'new' is no verdict. To be different does not necessarily mean to be better. An old tendency may contain beauty in itself; a new one may, of course, do so too, but not necessarily. He who grows excited on behalf of the old, simply because it is old, is commonplace. He who grows excited for the sake of something new, merely because it is new, is commonplace with a negative prefix. Only wait a little while. In a short space of time the new will have become old, and you will recognise that there was no grounds for raising a noise about it. The man of the new thing, whom you hail as the bringer of a new salvation, is no better than the ancients; but he is right, for he wishes to be noticed, to inherit from the ancients, and that is wholly justified from his selfish standpoint."

The would-be aristocrats of intelligence — the

"intellectuals"—would find a speech like this intolerably homely. It is not in the least "deep." It is not at all applicable to the mystic inclinations of vaporous brains. It discovers no single unsurmised and astounding relation between phenomena that have nothing in common with each other; but I believe it is literally true.

The "Impressionists" of the Caillebotte room in the Luxembourg painted brightly when the *salon* was correspondingly dark. The one light picture among the dark paintings acted like a window that opens in the gloomy wall to the sunny air. When the other painters saw that the multitude flew towards this bright point, like moths after the flame of a taper, they hastened to paint also in bright colours. "Free light" was discovered. It corresponded to no mood of the period. Free light is joyous and satisfied. The spirit of the age was, during its predominance in painting, pessimistic and sick with longing as it had hardly ever been in the past. Nor was it a new way of seeing and feeling nature. Turner, Corot, Claude Lorrain, Ostade, Salvator Rosa himself had seen and felt nature quite as brightly as Manet and Monet had done. The truth is that the "Impressionists" were turbulent young people who got angry at vegetating in obscurity whilst Gudin and Schnetz, Signol and Müller, Pils, Cabanel, Dubufe, and Robert Fleury had all the honours and successes; and that impelled by envious loathing of these celebrities of that day, they found,

as it were, in a negative chemo-tropical way, the exact reverse of their dark style.

Five years ago the same incident was played off exactly in the opposite direction. Everybody was painting in a bright style. The Schnetz and Cabanel, Delaunay and Cogniet of the day were called Puvis de Chavannes and Roll, Besnard and Cazin. Then, again, some young people got angry about their being unknown and unheeded, and they entered, consciously and of set purpose, into opposition against the celebrities of the day. Charles Cottet exhibited a black picture which, in the middle of a blinding white exhibition wall, struck just as glaringly as did, thirty years ago, the bright picture in the middle of the black wall. Cottet had hit the bull's eye. He instantly created a school, and to-day the *salons* look once more as they did thirty years ago, to be once more flooded with free light, probably, some twenty or thirty years hence. It is an orbit without beginning or end, an eternal beginning over again, and only posing fools seek, in this monotonous, periodical return of the same effects under the influence of the same causes, to ferret out connections with definite phenomena of the times.

Charles Cottet is developing into the undisputed leader of the young race of painters. He deserves the recognition accorded to him, yet it is a serious matter that he provokes to imitation; for what in him is uncouth, though justifiable, independence,

will become with the imitators a manner that may rapidly pass into intolerable aberration. Cottet loves dark harmonies of colour. He paints night, closed rooms illumined by artificial light, candle and fire effects; unlike Rembrandt, whose glooms are delicate and transparent, whose men and things are particularly self-luminous in sunless space; and unlike his pupil, Schalcken, who treats flames and their reflections roughly after the manner of a blacksmith, without mystery or harmony. Cottet paints it apparently more from joy in darkness than joy in light, for with him darkness is generally the principal thing, and the sources of light are there chiefly to call attention to the sinister stir and movement in the unillumined dusk. His imitators do not see the intense life of his shadows. They only see his black, brown, and dark-green palette, and dimly brush away at it again as in the worst days before the dawn of "free light."

Painting goes out into the night, and will remain there a while. Then once more a cheerful and free artist will come, and discover light for an astonished and enraptured world, and he will be deified or damned as a revolutionist just as Monet was thirty-five years ago when he did the same, and as Cottet was five years ago when he did the reverse. And thus it will ever be so long as in the human apparatus of thought a change of impression will relax conscious feeling, and art creation will have to serve, not only the utterance of strong impulses

of emotion and the relaxation of the nervous system, but also the ambition or vanity of the artist, which means, I suppose, to the end of time.

Cottet's execution is somewhat brutal. He works in the style of Ribot, who was himself a curious mixture of reminiscences of Franz Hals, Ribera, and Velasquez, with an admixture of personal self-will. He lays great, dark, almost dirty spots on the canvas, and treats human skin with boorish coarseness — I might almost say, with the curry-comb. But what truth and energy in all the movements! How economically and yet how exhaustively he can reveal the thoughts and feelings of his subject. There is little in the whole of modern painting so pathetic as his three-panelled picture, "Sea Folk," that now adorns the Luxembourg Museum. In the middle, the parting meal of the Jack Tars before starting, round the village table fifteen people, strapping young men with their womenfolk—mothers, wives, and sweethearts. Through the open window dark-green night looks in; from the petroleum lamp there gleams a sharp streak of yellow light; the men sit close to each other in silence; forebodings and the sadness of leave-taking exalt them and raise the souls of these horny-handed toilers to the regions of poetic thought and dreams. On the right, the boat that is conveying the sailors to their ship; some are rowing or steering, the rest are in a reverie. All go carelessly to meet their fate, which perhaps will mean merely prosaic seaman's work on a voyage

without any adventures, but perhaps even heroic tragedies of struggle and destruction. On the left, the women remaining behind, who watch from the shore the departing men, their lovers, their bread-winners, with sorrowful love and prayer in their looks, their mien, their hands, and their attitudes.

Possibly this profound picture moves me so much only because it illustrates completely what I meant when I described the social mission of art in the future in these words: "In a work of art which is to attract the people, the people must find themselves again, but just as formerly the priest and king did: magnified and ennobled. The work of art must show them their own likeness, though a beautified one. It must raise the people in their own eyes, teach them to respect themselves. . . . Works which can show the dignity and beauty of the occupations of the multitude, which are a sanctification of labour, an apotheosis of the tragedies and idyls, of all the sweet and bitter stirrings of emotion in the common life—these works, I believe, constitute the type of the art work of the future."

Cottet's triptych is one of these works. It renders my abstract deductions concrete. He is a great painter who can extract with so sure a hand from the stone of everyday life all the gold of beauty it contains.

Cottet gets his suggestions for the most part from Brittany. Almost all his works, in any case his most famous ones, tell of Breton nature and the life of the Breton people. His "Midsummer Fire" is

very affecting. The holiday fire is kindled beneath the clear sky of a midsummer night; around it assemble the Bretons, ever faithful to their traditions. The smoke ascends vertically; the flames glow on the countenances gazing on them. Old women and children they are, for the most part, who celebrate the solstice according to ancient custom; there are hardly one or two men among the devout multitude. The sterner sex, the middle-aged, laugh at the superstition; but the grandmothers foster the custom of their ancestors, and entwine it into the earliest childhood of their grandchildren as a dear remembrance that grows up with all the joys and sorrows of their infant years. Thus what is old is retained and is handed down from generation to generation. Cottet has expressively illustrated this rule of folk-lore, not because he intended it, but because he was true. Far and wide, as far as the eye can reach, other fires are burning, and mirroring themselves in the sea, and you can guess that, even around the furthest, which are hardly visible in the night, the villagers are making a circle, just as round the flame in the foreground. One single note hovers over the whole of this landscape; one single feeling dominates the soul of all this population. Each one of these old women whose glances are submerged in the holy flame feels herself at this instant a unit of the whole race inhabiting the hereditary granite soil, and part and parcel of her forefathers who have long rested beneath the sod.

Thus a real work of art, without straying into literature, points far beyond its own boundaries.

The "National Fête at Camaret" is celebrated so earnestly by the Breton peasants that, in spite of the bright paper lamps on the tree, it has the effect of a church solemnity. In "The Old Breton Nag," Cottet has translated from bronze into less severe painting one of the never-to-be-forgotten coal-mine horses of Constantin Meunier. "Mourning by the Sea" is one of his masterpieces. Grandmother, mother, and daughter are sitting together on a stone bench on the shore. They are all three wearing widow's weeds. They are speechless and motionless, abandoned to their thoughts, which abide with their dead. The sea, which has swallowed their husbands, and to which they turn their backs, lurks behind them in insidious calm behind two storms that depopulate the coast, and leave behind the granite cliffs only old and young widows and children, who, in turn, also will be trained for the sea—the merciless sea, on which the poor devoted fishermen and sailors seek their living and find their death. The existence of a population, its truceless fight with hostile nature, is comprised in the black figures of these three modern Niobes. To-day, too, as in its beginnings, true art is myth-making.

To this series of pictures from Breton peasant life belongs also an "Early Mass in Winter," which at present hangs in the "Little Palace," at Paris. In the early dawn, beneath heavy clouds, a few Breton

peasant women, of whom we get a back view, are proceeding across the flat, damp heath to an insignificant village church. They wear the round mantle with a hood, which is usual in that country. On first glancing at these short, broad, black figures without human form, which look like wobbling, tightly-filled coal-sacks, I could not help laughing aloud. But I observed in the mien of other observers composedness, piety, and admiration. These evidently saw in the picture only the walk to church, not the clumsy sacks, always a proof how powerfully Cottet can conjure up a mood.

Once or twice Cottet has in some measure proved faithless to his usual dark style of painting, and allowed himself to revel in colour. Thus in his portrayal of a family of Breton fisherfolk, when the corpse of a baby is laid on its bier. The dead child lies in its little open coffin, around which four tapers are burning. On both sides of the bier the seven or eight relatives stand grouped: the parents, aunts, little brothers and sisters express, each in his or her way, their grief, which, in the case of the still unconscious children only, sinks to the level of mere curiosity. From the coffin proceed two vividly red ribbons which stream across the bier down to the ground. Flowers of a similar furious red are strewn over the bier. These shrill values do not produce exactly a fine and harmonious effect in the dark-toned general atmosphere with the opposite warm yellow spots of the taper-flames. Moreover, the

composition here is also not a happy one. It is an error to make the pale little corpse of the child the centre of a large picture. Death does not attract the eyes, but repels them. It does not endure the rivalry of life unless it can compel attention perhaps by means of special melodramatic circumstances or symbolical value. The glance turns naturally to the living, feeling, acting human beings, and thus the centre of the picture, which should be the keystone of the arch that holds the composition together, seems to be a gap. Christ's dead body may be made the centre of a picture. This dead Saviour will always be, in the beholder's imagination, the most living, the only living thing in the picture. So, too, the dead Lazarus and Jairus's little daughter are suitable for the main figures in a composition, because these dead persons are virtually living, and what makes them interesting is not death, but returning life. But the innumerable "Lessons in Anatomy," which were a favourite subject with the Dutch painters (Aart Pietersen, M. van Mirevelt, Rembrandt, Adrian Backer, Van Neck, Cornelis Troost, etc.) show how unsuitable a corpse, to which no suggestions beyond its visible condition are united, is for arresting the attention. Even a master such as Rembrandt is unable, in what is, I suppose, the most famous of all "Lessons in Anatomy," to direct attention to the dead body. In spite of the large space occupied by the corpse, we do not see it, but only Dr Tulp and his audience. Cottet's

picture is the most convincing proof of the impossibility, in a composition containing living persons also, of laying the chief stress on a dead one. The psychic element, *i.e.*, the mourners' pain, Cottet has, however, expressed with gripping force and truth. It is his strength and glory that the inward, emotional life preponderates with him so far beyond all externals.

At the first glance his "Breton Festival" is even more repellent than the "Dead Baby." The line of hills on the horizon, the stern heath, the church, the breakfast laid on the white tablecloth in the foreground, are certainly masterly achievements; but the Breton women grouped in the open air round this still life wound us with their silk bodices of the crudest blue, green, and violet! It is said that Breton women actually dress in such shrill colours. This may be so; but that does not really justify the crude reproduction of such brutalities. It is asserted that time will subdue the overloud tones of these violent colours and effect a reconciliation of them. On this subject our children or grandchildren will have an opinion. What we see now is, anyhow, unpleasant. Has Cottet wished to show that he is able to deal with something besides asphalt and umber? If so, let him be told that his dark harmonies of brown, grey, and black are more agreeable than all these shrill penny-trumpet tones.

Cottet stands at the zenith of his life and artistic

capacity. It would be rash to predict his further development. Whether he keeps to the dark style of painting, to which he owes his reputation, or lets himself be led away by the strong, bright, full colours; whether he remains faithful to Brittany, which seems with the young race of artists to take the place of the classic Italy of their predecessors, or seeks another soil and another landscape to serve as frames for his men and women of deep emotions —in any case, Cottet has already secured himself a place in the History of Art; deservedly, too, but chiefly because the change in the valuation of tones is bound up with his name. It was day; it became night. Manet and Monet had denoted dawn; Cottet introduced evening twilight.

XII

PHYSIOGNOMIES IN PAINTING

JOHN W. ALEXANDER, an American, possesses an enviable skill and certainty. He is master of the means of expression belonging to his art, and has a trustworthy feeling for the harmony of those light, subdued colours called in France "Liberty" shades, after the name of an American tradesman in the Avenue de l'Opera who first brought into vogue clothing, furniture, and wall stuffs in such pecŭliarly anæmic and almost chlorotic colours. With his dexterous draughtsmanship and charming harmony of cool, diluted blue, soft green, faint pale yellow and delicate rose, he might possibly have pleased connoisseurs, but could hardly have attained world-wide fame. He, therefore, hit upon painting women's portraits in amazing positions. He was the inventor of acrobatics in portraiture. His women lie about, in orgiastic contortions, on the ground or on sofas, with their legs up and heads hanging over the edge, or with forms twisted twice round, like a screw, or curled round like a sleeping dog, astonishing the inoffensive spectator,

and suggesting to him of corrupt imagination certain lustful ideas. The means were effectual. Alexander became a first-class firm, and the *crétins* of criticism did not fail to praise his special knowledge of, and feeling for, the "modern women of high-strung nerves and Satanic caprices." Now Alexander seems to find that he has acquired sufficient fame, and is abandoning his follies. Among his later pictures there very rarely occurs one of which the model betrays his earlier leaning to gymnastics. The ladies he now paints are quite decent in their attitudes, and only, perhaps, a serpentine movement in their long, flowing garments reminds us still of the old gutta-percha or snakelike contortions of his bodies. Alexander has slipped through the fingers of his modernistic critics. Whilst they still keep on raving about his "modern women with high-strung nerves and Satanic caprices," he is painting prosperously, peacefully, and intelligently, and can now be recommended to the most respectable *bourgeois* families to immortalise their matrons.

AMAN-JEAN is a melancholy painter, whose palette has been tuned in a minor key. He is the guitarist of the falling leaf, twilight, tapestry-hung ancestral halls, sombre Gobelins. His pictures result from the mood in which a man catches himself humming the *King of Thule*. I do not say that this tone of colour does not possess its charm. He who does not live his life like a thoughtless, devouring,

and digesting animal has, I suppose, on every blessed day of his existence, an hour in which he finds his own soul in the subdued and faded palette of Aman-Jean. It is, however, morbid to see the phenomena of the universe merely as old Gobelins in the hue of twilight hours. And morbid, too, is the way in which Aman-Jean transforms his impressions of poems into a painter's view. I know, for instance, a "Beatrice" of his which affords the maximum of involuntary comicality. Before an artificial-looking orange-tree, which she overtowers in height, Dante's beloved, with the upper part of her body thrown back, and her stomach pushed forward, performs a sort of *danse du ventre.* To her girdle she has a golden laurel garland hanging, which, as a note of illumination in the dull night-hues, has an excellent effect as *valeur* (as the French say), but as an object or requisite is very comic. Aman-Jean himself, with that misappreciation of subordination in his pictures, which is so common among artists, lays far greater value on such ridiculous whims than on his portraits. And yet it is only in these that he shows with what sureness and intensity he is able to seize and lay bare the most inaccessible and most mysteriously elusive thing that reality has to exhibit, viz., living man. His "Jules Caze" and his "Dampt the Sculptor" belong to the most delicate portrayals of men, just as his "Paul Verlaine" and "Madame Henri Martin" must also remain unforgettable by every one who has beheld them.

His portraits, to be sure, are not by any means of the same value. There is, for instance, a portrait by him of a "Cossack Colonel" that must fully mislead in regard to him. Materiality is entirely lacking in the full-length figure he has painted of the Russian officer; it is clapped flat on the canvas like a pancake. A laurel bush climbs from the bottom to the top of the picture — one cannot say in the background, as the picture has no depth, but, apparently, behind the man. The shrub seems painted on the wall to the height of the head. It suddenly grows plastic before our eyes, and shoots its leaves in front of the colonel's nose and forehead. By this symbolism which scoffs at all the laws of perspective, the painter evidently wants to suggest relations between the warrior and fame. One can only shrug one's shoulders at such puerility.

He is more and more breaking himself of the habit of regarding living models, and allows himself to be hypnotised by the Præ-Raphaelite magic lantern. We might wish for an Orpheus to take this noble artist by the hand and lead him back to the light from the shades in which he has lost himself. Perhaps the adventure would be more successful than in the case of Eurydice.

ALBERT BESNARD.—Contemporary painting knows no more harsh contrasts than Puvis de Chavannes and Albert Besnard. The former saw nothing in the world except spectres; the latter sees only fireworks. Puvis's eyes perceived no living colour; Besnard's

eye is in a state as if it had received a violent blow from a fist, in consequence of which it saw the proverbial ten thousand candles. There is nothing objectionable about his delight in colour; on the contrary, any one who is not suffering from Daltonism would be delighted to be invited to his debauch of colours. If only Besnard only satisfied his taste in a somewhat nobler way! It pleases him to introduce his dazzling rockets into women's faces, and there no man of healthy taste will care to follow him. Besnard has marvellously beautiful yellow, orange, green, blue, and red on his palette. He can attune them, too, to a beautifully sounding harmony; but why must he put yellow on the cheeks, green on the hair, and blue and orange on the shoulders in his portraits? Why must he so portray his model as if it were streaked with luminous paint or bathed in a stream of light that has flowed through a coloured glass window? His mastery of drawing and modelling certainly makes his colouring-run-mad somewhat more endurable, but it does not justify his not searching for the tumult of colour which he loves in actual life (where, after all, he might with some effort find them), but chasing them into actual life without any regard or thought.

In the *salons* of late years, Albert Besnard pursues a curious policy. Near one or more aggressively stupid works, he exhibits a portrait or painting which is amazingly rational. In this there is method, unmistakably. It is a sort of self-defence. Besnard

seems, from his canvasses, to address the visitors to the "Salon" in these words: "You see that I am in private life quite a sane individual and correct painter, who is as much the master of his art as anybody in the world. The other rubbish is for the fools of modernism. For those I am bound at times to play the Jack Pudding, but you need not, however, worry yourself about that. Once, for instance, this painted plea was the life-sized portrait of Denys Cochin, the nationalist deputy for Paris—an excellent work, laborious, powerfully drawn, and irreproachable in colour, which reminds one of Herkomer's best style. His clownery, on the other hand, was a huge picture which Besnard calls "The Isle of the Blessed." A bushy shore in the foreground, then a wide expanse of water which looks partly like sand, partly like wine-soup, and only in the remotest degree like natural water. Finally, in the background, a flat shore with the outlines of a white town that stick, as if cut out of paper, on the blue horizon. Across the level sea where it is reddest, glides a skiff in which stands, in the attitude of the Saviour calming the tempest, an enigmatical figure in red, flowing garments, and with the countenance of an Indian chief, surrounded by a grass-green and wine-dreg-coloured woman and a monkey-like rower of sulphur-yellow hue. On the bank young maidens tarry for the new arrivals, their light raiment, blown bell-shaped by the breeze, reproducing a *motif* of Botticelli. Between the trees groups

of bright-coloured figures are camped, and on the steps of a hill sit or lounge flute-playing fauns, one of whom has the typical head of a retired French colonel. The women in the skiff are distinguished by distorted, acrobatic attitudes, which no model could sustain for ten minutes without supports and props. On principle, no two figures are placed side by side without being clad in the most opposite colours in the spectrum. This arrangement of colours suggests the thought that none of the figures must move away from the side of the others, and none could step into another group, as otherwise the harmonies intended by Besnard would be destroyed. That seems boldly and freely fanciful, but is soberly and painfully subtilised. It is a mechanical game with contrasts of colours, devoid of purpose and even of the charm of any sense of colour. Albert Besnard has, in his later days, evidently discovered Böcklin, or even has only heard him extolled and wants now to make his own Böcklin. The fauns—up to their heads—the maidens on the shore, the blue sea, the white town in the distance, are descended in the direct line from the pictures of the Bâle master. But Besnard has imitated the details as any one may copy a writing which he cannot read. "The link of the spirit is all that it lacks."

JEAN BOLDINI is one of the most remarkable painters of female portraits in our time. In these

he makes himself most solicitous to unite together the screw lines of Alexander's demoniacs twisting in hysterical convulsions, and Zorn's bold, sunbeam dances. The faculty of tumult hardly any one among contemporaries possesses like this uncommonly skilful Italian. His pictures seem to fly up as from a bursting bomb. Every fibre in his women palpitates and throbs. One of his women sits half naked, just as if she had torn, in a rage, the clothes off her body, on a lion's skin, and he has made the head and skin of this common floor-rug bristle with such an expression of cruel savageness, that you jump back in terror from the expected spring of the bloodthirsty monster. Another woman wears on her arm and shoulders a feather boa with wonderful convolutions, which seems to rustle from her in excitement like an eagle. A third lady stands in a door frame—she seems to be about to spring forward with the leap of a tiger. She wears one of those very modern, low-cut evening dresses, which are fastened over the shoulders only by a tiny chain; her bust looks as if it were laid bare because her dress was torn from her body in a brutal struggle with a satyr. There is an atmosphere about this woman of all hysterical convulsions, St Vitus's dance, or defence with teeth and claws against lawless attempts. There is a story about sorcerers and witches who through a touch give another shape to men. This changing of skin is not practised only in fairy

tales. Certain portrait painters also have it in their power. Old Cabanel transformed the rich, fat wives of wholesale merchants and owners of house property, whom he painted for 30,000 francs, into goddesses of the old Greek mythology. Boldini by a spell transforms the ladies who trust themselves to him into mænads, mad women, evil witches that ride of a night on broomsticks to their Sabbath. I do not believe that people pay him 30,000 francs for that; but if a lady even disburses a centime to be represented by Boldini as a Bacchante or a Vampire, she must be as much a victim to neurosity as Boldini makes her out to be.

WILLIAM BOUGUEREAU. — The contempt of Bouguereau is the beginning of wisdom in art. That everybody knows who has occupied himself with contemporary painting otherwise than as a picture-dealer. Among the long-haired ones who dwell on the mountain land of Montmartre, no name conveys a worse insult. He who wants to make an impression on the Botticelli ladies when visiting the "Salon," must make a grimace of sudden, severe nausea when he comes across a painting by this "manufacturer of perfumery labels." On the other hand, Bouguereau has managed to collect in his head in a coronet of all sorts all the honours that blossom for an artist in France. He is Commander of the Legion of Honour and Member of the Institute; he gained the *Prix de Rome*, and has pocketed all the

medals that the Salons and Universal Exhibitions had to bestow. His works fetch the highest prices in the market, and if no Parisian artist finds purchasers, the big pork butcher of Chicago, that painters' Providence, to whom in their prayers they turn their countenances, always has gold for Bouguereau. The deplorable Philistine, who would also very much like to have a little share in the æsthetic enjoyments of this world, tears his hair and groans: "Where is truth?" The *Chat Noir* treats Bouguereau as a buffoon, but the Academy erects altars to him. Criticism scoffs, but America pays. And, however readily the Philistine yields to the appearance of daring modernity, if he listens to the voice of his own heart, he notices to his embarrassment that Bouguereau, as a matter of fact, pleases him. He gazes with secret delight at his "Cupid and Psyche," his "Pearl," and "Innocence," his "Oblation to Cupid," his "Wasps' Nest," his "Cupid *mouillé*," his "Holy Women at the Tomb." It is always the same: a sweet maiden, or even several, a well-built youth of rosy body and slender limbs, laughing little mouths with pearly teeth, blooming cheeks, snowy bosoms and rosy fingers—all lovely, all a delight to the eye. The Philistine wriggles under the decree of fashion, which forces him to find these charming things horrible, and his troubled look frames the question that his mouth dares not utter: "Why? Why?"

I think we are doing a good work when we answer him calmly and in a friendly manner, without

exaggeration or cheap witticisms which neither explain nor prove anything, not even necessarily the sincerity of the witling. Bouguereau pleases the insufficiently trained eye, because he paints prettily; but in art prettiness is the direct opposite of the beautiful, for it is untruth, since a conscience originally delicate or happily trained only feels truth to be beautiful.

Prettiness is necessarily untruth, for it is that which is conceived without trouble, which excites no opposition, which compels no strain on the attention and no adaptation on the part of the spectator to the peculiarity of the artist. Its effect is merely the effect of what meets the spectator's pre-existent thoughts or feelings completely. This pre-existing element is not, however, the result of collective observation and strong feeling, but the dissipated precipitate of the most fugitive, indifferent perception, which is totally unfitted to obtrude into the world of phenomena.

The artist whose goal is prettiness, does not glance at reality, but at the soul of the crowd which he wishes to please. He does not portray what he sees, and what makes an impression on him, but what suits the feeble, inexact concepts which the average man forms of things. He is a courtier of the crowd; he flatters their shallowness and incapacity. He wants them to say, with a self-satisfied smile: "This man is a great artist, for he has the same way of looking at things as ourselves." Prettiness is, in lyric poetry, rhyming

"love" with "dove," "heart" and "part"; in drama, it is rewarding the good characters with advantageous marriages and lucrative posts, and making the wicked fall into the pit they have dug for others. For this is just what the public expects; such is the world-picture which the world has arranged for itself, and it is grateful to the poet that he does not force it to rectify its comfortable way of thinking.

In the plastic arts prettiness is the average or typical. Bouguereau paints a pattern, not a person. He has a canon to which he holds; and if he would only go so far as to look at real human beings, and had to admit that nature does not act according to his canon, he would certainly say: "So much the worse for nature."

Superficiality always confuses prettiness with the ideal. One cannot fail to see that prettiness lacks exactness. This inexactness is, however, praised as an improvement on reality: the master of prettiness understands nature better than she understands herself. He guesses what she would, but cannot always, do, and comes with his superior creative power to help the poor incapable. The truth is that prettiness is the exact reverse of the ideal; for the ideal is the presentiment of future developments: prettiness the pompous repetition of what is commonplace. The idealist is impelled by a restless longing after novelty to represent; he seeks in invisible germs which the average soul does not perceive to detect the later glory of

blossom. The painter of prettiness shows scant satisfaction in attainment, and his creation is nothing but a sleepy reminiscence of impressions he is accustomed to.

The chief harm done by prettiness in art is that it confirms the multitude in their dulness instead of arousing them from it. What the "man in the street" feels in presence of a work of Bouguereau's is self-complacent pleasure at the artist agreeing with him. He will expect the same feeling also from real works of art, and be disappointed if he fails to find it. Pretty paintings deaden the mind of the average man for powerful works, which teach men to see, educate eyes, operate for cataract, and heal colour-blindness, are keys to the hidden sense of lines of movement, interpret the symbolism of form, and point the way to unknown beauty. The bloodthirsty backwoodsman of Montmartre is, therefore, right to think little or nothing of Bouguereau, and to scalp him; and the Philistine who expects to elevate and enrich his mind by art must make the sacrifice of renouncing the cheap pleasure which the engaging banality of prettiness procures him.

If Bouguereau has anything personal to say, he can say it no worse than many another. His "Portrait of Himself" in the velvet painting-jacket is sincere, and at any rate strives to be honest. It is true that here, too, he has not been quite able to overcome his habit of embellishing, and his cheeks are distressingly rosy. One could

not expect from him the almost terrifying inexorableness with which a David has confessed the dreadful grimace of his face paralysed on one side, and a Rembrandt, in his old age, the puffiness of his features and the wateriness of his eyes. These men had such a pride in truthfulness that, in their anxiety not to be partial, they felt almost hostile to themselves, and tried, and judged themselves accordingly. Bouguereau does not understand why he should treat himself more ill-temperedly than his Cupids and nymphs, and smiles good-humouredly at himself.

FRANK BRANGWYN. — This young Englishman, born in Belgium, is a painter of the great class from which the kings of art spring. In his delight in colour, he reminds us of Delacroix in his *Sturm und Drang* period ; in the dauntlessness with which he wields the brush, of Franz Hals himself, the boldest fighter with this weapon that ever lived up to now. His two first works exhibited in the Paris Salon, "A Sailor's Funeral" and "All Hands Aloft," instantly called attention to him. His "Buccaneers" was a veritable revelation. In a boat, floating on the blue-black tide of the Carribean Sea, row some life-sized fellows clad in variegated material, their heads bound with bright red cloths. In the glowing, tropical sun that swelters down on them, everything is a blinding, bright flame: the foam, wet oars, the ship's planks, the clothing and headgear of the people. The brown cut-throats get

in this noonday glory an almost superhuman relief, and in their savage countenances a calm consciousness of their formidableness is revealed, which even in the picture has the effect of a challenge to mortal combat. A year later he exhibited "Goatherds," likewise life-sized, and likewise plunged in the noonday glow of a southern sky, and, in addition, a reposefully coloured and marvellously deep night-piece, "The Three Holy Kings offering the Infant Jesus Gold, Incense, and Myrrh." His ability was further enhanced by a "Market on the Shore" and a "Miraculous Draught of Fishes."

The "Market on the Shore" is held in a Barbary harbour. Little bright-coloured carpets are spread on the yellow loamy sand, where negroes in brown and green-lined *haiks* and *burnooses* lie squatting. They are surrounded by poorer people in fantastic rags, with red *tarboosh* on long, clean-shaven Hamitic skulls. Beyond, three ships extend their prows over the flat beach, and in the background, on the further side of a strip of water, we get a glance, through a gateway with three pointed arches, at the dim throng of a mysterious Mohammedan town.

The "Miraculous Draught of Fishes" takes place in the evening. The fishing-boat rocks softly on the almost oil-smooth, dark blue mirror of the Lake of Genesareth, on the shallow valleys and crests of whose waves the setting sun's nearly horizontal beams strew leaves and strips of thin gold. Four fishermen are busy hauling in with powerful move-

ments the net heavy with their catch. Behind their vessel, a green, flat-bottomed boat with sails, steered by a disciple, carries the Saviour, veiled in the gloaming, across the water.

Religious subjects have an especial attraction for Brangwyn. In his great picture, "The Scoffers," he shows a man with the bearded curly head of an enthusiast, fastened to a pillory. The scene, as is usual with Brangwyn, is an Eastern town. A crowd, which is amusing by its negro and Moorish types and their charming garments and rags, presses on the prisoner, who is wearing the strange garb of a Western artisan, and reviles him with the words from their mouths opened in sneering laughter; with the glances of their stupid, malicious eyes; with the gesture of their forked and pointed fingers. Pity is mingled with curiosity only in the case of a handsome, brown, young maiden in the foreground, who, with a noble water-pot on her head, evidently returning home from the spring, remains standing in order to gaze at the scene. You may understand the story as you please. Perhaps it is a foreign socialist or anarchist, who tried to preach his doctrines there, and to whom the authorities are giving short shrift, and whose only reward now is the mockery of the stupid crowd to whom he intended to bring a message of salvation. Perhaps the incident has a deeper and more solemn sense, and is the subjective, half-touched-up, half-modernised representation of the mocking of Christ when He

was bound to the pillar in order to undergo flagellation. Whether the drama is conceived from a sociological or theological standpoint, it is of supreme power. The great pain of the altruist who sacrifices himself for mankind, and sees his sacrifice despised; the great sin of the populace that is thoughtlessly guilty of the most horrible ingratitude, are strikingly expressed. And in what form is this rich spiritual and moral purport clothed? Such repose and nobility in varied colour; such witchery in the flat triad of dark yellow, reddish purple, and deep blue; such amazing sureness in modelling by means of mere patches of colour without outlines, it has not been my lot to meet with twice in contemporary painting.

Neither must I leave his "St Simon Stylites" unnoticed. The saint is sitting, with his back resting against a pole, on the platform of his lofty pillar. On the other edge of the platform, ascending by a ladder, appears a priest in mass vestments, accompanied by a deacon, in order to administer Holy Communion to the Stylite, who is apparently dying. The story, however, is a matter of indifference. It is the wonderful harmony of colours that makes this picture so expressive. It is late in the day; twilight is approaching; the last ray of sunlight is finely sprinkled through the air around the figures above the roofs of the Syrian town, from which arises a transparent cloud, so thin that it is rather a breath, an exhalation, than a vapour, and is more surmised than seen. A flight of

swallows glides past the saint, and the birds, with their arrow-swift and pleasing motions, observed in the precise Japanese way, greatly help to produce an impression of height and airiness, which Brangwyn attains chiefly by his art of distributing light, and his eerie perspective.

Brangwyn fixes in his pictures all the magic of noon and midnight. He shows his figures either flushed by the quivering heat of the full burning sun, or covered with a veil of half-transparent darkness. Both illuminations have the peculiarity of suppressing all subsidiary work and letting only what is essential remain. The face or body of a man steeped in sun rays becomes almost transparent. Behind the skin and the connecting tissues which we perceive only as a covering, the muscles and bones come forth. The intense brightness prepares a body almost as the dissecting knife of anatomy. Darkness has a similar effect; it blots out the connections and transitions, and only accentuates the strong lines of construction. Only diffused light gives an equal value to all the parts of a surface; it shows all and explains nothing. Direct light, on the other hand, just like darkness, graduates phenomena, makes us recognise at the first glance what is external ornamentation and what are the supports and timber.

Brangwyn is an impressionist in the best sense of the word, a perfect representative of what Impressionism contains that is justifiable. He does not

stop over trivialities and accessories. He sees only the essential in phenomena, but this he sees with infallible certainty and intensity. A feature which marks exhaustively the direction, purpose, and force of a movement; a spot of colour that challenges and fixes the eye, as a sudden stroke of a bell does the ear—these are the optical elements which he grasps, and with delightful simplicity, weight, and carelessness, and, as it were, in student fashion, throws on the canvas "straight from the wrist." The spectator finds once more in the picture exactly the component parts of the phenomenon which in the actual thing would alone excite and fix his attention, and, corresponding to his psychological habit, he supplements the indications of the painting by pictures from his own memory, till it becomes a perfect copy of the real thing, which then includes also all the subsidiary matters either merely hinted at, or quite passed over by the painter.

Brangwyn is one of those rare gifted *virtuosi* who does not need to draw. The line does not subsist for him, just as it does not subsist in nature. He models with light and colour. He puts spots irregularly near one another, little and big, long and short, angular and round, bright and dark, white and coloured; and from these spots, from this mosaic of correctly-felt effects of light, he builds up the phenomenon in space with incomparably genuine and intense corporeality. Our judgment adds the lines which the painter has never drawn, as it does when looking at the actual thing. We have here

the optical elements themselves, which are perceived by the retina of the eye as mere gradations of light, but are apprehended and interpreted by the higher centres as coloured and plastic phenomena. Such a way of painting demands infallible certainty of sight and trustworthy obedience of the hand, else it leads to bankruptcy in art.

PAUL CÉZANNE.—He was one of the protagonists and pioneers of Naturalism. He was with Claude Monet, Caillebotte, and the other Impressionists an interesting subverter; with Zola he was for a moment a victor, and is now vanquished, although, probably, he will not admit it. A barefooted Masaniello, whom a successful revolution of the rabble carries to the top and lodges in the king's palace, but who has very soon to exchange his purple mantle for his hereditary rags. Fortunately, the lot of overthrown art-revolutionaries is not so horrible as Masaniello's; they do not end under the executioner's hand.

Cézanne has one thing in his favour which prepossesses us for him, *i.e.*, his uprightness. It is his nature that ugliness has for him an attraction. He sees only what is abnormal, unpleasant, and repulsive in actual life. If he paints a house, it must be warped, and threaten to tumble down soon. If he portrays a human being, the latter has a distorted face, apparently paralysed on one side, and a deeply depressed or stupid expression. Every model that

submits himself to him is put in some sort of convict's dress. Here is a female portrait. A withered, dried-up face, mud-bedaubed clothes that look as if they had been trailed through the gutter. Doubtless a "professional" who at a raid was accommodated in "Black Maria," and, after a night in the cells of the police station, discharged? Nothing of the sort. She is a respectable lady of the upper middle-class. This man with the trouble-distorted countenance and the greasy felt hat and overcoat is perhaps a starveling from Bohemia, a broken-down creature, ruined artist or writer? Most certainly not. He is a well-to-do person of independent means. It is curious to me how any one can allow himself of his own accord to be painted by Cézanne, unless it were done in a contrite, penitential mood as a penance. To be sure, one cannot be angry with him, for he does not treat himself any better than his other victims. He has painted portraits of himself which would be grossly libellous if another had painted them. In truth he is not vain, for he sees himself as he represents himself in these pictures. And his morose eye disfigures not only faces, heads, and raiment, but also the rest. Heine assures us that "A woman's body is a poem." He would not dare to sustain this statement if he were to see Cézanne's "Three Naked Women before the Bath." Such nudities are really immoral, and shriek, not for a discreet fig-leaf, but for a nine-fold covering of cloth and fur.

BLAISE DESGOFFES.—This painter, who died in 1902, was an incomparable copier of still life; for indeed there exists a still and secret life in the productions of the artist's hand, as an eye lovingly steeped in form and beauty of colour sees them. Desgoffes was great in little pictures, which rendered splendid things of gold and enamel, of rock crystal, jasper and chalcedony, trinkets and precious stones, lace and embroidery on velvet and silk, carved and polished ebony in insurpassable perfection. There is a school which very contemptuously calls these pictures *bodegones*. That is the disdainful Spanish expression both for a cookshop and for daubed representations of vulgar eatables such as sausages, smoked herrings, and cheese made from whey. Copying the productions of human hands should be unworthy of an artist. Only what is living, nay, only human life, should be justifiable. But that is too narrow a conception. Certainly the highest mission of all human art is the portrayal of men and women; and what is not itself human becomes artistic in proportion as it gains relation to humanity by means of secret anthropomorphic animation and spiritualisation. But he who demands harshly and dogmatically that the human figure should be treated to the exclusion of everything else, relegates a Hondekoeter, a Landseer, a Rosa Bonheur to the second class, and denies a Desgoffes the title of artist, which is sheer nonsense. I do not know if there is a precedence in art, or any other precedence

than that of the ability to express and transmit the life of emotion. Anyhow, a man stands very high who understood how to translate into painting the optical peculiarities of choice woods, metals, stones, and textures better than any painter before him.

LÉON FRÉDÉRIC amazes like an anachronism; in him lives the soul of a primitive. Thus the Van Eycks, Roger van der Weydens, and Hans Memlings regarded the world and man. That is, however, not a sort of affected, antique skill, as in the English Præ-Raphaelites, and their Continental imitators, but genuine, unconscious atavism, the purity of which is evident from the fact that Frédéric paints no masquerades, but only nude, human limbs, or contemporary types of the people in the miserable working garb of our days. If they appear like figures out of mediæval ballads or folk-stories, it is because Frédéric feels them so. He is an out and out Fleming: mystical like his countrymen Ruysbroek, Suyskens, etc.; and, besides, delighting in form, like the builders of the Belgian cathedrals and guildhalls; in love with life, like the feasters and dancers of the Flemish kermesses; honest and conscientious in his work, like an old guild-master of the time of the Spanish Netherlands; brooding and earnest, like a Beguine or a Lollard.

Frédéric does not actually copy, but he is curiously vivid in his recollection of what he has seen. The

old Low-German and Flemish masters, whose outlook on the world he shares, hover before him. From the Low-German artists he has his *naïve*, brick-red flesh tone and the painfully conscientious kind of workmanship, which neglects no wrinkle in the skin or curl in the hair; from Memling, his loving accuracy in treating all accessory work — flowers, ground, clothes, and utensils. Sprinkling the whole canvas with equally finished details, chiefly luxuriant plants, is common to Frédéric and all the Præ-Raphaelites. The pictures of this school, even if they take their subjects chiefly from the fourth dimension, are optically of two dimensions. They are only surfaces. They do not understand perspective, and, therefore, cannot shade off a middle distance or background. Everything lies in one and the same plane and is treated with the same clearness and precision. In the accuracy with which they render every little stone, every texture, and plant, the Præ-Raphaelites have no equals. If, in addition to this, they could paint human beings also, they would deserve unstinted praise, at any rate, as draughtsmen, if not as colourists.

Frédéric feels the sacredness of his art profoundly, as do few other painters of the present day. He seems to himself a priest. It is an external, but a characteristic one: he paints hardly anything but triptychs, which he regards, to a certain extent, as altar-pieces of a philosophical religion; and what he portrays is always a sort of pathetic symbol, from

which there comes a sound like verses from the Bible or Vedic hymns. His symbols are not always clear, but it is not his fault that painting is not a fit expression of brief syntheses of long trains of thought, or ethical and philosophical abstractions. At most it is his fault that he does not feel this. His triptych, the "Golden Age," is, for instance, a view such as Ovid might have described if he had lived in a Belgian district among Flemish people. Frédéric relates the history of one day of his happy race: how human creatures of all gradations of age sleep peacefully in the gleaming night, clinging to one another; how they are awakened by rosy dawn and refresh themselves in a crystal brook; how, beneath a noonday sun, they play and dance and shout for joy, pluck blossoms and fruits, and sit before dainty dishes. It is a profusion of magnificently modelled nude women who are all very red of skin; a laughing exuberance of life such as an old-time worshipper of the obscene god of fruitfulness might have dreamt of amidst the reek of sacrifice. It is also a funnily cannibalistic debauch of delicious children's flesh and blooming, well-nourished bodies. In other pictures Frédéric has occasionally tortured us by quite as perfectly painted, but, on account of their inexorable truth, fearfully painful representations of radiant nudities torn by thorns, and whole heaps of children's corpses. Here, however, he is all joy and peace, and his picture is a delight to the eye.

In another of Frédéric's triptychs, "The Ages of the Workman," we can measure the whole emptiness of such concepts as "Realism" and "Idealism." Compare Frédéric with the Bastien Lepage of the Luxembourg. Bastien Lepage passes for the most perfect didactic type of realistic painting. His brutalised, ape-like, feeble-minded, staring Reaper is supposed to be genuine, unrouged nature. Possibly the painter has, on some occasion, seen a disgusting idiot of this sort. I do not know, but I will believe it, for I should like to assume that he had not discovered in his own imagination so perversely distorted an image of the human form. But as such repulsively bestial young women are, in any case, rare exceptions among the white races, Bastien Lepage has unmistakably taken the trouble to choose out of thousands the most hideous model he could hunt up, out of a base, corrupt delight in ugliness, with the malicious intention of defaming nature. Frédéric tells a story in his triptych, "The Ages of the Workman." Who can deny that he, too, has held with absolute accuracy to reality? On the right, early childhood: workmen's wives, young and fair mothers are suckling their babies, sweet, fat little creatures with firm little limbs and skins like rose leaves; little maidens, who can hardly stand on their feet, take in tow and act the mother to still smaller brothers and sisters; old grandmothers, who can no longer take part in the labours of the household, keep an eye on the children

crawling and swarming about. In the middle, youth: neglected yet happy scapegraces are playing cards in the street, sitting or squatting on the curb-stone; undisciplined lads are venturing the experiment of their first cigarette; grown-up youths go out with young girls of their class on their arm; what they whisper in the ears of their blushing sweethearts would scarcely delight severe guardians of morals; but, at that period of life, in that human environment, their feelings are so natural and healthy that, in spite of all crabbed affectation, they are felt to be pleasant and touching. Finally, on the left, men in their prime are at work: they are erecting toilsomely, with heavy pieces, a scaffold, and a little youngster looks at them; what he has before his eyes is his own future lot, but in his careless, boyish curiosity he notices only the amusing side of the growth of a skilful and intricate work of man, not the hard seriousness of the ill-paid, dangerous, and severe exertion. Thus the life of the poor artisan lies exposed to our gaze. Frédéric does not conceal from us either its hardships or the scantiness of its material condition. He shows us how poorly the people are clad, how ugly their streets and houses are, how narrow is the circle that includes their petty joys and sorrows, and how serious, now and then, is their pastime. But he makes us see also the sunshine resting golden over their years of childhood and youth, and feel the satisfactions with which their families also animate and delight their monotonous

existence. He brings these poor, humble people humanly near us, and gives us a great lesson in brotherhood. Every feature in his picture is true; but from this truth a noble and consoling thought proceeds, revealing to us its full extent of beauty and moral motives. Frédéric is a Realist quite as much as Bastien Lepage, so far as he deals with the painfully exact reproduction of sights he has actually observed. But in Frédéric's presentment the commonplace appears ennobled, and that a superficial æstheticism dubs Idealism. The fact of the matter is that the words Realism and Idealism mean simply nothing. There is no art, there is no artistic tendency, which could be so designated. There are only artists' temperaments, which are themselves bilious, and, for that reason, dwell with malicious joy on the unpleasant sides of reality, and others which delight in all that is bright, and have a presentiment of a deeper redeeming meaning even behind the unpleasing external. The Realism of a Bastien Lepage is calumny; that of a Frédéric, a speech for the defence.

JEAN PAUL LAURENS has reached all the heights of artistic success. He is a professor, an Academician, and he receives the most honourable commissions from the State and great cities. He has been graciously permitted to satisfy his ambition as a monumental painter with enormous wall- and ceiling-paintings, like those of the Capitol of Toulouse.

He was often more happy, often less happy, always powerful, always pathetic, now and then, I will admit, declamatory. But he has also once forsaken his visions of history and turned a glance at the present; and what he saw there, he fixed in a great painting which he calls "Mining Folk," which stands above all his far-famed frescoes.

It is evening. Between a high, steep-sloping heap of coal and slack and a low line of distant hills closing the horizon, a big town is painted in a wide trough of country. Over the crowded roofs of this town numerous chimneys rise up. No church towers or palace gables, only chimneys which belch aggressively, one might say, white vapour or dense black smoke in the face of the twilight sky. From the middle distance a procession of weary, toil-worn men, whose legs drag and heads hang down, is moving forward along a causeway. From the depths on both sides of the causeway ascend clouds of sulphurous yellow and blue smoke.

Any one engrossed in the details may see how the workmen wandering homewards are clad in the garb of the modern proletariat, and how a manufacturing town of the present day with typical factory buildings lies stretched before us. But the first rapid, comprehensive glance conveys quite a different impression. The town looks like a Sodom and Gomorrha in rebellion against God, and is on the point of being chastised by fire from heaven. The procession of men appears to be a band of the

damned which a hidden, mysterious abyss of hell, behind the bend in the road, has vomited. Near the causeway, uncanny depths seem to yawn, from which tongues of hell-flames leap up. It is a prophet's vision, and the atmosphere of a saga. You fancy you have an illustration of the Inferno before you, but also a note from the formula according to which the painters and sculptors of the Middle Ages were wont to depict the Last Judgment.

And the most remarkable thing is that this epic extension and enhancement of so banal an incident as the exodus of a shift of pitmen knocking off their work is by no means intended. The painter nowhere consciously works with a view to melodrama. He keeps, in all details, strictly to facts. It is only his perception that has made a canto of Dante out of a true copy of an everyday incident. At the sight of the flaming forges, smoking chimneys, and exhausted slaves working for hire, there came to him an inkling of the mighty forces of nature and society which are at work in the man- and horse-powers of a modern wholesale business, which fixed the choice and arrangement of elements in his picture, imprinted on it the demoniac feature, and rendered it a profound symbol of the history of a part of humanity.

JEF LEEMPOELS is one of the most interesting of contemporary Flemings in whom the exquisite artistic qualities of their mediæval forefathers and masters live again. Leempoels has the sturdy,

homely truthfulness of these ancestors, their profound feeling, and speculative mind, which easily goes astray into the fantastic. He has their masterly draughtsmanship, and he only lacks their delight in colour and their gift of free, clear composition to rise entirely to their greatness.

He does not rely on his capability or right to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential. He does not dominate his subject with sovereignly subjective perception, but makes himself the humble slave of the phenomena and all their most capricious and lowest details. He does not span the world with the eye of a creative artist, but glances at it as though he were a photographic apparatus for taking authentic negatives. To this intellectual dependence is joined an insufficient development of the sense of what is picturesque. Leempoels is dry in his accuracy and sober in his colouring. He does not seem to think it is his vocation to harmonise tones and to please the eye by a well-arranged palette. And in spite of all this I can never forget his chief pictures. He revealed his nature in *naïve* little features. For instance, on the wall of the room where the father and mother, old and worn out by life, are sitting together, hang faded photographs representing them, as a young married couple, in a strikingly comic dress according to the latest fashion of five-and-twenty years ago, yet young and full of joyous hope. This discreet contrast, which must be sought for to be noticed, contains the whole

melancholy poetry of their life from blooming youth to withered age. And the pictures of his sisters. The good girls are not particularly favoured by nature; they are true daughters of the homely Flemish race, in whom beauty is rare. When Leempoels painted them, there was a struggle in him between the conscientiousness of a sworn witness to reality and brotherly love; but the former gained the victory, and the latter was allowed to reveal itself only in the delicate, almost caressing, perfection of their hands, necks, hair, and clothes.

His picture "Friendship"—an old and somewhat younger man are sitting boldly before us, hand in hand, with their honest, ugly faces turned full towards us. They are figures from the people, the one wearing a green, the other a dark red knitted waistcoat. They are evidently neither rich nor educated, and no particularly developed intellectual life speaks from their clear, reposeful eyes, or their heavy, vulgar features. And yet they are noble creatures. It is their feeling which ennobles them. Only lofty souls are capable of such loyalty and attachment as these two workmen, who so affectionately clasp each other's hands and lean shoulder to shoulder—let come what come may!—and he who comprehends character without declamation says to himself involuntarily before this picture: "It is well for him who in his path through life meets with such friendship." Here Leempoels has performed the highest mission of the artist—he has recognised

and indicated convincingly what is grand and beautiful in the insignificant and commonplace. That is healthy idealism, for which it is my pride to fight—a consoling and uplifting moral purport in an exact and true form.

I am less agreed in respect of another picture. Leempoels calls it "Fate and Humanity," and in this he has gone beyond his natural vocal register. From the lower rim of the picture there grows a marvellous flora of hands stretched forth on high, either folded in supplication or clenched in threatening fists, embracing many symbols of faith of various kinds, such as crosses, communion chalices, fetishes and offerings; over them appears, in violet light and filling two-thirds of the picture, a huge, bearded face that, indifferent and unmoved, gazes forward without noticing the hands of supplication and blasphemy raised towards it. It is plain enough what Leempoels wants to express; but it is not apparent what the effect will be of this violet face as inexorable destiny. Its feeble, vacant gaze and stiff nimbus infuse no particular horror, and nothing else which might be imposing is discernible in it. On the other hand, Leempoels imparts to the hands the full measure of his amazing capacity. These hundreds of hands, which are painted with a patience that is almost painful, have all their individual physiognomy. They are all individual hands of men and women, young and old, industrious and idle, Caucasian, Nubian, and Indian. The hands

of all races, callings, ages and temperaments are so perfect in their characterisation that error is impossible. If among the hands were to be found those of a friend, I should certainly recognise them at the first glance. As a study of human hands, the piece is a museum-picture which has not its peer in all the collections with which I am acquainted. As a work of art it saddens through want of taste. Leempoels would sin against himself if he strayed into unlimited symbolism. His talent points him in the direction of the clearly circumscribed. He need not trouble himself about being implicated with Philistinism through his devotion to actuality. His sincerity of feeling, too, in the treatment of Philistine subjects, will always raise him above Philistinism.

HENRI MARTIN has always aimed at lofty ends, but the paths he has followed to gain them were crooked and wrong. He was, when he began, and still is, in moments of relapse, a dabbing stumper, *i.e.*, he laid on a thick dab of colour the size of a hazel-nut and extended it somewhat. With this method, his famous "Vibrations" was, indeed, successful, especially at a certain distance; but he broke up all form, and this allowed him to draw quite superficially. If any one reproached him with not rendering a single outline with exactness and certainty, he could use the excuse: "One cannot at the same time flood a picture with flickering light

and model precisely." Stumping was with Martin as with his imitators the cloak to cover up artistically dishonest forms. His idealism—the main feature in his physiognomy as an artist—was revealed, in his first period chiefly, by his feeble figures being dressed in the garb peculiar to no time or country, the garb in which the Primitives were wont to make their angels appear, and by their moving in an artificial stage, which one can call neither earth, nor air, nor heaven; for, as a rule, it was painted a single iridescent, mixed colour, mostly a sort of pale lilac, into which some darker, smooth tree trunks, placed regularly like a lattice, were introduced.

Typical of his first period are his symbolical pictures "Towards the Abyss," and "Every One has his own Chimæra." We are almost ashamed to linger over describing this confused rubbish.

"Towards the Abyss."—A hussy unclad after the fashion in vogue at a Paris artists' pot-house—her cunning nudity is emphasised by ball-shoes, long black gloves, and by a black veil, thrown back at the right place, but transparent throughout — is hurrying down the gentle slope of a hill. Bats' wings wide outspread sprout from her shoulders. A crowd of people, in which men and women of all ages and ranks are mixed up, rush after her with the attitudes and gestures of epidemic madness. Some run, others drag themselves along on their knees, others, again, on all fours, after her, and scuffle for flowers which she strews in her wake. Every

meaning can be imported into this picture, but nothing can be gleaned from it, or, at most, that the frenzied attitudes of the slaves and victims of this creature, wallowing in the dust, kissing and licking the hussy's footsteps, betray an unconscious masochistic trait in Henri Martin's soul.

"Every One has his own Chimæra" is even more futile than this perverse illustration of the pious admonition: "Keep from sin, for the lust of the flesh leads to destruction." A number of daubed, shadowy figures crawl painfully along in a clay-coloured mass; each is bent under a burden which represents in bodily form his ruling passion. Thus the sensualist carries a naked strumpet; the miser a sack full of gold; the ambitious man laurels and the spoils of war, etc.—a lamentable attempt to represent a literary commonplace in an artist's vision, in a living and concrete form.

Luckily, Henri Martin showed development. After his first period of crudely affected stippling and streaking, of bold neglect of drawing, amidst the shapeless daubing of coloured *confetti*, serpentines, and pomposities, with a would-be profound yet absolutely vacant symbolism, he returned to nature and life, treated warmly human subjects from an ideal standpoint, and toned down the crudeness of his execution without, I admit, giving it up altogether.

Commissioned by a rich banker, he painted for the Marseilles Savings Bank a monumental triptych

which he called "Labour." He assigns views of Marseilles—certainly treated with great freedom—to the three backgrounds. The manifest meaning of the three panels is morning, noon, and evening. In the first panel, the children are on their way to school, reading their books; the women are going to market, the labourers to their place of work. In the second, dockers, under the glowing sun of Provence, are unloading a ship's cargo, which consists of baskets full of golden oranges. In the third, the waterside is almost deserted; an old couple, with a child carrying a doll in its arm walking in front of them, stroll in the cool of the day; some artisan families are also enjoying some fresh air after leaving off work, and

Jam majores cadunt altis a montibus umbrae.

But the times of day are, as I have said, only the plain meaning of the picture. Beside or behind it, it has also a deeper, veiled meaning. It would illustrate also an actual state of things in the future. Valiantly take full advantage of school in the morning of life, learn and prepare yourself by that means for working and daring later on. Labour in your prime until your ribs crack: you can do so, and it is lucrative. In return, in the evening of life you will be at ease, and, as a comfortable man of means, enjoy refreshing leisure.

We must be allowed to laugh at this optimistic aspect of industrial life. If Henri Martin has known

a docker—of Marseilles or any other place—who was able to end his life as a man of independent means, I should like to ask him for that man's photograph. Nevertheless, a painter need not be a political economist, and the picture is, you know, intended for a Savings Bank, and the people who will see it there may actually find themselves on the way to the independency that makes blessed, though hardly after noonday unloading of orange boats. We might be able to pass lightly over the poverty of thought in the work, if its artistic qualities were satisfactory. But there's the rub. It was indeed a questionable thought to put in juxtaposition three pictures separated only by slender pillars, which had to exhibit three absolutely different lights; for either the lights of morning, noon, and evening were properly kept apart, and we had a discord in three notes, or the tones were pitched in one key in order not to shriek at each other, in which case they were untrue. Such is indeed the case. There is a somewhat more silvery breath about "Morning," a somewhat redder one about "Noon," a paler violet about "Evening"; but the lights and shadows are about equally powerful, whatever be the position of the sun. The forest of masts in the middle panel is of such exaggerated density that the eye is confused in the maze of shrouds and yards. And the entire picture is executed in the crudest stippling, with dabs of colour thickly plastered on, so that it looks almost scaly. If Henri Martin could give up his vagaries and lack

of good taste, he would be a monumental artist of lofty vocation; for, though the fairies have refused him sundry things, they have given him one precious gift when he was in his cradle, viz., that of light. There is sun in his pictures, and they brighten up the space they occupy.

His best work up to now is a huge wall-painting for the Capitol of Toulouse.

A landscape of big, restful lines with a background of dark-shadowed mountain forests, against which all I have to object is that they wall in the whole horizon. From this range of darkening blue heights the country sinks in undulating tiers of hills to the plain of the foreground. Here the idyll of the seasons and men's lives is developed in three pictures. First, amidst the laughing spring, a strapping maiden, intoxicated with love, on the breast of the young lad who is embracing her. Next, a number of stalwart country folk in the summer work of haymaking, on whom, beyond the cut grass, their wives and children at play are gazing. Lastly, under melancholy autumn trees, a lonely old woman preoccupied with recollections. The people are homely, of course, without crude realism, poetic without the shepherd-insipidity of Gessner. The parallelism between the aging of the men and women and the progress of the year is unforced; the symbolism clear and free from morbid, perverse mysticism. Turf, trees, and bushes are decorative in form, delicate, and at the same time sufficient in colour, and the whole

is flooded by a wonderfully joyous sunshine, which is more reminiscent of the glories of May in Provence than even Montenard's symphonies of light. Henri Martin has, I admit, here, too, indulged in stippling, but he has given his people and trees strong, free outlines, and scarred only the outer skin very lightly with pock-marks. He has not abandoned that ill habit, but he seems to practise it with remorse. Perhaps he thinks gradual transition is due to his conversion to better insight. In any case, this picture was conceived and executed in a happy moment.

Henri Martin's career teaches a moral. Let him who would honour an artist continually bear in mind an appropriately modified reading of Solon's warning to Crœsus: "Do not pronounce on any artist before his death."

JEAN RAFFAELLI. — Like Henri Martin, Sisley, and the other stipplers who painted with little dots, Jean François Raffaelli at first painted with thin, slightly serpentine strokes. And we have had to get accustomed to this manner. Raffaelli has been able to succeed, because he long favoured subjects for which his ripple lines were the suitable style. He painted poor people in poor landscapes, emaciated bodies in slatternly clothes under trees as dry as brooms. Like a raindrop on a window-pane, and like a tear on a furrowed cheek, the slender traces of colour flowed down these pitiable figures, arousing twilight imaginations

of weeping, plaintive trickling, and dissolving. Later on he caught cheerful, coloured views of Paris streets — The Invalides, Notre Dame, and the Place St Michel. In these his streaky way of painting was somewhat inadequate; but his amazing feeling for a crowd in the hurried, nervous movement which is peculiar to the Parisian lower orders, saved him. I know no painter who feels as Raffaelli the bustle of the world's metropolis. I think that any one who suffers from dread of the market-place, must get a feeling of fear at seeing his pictures.

In a third period of his production, Raffaelli gave a rare example of complete change in his maturity. He who had grown famous as a painter of the poor and miserable, of vices and sicknesses, turned, at the zenith of his success, from the aspects that he had hitherto cherished, and opened his heart to the joys of existence. In his mind a process occurred, such as the ninth symphony describes in eternal strains. In his despair a voice suddenly cries out: "Brothers, let us sing other strains," and roars out exultingly: "Joy, fair brightness of the gods." Formerly, he knew only abandoned tramps, tattered beggars and thieves, broken-down hospital brothers. His plant-world consisted of the leprous turf in front of the Paris forts, decayed flowers, the half-withered, suburban street trees, broomlike and leafless as in autumn. And he painted this misery in miserable colours and in his own peculiar, streaky manner, especially

appropriate to the subject. Now he caresses with a broad, full brush bloomingly beautiful maidens in white raiment, sunny, ornamental gardens with rich *parterres*, fresh nosegays or living flowers. He has also changed his style with his subject. It is all renovated—palette, execution, and story. I have a feeling of a secret happiness having blossomed in this artist's soul, and I rejoice in the cheerful unconcern with which, by his altered work, he makes all men privy to his *Vita Nuova*.

ODILON REDON is a completed artist. His development is ended. It came from Gustave Moreau, and it never deviated from him. He is a delightful harmonist of colours, who handles the sharp and flat notes with equal mastery, and if he condescends to paint flowers, fruits, unpretentious still life, and landscapes every one can understand, he displays naturalness, taste, and winning homeliness. But when he strives for higher expression he gets beyond his master's range of vision, and becomes purely hallucinatory. Fabulous creatures, at once Pegasus and Centaur, stagger about amongst rare flowers, which gape like bleeding wounds or grin like vampires' mouths. Monsters without recognisable organic shape, bastard combinations of parts of dragons, beetles, birds and fishes hover or swim in an uncertain medium, which may be water, air, or ether. Dreadful human heads, bound in clusters, grow bushlike out of the ground. All this is in colour pleasing; in form, enigmatical.

Gustave Moreau is always intelligible; we know the myths he clothes in forms of extrahuman and superhuman splendour. No one can make head or tail of Odilon Redon. He himself does not think at all in his unearthly representations, and they awaken no definite thoughts either, but affect us like wild faces in a fever.

Pierre Auguste Renoir is also counted among the Impressionists and Naturalists. When we see that the same designation is applied to him as, for example, to Cézanne, we can, as it were, clutch with our hand the misuse of the words, and convince ourselves how senseless classification in art is. Renoir is certainly no painter of prettiness. He does not paint nature white and rosy, or stick beauty-patches on her face. He does not go out of his way even for pronounced ugliness. You have only to look at his two Megæras on the garden bench to be convinced of this; but beside these witches he has so much refreshing, individualised beauty, that one fails to understand how he could have been classed with Cézanne and, what is more, the routine Naturalists. His naked young woman with the mother-of-pearl flesh; his lady in a cashmere dressing-gown on the tapestry sofa; his girl in blue with the red cap, and the little sister in white; his two ladies with the roses, are simply charming. And love speaks no less from his chrysanthemums and his sunny meadows than from his men and

women. He who has the same feeling as Renoir for roses and children, is not only a great painter, but also a good and noble man.

ALFRED ROLL is one of the most amiable figures in the art world of to-day. No one has such feeling as he for the exquisitely delicate silvery vapour of a May morning atmosphere, quivering with sunlight and saturated with dew. No one knows how to model out with such creative genius as he a human body from the daylight that flows around it in gushing torrents. In his free-light painting one breathes free from all oppression. Besides qualities which, in all ages, make a great artist, he has the little trace of corruption which makes him a legitimate son of our age. One of his masterpieces—the naked young woman who clings caressingly to the bull—awakes Pasiphaistic ideas of old classic aberration. To procure pardon for this picture, he had to do no less than paint the splendidly healthy peasant girl with the brimming milk-pail and the cow—certainly a worthy penance.

Roll is, to be sure, not always the charming, luminous painter of the milk-maid and the girl with the bull. He very often strikes other notes. Thus, for instance, in his picture inspired by socialism, which he calls "The Martyr's Road," he shows an old tramp who, with his back leaning against a tree, has collapsed by the wayside, has let his wallet fall beside him, and appears to be about to give up the ghost. The misery of his worn countenance already

overshadowed by death, of his emaciated figure and tattered clothes are convincing. On the other hand, it is open to question whether it was good taste to paint the dying man in front view, with bold foreshortening of the outstretched legs, and with boot-soles of a terrific size, that rear up before us, in the extreme foreground, like two præ-historic *menhirs.* Roll intended to pay his homage to Maxim Gorki also. Was it from sincere feeling, or to show that he is *dans le mouvement*, and is keeping step with the most advanced of his time?

He has insisted on trying his hand at monumental decoration also. The fruit of his effort is a gigantic picture which he entitles "Life's Joys." He has evidently thought of Watteau, probably of the latter's "Embarcation to Cythera." It is the same blissful landscape with roses, trees, and water that seems, in the haze of the distance, to continue interminably until it reaches Paradise. It is the same air which the rain of blossom renders coloured and almost opaque. It is the same spring sky which we might hail with shouts of joy. The men and women, however, who give life to this Eden, are different to Watteau's. In Roll, everything is marvellously austere and hard. His women in the foreground are naked, and partly lie in Michael Angelesque attitudes on the grass, partly sit there overpoweringly monumental. Loving couples, walking and dancing, behave as if they were possessed by wild, brutal lust. Something like

a tragic current is traceable amidst this idyll. We exclaim in alarm: "Here, this very day, there will yet be murder or manslaughter." And with the object of destroying still more the ideal note of May, Roll puts, in the midst of this fairy-tale splendour, three realistic musicians, whose clothes were bought at *la Belle Jardinière*, who will certainly, after every dance, go round with a plate and collect from their audience. Where will the nude ladies take money from to throw to them? How much more charmingly and wittily does Watteau begin his theme! Only a marble statue of a woman renounces the advantages of elegant toilettes. Winged Cupids flit about the young couples, and translate, as it were, into lyrical, rhymed verses the naturalistic prose of the gallantry exhibited. The men do not rage in brutal eagerness, but pay delicate and discreet court to their ladies. And above all things, Watteau's infallible taste warns him against telling his stories at excessive length. As brevity is the soul of wit, so moderate compass is a great advantage in an Anacreontic scene. This should be elegant and pleasant; but the monstrous excludes elegance and pleasantness. Roll's Titans and Cyclopses are not suitable for masquerading as Arcadian shepherds.

LUCIEN SIMON, a painter who has been an imitator of Cottet, puts himself forward now, by an impetuous movement, into rank with him. "The

Evening Gossip" unites the family round the table lamp, which lights up a number of richly animated faces with curious lights that play and flicker. "Nuns Collecting"—one old and one young nun try by gentle yet tenacious and irrefusable pressure to overcome the resistance of a well-to-do and apparently somewhat niggardly country lady, and to determine her to open her well-guarded purse. In a "Ball-room in Brittany" peasant couples, in the dress of the Celtic province, under smoking lamps emitting a yellow light, spin round, with heavy stampings, to a bagpipe tune which drives the blood into the simple dancers' browned cheeks, and kindles sparks in their eyes. All this is stumped in broadly and luxuriously without petty dwelling on the less essential, yet with a sure feeling for what is characteristic in appearance and movement, and in a harmony of dark colours, which is as far remote from the bright tone of the style of painting in vogue the day before yesterday as a Guido Reni is from a Franz Hals, but affirms its own justification as self-consciously as the particular note struck by a Hennar and Gustave Moreau among the moderns, of a Velasquez and Rembrandt among the greatest ancients.

Up to now, his most important creation is his "Mass in Brittany," a work of an exquisite nature. The young and old peasants and seamen who hear High Mass standing in the bare village church, are truly and lovingly individualised head by head. Proudly renouncing pleasing externals,

L. Simon has made up his mind to produce his effects only by the noblest means, viz., by characterising with accuracy these manifold types, and by the depth and fulness of the spiritual life of these pious folk here gathered together. Offence has been taken at the broadness of his execution, which already bordered on superficiality, and on the coarseness of his colour, which put one now and then in mind of the bill-poster's newer art. He has laboured conscientiously on himself, and diminished the defects of his qualities without weakening the latter. He still continues to paint with large strokes in fresco style, but he pays attention to the solid building of his figures. He is still pronounced and unaffected in his colouring, but he avoids letting power degenerate into coarseness, and expressiveness into shrillness. Thus Lucien Simon rises slowly and steadily, though unerringly, to the lofty peaks of pre-eminence.

JEAN VEBER is quite a peculiar phenomenon which has not yet been deservedly appreciated. On one characteristic ground: because he never understood how to be solemn; because he seems not to take himself or his art seriously. He began as a caricature draughtsman for Boulevard papers, and only when his vocation for this peculiar province was well established, did he exhibit oil-paintings. But he was already labelled, and people continue to regard him merely as a comic draughtsman. The public refuses to allow a double renown to a single

talent. Its admiration, you know, costs nothing, but it is, nevertheless, scanty with it, as if it were bringing a sacrifice obtainable only with difficulty. That is a royal trait in the sovereign mob. It is niggardly with its distinctions in order to enhance their value. The splendid Daumier also had to suffer from this coyness on the part of the public. For a long time nothing was thought of his easel pictures, and it was really the Universal Exhibition of 1900 that first revealed to posterity the fact that Daumier of the "Charivari" was one of the most important French painters of the nineteenth century. The caricaturist of our days is, as it were, the journalist among plastic artists, and we know that it is very hard for journalists to succeed with poetical creations, however brilliant. The older humorists among the painters fared better. The Dutch painters could make rough fun of the life of the populace without injuring their reputation as artists by so doing. Hogarth attained high recognition, although his clumsy, Philistine, moralising painting ranks below the works of many caricaturists of to-day. Cruikshank, however, whom I rank, without hesitation, above Hogarth, occupies, in popular estimation, a lower rank, because he put his pencil at the service of the Press.

Jean Veber is the descendant in the direct line of the younger David Teniers, the Adriaen Brouwers, and the Höllen-Breughels. From them he derives his full style of painting, his deep, rich colours, his

great sureness and luxuriance of execution, his clear composition and florid imagination. He differs, however, from them in the quality of his fancy which delights in symbols replete with philosophical references; frequently in Saadic spectacles of cruelty and lust, and very often in lubricities of the Félicien Rops kind. This is the effect of the hundred and fifty to three hundred years which separate him from his more innocent spiritual ancestors.

Of the pictures he has exhibited, some are unforgettable, when one has seen them. The "Triumphal Procession" of a gigantic crowned goose through the streets of a mighty city, amid the loud applause of a populace raving mad with loyalty. The "Struggle for Gold" of a number of awful cripples tearing each other to pieces in their mad struggles for a few gold pieces that have fallen in the street; the "Sight of Terror" of a man reeling home at night, apparently after a long drinking-bout, in whose eyes the houses and monuments take weird, living physiognomies, are most impressive utterances of the misanthropic pessimism, the satiric bitterness, and the humour of Veber, also, to be sure, of his predilection for the weird, the ghostly, and the horrible.

These qualities are repeated in almost all his works up to now. The greatest and most pretentious, "The Machine," offends through the daring symbolism by which he illustrates the murderous power of woman over the sensual man. On the other hand, "Sunday Morning" is a bit of life observed with exquisite

humour: a barber's shop in the village, with a soaped victim under the nimble but not too considerate hands of the beard-shaver's wife, whilst some other customers, of unspeakable comicality in looks, bearing, and dress, smoking, dreaming, staring, or chattering, wait their turn on the bench by the wall. "The Hermit and the Female Faun" is a scarcely orthodox, but keenly witty modernisation of the old theme, the temptation of a saint, which these square-toes of painters for the past five hundred years have cherished with predilection, since it permits them to present quite heathen sights with a hypocritically contrite air. "The Three Good Friends" are of refreshing cheeriness. The ugliness of these contented louts is touching. The painter, by way of exception, exhibits them without malice, rather sympathetically, with a plea for extenuating circumstances. But generally, his wit belongs, in the main, to the species of evil-speaking. We laugh over the malice with which a sharp-tongued observer characterises our fellow-creatures, but we feel quite well that it is not the better man in us that laughs. Jean Veber loves to mock at mankind in goblin fashion. He sees men perpendicularly pushed together like a telescope, horizontally drawn out as short, square gnomes with pumpkin faces, who, pleased with themselves and unconscious of their grotesque ugliness, strut about as if they were so many Apollos and Dianas. Thus Jaurès appears with mouth agape and flourishing gestures on the rostrum of the

Chamber, at the foot of which breaks a flood of blustering deputies in stormy session. So in a parody of Rubens' "Kermes"—itself of the nature of a parody—villagers resembling sacks amuse themselves with feasting and drinking and amorous tendernesses which are calculated to disgust us with love itself. A grandly rigged-out, inexpressibly laughing lady in a low-cut dress between two greybeards paying their dreadful court at an exquisitely appointed supper-table; a physician at the foot of the bed gazing with devotion at the tongue, put out quite a yard, of a rich, fat lady-patient; a short, stout woman in a fashionable tailor's *salon*, whom the slenderest of the show-room girls is trying, with "cake-walk" movements, to fit with a dress like an umbrella-cover, are amusing in their stupidity and ugliness. On the other hand, I cannot follow Jean Veber further when, in "Family Joys," he tries to make the newborn child ridiculous—a shapeless bit of sprawling flesh, red as a crab, which the midwife has brought from the bed of the exhausted mother at the back of the room, and is exhibiting in triumph to the gaping family. He should keep his sacrilegious hand off the sanctity of this event.

The happy combination of a faultless dexterity with an arrogant, creative humour, in which I would only like to see a trifle less admixture of gall, renders Jean Veber's an artistic physiognomy that is far more interesting than many an idol to whom altars are raised.

EMILE WÉRY, a young and fortunate man of talent, began his career with a great success. His view of an Amsterdam canal made a sensation, and gained the great prize at the "Salon." Perhaps a little stupefied by this triumph, he kept for a while to the style of his prize picture, so that there was reason to fear he would early stiffen into a manner. He painted, for instance, an attractive triptych, which presents Venice to us in her three characteristic decorations: the narrow *Calle*, the slender *Rio*, and the splendid *Canal*. But what we cannot anyhow fancy absent from a view of Venice — the southern sky, the gleaming sun, and the warm tints of her old stones and tiles: these are here altogether lacking. It is all grey, northern grey. It is the same tone as in the prize picture of Amsterdam. As Faust found Helen in every woman, so Wéry then found apparently Dutch water-towns in every town, and Amsterdam herself in Venice. People think they are flattering the city on the Amstel, when they call it the Venice of the North. Wéry reversed the compliment: to him Venice was the Amsterdam of the South. How true it is that we see not with the eyes but with the soul!

The South, combined with his youthful impulses to development, was to save him from the danger of mannerism. Though he had seen Venice with his Amsterdam eyes, and found in the azure and gold of the city of lagunes the leaden waters and mist of the north, further south, in the light, he

bathed his eyes clean from the muddiness of higher latitudes. In "Sicily" a girl's brown head, with red cloth in the midst of a cluster of dark green-leaved branches with ripe oranges, flashes and glows the whole noon of the magic island, which this vigorous woman—a golden fruit among golden fruits—is to personify. But even after his return home he still remained drunk with the light of Italy. In a new picture, "The Little Ones," we are once more in a harbour on the North Sea, at a place where Wéry's talent takes its root. Flaxen-haired youngsters are playing round a boat; one of these, a little chap in wide, flapping trousers, is droll enough to eat. Water, sky, and river-bank are wedded in silver sheen, and over the whole reposes a happy sense of comfort, in which the artist's cheerful heart is disclosed. He has happily got over his first crisis. Now his artistic career lies smooth and sunny before him.

ANDERS ZORN.—This Swede is a virtuoso of amazing skill. He delights in marvellous effects of light, in surprises, in fixing fugitive views. His pictures are snap-shots pitched on the canvas with an almost mechanically smart brush. He is a concert painter possessing talent. He is one of the great corruptors of young artists nowadays. It is so fascinating, by a few wild, staggering, nimble strokes of the brush, to conjure up a human figure or a scene. But this method leads to the worst

superficiality, and attracts most the lazy fellows who wish to save themselves the trouble of learning properly the principles of drawing and painting. Zorn did not make the thing easy for himself. He honestly and industriously acquired a thorough mastery of technique before turning to execute his dazzling little pieces. He may allow himself to storm and rage over the canvas, for accuracy has become automatic in him. In spite of this haste, every line is on the right spot, and though people often regret that he only hints instead of stopping and deepening, nevertheless it is continually said: "The man knows how to build up a figure or a group." His imitators, however, have caught only his daubing, and with them superficiality is but a bold excuse for ignorance of drawing.

IGNACIO ZULOAGA.—Spain can at the present time boast of a number of painters who might call out to their greatest predecessors among their countrymen the proud *anch'io*. What characterises them is a peculiar, almost mad energy in drawing, which appears in all details, in the living and the dead, not only in the mien and attitudes of men, but in the sharp profile of every leaf and blade of grass, in the bold relief of every stone, in the aggressive self-consciousness of every being as of every thing. This energy is not to be learnt. One has it or one has it not. There are foreign painters in plenty, whom Spain has bewitched, and who their whole life long

recount nothing but bull-fights and processions, shepherds and gipsies, *cigarreras* and *manolas*; but no one who knows the genuine Spaniards will confuse these with the foreign imitators. There is, for instance, the excellent Jules Worms. He has been exhibiting Spanish scenes uninterruptedly for forty years. They are always nicely painted, prettily conceived, and pleasantly executed. As contributions to knowledge of the nation they are not without value. They have gained him all official honours, and he passes for an undisputed master of his particular province. And yet how un-Spanish is this life-long Spanishness of Worms and all his rivals and imitators! It is as smooth, licked, tricked up, entertaining, and banal as the railway novel of an inquisitive but superficial globe-trotter. It is a conventional comic-opera Spanishness, a theatre decoration for scenery, with groups of costumes for living figures. It lacks the power, the stern virility which distinguishes the Spanish painters, even those of the second rank, and gives them a family likeness to their great ancestors, Valdes, Velasquez, and Ribera.

The most typical of these modern Spaniards is Ignacio Zuloaga, and the most typical, perhaps, of his pictures are the three sketches from Spanish folk-life, which were exhibited a few years ago in the "Salon." An Andalusian, young, thin, and delicate, with a little crumpled face of apish ugliness, with a supple body that seems to whirl, stands in front of a poor mirror, and powders her face with coarse

rice-powder, as though she were sticking on a comic Pierrot-mask, whilst her sparkling eyes testify that she wants to make herself thoroughly beautiful for the bull-fight. Then we see her in loud, bright ribbons, with the inimitably draped mantilla over her head and shoulders, passing quickly through the street, greeted by two old connoisseurs with highly-spiced endearment. On the third occasion she or her sister goes with a diabolically piquant young gipsy girl, whose insolent laugh discovers gleaming wolf's teeth and turns up the sharply-curved nose, rapidly over the ground, probably to keep a Sabbath, from the expression of both grimaces. This is warm life such as not often glows on painted canvas. Zuloaga has felt his Andalusian wild creatures to his finger-tips, and renders them with all their *garbo* and *salero*—the German *Schneid* and *Mumm*, and the French *montant* and *mousseux* are weak translations of this expression. The pictures seem to be painted, not with mineral colours and oil, but with sulphuric acid and lunar-caustic. These ladies are young witches, of whom you would imagine that by touch they must give an electric shock like a torpedo-fish, that, if they open their mouths, red mice will jump out, and that it must be more natural for them to ride through the air on a broom-stick than to make use of their legs in the usual way. In the piquant ugliness of their faces, made up with a thick layer of rice-powder, in the gorgeous Sunday array, in their attitudes and movements, in

the gipsy-girl's bestially insolent grinning and winking, in the lustful glances and laughter of the men, there is a fulness of hot life, an insolent sensuality such as is only met with in Brangwyn's youthful works. One often heard the name of Goya pronounced before these pictures. It is indeed the same temperament, but another outlook on life, another art. Zuloaga has much of the cutting virtuosity of his great countryman; but he is no embittered critic of the world, rather a laughing Sunday's child who enjoys life with all his senses.

And, above all, his pictures are patterns of a domestic art which, through its unreserved sincerity, is at the same time an universal art. For it reaches so deeply that it penetrates beyond the special type to humanity in general.

XIII

AUGUSTE RODIN

RODIN'S place in present-day art is a peculiar one. Auguste Rodin has been raised to the dignity of a test for decadent ways of feeling. We admittedly call "tests" or proof-objects the objects (for the most part, the shell-armour of diatoms or the scales of butterflies' wings) on which the magnifying power and exactness of analysis of microscopes is tested. By Rodin the fanatics and snobs of insane tendencies test the genuineness and power of symbolico-mystic sentiment. What do you think of Rodin? Do you admire him? Good: then you need further only adore Besnard and rave about Félicien Rops, and you can claim to be numbered with the newest, without respect to the colour of your hair or opportunist baldness. You do not admire Rodin? Then sneak whimpering from our league. You are no decadent. No beauty with her hair combed in the Botticelli style will love you; Mallarmé will not write poems, nor will Nietzsche philosophise for you.

Nobody will invite you even to a Black Mass. Go to the Philistines; you belong to the narrow-minded community, which is a herd of ruminants.

It would be intelligible if the provocations of the shriekers, who, after the manner of howling dervishes, dance and rave round Rodin, were to induce men to take a violent part against this very man. Justice, however, demands that people should suppress their natural tendency to make him responsible for the ear-piercing din of his drummers and trumpeters. After all, he cannot help a horde of swindlers and silly people making a vulgar disturbance about him and his works. If we are to judge him, we must try to forget that critical offenders, by invoking his name, continually outrage the sense of æsthetic decorum and artistic conscience. Rodin is, in fact, not the originator of this shameless proceeding, but the victim of the æsthetic Catiline conspirators who have got possession of him, and are pushing him on before them, so that it looks from a distance as if he was their leader. Rodin is not the least *cabotin*. He is of a modest, homely nature, but no strong character; and he has not been able to stand against the suggestions of those whose interest it is to eulogise him, who have for so long chattered his poor head full of their most brain-firing, æsthetic doctrines, and most profound interpretations of his alleged purposes, until he has lost his own personality, and makes the most desperate efforts to become like the picture which

his critical Corybantes present of him to the open-mouthed gapers.

What has raised Rodin to an article of faith among the degenerates is three peculiarities. First, the choice of his materials, which appeal to the mysticism and sensual psychopathy of his body-guard of degenerates; secondly, his technique, which deviates from tradition in childish, would-be-original whims; and thirdly, his mistaking the natural limitations of his art, which he wants to make say things for which sculpture possesses no means of expression. These traits are proved by a short review of his principal works.

The production which first brought him the custom of the decadents is a composition which was devised for the gate of Dante's *Inferno*. He had worked at it for decades. After a few fragments, which were to be seen in 1889 in the Universal Exhibition at Paris, he showed the whole in a plaster model at his private exhibition of 1900. It is inspired unmistakably by Ghiberti's door of the Baptistery at Florence, but stands in intentional contrast to it. The great Quattrocentist depicts life in Paradise; Rodin's intention is to show existence in Hell. The framing and articulation of the work, and nearly all its details, were rendered with organic necessity from this starting-point. The door is cut up into panels, which are not divided by stiff, geometrical lines, but, just as in the case of Ghiberti, are at the same time immediately separated, and again indirectly

connected into a higher unity, by a feature of the picture itself, *e.g.*, a cliff, a man's figure, a piece of building. In every panel an act from the *Inferno* is played. The parts, in the majority of cases indicated only in a sketchy way, betray strong, indeed mainly perversely directed, erotic imagination, and the gift of exhibiting human bodies in the movements of passion. Of course, Rodin, too, has not dropped down from heaven, but is the descendant of easily demonstrable spiritual forefathers. This sculpture of violent action, a particular development of French art, and in no way connected with the Laocoon, as one might easily make the mistake of assuming, has its first master in Rude, whose power is revealed most grandly in the "Marseillaise" on the Triumphal Arch at Paris. Rude's successor and continuer is the incomparable Carpeaux, who, as is most clear from his group "The Dance" at the Grand Opera, in place of the wild heroes of his model and master, substituted wild Bacchantes; who celebrated, instead of self-oblivious joy in sacrifice in the service of rugged duty, self-oblivious intoxication in a debauch of sensuality, but represented a life of excitement no less sublimely and no less ravishingly than the former. Rodin is closely connected with Rude and Carpeaux. With him passion descends a step lower still to the uncivilised and dissolute. Heroic with Rude, voluptuous with Carpeaux, it is Satanic with Rodin. The "Gate of Hell" exhibits rows of naked women in all the situations and occupations of the witches' Sabbath,

when it is most devilish. Fits of hysteria shake and twist these bodies, every motion of which betrays shocking aberration and eager Sadism. The patients of the Salpetrière or the Atlas of Pictures edited in this *clinique* (*Iconographie de la Salpétrière*) evidently served him for models. And from him, be it incidentally observed, Alexander appears to have drawn his inspirations with the aggravating circumstance that he clothes Rodin's naked women in rich, modern toilettes, and by this artful means makes them even more obscene. The feminine genius of tragedy in Rude is inspired by Tyrtæan war-songs. Carpeaux's two female dancers have drunk sparkling wine; Rodin's demoniac women have swallowed pills of Spanish-fly. Thus it is clear that Rodin must be dear to all wanton schoolboys, impotent debauchees, and incipient spinal sufferers.

If the "Gate of Hell" is an illustration of hystero-epilepsy and feminine Sadism, so, too, is a marble group which he exhibited in 1898 of Masochism. A naked woman with horribly glacial, unmoved features sits leaning against a wall of rock. A man, apparently growing out of the earth, kneels before the merciless image, embraces its knees with despairingly imploring gesture, and presses his head against its body. This is supposed to show man in an ecstasy of desire, subjugated by the sexual power of woman. I can only say that a copy of this group would excellently suit as a frontispiece for an edition of the collected works of Sacher-Masoch.

Other smaller groups of Rodin, which he exhibited in the Champs de Mars Salon, hint at other forms of morbid sensuality on which I am reluctant to dwell. They all disclose a sub-soil of corrupted sensuality in the artist's soul. That secures him influence on natures in harmony with his own. The degenerates who revel with Baudelaire in love of corpses, and with Félicien Rops in highly-spiced lewdness, find the same excitation in Rodin, and they intoxicate themselves with his ecstatic lasciviousness just as with the unnatural or madly exaggerated eroticism of their other fleshly poets and painters.

So much for Rodin's choice of themes. Now for his technique. One of his singularities is that he loves to astonish people by a crude, external contrast between a block of unworked marble and the most exquisitely finished and sweetly polished sculpture of bodies. He takes a great cube out of all proportion, which he leaves as the labourer hewed it as it came out of the quarry; and he works a little corner of it into a head and body polished with the utmost nicety. In this way, the figure grows out of, or into, the natural stone. Looked at from three sides, a lump of rock or stone is presented to the eye, only on the fourth side the work of art is revealed, blooming, as it were, in the wilderness. We may describe this manner as the sculptural form of mysticism. The association of ideas which Rodin wishes to awaken by this device should make the idea

dawn on the consciousness that here, before our eyes, a miracle of creation is being accomplished; that we surprise the very incarnation of the stone; that we are witnesses of the birth of organic form from the stiff, lifeless original matter, and may observe how the figure, still half imprisoned in chaos, struggles painfully forth to a form instinct with life. There are subjects for the representation of which Rodin's style would have been a happy invention: perhaps the creation of Adam from a clod of earth, or the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha, or a Promethean motive. But its uniform employment for all possible subjects—on banal busts or groups which have no reference to creation or genesis—causes the manner to be recognised for what it is, a snatching at effect by means of eccentricity. Of course, this striking and easily imitatable freak has founded a school. No American or Scandinavian who wants to frighten the Philistines with "modernism" neglects to exhibit a piece of, for the most part, wretched sculpture as tiny as possible on a clump of unworked rock as Cyclopean as possible. It cannot be said that the joke is cheap. The unhewn block of marble often represents a pretty stiff value in hard cash, in any case a higher one than the corner that has been chiselled. One can only say that any idiot can succeed in using a ton weight of stone as a support to a figure the size of a man's hand.

Yet, in conclusion, it is a comparatively harmless

folly which a practitioner can remedy with a few strokes of the saw. It is sufficient to cut the sculpture off, and give the rough block to a needy sculptor. Far worse, because it is incurable, is the æsthetic principle to which Rodin pays homage in the technique of his more important works especially. He is, to wit, an Impressionist. A line of motion in an individuality or group interests him. He seizes it, shapes it with convincing truth, with an emphasis exaggerated—certainly purposely—to the point of caricature, and neglects everything that does not serve to illustrate this line of motion. Sculpture, however, is an art which does not allow any Impressionism. It demands, according to its nature, a perfectly accurate formation of the whole figure, and simple honesty in reproducing the phenomenon. This can be proved by a theory of perception. Sculpture fills space and is of three dimensions; it addresses itself, in the first place, certainly to the eye, but also to the sense of touch. It calls for stereoscopic vision, and is, at least in theory, capable of further proof by a second sense. Now just this theoretic possibility of further proof, by means of the sense of touch, has the prohibitive effect, that fancy feels no inclination to supplement the image provided by the sense of sight. In works of painting we add in our mind much which is not optically given in the picture. In plastic works we have not this psychical habit, because a testing with the hands is opposed to

the free, inventive power of the imagination, and makes us at once recognise what has been given in space, and what has been added by our imagination. On this ground, there is no place in sculpture for intentions or hints. That is enough for a rough plan, but not for the finished work. Rodin, however, stops at a stage of completion, which may, at best, pass for a promise, but never, in any case, for an achievement. He deliberately breaks up the frame of artistic form. He would fain work with the habits of the painter's eye and the painter's hand, and he applies this treatment to the statute, standing free and exposed to examination from all sides.

The confused lines which represent the draughtsman's first sketch (*ébauche*) have their special charm and meaning on the surface to be painted. If, however, you translate them into three dimensions, if every careless movement of the artist's hand, either still feeling its way or hurrying on, is finally fixed in clay or bronze, something inadmissible results, which has no right to proclaim itself a work of art.

Such a seeking after the right expression, such a stammering in metal is Rodin's monument at Calais, which represents the burgesses of Calais with the rope round their necks, standing before Edward III., who had successfully besieged that city, and asking for mercy. The crushed spirit which Rodin tried to express is actually visible in the group; but the figures which express this emotion are formless from head to foot. The limbs are rugged boughs; the

bodies violate the laws of anatomy; the whole group is on the stage of technical perfection reached by the idols hewn from wood by the South Sea Islanders, and is far inferior to many a pre-historic picture on mammoth's teeth and stag's horn, which may be seen, for instance, in the Museum of St Germain. Rodin's domestic trumpeters promptly proclaimed this for a work of lofty genius. The Corporation of the town of Calais, who had ordered it, dared not reject it. The decadents' reign of terror—it was in the year 1895—was then in all its fury. The whole Paris Press was in the power of the dictators of the Chat Noir, and the poor Calais burgesses, clever men of business, but very uncertain in questions of art, feared to be jeered at as wise men of Gotham, if they rebelled against the æsthetic edicts of the tyrants of Paris criticism. But they blush for shame and anger whenever they pass by the memorial, and now, when the reign of terror of decadent criticism is over, it will probably not be long before the Calais people pluck up courage enough to have Rodin's bronze abomination carted off from the public square, and withdrawn, in a store-room in the Town Hall, from the scornful eyes of strangers.

A counterpart of the Calais group is the design for the Victor Hugo Memorial, which was for the first time exhibited in 1897, and again five years later, when it was somewhat further advanced. This design also showed nothing but intentions. The poet is sitting naked by the seashore. The last

shallow wave washes gently up to his feet. Two female tutelary figures—perhaps History and Legend, or Poetry and Philosophy — are flying to him horizontally at the level of his head and whispering secrets in his ear. As a mere intention, the composition might be allowed to pass; but nothing of execution, practically, was yet to be seen. Victor Hugo's body was not modelled; the flying female figures could not be distinguished, either from a distance or on close inspection, from cloud packs, or the fantastic animal figures of Gothic gargoyles. Nevertheless, Rodin disarmed intelligent criticism by declaring that the work was a mere sketch. Of course, he could no longer be fairly reproached with its shapelessness, and people had to content themselves with waiting for its completion, which has not come to pass up to now.

Rodin has overstepped, in his Balzac Memorial, which he first exhibited in 1898, the very extensive limits within which his silly aberrations might have been borne. Master Shallow, who tolerates much, could not tolerate this work, and broke down under its crushing exaction. When the public saw this provocative monstrosity, it broke out into that uncontrollable laughter, whereby the outraged intelligence of mankind revenges itself with primitive force for restraints that it has long suffered in silence. In the face of this result, the Committee of the French Union of Authors, which had commissioned the Balzac Memorial, resolved unanimously to decline

it. In vain the Condottieri, who had usurped supremacy in art criticism by the most unscrupulous methods of conspiracy, violence, and oppression, made desperate efforts to maintain themselves. They were powerless against the armed rising of sensible people who had at last come to themselves. Their tyranny was vanquished, and they were swept away. They might still talk all sorts of twaddle about the stupidity of the masses, and, in impotent rage, hiss at the victors the well-known shibboleths, "Philistine," "provincial," etc., but this final, faint-hearted nagging sank unheard in the unanimous cry of scorn from public opinion.

Rodin has represented Balzac as, jumping out of bed in the morning, he wraps himself unclad in his monk-like dressing-gown, without even putting his arms in the sleeves, irresistibly impelled to hurry to his writing-table in order to fix the thoughts of which his creative brain is full to bursting. Agreed: that, again, is the intention which Rodin might, perhaps, have secretly put into the figure. What the eye really sees is a sort of tree-trunk, hewn in the roughest manner by a woodman with an axe, which is surmounted by a hideously swollen tadpole head on a goitred neck. Malicious Parisian wit has exhausted all the droll comparisons that this monstrosity can suggest to flouting humour. People have called Rodin's work a meal-sack, a carved potato, a snow-man made by a cheeky schoolboy, an unpacked statue, a stalactite, etc. The work is all that, for it

is nothing at all ; but it is pre-eminently the conclusive refutation of Rodin's æsthetics. For it is the highest expression, and, on that account, the unintentional parody, of his impressionist technique and of his third mistake, viz., ignorance of the limitations of his art.

Rodin worked at this wretched piece of work for ten whole years. First he read all Balzac's works ; then he made a journey to Touraine and spent months there, so as to absorb the human environment from which Balzac took so many of his models, and to become permeated with the feelings and impressions with which Balzac may have satiated himself when composing—all this to make a human figure which was to be the likeness of a man whom many people now living have known in the flesh. After these preliminary studies, Rodin finally proceeded to form his Balzac. His head was to be "a synthesis of his works," his physiognomy was to be summed up "in an eye that looks on the *Comédie humaine* and in an upper lip that is curled in contempt for humanity." So said Rodin himself in several interviews which were published at the time when his statue was exhibited. He was then merely repeating what the twaddlers of Montmartre had chattered to him. It would be easy to make jests about this inflammation of the brain, but it is not worth even cheap raillery. It is quite enough to establish, soberly and drily, that Rodin, like a child or an idiot, aimed at something impossible. Sculpture

cannot furnish any "synthesis of Balzac's works." Nature herself cannot, in the sense that Balzac himself, when he was alive, did not synthetise his works, in his externals, in his physiognomy. He had perhaps the head of a man of mark, but there was assuredly nothing in his face to show that he had written the "Physiology of Marriage," and not written "La Chartreuse de Parme" (Stendhal). Rodin imagined that a portrait-statue could quite alone, merely by its own means, supply the place of a biography and a psychological and literary characterisation of the person represented. This patent lunacy was necessarily bound to end, as it has ended, in a mad caricature.

"The Thinker," a colossal statue which was exhibited in 1904, is almost as bad an aberration as Balzac. It is a gigantic enlargement of a little sketch that one saw many years ago over Rodin's "Gate of Dante's Hell," in the confused and scarcely indicated unborn *foetus* lines of which confident devotion might imagine all possible promises of future splendour.

The promises are realised in "The Thinker." He who still wishes to shudder with foreboding in the presence of the finished work will be at liberty to do so. It will be the same sort of man who grew enthusiastic over the "Balzac," before which every criticism of intelligent — not "intellectual" — men dissolved into unextinguishable laughter. "The Thinker" is brother of the "Balzac," only it is not

so comic, for it is not dressed in a meal-sack, but is naked, and the bared human body, when misshapen, excites in a spectator of unvitiated taste, not cheerfulness, but discomfort, which may even rise to loathing.

"The Thinker" is not only naked, but also flayed. Its anatomy is executed with obtrusive importance, without the covering epidermis with its vital warmth. The enormous exaggeration of the muscles, the impossible assertion of strength which is expressed by the extreme contraction of all the muscles, therefore also of the counteracting muscles, are well-known features of sculpture in its worst period of decline. There is still, however, a distinction between Rodin and the *rococo* sculptors, who confused fleshy tumours over the whole surface of the bodies of their statues with the power of portraying artistically. At any rate, the latter had a correct knowledge of myology, or the subject of the muscles, whereas Rodin's anatomy is shockingly inaccurate. I really do not think much of Lorenzo Matthielly's groups at the Vienna Hofburg-gates; but in the face of Rodin's monstrosity I apologise in my heart for all the objections I have ever made against them. At any rate, with Matthielly every muscle occupies its proper place. Rodin, however, invents muscles which do not exist, and never did exist. Two mighty ridges, ending below in sausage-tips, run down the "Thinker's" back, which are perhaps intended for the two *longissimi dorsi*; in this case, however, they are howling blunders as regards their attachment, their

whole course, and their form. The muscles of the forehead and temples are treated quite as arbitrarily as those of the back. Where nature only recognises thin cutaneous muscles and ligatures, there Rodin puts bumps which remind one of blood tumours after blows from a club, and impart to the face the appearance of evil *Verschlagenheit*; not, as Fritz Reuter says, in the sense of craftiness, but in that of receiving a sound cudgeling. As a record "The Thinker" stands on the same level as the anatomical plates in Japanese manuals of the healing art of the time of the Shoguns.

This, however, is not yet the worst; the intellectual element fares even worse than the bodily one with this oaf who calls himself so pretentiously "The Thinker." The flayed man sits crouching, with a distinctly crooked hump, on a sharp-edged block of stone. His toes claw convulsively into the ground. He holds a clenched fist before his mouth, and seems to bite it fiercely. His bestial countenance. with its bloated, contracted forehead, gazes as threateningly dark as midnight. He who has to interpret the figure without the help of a title will, from a back view, conclude it is some one writhing in agony on the rack; and from a front view, a criminal meditating over some foul deed. Its mien and bearing would suggest a designation such as "The Fallen Titan," "Lucifer's Rebellion," or "Cain before he murdered his Brother." The last thing which one would think of would be to look for a

mind working behind this bulgy forehead, or to imagine that thought was supreme in this body seized by a spasm of rigidity in all its muscles. The name given by Rodin to this wretched performance sounds like a scoff or a calumny, and it might be thought the misled artist, robbed by his fanatics of all self-criticism, had intended to make a malicious parody of Michael Angelo's *Pensieroso.*

Rodin himself, by his portrait busts, makes it possible to gauge the whole insincerity of his pose as a profound thinker, and his genius-playing arrogance; for instance, by that of Octave Mirbeau, and, still more easily, by a female bust which was exhibited at the same time as "The Thinker" monstrosity. With the exception of the folly, which is, moreover, not too obtrusive, that a piece of the rough block was allowed to remain on both shoulders, there was not the faintest feature in the bust that could differentiate it from a severely classical, coldly correct work. Here he had to satisfy a lady client, and he was irreproachably smooth, executed all the details lovingly, and produced a soft, delicate flesh, to which the elegant Injalbert might sign his name. If one were desirous of making an objection to this pleasant bust, it would, at worst, be that it is too sweet. He becomes the destroyer of all form, the bungling sham-Titan, the inscrutable philosopher, dramatist, and lyric poet, whose eye rolls in a fine frenzy, and who, in the throes of his fever to create, confines himself to hurried indications—he becomes

all this only when he works for his bodyguard of sympathetic sensitivism.

How future generations will laugh over all this buffoonery of "nerve art"! Only, indeed, when it comes to know the comments of contemporary "intellectuals" in addition to the artists' silly bungling. For the former will show them in a way to excite sympathy and amusement what devastation the deafening babble of a band of gossips, dreadfully ignorant of art and innocent of any feeling for beauty, could produce in the taste and thought of a large majority, which honestly yearns after æsthetic education, but, on account of a lack of trustworthy traditions and adequate instruction in art, has not sufficient self-confidence to set up the promptings, however obscure, of their own feeling against the impudent dictates of presumptuous arbiters of taste.

Mysticism and sexual psychopathy in the choice of themes; Impressionism and incidental eccentricities in technique; overstepping the limitations of his art, have made Rodin the great man of the fellows who for some two decades have set the fashion in art and literature. By these three peculiarities, to which he owes his spurious celebrity, he will be ruined as an artist, whatever the success he owes to puffing may be. And that is lamentable, for Rodin is a genuinely gifted sculptor, who created beauty when he did not yet think himself bound to work out of gratitude to the "young" journals. Unfortunately, it is extremely improbable that he will now find

his way back to that simplicity and naturalness in which salvation is alone attainable. There is no return from Montmartre, not, at any rate, for an old man who has climbed this height and accepted with passionate earnestness all what he saw and heard there in advanced years. Young people who are still capable of change, in many cases awake from the idle dream of Montmartre æstheticism. Nature does not vouchsafe to the old to begin a new life.

XIV

RESURRECTION

BARTHOLOMÉ

I DO not want to speak of Tolstoi's novel, but of a work of art—great, at any rate, materially, as a statue—which every pilgrim to Paris will, I suppose, wish to see, viz., the monument which Bartholomé dedicated "To the Dead," and which is to be seen in the cemetery of Père Lachaise.

It is interesting in so many aspects that one might devote to it a monograph as thick as a book, which would send out suckers over the whole domain of æsthetics and the history of art. Never do I feel so painfully the inadequacy of a short essay as when I proceed to handle a subject so rich in connections. It is impossible to exhaust it in this form, and it is painful to leave it as a fragment. One appears limited, whereas one is only restricted. We must satisfy ourselves with indications which will easily be looked upon as superficial, though they are merely terse. What is thought out as a proof takes the form of mere assertion, and in cases where we should like to convince, we must think

ourselves successful, when we have incited the reader to kindly co-operation—which, however, goes for the most part its own way.

This pious ejaculation will make it easier for me to accommodate myself to the conditions which have been imposed on the short essay.

Works of sculpture in public places, which are neither monuments nor ornamental buildings, viz., such as are not intended to call to mind special events or particular individuals, are something novel in the development of high art. Antiquity knew only monumental creations which had their origin in patriotic sentiments. We have to bear in mind that religion in ancient communities constituted a part of patriotism, for there were no gods for mankind in general, but only gods for a particular people or a particular state. When Socrates had to drain the cup of hemlock, it was not because he had sinned against Olympus, but because he had given offence to Athens in the person of her tutelary divinities. The Battle of the Giants and the Frieze of the Parthenon, the Pallas Athene of the Acropolis and the Olympian Zeus, were felt, by those who gazed on them and for whom they had been wrought, as images from the past and present of their race. Even the "Laocoon" and the "Farnese Bull" were so regarded: a distinction between the legends of their race and accredited history, nay, between theology and politics, did not exist in the consciousness of the multitude at large, or even in

that of the select few. The god made of ivory and gold was the public worship of a living being who was invested with high rank in the commonwealth, and the Olympian victor to whom a statue was erected entered into mythology as a comrade of Hercules, Theseus, and Perseus.

Religious art was the only public art known in the Middle Ages. If material political interests swayed the minds of communities in Pagan times, when the nations became Christian the supersensual, *i.e.*, the salvation of the soul, became the great concern of the individual as of the community. Patriotism disappeared from the domain of emotion; what took its place—the pride of town, or class, or guild—was merely delight in material possession, or, if you like, a sort of vulgar dignity without any ideal background. Faith was their only sentiment, piety the artist's sole impulse from which genuine creations could spring. It followed, therefore, that religious art—the only monumental art then in existence—attached itself to sacred places, and subordinated itself to them as really mere accessory decoration. Without resting on architecture, sculpture stood on its own feet only in the Stations of the Cross on Calvaries, but, even in this case, it had no object of its own, but served a definite purpose of worship. The beginnings of a public art which grew out of an abstract thought of the community—one not of a religious but of a temporal, of civic nature—are scanty and dim. As forerunners of such an art we

can claim the Roland Pillars of the Free Towns—the symbol of their civil and criminal jurisdiction—with their indistinct, historical background of dim memories of Charlemagne as the legal source of municipal liberties, and perhaps also the Byzantine Lion of Brunswick.

The Renaissance was the first to create a monumental art that was to serve no practical, religious, or dynastic purpose, but one purely æsthetic, from which people looked for no strengthening of ecclesiastical views, no increase of authority and, through that, of power in a prince or government, but looked, in fact, only for delight in beauty. Renaissance art, I admit, rich and free as its development was, also remained thoroughly under the influence of mediæval traditions, and knew no other range of themes than those derived from the Bible and Classic mythology Even worldlings among the artists, who had outgrown religious ideas, drew at least their stories from the New and, even more commonly, from the Old Testament, or from pagan mythology, which was familiar only to the educated, and to the multitude at large was meaningless, and devoid of life. A scholastic pedantry hung about such works as Benvenuto Cellini's "Perseus," for instance, which prevented the masses from appreciating them fully. It was not, however, done from haughty disdain, for monumental art — the art of the streets and squares — appeals indeed to the masses. The modelling, on the one hand, of what is purely

human, which appeals to feelings in every human heart, and is, therefore, understood by every man; on the other hand, of a subject, well-defined in time and place, which must be familiar, at any rate, to contemporaries and residents: this degree sculpture attained only gradually and late. The Goose-man of Nuremberg and the Brussels Mannikin are instances of local Realism; Tadda's "Justice" at Florence and Michael Angelo's "Pietà"—these in spite of their religious relations are examples of universal human Idealism. It is characteristic of the timidity of sculpture, even in its proud epoch of the Renaissance, that it dared not cast itself adrift from presenting what was of immediate utility. It thought it needed an excuse for stepping out into the market-place before all the people. It found it fairly in supplying towns with water. It created fountains. These are the first and, for a long time, the only monumental works which were suggested neither by religion nor by loyalty to some dynasty; which aim neither at immortalising the memory of a particular event, nor at refreshing the schoolboy knowledge of the more liberally educated, but embody, without any pre-possession, a purely artistic conception of form fulfilled and animated with subjective emotion. The stages of development of the monumental fountains, which pretend to be mere sports of untrammelled fancy on the artist's past, extend to the present day, in the latest phase, in which the fountain is not really intended to distribute

water, like Sluter's "Fount of Moses" at Dijon, or Jean Goujon's "Fontaine des Innocents" in Paris, but uses the water only as a decorative element, as Donner's fountain in the market-place of Vienna, or Reinhold Begas's Neptune fountain in the Berlin Schlossplatz.

We must come down to the last century to find at last a monumental art of universal feelings or thoughts, still, for the most part, modestly cringing under the protection of architecture, as groups on pediments of palaces, theatres, and exhibition-buildings, and taking possession of the public square in full independence only in the last decades. Historical works, even of an universal, impersonal sort, such as the numerous war-memorials in Germany and France, the *risorgimento*-monuments of Italy, the patriotic battle-memories in Switzerland — do not come under consideration here, but only abstract works such as Bartholdi's "Freedom enlightening the World," at New York, or Dalou's "Republic as the Protector of Labour and Culture," in the Place de la Nation, at Paris.

Even these works still continue to show a birth-mark, which betrays their origin from the sculpture of purpose, for Bartholdi's gigantic statue is a light-house, and Dalou's "Triumph of the Republic" belongs to the fountain series.

On the other hand, Bartholomé's "Memorial to the Dead" is as free from every idea of common-place utility as any mouldings for the rooms of a

house. It originated in the artist's emotion, and had, at its birth, no other purpose than that of relieving its creator by the gratification of an impulse. What was to become of the work after it was finished is a question Bartholomé probably never asked himself at all. Perhaps he resigned himself to the thought that it would pass a pensioner's existence in some museum or other. In any case, carelessness as to what use would be made of it left him entire freedom as to the form it should take. And now he had the unexpected happiness of the work being purchased by the city of Paris, and placed in Père Lachaise. This has been the first instance, as far as I know, of a purely subjective, monumental work capturing a public position without this being justified by a practical service to the community, without embellishing a building, without satisfying any religious need or patriotic feeling, without immortalising any historical reminiscence, without glorifying any event or individual, but basing its claim to the grateful attention of the people at large only on the grounds that it attempts to embody in beauty an elemental emotion alive in the masses, that is to say, a real, common interest of moral order. The work may become the starting-point of a new monumental art, which will set itself the hitherto unknown task of presenting, with the authority of great sculpture, moods and views of the world, viz., the spiritual conditions common to a people, of interpreting them to that people, and of fixing them for history.

With all its novelty, Bartholomé's work is, notwithstanding, not without organic connection with the historical development of art. There is no virgin-birth in art. Every work has a pedigree. Bartholomé's art is allied to the Campo Santo art of the Middle Ages, from which it borrows thoughts of consolation and promise. It nevertheless exhibits a daring progress when it has emancipated itself from the architecture of gateways, outer walls, chapels, etc., and forced its way in independent form, complete in itself.

The street of tombs opens at the main entrance of Père Lachaise, and leads to a gently rising hill, the declivity of which Bartholomé's masterpiece occupies. It displays the irregular, decorated side of a two-storied stone building of ancient Egyptian architecture of the simplest lines. A high door opens in the middle of the upper story, into the shadowy depth of which a naked man has entered. Him follows hesitatingly, with her outstretched right hand grasping his shoulder and seeking support, a young woman, the lines of whose profile, from her mouth distorted with fear down to the soles of her feet that detach themselves reluctantly from the ground, express a horror in presence of the unknown.

Towards this Gate of Death move, on the right and left, groups, each of seven persons, whom the artist has striven honestly, yet without real success, to fashion in various shapes. At the first hurried glance, the two processions appear to be variously

moved; but on looking more closely into them, we recognise an uniformity which proves a striking poverty of imagination. On the left, hard by the Gate of Fate, a young woman is sitting on a stone-bench without support, with her countenance concealed by her hands. She cannot make up her mind to rise from where she is resting, in order to take the last step. A second woman is visible in a similar irresolute attitude, in weak relief on the wall. Cowering behind the two, kneeling quite low, so that the thighs lie in parallel lines over the legs, a naked man seems to be whispering words of encouragement into the ear of the seated woman. Then follows a woman sunk on her knees as if crushed, who hides her face like the first with a somewhat different movement, and behind her a man standing, but bending down to her, and addressing words of consolation. Last of all, another woman sitting down, whose dishevelled hair is streaming over her countenance, and, behind her, a man standing upright, likewise as a consoler. Thus is repeated on this side the theme of the despairing woman and the calm, comforting man. On the right side the invention is somewhat richer. Close to the door stands an old man—decidedly the most expressive figure in the whole composition—clinging tightly to the door-posts; and with his head and the upper portion of his body bent forward, he tries to get a terrified glance at the awful mystery, ere he pulls himself together for entering. To his group belongs a woman stretched on

the ground with her face pressed in her hands before her; another folding her hands in prayer, and a half-grown girl shrugging her lean shoulders in terror. There follows a second group of three figures—a woman with dishevelled hair, bowed low to the ground; a crouching man supporting her and preventing the feeble figure from sinking down completely; and a young woman who kneels on one leg, turns her back to Death's portal, and glances back on life as though she still hoped for deliverance,

The lower story shows, through the front-wall, which is removed to its full extent, the interior of the vault into which the upper Gate of Death seems to lead down. On a mattress-like couch rest, side by side, the naked bodies of a man and his young spouse; across their bodies is laid their little one year old child; in the background is visible in low relief on the wall a winged angel with outstretched arms, who looks down lovingly on the three quiet sleepers. With a *naïvité* which does not rise above the puerile method of the *quattrocentisti*, of making their figures express themselves by means of legends issuing from their mouths, Bartholomé writes on this wall beneath the angel the sense of his allegory: "They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined."

Above all, the artist deserves the respect that is due to long and earnest effort. We have here before us a work of ten years' labour, executed with composure, inspiration, and conscientiousness. He

who can do that, of him one may say, without the slightest suggestion of irony: "With his talent, however applied, the man is certainly a character." Many details of the monument, nevertheless, prove that Bartholomé is not only a character, but also a man of talent. The husband and wife turn their quiet faces to each other in the rest that is in the grave, and lay their hands one upon the other; and this movement is so tender and sincere that it makes a deep impression. It really expresses in sculpture the love that endures beyond the grave. It is the solitary true emotion in the whole work; for he whose eyes grow moist at the sight of the dead child with the sweet little baby limbs, will say to himself that his emotion is not of an æsthetic nature, is not evoked by the means of art, but is the purely physical reaction of a human heart from a cruelly painful impression, in which no artistic element or inspiration is mingled. The woman who enters Death's portal a prey to horror exhibits graceful lines, and the old greybeard who timidly peers into it is cleverly conceived and accurately represented.

Beside these excellent details, many middling and absolute weak ones disturb us. The dead husband in the grave has an Aztec face of repulsive ugliness, which is not called for by any artistic considerations. The attitudes of many figures, especially those squatting or cowering, are in bad taste. A primary personage—the man who has stepped into the Gate of Death—stalks bending forward with head bowed

down and the muscles of his back contracted, like one who is hauling with all his might. It is a matter of surprise that the tow-rope with which the vessel is dragged is not to be seen. I cannot prove it, but I am convinced that Bartholomé has formed this man, not after a model, but from what he recollected of a hauler by Constantin Meunier. I have already called attention to the monotony of the group *motifs*. The whole conception of the composition, at any rate of the upper story, is an echo of Canova's monument to Maria Christina at Vienna, with the further development that Bartholomé shows the subterrestrial and supernatural continuation of the theme which Canova carries only as far as the entrance to the realm of shades, leaving what follows to the pious belief of the spectator. The weightiest objection which must be made to the work as a whole is its offensive lack of repose. All the individual details are, with few happy exceptions, realistic, whilst the effect of the whole composition moves in extreme unreality. How has Bartholomé's most original artistic instinct not preserved him from trying to present a wholly ideal dogma with the most vulgar, petty realism? Simple mediæval sculptors might work thus. In our contemporaries we do not believe in simplicity, and therefore the discord between idea and form has a jarring effect.

The most ideal dogma that Bartholomé preaches is, however, that of the immortality of the soul

and the resurrection of the body; for his monument can mean only that, if it means anything at all. It is conceived as a consolation to the sorrow-laden who form the last escort to a dear one that is dead, or are making a pilgrimage to the grave of one they loved. And what consolation has he to offer them? See, he says, in the figures on the upper story, the sorrow with which men approach the gates of shadow-land. Why this faint-heartedness? Why this timorous shrinking from the terrors of death? Death has no terrors. It is entering into peace and the fulfilment of a high promise. And he shows, in the lower story, the gentle, blessed rest the dead enjoy who there slumber until their resurrection, watched by their guardian angel, who awakes them at the appointed hour, and convey their immortal souls to their divine destination.

That is the cosmic view held by an artist on the threshold of the twentieth century. Holbein and his predecessors in painting the Dance of Death were men who believed in Christianity, but the only consolation that they offered mortals was this: Don't bewail your mortal lot, you share it with Pope and Emperor. The path from the Rationalism of this exhortation to the mysticism of Bartholomé's dogma is called by the decadents Progress.

The decadents are consistent when they call Bartholomé a modern, one of the most modern, and hail his work as the art of the future. It is logically on a line with the "progress" and

"modernism" of a Huysmans, Maeterlinck, Bourget, and other New Catholics. But what is to be said about the city of Paris having this unctuous work erected in Père Lachaise? Had the Moscow Duma done it, everybody would have found it natural. But the Paris Municipal Council! This society of boasting freethinkers which has banished the Cross from the schools and churchyards, hounded the Sisters of Mercy from the hospitals, has the dogma of the Resurrection preached officially!

That is the highly interesting ethical side of this work. It reveals monumentally the confusion in the donkey-heads of the self-styled freethinkers. That they should decree the honour of a public site to a composition of a dogmatically religious character is proof of crass ignorance of their own standpoint, or else of their hypocrisy. I prefer to assume it to be their ignorance.

XV

JEAN CARRIÈS

THE little palace, the charming edifice which was already attractive as the abode of the Dutuit collection, has received a new value and consecration. A room has been opened in it, in which a great artist reveals himself, whose acquaintance, though not indeed quite exhaustively, but nevertheless very profoundly and familiarly, can be made only here in the wide world.. This artist is Jean Carriès, who died in 1894, at the early age of thirty-nine, after a marvellously planned life. To this pattern life, as expressive as any whose story Vasari has told, belonged a patron who kept what is vulgar away from him, who saved him from care and anxiety, who made his mind easy as to his influence on contemporaries and posterity, and, to a certain extent, symbolically personified his fame for him. This useful part was played by a certain Herr Hoentschel, who acquired most of Carriès's works. He has now presented them to the City of Paris, and, by so doing, rendered the opening of the

Carriès Museum possible. In return his name has been engraved in letters of gold on the marble slab which declares the purpose to which the room has been assigned, beside that of his trusted artist—no mean satisfaction to a high-aiming ambition.

Carriès was the son of a poor artisan of Lyons. He seemed destined, as he thought, to follow his father's avocation; but the fairies had conferred gifts on the proletarian's child in his cradle: sense of beauty and power of design. He was for a short time apprenticed to an artisan; then he taught himself to be an artist. He pursued no beaten tracks, and could follow no guides. He was left to his own sense of locality for finding out a path, and he made wide *détours*, but, nevertheless, raised himself safely to the highest peaks. Phenomena delighted him as form and colour. His pleasurable sensations sufficed to impel him to utterance in sculpture and painting; he satisfied his delight in form by modelling in clay, his delight in colour by enamelling.

For nearly two decades he sought, strove, and created in solemn loneliness. Only the patron whom he luckily found at the right time glanced over his shoulders when at work with bated breath. His reverential admiration expressed itself in a convincing manner by the helpful gesture of the open hand. Some intimate comrades were allowed to witness the lofty drama of an exquisite development. His studio, however, was far removed from the noise of the

market. The heat of praise and the icy breath of blame brought no disturbance into the even climate in which his talent was powerfully developing. Quiet and collected, he worked on until he saw his inner vision realised before him. Then he said: "It is good"; and allowed a great Sabbath to follow the hard days of creation. Absolutely unknown to wider circles, in 1892 he stepped before the public for the first time in the Champs de Mars with a rich exhibition. An hour after the doors of the "Salon" were open, he was famous. In the history of modern art, never before had such an impressive revelation been observed. There was no hesitation, no vacillation. Artists, critics, connoisseurs made pilgrimage, as if guided by the shepherds' star in the bodeful procession of the three kings of the East to Carriès' glass cases and pedestals, bent their knees, and brought incense and myrrh. His countrymen shouted for joy: "France has one great painter more." Thoughtful persons looked at one another and said softly: "The world is by one beauty richer."

All asked: "Who is the man?" for they insisted, in their amazement, that nobody knew him. And then they found out that Jean Carriès was a finished artist, a man of thirty-seven, who lived in the provinces, and had, up to that time, sought nothing but the satisfaction of himself. He had not wasted the tiniest little spark of his Promethean strength in the vulgar melodrama of fighting for success. His tragedies were the great struggle with

the resistance of material, and doubt of himself, and they had been played in secret in his soul. And now was pressed upon him that for which candidates strive convulsively, and how often fruitlessly! The Champs de Mars Society elected him with acclamation to full membership, and dispensed him from the probationary period as associate. The State asked for specimens to serve as models for its museums, and tied the red ribbon to the buttonhole of his blouse. What was purchasable was bought up by the ladies of Arc de Triomphe quarter during the first days of the "Salon." A rich American lady, Mrs Winnareta Singer, commissioned him to carry out the model of his fantastic "door." The artists fêted him by a banquet in his honour—a homage which at that time was not lavished as was the case afterwards. Mdlle. Luise Breslau painted his portrait, which is now exhibited in his room in the midst of his works, and showed his admirers a still youngish man of noble beauty, with a Lucius Verus head, the Cæsarean nobility of which was not in the least injured by a careless slouched hat. I do not know whether Mdlle. Breslau has flattered her model or has been honest, for I never saw Carriès himself; but in the picture he appears, as one would like to fancy him, every inch a gentleman, on whom his careless working-dress has the effect of a disguise which does not for a second deceive as to the rank of the wearer. A delicate, slender figure; wonderfully active, inspired hands; deep, searching eyes that

seem to sight and fix a dream-picture hovering away; soft, narrow cheeks, on which uneasy shadows play, under the short beard; a thoughtful, white forehead over which an abundance of light brown curls falls. How many women may have indulged in dreams before this likeness, for it fascinates even men!

The homage received had no intoxicating effect on him; the activity of the Press concerning him did not infect him with the smallest beginnings of conceit. He withdrew from the curiosity of the world by quietly returning to his provincial nest, where, day and night, he stoked his flaming furnace, and mixed his acids and metallic salts; suffered under frequent disappointments, and enjoyed rare delights in the success of a firing or a coloured enamel. In the ensuing year one looked in vain for him in the "Salon," and not quite two years after his unparalleled triumph that came like a bomb, men learnt that he had died.

His life had ended artistically. Carriès disappeared ere his locks grew scanty or grey. Beautifully and noiselessly, like another Euphorion, he soared away from the admiration of his contemporaries in the full lustre of his fame; and his works, through his early death, experienced the enhanced value of the Sibylline books. We may call him happy, for in this room we feel that he had given his best when he died. With a longer life he might have gone astray, for there is no lack of short openings to false paths. Very likely he

would have repeated himself many times, and that would have detracted from the dainty charm of rarity which, besides their noble beauty, is peculiar to his works.

He unites in himself two different and equally perfect artists: the sculptor and the art-potter. Each tilled a tiny field; but with what intensity! And what harvests they conjured out of it! As sculptor, curiously enough, the whole human figure in its Olympian nudity failed to interest him. He has not on a single occasion sought to represent the body's Paradisaic beauty. He confines himself, apparently on principle, to head and hands; but these are surpassed by nothing, and equalled only by little, that all the centuries since the Renaissance have produced. I pass respectfully, yet without deeper feeling, by his busts of Velasquez and Franz Hals. They are merely exercises of his hand, perhaps only pastimes. They seem theatrical by reason of the accentuation of the costume. In their countenances the absence of the model is too evident. But beside them the busts of Gustave Courbet, of Jules Breton, especially of Carriès himself, operate with unequalled authority. They live before us; they think, and they reveal themselves. In looking at them we involuntarily call to mind the old stories of the earthen statues which a magician filled with the breath of life in order that they might serve him.

The same impression, only intensified and deepened, is felt before the busts of the "Young Girl with the

Drooping Head," the "Dutch Wife," and the "Dutch Maiden." This young Dutch girl is particularly adorable. I do not consider I am exaggerating when I say she ranks as a sister, though in a different technique, with the "Mona Lisa." The maiden's innocent eyes, which have no presentiment of the passionate secrets of Gioconda; the graceful, reposeful countenance, that seems wondering blissfully over her own blooming youth and the loveliness of the world, charm us like the miracle of a spring day. Similar joy streams from his sleeping and waking little children. The softness of this baby flesh, the delicate texture of this plump, warm, satin skin, are unattainable. Carriès discovered a new technique for the life of the outer skin, the results of which, in his hands, are amazing. He gives a delicate, perpendicular creasing to the membrane of the lips, and marks it off from the skin of the face in a discreet but firm line, so that it imparts the illusion of seeing swelling lip-red framed in mother-of-pearl. The mouths of his women are weirdly seductive. It would really not surprise me if semi-fools and lunatics were to pounce upon these ravishing lips with eager kisses.

Even when Carriès is not idealising, but is reproducing portraits true to nature, he imparts to them an inwardness which seems unfathomable, like that of a deep soul. For this let any one only look at the "Bust of an Unknown Lady" and "Mother Callamand"—the former a cold, proud patrician,

perhaps the Clara Vere de Vere, in whom Tennyson admires "that repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere"; the latter a splendid old nun, probably an abbess, a sturdy, peasant woman who is conscious of her high rank in the convent, and in whose broad face goodness and severity, healthy power and enthusiastic spirituality, are mingled. This gift of filling the subject with inward life is the strongest element in Carriès' genius. In a series of works which were exhibited in the Champs de Mars Salon, and are, unfortunately, not to be found in the room of the Little Palace, this cropped up overpoweringly. There were fabulous animals, monsters, which a luxuriant imagination had invented—toads, frogs, lizards of gigantic size, in positions humanly conceived, the female reposing on the breast of the male, whose eyes are closing in rapture, and delicately embraced by his paws. One might think they would have a grotesque effect; by no means. Their anthropomorphism brought them in danger of derision; but the genius of Carriès was here directly revealed. The quasi-human, emotional life manifested in their attitudes made them pathetic. The toads' legs were not seen; their mouths and goggle eyes were not seen. People saw only the unmistakable trait of love, and were moved by this exhibition of the primitive feeling—the same in man and beast—which holds the world together.

Perhaps it is in accordance with this gift of spiritualisation that Carriès never worked with marble,

rarely with bronze, but, as a rule, and preferably, with potter's clay. Stone and metal, however painfully correctly they render, with every stroke of the thumb and impression of the finger, the clay model, seem to him too hard for the inexpressible tenderness which he wants to express. Only one material satisfies him—the one which possesses the softness of flesh and of nerve-plasm. He can knead only clay so that it retains his lightest vibrations. There is something about his busts of burnt clay that reminds me of phonographic cylinders. There is soul-melody inscribed in them in invisible lines, and, set in our mood, they again begin to give forth sounds, and to repeat the mood of him who composed them.

The ability with trembling fingers to coax emotions into soft clay and to render them plastic seems to be something divine. It did not satisfy Carriès. Anybody else would have found the limits of his genius enviably wide; to him they appeared narrow, and he tried to pass beyond them. He wanted to create monumental pieces of sculpture, and he constructed his "Martyrdom of St Fidelis" and his astounding "Gate." The "Martyrdom" is a group, composed of the kneeling martyr in monastic habit and the executioner behind him, raising his armed fist to deal the murderous blow. In the details the artist is here, too, distinctly Carriès, *i.e.*, the executioner is of superb cruelty—a fine specimen of the family of brutalised legionaries

or torturers who, in mediæval *relievi* of the Way of the Cross, scourge Christ at the pillar and nail Him to the Cross. Taken as a whole, the master's art is a failure; the group has no line. The drama cannot be seen from any side, that is, the gesture of the executioner, with its menace of death, and the countenance of the martyr who is awaiting his last trial, cannot be comprehended at once in a single glance.

If this group is weak, the "Gate" is a complete failure. He imagined a gateway with a depressed keel-arch top, divided by an intervening pillar into two gates. The pillars are covered with grotesque masks and mythical animals from top to bottom. The arch of the gate is formed by a dragon, in the gaping jaws of which stands a noble lady. The separate masks and monsters scintillate with spirit, fancy, and humour. In richness and variety of invention, and in depth of humour, I unhesitatingly place these heads far above Germain Pilon's Pont Neuf masks. The contrast, too, between the fearless maiden standing in the animal's jaws, full of quiet self-confidence, and the hideous beast, is of pregnant symbolism. The work is, nevertheless, an aberration, as a whole. The masks and monsters have no organic connection with the gate, either constructively, or in accordance with the meaning. They are simply stuck on. And the gateway itself is an insoluble riddle. Where should it lead to? To a lunatic asylum, a museum of caricatures, or a

carnival ballroom? Or should it mean "the abstract door," the door pure and simple, without the purpose of an entrance into a building? The poor, great artist consecrated years of his life to this prodigy, and never saw that he had wasted them.

The decorator amused himself in devising unheard-of enamels. He modelled vessels of smooth, supple plant-forms—calabashes, melons, cucumbers, mamillaria-cactuses, bulging or fallen in, smoothly swelling, or warty and shrivelled, whimsically dinted like a thin copper-plate, wantonly hammered, or lumpy and swollen. And over these whimsicalities, which show an incredible mastery of the material, he poured glazes which look so fat and moist that they seem to flow still, viscous and languid. Many are purple, like half-curdled blood; others white and rich, like fresh cream; and others like coloured fruit juices; but many a time we think we see thick matter and brains in frightful discharges; and on some vases the enamel imitates the lichens which overrun the bark of trees in spots, grooves, and bands. And when Carriès has done enough with these glazes, which remind us of opalescent life-saps, he tries diversity in glazes of gold, silver, coral, and precious stones, which change his stoneware phials into splendid vessels from a treasury of the Thousand and One Nights.

As a sculptor in clay Jean Carriès stands as high as Della Robbia; in details—in forming lips and cheeks — far higher than the latter; and, as a

decorator, no one can be compared with him, not even Bernhard de Palissy—to mention a name by which his rank may be estimated. Carriès is not a man of to-day, and fashion lies far below the height on which he works. The wretched æsthetic-babbling coteries of the period cannot get hold of him, or make use of him for the senseless but furiously bellowed catchwords peculiar to the polemics of the day. He is not a modernist, not a classic, not an impressionist; he is not this, he is not that, but, he is, quite simply, himself. He works up what he has learnt in his own person; he invents his own, and always gives himself. He creates from his own soul, without looking to right or left. In him there is no school, no tendency, and no straining, but only feeling, personality, and the service of beauty. Yet it is through these great artistic natures, which belong to no time, that the line of development in art proceeds, and not through the pitiful *homunculi*, whom Faust caricatures artificially engender in advertisement-retorts.

XVI

WORKS OF ART AND ART CRITICISMS

DURING the last years the relation of public opinion to works of art has been repeatedly discussed, and on each occasion with great warmth.

The discussion, in the main, is concerned with two questions which are independent even if they are connected with each other, viz.: Has the public a right to judge a work of art, or must it renounce its own opinion and simply bow before the verdict of specialists? Have not all, or, at any rate, many, works of art that have subsequently gained undisputed recognition by the world, been strongly opposed and rashly rejected on their first appearance in public?

In 1899 intellectual Berlin was excited about a pertinent question. Professor Franz Stuck, the Munich painter, had obtained a commission for a wall-painting for the German House of Parliament. When the artist sent in his sketch, there came a shriek of most unpleasant astonishment from the judging committee of the Reichstag, and a member,

Dr Lieber, expressed in public session, in very strong language, his absolutely unmixed feelings in respect of the work.

The Munich friends of the insulted artist, to their credit, made common cause for him. They published an armour-clad protest, in which they characterised the members as "laymen unable to judge," and reproached them with impertinence because they "thought they understood everything better than learned specialists did."

I expressed my views then in the *Deutsche Revue* of this opposition between specialists and laymen in plastic art, and I ask permission to repeat here in brief the essential part of my arguments.

Who are the experts? From the general drift of the objection on the part of the Munich artists it was to be concluded that they must be the practising artists, the critics, perhaps also the professors of art-history. Let him who does not belong to these three sacrosanct categories steal weeping away from the confederation of experts. And even among the critics there is probably a selection to be made. The critic who praises the artist is to him undoubtedly an expert; the critic who blames him shows himself incontestably as a *bourgeois*, and in intelligence stands almost as low as a common University professor who does not teach art-history.

All this is foolish talk. In matters of art, if, indeed, any one can, only an individual—never a category—can lay claim to the rank of expert.

Is, perhaps, the practising artist the expert? He is not so necessarily. There are people whose vocation in life, or, speaking more correctly, whose usual occupation, is painting, but whose painting is a continuous insult to art. One may be a professional painter, and yet a pitiful dauber, and commit such impudent sins against good taste that every non-expert must recognise this at the first glance, and be provoked at it. Or is the critic the expert? It would be a good joke to assert that.

Nearly every verdict on a work or an artist committed to paper by a professional critic is opposed by another verdict, also by a professional critic which says the exact contrary. Which of the two critics is an expert? Which of the two has a right to demand that people should bow before his verdict, because he habitually makes phrases about works of art in public? What proof of capacity do the papers as a rule demand of the *beaux esprits* to whom they entrust art criticism? He who has observed dozens of times how ambitious young newspaper-writers, on their first report of an opening of an Exhibition, or after forming a coffee-house acquaintance with an artist thirsting for advertisement, suddenly discover in their minds a gift for art criticism, and have subsequently cultivated this with brazen self-consciousness; he will feel highly amused when people try to crack up art-critics as experts, simply because they exercise this function. Even professors of the history of art, even directors of

museums, are not, by reason of their office, experts in the sense of possessing very profound understanding of art. The academic study of art-history lays the chief stress on the facts belonging to the history of life and morals, which need have nothing in common with the understanding of art. One may make in archives the most beautiful discoveries for the biography of Leonardo, and not feel a single one of his pictures. And as regards superintendents of museums, it is possible to relate the funniest anecdotes about their fallibility, and oppose to them simple connoisseurs, also "non-experts," who have formed splendid private collections.

The truth is there are no experts in questions of art, as there are, perhaps, in questions of technique. Expert knowledge presupposes the existence of fixed rules, of a canon. There can be no talk of this in the fine arts. The only element of painting that, at least to a certain point—to the point where the individual conception and, with it, really artistic interest first begins—is under objective rules, is drawing, both from its figure as well as its perspective side. This element can be taught, learnt, and faithfully measured, for nature furnishes the scales. On the other hand, the colour element in painting is subject to absolutely no canon, but at best to subjective feeling, at worst to a fashion of the period. Every artificial colour is a convention; for, as I have argued more particularly in my studies of Sisley and Pissarro, none can truly reproduce

the real colours of natural phenomena, and it is wholly a consequence of education and habit, when the polychrome of oil-painting or water-colour more easily excites in us the illusion of colouristic truth than the monochrome of the two-colour or of black and white art. One decade paints in dark, another in bright colours. One school likes powerful, another subdued harmonies of colour. Præ-Raphaelites imitate the tone of old frescoes and faded Gobelins. Puvis de Chavannes took the colour out of his pictures by a transparent white-wash, pale as the moon. Besnard, on the contrary, discharges fire-works, without caring in the least if the mad tumults of colour that he loved are possible or not in nature. Carrière envelops his figures in a dense mist. Cottet has, very recently, brought into fashion the black and dark shadings which go right back from Ribot and Prudhon to Velasquez and Ribera. Who is right? Who is wrong? Here everything is feeling, and consequently subjectivity. Of drawing, one can in all cases say (and by photography irrefutably prove), it is correct, or it is wrong. Colour does not admit of a similar verdict. All that can be said of it is: "I like it," or "I don't like it."

For beauty in art, in the present condition of the perception theory, the physiology and psychology of pleasurable feelings, there is no other standard than subjective feeling. This is dependent on the greater or the less sensitiveness of the nervous

system, on its perceptivity of slight qualitative and quantitative differences in the excitation of the senses, and, therefore, on an essentially congenital constitution of the organism. The gift of receiving strong impressions from works of art can be developed by practice, by the frequent and attentive study of works of art of different kinds; but it cannot be attained artificially by any effort or any amount of study.

What, then, mean the expressions expert and layman, when applied to æsthetic verdicts? The classes of society, in which preponderating occupation with intellectual problems, continued through several generations, has refined the nervous system and rendered it more sensitive, produce, as a rule, individuals with a feeling for art. These live in large towns, in the centres of art life, they travel, and visit numerous collections, and thus their feeling for art is developed into a wide understanding of it, that studies works of art from the historical standpoint. These are the real experts, so far as there can be any talk of such in æsthetic questions. But these classes of society, these individuals are only to the very smallest extent painters or professional critics, *i.e.*, critics writing for the public. To wish to exclude them, on that account, from the expert class is ludicrous presumption of certain persons who, by their own authority, confer this title on themselves. The educated public—the intellectual *élite*—has not the least reason for allowing their

opinion on works of art to be dictated to them by painters who may well be daubers or crack-brained fools, or by critics who may be ignorant phrase-mongers.

So much for the first question as to the fitness of the so-called layman for criticising works of art.

The second question, as to the changes in public opinion about certain works and their authors, is considerably more complex.

It is not to be gainsaid that such changes have occurred, but they are much rarer than those would like to make us believe who, from instances of pretended later conversions of originally rebellious taste on the part of contemporaries, hope to succeed in proving that the ugly is beautiful and the beautiful is ugly.

The names which were most often cited to prove the incompetency of contemporary judgment on works of art of modern tendency are most unfortunately chosen. Millet, Rousseau, and Corot were looked upon by their contemporaries as smearers and daubers; Manet was laughed to scorn, Böcklin pronounced a fool, his friends advised Hans Thoma to change his name, etc., etc. In order not to go to too great length I will now leave Thoma and Böcklin out of the discussion. But the others! That Rousseau and, especially, Corot passed for smearers and daubers among their contemporaries is simply not true; on the contrary, justice was at once done to them for their technique.

Even their most unscrupulous opponents admitted that they were draughtsmen and colourists. What they were reproached with was only the alleged intellectual insignificance of their work. People remained under the influence of classical landscape with ancient buildings or ruins, and a decoration of ideal figures such as Poussin brought into fashion, and Claude Lorrain cultivated. A landscape without nymphs or shepherds in Arcadian dress, without temples or figures of Hermes, seemed empty, insignificant, ignoble. The majority had as yet no taste for the witchery of mood in wood and field. Why, Corot himself was not clear about what was new and determinative in his own art, for in some of his grandest pictures Dryads dance, beneath young-leaved trees immersed in the mists of spring-tide, the most correct sham-classic square dance. It was only in his last period that he renounced this ancient magic. Rousseau had broken away from tradition more resolutely, and was on that account less esteemed than Corot by contemporaries whose education had been perverted by precedent. But the worst that was said against the two did not go beyond the assertion that they were "vulgar."

The case of Manet is, of course, different. People have roughly disowned this painter; but it is absolutely false to talk about a change in popular opinion about him. Those who "laughed at" him thirty-five years ago, laugh at him in precisely the same way now. In my study of the Caillebotte

room in the Luxembourg Museum I have alluded to the angry protest of Gérôme and Gustave Moreau against admitting the works of Manet and his friends into a State collection. If the laughers are not so numerous, and if their laughter is not so ringing as in the "Olympia" year, it is simply because the man is absolutely done with. Only a few stragglers still talk nonsense about Manet, men who have missed the connection of "the last train," and some grey-beards in their dotage—the barricade warriors of the "Salon"—who fancy they are still breathing the gunpowder smoke of 1863, and will keep up to the day of their death, which cannot be far off, the happy, exultant mood of the beer-evenings at the Café de Madrid. None among the pillars of young and living art recognises Manet as his ancestor. People know now that he was a discovery of Zola's. The sharp turn in the development of art in the last thirty years of the last century was inaugurated, not by him, but by others. Courbet introduced realism which has nowadays shrunk to nothing. Monet kindled "Free Light," and that was a very great service which, unfortunately, is also no longer fully acknowledged, for the latest race of Parisian painters again abandons joyful brightness and goes back to the gloomy, oppressive tones of "the 'fifties." Manet, however, found nothing and invented nothing, and he owes the noise that was, for a period, heard about him only to his relations with a devoted friend, who vindicated his own tendency by that of

the painter, and said of him all the good which he thought of himself.

The change in taste from one generation to another is a general law which I proved in the *Neue Freie Presse* of 9th August 1896, and afterwards developed and established in the Florence *Rivista Moderna* (No. 3, of 1898, "*Le alternanze del gusto*"). I strongly believe in the prevalence of this law; but if particular cases are followed in detail, it is recognised that many an apparent change in the appreciation of a work or an artist rests on an illusion of the senses.

To return to the subject of Manet. An awful din arose at the first appearance of "Olympia." Friends and foes waged wild battle with each other. Each panted for the blood of the other. Twenty years later the picture that had been so hotly contested was hung in the State Museum, which roused fresh, but considerably weaker, opposition. Finally, however, no one any longer protested against its presence in the picture-gallery, and now a sophist might assert: "There, you see! The picture which was once laughed at is, thirty years afterwards, acknowledged as a classical work of art."

Gently! That is by no means proved. The fight has ceased only because it has become objectless. Who nowadays waxes warm against Manet? The man, you know, is dead, not only as a human being, but also as an artist. He no longer troubles any one. He no longer exercises any bad influence.

He no longer even poisons popular taste, for it is sufficient to observe the visitors to the Luxembourg, to see that they pass by the "Olympia" with laughter, and shrugging of the shoulders, or else with astonishment and shakes of the head. If a belated corybant raises a shout of "Hail, Manet!" he is merrily allowed to shout. It is superfluous to shout him down, for nobody listens to him. The truth is that the taste for Manet is not in the least changed. People find the "Olympia" every whit as repulsive nowadays as it was thirty years ago; but they no longer say so with a loud voice and with the veins about their temples swollen, because, generally, people no longer stop before its mouldy ugliness.

If you examine very carefully, you will generally find that the various appraisements of particular works in a new generation do not originate from later generations regarding it differently than did contemporaries, but from their generally no longer viewing it with the same eyes. Let us only bear in mind always that the vast majority of mankind have no feeling of their own for artistic beauty. They act as if they had some feeling only because they know that a feeling for art is pronounced to be a mark of higher culture. We cannot rate too highly the part played in art idiocy by sham culture, pose, and self-deception—or, shall we say, more indulgently, by auto-suggestion? Honest confession of obtuseness to art is hardly found in any but the

two poles of humanity — on the extreme summit and at the lowest antipode. A man must be either a rustic lout or an overtopping genius like Prince Bismarck, to confess that he can make nothing of the fine arts. The culture-Philistine never has this courage. He always pretends that he finds luxurious enjoyment in the contemplation of art. This culture-Philistine always repeats what has been said to him; he admires where the Baedeker-star prescribes admiration. And he is, in many cases, not even dishonest. He persuades himself that he feels what he regards it as his duty as an educated man to feel; and he really comes to feel it in the end, thanks to this self-persuasion. All the effects of art depend on suggestion, so far as they are not concerned with the most absolutely primitive and undifferentiated sensual excitations. On one who has a genuine feeling for art the work of art itself conveys the suggestion, which is followed by feelings of pleasure. On the average men, whose blunt nerves take no impression from the work of art itself, the Baedeker-star — the label — exercises this suggestion. If a work of art has once got the reputation of excellence, either because it deserves it, or because it acquired it from a dishonest, busy, bold, and swaggering clique, the next generation of Philistines in art does not test it further, but takes it as something accepted. The clique can then state triumphantly that the work they have

puffed is a success. But has it on that account acquired real success?

The number of free, strong men is extremely small, who have the courage, desire, and ability to examine the veracity of traditional labels; but there is a frightful devastation every time that such an idol-destroyer and overthrower of altars breaks into the Temple of Renown, which is guarded by that dragon, the Good Old Way. People are then convinced about the quantity of plaster rubbish which has been smuggled into proximity with real marble and gold-and-ivory work in the semi-darkness of the sanctuary, and has enjoyed for hundreds, perhaps for thousands of years, the same veneration as the wonder-working revelations of genius.

But suppose we conceive in our mind's eye the extremely rare case in which a real masterpiece was misjudged at first, and, later on, was greeted with acclamations. In this case the question, as a rule, is not of lack of understanding, but of lack of sense of proportion. The contemporary age which blames, and the succeeding age which praises, are both right, *i.e.*, they do not praise and blame the same thing, and the divergent appraisement of the work is simply due to the fact that contemporaries like to dwell on the faults and overlook the excellencies, whilst latter generations neglect the faults and regard only the excellencies. The contemporaries were biassed in severity, their successors

are biassed in indulgence. Ideal justice is not of this world. But faults remain faults even in the ages that come after, and excellencies, too, were excellencies even in the period of their origin; and it is jugglery and forgery when people interpret the change in appraisement as if a later generation had admired as a merit that which an earlier generation had stigmatised as a fault. Just one example to illustrate these propositions: Millet is said to have passed for "a dauber and smearer." Now, his contemporaries who blamed him used no such harsh expression. They said only that Millet drew incorrectly and painted carelessly, and those with a real feeling for art notice exactly the same thing to-day, only they say it no longer, unless the question is expressly put to them. On the other hand, his contemporaries, too, noticed his deep moral earnestness, his warm human feeling, the touching simplicity of his style, which we prize so highly in Millet to-day. But they were not inclined to forgive him his defects in execution on account of these intellectual merits, whilst we take his weakness in form into the bargain on account of the feeling it contains. These weaknesses, however, are there to-day precisely as they were thirty years ago, and he who fails to see them is guilty of presumption if he passes a verdict on pictures.

Taking them altogether, the works and artists that were overvalued by contemporaries are far more numerous than those that were underestimated at

the beginning. And even in the extremely few cases of the latter category, the injustice of contemporaries did not, as a rule, take the form of violent opposition, but that of indifference. Contemporaries did not gainsay their beauty; but it escaped their attention, because this was claimed by other fashions and styles. No work of plastic art that is nowadays accepted without dispute was rejected, when it appeared, with such anger as certain products of the "Secession" are at the present day.

That is natural. The conditions of art production were half a century ago absolutely different to what they are now. The artist gave his personality full scope, and sought to please only a few customers of rank, without troubling himself about the people at large. To-day he wants to excite a sensation at any price, and he looks, for this end, not into himself, but about himself. By creating he is not satisfying his impulse to give form and shape, but his hunger for success.

Vain *amour propre*, swaggering, conceited vanity and cunning "pushfulness" are the motives that far too often guide the artist's brush or chisel. The coarse vulgarity of the means corresponds with the coarse vulgarity of the motives and aims. One must make a sensation, and that is attained most easily by a rowdy rebellion against taste, truth, and healthy human intelligence. If he annoys his contemporaries, the ruthless advertiser finds his

account more surely than if he praised them. Only he who startles dares hope to be noticed in our present huge exhibitions with their three thousand numbers. That is why the unscrupulous competitor works with the object of startling, and only with that object. His natural allies are writers who seek by aggressive criticism to satisfy the same hysterical impulse towards sensation as he, and the snobs who hope to justify their claim to be un-Philistine by pretending to discover and appreciate hidden beauties, where the thick-headed majority of their fellow-men observe and condemn only unblushing outrages on the sense of beauty.

The necessity for creating a sensation has arisen only in our times of over-production in all fields of intellectual creation, and of frightfully murderous competition for success. In the earlier days of art it played hardly any part at all. On this account it is fallacious to try to deduce from the, after all, extremely rare romances of works, originally misjudged but afterwards recognised, in the past, an argument in favour of certain creations of the present day, which a large proportion of educated men rejects, not because they do not understand, them, but because they understand them only too well.

Let men only have the quiet courage not to allow themselves to be put out of countenance; they will carry their point even before posterity.

XVII

MY OWN OPINION

THERE is hardly anything which I hate so cordially as opportunistic criticism, which, in respect of phenomena in art-production presented in a noisy and pretentious way, affecting to signify modernity and progress, does not honestly take a side, but with the cunning foresight of the bat in the fable attempts to come to an understanding with both the opposing armies, of the birds and of the mice. Criticism that openly wears the uniform of a pronounced movement in art can be put up with. The enemy of the movement fights the criticism and the movement at the same time. It shares all the fates of its banner; it is in the danger, and it may be in the victory. If the movement for which it carries weapons succumbs, it gets the worst of it too, and experiences the treatment accorded to the vanquished. It has to lay down its weapons of criticism, falls into contempt, and has no longer the possibility of devastating art life, of perplexing artists, and oppressing those who enjoy art. Insufferable, on the other hand, are the

clever, the unprejudiced, the eclectics, the smooth civil sneerers who praise, yet with faintness, who blame, yet with a saving clause, who carry in their lips such well-known and rather good phrases as: "Certainly, there is some exaggeration here, but the peculiar style is not to be misjudged": "It is certainly no finished creation, but the work, nevertheless, contains some promise": "This is not exactly a work, you know, which one could recommend for imitation, yet there is much to be learnt from it": "It is the new wine in Goethe's *Faust* that is acting so absurdly, but still perhaps it will yield a good vintage." These people who talk so sweetly are those who really poison the springs of public taste. Thanks to them, movements which ought to stand without the pale of the law enjoy a sort of equal justification, as it were, of the æsthetic, historico-artistic copyright. Their mask of benevolence, justice, and toleration gains them the confidence of the irresolute, who, left to their own feeling, would recognise, at once, in certain works, either a gross impropriety of the shameless sort, or an indubitable manifestation of insanity, yet through the cheap phrases of opportunistic critics, become doubtful of themselves and say: "If such sober-minded scholars as this and that critic constantly find something to recognise in this stuff, I am perhaps wrong to condemn it at once."

Moderate feelings are much more widespread than extreme feelings. They are the normal product

of the nervous system in civilised men; to the great majority of half-coloured, faded grey men subdued colours only are sympathetic; violent and shrill colours may amuse it; but, in its innermost being, it feels instinctively drawn only to the lukewarm ones. It believes them; and on their information, on their irresponsible recommendation, gives to the most openly rascally art-firms the credit through which alone they can hold out for a while.

And these critical warpers of justice are not assailable. They always play an imposing part, and are always right. If an objectionable movement lasts—and there are aberrations which have held their ground for at least a generation—then they triumph modestly, for they have been among its first heralds and have "recognised at once the sound kernel in the first strange shell." If the imbecility is as such patent to all, and disappears amidst the derisive laughter of the intelligent, they triumph again, only somewhat more self-consciously, for they have "not let themselves be dazzled by novelty, and have pointed out its weaknesses, and worked strenuously at its defeat." Thus every adventure in art life, every campaign in criticism, be its issue what it may, increases their esteem; and the longer they continue their course, which is so mischievous to the community, the more blindly the multitude yields to their leadership, and the greater devastation they are guilty of

through their dishonourable exercise of their office of guardians in matters of art.

I well know how this opportunism in criticism arises. It is the result of the co-operation of the basest and most despicable intellectual qualities. I find its causes in the dull feeling for the beautiful which renders weak and indistinct all reactions from artistic influences, and suffers neither delight nor irritation to arise: in the cowardly fear of man and pitiful adulation, which aims at injuring no one and only thinks of keeping a retreat open for itself; finally in common vanity, which prefers to please a crowd of gaping boobies rather than the select few, and the flattering, though so cheap, reputation of being "very intellectual," to the responsibility of crude performance of duty. The favourite word by which the opportunistic critics compound with every artistic confidence trick is "development." If the clairvoyant monitor utters the cry of "decay and degeneracy," the opportunists reply, "buds of a new and splendid bloom." They love to appeal to the history of art. That is right. When the Masolinos and Masaccios sprang up, the last pupils of Gaddi and Orcagna whimpered, "Now there is an end of painting." But what was at an end was Byzantine art filled by Cimabue and Giotto with some fresh life, and what began was the ever glorious *Cinquecento*. And much nearer to us: when Delacroix emancipated himself from the colour rules of David's pupils, and broke out into a downright exultation of red and

blue and purple; when Corot, Rousseau, and Dupré set homely nature viewed with lyric eyes in the place of Poussin's classic landscape degenerated into dial painting; then earnest voices likewise accused the innovators of digging the grave of art, and yet we know nowadays that Delacroix and Corot were by no means the wild anarchists which the Academicians held them to be, and that an uninterrupted line of development extends from David and Prudhon through Géricault to Delacroix, and from Nicholas Poussin and Claude Lorrain through Joseph Vernet, and even through Watteau to Corot—a line which was unnoticed by contemporaries, yet one which we now see clearly. It is the dodge of an unscrupulous attorney to quote these examples when treating of the art of a Puvis de Chavannes, an Aman-Jean, the Prae-Raphaelites, *pointillistes*, *vermicellistes*, and *pipists*. There are sure marks of recognition by which the authorised can be distinguished from the unauthorised, the true from the false, development from retrogression, and buds from gall-nuts. A movement which, indeed, resolutely diverges from the taste dominant at a given time, though striving to approach nature, need not, but may, have a future; and he who does not suffer from stiffness in the joints will not, as a matter of course and on principle, refuse to follow it with benevolent curiosity. If, however, the new movement departs from nature, one may confidently say "it leads to nothing." If an independent method which strives after personal

expression reveals itself in a revolutionary effort—however peculiarly, nay, perversely, it might impress—the intelligent man will not condemn, but wait to see if something living comes from the attempt. If the practised eye, however, recognises, in the peculiarity, either a cunning imitation or a cold-blooded, intentional oddity, then one may confidently pronounce the death sentence, for it contains in itself no germs whatever of development. The only two eternal sources of art are, and will be, feeling for nature and personality. Fidelity to nature and honesty produce living creations. Unnaturalness and affectation are marks of decay. He who ever holds fast to these simple dicta will hardly ever run the risk of mistaking a Will-o'-the-Wisp for a light-house, or what is morally, if not practically, a more serious error, of treading under foot an insignificant chrysalis with the living and beautiful butterfly it enshrines.

Even of the manifestations of insanity of crack-brained painters, of the hoaxes of tricky strugglers for success, and the whims of childishly immature and childishly careless people living from hand to mouth, who have sprung up in the last two or three decades, the good man's insinuating word of the "sound kernel," of the "tendencies, capable of development, to a new blossoming of art," has been spoken by the opportunistic of critics. Well, time has now given the answer to these verdicts, at any rate in regard to some of the movements for which

those prophets so benevolently predicted a glorious future. Fifteen or twenty years ago we saw in the Paris Salon, beside the expressionless fabrications of the usual daubing artisans—the "Mother's Joys," the "Young Lady at her Toilet," the "Oyster with Lemons," which constitute the stock in trade of all exhibitions of pictures—only two formulae appear in hundreds of repetitions: the vulgarly realistic, after the style, let us say—to mention a particular name — of Bastien Lepage, that pupil of Cabanel who had degenerated into an apostle of Courbet; and the pseudo-idealistic, after the model of Puvis de Chavannes. Workmen with brutalised countenances and greasy blouses, and unearthly figures in antiquated landscapes of chalky paleness, disputed the visitor's attention. A concreteness which did not spare us a single finger-nail in mourning, struggled for supremacy with a careless vagueness which styled itself "Abstraction" or "Synthesis," and produced only questionably schematic types. Whole walls exhibited unbroken rows of pictures which reminded us of the spectral ballet of the dead nuns in "Robert the Devil." Then we came to rooms where an unmixed company of rag-pickers, and night-men exercising their calling, of huzzies on the night-prowl, dung-carting stable-helps, and rapscallions at loggerheads, were quite at home. One of these movements, *i.e.*, painting in faint colours, has hardly a representative left; the other

—the art of vulgarity, meanness, and ugliness—only a dwindling few.

Here, then, we have two movements, to which "the intellectuals" have promised a future. One of them is as dead as a door-nail and buried, the other dying. He who did not let himself be cheated, or want to cheat others, could predict this outcome with certainty. Debased realism was a misunderstanding of the impulse towards truth displayed by the Manet School. This School held itself bound in conscience to record minutely even the unessential and the ugly accessories. Their limited imitators sought only that which was ugly and unessential in the world of phenomena. They thereby wandered far from the eternal aim of art—to excite an emotion by a work of art; for the mere imitation of a sight either actually indifferent or frankly repulsive can never excite an emotion. It was, therefore, easy to recognise that this tendency could not be lasting. The pseudo-idealism of Puvis de Chavannes showed the other infallible mark of morbidity, viz., impersonality and dishonesty. He tried, by an artificial bleaching of colours and a semi-transparent white-wash, to produce the effect of old and faded frescoes, in which their age of several hundred years is an element of æsthetic effect, by reason of the dim depictment of what is remote, dead and gone, and unknown; by reason of the longing they awake for what has for ever passed away and will never appear again. It was imitation; it was an attempt to

deceive. It was not the honest revelation of personality, but its disguise in a strange, historical costume. That had no future, and it could not last.

What justified the primitive naturalism of the pioneers, the convinced fervent service of truth, this survives victoriously every change in fashion, and, in fact, is developing strongly further. True naturalism, which grows enthusiastic for the poetry of unpretentious sights, and was the logical development of Rousseau's return to nature, and of Greuze's village stories inspired by that return (the "Village Bride," the "Father's Curse," the "Son's Punishment," etc.), has held its ground. On the other hand, loathsome painting, which is naturalism run mad, has been finally conquered, and the spectral painting of Puvis is about to follow it into oblivion.

These much-extolled tendencies have, then, no future in them. They were not buds which were to develop into blossom and fruit. They were wild suckers in which a generation of artists fruitlessly squandered its best strength, and which are now withered and blown away by the wind.

And that, too, will be the lot of other aberrations which have not yet quite run their riotous course. That may be predicted with quiet confidence, without any being taught by the future of another.

A great philosophical doctrine is deducible from these facts. All development—including that of art, which is a part of nature and a part of human nature, and obeys the common laws of nature—all develop-

ment is constant, and will be diverted from its logical course by no power. Its great procession always goes through a main street, and sudden turnings aside branch off only into blind alleys. Extreme forms have no stability; they remain individual monstrosities without issue. The strenuous life is always making efforts back towards the typical constitution of the species. In art this law may be found deplorable up to a certain point; for it is inimical to strong individualities, even to honest and justifiable ones, and favourable to the indifferent average, whilst in art the absolutely untypical individualities are full of charm. But, as things are, it is the iron law of development which no living thing can escape.

It is not easy to oppose successfully the opportunistic criticism which always professes to see, even in the maddest and silliest things, at any rate, "germs of artistic development"; but it is, nevertheless, a duty of subjective morality to do so. My verdict on many notabilities of fashion stands in sharp contrast to that which one generally hears and reads about them nowadays. He who does not suffer from the delusion of greatness, or a morbid distemper of contradiction, feels a position of this kind painfully. I have earnestly and conscientiously tried whether my adversaries were justified in demanding that I, as an individual, should submit to their huge majority. Well, I cannot concede this right to them. In dozens of instances, I have too closely observed how

the unanimity of contemporary opinion about an artist arises. It is enough for an artist to invent a whim and obstinately cling to it, without letting himself be put out by indifference, vexation, or scorn. Very soon some ass of a critic will come and explain this whim as an inspiration of genius. This he will do out of vanity, affectation of originality, or an itch for sensation. He will do it to give the impression that he is of more brilliant intellect than the common herd, and that he alone can appreciate a beauty which the Philistines stupidly pass by. If the humbug of a critic has some skill in coining phrases, a little perseverance, and a fairly sonorous pulpit, he will infallibly, in course of time, collect a congregation around him; for it is easy to gain adherents to a chapel which one designates as a place of worship for the intellectual *élite*, men of fine feelings, and those gifted with understanding. Provided that this sham lasts only a few years, it must needs triumph over all opposition. A young generation grows up which takes it for granted. No one puts to the test what has come into his possession, but takes it as a matter of course. It attains iron permanence. What was a paradox yesterday has attained the rights of dogma to-day by mere lapse of time. Busy pens now vie in outbidding each other in the elegance and wittiness of the phrases with which they express the prescribed admiration for the great man. If an independent person steps forward, and shows the worthlessness of the puffed up celebrity, the devotees of the little

chapel, which has grown into a great church, feel an honest indignation against the heretic. "How does this man dare to doubt, when we, who are certainly better and cleverer than he, piously believe." That is the history of every religion: when it is organised it becomes intolerant and endeavours to assert itself by means of violence. But, to the honour of mankind, there are, nevertheless, always independent spirits who will not let themselves be intimidated, and on whom authority does not impose. They test the dogma, and kick it away if it is not firmly based. The stake has not protected religion from these independent critics; still less can the Corybants of art-reporting guard a fashionable idol from them.

The right of criticising the views even of the most overwhelming majority must be maintained. A final proof in disputed questions regarding æsthetics is, I admit, not to be supplied. All artistic influence rests on suggestion. The work of art, itself and, originally, exercises the suggestion on a minority endowed with delicate sensibilities. On the great majority an opinion of others, delivered with firmness does so. The great majority of people admire one who is praised because it is suggested to them by his trumpeters that it is their duty to admire him. As a matter of fact, they feel the admiration, without being conscious that not the work of art has inspired them with it, but the enthusiastic gossip which they have read and heard about it. These people refuse to believe me when I tell them

that they are admiring something which is an aberration. The prior suggestion prevents them from tolerating a fresh suggestion from me. No one, however, can contest this so far as he is quite certain only of his own feelings. In art, effect is an infallible criterion, even if of only subjective value. If a man feels definitely as regards certain pictures that they are valueless and unmeaning, he has a right to express it as strongly and honestly as he feels it, even if millions declare that they discover all kinds of loveliness and depth of meaning in them. One will perhaps fail to convince a single creature, and will, as likely as not, long remain a preacher in the wilderness. But perhaps not for ever. The inventors of a fashionable *culte*, whom their selfishness obliges to stand up for their own work, will not remain in arms for ever and live. Those who worship after them have not the same strong, effective grounds, the originator's vanity, for defending that *culte* desperately. The snobs who thronged to it because it was the singularity and they were the exceptions, necessarily abandon it as it becomes commonplace and they find themselves in a vulgar majority. Then the uninfluenced art-conscience again faces the work; it becomes susceptible to the warning of him who was, up to then, "the one voice crying in the wilderness," and in a short time all lips murmur: "That was indeed a swindle."

INDEX

Printed at
The Edinburgh Press,
9 and 11 Young Street.