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MODERN ART

BEING A CONTRIBUTION TO A  
NEW SYSTEM OF ESTHETICS

BY

JULIUS MEIER-GRAEFE

FROM THE GERMAN BY

FLORENCE SIMMONDS

AND

GEORGE W. CHRYSTAL

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FRAGMENT OP THE LARGB MOSAIC AT TORCELLO

BOOK I

THE STRUGGLE FOR PAINTING

## THE MEDIUMS OF ART, PAST AND PRESENT

I

Our collective artistic culture was bound to suffer, when the collective forces of art were concentrated in a special domain, that of pictures and statues. The fact is not minimised by the consideration, that this development was the work of a glorious history<sup>^</sup> originating in the most brilliant phases of modern culture. Nor can it be denied that the most splendid epochs of humanity achieved their great results without the omnipotence of pictures. It will hardly be contended that the Greeks lacked the instinct for artistic expression. The only modern nations that may aptly be compared with the Greeks in artistic importance, the Chinese and Japanese, certainly had pictures, but they had them as the Greeks had their sculptures and their wall-decorations ; to such gifted nations as these, abstract art was not the final goal of artistic ambition, but merely one of the many emanations of their rich culture. These works are, no doubt, the most important evidences of their art that we now possess, but they are far from being the only ones ; they crown a whole that is homogeneous throughout. They are, therefore, infinitely less significant of the degree of culture of their age than are works of equal importance in our own times. To the brilliant researches of German savants, more especially Furtwängler, we owe the beginnings of a personal estimate of Phidias. Yet who does not feel that even this greatest of artists was not the arbiter of his epoch, but a product of its glory ?

The ideal interdependence of all artistic activities made art the possession of the whole people, and enabled them to understand it and to love it.

We moderns repeatedly see instances of great artists who live and work and die among us, and find recognition only after death, while the public acclaims the pigmy who is no sooner dead than he is forgotten. It was not so in the past. Among the pictures of the great masters in our galleries we find portraits of their wealthy and powerful contemporaries. How came the rich patrons of Florence, Flanders, and the Netherlands, of France and Germany, to choose the greatest masters of their time as their portraitists, whereas the wealthy and distinguished of our own age so often content themselves with the most miserably equipped ? Obviously, they were better able to appreciate good painting. Yet then as now, princes busied themselves with affairs of state, and their artistic sense was not relatively higher above that of the general public than it is to-day. But the general standard was higher. The public was no more concerned with painting than it is now ; then as now, it had other things to occupy it ; but it was familiar with art. People found in painting the same excellence as in other things, chairs, tables, and clothing; they would have been astonished to find anything else. Painting was not much more highly esteemed than any other craft. It owed its privileged position solely

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## 2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ART

to the fact that from its nature, it existed mainly as the handmaid of religion ; it adorned the church, the sanctuary\* The origin of this adornment was practical ; it filled the bare surfaces left by the architect, the real artist in the eyes of the masses throughout the Gothic period. Painting dealt only with predetermined themes ; it had to translate religious conceptions ; hence there is a certain essential difference between it and the art of our own day ; subject was in no sense characteristic, for it was the same for all. This necessarily led to a purely artistic development, which the multitude followed\* If it did not quite exclude critical errors, it reduced them to a minimum. The strict convention no artist could cast aside, did not prevent artists from becoming great; it served them as a shield against the public, who recognised something familiar even in their originality ; the convention was a protection, not an impediment. But at the same time a close relation between artist and layman was not of such practical necessity then as now. The Church or the State was, broadly speaking, the sole patron. The artist troubled himself little about the public, for he had no immediate or practical dealings therewith. This circumstance had not only a material side ; it contributed to the ideal relations subsisting between the two. The layman of the Gothic period looked at a work of art with other eyes as compared with ourselves. To a certain extent he was colder in his attitude ; but he was also juster.

In these days, the pure work of art has been brought into immediate contact with every\*day life ; an attempt has been made to transform it utterly, to make it the medium of the esthetic aspirations of the house, whereas this function belongs properly to the house itself and the utilitarian objects in it. We have tried to popularise the highest expression of art, something only significant when applied to the loftiest purposes, something, the enjoyment of which without a certain solemnity is inconceivable, or, at least, only to be attained in moments of peculiar detachment. We have succeeded merely in vulgarising it«

This is the source of the great error that retards our artistic culture. We revolve in vicious circles round the abstract work of art.

The painted or carved image is in its nature immovable. Not only because it was originally composed for a given space) but because the world of emotion to which it belongs lies wholly apart. This may be so powerful, that its association with the things of daily life cannot be effected without serious damage either to the one or the other.

The association of works of art with religious worship was therefore the most natural association possible. A heavenly illumination, itself possessed of all the

attributes of divinity, art gave impetus to the soul in its aspirations towards the mystic, its flight from the sufferings of daily life, and offered the best medium possible for that materialisation of the divine idea, which the primitive man demands in religion. The ancient Greek worship, with its natural, purely sensuous conceptions, was the happiest basis for the artist, for in Greece religion and art were one thing : beauty. The god was the ideal of beauty.

When the temple became a church, art lost its original purity, and became the handmaid of the hierarchy. But religion was so deeply implanted in the souls of the faithful, that both to executor and recipient the service never lost the mystic atmosphere, the common bond, and all hostile antagonism was avoided. It was the Reformation that first drove the image from the temple, and gave to worship the austerity of which excluded any sensuous enjoyment

### THE MEDIUMS OF ART, PAST AND PRESENT 3

This was one of the many contributory impulses that brought about the confusion of aesthetics. Art was so closely bound up with religion, that it almost seemed as if the enlightenment that shattered the one, must be dangerous to the other. The mysticism of art and that of religion had formerly mingled their currents. As a fact, the former was no less obscure than the latter — who can say even now, what the essence of art is ? But the pious and sometimes beautiful fable of religion had to perish, to make way, not for Luther's compromise, but for something radically opposite, science, by which the *raison d'être* of art remained unaffected; Indeed, as science could not satisfy the mystic yearnings of the soul, the sphere of art was, if possible, extended, though it could no longer be restricted to conventional forms.

The emancipation of man from the dogmas of the church was an advance. In the domain of art, where it destroyed the fixed convention as to subject, it might have become beneficent. But as a fact, it entailed retrogression. Painting was not yet strong enough to stand alone, or perhaps it was already enervated ; instead, now that it was free from all objective constraint, of rising to the heights of pure art, sustained by its own convention alone, it gradually became vulgarised, and finally fell into perplexities from which it had been preserved in the early ages of culture. A threefold watchword inspired the political and social contests of the new age: Freedom, Truth, Equality. We think we have the first two; and our generation is warring for a verdict as to the third.

Art thought herself bound to take part in the contest. As on other battlefields, the three sections of the ideal were upheld simultaneously, and as in these again, the fight was sharpest and most decisive over the first two. Freedom and Truth.

Broadly speaking, the trilogy, taken absolutely, is Utopian, and even nonsense\*

sical ; but in social matters, the ideal regulates itself in a rational manner. In art, where such was not the case, where the extravagance of the postulate was far in excess of its good sense, it worked most mischievously.

Art was to be free — but free from what ? The innovators forgot, that freedom implies isolation. In her impulsive vehemence, art cast away the elements that made her indispensable to man. The vaster the wide ocean of unbounded aims before her, the more distant was the terra firma which had been her home. She lost her native land.

The goal was of the vaguest, and therefore, it was dubbed truth. For the most part it was a negation of the very essence of art, which is neither truer nor false than an earthworm, or a star, or any imaginable thing to which conceptions such as that of truth have no possible relation. But the formula persisted, and the materialisation of the abstract was carried so far, that Art was humiliated by a crude comparison with Nature. Because conceptions of certain aspects of Nature figure among the technical equipment of great artists, because they faithfully reproduced things the eye is supposed to have seen in woods and meadows, they were pronounced "truer" than others who did not use these means, or who used them differently. Men began to forget that to the artist, woods and meadows can be no more than a purely mechanical medium such as his brushes or his palette, or a thousand other things he supposes, rightly or wrongly, to be necessary to him, but which are as foreign to the enjoyment of others as those rotten apples which a certain German poet needed for his inspiration !

It must be understood that the artist did not think thus. It was the layman\* He took to reflection where he had formerly given himself up to sensation, and

#### 4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ART

his attempt to arrive at a rational understanding of art resulted in schism, as formerly in the case of religion. It was impossible for him to see the thing as it was, and not knowing how justifiable was his repulsion to an incomprehensible abstraction, he caught at the first tendencies his caprice presented to him, and directed art in accordance therewith. The immediate result was that adroit persons at once sprang up, who exploited these tendencies. They were greeted with acclamations.

This alone is a sufficient explanation of the ever-increasing disproportion between artists and those who impertinently call themselves such. And at the same time, it accounts for the antagonism of the layman to art. In earlier times the mysticism of the church drove the believer into the mysticism of art. He offered no resistance. One awe completed the other. But later he had made up his mind to a personal interest in the matter, and when this was not satisfied, he

was repelled.

The conception of equality in the secularisation of art tended to positive aberration. It did not attain to the authority of a shibboleth, like the two others, but it danced like an ignis fatuus before the eyes of both artists and laymen. Art was to lay aside its majesty. Even here tyranny was supposed to have entrenched itself. It was to present itself humbly, soberly, plainly, realistically. But when it came, men knew not what to make of it, and in lofty scorn of the equality that had been won, it turned to serve the few, the elect.

Art could only have remained equal and universal on universally accessible ground. This it had lost when it was severed from the church. An attempt was indeed made to replace the religious ideal by the patriotic passion. But setting aside the fact that there was no appropriate stage for the display of the results, this ideal, though perhaps a more possible substitute than any other, lacked all the elements necessary to a tradition. It was, above all, too mobile, too closely related to contemporary passions and personalities. It gave us the historical picture, in which the public saw only the history ; the enthusiasm or pain that it evoked could not be laid to the account of art.

That works of art should be easy of acquisition by purchase was one of the principles of the theory of equality. Every one was henceforth to be able to buy art. All that was needed was money. This, again, led to a direct negation of the shibboleth.

It was only in those earlier days, when proprietary rights were not associated with art, that the relation of the layman thereto approached the socialistic ideal. Art was for all, for it belonged to no one. It stood above individual greed, a highly communistic symbol in an age that in all else was far indeed from the socialism of our day. Now it has become the expression of our terrible class distinctions. It is only accessible to an aristocracy, whose domination is the more sinister, in that it is not based solely on rank and wealth, that is to say, on things by the division of which the ardent socialist hopes to re-establish the social equilibrium. There is nothing so unattainable, for the enjoyment of it presupposes an abnormal refinement of aesthetic perception, which has become as rare as genius itself. Nowadays, one must not only have a great deal of money to buy art, but one must be an exceptional creature, of peculiar gifts, to enjoy it. It exists only » for the few, and these are far from being the most admirable or beneficent of mankind ; they seem, indeed, to show all the characteristics of the degenerate. Loftiness of character, or of intelligence, are not essential to the com-

## THE MEDIUMS OF ART, PAST AND PRESENT 5

prehension of art. The greatest men of our age have notoriously known nothing

about it, and what is more remarkable, artists themselves often understand it least of all. Artists have talked more nonsense about art than any other class of men. Modern artistic culture can scarcely be accounted an indispensable element of general culture any longer, for the simple reason that art has ceased to play a part in the general organism.

Art has not so much as a decisive influence on our taste, even among those who have penetrated most deeply into the secrets of artistic enjoyment. We have the clearest evidence of this in the indifference with which people, who surround themselves with the most costly works, regard the general decadence of industry. They, the elect, who possess their masterpieces, not only materially, but psychologically, tolerate the most glaring breaches of taste in the rooms where their treasures hang. They, who have shown themselves competent to choose the best among the best, amaze us by their utter insensibility in such matters as their clothing, and their daily surroundings. The one thing swallows up all the rest ; their worship has become mania.

This attenuation of aesthetic exigence tends further to reduce their demands on the work of art itself to a minimum. They tolerate the most glaring defects, nay, even to a certain extent absolute incapacity, if some single quality is preserved, which approves itself as unique.

In the course of our appreciations, we shall make due allowance for the relative justification of such estimates in individual instances ; we may even fall under the spell of the particular so far, as to be unable to keep the general always before our eyes. I register my protest here at the outset the more emphatically, in the hope that it may be strong enough to curb my own obsessions. It, is the vow of the \*' infirm of purpose, his hand already on the door of the tea-house, whose inmates beckon to him from behind the reeds.

## II

The incomprehensibility of painting and sculpture to the general public has been shrouded in a veil of pretentious exposition. The amount of talking and writing about art in our day exceeds that in all other epochs put together. The increase of sociability rising from increase of wealth made it necessary to invent suitable occupations for unproductive energies. Chatter about art became a highly popular form of such amusement ; it requires no special preparation, no exertion, is independent of weather and seasons, and can be practised in drawing-rooms ! , P^rt has become like caviare — every one wants to have it, whether they like it or not. The immaterial elements of the former give a certain intellectual tone to the sport, which is lacking in a feast of caviare; it is therefore complacently opposed to such material enjoyments. The discussion of art in Germany (the home, par excellence, of such discussion) originated in the

dark days of the nation during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, when men were dreaming romantically of the great things they lacked. Nevertheless, it was more fruitful than it is now ; it was the sphere of great personalities, and the origin of an idealism, which, though impotent, was sincere. Nothing of all this has survived but a subsidiary function. It is the form of

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entertainment affected by families who do not give expensive dinner-parties. It has become the feudal cognisance of the aspiring bourgeoisie, as necessary to the well-educated as some indispensable garment\*

Love of art, however, especially the kind of love that goes beyond platonic limits, becomes rarer as those who meddle with it multiply in every land. Purchase has become the touchstone of such affection ; like marriage, it is a practical token of sentiment, and even to the artist, this evidence is generally more important than the impulse that inspired it.

It can hardly be otherwise now. If art is to be anything, it must not arouse merely that languid attention which people manifest when they politely approve something as "very interesting." It is not enough that it should inspire the pens of scribblers, and develop itself alone, and not others. In the form to which it is confined to-day — that of picture or statue, a marketable commodity — it could only exercise an influence by fulfilling the purpose of other marketable things: that of being purchased. But the popularisation of art is rendered impossible by the extravagant prices commanded by recognised works of art and demanded for those that are not so recognised, by a frantic, absurd, and unhappily, thoroughly dishonest traffic. I can conceive of rich people who would refrain from the purchase of pictures out of sheer disgust at the trade, a desire to keep their hands clean. The purchasing amateur is a personality made up of the most obscure springs of action. The absolutely incalculable fluctuations in prices, the influence of fashion, nowhere so demented as in this connection, the desire to go on improving his collection, leading to bring it up to the fashionable standard of the moment, forces the collector to be always selling, to become the shamefaced dealer, who is, of course, the most shameless, and who introduces additional elements of disorder into a commerce already chaotic. The result is that there are, as a fact, no buyers, but only dealers, people who pile their pictures one above the other, deal exclusively, or almost exclusively, with each other, and have no connection with the real public. Statistics, showing how few are the hands to which the immense artistic wealth of the world is confined, would make a sensation. A great London dealer once told me that he had only three customers ! Durand-Ruel, of Paris, has several times had certain famous Impressionist pictures in his possession at progressive prices, rising some 1000 per cent, each time, and the purchasers have often been the same persons on several occasions.



Such conditions reduce the aesthetic usefulness of a work to a minimum. Pictures become securities, which can be kept locked up like papers. Even the individual, the owner, ceases to enjoy his possession. Nine-tenths of the most precious French pictures are kept for nine-tenths of the year in magnificent cases, to protect them from dust. Sales are effected as on the Bourse, and speculation plays an important part in the operations. The goods are scarcely seen, even at the sale. A typical, but by no means unique, example is afforded by the late Forbes collection. It consisted of I forget how many hundreds or thousands of pictures. To house them, the owner rented the upper storey of one of the largest London railway stations, vast storehouses, but all too circumscribed to allow of the hanging of the pictures. They stood in huge stacks s<sup>^</sup>inst the walls, one behind the other : the Israels, Mauves, and Marises were to be counted by hundreds, the French masters of 1830 by dozens; there were exquisite examples of Millet, Corot, Daubigny, Courbet, &c., and Whistler. Although the stacks of pictures were held up by muscular servants, the enjoyment of these

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treasures was a tremendously exhausting physical process. One walked between pictures ; one felt capable of walking calmly over them ! After five minutes in the musty atmosphere, goaded by the idiotic impulse to see as much as possible, and the irritating consciousness that it was impossible to grasp anything, every better instinct was stifled by an indiff<sup>e</sup>rence that quenched all power of ap<sup>\*</sup>preciation. The deathly calm one broke in upon, as one toiled sweating through these bare gigantic rooms where there was no space to turn, the whistling of the engines, the trembling of the floor as the trains ran in and out below, seemed to inspire a kind of strange fury, a silent longing to destroy the whole lot.

Who would be the loser if this were actually done ? If anything could justify anarchism, it is the knowledge that the greatest artists toil in poverty, to enable a few dealers to grow rich after their deaths, and a few fanatics to hoard their works in warehouses. The most notorious vices are not so grotesquely irrational as this mania for hoarding, which, owing to its apparent innocuousness, has not yet been reci<sup>^</sup>nised as a malady. All the famous collectors of Paris, London, and America are more or less tainted with this disease. We enter their houses full of eager anticipation, and quit them with a sigh of relief, half suff<sup>i</sup>ocated by the pictures that cover every inch of wail-space, and wholly depressed, not by a feeling of envy, but by the thought that there are people who have voluntarily accepted the torture of spending their lives among all these things.

Even if a wiser economy should improve the conditions we have described, it will never be possible to induce a better appreciation of art by commercial means. Hence all the fine ideas of " popular art " are doomed to remain mere dreams. It

is materially impossible to produce pure works of art at prices that will bring them within the means of the masses. The Fitzroy Society in England, and the publishers of the prints for the Riviere School in Paris made the attempt, and in Germany Thoma was inspired by the same ideal in the production of his lithographs. All these attempts have only served to stimulate the collecting mania. Every speculation that panders to this instinct is successful, whether it deals with postage stamps or pictures. There is no question of aesthetic principle in the matter. I believe that the plebeian would really prove accessible to a revival of artistic influences, if he could possess a picture of his own, to hang up. But a work of art could never be cheap enough for this, for if it cost but tenpence, the poor man will always prefer to save his tenpence, towards the purchase of something necessary to his physical well-being. An artistic propaganda that relies on purchasable and abstract works of art must always fail. It can only succeed by means of industry, by producing things which combine artistic and utilitarian qualities. As long as we neglect these, we need not wonder to find the artistic sense of the lower orders more depraved than at any other period of the world's history.

The social struggle is breaking down class distinctions ; the intelligent outcast of to-day is the millionaire of to-morrow. Nothing opposes the rise of the proletarian in the modern state, and he brings his lack of culture with him into his higher sphere. The man who has had no aesthetic stimulus in his period of development will, as a rule, have no lofty requirements when chance has made him an influential member of the community, though he may simulate these, and so add a new source of error to those already present^

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### III

So much for the material side of the question. This is in itself decisive discussion on any other basis can only deal with the conditional, and with compromises. Let us suppose for a moment that we could realise a state of things in which every citizen should not only have a fowl in the pot, as the good king wished, but a picture in his room. What can the man who is blessed with taste and wealth buy in these days ?

Every sensible person who buys things will be governed by his requirements. When he purchases a picture, he will ask : can I make use of it ? and this will lead him to the further inquiry : can I hang it up in my house ?

And here the tragedy of contemporary art forces itself upon us, the lack of all

steady connection between art and purpose, the impossibility of establishing an intimate relation between producer and consumer. The artist cannot attempt this, for in general he does not know for whom or for what his work is destined. Experience has taught him that he will do well to make it as adaptable as possible, easily moved, and suitable for a great variety of interiors; in other words, not intrinsically valuable to its possessor, but valuable as an object of barter. These conditions are disastrous to the ideals of the artist, who feels it to be incompatible with his freedom to be fettered by such limitations, and to allow his creations to be governed by anything but his artistic conception.

Directly the layman is brought into established relations with art, the absolute value of art gives way to the relative value. The appreciations that determine this are very complex.

The question of locality, the axiom that a work of art can only be perfectly executed for a given place, is by no means decisive. This idea rests on a misconception which is practically refuted every day, though this refutation is far from favourable to modern methods of creation. The axiom is not even sound as applied to the works of the old masters, although these were always more or less architectonic in structure. A beautiful figure of a saint in the porch of an early Gothic church remains beautiful, even when it is removed ; it even retains a considerable part of its charm in surroundings that have no sort of relation to it. A work of art in which the architectonic relation to the original place is less intimate, as is the case with most easel-pictures, may change its home still more readily ; it may even gain by the change.

The past decade has- given us excellent museums, which have settled this question satisfactorily. The majority of "Old Masters" which adorn- these galleries, show to greater advantage here than in the places for which they were painted, places where the light was often defective, or where it was impossible to get at a right distance from the" picture. We' have taken up the rational position, that the essential in these matters is a condition realised in the great museums : the picture should be seen in the most favourable manner possible. We have not the same eyes as those for whom these things were originally made, and we have every right to use all the means at our disposal to enhance our enjoyment of them.

Our enjoyments differ from those of the original spectators. We have invented new pleasures. We may instance the grouping together of works by the same artist or different artists, and of different periods, on the same wall, and the effect of one wall so arranged on another; such and many other combinations

MOSAIC IN MURANO CATHEDRAL

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possible in our museums have, in spite of all antiquarian logic, an artistic charm which was lacking to these works in former times.

The museum is perhaps — or might be— an ideal substitute for earlier vehicles of art. It is the purely neutral spot, that serves beauty alone— or might serve it — and knows no other end, or need know none. It has already all the elements of an institution of which we may justly be proud.

All the more irrational, therefore, is it to confound the house, the dwelling, with these constitutionally holy places, and to interchange functions so radically opposite. Everything, or almost everything, that is necessary in the one is out of place in the other. Why then should the layman buy pictures at all ? If we go to the root of the matter, it seems as if he bought them primarily to get rid of them. The disinterestedness of certain rich people who buy works of art to present them to museums, does not modify the grotesqueness of this state of things.

We may ask if our dwellings are better adapted for the display of pictures than those of earlier periods, which contained few, if any, abstract works of art, in our sense of the term.

The dwelling-house of to-day has lost its formal relation to the age. Save for non-social, practical considerations, which express themselves in a certain comfort and in the employment of space to the best advantage, it shows a lack of cohesion with our lives. Contrary to the usage of former times, our sphere of action is now generally outside our houses. This action itself has changed, no less than its field; mental effort tends more and more to take the place of physical exertion. The men whose activity is most prolific in these days, that is, whose wills have the strongest influence upon production, use their limbs and muscles the least. The intellectual apparatus accordingly requires care and protection in its leisure.

The dwelling has become a place of recuperation, and this determines the character of the busy man's domicile. ^

(As places of recuperation, our dwellings have, as a fact, become better adapted for artistic elements, and even for abstract works of art. We may for the moment set aside the dismal fact that the pure work of art is generally the only artistic thing in the house, and quite without relation to all the rest.

Such conditions only make it the more essential, if man is not to renounce every loftier stimulus from without. But if the work in the house is to have any influence, in conditions so far removed from those of the earlier vehicles of art, it must be subordinated to these new conditions. It is not the chief object that draws us to the place containing it, as in the case of a museum ; we do not approach it with the devoutness of the soul athirst for mystic rapture, as formerly in a church. Comfort is the essential in this modern shrine, and a picture that disturbs our sense of well-being is clearly out of place in a house.

This sense of comfort is certainly not to be satisfied merely by artistic qualities. The very works that make the deepest impression upon us, are least adapted to domestic combination, because the sensuous value that might promote satisfaction, is present in them in forms unsuitable to our four walls or our hundred pre-possessions. There are things one admires, and others one wishes to possess. That which decides between them is a whole world, and not a kind of hygiene, which teaches us to live with certain sensations, because they demand intellectual effort and sacrifice.

Art under such conditions ceases to be divine ; she is no longer the enchantress

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who brings men to their knees before her, but rather a gentle little housewife, who surrounds us with tender attentions, and eagerly produces the sort of things that will distract tired people after a day's work.

Such a function is beneath the dignity of art. She could not accept it, if she was to remain what she had been in the past. It did not embrace her whole domain ; it belongs by right to utilitarian art.

We have come back to the same point on our circle : If the uses of art change, art itself must change. If it cannot have the place it requires, it becomes meaningless. If it stands alone, it perishes. To restrict our artistic requirements to abstract painting and sculpture is a folly of the same order as that of the madman in the fable, who wished that everything he touched might turn to gold. Abstract art is a holiday delight. We are not a race of pleasure-seekers, and we are proud to say so. Our most rational idea is to divide, not wealth, but work, to see an era when there will be no drones, when every one will exert himself for the common good. In such a state the amateur will cease to exist.

#### IV

For what then do artists create, pending what is generally the posthumous consummation — that accumulation of their works described above ?

Some for an unattainable object, every step towards which is marked by tears and blood, an ideal that can only be described in somewhat metaphysical rhetoric : the satisfaction of a conscience that has no relation to extrinsic things, of a supernal ambition, grandiose and dazzling in its conscious determination, in its consistent effort towards the elusive goal, amazing in the unconsciousness with which it achieves results that would seem only possible to the most strenuous toil. Creation for the sake of creation.

A far-seeing idealism sustains them, the hope that they will succeed in giving a new form of beauty. A blind optimism leads them, even when most neglected, to believe that they will be appreciated by some, that some will share the new joys they have discovered. And when the futility of such hopes is demonstrated, when they see their works passed over, or, worse still, bought by purchasers who have none of that intimate delight in their creations on which they had counted, they withdraw into themselves and do their greatest work.

Sometimes that which appears to them in their confident self-knowledge their greatest work, is recognised by the enlightened at last, and becomes an eternal possession, a lasting element in after generations of artists, in whose works it lives in another form, completed by new achievement. It passes into the artistic heritage of the nation, and finally plays its part in national culture. Others fail ; not that their self-knowledge is at fault, but that their talent or their intelligence falls short. Their numeric preponderance is so great, that they completely crowd out the few, and the limited demand of the public for pictures is supplied almost exclusively by them. I suppose that to every thousand painters of the one class, there is not more than one of the other. Imagine such a proportion in any other calling ! The artist can mislead the public more easily than can a man of any other profession, for setting aside the affinity of the herd for all that is superficial, a sort of halo surrounds the painter ; he profits by a number of institutions very favourable

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able to mediocrity, which give a certain importance to the metier as such, and are readily turned to account by the adroit.

Foremost among these is the art-exhibition, an institution of a thoroughly bourgeois nature, due to the senseless immensity of the artistic output, and the consequent urgency of showing regularly what has been accomplished in the year. This institution may be considered the most important artistic medium

of our age.

It would have a certain appositeness as a shop in the grand style, arranged with a luxury befitting the wares. But this purpose, which seems to be included in the general scheme, is quite subsidiary, as may be seen from a glance at the sale statistics.

Artists acquiesce in the system, because if they held aloof, their last means of expression would be denied them. They want, at least, to let their work be seen, and see it themselves, even among that of a thousand others, even for a few months, even under barbaric conditions. What becomes of it after the exhibition is indifferent to them. It is enough if the picture fulfils its purpose at the exhibition, attracts attention<sup>^</sup> is discussed by the critics, and, perhaps, even — this is the culminating distinction I — receives a medal.

To secure these results in competition with the thousands who are bent on the same ends, it is above all things necessary that a picture should have certain qualities that distinguish it from the rest. If the artist is bold enough, he makes it very large, or at all events very insistent, that it may strike the eye, even if badly hung.

It is obvious that under such conditions the purpose achieved by competition in Mother domains — that of promoting the selection of the best— can never be fulfilled. A variety of those base impulses, which always urge on the compact majority against the loftier individuality, play their part in the result. Rarely, indeed, has a genius been brought to light through these channels. The greater artists avoid these exchanges, and even the amateur does not frequent them, since quantity is not the only thing he craves.

The remnant of artistic sensibility that lingers in our age bids fair to be systematically crushed out by these exhibitions. If perchance any of the palatial barracks that house them should survive for posterity, they will be more damaging to us than any other relic. There will be persons who will go through these galleries in the spirit in which we visit ruined castles, and the rusty picture-hooks will be to them like gruesome instruments of torture.

Pictures once hung on these hooks • « «

This is the end of the history of pictures. We have, at least, the comfort of knowing that we can sink no lower. Once the symbol of the holiest, diffusing reverence in the church, and standing above mankind like the Divinity itself, the picture has become the diversion of an idle moment ; the church is now a booth in a fair ; the worshippers of old are frivolous chatterers.

## TRADITIONS

Painting is the art of charming the eye by colour and line ; sculpture charms the eye by means of form in space.

As the eye, in common with every other organ of sense, has a tendency to reflect its perceptions on the understanding, i.e. that accumulation of experience which checks new perceptions by those already accepted, and as it resists every illusion that might jeopardise its earlier acquisitions, the charm of art cannot be summarily explained as illusion. Were this otherwise, susceptibility to its influence would presuppose defective powers of understanding, and this is contradicted by actual facts. Though persons of high attainments have lived all their lives ignorant of the charm of art, it is not, on the other hand, to be denied that the keenest thinkers have been very susceptible to artistic influences. To explain this, we must assume the existence of certain brain-parts having peculiar functions ; these, in some individuals, act simultaneously with the parts on which the concentration of the understanding devolves. When a beautiful new flower meets the eye, the senses announce it to the understanding as a botanical specimen ; in certain spectators, the other portion of the brain will be simultaneously occupied solely with the form and colour of this new thing, regardless of the question whether these qualities belong to a flower, i.e., to a familiar species, which, as such, may suggest all sorts of extra-aesthetic — for instance, utilitarian — considerations. It may be presumed that all men are provided with this brain-power more or less, that it may be cultivated or allowed to dwindle, and that not only individuals but whole races are more richly endowed with it than others. Like the other brain, it has its store of experiences, and the conscious sum of such experiences known as logic in the one, is called aesthetics in the other. This, like logic, is enlarged by every new experience, by every new enjoyment, and thus enriches not only itself, but every individual enjoyment

So far, all is simple enough. The difficulty arises from the undeniable relations between the two brains. The great question nowadays is, whether the one can work without the other. It is at least certain that perfect results will not be achieved, either in logic or aesthetics, if the two are divorced. Artistic enjoyment may be promoted or hindered by these relations ; there may be works, that set both in motion, that act as a strong stimulus not only to the aesthetic, but also to the intellectual apparatus, and call all the powers of the mind into play. There are works that do not merely impress as beautiful ; — they may even do this to a comparatively slight degree— but with their beauty, they combine a depth of experience that goes beyond all experience achieved by intellectual processes, and gives the soul an instantaneous sense of enlargement and enrichment. Such works were not vouchsafed to the classic age of art, superior as it was to ours in beauty of form. They first became possible, when traditions relaxed somewhat, and permitted an isolated genesis of artistic genius, under circumstances that were even opposed to the spirit of the age : Michelangelo — Rembrandt.



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Michelangelo reveals to the beholder a beauty that emerges from form, whereas the ancients, of whose forms he reminds us, contained beauty in complete solution. The antique stands still and allows us to approach it\* Michelangelo hurls beauty into us. ^Pl power which seems compounded of the power to create forms inherent in thousands of artists, gives the subject he handles an expression that turns the strongest peculiarities outwards, and makes them credible and acceptable. Faith grows strong, because it accomplishes a work of its own in every spectator, and anchors itself in the soul of each with reflections peculiar to each. It reaches its consummation in a manner directly opposed both to the unreflecting antique worship of beauty and to the mysticism of our early hieratic art. It may become so powerful as to go far beyond all the logical means that approach the same subject, and when, as with Michelangelo, it treats of divinity, it may give mortals a foothold, that will enable them to approach the Godhead by new paths. Rembrandt achieves the same result by means that have no sort of apparent relation to the antique.

This effect is happiest, where it appears utterly unconscious. If art is to have its true value, it must give its first rapture in the sphere that is peculiarly its own, re-acting from this on the intellect, not vice versa. A work may express the deepest truths, and yet fail utterly to satisfy artistic requirements; a conscious insistence on ideas ^11 always injure the artistic side. Michelangelo did not always hold fast this truth. Wherever he appears as the analyst, his art foregoes something of that legitimate effect he never fails to produce in synthesis. His famous Leda and the Swan which is often pronounced his greatest work, is an extraordinary example of intellectual invention. In spite of the mastery with which the composition utilises the idea, the immensity of the giant is not so impressively suggested here as in certain studies of the nude, which are by no means definite reproductions of actual facts, but mere fragments. But this does not prevent them from inspiring thought in those who behold them. The man of a special capacity will be more easily swayed thereby than another ; the direction in which his thoughts will move will be determined by a hundred things — his degree of culture, his temperament, &c., and not least, by his momentary mood. No two persons will follow out the same train of thought before such works, but both will perceive the same force, urging their thoughts onward.

In the new art we can\* trace two main currents ; in one synthesis predominates^ in the other analysis ; the latter preponderates enormously. Indeed, this is the

direction in which abstract art has tended to develop ever since the Renaissance\* The tendency became more and more pronounced, in proportion as the Germanic nations, with their infinitely younger culture and their introspective genius, turned to the practice of art, while the Latins remained more faithful to the purely sensuous ideal. The results were two traditions : the one relatively artistic, the other relatively literary. The former is, of course, the only essential one from our standpoint^ We shall therefore have to concern ourselves especially with this, in order to find points of contact with other aesthetic interests.

Its capital, its principal dwelling, we may say, is at present Paris.

This fact is not to be gainsaid by patriotic feeling. It seems to us a regrettable one, not only because it gives an advantage to our hereditary foe, but because we should deplore such a concentration anywhere, as showing that even art has succumbed to the modern mania for centralisation.

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It will be well to circumscribe our meaning here.

Of course, it is not suggested that Paris is the only centre of painting or sculpture. It is simply a question of manner. I believe that German painting, as manifested in Thoma, Bocklin, Lenbach, &c., or English paintings as practised, for instance, by the Pre-Raphaelites, is less citable of expansion, of a wide, universal artistic development than that of Paris ; when I say ^ of Paris,\* I include in the term many distinguished aliens, who, after studying in Paris, have carried the tendencies of French art back with them to their native lands, extending and nationalising them.

For directly we consider German, or English, or Scandinavian painting purely from the pictorial standpoint, we do it injustice\* We would fain determine what is modern, Le.^ serviceable to the age. How can we do this with painting specifically German, English, Danish, &c.?

It is not only that the material analysed by many artists of these nationalities is remote and has no affinity with the era of railways and of countless other things that give it an aspect so different to that of its predecessors; the manner of analysis might harmonise this or at least avoid glaring discords. But it is just their manner of -analysing that is so foreign to us. There is much originality in the process, it is true ; but it is the same manner, modified by individuals, with which the ancestors of these artists achieved identical results with the greatest success several hundred years ago. We know that such and such a picture was not painted centuries ago, solely by reason of certain externals familiar to all students of art

history ; no intrinsic tokens make it certain that it could only have been painted in our own day. This art is not the necessary consequence of weighty contemporary elements, something self-evident and belonging to the age, but rather something opposed to it. We might almost say that it was not created by the age, but in spite of it«

We know, of course^ that there are affinities between modern artists and their remotest ancestors— that there are moderns who have succeeded in avoiding these incongruities, though painting the same things as the old masters. It is just the greatest art of all ages that shows these affinities, nay more, that lives by them. There is nothing more economic than the power that augments the artistic wealth of the world. Like the organic forces of Nature, it works by fertilisation. If the stages of development are more obscure here than in Nature, the aim, the strenuous impulse towards purposeful efficiency, is identical in both.

We shall try in the sequel to discover certain fundamental aesthetic elements of ancient art, in order to see where we have gained, where lost, and how it has all happened. We do not propose to do this by the process of art-history ; this would be to repeat an oft-told tale. We shall only linger at one or the other of the stages of this development, notably, at one of the earliest, because it offers the strongest possible contrast to our latest, and because, in spite of this, there are bold dreamers who would bind the two ends together. Whether this is possible is still an open question. At any rate, we will consider them both, with this possibility in view.

## THE RISE OF PAINTING

The Christian Church undoubtedly rendered immortal service to art. Her artistic influence began at the moment when the Roman Empire lay in its last throes. Her radical principle, to make everything as unlike as possible to the creations of Rome, enabled her from the first to dictate the course of art to some extent. The aesthetic standpoint was naturally somewhat overlooked in the programme. In the beginning the church was as barbarous as Protestantism. Art was idolatry, and for the Christian, this idolatry was embodied in sculpture, the presentation of heathen divinity, which was accordingly forbidden once for all. Not until Christian Radicalism had been softened by the lapse of a thousand years, did men begin to think more indulgently. But sculpture never quite recovered from the effects of this neglect, and its development as an abstract art was therefore tardier than that of painting. It remained architectonic to the time of our grandfathers.

Art that had pertained to it in pre-Christian times among all nations, became the property of painting. The aims of the two arts were by no means identical.

Painting was writing, a medium of communication for the primitive purposes of the church. It did not become art, till thought found leisure to express itself in images, and growing wealth led to the decoration of the churches.

Hence it was originally stroke, line, linear signs. Its development was the development of line.

And at the same time its history may be carried back to a history of the supersession of line by plane. All that was taken from the one was added to the other. The relation between the two is the physiological point of the whole history.

Line was the handwriting of style. It rises from the coarsest ornament to the highest expressive power, and becomes the vehicle of the mightiest and most comprehensive of traditions, the Gothic. As it declines, tradition declines with it, and individuality gains the ascendancy. Then it takes refuge in planes, which become of supreme importance in our modern, purely abstract art.

## MOSAICS

The first stage included mosaics. Planes as yet had no existence for the artist, they were the affair of the craftsman. Contour alone was the vehicle of the formula and the formula was anonymous, not the work of individuals, but a legacy.

It is difficult, to a certain extent, to imagine the creative act that produced these early mosaics. There was no art, but there was certainly an instinct for interior-effects, the vastness, loftiness, and grace of which fill us with amazement. Who will find words in our copious art-dictionaries to describe the abf aluteJy divine emotion that thrills the quiet tourist in a mossuc interior like that

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of the Baptistery of the Orthodox Church at Ravenna ? Who could suggest the splendour of the gem-like purples, the rhythmic harmony of the simple, earnest faces of the Apostles ? Where may we dream more sweetly of the lovely l^ends of our faith, than in the chapel of Galla Placidia, before the artless poetry of the representation of the Good Shepherd ? What can be more magnificent than San Vitale ? We are dazzled at the mere thought of what this building must once have

been. Wherever, wandering in search of the highest enjoyments, we light on old mosaics, be it in Rome, Sicily, or Constantinople, there comes a moment when we feel more or less definitely as if in comparison to these first written characters of our art, all that has followed had been mere confusion. Is there not something of the same feeling in our attitude to the architectonic form, which bears so many of these characters ? The Romanesque style has never been surpassed in grandeur ; to our generation it seems the sole basis for a modern architecture.

The Byzantines were the first to bring mosaic decoration to perfection. Modern research, blind to all but the analytical development of art, is inclined to neglect their work altogether, insisting much on the beauty and nobility of Early Christian examples, and treating the Byzantine more or less as barbaric aberrations. This attitude is a remnant of that famous classic tendency, which while it preserved painting and sculpture, perverted the development of architecture, and was not so far overcome as to allow us to look for beauty outside Greece and Rome till our own times. The greatest and most rational achievement in modern aesthetics, the rehabilitation of Gothic and Romanesque art, cannot ignore the Byzantine form ; least of all can it do so in favour of that last and somewhat puerile remnant of the Roman tradition, which the early Christians of necessity carried into our era.

In one point only were these earlier mosaic-workers superior to the Byzantines : in colour. Even here the superiority is not quite indisputable ; for the reticent colour of the Byzantines undoubtedly served the architectonic ideal to perfection. On the other hand, the Byzantines excelled in drawing, if we judge their work rationally, and not with the unnatural determination to divorce it from architecture and consider it as a thing apart. It is absolutely appropriate to the technique. Wherever the Early Christian mosaics, influenced by the antique, or the later mosaics, betray that feeling for nature afterwards developed in painting, the decorative effect is sensibly diminished. The problem of equilibrium as between the requirements of nature and style, which antiquity alone has been able to solve to the satisfaction of both, began here. Directly realism appeared in the mosaics, the magical effect of the technique disappeared.

Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in S. Mark's at Venice, to whose vast series of mosaics every century has contributed, from the tenth to our own ; in other words, the whole of that Christian era with which we are dealing. To the Byzantine conception, persons and things, and all that was represented<sup>^</sup> i were merely vehicles for decorative line, hardly more than those exquisite letters i that accompany the pictures, and are more essential for the comprehension of the picture than the subject-matter itself. The modern mosaics take a middle course<sup>^</sup> | and aim chiefly at attracting as strongly as possible. The compositions on the | facade are gaudy pictures, in which the space they occupy means only the | measure of their extent, and is otherwise a matter of no importance. They serve | merely to make the extraordinarily animated facade more restless still, and they attempt to compete with the architecture, instead of to harmonise with it. They

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do, perhaps, succeed in putting their rival into the shade, but only by destroying the artistic harmony of the whole. We note a difference at once as we pass into the atrium. Here the Byzantine ideal predominates. We get some prescience of the splendour within, but, in accordance with the old methods, it is only a prescience. It is architecture covered with signs. These signs are unmeaning if we examine them in detail as we should examine a picture ; their conventionality of composition, the very primitive ideas they symbolise, make them incomprehensible to the modern. The architecture alone gives them aesthetic value. One of the arches depicts the story of Noah. The various episodes of the legend are set forth in sections at certain intervals ; each is a decoration in itself. We see figures, animals, waves, but what impresses us above all, is the extraordinary correlation of these lines and the planes they surround ; the lines are placed with such unerring judgment, that we never for a moment ask ourselves what they mean. The subject-matter is so subordinated to them, that we do not even think of protesting against this subordination. Captivated by the purely decorative charm of these signs, we finally come to accept the complex emotions they demand from the understanding. The psychology of religious suggestion finds rich material here.

The six-winged angels between the arches of the right-hand cupola in the atrium are magnificent pieces of decoration. Their wings stream out in the three directions of the pendentives assigned to them ; it is scarcely possible to imagine anything more architectonic, more absolutely appropriate to a given space. They are a perfect translation into planes of the grandiose sculptures of the capitals, with their lions and peacocks, that uphold the arches. The modern mosaic of the sixteenth century in the central cupola seems timid indeed in comparison. The Evangelists are seated on clouds on either side of the enclosing triumphal arch. They reveal all the mediocrity of the epigoni. If the naturalism with which they are treated were carried very much further, the theme would seem none the less unnatural to the spectator. As it is impossible to sit upon clouds, the more realistically such a suggestion is made, the less credible it appears. The representation of the Apostles as life-size figures, lacking all architectonic proportion to the magnificent arch, is positively murderous in its unskilfulness. Early Christian buildings of some 1000 years earlier show what can be done with such arches in mosaic without any ornament. I may cite the triumphal arch of Sant' Apollinare in Classe, near Ravenna, the mosaics of which date from the sixth century.

In the interior of St. Mark's criticism is dumb ; so, too, is what we call artistic perception. We no longer deliberate ; the hand that holds the guide-book closes convulsively, and the brain abjures its deadly waste of time and thinks no more. We can form no idea of such splendour till we see it, and then we seem

to be in the presence of something abnormal, impossible, gigantic, terrible. We do not see this golden magnificence — ^we hear it, feel it, and breathe it. In an instant, a new sense is created — a sense of space. We cease to be individuals, and become atoms, silent particles among other such.

What do we moderns with our aesthetic trivialities know of such grandeur 1 If we could fill a room with the finest pictures of our century, if we could collect all that is greatest in Italian and in Northern art in a single gallery, it would remain a gallery, a space devoted to art, something isolated and remote that could never intoxicate the soul as do this barbaric gold and these barbaric symbols of the discredited Byzantines. It may be objected that it is the depth, and not the

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extent, of the emotion produced that is of moment. » • » I can imagine heretics who would call this depth weakness, who are brutal enough to prefer the blind impact of such barbarism as this to the solvent knowledge of culture. • • • It may certainly make some among us forget our analysis n>r a moment, and lose our critical bearings, so to speak. But what would we not give, if such emotion sometimes overcame us in the presence of modern decoration {

Here the art of mosaic shows its strength ; it was created for these galleries, for these arches and cupolas. It works miracles here with the dusky gleam of its gold in the quiet chapels, in this inimitable interior, with the magic glimpses between and above the pillars\* There is not a single picture in the church, yet none seems richer in pictures. I am not thinking now of those created by the mosaic-workers, but of those produced as one catches sight of the mosaics through the architecture, pictures that change with every step, with every gleam of light, and are absolutely inexhaustible. Whereas in the atrium the Byzantine decoration appears as the discreet handmaid of architecture, here it is the privileged companion, or indeed the crown of the whole, the speech, the vivifying element of the divine body.

The wealth of this language is extraordinary. It ranges from the loftiest majesty to the most child-like simplicity, from awe-inspiring gloom to smiling sweetness. Below the large modern, ineffective compositions in the two side-aisles, there are on each side five isolated figures, among them, on the left, a youthful Christ, and on the same place, on the right, a youthful Virgin. It is impossible to imagine anything more delicious than these two faces. The fair-haired, aristocratic Christ has a sweetness of expression only to be found in Vivarini's most delicate works, and the Mary with the dark hair and eyes, and the tender lines, might also be by the hand of the great master of Murano. With this

graceful loveliness we may contrast the tremendous vigour and dignity of the mosaics over the high altar : the symbols of the Evangelists in the pendentives that divide the cupola of the apse from that of the high altar, and especially that terrific lion, in the creation of which convention has only been used to emphasise the grimness of the beast, who appears as the concentrated expression of all the gloomy majesty that slumbers in the architecture. The bold suppliant who dared to raise his eyes from the ground must have started, as if a glare of lightning had met his gaze, when he saw this monster high above him, and have bowed his neck again meekly, to carry the burden of inarticulate prayer.

In the exquisite chapel of St. Clemente close by we enter into another atmosphere, one of gentle mysticism. A brooding twilight fills the space. The marble rises in gray majesty from the ground. At the spring of the vault the mosaic begins, and shows the solitary figure of the saint in the lunette. Can one ever forget the twilight behind the pillars, through which the bronze lamps gleam, the solemn altar with its shimmer of marble reliefs, the calm saint above ? Over this again the eye is carried through vast arches to the upper storey, to the recurrent glimmer of gold and holy sign, and finally rests high above in the vault, on the swaying ship with the Apostles and the fantastic white sail.

' It is curious that the most \*\* modern \*' of spectators feels no inclination to smile at the naive audacity of certain of these conceptions. And as he has learnt to dissociate religion from art, and prides himself on having lost his reverence for an outworn creed, it can only be aesthetic appreciation that makes him accept the extreme manifestations of this much maligned style. These are plentiful enough.

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A favourite motive in various places, which recurs in St Mark's, is Christ leading the faithful to bliss over the prostrate Satan. This group so teems with grotesque defects of drawing, that in any other connection it would suggest caricature. But here our critical judgment is suspended. Each detail carries on the eye to the next, and bids us grasp the whole. And this gives life to the creation. It is, of course^ a very different life from that of the modern picture. Measured by this, it may seem a dead letter, but, on the other hand, the modern work would be dead if applied as it is applied. It is a part of the place that stirs such strange exaltation in the specutor ; these symbols were made for this place, and for it alone. A time came, when men looked upon those mathematical laws which the Byzantines consciously or unconsciously observed as sheer barbarism, and judged it unworthy of the soul to be guided by logic. As if there could be anything more venerable than these eternal mathematical truths ! As a fact, the eye still .finds harmonies in these half geometrical pictures, unique creations that evoke unique emotions. In the very group I have just mentioned, there is such a mighty sense of movement, the action of the advancing Saviour, his mournful face turned



to the suppliants, the cross held high in his hand, is so convincing, that one is carried away and accepts the grotesque as a matter of course. Consider similar subjects as treated later by the primitive painters : Fra Anselico's *LMt Judgment*^ where the angels pace the gardens of Paradise on the right, while sinners are larded, boiled, and roasted on the left. These inevitably strike us as comical, because here mathematics have given place to spiritual sentimentality. Of course, Fra Angelico's conception, a symptom of that milder ideal of Christianity that followed the phase of rigid asceticism, indicates a general advance in culture. But this synchronised with a diminution of suggestive power, an enfeeblement of the forces at the disposal of the Church. The difference is very apparent, even in St. Mark's itself. Wherever we find the work of later centuries, more especially of those when painting was at its apogee, the technical effect is lost. It is lamentable indeed that the most important feature of all, the enthroned Christ of the apsidal cupola, should not be in the pure style. In domed spaces such as this, Byzantine mosaic developed a grandeur truly stupendous. I know nothing more beautiful of the kind than the fragments preserved in the churches of Murano and Torcello, the venerable dependencies of the city of the lagoons.

The ancient mosaic pavement of San Donato at Murano is in itself worth a visit to the melancholy spot. The design is exquisite, geometrical yet arbitrary. Time, working like a mole under the slabs, has made it more arbitrary still. One feels inclined to lie down on the ground, on this strange. Oriental carpet of stone.

Then suddenly, almost casually, one sees far beyond, the gigantic golden apse, and alone therein, a single slender figure, in flowing blue draperies : Our Lady as Intercessor. It does not seem to be a dome in which she is hovering, but a world, and the pale creature floats in the terrible world-solitude, holding her hands up before her face, as if rigid with the burden of her enigmatic prayers. In all our religion there is no grander, deeper mystery, and nowhere has it been more grandly and deeply treated than here. The mosaics in the apse at Torcello have the same vigorous intensity. Here the Virgin supports the Infant Christ, as in the chapel' of San Zeno at St. Mark's. Below, and separated from her by a banderole, the exquisite lettering of which has the effect of the finest ornament, the twelve Apostles stand in a flowery meadow, and beneath them the splendid gray marble with its almost geometrical zigzag veinings, descends to the

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choi't^talls, which rise in tiers, and fill the hemicycle of the choir as in an antique theatre. The artistic effect is indescribable. Everything is so arranged as to bring the principal figure into relief. Proportions and colours are gradually strengthened to this end. The Apostles are treated in subdued tones ; white predominates in their draperies, while the slender figure of the Virgin, clad in the traditional deep blue robe, stands out from the golden background, her hands and face being the

only passages of light colour. The most beautiful ornament would not be so effective as this simple contrast, the sharp contour against the grandiose gold background, to which an automatic play of light and shade gives a gentle animation. The Apostles all stand facing the spectator on a straight strip of meadow, studded with exquisitely treated conventional flowers. Their draperies are caught back in such a manner that each overhanging hem forms almost identical angles, and this gives throughout the row a scarcely perceptible, yet indispensable undulation to the outline, which contrasts pleasantly with the perpendicular figures. The meadow with the Apostles is enframed in a beautifully designed border, simpler and more tasteful than the similar border in the apse of St. Mark's.

If we picture to ourselves the cathedral of Torcello, decorated with the same mosaic as the magnificent facade, with its pavement, and its internal architecture, of which certain marvellous fragments still remain, notably on the rood-screen, we shall not lightly judge an art that was lost for ever, yet never replaced. What is it to us that it was practised by slaves, and that its radiant structures rose upon necks bowed beneath the yoke ? The Church, the element that generated this art, has fallen from her high estate, and as we linger in the palaces of her departed glory, we venerate, not her, but the art she called into being. The greatness she created she herself caused to decay. The association of art with religion was as propitious to this great decorative art in its beginning as it was disastrous towards its close. The more the Church drifted from her supernatural sense of supreme aloofness, the more languid became that great decorative impetus which made the house of God a new world, expressing, not only the genius of one man, however great, but the fervour of nations and peoples.

Art has become free ; it has thrown off, not only the bondage of the Church, but that of all subsequent elements which have attempted more or less successfully to take the place of the religious impulse. To-day art is as essentially the work of the individual, as it was formerly that of thousands. It has altered so radically, that the name it once bore is scarcely applicable now. Between the new and the old lies the gulf that separates the individual and the mass. These are distinct conceptions, that no art history can weld together.

G/OTTO: DETAIL OF A FRESCO

IN THE CHAPEL OF THE MADONNA DELL' ARENA IN PADUA

## FROM THE GOTHIC PERIOD TO THE RENAISSANCE

The first step was the transition from mosaic to fresco. It was decisive. The artist himself became the decorator, and undertook the expression of his thoughts ; in his hands thought necessarily underwent a corresponding change.

The rapidity with which the decorative ideals of the mosaicists disappeared is remarkable. In his mosaics, as in his gigantic Madonna-pictures, Cimabue still shows the decorative grandeur of an art directed to the ornamentation of vast interiors. In Giotto's hands, painting is already pictorial.

The example that will best illustrate our present thesis is perhaps Giotto's beautiful and harmonious fresco-series in the Chapel of the Arena at Padua. This work contains the germ of all that later art has laboriously achieved. In such details as that of the traitor's kiss, with its antithesis of the brutal plebeian head of the renegade and the divine face whose eyes seem to pierce the sinner's soul, we are startled by a manifestation of personal conceptions, a deeply dramatic power, worlds apart from Byzantine ideals. But all such effects are isolated. Let us examine the general effect produced by this little interior, which might have been decoratively treated by the simplest methods, and let us remember our first sight of it on entering, before we had found out the pearls among all these rigid lines and tints. Did we not feel a desire to turn back at once into the blooming garden about the little house? Did we not conquer a certain involuntary repulsion by a more or less archaeological interest before we could venture nearer? Then, indeed, after getting at the root of the matter, we possibly went to another uncritical extreme, and looked upon the desire for strong impressions which was disappointed at our entrance, as the impulse of a barbarian. In unsophisticated minds, memory will always retain the twin impressions : the delight in personal elements, which we find here in such imperishable traits, in spite of all ravages, and the yearning for architectonic effects, which was so painfully repulsed.

The Chapel of the Arena was the first picture-gallery: it is the starting-point of what I may call the gallery-characteristics of all our art. The picture has already become something we must look at alone, divorced from its surroundings and governed by its own laws. Art no longer bases itself on the cosmos, but the individual becomes his own cosmos, a world within the other. The very first step of this art was momentous for the decorative ideal. Note the Last Judgment on the facade of the chapel. The composition — not, of course, by Giotto himself — is as weak as the conception that inspired it, and led on to Fra Angelico's versions of the same subject.

Meanwhile, as the land, struggling against disaster, allowed art to become painting, incapable of creating anything but pictures, a marvellous structure was growing up in the barbaric north, the home of the new church. It could not have

arisen in Italy, where, in spite of all intellectual reactions, the mighty works of antiquity held the senses spell-bound. The ancient Roman civilisation was not merely a pagan civilisation ; it was above all things Italian, a part of the national being, and the greatest, most idealistic artistic expression of that being. The fact that certain ideas had changed under alien influences, could not suddenly drive the blood of the nation into different channels, any more than it could alter their faces and racial peculiarities. The growths of the Italian soil could not be anything but Roman.

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On the other hand, there was nothing in the north that was calculated to check an artistic development of ecclesiastical form. The part assumed by Christianity here was different from that played by the obsolete pagan culture of Italy. It took the form of a revelation, throwing light into the minds of the barbarians, still shrouded in the mists of dawn« A robust people, which had lived hitherto by its own rough strength, encountered Christianity just when its power had manifested itself sufficiently in externals to allow of further development on spiritual lines. The material function of Christianity was at once favourably regarded by the leading spirits, who valued material enlightenment. To them the intellectual advantages offered by Christianity sufficed to make the whole scheme acceptable. And the new doctrine carried out this mission with unexampled circumspection, disseminating practical knowledge, and sciences, with no premonition that the very culture whose foundations it was laying would finally outgrow it, as the last consequence of its work. Thus art, which served it, grew in its hands to some\* thing intellectual, not merely suggestive of thought, but itself a fruit of thought. Popular decorative elements blended with what religion had brought, but the distinctive element was a new one, resting on a basis of keen reflection, and thus sharply differentiated from all Roman art. It found its fullest expression in the French architecture of the thirteenth century, known as Gothic architecture. Consciously, and with a science whose healthy influence has worked beneficently even in our own day upon our decadent architecture, a system of construction was evolved that was logical before it became beautiful. The consequences were stupendous; the system found its way into Italy and there accomplished the unimaginable, the subjection of the Italians to the barbarians, and their docile acceptance of that Gothic style, which was antagonistic to all the inherited

instincts of the nation.

The audacities of this architecture reduced the solid wall-surfaces to a minimum. There was no room for mosaic. Its place was taken by painted glass, the *Hosanna* of Gothic art, which found its counterpart in the noble music that swelled upwards to the lofty windows.

Let us compare the Paduan picture-gallery with the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris, that little miracle of glass-painting, where the coloured windows (which are far from being the most beautiful specimens of this Gothic art) constitute the sole decoration and complete the seductive harmony of the place. It seems incomprehensible that we should have given up the one thing — ^this splendid unity — to nurture the other — the art that Giotto inaugurated.

It was, nevertheless, inevitable. The tremendous forces of Gothic art were bound to prove self-destructive in the end. The same power that soared heavenward in its magnificent buildings, forced every activity upwards, into a sphere where at last there was no possibility of co-operation. In Italy, under Giotto, the pupil of the mosaicist Cimabue, the style became type, a similarity of faces and movements, within the limits of which the individuality of Giotto's pupils could only find expression in delicate inflections. But simultaneously, painting became independent of the wall. The wooden panel grew out of the fresco, and this evolution was the external preparation for the complete isolation of painting. A circumstance that contributed greatly to this result, was that the execution of these pictures was entrusted to the same artists who illuminated the books used in the services of the church. The didactic purpose of the books usurped predominance in the pictures. The ornamentation of the missals, admirably and

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intelWgently applied as such, with a perfect comprehension of the surfaces to be decorated, and of the relation between pictures and text^ was stripped of its ofi^nal function in a picture, and found no new, clearly defined vocation to replace it. The artist arranged and enlarged«what he had painted in little on the vellum ; the superficial relation to architecture which passed into the picture in the process, came circuitously through the book; this, of course, had certain decorative elements in common with the structural style. The literary experiments of punting are of great antiquity.

Thus was evolved the picture, a composition governed, not by the law of the place that contained it, but by that of a more or less arbitrary frame. This frame ' still stands in the appointed Holy of Holies, but it is already an independent thing, a church within the church, a place in which is worth the effort of the noblest.

And now the North begins to invade this place too. A school of painting sprang up in Cologne, which expressed the very essence of Gothic art in its altar-pieces. These have none of the minuteness of the illuminators ; their unknown authors were rather stone-masons, penetrated by the ideas of form that governed Northern carving, and seeking to express these anew in pictures. They could not arrest the tragedy of the problem ; their dawning glory heralded the downfall of the building, but they rescued what was most precious therein, preserving it to inspire after-generations to renewed creative effort.

From these germs the first genius of the new art, Jan van Eyck, arose a century after Giotto. He gave to painting something universal and all-embracing, elements of such grandeur and nobility that we acquiesce in the ruin of all else, to ensure the survival of this one thing.

With him the material functions of pictorial art changed once more. The planes become more and more significant; an amazing minuteness of detail reinforces the particular interest of the theme. Such miniature-painting as Van Eyck accomplished in his *Vkpn* in the Temple of the Basle Museum, or his *Vierge au Donaur* in the Louvre, especially in the exquisitely elaborate background, differed entirely from the work of the mediaeval illuminators, and was hardly ever achieved by the specialists of a later date. Simultaneously Fra Angelico painted the little altar-tabernacles now shown in the monastery of St. Mark's, the minute golden lattice-work with the *Vii^in* behind, works of art full of the pathetic patience only possible in a monk. Compare Fouquet's miniatures at Chantilly with Fra Angelico's. There is nothing minute in the work of the Northern miniaturist, and certainly no sweetness. The eye is delighted by the detail here also, but this disappears in the general effect. Van Eyck's art is the sagest application of architectonic laws. In his hands, a brush and pigments accomplish what only structural art had hitherto achieved.

Technically also. Van Eyck's methods were new. He invented painting with oils, the medium that caused a revolution, the only medium in which the mighty achievements of the future art were possible, the medium which ensured them an immortality they could not have enjoyed in the form of frescoes.

With the rise of this art, the organic nature of general artistic development ceased. The grouping of artists into Schools was the last remnant of the superficial homogeneity of individuals. It disappeared gradually under the growing worship of personality. The subsequent development necessarily takes on a spasmodic character, the accidental, experimental nature of isolated effort. Italy produced no parallel to the art of Van Eyck, wealthy though it had become again, and

fascinating as was the bloom of Fra Angelico's colour. In the North the monk had become a schoolmaster ; here in Italy he remained an artist, until Donatello's generation. His work was both pious and charming, and an admirable decoration for vellum or parchment. But when he made use of large panels, it overflowed with a sugary sweetness that trickled into the art of Uik successors. Van Eyck is a man beside a doll in comparison ; we need hardly invoke the Adam and Eve of the Ghent altar-piece to illustrate this.

The union of the Italian and Northern Primitives was the happiest of artistic marriages, but the North was the man. There was no danger of loss for the North, but it was different for the other partner. Once more a mighty song swelled across the Alps, the psean of the Van Eycks, of Van der Goes and Roger van der Weyden ; once more a barbarian conquest was imminent, and this time a final decision was involved.

But meanwhile Italy had recovered her senses, and had become a rich and power\*ful country. Her artistic energy had certainly not spent itself in the devout litanies of the monk of San Marco. One day artists who wore no cowls discovered renuiins of classic sculptures beneath their native soil. In a flash they recognised how they might shake off the foreign domination, and cleanse the house from all traces of the barbarians. The tremendous prestige of classic art unfurled its phoenix wings. No one troubled himself now about the moral import of this art. The Church had become onnipotent, and could venture upon anything. She stood exalted above the petty party-rage of her infancy : a gracious woman, fair and crowned, who loved courtly splendour, and understood the aesthetic value of those relics of her long-since-perished heathen predecessor which she had once looked upon with such aUiorrence.

As the final act of her artistic career, Italy essayed the happy experiment of the Renaissance, with stupendous results ; after a struggle of a century she conquered Gothic, and brought the barbarians to her feet. The Renaissance became the style of all Europe.

The spectacle is a familiar one. But we have perhaps rather overlooked its tragic side, and in the fulness of delights showered upon us by the Renaissance^ have forgotten what it took from us. The battle of its great leaders is bound up with such important deeds and is so rich in wondrous elements that we forget that what they gave us at last was a many-headed hydra. Our artistic appreciation is coloured by our recognition of the immense advance in culture, the real struggle for real ends, which heralded our new era, and was so richly adorned by art. But in the domain of art the course of victory was not pursued in the normal direction of general cultxire, as the result of battles already won. On the contrary, it gave up positions already taken, and lost them irretrievably. It was natural that radical changes in social and economic conditions should seek expression in art. As no fitting expression was to be found through the medium of Gothic art, there was a sudden retrogression to a world of forms which lacked the sound basis of this art —

a determination to meet natural requirements — and admitted of artistic but not of local application. Art became more natural, by using the freer forms of the ancients, but at the same time, it veiled on the unreal, for the age had no inevitable necessity for these forms. It would be futile to attempt a critical comparison between Gothic and Renaissance ; the Renaissance manner was not, strictly speaking, a style at all ; there has, in fact, been no style since the Gothic.

From this standpoint, the significance of which is more and more apparent

VAN EYCK: JAN ARNOLFINI AND HIS WIFE

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

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to this the height of that epoch, the Renaissance in architecture was no revival, but a brilliant decline. Its essential element is of a negative and dissolvent kind, an experiment that necessarily brought about decentralisation, the primary essential for the development of painting. At one ideal moment we find all the artistic forces assembled. It is the prologue, the freshest, most enthralling act of the whole drama. Masaccio's gravity becomes the blindest poetry in his eager, gifted pupils. This poetry, to which Filippo Lippi, Botticelli and Ghirlandajo contributed their loveliest rhythms, disclosed the sweetest blossom of Italian art ; its virginal charm is eternal. The vernal freshness that characterised it, its hopefulness, its thirst for action so enchant us, that we feel a certain disappointment at the consummation offered us by its more mature successor.

The prologue is like a meeting of the hunt : the sportsmen are all together, but they are waiting eagerly for the signal that will scatter them to the four winds. They are held together only by influences, and these influences unite the arts. Donatello inspires the painters, and the painters are further architects, goldsmiths, and many other things, but they are so individually, accidentally, as a result of their passionate desire for action, their lofty wish to make everything share their enthusiasm. They take part in industry. But their influence is of no permanent benefit to industry. What do they, in their exuberant energy, know of that use and purpose, without which industry pines away ? And while they carry their art unto these manifold activities, they over-refine in detail, and give an active impulse to that decadence in general art, which their forefathers passively promoted.

It is characteristic of our age, that contemporary artists are usually concerned with the resuscitation of the Renaissance ideal, and that so many of the artists who



have the renewal of general art at heart, are haunted by that epoch, on which, by a pious fraud, they foist the tendency they desire to promote to-day. We cannot demand of the last heirs of that development, which made individuality the highest good, that they should go back to a period when the individual was non-existent. They take the moment when the ideal of a general style was still alive^ though various powerful personalities were at work. But they overlook the logical weakness of the moment, the fact that the qualities which distinguished these persons necessarily brought about the disintegration, the evils of which we are now enduring.

An Italian, the latest and greatest, made a final effort to combine the two ideals, to offer the highest that individual art could give, and to unite all the arts to beautify an interior. This was the dream of Michelangelo !

But this giant's life-work served only to bring the tragedy of modern art to a climax. He, the purest, most abstract artist that ever lived, attempted to accomplish what can never be combined with the abstract. The fact that his noble frescoes in the Sistine Chapel can only be seen by a dislocation of our limbs, and that we have to examine them in photographs in order to enjoy them, suffices to condemn them from the architectonic point of view. There is unquestionably more genius in the finger of God, calling Adam to life, than in the whole work of any of Michelangelo's forerunners ; but the secondary purpose he, the master of all arts, bound up with his art, he never accomplished, because it was impossible for him to avoid the natural consequences of his brilliant gifts. And therefore the decorative effect of his magnificent ceiling is monstrous, just as, in spite of the beauty of the marble figures on the Medici tombs at Florence, the ensemble of limbs and the stones^ on which they rest, /.^., the sarcophagi as such, are monstrous. The objection, that powers far inferior to his would have sufficed to achieve harmony, VOL. I D

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is unmeaning, and quite beside the question. If, in our quest for a certain good, we light on another far greater, the fact that we have not found what we set out to look for remains unchanged. Michelangelo was conscious of the tragedy. The number of unfinished works he left prove how greatly he feared to forget the result in the process. He became the bane of the epigoni, who took what could not satisfy him, and made it a definite formula,, from which they evolved the sinister beauty of the Baroque Style — the beginning of the end of European architecture.

WOOD£M CRUCIFIX IN BRUM3WICK CATHBORAi.

TINTORETTO:

BRUSSELS MUSEUM

MARTYRDOM OF ST. MARK

## THE FIRST FLORESCENCE OF PAINTING

The victorious struggle of planes against line continued with results more and more decisive in the new painting. The Venetians, Rubens, Rembrandt and Velazquez were its heroes. In the nineteenth century this tendency was carried to its extreme consequence. The result is undoubtedly the most important acquisition made by our art. If it were the only one, and if the influence on all aesthetic production had been limited to it alone, its apogee would coincide with the nadir of our power to form style.

This conclusion, a consequence of the Renaissance idea, is happily an error\* We shall see later, on which factors the formation of style devolves in our times» at least, in our abstract art. To deduce the style of our day from our pictures would be as absurd as to deduce Gothic art from Gothic pictures. Painting did not create Gothic. The reverse was rather the case. Painting needed the impetus it received from contemporary style, to free itself from that style\* Its destinies can therefore at the most only be accounted symptoms of this liberation, this ^\* degothicisation,\* if I may coin such a word.

On the other hand, the period undoubtedly plays a part in another form in the development of painting, however spasmodic this may seem. Its course may, to a certain extent, be recognised as a phenomenon parallel with the development of the human organ of vision and certain faculties of perception, not in its entirety, but certainly in its most important tendency. The great painters, to whom we owe landscape, from the Dutchmen of the seventeenth century to our own contemporaries, were undoubtedly right, when they showed that there are other things to see in Nature besides the stylistic line which classicism selected. Our own century played such an important part in the development of landscape, that we may almost consider the creation of the genre as an achievement of our era alone. The importance of light, of air, of all the imponderabilia we require to give probability to a study of nature, developed gradually, almost step by step. Much that the earlier masters saw in Nature, seems, if we place the most trivial modern landscape beside it, an illusion of

primitive senses, and it seems legitimate to demand that the increased complexity of our perceptions should find expression in art as well as elsewhere\* This necessary scientific accretion, which nevertheless may leave to art all its sources of beauty or even create new ones for it, modifies its technical equipment. The significance of the artistic is unaffected by this modification ; painting governed by scientific considerations alone would lose its artistic value. Science must remain a means, and can never become an end in this connection.

The quasi-material development of painting naturally caused a reaction on the other side. While interest in Nature became more and more intimate, composition entered upon a new phase. Its field of operation altered, became smaller both in a superficial and a literary sense. The Dutchmen of Rembrandt's time had already demonstrated that, to render the quality of a fine piece of stuff, it is not necessary to drape it on an elegantly posed figure, nay more, that arrangement

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of the drapery is just as unnecessary as the elegant pose ; a Vermeer showed the perfection of art that may lie in the picturesque reproduction of the stuff alone, and how things so unpretentious from the literary point of view may afford far more enjoyment than the huge compositions manufactured in Rubens' workshop.

There was composition, too, of course, in the Vermeer ; without it the artist's gift would not have produced its full effect. But it was not of the lofty classic kind. It concealed itself behind an apparent simplicity of form that suggested mere fidelity to the thing seen. It did not make the arrangement of the picture dependent on the literary argument, but treated it to all appearance quite arbitrarily, though in reality with the most delicate sense of the division of space, which made the illusion of accident an artistic means no less powerful than grandiose composition.

What I call grandiose composition here, in order to make myself easily understood, is deliberately constructive painting, which still retains a certain connection with the conventions of antique style, and finds the stately character it desires more especially in reliance upon classical forms.

The definite linear outline was originally the logical organ of this art. The great typical pictures of the Venetians made the first step towards that use of colour which destroys line, and in a still greater degree is this true of Rubens, who practically abolished line. It is remarkable that among the immense series of his gigantic pictures the two that deserve the place of honour are the magnificent unfinished works in the Uffizi, the *Salome* and *Henry VIII's Entry into Paris* works consisting mainly of splashes of colour, in which we divine more than we see, and in which not drawing, but a vigorously wielded brush triumphs.

They are far more valuable than the long array of finished flesh-constructions that cover the walls at Vienna, Dresden, Munich and Paris, because they contain to a marvellous degree what Rubens could do, and because his faculty is closely akin to that of the best among our own masters.

The shadow of this personality hangs over the whole of modern art. Rubens stands in his small Flanders like a colossal tree, so firmly rooted and so great that in the three hundred years of his still unchecked growth his boughs have spread over all the little land.

Two strong branches dominate among the rest. One, the larger of the two, stretches out to France. On it, not far from the parent-stem, are perched a couple of lovers in Watteau costume; farther on is Delacroix. Then the stem makes a mighty knot, and divides into many twigs, on which the buds are only just beginning to burst; they gleam with the colours of modern French art. The other branch rises, slim and tender, with but little side-growth, northwards to England; this was grafted by Van Dyck. It was not so vigorous and natural as the other, with whose foliage its own often mingled; it did not develop in the open air to which the other aspired, but flourished in the lofty sphere of English Court life. It first overshadowed the pale aristocrats that Rubens\* pupil painted at the Court of Charles I., and then the more natural and not less stately splendour of Gainsborough and Reynolds.

The law which governs the historical development of powers such as that represented by Rubens is a secret one, mysterious as Nature and comparable to Nature in its noiseless workings. If we go further back, we shall recognise in Rubens the fusion of northern and southern elements, which, before him, first met at the time of Van Eyck\* When the pictorial impulse of Italy was in its

RUBENS: THE LION HUNT

HERMITAGE, ST. PETERSBURG

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first phase, the North approached her. Venice, in particular, was the scene of the encounter; here Van Eyck's pupil, Antonello, taught the new creed, and gave the new school so much of his own strenuous individuality that all Italy subsisted on it for generations, and the first great painter of the Venetian school, Bellini, is like a Northern Gothic artist. Later, during the second prime of Flemish painting, when the tradition began to fade in the North, Italy gave back

the borrowed fruit. It drew the pcunters of Antwerp to Venice, and here they took from the offspring of Bellini, from Titian and Veronese, that which the North had denied them : colour. Rubens was the child of this wondrous marriage between North and South, and from him we may date the rise of modern painting. Like every genius, he had a disastrous influence on his immediate followers : Van Dyck was but a feeble epigone, as long as he followed in his master's footsteps. Italianism, which even in Rubens' northern fist was sometimes held in check with difficulty, degenerated into the grossest mannerism among his disciples. Van Dyck first came to his own when he had escaped from Rubens' jurisdiction, and at a first glance he seems to triumph most completely by qualities he did not share with Rubens. The influence of Rubens seemed to have died out, even in Flanders itself.

But it declined in a small domain, only to wax more vigorous in a wider field. The Frenchmen of the eighteenth century drew the sweetest melodies therefrom. They transformed the wanton love-song into dainty and polished verse. Among these airy folks, Rubens looks like a giant with a legion of dwarfs swarming over his thumb. They are careful to take no more from him than they can carry, but even this little is as much as they can manage. Watteau, the greatest of them, was the one most capable of resistance. He went back to the sources of Rubens' art, as if to strengthen himself at these, when the impression of what lay nearer to him became overpowering, and the Venetian element in him appears almost as the masculine antithesis to the soft seductive charm of the Flemish. Fragonard was the first to give himself up wholly to the spell, Fragonard, the most French of all the Frenchmen of his age, in whom everything was pure, picturesque harmony, even his melodious name. But even in his hands the exquisite fruit began to wither. France never tasted it again in such perfection. The art of a much later date which derived from Rubens required another and sedater element.

This, too, was a product of the great period. It gave birth to Velazquez. The whole sum of modern art is manufactured out of Rubens and Velazquez. They are both extremes, protagonists of stupendous powers, almost in excess of their actual accomplishment. We always feel as if we should some day light upon pictures by Velazquez more brilliant than the famous examples, as if everything in the Prado and in London were merely a collection of sketches for some great work surpassing them all. The same may be said of Rubens.

The obvious incompleteness of their accomplishment gives them a remarkable power that, centuries after their deaths, stirs the energy of all creative artists, and that even in their life^time moved their confreres to emulation. Nothing is more natural, than that we should rec(^nise many different hands in the works of Rubens, and that there are so many contemporary variations on the Spaniard's originals. Velazquez himself repeatedly executed variations on the same canvas, and who can say whether the last was the best i

A third, the greatest of the age and of all ages, came to associate himself with

these two, darker, deeper, more complex than the others, incomprehensibly unique

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and yet more human in the highest sense. No school bears his name ; there was a Rembrandt. This very fact makes him suspect to the present generation. Because he defies technical analysis, because he was a genius, because his results alone are valuable to us, and not his methods, which only lead the modern painter astray, we are accustomed, among modern artists, where methods are all-important, to see him looked upon with ill-concealed repulsion mingled with veneration, in striking contrast to the boundless admiration expressed for him by the laity.

A thousand things may be urged against Rembrandt, but as a fact they have nothing to do with him» We shall always be beside the mark if we judge him by standards that apply to others. He is but little concerned with painting as we understand it. By its means he created things that are more than the art due to human hands. A Rembrandt makes the air around it vibrate ; it is like some splendidly sonorous voice, the very sound of which is pregnant with wisdom, before we grasp the words it utters.

He painted dignity, of the only kind we can thoroughly understand : the dignity of human beings. It is, of course, the dignity of man. He has but one rival here» Leonardo, whose pictures in the Louvre show the same penetration in approaching woman, the same lofty, purely intellectual — perhaps, here, over-intellectual — conception ; in him we see a profound result of the Latin race, just as Rembrandt was the summing up of the Germanic. Such men as these may boldly accept responsibility for making art purely abstract, and we understand that cathedrals and palaces had to fall, that they might gaze out freely into eternity.

Rembrandt is a direct contradiction to the art which concerns itself with pure beauty of form. He is a strenuous prosaist, who, by the significance of his language, succeeds in lifting us to the heights only attainable to the ancients by the melody of poetic form. To the ideal of beauty of the Greeks he opposed an expression in which everything formal seems to be replaced by a consciousness of knowledge rendered intelligible in some mysterious fashion. It scarcely deals with beauty, it is too intimate for that ; but it is as deeply rooted in our world of emotions and as natural to us as was the worship that rejoiced in the marble to the Greeks. By its means Rembrandt gave the most accurate expression imaginable to the deep moral difference that divides the two cultures, and further a testimony that we need not blush before the ancients, and that it is possible for us to make up for inferior fortune, inferior beauty, inferior power by superior intellectual gifts. From this representative standpoint it matters little that he was a Dutchman, and how he formed himself or was formed by others. All this was much more important in the case of Rubens, and most of all, in the case of Velazquez,

who for this very reason may perhaps be accounted the least among the three.

There is a place in London where pictures by Velazquez and Rubens and Rembrandt hang together. The Wallace Collection is to Northern art what the Uffizi is to that of Florence. Here we may approach our men ; they live and converse together like ordinary mortals. Here is Rembrandt's Parable of the Unmerciful Servant: the old man with the turban speaking to the three, the debtor and the two who have brought him before his master.

He speaks, indeed, to many more.

Rembrandt has been praised for his truth of observation, the vigour of his gestures and facial expression. Even the Anatomy Lesson has been lauded as masterly in this connection. I think that Frans Hals surpassed him in all these qualities, and that Rembrandt showed his greatness by his abandonment of these

REMBRANDT: DR. DEYMAN'S ANATOMY LESSON

RIJKSMUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

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cheap ambitions in his maturer years. Certsun of his qualities are to be found in a higher degree in other Dutchmen, but he is the architect, the rest arc only decorators. They seem mere painters of detail beside him. On one side of the picture I have mentioned hangs Hals\* Laughing Cavalier — it seems mere boisterous chatter; on the other Velazquez\* famous Lady with a Fan; she looks at us, cold and lifeless ; the most exquisite Gainsborough sparkles on the opposite wall ; it has the efiect of a costume-picture. These were all painted to please ; they have a touch of make-believe about them ; a rich, a varied and a wondrous make-believe, of course. But they are not so necessary in the final sense as the Rembrandt.

The importance of every man lies in the importance he recognises in others. His value is of the same quality as the value he draws from life ; that which seems momentous to him, is momentous in him. No conscious philosophic profundity is required in the process\* Vermeer's little Lace-Maker is a stronger and deeper effort of concentration than acres of symbolic pictures. Instinct guides the hand of the master, but not the ego-instinct, rather that greater, indefinable instinct that illumines a sincere and healthy mind at times, when it can forget the little ego, who wants to paint fine pictures. Rembrandt had such moments, and only one artist since, a painter who has a close spiritual relation to

him: Millet\* The Wallace picture is like some colossal revelation. We ask ourselves whence these men have come, who are talking together\* The famous chiaroscuro probably never played a more important part than here; it gives spirituality to the episode, and provides the cloud on which the Eternal Father was wont to sit in the days of Michelangelo. From out this magic dricle the eyes gleam with strange intensity. And not only do the eyes of the four persons look at each other, but their very bodies ; each line of the three servants is eloquent of some relation to the speaker, still more every light, every bit of colour. The play of planes is positively overpowering in its richness. How poor the use of linear effects by means of contour seems in companson ! Before this we think of the Primitives as truly primitive ; the slender single threads on which they depended seems to have been transformed into a wondrous web, into which all emotions are drawn as into a rich, warm, many-coloured life. This richness gives increased depth to the theme. We discover not only the relations of the three listeners to the speaker, but those of the three to each other. They appear before us as so many generations, classes, species, aspects of the universe. Superficially, this variety is not much insisted upon. The servant and the man-at-arms are of the same age, and are, further, well-known models ; one of them is the Joseph of the Berlin Potiphar's IVife^ the other, unless my memory deceives me, reappears in several portnuts. The older man of the three is Rembrandt's brother, whom he so often painted. Delacroix called Nature a dictionary. We might compare Rembrandt's models to the elements of style in classic buildings, elements that resemble each other, yet are perpetually combined to give different results. And, indeed, such pictorial art is only comparable to the noblest works of architecture, that stand outside the domain of trivial significance. Who asks what these men in the picture are talking about, who wishes to know what is happening here } What the old man is saying may be of the profoundest wisdom ; it could only be dull, trivial stuff if we translated it into words ; just as, on the other, hand, an attempt to render Goethe's Faust in colour could only result in feeble painting. But we would fain repeat the experience, and have such solemn moments with our fellow creatures as these four men are having ; if we are artists, we would fain

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be hetrd with the same eloquently expressed comprehension as this old man, who with his left hand seems to be casting down the barrier that divides — ^my soul from thine !

• • • •

Rembrandt had no artistic pn^ny. He completed himself. Bode rightly assigns the Unmerciful Servant to his last period. It seems the work of one who had lived many times the years of the master. Any further application of the methods of this unique artist could only lead to failure : thus has Nature



decreed concerning the giants of art. The sensual, rather than the intellectual, faculty is necessary for propagation, and this is true in art as in Nature. Rubens had a rich store thereof. His successors really did little but cast a veil over the unseemliness of his sensuality, and that of Frans Hals. The talents of the eighteenth-century Frenchmen were admirably suited to the task. This Rubens-esque influence continued into the nineteenth century, and became a more serious but not a less beautiful thing, for which lovers of our modern painting are more than ever thankful. It was the banner upheld by Delacroix to which the revolutionary elements rallied against Classicism. It was not the gorgeous representative pictures of the Fleming that determined this reaction ; the vivifying influence was the life that seethed in his frenzied brushing, the riot of his vigorous senses, insisting as with a shout of joyous vitality on the present, the while the Empire determined to turn back once more in pilgrimage to the past.

REMBRANDT: THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

WALLACE COLLECTION, LONDON

## THE EMPIRE

The classical reaction that took place in France at the close of the eighteenth century, when David suddenly gave up painting in the manner of Fragonard, strikes us as inconsistent at a first glance, because it was an outcome of the Revolution. It seems a contradiction that the antique should have become a revolutionary symptom, that an obvious retrogression should have been welcomed as the artistic expression of progress. The phenomenon is not to be explained by literary influences alone, nor by the gradual growth of the tendency in the years preceding the Revolution\* That at a certain epoch, certain characters in Roman history excited peculiar sympathy and admiration, is not in itself enough to explain the substitution of the toga for modern dress, with a fine contempt for all material differences. What men were seeking in that dramatic moment — the most tremendous, perhaps, in the history of any nation — was a definite, form of expression, a speech that could convey something of the dignity to which the people had risen in the Revolution, an art which could fix in plastic form the extraordinary elements of this great period. They were seeking, in fact, the simple ideal of popular art, a sign of the times that all might see from afar.

The art of the great Watteau's successors was altogether alien to such a conception. It found itself suddenly in irreconcilable opposition to its contemporaries. It is surprising that at a time when the guillotine was so busy its exponents should not have fared worse. For they were the faithful represen-

tatives of all anti-revolutionary instincts; not merely because they were an embodiment of the seductive period of the Monarchy, the most delicate deposit of the gay rococo style that had delighted the Court of Louis, but because their whole mode of thought and form of expression breathed hostility to the revolutionaries. In one of the many coarse illustrations of the scenes of horror of the closing century, a dainty cavalier is shown looking delightedly at a print in a bric-i-brac shop, while a Jacobin in a toga, the Phrygian cap on his dishevelled hair, laughingly drives a Roman sword into his ribs from behind. No more striking antithesis could be imagined than the delicate dilettante art of Fragonard, the decadent sense of enjoyment that found delight in St. Aubin's marvellous prints, and the Roman ideals of the youthful Republic. It almost seems as if the ancient places of North and South had been reversed, as if culture had evolved the barbarian, and barbarism the man of culture.

The historical criticism that seems so obvious to us now, that sees salvation in the Rubens-Watteau tradition, and looks upon Classicism as an untoward interruption in the development of modern painting, was totally outside the ken of these Republicans. They had all the ingenuousness of youth ; for the social upheaval had made them almost a new people. There was more affinity between a French\* man and a native of the United States, than between the Parisian of the Monarchy and the Parisian of the Directory. That this youthfulness was a mere rejuvenescence, that the nation was the same in blood and was at the end of its powers, was

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shown by the fact that it turned back to the past instead of creating something ' new, and that this renaissance finally spent itself in a kind of Indian summer. But from their own standpoint the French were right ; not merely because they suddenly bethought them of the few drops of Roman blood in their veins, or because they, perhaps, recognised an alien strain in the Flemish element of the Watteau tradition — ^what was it to them that history declared this strain to have been present in Gothic art ? — but because they desired at least to feel themselves Latins, if they could not be French, and above all, because they wanted something more in art than luxury, than work belonging only to the rich.

In the case of Napoleon, again, it was not mere prudence that made him take these aspirations of his people into account. A Nero with intelligence, a *lulus naturae* made up of the most violent inconsistencies, a materialist, but so immense in his materialism that there was not space for him in modernity, a man possessed by a megalomania that the Roman period alone could have tolerated, laid hands on the helm, and conquered the world. The baroque daintiness of his periwigged predecessors could not suffice him for the setting of his drama ; he could not

accept artistic consecration from the conquered present that lay writhing at his feet, but compelled the shadows of the gray past to form the nimbus round his throne. When a martial caprice drew him to Italy, it is natural to suppose that he did not pass unheeding through the ruins of an age in which he would fain have lived. To him it was not a foreign, hostile land ; he understood its loftiest art better than the Italians themselves, who looked on with scornful smiles, when he carried off their least prized pictures, the almost unknown early masters of their art. But the traces of Napoleon's passage through Italy are not solely those of the spoiler. His well-considered architectural renovations have something of the tender solicitude of the native prince, adorning his territory.

He took more away with him than Fra Angelico's pictures. Things irremovable, the mighty relics of antiquity and greatness, stamped themselves deeply on his soul, and he determined to build them anew at home, after his own fashion, in the Napoleonic vein.

And this same man, who carried off the horses from the portal of St. Mark's, gave a code to the moderns, and weakened the lands he could not conquer by falsifying their coinage — was, in short, modern in all his methods.

This modernity masquerading in a toga was inconsequent and prevented the working out of a systematic style. Napoleon had, in fact, no time to achieve style in monumental things ; it did not extend to the complicated buildings of his Roman prototypes, to say nothing of the Egyptians, certain samples of whose art he sent to Paris. What he achieved belongs mainly to the interior of the house-rooms, furniture, classic pictures, portable things . • .

Relatively speaking, architecture fell into the background. Michelangelo's Renaissance had given the world an architecture rather artistic than utilitarian. The Empire concerned itself exclusively with details, and though our recent appreciation of the cold distinction of Napoleonic furniture and ornament was not ill-founded, the artistic essence proper to it seems to slip between our fingers — perhaps this is the very reason of such appreciation.

The Empire style was a convulsive attempt to give a different direction to art-development by those who lacked the power to create it afresh. It is folly to see in this effort a mere classicistic tendency ; it was a presentiment of that which moves us to-day, and begins to take tangible shape before us.

J. L DAVID: PARIS AND HELEN

GROUP FROM THE PICTURE IN THE LOUVRE, PARIS

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though as yet we have no formula for it : the socialisation of art ; style", not only in pictures but in everything. The time was not yet ripe. Art was as yet untouched by those factors which the nineteenth century brought into play, those factors which gave material importance to the class that had won political power by the Revolution. The right to a civic style had been acquired, without the means to make use of that right. The idea of the citizen existed primarily only in the form of address adopted by the Republicans. It was not until he had created his social independence that he could find a form.

And it was because the Empire ideal, in France and Germany at least, failed to capture this fruitful sphere for which it was adapted, in which classicism might have become a means to an end, giving the impetus to a general modern artistic culture, after the manner of other archaistic tendencies of our day ; because it selected the classic form, the worst it could have adopted, since it was the most complete and therefore the least capable of development — for all these reasons it degenerated, expressing itself in details, instead of creating a style.

In painting it revived the definite contour, " la probité de Tart/\* as Ingres called it, that structural element, which affords an immediate practical connection with the utilitarian art tendencies of the age, and for the annihilation of which painting in general had more or less consistently worked till this time. Style is line. And modern art was so far advanced, that Classicism could not be a mere echo, and the new line a mere repetition of the old. Capable hands took care that the classic line should become an enduring element in modern painting, and should exercise the most salutary influence to this day, though less directly perhaps than the Delacroix tradition of colour.

The majority of pedagogues can still urge very cogent reasons for the retention of Greek and Latin in the curriculum, not as vehicles of culture in themselves, but as the best possible form of gymnastics for the intellect ; in the same way, the cool neutrality of classic form has its advantages as an educational factor. It is idiotic to expect a student to draw and paint from Nature\* as idiotic as it would be to set a man who was taking his first lesson in mechanics before a modern steam-engine in order to make the elements of the science clear to him. The organs that are to do justice to the complex phenomena of Nature, must first be educated ; that in Paris this training is still based upon classic tradition, explains to some extent the enormous difference between the French average of artistic proficiency, and that of other countries. The Frenchman goes to school, and to masters who, be they never so Philistine, know something of the principles of teaching. Lecoq de Boisbaudran, in whose school so many modern artists were formed, painted indifferently himself, but the brilliant system of grammar he managed to instil into his pupils, was none the less beneficial. In Paris, certain definite conceptions are

imposed on the ebullient talents, that would prefer to cover large surfaces, regardless of what they represent ; they are given the skeleton that must be the substructure, no matter how completely it may disappear under the luxuriant growth of individuality

## INGRES

No pedagogic considerations are necessary to make us do justice to the great men who led the classic movement. The furious strife between Realism and Classicism is at an end. We have dropped our battle-cries and have learnt to see something more in these people than impersonal professors. They were above all, guardians of culture, who worked a kind of cure upon neglected esthetic instincts. They not only took over an ancient form\* renewing and transforming it in a highly original manner ; they received and renewed the sense of form itself. This alone is enough to make Ingres immortal. Under him art became an expression of culture of the utmost purity, whereas under his master David it had reigned by virtue of a turbulent grandeur that bore the unmistakable stamp of the upstart. The creator of the Coronation was a great orator of tremendous power, the true imperial painter, who girded on Roman form as a superficial ornament that left his mighty loins free play. How little he really assimilated it may be seen when he reveals himself, as in several of his portraits; for instance, the brilliant unfinished picture of the Marquise de Pastouret by her child's cradle at the Chateau de Moreuil in Picardy, or the fine portraits in the Louvre, notably the beautiful picture of Madame de Staziat with her child. In the extraordinary freshness of the colour and handling, this shows more affinity with Frans Hals than with Rome. •

Ingres, on the contrary, was never realistic like this, even in his most unguarded moments. Lapauze, in his 'Dessins de J. A. D. Ingres de Montauban' quotes the dictum that Poussin would never have been the great artist he was, if he had not professed a " doctrine. With Ingres this " doctrine " was not merely a scientific theory that excites a cheap smile to-day, but a conscious organisation of far-reaching artistic instincts. When Ingres became supreme, the great period of imperial activity was past. Men had learnt to reflect. In the land of classic art Napoleon had seen only the territory of predecessors akin to himself in spirit. Meanwhile men had drawn nearer to the soul of classic art, or rather to its divine body. Mosaic copies of the Pompeian frescoes had become widely known. Lord Elgin rescued the Parthenon sculptures, the Germans discovered the Egyptian remains. The field of art extended, and with it that of perception. David had been a disguised Roman, Ingres became a Greek, but in a very wide sense, far more universal from the purely aesthetic standpoint than Goethe, for instance. He discovered the Greek spirit in Giotto's frescoes, which he placed above those of Raphael as vehicles of expression, and copied "on his knees " ; and yet he associated himself in friendly fashion with Viollet-le-Duc's tendencies. He followed after line. If later on he concentrated

his sympathies more and more on the Greeks, it was because he found in them at first hand what he was seeking. He was as essentially a draughtsman as David was a painter ; nay more, he was the greatest draughtsman the world has known. When the Renaissance discovered the marbles of the ancients, Italians and Frenchmen began to make statues. The age was still vigorous enough to essay the same material as that in which these masterpieces had been carried out. David tried his hand unsuccessfully at sculpture. Ingres forbore, but this renunciation concen\*

J. L. DAVID: THE THREE LADIES OF GHENT

(LES TROIS DAMES DE OAND) LOUVRE, PARIS

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trated bis expressive force in the more restricted field, till it became a quintessence of extraordinary strength. He appears as a sort of reservoir of line, as one who wished to transmit all the mighty impulse he received to his form« In his Odaisque^ bis Baigneusi, and his Roger delivrant Angiliquiy he is like a bow strung to its utmost tension, before the elastic vigour of which our minds, enervated by contemplation of the colourists, involuntarily cower, as fearing to be transfixed\* Hi3 Bain Turc^ in the Princesse de Broglie\*s collation, is equal to Raphael's finest work, as truly one of the most brilliant consummations of our modern art, as were the Vatican frescoes in the art of the Renaissance. Taking him all in all, he was an incomparable artist, in spite of the comparisons he seems to suggest, no epigone, but the poetic embodiment of the instincts of a nation ^at had conquered the world, and saw in Napoleon's domination a natural symbol of its own greatness, a greatness so far beyond Napoleon that its political downfall remained a mere superficial episode, serving at most to stimulate its energies.

And it was not only the Frenchman in Ingres, but above all, the Northern instinct that manifested itself with greater energy than ever before, almost with the energy of a first encounter with the Greeks. He possessed the North before he possessed the South, aïd a good deal more than he himself supposed. I can never help thinking of Ingres' pencil portraits before drawings by Holbein, and of Ingres' painting before Vermeer's Lace^maker. The Northern strain in him gave him that intimacy, if we can so describe the quality, which we admire in his portraits of private persons. If nothing of his work remained but the pencil drawings in the Bonnat collection, he would be immortal. No artist has ever seized the thousand aspects of the outward man as did Ingres, and he did it on little pieces of paper and with pencils that gave only the sharpest line. His natural predilections no doubt work decisively here. At twenty he could draw what he liked. Bonnat has

one of the earliest sheets, a unique portrait of M. Revoil, a drawing full of colour, that owes nothing to the sharp point. It hangs between the wonderful portraits of M. and Madame Leblanc, and it is difficult to believe that all three are by the same hand. He was eighteen years old when he did it. Many would have been satisfied to rest on such laurels. At twenty he looked upon it as a youthful error, and became Ingres.

Perhaps the Northern element was also the true reason why Ingres never impresses one as conventional in the narrow sense, and why one always arrives at a personal relation to him. We must not, of course, take the colouristic tendencies of our own day as the criterion by which to condemn all phenomena that do not take colour as the basis of pictorial art, nor judge of Ingres so coarsely as does, for instance, Montrosier, \* whose attitude towards Ingres is typical of that of the older generation. He praises the painter's application 1 \*\* Ne confondons pas la patience avec le génie," &c. Montrosier describes how he once stood before a Van Dyck with a "really great" artist, and how the artist laid down the law as follows :

•\* This artist [Van Dyck] was the painter of the decadence. All his persons have the same gestures. Compare him with Holbein : when the latter paints a miser, his gesture is avaricious ; when he portrays a soldier, it is peremptory ; when the character is a philosopher, it is serious ; when a lover, passionate • • • "

And Montrosier adds complacently that nothing could be more judicious, and that the reproach might be addressed to Ingres as pertinently as to Van Dyck 1

\* "Peintures Modernes." Paris, 1888.

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Finally he says of him what Rousseau said of the woman\* »writer and woman\* painter : \*\* Il n'a pas conclu.\*

Such criticism is beneath contempt. If ever a painter understood the conclusions that escape this author it was Ingres. We are tempted to ask if ever, even at the time of the Crusades, there were people whose attitude towards culture was so gross as that of the generation which, thank God, is nearing its end. One of its worst crimes is a certain grudging recognition it accords as a last insult to Ingres. We cannot expect a Delacroix to applaud his arch-enemy; we can understand the aversion he inspired in artists occupied with problems of colour. Artists have a right to be idiots ; they owe it to themselves, indeed, and Ingres himself was no exception to this rule. He was not only a prescription, a doctrine, but a gigantic factor, whose eclecticism was a subsidiary thing, yet who, if we take him aright, placed his exemplars in a new and purely aesthetic aspect, that of culture.

David was the academician, too essentially different, too uncultured, to give new life to the inheritance from the past. He accepted it without reflection, when he did not disregard it. Raphael Mengs was a German, and took a sentimental view of the ancients ; he was not sufficiently gifted to hand it on. Ingres said — I think his pupil Janmot records the phrase — *« Il faut manger cela. »*\* His quest of pure form in the works of the ancients has been condemned as narrow ; it was really great. He wanted to paint arabesques, not to point a moral.

The principle of his form of expression is no longer a subject of debate. What might have been unseasonable and absurd in others was a great achievement in him, because he succeeded in it. It is strange that the Romanticists should have been so enthralled by Delacroix that they could not even see the intention of the painter of the *Odalisque*. Baudelaire, of course, could not guess how negligible his own romanticism and how indispensable Ingres' non-idealism would some day seem to us. They are always harping on his colour. Baudelaire makes the amazing statement that Ingres had an ambition to shine as a colourist, that he had dreams of competing with Velazquez and Lawrence, &c.\* They depreciate him for not having accomplished what no reasonable person can suppose him ever to have attempted. As a fact, Ingres simply tinted his planes, that is to say, he overlaid his models with colour. It is possible that this colour would be very ugly if applied elsewhere ; I have not the courage to assert that it was not the right thing, used as he used it. Ingres once made the very profound remark that a great artist can always get the colour that suits his drawing. Perhaps some day his will be extolled to the skies. As to his painting, on the other hand, there are no longer two opinions. The *Madame Granger* of the Centennial Exhibition, in which the painter Granger collaborated, is an immortal work, and no great imaginative effort was required in 1900, to find the way from Delacroix to Courbet or to the *Sorcerer of Bal* of Bazille, Manet's comrade and pupil. Considerations of this sort, though from my point of view they touch but a small part of Ingres' activity, show how far modern French artists are justified in acclaiming him as the father of Naturalism.<sup>f</sup>

\* Baudelaire's Salon of 1846, in his *Œuvres complètes*.<sup>^</sup>

† Roger Marx sees in him *« un artiste impenitent inexorable, le représentant officiel du naturalisme, »*<sup>^</sup> agreeing here with Baudelaire. It is, obvious that appreciation of Ingres is vitiated by the French racial instinct. Or at least, such opinions, which are in direct contradiction, again, to those of Montrosier, are only to be explained if we say that the convention, which enabled Ingres to express himself to perfection, is so natural to the French, that they lose sight of the immensely specific tendency it induced in him. If there is any comprehensible meaning at all in the term Naturalism, it can only



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INGRES: DRAWING OF A LADY

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As a fact, his importance is hardly to be overlooked even in the present. Puvis is dead. Degas an old man ; but the medicine offered by the same hand to these two widely different temperaments is not yet exhausted. The right stomach is necessary if it is to work beneficially ; a constitution that, answering at once to treatment, reacts and gives health to the body. The simile applies perfectly to the doctrine of Ingres. Classicism became a poison everywhere where vigour was lacking, in Germany at the beginning of the last century, in England in our own times. Even here, however, it worked beneficently in so far as it cleared the way, and made room for other things.

be used as an antithesis to inherited rule, and must refer to the unbridled play of instincts, always superadded by Ingres to an accepted formula. Marx's pronouncement is the more remarkable, in that he rightly sees in Ingres\* portraits a continuation of those of David. All that is erroneously said of

Ingres might be more aptly applied, to David, whose sympathy with the less chastened Roman ideal of form made him more or less a Naturalist as compared with Ingres, and who consequently excelled in his portraits, whereas his pupil never succeeded, even in his most brilliant portraits, in eclipsing his OdaRsfUi and other work of the same rank. And is not the difference in the disciples of the pair a striking proof of this contention ? No Ingres could have produced a Gros. On the one hand we have the boisterous fugue of a gifted plebeian, on the other the lyric melody of Chass^ao.

FROM AM BNORAVIMG BY Dt^RBa

## GERMAN ART

Germany now made atonement for the dependence on French art that had marked the eighteenth century. Since the time of Durer there had been no great painter in Germany, and even at this era of florescence the essential genius of German art expressed itself rather in design than in painting. On the other hand, Germany was the one country in which the Germanic tradition had remained pure, and where the influence of the Renaissance had been almost imperceptible. The political events of the seventeenth century, the desolation wrought by the Thirty Years War, were not the only causes that deterred her from taking part in the beneficent artistic consummation, the migrations, so to speak, of the artistic instincts of various lands, that signalised the seventeenth, and still more, the eighteenth century. She was less impressionable than other countries. They, too, had known the scourge of war ; we have, indeed, instances of nations who produced their greatest painters in periods of deepest political depression. The greatest poets of Germany sang in the darkest days of her history. If there is no parallel to this in her art, it is because her genius is deficient in the pictorial instinct. The German is a musician, a poet, but not a painter. This opinion may be maintained even before the works or the most brilliant of the early German masters, when we see these out of Germany. The Tribuna of the Uffizi in Florence contains marvellous pictures both by Italians and Germans. Diirer's tAdoration of the Kings and Cranach\*s Eve are classic escamples of the masters, and as it happens, their pictorial qualities reach their highest point of accomplishment in these works, notably in the case of Durer. (To see Cranach at his greatest, we ought perhaps to supplement the Eve by the Nymph in the Leipzig Museum.) Yet, looking at the two examples we have cited in this place, it is just their pictorial qualities diat seem the least admirable of their merits. Marvellous as is the wealth of detail in

the Diirer, exquisite as is th| cool nudity of the Eve^ they seem to belong to a different art from that of the Raphaels and Titians beside them. It is as if accident had provided their authors with the same materials for wholly diBFerent purposes, and it seems scarcely possible that their works should have been contemporary with Raphael's. What we admire in the one, we forget entirely before the other\* This is not due to a diflFerence of personality, such as that which distinguishes a Raphael from a Leonardo; it is not the difference of nationality, as in the case of an Antonello and a Bellini, nor the dissimilarities of period and culture — for great as these may be, a simultaneous study not only of Italian and Northern examples, but of the works of all possible cultures^ has so accustomed us to them that they have become hardly more than a question of costume. The difference here is one of species, 'irreconcilable as the antithesis on which they partly rest: that of painting and sculpture, the difference between two arts.

German art has never freed itself from the Gothic tradition. Its deare?t« most characteristic qualities remained Gothic, even after the Gothic form had

INGRES: MADAME RIVIfERE

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disappeared ; in other words, the Germans produced their effects by outline and not by planes. For this reason they show to great advantage in wood-engraving ; DQrer is more especially impressive in his prints.

It is, of course, the same characteristic which originally differentiated North and South, that which distinguishes a Francis I. by Clouet from a Francis L by Titian. But that the distinction should have persisted in Germany, when it has died out in all other Northern lands, is certainly remarkable. We may even say that it became more emphatic with time, that certain of the early German masters, Stephan Lochner and his circle, for instance, had a stronger sense of the pictorial than later painters of equal talents, and that in Germany we cannot trace that development of draughtsmanship into painting which we note in Flemish and Dutch art. There are portraits by Holbein that recall Giorgione; but what Clouet took from him was not his sympathy with paint. No one can hesitate which to prefer as between Francois Clouet and Titian, though both are equally imposing. The pictorial quality in the Francis I. in the Louvre, by Titian, is so seductive, so much more human in its stately splendour, so much more natural in

the means by which the expression of greatness is obtained, that it not only seems nearer to us but more important. Clouet's greatness is more a result of a great convention ; Titian's is the overwhelming personality of the artist, which makes the vehicle of his art a material peculiarly his own, and wholly subservient to his purpose, a personality to whose gifted vision a medal was a sufficient source of inspiration for this vital portrait.

The linear convention persists among the Germans; and in its progress it manifests qualities of design, but never of painting. Take any purely German artist of our age, from Rethel and Schwind to Gebhardt and Thoma, Kraus and Menzel : these are typical Germans, without a drop of foreign blood ; they are all draughtsmen. So, too, was the only German artist of the eighteenth century<sup>^</sup> Chodowiecki. If we judge them as painters we wrong them ; as painters they seem old-fashioned ; Frenchmen and Dutchmen of the fourth rank excelled them. The smallest pencil drawing by Menzel tells us more of the artist than any of his oily paintings,\* interesting though these may be socially and historically, and his immortal illustrations for Kugler's history are far more impressive than his pictures of the same subjects\*

It is not surprising that this ancient Germanic tendency should have found complete satisfaction in a Classicism of pure design, indifferent and even hostile to colour, nor that its exponents should finally, under Carstens, have arrived at the logical conclusion of dispensing altogether with colour. Modern criticism has perhaps dealt somewhat perfunctorily with Carstens and his successors, just as it has with the classic phase of Goethe and of Schiller. In the case of the poets, is it not probable that those strong and lucid minds chose more wisely than their descendants can judge ? It is pertinent to ask : would they have done finer work on other lines ? As regards Mengs and Carstens we may answer such a question unhesitatingly in the negative. Mengs did his best work in Italy, and not with his Gallicised portraits. Carstens, Overbeck, and Cornelius again were no geniuses, and they turned their relative gifts to the best possible account\* If they had not had a creed for their guidance they would probably have accomplished even less than they did, and we should not have found compensation for their respectable tedium in those happily inspired details which only highly disciplined taste could

\* I except certain admirable little early pictures.

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have achieved. This applies in a still greater degree to Genelli, the greatest man of this little period, whose worse caprices cannot spoil our pleasure in his admirable drawings.

Be this as it may, Winckelmann was inspired by a sound and brilliant

instinct, of far greater importance than the very vulnerable principles he and Goethe deduced from it, principles which also evoked a work so typical of the German attitude to art, as Lessing's *Laokoon*."

It is surely by a curious irony that the writings of the two Germans, Winckelmann and Mengs, exercised their most fruitful influence on the artists of France. Of course their doctrine harmonised here with an ancient racial instinct — a consideration that was apt to be forgotten at the time of the supremacy of the French language. It was accepted in France, not because those who assimilated it were fit for nothing else, and had nothing to lose ; but because they possessed the just counterpoise, and could maintain their equilibrium against the classical onslaughts. Compare David's portraits with those of Cornelius and Carstens. France was trying the classical experiment for the second time. Poussin had been in Rome two hundred years before\* A purely pictorial school had arisen in France between the two phases, and though David and Ingres abjured this in their polemics, they were not able to throw it off entirely in practice. The radical difference in the reaction that took place against Classicism in France and Germany is highly characteristic. France had her Gircault and her Delacroix, Germany the *Nazarenes*,<sup>\*\*</sup> again a school of draughtsmen, who superposed on the classical line another which was partly a watery Pre-Raphaelism, partly a sentimental early German revival, wholly inadequate for the fresco-painting to which the megalomania of Cornelius attempted to apply it. The Munich frescoes are perhaps the sorriest phenomenon of impotence in existence; lower than this it would be impossible to sink.

Rethel and Schwind were the only strong personalities that rose among the vapid sentimentalities of Düsseldorf and Munich. Schwind gave vigour to the German note of Steinle and Föhrich. He, again, was a Gothic master, tenderer, softer, more lyrical than his prototypes. He might be called the German Fra Angelico, but he did not play the same part in painting as the Italian. He revived that ancient German strain, the most original manifestation of the German spirit, the *Volkslied*, giving it artistic expression no less sincere than the limpid fervour of Walther von der Vogelweide. He wrote his pictures, as if they had been poems ; we feel as if we were turning over the pages of some beautiful book as we look at his works. Ludwig Richter brought this book into the cosy atmosphere of homely German living rooms. Is there any one in these days with the courage — or the pen ! — to write such artless things ?

Germany made up in the nineteenth century for what she had missed in the seventeenth — the assimilation of Italian and other ideals. To this tardy development is due her retention of some fragments of the ancient German tradition. This distinguishes Germany from France and England. Neither of these has an original art, though they have original painters. What we describe as French or English now is as definite to us as the difference between black and white ; but each of these conceptions appears upon analysis extremely complicated. Dividing them into their component parts, we can recognise every element, but we

find nothing of early French or early English, directly we get away from what is purely superficial and ethnographical — types of faces and so on — and consider the

INGRES: LA GRANDE ODALISQUE

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form of expression. Roughly speaking they are both, and more especially the French, a continuation of the amalgamated painting of Italians, Flemings, Dutchmen, and that great master, Holbein. There are pictures by French Primitives, in the Louvre, notably the *Martyrdom of St. Denis* ascribed to Jean Malouel, so strikingly akin to the Italians of the time of Fra Angelico in colour, if not altogether in composition, that we should not be surprised some day to find them recognised as Italian works. It is only the black-bearded executioner in the so-called Malouel who betrays the hand of the Northener. Fouquet was the first great Frenchman, and though we may wax enthusiastic over the wonderful picture lately acquired by the Berlin Museum, and the magnificent *Charles VII.* in the Louvre, Fouquet was obviously a continuation of Van Eyck. Nicolas Froment is a pure Fleming, and the coarsest of them all. Clouet grew up near Holbein, Poussin journeyed to Rome, Watteau came from Venice, Delacroix from Rubens; the landscape painters of 1830 brought the Dutchmen to France, Manet the Spaniards, Degas the Japanese. « , And in spite of all this, how unreasonable should we be not to see one and the same painting in this history, one body, the multitudinous portions of which only serve to make it invincible !

The Germans have no German painting, but they have still an original art. It is true that the actual German ideal seems hardly a new acquisition, fond as we are of describing it as such, but rather an ancient much-prized piece of furniture, which lay forgotten in the attic, while the enemy was plundering the house, until, when the time came to set everything in order again, the worthy housewife. Nationality, brought it triumphantly forth. Unhappily, clean and polish it as we will, it does not suit our new house. The two hundred years or so that it lay in the loft cannot be rubbed away. Now French painting, though somewhat younger, is still old enough. Why then is there no suggestion of the lumber-room in its tradition ? Why is French art always modern, German art always old-fashioned ?

Because France received the necessary new blood by pairing at the right time, when she was fresh and vigorous, and fusion by means of simple natural instincts was possible, whereas Germany remained too long unmated.

Fruitful intercourse\* began for her in the nineteenth century, for Frederick the Great's French acquisitions remained mere foreign imports during his life, beneficent as they proved afterwards to Pesne's circle and Tassaert's pupils, almost against their will. In the nineteenth century, however, this intercourse was not a leavening of the whole mass, as it had been in other lands, but the contact of individuals, and that is why the great Germans stand so high. Germany had no popular requirements to impose upon them ; thrown entirely upon their own resources, they perfected what their forefathers had forgotten, and this they did with individual, and not with national power.

## FROM AN ENGRAVING BY DURER

## ENGLAND'S CONTRIBUTION

## HOGARTH

England had amateurs before she possessed an art. Henry VIII. was Holbein's best customer. Charles I.'s advisers bought the finest works of the Italians, Flemings, and Dutchmen. From the time of Van Dyck, the great and little masters of the seventeenth century had a second home on the Thames. If a taste for the arts had been the determining factor, we might well wonder with Macaulay why, at the end of Charles II.'s reign, England had no native artist whose name deserved remembrance. But this very wonder touches a portion of the problem presented by the history of art in the island kingdom. For as a fact this poverty was by no means astonishing, and the present state of things in England is a consequence of those same causes which Macaulay overlooked. The start was momentous. All art is to some extent illustration, especially all youthful art. It should be so, just as the first stories that delight a child should be fairy tales. But English art was not. It did not spring from the nation, but came from without. It matters little that its first products were imports, for the same thing happened in other lands. But it was the demand and not only the supply that was an importation. The English tried to graft before they had a stock. If German art resisted inoculation overmuch, English art went to the opposite extreme. The faults of German art were errors of development, the results of a violent interruption in middle age. It had a happy nursery. English art had none. Lacking youth, it lacked also enthusiasm, confident self-surrender to a great cause, the earnest purpose which nerves the powers, gives self-sacrificing earnestness to individualism to help it on its way, and rears, not egotists, but heroes. Every art requires concrete ideals



at the beginning, a body that even the poor can grasp and understand, in order to rise to spiritual heights above all material aims. It was only the essays of primitive times in the simplest variations which gave the period of fruition power to materialise the abstractions of its ideal, and to create an art which still points out the path to the future. All the elements of a nation must contribute to successful natural selection. Although in our own times progress inevitably leads to an aristocracy which sells the enjoyment of our highest good at a steadily increasing price, the beginning was always purely democratic, and the remembrance of this past, the knowledge that things were not thus brought about in purely arbitrary fashion, comforts us in the contemplation of our multiple refinements. England's dawning art was not the usual necessary utterance of the race. Not national but plutocratic instincts stood round its cradle. It began with a commercial commodity, the stereotyped portrait. Having so much, rich people wished to have pictures too.

This origin deprived English painting of the power to speak to the hearts of men. From the first it was by nature what it has now become of necessity : luxury,

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and from this it took its character. To this it has remained faithful to the present day, and this distinguishes it from all other national arts. Luxury does not rob the others of their loftiest heritage, the function of stimulating the noblest impulses of the nation, and of asserting themselves against its baser instincts, of remsuning a language to the evolution of which the best contribute, even if the people, having learnt fresh combinations in the course of ages, no longer listen to it. But the art of England at the beginning of the eighteenth century was not only non-lingual, but anti-lingual. It veiled the thing to be expressed, the natural impulse, and offered paint to its customers. Instead of painting faces, it rouged them, dwelt upon costume and social convention, represented people as they wished to be reflected in the mirror of fashionable esteem, and was fashion rather than art.

Two great men were ashamed of this tendency, and attempted to give a more virile tone to their native art. The greater of these was Hogarth. He retrieved what the others had missed, began to speak to his people by its means, was an illustrator. He did not tell his story in conspicuous frescoes ; the age jiad become too parsimonious for such outlay. We shall see that he nevertheless showed the distinctive characteristics of the great beginners of national artistic manifestations, without belying the century in which he lived or the task of the great personalities of our modern world. Only one of his successors showed a mental vigour equal to his — Constable. These rare spirits tower high above their compatriots, and their very greatness prevented them from giving a rich blessing to their land.

They had their origin in opposition to the motive forces of English art-life, and threw back to the elementary, innate peculiarities of the race : they were Englishmen before they became artists, men strong and wise before, urged by the necessity of expressing themselves according to their temperament, they chose their craft ; they had something to say before they had mastered their language. Hence they were hardly understood in their native land as they deserved to be. But what their fatherland lost, preferring the idols of the day, has been the gain of all Europe. Just these men, who were Englishmen, who meant to speak only to their own people, who are inconceivable in any other land, have found comprehension for their best among foreigners, and borne their richest fruit on alien soil.

It is significant that Hogarth began at once with a reaction. His art was, and had of necessity to be, a negation of all his countrymen had hitherto produced. This was his tragedy, for this negation determined the sterile relation of his unique fecundity to England. We need not ask how far he suffered under it. Tragedy in the history of art does not depend on the fate of individuals. It is an established fact that the negative beginning of his art gave a false direction to the relation of his countrymen to him from the very outset.

The peculiar development of English culture, which, protected by the position of the country, passed into modern materialism more rapidly than that of any other nation, caused a premature expression of problems in art as in other domains. In all progress there is a simultaneous working of analytical and synthetical elements. Every great artist is at once affirmation and denial. The sound economy of national development depends on the adjustment of these conflicting tendencies, so that no stronger negation may be expected from the people than it can bear at a given moment, in order to obtain positive advantage from the expression of genius. Hogarth denied at a stage of development when what the nation needed above all was a positive element. His mockery was directed against a latent national possession<sup>^</sup> attested by his own art, but the sting came too soon to be recognised as a stimulating

HOGARTH: PEG WOFFINGTON

SIR EDWARD TENNANT'S COLLECTION

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synthesis. His first achievement, the caricature of William Kent, which dethroned the bugbear of English society, tickled the risible muscles of his countrymen, and this was its only result. Nevertheless, it had a very strong effect, if we may judge by the episodes retailed by contemporaries. Some feared him, and others took a malicious pleasure in his satire. He was looked upon as at least an amusing author. Charles Lamb's dictum, that Hogarth was his favourite reading after Shakespeare, marked the highest degree of appreciation vouchsafed him. It was at once a doubtful tribute to Shakespeare and a depreciation of Hogarth. No one recognised the new world of form in this jester, the enthusiastic affirmation which expressed itself with all the forces of the noblest optimism, and to which negation served merely as the outward husk ; it was not, indeed, possible for any one to recognise it. For such recognition would have implied a culture for which Hogarth himself supplied the first elements. It would be unjust to wonder that he was misjudged. It is certain that Hogarth could only deal as he did with the sting that had been transformed into a paint-brush, and just as certain that his contemporaries could only offer him a sympathy rooted in error, to which all influence on aesthetic culture was denied. Walpole would have been as great a genius as Hogarth himself, could he have appreciated Hogarth better than he did, and even in such a case his isolated testimony would have had no result. The sphere to which a man's wit reveals itself is removed by many strata from that other in which beauty of form is understood. Even a cultivated race like the French could not do justice to Daumier a century later for the same reason, although Daumier only veiled the national affinity to the antique spirit in the most superficial manner. Recognition of some easily apprehended quality suffices to obscure nobler traits in the consciousness of the people. How much the more certain was this to be the case with a nation whose instinct for artistic things had barely been awakened !

Hogarth himself was hardly conscious of his own importance at first. His inexorable laughter alone seems to have inspired him. He had a pleasure in horrible situations which would remind us of Goya, were he not devoid of any kind of mysticism, a typical carnivorous Englishman, direct, exact, the true son of his native land. He laughed like an Englishman ; he had the characteristic cruelty of English comedy, which still strikes us as a strange world when we see it displayed in the circus by grotesque clowns beating each other black and blue. That which makes the effect is the naturalness, the logical quality in the nonsense of exaggeration, the style in the extravagance. This style does not concern itself with complications. It is as evident in the laconic structure of English colloquy as in the dry abruptness with which John Bull gets his own way everywhere. The cabman on the high perch of his hansom commands it no less than the peer in the Upper House. It is a style which impresses by something in it that is *irrident* and absolutely non-academic. We should call it barbaric, were it not so logical and so natural. \*y

Hogarth's pictures look like primitive art at a first glance. His early engravings in particular have a thoroughly popular character. The episode is well to the fore. The only recognisable intention is the determination to show everything that

happened at the given moment on the given spot. And what a multitude of things are happening 1 There is no corner in which we shall not find the contents of some milk-pail splashing over a courtier's brocade, some drunken soldier fondling a wench, something shattered or destroyed. Everything is absolutely credible, in spite of — nay, indeed, because of — the impossible piling one upon another of

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every imaginable scene. We do not at once know how far the presentment is art, because at the moment we have not all the data for comparison by which to check our impression ; but one thing is evident, that we are dealing with realities. We have the same sensation here as before Callot's engravings or the elder Breughe's snow-scenes. No one thinks of taking these painted stories for history, and no one doubts their actuality. These things seem to us more true than probable, and pass unchallenged, although if written or described, the same events would provoke a smile at the artlessness of the statement. This comes from the fact that these incidents were composed for their own sakes, and not with an eye to the spectator. The actors in them are taking their pleasure, beating, deceiving, and murdering each other for their own satisfaction. No glance ever strays across the footlights to the audience. This is carried so far as to make some of the episodes incomprehensible. We cannot unravel the meaning of certain details in the mummeries of *The Fair*^ or understand quite what is happening in the *March to Finchley* or the *Four Times of the Day*. It is difficult to connect the various sections of the great series in the National Gallery and the Soane Museum. There was no lack of commentators in the eighteenth century, and among these the Germans were of course prominent.\* The result could but be negative. The value lies in the very things that elude the commentator, that escape an analysis of the historical, the humorous, and the satirical elements. Only a very ingenuous mind will suppose that the incidents in Hogarth's pictures were really transcribed, that people displayed their passions with so little reticence, and showed such a lack of restraint under all circumstances. Hogarth did not witness the dramas he depicted. But he grasped the dramatic possibilities of his age in a manner that makes him comparable to Shakespeare, if we set aside the usual significance of the drama, to which Shakespeare gave such a noble interpretation, and turn our thoughts away from that which poetry contributes to the structure of the piece upon the boards, from the specific character of the genre. Shakespeare heard what the people about him were saying, and pondered their speech. And he created his immortal plays because he was able to weld everything he absorbed into an organic whole, because the amalgam was just as strong as the power with which he grasped what the outside world had to offer him. Hogarth had an intense perception of the typical movements of his characters under the stress of emotion ; like Daumier after him, he grasped their fashion of laughing and crying^ and brought them into a relation which harmonises with the peculiarity of the parts in a marvellous fashion. We might almost imagine that the artist saw all the

details that fascinated him distorted, with jagged broken organs, pressing forward to unite with others, in order that so they might produce a reasonable result, the only thing that\*- seems reality to the artist, form. We care little what story Shakespeare treats, whether he deals with a Brutus, an Othello, or a Falstaff, for

\* See Lichtenberg's famous \* Ausführliche Erklärung der Hogarth'schen Kupfersuche \*\* (Göttingen 1794). The whole of the literature dealing with Hogarth down to our own times is a cheap recapitulation of his wit. His contemporaries are mainly concerned for the morality of their heroes.  
John Trusler, for instance, in "The Works of Mr. Hogarth Moralized" (London, 1768), in the over-rated letters in which he sententiously observes : " N'allez pourrunt pas vous imaginer qu'il y ait quelque chose d'obscène, selon les mœurs Angloises, dans les tableaux de Monsieur Hogarth " (Lettres de Monsieur . . . à un de ses amis à Paris pour lui expliquer les estampes de Monsieur Hogarth (London, 1746). Even the biographers of our day have made Hogarth's moral their text.  
Armstrong and Dobson were the first to attempt an appreciation of the artist in their important volume (Heinemann, London, 1902).

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He remains the same concentrated Englishman, whether he applies his poetry to Roman or to Venetian legend. Neither are we greatly concerned whether tears or smiles predominate in the drama, for we recognise these more general conceptions as the instruments of higher powers, and hence the question as to whether the drama agrees with the traditional event loses its importance for us. Things had to be as the poet has made them. History is false if it teaches us otherwise, or rather, it teaches other things, not those with which he dealt. Thus Hogarth — in a humbler, less perfectly abstract manner— carries conviction by the amalgam which unites his particles. The isolated local significance does not give the sense. The amalgam is just as much a result of the methods of formative art, just as visible, that is to say, as Shakespeare's marvellous power in suiting everything to the organs with which we are best able to absorb his gift. In the one case the power of words rises to abnormal heights, in the other the play of lines and planes and colour. It is not their wit or their situations which make Shakespeare and Hogarth comparable ; the elements in these which seem alike are as different as possible ; it is their common faculty for making their occurrences live before our eyes. They achieved this in different ways. The resemblance springs from a distant affinity in creative

impulse, due to the fact that they belonged to the same country. Like Shakespeare, Hogarth required the incentive he gained from the opposition of his own personality to the activities of his contemporaries, and it is obvious that his passion could not have found expression in still-life. His anecdotes, unessential as they are to the immortal quality of his art, are as inalienably a part of him as are "Hamlet," "Macbeth," and the historical plays a part of Shakespeare. But when we speak thus, we do not look upon the anecdotes as objective, as the material circumstances which stimulated the creation, but we see them as parts of the creator, and make use of them as necessary symbols for certain portions of his nature. We mean Shakespeare when we talk of "Macbeth," and we mean Hogarth to a certain extent when we mention Southwark Fair. The fact that this process is much easier in the case of Shakespeare, that we feel we possess immeasurably more of him than the stories he actually left us, and that the abstraction he accomplished was far greater than that of Hogarth, places the poet far above the painter. Shakespeare has shown himself in a hundred gradations, whereas, compared with him, Hogarth was content with a narrow scale.

Hence, the incomprehensibility of certain of Hogarth's works, notably the engravings, which preserve the reproductive character of all the prints of the day, does not in the least diminish our enjoyment. We do not understand the details of the episodes, but we grasp the general intention better than the artist's contemporaries, who got no further than the allusions. Not in these, for which his contemporaries had ten, and we have a hundred, interpretations ready, does the intangible dramatic quality lie, but in the combination of emotions, the eloquent gestures accompanying a varying dance. The strophe about the mystical dance in Milton's "Paradise Lost," which Hogarth quotes in his "Analysis of Beauty," might stand as the motto of his own art :

Mystical dance !

Mazes intricate

Eccentric, involved, yet regular

Then most, when most irregular they seem.

Like every great artist, he danced his works, and his rhythm is so powerful that it

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helps us too over the passages which our curiosity would fain snatch from the context

and hand over to the speculations of the understanding.

The genesis of his works substantiates this basic quality of all Hogarth's art. The drawings for his engravings in the British Museum and in the Fairfax Murray collection, if we compare them with the ultimate prints, show that the primary pre-occupation was neither satire nor comedy, but rhythm. Only a few of these drawings are first sketches. It is evident that Hogarth made a variety of studies before he arrived at his final conception. There are drawings which approach the definitive result very closely, and certainly do not represent the master's first idea, as, for instance, Mr. Fairfax Murray's red chalk drawings for *Gin Lane* and *Beer Street*. Even in these we note how Hogarth made the illustrative quality more pronounced in transferring them to the copper-plate. Others reveal the comic element hardly at all, or only in slight indications. The drastic quality lurks, inarticulate as yet, in the play of dancing lines. In the drawing for the eleventh plate of the cycle *Industry and Idleness* — nearly the whole of the sketches for which are in the British Museum — the seething multitude in the public square, with its innumerable heads, dominates the more intimate significance of the plate. The sketch for the shop scene in the same series, which was never carried out on the copper, does not as yet indicate whether the sentiment of this scene was to be grave or gay, but it divides the masses with irresistible clarity, and gives the lines an expressive force that recalls Rembrandt. The manner in which the broadly washed planes flow about the structure of lines again suggests Daumier. Other sheets of the same series are pure *dix-huitième* siècle. The spectator's eye participates in the quivering movement of the microscopic curves, and communicates only a beneficent vibration of forms to the mind. In the *Banquet* — the drawing for the eighth plate — a child seems to have held the pen. Everything sways, even the lines of the architecture. Slightly modified, the outline of the seated figures might represent the wooded background of a drawing by Both. The renunciation of detail might almost be described as playful in its arbitrariness. But all this child-like element is really sincerity and genius. The ensemble is ensured in an incomprehensible fashion. There is no insistence on the psychological significance of any particular group; the theme is the room with the long table of diners, whose animal function is expressed by a saltatory line. It seems almost as if satire, which is wont to find its objective in human figures, had here made the room alone the butt, giving it the semblance of some rococo face, full of lines and furrows. When we have once grasped this, we shall recognise this same physiognomy in all Hogarth's interiors, even in those where the single faces seek to engage our whole attention.

And further, we shall see in these drawings a fact confirmed by the pictures, and obvious to every one who has studied the artist's work thoroughly, that Hogarth did not keep closely to Nature, and was by no means intent on the direct reflection of the material world. I do not feel at all assured that Muther was right in asserting\* that he was in the habit of sketching from the life in gaming-hells, brothels, and dram-shops. I know no drawing of which this might safely be predicated. It is, of course, evident that he did not paint these haunts and their inmates from

fancy, and that, like the author of "MoU Flanders," he had an extensive personal knowledge of them. But he did not copy them. I am inclined to think that these places and their customs were not very repulsive to him ; it would perhaps not be

- " Geschichte der englischen Malerei " (S. Fischer, 1903).

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too much to say that he was at his ease in them, - in so far as the morality of this moralist allowed him to be. Hence he had no need to copy them. He had the instinct for these centres which no copying, had it been practised for a hundred years, could have replaced. And what was better still, he had universal instincts, not only for this shady side of life, but for every life ; he had the remarkable faculty for expression which creates plastic forms out of what to ordinary mortals becomes more or less conscious experience.

The biographical notices of Hogarth moreover give us some very definite indications of his relations to Nature. We learn that he worked almost exclusively from memory. He found, he tells us, \*\* that he who could by any means acquire and retain in his memory perfect ideas of the subjects he meant to draw, would have as clear a knowledge of the figure as a man who can write freely hath of the twenty-four letters of the alphabet and their infinite combinations (each of these being composed of lines), and would consequently be an accurate designer. I therefore endeavoured to habituate myself to the exercise of a sort of technical memory, and by repeating in my own mind the parts of which objects were composed, I could by degrees combine and put them down with my pencil. Thus with all the drawbacks which resulted from the circumstances I have mentioned, I had one material advantage over my competitors, viz., the early habit I thus acquired of retaining in my mind's eye, without coldly copying it on the spot, whatever I intended to imitate. Sometimes, but too seldom, I took the life for correcting the parts I had not perfectly enough remembered and then I transferred them to my compositions."

The biographers confirm this account of his methods, which the whole character of his art hews out. It contains in itself the master's protest against the pitiful helplessness of his compatriots. An imitativeness devoid of any sort of earnest purpose had found no antidote in the dull reproduction of Nature. Hogarth sought in his calling above all things a means of measuring himself against the world, and in his situation could only do this through a vigorous synthesis. He was of the kind, if not of the stock of Rubens.

His rhythm has many affinities with that of the Fleming. A century and the difference of race divide them. Hogarth has nothing of the royal manner of Marie de' Medici's painter. He was a bourgeois to the core in a bourgeois land, and lived in an age which was endeavouring to supersede the rhetoric of the



seventeenth century. Quantitatively, therefore, he bears the same relation to Rubens as the contemporary Frenchmen. But his manner was more closely akin to that of the master. Something of the peasants in the Louvre Kermesse<sup>^</sup> of that very individual Rubens, lives in his scenes — reduced, of course, and seen through the temperament of the eighteenth century. We are conscious of the decorative rococo element even here, in spite of many a coarse detail. But his decorative gift is less fluid than that of the Frenchmen, and this gives him advantages greater than the countervailing disadvantages. His tougher manner, biting into us as with barbed hooks, makes the deeper impression, whereas we enjoy the pictures of the Watteau school like ripe fruits, melting in the mouth. He never quite loses the obstinacy of the self-taught artist, he seldom shows himself a virtuoso — when he does so it is to a degree almost unimaginable in an Englishman — and never goes without a remainder into the familiar rhythm of the age. He has a movement peculiar to himself — <sup>^</sup>the dix-huitième siècle expressed in masculine terms. No Frenchman of the period painted a grotesque ; the " heure .du berger " \*

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could not endure harsh contrasts. Beside Hogarth, the Frenchmen seem to have played always upon one string, leaving the rest of the instrument mute. Hogarth is a larger world, more objective, its outlook more from above. His laughter does not excite our responsive laughter, like the quirks of the jesters. He grasps more, because he feels more strongly, although at the first blush his emotion may seem to us only stronger hate. No Chardin or Fragonard could have painted certain things in his pictures more sweetly than he has done. But these are always tone among other tones, and the harsh shade beside them gives a richer variety. We always feel something of the freshness of a beginning, whereas there is a presage of the end in the sweetness of the alcove-painters.

This is true also in a wider sense. The analysis of art-history brings out many ingredients which seem to present the sharpest contrasts to our perception. Hogarth forces memory to jump from his contemporaries to such remote spirits as Breughel. He is akin to all the grotesque painters. Even during his lifetime his indebtedness to Jan Steen, Teniers, and Ostade, to say nothing of Callot, was recognised. But Breughel is the salt in Hogarth, a constituent which could not be replaced by a second name like the rest. Looking at the drunken woman on the stairs, dropping her child over the balustrade, in Gin Lane<sup>^</sup> we are reminded of Breughel's Blind Men and similar things. Details in A Medley<sup>^</sup> the scene in the church, might have been taken from a Witches<sup>^</sup> Sabbath by Breughel or Bosch. Such pages are to be found in all Hogarth's phases. Gin Lane was executed in 1751, <sup>^</sup>Medley ten years later, and even when the external resemblance vanishes we seem to recognise something of the fantastic Fleming's daring<sup>^</sup> style in the whole manner of thought. And yet I do not know if Hogarth really knew Breughel. The affinity — <sup>^</sup>if it can so be called — <sup>^</sup>has no trace of archaism ; the emotion fills the

form to the very brim. It is quite possible that here we have merely similar conditions leading to similar results. In any case, this primitive basis is indispensable in the work. It gave the painter his firmness of structure, and prevented the satirist from losing himself in the non-plastic.

Satire was, indeed, positively an advantage to his art. It apparently repressed his artistic intentions only to distribute them the more happily in reality. When we first glance at his interiors we see only the scene. It entices us to find out what is going on there. But directly we get nearer the art takes us captive, and we scarcely note that our original curiosity is being led by the nose. The art manifests itself primarily as an astonishing suggestion of space. It is less in degree in the two earliest cycles, *A Harlot's Progress* and *The Rakes Progress*, the first of which is only complete in the engravings. The moral tale predominates here, the scene is more important than the room. In the little cabinet of the Soane Museum we can easily see how the painter's genius expanded, how it became more universal, more pictorial, in its progress from these pictures to the *Izde Election* series. On the other hand, there is a certain uncanny power in the details of the earlier works. The gesture not only speaks, but acts. In the sixth part of *The Rakers Progress* the scene in the gaming-house, the furious gesture or the ruined spendthrift breaks through the colourless darkness like a magical light. The picture, like many of the others, has darkened very much, and was barbarically painted from the beginning. But it still affects us like a glimpse into half-fallen ruins, where details preserved by chance urge our thoughts to reconstruction. Slight as the indications are, they nevertheless give the self-absorption of each group with grim precision, their indifference to the fate of the prodigal, whose scream penetrates to us like the

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echo of unseen forces. The primitive detail — primitive not intentionally, but because of the unity of the conception — adds to the effect here, as it so often does in Hogarth's works. The series reveals, further, much more tender gifts. The first picture, in which the young spendthrift makes his arrangements for the rosy future, foreshadows all the artist's future palette. The orange-brown coat of the tailor and his red cap nestle against the silvery grey and blue of the hero's open waistcoat. The blue is worked out in the spotted dress of the old woman, the strongest figure in the composition, and the young one, the "bed-maker's daughter," completes the harmony with her tender pink and yellow and her rich white. This bouquet of colour stands out brilliantly against the Velazquez-like brown of the walls. Hogarth's solicitude for the structure of his rooms can only be compared with that of the best Dutch painters of interiors.

Before such pictures we need a little patience. If we hurry past them, as is our wont in modern exhibitions, we might really note nothing but a painter of anecdotes. But if we linger for a few minutes a remarkable transformation takes place ; the

anecdote disappears behind the actual vehicles of charm. This is noticeable in all Hogarth's pictures. Only the consummate painting has survived of the biting satire *Calais Gate*<sup>^</sup> in the National Gallery, by which Hogarth took his revenge for his undeserved arrest in the year 1748, when he wished to go to France. We no longer know exactly what the huge joint of roast beef in the arms of the bony servitor means, but we are delighted by the textures of the meat and of the white cloths, and the juxtaposition of these details and the flimished faces of the watch does not convey to us only the vague indication of the allusion, but a very definite impression of the flickering fantasy of the scene. Thus the story is not concentrated as the literary punter would concentrate it, but is generalised in a manner worthy of an artist. All that remains to suggest the origin of the picture is the figure of the painter in the background sketching the gate — an allusion to the cause of his arrest.

The consummate colour in the above-mentioned scene of *The Rake's Progress*<sup>^</sup> is not common to the whole series. Hogarth fulfilled the promise there given ten years later in the National Gallery masterpiece, the six-act cycle called *Marriage à la Mode*. The progress lies in the development of the palette and the elimination of all impertinent detail. If we include the first series, *A Harlots Progress* in the comparison, we are conscious of following the evolution of a primitive into a master of the most varied effects in a still higher degree. The expansion of the space that has taken place in the second of the Progresses is very considerable. The reduction of the strapping figures, which do not stand in any very convincing relation to their surroundings in the first series, gives a more rhythmic effect to the second. In the third, maturity of colour is added to the rest. This belongs solely to the painter, whereas the first two still betray Hogarth's beginnings as an engraver. *The Marriage à la Mode* dates from the punter's most prolific period, the time of his own portrait with the dog and the portrait of his sister, and shows the maximum of pictorial charm imaginable in this genre. We feel as if we were contemplating a diminutive fresco, so naturally is the vibration within the one frame carried on into the next, affecting us as the portion of a many-limbed whole, in which the development of the somewhat trivial story of a coquettish woman and a frivolous viveur plays no very important part. In spite of Hogarth's assertion that France did not possess any good colourist — the assertion which goaded Diderot to such a comical outbreak of wrath in his *Salon* of 1765 — we

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can only suggest the charm of these pictures by means of a French name, the same which Diderot exploited against Webb and Hogarth — Chardin, Not to compare the value of the one with that of the other. That which was the chief attraction of the quiet painter of the *Benedicte* was ill suited to the English dramatist, and what the latter possessed he owed not to Chardin, even though Chardin, as Diderot justly says, had earned the title of a great colourist long before Hogarth. We

might call the six pictures of Marriage d la Mode dramatised episodes out of the same world which suggested the lyrics of Diderot's meditative friend. Chardin seems the freer of the two. His greater culture ensures his greater indifference to the fashionable standard. In these scenes, as a whole Hogarth is almost more dix-huitième siècle than the Frenchman. The rhythm which whispers faintly in La Pourvoyeuse still sounds over-loudly in comparison in the tenderest pictures of the Englishman ; but, on the other hand, it has a luxuriance which overflows the narrow confines of the frame. The difference increases on closer comparison. All is straight and simple with Chardin ; he loves vertical lines, everything that gives the quietest movement to his veil of colour. In the documents of the author of " The Analysis of Beauty " the curve predominates. Everything is arched, and the colour is made up of winding chains. It is only in their total results that the palettes resemble each other from a distance, just as certain figures in the pictures of the two artists resemble each other, because they bear the same proportion to the rooms in which they are set. The genesis, however, is perfectly distinct. The interiors themselves have nothing in common, and the persons who inhabit them have perfectly different souls. In the one case they are animated, mercurial temperaments, in the other calm, contemplative figures. Chardin builds up the skeleton of his pictures with clear, well-organised colour-contrasts, and the flesh consists of vaporous veils drawn over the whole ; the airy fabric is woven of microscopic diamond-splinters. Hogarth dresses his little figures as Rubens attires his Popes, and produces correlation by the accumulation of all kinds of materials. The singing fop in the toilette scene of Marriage à la Mode is royally arrayed. Such a minute detail as the trimming on the olive-grey sleeve, in which orange is interwoven with gleaming red and blue, seems— I know not how — to be taken from the vestments of the St. Liévin at Brussels, or some kindred example of Rubensesque splendour. The Countess has always a particular cachet. For the hair-dressing she wears a grayish pink skirt, partly concealed by the rich folds of an orange dressing-gown. An exquisite corset, gray with blue bows, supports her rounded bust, and over it falls the white toilette jacket, with its gray shadows. The mise-en-scène is made up of the thousand important nothings which furnish the existence of triflers. And yet these puppets live ! This is the amazing part of it all — a life among powder-boxes ! The Countess is no clothes-peg. Her face has the seductive animal freshness of the little lady who makes good use of her time. The granulated pink-and-white complexion, set off by the glossy brown hair, reveals energy in the pursuit of pleasure — a diabolical nervous energy. Even in the second picture. Shortly after Marriage à la Mode where her ladyship seems very cheerful beside the future cuckold, we divine that her activities will not confine themselves to details of dress, and we feel — I blush to acknowledge it — a guilty sympathy with her sweet audacity. Such a comprehensive individualisation of the eternal feminine on a small scale was undreamt of by Chardin. Guys was the first to give a similar impression.

It is easy to understand that an artist capable of thus extending the traditional

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idea of beauty by virtue of his vital conceptions of the present had small respect for the pictorial wares of his contemporaries, and that once, in jesting reference to the exaggerated estimate of Italian pictures, he wrote : \*\* That grand Venus — as you are pleased to call it — has not beauty enough for the character of an English cook-maid/' \* Hogarth's unconcealed aversion from Italy is no less interesting in the famous letter than the love of country which may be read between the lines. This ideal attitude towards his native land, manifested on every possible occasion, seems scarcely compatible with the mocking spirit that feared neither God nor man ; yet it was not only the moral basis of the man, but the essential condition of his art. How these two characteristics harmonised without forcing the artist to compromise with the man is the key to Hogarth's psychology and to a true appreciation of his greatness — ^above all, of his art. For the fact that in his pictures mockery decked itself in beautiful colour and chose agreeable forms does not sufficiently explain the phenomenon. The logic of this combination remains to be discovered.

Hogarth's scenes are the utterances of a satirist who won monumental forms from the things he lashed. We have already noted the introspective attitude of the actors on his stage, the author's objective rendering. But this is not in itself the stylistic force of the pictures. It merely precludes insipidity of style, sentimentality of process, prevents what is injurious, but is not positively progressive. That Hogarth's pictures are not lampoons, but caricatures in the sense in which caricature may be called the basis of all great works of art, is not a result of the objectivity of analytical vision. But is this objectivity in Hogarth really so exclusively abstract, even in its obvious extent, as it would seem to be in a superficial formulation ? In psychological terms, was Hogarth merely concerned to ridicule ? The solution is not to be found in the smug morality of the zealous biographer, intent on human episodes. This is evanescent, and cannot examine conditions that were moral or immoral a hundred and fifty years ago by the standards of to-day. The idea that Hogarth's satire aimed at the reformation of those he satirised, even were it well-founded, could but turn us away from the penetrating recognition of that satire itself. We require instinctive confirmations. If we travel with Hogarth through the scenes of the Marriage a la Mode one thing, at any rate, seems hard to believe — ^that the creator of the society whose misdeeds he exposes so mercilessly stood entirely aloof therefrom. The details of his life which have come down to us throw no light on the point. The fact of material relation would not give us much information, and we know, indeed, that there can have been no question of this. But the man who called Garrick his best friend, the companion of Pope, whose caricaturist pencil was guided even in his youthful works by the lofty spirit which felt itself^ drawn to Milton, understood first before he hated. He fulfilled the postulate afterwards formulated by his countryman Carlyle — he saw. His perception pierced through the ludicrous kernel of things and beheld relative force and vitality even among the contemp-

tible. The zealot who considered the ethical success of the popular series of engravings, 7%^ Four Stages of Cruelty^ by which he hoped to inculcate mercy among his countrymen, a higher thing than the proud consciousness of having produced Raphael's cartoons, could not in his best works refrain from treating his

^ In a letter said to have been written hj Hogarth, under the pseudonym ^^Britophil" to a London newspaper in 1737. Reprinted in extenso in John Nichols' \*\* Genuine Works of William Hogarth, with Biographical Anecdotes" (London 1808-10).

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victims with more tenderness than pedagogy demanded He could not have given such seductive grace to the heroine of the Marriage i la Mode^ even in the duel scene, where the wretched woman kneels in her chemise before her wounded husband, if he himself had been quite callous to her charm. Nor should we find such rare tones of the palette in the poor sinner's death-bed scene if the last word had been left to the moralist here. Of course, consciously he may have accepted the part which appears the most natural one. It brought him the facile satisfaction of the worthy citizen who is extolled by his intimates. But splendour remained beautiful to the painter even when it masked vice or absurdity. The frivolity of the upper classes must have been apparent to the healthy mind of this friend of the people in the fashion of the day, and Hogarth lost no opportunity of speaking his mind on this point. He succeeded best in his famous picture of the year 1742, Taste in High Life. Even here, where the moral tendency called for no restraint, where the theme is two old fools, whose puppet-figvues could not stir any human emotion in any spectator, even here the decisive strain of Hogarth's subconsciousness mingles with his laughter. The work is by no means exhausted when we have recc^nsised the comicality of the personages. Absurd as is the effect of the hooped skirt on that aged carcase, made up merely of paint and false hair, whose arabesqued hands belong rather to the face than to the body, idiotic as is her partner, to whom all existence, sex included, is compressed into the mechanism of a mincing gait, the ludicrous aspect of this monumental type of fashion-mania is not maintained before the greater complexity of sensations which it evokes, directly or indirectly, according to the degree of culture of the spectator. For it does not only condemn, though the ridiculous is present in every detail, even in the grotesque pictures on the walls. It has a positive side, though not in the popular manner, not by means of cheap personifications. We do not see \*\* the good " side by side with " the bad," nor bring our examination to an end with a \*^ quod erat demonstrandum." But the good is shown in the evil. The false grace which Hogarth condemns is counteracted by a grace which makes use of the same persons, the same gestures, and welds all the absurd details into a common gesture, which, because it is harmonious, lifts the soul to higher realms, far above those of morals. A microcosm becomes monu-

mental, and after the evanescent wit has had its effect we still retain the permanence of a new form, caring nothing from what paradoxes it sprang. The movements of the two grimacing figures make up a magnificent arabesque. The monkey, which breaks the gigantic curve like a rosette, was not set in the foreground merely with a satiric intention, and in the second, I had almost said the third, female figure, even taking it as a detail, there is scarcely a breath of negation ; or, rather, the breath that remains seems merely the spice of this piquant grace. Effeminacy was not merely satirised here. Out of the grotesqueness is evolved a charm which could only have been wrought by the capacity for objectivity of an artistic soul, and finally becomes so strong that we are conscious of titillation rather than of the scourge. Beardsley, who of all Englishmen owes most to the author of *Taste in High Life*, was the first to essay this kind of objectivity again, on a much smaller scale. *Mutatis mutandis* ! The sphere of the late-born illustrator of *The Rape of the Lock* no longer required the strong difference between subject and object, and perhaps exaggerated his affection for the objects of his laughter, just as his predecessor had exaggerated his hatred. That which brought the two children of such different worlds together was a common sympathy. We are told that at

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the age of twenty Hogarth began his artistic career with an engraving from the same poem of Pope's to which Beardsley owed one of his most exquisite fantasies.

But we must not lose ourselves in admiration of a single fruit of Hogarth's tree, which has perhaps a somewhat excessive attraction for us of to-day ; we must not forget that it is only one of many. The subject of the last great cycle is a world apart from that of the earlier series. It is an electioneering campaign in four acts, the Election series. It dates from the year 1755, ten years after the marriage story, and twenty years after *The Rake's Progress*. Garrick bought it, and rejoiced in it to the last day of his life. It is now the great treasure of the Soane Museum, where it shares the same gloomy little cabinet which shelters *The Rake's Progress* and a variety of other things, useful and superfluous. It will be generally agreed that this cycle is the masterpiece of the versatile painter. Though it has nothing of the brilliant fin-de-siècle pleasantries of the pictures we have just been considering, it has retained what is best in these, the same playfully triumphant form. But here the victory implies the curbing of an inconceivable multitude of effects. To get a clear idea of this it would be necessary to see the pictures in a suitable room, where it would be possible to isolate each, and to look at them from a proper distance. To imagine the details we must recall Jan Steen's most grotesque types and kindred things. Faces of this kind swarm, and many a one shows a close resemblance to famous prototypes. In the first picture, for instance, *Entertainment* (the banquet to the electors), the fellow in the red jacket with the glass in his hand at the left-hand table, whose bestial joy draws the tongue out of his throat;

or the monstrous old woman on the extreme left, who is making the spruce candidate pay for her political opinions in kind. This robust Dutch note does not appear for the first time in this final series. It is to be found here and there in many earlier pictures and engravings — the Cockpit<sup>^</sup> for instance — and even in the figure of Bambridge in the Assize picture of 1729, in the National Portrait Gallery. Sometimes we could believe that the heads had been taken directly out of small Dutch pictures and put into Hogarth's. But the way in which they are introduced is the remarkable thing. It might almost be asserted that Hogarth first found the right use for grotesque masks, which are often mere isolated monstrosities in the small Dutch pictures, by employing them as accents in his crowds of figures. The general effect is as unlike Jan Steen as possible ; it is rather — rococo. A skipping rhythm, like a merry streamlet, gliding over all sorts of grotesque stones, which lie in all possible positions beneath the surface of its dear waters; perceptible in spite of its infinity of detail, always animated to the point of frenzy, and yet a single harmonious surface. A year earlier, in the March to Finchley of the Foundling Hospital, we see how Hogarth compelled repose. Without the recurrent red of the faces and uniforms the picture would fall to pieces. The perspective of the colours completes the arrangement, still somewhat arbitrary here. In the Election series this effect is multiplied. The colour becomes a net of innumerable meshes, which follows the movements of the composition, and the composition, for all the spontaneity of the impression, is so arranged that all the individual movements complete a main direction. In the Entertainment the brownish, granulated gray of the walls and tables gives a firm foundation for this play, which is necessarily much more reticent in colour than in line. Gray-blue shades predominate. The heads, heated to boiling-point by gluttony, may laugh, grin, and scream as boisterously as they will; the pervading reddish-gray tone binds them to

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the quiet surface and before the uniform background into an ornament for the table, which stands like a rock in the hurly-burly of the elements. The more lively colour-contrasts appearing here and there are divided almost mathematically. Red appears in the background to the left in the red jacket of the lewd fellow with the glass, in the youth with the cask of the foreground, and to the right in the costume of the decrepit devourer of oysters ; orange to the left in the flag, in the middle in the violoncello, to the right in the carnations of the old woman, &c. We never remark the scheme. Each of the four pictures is a world, a mood in itself, and yet a part of the same story. In the second act, Canvassing for Votes where hard cash takes the place of wine and oysters, and greed is shown in all its stages from extreme hunger to satiety, the extraordinary energy of the central group with the farmer is only made possible by the repose of its surroundings. On the one side a voting paper is thrust suddenly under the farmer's nose, while on the



other the host, crimson with persuasive energy, and almost bursting, sets forth the virtues of the rival candidate, the while the worthy man calmly pockets the chinking arguments of each. A conception becomes plastic form forthwith. Each of the three preserves the corporeal entity proper to him — even the spiritual elements are corporeal here — and at the same time the limbs of all three weave themselves into a new mass, a Laokoon in small. In the last two pictures of the series Hogarth enhances the fantastic character of his structural art, and again, as in the others, tones down the wildness of the composition by the mild scale of bluish-gray, orange, and brown. The scene of The Pollings with the swarm upon the steps, and the concentrated variety of individual scenes, is a charming, peaceful landscape, accompanying the uproar with gentle chords. We recognise what Wilson's friend might have become to the English school of landscape painting. Chairing the Member (the apotheosis) rises in my memory as a tumultuous wave of humanity. In the many-storeyed structure, with the fat candidate's arm-chair to crown it, each detail contributes to the rhythm, without detriment to its objective structure. If the boldness of Rubens and his followers, destroying a cosmos to build it up afresh, fills us with admiration, this citizen of a smaller world teaches us to appreciate the tough endurance which raises its pyramids with small stones.

Minuteness of structure was proper to Hogarth, as was also minuteness of material. The idea of a picture grew up in his mind from the sum of single observations, which he was able to seize and to co-ordinate. The converse method, to which his ambition sometimes urged him, the production of an idea independent of his daily sum of verifiable experience, was not so successful in his hands. He had already in his thirties attempted "what the puffers in books call the great style of history painting," the result being the two large pictures now in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, which he himself disparaged in later years, and not altogether without cause. Shortly before his fiftieth year, and between that and his sixtieth year, he returned to the charge, goaded by the patronising criticism which persisted in looking upon him as an outsider, and painted several large Scriptural subjects, even producing an altar-piece in 1756.\* The Moses before Pharaoh's Daughter in the Foundling Hospital, seems to me the most interesting of these essays. It is certainly the happiest of the many combinations with Rembrandt attempted by the England of the eighteenth century. We note with satisfaction in the old man to the left of the picture the translation of a veritable Rembrandtesque Jew into a new world, and in the Moses, with his yellowish-red carnations, a relation to the great

♦ A triptych for St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. Now in the Fine Arts Academy, Clifton.

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prototype, based upon a firm earnest comprehension of transmitted treasure. Comical as are the dignified periods in which Reynolds, of all people, stigmatised this departure of Hogarth's as a regrettable aberration,\* even a juster optimism might deem them no fresh titles to fame for a master who had manifested so independent

a conception of the world. But a more penetrating appreciation would find valuable indications of his personality in these works. Even the weaknesses of great men attest their strength. Here we will be content to note that in Hogarth's extensive life-work these disputable productions are quite insignificant numerically, even if we include among them the! much-debated Si<sup>^</sup>smunda<sup>^</sup> the weakest work of his old age.

On the other hand, Hogarth has left abundant proof that his art did not require the \*\* ridicule of life \*<sup>^</sup> to manifest its greatness. His portraits are unrivalled in the portrait-ridden art of England. Hogarth as a portrait painter forms a chapter of himself. I have referred the weakness of English painting to the fact that it was a form of luxury, designed, not to be a medium of expression for the artist, but to lend a pleasing elegance to the heads of the sitters. Hogarth was free from this vice. He is distinguished from his colleagues, not because he used other colours, because he was more or less skilful than they, but by his different conception of his calling. He saw in portraiture exactly what he saw in all other painting. He would only take people who amused him as his sitters. Art was not a business to him, but experience, the possibility of giving clear forms to the things that moved him. Hence the most striking quality in all his portraits is their inevitability. This inner quality is not to be replaced in any way, not because it suggests any particularly moral or sentimental reflections to us, but because it is the vehicle of that motive energy which alone urges the highest capacities of .the artist to manifest themselves. There is scarcely one among the portraits that was not seen with all the psunter's powers. This is at once apparent in the manner in which the people in his pictures fill the space. The Lord Lovat<sup>^</sup> of 1746, first sits in the arm-chair before he becomes decorative, and sits with all his sitting power. His physi<sup>^</sup>nom<sup>^</sup>y lies not only in the broad, intelligent face, but in the whole body, the exuberant fleshiness of which we divine under the folds of the coat, even in the thick hands with the calculating fingers. Nothing betrays the fact that this man was executed the day after Hogarth painted him. But the energetic vitality of the sitter, who had given the Government plenty of work, is emphasised in all its variety. Hogarth himself pronounced the Cap fain Coram<sup>^</sup> of 1739, in the Foundling Hospital (with its extraordinarily expressive face, kneaded with vigorous brush-strokes, and yet soft), his best portrait, because it revealed a certain aflinity with the genre of the day, and triumphed by those methods which were common to Hogarth and his colleagues. The judgment seems to us somewhat extravagant now, not because we do not think the Captain Coram a fine work — <sup>^</sup>it is almost unrivalled in its class — but because Hogarth is incomparably more individual in other portraits. I am thinking not so much of works that approximate to the specifically English sentiment of the day, such as the portraits of Garrick, Thornhill,

\* <sup>^</sup> After this admirable artist had spent the greatest part of his life in an active, busy, and, we may add, successful attention to the ridicule of life, after he had invented a new species of dramatic paint-

ing, in which probably he will never be equalled . . . ; he very imprudently, or rather presumptuously, attempted the great historical style, for which his previous habits had by no means prepared him : he was indeed so entirely unacquainted with the principles of this style, that he was not even aware that any artificial preparation was at all necessary.\*' [A Discourse, delivered to the Students etc. (London, 1789).]

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and Pellet, evidences of the superiority of a natural instinct to the dexterity of the fashionable artist, or of the proud bearing of the little Duke of Cumberland in the late Sir Charles Tennant's collection, where within a very small space there are details which foreshadow Goya, but rather of certain female portraits, the Miss Arnold in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, and the glorious works in the National Gallery. These are imperishable documents of the most patrician English spirit, contemporary with the portraits of Reynolds' school, and so far above the best works of that circle that it is inconceivable why a country, simultaneously producing such distinct grades of artistic merit, should not have pronounced for the better of the two. Hogarth's woman is not the doll which the others endow with fine clothes and pretty gestures and insipid ideas. She speaks, works, bestirs herself before our eyes, expresses herself with all the instincts of her nature, with her temperament, her moods. The vivacity which could not accommodate itself to the didactic purpose of the social drama in *Marriage à la Mode* without showing the irrepressible freshness of the "cook-maid" in some form or other, bursts into luxuriant bloom in portraits which were painted only on its account. The portrait of his sister Ann is not only Hogarth's maturest work, but one of the most beautiful faces of the eighteenth century. In the dress a rare harmony is produced by the reddish-orange tones, rising to yellow and enframed in olive, the pink in the centre, and the white tones of the illuminated lace, with its vivid lightning lines. In spite of all this richness, the dress retains its airy, diaphanous character. We divine the vigorous contours of the body under the stuff. From out the laces grows the face, with its blooming mouth — in which the red becomes more intense, as in the mouths of Vermeer's girlish faces — its beaming eyes, and its rich brown hair, lighted by a final red. The wisdom of this colouring, on its dark green background, is as far above the frippery of the English fashion-painters as is the natural bloom of the skin above the "foreign aid" of the rouge-pot

English as the result is, the means by which it is obtained are as un-English as possible. All unconsciously, this Gallophobe here approximates to the colour-culture of the land' which was to produce a Delacroix. Of course, the extraordinary com-

pactness of this mellow form was quite unknown in France at the time. It is only the logic of the colour-language which strikes us as French, because it was finally worked out in Paris, and not in England. I will not venture to say whether the many currents of influence that set from the one country to the other in the eighteenth century did not begin with Hogarth. The physiognomic element remains very distinctive. The head of the artist's sister is or the same stamp as his portrait of himself ; there is a dual family likeness. It has the same fat handling, which never tends to resolve itself into colouristic vapour, but achieves vitality with granular precision. Style never seduced Hogarth into a lack of respect for his model. Just as in his popular scenes he notes the incident calmly in the midst of the utmost tumult, so in his portraits he is above all truthful, and places the necessity of creating human beings above the artist's desire to express himself in beautiful figures. The picture of his six servants in the National Gallery is a most remarkable document illustrating this principle. The absolutely pictorial relation of one to another, the desire to decorate the surface with six faces, does not prevent each head from looking as if only the endeavour to fix it as faithfully as might be on the canvas had set it by chance beside the rest. Each face reveals the technical treatment best suited to its character. The old man in the back row on the right seems to grow out of the material automatically like a Rembrandtesque face. Pink

HOGARTH : THE SHRIMP GIRL

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

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and white mingle in the carnations, the eyebrows are rendered by a gentle stroke^ the grey hair enframes the face and flows into the uniform background\* Everything is soft, mild, and fluid, like the character behind the features. The man in the centre is utterly different. Here the firmer material, the stronger pink, the decided brown of the hair, and the more energetic touch harmonise with the more vivacious expression of the face, whose owner was undoubtedly the person of most authority in the circle. Despite this differentiation, which is no less pronounced in the female faces, the six belong unmistakably one to the other. They are, indeed, said to have been relations, and this interconnection is indicated with as much artistic variety as the individuality of each.

In the Shrimp'Girl Hogarth surpassed himself. Here for once the colourist cast aside all considerations of the versatility of the master's gifts, forgot precision in detail, and produced an impressionist work of the purest water under the stress of a happy inspiration. Fragonard himself rarely handled the brush more loosely.

We scarcely remember that the creator of this indescribable face, which consists, not of nose, mouth, and eyes, but of a single mass of melting tones, lived in the eighteenth century. It was reserved for our age to throw down all the barriers between will and instrument, and to permit the immediate transmission of strong personal emotion to colour upon canvas. Yet Hogarth worked on these lines here. His strenuous cumulative industry vanished. An impulse, effectual as a single grasp, transformed the palette into a picture. The gray, brown, and pink tones run like undammed streams among one another, guarding the secret of their relation from inquiring eyes. The liquid eye has no more importance than any detail of the costume — a dress no tailor could have devised ; it is a spot among other spots. No detail is clearly distinguishable, no detail is wanting in this vital creature, who stands before us, not only corporeally complete, but with the atmosphere in which she lived and still lives. Something in the attitude recalls Rubens, the exuberant freshness of the basket-bearer in the Flight of Lot in the Louvre. And here memory is not confined to the consciousness of having the reduced forms of a greater world before it, but, setting the impression beside the achievement of the great artist, sees therein a result of equal value, a realisation of the most secret of Rubens' ideas, and admires the same kind of energy in controlling swimming masses. In addition it is a typically English work. Of all the pictures that show us the London girl, this fresh and laughing face is the truest. It is the type of a race, like Rembrandt's Cooky or one of Corot's young girls, or a Madonna of Raphael's.

Hogarth also painted himself two or three times, and it is amazing that the craftsman who applied this vaporous technique to the Shrimp-Girl should have recorded what manner of man he was by such totally different means. He portrayed himself with his bull-dog and with a palette on which he drew the "line of beauty" — two emblems appropriate enough to the square face with its intellectual forehead. The painting is classic. The creation has nothing of the eighteenth century, but all the force and fervour of the great sixteenth and seventeenth century portrayers. Like these, he wanted to paint a costume, the main preoccupation of his contemporaries, is a negligible quantity here ; the reddish-brown coat over the black waistcoat served merely as a frame. But in the dog, whose tints are indispensable to the colour-scheme of the picture, the keen student of physiognomy reappears. Here, just as in the painter's own face, the brush yields all its richness to the touch. The dog belonged to the man, as does

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the broad, elastic, yellowish-brown stroke of his shaggy coat to the dark harmony of the picture. The conception is more animal than that of the human countenance, where all that the coarser strokes express in the dog appears in delicate shades. Such symbolism was the language of the old masters. The modelling of the face recalls the greatest foreigner who ever painted in England. Hogarth seems

to have been the only one who profited by him. In the little portrait of himself again, in the National Portrait Gallery, where Hogarth is seated at his easel to paint the Comic Muse, the plastic quality evokes Holbein.

This face makes us feel that the man who owned it had thoughts of his own about the world and his art. The things he had to say about art he set down in a book, which has met with the same scanty appreciation accorded to his pictures till the last few years. A book in which the bull-dog that lurked in *Hearth* sometimes barks furiously, and perpetrates crude errors, such as those Diderot pilloried, yet, on the whole, one of the best works on art extant. Lessing was one of the few who read it with profit.\* An artist's book, one-sided, as are all the theories of artists, and therefore good, for the one-sidedness of strong personalities always shows the road by which they have reached perfection, and contributes to our knowledge just as their art contributes to our enjoyment.

Hogarth thought the curve more beautiful than the straight line. The uncompromising nature of the dictum is disturbing. It is too just for acceptance. Every child can see that straight or crooked can be neither beautiful nor ugly in itself, for a single line in a work consisting of many is merely a fragment in the factors that make up beauty. The unit cannot be demonstrated concretely. Even in the simplest work it is not the detail reduced to a minimum which gives the result, but the use of parts for a whole, and the curved line may be just as beautiful or just as ugly in a given place as the straight. Had Hogarth contented himself with the setting down of this sentence the ridicule it excited would have been pardonable. But the sentence was put forward by superficial frivolity, which in Hogarth's time, as in our own, delights to take some paradox, easily refutable when divorced from its context, and to make this the excuse for throwing the book into the corner. As a fact, the two forms which Hogarth opposed one to the other were only symbols for different principles. The one, which he personified by the straight line, represented immobility ; the other, which he typified by the curve, stood for movement, as who should say death and life. He pointed out that art demands suitable differentiation, the richest possible development of all the latent motives in a subject, and the concentration of all this variety into a single rhythmical expression. This he insisted on, not only for linear composition, but also for colour, and was not content with his own art, but showed it in the other arts. The symbolisation of the problem by the simple form of a curved line was characteristic of an eighteenth-century master. He generalised a particular case which the whole organisation of his genius led him to look upon as universal. If we go back to the purpose of his conception we shall agree with him unreservedly. Though not always right in practice, he was essentially right in principle. Under the S-shaped line of the ornament on the title-page of the "*Analysis of Beauty*" is the word ^\* variety.\* Referring to this in the chapter containing his unjust criticism of French painting, he says : " Upon the whole of this account we find that the utmost beauty of colouring depends on the great principle of varying by all the means of varying, and on the proper and artful union of that variety."

- "Laok6on."

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Hogarth extended the significance of his axioms more by his own works than by the fund of brilliant observation with which he illustrated this leading axiom of creative aesthetics — experiments which already foreshadow that which first became familiar to men some hundred years later. His most distinguished variety lay herein — ^that he gave to each task the special form suited to it, and that he never repeated himself. The correlation of his works connotes an unparalleled versatility. Every one who passes from the first Progresses to the last series, from the engravings to the historical pictures, from the male to the female portrsdts, is filled with astonishment at their organic richness. ' He was an inventor, and more especially an inventor of forms. It was his own highest variation that he, the satirist, was not content to analyse the absurdities of his contemporaries, but followed after imperishable beauties.

After this demonstration we may well doubt whether Hogarth was in any degree the artist drawn for us by contemporary biographers, and those who followed them. It is certain that little more of the moralist remains than would furnish us with a biographical note of dubious interest. What he wanted — or, rather, what short-sighted commentators have supposed he wanted — ^bears no sort of proportion to what he achieved, and what he himself has written about it afilirms his mistrust of such a petty conception. If it be true that his graver only enraged his con-^ temporaries, or stimulated them morally, frightening the vicious and edifying the good, time has effaced the utilitai:iah character of his work, and all that remains of his hatred, which found such vigorous expression, is love. The change has tauglit us not only to know a new Hogarth, but some important facts about ourselves. The humanity which could only judge of such gifts by coarse anthropological standards led a different existence from that of our present, with its siniling indifiference, its strange tranquillity, intent only on the beauty or ugliness of artistic action. It seems marvellous indeed that a preacher out of such a world could also be a great artist, leaving works behind him which after the lapse of centuries arouse greater enthusiasm than they evoked among his contemporaries ; that the genius of art not only suffered the coexistence of a mental state which seems to us strangely circumscribed, but could even to a certain extent subordinate itself to this secondary force. Such phenomena are impossible in these days. Every artist .of this age who should not resolutely reject the part gladly accepted by Hogarth would probably be shut out from all participation in the propagation of beauty. But the phenomenon really lies, not with Hogarth, but with us. He merely expressed in a particular form what was common to all the older art of our culture — the faculty for transposing strong, simple ideas, illuminating to every contemporary, into art. He spoke as all great creators have spoken to their compatriots, more •or less intelligibly, never so far from the comprehension of the masses as an artist

of his calibre would be to-day. The phenomenon lies perhaps rather herein, that we\* are able in these days to substitute abstractions for that far-reaching home-feeling which serves as impulse to the creative genius, that an all too feeble imagination suffices to give to forms the mighty speech that echoes through the ages, and that we no longer need the primitive purpose in order to sun ourselves in beauty. Hogarth was certainly an exceptional manifestation in the nation whose serious aspects he recorded ; still more so in the art of his home, which looked upon the Muse as a venal handmaid. But how much more of an exception in normal humanity is the great artist of our own times, to whom what appeared abstract to his predecessors must present itself as concrete.

## THE PORTRAIT MANUFACTURERS

We cannot imagine English art without the introduction Hogarth gave to English painting. It also determines the artistic tendency of the development. Hogarth was the first to declare war against the Continent. From the first noteworthy beginnings of English painting down to Whistler, whom I assign to the English school for reasons to be explained later, all the efforts of any moment have been directed to the problem propounded by Hogarth. The manner of each of his successors has been the outcome of his relation to the rococo. The problem was not merely an aesthetic one ; it shows, as in a mirror, the human attributes of the artists who dealt with it. The result, the emancipation from the rococo, is the highest title to fame of English painting, and the most decisive factor in the development of European art. It introduces the varied spectacle that unfolded itself in the nineteenth century.

Hogarth was first a man and then an artist. He depicted certain aspects of his nature in his art, sunned himself in its radiance, and was like a crystal in the light. There is no print, no sketch, no picture of his, in which the man does not speak to us. His was a sentiment that took these forms and was not taken by them. It still remains when we have seen the whole work, like the power of a nature element, which did all this, and could have done much more. When artists do not seem to us inexhaustible after their own fashion they are never great.

Hogarth's contemporary compatriots, even the greatest^ among them, were first " artistes " and afterwards men. Were they ever artists ? We use the word so glibly, applying it both to Rembrandt and to a bookbinder, using the same term to connote dexterity, industry, all that the intellect can accomplish by ideas, and genius, the mighty and inexplicable, to which dexterity, industry, intellect, and I know not what beside, are but as the fingers on the hand of a giant. Hogarth had the great inclination for and against the world. He felt the impulse to soar above the world, and to contemplate men and beasts, passions and vices, and himself into the bargain, with all his grave and comical, his fair and his ugly aspects, like a panorama painter. He, who was so firmly rooted in the earth, to



whom a "cook-maid" was more than any "great Venus," who depicted nothing but what he believed he had seen in the flesh, was an idealist, a fantastic, a symbolist, everything by which we designate the man averse from gross realities.

The others were nothing of the sort. They laughed at his bad spelling. There is a whole literature touching the question whether he could write or not — he who, like Rembrandt, of whom the same things were said, had the gift of writing with pictures. They jeered at the technique of his scenes, which was not according to rule, and forgot that he was the man to find his own rules, strong enough to keep his pictures alive when those of his rivals should have perished. They had something he lacked, something that is still, as at the time of the Marriage d la Mode^ more profitable than art — amenity. They had a courtesy that was lamb-like in contrast to his bull-doggedness, and yet never lost sight of

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REYNOLDS: LAVINIA, COUNTESS SPENCER

EARL SPENCER'S COLLECTION

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the necessity of looking after the beloved ego. They are further lauded for their taste. People praise an artist for his taste when there is nothing else to be said for him, and it would be blasphemy to insist on the quality in Hogarth. EQs taste was so supreme that it seems a very different thing from the gift of the others. With him it was a capacity for bringing the parts together rightly. It directs the work as the conductor directs the orchestra. It is not this quality which is lauded in the others. That which is called taste in Reynolds and his followers is not theirs, but that of the pretty things in their pictures. It is at most a power of selection, not creation, and means no more in art than in life — a question of tailoring. This is prominent in English painting of the present day, and causes English pictures to be, with few exceptions, shadowy compilations rather than human documents. It is identical with what is called brilliant in the popular portraits of the school. A mind which only contemplates, which does not sympathise with every phase of a personality, which does not live in the life of its creations, must perforce produce soulless things. Hence it is that all the brilliant painters from Reynolds to Lawrence, who were content with conventional analysis, seem like brutal materialists beside Hogarth, whom it is customary now, as in his life-

time, to describe as a clumsy barbarian in comparison with his aristocratic colleagues. That which pleases us at the first glance, that which we understand at once, is generally the outside shell only, like to the dress and manners of a person, and it needs art of our own to find out if it is hollow or if it contains a fruit. With Hogarth the shell was satire, and we could not wonder if other painters had renounced it and concentrated their ambitions purely upon form. Nay, they might even have stood higher for this reason. If we knew no more of Reynolds and Hogarth than that the one was a satirist and the other a painter, it would not be difficult to decide in favour of the more famous of the pair, for we should be right in placing the higher conception of art first. But such speculation is futile if we do not go to the concrete, and find out how far the satire went with the one and the painting with the other. I have tried to do the first of these in the preceding chapter. We have seen that Hogarth did not win the key to immortality by his wit and mockery. It was not with this spirit that he conquered his rivals, among whom there may have been many satirists more subtle than he, but with the conviction of a great artist, with the sacrificial courage which makes epic poets of caricaturists.

English painting of the eighteenth century owes its origin to Van Dyck, to name but the most decisive of manifold influences. Its good and its evil are alike traceable to Van Dyck. Even Hogarth, who set up Van Dyck's bust in his house — I am always tempted to wonder whether it was a caricature — took something from him ; and that which pleased him in Van Dyck was not the worst part of the Flemish master. The others confined themselves to imitation of his artistic methods. Jacob, Van Dyck's travelled client, described to Despreux, the author of the " Cours de Peinture par Principe," how the painter proceeded in London after Charles I.'s favour had won the hearts of the Londoners for him :

" He gave the day and hour to persons who wished to be painted, and never worked for more than an hour at any one portrait, whether sketch or picture. At the stroke of the hour he rose, bowed to his sitter to signify that it was enough for that day, and proceeded to give the day and hour for the next sitting. While his assistant cleaned his brushes and set his new palette, the painter received the next person who had an appointment. In this manner he worked on

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several portraits the same day with extraordinary rapidity. After he had made a slight sketch, he made his sitter take the pose he had decided upon, and in a quarter of an hour he drew the figure and costume in black and white on gray paper. . . . This sketch he handed to skilful assistants, who then painted in the dresses from the costumes themselves, which the clients sent to the studio at Van Dyck's

request. After the assistants had got the draperies to the best of their ability, he worked over them lightly, and in a short time gave them the truth and art we admire in them. For the hands he had persons of both sexes in the house who served him as models."

It was less the reflection of the vigorous epoch on which Van Dyck had nourished his talent, and the relative power of his best pictures, than the wise economy of the man of business which became the recipe followed by Reynolds and his alumni. When we read accounts of the activities of Reynolds' studio we seem rather to be hearing of the clientele of a fashionable dentist than the energy of an artist. Hogarth christened the practitioners of this method 'portrait manufacturers.' In essentials they were the same after him as before him. The evolution of English portrait painting was literally skin-deep. There is no distinctive difference between the relatively underrated methods of Kneller and those of his successors. Mannerism wears richer and more complex masks, but the face beneath them is the same. Of course culture had increased. It is not necessary to read the speeches of the first President of the Academy, the unctuous tone of which is so far removed from Hogarth's strongly spiced utterances and the incisive pronouncements of his theoretical subjectiveness, in order to recognise the respectable average of cultivation in Sir Joshua's circle. Each of his pictures reveals the same cultivation. If a preoccupation with lofty things is to be a criterion, we cannot refuse recognition to this whole period of English art. And a criterion it is, but not for the art of a whole period. This also profits undeniably by the efforts of great predecessors if it has the necessary intensity in its vision ; in fact, it may almost be said that the epochs of art are distinguished in their achievements by the varying degrees of this intensity. This is the case, for instance, if we compare the English eighteenth century with the nineteenth. The fact that the former seems to us a relatively classic period comes only from the higher degree of attention which Reynolds and his pupils accorded to their masters. The essential difference is determined, not by change of exemplar, not by the circumstance that the older generation preferred the masters of colour, and that the Pre-Raphaelites went back to other artists, but by the fact that the relative intensity of the relation between art and artists in the eighteenth century, modest as it was, if taken absolutely, became very much weaker in the nineteenth century, relying more than ever before on externals. The fundamental error which Hogarth avoided, the sacrifice of personal sentiment to the taste of the connoisseur, was the decisive factor in the eighteenth century. The circumstance that artist and connoisseur were often united in one person, as in the case of Reynolds, makes this intelligible, but not less disastrous in its consequences. In every great artist there is, in addition to the complex suggestions of tradition, which reveal more or less distinctly on which predecessor he is founded, a primitive spirit — we have seen it plainly in Hogarth — which captivates us at once by its originality of outlook, and makes that which the artist has derived from others seem a part of his own world, not that of another. This is what we called the play of personality in. Hogarth, the play of exuberant power, turning to art only because no other

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medium offered equal possibilities of expression. It gives the spectator a conviction of necessity, which is essential to him if he would recognise what the artist offers him as no ciiltndred pastime, but the highest effort of human idealism. This same conviction underlies our criterion of the beauty of pictures. Not that emotion must necessarily express itself in terms of art, but that no good work can arise without emotion. That which we approve as "right" in it, and acclaim as admirable with all the innumerable gradations of our illogical powers of expression, is always the result of an immediate and powerful relation of man — ^the creator — ^to his work. If this is lost, or even relaxed, if we but feel the preponderance of craftsmanship over emotion, the suggestive force disappears, and we shall have no difficulty in justifying our subjective distrust by objective recognition of the weaknesses of the work. It is very difficult to formulate this primitive defect, on which everything depends, for the standard to which we might refer ha^ yet to be constructed. A scientific language fit to set forth this contest of opinions without lacimae does not exist as yet, and hence it is always easy for hostile opinion to pronounce logical conceptions mere arbitrary emanations of personality, and to dispose of the matter by the axiom that tastes differ. That the decision has no more to do with taste in this sense than with art does not prevent a constant repetition of such arguments.

The manufacturing character which Hogarth derided in his colleagues betrays itself even in the most important personality of the school. Even Gainsborough had not the power of the great portrayers of humanity, the penetrating eye to which everything essential in appearance is revealed, the ruthlessness in sacrificing everything superfuuous to expression, which sometimes exasperated Hogarth's clients. He painted his portraits for the sake of a detail or a group of details, never forgot taste for elemental things and allowed a piece of stuff to become more vital than his picture. No one can, of course, fail to see the charm of the costumes in the Mrs. Siddans of the National Gallery, or the Perdita of the Wallace Collection. But this charm only excites a vain desire to see the costumes perhaps without their wearers, or the wearers without the costumes. Our desire is not at once stimulated and satisfied by the picture, but grows to a coarser avidity, which would fain materialise beyond the picture. Many of his groups against a hastily treated conventional landscape or a red curtain have the effect of scene painting. This would not be a defect if the decorative element in them exhausted the rhythm. But Gainsborough lacked the boldness for such treatment. He creates a compromise, and this produces fragments. Looking at the large group of the Baillie family, we can imagine that if the vast red drapery behind the group were to move the figures would dance with it, so much like a drop-scene is the whole. Atmosphere is sacrificed to harmony. But this harmony does not obtain throughout the picture. It is impossible to believe that the arm outstretched to offer flowers to the child belongs to the boy in blue,

and the stability of the whole group is still more disquieting. Near this picture, in the vestibule of the National Gallery, hangs one of Champaigne's portraits of Richelieu. The crimson robe, the feudal expression of the face under the purple skull-cap, the admonitory gesture of the hand, leave no doubt of the superficial purpose of the picture. Yet I know no portrait of the English School in which representative character is so combined with solidity. No one would speak of Champaigne in the same breath with the great portraitists of the seventeenth century. But then he had not the intention of these great men, which

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stimulated the ambition of the Englishmen ; he attempted less than they, and so achieved a good deal more. The gesture, to which he gave himself up deliberately, is appropriate ; no part of the picture disturbs the proposed harmony. Gainsborough's works lack this totality of harmonious impression. In the profile of his daughter in the National Gallery his pictorial power was concentrated by his affection for the sitter, and makes for the fusion of the work. But even here there are differences of treatment in the face, and in the fine passage with the hand, which disturb the harmony, and are due merely to a respect for convention. Yet even setting his landscapes aside, Gainsborough touches us far more deeply than his colleagues. In his portraits he has given us, not women, but a feminine essence that almost suggests life. His elegance does not rise merely from the fashion of the day, but from his discriminating feeling for a grace, and a manner which was the outcome of his own nature. We do not see the women he tried to create, but something of himself, which the others do not give us ; we feel something of his own tender fragility in the weakness of his forms, we can imagine what he was and what he would fain have been — a noble spirit, to whom all base things were foreign — and we do not suffer under the repellent impression of bold satisfaction with inadequacy which mars even the best works of the others for us. His taste did not, indeed, save him from failures, of which those in the Dulwich Gallery are not the worst examples. But he refrained from that criminal trifling with the great heritage of the past of which Reynolds was guilty. That which critics to this very day cannot forgive him, a certain superficiality of touch, apparent even in the official portraits of the two Cumberlands, or the royal portraits at Windsor, I am inclined to account a merit. It was a symptom of an independence of mind which was a check to materialism, and tends to soften the asperity of strictures upon the artist by convincing us of the generosity of the man.

This human element was conspicuously absent in Reynolds. He showed us perhaps what he thought of Rembrandt, Van Dyck, and the Italians ; but this he has told us in his "Discourses," and it was therefore unnecessary to paint pictures for the purpose. On the other hand, he makes it impossible for us to get an image of his personality that might add a fresh page to the art history which deals in human manifestations. That which he tells us of his predecessors is not

that which seems to us most important. He is said to have destroyed a picture by Titian to discover the secret of its technique.\* He was for ever confounding accident with cause, and attempted to reproduce the gestures of persons whose feelings were unknown to him. To see a costume painter in Van Dyck was a pardonable error. But Reynolds and his fellows took from Velazquez and Rembrandt what Van Dyck could have given them, and this was no error, but high treason. In the National Gallery hangs the Yimous Banished Lordy the most Rembrandtesque of Reynolds' works, painted in deep brown tones with a red drapery. A pendant may be found in the artist's own portrait, also in the National Gallery, or the one with spectacles, in Buckingham Palace. The first thought that occurs to us before these pictures involuntarily detracts from Rembrandt. Man is always most accessible to the baser instincts, and thus in this case what we first experience is an unexpected belittlement of the exemplar. We see with the eyes of the plagiarist without being conscious of the plagiarism, and, revising our estimate of Rembrandt, we submit that his art was, after all, perfectly simple, and that it is going rather too far to place him above all his compeers.

♦ Related " inter alia," by Fcuillet De Conches in iiis "Histoie de PEcolc Anglaise de Peinture."

REYNOLDS: WHITE THE PAVIOUR WITH A BEARD

EARL OF CREWE'S COLLECTION

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The similarity is surprising indeed. Not only the typical colour, but the granular impasto is imitated, the porous flesh, the peculiar material. And, in addition, this imitation does not lade an air of spontaneity ; it seems in some sense a continuation, and even an improvement. That which was incomprehensible in Rembrandt becomes quite natural here, as obvious as some effect of industrial art\* The inexpressible becomes a simple affair. Fortunately the error is no less easy to correct than to make.

Reynolds resembles Rembrandt as the utterances of the phonograph resemble the human voice. He reproduced the Dutchman dramarically, but without drama. The Banished Lard is the most obvious melodrama. Rembrandt had no organs for such cheap stage effects. By drama I mean the spectacle of excited Nature that displavs itself in every work of the unique master, the confluence of

mighty streams which never rest ; the conflict of dark forces which are never weary, the stormy action of all the elements of the work which carry us away and yet pour a divine peace into the soul. Reynolds painted with Rembrandt's colours. We may even find his touch reproduced here and there\* But as applied by Reynolds, the touches seem to be marking time, so to speak. They achieve nothing. That which Sandrart singled out as Rembrandt's characteristic trait, that "he opened the eyes of all those who, according to custom, were rather dyers than painters," was lost again in Reynolds. We do not recognise the growth of the work of art, the treatment of its atoms, the development of a conception into a creation, which alone awake our belief in the beautiful, but there is an attempt to show the condition itself, the impression we can only prepare for ourselves. Thus the supposed advance on Rembrandt becomes a cheapening of the prototype ; the most important elements disappear, and only a shadow remains.

No one can paint like Rembrandt, not because of his greatness, but because the reproduction of a constellation of such instincts is impossible. Approximations are conceivable, produced by glowing enthusiasm and an affinity of emotion. They have occurred often enough, and we have seen new values evolved thereby ; indeed, all art history is built up on such elective affinities. But in such cases we shall always see the transmitted value appearing either as shell or germ of a new one, transformed by a new emotion, not impoverished, as in the case of Reynolds, but enriched. Thus through the rich texture of Hogarth's impulses we discover Rubens, and this discovery detracts from neither artist. Our affection for the great Fleming derives fresh nourishment from the testimony of a great successor, and the fact that he was capable of absorbing such a mighty prototype to the advantage of his art can but redound to Hogarth's credit. Reynolds also adds something to the heritage of the past, but something of a purely negative kind. Delacroix' admiration for the English School did not blind him to this negative aspect of their relation to the old masters so especially apparent in Reynolds, and it caused him — to his honour be it said — to deny Reynolds' tide to mastery. He held that the Englishmen were content to imitate more particularly the disfigurements produced by time in their exemplars. "Ils ont cru en faisant des tableaux enfumés faire des tableaux vigoureux, ils ont imité le rembrunissement que le temps donne à tous les tableaux et surtout cet éclat factice que causent les déveissages successifs qui rembrunissent certaines parties, en donnant aux autres un éclat qui n'était pas dans l'intention des maîtres." ^ Reynolds

• "Journal," iii. 70, 71. See also p. 377 for his criticism of Reynolds, Lawrence, and Turner.

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exaggerated these supposed qualities of the old masters ; he made the shadows

round their star still denser, and helped on the destructive work of time — which only weaklings and sentimentalists suppose to have improved Rembrandt — \yf removing altogether treasures half concealed in the unpremeditated darkness. His portion in his prototype was therefore robbery. Not only did he add nothing, but he repaid the help he received by distortions.

This was the eventful part played by the famous protagonist. He dealt with Van Dyck as with Rembrandt — witness his portrait of ^wo Gentlemen in the National Gallery, and many others. He dealt in like fashion with the Italians, as we see in his Death of Dido at Buckingham Palace, his Charity at Oxford, his Children with a Net in the Alexander Henderson collection, &c. He it was above all others who introduced into the new art the evil practice of replacing the original work, the individuality of which demands the spectator's utmost powers of attention, by an agreeable feuilleton, with which the economical reader is much better pleased. He was a populariser in the worst sense, who is responsible for the enervation of English art, and the consequences of whose achievements are still undermining the health not of English art alone. The dismal false economy, which everywhere allows artists such as Lenbach to usurp the place of greater men, is due in no small measure to Reynolds and his school. It is true, no doubt, that the Dutch and Italian masters had their epigoni long before the time of Reynolds — pupils who imitated a master with or against his consent, or envious persons whose gall or whose greed was stirred by the rising star. Such base contemporary rivalries are unavoidable ; and, large as they may loom in the biography of a hero, they are his concern, not ours, and are harmless in the main. Bandinelli may have destroyed Michelangelo's cartoon, and juggled away a few commissions from him. The injury was as a small stone in the life-path of the great man, and, like all else that was irksome, served to form the master who lives in our conception. But Reynolds attacked this conception with unequalled dexterity imder a mask of reverence. He put a pale simulacrum in the place of the hero who should be a national hero in every land. The question as to whether he was conscious of his crime or not is of secondary importance. Even the by no means established contention that he at first attempted to make the great masters contribute to the formation of a native tradition cannot mitigate the fact that he was guilty of blasphemy against them. And just as he vulgarised the others, so did he trifle with himseU. He turned his emotion to theatrical account. I know nothing more trivial than the famous Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse at Grosvenor House— or the monstrous replica in the Dulwich Gallery — ^the Garrick between Comedy and Tragedy in Lord Rothschild's collection, or the Infant Hercules in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. A divine justice has decreed that dexterity, when not applied to a great task, has the effect of making triviality appear still more trivial. Hence it is that the mastery displayed in some of Reynolds' pictures cannot conceal the insignificance of his whole activity from a lover of art to whom the meaning of noble artists has been revealed. The skill in some of the portraits is, of course, extraordinary. Many of the portraits of Reynolds' friend Dr. Johnson have a startling intensity. We feel that they are not to be classed among the 150 annual works turned out by



the painter, that they are the results of a concentration of the artist's will on an object that excited his deepest interest. But even here the creative method goes very little deeper. It treats the face as does a photographer when he is wise ;

ROMNEY: PORTRAIT OF MISS RAMUS

HON. W. J. D. SMITH'S COLLECTION

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that is to say, he places his model in the most natural position possible, and fixes all the peculiarities of the moment. As the face is an interesting one, the picture is interesting too; but it owes its charm not to the painter, but to Nature, and in comparison to this must always remain a mere counterfeit, an accidental condition rather than pulsing life. A great painter, on the other hand, knows how to suggest the many-sidedness of actual life by the organisation of his work, not by dealing exclusively with the details which produce a certain impression in Nature, details of which only a limited portion can be visible, but by creating a symbol which reinforces that which is offered to the eye. There are some interesting things among Reynolds' portraits of women too, which leave the triviality of a Robinetta far behind. There are seductive details in the Perdita and the Mrs. Braddyl in the Wallace Collection. The treatment of the powdered hair and of the muslin has great pictorial charm. But here, as in so many portraits of the school, the manner in which the face is rendered contradicts the rich handling of the accessories. The more exquisitely the stuffs are treated, the greater is the flatness and insipidity of the puppet mask. They often look like enlarged miniatures in garments by Velazquez. Velazquez too, especially in his portraits of children, often kept the faces quite smooth and loaded the impasto in the costumes. But with him this antithesis has the effect of an artistic method, because the complexion (to say nothing of the incomparable modelling which he veiled in vaporous bloom) gave exactly the tone which the constellation of all the values of the picture demands. With Reynolds, on the other hand, details play a part of their own. In the famous Nelly O'Brien of the same collection, the pale pink silk drapery across the knees is treated with stupendous mastery ; but this treatment is so little in harmony with the rest that the spectator cannot help feeling he is looking at the portrait of a quilt. Gainsborough's clumsinesses are avoided. Reynolds' bodies are never impossible, like those of his greater colleague. He had learnt to make a body credible according to rule. But many lesser men have mastered this academic science without approaching the sphere where warm interest in artistic things begins. Certain relations are observed in his colour. In the Lord Heatbfield of the National Gallery the purple of the coat tinges

the face ; and in like manner the greenish blue of Lady Albemarle's dress — here again the centre of interest — ^throws its lustre on the pale face. Here and in many other cases we note what were indubitably deliberate artistic relations. But how poor are they all in comparison with the pretensions of these pictures ! In all of them the colour dyes instead of animating. It does not spring forth from the face, like the perfume of a flower or the breath of a human being, but has been added to it from outside. Of course the relation given by Reynolds had to arise; it would have been impossible to leave such prominent details of colour without effect upon the rest; but, further than this, there should have been a much richer variation to justify the pretensions of these details and the whole tone of the work. In the girl of Rembrandt's *Susanna van CoUen* with her Daughter in the Wallace Collection the tone of the face is closely related to the coppery tint of the dress, but it is at the same time perfectly independent in its action — ^to all appearances a natural quality of the flesh. And among the relations which the inquirer seeks in order to get nearer to the riddle of the effect, the one here disclosed, to which Reynolds confined himself, seems to have arisen accidentally, because it is lost among a hundred others. Yet how majestic is this simple work by the youthful Rembrandt, in

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which his real gifts are barely indicated, when we compare it with the decorative nullities on the opposite wall !

Gainsborough and Reynolds are the limits between which the gradations of Romney, Hoppner, and Raeburn, down to Lawrence, the youthful prodigy of the school, disport themselves. Not one of them rose above the standard fixed by the moderation of their leader. Not one of them was able to cast off the title which Hogarth coined for them. They were less talented and less well descended than Gainsborough and less pernicious than Reynolds. Their ambition sank to the level of amiable costumiers. Their people laugh before they have faces, and are sentimental before they come to life. English art owes to them the peculiarity that in the eighteenth century it is represented with one exception solely by portraitists — a peculiarity shared by no other nation. Is this peculiarity an advantage ! It might, of course, have been one. The necessity that forced a painter to exercise his gifts in a domain he shared with rivals was a cause of fruition in earlier years. Man, the image of God, was perhaps not inferior as a model to the saintly figures of the Church. But from the earliest times it has not been enough to have the right model. The history of art shows us that the indispensable vehicle of the beautiful is the depth of emotion which draws the artist to his model, the extent of his love or of his hate, an emotion strong enough to tear him loose from earth and set him to seek the ideal with his soul. This was lacking in these much-praised painters. Their biographies may be compiled from the scale of their prices. They were all cheap to begin with, and have become dear in course of time.

An art history confined to portraiture might have become the rarest of national histories. The portraits of great masters have taught us not a little from the fifteenth century onwards. Three centuries scarcely produced so many portraits as did the school of Sir Joshua in fifty years. And yet we should know little of England if we were to confine ourselves to that which her painters have told us. They contradict all just ideas of the manners of a people who have been in the van of European culture on a hundred serious questions. We like to think of the Englishman as a City tradesman, plain, practical, intent on realities, severely disciplined, precise, and we praise his honesty. We know his love of Nature, of a natural mode of life, of a home. He who has spent but one day in London among citizens, or in the country among country people, can divine the character of the nation, which permeates all circles, and is comparatively, but slightly affected by those differences produced in other lands by the severance of work and social affairs. I am always astonished afresh by this fidelity of the Englishman to himself, which is so lacking in English art ; and not only in the English art of the eighteenth century. Indeed, it almost seems as if insincerity had increased since the time of Reynolds, as if those dexterous artists who painted the mask of the eighteenth century had been at least more truthful than their successors in the nineteenth. An art that has turned its back resolutely upon life presents itself to us, made up not of flesh and blood, but of insipid ideas, dry books and feeble sensations. The great Shakespeare's fervour is not its exemplar. These pictures read like a book for bread-and-butter misses, or a romance for empty-headed ladies. We may fairly doubt whether the rational life makes for the culture of a people when art is looked upon as a thing apart from culture.

How much healthier, how much more honest and robust, does the frivolous dix-huitieme siècle of the French appear when compared with the manifestations of the English costume-painters ! Only in Greuze do we recognise the absurd

RAEBURN: MRS. JAMES CAMPBELL

MR. L. MUIRHEADS COLLECTION

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qualities of the Englishmen, and he might be struck out of history altogether without affecting the picture. Watteau, Lancret, and Fragonard did not probe any great depths in their models. They treated them as their light-hearted age treated everything. Art was evolved from frivolous jests. Rembrandt and Velazquez would have found little favour. But there was method in this frivolity.

It was genuine, and therefore, though lamentable for morality, prolific for art. People showed themselves as they were, not because they were perfect, but because it gave them pleasure to be what they were. Painting was the true child of its period, which thought as artists painted, and saw no necessity to be different, as long as the sun shone over the memest of all kingdoms. Frivolity penetrated people through and through, and therefore was without sentimentality. Sentimentality was impossible, for reasons of taste. Everything had to be facile and pleasant — everythmg, not only "Pheure du berger.\*" To represent light things lightly was art. Silk was not to crackle like paper, and flesh was not to look like china. Artists were sincere — sincere to the point of showing everything they thought beautiful, not from morality, but from love of beautiful things. And because their ideal was a healthy one it allowed of differentiation, and hence it was that they thought less of adorning their fair sitters than of adorning their pictures. The most significant works of the period are not portraits, but genre pictures, and these are truer likenesses than the English portraits. The Frenchman's superiority lay in his more logical acceptance of the spirit of the age. The individual is by no means heroic in his scenes, but he is free from the involuntary comicality of the English heroic attitude. We might even call him a puppet — which man really was in the mirror of this French conception of the world — and might recognise regretfully that this type did not wander upon the heights of humanity ; but in spite of all this we shaU be obliged to admit that the pictures which immortalised it were excellent.

## VOL. I

### WILSON AND GAINSBOROUGH

The industiY of the portrait manufacturers tended to keep not only Hogarth in the shade, but still more one of his friends, who might have come .to the aid of English art from another side — Richard Wilson. It h pleasant to think that these two were friends. The fact tells us more than many biographical notices concerning the breadth of Hogarth's sympathies; and we are glad to find that, like him, Wilson had to bear the hostility of the others. Hogarth's biting satire saved him from the worst obstacles that might have been put in his path. In the case of Wilson this wise provision was lacking ; no one feared the quiet dreamer. The consequence was that he had to reckon with himger in his old age, notwithstanding ids membership of the Academy. Reynolds had not even a condescending toleration for this colleague. Yet what Wilson practised was, as a fact, nothing more than that which the President of the Academy recommended to all his pupils, and carried on diligently himself — propaganda for the noble masters of the past. But the landscape painter strayed m the process into a totally neglected domain, that of Nature, and worked on more

logical, less subtle, and therefore more human lines. A simple question of material had redeemed the plagiarism of the portrait-painters. They painted English ladies and gentlemen, and so put matters right. Whereas George III. returned the picture of Kew Gardens he had ordered from Wilson, on the ground that he had received, not a landscape in the Italian style, but an Italian landscape.

Wilson began as a portrait painter. His early essays show that he might have succeeded as well in this line as any of the others. He met Zuccarelli in Venice and Joseph Vernet in Rome. The latter decided him. His first work has much in common with those of Corot. • What he lacked was continuity. This want compels us to be cautious in our judgment of what he offered us, even if we cannot but suppose that an instinct of community with his fellows, such as that which illuminated the path of Corot, might have helped Wilson further on his way. When he was dead patriotism attempted to make an English Claude of him. He still passes as such. John van Dyke says : " He translated Claude — that is, he Englished him — just as a century before Ruysdael had translated

Salvator Rosa into idiomatic, even classic Dutch."\* A somewhat audacious assertion. Wilson certainly translated Both (in his large pictures) and Joseph Vernet (in his smaller works), artists who were themselves translators, but not after the fashion of a Ruysdael, in whom the prototype disappears completely. To have done like Ruysdael, Wilson must have been another personality, and the art language of England must have been a mightier one. No Germanic art of modern times has had strength enough to absorb classic forms. Wilson, indeed, never thought of any such thing. His temperament did not urge him on to the part of a great personality,

\* "Old English Masters/" Macmillan, London, 1902, p. 72.

at C/, the landscape of the Van der Hoop Collection in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum (No. 591), that of the Six Collection, that of the Hague (No. 21), etc.

## WILSON AND GAINSBOROUGH

for which his gifts would have been insufficient. He was a melodious musician, content to be played upon rather than to play himself. He had as little of Claude as possible. The crystalline structure of a cool harmony was foreign to his inmost nature. The quiet charm of Poussin's atmosphere was more attractive to him. Sir George Beaumont, that bad painter and discriminating collector, understood the relation when he grouped the works of his countryman — unfortunately not the best — with their prototype, the exquisite little Poussin landscape, bequeathing them finally to the State. This unpretentious little creation of the great Frenchman's, in which the sonorous rhyme of the ideal figures is still banished to the twilight woods and only the innocence of untouched Nature appears, contains the world

in which Wilson was happiest. He was never successful on a large canvas or with lively action. When he ventures upon episode, as in the Destruction of Niohis Cbilireny he is insupportable, and presages the worst aberrations of the English School. When he leaves his small composition, he becomes more confused than Dughet in his worst pictures. His material is like a thin veil which one dare not expose to the four winds of heaven. It is the same thing with him and with all his French and Dutch colleagues of the same class. But when he restricts himself and stretches his veil within narrow bounds, taking care to give it points of support enough, here a bit of ruin, there a tree or two, in the background the pleasant outline of a mountain chain, he achieves that refreshing charm of quiet pictures which seem to shroud our nerves in down and pour contentment into our souls. On these lines he sometimes (as in the small landscape at the Berlin Gallery) attains a structure of the arabesque far beyond the Dutch and French eclectics, and suggesting the fruition of Dutch art rather than the decadence of the eighteenth century. He was certainly no colossal genius, no original with lightning lyre, but an imitative poet, who never concealed his sources of inspiration. Yet an aristocratic figure, incapable of disguise, who allowed his origin to be plainly seen, and who chose his method, not out of ignoble speculation, but because it harmonised with his most intimate nature. The difference between Wilson's manner and that of his portrait-painting contemporaries is no gradation, but the far-reaching difference between a lofty and a vulgar mind which is manifest even where there is similarity of attitude. The youthful Delacroix once wrote to a friend, touching the difference between good and 'bad artists, that "les bons sont les vrais sages, ceux qui jouissent innocemment de leur ame et de leurs facultes ; les mauvais sont des fous, heureux de leur marotte et qui ne sont pas plus a plaindre que ceux qui vendent leur temps et leur conscience aux folies des autres." \*

The practical result was that Wilson succeeded by his method in establishing certain fundamental elements of landscape painting. His emotion was so sincere that it could not fail to prove the validity of its conception when it had a problem before it to be overcome by its power. He showed by simple means what air means in landscape, and the possibilities of organisation by well constructed planes, indicated the degradation of colours, and above all the stylistic results of illumination. And so convincing was his simple manner that he succeeded, without suspecting it himself, in sowing the seed of a fruitful and far-reaching development in an artistically barren land, and in an art prematurely given over to a contemptible egotism. The despised starveling became the founder of a school, which was to leave the brilliant plunder of the portrait manufacturers far behind it. He, who was never forgiven for his love for the country

♦ "Lectrici" Paris, Quantin, pp. 57, 58.

beyond the Alps which had given him knowledge, taught his successors to work with their own organs.

Gainsborough seconded him here, appearing in a very different light from that in which he figured among the portrait painters. He confessed himself that he painted portraits for gain and landscapes for his pleasure, and the difference of incentive makes itself very plainly felt in his pictures. As a landscape painter he shows little of his quality as a portrait painter, his dexterity in detail, his grace and splendour of bearing, even his lightness of handling. A laborious, struggling spirit presides over the palette, tormenting himself with dark, unruly colours, which threaten to veil the picture in colourless night. But his landscapes have something that his portraits lack — physiognomies. They speak to us in human tones, and we listen with greater pleasure to the stammering sentences of his emotion than to his smooth, insignificant phrases. An unwonted gravity informs the words. We learn to know the sensitive being who loved music so passionately. In all his portraits, it is true, there is a breath of melancholy, but in these it is more a final adjunct to the toilette, proper rather to the genre than to the painter. Here, on the other hand, the artist's soul stirs. It may be urged that sensibility in a landscape is in itself more agreeable than in a portrait, and that the mere change of genre is refreshing after the many sentimental portraits of the English School. But what we call sentimental in the disparaging sense is scarcely perceptible in Gainsborough's portraits. He had too much taste and distinction to fall into the snare to which Reynolds' coarser manner so readily succumbed. He was more rococo than the people he represented; and his superiority appears in this, that something of the same essence came from him and from Watteau. He made style, and this not merely as a portrait painter. We might speak of Gainsborough landscapes just as people speak of Gainsborough hats. There is the same curve in each. The brown foliage is sketched with the same rococo slightness as the backgrounds of the famous portraits, where the trees serve the same purpose as the wings on the stage. But the relation of the whole to the details has undergone a complete change in the landscapes. Not only the foliage, but the whole picture obeys a more vigorous impulse, and the sensibility therein owes its origin to a stronger development of the personality. Though echoes of the rococo mingle with both genres, they no more resemble one another than a Wilson resembles a Boucher. In the one the rococo is the final aim of the creator, in the other the accidental ornament of the age. Here not only is it non-essential, but it appears as the antithetical element, against which the personality of the artist is fighting. That we can see the struggle is a merit in Gainsborough's landscapes, which is not discounted by the impression that he was not always the victor in the contest, that he did not always succeed in presenting his scene with the relative finality of his portraits. The portraitist only got completeness by taking his task lightly. Others showed that a superficial completeness was to be achieved with even inferior pretensions.

Gainsborough began his artistic career with landscapes, before he had seen Van Dyck. Dutch prototypes are mentioned, Wynants in particular. All those other

artists who had affinities with Wilson might be included. But I think he copied Nature more even than these, yet after the manner of a young man, who looks upon Nature not as a whole, but in detail. He said himself when he wandered through the Suffolk lanes, a youth not twenty years old, that there was "no picturesque clump of trees, nor even a single tree of any beauty, no, nor hedgerow.

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stem, nor post," in his home which he did not know by heart. These details he brought together in pictures, in which Wynants' convention helped him. We have such compilations in the landscape of the Dublin Gallery and the typical work of his early period, the Great Comard Wood of the National Gallery, both painted before 1750, when Gainsborough was yet in his teens. The latter is not a wood, but an assemblage of weU\*studied trees, not one picture, but at least two, one of which, the larger left half, has much beauty. The high tones enhance the want of unity. The work resembles Wilson as far as the first essay of an awkward, self-taught youth could resemble a refined eclectic. Another difference is the absence of Italian reminiscences. Gainsborough never visited Italy. This was a disadvantage, for to this was perhaps due his inability to work with planes. It was an advantage, since it saved him from the seductions that led Wilson astray. If he did not succeed in accomplishing the development of his Comard Wood into his Market Cart by the help of purely native tradition — and how could he have done so with the tradition of his native land? — he at least kept within the limits proper to him, and solved the problem as a Northerner, in the only fashion which his compatriots could work out further. The Italian sun cannot be transposed to England. It is not true that Wilson anglicised Claude, but it may truly be said that Gainsborough made Wilson an Englishman. He eliminated what was ascribed to Claude, not merely by replacing Wilson's Bayaderes and dreamy pilgrims of southern origin by native figures, but by a modification of the scenery itself due to observation of English landscape. The National Gallery contains all the important documents of this development. The line is not quite stable, it makes various curves, because it arose from almost heterogeneous impulses; and we are the less able to trace it definitely because the dates of very few of the pictures are known. The little view of Dedham with the wood in the foreground and the glimpse of the church nestling among the trees of the background is one of the culminating-points. Beside the best Wilson it is as Nature to construction; and yet I am inclined to see more charm in Wilson's slight but truly poetical structure than is customary out of England. The relation between the two is obvious; the road to the little Landscape to itb Figures of the older man, where girls are undressing to bathe in a sunny lake, or the charming perspective with the ruin in the fore\* ground and the inevitable tower in the middle distance, is easy to follow.\* And whereas Wilson's delicate poems arouse our subtlest emotions, after the manner of certain modern English poems, which are merely rhythm and melody,



and achieve beauty not by what they offer but by what they conceal, we feel an intimate sympathy before Gainsborough's Dedham. Even the foreigner seems to hear echoes of home, so strong is the love of the soil expressed in the little picture. And this is not merely the sentimental effect produced by the "good, kindly, happy man" of whose pictures Constable wrote: "On looking at them we find tears in our eyes and know not what brings them." All Wilson's delicacy is retained here, the delicacy which distributes emotion in subtle channels, and is not content with the coarse excitement of sensational feeling. Gainsborough attempted to strengthen this sublimated effect under the influence of Rembrandt. It was natural that the tender Wilson could not withstand this rivalry, and that Gainsborough declared himself more and more strongly for the great Dutchman. A greater artist would not have been able to bring two such opposite

\* National Gallery, Nos. 1290 and 301.

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worlds into equilibrium. Rembrandt gave Gainsborough consolidation of colour. He taught him to manage large masses. But it cannot be denied that the disadvantages outweighed the obligations. Gainsborough was alien to the whole nature of the Rembrandtesque conception. His light-hearted merriment and his superficial melancholy had no organs for Rembrandt's fervour, and the gentle dreamer who was very capable of ennobling Wilson was caught a helpless captive in the net of the strongest personality of the seventeenth century. The examples most accessible to him may have been harmful to him. Although he by no means shared the general enthusiasm for Sir Joshua, he could not altogether resist the suggestion of the supposed help his colleague had received from the old masters, and neither Reynolds nor any other contemporary could show him how to modify what he imitated. His borrowing resembles that of the rest in so far as he was content with a generalisation of the prototype. The great difference was that he had no speculative aims. He was not only too honest, but too unskilful. The question is not purely one of moral considerations, but has an important bearing on the aesthetic result. For as a fact he gave us much more of Rembrandt than his infinitely more dexterous rival, and this because — paradoxical as it may seem — he had less affinity with Rembrandt. Reynolds had a far truer comprehension of the technique of his exemplar; he appeared desirous of maintaining the same diversity, complicated his pose thereby, and made it almost impossible for his contemporaries to recognise the genuineness of his whole conception. Even the extravagant patriotism of his own countrymen could not compare Gainsborough's landscapes with Rembrandt's pictures without being convinced of the natural difference of their respective powers; but these landscapes show in a very primitive degree the same clear-sighted and elementary harmony of the author's emotion with the chosen form which is peculiar to Rembrandt's pictures. He painted thus, not because he had perceived the effect

this manner had upon the public — the cold reception accorded to his landscapes would soon have taught him better ; not because, like Reynolds, he had mastered this and many other forms of imitation, but because this manner alone seemed to him natural and rational. He understood Rembrandt with the whole strength of his enthusiasm, but he understood him after the fashion of one who nevertheless remained himself, of one who was temperamentally a rococo artist, the absolute antithesis of Rembrandt.

Before we can either do justice to Gainsborough himself or understand the consequences of his art we must probe the psychological depths of this problem. We must admit that the difference between Rembrandt and Reynolds lowers the imitator, and that Gainsborough's shortcomings in the same path are of a purer, a more tragic kind. It was no lack of intelligence that hampered Gainsborough^ but the difference between individuality and surroundings. He shared the experience of many in these days, that the natural possibilities of development are denied to knowledge and to will. He desired to practise a great free art, in which personality is the dominant force, and remained fettered by all the dainty bonds which the author of the Blue Boy owed to his successes. Reynolds was the more modern of the two. Nothing bound him to the soil, not even the rococo, for he shook this off when he pleased. He was the forerunner of the many who belong to no age, who practise art to-day, just as they practise something else to-morrow, the ruthless, unfeeling egotists, individualists, but not after the manner of the great personalities who offer the divine gift of their being to art.

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The weaknesses of the landscapes are obvious. Gainsborough saw only the shadows round Rembrandt's illumination, and under-estimated the glow that gleams through the darkness. He sought out an opening in a wood where cows come to drink, or a cart with gaily clad figures files up the forest path, and round these he poured deep shadow. The process produces finely illuminated groups, but a vast proportion of the picture is squandered to form a frame. His yearning for unity of expression drove him to stake his all on a single card, the contrast of this central motive with the surrounding shadows. He overlooked the fact that as in Nature the value of unity depends only on the many-sidedness of the effects, so art can only achieve the richness of its original by the manifold aspects of effects directed to a single end. He lacked Hogarth's variety. This beauty has already caused a material deterioration in many of his pictures. The effect of the landscape in the Diploma Gallery has been practically destroyed by the black masses in the middle and on either side. There are worse examples still, which look like asphalted surfaces with spots of light here and there. Bad pigment is not solely to blame. It is as if Nature were avenging the false economy of art. She destroys all that is not held together by a thousand threads.

Gainsborough the landscape painter had obviously to pay the debts of Gainsborough the portraitist. The disproportionate emphasis bestowed on the central motive was due to the perverse conception of the portrait painter, who made a distinction between figure and scenery, and only preserved himself from the same results in this genre by the hasty treatment of the whole. Had Gainsborough given himself up as unconsciously to his temperament in portraits, had he not contented himself with a splendour restricted to costume in his creations, the tragedy would have made itself felt just as keenly here. The gamut of his artistic means obeyed only his dallying mood. How weak it was is shown clearly enough thereby. In addition to this, the large scale of his pictures told against him. It is not an accident that Gainsborough's smallest landscapes are his best. His sketches and studies are greatly superior to his pictures. We see Gainsborough at his best in the British Museum, not in the National Gallery. In the Arthur Kay collection there are landscapes of a vaporous delicacy, in which the swift chalk has fixed every gradation of the atmosphere. The figures in these sheets are no compact, isolated portraits, but a portion, subordinated to rhythm, of the whole, combined with the landscape by relations intangible as air. Nothing could be more fluid, more supple, than those brilliant little water-colours, which Constable and Turner never wearied of studying. Cheramy of Paris owns a fascinating example, two riders on white horses in an undulating landscape. It seems compounded of light and air, all in a single pale golden tone, and yet we feel as if we were with the riders on the wide plain, and could see all that they see.

I would give all the Mrs. Siddons gladly for one or two studies of English servant-maids and peasant girls by Gainsborough, though I am quite alive to the many agreeable things I should have to renounce in the exchange. Of course these studies have not the decorative quality which furnishes the wall of a room. They lack the magnificence of the stately ladies, before whom the spectator has the agreeable sense of having been invited to visit wealthy acquaintances. But the exchange would be neither more nor less reckless than that of the most magnificent screen from Old Nippon for a perfect small drawing by Rembrandt, and no one would hesitate who cares more for purely spontaneous poetry than for the

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most dexterous routine work. It is only in these sheets that Gainsborough rises to the level of the old masters<sup>^</sup> and only before them may we cite without blasphemy those illustrious names with which the praises of the most commonplace works are interlarded in English art-literature. In his landscapes we are never reminded of the master whom Gainsborough followed. It is a significant fact that not one of Gainsborough's successful drawings reminds us of Rembrandt, though the shadow of Rubens rises behind them — that same Rubens whom Hogarth shows us. Here again, as with the author of the Progresses<sup>^</sup> the mighty

shadow creeps into the line of the descendant, and Gainsborough also shows a diminutive of the giant's features. We seem to find the same things in a small world under different symbols ; a tributary of that broad stream, not mighty, but charming with its pleasant windings between lower, closer banks. Art is humanity on a higher plane. In artists as in men we love not only what is peculiar to them, but that which ennobles their idiosyncrasy. This nobility comes from concentration. But such concentration does not inhere in all individual effort. It must spring from the nature of the particularity, and express an emotion which ensures the best use of gifts, making them beautiful. No contortions will serve it. Artists are leapers, not rope-dancers. Only when a work is the outcome of perfect harmony between its creator and his form of expression does it become art. This harmony is no more coexistent with the gift than is a wise use of our senses vouchsafed us together with them. It must be invented ; and not only the temperament and qualities of the subject, but also the artist's surroundings may help or hinder him in the process. In the case of soft transitional natures like that of Gainsborough, in which extreme tenderness is allied to sanguine enthusiasm, a vast deal depends upon the circumstances under which they spend their lives. Imagine Corot, another painter who excelled both in landscape and portraiture, in an art nourished upon official portraits, and among people who only react to crudely emphasised effects ! Would he have had courage for his fragility, the endurance to transform this fragility into the strength of his later work, amidst the Rembrandtesque greatness of which we can still trace the loose touch of the dreamer ? Would he have had the incredible capacity to become vigorous and at the same time to retain the tenderness of his native gift ?

We must think of all these circumstances if we would be just to Gainsborough. It was not the best works of this generous artist which were prized by the purchasers of his pictures, and had he appeared only with these, shown himself in his true aspect, that is to say, he would hardly have escaped the fate of Wilson. When he died most of his landscapes were still hanging in his own studio, or on the walls of his intimate friends. The prodigal presented a good many to the carrier who used to take his pictures from JBath to London. He gave away a famous work in return for a solo on the violin. Nothing was more salutary for English art than the spectacle of such generosity. Among all the money-makers, big and little, here was one who gave with eager hands, who loved to give, and was not engulfed in the plutocratic tradition of the land. His will went beyond what he gave, and had a far-reaching influence for good. Gainsborough's service to the art of his country is not so much that since him England has known good landscapes, as that since his sincerity to a personal conviction has gained ground. Wilson's comrade had unconsciously become the representative of an anti-Wilsonian tendency. The painter of Great Comard Wood and the painter of the Market Cart were equally well disposed to their fore-runner. The transformation

## GAINSBOROUGH: STUDY FOR A PORTRAIT (1760)

J. p. HESELTINE'S COLLECTION

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had taken place without any dramatic reaction, and, as we have indicated, it scarcely touched Gainsborough's actual nature. It was otherwise with his contemporaries. English art was not capable of making such an objective choice as the universalism of Holland at the time of Vermeer. A very ripe culture was required to combine the heritage of Vermeer's great teacher with the purest reflection of sunny Italy. Gainsborough's successors had to declare for the one or the other. The choice was a matter of course, as soon as the latent worth of the two conceptions was taken into consideration. A venerated artist only begins to exercise a real influence by his works some hundred years after his death. During his lifetime admiration will place the ideal in advance of the actual achievement even in the case of an exemplar absolutely free from all didactic purpose, and build principles from what the creator himself refrained from formulating. In this case it was a choice between English art and eclecticism. The decision, which was not solely due to patriotism, was not unmindful that Wilson's conception of the world rested on a weak foundation, and that his art was an exceptional case, only successful as long as it was kept within narrow bounds. Gainsborough, on the other hand, was so familiar to the youth of England, and his purpose so convincing, that down to the present day there has been no serious critical examination of his work, though within the last ten years his real importance as compared with Reynolds has come to be recognised. And on the whole, this is well. Gainsborough is one of those artists whose very weaknesses are fruitful, because their whole lives, with all their purposes, are so transparent that even the least keen-sighted can see where the result requires completion. The defects of such masters stimulate to effort no less than the virtues of others. Thus Gainsborough, not Wilson, became the leader. History has confirmed the choice, and if the excellence of successors pleads for the prototype Gainsborough achieved a great deal. A good deal of brown sauce came into the English School through him, and many others less agreeable than Old Crome used it. The idea that the light of the great Dutchman might be approached in shadow cost many pictures, even after Gainsborough's death. But though a foreigner cannot share the over-estimation of the school which produced so many hand<sup>^</sup> and so few heads, no one can refuse respect to the remarkable pictorial level achieved by this landscape painter. It was from this level that the greatest Englishman since Hogarth, Constable, was able to advance. The first master of the new florescence of European painting was a pure fruit of English ground. There is not an iota of Wilson to be found in his work. I shall try to show how it was only by holding aloof from all eclecticism

that he did the bold deed to which contemporary England owes her finest pictures, and modern painting throughout the world its most stimulating impetus. There were exceptions who sought another road, and remained nearer to Wilson. They afford the negative counter-test. Even the dazzling apparition of Turner does not prove Gainsborough to have been in the wrong when he saw future salvation in the woods of his home, and in a simple native speech.

## VOL. I

### TURNER

The exceptional character of Turner's whole existence contributed in no slight degree to his prestige. In a circle of simple people, whose ideas are of a very obvious description, the unusual person, who is not so easily understood, soon gains the ascendancy. Compared with Turner's complexity. Old Crome takes on a bourgeois touch and Constable becomes coarse. The sentimentality of Morland, who watered down Gainsborough's idyls, and repeated himself ad nauseam, gradually became transparent, and failed to satisfy subtler requirements, and this sentimentality makes us so suspicious that we are apt to overlook the qualities of a Wilkie. Such pictures as Wilkie's Spanish Girl in the Tennant collection reveal an admirable colourist, and his productions with the painter's natural implement, the brush, ensure him a place of honour in European painting. It is due to the motives of his best-known pictures that this place is not yet freely accorded him on the Continent. Beside all these people Turner appears a phenomenon. When we enter the last of the rooms devoted to the English School at the National Gallery we seem to lack any standard by which to judge of his manner. After the placid pictures of his contemporaries we are not prepared for what we find here. The effect is that of a magical apotheosis concluding some harmless and by no means imaginative story. The others show us a gentle twilight of grays and browns ; Turner blazes forth in fiery enchantment. On the one hand, cheerful amenity or meditative dignity, and even when the drama is in a grave key a consolatory indication of a happy ending ; on the other, feverish excitement, violent haste even in the idyl, breaking all bounds in drama, not English, not French, but exotic, although it is impossible to say to what strange zone such colour and such images belong. There are, indeed, allusions to ancient things. Fragments of mythology are revealed through clouds illumined by lightning flashes. But these sign-posts serve but to increase our bewilderment, for we see them in conjunction with things which destroy their accustomed meaning and give them the aspects of ghosts running about in broad daylight. When we seem to be examining a scene from the " Odyssey " we hear cannon-shots. The fireworks of a modern city are let off against the sky of Arcady under the title of J Night in Venice. We know not whether in the turmoil of

winds raised by a snowstorm or a simoom, Hannibal, the wreck of a steamer, or the threatening fist of Polyphemus will appear. The atmosphere of modern London shrouds the gesture of the Hesperides, and near a valley where nymphs are dancing races an express train, a new dragon Ladon with the eyes of a real locomotive. Here indeed was material enough for excitement. Turner's age has no other example of such eccentricities, still less the ages before him, even if we search through the whole span to the first dawn of art. The most striking phenomena of the late Renaissance shrink to the semblance of harmless jests. The whole of Japanese art is not so strange as the fantasy of this one man, and all the Greeks and Romans had not so many ideas as had Turner in a single day. It was reserved

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for our age, which achieves everything, to produce artists just as remarkable. Next year may provide us with a spirit whose versatility shall throw Turner into the shade. For who will venture to determine the boundaries of this development? We can more surely surmise how many chemical elements will draw man's spirit to the light as how many worlds of thought we have still to expect from painters and sculptors.

i Turner's beginnings were modest and akin to those of Gainsborough. Like the latter, he began with Wilson. His diploma picture, *Dolbadde Tn*<sup>4</sup> was an obvious reminiscence, and all the youthful works painted at the end of the century approximate very closely to his exemplar. They give the same site, the lake, the ruins, the little figures with the classic gestures. Yet it is easy to distinguish between the two artists. The Turner of this period is, if we set aside some rare exceptions, an insipid reflection of his predecessor. We are amazed to see how much life Wilson possessed, and inclined to find new charms in his rococo. Turner, it seems, had not taken over this rococo, or had laid it aside in the course of his activity, and in this his greater independence became apparent. A rococo master in the nineteenth century would have been antiquated, and not remarkable in any other way, and Turner, a sorcerer even among the most dexterous of the Englishmen, is not in the least old-fashioned. But in Wilson's rococo there is not only the distinctive mark of the eighteenth century, but a wise gradation of colour, a stimulating play of planes, a rhythm directed to pictorial ends. Gainsborough attempted to replace this rococo by the richer methods of another world, which were more agreeable to his desire for liberty. Turner took the matter more easily. If the reduction of the picture to the scenario implies the greater freedom of the artist. Turner is incomparably freer than his predecessor; and, indeed, no small portion of his fame is based upon this. But the recognition of this, even if we admit the doubtful premise, yields no positive value. The freedom of an artist, as of an individual, remains an empty conception, until we know the opposition it resisted and the results of the emancipation. The entire Turner problem, one of the most typical problems in modern art-

history, is contained within the meshes of this simple consideration.

Turner was not content with the Wilson of the small landscapes ; he also drew the large canvases into his domain. And while he was far from achieving the peculiar excellence of the former, he came very near to the latter. His large compositions of the first years of the nineteenth century, *The Tenth Plague of Egypt* *The Destruction of Sodom* &c., belong to the same category as the *Niobe* picture and similar work of Wilson's, in which the charm of the rococo master is reduced to a minimum. A feature common to the two is that the details fill the frame without any convincing relation one to another. The difference lies in such a thing, for instance, as that in the pictures of the one persons, in those of the other whole cities, are destroyed. Turner's sphere of interest was larger. When he painted these pictures he was also painting more realistic works, such as the agitated sea-piece with the shipwreck and the fishing-boats, or the famous coast-scene. The *Sunrise* historical pictures like the *Death of Nelson* English river-scenes and harmless genre, to say nothing of other essays. This extraordinary versatility was not developed gradually in the space of some ten years, but forthwith. Before Turner was thirty he had produced several works in each of the domains of painting. But this rapid extension of the creative sphere was merely peripheral, and responded to no

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spiritual necessity. It did not raise him a hair's breadth above Wilson's modest level, and merely complicated an eclecticism which seems to us natural and pardonable in Wilson and in Turner crassly disproportionate. It was the same poor, thin technique, whether it was applied to a stormy sea with drowning men or to smoking ruins, whether it made use of contemporary or antique gesture ; and it is the more disappointing in Turner because it presents itself with inordinate pretension, and is in no sense due to the enthusiasm of a fervid epigone. Wilson could only work in the one way. Within his modest sphere, he went through all the phases of his beloved exemplars, and in his merits as in his weaknesses appears as the reflection of his greater relatives. The kinship ennobles his dependence. Turner's motives were more egotistical. Wilkie had had a great success at the Royal Academy in 1806 with his *Village Politicians*. The following year Turner exhibited his *Blacksmiths Shop*, a picture very unlike anything he had previously shown. It was quite in Wilkie's vein — argumentative persons in a workaday setting — but the actors and the scenery were somewhat altered ; the schema without the subtleties of Wilkie, who concealed the charm of piquant colour under a simple design. A superficial observer might conclude from this that Turner had this string too upon his lyre, and was therefore greater than his exemplar. To keener eyes, which delight in probing the system of an artist, Turner's stuff was clumsy imitation. He did not betray himself so obviously again. As a boy he had studied in Reynolds' school in the Academy, the high school of plagiarism.



Sir Joshua never found an apter pupil.

His proceedings were identical in a different form. His piracy, masked by the qualities of an apparently comprehensive personality, which exaggerated the sentimental effect of the original it assimilated, and became equally injurious by its distortion of the model, was more harmful than Sir Joshua's, because enriched with a greater confusion of qualities. Claude became to Turner what Rembrandt was to Reynolds. The experiment was a more favourable one, inasmuch as it dealt with an artist whose system was less complicated, and who was therefore more easily magnified. Claude's quiet shadow, his wide perspectives, which seem bald to all garrulous spirits, invited decoration. The discreet colours could be replaced by more resplendent tints, the whole style of composition seemed to allow of all sorts of combinations. In the ten years between his *Garden of the Hesperides* and his *Dido* Turner finally exchanged the lesser exemplar for the greater. It was a question of scene-shifting.

Turner used Claude solely to improve his theatre. He discovered in Claude what Gainsborough thought he had discovered in Rembrandt — the effective central motive.\* Two or three pictures, like the *Bouillon Claude in the National Gallery with the embarkation of the Queen of Sheba*, had shown him the advantages of an illuminated central motive surrounded by shadows. The bright centre could be produced by a watery surface with ruins on either side

\* The schema was indicated by a contemporary writer. Rippington says : '\* In a great number of these productions there is no proof of the true motive ; such pictures appear to be made by a recipe and to order, they are tame and mannered to excess. Each contains a large splash of light in the centre, with certain masses of darks grouped round. Nor is there often any variety, novelty, or ingenuity comprised in these ; so that the treatment, in a few examples, becomes rapid and commonplace. This continued trick, often marred in the process by slovenly treatment, has the less to recommend it since it has no claim to originality in Art ; and as regards Nature, it is partial, insulting, and injurious to the boundless and eternal variety of effects in which she presents herself to our notice and admiration " (quoted by Thornbury in his life, new ed., London, 1897, p. 408).

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— ^the favourite form — ^by a battle-field, or a man-of-war, or a herd of cattle, &c.

A certain effect was always assured, an effect which could be prolonged. It was only necessary to gradate the colour on every side, and to employ the greatest possible number of objects for this gradation — dragons, nymphs, temples, gondolas, &c. — preferably things with which romantic mortals rightly or wrongly have fantastic associations. By this means an effect at once pictorial and agreeably exciting was achieved. The obscurity of its genesis enhanced the charm. This last circumstance was the decisive factor. Turner's emulation of Claude was an unerring speculation on the hastiness of the general inspection of works of art. He painted his pictures as the ordinary visitor to galleries is wont to see them. Claude's Etnabarkatian is not, literally speaking, any nearer to Nature than the Turner which hangs beside it. Claude had no more seen his picture in Nature than the creator of the Pantheon had seen the forms of his cupola. He had built it himself. The whole scene, with the palace on the right, the Corinthian pillars on the left, and the carriers in the boat in the foreground, was freely invented. Freely, but not capriciously. There is nothing arbitrary in the arrangement of the distance, where every line, every dot contributes to the effect of space demanded by the law of perspective. Every child knows that this Italian Renaissance building never contained the apartments of the Queen of Sheba. If the ships and the people obviously did not belong to her legendary age, but to some later period — nay, if they belonged to no age, and were creatures of the painter's brain — they yet played the part of realities in the work, and played it faithfully, as if the scene were no imaginary perspective, but actuality. For the proportion which prescribed the relation of all the great parts, as of all the smallest details, to their neighbours belongs to reality. It is the same with the colour. It is true that Nature may not always show all the tints which enliven the raiment of this festive multitude, though, indeed, there is nothing abnormal about them ; reality, we might rather say, would clothe such incidents with more striking and dazzling splendour, so that the eye of the spectator would be fatigued too quickly to enjoy. Claude avoids this disturbing accident of magnificence. He gives a harmony, which assigns to the colours solely the part played by the single tones in a musical chord, or it would be more exact to say a sequence of chords, the variations of a theme which gives perpetual new aspects in different chord sequences. This is the case here, in this marvellous harmony of blue water with gray architecture, with the tone of the sky, and the gold of the sun breaking through the atmosphere. These three chromatic powers are the natural vehicles of the harmony. The architecture and the sky have the repose necessary to ensure the equilibrium of the gleaming expanse of water. Together they give the theme in the sustained three-four time of a simple fugue. There is already an extraordinary richness in the play of the rippling waters, to which the sunshine lends a metallic lustre. The waves seem to give just as many tones, tones of one and the same colour, moving in equal rhythm, differing by shades, a bluish lustre changing to a greenish one, veiled with silver, flowing continuously, only recognisable in the mass as a uniform surface. The runs in which the motive is repeated, are represented by the boats with their contents, the persons, both those in gala dress in attendance on the queen, and more especially those on the shore in

the foreground, the spectators and slaves who are stowing away the baggage. Here the eye again discovers the pure basis of the water in small quantities. Claude's beloved deep blue appears in the dress of the man who is pulling the rope.

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Close beside it blue and white meet for a differentiation of the silvery shade of the water, and in the box which a tawny slave is lifting into the boat the blue is grouped with black and an indescribable brick red, forming one of the rarest of the many combinations. These chords, with the water playing about them, concentrate all the colours that lurk in the picture, even the yellow of the sunlight. They show, in addition to the linear perspective, the genesis of another, which, in the group of the queen, with the so<sup>^</sup> red and blue garments, and further back<sup>^</sup> in the more distant details, undergoes the same diminution noticeable in the other perspective. And beside it a third scale, which makes everything that tells through colour and arabesque appear in relative subordination, and without which the charm of the details might be an exercise of taste. It is the soul of the picture, the fundamental scale of all the other scales, the highest affirmation of the law : light. In this we recognise the hero of the work. It enhances the effect, but at the same time makes us acquainted with the whole complexity of pictorial manifestation; acts as intermediary between artist and spectator, just as the actual sunshine does between us and the cosmos. We " see " what the artist built, and organic nature emerges from the manifold ideas of his imagination. The variations of the theme, which manifest themselves emphatically, are therefore by no means arbitrary, not only because each of them has a legitimate motive, but because their multiple effects are indispensable to the impression to be produced. We can imagine a different architecture and other figures, a herd of cattle or the side of a ship in the place of the water. But it is impossible to modify the law which determines the illumination, the degradation of the colours and the perspective. This guarantees the objectivity of the art for us, raises the work above the limitations of the single work, and unites it with ourselves and with all normally reacting beings of the future. And though we may not find in every Claude the richness of the Embarkation<sup>^</sup> or the charm of its famous pendant, the waterfall with the marriage of Isaac and Rebecca, where the red, blue, and yellow of the exquisite central group have the crystalline resonance of a trio by Mozart, yet he always affords us glimpses into Nature — i.<sup>^</sup>, into well-constructed harmonies. And when an occasional picture is less generous to us we are affected as by a cloudy day, which prevents all the charm of Nature from showing itself. Turner does not lack this or that quality to achieve a like degree of impressiveness in his pictures, but the chief thing, the basis, not only of an effect after the manner of Claude, but of any deep artistic impression. He exaggerates the splendor:. At a first glance his pictures may seem richer. They are fuller. We get the impression, always avoided by Claude, of that proclamatory magnificence which stimulates curiosity. This curiosity is of necessity as ill satisfied here

as in reality, when, attracted by some striking scene in the street, we rush up breathless to discover that the phenomenon is merely some trivial accident, some fantastically dressed simpleton, or the king driving by in his carriage. Excitement ceases at the moment when we have realised the occurrence. Claude avoids this moment. He too can arrest us at first by curiosity, by a striking gesture or something of the kind. But when we come nearer, the net of his variations, invisible from afar, begins to entangle us. That particular gesture is related to a hundred others, which continue to fascinate us, and to set degrees of interest of increasing depth in motion. Unobserved by ourselves, our passive curiosity becomes the active co-operation of our subtlest organs, spiritual enrichment. Turner is a genre painter in comparison, though not, of course, one of the usual kind. He too knew the danger

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of the momentary intoxication of curiosity. He does not avoid the moment, nor does he transpose it into a system of organic effects, but prolongs it by all kinds of devices, above all by the indistinctness of his action. He is a builder of facades who seeks to mask the lack of definite structure by all sorts of decorations on doors and windows, and to hide the bad materials under gay paint. But his pictures are like such houses, uninhabitable. None of the decorative details in Turner's *Dido* can compensate for the faulty construction. In spite of, or rather because of, the rich architecture of the foreground the eye finds no true point of support. The picture is slipping down, so to speak. The perspective does not serve as a sounding-board for the motive introduced in the foreground, to throw back the tones, enhanced by echo, but plants the effect in space. We look past glistening things into nothingness. Here again the cunning craftsman foresaw disaster. It was for this reason only that he put the bridge in the background, which is meant to terminate the picture. An emergency bridge ! The compactness of Claude's structure was not to be achieved by such petty means as tins.

Art is mathematics, though not of the calculable kind that can be demonstrated with a footrule. It leaves the personality full liberty to work with the most primitive means imaginable. The old masters, who knew nothing of the devices which are now familiar to the humblest draughtsman, managed to paint divine pictures with the means at their disposal. This because they proceeded logically within their sphere of effect, because they had the principle, though not all modern applications of it, because they achieved harmony by unities peculiar to themselves. Turner contradicts, not an abstract standpoint in optics or in any other science, but himself, his own mathematics. When in the *Dido* he suggests an atmospheric effect of perspective apparently far in advance of Claude, he binds himself to a definite degree of knowledge, and if he does not carry out this degree logically he is either insincere, because such thoroughness would make other, and to him more important, effects difficult, or he is a bungler

who cannot think out what he has begun. It is not the beginning which is decisive. The initial effort in many of Turner's pictures implies a power of conception unique in his age. But this is as non-essential as the amazing displays of skill of some infant prodigy. It is the execution that really matters. Hundreds before and after Beethoven have had perhaps the same motives in their heads. His glorious invention lay not in the idea of making a melody out of six tones, but in creating a symbol of infinity out of these finite elements.

Thus in the *Dido* the more convincingly Turner essays an effect of perspective that should be an advance upon Claude, the more crudely do the lacunas in his scale reveal themselves. It would be impossible for the figures on the left to look as they do if the pillar beside them looked as it does. It is impossible that we should be able to recognise the details of the bridge in the extreme background, and even the structure of the masonry, if the atmosphere were not a mere arbitrary presentment, but the basis of the whole composition, and it is impossible that the central portions of the right side should bear the relation to their ends and the whole of the banks should bear the relation to each other which Turner asserts. The colour is treated after the same fashion as the perspective. Just as Claude's whole arrangement is copied, so is the water imitated. But Turner modifies the blue with his favourite golden yellow, and so introduces a foreign body into the harmony, and one which demands a perfectly different harmony absolutely opposed

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to Claude. The golden yellow remains an assertion which is by no means borne out by the implication that it is in itself nearer to Nature. For the proof is not to be found in the agreement of this part with a part in Nature, but only within the frame of the picture, in the homogeneity of all parts. The lack of all deeper logic in the relations of this colour to the others makes the picture gaudy rather than rich in colour, and that part of the effect which seems to transcend Claude really only exaggerates the same difference, very much to the disadvantage of the imitator. The use of light emphasises this still further. Light is not for Turner the sense that holds the picture together as the rhythm holds a poem, but two things : firstly, one of the many factors with which he provides for the plausibility of his naturalism (nota bene, very often, as in the *Dido* with glaring ill-success). A sun in the position indicated in this picture could not so illumine the water and the banks. This would be unimportant if the aesthetic purpose of the illumination were fulfilled — a purpose which is not, of course, concerned with the demonstration of the concrete natural phenomenon, but only with the further consequences of the relation of the light to the landscape, namely, with the stylistic characteristics of the system of illumination. Claude's *Embarkation* which Ruskin compared to a child's primer, not only shows the naturalistic phenomenon in incomparably closer agreement with our modern experience, a far greater diversity of radial effects — especially apparent if we compare the reflec-

tions on the water with Turner's treatment of a similar surface — but above all it shows light as the stylistic element of the picture, bringing all the illuminated portions together in a perfectly definite relation. It is just this second weighty significance of the light which Turner overlooks altogether, replacing it by a centre, in order to give prominence to certain portions of the picture, the objective importance of which seem to him to warrant it. It is only this entirely extra-pictorial consideration which can explain the ghostly moonlight illumination of the Dido group on the left side of the work. It is the Bengal fire, which should fitly celebrate the queen's foundation of the city. If we call this flame the sun, we are driven to the conclusion that there are several suns in Turner's picture. And this we should be willing to concede if these lords of light really ruled, if from their multiplicity we got the warm harmony which Claude achieves in many a night scene with the faint light of the crescent moon.

We must not make it a reproach to Turner, as certain English critics have done, that he attempted anything so fantastic as the representation of a city's foundation. The naive mind has occasionally lighted upon things more remote, and yet has produced credible beauty. But fantasy without system is an evil; it is invention which does not aim at making plain what it has seen, either in dreams or in reality, but confines itself to the curious idea of placing a non-historic event upon the canvas.

The fantastic scene is here, as in the works of so many moderns, solely a means of avoiding the artistic solution of a worthy task, and characterises the difference between Claude's poetry and Turner's romanticism. We find the same disproportions in pictures of all kinds and of all periods by him. In the Bay of Saut (National Gallery, No. 505) the delicate background, the blue mountain-fringed water, has nothing in common with the crude foreground disfigured by the two impossible trees, akin to the tree in the Carthage (N. G., No. 506). The same may be said of the Fieta of Venice (N. G., No. 370). To what giddy heights do the Canaletti scorned by Ruskin soar when compared with these amateurish scenes! The

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Ulysses deriding Polyphemus is quite formless. There is no reason why this structure of rocks and ships should not be continued for a few metres to the right with other masses of cloud and other suns. Many of Turner's pictures contain, like this one, several pictures in one frame. If in the Carthage and similar works we imagine one side away, we get a passable picture. In the Fighting Temeraire this proceeding would leave a very fine sunset, and would produce perhaps the best of Turners, whereas now the ostensibly more important left portion, with the ships, in which a perfectly arbitrary attempt is made to repeat the harmony of the sky, destroys the balance of the canvas. In one of his latest fantasies, the famous Queen Mab's Grotto, Turner goes so far as to include three or four pictures

in the same frame. The division between the passage with the shooting Cupid and the rest is distinctly perceptible in the drawing, as in the tone and colour—the fiery red and yellow ; even the bluish white sl<sup>^</sup> above is disturbing. The grotto is the second part, the least interesting, in the vicious manner which even the official catalogue of the gallery admits to be " almost formless." \* The third would be the right side, with the remarkable person who is being drawn in the air by the swan, and the crowd of other figures. Even after this division by three there would still remain the lofty ruin in the background, which bears no relation to any of the other parts.

To pile things up ! This became Turner's principle more and more as the years passed by. To bring together as many things as a frame would hold, then to shake them up vigorously, and leave the rest to Ruskin ! And especially heterogeneous things. The soap bubbles in the Visi(m of Medea of 1831, or, in the Landing of the Prince of Orange<sup>^</sup> the white shield with the definite blue coat of arms on a ship in the mists of the background, the outline of whose masts and sails is barely distinguishable, and other such variety effects, are comparatively harmless when compared with the Fire at Sea<sup>^</sup> with its Rubensesque infernal cascade illuminated in the modern manner, or the Great Western Railway y where the dance of nixies obligingly diverts attention from the paltry rendering of the chief-motive, or the fireworks of the painter's last years. It was but seldom that Turner resisted this theatrical devil. The Burial of Wilkiej where the atmosphere, compounded of blue, black, and white, blends all the portions of the composition harmoniously, only succeeded because Turner was content with a simple scale of colour and moderate dimensions, and had Dutch models not beyond his powers before his eyes. The other exceptions also owe their relative artistic completeness to the artist's limitations. The not very vigorous, yet nervous organism of the waves in the little sea-piece Port Ruysdael (N. G., No. 536) is a refreshing oasis in the desert of his last period. Comparison of this picture with the earlier sea-pieces shows a distinct advance. The Port Ruysdael is infinitely superior to wretched genre scenes like the Calais Pier of 1803 (N. G., No. 472), in which Turner forestalls Achenbach's maritime tragedies, or the simpler but no less helpless marines such as the Bligh Sands of 1809 (N. G., No. A96). In this picture Turner seems really to have caught something of the spirit of the distinguished master of Dutch marine painting. The advance could be further demonstrated by various other works, if we could examine Turner's production without reference to the bewildering complexity of opposing tendencies. But how little the character evolved from such a lifting would typify the actual tendency of the artist !

\* See the large iUnstiated catalogae (Cassell & Co., 1900, iiu 332) in reference to the Undine picture (No. 549) of the same year.

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I fail to follow the critics who have the perspicacity to distinguish different styles or periods in Turner's development. Robert de la Sizeranne has finally put forward this suggestive classification : the classic, the Wilsonian style of the first

period, the realistic style of the middle period, and the evocational " or purely Tumerian style of the last period.\* Among these the last category bears the most characteristic name. When a phenomenon loses all relation to concrete representation, it is itself taken as a pattern, and a new rule is built up from a purely arbitrary incident. To my mind, Turner never had what may legitimately be called style. If Turner's fantastic imprimatur can be called style, and his painting art in the higher sense, then all the masters to whom we owe our artistic culture have lived in vain, and art is not to be looked upon as the loftiest affirmation of law, but as an intoxicating phenomenon of an ephemeral kind. On the other hand, he shows fragments of style-culture. First, fragments of bygone epochs, which accompany his whole activity to the end ; and, secondly, fragments of a synthesis, which are also apparent in all his periods, but more especially in the last. To the first he undoubtedly owed his best pictures. They are not his most original work ; indeed, they are, as a whole, far removed from the general conception of the purely Tumerian style, and will seem unimportant to those who place originality above the recognition of law. Most of them belong to his earlier years and are of small dimensions. There are about half a dozen in the National Gallery. The best of them are hung together, enframing the Burial of Wilkie and are simple landscapes, devoid of all fantastic elements, obviously inspired by Wilson's tradition, but portraying a Nature truly felt by the artist, and seen with a painter's eye. Later on Turner never showed such sincere surrender to the object as in the Clapham Common the charming group of anglers, and the famous trees which seem to greet us in every corner like old friends, or in the Clivedon on Thames, with the cows in the water. There are in various private collections in England a number of similar pictures of the same period, showing the same promising beginnings of a landscape painter with freer vision than Wilson and an airier flight than Gainsborough, who might have continued these two predecessors. - The fragments of a new synthesis arise from Turner's susceptibility to the imponderable charm of atmosphere. This tendency is characteristically modern. Turner had a prescience of the path modern landscape would take. His personal utterances, recorded by Ruskin, reveal a more or less sure consciousness of the importance of the physical phenomena of air and light for the future. This perception is manifested in many pictures of all periods. If in the Snotastarm of 1812 (N. G. J. No. 490) we suppress the whole of the lower part, with the impossible Hannibal episode, there remains a very remarkable representation of an atmospheric phenomenon, which achieves an impression of reality. He himself carried out the suggested suppression in later pictures. The Snowstorm of 1842 (N. G., No. 530) shows the play of the agitated atmosphere without the distressing heterogeneous genre scene. Even if we did not know that Turner



had experienced this storm himself upon the water, we should suppose it. One of the sea-pieces in the James Orrock collection of the same year gives the decomposition of the moist element by movement and light, and convinces in spite of the garish colour.

Turner's strongest power of suggestion rests on this capacity. It was combined with an opposite and much less prominent tendency. Turner recorded

\* Studio<sup>^</sup> special number, 1903, p. 3.

TURNER: "THE FIGHTING TEMERAIRE"

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

TURNER: THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY

NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

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certain detail<sup>^</sup> of Nature conscientiously, drawing a tree or a leaf with great fidelity, or reproducing mountain formations convincingly. The bewildering impression produced by his pictures was aggravated when the spectator discovered suggestions of the old masters in this conglomerate of unwonted actualities, affinities to Cuyp in the silky atmosphere of his landscape, reminiscences of van de Velde in a river scene, or one of the venerable classic forms in this new light. But even those who, preserving their reverence for the old masters under the magic of the innovator, were recalcitrant to the suggestion of the naturalistic detail, and saw the comic aspect of Ruskin's mineralogical and botanical expositions, succumbed to the charm of the magician's atmosphere. The most cultivated French connoisseur of the time, carried away by Turner's effects of light, declared :

<sup>^</sup> Claude, le supreme illuminateur, n'a jamais rien fait d'aussi prodigieux." \*

Leslie, one of the best of the English critics, was not blind to his compatriot's limitations. He perceived the theatricality of his art. " For my own part, when I look at the Building of Carthage I feel as if I were in a theatre decorated with the most splendid of drop-scenes ; but when I stand before Claude's Embarkation I am in the open air enjoying the sea-breeze and listening to the plash of waves on the beach." More prudent than Burger, he guards against deprecia-

tion of Claude, and puts Ruskin aside with touching patience. But he does not persevere in his perfectly right course, and instead of concluding logically he avails himself of the outlet which has served so many hundreds since his time, declaring that the aims of the two artists were not the same. Finally, when Turner comes into direct rivalry with Claude he is subdued : " Claude could not paint a storm."

This suggestion was, in fact, but one of the stages of Ruskin's naturalism, based upon the degradation of art to a purely reproductive manifestation. The rarity of the Nature reproduced does not make the reproduction a work of art. Before those Turners which are restricted to the representation of atmosphere or of certain effects of light, and are not disfigured at the outset by heterogeneous things, do we not seem to be observing Nature demonstrations of a special kind ? Their sphere of interest lies outside aesthetics, and so is very speedily exhausted. For how should a bit of canvas overlaid with colour give us objective information concerning the movement of air or the optics of light ? Photography and the spectroscope are better aids than the unscientific methods of a painter, and the idea that a picture by Turner adds materially to our knowledge of Nature could only occur to those dilettante minds which might be termed the amphibia of opinion, because they live partly in art, partly in science, and are at home in neither. Beings like Ruskin are the deposits of an age which set about giving natural science its own field of labour. We do not look for, nor can we find, the physical qualities of the storm, nor the optics of rays of light, in art ; what it should give us is a symbol of their might. Even the vigour of a Rubens cannot turn a windmill or warm our skins. But Rubens gave an unerring image of storm by showing the effect of the elements upon his creatures, the manner in which trees, men, and clouds were bait by the same force, and his whole cosmos was stirred by the same agitation. In his *Meuager and Jtalanta at Brussels* we do not see the storm which blows away our hats and buffets our limbs. We are quiet enough before the picture, and yet we rightly feel ourselves carried away. The motive power is not the threatening extrinsic element, but Rubens the god, who sits enthroned

\* BQrger, in \*\* *Lea Trten d'Art ea Angleterre*."

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above his world, and whose " quos ego " sets the winds in motion. If at a first glance the audacity of some of his human structures fills us with alarm, it seems to have been evoked merely to enhance our subsequent sense of security in this play of the elements. For however vigorous the gesture may be, there is always something more vigorous which enforces repose. We find nothing of this in Turner. We see conditions. Nature was perhaps like this when he beheld it at a given moment. But whereas here nothing remains after this supposition, we do not even consider the point in the case of Rubens. The security he inspires is not based on an extra-pictorial examination of facts, but on

the picture itself. What he asserts is proved, not by Nature, but by himself ; and herein lies our prescriptive right to call Rubens Nature. Turner lacks what Aristotle calls (in tragedy) the philosophic principle, and what Lessing formulated<sup>^</sup> when he desired the diminution of surprising phenomena in drama, and demanded the genesis of characters and passions. He was curious, and he satisfied curiosity<sup>^</sup> He was no constructive spirit, who opposed the depth of his organism to the cosmos, and evoked a new Nature out of Nature, but a purely receptive organ, assimilating all he encountered, governed only by physiological limits. Turner reproduced Nature or his own fantastic ideas just as he had at first reproduced art. Nevertheless we may discern fragments of a new synthesis in Turner<sup>^</sup>s works, though in no sense do they support the monstrous assertion that Turner had a decisive influence on the nineteenth century, and was even the pioneer of modern painting. It would be disastrous indeed for our art if it were based even in the smallest degree on the weakness of such ancestors. The qualities most opposite to Turner's idiosyncrasies are those which have loosed the pinions of nineteenth<sup>\*</sup> century painting for its loftiest flights — a thorough comprehension of its artistic inheritance, a deepening of independence, and above all, stem self-discipline and purity of sentiment. Even the personal relation of one or the other great master to Turner cannot be demonstrated. The assertion of various art historians that the Impressionists are the descendants of Turner is an outcome of that concep-<sup>^</sup>tion which sees form in Turner, does not remark his formlessness, and takes Impressionism for a colour-category, instead of recognising its colours as variable constituents in a new system of beauty.

The newly arranged Turner Room in the Tate Gallery is well calculated to confirm the error. The effect is more harmonious than that of the large room in the National Gallery, because the pictures are for the most part of Turner's last period. At a first glance they might be taken for misty Monets of a late date<sup>^</sup> "full of light colours and tender tones, <sup>^</sup>he Thames from above Waterloo Bridge (No. 1992) seems to presage the London impressions of the French painter. But that which the aged Monet really has in common with Turner here, his contentment with " tours de force " of the palette, is not a quality that will add to his fame. Still we should be amazed at the richness of Monet, even in these works of his old age, if we could see them side by side with Turner's Thames pictures. Even here, where the minimum was demanded of the painter, a closer examination reveals Turner's lack of order. The colours are harmoniously juxtaposed, but they do not cover the drawing. The details are falling to pieces. The vague outlines of the steamer, the bridge, etc, seem to have nothing to do with the structure of the picture. Such a charge could never be brought against the weakest Monet. In some of the renderings of atmosphere, on the other hand, {e.g.<sup>^</sup> Nos. 1980, 1984, 1987), all Turner's usual defects are absent. Our eyes

seem to be veiled by a vapourous haze. But this purely sensuous phenomenon exhausts the charm. The eye wanders helplessly from one picture to another, and finds nothing to arrest it, nothing to call forth a vibration in the soul of the spectator. The manner suggests Whistler. He too turned such accidental aspects of atmosphere as those of Nos. 531 and 1990, for instance, to a like insignificant account, and I shall show later on how this pseudo-modern approached Turner in other ways. In the Evening Star (No. 1991) even his Japanese aspect is foreshadowed. Other fantastic examples (Nos. 552, 553, 554, 2066) recall Monticelli, but if we examine them more closely, the point of contact is a ghostly variety of colour, which in itself would never have made Monticelli the great artist he was.

Turner's influence is confined to superficialities, to the production, so to speak, of a veneer of valuable tendencies. In the creative process every artist goes through an initial phase, in which he confines himself more or less to a passive attitude. It is the first moment of suggestion, the allurements of Nature. The motive is perceived, yet the artist has not exerted all that individual force of perceptive activity which leads to creative conception. Every person who keeps his eyes open will discover a thousand beauties every day. This depends on his receptive faculty, not on a special gift, but on a possibility of abandoning himself to agreeable impressions which depends on circumstances. He lingers where another would pass by under the stress of business. This receptiveness may become so strong as to induce expression. One ponders his impression, another speaks of it ; this one describes it, that one would fain paint it. Each of these essays in expression is an embryonic condition of artistic creation. The master fortifies this receptiveness by an active tendency opposed to its passive conditions. In reality he resists impressions more readily, chooses his moment of self-abandonment more cautiously, selecting those occasions which will make it most fruitful of results. He only loves where he feels safe in lavishing the whole treasure of his tenderness, and receives only when he can requite the gift an hundredfold. In his relation with Nature he is always the male. Artistic creation consists in the systematic transformation of the thing given in accordance with the mind of the creative personality. As God created the world after his own image, so does the artist create his work. He gains a new value out of infinity — i.e. he opposes himself to infinity, to what seems to him the unruly flood of phenomena, arranges what was disorderly, divides, achieves a new order. That which fascinates us in great works of art is the triumph of mind over material. Turner consumed Nature instead of experiencing it. He made use of his painting for those misty initial stages of thought which higher natures work out in their heads, and in the process he hit the superficial characteristics of the motive like a bad dramatist who has chanced on a good idea. He expressed himself prematurely, before he had condensed his material ; and as soon as he saw his hasty memoranda on canvas or paper they exercised a suggestive reflex influence upon him, enticing him to ephemeral completions of this ephemeral condition. He did not conquer his material ; he played with it. His connection with Nature was a flirtation in which Nature was never taken captive. He had not the strong

fervour of the man who consciously applies all his strength to a worthy task, but was an essentially feminine spirit, loquacious, coquettish, charming in trifles, intent on surface and not on depth. He saw in Nature what he shows us of himself, a beautiful, scintillating aspect, born of a fleeting impression, and reflect-

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ing the same. We are not moved by his works, especially if we let them pass us on the wing. We divine what he desired to give, what he might perhaps have been able to give, a world woven of vapour, adorned with beauties more fragile than the art of his time, and presaging things which have now taken solid form, since the victories of the painters of light. He has given us an embryonic condition of this art, the divination of a dilettante. If we must associate him with Impressionism, it must be as the passive constituent of this phenomenon. Of the essential qualities which led up to the summits of this art he had but one—^ receptiveness. "He had beauty's phases at his fingers' ends,"\* says the most clear-sighted of his critics, "but not its causes." \*

Turner's passive attitude to the exterior world, his conception of art as a channel for the flood of phenomena, and not as a regulating, transmuting organ,

\* This is Armstrong's brilliant conclusion :

\*\* In the case of Turner, we cannot satisfy our aesthetic appetites as we do before the Titian. The more intimately we look into the texture and constitution of his pictures the less significant, the less stimulating in themselves, do they grow, and the more imperative does the necessity become to look through them to something beyond and comparatively external. Turner, in short, does not create, he adumbrates ; he does not present original and concrete ideas of his own, he reproduces and illustrates existing things, playing with them, indeed, and enhancing them, so far as imitation can enhance the thing imitated, arranging them anew, for the most part with extraordinary sympathy and vigour, but seldom depending on the power innate in the language he is using to carry his own emotions into the souls of his fellow creatures. But this last sentence is ambiguous. As it stands it might be taken to suggest that he had the right emotion, but deliberately curbed its expression. That is not my meaning. What I mean is that he was weakly endowed with that emotum,

and that it was kept down and hidden away by the overpowering strength of the passion he shared with, his great exponent, a passion for the external beauty of inanimate things. He was content to perceive and be moved by that beauty. He felt no consuming demand to know its cause and use the knowledge for the delving of new and self-existing forms of beauty out of the microcosm within himself. He watched phenomena and learnt them ; classed them and recombined them, with all kinds of personal modifications, exaggerations, and enhancements ; but he was not inquisitive into the why they produced the effects of beauty, sublimity, repose, or horror which they did. He had beauty's phases at his fingers' ends, but not its causes. He could show you bow trees, mountains, rivers, mists, even dews and frosts, adorned the earth, but the instinctive grip of the unpromising artist on the why and the consequence of such a grip, the power to create beauty without the help of immediate imitation, he only possessed in a limited degree.

«< An this argument brings me round to what I said at starting, that Turner was a mediator rather than a maker, that his instinct was towards explanation, illustration, and insistence rather than towards creation, that his pictures exist for what they tell us rather than for what they are, and, consequently, that his achievement must be measured, more than that of any other famous painter, by collation with free and pre-existing beauty. He was no virtuoso. He never hung upon the charms of his instrument, coaxing it to make the most of its essential and distinctive gifts and persuade the stander-by that no rival medium could pour passion so richly from one human vessel to another. The sympathetic caress of a Giardini, the despotic lunge and finger-sweep, alive with nerve and will, of a Stevens or a Gilbert, the balanced drag of a Metsu or a Chardin, building up in ecstatic things which offered in their own substance the seeds of their own immortality, had no parallel in him. He kicked at the limitations of his medium, and employed a more willing ingenuity in pushing on beyond it than in showing its native felicity. And to this, it must finally be said, he owes the unprecedented worship he now enjoys. The multitude will never again understand the arts. The probability is that as the generations pass and man creeps farther and farther away from his primitive

condition his comprehension of Nature's language, of those multitudinous signals by which the good of things was made known to his young and eager sense, will slowly die away, until at the last a capricious criticism will be substituted for the old instincts, and a long succession of reactions for the logical development of the great and simple ages of the world. Meanwhile the contest goes on between those who see beauty but not its cause, and those who see both the one and the other. For the former art is imitation, reproduction, illustration, selection, everything which involves the supremacy of the object and the humble obedience — which is by no means the same thing as the deliberate self-suppression — of the artist ; for the latter it is the creation of beauty by welding its elements — line, colour, sound, whatever sense can grasp — into an organic whole, justifying its own existence by its share in the balanced order which controls all vitality. On the result of the struggle between these two conflicting ideas depends the final verdict on the achievement of Turner." (Turner, by Sir Walter Armstrong; Thos. Agnew & Sons, London, 1902.)

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explains his productiveness. The most prolific geniuses do not approach him in the extent of their output. Armstrong reckons some 21,000 pictures, drawings, and sketches, and among them 2000 more or less finished works of art." Compared with this mass of production, Reynolds' activity was a trifle. Turner might be called the landscape manufacturer, a pendant to the class stigmatised by Hogarth. Whether he made large profits, whether he was content with the prestige of an original and his assurance of posthumous fame, and coveted no public honours, whether his lasciviousness was more jealously concealed than Sir Joshua's dignified egotism, are all secondary questions. Technological considerations are also of little moment beside this significant conception of his calling. To seek an explanation in Turner's taste for water-colour would be to mistake effect for cause. Constable's definition of the oil pictures as " large water-colours " does not exhaust their defects. We could forgive Turner his sins upon canvas if he made amends for them on paper. But the least exacting critic cannot accept such atonement. The water-colours are more normal than the pictures. They conform more organically to the history of this favourite branch of English art, and the level of excellence in this subordinate art is so modest that Turner is more impressive in this domain. But if we compare him with the greatest of these " little masters," with John Cozens and Girtin, whose superiority he himself honestly acknowledged, we shall find the same relation we have already noted

between his pictures and those of Wilson and Gainsborough. Here again he replaces the essential elements in the tendencies of his predecessors by a hastiness of conception which suggests a freer and more modern attitude, but lacks all thoroughness. Thombury's superficial dictum that "Girtin was a great artist and Turner a great poet" sufficiently indicates the sphere of Turner's effects. I think, however, that Turner was certainly less inclined to encumber the delicate structure of his water-colours with his grotesque fancies. Their hastiness ensures their primitive harmony, and their unpretentiousness spares them that sharp antagonism which is evoked by the pictures. But how slight are the spoils of the patient souls who have waded through the sea of papers in the cellars of the National Gallery! The same schema on every wall; the same indications of promise in every sheet, and always the same disappointment. We imagine we are approaching the soul of the chameleon, and only find a new receipt. Turner's joke at a party, when the salad was handed, that a Turner could be made by admixture of the mustard sauce with the green of the leaves and the red of the beetroot, was cruel earnest. I prefer his "Liber Studiorum" to his coloured drawings. The tone of the aquatint has more vitality than the variegated tints of the water-colours, and the charm of Turner in his early period is more apparent here than anywhere else. We must pass over all the fantastic motives, and those that incline to classicism, for these show the artist's weaknesses even more glaringly than the pictures. But the purely landscape motives, such as Nos. 37 and 43, where his treatment of light is more convincing than in his most brilliant pictures, the View of Basle (No. 43), with the rich atmosphere, &c., contain enduring beauties, while in some very dry drawings a certain satisfaction is to be had in the truth which is so distressingly lacking elsewhere. Of course the object Turner had in view when he prepared the book<sup>^</sup> one which itself reveals volumes concerning the man, is no more accomplished here than in the pictures he had hung between the two

• "Life of J. M. W. Turner," London, 1899, p. 64.

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Claudes. Beside the "Liber Veritatis" the "Liber Studiorum" sinks to the level of cheap literature, and this in the face of what the English critic rightly calls an unfair rivalry, by which reproductions of Claude's works, collected together without his knowledge and without his supervision, indeed, several generations after his death, were brought into competition with a series prepared with the greatest care by Turner himself. The "Liber Veritatis" reads like a pastoral

goem. The tender love-story of Daphnis and Chloe sounds between the lines, other passages are like an epic of foreign lands and peoples and their strange fates. Ruskin was distressed to find no natural history in this book. He praises the poetry in Turner's descriptions of travel.



In the later drawings and sketches, again, the monochromes are superior to the polychromes. There are one or two fascinating things among the Wanderings by the Seine^ the originals of which are preserved in the National Gallery. The St. Denis of the second series, published in 1835 — ^the river with the silhouettes of the people in the foreground, the dark masses of houses on the bank and the cathedral in the distance — shows the magic of which Turner was capable when he was not a conscious magician and was not seduced by his palette. The famous sketch of his latest period, J Pilot Boat, in the National Gallery, needed only to have been carried a shade further to become a masterpiece, and it was not by chance that the painter executed it in plain sepia. His pleasure in the arabesque of his brush-stroke was as dangerous to him as the allurements of his facile colour. When he was stippling his minute perspectives he thought first of the stipple, then of the perspective. Hence many of his landscape drawings look like half-effaced topographical maps. The spectator is no longer able to keep the meaning of the signs together. In many of the panoramas we know that the subject is a landscape merely by some detail quite outside the technical structure. The technique is ornamental before it fulfils its natural purpose. It becomes that " infernale commodite de la brosse " which Delacroix dreaded, which never fails to expose every painter to mannerism who does not set the concentration of expression before him as his safest guide. The well-known story of the landscape that was hung upside down may or may not be true. It was certainly possible. There are plenty of late Turners which might be so hung without any material injury to the effect, while there are still in these days many amateurs whose insistence on the ornamental in painting leads them to accept this anecdote as a criterion of mastery.

Like the landscape painter Gainsborough, Turner left many fragments at his death. After Hogarth's universal form, compact as a cannon-ball, came Wilson, a weaker spirit, who had to content himself with a reflection of his age. He owes his harmony to his incapacity for resistance. The form of his time was solid enough to carry him. In Gainsborough the same age warred in vain against the perception of a modern mind. It succumbed. But its defeat did not give victory. The pliancy of the rococo master " malgré lui," who examines Nature and Art for favourite motives and gives himself up to selfless enthusiasm did not, and could not, evolve the new synthesis. The new man had to make tabula rasa of rococo, had to withdraw into himself once for all, to be alone with the fervour of his emotion, to accomplish the creative act of a new form for his age. Gainsborough longed to do so. He thirsted after consciousness ; he did not want to give forth the sounds evoked by the age from his susceptibility, but to evoke sounds himself. He sought after a new birth of the cosmos, and turned to the

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master who had made a like venture with success some hundred years before.

His work is a fragment to which the warm impulse of life clings, and it could be no more. Turner followed. The development was obscured. For a moment it seemed as if the age had made a prodigious leap forward. Turner began with Wilson, and, if we are to credit English enthusiasts, he ended at the zenith of that new art unborn at his birth. But he gives only a fantastic prophecy of what was coming, a presage which reddened the skies, but left it uncertain whether the red heralded morning or evening. He failed to announce the basis on which the new art was to rise, and contributed no serviceable building-stone himself. That which he announced was subject for grave forebodings, should the new structure really serve merely for the intoxication of inferior minds? Would the new masters show themselves as treacherous to the old as Turner to Claude? Would they interpret Nature just as coarsely, deal as hastily and as heartlessly with art? But eyes steeled by contemplation of Hogarth's lofty art can withstand the dazzling effect of Turner's aerial witchery. One needs but the standard given by development from its earliest beginnings to recognise that the novelty is merely apparent. If we break through the convenient mist which will only keep back the most uncritical we find the old follies, once more the rococo. Not, indeed, the friend or the foe of struggling predecessors, not the rococo of Wilson and Gainsborough; more modern, seeking to deal with God's sun as the peaceful architectural painters of the eighteenth century dealt with their broken columns. A false rococo; it forfeited the body, and lost both form and emotion; born, not of desire, but of necessity, the makeshift of painter-writers. The product was not even Turner's own. Other dexterous painters had been before him, who attempted to replace strong forms by feeble ideas, and gave a more facile interpretation of Hogarth's variety. It is the rococo of Fuseli and Stothard,\* which had matured another and no less suggestive variant in Blake; incapable of treating pure realities, it took refuge in mysticism. It was this development, not that comprised in Wilson, to which Turner belonged. He must, indeed, be reckoned among the men of the present. He inaugurated that series of problematic figures who did not open the way to modern art, but who threatened to close it. They seek to show their modernism by turning away from the law of their predecessors, and have deluded the present with the belief that their arbitrary notions are the fulfilment of the new law. Each of the countries which have contributed to modern development has produced several such personages. Each has its special type of degenerate. But the essential fallacy is always the same: the supposed extension of the domain of art by tendencies lying outside its boundaries. The danger lies in the popular prestige of these pseudo-moderns. Not only do they usurp the place of more useful beings, but they infect the whole region. Their errors are more prolific than the wisdom of the great masters. Among all the variants, the Turner problem is the most complicated, and therefore contains the greatest dangers. The worship of originality characteristic of our age, which delights in novelty, acclaims the most extravagant orgies here. The aureole gains in splendour from an extremely

\* In his best pictures, among which I do not include the famous Northamptonshire decoration,

Stothard is greatly superior to Turner, who made use of him just as he made use of Wilkie. Compare his *Sans Souci* in the National Gallery (No. 1829) with Turner's so-called *Bird-Cage* in the Tate Gallery (No. 507). In spite of its crudity how much more sincere is the '^ dix-huitieme siecle " effect in the Stothard, how much sounder the colour ! Turner's scene is like a caricature of Watteau.

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pliant schema, which does not operate like the Böcklin cliché (the German variant), with premises easily recognisable as false, but appeals to a stronger gymnastic of culture and more delicately attuned organs of sensation. The problem here lies, not in the manner, but in the degree of effect. Turner, in fact, expressed himself artistically. He made use of artistic means for non-artistic ends. He was really a *luministe*, familiar with the phenomena of the atmosphere, who knew how to turn them to account, and who had, as Dayes said, "a superficial notion of form," but nevertheless a notion of form on which he played spontaneously without any perceptible reserve of underlying emotion. The difference between the invention of a man who has sublime things to tell us, and uses a system of complicated effects for the purpose, and an eccentric who wishes to amaze us, and perhaps himself, and who builds up a no less complicated structure for the purpose, is not very clear from a distance. The less legible art becomes to the eye of the layman, the more easily does the burlesque succeed. There is no fantasy in which the fantastic cannot discover a meaning, and all the rest depends merely upon how much such fantastic persons will write and print in order to transform their personal idea into general suggestion. Turner's burlesque had this peculiarity, that the parody was written before the original.

TURNER. 80LWAY MOSS. (after the Etching.)

## CONSTABLE

Denique sit quid vis  
simplex duntaxat et unum,— Hoeaci.

England's successful leap in a direction which had escaped the versatile artist who seemed to have embraced every side of art was more or less contemporary with Turner. Nothing could be more remarkable than the fact that England had room for a Constable at the moment when she had produced Turner, the most bewildering result of her fundamentally erroneous conception of art, the richest type of literary poverty. It is impossible to imagine a stronger contrast. We cannot indicate more strikingly what is unconditionally allied to great art, what is unconditionally remote from it, than by the names of the two contemporaries. The exemplification is so striking because Turner draped the inartistic in the most enchanting robes, and Constable presented the artistic in the simplest guise.

Constable's few references to the colleague who was held up to him, not by Ruskin alone, as a being enthroned on imattainable heights, are full of respect, and show the same self-effacement as his reverence for Reynolds, his dependence upon Stothard, and his estimate of Fuseli. We find it difficult in these days to understand such mildness, especially in a man capable of such healthy and independent work. We are accustomed to less eclectic geniuses, whose fidelity to their chosen task justifies the bluntness of their judgments upon other aims and tendencies; we are distrustful of those who profess to understand everything, and doubt whether their indulgence to others is compatible with the necessary sternness to themselves. Nowhere is good-nature more akin to weakness than in art.

But Constable's judgments were not inspired merely by good-nature. He could be pungent enough about those whose work had no redeeming qualities. His attitude to art differed from that of his contemporaries, and the gentleness of his criticism is a symptom of this attitude. His relation was freer. He was less dependent on the productions of others than Turner, less so even than Gainsborough, and much less so than Wilson. He was the first artist since Hogarth who looked upon painting as a purely instinctive manifestation. He was more instinctive, more direct than Hogarth; indeed, it may be said of him that no one before him had dealt so naturally with art. For the majority of his compatriots painting was a charming and profitable business connected with a life of comfort, a holiday enjoyment for the poor, a luxury for the rich, a thing bearing no true relation to the realities of life, but giving man an illusion to support him in the seriousness of his existence. The illusion had a thousand degrees, embracing not merely the higher and richer fields of sentimentality, but playing upon all the registers of eclecticism. Art was to be beautiful above all things, and beauty was what was found agreeable in the art of the old masters. The period of the portraitists had striven to establish this in every shade. English art possessed a reflection of the Dutch-

men, a reflection of the Spaniards and of the Italians. To this store Turner had added a reflection of Nature — creating the instructive landscape. He

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had painted romantic scenery, adding appropriate figures calculated to anthropomorphise the character of the scenery. Constable took no part at all in any of this process. He never painted for the love of good painting or of beautiful Nature. His art is more elementary. ^^ When I sit down to make a sketch from Nature the first thing I try to do is to forget that I have ever seen a picture."\* No eclecticism, evidently! No breath of an alien art came between the individual and Nature. He carried this so far that many of his contemporaries questioned his title to be considered an artist, even when they praised his pictures. They thought there was something in Constable essentially different from all they had hitherto accounted art. He was to them a child of Nature of a peculiar disposition, who substituted truth for beauty, and made amends by his sincerity for his inability to respond to the traditional demands of art. Bazalgette, the French translator of Leslie's biography, has recently noted this attitude of the painter. In his charming preface he speaks of Constable's "souci minimum du style."^ He thinks that the Englishman looked upon Nature as mistress, on his art — "produit direct de la terre" \* — as servant, and that he laid hold of reality for its own sake, "non pour le parti qu'un peintre peut en tirer en le déformant." t Such a conception might easily have led to a naturalism '^ sans phrase," against which no one, indeed, protested more vigorously than Constable himself. The painter of the Hay-Wain gave us new forms, but not new aesthetics. His art was as remote as possible from Ruskin's natural history ideals, and was, in contrast to that of Turner, system in the best sense. It did not reveal certain hitherto unnoted aspects of a given object — what we suppose to be this is either illusive or unimportant — but simply variations of the beautiful, which is eternal, like Nature, to which Horace addressed his odes and Goethe owed his inspiration. In principle it did not differ from the art proclaimed by the official father of English painting. In the summer of 1813 the famous Reynolds Exhibition took place, inaugurated by an official banquet which the as yet unknown miller's son attended with some pride. Leslie gives a fragment of a letter in which Constable writes enthusiastically to his betrothed of the presidential speech. "Although the style of Sir Joshua Reynolds," he says, "might differ in appearance from the style of those specimens of art which are considered the nearest to perfection in the ancient Greek sculpture, and the productions of the great schools of Italy, yet his works were to be ranked with them, their aim being essentially the same — the attainment of Nature with simplicity and truth." \ The lofty words no longer seem very applicable to the subject of this convivial enthusiasm, but they might be used very aptly in praise of the man who accepted them so unquestioningly, recommending his betrothed to go to the exhibition very often, in order to get an idea of the true nature of painting from these magnifi-

cent works. For in them was to be found " the finest feeling of art that ever existed."

The illustrious President of the Academy would hardly have returned the compliment. He would have been no more disposed to recognise the simple landscape painter's relation to that high art of which he accounted himself a representative than he had been in the case of Hogarth. The relation was very similar. A

♦ "Life and Letters of John Constable," by C. R. Leslie (new ed.; London, Chapman & Hall, 1896).

† " John Constable d'apres les Souvenirs recueillis par C. R. Leslie." Paris, F. Bury, 1905, X Leslie, p. 49.

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kindred strength of personality, enabling them to preserve the originality of their outlook, to see with their own eyes and act upon this vision, brings Hogarth and Constable together, and places them outside the official school of their native land. In spite of this, or, indeed, because of this, they are the more vigorously English. They gave us something that could only have arisen in England, and the product, relatively independent of the Continental movement, forms an indispensable constituent of European art. Within this relationship Hogarth's aggressive character and Constable's so-called naturalism appear as secondary tendencies, governed both by contemporary influences and by the special temperaments of the two, and this difference is but a superficial veil over their common work at the same ideal. The objective of the one was the rococo, with which his contemporary compatriots had a more or less illegitimate connection ; the other accomplished the liberation that had been prepared, and steered the little craft of the new art from the sandbanks to the open sea, where only it could prove its stoutness.

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### CONSTABLE AND CLAUDE

Constable also followed a tradition. "A self-taught artist," he said, "is one taught by a very ignorant person" ; and the sentences with which he prefaced a series of four lectures in 1836 on the history of landscape painting are very

typical :

\*\* I am here on behalf of my own profession, and I trust it is with no intrusive spirit that I now stand before you ; out I am anxious that the world should be inclined to look to painters for information on painting. I hope to show that ours is a regularly taught profession ; that it is scientific as well as poetic, that imagination alone never did and never can produce work that are to stand by a comparison with realities ; and to show, by tracing the connecting links in the history of landscape painting, that no great painter was ever self-taught."

An old master might have said these words ; and were such truths manifest to the present generation, were all agreed with the preacher of these golden axioms as to the double function of art, scientific and poetic, could all see therein a regularly taught profession, which should purify imaginative power, our modern culture would have made a gigantic advance. That the speaker should have been Constable, that the word Nature is absent from these curt categorical sentences, not because he was not thinking of Nature, but because the thought seemed to him a matter of course, should give food for reflection to those who insist on Constable's naturalism.

Constable, then, relied upon predecessors just as Hogarth did, but not at all after the manner of the school of Reynolds. A circle of geniuses reveals itself in him, becoming greater and greater the further we penetrate into the nature of the artist. But whereas the spirits of those who were turned to account by the others rise with angry gestures against the productions of their epigoni, we seem to see Constable himself within the circle, and those who helped him glance kindly at him, almost as if thanking him for what he owes them.

No name was so often on his lip as that of Claude, the same Claude Turner aspired to rival. The occasions when in his youth he visited Sir George Beaumont's fine collection were red-letter days, and even in his latest period he always returned to the master with fresh enthusiasm. Yet there is no picture by him which bears any external resemblance to any of Claude's work. We never find the famous stately buildings in any of his landscapes. No nymph, no daintily aproned Italian rests in the shadow. She would seem as extraordinary here as if we were really to meet her during a country walk in England. No Biblical story is enacted by the figures, no scene from mythology. A cart with reapers still in the vapour of the field where they have toiled till they are weary, horses towing a barge along a canal, resting or working men and animals — ^these are the only episodes in his pictures, besides that which goes on in a landscape irrespective of man's collaboration. And this to him was the chief thing. Yet his likeness to Claude is appreciable. It reveals itself to him who does not look upon the nixies and ruins in the great Frenchman's pictures as the most important things, but can pierce beyond details to Claude's organism. To him the artist of the " Liber Veritatis " appears rejuvenated in many an early work of Constable's, making him say that if such a spirit had

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arisen in the time of Constable he would have painted in the manner of the English miller's son. The truth is the same in each; not, of course, the objective truth. This is impossible, not merely because Constable lived two centuries later than Claude, and had a correspondingly greater experience of humanity at his disposal. How insignificant is this progress which has brought Nature in general nearer to man, as compared with the knowledge which a great artist evolves from himself! Impossible, rather, because two such complete personalities, were they contemporaries, or divided by centuries, would never fix their eyes on the same things, even though they were both landscape painters — nay, even if they both painted the same landscape. It is not realism, but that Veritas so aptly linked with Claude's life\*work, which reappears in Constable. Nothing impresses us so strongly in the Frenchman's pictures as the harmony between the work and the soul of the artist. Claude is so clearly manifested in his pictures that our memory carries away no actual landscape, but something higher, the idea of a marvellously inspired humanity, which, inversely, we are no longer able to connect with the customary realities of a landscape. The form is above reality, as thought is above the body. The part played by Poussin and Claude in the history of landscape is of great importance, but this historical consideration is but a small matter in comparison with the importance of these spiritual heroes to the development of human idealism. The only possible continuation of Titian and Veronese was through victory over their glorious materialism. Their splendour could not be increased; but it could be spiritualised. Constable had this spiritual value in his mind when he called Poussin's little Boccaccio landscape, which had also stirred Gainsborough's enthusiasm, "^^ full of religion and moral feeling." \* The Englishman's realism was not disposed to travel further on this road. Claude's lofty spirituality is as impossible in our age as the simplicity of Mozart's exquisite poetry. We no longer possess the organs for such contemplativeness. The alertness necessary in our age makes us too vigilant, directs our minds too inexorably to concentrated thought, makes us too full of doubts and yearnings to keep our souls as unruffled as the pellucid surface in which Claude's humanity is mirrored; and when contemporaries seek to give us similar impressions we are not unjustly suspicious of their simplicity, which cannot or will not give us what it should, while their completeness lacks the unsophisticated Veritas. But Constable was able to steep his soul in his work after the manner of Claude, to become one with his painting, and to penetrate its forms so intimately that a spirit seems to emanate from his pictures too, which is no longer landscape, but aims at higher conceptions, its final result is also the idyl, differing, indeed, from Claude's magic world, and still more remote from the eighteenth century, which set the idyl above everything, and because it had no affinity for that of the old masters, created a new one, smaller than Claude's wide fields. It transformed the spacious Nature



\* Presented to the nation by Sir George Beaumont in 1826. It represents a wooded region near a cigr. In the foreground a man in a plain robe, supposed to be Phocion, is washing his feet at a public fountain, as if to indicate the purity and simplicity of his life. Bazalgette ^ls entirely to understand Constable's remark. \*\* Que peut bien ^tre un paysage moral ! " he asb in amazement. " On ne voit pas tiop comment le peintre r^rohibitionnaire et r^aliste uniquement soucienx de T6rit6 qu'6tait Constable, pent k ce point adnurer Tacadteioue et froid Nicolas Poussin. U 6tait yraisembkblement s^duit par rintense harmonie de conleurs et de composition qu'offre parfois le peintre des Arcadies." This is a typical confirmation of the naturalism I have just ascribed to many of Constable's worshippers, which leads inevitably to a denial of his art.

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of the classic landscape painters into a well-kept garden, and was compelled to represent the idyllic by tender groups of daintily dressed persons. Constable could not call back either the spirituality of the one or the tenderness of the other. It is because, more determmed than his compatriots, he gave up all idea of reaching Eldorado by the road of the old masters, because he did not attempt to make idyls, but bore within him what even in these times of ours we might call the emotions of an idyllist, that he succeeds in producing an impression akin to that produced by Claude upon our minds. His landscapes too have the inestimable gift of shedding peace, of breathing calm ; and they achieve this without raising a wall between us and our age, without deceiving our senses, but rather the reverse, since they enable us to recognise what is around us better than the cursory glance of the hasty observer can do. This power of perception was not derived from Qaude. Constable looked only with his own eyes, and took in other things than the classic painter. But that high example taught him to keep the same equilibrium in what he saw afresh. And it is, no doubt, chiefly this balance of parts that makes his idyls so precious. The life-history of the man corresponds wim his art. It glides along gently as a cloudless summer day. No shephera's biography could be simpler. A peaceful childhood in his father's mill, where the boy learned to watch the clouds, and outside in the woods, where he became familiar with the trees. A worthy father, with the usual distrust of the artist's calling ; a no less worthy and highly intelligent mother, more lenient to her son's secret yearnings. A long engagement — an inevitable complication ! — ^to a lovable girl. Maria Bicknell was the daughter of a dignified lawyer, who, like SasHa's guardian before him, did not take kindly to the idea of the miller's son as his son-in-law, and the granddaughter of a still

more inexorable clergyman of considerable means. The obdurate old man's money-bags threatened the happiness of the loving couple. Young Constable further embroiled himself with the purse-proud cleric by a malicious caricature, and Miss Bicknell was warned that she would be promptly disinherited if she married the good-for-nothing painter. She hesitated to incur the penalty, not for lack of sympathy with her John, but because it would have been rash, and contrary to all the family traditions. They must wait, and John resigned himself good-humouredly to the inevitable. The love-letters cover five years, till he was forty and she thirty. The poems and letters of Cowper, "the poet of religion and Nature," a favourite author of both, reflect the emotions of the lovers. "I believe," wrote Constable, "we can do nothing worse than indulge in useless sensibility"; and his betrothed exhorts him not to sacrifice concentration in his work to love. As was the engagement, so was the marriage — twelve years of undimmed happiness, brought to a close by the death of the wise and loving wife. Not quite ten years had passed, spent by the widower in quiet resignation, surrounded by beloved children and faithful friends, when he died at the age of sixty-one, the doctors being unable to name any specific disease as the cause of death.

The course of this worthy existence had but one thing momentous about it : art. But art was nothing extraordinary in Constable's life. Unlike the activities of many great men, it did not manifest tendencies totally opposed to the rest of his being ; it was in rare but literal harmony with the rest of his personality. There was nothing abnormal about it. Painting was Constable's natural intellectual form of existence, and we could no more conceive of him apart from it than "we could conceive of any cultured person without their thoughts and emotions.

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"Painting is with me but another word for feeling," he wrote to his kind and faithful friend the Rev. John Fisher.\* Hence the impossibility of putting any sort of constraint upon his Muse, his inability to complete portraits he had undertaken for the sake of money — portraits he left unfinished, to the stupefaction of his friends and even of his betrothed. Hence the fact that he was no more successful with religious pictures than Hogarth. Every step outside the path of pure instinct was prejudicial to him. This path led him to paint what he had about him, what he loved, and only to paint when he wished. The originals of his pictures lie within the space of some three miles, on the banks of the Stour, at Bergholt, and in Dedham Vale, where he spent his youth, and whither he always returned. It was by no means a rugged Nature, but a cultivated landscape, with well-tilled fields and trim woods, with farms and windmills. ^ Those scenes made me a painter, and I am grateful: that is, I had often thought of pictures of them before I ever touched a pencil." The phrase is characteristic, and recalls Gainsborough's assertion that this same

East Suffolk had made him a painter.

Gainsborough and Constable were natives of the same district, and their common home seems to have given them a certain kinship. There are many affinities between the view of Dedham by Gainsborough and Constable's pictures of the same motive. Constable's earlier renderings more particularly suggest his predecessor. The earliest of these is the beautiful little sketch of 1802 in the South Kensington Museum (No. 124), which the artist used some twenty-six years later as the basis of a large and comparatively detailed picture, *izT* removed indeed from Gainsborough. In the sketch Constable had caught something of his compatriot's dreaminess. In the motive he is differentiated by this, that he does not, like Gainsborough, set a few trees in the foreground through the foliage of which we look, as upon the stage, in order to make the distant view of the light background more effective, but leaves the whole plain open. We need not inquire which of the two renderings comes nearer to Nature. Nothing is more likely than that Gainsborough really found the trees thus conveniently disposed. Constable's choice was more natural, because he avoided every sort of theatrical effect, even such as Nature herself provided, and left a wider field for effects, not of Nature, but of Art. His landscape compelled him to develop a richer play of linear and colouristic values than Gainsborough, who was content with the simple opposition of the two planes. Constable's Dedham of 1809 in the National Gallery (No. 1822) is still closer to his predecessor as regards motive. The point of view is obviously almost identical, save that Constable kept rather more to the right, and therefore the church tower, which in the elder man's picture comes nearer to the left, stands in the centre of his composition. Nevertheless the pictures as a whole resemble each other but little. We almost feel as if Gainsborough had painted the landscape lying on the ground, and Constable while flying over it. The playfulness of the older painter is in even stronger contrast to the large masses of the younger man, who achieves far greater variety, in spite of his incomparably broader handling. They remain akin in the intimacy of effect, the indescribable sense of well-being. But this sensation which attracts us in Gainsborough appears on a much higher level, so to speak, in Constable. It does not fascinate us at once ; it is interwoven with a web of more neutral phenomena ; but the effect is all the stronger when we have once grasped it. The relation to

♦ Leslie, p. 105.

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the beloved predecessor was not always so free as in the example we have been considering. Constable studied Gainsborough conscientiously. There are many landscapes dating from the first years of the century which clearly reveal this

influence. On Barnes Cammonj in the National Gallery (No. 1060), with the famous windmill, the Lake Windermere in the Cheramy collection, &c., look like enlargements of small things by Gainsborough. The affinity persists at a later period, long after Constable had conquered independence. The advantages of the central motive struck him also. The Hay-Wain^ the Comfieldj the F alley Farm^ and others seem like free continuations 01 Gainsborough's landscapes. But the sequel leaves the beginning far behind. Gainsborough never quite got rid of the notion that landscape should be a background for something. He was always thinking of a stage, and enclosed his central motive hermetically. Constable opened his pictures, letting the light in from every side, and especially from above. The whole world seems to have grown lighter, more fruitful, and richer in a decade or two. Even the richness of those very elements which Gainsborough had in his mind had increased. The opening up does not impair the mystery of Nature, it does not banish poetry ; only that which is to be shown no longer lies so conveniently in the way. Constable perceived that Nature never thiiJcs of the lyrical or dramatic when she distributes her mountains and valleys, her trees and meadows, that all these dispositions are automatic, as soon as the richness is there which seems thus to one, and otherwise to another, and that the only essential thing is to create that fundamental cause of our delight in the world, richness.

Constable was the richer of the two. He had in himself, in his strong and healthy activity, all that Gainsborough learned from tradition. He saw in a tree a vehicle of more varied events than those which the romanticism of a rococo master laid in its friendly shade. The tree lived out of its own vieour in its own cosmos, not only in our fancy ; it was no concept, but an actual being. In his last lecture at Hampstead he painted in playful words the fate of an ash which he had drawn, and he was more in earnest than his lbteners imagined when he spoke as if he were dealing with the life-history of a person. " Many of my Hampstead friends," he said, " may remember this young lady at the entrance to the village. Her fate was distressing, for it is scarcely too much to say that she died of a broken heart. I made this drawing when she was in full health and beauty. On passing some time afterwards I saw to my grief that a wretched board had been nailed to her side, on which was written in large letters, ^ All vagrants and ^gg^ will be dealt with according to law.' The tree seemed to have felt the disgrace, for even then some of the top branches had withered. Two long spike naUs had been driven far into her side. In another year one half became paralysed, and not long after the other shared the same fate, and this beautiful creature was cut down to a stump just high enough to hold the board." \* The fanciful words seem to me to show a more convincing feeling for Nature than all that Ruskin extracted from Turner's documents. As we may well suppose, this kind of Nature was not at all to the taste of Ruskin, who thought nothing so truly " high art " as Turner's " real trees " and " real mountains." He was repelled by the homely motives, or fell into the grotesque mistake of comparing Constable with Berghem. t Constable was able to justify his simplicity. As he spoke of the tree, so

- Leslie, pp. 103-4.

t Leslie draws attention to the comparison, mentioning Constable's horror of everything connected with Berghem.

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he painted it. Not in such a manner as to stamp the rendering with a sentimental sympathy ; this would have been somewhat after the fashion of the board on the tree ; but rather with the solicitude of the portrait painter before a beloved model. The two large water-colour studies of trees in the South Kensington Museum (Nos. 1248 and 49) are treated with an exactitude of detail that recalls Japanese masters, though the details never degenerate into the pettiness that marks so many English nature-studies. We are shown all the characteristics of the tree — the stem, the branches, down to the smallest twig, the foliage — and yet we see before us a tree, and not a collection of its peculiarities. The greater richness as compared with Gainsborough was, in fact, greater objectivity. Gainsborough certainly did not love Nature less sincerely ; he may, indeed, have been more tender to her. With Constable, on the other hand, we are less conscious of this love as such than of its result. Benjamin West understood this when he said of the study young Constable showed him, " You must have loved Nature very much before you could have painted this." \* In art, indeed, it is not so much loving that is important as to have loved — i.e. the emotion which was strong enough to become objective. We can refer the various degrees of excellence in English artists from Hogarth onwards to the varying degrees of this capacity for objectivity, and then, in spite of certain formal resemblances, we shall see the essential difference between Constable and Gainsborough and between Constable and Turner almost palpably before us. Of the three. Turner's emotion was the most superficial; it lay in his finger-tips. Constable's was in the deepest recesses of his nature. The essential similarity of Constable and Claude, in spite of all their formal difference, reveals the same kind of conception. As in the case of all delicate things, we can only arrive at a clear conception of the relation between the two by a circuitous route.

Claude was Constable's noblest affection, the figure he approached with the purest feelings, as the youth approaches his first love. He worshipped him from afar, and the consciousness of a kindred emotion sufficed him as the price of his self-surrender. It was this Platonic relation only which proved fruitful. Turner's egotism resulted merely in a convention which Claude, and carried the imitator far away from the spirit of his exemplar. Constable's unconventional manner struck Delacroix as even superior to Claude. On one occasion in an enthusiastic eulogy of the Englishman, he asks whether after all some of Claude's landscapes are not injured by the conventional character of certain trees in the foreground, for we may be sure that Delacroix was not concerned here with the relative value

of different systems, but that he pronounced an absolute judgment. We have to reach Claude's blooming Paradise over crumbling ruins. The thieves who wanted to plunder the garden were fools enough to be content with the debris.

\* Leslie, p. 15.

t In his notes on "L'Idéal et le Réalisme."

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### CONSTABLE AND THE DUTCHMEN

Constable's relation to the Dutchmen was entirely different. He espoused them, and the fruit of this union was a glorious art epoch that still endures. He accomplished the task his contemporaries in Holland neglected. There the great masters who had begun the conquest of landscape in Rembrandt's time had been succeeded in the eighteenth century by a feeble race who had to suffer for the sins of the subtle Italianisers, Berghem, Poelemberg, Moucheron, Karel du Jardin, &c. Nothing of Van Goyen's and Ruysdael's redism remained. Li obscure little masters such as Dirk van der Laen, who extended into the nineteenth century, some faint reflex of the great epoch still persisted,\* more a curious relic than an earnest of brighter things in the future. The vitality of Dutch painting had been exhausted, on the one hand in the rococo, on the other in classicism. It was a remarkable dispensation that Constable, who had no greater reverence than for Claude, should have re-established the healthy tendency which had been lost through a mistaken conception of his favourite's influence. And it was a beneficent dispensation. For this disposition safeguarded the reaction from the opposite extreme, and did not allow a sickly idealism to be followed by a no less disastrous naturalism.

A whole volume might be devoted to setting forth in detail the part played by Constable as the successor of the Dutchmen. C. J. Holmes has attempted it, and has at least suggested the point of departure, f The limitations of the Dutchmen lay in the specialised character of their painting. Constable combined them. Holmes, of course, makes the boundaries of the Dutch school too narrow. To bring his hero into stronger relief he minimises the importance of the results achieved before him. It will not do to reproach a Cuyp, a Van Goyen, a Van de Velde even with a shade of mannerism, least of all when one sees in Wilson the revival of landscape, as does the author. He accuses these great men of a lack of ^\* true naturalism," and declares that Hobbema never painted " a real oak,\*" nor Van de Velde " a real sea." " Such criticism excites

distrust. It suggests that ill-considered naturalism of which I have already spoken. To see in Constable the superlative degree of a conception based solely upon objective truth to Nature is to deny his artistic gift. It is only because he was able to transpose his naturalism into a thoroughly concrete convention that he is important. And this convention relied mainly on the laws of beauty taught us by the Dutchmen. They, according to Holmes, were merely interesting craftsmen, and we can get nothing from them

\* Dirk van der Laen, the author of the charming view of a country house in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum, formerly ascribed to Vermeer of Delft. He lived from 1759 to 1829. The Cuyp tradition was carried on into the nineteenth century by the brothers Strij, Kobell, and others.

t " Constable and his Influence on Landscape-painting " (A. Constable & Co., 1902), more especially in the chapter that deals with Constable's predecessors. See also the same writer's shorter study in the Artist's Library<sup>^</sup> edited by L. Binyon (London, 1901).

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which would not be better learnt from Gaude, Titian, or Rubens.\* Holmes imagined that here he was following up his hero's train of thought in the lecture where he enumerated four memorable works as landmarks in landscape painting : Titian's Peter Martyr in the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Poussin's Deluge in the Louvre, Rubens' Rainbow landscape in the Wallace Collection, and Rembrandt's Mill in the Marquis of Lansdowne's collection. Leslie's notes do not enable us to exhaust Constable's reasoning. But that the characteristic landscapes of the Dutchmen are rightly excluded from this particular category is no argument against their importance. The criterion, which reckons with four names in art, avoids all differentiation, and precludes a consideration of landscape as such no less than the appreciation of gifts less supreme than those of Titian, yet indispensable in a fuller survey of art-history. The Titian, destroyed in the fire of 1867, is known to us only by the excellent old copy. Constable himself had never seen the original, and he might more fitly have cited Giorgione's Concert CampStrey which he knew. Development shows the struggle made by painting for her own house, when she freed herself from decoration in the architect's sense in order to become decorative in the painter's sense. The stages from Rembrandt to Constable are not, of course, so long as those from Rembrandt back to the Venetians. But our recognition of the great pioneers should not blind us to the fact that the achievements of the seventeenth-century Dutchmen were no less necessary than theirs. We are easily led to depreciate them from the outset, because we view the process of development from the Venetians

to Poussin and Rubens at a greater distance ; it is like a monument rising far from us on an open plain, whereas the structure of the ^ little " Dutchmen still shelters us. We may compare the various participants in the work of development to the phases of great revolutions. A Titian, a Rubens, a Poussin accomplished the personal, the momentous act of history. Spain put forth Velazquez, and Holland Rembrandt, as champions. All these heroes of painting were worlds in themselves, self-contained programmes, in whom participation in the general history of development seems subordinate to the individual development they themselves experienced. They decreed freedom, and the nations listened to them with glowing enthusiasm. They blew up tradition. Each of them left ruins behind him. The school from which they sprang fell to pieces like the shell of the egg from which life has emerged. To wish that the world might consist solely of such heroes is unreasonable. Were this to happen, art would consume itself, and the world would gain nothing from it, because it would lack the norm necessary to get at the right distance from the summits. We owe the possibility of supporting ourselves upon these to smaller people, who repaired the net torn by the others, and so made a place in it for the new. They are the peaceful revolutionaries, who take internal affairs upon themselves, so to speak, and organise all the branches of the new regime with industry and intelligence. We should scarcely hesitate to sacrifice all Rembrandt's contemporaries for his sake, but this is a resolution we only make after having possessed them, and we could not deny that Rembrandt alone could not replace them. The oft-repeated assertion that he contained all the others in himself is grotesquely superficial. Van Goyen, the father of a whole generation of glorious landscape painters, the grandfather of a Hobbema, who carried over the heritage of the great

\* Holmes, p. 44.

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E^riod to the eighteenth century, stands as firmly on his own feet as Rembrandt himself. If we made his smaller stature a reproach to him, it would be as if we reproached the butterfly for being weaker than the lion. The public is still at the puerile standpoint of Fromentin, who forgot Van Goyen, not in Rembrandt, but in Jacob Ruysdael. Among the landscape painters there is many another great one who is not swallowed up in the shadow of the painter of the Syndics. Cuyp is nearer to Poussin than to his own great countryman\* Potter's realism is the exact opposite of Rembrandt's art. It would be foolish to look for the elegance of a Terborch in Rembrandt, and we give but a faint idea of the greatest of the Dutch painters of interiors, who was also the greatest of the landscape painters, when we describe him as the pupil or the descendant of the mighty Amsterdam master. Yet all of them, from Vermeer back to Van Goyen, bore the impress of Rembrandt ; all were his debtors. But the ray each received from him was not his vital principle ; it was an addition to his own property. All these and many another



exist beside, and not through him. Each one of the two dozen names that are dear to us indicates a locality in the Holland of art, where Rembrandt towers aloft, a giant in Lilliput. And each one of these localities is an individual cultivated organism, lying picturesquely between rivers, canals, and meadows. If we pass over the land in a balloon, they may seem insignificant ; one may look very much like the other, and very unlike the one Colossus who rises suddenly like a mountain in flat surrounding country. Among the " stay-at-home people," as Constable called the Dutch, Rembrandt is the least Dutch, not because he was of another stock, but because he was so great. That in him which may reasonably be called Dutch is such a fragment of his being that it does not explain him. No one ever remained so close to Nature and at the same time rose so high above it. To understand his greatness we must look at it from below. If we do this as becomes our own littleness, the other localities we shall note in his neighbourhood will reveal many exquisite things, and we shall see with amazement how community with the others tends but to increase his own variety. This, I think, was Constable's attitude to the Dutchmen. His method was not a cheap, summary criticism, which has eyes only for the greatest, and for this very reason fails to grasp it altogether ; yet his taste was severe, for the Dutch mannerists found no mercy from him ; but with this severity he combined an instinct for the Dutch spirit, and thence a mind open to all its manifestations. He bears eloquent testimony to this in his lectures, still more in his pictures. Constable was not of Rembrandt's inspired genus. The portrait of him by Gardner in the South Kensington Museum at the age of twenty, and that in the National Portrait Gallery, painted by himself a few years later, show a handsome young man of sympathetic but not especially striking aspect, the same well-disposed personality that reveals itself in the love-letters. Leslie's mediocre drawing of him in later life, and a study by Maclise,\* have bequeathed us a well-cut normal English head, that might belong to some gentle scientist of a typically urban class. The passion of a Rembrandt did not mark behind that high, smooth forehead. And yet they were kinsmen, and kinsmen by no means in a superficial and evasive degree. It was not, however, a relation that could be termed an elective affinity. Constable had every possible respect for the painter of the famous Mill. Yet we are conscious of a certain note of reserve in his recognition. Constable was more deeply conscious of the ravages wrought by Rembrandt in the English School than he would admit, and

\* Both reproduced in Leslie's work.

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in his inmost heart there was perhaps a slight and almost unconscious resentment against the great and ruthless master. The impetuosity of the giant alarmed him. He loved clarity, the crystalline play of Claude, to whom Rembrandt would certainly have been a sealed book. He wished to make his perception deep and searching, to deal with all there is to see in Nature, but to go no further, to give

nothing that cannot be seen.

For this reason the other Dutchmen were nearer to him than Rembrandt. Ruysdael stood next to Claude in his affections, and was in his opinion a genius opposed, yet equal to the Frenchman. Cuyp, Jan Steen, even Pieter de Hoogh, are more frequently cited by him than the father of Dutch painting. He commends them as ^' more artless." \* Much as he admired the power of building up a landscape out of chiaroscuro, success on these lines seemed to him rather a happy accident than the certain norm for other architects. The art therein was to him too much formulated principle to include all he saw in Nature. Here we come in contact with one of the limitations of Constable, which not only contracted his aesthetical perceptions, but also cast its shadow over his development as a painter. The error of judgment is easily refuted, and Constable himself abandoned it when he tmconsciously approached Rembrandt on another side, as we shall show. But we shall not get to the heart of the matter by hasty condemnation of the weakness of his perception ; this would only furnish us with a cheap reason for depreciating the master before we had grasped his high qualities. Constable recoiled before Rembrandt's great decisions, because they seemed to him to cut off a wealth of effects he found in Nature, the unobtrusiveness of which appealed more to him, and, as he supposed, rightly enough from his own standpoint, diminished the remoteness of the painter from the object. These effects he found already indicated in those Dutchmen to whom he felt himself more closely akin. He would, indeed, have been a simpleton had he sacrificed the economy of his own temperament to Rembrandt's prestige.

Constable's relation to the Dutchmen does not depend for its importance on the discovery by him of hitherto unknown artists. He was not the first who had recognised forces other than Rembrandt in Holland. By name at least, the whole of Dutch art was known to English collectors at the outset of his career. Even Wilson is not to be referred solely to the rococo of the French. In him and in George Lambert, too, we find traces of the best of the Dutchmen. In the next generation Thomas Barker in particular continued that amalgamation of Wilsonian and Dutch tendencies inaugurated by Gainsborough. Turner had discovered Cuyp, and he repeated all the effects he noted in the fine examples of English collections. While he was making his material softer and more liquid, James Ward, his senior by several years, was subjecting his exemplars to a kind of petrifying process, and giving an ominous foretaste of the realism of the Pre-Raphaelites. For three years he toiled at a version of the famous Bull at The Hague, imtil nothing remained of that freshness of Potter's which had triumphed over all his elaboration. Old Crome approached Hobbema with more delicate organs, and the side-glances he cast at Rembrandt the while taught him not a

\* \*\* The other great painters of the Dutch School were more artless ; so apparently unstudied, indeed, are the work of many of them — ^for instance, Jan Steen and De Hoogh — that they seem put together almost

without thought, yet it would be impossible to alter or leave out the smallest object or to change any part of their light, shade, or colour without injury to their pictures — a proof that their art is consummate/' (Leslie, p. 391.) The inference as to Rembrandt is obvious.

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little. His brother-in-law Ladbroke and the other Norwich painters, Cotman, &c., kept still more closely to their Dutch models. Calcott, called, like several others of his calibre, the English Claude, was none the less an imitator of Cuyp and of the Dutch marine painters. Nasmyth's waterfalls seem to his countrymen like real Ruysdaels, and his Hobbemas fetched higher prices for a time than the Dutch examples of that master. Holland, then, existed in England before Constable. But it is hardly too much to say that if all these evidences of familiarity with Dutch art were to disappear suddenly from England, the aspect of European art would not be sensibly affected. The relation of successors to predecessors, broadly speaking, was in every case that which Turner demonstrated with greater skill than the rest. The greater men took from the great masters of the past, the smaller men from the smaller masters. No one added anything. But it must be admitted that the little thieves were more reverent than the big ones, and that a more sincere tradition was possible and had indeed arisen even in Constable's youth as an outcome of Crome, Barker, Callcott, and Nasmyth, than was yielded by Turner's reflections.

Constable's attitude to the illustrious school was quite different. What delighted him in the old landscape-painters was the delicacy of their self-abandonment to Nature. He did not take the one or the other of them as his master, did not paint animal-pieces à la Cuyp or scenery in the style of Ruysdael. He always painted English landscape with English figures. And the term English is not to be understood as designating a particular genre in the way in which we apply it to English portraits, which have a certain specific character. Every one of the places he depicted might be identified; every detail might be recognised by contemporaries did any such survive. It was not the motive, therefore, which Constable borrowed from the Dutchmen. This, indeed, plays no very momentous part in his pictures. The same view of Dedham, the same spot at Hampstead, or in his friend Fisher's park, recur constantly, and when he painted the lock with the horse for the first time he probably seemed to himself a very fanciful person. Yet he never repeated himself, and Turner's varied pictures seem a perpetual monotony compared with his; he was an inexhaustible inventor, not of situations but of means whereby the effective in visible Nature might be transmuted into painting. A section of a landscape of a few miles suffices to make us recognise with astonishment the immeasurable forces of the cosmos. As the art of an individual can only

grasp certain sides of this effectiveness, those corresponding to his inclinations and capacities, it will penetrate the more deeply the more wisely its creator restricts his field of observation at the outset. Expansions of this field are necessary, to give the artist new chances, to refresh him. But every expansion of what is given him from outside weakens him at the same time, because it compels him to keep his most delicate powers in abeyance until the coarse rind of the material has been pierced. It is hardly necessary to say, that what may profitably be taken from without is not confined within the limits of a particular landscape, but extends to a certain class of motives. The Dutch were masters of this economy. They placed the deepening of their individual manner above the many-sidedness of the material, and appealed to highly cultivated emotions. Far-reaching competition drove the individual to specialisation in a narrow field. The country was small, and there were many artists. They were compelled to live in close proximity. The culture which compelled each not to differ from his neighbour by crude externals, but to

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remain true to the intimate characteristics of the land, was sublime. Two leading manners are apparent in the multitudinous Dutch renderings of the same object. Both are methods of reduction. The one deals with the envelope of landscape, with atmosphere, and conceives of that which lies beneath it as an immutable solid. It distributes light and to a certain extent leaves the single forms of Nature, *ue.j* the profiles of the scene, untouched, intent only upon getting rich, or at any rate specific effects of light from the chosen section of Nature.

Its medium is tone. It dissolves the world in the softness of manifold gradations, and is careful to leave no trace of the instrument behind. The other manner adopts the opposite principle. Not only does it show the brush-stroke, but it makes this an element of itself, forming it into an arabesque system designed to enforce the character of the model. The extreme of both methods is imperfect. Light without the object illuminated is ineffective. Linear design without a feeling for light leads us back to the Primitives. In a centre so highly developed as that of Dutch painting in the seventeenth century such extremes were unimaginable. What we call a tendency nowadays in our barbaric art-conditions, was able to assert itself without the frenzied sharpness of paradox. Even the most strongly marked contrasts had certain essential qualities in common ; it was in shades only that the characteristic point of view made itself felt. Hence we find both methods used by all the artists of the great period, and it is only the predominance of the one or the other that stamps them. The one manner is represented by the doyen of Dutch marine painters, Simon de Vlieger, who made his sea-fights credible by enveloping them in haze, and later, when he painted the tranquil sea-piece in the Schwerin Museum, needed no animated motive in order to assert himself. His pupil Willem van de Velde and others con-

tinued him. None among them carried atmospheric painting farther than Jan van de Cappelle, whom Rembrandt honoured with a portrait. Two or three of his works in the National Gallery and in the Stockholm Museum are magical in their effect. Water, earth and sky are painted in a single colour, of which it is difficult to say whether it is white or black; it hardly suggests colour at all, or even any material; it is a medium softer, suppler and richer than the softest and richest silk, in which figures, ships, clouds, sky and waves seem to exist in a strange noiseless peace. The best Van de Veldes seem clamorous beside them, and Ruysdael's materialism becomes almost insupportable. We might ascribe these marines to another world, if the things in them were not so manifestly Dutch. Van de Cappelle was the inventor of those transcendental effects which have seduced so many dreamers since his time. Turner certainly studied him, especially at the time when he painted his *Burial of Wilkie at Sea*^ producing no more than a mirage of the reality. That which he dreamt of adding to the charm of the original, a deliberate visionary element, is just what Van de Cappelle avoided with incomparable mastery. The vision of the Dutchman was a perception of the fugitive, that of the Englishman fugitive perception. This method was the antithesis of Van Goyen and his school. His tonal art maintains itself between ^ghter differences, and we even note how, as he grew older, he got his effects with less and less of material means. In his last period, which, like Rembrandt's, was his best, he renders a life full of colour with a bluish tone, and a blond that we scarcely recognise as colour, by the most neutral means imaginable. His material is not in itself beautiful, like Van de Cappelle's atmosphere. It has not the seductive quality of certain little panels by Aart van der Neer, the deep amber tone of

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which delights us before we know what it represents. The life in the quivering strokes carries us away with it. It is more than beautiful. We admire the spirit which can set down the outline of a town on the dear horizon with a few trembling touches, [and as in the famous *View of Dordrecht* in the Amsterdam Rijks Museum, merely by modulation of the brush-strokes fills a section of Nature with a gigantic perspective, revealing all its accidents. Cuyp combined the two. In his most mature period he depended on the charm of atmosphere — the coast scene with the mill in the Carstanjen collection is closely allied to the Van de Cappelle of the same collection, and he loved to divest his great sturdy cows of all their animal qualities by means of the golden light of the sun. In smaller pictures, such as *the landscape at the Hague*, and more especially in such early works as *the view of dunes* in the Berlin Gallery, he remains closer to Van Goyen, and seems to add breadth to the methods of his inspirer.

All these methods, subtly as they serve their purpose, are no mere tricks of art, but forms for highly subjective conceptions. Remarkable men of simple aspect are behind them, philosophers, who combined the quiet irony of the sage with the meditative calm of their delight in Nature, who understood the world above which they rose, admirable victors over the existence to which they dim with all their fibres. And side by side with these were others, who take their stand between the two tendencies. They were absorbed neither by the atmosphere of the one group, nor the arabesque of the other, but delights, in colour. The web of tone woven by Van Goyen and Cuyp accorded ill with their robustness. It was not given them to express themselves by an unmistakable handwriting in the smallest things. They concealed their specific manner under more ingenuous forms. Ruysdael's realism seems clumsy compared with de Vlieger, his illumination impure beside Van de Cappelle's phenomena of light. Relatively, he is rather a copyist than a creator. And yet we cannot but feel that a beautiful bit of old Holland would be lacking if we did not possess him. Hobbema's colour is of a higher order, because it fastens less upon the superficial. In the famous Avenue of Middelbamis in the National Gallery the colour emphasises the marvellous perspective with extraordinary taste. In the House at the Edge of a Wood of the Carstanjen collection a new colour is created by the flowing together of the moist brown green of the leaves with the grey of the hedge, a colour not to be found on any palette, in which we enjoy the manner of its production even more than the exquisite silvery brilliance. It is true that Hobbema composes rather with beautiful trees and picturesquely situated cottages than with abstract forms. Yet he and other artists like him preserved that healthy naturalism which gave nourishment to all Dutch expression. If, as Ruskin says, they were soulless painters, we can only wonder the more at the greatness of an epoch in which the intellectually barren achieved such powerful manifestations. It is to them that Constable seems to go back, the Constable, at any rate, of the large finished pictures, the Hay Wain, the Cornfield, the Valley Farm, the Lock pictures &c. Neither Cuyp nor Van Goyen, nor any of the more subtle Dutchmen, are contained therein. At a first glance these works suggest the painters who are, relatively, the coarser masters of Dutch landscape. The objective content is similar to that of their masterpieces in the Antwerp Museum, at Buckingham Palace, &c., and, judging by Constable's own utterances, he was more akin to the circle of Hobbema and Ruysdael than to those artists whom we justly rank above them.

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Constable's whole style made this almost inevitable. He was too independent to imitate the very individual abstractions of a Van Goyen, a Cuyp or a Vermeer, the extract of the efforts of an entire race, which had only become possible under the highly specific conditions of this people and their epoch. A man like Constable could and would only approach these results by his own road, on which he travelled alone over that part of the way which their own insight and the

help of great compatriots had spared them.

Let us recall his attitude to Gaude, how he took nothing specific from this favourite exemplar, but did his very utmost to recognise the law that governed the transference of emotion to the work. He was too rich himself and too honest to do more than this. Hobbema and Ruysdael, whose cast of mind was sympathetic to him<sup>^</sup> exacted no intimate participation from him, but played somewhat the part of the natural model for him. To him their comparatively slight concentration implied less remoteness from Nature. The traditional element he received from them by no means limited the development of individual gifts very different in most respects from those of the two Dutchmen.

If we look closer, if we actually place a Hobbema or a Ruysdael beside a Constable, the difference is immeasurable. The <sup>^</sup>more artless " he applied to them as compared with Rembrandt might be just as aptly used in comparing his work with theirs, with this distinction, that here we are not obliged to make the weighty reservation demanded in a comparison of Rembrandt with the landscape painters. Yet we may admit that only the freedom of emotion of many of the early Dutch painters could have led to such works. But this freedom is a relative conception, which becomes the norm in the course of time. It is not easy to prove that the Hay Wain is better as painting than the House at the Edge of a Wood. The virtuosity of Hobbema, who here accomplished the uttermost with the given means, is hardly to be surpassed. Constable, on the other hand, is very much stronger as emotion ; we might even call him a virtuoso of emotion, if the term were not ill-suited to the nobility of his mind.

By a strange dispensation, the beautiful is the more easily achieved the less deliberately it is pursued. This is not only the case in art. A beautiful attitude in a human being is the result of a tension or relaxation of emotion governing the limbs. It is not what we see but what we divine behind it which delights us. It is not the beautiful, but a glimpse into the higher power which produced it that strengthens us, enlarges our experience and so prolongs the moment that it becomes eternity. If we perceive that the excited person is conscious of his excitement, it becomes finite, and our illusion vanishes. We have a bit of lifeless material before us.\* The distinction is hardly so crude in any one of the great Dutchmen of the seventeenth century. In the days of Rembrandt emotion remained at a higher level even among the most hardened materialists. But in a circle where so many were working in the same direction the impulse which led to the greatest accomplishment could not be given to every one. The abnormal culture of painters and the refinement of public taste circumscribed the influence of genius. Faultless pictures were painted, the syntax of the pictorial art extended to an unprecedented degree, but the ideal conditions for the production of the work of art were relaxed. People learned to paint fine pictures just as they learned any other trade, and only a greater dexterity raised the artist above the artisan. Our age, which has no artificers, made a virtue of necessity, and refined our instinct for the individual. We now recognise a tincture of the industrial element

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in people who were nevertheless personalities, and we are able to determine the difference between them and great artists. And therefore we suspect that Ruysdael was less bent upon giving powerful and candid utterance to his impressions than upon making his brown and russet harmonise perfectly with the gray of his sky. We find that in many of his pictures his concern for the telling passage condemns the rest of the work to a comparative immobility. In our admiration of Hobbema's gems we do not quite forget that they lie on the surface, and that an immense practicality of detail was necessary to produce effects, the perfect harmony of which deceive us as to their extent. Many of his landscapes do not avoid a certain over-insistent picturesqueness. The frame encloses so much, that our fancy can add nothing to it. And so we feel at times as if we too were enclosed in a frame, and see the Nature we would fain enlarge circumscribed. That each Dutchman, from the greatest to the smallest, is distinctly recognisable, does not strike us as a satisfaction that silences all objections. We do not find in all these developments of individuality the ultimate form considered as the highest spiritual aim ; rather is it looked upon as a practical type, and what at a first glance seems a token of personality has to be recognised as a limitation of the personality. This is noticeable in a Van de Cappelle, in a slighter degree in a Van Goyen, and even in the great Cuyp. Limitation to a single circle of experiences leads not only to concentration ; it may also seduce into virtuosity.

The essential difference between Constable and the Dutch landscape painters lies in the absence of all virtuosity of this description. The difference would be unimportant were it a mere negative one, or were it necessary to see a hundred pictures by Constable to assure ourselves that he did not repeat himself, or that he repeated himself otherwise than his predecessors. But the difference is positive, for it appears in every picture. Constable's force of conviction is stronger ; analytically considered, the effectiveness of his methods is greater. We trace his relation to Hobbema in his system of colour, in the style of his contrasts. But how much more vigorous is his colour ! How much richer and more varied are his contrasts ! To become rich, to multiply, to utilise the impulse, the gift of a higher soul, economically, was his principle. He could not create the impulse himself. It came to him from his blood, his race had given it to him. It was not so mighty as the enthusiasm of a Rembrandt, not so inspiring as the frenzy of a Rubens. Behind it there was always a harmless person, who took a reasonable view of life. He was great because he was able to press on to the goal with a simplicity which did not lack the English sturdiness. A mightier spirit would have solved the problem otherwise. That a Constable was necessary for Constable's task was the vivifying element in his existence.

The task was to evolve a modern system for painting out of tradition, the



tradition of the Dutchmen, since they alone had worked at landscape. And landscape alone, as Constable clearly saw, was capable of giving contemporary painting the right model. Standing far off enough to see only the determining aspect of Dutch art, the manner in which the Dutchmen had added the surface of the picture became their characteristic idiosyncrasy.

Other English landscape painters had also learnt the elementary law of art from the Dutchmen, the effectiveness of contrast ; but they had immediately given a coarse interpretation to the phenomenon, seeing in light a magical element, and in dark an obscurity, and thereby setting up a stage for sentimentality. Constable purified contrast with the sincerity of the Dutchmen from all conventional

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significance, and submitted calmly to the reproach of being a mere artisan. Every picture was to him a new expression of his relation to the world, at which he worked with all the force of his emotion. But each was also to him what a picture was to the Dutchmen, a framework for light and colour, a framework it was necessary to strengthen by all the means of knowledge. Constable was a master of the division of surface. He carried it so far, and achieved so many hitherto unattainable effects by its means, that he may almost be considered to have rediscovered a method which nowadays seems to embrace the whole nature of painting. It was not only composition to which he gave airiness by skilful division. Where his predecessors, both immediate and remote, had seen a tone, a plane, he discovered innumerable differentiations, the harmony of which yielded a proportionately richer resonance. His whole history consists of continuous progress upon these lines. The generalising brown and gray of his first period, a reflection of his study of the old masters and his English predecessors, yielded to an ever increasing richness. He noted the devastation wrought in Gainsborough's picture by an inordinate use of asphaltum, and recognised the lack of structure in the dense foliage of his contemporaries. There are no black Constables. The Valley Farm in the Louvre (fortunately skied) would be an exception if it were genuine. The version of the same motive in the Cheramy collection is the darkest as compared with the two examples hanging opposite to each other in the National Gallery, and in this there is no dead point the size of a pin's head. Yet he did not avoid the use of black. It was indeed one of his favourite colours, and we may even regret that he was not more cautious in his choice of the dark pigment in several pictures. The black of many of Constable's groups of trees is unequalled for intensity in any other English landscape, still less in any Dutch one. But these trees are set against a spacious sky that occupies two-thirds of the whole picture. The gray of the clouds peeps through the trunks and twigs, penetrates the darkness, and surrounds it with gleaming light. In his sketches, coal-black is always surrounded by fiery red and pure white. Whereas his predecessors used black for a dreamy darkness. Constable

made light with it by using it for contrast. Even in this there is an analytic element of the first importance to Constable's relation to the Dutchmen. He gave a new significance to colour contrasts, and if he did not always "leave" his pigments with absolute frankness, he broke them less than others, and so arrived promptly at the basis for a stronger synthesis. Absolute purity of colour was not his aim in this. Turner's efforts in this direction were quite foreign to him. Colour chemistry was not enriched by him. His basis is as frank a brown as the favourite tint of the Dutchmen. The difference is merely this, that his landscapes do not impress us as brown, because they are so divided that they never suggest a summarised application of colour, brown like that of the Dutchmen, or black like that of Gainsborough.

The brushing serves the same purpose in a much greater degree than the combinations of the palette. The reproach brought with more or less justice against Hobbema and occasionally against Ruysdael, that their realism approaches a kind of reproduction, is levelled against the inadequacy of a method which interpolates non-pictorial expedients — *ue.y* media foreign to painting as such — between the natural means of the painter and his result, expedients the more harmful in landscape, inasmuch as here art demands a swift transcript of the impression. In many Dutch pictures we see the drawing under the veil of colour.

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Some of Ruysdael's solitary tree-trunks with their proclamatory naturalism suggest that the modelling was not carried out together with the painting, but was completed before the painting had covered the canvas. This gives the colour the effect of tinting. Constable, on the other hand, always shows his material quite frankly, building up the whole with the same material. His incidents are not tinted representations, but the colour itself supports the incident. His synthesis is greater, in the widest sense. The unit of which the picture gives a multiple is not the tree, the leaf, or the stone, in a word, nothing natural, but colour, or more precisely, a brush-stroke bearing colour, and representing not the tree, the leaf, the stone, but a generalisation of these things. Constable once said to William Collins that a picture is like a sum, "for it is wrong if you can take away or add a figure to it."\* The addition or subtraction, is more or less possible in a picture where the unit is some realistic conception — a battle-piece, for instance, representing only soldiers, a landscape dealing only with trees, meadows, water, etc., any genre picture of some comic or pathetic incident. The sense might be conveyed with other "figures." We read such a picture without regard to the colour, the brush-stroke, all that has accidentally contributed to its significance. Constable aimed at a new gesture, consisting not of the outstretched arm or the proud glance, nor of a romantically curved mountain formation, but giving eloquent expression to the material in whatever form expressed, before it grasped itself

to the usual summary conception. His sea is water before it becomes waves. His leaves express the green of a leaf before they grow together into foliage, his clouds, the most exquisite feature of his pictures, by which we can most dearly measure how far he excelled all the Dutch landscape painters, are the atmospheric element of the heavens before they have taken on those threatening or friendly aspects we are accustomed to attribute to them. With drama such as this, he made form clothe itself with thought instantaneously, achieved something akin to Shakespeare, in whom what we perhaps most admire is the manner, in which the action marches with the idea, never preceding it nor dragging behind it, as with the weaker dramatists, who are not absolutely masters of their material. And just as with Shakespeare we ourselves add tragedy or comedy while the poet is content with drama, so Constable's pictures invite all we ourselves would contribute, without tingeing our mood dark or light. His landscapes neither mourn as we perhaps might wish to mourn, nor rejoice as we might wish to do another time, but they stretch strong hands to us, the warm pressure of which gives us pleasure. He aimed at progression, not at a condition of existence. This explains why he was content with so few motives. The motive was the treatment, not the given scene. The Glebe Farm in the Chermay collection is made up of great thick masses. The gray of the colossal sky fights with the Giorgionesque brown of the trees, and the red of the girl against the tree trunk looks like the blood shed in the combat. The sketch for this picture in the National Gallery (No. 1823) is very different. The fact that the same place is represented is a superficial matter. The real scene is entirely altered. Everything flows in the picture. The blond tone is as inseparable from the thin brushing as is the dark from the massive impasto of the Parisian variant. Finally, in the ultimate version a new material is obtained by other means. It is crystalline in structure: Hobbema's tree-tops are decked with silver points. A different scale underlies the Hay-Wain variants, yet another

- « Memoir of the Life of William Collins," London, 1848, i. p. 56.

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NATIONAL GALLERY, LONDON

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the Dedham pictures. The reiterated scene gains something akin to unity of place in drama. In the Hampstead series, Constable finally abandoned the central motive, and thus gave up his last connection with the narrower tradition of his home. Gainsborough's pleasant woodland pool has become a detail among other details, and has lost all its shadowy environment. The motive in itself is uninteresting to a degree. Save for a hillock by no means attractive in form in

the foreground, all we see is a wide plain. The actual symbol dwindles to a nothing. And yet I know of nothing more fitted to show Constable's art to advantage. He must have felt this himself, or he would hardly have painted this bit of land so often.

It is here that he differs essentially from the rest of his countrymen. The pictures of the portrait-painters of the eighteenth century are differentiated only by the faces, and therefore never have a face. Gainsborough never gets away from convention. His foliage always consists of the same flat pointed spikes. He has a fixed formula for things which by their nature are subject to perpetual change and owe their beauty to the fluidity of their appearance. Morland made rococo trees as one makes rococo furniture. His objects and Gainsborough's too have an artistic structure of their own, but as this always consists of the same jagged brush-stroke, it is too one-sided, and does not clothe the design, but lies upon it like decoration. At the Morland Exhibition at South Kensington in 1904 the spectator could not stifle his yawns. The variety of the subjects with their monotony of treatment lost all variety of effect after the first six pictures. If Constable's series dealing with a single theme were brought together, the identity of motive would only help to give the impression of an irregular mosaic frieze, forming in its entirety a marvellous decoration for an interior, yet inviting inspection of every component part by its individual treatment of detail.

The same quality differentiates Constable from the Dutch landscape painters and brings him near to Rembrandt. Rembrandt, too, does not exhaust himself with the external motive, if indeed we can use such a term at all in connection with such a dramatist, to whom what has been said above of Shakespeare applies in a still higher degree. The objector, to whom the invention, &c., of the Biblical scenes is dear, need only think of the master's portraits of himself. In these, the most moving portraits of our era, conventional conceptions have but little part. We get no nearer to their character when we recognise a time-worn head in those of the later period, a younger face in the earlier examples, if we call them laughing or serious. What attracts us is the second face, seen outside the countenance, the materialised conception, which succeeds in immortalising the highest qualities of its creator in abstract images.

Constable, too, gave us portraits of himself in his landscapes, so intimate had every tree and every other detail become to him in his repeated contemplation of them as the reflections of his own moods. He felt himself as completely one with Hamptead or Dedham as Rembrandt had felt with his own face, and he succeeded in winning forms out of the practised concentration of his emotion. These are not, of course, so mighty as the vessel into which Rembrandt poured the fulness of his spirit, partly because they were distributed over a wider area. The almost painful focussing of power upon such a minimum of objective as Rembrandt saw in his mirror, eludes a less vigorous tension. Rembrandt was anchored fast upon one spot, the seething emotion of his spirit was directed to a single point. The relation of this emotion to the calm of the object gives the daemoniac element which verges

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on tragedy, even when genius emerges victor from the terrible conflict. No Constable makes this impression upon us. He holds himself and us in airier bonds. His task does not, like that of Rembrandt, transcend all our conceptions of the capabilities of an individual. His life was pettier and less remote from that of his fellows. But in his existence also we can trace the power which drives the individual to a never-resting self-expression, and the fruit has not suffered from the fact that the tree was closer to us.

Rembrandt's phases, from the first sketch to the finished picture, show increasing richness of power and breadth of structure. The same may be said of his whole development. His tendency is towards greater restraint and simplicity, a more determined rejection of the non-essential. A first survey of Constable's life work tempts us to see something of the same kind in him. He too gains breadth, as we shall show by particular instances, becomes more vigorous with years, and the broader form answers to a greater depth of conception. But his progress has not the unswerving tendency of Rembrandt's growth. It was less marvellous, though even in proximity with the giant the individuality of his being suffers no loss. The amazing thing in his case is a sudden knowledge, acquired in a few years, and in a partial concentration of his nature, to which we owe the unique quality of his sketches. But he does not manifest the same unbroken enrichment to the end. Whether, as his biographers declare, his marriage with a much loved wife determined the character of his art, it is difficult to say. Be this as it may, the term 1817-1828 is the most prolific in his career. The Rembrandtesque development is manifest down to the close of this period. But as I shall show, the decade that preceded his marriage brought to light his own scarcely surpassed riches.

But the relation of the English mSler's son to his Dutch confrere is not confined to these abstract affinities. The painter who showed such coolness in his dicta concerning the great master, sometimes approached him very closely. It was indeed, perhaps, the conditional nature of his admiration which makes the relation valuable. There are landscapes by Constable which we cannot but describe as Rembrandtesque. They resemble, not Rembrandt's landscapes, but his portraits.. The expressive vigour of the big brush-strokes with which the landscape is modelled, recalls the fashion in which the aged Rembrandt built up a face. I may instance Mr. Alexander Young's sketch of 1819 for the White Horse the Mill near Brighton of 1828, in the South Kensington Museum, and kindred works. The form is not quite so pregnant as in Rembrandt's faces, the strokes do not carry quite so much. But here it is less a difference of power than a different system of division that manifests itself. Constable's pictures became more and more fluid, and they would not have fulfilled their task had not this fruitfulness of rain-soaked earth, unnecessary to Rem-

brandt's purpose, been suggested in them. This yields a further element of the synthesis accomplished by Constable.

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Fuseli's jest as to the overcoat and umbrella required by the admirer of Constable's pictures referred to the dripping, fluid element in all his friend's best works, a quality quite alien to the Dutchmen, though they were guiltless of the terrible dryness characteristic of many English and German landscapes painted under their influence in the first half of the nineteenth century. Constable showed early indications of the quality which ensured the freshness of his pictures, and the great example of Rubens encouraged him to develop his own tendency. His reverence for the Fleming ran parallel with his love for the Dutchmen. His landscapes, as far as analysis reveals foreign constituents in them at all, contain '

both forces in equal measure. Rubens was the turbulent driving energy who drew him to the light, and who yet was no more able than Rembrandt to turn the head of one whose eyes were fixed so steadfastly on Nature. Constable inclined more to him than to Rembrandt, but after the manner of a Northerner, who, swiftly as his blood may flow, retains a certain sedateness. There was nothing in him which could follow the Italian element in Michelangelo's great successor, and here he was at one with Hogarth, but he recognised Rubens' clear intelligence behind his frenzied energy, and was attracted by the happy naturalism of the chdtelain of Steen. Rubens taught him to take heed of blond tones, enticed him out of Gainsborough's woodland thickets into the open air, «nd encouraged him to invest the sunsets of certain sea-pieces with all the splendour of his palette. Such examples, in which the affinity seems perceptible even in the colour-scheme, are rare. The Louvre owns one of the best.\* But the handling of the early period is the happiest result of intense preoccupation with the great master. I mean the exquisite suppleness of the brush, the power of reproducing the form of a detail to perfection by a winding stroke, and giving its light-value and its local colour. Later on, this downy softness gave way to a preference for fat, and preferably straight strokes. But reminiscences of Rubens still linger, if not in details, at least in the great outlines of composition.

Rembrandt seems to have had more influence on the sketches, Rubens on the pictures. The slanting motives in Rubens' landscapes suggested to Constable the development of a composition rich in diagonals, and his exemplar was especially serviceable to him where he had to reckon with detailed foregrounds and wide perspectives, as, for instance, in the lock-pictures, *The Lock*, *The Leafing Horsey Flatford MtUy &c.*, and again in the series of works connected with the Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows, *The service was of an ideal kind and illustrates the felicity of all Constable's relations to the old masters. Our attention is not arrested by some accident in the model, reappearing under another form in the imitator,*

\* Weymouth \*Bay, — In an article on 'The RepresenUtion of the British School in the Louvre " in

the BurRngtm Magazine (p. 341, March 1907), by P. M. Turner, the genuineness of this picture is

•called in question, quite groundlessly, in my opinion On the other hand, the writer is perhaps

justified in ascribing TJ^ Windmill m the Louvre to Webb. I also concur in the attribution of The

Cottage (Louvre, No. 1806) to F. W. Watts {BnrRnff9n Magiodne^ July 1907, pp. 226, 227).

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but we see the superiority of the old master revealed in the virtues of his disciple and this generalisation increases our respect for both. Constable took the brightness and lucidity of Rubens' motive as his pattern, the organisation that penetrates every detail and preserves the purity of the theme even in the greatest wealth of variations. Rubens ennobled his realism, and taught him to detail form, not object ; it was his example which brought about that " absence of everything stagnant " over which Constable himself expressed his naive creative joy in writing to his friend Fisher about *The Lock*.^

The Rubens cycle of the Four Seasons was as familiar to him as his own pictures. It was brought to England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, from the Palazzo Balbi, and to Constable's distress was here divided up into three portions. One picture, the beloved *Rainbow*^ now in the Wallace Collection, was acquired by the Earl of Orford ; the *Chateau de Steen*^ now in the National Gallery, by Sir George Beaumont, and the other two went to Windsor Castle. It may seem over-bold to compare these manifestations of a lordly genius, who playfully expanded the surfaces confined within the limits of a frame, giving them the spacious splendour of fresco, and even here, where he was concerned with modest things, allowed his personality to overflow in still wilder exuberance than was his wont, with the pictures of the modern, which make no claim to be anything but landscapes. Nature, whom the one moulded with unprecedented force, more despotically than any after him, was approached by Constable with the reverent love of a son in the modest garb of a Hobbema, and it is against all probability that the expression of such a mind, however successful, could even approach the power of that subjectivity.

But setting aside the obvious difference in absolute potentiality of the two artists, the suggestion of such a possibility leaves out of account the necessary and beneficent evolution of time, which forbids any artist to measure himself in the closer sense with his predecessors. Constable could not pretend to equal Rubens with the gesture of a Rubens. That form was not an outcome of Rubens' power alone, but was also the gesture of a multitude. To this multitude, which in those days an artist could fire by vigorous action, Rubens made his appeal, winning strength for his performance from his confidence in the echo of his appeal. A Rubens in these days would be like an orator setting forth revolutionary ideas to empty benches. A modern artist of Rubens' power would not be rhetorical ; he would find subtler modes of expression. This was Constable's method\* The problem was to make the hidden effect as rich as possible. The solution could only come through a transposition of power, by employing organs of a work of art more or less independent of the vehicles of Rubensesque beauty. The Fleming's dominant effect lies in his modelling. This made a comparatively summary system of colour necessary. Rubens would have dammed the river of his forms if he had divided it into too many affluents by colour, and he would have become illegible. It is true that the richness of his pictures is not due solely to the play of forms ; the part assigned to the palette is by no means negligible ; but important as this is, it is the modelling which is decisive. The colour is a splendid,



amazingly supple material, created on the palette, i.e., outside the picture, with which Rubens moulded, as the sculptor moulds his clay. The colouristic variations may be compared to the reflections of some costly stuff, the appearance

\* \*\* My' Lodt' it now on my easel; it is Hyeiyy windy, and didoni, aU health, and the abienoc of every-thing stagnant, and is wonderfully got together." (Leslie, p. 173.)

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of which changes according to the forms it has to cover. I crave indulgence for the crudity of a comparison suggested by my desire to make myself understood. Constable had from the beginning to renounce Rubens' play of forms. The tree, the river^ the sky, all realities, were to him no relative conceptions, which could be made into pictures by modification of their forms, but things which had to substantiate the degree of his objective knowledge. Transmutation into an artistic system could only succeed by turning the natural connection between all things in a landscape to good account. Rubens looked at details at close quarters ; in a wood he saw, not an inseparable whole, but a collection of trees, and he sought to give the illusion of multiplicity by the special elaboration of a tree or a few trees. He could only bring this product of units together by means of a conventional line. If, on the other hand, the painter, as the natural integral conception requires, took the landscape regardless of details, from a fixed point, masses arose which could not be limited by line. Line accordingly gave up its stylistic part to colour, or, to be more precise, to the coloured patch. On this Constable concentrated his whole art. He neglected modelling comparatively, created no arbitrary contours, but suppressed all he could renounce, and thus enriched the surface all the more. He modelled his spots of colour as Rubens had modelled his forms.

We recognise the principle as an eccentric as well as a concentric system in comparison to Rubens method — eccentric in so far as Constable unloosed what Rubens held together, and concentric in so far as he gathered up into masses what the other had left scattered. Modern painting has worked out the system more and more completely. Constable himself demonstrated it in the most logical manner in his sketches. In his pictures we can recognise the difference of the two conceptions more in details than in the whole. The showy horses in the foreground of the later cathedral pictures are clearly the descendants of the Brabantine stallions who passed a contemplative life in the stables of the Chateau de Steen. Rubens painted his favourites as monuments, exaggerated their forms to colossal dimensions, and made it certain that every one who came across such a steed should always have the time in his mind's eye. The stable was but a frame for the colossus, and the landscape round his men and animals was almost the same to him. Even in the two pendants of the Seasons the horses appear as the incarnate life of Nature. They would be impossible, if we took them out of the picture ; it would be dragged awry, the trees would fall ; they seem to carry the whole landscape on their mighty backs. Constable too never neglected his accessory figures. The forays are not so colossal, but they are more compact ; they hang absolutely to the landscape in which they are set, and to no other ; but their relation to their surroundings is calmer, the structure more closely knit. The animals show less. The eye involuntarily hurries away from them to the gleaming water and the silvery trees. We take in fewer single motives; the sounds are softer and quieter. But rich chords are heard among these softer tones. I may give one instance among many. The red of the caparisons of the Flanders team is also always used for the draught horses of the valley farm.

Rubens uses such red patches very often, just as Claude does, as decorative adjuncts. They lie flat, float upon the stream of his material, and have the same value only that they have upon the palette. With Constable, on the other hand, the red becomes an important factor in the structure. He gives the colour a Rubensesque splendour by modelling the patch, and so evokes a new illusion of

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reality inherent in the nature of the pictorial. For in Nature too we should, at the given moment, first note the red gleaming in the sun upon the horses, before we took in its form, and even afterwards this effect of colour remains important for the formation of our impression. Long before Constable, Hobbema had made the experiment, and had begun to turn it to account. Reminiscences of him are to be found in Constable's large pictures, often closely associated with traces of the Antwerp master.

The variation of the effect in *The Rainbow* and the *Chateau de Steen* incited Constable to essay a similar pendant for his various versions of *The Hay-Wain*. In the pictures of this name in the National Gallery and South Kensington, the waggon goes forth empty, as in the *Chateau de Steen*, whereas in the *Cheramy* version it returns, as in *The RainboWy* heavily laden.\*

It is not easy to decide which is the more attractive of the two compositions. In the famous London picture the planes are larger, the farm lies very picturesquely among the trees, and the pool with the cart gives a valuable richness to the foreground. In the much smaller *Hay Wain* in Paris, it is evident that the scene at the back of the farm was represented. Consequently, the haymakers loading the cart, who appear in the distance only in the National Gallery picture, are quite near here, and close the horizon with a fine group, its keynote a gleaming white. The painting has none of the cool silvery effect of the final conception; it is more akin to the large sketch at South Kensington, but it surpasses this in force of expression. The pendants give various modes of expression rather than external variations of the motive. In the London *Hay Wain* we have the idyl. The relation of man and Nature is expressed as one of life-giving peace. Rubens has disappeared; we see an inspired and ennobled Hobbema. Whatever the mood on entering the National Gallery, five minutes before the *Hay Wain* give calm and peace. In the Parisian picture Nature is nearer and more aggressive. The sun blazes. Men and beasts seem to bleed in the heat. Red mingles even with the brown of the twigs. Marvellous is the mighty vault of foliage over the cart, truly that "formidable cathedrale des constructions vegetatives," with which Sensier compared Rousseau's trees. We seem to recognise Rubens' vigour in every twig, in every leaf, in every germ.

Constable built up another kind of mighty edifice with his clouds, which also

reminds us of Rubens at times. His skies are the faces of his landscapes. They reflect the happenings on the earth below, translated into curves, and appear as the seat of the spirit who reigns, welding together the dismembered body beneath. "I have often been advised," he wrote to Fisher, "to consider my sky as a white sheet thrown behind the objects. Certainly, if the sky is obtrusive, as mine are, it is bad; but if it is evaded, as mine are not, it is worse; it must and always shall with me make an effectual part of the composition, j"

Both obtrusiveness and neglect in the treatment of the sky are opposed to unity of composition. Constable's own words, no less than the praise accorded to his skies, even in his life, by critics otherwise hostile, seem to support the charge of obtrusiveness. There may be some truth in his self-reproach. But Constable generalised it over-hastily. In a hundred examples the sky is not too prominent by a single shade. At times the life-long habit of observation of the nrmament, of the "source of light in Nature," may have led to an exaggerated materialisation

\* Painted, no doubt, about the same time, 1821. t Leslie, p. 104.

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of the airv structure. But this defect does not injure the composition; rather, does the decorative element in the picture gain therefrom; it is only the necessary-difference between the consistence of the sky and that of the rest which suffers. Instances are to be found exclusively in the late period; the often painted Stokf Church is a very typical example. The white church seems to have been precipitated from the white mass of the clouds, a condensation of the wild element of the air. The local colour is restricted to differentiation of the white masses by imperceptible tones. The impasto, laid on almost entirely with the palette knife, is proper rather to modelling than to painting, and is brilliantly appropriate to the architectonic detail of the old cathedral. How remote is this Constable from Rubens' luscious handling! And yet even here, where the brush seems to have abdicated all its rights, in the juicy green-rimmed brown of the groups of trees, in the floating shadows, enlivened, where they are deepest, by the deliberate red dots, we trace something of Rubens' fluidity, yielding to the threatening solidification.

The strongly marked sky in such pictures made a greater emphasis of the earth necessary and so the whole became too robust, and the richness of the conception was lost. True, this defect is often redeemed by the unified power of the handling. In many cases, the most loaded among various versions of the same design is the happiest. This is true, for instance, of the pictures known as Spring. The motive is a field with peasants ploughing, a group of trees on the left and the mill — ^in which Constable himself is said to have worked — on the right. The first version is the little sketch of 1814 in the South Kensington Museum

(No. 144), a correct but not very inspiring Nature-study. The same mill painted in Constable's last decade, and now in the Chermay collection, is a much more animated work. Here the palette-knife usurps the function of the brush. The stormy sky is put in in broad masses. Great lumps of pure flattened white are veiled with dark cloudy configurations. On the left, the sky drops gradually lower and lower towards the ground. The earth is much slighter in structure than the convulsed cloud-vault. The proportion convinces absolutely. The particles of colour, 'akin to the widely opened pores of the humus, suggest the heavily breathing soil, expectant of relief. Coal-black are the fat, glistening clods, furrowed by the blood-red plough. Horses and man, even the mill, look small in the turmoil. They will soon yield the stage to the storm, which will plough up the earth more deeply than man's puny shares. The sky overpowers the earth in this picture, but not the form ; and all that is " obtrusive " is the power of the element, which here makes heaven and earth its plaything on a small scale no less powerful than on the vast scale of Rubens.

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### CONSTABLE'S SKETCHES

As long as attention is directed to the most important feature of Constable's work, his sketches will always arouse the enthusiasm they evoke in our own days. When I speak of the sketches, I mean, of course, to exclude those which were purely studies, a large number of which are preserved in the British Museum. Beside those we are considering here they are quite unimportant. As Lord Windsor says. Constable's sketches were not intended for the eyes of strangers, and never for sale.\*

It was not until many decades after his death that the majority of them passed into collections. But this was the case with the works of many masters. What distinguishes them is that they are even free from the utilitarianism which the thought of his future picture imposes on the artist. They were not what is called the first idea of a work, a necessarily provisional form, which only reveals certain sides of the future picture. The slight importance Constable attached to the motive would have made the greater number of them superfluous, had this been so. Besides, every comparison of them with the pictures shows the absence of all essential relation between the two. The sketches were made for their own sakes. Their technique is peculiarly their own. Their form does not permit of completion. On the other hand, they cannot be classed with the small pictures which Nasmyth, Callcott and others painted before and simultaneously. Even though the small examples of these artists are far superior to their larger works, they yet betray that dependence on the Dutchmen which reduced so many

painters of J their period to the status of epigoni. Constable's relation to the und of Hobbema seems, on the contrary, to disappear altogether in the sketches, and nothing is more conspicuously absent in them than the seductive nicety of the small Anglo-Dutch picture. He is never greater than here, and I say greater advisedly, for the particles of paint are much more roughly treated than in the pictures. The sketches were a kind of journal. That which is lacking in Constable's letters and written memoranda is richly supplied in these. Many of the little panels have a ticket on the back with the date and hour of execution. They were painted records of events which turned on atmosphere and light. The mode of these occurrences forced the easygoing painter to work with the utmost rapidity. The complexity of the phenomenon demanded a perfectly simple and legible handwriting.

Holland's sedate landscape painters had known nothing of such requirements. For them too Nature was the guide for art ; they painted what they saw, each according to his temperament, but above all, they wanted to paint pictures. This was Constable's last consideration. Nor can it be said that he was urged on by his temperament. He seems to have been an equable man, unvexed by personal ambition. He behaved as inconspicuously as possible. Necessity urged him to follow after certain things which could only be obtained in th^  
♦ '<Johii Constable," London, 1903, p.\_i88.

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way. This necessity arose from the times, from the instinct of progress ; the spur of research guided his brush.

With Constable the history of those factors that make for art\*production — another history of development, which still awaits its chronicler — entered upon a new phase. His sketches are the first and most memorable steps of a painting which finds itself bereft of all the art vehicles of earlier ages. In the primitive epoch Nature was the corrective for tendencies which in themselves were completly independent of Nature. To the great realists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was a new element which, above all, had to be reproduced. That which excluded a destructive literalness was not the will of the individual, but the

Bescriptions of the guilds. These lost their authority even in seventeendi-century olland, and were entirely broken down by the French Revolution. For the new age the reproduction of Nature was the one artistic aim that remained. This purpose threatened to annihilate art as soon as it was achieved, because then the powers of the artist were robbed of their last discipline. We may take it that the degree of realism which Hobbema and Ruysdael offered in their conceptions of Nature, was not above the level that is now achieved by mechanical means, t./., that the art-stimulants arising from the Nature of their day would, relatively

speaking, find satisfaction to-day in amateur photography. By this I do not of course mean that Dutch pictures might be manufactured nowadays by photographic processes. New requirements obviated such a danger. That which had stirred the longing of Ruysdael and Hobbema was outshone by aims which lay beyond the visible world of Dutch models, and so new inventions became necessary to the artist. Art obtained new stimulants.

Henry Richter, a little known contemporary of Constable's, wrote an amusing colloquy between Rembrandt, Rubens, Teniers, Cuyp and other great shades of the past, with modern artists of the author's period.\* The conversation turns on the new discovery of daylight, the <sup>\*</sup>plein air" painting of the period, and in spite of the calm proper to the ghostly disputants, we note the warmth with which then as now, the right methods are debated, the right colour, the right light, and everything else bearing on the theme. Nature. At the close, one of the living ventures to ask the illustrious dead what results they expect from the introduction of the newly discovered daylight into the pictures of the moderns. Rembrandt and Cuyp welcome it with effusive enthusiasm, and Cuyp even goes so far as to propose that instead of loan exhibitions of famous masters, there should be yearly demonstrations of honest studies of light with decent premiums and substantial purchases. Thus, at a relatively small cost a very valuable school for the study of colour would arise, in which laymen and artists alike might educate themselves in the knowledge of Nature.

The same demands will continue to be formulated with a little more or a little less naivety in similar circumstances. We cannot conceive of development without this fiction. Art as an end in itself is of course conceivable objectively as a source of the highest joy apart from any purpose<sup>^</sup> but not subjectively, i.e. in the hands of the artist. It is beyond our powers of conception that important persons can give themselves up to an abstraction with the intensity necessary for the creation of a work of art. The <sup>^</sup>"expression of personality" is merely a paraphrase post festum. No artist of to-day feels the force that urges to such expression without a yearning after Nature. It was Nature, then, which inspired Constable. Hitherto

- «< Daylight, a recent discovery in the art of Painting.\*\* Ackermann. London. 1817.

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the intensity of his conception of Nature has been unsurpassed, and it is a question whether it could be greater. This applies not only to the domain of his art. We find nothing in the literature of his country that corresponds to his aspirations, nothing in that of contemporary France, far less of Germany. J. J. Rousseau's hymns to Nature are too essentially hymns even to suggest a like intimacy of relation. The letters of the youthful Flaubert, who was fifteen when Constable died, show the beginnings of such a spirit in poetry. Only in the time of an individual comprehension of art transcending that of every

other epoch could Nature have been understood as it was by this great man. Even now the delicate bloom of the naturalism in Flaubert's letters is so unique, that it can be better defined by comparison with Constable than with a fellow craftsman. And in like manner the spirit in Constable's sketches seems to me to be better suggested by a comparison with the poet than by some parallel in art history.

That which places Constable's so-called finished pictures beneath the sketches, is the painter's respect for an obsolete guild prescription. It is no cheap respect, consciously speculative, but rather a slight fetter of instinct. Perhaps it was unavoidable. In his sketches Constable ventured upon things which we can readily believe required a new generation to make them into pictures. At the same time, I do not overlook the difficulty of distinguishing between Constable's sketches and his pictures, and, setting aside late pictures such as the Cenotaph J to formulate the difference clearly. The format is not always a criterion even for the highest quality of Constable. There are works considerably larger than the generality of his small pictures, which come very near in excellence to the most subtle of the sketches.

Two qualities characterise the sketches. A direct interpretation of Nature, of which it is difficult to speak unless the pictures are before one, and of which reproductions can give no idea ; and an effect I cannot, taking into account the poverty of our speech, describe otherwise than as decorative. The most effective element in both qualities is their association. The latest, and in particular the latest English art movement, has not accustomed us to the conjunction of decorative effects with naturalistic works, and hence the modern conception has arisen, that the decorative quality of a work of art is in proportion to its remoteness from Nature. The logical consequence of this idea leads to the wall-paper, and excludes painting as such entirely. In Constable, decoration is only that which also subserves the highest purpose of art, conception, the adornment of a surface within whose tiny bounds the cosmos manifests all its richness.

For the last few years, a number of Constable's sketches have been hanging in the National Gallery, in the corner of the room where the large examples are exhibited. They attract the eye as if they were so many lights, inviting attention, in spite of their small size, at a distance from which, in general, only large works would be noticed. We see nothing of the incident represented. The eye seeks them without consulting the mind, because they offer a most agreeable and beneficent surface. They produce the effects of a fine carpet, but surpass the textile in beauty by reason of their greater richness and variety. Just as a skilful jeweller is not only careful to procure costly stones, to produce harmonies with the colour-effects of the various parts, but also to have each stone so cut that it will show most fire and be employed to the greatest advantage, so Constable not only juxtaposed harmonious colour effects, but with palette-knife, brush, and



## CONSTABLE: COAST SCENE

CHERAMY COLLECTION, PARIS

### CONSTABLE'S SKETCHES 129

fingers formed each individual particle of pigment, and thus enhanced the splendour of the whole far beyond the given qualities of the material. And all this, not for the sake of splendour, for which no purpose can be imagined sufficiently lofty to exclude every thought of materialism, but in order to give an image of Nature in the shortest possible manner, a reproduction which is concrete, because it fixes a clearly determined section, yet is the highest abstraction, because at the same time it depicts not only a state but growth, less the moment than the forces that led to it. Such is the impression produced by the Dedham Vale in the National Gallery, or the Hampstead Heath sketch in the Chéramy collection — a flood of colour, the flaming vigour of which suggests I know not what mystical connection of the artist with the earth he represented. On the back he wrote after the date— 9 August, 1823 — “Stormy evening after a fine day. It rained all the next day.” This means, that such was the impression made by Nature at that moment on a man of Constable's extraordinarily subtle senses. We feel as if he had been conscious of such variations of effect in the soil, and was himself part of the things he painted — nerve and quivering sensation rather than creator.

These little words might be more aptly called sketches of Nature than sketches for pictures, representations of elementary conditions divined rather than seen. In them the earth does not appear picturesque, though nothing non-pictorial has gone to the rendering, but active, a great procreative element, embracing all existence.

Of such sketches Constable produced hundreds. There is a whole roomful at South Kensington ; they hang modestly on the staircase of the Diploma Gallery, and rouse high expectations of what is to follow in the rooms beyond. In the Tate Gallery they form almost the sole precious asset in the cargo of contemporary English art. On the Continent, Chéramy comes nearest to the English collections with a series of some thirty, for the most part brilliant words. Certain dealers in Paris and at Munich, have also formed collections of some importance. Among the Continental museums other than the Louvre, the Berlin Gallery owns two little landscapes on the Stour, not of the first quality, and the Munich Pinacothek a fine sketch of Hampstead Heath.

The variety of the sketches makes it impossible to classify them. We can group the large pictures according to technique, and trace a development therein —

but this is impossible with the sketches. The most remarkable thing about them, especially in the middle period, is the conjunction of the carpet-like spotty effects with a gliding brush-stroke of the utmost softness. One or two little sea-pieces at South Kensington painted at Brighton in 1824, illustrate the rarer, more supple method very distinctly. It is shown even more richly in Cheraamy's sea-piece, . A Coast Scene with Fishing Boat. Here we are not reminded of De Vlieger or Van de Cappelle. Even the most refined work of these subtle masters have not the characteristic quality of Constable. Their substance is, roughly speaking, more material, thin rather than delicate. They set us at once in a tender atmosphere, and are content to extend this condition, not allowing us to co-operate in its creation. They give the anomaly of an effect of nature rather than an evidence of their power of creation. Constable suggests our contemporaries, and the best of these, Manet above all. Things like this little Coast Scene are the first evidences of that conception of Nature which we call Impressionism, and give indications of everything that Manet brought into the same domain, in nuce, of course, but the instances are by no means isolated or accidental. The period after the

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years of apprenticeship, that of Constable's mellowest painting, which many connoisseurs prefer to all the rest, is rich in such indications. The Bridge over the Mole of 1807 in the Alexander Young collection, has a striking affinity with Corot's broad manner, which was adopted by the Impressionists. At South Kensington there are several pictures of medium size, unsurpassable models of that grace of modern brushing, which so easily makes us forget its fragility. No Whistler ever achieved the effect, half smears, half strokes, and yet perfect construction, of the landscape on the Stour (No. 325), with the boats in the foreground, and the vapourous silhouette of Dedham church on the horizon, or the powerful Nature built up of broad touches of the other landscape, Flatford Mill. To about the same time — 1810 — we owe the profile of a girl in the same collection, a work with which we should never have credited the painter of the tiresome portraits executed a few years earlier. It is a remarkable evidence of the master's comprehensive gifts. The flesh painting stultifies all our preconceptions of a landscape painter's art, and suggests that Constable might have become one of the great painters of women, if he had not preferred his trees and windmills. Here only do we note a connection between Constable and the famous school of his country. In this girlish profile there lurks a higher conception of the grace of him who immortalised the features of Lady Hamilton. There is the same virtuosity, modelling with the brush and dispensing with any preliminary drawing, but it has this advantage, that it does not arrest us as a tour de force. The delicately suggestive method is to be found also among the English masters of the eighteenth century, and it must be admitted that their traditional dexterity was helpful to Constable,

but more serious than they, he did not make dexterity his aim. His purpose was not to give a summary idea of grace, but, as in his landscapes, to reflect Nature. It is not that the intention is nobler — as to this, there may be two opinions — but the painter's power of expression is greater. In this single head we see a new aspect of Constable; the impression we have received of his suppleness and tenderness, purified by the influence of Rubens, is deepened, and another experience is added to the rest. With the older English masters we are always marking time. And this difference does away with the affinity which the historian might infer from a certain similarity of technique. Our first impression, as we stand before this head, suggests, not Romney and his contemporaries, but Manet.\* And the impression persists, although, on closer comparison with a head by Manet, we are surprised at the difference of character.

Constable was never younger than at this period. One can imagine nothing daintier than the little Village Fair of 1810 at South Kensington, the booths with the swarming crowd, whose liveliness of movement electrifies us, although we are quite unable to distinguish bodies, or even faces. So too he has depicted life in the Thames Docks in London with dots of colour that become animate. The persons in some of the Hampstead sketches are not much bigger than pin-heads. Three such dots in various colours constitute a group, a dozen a many-headed multitude ; it is impossible to imagine greater precision than we evolve from what is shown us.

When Constable took over the helm, this pointillisme had already a glorious international history. The Canaletti owed it their rococo pictures. They, for their part, had not invented the technique themselves, although it suited them as if it had been made expressly for them. Canaletto's gifted friend, Tiepolo,

\* The likeness has been pointed out by Holmes and other English writers.

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was distinguished from his great predecessors by the fact that he expressed in dots what they had leisure to write down calmly. Italy would scarcely have discovered this technique without foreign intervention ; it was too alien to the old tradition of the land. Long before Tiepolo, it had been practised in Holland. The greatest of the Dutchmen had not disdained to beautify the ornament of his garments by its means. His successors developed the method, and Vermeer fashioned his canal out of sparkling dots. The Dutchmen who went to Italy both gave and received. They recognised the increase of charm to be got by combination with the richer colour of the Italians, noted the effect of the little luminous central

groups in Claude's landscapes and the possibility of welding those isolated decorative details, which Claude looked upon as mere adjuncts and often had put in by other hands, into closer union with the rest. In many cases Claude polished the blue, yellow and red of the groups to smooth surfaces, letting them appear as if the light played about them rather than as luminous themselves, and placing them preferably in the cool shadow, where their delightful gesture provided plenty of variety. The Dutch were less careful, aiming rather at the vitality of the little figures than at their splendour. The greatest among them never use colour as decoration, but to enhance the naturalness of expression.

Canaletto had to choose between the two conceptions. He did not decide for either, but took with great taste from each. Belotto and certain anonymous imitators who cared more for the carnival delights of the moment than for the future of painting, sometimes reduced their pictures to a primitive dance of more or less rounded dots. Their mannerism is too gay and harmless to excite resentment. One, to whom the Muses had given all lovely things, brought a higher conception into the game. Guardi, with a truer pictorial instinct, checked the over facile rhythm of his great teacher and chose imity, intent at once on greater richness and more intimate connection. His well-built vessels laden with gaily coloured wares sail like stately spice warehouses on the Grand Canal. The little figures in the Piazza have all the rococo daintiness ; but the colour, more supple than in the pictures of his predecessors, not only clothes the multitude, but animates it. This is more sincere as art, and higher as taste. His arcades are as expressive as portraits, and far surpass the contemporary works of the French architectural painters. He gave back to the technique of dots (pointillisme) the relative importance bestowed upon it by the Dutch, but enriched it with all the results of the intermediate stages.

It is quite certain that the successes of these artists were not without their influence in England, to which country Canaletto paid a visit in 1746 that lasted two years. It is the home of many brilliant works of his school. The beautiful view of the Thames by an unknown English painter of the second half of the eighteenth century in the National Gallery (No. 1681) is not the only evidence of his influence. Guardi's traces are more easily followed. Constable's younger compatriot, Bonington, gave himself up unreservedly to the Venetian when he went to Italy on the conclusion of his years of study in Paris. Cheramy has two small views of the Piazza of St. Mark, one of which might be a free copy on a small scale of the beautiful Guardi formerly in the possession of the Princesse Mathilde.\* At this time Bonington had nothing to substitute for the golden tones of his prototype, and contented himself by replacing the costume and the whole spirit of the Venetian dix-huitième siècle with the costume of his period, not without

\* No. 62 in the catalogue of the sale at the Hôtel Drouot, Paris, in 1904.

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prejudice to the results. The impressiveness of the exemplar makes way for a stiff frostiness, and the hard blue sky is a poor substitute for Guardi's magical atmosphere. It was not long, however, before Bonington threw off this allegiance for a nobler one. But until his early death, the landscapes of Guardi's school did him good service.

Whether Constable took the 'glittering points' of which MacCoU speaks in his chapter on Constable from the same source is an open question. He was made of sterner stuff than Bonington, and was not so easily influenced. But I am inclined to think that the Venetians of the eighteenth century had some share in the reverence he accorded to their predecessors. Many of the small pictures attest this, Cheramy's sketch of the Isle of Wight among others. From a hill in the foreground a company of soldiers and women in holiday dress contemplate the landscape. The gay tints of the uniforms stand out with the brilliance of lightning against the blue-green of the vaporous landscape. The relation is yet more evident in the remarkable view of the Thames Docks in the same collection, where the boats are rendered by white dots upon the blue-gray water. In this little picture too, we recognise one of the many bridges to Windsor who, armed with Constable and Japan, returned again to Venice, to get a new note out of the instrument. In him the last echo of Canaletto, the master he placed above all others, died away.

Turner and the whole of the English landscape painters make use of the dot as an accent. Gainsborough had already applied it to his little blond sketches which Constable diligently studied. For Turner they were a refuge, the means by which he sought to give his fantasies the handling of oil-pictures, an expedient which, however, never succeeded in concealing the character of the 'large water-colours.' Constable too, at the beginning of his career, had accepted the tradition of the English water-colour painters. From 1801 to 1806 he was a good deal under the influence of Cozens, whom he once declared to be the greatest of landscape painters, and more particularly of Girtin. The majority of the numerous water-colour drawings in South Kensington were painted in 1806, and represent Constable's most important production of this year. The coming master found in Girtin a counterpoise both against Claude and the Dutchmen, and a preparation for Rubens. After a short apprenticeship, during which he did not disdain to copy Girtin, and also painted works of his own which are scarcely distinguishable from those of the other, he began to subordinate the methods he had acquired to his new aims. Turner contented himself with transferring Girtin to canvas. Constable accomplished the amalgamation of the water-colour tradition, a valuable affluent of English art, with the main stream, because he did not allow one stimulant or the other to prescribe an artistic ideal to him, which

would in either case have circumscribed his development, but applied the means to a better understanding of Nature. The View of Windermere of 1807 still shows traces of the water-colour, the arrangement of the masses and the summary character of the colour point to Girtin, more especially the background with the shrouded blue-gray plateau, on which the yellow light of the sun is striking. Girtin seems to have joined hands with Gainsborough. The dainty and appetising aspects of the scene come from the one, the romanticism of the sequestered shade from the other. The technique accentuates the dual character of the picture. The thin tones are powdered in all the illuminated portions with little

\* <\* Nineteenth Century Art" (J. Maclehoie, Glat^w, 1903), p. 74.

## CONSTABLE: JUBILEE AT EAST BERGHOLT AFTER WATERLOO

CH^RAMY COLLECTION, PARIS

### CONSTABLE'S SKETCHES 133

coloiir-particles of various sizes. These dots produce variety, and give relief to a detail here and there which would otherwise be too shadowy, but their eSect is not akin to that of the strokes and splashes in the pictures painted a few years later. Whereas later Constable's units resemble the words in a short sentence, the points here play the part of inter^punctuation, and many of them are like the dash by which emotional writers suggest unformulated ideas. In this picture, a very typical example of his early period. Constable approaches his contemporary compatriots. He never came so near to Turner again, more especially in the mountainous background, where the dainty details are evolved from a mysterious vapour, beneath a sky which is really ^\* evaded," which gives little presage of the mighty vaults the later Constable was wont to build over his compositions, and is rather a convenient background than an organic part of the composition. The painter still seeks to surpass the aquarellist by his material. And yet the little work gives some indication of the master who was to come. It has none of Turner's theatrical frippery. The loose and indefinite character of the forms is due to lack of skill. We feel that the simplicity of this beginning will not be prejudicial to growth. The love of Nature, which is less at home in the mountains than in the quiet valley, which provided the red-coated oarsman in the boat, and the red-roofed mill in the shade of the wood, is of good augury. It is true that this unconvincing mill gives little promise of the later Constable's mill pictures.

Some few years later the sparkling points had become the eyes of his landscapes ; they stood in the right places and regulated the whole picture. They lose their arbitrary and supplemental aspect, and are distributed with more semblance of

inevitability. The sketches become sections, showing a deeper and more serious conception ; the audacity of the youth becomes the resolution of the man. From about 1820 onwards Constable was completely master of his means, as far as the sketches are concerned. He worked in masses, and in a manner consonant with masses. His broad handling did not impair the animation we have noted in early sketches such as the Village Fair of 1810. But the piquant note gave way to stronger expression. The technique of *Cheramy's Jubilee at East Bergholt* after Waterloo recalls that of the wonderful sketch for the Salisbury Cathedral in the National Gallery (No. 18 14), painted in 1831, and may have been executed a few years earlier. Constable witnessed the occurrence in 1824. In a public square surrounded by trees a many-headed crowd has gathered to see the hanging in «ffigy of the hated Corsican. The gallows rise beside a gigantic cream-white flag, and from it dangles a stuffed figure of Napoleon. Only the movement of the comical episode is recorded, nay, the movement seems to be itself the episode, the rhythm of the black and white multitude, of the flags, the trees, the clouds, «ven of the houses. He treats his fellow creatures yet more summarily in the many sketches for his inauguration of Waterloo Bridge in 1817. He tended more and more to a synthesis for the life of the cosmos, and to suppression of detail, under which head he conceived of man in landscape.

Much of this freshness is lost in Constable's large pictures. A great deal of the loss is hardly avoidable. Energy, making use of larger and more versatile forms, naturally loses in concentration what it gains in extent. But Constable's loss was not solely of this normal kind. It was at once larger and smaller. If we compare the finished picture of 1819, *The White Horse* ^ in the Pierpont Morgan collection, with Mr. Alexander Young's sketch, we can scarcely believe that both are not only by the same master, but of the same period-^the same year indeed.

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according to Holmes. Both are wonderful things. The finished picture is the greatest possible culmination of the work begun by the Dutchmen ; an idyl of Nature with all the customary details, everything faithfully reproduced in perfect harmony^ and we admire both the perfection and the wise economy which could give so many things, without letting them appear too numerous. The sketch bears the same relation to it as does a late Rembrandt to a Hobbema. All the typical character of Dutch landscape has been blown away. There are no details. Where the boat appears in the picture, stretches the mighty black mass of the trees. Even the chief motives are indeterminate. Whether the surface in the foreground represents water or dry land can only be said by one who remembers the picture. A few roofs in the background are the only concrete touches save the trees. But the mind of the spectator has long since flown over the keyboard of objective conception and rejoices in the splendour of the gigantic form, a world apart from delight in the reality of a boat, a tree, a pool of water. The truth of a

symbol of earth and sky, of elementary forces, has been revealed to him. The knowledge that the same bit of Nature has served for model in both pictures is disquieting. We are uneasy at the anomaly of two such opposite forms of expression simultaneously used. The usual antithesis of sketch and picture does not cover it. The sketch in the Young collection and the Pierpont Morgan picture could never have borne the implied relation one to another\* This anomaly increases the difficulty of deciding which of the two forms Constable esteemed more highly. We are tempted to call the Young picture poetry and the other prose, without getting to the root of the matter. For the prose of a poet who is also a master of prose will always reveal the peculiarities of conception shown in his verse. But in Constable's case we often have the impression that his works are not only by different persons, but due to different conceptions of the world. And the phenomenon is not diminished by the circumstance that the results of both conceptions are masterpieces.

Sometimes we shall decide unreservedly in favour of the sketches, especially in the works of the last period. Format and definition add nothing in these cases ; the details are relatively obtrusive, the curt expression is lost. On the other hand, it would be unjust to condemn all Constable's later work as inferior. It comprises too many, if not of his finest, at any rate of his ripest works, in which there is scarcely a hint of failing powers. In a summary review such as the present, we shall have to admit that the last five years of his life contributed little to the great sum of his achievement, if we except one or two memorable works. He confined himself for the most part to transformations of existing works, and broke no new ground. His English biographers refer this cessation of creative activity to technique, and make his exaggerated use of the palette-knife responsible. They are so far right, that most of the later works are spread upon the canvas rather than painted. Whereas in his youth Constable began with the brush, and only used the palette-knife to give breadth to the brush, at certain moments in later life he began his compositions with the knife, and used the brush for ornamentation. He felt expression slipping away from him, and tried to indemnify himself by exaggeration of method. To preserve unity, he gave up the differentiation with which he had spoilt us in the beginning. The result was an increase of breadth without apparent justification, and, more frequently, an exaggerated spottiness. The Cenotaph of 1836, the year of Constable's death, is still brilliant, but we feel as if the artist's whole purpose had been exhausted with this material effects

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The glittering points of the leaves, used in former pictures for decoration, are the design itself here. In other examples, the mosaic seems to have been made for the sake of mosaic, never in the sketches, strange to say, where the decorative value might justify such exaggeration, but in the less decorative large pictures. We miss the breath of Nature under the large splashes of colour. Others again, such



as the Romantic Mousey decompose the form which should have been poetised, and are far inferior to similar motives of the earlier period. And yet together with the Romantic House at the Royal Academy Exhibition of 1832, appeared the grandiose Waterloo Bridge^ the result of a labour of many years, a work which in itself justifies revision of an over hasty verdict on the last period.

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That which is often made a reproach to critics of modern art, that they praise even the weaknesses of their heroes, is certainly inapplicable to our criticism of the first modern. We make relatively larger demands upon him than upon the average greatness of the transition period. A Wilson or a Gainsborough always fares better^ Because from the first they only keep us at a moderate distance from the normal, and we are apt to become too generous in our appreciations of the relative. We are inordinately grateful to Turner, when for once we find him productive, and all his braggadocio does not prevent us from believing him when for once he speaks the truth. Constable, who even in the weak moments of his last period is immeasurably superior to his fellows, we judge by his incomparable display of power, even in those hours of exhaustion when he can no longer offer us the same wealth of gifts.

But this criticism also shows the peculiarity of our attitude to its object. Constable has not yet become historical to us ; we are so near to him, that we still watch every change in his fortunes with anxiety. We follow him like a favourite racehorse, and every little swerve wrings an exclamation from us. He will not become historical until our whole epoch has attained the platonic dignity of historical existence. This knowledge makes us cherish his qualities and his weaknesses as our own characteristics, gives us confidence in the course we are following, and sharpens our perception of obstacles. It also over-steps the limits set by nationality. All Constable's relations to his compatriots seem to us insignificant, as compared with the ties that bind him to - that cosmos of modern art which was revealed by him, and is still growing. It may well fill every modern Englishman with joy to follow the course on which Constable accomplished the last and greatest portion of culture's task, the liberation of English art from rococo influences. His countrymen may be justly proud of the knowledge that the grandson carried out the promise of the grandfather Hogarth, to get Art from Nature, and that he gave a most fruitful interpretation to the gospel of "variety." But spirits still greater than his English predecessors were at work in Constable. Behind the shades of Hogarth, Wilson, and Gainsborough,

rise Rubens, Claude and Rembrandt. This is the reason that both the foreigner and the cosmopolitan Englishman feel a sympathy with Constable more far-reaching than the sentiment rooted in the soil which he evokes in many of his fellow countrymen. We cannot say as much of any of his contemporaries in England. However much we may admire Crome or WiUde, we are always conscious of a certain provincialism in them, which robs their speech of what may be called the classic, the universal accent. Constable's absolute, not his relative accomplishment, and even more the healthiness of his ideal, give him a place in the art-life of all progressive nations.

History bears persistent testimony to what I may call the Europeanism of

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Constable. Like Hogarth, he left little trace in England. But if in Hogarth's case our regret at this is softened by our consciousness that it was not easy in his day to choose out the universal and permanent elements from the complexity of the manifestation, we are at a loss to explain England's relation to her greatest son. No benefit was derived from him during his lifetime. His fame was established by a few intimate friends. This is not very exceptional. But when he died, he ceased to exist for England, not only for the public but also for art. Not only did no one make use of his legacy, but with it his countrymen renounced the movement which had brought him forth. English landscape already existed when Constable appeared. What he added to it was enough to have made England at one stroke the leader of European art. One might have supposed that the generation which grew up with the picture of Waterloo Bridge would have felt irresistibly impelled to carry on what this work had begun. Nothing of the sort happened. Bonington was exhausted long before Constable himself laid down the brush, and even had he not been stricken down untimely, he would never have been the heir of Constable. He was unfitted for the office, not by incapacity, but by his tendencies. Links between the two were not lacking ; Bonington once essayed a composition in the style of the Hay Wain of Italian origin. He was not of the same fibre. The picture of his housekeeper in the Louvre is the only one of his works which has the vigorous directness of manner characteristic of his great friend. It is not his supreme work, indeed, it has not even his typical qualities, his extraordinary delicacy of taste and his tender grace of touch and colour. But it might be possible to conceive of this as a bridge to Constable and beyond him. It remained an isolated effort. The true Bonington threw in his lot with the French colourists who hailed from Venice, and from that Rubens who invented flesh-painting — ^not from him who dwelt among peasants and horses in the Chateau de Steen. In that room of the Wallace Collection where the relations between Frudhon, Delacroix, Decamps, Isabey, Diaz and Meissonier are as evident as if they had worked in the same studio, the unique collection of Bonington's works is in the right place. No one would take them

to be the work of an Englishman of Constable's school. The gaily coloured costumes common to Bonington, Wilkie, and Etty, show his Anglicism in no very favourable light.

William MoUer mingled an insipid romanticism with Constable's gravity, and made clever sketches with a skill as remote from his prototype as Dantsic from Bergholt. In our own times again an Anglo-German — ^Muhrmann — has made essays in Constable's manner.

But apart from this Anglo-Frenchman and German-Englishman nothing remains of Constable in his native land. Btlrger noticed the sterility of his influence in England,\* and Lord Windsor, who quotes the passage, remark that ^ this may have been true in BQrger's time : " Up to 1860 there is little evidence ' of Constable's influence, and though there is plenty of it now, it has come less directly from him than coloured, as it were, through French spectacles." t

This " plenty " seems to reduce itself to one instance, that of the Anglo-American whistler, whose ephemeral relation to Constable will be examined in a subsequent chapter. With this hardly legitimate exception there has been nothing in the last forty years to modify BORger's pronouncement. To accept Holmes'

♦ «' Histoirc dcs Pcintrei." 186j.

t "Conitable.\*" 1903.

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demonstration of a following in contemporaiy England, one must either be an Englishman, or have little perception of Constable.\*

What his fatherland neglected was taken over by the Continent\* Strange as this neglect may seem, the rapidity with which Europe assimilated Constable is even more remarkable. The movement began in Paris. France had the necessary conditions for the part. Not the culture of her painters — ^this sprang from a tradition alien to Constable and was rather of a nature to make her hostile to him — but a purpose. France needed what Constable had to give. The Empire had driven out the rococo with violence and had created a condition answering to an abnormal state of national excitement, which could only be prolonged by the decorative requirements of an Imperator. The intensification of revolutionary ideas which had crowned the eighteenth cen\* tuiy, could not subsist after Napoleon's abdication, and was fam to seek the basis of an art in harmony with the portion of the race that was capable of development. At this moment it was discovered what had arisen on the other side of the Channel, an art following after Nature with the utmost independence.

Archaeology had not been superseded there ; it seemed never to have troubled any one seriously. Results even more brilliant than those of David had not succeeded in concealing the mechanical nature of an artistic doctrine, the exact opposite of which was flourishing in England. Freedom, the dream of the young generation, had long been a normal form of artistic practice there, and it was made clear to the disinherited, that it was possible to paint without the receipts that had been lost in the Revolution, and also without those new ones whose author had been driven out in 1816 with Napoleon. This enormous difference between the tendencies of the two nations must be borne in mind, if we would understand the hymns of praise sung by Frenchmen to English painters of the second rank. The tendency was so astonishing to them, that they had no leisure to criticise its exponents. The young Frenchman saw the traditional English freedom with eyes sharpened by enthusiasm. Not only did contemporaries paint on national principles ; their fathers and grandfathers had done the same, and what they had left undone, what, it might be hoped, could be done better, was a further cause for gratitude in those who came after. The doctrine, like all logical ideas, was more effectual than the example.

Bonington was one of its disseminators. The friend of Géricault and Delacroix, with the suggestive faculty of a delicate susceptibility, conscious of the advantages derived from a mixture of French and English culture in his own works, he was able both by his words and by his works to forward that rapprochement of the two nations, so often realised in the eighteenth century. Géricault was the first to take the journey to London. In a letter of May 6, 1821, he wrote to his friend Horace Vernet, that his (Vernet's) talent lacked nothing but " d'être trempé à la Picole anglaise." His enthusiasm for the Royal Academy Exhibition was unbounded. " Vous ne pouvez pas vous faire une idée des beaux portraits de cette année, d'un grand nombre de paysages et de tableaux de genre, des animaux peints par Ward et par Landseer, âgés de dix-huit ans : les maîtres n'ont rien produit de mieux en ce genre ; il ne faut point rougir de retourner à Paris ; on ne peut arriver au beau dans les arts que par des comparaisons. Chaque école a son caractère. Si l'on pouvait parvenir à la réunion de toutes les qualités, n'aurait-on pas atteint la perfection ? . . . Je faisais à l'Exposition le vœu de voir placés dans

♦ "John Constable" Holmes, p. 205.

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notre Musée une quantité des tableaux que j'avais sous les yeux. Je désirais cela comme une leçon qui serait plus utile que de penser longtemps. Que je voudrais pouvoir montrer aux plus habiles même plusieurs portraits qui ressemblent tant à la nature, dont les poses faciles ne laissent rien à désirer, et dont on peut vraiment dire qu'il ne leur manque que la parole. Combien aussi seraient utiles à voir les expressions touchantes de Wilkie (he writes Wilky). Dans un petit tab-

lean, et d'un sujet des plus simples il a su tirer un parti admirable. La scene se passe aux Invalides ; il suppose qu'i la nouvelle d'une victoire, ces v^tirans se riunissent pour lire le bulletin et se rijouir. Il a varié tons ses caracteres avec bien du sentiment. Je ne vous parlerai que d'une seule figure qui m'a paru la plus pariaite et dont la pose et l'expression arrachent les larmes quelque bon que Ton tienne. C'est une femme d'un soldat qui, occupde de son mari, parcourt d'un oeil inquiet et hagard la liste des morts • • • Votre imagination vous dira tout ce que son visage dicomposi exprime. Il n'y a ni crêpes, ni deuil ; le vin au contraire coule k toutes les tables, et le del n'est point sillonné d'eclairs d'un prisage funeste. Il arrive cependant au dernier pathétique comme la nature elle-même. Je ne crains pas que vous me taxiez d'anglomanie ; vous savez comme moi ce que nous avons de bon et ce qui nous manque."

We are not surprised to find that at this primitive stage of perception GMcault had no word of appreciation for Constable's Hay Wain which appeared for the first time at this exhibition. True, this may have been due to the recipient of the letter, to whom the anecdotes of the English school would certainly have appealed more than its loftier flights. But that the painter's instinct had already left the secondary phase of such interest far behind is shown by the noble

Picture of the Epsom races painted this year, especially by the little gem in the Louvre, in the brilliant freshness of colour and touch of which the best art of England manifests its vivifying influence. Among Géricault's figure-subjects, painted with flaming red touches, the magnificent head in the Eissler collection at Vienna shows this influence the most clearly\*

At the instance of their young admirers in France, the Englishmen made their first appearance at a Paris Salon in 1824. The exhibitors were Bonington, who had been seen there before. Constable, Lawrence, Copley Fielding, Thales Fielding, Harding and William Wyld.\* Constable, with his Hay Wain his Lock on the Stour^ and one of his small Hampstead Heath pictures, was hailed at once both by friend and foe as the leader of the invasion. The opponents were, of course, in the majority. The coarser spirits were represented by the anonymous critic who summed up all objections to the Hay Wain in the famous comparison of the sponge soaked in colour and thrown at the canvas. The opinion of the more moderate found utterance in the criticism of Stendhal, who, while admitting the merits of the works, regretfully pointed out their lack of idealism, or in the more drastic phrase in which it was asserted that these hymns to Nature were beautiful, but "meant nothing." Constable was much amused, and quoted a phrase of Northcote's against the Parisians : "They know as little of Nature as a hackney coach-horse does of a pasture." Some intelligent persons of Delacroix' circle divined that the performances of the English visitors would leave permanent traces. They had shared the spontaneous reaction of the young painter of the Massacre de SciOy who, swiftly making up his mind, essayed to turn the new

\* Bazalgette enumerates the pictures in *Ui* preface, and 'gives a<sup>^</sup> interesting selection from the Parisian criticism.

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experience to account by adopting Constable's method of division in his lately finished Salon picture. I shall try in a subsequent chapter to show the further consequences of the impression in the whole development of the French leader. Delacroix waxed enthusiastic not only over Constable, but over the novelty of the whole English school, even though he did not go quite so far as Gericault. His letters from London in 1825 show that he remained the Frenchman in England. " L'Angleterre me semble peu amusante," he writes to Pierret : <sup>^</sup> Il n'y aurait qu'un motif bien puissant comme, par exemple, d'y faire des affaires qui put m'y retenir." \*

He thought highly of Lawrence : <sup>^</sup> La fleur de la politesse et un véritable peintre de grands seigneurs ; " still more highly of Wilkie, especially in his sketches — <sup>^</sup> il gate régulièrement ce qu'il fait de beau " — but gives the palm to Bonington, Turner and Constable. With Bonington, whose acquaintance he had already made in 1819, he shared a studio after returning from England, and the companionship was not unprofitable to him. " J'ai eu quelque temps Bonington dans mon atelier," he writes to Soulier in 1826. " J'ai bien regretté que tu n'y sois pas. Il y a terriblement à gagner dans la société de ce luron-là, et je te jure que je m'en suis bien trouvé." Later on he found occasion to modify, not his sympathy with the man, who always remained dearer to him than any other Englishman, but his admiration for the artist. He recognised the danger of dexterity in Bonington's " touche coquette." . . . " Sa main entraînait, et c'est ce sacrifice des plus nobles qualités à une malheureuse facilité, qui fait choir aujourd'hui ses ouvrages et les marque d'un cachet de faiblesse comme ceux des Vanloo." His admiration for Lawrence also cooled in time. In a letter of 1858 to Th. Sylvestre he speaks of " l'exagération de moyens d'effet qui sentent un peu trop l'école de Reynolds." His ripper opinion of Turner, whom at first he had ranked with Constable, I have already recorded. On the other hand, his relation to Constable — <sup>^</sup> homme admirable, une des gloires anglaises " — remained unaltered, and it is a testimony to the sincerity of the great Romanticist, that the fundamental differences of their natures did not prevent him from recognising the essential community of their conceptions, and profiting by it. As far as I know, they never became better acquainted. Constable had no organs for the characteristic manner of his admirer, and Delacroix' complex mind could find out no other relation to him than the impression he had worked out so logically on first seeing the Hay Wain. The advantage he derived is set forth in a phrase : <sup>^</sup> Constable dit que la supériorité du vert de ses prairies tient à ce qu'il est composé d'une multitude de verts différents. Le défaut d'intensité et de vie à la verdure

du commun des paysages, c'est qu'ils la font ordinairement d'une teinte uniforme ; " and he adds : ^ Ce qu'il dit ici du vert des prairies pent s'appliquer i tons les autres tons." §

The whole secret revealed to him by the Hay Wain lies in this reflection, and all he had to do thenceforth was to carry out the variations of the principle in his own spirit. If we look upon the basis of these variations as the thema which has persisted from Delacroix to the pioneers of Impressionism, we cannot but recognise in Constable the father of modern painting, if it is to have a father at all. That he left his children and grandchildren enough to do has been shown

• « Lettres," p. 82.

t " Journal," ii. pp. 278, 279. He tempered the severity of this judgment later on, cf. iii. p. 188.

t " Lettres," p. 295 ; cf. t.iiio^ Journal," iii. p. 377. | « Journal," i. p. 234. .

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LOUVRE. PARIS

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by the results. These are so various, that the tracing back of them all to one pair of eyes is only permissible in the sense which circumscribes and completes all speculations touching the personal origin of impersonal facts. With comparatively slight reservations, we may see in Constable the leading spirit of the landscape school of 1830. By this I mean the men who applied themselves exclusively to landscape, above all Rousseau, Dupr6 and Daubigny. Paul Huet may perhaps be looked upon as the first of this generation. He had been a friend of Gircault's since 1822, and was one of Bonington's comrades in Gros' atelier. Constable's friend, William Reynolds, who engraved The Lock and painted with some talent, influenced him, even before he had seen Constable's works himself. Huet's pictures in the Louvre are of his late period, writing of which in his journal Delacroix said : " Ce pauvre Huet n'a plus le moindre talent ; c'est de la peinture de vieillard, et il n'y a plus l'ombre de couleur." • But there are some small pictures painted about 1830, which partly explain the enthusiasm of Mantz, Alexandre Decamps, BQRger and others, who hailed him as a pioneer. Earlier still Georges Michel had come under the influence of the English landscape school, but his life was too lonely to propagate it, and he himself got no further than a

sincere but colourless feeling for Nature. Both translated the English manner rather than Constable into French. In him they saw more what he had in common with Crome and others than his personal qualities, and they themselves were not sufficiently individual to add anything. From these early disciples to Manet and Monet, we can trace an ever deeper appreciation of Constable's programme, or rather of his effects, an appreciation that gradually shook off the accidental element of the first discovery, and aimed increasingly at the universal. We may compare the development with the perspective of a well-formed bay to the open sea, and so recognise not only Constable's fertilising influence, but also the achievements of his successors.

With Rousseau, the shore was still comparatively near. Sensier, a victim to that biographic mania which refuses to allow any relation between the hero of the tale and the rest of mankind, and perhaps also dazzled by the later Rousseau's extraordinary versatility, attempted to deny any sort of connection between his friend and Constable, f Rousseau, bom in 181 2, exhibited the first results of his nature-studies in 183 1, showing how much he had profited by the works of the old Dutch masters. In 1832 he saw Constable, and we find the date 1833 on one of his finest early works, the large landscape of the Kucheleff collection in the St. Petersburg Academy (No. 308). The whole arrangement, the little hillock, the cart with the red-capped peasant, at once recalls the Hay Wain and similar pictures, and also shows differentiation as compared with the Dutchmen, of whom we have in this same gallery a very typical example in the Constable manner, the Hobbema with the mill beside a pond. The division of the colour, by means of which Rousseau was afterwards to approach the Impressionists, is inconceivable without Constable, both in the Petersburg picture and many other examples. It is true that we are also astonished here by the primordial Gallic quality in Rousseau, the passion that breaks like a cry of Nature out of this very truthfully treated landscape. This was lacking in Constable, and this is why he ^omerimes seems tame beside Rousseau.

\* " Joanud/" p. 377. What he wrote to Huet later about the InomiaHon now in the Lourre wai  
merely a cmlity to his old friend.

t \*\* SouTenir sui Rousseau." Paris. L. Techner, 1872.

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Dupr^ will, I fear, lose in importance as Constable becomes more popular. The exaggerated prestige of the school of 1830 should be discounted mainly in his direction. It is scarcely comprehensible nowadays that there was a time when his reputation was much above that of the great Englishman. Daubigny, the youngest of the generation, went farthest in turning the heritage to good account.



Constable's most decisive influence on modern landscape manifests itself first in his vigorously brushed planes, Rousseau and his circle had restricted themselves to the pictures. Daubigny and his immediate followers worked out the hints given in Constable's sketches and transposed them to large canvases. The result was a new kind of picture. It is only now, watching the successors of Manet and Monet at work, that we are beginning to get some idea of the extent of this new conception.

Constable's connection with French painting brings him into the closest relation with the development of European art. There is hardly a serious school of painting of the nineteenth century which has not some secret link with him. On the other hand, his influence outside of France was almost as insignificant as in his native land. In Germany we find isolated traces of him, without any important results. The little nature studies of Dahl, to whom German landscape of the early nineteenth century owes a good deal, have a certain likeness to the Constable sketches of the middle period. Blechen and Feamley come nearer to the Berg\* holt master. Blechen's little sea-piece with the lonely spectator on the shore, in the Berlin National Gallery, might almost pass for a Constable, and there are one or two small works by Feaidey at Christiania in the same manner. But I can find no trace of a direct relation in any one of these cases. Dahl left Copenhagen in 1818 for Dresden. He meditated a journey to London, but this, according to his biographer A. Aubert, never came to pass. His characteristic studies began about 1820. Feamley frequently came into contact with Englishmen, but according to Aubert, not till 1832 in Italy, where he may certainly have seen

Pictures by Bonington and Turner, When he came to London several years later, he greatly admired Turner, \*

His most important Nature-studies, as, for instance, the Scharfenbergj are dated 1829, and are sufficiently explained by the influence of his master, Dahl. Blechen, too, came into frequent contact with Dahl at Dresden, and finding any evidence that works of Constable's were exhibited in Germany before 1830, he too must be reckoned among the disciples of Dahl. It is true there are various indications that the fame of the Hay Wain^ after setting Paris in a ferment in 1824, had penetrated to Germany. Did the Hamburg painters, Wasmann and Morgenstem, arrive at their joyous landscapes alone, or by the intervention of Dahl ? Was that Impressionist-in-little, C. F. Gille, who has left us charming studies dated 1833, indebted to Feamley or to a greater artist ? and is the early promise of Achenbach sufficiently explained by his acquaintance with a painter so little sure of himself as that same Feamley, with whom he went to Norway in 1839 ? The exhibition of Constable's works in a Berlin hotel, vouched for by Menzel in a conversation with Tschudi, took place before 1845. What the best German painter of the period owed to this contact I have tried to show in another work.t But this exhibition, which Menzel eagerly studied, was certainly not the first

\* In the collection of Hof jagenneister Fearnley, of Chriitiana, there is a little picture of Turner

on vanishing day, 1837, at the Royal Academy,  
t " Der junge Menzel." Insel Verlag. 1906.

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opportunity the Germans had had of reckoning with Constable. Beyond a  
doubt^ the Munich landscape-painter, August Seidel, had seen Constable. His

German public before their great instigator.

In Vienna Constable was better appreciated. A school, which even in the  
eighteenth century was an important offshoot of England, and owed much to  
Laiyrence and Wilkie at the beginning of the nineteenth, no doubt paid homage to  
the greatest English master. It is true that the genre-pictures attracted most  
attention. Amerling, Danhauser and Fendi, who were in close touch with English  
art, iverer never able to make up their minds to give free rein to their inclination for  
landscape, and WaldmuUer, whose fresh renderings of the district round Vienna  
sometimes recall Constable, did not, as hr as I know, make acquaintance with  
the master's pictures till later.

Constable never knew the glory of the conqueror, and even after his death  
remained a quiet spirit. He lackea the kindling quality of astounding personali-  
ties. ^ His art was too well organised to attract attention from afar ; it had that  
simplicity of perfection, which repels the public and the public's painters; it was too  
thorough, too free from the picturesque, to awaken that astonishment which  
smoodies the way for enthusiasm. His gift attains the abstract purity of the  
scientific fact, and its benefits are so universal that the giver is scarcely  
remembered.

## FROM DELACROIX TO COURBET

### EUGENE DELACROIX

Wir sind vielleicht zu antik gewesen  
Nun woUen wir es moderner lesen.

Goethe.

To write adequately about Delacroix would be to relate the whole history of modern art. If I devote but one short chapter to him here, it is partly because the whole compass of this work would be not too great to appreciate him worthily, partly, indeed, because my book deals with little else but the results of his art and of his ideas. The brief notes that follow are designed merely to call the reader's attention to certain important aspects of Delacroix' art, on which I shall dwell in greater detail elsewhere, in connection with other artists. He lurks in all of them. Just as there is a touch of Goethe in most of the poets of the nineteenth century, so Delacroix was the spirit who communicated some particle of himself to all the important painters of his age. Yet no great Frenchman is so little appreciated out of France. To appreciate him fully it is perhaps essential to be a Frenchman. No German gallery owns any of his works. Thanks to the English colourists of his day, he is somewhat better known on this side of the Channel. There are a few good pictures by him in the Wallace collection, and in the Ionides collection at South Kensington. But even here his art has never been seriously considered. His compatriots undervalued him, even after he had become famous. He had a great deal more than passion and rhetoric, and, indeed, I am not sure that the latter-day cynics who question the reality of his pathos are not more right than they suppose, and that the heart whose wild pulsations we seem to feel in his pictures was not associated with a perfectly cool head. The hasty judgment that ascribes everything to the familiar daemon, is as erroneous in his case as in that of many another great man. The important thing to realise is that he had a great intellect, that he was cold enough to evolve a rational standard from his wishes and emotions, warm enough to soar above this standard by his power. He could paint. He grasped at mighty things ; Dante spoke to him before his beard had grown. There was need of this mighty force to strike down Classicism, which threatened to become a draughtsman's speciality. Painting needed the impetus he gave it to carry it along into our century. And he it was who laid that tragic element in its cradle, with which it is struggling for life to-day.

We may say perhaps that he was the last great punter who was a man of profound culture. . We stand before his earliest portrait of himself and are thrilled by the painting, astounded at the energy of the brushing and also of the face it has evoked.

Of his private life I will only say that he wrote marvellous letters, and kept a journal which should be a sort of Bible for youne painters.

Enthusiasm is clarified by contemplation of Delacroix. For George Sand and

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Musset and finally for Baudelaire, who got nearer to him, he was so essentially romantic suggestion, from which they drew vigour for their own achievements — Chopin, too, owed him several inspirations — that his deepest artistic meaning escaped them. He was not unconscious of this himself, and spoke of George Sand much more coolly than she of him. He had a great respect for Madame de Stael. Baudelaire, to whom he had every reason to be grateful, he treated with the elaborate courtesy characteristic of him, and was much more intimate with the philosopher-painter, Chenavard, Ingres\* pupil, whose culture seemed to him more profitable than that of the other. He had the natural repulsion of a man of trained intellect to the frenzies of undisciplined emotion, and knew himself to be by no means a Fleur du Mai.\*

His life-long endeavour was to find a conventional language, which should nevertheless be capable of fettering his strong expression. He worked daily at the technique of this language, and it was as laborious to him as the invention of his design was easy. In his facility of dramatic utterance, he was a Romantic, but when his mighty mind had taken its rapid flight through space, the faithful workman followed after, smoothing with almost bourgeois exactitude the road which his lightning invention had struck out in the new domain. That which exhausted him and made him the sick man who wasted one-third of his time in order to make himself capable of working in the other two-thirds, was not the unhealthy intoxication of an over-heated imagination, but the terrific energy of a worker who hated nothing so much as the slovenly technique of modern art, and who strained every nerve, to give the unconscious forces of his genius the most conscious form imaginable. A perfectly simple, cool-headed man, who loved music, not because it is the most purely sensuous art, but because it affords the purest conventional form. He refreshed himself with Mozart, was never quite able to convert himself to Beethoven, abhorred the modern French composers, and was the first to condemn Wagner.

\* ^ Delacroix, lac de sang, hanté de mauvais ange  
Ombrié par un dais de sapins toujours vert  
Où, sous un ciel chagrin, des fanfares étranges  
Passent comme un soupir étouffé de Weber."

Baudelaire, ^ Fleurs du Mai.\*\*

As far as I can remember, Delacroix never made more than a passing reference to this enthusiastic

adherent in any of his numerous notes and letters. I remember, however, what he once wrote in his journal at Dieppe, when Chenavard had been lamenting to him : ^ Il me semble toujours que cette quality de philosophe implique, avec Thabitude de r^fl^chir plus attentivement sur l'homme et la vie, celle de pendre les choses comme elles sont et de dinger vers le bien ou le mieuz possible cette vie et

d'efibrts\*

Il me trouve henreuz, et il a raison, et je me trouve bien plus heureux encore, depuis que j'ai va sa misire. [He is speaking of Chenavard.] Sa d^olante doctrine sur la decadence ndcessaire des arts est peut-dtre vraie, mais il faut s'interdire m^me d'7 penser.

con

conformity j

m^iocres qui puUulent dans chaque sidcle et qui courent apr^ la faveur en flattant mis^rablement le

goAt da moment ; c'est en se servant de la langue de ses contemporains qu'il doit, en quelque sorte,

kur enseigner des choses que n'exprimait pas cette langue, et si sa r^puution m6rite de durer, c'est

qu'il aura 6t6 un exemple vivant dn goAt dans an temps oil le goiit ^tait m^connu."

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This same being was so susceptible to sound, that he had the ^ Divine G>medy \*<sup>1</sup> read aloud to him with a strong accentuation of the rhythm whUe he was painting his Dante picture, and was almost magnetised in the process. A very complex intellect, estimating Shakespeare and Calderon as mighty savages, capable of painting with vulgar details, and at the same time of saying immortal things about the nonsense of exaggerated local colour, which might have been aimed at the modern naturalism of German literature ; take him all in all, a universal genius, and therefore a universal artist too. Ingres sought for universal line ; he made an experiment that was bound to fail, and that will never lose the character of the abnormal, using the term in the most favourable sense. Delacroix was not only his pictorial opposite, but a richer, more picturesque entity, to whom the whole world was fused in magic tints; whose mind was open to all impressions, no matter whence they came, and in whose life and works the whole first half of the nineteenth century is marvellously reflected. He showed himself a modern, for whereas Ingres specialised, he did his utmost not to appear as the master of one particular genre ; he reminds us of Goethe, and this in spite of his having painted *Gotz von Berlichingen* ! Affinities rarely appreciate each other, he had very little veneration for the poets who provided him with themes ; Walter Scott seemed to him hardly less important than Shakespeare and Goethe; he found pictures in all three, and preferred Ariosto to them all, because it is impossible to take anything away from Ariosto.\* This wholesome nonsense, to which we find parallels in Goethe, also tended to preserve him.

His coolness of judgment gave him a right perspective in considering his own art His master Rubens was the only being concerning whom he did not change his opinion throughout his life, and in whose praise he waxed fervid. There were moments when Rubens engulfed him, notably in the large easel-picture, the *Death of Sardanapalus* in Baron Vitta's collection, painted shortly after the *Massacre of Scio*<sup>^</sup> and still more evidently in the fragment of the same picture, belonging to M. Cheramy, the florid, luscious colour of which is difficult to explain when we compare it with that of the *Massacre*. And just as we prefer certain of Rubens' small sketches to certain of his great pictures, so, for the same reasons, we are inclined to rank the exquisite little study of the whole composition (also in the Cheramy collection) above both the large picture and this masterly fragment.

Delacroix saw how Rubens and his predecessor Michelangelo had achieved their grandiose effects, namely, by the exaggeration of certain proportions, and he understood that the imitation of such heroes must lead to decadence. He saw this degeneration — ^as did the classicists, though on somewhat different grounds — in the French art of the eighteenth century, to which he was not only unsympathetic, but antagonistic. Watteau was the only artist of the school for whom he felt some indulgence in later life ; he never mentions Fragonard. He had

nothing of the Fleming in him ; Rubens showed him how to achieve the grandeur of Italian composition without foregoing vigorous expression. Frans Hals was almost unknown to him. He was a Latin, a Frenchman akin to those who looked on when Primaticcio painted Fontainebleau for Francis I. He loved Poussin.

In Delacroix we see what race bestows on the individual. The Germans, and later, the English went to Italy and came home to paint literature. Delacroix

♦ " Journal de Delacroix."

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was never in Italy ; all he possessed of her was what she had given to France. The Renaissance had parted into two currents ; two sisters, the second of which, though so much the younger, was not the less like her senior. A\* dweller in France knew what Italy was like. The Renaissance here had been less a conquest than a restoration ; it dropped the first syllable, and was beginning and continuation in one.

It is nevertheless regrettable that Delacroix never carried out his intention of visiting Venice. He only knew Titian and Veronese ; at Venice he would not only have made the acquaintance of Tintoretto, but he would have recognised the relation of all these artists to their age, and would probably have discovered that his connection with his own was less complete. He had the Latin racial instincts ; they were at once his strength and his weakness. No less than Prud'hon or David, he felt that Watteau\*s tradition carried certain dangers in its train.

He was right. Boucher and his disciples had not the vitality to make our art fruitful. They stood and fell with their time, from whose style they sprang, symptoms of a very individual epoch, but not themselves individuals. Fragonard's colour had always too much of the nimble dexterity of the decorator, as soon as it was applied to great decoration. The brilliant panels purchased a few years ago by Mr. Pierpont Morgan show the exhaustion of the age. Its painting had become too slight.

Delacroix sought to translate, not this, but its original essence, Rubens, into poetry, and to dissolve it in the French tradition. Even in such early work as the frieze in the throne-room of the Palais Bourbon, the colossal nude figures of which were still wholly Rubensian, he strives for more strenuous expression. With the Fleming it was the flesh that was eloquent, with Delacroix the gesture. Even in his most mature pictures, Rubens has not the lofty poetry of the naked bodies that cling to Dante's boat in Delacroix's earliest work. I mean the three classic bodies in the centre, which form the artistic base for the figures in the ship. They are worthy of the poet himself. A generation later, Rodin, France's greatest sculptor, built upon a like foundation.

But Rubens is in the Banter's Boat too : in the loathsome creature on the left, who holds on to the vessel with his teeth, and the group in the foreground. They recall details in the Last Judgment at Munich, and similar things. In spite of all the deductions of modern colourists, the Banter's Boat is the strongest of the master's works, notwithstanding the "brown sauce" in which it swims, and the superficial lack of independence. Later, Delacroix gained in beauty, richness, and perfection, but he rarely again gave utterance at once so powerful and so spontaneous to the mighty undertone of his individuality. He slipped his rough husk, rubbed off his asperities by contact with the world, and losing those peculiarities that at first repel in his works, he also lost something of the vehemence that made him great. This must always happen with men like Delacroix, in whom temperament is everything. Poussin and Rembrandt did not reach their full perfection till their old age : Poussin, because he had need of the utmost formal calm, Rembrandt, because the highest spiritual experience was necessary to him. Delacroix is inspiration. His art is the closest possible approximation to the creative force of the poet, for whom all the ripe experience of life cannot replace the "first fine careless rapture." But, if his later works are less forceful than those of his youth, they are perhaps even more important, as expressions of his individuality and revelations of his conception of form. -

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The Massacre of Scio is not quite on a level with the Dante's Boat in this respect. It is not so unique, so homogeneous ; yet here, too, is a mighty work, so vigorous that its dependence on a tradition is barely noticeable.



To Gros much is forgiven, because he fostered Delacroix and Géricault for a time. We toil patiently through his dreary battles in the great gallery at Versailles, searching for an atom of the genius of his two successors, the genius that shines forth in Delacroix's Taillebourg<sup>^</sup> in this gallery, in spite of all with which it has to contend. If we compare this gigantic picture with the magnificent sketches for it belonging to M. Gallimard and M. Haro in Paris,\* we recognise the great gulf that divides Gros from Delacroix. It is a gem, a battle-piece in which, despite the fury of combat that pervades it, a peaceful element makes itself felt above the tumult, inviting the senses to deeper, subtler emotions than could be suggested by a realistic scene of war. When Renoir saw the Gallimard sketch, he said it was like a bunch of roses — a phrase no less honourable to the picture than to Renoir himself, the grateful disciple who grafted the roses of this art on to his own. This marvellous quality is lost in the large picture. The composition, too, is much finer in the smaller work. It is, indeed, a flower-piece, in which warriors and horsemen are the blossoms, yet it has all the verot of Rubens in the same genre. Delacroix had evidently seen the Munich Battle of the Amazon<sup>Sy</sup> or one of the sketches for it. His architecture is used in the same way, the prancing horse in the centre may have done duty as a model for Géricault as well as for Delacroix, and we may perhaps recognise it again in the horse of Chassériau's Macbeth<sup>^</sup> rearing at the encounter with the three witches. But whereas Rubens' Flemish frenzy exalted vast orgies and exaggerated the elements of disorder, in order to riot in the tangle of vehement bodies, we find in Delacroix a higher culture, that delivered movement from the burden of brute-fury, a nobler passion, that dominates the hurly-burly and introduces order even in violence.

Such passion did not lack themes in the days of Byron and Victor Hugo. Delacroix was one of the most fervid in that age of eager enthusiasm. To his contemporaries he appeared rather as a tribune full of generous ideas, than as the apostle of a new art. The threnody in which Cleuziou appreciated him in 1864 is typical of all the rest.<sup>t</sup> Greece is more to the fore than colour and line in most of them. These ideas have long been out of date, but Delacroix's emotion is as living now as it seemed in those days to his sympathisers; indeed, it has gained that plastic sincerity, which compels belief, whether we admit the value of the conviction or not. Such are the history-painters who live.

Gros is not of their number, in spite of his unruly strength and his extraordinary capacity, in spite of that heroic gallantry which seems to us such a natural reflection of the great epoch. There was in him a lurking barbarism, which ignored the noblest French instincts.

It was not Gros, but Géricault and Delacroix who legitimised the counter-Revolution. Géricault, a splendid athletic youth of the purest nature, the noblest race, a young giant, to whom no exertion was an effort; the other, passion de-

^ M. Haro's sketch, which hung in Delacroix' studio till his death, shows the original design for the VenaiUet picture. The architect made him cut away part of the bridge, and the master often lamented the consequent injury to his composition.

t << L'CEuvre de Delacroix.\*\* B7 Henri du Cleuziow. It was reprinted in a litde volume twenty-years lat^, by Marpon and Flammarion. Paris, 1885.

GERICAULT: THE MAD WOMAN (LA FOLLE)

CHfIRAMY COLLECTION, PARIS

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materiaHsed, and kindling only for the beautiful, a master who assimilated all the mastery of others, yet never turned away his eyes from heaven or blenched before the splendour of the revelations vouchsafed him.

Giricault's influence on the whole generation of the early nineteenth century was incalculable ; the generosity of their art came from him, the simplicity of a patrician cast of thought. He was perhaps the most gifted of them all, an incom- ' parable portrait-painter, whom Delacroix followed without ever overtaking. There is a series of portraits of mysterious types by Giricault — two of these, the famous La Folk and Le Fou^ are in the Cheramy collection — the tremendous force of expression in which seems almost to bridge over the gulf between our age and Rembrandt. His equestrian portraits in the Louvre take away our breath ; his landscapes are like heroic deeds.

Everything Giricault touched became immense. The same man who multiplied Gros a hundredfold with a few strokes of the brush, painted the Radeau de la Miduse^ which clangs through its gallery in the Louvre like a trumpet-blast. It is a shriek of wildest passion, though its echo has tones full of exquisite, peaceful harmonies.\*

This raft was the cradle of the painter of Dante s \*Boaty and those who think the obvious relation of this work to G^ricault\*s detracts from Delacroix\* greatness forget that nothing less than this mighty precursor was necessary to make Delacroix possible. Even if we infer from Fromentin^s memoranda! that G6ricault collaborated in the Dantis ^oat^ we have only the greater reason to

extol the goodness of Providence, which so brilliantly atoned for Gericault's cruel fate in the person of Delacroix. With such vast possessions, the personal ceases to exist. Delacroix's note, in which he records how he ran through the streets like a madman after seeing the Raft of the ^Medusa would be of little interest, if the consequences of this revelation had not been expressed in a lasting fashion. <

Delacroix had a clearer perception of Rubens than had Gericault ; it gave him modelling fusion and animation, and endowed even his historical pictures in the spirit of Gros (such as the Greece Expiring on the Ruins of Missolonghi in the Bordeaux Museum, the forerunner of the 28 July in the Louvre) with a flexibility that Gericault lacked and that was essential for after-development

In the Massacre of Scio Delacroix indicates almost the whole sum of what he had to say in composition.

In the splendid group with the horse dragging the half-naked girl, there is the germ of the great Hun picture in the Library of the Palais Bourbon ; the dead mother with the babe at her breast in the foreground to the right, is the future Medea, and the whole has the effect of a gloomy pendant to the gorgeous Entry into Constantinople. As yet these are laboriously combined fragments, that lie side by side like rough blocks of stone. If we compare the Massacre with the Trek of the Don Juan or the Lake of Gennesareth^ we shall see how far more closely all the details are welded into a whole later on. In these he achieves that famous unity which, as he beautifully said, can only be got by sacrifice. The ship in the Don Juan is of the same material as the sea ; there are no details now. The passion of the conception is dissolved and permeates the whole. In the Sea of Gennesareth the figures, the ship with its sails, and the waves make up a

\* In the sketch belonging to M. Moreau-Nélaton the harmony of the forms is more perfect, and all that disturbs the rhythm in the Louvre picture is avoided, t \*\* Eugene Fromentin/ By L. Gonse,

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perfect, many-toned melody, in which no one instrument overpowers the others, and only the rhythm prevails. He did not need movement. He took it for convenience\* sake. His wonderful Women of Algeria is entirely ^thout action, and it is perhaps his greatest achievement.

Delacroix' Eastern subjects gave colour to modern painting. His journey to Africa was a voyage by way of Venice. All great men have a propensity to look behind their prototypes. He saw behind Veronese and Titian, and the works of his friend Bonington and of the much-admired Turner, who also knew Italian

colour through a French medium (Claude Lorrain), taught him that he himself needed a more intense nature, rather than the originals in Venice. He would never have found what he brought back from Africa in Venice. In the Algerian Women he cleaned his palette, and finally renounced Gros' brown sauce. Colour glows splendidly beside colour, and new contrasts produce new tones. When he painted the Entry into Constantinople a gleam of sunshine fell upon the art of France, and Europe hastened to warm herself and recover from the frost of Classicism. Here and in the Heliodorus of St. Sulpice, and even earlier in the splendid ceiling in the Louvre, he did not, like his great forerunners, modify the Venetians; he surpassed them in strength of colour. This ceiling in the Galerie d'ApoUon glistens like fine mosaic, and triumphantly asserts itself in the profusion of gilding.

He gave modern painting not only colour but a garment of her own. Prud'hon's genius had run about naked, so to speak. Delacroix taught us the dramatic quality of colour, which can convey the deepest mysticism, and represents something altogether different from that which the modern school-colourist sees in it. Van Gogh understood him. In a letter to Emile Bernard he writes: "Ah ! le beau tableau d'Eugène Delacroix, la barque du Christ sur la mer de Genesareth." Lui, avec son aurole d'un pale citron— dormant, lumineux, dans la tache de violet dramatique, de bleu sombre, de rouge sang, du groupe des disciples ahuris, sur la terrible mer d'Érythrée montant, montant jusque tout en haut du cadre . . ."

The admirable Thomy Thibry collection has given the Louvre brilliant examples of the master in every phase, even his latest and ripest period, which would otherwise have been unrepresented in the national museum. It is astonishing to see how youthful the man in Delacroix remained as the artist matured. It needed the unquenched ardour of youth to paint the Rebecca and the Templar which he produced in 1858, when he was past sixty. The Pentecostal tongues of fire seem to glow in the painting.

After his Eastern travels, in other words during his greatest period, Delacroix changed very little. In his subjects especially he was always conservative. In Moreau's and Robaut's catalogues of his gigantic work, we note how he treated the same subjects at different periods. He did so, no doubt, from a kind of respect for the idea that had given him such grandiose results as the Medea ; it acted as an auto-suggestion firing his imagination and enabling him to go still further. He called this "se faire la main." The owner of the fragment of the Massacre told me that Delacroix painted it in 1838, to get his hand in for the Taking of Constantinople. He thus gave an objective, as it were, to his daemon ; he could not control it, but was able so to prepare himself that he might be ready when the inspiration came. Thus he accustomed himself to paint his

\* He was referring to one of the many sketches of the composition, one of the finest of which belong to M. Gallimard.

DELACROIX: HORSE AND TIGER (lithograph)

CHÉRAMY AND A. ROUART COLLECTIONS, PARIS

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most brilliant conceptions, such as this fragment from the Massacre of Sdo<sup>^</sup> with the same 'ngour, though not in the same manner as in the original picture in glowing colour instead of Gros' sauce ; he made still-life pieces out of his inspirations.

Sometimes ideas occurred to him a tempo. The splendid large sketch. King 7(odrigo losing his Crown, formerly belonging to Dumas the Elder and now to Cheramy, was painted in three hours. Dumas had requested his artist-friends, Delacroix among the number, to decorate a room in his new villa (it was in 1830), with panels. The pictures were to be ready on a certain day, when Dumas was to give a ball. When the day arrived, only the panel assigned to Delacroix remained empty. At noon the painter came to the house, and was aghast at the large surface reserved for him ; he had meant to paint only a few flowers, <sup>\*</sup> Listen," said Dumas, <sup>\*\*</sup> I have just been reading something that will do for you," and he described the first canto of the <sup>^</sup> Romancero," in which Rodrigo loses his crown. Delacroix began at once, and had painted the whole scene by sunset, in the most unusual colours, a harmony in yellow, unique in his work. Great was the enthusiasm in the evening, when the friends saw the picture ; Barye, in particular, who had contributed an excellent panel, is said to have been beside himself."<sup>\*</sup>

It is difficult to do justice to his most important work, the ceiling-pictures and the two hemicycles in the Library of the Palais Bourbon. A young Frenchman, Jules Rais, called it the French Sistine Chapel,<sup>t</sup> and it certainly recals the other in the wretched misapplication of its treasures. Sometimes in the morning, when the sun lights up the long room cheerfully, we get some idea of the wealth of action that is wasted here. The two hemicycles are antithetical ; one is the purest lyric poetry, the peaceful Orpheus among the Greeks, the other the most frantic drama, the horrors of war, Attila devastating Italy. A whole world of pictures surges between the two. Many of these recall Poussin, especially the peaceful scene, where the oxen pass quietly along, surrounded by joyous naked

Zres. It is the mature Poussin again, to whom the beautiful, though unhappily lost invisible cupola in the Library of the Luxembourg owes something of its peculiarly sweet and solemn character. Delacroix' composition is not so rhythmic as the poetry of the beautiful Bacchanalia, but on the other hand, it

is more fiery and virile. The Education of Achilles is marked by the most admirable symmetry in its vigour. Others among these marvellous pentagonal pendentives suggest that earlier Poussin who, before he left France, painted the fine ceiling for Richelieu. The Attila is perhaps Delacroix' most brilliant achievement of the period. To a deputy who objected that he had never seen such a horse, Thiers, who had given Delacroix the commission, retorted : '\* Vous voulez done avoir vu le cheval d' Attila } " No criticism could have been more apposite. There is a wild, almost demoniac creative energy in the composition, that far outstrips the school of Poussin; yet the reverence due to Poussin is not outraged thereby.

It is lamentable that these paintings should not be removed and replaced by copies, as GefiProy§ lately proposed, that the originals might be preserved.

\* See Dumas' M<sup>e</sup>moires," 1898, vol. ix. p. no.

t ^ Le Palais et la Chambre des D<sup>e</sup>put<sup>e</sup>s," in the '< Revue Univerelle " of October 15, 1902.

X Now No. 735 in the Louvre ^Salle du Poussin).

§ ^Les Peintures d'Eugene Delacroix \ la Biblioth<sup>e</sup>ue de la Chambre des D<sup>e</sup>put<sup>e</sup>s," 1903 With reproductions. Delacroix was obliged to repaint a large part of his work, owing to the defective state of the surface. The Attila is now disfigured by a large crack. This and the pendant in the other dome are painted on the wall \ the ceiling pictures are on canvas. They might easily be saved.

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Like so many other things in France they are threatened with ruin. Happily, a single work is but as a drop in the ocean to the life-work of an artist so prolific that Rubens alone can be compared with him. And his fame is already secure in the tradition of his native land.

The devotion young France accords to Delacroix imposes silence as to his weaknesses. These were so obvious, and so easily overcome by the contemporary generation, that it never occurs to any one in France to discuss them. The German, on the other hand, who prides himself on nothing so much as on his victory over Romanticism, is generally so much repelled by them that he fails to enjoy the rest. We may admit that the fluttering ends of drapery in many of his works are often disagreeable, even in his Louvre ceiling ; in the Chapel of St. Sulpice the Raphaellesque action is no truer than in the prototype. It is in this

chapel that the younger generation has made a practice of paying homage to the master ; it is one of the few places where light and position do not make it impossible to see the picture. Long after leaving it, one seems to be still in the whirlpool of colour, and this feeling is more enduring than the discomfort produced by certain rhetorical details of the composition, which finally resolve themselves into mere superficialities. Who will dwell on these trifles so far as to forget the consummate general structure, and the culminating audacity of the ceiling. Delacroix, like every true Frenchman, is an orator, as was the simple Millet, as is every young aspirant, even the greatest blagueur of the crew. The Latin races talk with the hands, but what they say may be very remarkable nevertheless. The unnatural in Delacroix's unsuccessful attitudes is a natural extreme, which nevertheless recalls the marvellous norm in which he is so great. Even his defects seem inevitable. He composed to some extent in sections, in long-drawn gasps, as a worker accomplishes a heavy labour. This is evident in all his great decorations. There are, of course, a thousand links binding these components together, but he does not always succeed in fusing them. The fluttering streamers and protruding legs that disfigure some of his pictures were the result, not of exuberant rhetoric, but of the weariness of the toiler, who forgets to remove his ladder after finishing his building. He had an unsatisfied longing for a style to which every particle of the whole should contribute, an ambition that was not to be realised, because his genius lacked that grain of prudence which was also denied to Michelangelo. He was as gifted as an artist can be in our age, and he had perhaps the tragic perception that the implied restriction is very considerable.

He had Michelangelo's mysterious power of suggesting a drama by an arm or a leg, a piece of flesh. Into everything he touched, he sent a mighty current of life. To evolve harmonies from the titanic elements with which he worked was a stupendous task. He brought to bear upon it a system of colour of like intensity. Delacroix' colour does not lie on the canvas; it emanates from the surface, and as it leaves this, seems to begin a new life of its own. Rubens and the Venetians are outstripped. To others, he is as a ruby to an expanse of painted glass. And all that can be urged against Delacroix is based on the postulate, that it is impossible to make walls with rubies.

Superabundance, super-humanity. Nietzsche compared him to Wagner, but the comparison is just neither to Delacroix nor to Wagner. Wagner was centrifugal, the great and beautiful expanse; Delacroix is a sum of gigantic forces, focussed to a minute point.

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The smaller Delacroix are, of course, the most finely organised colour harmonies. Here he comes in contact with Constable. The relation between

the two is as that between Velazquez and Rubens, or in our own times, between Manet and Renoir : the elective affinity of two utterly different temperaments\* These two great men may be studied side by side in the gallery that contains the finest collection of Delacroix after the Louvre — M. Cheramy's huge studio in Paris, a storehouse of pearls, where hundreds of treasures are earned, apparently without method, and even in bewildering disorder, but in reality bearing a definite relation to one another — children of one family scattered throughout a world.^ Kneeling before a Delacroix in this dissecting-room for the student of occult developments, one must be careful not to overturn an easel with a dozen tiny Constables. Each has his family about him, Constable his EngUsh progenitors, Delacroix his French relations. Genealogies lire momentous things in art as elsewhere. It is more important to trace them here than in the annals of mere mortals, for through them the closest secrets of the origin of styles reveal themselves. For this reason the hours spent in this mad medley are among the most stimulating one can imagine. One does not learn a science here, but simply a means of living a hundred years longer than other men, because one enjoys a hundredfold more. The power of recc^nising a multitude in the concatenation presented by a genius, enables us to enjoy not only the one but all the others, to grasp our cosmos in its highest form and to discover in one law a hundred others.

In the Cheramy gallery, we recognise the superficiality of the phrase that has been repeated in every art-history since Fromentin, as \$0 Constable's influence upon Delacroix. It is prejudicial not to Delacroix, but to those who desire to approach him more closely, for it measures greatness by an utterly primitive standard. This standard is the question of costume. Let us imagine an Italian and a German of the purest blood in the drawing-room of an English lady, or the boudoir of a French grande dame. They wear the same costume, because they belong to circles ^^ which have discarded a national dress, and they speak the same language, which is ^\* not necessarily their own, because it is a mark of good breeding to be master of a tongue in which one can make oneself understood anywhere. As the result of a thousand circumstances, they are all capable of behaving in a European fashion, in other words, of accepting a convention the comprehension of which implies gentle birth, and they pride themselves on making their temperament and their peculiarities subject to this form.

The convention in our present case is stronger than that of the lady's salon ; it represents the contemporary form of pictorial expression. In those high circles in which Constable, G^ricault, and Delacroix move, people express themselves as they do. But we cannot deduce what is characteristic of each, from what is common to all three. It is a matter of common knowledge that Delacroix re-painted' his Massacre of Scio after seeing the Hay Wain in the Salon. Giricault's letters, and Delacroix' own comments on his London impressions, sufficiently show how far he was indebted to the Englishman. I shall deal with this more fully in its place. Here, I am rather concerned to insist on Delacroix' independence, for even in these days there are some who, taking up the tale of Couture's pamphlet, f see



\* It is characteristic of this accomplished connoisseur, that he should have bequeathed his finest fragment of the Massacre to the London National Gallery, on condition that it shall hang beside the best Constable.

t \*' Méthode et Entretiens d'Atelier," par Thomas Couture, Paris, 1868.  
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in the master an irresponsible eclectic. What Delacroix found in Constable' was less a new formula of colour than a method of freeing himself from the entanglement of ill-defined images, of getting away from Gros, and giving clarity and precision to his own style. Constable taught him a higher conception of colour, but what would this have availed him, if he had not been capable of using it for the development of his own personality? Nothing could be more unlike Constable's landscapes than the little gems of the Thomy Thibry collection. The relative similarity of the two men lies in this, that they chose from their rich heritage the elements that enabled them to adopt a higher convention, each after his own manner. This could only be a convention of colour, for both were too clear-sighted, too original, and too honest not to admit that colour must be the first concern of the painter. Constable may seem the greater discoverer of the two, because his native art offered him fewer elements which could be utilised, than that of Delacroix, who was familiar with the great pictorial art of all the ages. But Constable was the poorer of the two, not because he painted landscapes while the other ranged over a wider field of subjects, but because there is a richer world of enchantment in Delacroix, because he used the Englishman's gift for the revelation of personal qualities of which there is no hint in the Hay Wain. His relation to Constable is of the same order as his relation to Géricault. He fought his battle - with troops his predecessor had trained. That he conquered is the essential fact. Finally, in all appraisals of Delacroix' colour, now the central point of interest, we must be careful not to value him only for his palette. We can make carpets with colour, but not pictures. There are people who forgive Delacroix all the rest for the sake of his colour. But the rest is everything, just as with Rembrandt.

GOYA: VISION DE LA ROMERIA DE SAN ISIDRO

PRADO, MADRID

DAUMIER: DRINKING SONG (water-colour)

TAVERNIER COLLECTION, PARIS

HONORE DAUMIER 155

HONORE DAUMIER

In Rembrandt's shadow we meet Delacroix' great comrade, who also demonstrated how great or how little the importance of colour may be. He forces us to a deep conception of art, if we would appreciate him and yet not depreciate the other in the process.

Delacroix fought with new methods for the heroic tradition of France. Daumier made a virtue of necessity, and renounced the attempt to draw epic poetry from the age. He may have believed in heroism none the less.

We should learn to pronounce Delacroix and Daumier in one breath. The one was the conscience of the other, and in every artistic mortal the two elements they represent must be combined to give perfect fruition. Our whole age lurks in three strokes of Daumier's brush. He abandoned himself to his painting just as Delacroix stood on his guard against his. The culture of the creator of the *Dante's Boat* was immeasurably above the author of the *Ventre LigiskUif*^ but it is like the boat itself, that struggles against the forces surrounding it, and never reaches the shore. Daumier had the new barbaric healthiness : a huge nerve, formed to divine all that is monstrous and vibratory in our age — and to laugh at it ! His pictures are spasms of genius, of our genius, of that paradoxical genius of the nineteenth century which we might describe by transposing what Ingres said of Signorelli, " C'est beau, c'est très beau, mais c'est laid ! " — \*\* It is ugly, very ugly, but extraordinarily beautiful ! "

Daumier's caricature was an expedient. It replaced the motley of those earlier court fools, under cover of which wise men said profound but forbidden things. The age was not of a temper to accept as serious an art such as this bourgeois who hated the bourgeoisie offered it, nor would he have trusted himself to give such serious expression to it, had he not believed that he was only jesting. He used the tradition Delacroix had revered only to laugh at it, and found a stimulus in the exaggeration of his freedom from its restraints. Everything that Michelangelo and Rubens had set apart for the creation of the lofty and grandiose, he compressed into a tiny surface, in which every particle became vociferous speech, a neighing

of the human herd, that no longer sounds comical. If the sign-manual of true humour be the gravity that lurks in the back ground, Daumier must be accounted an excellent jester. I do not know if his famous drawing of the *Malade Imaginaire* was ever accepted as humorous : the living corpse upon the chair, the sweat of terror on his brow, and the doctor with the death's head beside him, staring into the corner paralysed with horror. But the supposition would be natural enough. The doctor in particular is intended to be comic ; the absurdity of his costume only serves to intensify the grim earnestness of the subject. This is the wit of Pierrot as conceived by our age ; fundamentally, it is no less ghastly than the most frenzied inventions of Daumier's forerunner, Goya. The cynical monuments he erected in the law-courts of the Citizen Kingdom are not any more laughable. What fascinated him in the lawyers was not only their rascality, but the animality of their speech. He loved the mouth as Giricault loved the horse. The famous water-colour. *La Chanson a hoire*<sup>^</sup> is a physiology

\* Tavernier Collection, Paris ; reproduced here.

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of the human mouth. The two advocates in the Cause Cilibre arc two beasts, bellowing at each other ; our hands go up to our ears instinctively ; they seem to have hideous limbs under their gowns with which they claw their flesh, which is not as other men's flesh. The spectators sit like a whole world, dumbly attentive to the combat between the grotesque monsters. A very different Shakespeare this, to the one Delacroix understood ! The inhuman is embodied here ; it towers aloft like the upheaval of some great city in convulsion, to a sky ceiled with the planks of coffins.

What harmless folks are those modern satirists who so easily incur the penalties of the law, in comparison with Daumier ! It seems amazing that this man should not have been torn limb from limb ; when he wished to say the most harmless thing, he could not refrain from spitting in the face of the world at large. Most satirists are sentimental folks ; this one employed the " anatomical expression " which the peaceful Raphael Mengs thought reprehensible in Michelangelo ; the vulgarity of his personages is not in their faces but in their bones ; their very marrow snarls and gibbers. All the optimism which a divine illumination lent to the chisel of the ancients seems here to have become a negation no less irresistible, and derived from the very same sources. For Daumier was a classicist ; this is what differentiates him most sharply from Goya, whom Mengs was never able to lead into the right road ; something of the marble grandeur of the ancients lurks in his every gesture. He has vast contours, vast surfaces, nothing superfluous weakens the force of expression. It is notorious that he built up his victims first in tone ; drawing came afterwards. It still bears the mighty thumb-mark of its sculptor. No painter before or after him has ever understood how to weld with

the brush as he did. Bonington was the one artist of our epoch who foreshadowed it, when he painted the picture of his housekeeper now in the Louvre. It seems as if the price paid by such precursors must always be life. An aureole like that which surrounds Garibaldi hovers about this Englishman, who died at the age of twenty-seven. From this portrait of an elderly woman to Daumier's Berlioz at Versailles there is but a step, though it is a good stride, certainly, from the shrewd, somewhat perverse old dame with a weakness for the brandy bottle \* to the masterful male of the same family. The Berlioz might have been painted yesterday, if a man of such originality could have been found yesterday, for Manet is here, Cezanne, and the greatest of the Germans. Poor Van Gogh lost his reason half a century later in his efforts to paint in this manner. The portrait hangs in the second (Attique) storey of the palace, near David's fine equestrian Bonaparte and other respectable achievements, but one sees nothing else. All the rest seems asleep, while this one work speaks to us of our inner life in lightning phrases. Everything in it is novel. The black velvet of the coat gleams against the dark brown background, like the sleek fur of a cat. The rosette of the Legion d'Honneur strikes a vehement red note in the harmony. The splendid tone of the high neckcloth is got by a few touches of blue. We can count the brush strokes that build up the flamboyant face in a few seconds, and yet the work is more complete than anything the centuries have painted in this much decorated palace, besides being one of the master's few finished works.

For in this again Daumier belongs to the men of to-day, unhappily ; he has

\* Delacroix also painted her with this same air of bibulous joviality.

† This modern note has given rise to doubts (perfectly groundless) as to the authenticity of the work.

DAUMIER: PORTRAIT OF BERLIOZ

VERSAILLES MUSEUM

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left hardly anything but sketches, splashes of colour that resolve themselves into faces, the notes of a temperament that already had another design in view when the hand was setting down the first. Yet these notes are like the leading words in a sentence that give the sense unerringly. With Daumier the sketch is so pregnant that the conception of finality ceases to play an important part. Ingres summed

up all linear conception in a line ; his Grecianism enabled him to simplify Raphael and Guido. Daumier takes the strongest plastic expression, and veils it in a remarkable substance that has the property of suggesting the essentials of all it contains. A juggler with shadows, like Rembrandt, with whom alone he may be aptly compared, a painter so mighty, that no terms can exaggerate the greatness of his importance. Caricatures were his life studies. He needed no convention to do all the rest with these. Like Rembrandt he dips his figures, which he saw in barbaric sharpness of contour, into an atmosphere of humanity, where mockery falls away, and we note only the deep breathing of a great soul. Such pictures are rare. The fact that he was condemned to work at lithography for his daily bread has been justly regretted ; but one is apt to forget, that this preliminary work was the bread of his art too, a necessary compensation of the brain, just as were Leonardo's caricatures to the creator of the Gioconda. And if the complete results are scanty, it may be argued that perfection is in its nature rare. I am not sure that Daumier would have painted many more finished works like the Seine Quay series under other conditions. He never finished the beautiful Laveuse in the Bureau collection, though he painted it more than once. Of the several versions of this motive, the most elaborate is the Gallimard example, where the neglected background of the Bureau version is exquisitely brought out in the form of houses. Apart from this, I prefer the fine material of the Bureau picture and the pale golden yellow tone ; Daumier, too, was often in love with various aspects of one design, and therefore hesitated to conclude them all at once. He has scarcely said all he had to say in any one picture, but I doubt if greater leisure would have enabled him to do so.

The difference between the caricatures and these pictures is almost incomprehensible at times. In his caricatures he makes his figures up of holes ; in his pictures they are treated with a great prodigality of masses, as in the Bain<sup>^</sup> formerly in the Lutz collection, or the LuUeurs of the Sarlin collection, one of the pictures that reveal the future for a century, and at the same time recall the past. Michelangelo might have painted such things, if he had lived in our times.

I have a vague recollection of the famous fVagon de Troisiime Classe which Durand-Ruel sold to Mr. Borden, of New York, many years ago. M. Gallimard owns a brilliant replica with variations. The figures sit there as if cast in a mould, clumsy creatures such as Leibl showed us later, but simpler, more vigorous, and marked by an intense reality that the Gallic race has never achieved before or since. We see scarcely a colour, to say nothing of a detail ; it is not beautiful, nor is it a cunning transcript of nature. We stand before it helpless, as before the two giants of the Quirinal, nay, more helpless, for here the tremendous power of the work is even more unaccountable. Thus was the famous Realism born, of which the nineteenth century is so proud, and it is well to remember that it never became greater than its father had made it. Millet expounded it, Courbet and Leibl organised it, and many others have elaborated it ; no one has surpassed its original greatness.

Daumier's mysterious power becomes more intelligible when we see his

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sculpture He did very little ; his best known work is the caricature of Napoleon III., Ra<sup>^</sup> baily the wild figure, made up of hollows, which against all probability is stinct with the most amazing vitality.\* The finest is Roger Marx' relief, reproduced here, the wonderful train of fugitives he painted so often, t in which he reveals his affinity with Michelangelo more distinctly than anywhere else.

Daumier was the first logical Impressionist, and none dared more greatly than he without renouncing more. His aim was to multiply the elements that served the movement at the expense of the rest. His is a kind of ghostly art. In his numerous renderings of Don Quixote, he has made symbols of the two figures, that give an almost metaphysical value to the conceptions of ' ^ fat " and \*\* thin.\*' M. Bureau owns a sketch in which Sancho Pansa thrones it upon his ass like some idol, and Don Quixote's figure shoots forward like an arrow, almost horizontally. The whole essence of Cervantes' romance seems to lurk in this opposition of thick to thin lines, and our delight in the parody deepens to a recognition of mysterious natural laws. Or again, he gets the most extraordinary effects of space by a few streaks of wash. M. Gallimard has a little drawing of this kind, a group of four figures. Of the ten or a hundred thousand planes or lines that would make up such a picture in nature, he takes the three or four that are essential, and these he fashions so that they produce the harmony Nature achieves with her thousand notes. Rodin adopted this method later for his grandest designs, simplifying still farther and insisting more upon rhythm. He has every reason to be grateful to Daumier.

There are people who question the value of this simplification, and conclude from such examples as these that they are only useful to artists themselves as exercises, and are of no account to the layman, because they do not seem necessary to the finished work. He who is not content with Daumier's sketches, may well question the raison d'etre of all art. They are not valuable only because they have made all the art of the moderns, but because they are perfect in themselves, because they reveal things that were only dimly divined before Daunuer, things that appear to us as essential as the progress of our present social conditions, as compared with those of earlier times. A new art-language arose from Daumier's sketchiness, at the syntax of which we are still working. No historical considerations are necessary to compel admiration for its power. Daumier himself created true epics therewith. We may call. his Don Quixote in the Berlin Gallery sketchy, if we choose to compare it with a Meissonier. But we may as justly call it fresco-like, if we compare it from a greater distance. It is not, in truth, the picture, but the eye of the spectator which

is sketchy. Nothing could be less pertinently laid to the charge of such pictures than the reproach of obscurity and indistinctness implied in the term sketchy. The master of shadow, who often avoided all precise form, painted when he chose with outlines thick as the finger surrounding enamelled planes, and delighted in a decoration that would well have borne expansion into fresco. In his masterpiece, the Drama, one of the treasures of the Berlin gallery, this powerful contour is combined with the most exquisitely liquid colour. Daumier could be

\* Ahtne Alexandre had twenty reproductions cast in bronze from his example ; they are in varions collections.

t One example in the Alexis Rouart collection, Paris. Roger Marx\* relief, here reproduced, is the only example in bronze, and was made by the galvano-plastic process from the original plaster model.

DAUMIER: THE TWO LAWYERS (LES DEUX AVOCATS) (water-colour)

BUREAU COLLECTION, PARIS  
WOODCUT BY MARX (L'IMAOE)  
CORP. FR. DES GRAVEURS SUR BOIS

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a great colourist upon occasion. He substituted a fluid strawberry red for his usual brown, painted blue atmosphere like Velazquez, pale golden backgrounds like the most refined of the Dutchmen, and invented contrasts of pink and orange which recall the Venetians. The picture of Christ and the Disciples in the Amsterdam Ryksmuseum, is one of the best examples for this aspect of the master. This versatility told against his fame as a painter, for it was combined with an indifference to motive, which the stupidity of the public translated into poverty of invention. The best artists of his day thought differently. Corot's high estimate of him is well known. Delacroix copied many of his drawings. Many of the younger men came still nearer to him.

Till quite lately this influence was practically non-existent for the public. Collectors like Bureau, in whose family the worship of Daumier is a tradition, and Rouart, perhaps the oldest living collector of Daumier 's works, are rare. The Centennial Exhibition of 1900, and the supplementary exhibition in the École des Beaux Arts revealed Daumier the painter to France.

It is to be hoped that the time will come when a monument will be raised to him. On the base, where the contemplative symbols generally find a place, I would put four artists : Millet, Cezanne, Meunier, and Van Gogh ; all in the reverent attitude of worship.

Delacroix and Daumier make up a remarkable synthesis. Their work, taken in conjunction, embraces the art that had been before them, and the future to the present day. Daumier's individual manner points backwards, not because we find Michelangelo in him, but because his creative manner brings back the most precious elements of the earlier masters. His genius was the mastery over space, the justness of his modelling in every dimension, the power of placing the object in the picture as firmly in all its ramifications as a form in the air, the art, which the Germanic mind, eager for reality, has always understood better than has the Latin intellect, the art which enabled Rembrandt to offer a triumphant resistance to the seductions of its rival.

This art, which actually succeeded in giving everything in a picture, which fixed the divine trinity, architecture, painting, and sculpture on a canvas, and confined it within the four barriers of a frame, was bound to fall, as soon as the instinct of the age considered its tendency, and divined the dark side of this concentration. In Daumier's hasty and deliberately fragmentary manner we divine something like a doubt as to the basis of his creation, and we hear the mocking laughter of the Decadent, who is content to bathe one tiny detail in Rembrandt's mellow haze, and to leave another, a bare skeleton, rising stark and grisly into the air.

Delacroix stands already on the other side. We shall look in vain to him for the masterly assurance with which Daumier built up his figures, even when he left them naked. He desired to decorate surfaces, not space; but the implied renunciation gave him all that Daumier lacked. The gloom that fills space with mystery, is inferior to the light that floods a surface. But what the greatest masters of planes possessed, is revived, and the consciousness of a great intellect, making use of a happy gift, was able to bring it to a point of splendour never before achieved. The form that grasps such facts still trembles from the violence of its own gesture ; the goblet that gleams before the future seems to overflow.

There is no lack of thirsty souls to drink of it.

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CAMILLE COROT



His mother, whom he always called 'La belle Dame,' was a fashionable milliner of Swiss origin, under the first and second Emperors. His father, the son of a wig-maker, was the cashier of the establishment.

The mother loved the boy tenderly. The father, a typical, commonplace bourgeois, watched his career with amazement; he was still full of naive astonishment when a purchaser came to his fifty-year-old son for a picture, and when the Legion of Honour was bestowed, found it difficult to believe that the distinction was not intended for himself, but for the painter. No undue difficulties were made, when the youth chose the strange career of an artist. The old man placed to his son's credit the sum of money he had set aside to establish him in business, and gave him a sufficient allowance. The parents were not afraid he would commit follies. Camille was a good lad.

Was it possible that a revolutionary artist should spring from such surroundings, where comfort and well-being reigned, and only the most delicate things were dealt with, where every gesture contained some tasteful feminine essence? Everything seemed to negate such a possibility. Physically, however, he was extraordinarily robust and powerful, like Courbet. The sexagenarian who rose with the sun, who defied cold and wet, who dressed like a peasant, and went about like a labourer, might have been the son of a peasant. It was only in his face that all the gentleness of his nature manifested itself. It was like that of a country priest of the best kind, whose piety seems to come to him from Nature.

In short, he seemed to be anything rather than a revolutionary. He was born before the death of the eighteenth century, and was about a year older, than Delacroix, but nothing of the wild period had touched him. A virginal soul dwelt in the sturdy body. His letters to his parents and friends read like the outpourings of a schoolgirl. He was devout, went regularly to mass, and was not ashamed to talk of 'le bon Dieu' before the Bohemians.

No man was ever happier. He was able to gratify his modest aspirations to the full. He had more friends than great princes, and can scarcely be said to have known an enemy. Why should he not have been pious? For his piety was fettered by no narrow formula. It reveals itself in the phrase he once pronounced touching a future life: 'Well, at any rate, I hope we shall go on painting up there.' As has often been the case in France, it mixed up the beautiful with the divinely ordained, angels with nymphs, Heaven with Olympus. Although a good Christian, he was not a bad Pagan Greek. Theophile Gautier called him a poet, but that is almost too true. This poet was a thorough bourgeois. When a friend of his mature years taught him to fish, Corot forgot his painting for a fortnight in his ardour for this characteristic amusement of the middle-class Parisian. Family gatherings were his passion. He never missed a baptism or wedding; in politics he was a thorough-going Conservative; Courbet impressed him greatly; he was not converted to Delacroix till his old age, and could never bear Manet. He was

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certainly greater as an artist than as a man, or, at least, so it appears to us, because good-nature is a quality we are not inclined to ascribe to the great. And yet ^\* le Pere Corot " and his works were as much one as body and soul. We feel somewhat suspicious of such anecdotes as those which tell how G)rot presented himself to his friend Dutilleux, the mediocre landscape-painter, proposing that they should paint " veritables chefs-d'oeuvre," together, or how he deaned his flutes " to work for the little birds in the wood." Who can believe such things nowadays ? Are there any children left in the world ?

He, at any rate was a child ; we cannot describe his nature more exactly. When dubious dealers brought him false pictures, he painted new ones for them over the old ones — Roger Miles gives two or three amusing anecdotes in this connection\* — ^and on his death-bed he signed a forgotten picture for Tedesco. He was much more good-natured than the average child, but he had the optimism of childhood. His biography, compiled with great industry by Moreau-N^laton, reads like the life-story of a child who lived to be eighty.!

He worked playfully, with a fancy characteristic of boyhood. There is a certain childlike element in his art When I look at his drawings I always feel as if I were contemplating the works of a very young man, whose creations have all the na'i veti of the beginner. He was at school in Rouen until he was eighteen, then he was a clerk for dght years, then for a time with his contemporary, the precocious classicist, MichaUon, and when this artist, who had shown considerable promise, in certain small landscapes, died in 1822, Corot entered the atelier of Victor Bertin, the academician par excellence. But, as a fact, he never studied in any actual school. This was the great difference between him and Ingres, between the new art and the old. Ingres was the highest expression of school, Corot of self-teaching. \*\* Confiance et conscience " was his axiom, two words that were synonymous to him, for '^ conscience " to him applied only to his own standard, his own sensations, as expressed in Nature. Nothing else seemed of moment to him, he would think of nothing else, not even of the old masters. To be a child, to open one's eyes, to dream — et voili ! Ingres succeeded in assimilating the highest culture so intensely, one might almost say so physically, that his formula seems almost like Nature. Almost, yet not quite. For we can never forget, even before the ^ain Turcy that we are looking at a painting, a construction, and the most brilliant of the Odalisque drawings always suggest decoration. Corot is purely human, but such is his divine instinct that the loveliest form is also the most natural to him. Herein is his great charm, and also his absolutely unique importance. The artistic parti-pris of the stylist^, even of an Ingres, has all manner of beauties, but it conceals the elementary. It works through tradition. The artist does not identify himself with it altogether. The spectator

has to overcome the tradition before he can penetrate to the actual form of the artist, to his humanity, and this circuitous way of approach wearies him occasionally. Nothing of this sort impedes us on our road to Corot. We believe his statements at once, for in his method of communication, in every stroke, we trace his creative emotion. It is this which makes Corot a modern. But he is not so in every sense. The first need of an age, stripped of the ancient culture, was a swift capacity for the expression of the human. This he had. But Delacroix and

- "Album d'œuvres des Chefs-d'œuvre de Corot." (Braun et Cie., Paris, 1895.)
- † \*\* L'Œuvre de Corot par Alfred Robaut, catalogue raisonné et illustré de l'histoire de Corot et de ses œuvres par Etienne Moreau-Nilaton." (H. Floary, Paris, 1905.)

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Daumier also worked to this end, and yet we do not reckon them among the moderns. In both of these, the style-element of the old masters persisted, though it had been tremendously modified. In Delacroix Romanticism made it rhetorical, in Daumier it was applied to caricature. They were both Encyclopaedists of the revolution of form, playing the part of Diderot, but they were not active revolutionaries.

These were to come in formidable numbers. But Corot was not one of them. He was without the subjectively rebellious strain that characterised Rousseau and Dupré, and in a still greater degree, Courbet and his school. But it was just this that gives him his unique position in his age, and makes the effect of his work so beneficent. The revolutionaries came, and were bound to come. The age called them forth. The programme followed automatically. Courbet's realism — not, of course, his painting — was a phenomenon that might have been reckoned upon almost mathematically. But Corot had no place in the programme. He was a Heaven-sent surprise. It was just the non-revolutionary nature of his genius that was wonder-working. It cut him off from the momentary success and from the enthusiasm that was Courbet's portion, but it saved him from the unjust and abysmal fall, from the monstrous fate of Courbet, who was thrust into a corner like a disused piece of furniture, after having given the watch-word to the world. Courbet was thought to have been disposed of with his programme, and those who thought thus overlooked the fact that he towered immeasurably above it. Corot had no formulated programme beyond his "confiance et conscience.\*" But, indeed, he realised the most positive of all programmes, that of preserving tradition in the new spirit. It was the spirit, and not the form of tradition which lived in him, and all unconsciously inspired him. He determined to paint only what he saw, but in reality he painted at the same time all the impressions of a

man who was a Frenchman to his finger-tips, all the optimism of his happy race, all the rich legendary lore of a son of the people. His nymphs spring from the earth like his trees. He must have seen them. They are the organic beings of his Nature, and when they are absent in his works, Nature is so painted that we feel they must appear somewhere. This was so from the beginning, when he was only thinking of learning to see from Nature, and it was this involuntarily softened relation to Nature, which I hope to demonstrate more plainly, that gave him his distinctive position among the Barbizon painters. One of its most salient features was his comparative indifference to locality. Rousseau and Dupr6 were stationary folks ; Corot flew about the world like a butterfly, now here, now there. His mobility seems difficult to reconcile with his contentment and well-being, and yet they must have been compatible ; no one seems to have felt any surprise at finding him in a new place every fortnight throughout the summer.

He rarely made incursions into Rousseau's domain. His world was not the stately forest at Barbizon ; but rather the gentle beauty of the pond at Ville d'Avray, with its coquettish surroundings, or Nantes, with its bridge and river, or Arras with its long, oft-painted road, where his friends lived : simple, honest admirers, quiet people like himself, among whom he perhaps was more at his ease than among his philosophising colleagues Or Auvers, in the lovely valley of the Oise, where he gave the house to Daumier ; the landscape glorified by C6zanne and Pissarro, and finally by Van Gc^h, a district at least as important in the history of modern art as Barbizon.

But he cannot, indeed, be described as the painter of any special landscape.

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His pictures were within him, and he needed external phenomena merely to confirm his visions. He was one of those wonder-children, who are born with a sense of form. It was long taken for granted that he had no aptitude for pure form, that he was deliberately indistinct, that he could not draw, and, therefore, was only master of his materials in twilight. As far as this can be made a reproach to his art, it is by no means true. ^ Il ne faut laisser d'ind6cision dans aucune chose," he remarks in his note-book, when he made his first journey to Italy. He was too conscientious to have accepted any such compromise. Those who blame him for defective drawing insist on a kindred weakness in Velazquez, Rembrandt and Rubens. In the true artistic sense, to draw means nothing else than to paint : the capacity to fix an impression received through the eye, by means of pen or pencil, as well as brush, in accordance with the manner of the executant and the degree of perfection incident thereto. His manner was not that of the classicists, nor that of the Cinquecentisti. During his two years' sojourn in Rome, he never entered the Sistine Chapel, and when he returned fifteen years later, Michelangelo left him cold. He was, of course, indififerent to contour, as

was natural in an artist who saw everything in large masses, for whom only forms and tones existed, or rather, indeed, only tones, but, who could create anything he wished with tone. His drawings, alike the earliest, the portraits of the milliners in the parental workshop, and the nymphs and dancers of his septuagenarian days, are made up of timid scratches. The child-like, self-taught character of his art is most apparent here. Where his drawing is restricted to the pure stroke, it is, in fact, mere memoranda, without any sort of artistic pretension. Sometimes the sheets are covered with little circles and squares, which, as André Michel tells us, were his shorthand notes. The circles denote light, the squares shadow. No one would dream of comparing such memoranda with masterly drawings, and, so far, therefore, the critics who say he drew badly are right. But as soon as he admitted tone to the psiper, there was a change. Corot could make a landscape with three patches of shadow and as many strokes. It remained a very delicate structure, for its creator wished it to be mobile, that it might grow into the heart of the spectator. \* "Sa forme flottante," ssdd Jean Rousseau, in his charming study, "semble toujours en mouvement. Plusicrite elle serait immobile." \* This was true of his drawings no less than of his pictures. Their tenderness is without prejudice to their divine aroma. Millet waxed enthusiastic over them. His best drawings, notably those that stir dreamy reminiscences of the antique, are penetrated by the Corot-spirit. Renoir, and more especially Pissarro, recalled them later on, and there are many who recognise a childlike genius of the same order as Corot's in Bonnard's lithographed fantasies.

Tone was Corot's great medium. Form in a picture appeared to him solely in the sum of the values. "What there is to see in painting," he said once, "or rather, what I look for, is the form, the whole, the equilibrium of tones. Colour comes after this with me." Like Rembrandt, he made colour with light and shade. Fran<sup>ais</sup> called him the Rembrandt of the open air. This is going a little too far. He appears as the lark beside the eagle, not, as he himself modestly declared, when compared with Rousseau, but certainly when compared with the greatest of Dutchmen. But who would dream of comparing grace with strength? Corot built a nest suitable to his genius. What great things were hatched in it, I hope presently to show.

• Jean Rousseau, \* "Camille Corot, suivi d'un Appcndice par Alfred Robaut." (Paris, Librairie deTArt, 1884.)

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G>rot was nearly thirty when he went to Rome to study seriously. He went as a pupil of Bertin, and normally he would have had as such to draw nourishment from the usual milch-cow, and become one of many. But, on the contrary, he treated Rome as if it had been one of the environs of Paris — a place where one

could work from Nature just as well as outside the fortifications by the Seine. The old masters of marble and painting might never have existed, as far as he was concerned. He copied Nature, in his own manner, as faithfully as he could. His earliest pictures are comparatively prosaic. We are only just beginning to appreciate his early, and once despised period. This is a natural reaction from the exaggerated worship bestowed on the lyric pictures of his later years. Many of his earliest works verge on topography, and began at the beginning. He studied the world before he set out to conquer it. There is no very marked difference between his first Roman pictures, and those he painted before leaving France. The style seems to lie more in the choice of subject, in the pattern, and less in the handling. But beneath these externals the whole Corot is concealed. The oft-copied *Ordeidee* across the Tiber with the dome of St Peter's in the middle, and the tower of St. Angelo to the right, the somewhat later view of the Colosseum in the Louvre, and other little pictures of the same kind foreshadow the effect of space, the delicate colour, and subtle gradations of later masterpieces. The Roman motives are innumerable and amazingly various. His early landscapes differ as much as his later ones resemble each other. It seems as if he had assimilated as many forms as possible in order to evolve unity from them later on. Indeed, many a landscape of his first Roman sojourn served as the background for some enchanted festival later on. Thus the little wooded landscape of 1826 with the Colosseum in the background, formerly in the Doria Gallery, became the famous *Fontaine de Nymphes* of the Salon of 1850, now in the Louvre. The drawings of this period, too, are the most correct he ever made. They sometimes reveal a touching solicitude for accuracy of detail. But even then his hand played him the trick of desiring to give more than his eye had seen. The rocks range themselves into terraces, the groups of trees melt together in cadenced lines, the rhythm asserts itself. As yet, Corot resisted the poetic impulse, and strove to be guided by Nature rather than by himself. His Roman period served him to create the solid anatomy of the structure that was to shelter him later on, and part of the charm of this period may come from the suppressed poems we divine beneath the conscientious realism.

In 1828 he returned, laden with pictures, and now his wanderings through France began. He painted his first pictures of Ville d'Avray and Fontainebleau, the sea at Dieppe and Honfleur, the quays of the ancient Rouen of his school-days, and tried to extort the respect of his family by one or two careful portraits, which seemed to his distrustful relatives mere caricatures, in spite of their limpid intensity. The landscapes are still more or less in the nature of reconnaissances, brilliant topographical studies. In 1834 he went south for the second time. This time he stayed in North Italy, at Pisa, where he sketched the medallion of the Campo Santo, and at Florence where he found scenery ideally suited to his style in the Boboli Gardens. At Venice he drew the architectonic details of the Piazza with elaborate accuracy, and again brought a number of simple little pictures home.

In 1835 he first came forward with a certain assurance, exhibiting his first large

picture, the Hagar in the WtldemesSy at the Salon. The outcast Hagar kneels

DAUMIER: RATAPOIL, BRONZE

A. ROUART COLLECTION, PARIS

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beside her sleeping boy in the for^round of a rocky landscape, and stretches her arms despairingly to Heaven.

We scarcely recognise Corot here. After the little pictures of the preceding period, in which he apparently follows submissively after Nature, the Hagar in the Gallimard collection appears like the work of another artist. The difference afibcts one almost unpleasantly, for it calls in question the very quality the earlier works had taught us to prize, an innocent sincerity. The Hagar is a conventional picture ; its relation to the Franco-Roman landscape school is obvious. The landscape is \*\* composed " after the classic receipt, the figures introduced on the same principles, the motive may have been suggested by Benozzo Gozzoli in the Campo Santo of Pisa. And this superficial conventionality tempts us to overlook all there is of Corot in the picture.

The disappointment is, as a fact, the fault of the spectator himself. He who looks for a revolutionary in G>rot will always be wide of the mark. The development of modern art is not derived from Corot ; he took something from it and gave something to it, but he did not play the decisive part which Rousseau perhaps, of all his immediate contemporaries, most conspicuously filled. Rousseau brought a fervid conviction and an abnormally complex equipment to the task of creating a new landscape, in which there should be no particle of the ancient construction of Poussin and Claude, the French successors of the Venetians. The impulse to this movement came to him from the art most sharply opposed to that of the Italians, the art of Holland, and set him on the only possible road by which painting could again become the medium of an individual conception of Nature. Corot held aloof from this adventure. He was in Italy when the first of the new landscapes were painted. We must not forget that he was already a man when Rousseau, Dupr6 and Millet were born, that he survived Rousseau and Millet, that he died about three years before Courbet and Daubigny, and was working to the last hour of his life. He was thus in a position to embrace the entire development of the others. This he did, but he would not have been Corot if he had been merged therein. His originality lies in his strictly conditional assimilation of the modern tendency. A part of his nature clung to other things, and was no less

pronounced a factor in his art.

Fromentin has described the conquest of the old Dutchmen by the Frenchmen of 1830 in one of his most brilliant chapters.\* He sets Corot aside, declaring him to be as little of a Dutchman as might be. This remark in the mouth of a worshipper of the Dutchmen sounds almost like a reproach levelled at Corot to exalt Rousseau. Just as is the dictum in itself, nothing could be falser than such a critical conclusion. Setting aside personal results, it might fairly be urged, that if the conquest of the Dutch was important, the preservation of the French tradition was no less so ; that many great artists contributed to the first achievement, whereas the other task was, in all essentials, the work of one man.

If the time should ever come when the consideration of art should no longer be confined to the purely personal and obvious, in the contemplation of which the essential is so apt to be forgotten ; if we should ever learn to deal more intelligently with the mediums of our enjoyment, there will, no doubt, be a complete re-organisation of our museums. We shall see a new system of classification, not by countries or centuries, or any such arbitrary considerations, but by the nature of works, by the tendencies they illustrate. The spectator will no longer be called

• \*\* *Lc8 Maitres d'Autrefois*,<sup>1\*</sup> p. 276.

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upon to perform a series of mental gymnastics in a gallery, leaping like an acrobat from one emotion to another, because every picture is in contrast to the next, and appeals to a different sensation ; a sense of comfort will enhance his pleasure in the work of art. Let us imagine a grouping of artists in families ; the works of one man hung together, and not only so arranged, but further completed by his predecessors and successors. Science would not be the only gainer ; the layman would profit no less than the student. The *homme moyen*, who stands helplessly before an unknown artist, and turns for illumination to his Baedeker, would become familiar with many masters whom no art-histories can explain to him, if all that now seems strange and incomprehensible in their work — I am thinking more especially of the moderns — were set before him in its various stages of development. The connoisseur's enjoyment would also be increased, for the latent cause of all aesthetic sensation, a chaotic recollection of beautiful things evoked by a particular work, would be multiplied by the actual presence of a part at least of these elements. No one would lose in the process, for the work of art that suffered by such a family gathering — and perhaps there would be many such in the newer museums — would prove that it had no right to its place. As aesthetic maturity can only be attained by continuous comparison of works, and as the process recommended would stimulate both knowledge and enjoyment, it is strange that it should never have had a trial, and that the nearest approach to it should



have been the grouping of artists into "schools," a system of classification which can give but a rough and ready suggestion of artistic affinities.

Were the plan I have suggested adopted, many unjustly depreciated masters would come to their own again. Among the forerunners of Corot, for instance, we should find the two favourites of the time of Louis XVI., Joseph Vernet and Hubert-Robert. Vernet was extravagantly appreciated by Diderot, who dared to rank him above Claude,\* but succeeding generations were too ready to cast him aside with other dbris of the past. Corot had no great admiration for the large landscapes extolled by Diderot, but, as his copy in the Cheramy collection shows, he studied the more intimate pictures of the painter of ruins, and owed them something of suggestion for what Diderot called \*\* *Clever des vapeurs sur la toile*," an art we note even in the earliest of the Roman pictures. In Hubert-Robert, he certainly cared less for the eternal architectural arrangements, once so admired by the Parisians, than for the more sincere little pictures, such as the *JVater-Carrier* in the Louvre, where a delicate tone envelops the arabesque. With Vernet and Hubert-Robert we should have to group L. G. Moreau, whose Meudon pictures foreshadow the freshness of Corot's best time, and Simon Lantara, the first of the Fontainebleau masters, who was painting in the famous forest as early as the middle of the eighteenth century. In the circle of this remarkable vagabond we find further Hue and Huet, and a German, Ferdinand KobeU, who made some charming drawings in the style of the day.

Joseph Vernet and Hubert-Robert were in the van of the movement which brought about the return to the antique, the reaction from V<sup>^</sup>atteau. They played a more important part in this double-edged achievement than David, who, coming after them, covered up many of the noble tendencies of this reaction with a frigid mask. Gabillot has shown this relation in a thoughtful work.<sup>t</sup> David adopted the antique as a revolutionary badge in opposition to the art of fallen

\* "Hubert- Robert et son Temps " by C. Gabillot. (Paris, Librairie de TArt, 1895.)  
<sup>t</sup> Diderot's Salon of 1765.

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tyranny. But, as a fact, the revival of the antique was the work of the same royal mind that created the eighteenth century. Just as in architecture the Louis XVI. style preceded the Empire, so the painters of Louis XVI. expressed in more delicate accents what the artists of the Revolution so vehemently proclaimed. This whole classic movement saw in the antique primarily Rome, whose more compact relics appeared of greater importance than those of Greece to those who were anxious to build. Gabillot calls the men of the Revolution <sup>^</sup> as little Greek as possible. They are above all Roman. They might have found patterns of heroism as easily in Athens and Sparta as in Rome. Their education impelled

them to remain Romans.\*\*

There is nothing of this Roman antiquity in Corot. He turns from David's declamation to the milder influences of the eighteenth century, from which it is easy to find one's way still farther back into the past. Several of the landscape painters of the seventeenth century contributed to Corot's peculiar scenery, the earlier Frangois Millet in particular. This artist was not always in his *Opira Comique* vein ; he appears sometimes as a genuine painter, in the large landscape, for instance, in the Munich Pinacothek, where Dughet's languid atmosphere is replaced by the freshness of a Northern temperament, and where classic form has only served for the production of a new and natural vegetation. Or, to name one more among many, Moucheron was also of the number, Moucheron, who occasionally treated light after a fashion which seemed to us a new discovery two hundred years later, when our contemporaries essayed it. I recall the little river-landscape in the Stockholm Gallery, and similar things.

Millet and Moucheron are French names ; but the one first saw the light in Antwerp, and is reckoned among the Flemish masters, in spite of his sojourn in Paris from his youth to his early death, and the other, Frederick de Moucheron, was a native of Embden. If we bear in mind Corot's relation to these and many similar masters, we shall see that Fromentin's pronouncement as to Corot's entire independence of the Dutchmen must be accepted with certain reservations. In some of the Dutchmen of the purest blood, notably in Wynants, he might have found precedents for some of the most important aspects of Corot's art. All he would concede in this connection was that Corot too had worked at the canal to the Promised Land which Rousseau built. He did not see that Corot had established a communication for himself by continuing the relation of two centuries earlier, and at the same time, fulfilling the domestic law of French art, the fusion of Northern and Southern elements, to which all his glorious predecessors had conformed.

We shall find that Corot, nevertheless, eventually arrived at Barbizon. But this was not the most momentous stage in his development. His unconscious sympathy with the older masters was far more important. He succeeded in reinforcing his Virgilian poetry with the conviction of a purely natural instinct, and in combining faint reminiscences of the form which Poussin and Claude had made invincible, with the realism of a self-taught artist of the nineteenth century. He had, naturally, to steer past many cliffs on his voyage to the goal. One of these appears in his *Hagar*. This picture, which delighted all the critics of the old school, such as Lenormant, who scoffed at Corot's little pictures for their want of style, was inspired by the naive conception that a Salon picture should be painted in the grand manner, and that the simplicity of the little pictures of nature would be insufficient here. But if the construction of the *Hagar* betrays compromise.

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the veil of painting that overlies the classic skeleton is of a kind undreamt of by Michallon and Berdn. Tone plays a very important part in the work, veiling the romantic rocks, and animating the conventional emptiness of the background ; we divine that Corot already held the threads of a brilliant and harmonious development in his hand.

So far, he stands apart from the beginnings of his contemporary, Millet. This difference shows us how high above Millet's exemplars or the forties was the tradition to which Corot had reverted. Millet had the misfortune to begin under Delaroche, and to receive the tradition from that uninspired source. Delaroche had given the Salon picture the character it still ventures to present to the public every year. The style of the large landscape compositions of the eighteenth century was empty and arid, but, as Corot showed, it could be vivified. Delaroche was always a still-born thing, without style, but with a secret willingness to flatter the evil instincts of the masses. Within the limits prescribed for him, Millet could have produced nothing but conventionalities, and his first attempts to please the public — attempts to which his poverty and not his will consented — are beneath criticism. After this false start, the *Winnower* of 1848 burst upon the world like a bomb. This, Millet's first real picture, bore but the slightest relation to his past. Perhaps the tragedy of this past was necessary, perhaps his enthusiasm would never have developed so freely, if he had not previously been held down by his unlucky beginnings. His whole art, indeed, the art of his whole circle to Van Gogh, has the explosive character of *The Winnower*. In Corot there is no trace of any such violent development. He showed his descent in his *Hagar*. To this he was faithful all his life, though his brilliant career illumined these beginnings with a retrospective lustre. He made his extremest compromise, to my mind, in his *St. Jerome with the absurd lion* of the year 1837. We need only look at Millet's picture of the same subject painted in 1846, or at his puerile nudities of the same period, to understand the wide difference between the parallel stages of development of the two artists. Corot's *Flight into Egypt* of 1839-40, and the contemporary *Monk* belonging to M. Moreau-Nilaton show the progress made since the *Hagar* and the *St. Jerome*.

We shall return presently to the large compositions related to these religious pictures. At the same time, seeking to give worthy expression to his piety, he made essays in purely ecclesiastical art. He went regularly to church on Sundays, and painted many church pictures. But the church in which he loved best to pray and to paint was outside, in the open air. Its pillars were his beloved trees, the birds its choristers, the sun was the preacher, and the holy angels became dancing *Bayaderes*. As early as 1836 he had painted a bathing *Diana* with her playmates. In the *Siknus* of the Salon of 1838 the nymphs dance in the wood for the first time.

The "eternal feminine" has a place in every true idyl Corot remained

unmarried all his life, but not on the same grounds as Menzel. Passion, of which Menzel had too little, was too strong in Corot to allow of his warming himself at a single flame. He never shook off the frou-frou of his mother's workshop, and was surrounded by women in advanced old age. He reminds us of Goethe here. His pictures were occasional poems, and they came to him spontaneously, like verses to the enamoured poet. We might suppose him to have first found himself, when he discovered the nymphs, and to have become his own master when he was forty years old. Man plays but a small part in his pictures. He left man

COROT: ST. SEBASTIAN

CHÉRAMY COLLECTION, PARIS

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to Millet. Even when Millet paints a woman, he gives the male aspect of her personality, showing her as the fellow worker of the man. Corot devoted himself to the other sex. Even during his first stay in Rome we find him painting innumerable women of the people to a very small proportion of men. At first he treated them as he did his landscapes of the same period, with the utmost thoroughness, noting their costumes and using them for effects of colour. Later, in Paris, he painted all the pretty milliners who came in his way, and created his type, the young girl whose face we cannot well remember, of whose figure we divine but a few lines, of whom we scarcely know more than that we caught a glimpse of Happiness as she passed— a Nymph brushed by us ! As Collin said of him, he painted, not Nature, but his love of her, and this was peculiarly his fashion of treating Nature as revealed in woman. But the phrase has a still wider application. It is not so much the objects in his pictures that charm us, be they what they may, as the tone that envelops them, the peculiarly spheric quality of the handling. This achievement of tone is the Alpha and Omega of his development. He made considerable progress towards it on his third Italian journey, in 1843 he was in Rome again. We shall see presently what he gained on this occasion as a landscape-painter. It is hardly too much to say that landscape was an intermittent element in Corot's art, which comes to the front more prominently at certain periods, but never absorbs the artist entirely. We shall get a truer insight into his peculiar and very comprehensive nature, if we endeavour to bring out all the other elements, and if we take especial note of his development in the treatment of figures, which also personifies his artistic progress.

In Rome he no longer studied woman objectively, as he had done fifteen years earlier, but as an element of style for future pictures. Ingres, who directed the

French Academy in Rome till 1841, exercised what I may call a localised, but not an unimportant influence upon Corot at this period. At the Salon of 1843, Corot exhibited a recumbent Odalisque^ the inspiration of which was clearly due to Ingres\* great picture in the Louvre.

This picture, now in the Hazard collection, is less than a third the size of the Ingres. It is also less magnificent, and lacks the exquisitely balanced arabesque of its prototype. But on the other hand, it is more fleshy, more human, more actual, and already point<sup>3</sup> out the direction in which Corot was to surpass the great classicist. Ingres\*s brilliant figure unites every splendour of modelling and contour. But it does not breathe. Even in the soul of the most enthusiastic spectator, there is a sense of something lacking, something that is and must be absent in the very essence of this art. It is the old difference between the arabesque of a Quattrocento and the painting of a Rembrandt. With Ingres, line is so pliant an instrument for the magical suggestion of space, that we forget we have a carefully calculated, absolutely schematic effect before our eyes. It is only when we put an artist of the other school beside him, that we see how the natural instinct of the painter surpasses this scientific process. Corot, like Renoir after him, desired to retain the maximum of a composition, but he would not renounce a painter's vital nerve, the effect obtained by the division of the surface. Ingres\* figures are lovelier than any of Corot's, but they are eternally alone, without light or air, brilliant objects. Corot sought to bring the beautiful dead to life. The picture mentioned above was not the first of his Odalisques. Gallimard owns a little picture of the same size, a Nymph of the Seine\* dated 1837, the first of this brilliant series. Here ♦ " L'Œuvre de Corot,\*" Robaut— Moreau— Nalaton, No. 458.

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we already note an effect of distance and atmosphere which is a secret to all mere painting. Ingres sought to concentrate everything in the one body, and surrounded it with other beautiful forms. Corot sought to blend his material with space, not only to harmonise his lines, but to make a continuous atmosphere of the whole\* The progressive development of his Odalisques continued till he was past sixty; not a development of the type, but of the painting. The little picture of the recumbent nymph belonging to Katargy \* was probably painted about the same time as the Nymph of the Hazard collection. The slender line of the body rises very little above the ground. In the course of fifty years this body seems to grow and take on broader, more majestic contours. The forms become rounder, the limbs learn movement, the flesh becomes more elastic, and finally, perfected beauty emerges. The Toilette appeared at the Salon of 1859. We might almost suppose that Corot foresaw his future course, when we find him initiating the maturest of the works he dedicated to woman, with

this picture of a young woman decking herself for some festival, enveloped in the tender atmosphere of Spring. The toilette is being made in the open air, among birch-trees, on the margin of a little pool. The attendant fastens an ornament carefully into the hair of the naked beauty, who raises her hands to her head to help, dreaming the while like one of Chassériau's meditative figures. The attitude is divine. The attendant stands as close as possible to her, leaving only the line of her back free to the air. The rich lines of the profile are brought together by the gown of the servant, the simple outline of which encloses the group on the left side, so that the outside of the group towards the open air forms a quiet, compact line, whereas on the inner side the movement is very effectively developed and allows of the strongly marked projection of the knee. The spectator receives an impression that this naked being is securely protected, a mingling of pleasure in the form and enjoyment of the intimate of the scene. The beautiful proportion between the group and the upper part of the picture, the happy shape and size of the canvas, and above all, the characteristic handling contribute to this impression. For the colour, the master relied on the emphasis of the brush-stroke and the differentiation of the modelling. The only strong tone is the yellow in the dress of the maid, which is deliberately painted in a more material and vehement fashion than the rest, to balance the vaporous surface of the naked flesh\* This vaporous effect pervades the whole picture. It seems to lie in the atmosphere, which fills both group and landscape with warm life.

In an analysis of Corot, it is difficult to avoid a term which has been so mischievously applied, that one uses it unwillingly. I fear to suggest a false idea, by describing Corot as chaste ; for in the first place, the quality for which I can find no other word, forms no part of the accepted doctrine of abstinence, and in the second, it exposes one to the danger of collision with those didactic aesthetes who have made their conception of this virtue a criterion of art, and have too long wearied mankind therewith. In Corot we find neither negation nor affirmation of the sexual element, but that higher virtue, which first demands beauty from what is sensual, before inquiring whether it is moral : the purity of the healthy. Corot does not avoid the sweet magic of love, but he shows it only in its happy aspects, as a Paradise where there is no need for repentance, where all its joys are set to the rhythm of dancing feet and measured movement. This applies to his composition, to the happy idiosyncrasy which makes him express desire in dance and song.

♦ \*\*L'Œuvre de Corot," Robaut—Morcau — *l'Art*, No. 540.

COROT: THE TOILET (1859)

DESFOSSÉ COLLECTION, PARIS

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But this joyful chastity also manifests itself instinctively in his treatment of details, his touch, his handwriting. It makes up the loose texture of his painting, his moderation in material, his involuntary hesitation to unveil beauty, that interweaving of airy threads, that unuttered harmony which carries us back to our youth, to the time when we wept and laughed for no particular reason, and saw the world spread out before us, a glistening net full of pearls and precious stones.

Corot's chastity lies in the fairy element he breathed into love. He idealised it in a credible fashion, by making the atmosphere the symbol. Bathed in this vapourous magic, his women, painted in the sixties, take on a brilliant loveliness. In 1865, the same year in which another art hero, Manet, set forth his ideal in his *Olympia* Corot exhibited his *Nymph reclining on a Tiger-Skin* and his *Nymph reclining on the Sea-Shore* the final result of the figure first created nearly thirty years before. Among these numerous *Odalisque*-pictures there is one, painted rather earlier, perhaps the most surprising thing in Corot's whole work, which would alone have sufficed to immortalise him, the *Bacchante with the Panther*. This is not one of Decamps' quadrupeds ; it has nothing in common with Delacroix' bloodthirsty beasts, nor with Barye's stealthy great cats. Corot has put a naked child to ride upon his panther. I do not think he painted it from life, though the skin makes a magnificent effect. Rather did he find it in that fairer world, where Titian also saw it, yoked with its fellow to the car of Bacchus, when the victorious god flamed forth upon Ariadne ; where Poussin found it later too, in the same Dionysiac cortege whence enthusiastic Greeks once lured it into gleaming reliefs. The group occupies the foreground of a faintly indicated landscape, and extends nearly the whole length of the long canvas. The panther and the nymph are almost on the same plane, both in sharp profile, so that the antithesis of the long outstretched feminine limbs and the heavy beast is strongly emphasised. In her extended hand the nymph holds out a dead bird to the panther. The curve of her arm, completed by the little chubby rider, seems to have surprised the most secret charms of beauty.

Ingres' supremacy was at an end. In 1864 Corot received twice as many votes in the election to the Jury of the Salon. And yet there was something of Ingres in this remote contemporary of that angry lion. A fragment of the divine form to which Ingres had dedicated his life, too precious to fall a victim to the stormy future, was clothed by Corot in magic garments and borne up to unapproachable heights.

We can understand that Corot should have disliked Manet. The assailant of modelling, the most essential process of the old masters, was incomprehensible to him, and his preference for Courbet was a result of the different attitude adopted by the latter on this question, and his skill in maintaining it. Beyond this, there was nothing in common between the figure-painter Corot and Courbet save this—

that he was not a figure-painter only. He had other peers before his eyes, was still dreaming, while the rest were formulating, and continued to make poems after Courbet had declared all poetry to be ignoble. Hals and Goya, who penetrated to him in France, did not disturb his idyl. That which they gave to the younger men, he had always found in the land of his dreams, where Giorgione and Correggio had lived. Poussin expanded his form, but remained comparatively alien to him. The splendour of the Bacchanalia was not revealed to his timidity.

\* L'Oeuvre de Corot, No. 1377. \ Ibid. No. 1376.

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On the other hand, he adored Giorgione as Poussin adored Titian. He strove to give naked figures in landscape the glow of the Concert champêtre. Lacking Giorgione's colour and his splendour, he had the same infinitely human sentiment which nuses Giorgione above his more gorgeous successors. In Corot's case, this sentiment sprang from a much less serious temperament. Its sincerity was compared with the sincerity of the French ideal comrade in Giorgione. After Prud'hon, who has been called the French Correggio, no one, Diaz not excepted, approached the painter of the Leda so closely as Corot. The point of view from which he saw Mm differed from that of Prud'hon and Diaz. Prud'hon had no greater ambition than to identify himself with the beloved master. Diaz, with his enthusiasm for the Italians, sometimes approached his prototypes so closely, that his exquisite idyls collide with an alien world of feeling. Corot, on the other hand, dreamt before Correggio, as before Nature. He looked from a greater distance, where the precise outlines of bodies were lost, and retained but something of the sum of many gestures. In some of his groups of dancing nymphs we might fancy we see the Leda multiplied indefinitely and proportionately reduced. Scene, atmosphere, the whole structure of the picture is more remote from Correggio than Delacroix from Rubens. But through all the differences the hereditary strain makes itself felt, and awakes in us something of the pleasure we feel, when, looking into a mirror, we recognise traces of honoured precursors.

Corot ennobled Correggio ; he set the sensuous beauty of the Leda in a wider, breezier space, evoked legends yet more poetic, went back, his eyes still fixed on the master, to greater and more distant times, when the gods were seen in bodily shape among men, and dictated the Odes to Virgil. The chastity I have ascribed to him is the antique spirit, which distinguishes him from Correggio. It is said that he learnt Greek in his old age, to enable him to read Theocritus in the original. It is certain that he had a closer affinity with the Greeks than his contemporaries. And it is for this reason that he seems to us of such far-reaching importance. We have seen how the classicism of Joseph Vernet's circle was distorted by David to pseudo-Romanism. Prud'hon resisted this tendency with a gentle determination. In his delicious drawings at Chantilly, in



the Louvre, &c., rather than in his large pictures, we find the re&x of a freer art ; they suggest the spirit that was never amalgamated with the massive body of Roman antiquity — Hellas. Corot ventured to psdnt in this fashion, and even more resolutely than Prud'hon, banished all reminiscences of ancient Rome, in order to brinff himself the more closely into communion with an ideal Hellas. This ideal he did not discern in the sculpture of the ancients. David would have found him even less akin to himself than Prud'hon. Corot evolved his ideals from his dreams. He painted landscape — the genre David's school pronounced contemptible — took it from the environs of Paris, and painted it in the Greek spirit. Instead of Hubert Robert's ruins, he set litde naked maidens in it, who seem classical to us now, though no one would have dared to call them so fifty years ago. He did what Poussin and Claude succeeded in doing in the same natural manner. In his review of the Salon of 1857, About wrote that Corot had seen things in Nature, which had escaped the two great masters of the seventeenth century.\*

It would be unjust to place the later artist above his predecessors on this account. Poussin arid Claude were to their age what Corot was to his, and he could never

^ Nos Artistes au Salon de 1857.

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have become what he was, had they not shown him the path he was to follow. These two had already breathed a new spirit into the things of antiquity, had given to the light in a picture the action formerly reserved for sharply defined outlines, and had completed the great inventions of Veronese and Tintoretto. The eighteenth century pondered long on this tradition. Corot did not only ponder it, but worked it out, and made such an advance on the old path, that we are apt to forget what had already been accomplished. We may say that he is more natural than his predecessors, without reproach to Poussin and Claude. He was more natural, because the whole world has become more natural. He is not less of a poet, not less classical ; and this is a rare distinction to-day. The mingling of his tender songs with the resonant fanfares of the new art has rejoiced many hearts.

To that Salon of 1857 described by About, Corot sent seven pictures, among them five masterpieces, which secured the recognition of the sexagenarian painter even by the general public. The first, the Concert Champitre^ which belonged to Dupr6, and was bought after his death by the Due d'Aumale for Chantilly, was an old picture; it had already figured at the Salon in 1844, but, simplified and improved, it delighted the same people who had then passed it over. Others were : the Destruction of Sodom,^ the Ronde de Nymphes^ and a Shepherdess on the outskirts of a wood, at sunset.

Thiophile Gautier, who had already sung the painter's praises in 1839, now wrote enthusiastically of his "verdures elysiens" and "ciels crâpusculaires." The epithets might lead one to suppose the master a comrade of Delacroix. Reminiscences of the Dante's Boat were remote enough from the spirit of Corot, as I have tried to picture it. The Romanticism of the one had nothing in common with the idyllic poetry of the other. They were, in fact, two extremes, almost two worlds. On the one hand, the flamboyant colourist, the turbulent temperament, the audacious dramatist ; on the other, the singer who veiled his pastorals in tender tones. But great artistic personalities are so richly endowed that they are rarely essentially antithetical. They cannot be exhaustively summed up by the coarse standards we apply to the average man. Their gentleness has its abysses, their passion its calm oases, and we shall know them but imperfectly, if we ignore the contradictions that complete their nature. In Corot's Christ in the Garden of Olives<sup>t</sup> of 1849, t Delacroix's famous picture of the same name, transformed by its passage through a more peaceful imagination, lies as if under a veil. In the Destruction of Sodom Delacroix' influence is very apparent. When Corot painted it originally, in 1843, he was a stranger to Delacroix, and, as far as we can judge by a contemporary reproduction, his composition was a classic one, in the spirit of his Hagar. Fourteen years later he repainted the picture, modified the shape and size, and gave the composition that dramatic unity of form, which seems a touching renunciation of his idyllic preferences. Shortly before, he had painted the St. Sebastian<sup>^</sup> already mentioned, in the painting of which — notably in the sketch — Delacroix' peculiar hatching is employed. In the Dante and Virgil of 1859 there are similar affinities. But the influence of Delacroix is most obvious in the Macbeth of the same year. The visitor to the Wallace Museum, where so many surprises await one in connection with the art of French Romanticism, stands astounded before this large picture. There is a tremendous dramatic verve in the three witches, and the two riders on the startled

\* This too had appeared in a different form at the Salon of 1844.

t In the Langres Museum.

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horses in the ghostly, lurid landscape, and at first glance we should be less astonished to find Delacroix' name in the inscription, than that of the actual author. We have but to turn, however, to the neighbouring picture, Delacroix' gorgeous Execution of the Doge<sup>^</sup> to see how great the difference really is. The Corot looks dark beside this. He did not abandon his own more discreet manner, but it is as if some stirring event had taken place in the life of the lyric poet, inspiring him, the limner of gentle shepherdesses, to a mightier form of speech. I know not if this obvious influence is to be referred to any particular picture of Delacroix\*. It is possible that Corot may have seen Chassériau's version of the subject, which approaches Delacroix very closely. When, in 1867, he saw his Macbeth again at the great

Exhibition, he could not refrain from certain sarcasms at his own expense. This same brooding Romanticism lurks in certain other pictures. In the Stedelijk Museum at Amsterdam, Delacroix's great Flight of Medea hangs in the same room with Corot's Contrebandiers^ the night-piece with the smugglers' horses in the gloomy ravine. Here again we note a faint reflection of the painter of the Medea.

The two artists first became acquainted in their later years, probably through their common friend Dutilleul. In 1847 Delacroix visited Corot's studio, and recorded the happy impression made upon him by the beautiful Nymphs\* Corot, less swift to form an opinion, came to admire Delacroix more and more as years went by. He had many tendencies in common with him, notably his veneration for Correggio, whom Delacroix ranked with Michelangelo, and may well have had more sympathy with the nobility of mind which breathed from every aspiration of the great painter and great man, than many of his contemporaries. He admired him, above all, as a monumental painter, as the author of the ceiling in the Louvre and of the large religious subjects, and it was perhaps Delacroix's example which moved him to try his own powers in this field.

Corot as a monumental painter is an almost unknown entity. Nor can we justly give him such a pretentious title, for his highest art is not to be found in these essays. They indicate rather a quantitative expansion of his rich activity than a new aspect of his genius ; but this quantum contains so many fine things that we cannot pass it by as insignificant. His first attempt was typical of him. Robaut tells us that Corot arrived one day at the beginning of the forties to visit his friend Robert at Mantes, and found workmen beginning to paint the bathroom. The artist forthwith begged his \*\* worthy colleagues to make way for him. He happened to have no implements with him, so he took the brushes and colours of the house painters, supplemented them as well as he could at the local colour-man's, and set to work. The room was small and ill-proportioned, like most bath-rooms. Nothing daunted, Corot decorated the six panels of this cupboard in a French villa with as many Souvenirs a^ l'Italie without any sort of preparation or anything to guide him save his recollection. There is at least one picture among the six, an oblong dessus-de-fen^tre with a view of the Grand Canal at Venice, which repays a journey to Mantes.

The decorations of the little kiosque in the garden of the house at Ville d'Avray, which Corot painted in 1847 for his old mother's birthday, must have been a more charming achievement, for here great care was taken to harmonise the

\* Delacroix ^ Journal,\* March 14, 1847.

t In "L'Art" for December 7, 1879. The panels are reproduced in \*\*L'Oeuvre de Corot,\*\* under Nos. 435 to 440.

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various panels, and the dimensions suited the painter. Robaut very unjustly ranks these panels below those of the Mantes bath room, because the different landscapes seemed to him insufficiently individualised.\* This deficiency was, in fact, due to a preference for a general effect, as far as we can now judge. One of the two largest panels, on which the little house itself is painted, is among Corot's most fascinating works. The other pictures complete and extend this fascination. Any stronger emphasis would have disturbed the idyl. The purity of the warm summer harmony is of a far higher order than the improvisation at Mantes, which, happy as it is, does not express Corot's highest gift, his melody.

Shortly before, he had painted the Baptism of Christ for the Church of St. Nicolas du Chardonnet in Paris, fortunately not on the wall, but on canvas. It is one of his largest pictures, almost four metres high, and is Corot's most precious contribution to monumental art in the conventional sense. The treatment is akin to that of the Cinquecentisti, and the traditional action is retained ; but as such, it loses all essential importance in the soft shadow in which Corot envelops it, and becomes a new element in the landscape in which it takes place. Before this perfect harmony, we sympathise with the enthusiasm of Delacroix, who recognised a kindred spirit here. The same art, simplified, reappears in the four frescoes of the church at Ville d'Avray. Here the landscape only serves as tone for the background, but on the other hand, the scenes themselves, notably the Expulsion from Paradise, are much more individual in style. Unfortunately, their position above the windows is so unfavourable, that the spectator can hardly enjoy them to the full.t

The fourteen scenes from the Passion in the village church of Rosny near Mantes, and also the large Flight into Egypt^ Corot's Salon picture of 1840, at the same place, have been so barbarously neglected by the local clergy that they are

already mere ruins. To the same period belong the four landscape panels painted at Decamps' house at Fontainebleau, and afterwards in the possession of Sir Frederick Leighton, and the four small ovals in Louis XV. panelling, at the Chateau of Gruyeres, in Switzerland. In the sixties, when Daubigny exchanged his floating studio on the Oise for a more stable summer residence at Auvers, Corot painted some of his most beautiful decorative compositions on the new wall of his friend's house. The largest of these served as pendant to a Don Quixote by Daumier, and showed in the background the two typical Cervantes-figures which Daumier painted so often.

This does not exhaust the list, but enough has been said to indicate the nature of these works. They differ from the rest mainly in dimension, and by a grace of handling even more airy and vaporous than usual. They have hardly added much to his fame, and are indeed merely the overflow of an inexhaustible energy. Yet they serve as a key to the right understanding of the master. They also help to explain Corot's attitude to the most important school of the nineteenth century, with which he has been too hastily confounded. A consideration of his work as a landscape painter will throw further light on this point.

The Romantic element we have noted in the master, and his affinity to Delacroix, disappear in the decorative side of his art. The yearning that breaks into fervid psalmody in *S. Sulpice* and the Louvre ceiling is denied to the mild

\* \*\* *L'Œuvre de Corot*, Nos. 600 to 607. The panels are now in the possession of Lemerre, of Paris.

t " *L'Œuvre de Corot*, Nos. 1074 to 1077, and 2311 to 2314.

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poetry of the gentle dreamer. Taken in conjunction, these two artists sum up the genius of their people. Corot's simple poetry springs, not from the fine frenzy of *ruget*, whom Delacroix venerated above all his predecessors, but from the gracious gardeners of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whose spirit still adorns the art of our neighbours at times.

We might typify the art of the Primitives by a figure of a saint, that of the florescence of the older painting by the portrait of a dignified man, that of the eighteenth century by a pastoral scene. Our own period might be summed up in a landscape. Here Painting — the isolated art — found a domain, in which the lack of tradition was not a drawback, but an advantage. Its full possibilities could only be revealed when individuals had gained sufficient vigour to insist on themselves in art. Antique art ignored landscape. Ecclesiastical art had used glimpses of the

country for backgrounds. The Dutchmen of the seventeenth century, who had no dealings either with the antique or with the Church, did not, even with their glorious works, debar the future from taking possession of the domain as of a newly discovered land. Indeed, what Ruysdad, Hobbema, van Goyen, and Aert van der Neer began, seemed rather to call for a continuation.

Conditions so favourable to a modern development inhered in no other field of the artistic heritage. Our unfitness to treat the votive picture is obvious, and the reasons are clear to every layman. But even in portraiture, the full splendour of the old masters is denied to us, and we delude ourselves if we see in modern compensation for this in our manner of characterisation. It is not a fiction that our portraits reproduce our epoch as those of the old painters reproduced theirs. The difference, however, must not lead us to conclude that there is a difference in artistic capacity. We cannot paint portraits as the early artists did. The intensity with which the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries applied themselves to this branch has made way for other tendencies, and had, in fact, to yield the ground in order to make other and more appropriate concentrations possible to us.

Thus, looked at from this distance, the doctrine of the unimportance of subject seems hardly tenable. We cannot say that what is represented is of no moment, if whole epochs have indeed shown a more perfect mastery of one thing than of another, though it is folly to accept the easily recognised results of habit as sufficiently important to justify an application of general rules to particular cases, and a laying down of laws for the guidance of individual talents. The superstition of the Classicists, that landscape in itself was unworthy of a painter's brush, the narrowness of Valenciennes, the painter and esthete of the Revolution, who condemned Claude Lorrain as too realistic, because 'the gods, demi-gods, nymphs, and satyrs were absent from his beautiful scenes/\* and built up a thesis about landscape on such premises,\* were thoroughly pernicious. And something of this superstition still clings to the amateur of the present day, whose admirations are confined within certain limits prescribed by the title of the work, and who cares only for landscape, or still-life, or imaginative subjects. He is unconscious that he says little as to the beautiful by such classification, and merely betrays some little personal defect of organisation, which dulls his perceptions as a tiny crack in china deadens the ring of the vessel.

\* ^\* Elements de perspective pratique i l'usage des Artistes, suivis de reflexions et conseils sur le genre du paysage." Paris, Pan viii.

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The votive picture was a suitable form in olden times, because the painter had

mastered it, because so many generations had worked at it, that finally the artist who had special aptitudes for this subject was evolved. The portraits of the old masters were not only presentations of this or the other patron, but reproductions of a norm created by the age, a variation of the author according to the features of the sitter, and therefore something altogether different to what we now mean by the term. This means that even then the supposed subject was in reality form. When David recommended his much-praised pupil, Gros, to paint a serious historical picture, he really had his beloved antique in his mind.

Landscape marked out a new track. It created new conceptions, new methods of turning these conceptions into pictures, new forms. For the older painters, who thought only man worthy of representation, all nature outside of humanity was a mere residuum. To the landscape-painter, man lost this isolated importance ; the artistic conception became pantheistic. And with his importance, man lost the world of forms which had gathered round him. The great arabesque evolved from the contours of nude bodies was inapplicable to planes with fields and woods and the sky in the background. Curves gave way to straight lines. And as the curve had brought with it a whole cosmos of rounded forms, so the straight line brought with it a world of strokes and angles of every kind, comparable to the furrows left by a spade in the soil. But even the landscape painters had no idea of renouncing the delineation of man. They brought him back, but no longer in the form he had when the dramatic curve played about him. He became the man of landscape, treated with the peculiarities of a method, which had accustomed the painter to observe light on large surfaces. The new man was a part of the new cosmos, a subject, where he had formerly reigned a king.

Corot was not more a landscape painter fundamentally than was Poussin, though we must not under-estimate Poussin's landscape. He was not exclusively a landscape painter. But was any great artist ever exclusive in this sense ? If Rembrandt had painted only portraits, he would have remained the seer and the visionary ; had he painted nothing but legends, he would have been none the less the great mathematician. Indeed, was not all he did at once portraiture and legend ? Is there any art which does not combine the two even in the least complex subject ?

Corot was a landscape painter in so far as he lived in the nineteenth century and expressed himself in the language of his age. If we take this expression in detail, it differs little from that of any other great landscape painter, yet he appears as a great poet by the side of excellent prose-writers. It was not the nymphs in his pictures which gave him this advantage, but his perfect freedom in dealing with a form created by himself and others (perhaps, indeed, more by others than by himself), a form which kept those others fettered to details. He appears to us as he did to the following generation of 1870, a greater personality, a richer artist, in whom the result of development achieved a more concentrated form.

He himself was quite unconscious of his pre-eminence among the younger men

of his day. He attributed his unique position solely to his close adherence to the ancient French tradition, and felt himself an alien among his comrades at Barbizon. The tales of his intimate relations with Rousseau's circle are purely apocryphal. Artists are, and must be, perverse in their judgments to some extent. Corot himself, despite his amenity, was no exception to the rule. He once confessed to Sensier that he could not take pleasure in the "art nouveau" ; by "new art"

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he meant Millet ; ten years earlier he had meant Delacroix. And these two must have been infinitely more sympathetic to him than such men as Cabat, Flers, Dupr6, and more especially Rousseau. To the Barbizon artists he appeared a compromiser, venerable, nevertheless, because he was 'le brave Pere Corot,' but to some extent vieux jeu. Moreau-Nelaton speaks of an antagonisme inavou6 mais r6el on the part of the Barbizon artists, and quotes contemporaries. We can read something of the sort between the lines in Fromentin. We have hinted at the essential reason for such an attitude in our consideration of the relation of the men of 1830 to the Dutch landscape painters. The former prided themselves on being pure landscape painters, working only from Nature, and adduced this as a proof of their sincerity. As a fact, they sat rather longer out of doors, and painted as they looked, whereas Corot worked without so many glances at the model ; a purely superficial difference, proceeding from the familiar fiction of a difference of kind. Corot painted nymphs ; that was enough for the foes of compromise !

But beneath the play of the nymphs there lay indeed a difference, which neither party took into account : Corot was a painter of tone, the others were colourists. In each case this essential argument must be completed by certain no less essential reservations.

We have seen how tone was the most decisive factor in Corot's development, how he brought it into the world with him, so to speak, for even in his first Roman days, when he painted the delicious views of the Tiber Bridge, and was intent merely on the collection of data, he bathed his objects in a vapourous envelope. How abnormal such a beginning was among painters without Corot's specific tendency may be seen if we recall the first Italian essays of such a gifted colourist as Bonington ; those which deal with the same prospect are merciless in their hardness.

This danger never existed for Corot. His art was as sensitive as his personality. But just as his proverbial kindness of heart was combined with immense physical strength, so also his pliant form overlay an elementary vigour,



which preserved that pliancy from sentimental inanity.

During his second sojourn in Rome in 1843, Corot's search of a form for his pictures of women. At about the time when he produced the Destruction of Sodom he painted a series of his finest landscapes. The pearl of these, the Gardens of the Villa d'Este at Tivoli with the boy on the wall, is in the rich collection of M. Henri Rouart, of Paris. This little picture has all the poetry of the famous views of the Villa Medici in the Prado, painted when Velazquez was still in the making, before he had got his generalising tone and grand style. The veil that hangs over the Gardens of the Villa d'Este is still transparent\* The shadow conceals nothing we desire to see. The colour consists of a wealth of distinct gradations, which, although they include the most delicate nuances, are granular throughout, and so add continually to the richness of the effect. It is as if we were enjoying some luscious fruit, and finding our enjoyment intensified by a slight resistance in the texture. At Tivoli the natural accidents were all in Corot's favour, the combination of architecture and rich vegetation, the picturesque outlook. But he triumphs, too, where his material is less pictorial, as in M. Rouart's other example or in M. Moreau-Natton's Cascatelles, or the remarkable little Genzano in the Cheramy collection. In hundreds of landscapes painted

• «\*UCCuvrc dc Corot,\*' i. p. 240, t l^td. Na 454.

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the following year, Corot continued on the same road, now enclosing a far horizon within his frame, in order to paint the vapourous distance of a quiet for^round, now following the country folks along the highways or in the meadows, to paint the intimate relation between man and nature in warm tones, now — as in the silent pool of the Sarlin collection, which delighted us at the Centennial Exhibition — enwrapping himself and us in solitude. There is a divine peace in this Nature, we feel as if we were unnoticed spectators of the scene. Our eyes travel along with the little, contented people of the pictures, wander over the thickets and between the trees, and linger calmly on the houses and steeples. They are all familiar things, though we have never seen the spot. We do not even yearn for them, so close do we seem to them. It is as if the air of the pictures were playing about us also.

This rich epoch of Corot is modified by two distinct tendencies. In the one he yields to his poetic impulse, and devotes himself to tone, to the silvery-gray light that suits his nymphs so well, and forgets a good many other things. In the other he becomes a colourist.

Will the silver-gray landscapes with nymphs always retain their present popularity? It is probable that they will with the public, for they are the lightest wares of the master's treasure-house. But the true worshipper of Corot's muse

will perhaps some day prize the animation of the nymphs less than the animation of the brush in certain less monotonous pictures. The Matinee with the dancing nymphs is the example every visitor to the Louvre prefers at first ; the picture is easy to grasp, the loose play of the technique captivates at a glance. But this same looseness is perhaps to blame, if the spectator is not kept in thrall, and if he feels a certain chill in his admiration, when he finds the same quality in many others of the famous pictures. We are, very rightly, fastidious in art. We have all the more right to be so, especially with the greatest masters, because they owe us what we give to them. The new place they conquer in our affections, not always without a certain loss to us, the novelty they force upon us, their whole claim is only justified, if we feel the necessity for their new form. This necessity becomes dubious at once, when form degenerates into mannerism.

Mannerism, though we recognise it readily in every exhibition, is difficult to define. The term implies repetition ; we use it to reproach the artist for always achieving the same result, for allowing himself to be governed by admiration of himself, rather than by an artistic impulse. On the other hand, repetition is an element in art, for without it there could be no style, either in individual works, or in the whole achievement of an artist. But it becomes a defect, where it ceases to be an advantage. Manner becomes mannerism, when the necessity for it no longer appears absolutely logical, where it does not embrace every portion of the work it has moulded, but leaves empty spaces. Manner is an artistic medium as long as it serves its purpose perfectly, and does not disturb the harmony of the subjective and objective, the elementary antecedent of every work of art. Mannerism is the subject without object, originality without consciousness, the husk without the kernel, the exaggeration of an element pleasing to the artist or to his public, at the expense of the whole. As these definitions converge to a point where the line of division between manner and mannerism is exceedingly slight; both may sometimes be shown in the same artist, or even occasionally in the same work, and then, of course, mannerism can only represent a delicate shade. This is the case in certain of Corot's landscapes. By a concatenation of effects, he produced a phenomenon

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which we learnt to love as his atmosphere. It is a ladder of carefully weighed effects, which can only be achieved if the painter thinks solely of the work in hand, and forgets himself entirely. We mount the ladder for our enjoyment, and looking down from it, see only the sum of these enchantments. With a much loved master, we fly up the steps without counting them, almost without touching them : a glance, and we are with him. His manner is so pronounced and has become so familiar to us, that a nod suffices us. All the more securely, therefore, should the artist build his ladder, for those who mount it are never the same. It must be strong enough for eternity, strong enough to lead men up to Heaven as long as the house stands.

This solidity of structure is sometimes wanting in the famous silver-gray landscapes. The steps are half effaced, built up too hurriedly. Pictures which should impress us by their depth, appear flat, or depth is suggested by flimsy devices. The nymphs, who should be but the accessories of an exquisite landscape, dance in a scene that fails to conceal all traces of the theatre from which it was sometimes derived. The gray into which we would fain gaze, as in other Corots, without fathoming its depths — ^the haze that consists, not of gray paint, but of a thousand other things— covers a thin canvas all too superficially. It is still very beautiful. The Louvre has none of the finest examples of this genre. For these we must go to the Baigneuses of the Henri Rouart collection, and those belonging to Cuvelier and Coats, the Bath of Diana in the Bordeaux Museum, the Nymphs at Chantilly, and at Arnold and Tripp's, or the Pastorale in the Glasgow Gallery. In all these there are imperishable qualities. There is a wide difference between the occasional mannerism of Corot the artist, and the occasional artistry of Besnard the mannerist ! If Corot had produced nothing else, he would have made good his title to our veneration. But we ought not to exalt this art as his principal achievement, or lavish admiration on the very things which are open to criticism.

It was no mercenary weakness that seduced Corot into mannerism, nor any falling off in his powers. Others took the easy downward path when their years were fewer and their achievement far less than his, but, as we shall see, Corot retained his vigour to the end. I believe it was his very generosity and good nature which made the little flaw in many admirable works ; the wish to give pictures, just as he gave money, to make others happy — ^a nonchalance, which, far removed from the introspective, self-exasperating demon of Delacroix, and the ^otism of genius, lacked the grain of poison that great men must bear within them to preserve their works.

But, if it be just to make such reservation, we must beware of over-hasty generalisations. In certain over-enlightened art circles, this reservation has long become a stock phrase, and instead of enumerating the relatively small proportion of questionable works, all the later art of Corot is rejected. This is far more unjust than it would be to make no mention of the exceptions.

For they are exceptions. They were not due to Corot's old age, nor even to a period of his old age, but to a certain kind of picture, extending over many years, and in many cases contemporary with works which the least appreciative could not describe as senile. The Matinee appeared at the Salon of 1851, and was painted the year before. Corot was then fifty-four, a relatively young man. The most brilliant works in the manner of La Matinee were all later ; it must be admitted that there were examples even more mediocre than La Matinee among them, as, for instance, the Souvenir d'Italie in the Louvre. But we need only pass into the

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next room, where hang the G^rots of the Thorny Thi6iy collection, to find later works quite modern in conception, before wluch our reservations melt away like soap bubbles.

With such pictures we might construct a new epoch in the life of Corot. He seems, indeed, to have renewed his powers between his fiftieth and sixtieth years. Or was it only that he adopted new methods, and changed from a painter of tone to a colourist i — a colourist who worked with a broad, frank brush, and, far from dreaming of nymphs in mists, nude spontaneous records of Nature.

No psychology can account for the simultaneous practice of two manners so totally different. Even the Corot who exhibited three such pictures, all of about the same dimensions, as the Macbeth^ the Toilette^ the Cache-Cache^ is a hard nut for the art-philosopher to crack. But it must further be remembered that at the same time he was painting like a richer, blonder Constable, and producing faithful studies of Nature by hundreds. The perception we gain from witnessing the logical development of our contemporaries — a Monet or a Liebermann — ^finds many a riddle in the serene idyllist, Corot. It would seem as if art must have been something less subjective to him, since he was able to evolve such varied phenomena therefrom, and yet it is difficult to imagine more direct ^\* impressions " than the gems of the Thomy Thi6ry collection.

All these works were painted in his last period, and, in so far as they lay

- stress on colour, they show an obvious relation to the Barbizon painters, from whom he seemed at one time so remote. It is possible that one of the youngest members of the great landscape school, and, perhaps, the most important, Daubigny, had something to do with this approximation.

Corot was on terms of close friendship with Daubigny, who, in 1840, exhibited a St. Jerome in the Desert^ which may have appealed to the master. Twelve years later they met in Dauphiny, and were obviously mutually helpful. Daubigny had meantime shaken off all classicism, and had freed himself from the influence of Delaroche no less thoroughly than Millet. From this time forth Corot seems to have adopted a more energetic touch, more decisive colour, something of the more luscious technique of the younger artist. His planes begin to glisten.

In the Mesdag Museum at the Hague, where a worthy altar has been raised to Daubigny, we can compare the two. Corot\*s Allee (No. 69), with its pure, fluid greens and dazzling touches of white, harmonises well with the rapid, less

rhythmical sketches of Daubigny.

This phase of Corot's had probably been prepared by Constable, who gave the strongest possible impetus to all the Frenchmen of his time. Corot first visited England in 1861, but he may have seen enough of the Englishman's work before this in Paris. *Le Gue*^ the early picture with the loaded rack-waggon in a pool,\* bears a certain superficial likeness to the *Hay Wain*^ though it has nothing of Constable's handling. Of this we find more indication in certain studies executed in the forties, as, for instance, the *Rosen*^ the finest Corot in the Mesdag Museum (No. 65). Constable, of course, had not the extraordinary lightness of touch, with which the gigantic rocks are utilised here, nor the boldness of the point of sight, which Corot took very far down, to make the stony mass more effusive, nor the play of fancy, which makes the whole picture look like an illustration for a poem. A certain affinity of conception with Constable is more obvious in later studies, such as \* *Œuvre de Corot*,\* No. 257; painted in 1832.

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as that of the house mentioned above, which recalls the famous Constable sketch, *A Deserted Mill*^ among others.

As Corot grew older, his brush became broader. It was but rarely that he applied this vigorous colouristic painting to large canvases. He reserved it for his little surprises in the manner of the *Thomy Thiry* examples. For larger pictures, he considered only his rhymed poetry sufficiently dignified, and in these the handling is always subordinated more to tone than to contrast. Thus, throughout his life we find the dualism we noted at the beginning. His nymphs and baigneuses beautify and inspire the classicism, to which he paid tribute in his youth with the *Hagar*; the little landscapes show the more intimate Corot, who, in Rome, could not persuade himself to enter any museum but that of Nature. The one gave to the other, it was the same man and yet I could scarcely name a single picture, in which both sides are perfectly combined. This dualism is the best refutation of a charge of deliberate mannerism, for mannerism is always one-sided, and tries in vain to conceal its weakness beneath variety of subject. It is true that Corot painted many pictures in which, if we compare them with his finest works, we cannot now recognise the creative necessity. He worked with no consciousness of doing anything remarkable. His art was his natural form of expression, and afforded him the satisfactory possibility of conversing with himself and with his fellow men. It was his habit to repeat in ten pictures what he had said in one, but we cannot say that the one might have been a more concentrated work of its kind. This multiplicity must not be made a reproach to the master, for it did not prevent his steady progress. He who is master of several creative processes cannot become one-sided. We can easily perceive that the various methods — ^the broad touch and the strong colour on the one hand, the tonal

painting with little dots on the other — were applied according to the design, according to the impression he had received and wished to communicate. Naked nixies and peasants required a different atmosphere. The hymn to woman had always a secret separate shrine in Corot's work and in his heart.

In his old age, when he was long past sixty, this affection brought about a new departure in his work. If woman in landscape had sometimes snapped her fingers at him, now, in these works of his latest period, where she asserts herself alone, we shall find the master on a rare — I had almost said, a unique— eminence.

Corot painted over two-and-a-half thousand pictures. I have tried to indicate the various manners by which they may be classified. We have noted in passing landscapes, portraits, idyls, romantic compositions. Odalisques, bathing nymphs, church-pictures, frescoes, and then again landscapes — z. whole art-history I And when we might suppose we had come to the end of the list, we find an array of pictures with new characteristics, which make up yet another category. Woman plays her part again in these, in settings chosen from among all the earlier manners, but these women stand out sharply from the others. They are sufficiently differentiated by the fact that they are women. Looking at them, we cannot recall that Corot ever gave us any feminine types before but his merry little nude maidens. These others are grave and silent, and we have forgotten that Corot was once grave and silent. They are still young, but they were not planted for their youth ; even in the most girlish among them there is something of the matronly grace of the famous Mandoline-player formerly in the Desfossis collection. Sometimes they are in the open air, fetching water from the spring, as in the beautiful picture of the

VERMEER OF DELFT: THE SOLDIER AND THE LAUGHING GIRL

MRS. SAMUEL JOSEPH'S COLLECTION, LONDON  
FROM AN ETCHING BY JACQUEMART

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Behrens collection at Hamburg ; always alone, lost in thought, or resting dreamily on the same panther-skin on which others— -or perhaps they themselves — once sunned their naked limbs. Or again, we find women with their children in a lonely landscape.

There is a totally different tone in these idyls. They seem to have none of the Greek feeling of earlier times. Now and again, indeed, we find a Greek — no dancing nymph, but a wounded Eurydice.

Now, for the first time, we find woman in the house. Heretofore, it seemed as if she could only flourish between trees, on the margin of pools among the dewy grass. Now we see young girls in quiet, cosy rooms. They hold books in their hands which they do not read, or they have crept in and seated themselves before the master's easel with a euitar which they do not play.

They are rather Dutch than Greek. The airy draperies of the Elysian Fields have become the neat dress of the bourseoise. The technique harmonises therewith. We are far from the misty envelope of the nymphs. The figures stand out in rich tints from the solid walls of modern rooms. The art of atmosphere fascinates us here, as before, but it has to reckon with the colourist. Clear harmonies illuminate these pictures. They reflect the meditative calm of these people and of their creator.

Here at last the direct influence of that land which was discovered by the painters of Barbizon stands revealed. But even here Corot assimilates Holland in a manner of his own, and not as did the series of painters from Daubigny to Rousseau. He still keeps all that French tradition had given him, and enriches his synthesis only with the most precious elements. The others learned from Ruysdael and his circle. Corot went to the two who, with Hals, stand for the greatest among the Dutch musters — Rembrandt and Vermeer.

Corot's instinctive sympathy with Rembrandt is traceable through his entire work, and it shows how freely we must conceive of classicism, if we would understand such community. It helped him to a looser form. In his St. Sebastian there is something of Rembrandt's Scourging of Christ in the Carstanjen collection, and since the appearance of Rembrandt's remarkable idyl, the TXana and Action of the Salm-Salm collection,\* at the Dasselldorf Exhibition, we might almost say there was a certain affinity even in this field. Corot is always daintier, not only in form and dimension, but also in the invention of methods. But the little seated woman in the studio of the Rouart collection and Madame Desfoss's gloomy Passeur are thoroughly Rembrandtesque. In the little Rouart picture, Corot, by a marvellous gradation of gray tones, achieves in small a majesty of effect akin to that we see in greater splendour in Rembrandt's Tielilah or Esther's Feast^ and, in a less spectral fashion, in certain portraits such as the Duke of Westminster's Lady with the Fan. This last Corot saw during his visit to London in 1862.

Eight years earlier he had been in Holland and Belgium with Dutilleux. According to the notes of this journey made by his friend, he was not much impressed by the Anatomy Lesson and the Night Watch^ but he admired the Syndics^ and, though we hear nothing of this, the Dutch painters of interiors must certainly have appealed to him. For shortly after his return he painted the two remarkable pictures which stand alone in the work of the fifties, the Kitchen at Martes and the Interior at Mas^BilierA

\* Bodc's ^ Rembrandt," Pltte 1 96.

t ^ L'CEavre de Corot,\* Nos. 824 and 826. Corot had never painted xterior before.

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The intimacy so characteristic of his landscapes, takes on a new charm in this typically Dutch genre. How diflerently people and things exist in Corot's rooms, and in the agreeably painted interiors of Pieter de Hoogh ! The Dutch fashion-painter, with his pleasant colour and clean handling, gives us a picture of the utmost amenity. Even the light is only there to furnish the room. Corot makes the room out of colour, the atmosphere out of light, and out of the whole a bit or life at which we seem to be looking unobserved.

To this art, which he thus essayed by chance, he returned later with great mastery, when advancing age had made the comfort of interiors more material to him. Forms he formerly bathed in morning and evening twilight, building them up of a hundred floating, lurking, interwoven specks and touches, now stood out in strong relief as large single figures surrounded by the light of a room, demanding all the skill of a firm brush and strong colour. It is astonishing that a septuagenarian should have had the vigour for this, the hardest task he had set himself, after the immense and varied labours of his past life. The first single figures in this manner coincide more or less with the two interiors. They were studies of Neapolitan models, akin to the first Roman pictures of women, but infinitely riper and bolder. M. Cheramy has an Italian woman \* in which Corot's whole palette is applied : the black and white in the hair and head-cloth, the pale yellow with the violet-gray shadows in the complexion, the red in the back of the bodice and the striped apron, the violet-brown in the sleeves, and, above all, the strong blue in the skirt ; the same blue he afterwards made into a veritable triumph of colour. The Italian sits on the ground in a very natural attitude, one arm on her jar, her hands and feet carelessly crossed. The colours have something of the same naturalness. They belong to the dress as evidently as the dress to the wearer ; a highly subtle degradation of tones harmonises the contrasts. This degradation becomes ever more masterly, and allows of an increase in dimensions and expression. In Durand-Ruel's somewhat later Fentme i la Pensee\ we already note the tapestry-like efiection which gives a beautiful warmth to many of Corot's single figures. In this class of pictures again, the older Corot became, the more did he make brushing and colour play the part formerly assigned to his all-enveloping tone. This will be best appreciated by a comparison of the six portraits of the woman before the easel.^ They began about 1865, and ended with the lady in the black velvet dress of the Lyons Museum, painted in 1870. In the earlier examples Corot seems more pre-occupied with the pure contour, with the beautiful apparition in the room, which he renders in blond tones, cool and gentle. Madame Esnault-Pelterie's picture, with the exquisite rose-colour of the dress, is z, masterly paraphrase of the Dutch



painters of interiors, but softer, freer, and more fluid than the genre-pictures painted by the specialists of the seventeenth century. In the Lyons version, on the other hand, he, like Rembrandt, penetrates more deeply into the art of painting ; divides what was formerly kept together, even at the expense of the modelling, shows himself architect rather than decorator, and creates a wholly modern work. It is no isolated phenomenon. In many pictures of the same period, that look like portraits and were painted from models, we find the same painting. Durand Ruel had one of the finest, a threequarters length of a girl, indescribably expressive, called *La jeune Grecque*.^ It is as simple and transparent as Rembrandt's young girl in the Stockholm Gallery, and one might almost add, as

\* \*\*L\*(Euvrc de Corot," No. 1037. t Ibid. No. 1041.

X Ibid, Nos. 1557-1561. § Ibid. No. 1995.

## COROT: THE STUDIO

### ESNAULT-PELTERIE COLLECTION, PARIS

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instinct with an incomprehensible mastery. Rembrandt touched the face and hands more broadly and used stronger colour. But one is inclined to attribute this difference not so much to superiority of powers as to a difference of temperament, which was, of course, irreducible. The little Emma Dobigny, the model for this picture, represents Corot's type as perfectly as Hendrickje Stoffels, or the so-called Cook represents that of Rembrandt. We divine in it the master's mental attitude, nay, his conception of life. No philosophy, but incarnate and complete forms of sensation. In this picture, and in many others, Corot showed the contemplative strain in woman, which does not complete itself in thought, but remains in the senses— <reams without any firm basis. Women, and especially Southern women, are excellent models for painters and sculptors, because their whole nature is expressed in form. They think, live, and create forms, and are untouched by the intellectuality which draws man inwards and saddens his external aspect. Their being is still animal, and as they cultivate this animalism with their instincts, and not with those of man, they avoid the ugly features of our hidden, uncultured animalism. Corot's maiden is supreme Nature. No breath of sentimentality or anecdote disturbs the purity of the conception. The picture seems a reflection in a magic mirror into which the girl — ^and not the artist — is looking. Rembrandt's little damsel at the window in the Stockholm Gallery is meditative also. But she betrays, involuntarily, all the natural racial energy, which does not

sleep, even when it is not required. She is always alert, always listening for sounds from without. Here the dream is woven of more definite thoughts. Rembrandt's art suggests this just as Corot's painting reveals the nature of his model. Emma Dobigny was a typical Parisienne, and yet *La jeune Grecque* is a very apt title for the picture. The conception is Greek, in a higher sense even than Corot's mythic fancies inspired by the Greek world. And it is this which marks the difference between Corot and the great Dutchman. The elements that tempt us to draw comparisons are the analogies of development, the transition in both instances from tone to colour, from the husk to the kernel. Only one of the many skins with which we may conceive the personality of a great artist to be overlaid, shows Corot's affinity to Rembrandt. Beneath it there is always the painter who went to Rome to study landscape. No matter how many of such skins we might discover, the core would always be the Greek feeling. And this is also the reason why, before these, the maturest of Corot's creations, our memories hover between Rembrandt and another master, superficially as sharply opposed to the Dutchman as possible — Ingres. But we shall travel further still. We shall find that a deeper comprehension of Corot's rich development will lead us back, if not to Rembrandt, at least to his immediate neighbourhood.

And it is not Ingres the creator of *Odalisques*, not Ingres the painter, but rather, the draughtsman Ingres, who achieved his greatest results by his most restricted vehicles, who also set his faces before us like inspirations created by a breath, purely human, and yet stripped of all human impedimenta. We find the same mysterious plastic treatment in Corot's female faces. The *Jeune Grecque* is just such a young girl as we might see any day, a good-humoured dreamy little being, with a certain drollery in her gravity. But, in spite of all our easy insight into this personality, an invisible power beguiles us to get more out of the face. Nothing psychological or poetical ; however much we might read into it on these lines, the really remarkable element would remain unperceived, if we were blind to the presence of a second face. We feel something like this as we look :

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out of the profile a second seems to grow, or rather, to hover before the other in barely perceptible curves, a profile that has nothing human about it, but is a symbol, a circle, an ellipse in space, a spherical something. This evocation, a perfectly regular form, which we might suppose ourselves capable of defining by a simple word, remains enigmatic, because, although perceptible, it exists only in the imagination, and is formed, quite involuntarily, by the eyes, nose, hair, and mouth of a girl who is looking at us. The spherical substitution of an abstract form for a natural one, to which the artist compels us, is his art, and never did Corot bring it to richer and fuller effect than in these junctures. The *Femme à la Perle*\* is a pendant to the *Jeune Grecque* and is perhaps more mysterious, less simple. Here

we divine the artist's conscious achievement of a form which, for simplicity's sake, we will call the antique. The constructive element of the symbol appears in direct relation with the organic element of Nature. When we begin to examine the details, we recognise the bridges over which we have passed. We see that the curve from eye to forehead could not be like this in reality, that the nose in the portrait is very different to the elevation between mouth and eyes in Nature, and yet, when we attempt to grasp the difference, we remain spell-bound by the plausible presentment. And now, too, we understand Corot's greater richness as compared with Ingres. The necessary recoil of contemplation in the reproduction of Nature as such is stronger with Corot. With Ingres we are more easily detained by the arabesque, especially in the *Odalisque* pictures. The beauty of these is above all praise, and is not called in question here. We have to analyse our sensation in order to recognise what lies beyond the narrowly enclosed sphere of Ingres' art. We soon perceive that the sharp classic contour softens, when we turn to Ingres' portraits, and that the whole proportion changes when we turn from the painter to the draughtsman. Ingres' drawings are of the utmost value, because in them form goes into material without a remainder. All the limitations of the painter disappear. The natural reduction of the palette to the gray and white of pencil and paper leaves no remainder. With the painter Ingres we receive a very precise form, but not to the same extent the double impression from symbol and from Nature that strains our higher powers of interpretation to the uttermost. The painter of *La Femme i la Perle* on the other hand, gives strength to this impulse. Roughly speaking, his effect upon us is double that of the other, though, of course, he does not achieve twice the specific effect of Ingres. The beauty of the *Femme i la Perle* docs not lie wholly in the full oval of the face, in the exquisitely modelled attitude, the symmetry of the folded hands, and the effect of this beautifully shaped mass against the background, but also in the bloom of the flesh, overlaid by a drapery of magnificent colours, and, above all, in the fact that the whole form is woven of a texture which brings the different parts together no less efiiectually than an arabesque.

Recognition of this superiority is not the result of a reaction in taste. This has nothing to do with the present question. The laws of taste, always sublimely observed by Ingres, can only meet relative requirements. Corot achieved more by a deeper insight into the possibilities of his material, an insight which influences our criticism automatically, because the results of this insight have become familiar to us in the history of development. Hence it is that we feel something to be lacking even in our perfect appreciation of a work by Ingres, and we see that Corot gets a finer result. He makes a more exhaustive use of his material.

- « L'CEurre de Corot," No. 1507 (1868-1870).

This appreciation would be unjust, if Corot's material had been essentially different, if, for instance, he had painted like Manet, who aimed at the suppression of modelling. But this was not the case. Corot's pictures of women have extraordinary plasticity. It is this alone which brings us to Ingres, just as Ingres brought Corot to it. He has this plasticity and something more ; he multiplies possibilities, not by increasing the plastic effect, but by a richer fulfilment of the purpose served by plasticity. He does this more effectually than Ingres. We have more parts to bring together in Corot's pictures. The efforts of our fancy, the levers of enjoyment, are greater, and not the less secure. Indeed, they are more secure, for there is less demand upon our sense of verisimilitude with Corot, because the mediums of effect are more numerous. We enjoy a combination of the plastic antique ideal, which predominates in Ingres, with the ideal of planes as conceived by Rembrandt. Ingres' absolute negation of the Rembrandtesque ideal was not a defect in his style, he gave tone to his planes with unerring precision. Nothing could be more perverse than to call him a bad colourist in this sense. Corot, however, achieves the same relative purity within his means, and more perfectly by these means, for he does not only tint, he paints.

The Rembrandtesque quality of Corot's later manner manifests itself only in a few aspects of his works. But there is an artist whose relation to the creator of the *Syndics* finds its parallel in that of Corot to the master — Vermeer. And this parallel throws a new light on some important characteristics of Corot.

It is rare, indeed, to find so many points of contact between two artists of such different races and periods. Even the landscape painter, Vermeer, travelled on paths distinctly akin to those of Corot at certain times. The street in the *Six Collection*, and the superb *View of Delft* in the Hague Gallery reveal an artistic conception divided by no impassable abyss from that of Corot the colourist. Vermeer, is, no doubt, more precise. His sparkling dots are more neatly distributed, his contrasts are set side by side like the houses in his town views, his brush never strays suddenly over the whole surface of the picture, but divides it accurately. But beneath this precision, which is, indeed, a characteristic of his school, we seem to divine just such another child-like temperament, quietly fashioning a world for himself. He does not penetrate into the depths, like Rembrandt, does not become great with the final consequence of a powerful drama, but decks himself with the delicate gradations of a gently emotional soul, and compels us with the tenderness of his demands upon our admiration. We adore the daintiness of Vermeer. He was one of the most aristocratic painters of his time. His subtle sense of unusual effects of the most delicate kind and his inventive genius preserved him from mannerism. But Vermeer claims our respect further, in that this wisdom never made him pretentious, that he evinced his faculty of producing new effects in art almost playfully, with an elegance that scorned insistence, with the simplicity of the poet. And this brings nearer to our parallel. We also find affinities in the experimental use of creative methods. We must not, of course, over-estimate these elements, as far as they refer to the landscape-painter Vermeer. The little figures in the entrances of the houses in

the Six Collection, or the luminous black and white personages on the salmon-coloured banks of the Delft canal have come down to posterity not alone in Corot's pictures. The whole of modern painting, beginning with Constable, must look to Vermeer as its prototype, and Signac was wrong not to trace the history of his group back to this, the most deliberate colour-divisionist of the old masters.

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The affinities between the pictures of women by the two painters is much closer, especially if we take Corot's latest period. In these we may note a remarkable unanimity of temperament in the most subtle inflections. The girl's profile in the Arenberg Gallery at Brussels, and still more, the magnificent head in the Hague Gallery, show the same almost mysterious combination of accomplished modelling and all the charms of painting. Such plastic purity was never achieved, far less surpassed, by any other Dutchman. That which Ingres painted with the pencil, the vapourous, rounded fulness, is perfectly preserved, and intoxicating colours play in the vapour, and the multiplication of the charm of colour seems to make the immaterial still more delicate. Our knowledge of racial characteristics is considerably enlarged hereby, for I do not know what should prevent us from describing Vermeer's profile as classical in the most liberal sense, as classical as the girlish head in the Berlin Gallery, painted 200 years earlier by Petrus Christus, one of the ancestral pictures of the whole series. Vermeer's maiden would make just as good a young Greek as Corot's model. As with the *Femme h la Perky* it is not the accidental cast of the model's features — ^in this case she was called Bertha Goldschmidt, and so was probably of Germanic origin — which is decisive, but rather the modification of the artist ; and in the two girlish heads at Brussels and the Hague, and in the *Dentelliire* of the Louvre, the charm lies in the second face which Vermeer created out of his model. But both artists preserved the essentially national type in the most exquisite fashion. We see, not a restoration of a Greek statue, but a Dutchwoman and a Frenchwoman, whose very social position we can divine. Vermeer's greater severity of form makes this less evident at a first glance, he comes closer to Ingres than does Corot. But he, too, preludes with the frankly natural origin of the figure — ^most apparent in the Louvre *Lace-maker* — and thus ensures the solid basis of the effisct. His Dutchwoman is cert^only very different to Hendrickje StofiTels, but still she is a true Dutchwoman ; the bony structure of the fiice may be seen in coarser outline every day in the street. Nevertheless, a higher form flows from the oval, which seems to us no less Greek than Corot's femde figures. The very unusual cracks in the two Vermeers at Brussels and the Hague make it impossible to follow the actual painting very closely. But the main points may be observed in the well-hung head in the Hague Museum. The colour-eflfect lies in the beautiful contrast of blue and yellow, the favourite colours of both artists, and the reciprocal inter-penetration of these colours, by which impure mixtures are avoided. The yellow of the head-cloth is intensified in the jacket, and so threaded with blue tones, that it

inclines to olive. In the face, the darker yellow shades to pink. This pink is marvellously gradated in the lips, and increases towards the inside of the mouth. The stronger shade is applied in flecks upon the lighter, and thus preserves a distinct series of gradations. The method is more cautious, I had almost said, more appetising than Corot's, but very similar in principle and even in the manner of laying on the paint. The mixture of very thin painting with economically distributed and heavily loaded passages is characteristic of both painters. The thick white impasto in the iris of the eye, the fashioning of the ear-ring ; the concentration of the heightened colours on the more subdued tone, so that the sparkling point crowns the tone ; the heightening of the yellow in the pendant piece of the head-cloth by the loaded touch in the lighter shades, and finally, the broad white strip of collar — these are all effects for which we may find parallels in a simplified form in Corot. The peculiar, comparatively less shadowed form of

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Vermeer remains. But we have only to remember the warmth of his faces in other pictures, as in the milkmaid of the Six Collection, or the lady reading a letter in the Dresden Gallery, to find further evidence of the affinity. For Vermeer's manner of veiling the faces in his warmer pictures, is one of his most masterly gifts. It distinguishes him sharply from Pieter de Hoogh and Terborch, who sometimes make strenuous attempts to achieve the same effects, and who fail to reach his level, even in their most brilliant works, because the effort is too evident. Vermeer understood the necessity for sacrifice, and did not disturb the general tone of the flesh by many colours, but he made his carnations vibrate under his quivering brush. Corot's method was the same, and in the young Grecque he emphasised this granular effect as he had learnt to do many years earlier in La Toison.

All these affinities must not be taken as literally as it is necessary to state them here for the sake of clarity. But the agreement of the two masters in many of their sentiments may be accepted literally enough. In a consideration of methods, the history of development sets its veto upon all narrow comparisons. We must not overlook the evolution of the manual process. In the interval from Vermeer to Corot, the handwriting has become more elaborate. Corot is not so precise in the differentiation of tone and contrast ; he allows himself more freedom, and creates a fragmentary form for himself, to enable him to keep pace with the swift-

ness of his invention. But this relatively careless technique nevertheless derives to a certain extent from Vermeer. I may indicate the process of evolution by saying that Corot, working in the same dimensions, strengthened all the mediums of effect, and consequently had to sacrifice many other factors present in Vermeer. Where, for instance, Vermeer built up a complicated groundwork, and finally drew the essential effect over the whole like a magic veil, Corot kept the final result in view throughout, and from the first ensured the effect of details which finally decide the character of the whole.

In the beautiful picture of the London National Gallery, we may, I think, see the prototype of the *Femme à la Perle*. Vermeer surpasses himself here in the splendour of his modelling, as does Corot in his portrait. In the forehead, which in both cases gives the typical ornament to the face, we note a very similar adornment. Corot's charming fancy of the pendant pearl on the forehead, by means of which he strikes a symbolic note that echoes throughout the figure, might even be referred to Vermeer, and to the peculiar effect of his ear-rings, &c. It is very probable that Corot saw and studied the London picture, which belonged to Burger in his time.

But this recognition of a single conscious inspiration does not exhaust the curious depth of the affinity. Corot had always a great deal of personal wealth to add to impulses from without ; he was too original to give himself up to a single prepossession, and we could hardly pronounce his last years the supreme period of his achievement if the fundamental qualities of his manner had suffered eclipse. Among these we have already noted, as an early peculiarity, Corot's manner of receiving Dutch influences through a French medium. Here again this was the case. It is certain that he had seen Vermeer's works, and the Delft master may have been to him what Hobbema was to the Barbizon painters; but once more he profited from the preparation of the influence by a French master of the eighteenth century.

Not all, but much of the importance proper to Vermeer in the Dutch school

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is ascribed in the French school to Chardin, the master of interiors and still-life. He, too, looked at the Dutchmen — not only those as whose imitator he was long honoured in France — and continued them. Corot's relation to a master two hundred years earlier than himself required careful examination, because certain creative impulses necessarily undergo modification in process of time, and obscure the likeness. The hundred years less in the case of Chardin are favourable to our examination, because they entail less change in the creative impulse. If we trace the evolution back to Petrus Cristus, then the two hundred years between Vermeer and his ancestor would have the same significance as the like term between the

Delft master and his descendant. Chardin's relation to Holland is obvious to all, because his subjects coincide with the favourite motives of the old Dutch masters. If we examine the relation more closely, the impression of a very close affinity disappears, save in so far as it rests on a pure question of material. We begin to seek out the Dutchmen, who really shared Chardin's idiosyncrasy, and finally, very little of the similarity remains. It is only from the very best of the seventeenth-century still-life painters that the road leads to the French master's fruit-pieces. Kalf's pendant lemon-peel in the Berlin Museum shows one of the stages. Among the very unequal works of Van Beyeren, there are one or two notable pictures, as, for instance, the Hague still-life of the platter with the pieces of fish, rendered by luminous white touches of paint on a gray-white ground. The indications are more clearly recognisable in the finest of all Van Beyerens, that of the hare, the chicken, and the red giblets, lately added to the Hague Museum. Such things remind us of Chardin. But much as he obviously owes to his predecessors, he is decidedly greater. Not only because the equanimity of perfection was natural to him, and he never succumbed to the temptations of mannerism, but because his style as such is more important. He, in his playful moments, masters what the others only achieve in their best works, and does so by surer methods. Chardin's Hare at Stockholm is simpler, and almost monumental in effect as compared with the works of the Dutchmen, and yet the elements of the effect are multiplied. The single little apple in the Hare picture makes a richer and stronger effect than a whole picture by Kalf. On the other hand, Chardin's level of excellence brings him near to the master who also painted still-life occasionally, though the still-life painters are not to be named in the same breath with him, the Vermeer of the Reading Girl in the Dresden Gallery, who ornamented the foreground of this gem with a plate of fruit, painted in a glowing olive tone, which contains the whole essence of the picture. In addition to this seductive glow of colour, which is obtained not by contrast, but by handling, and is likewise to be found in Chardin, we note yet another characteristic common to both. The monumental gravity of the Dresden interior is not comparable to anything in Chardin. But Vermeer had another manner beside that of the Dresden picture and of the girl in the fur-trimmed jacket in the Berlin Museum ; he painted a few interiors, in which his seriousness was not directed to the purity of an unparalleled harmony of forms, but called forth a second quality in the master, which we have already noted. I mean the works in which his daintiness is applied to a rendering of woman more akin to his landscapes, such as the piquant little picture in the Rijks Museum, the mandoline player with the amazingly lifelike servant-maid, or the large Allegory at the Hague. Here Vermeer plies his brilliant tonal art more as a decorator, adorns the background therewith, and sets his women in his rich-toned interiors with superb assurance. The baroque element in the Allegory^ already evinced by the gesture

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with which the woman sets her foot upon the globe, is the vehicle of this change of



technique. Here, and in the picture of the two women in the Rijks Museum, the master was not deterred from the contrasts he desired by a certain necessary hardness, and here again we find the effect won by little flashing dots, as in the landscapes. With this technique the landscape painter foreshadows that of Canaletto, which, indeed, merely generalised and coarsened the style; the painter of interiors heralds Chardin, and was continued by him in a sublime manner. In Chardin's homely scenes of domestic life there is the same softness of perfect gradation combined with freshness of contrast. It is not so much his conception of colour as his relatively granulated touch, at a time when most of his contemporaries showed an increasing preference for the brisk, decorative stroke, which connects Chardin with Vermeer.

\*\* His manner of painting is peculiar," wrote Bachaumont of Chardin. " He puts one colour beside the other, almost without mixing them, so that his work has a certain resemblance to mosaic or inlaying, like the needlework known as point carri. And Gaston Schiffrer, who quotes this contemporary criticism, adds :  
\*\* Chardin was, it appears, a kind of pointilliste. When we examine his pictures closely they seem mere indications. But when we step back, everything clears up, becomes distinct and flows together in a marvellous harmony." \*

This seemed a peculiar method of working in Diderot's time, but it was no longer so regarded in the days of the aged Corot, when this pointillisme had already found adherents of various styles. And if Diderot and his contemporaries had not forgotten Vermeer in favour of the then absurdly over-rated Teniers, they might have discovered this pointillisme a hundred years earlier in the Delft master. Chardin always reveals the eighteenth century, but the Dutchman subdues and intensifies his manner. He shows the Dutch spirit in the reduction of the space in his interiors, by which he gains a greater concentration of the effect, by making his women middle-class housewives, and none the less charming. Life in his delicious Dutch houses is daintier than in the Dutch rooms, lighter, more cheerful, more graceful, but there is in them a breath of the same intensity that endears the Dutch interiors to us. The Dutchman again combines the gentleness of a highly refined conception with a delight in bold accents. In Chardin we see the eighteenth century, reminiscent of the glorious past, in Vermeer a beauty instinct with all the charms of the seventeenth century is rejuvenated by its relation to the following epoch.

Corot has something of each. He accomplishes that which all the masters of the nineteenth century accomplish, forming a link in a chain of development that had extended as far as himself, and at the same time harking back to the seventeenth century as did Delacroix, Courbet, Manet and many others. But the eighteenth century was not so cavalierly treated by him as by others, who cast but a glance at Watteau and Fragonard in passing. Chardin and Vermeer put together do not make up Corot. But the mind which has grasped these two will look upon Corot as an almost necessary complement.

Whenever I see in the Louvre the pastels, and the famous old head with the horn spectacles, the portrait of Chardin by himself when he was nearly eighty years old, I am reminded of le Pere Corot. It is the same type, the same indomitable good-nature, almost the same shrewd bourgeois face. Although a century divides them, they seem nearer to each other than Corot and the generation that came after

\* \*^ Les Grands Artistes. Chardin." Paris, Laurens, no date.

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him. And nearer, fundamentally, than Corot and Vermeer. It is true that many of Corot's single figures seem to have more in common with Vermeer's serious women than with Chardin's little housewives. But the nuance that is opposed to the parallel Vermeer — Corot, is just what the master of Ville d'Avray shares with Chardin, the light and fluid quality of the form, I had almost said, of the manner of life. Corot's relations to his compatriot are the reverse of those between Chardin and Vermeer. He kept the doll's house element out of his interiors — his dolls were reserved for his silver-gray woods — increased the dimensions, paid far more attention to persons than to their surroundings, and lavished on his figures all the wealth which Chardin indicates by the scattered details of his delicious world. We can judge how serious we have become, from the old age of the most cheerful spirit of our times, if we compare him with the most serious of the eighteenth century.

And yet the likeness in the two portraits is not deceptive, A last shimmer; of the golden time that refused to look at the reverse of life survives in the aged Corot. That which makes his latest- figures seem more serious than the earlier ones, is the enrichment of the artist's effects, quite as much as the natural propensity of the mature to profounder meditation.

Thus the ring closes. All three strove after the same quiet beauty. Each belongs to his century and yet extends beyond it, and in this portion with which he belongs not to his age, but to eternity, he comes in contact with the others. Thus the Dresden rhapsody in olive, Chardin's Benedicite, and the last of Corot's women seated before an easel, belong together. The three painters seem even more closely related, if, turning aside from individual pictures, we take account only of what, in each of the three, appears to us as form in the widest sense, as individual organ, as soul.

The similarity is no mere verbal one ; if it were so, it would be possible to dispense with one of the three. They are related, if we stand back so far from them, that the lands and times in which they lived appear as enclosed masses, leaving their silhouettes the more clearly visible and laying bare all the incidental elements with which the passing hour endowed them. Among these incidentals I should reckon the accidental resemblances in the methods of painting of various

artists. Yet he who comprehends art in the widest sense will find, that such affinities are not purely fortuitous, in the case of great masters. If we penetrate deeply into the being of these three artists of three rich artistic periods which we have grouped together, we shall find more and more, that the manner of their painting corresponded most intimately with their humanity, and that any attempt to consider their technique apart from their personality, is inconclusive, and this shows us, that the relations between the three are not accidental, but arise out of the circumstance that three men who were alike — as far as such likeness is compatible with the different times in which they lived — determined to be true to their nature in dealing with their art.

When the future measures us of this generation from afar, it will perhaps think it desirable to revise the favourable judgments accorded by us to certain artists. It will deal most hardly with those whose relation to others seems accidental. It is hardly conceivable that any age will attack the Corot whose spirit mates with those of Vermeer and Chardin. As long as one of the trio is honoured, the other two will seem indispensable.

COROT: THE LADY IN BLUE (LA DAME BLEUE) 1874

H. ROUART COLLECTION, PARIS

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But we do not need to discern all these latent affinities in order to love Corot. He appeals to the amateur more readily than any great artist of the nineteenth century. The layman, who stands before many contemporaries as before so many enigmas, is charmed into rapture of the beautiful before Corot; so much of the old and familiar seems to be in him, so natural does his novelty appear to us. Corot's own emotion is so apparent in his pictures that we need but be susceptible of emotion ourselves to become his admirers.

The development of his latest and strongest period was only arrested by death. His colour increased in beauty with every picture. The Dame Bleue\* in M. Henri Rouart's collection — a perfect parure in blue, the richness of which depends more upon the vehement brushing than upon variety of tones — and the Monk Playing the Violoncello^ in Madam Amsinck's collection at Hamburg, both painted in 1874, when Corot was nearly eighty, show the same audacity of colour.

It is not only the breadth of the painting, appealing as this does to our modern

taste, but the wide humanity of his later works which makes me call Corot's last years his happiest period. He was always sincere, even when he trifled. But here he appears a great man, putting away childish things, and willing to sacrifice everything in order to win the highest results from the lavish gifts of his genius. If some of his earlier works are dimmed by a breath of compromise, the best pictures of his last period are the manifestations of a soul conscious of having to render account to his Maker alone.

If we set aside the many works which recur in every period and are merely modified reproductions of earlier conceptions, if we confine ourselves to what was, for the moment, new in his production, his progressive approximation to the ideal of modern painting is unmistakable. And yet we shall never reckon Corot altogether a modern ; his creative form has no cogent relation to the Impressionists. He went part of the way with them, but his eyes were always fixed on things which had long vanished from their ken.

Corot was a dreamer. He had not the temperament of the great conquerors, whose pictures take the world by storm. It may be for this reason that his influence was confined to a narrow circle. Its benefits are less obvious than those which Ingres and Delacroix conferred on their successors. Corot was not explicit enough, he was too unconscious of his own abundance, to be the leader of a school in the narrower sense. The things smaller men such as Lepine built up on his foundations are negligible. Yet in some of the most important artists of the age we find echoes of his spirit. Not in Manet ; he knew that Corot did not understand him, and stood apart from him, almost at an opposite pole. But the other Impressionists owe not a little to this tacit master. His warm tonality was of great service to them at their debut. Pissarro owes him most, then Monet, Sisley, and others. The first landscapes of the new school owed their peculiar softness to Corot's lyricism. During the conquest of light, thoughts went back to the master of twilight. Since painters have begun to deal calmly with this victory Corot's spirit has waxed prolific. Something of the great idyllist lives again in Bonnard. Whereas Maurice Denis approaches Ingres' successors, Bonnard manifests the higher classicism, with which he surpasses his companion as surely as did Corot the painter of the Odalisques.

Among contemporary Germans, Waldmüller was the first to appreciate Corot, though we find no direct traces of his enthusiastic admiration in his works. The ♦ " L'Œuvre de Corot," No. 2180. † Ibid. No. 2129.

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Frankfort group (Burnitz, Eysen, V. Müller, &c.) reveal the beneficent influence

of the master. Corot delivered the youthful Bocklin from Schirmer's dryness.

The French public has a boundless adoration for Corot. His popularity has even put Millet into the shade. Material appreciation of his pictures exceeds all reasonable measure. He is the only landscape painter of the great generation whose works show a steady increase in price. Pictures Corot painted for 1000 francs in his last years command a hundredfold to-day. This is no result of the fickle preference of amateurs ; it is due to a sounder instinct. Corot was unique. When he died, it was not only the creator of glorious works who was buried, but a style. He is behind us, and we may not look to the future for his equal. For, with all his versatility, in spite of his far-reaching affinities with the most pre-eminent spirits, we must admit that Corot did not deal exhaustively with his age. He was not deeply rooted in the present like Constable and Menzies ; he had not the astounding grasp of a new synthesis shown by Courbet ; he was not so necessary as Monet. The audacity of a Renoir was denied him. His art was like a smiling, well-protected coast, on which the waves ripple gently and never break in fury. Our glomng passion turns rather to the great solitaires, rocky islands warring against hostile elements. We feel more enthusiasm for these because they rise from depths in which we fear to sink, because they accomplish that for which our souls yearn. Yet who, trembling before all the novel forces raging around, would not sometimes gladly linger in the quiet meadows which Corot has preserved for the softer emotions that remain to us ?

MILLET: THE SOUP (LA SOUPE) (SALON 1871)

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JEAN FRANCOIS MILLET

Theophile Silvestre tells us of a description Corot gave him of his early manner of drawing. He began by drawing details of persons or groups that took his fancy in the street. But as folks were not so obliging as to stand still till he had finished, his sketch-book was full of half heads and fragmentary noses. He then determined never to come home without a finished head, and set to work to fix the general aspect of his groups in hasty outline drawings. If details escaped him, he managed to suggest the character of the whole.

The whole of modern art has adopted this receipt, which was also that of Rembrandt, Rubens, and Velazquez, and became genius in the hands of Daumier. Millet made it an element of style.

It is difficult to estimate the extent of Millet's indebtedness to Daumier. His biographers either suppress the fact altogether, or slur it over in a passing phrase. They either do not see it, or they wish to be discreet. Art history is to them a history of individuals, each of which must have invented everything. At bottom it is merely the pettiness of the biographer who belittles greatness by over-estimating. As if it detracted from the sum of achievement we call Delacroix, to admit that the things we call Géricault contain greater elements ! The research of the art-historian should concern itself with a state of being in which the individual disappears and works endure. It may thus give living artists hints for their personal edification, notably, examples of the golden fact that there always have been and always will be spiritual relationships. The biographers who avoid such researches are always those who accumulate anecdotes concerning the lives of their heroes. In this way it is almost inevitable that they should at last declare, that everything has already existed,, and this discovery may lead them to that abhorrence of all art which one has to regret nowadays in so many intelligent persons, who seem to have lost all their enthusiasms.

But we who seek for art, will find our love of art strengthened by recognition of the profound relation of great creations one to another. Reminiscences of Daumier will not minimise our enjoyment of Millet, but on the contrary, will give it a depth that will preserve us more especially from seeing in Millet a sentimental peasant, a point of view that has received a good deal of support from the kind of cult lavished on the sentiment of the Angelus. Millet is a very much simpler artist than Daumier, who was in every way a more richly artistic personality, and to whom it would have been impossible to have imposed upon himself a simplification of pictorial means for a higher purpose such as that entailed by Millet's Nature. For this reason, the painter of Don Quixote was not cut out for an apostle ; he had too much baggage, and proposed almost more to his universal genius than it gave him in works. In his hastiest drawings for the demands of those who furnished his daily bread he was more of a painter than Millet in his richest pictures. Millet had the very temperament of the great Primitives ; Daumier showed him the form, the elements of which belonged to the immediate present

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He took it, stripped off the linear contour, and filled it with the warm expression of his love for his fellow men. Millet has even less need for oil as a medium than the Primitives. Painting to him was often only a means of enhancing his drawing. We never get so near to him as in the woodcuts which his brother executed, in his pen-drawings, and his etchings, which are also more woodcuts than anything else.

Even lithography seems to circumscribe his artistic power. He has nowhere found a more perfect medium of expression than such etchings as, for instance, the woman blowing the spoon before feeding the child upon her lap, or La Legon de Tricof. I do not mean by this that Millet's pictures are superfluous. A Christ by R<sup>c</sup>^er van der Weyden that measures a few centimetres may also be enlarged tenfold, and the artist's powers will not fall short of the format.

It is strange that Millet should have been born in France. The more closely he seems to approach the French genius in certain pictures of Daumier's, the more remote from it he seems as a whole. His temperament is rather Germanic, and this not only because no other French artist has so deeply influenced the Germans, the Dutch and the Flemings, or because no other foreigner has ever so stirred the German imagination, but because of his material form. In his pictures he appears as a native Rembrandt; in his drawings he writes classic things in a simplified handwriting, akin to that of Diirer. Of all his generation, the Dutchmen gave him most. In his works, as in so many of Corot's interiors, we find beauties of the time of Vermeer, and it is amazing that they should accord with the very Michelangelesque grandeur that reveals its elemental nudity in certain of his drawings.

The great landscape school of Rousseau, Corot, and Dupre accomplished a deed of artistic policy, when it brought Ruysdael and Vermeer to French painting. France had need of the piece of bread that Dutch sincerity offered her, to keep her from dissolution in the arms of the beloved Rubens, and, on the other side, to infuse into the beautiful classic phrase something of that Nature which the landscape painter of literature, J. J. Rousseau, had opportunely applied to language.

Millet played a special part in the transaction. Corot and Diaz were seeking for some intermediary between the imported anti-Latin spirit and the ancient French muse, Diaz more especially in the Delacroix tradition, Corot, with a greater and freer instinct, in his typically French idyl. But neither Corot nor Diaz replenished the new earth; they merely adorned it. Corot's God-given genius transformed it into a land of dreams, in which the ever youthful Greek legend was at home. We should never have felt the want of anything more, had not Millet come, bringing to the vast work of Rousseau, whose trees stretch into the world like giant hands, the gift of speech, an expression of depth and gravity which held its own against the influences of Rubens and of classicism alike, and henceforth took its place beside them. He set human beings in this new landscape, not this or that individual, but the strenuous type whose spirit was born of this landscape. This could only be the peasant. He made him not beautiful or pleasing, but great, so great that his head towers into the azure, while his heavy wooden shoes grow to the soil. Millet was a peasant in the same complete sense as Rubens, his antithesis, was a patrician.

We can understand why Van Gogh revered Millet for remaining in his

own sphere. It was only thus that, after a long interval, the world knew one of

## AUVERGNATE PEASANT WOMAN SPINNING

FROM A WOODCUT BY PARIS AFTER J. P. MILLET

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the great race again, in whose creation all humanity participates with a long-drawn breath, one of those who must come from time to time, that the world may not be thrown out of balance by sheer genius, the great collectivist, who makes the mad mass of selfish activity once more kindle for the common weal.

What makes him immortal is, that through it all he was and remained an artist, that, the time being not ripe for the communism to which he had turned, he had strength enough to forego it in resolute impersonality. To no one was the danger of weakness more obvious. His contemporaries perhaps only needed the cross upon his pictures to hail him saviour. He preferred that he and his should bear it, and awaited the valuation of his pictures in millions in the hereafter.

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Just as a whole host of imitators laid hold of the synthesis that Michelangelo left behind him, so also the synthesis of Millet found many to continue it. The result has not been ^ a style," as in the case of Michelangelo, not only because Millet's activity was restricted to the field of painting, but because of the period in which he appeared, a period, be it remembered, which is far from complete as yet. The melancholy decadence which was the immediate outcome of Michelangelo's achievement, inevitable with such an exemplar at that particular period, consoles us somewhat for the humble fate of the later artist. That it has nevertheless borne fruit I shall attempt to show, as far as it is possible to demonstrate the fact from the manifestations of the short time that has passed since Millet's death. Perhaps I shall be able in the process to indicate one of the most remarkable antitheses ' of art-history. Of course Millet suffers from comparison with Michelangelo no less than do his disciples if set beside Rubens. But whereas Michelangelo's formula, as applied to the contemporary forces that produce style, might have been an Aprfes-moi-le-dcluge, Millet, in an age so much poorer in beauty, seems to offer the germ of a new form which may perhaps — I say it with all diffidence — bring about a return to a more universal language, that shall not be confined to painting. The reconstruction is as slow as the destruction was rapid. The structure will





It was thus that Millet reached Germany. We will look for him there later on.

DRAWING BY J. F. MILLET

AFTER A WOODCUT BY A. LAVIEILLE

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### SEGANTINI

No school could carry on the manner of Millet. This primitive could only exercise a fruitful influence on primitive forces. Peasants have understood him, sturdy children of Nature, who take small account of knowledge and of letters, who are guided only by Nature in what they do and what they leave undone, who belong to themselves and their own instincts, and who, when they obey something outside themselves, are only led to do so by their instinct.

Segantini is one of these. He is mainly important as a type, as an indication of what may be arrived at, taking Millet as the point of departure, and not by any means as an ideal. He oscillates between curious ideas and changeful technique ; but his processes are those of a peasant ; it is difficult to discuss them ; they are inconsequences such as are only possible to consequent natures.

Segantini, too, translated Millet into romantic terms, even more flagrantly than the others, but so frankly that it causes us less discomfort, and does not excite suspicion. He has not the genius to evoke the spectator's own sensations, the conscious hymn of praise ; he puts them into the picture ; he has not the cool lucidity of the really great artist, and still less of the taste that supplies the defect in others. He bathes his thoughts in Nature, and clothes them in the local colour of his life in the Engadine Alps ; but thought is always prominent in the foreground.

Yet all this is done unconsciously, and does not affect the thing itself, for through it all we are conscious of a purely artistic personality, to whom his creation is all-important. He gives us what he has. Line is his medium of fascination ; it has become more slender, not so virile as Millet's in spite of its crudity, but yet not weakly. There is something new in it, something we do not find in Millet, perhaps because we do not seek it — rhythm. Of course, if we use this term in

the widest sense, and take it to mean an individual law of line, a peculiar distribution of masses. Millet has it in superabundant, unsurpassed degree. But we mean something that Millet perhaps despised, but which pleases us to-day, the extraordinary lyric quality, the cadence of the line in Segantini's drawings.

His sense of colour came to his aid here ; this, too, is an element of strength in his manner. In this child of Nature we find conventions that are not in Nature, certainly, but that give a splendid completeness to his treatment of line. His distribution of planes is sometimes almost schematic ; his contrasts, not always deliberate, but always strong, his yellow, his white, are not studies from Nature, but effects proper to the decorator. His pictures are full of light, but connoisseurs will feel the want of air. That he attains to Nature nevertheless, is his art. For this Segantini has given us once more the Alpine landscape, of which painters have so long been afraid.

Segantini's emotional fantasy does not jar upon us, solely because it is not contemplative but naive, or, rather, it appears so. He was the first to show us what it

SEGANTINI: MOTHERS (LE MAORI)

(A. DRAWING)

SEGANTINI: LA VACCA BAGNATA

FLERSHEIM COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

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looks like on the mountain-tops, when we contemplate them from above, and not from below. The phenomena he deals with are in themselves so remarkable, that a fantastic element seems hardly abnormal in treating them. He creates a milieu^ and if we believe in it, it is easy enough to accept what he tells us is happening there. This is the secret of all the arts. And then the fancy of this quondam swineherd works with a certain loftiness. It does not merely oscillate between tears and laughter as does the art of his compatriots, even the greatest among them. It has the beneficent repose that eye and mind demand in wall decorations ; it seems important only by its form, and only its pictorial qualities give it meaning. The

weaknesses of this art are by no means slight. How should an Italian of the Engadine avoid all faults of taste ! The robust technique, which has failed to absorb any of those elements of Daumier that lurk in Millet, sometimes conceals a lack of precision ; it becomes coarse, that it may not seem weak ; not only naive, but uncultivated. And the large surfaces do not always suggest creative exuberance ; the sun in these pictures sometimes glitters judiciously, dazzling the eye that might detect their emptiness.

Nevertheless Segantini will count, at least in our times, as a pioneer on a new domain, in which no other artist out of France has worked so earnestly. He might have gone far indeed, if he had had the good fortune to meet with the artist, who strove after a kindred ideal far from Alpine heights, in Brittany and at Aries, an artist to whom Segantini was perhaps superior by virtue of his physical health.

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show his sympathy by some means or the other. He did so by recording what he saw on paper. . Thus, that which had thrust him from one calling into another, ' from one country into another, became a means of salvation to him.

This time his choice was final. In 1881 we find him again in Holland with his parents in the little village of Etten in North Brabant, drawing everything that came to his hand. One of his cousins was married to the painter, Anton Mauve. Mauve's advice was sought, and he took Vincent into his studio at the Hague. Here Van Gogh learned to paint. But the pupil and the teacher did not get on well together — which is hardly surprising ! Anything Van Gogh could have learnt from Mauve must have been acquired in a few weeks ! His brother Theodore gave him the means to set up a tiny studio of his own at the Hague. Here his teachers were those great Dutchmen of the seventeenth century, who silently proclaim their immortal tenets in the Mauritshuis, rather than his contemporaries. In 1883 he returned to the country, painting those powerful studies of Brabant peasants, in whose faces he discovered his own original physiognomy. The *Mangeurs de Pommes de Terre* dates from this period — he painted it at Nuencn in 1885 — ^the grandest portrait ever painted of this etre sacri de pure viriti^ as Van dc Velde calls the peasant in his beautiful study, *Du Taysan en Peinture*.^ Earlier painters of rural subjects had exercised their wit, their sense of the grotesque, their cynicism upon him ; the modern who misread Millet sought in him a legitimate outlet for sentimental emotion ; to the sestheticism of a Huysmans he was simply repulsive. Van Gogh saw in him a ^

Titanic healthfulness, rising like some rugged monument out of the prevailing corruption of the times.

Even then the real Van Gogh was complete. But he would not trust himself. In 1885 he was a pupil of the Academy at Antwerp for a few months. It was perhaps here that he conceived his gloomy prison-yard scenes. In 1886 he at last went to France, where the quality of his art that still lay dormant, colour, likewise developed with amazing rapidity. Here he found the few friends of his life, or rather they found him in the little shop in the Rue Clauzel belonging to Piere Tanguy, the only dealer who took up his pictures. Van Gogh commemorated him afterwards in the fine portrait belonging to Rodin, of the man against a wall hung with Japanese coloured prints. The chief of these friends were Gauguin and Emile Bernard. Vincent worked for a time with the latter in Cormon's studio, which Lautrec had quitted the year before.

The influence of Paris upon him was not altogether happy ; it sought to divide, a being who was an absolute unity. He made the acquaintance of the Impressionists, whose analytic art was the antithesis of his own, which aimed, above all things, at concentration, but whose logical deductions forced themselves upon his intelligence. The pictures he painted at this time betray the influence of Pissarro ; when he came to know and reverence Seurat, he even attempted division. The best picture he painted in Paris was the Quatorze Juillet<sup>^</sup> to which I shall return presently; in others — the medallion, for instance, now belonging to VoUard — his individuality seems entirely obscured. In all we are <sup>^</sup> conscious of an arrest of his powers, the uncertainty the vast city induced in him (he speaks of it in later letters referring to this time). But we must not think of Van Gogh as the peasant, falling under the wheels in the city. Rather did his danger lie in his remarkable instinct for culture, eager to embrace everything, and

- " Edition de TAvcnir Social." Brussels. 1892.

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insistent upon order, where disorder is habitual in all relations of life. Julien Leclerc, who made his acquaintance in 1888, describes him as a nervous, chilly individual, suggestive of Spinoza, and concealing a violent intellectual activity under an exterior reserve.

Vincent breathed freely again, when he found himself once more among peasants at Aries. His letters to Emile Bernard and to his brother, published by the " Mercure de France," reveal his conception of art, a conception which would only have excited the laughter of the boulevardier. "Christ," he says, "was the greatest of all artists, because He made immortal men, and not works of art, because His words, which He, as a grand seigneur, disdained to set down in writing, were mightier in their power over others than marbles and pictures, because He

knew that they would endure, when the forms of the world in which He lived had long passed away." Here we have the whole of Van Gogh, the man who believed, even more fervently than in art, in a tremendous pure creative power, given to men to make others happy ; which urges the individual not to gratify his own vanity by his art, but to find satisfaction in the hard fate of a great artist such as he himself was. He repeatedly lamented to his brother, that pictures and statues were not living things. It depressed him to think " that life is created with less effort than art."

It was natural that Millet should influence him : Millet, whose attitude to Christianity was akin to his own, and who invented the divine gesture of his Sower to express it. But Millet was made of other stuff. He enjoyed the Nature he painted. The gravity that breathes from his pictures is that of the countryman, familiar with hard work, but confident of its results. Van Gogh is all harsh tragedy ; he did not go to Nature ; she dragged him to her. To be nearer to her, he, the Dutchman, nourished in the northern calm of Rembrandt, Frans Hals, and Vermeer, went to the wonderland of France, to Provence, where the sun bathes the earth in pure colour, and men and things are still as simple and as great as when the Romans built their arenas there.

Frans Hals was the Dutch element in Van Gogh, who always retained his peculiar vehement handling. With all the impetuosity Frans Hals employed to give life and colour to his portraits, with all the turbulent vigour Daumier used to kindle his darkest sauce to flames, and with an irresistible impulse towards symbolism. Van Gogh rushed upon the new country, in which all the conditions were sharply opposed to those of his own nation : flame met flame. All his pictures are battle ; battle in the literal sense ; he painted, buffeted by the mistral ; the effects he sought lasted sometimes but a few moments, and had to be got in one sitting. And even more urgently was he driven forward by the frantic fire within, that blazed high under the burning skies above him : creating, creating —  
•^ Vite, vite, vite et press6 comme le moissonneur qui se tait sous le soleil ardent, se concentre pour en abattre."

Van Gogh seemed hardly to paint his pictures, but rather to breathe them on to the canvas, panting and gasping. We may take it that he painted about three-fifths of his pictures at Aries. His stay here lasted from 1887 to the middle of 1889. In this space of a little over two years, he painted several hundred pictures. These were slight superficial manifestations, implying long and exhausting preparation. Van Gogh may aptly be called a Vulcan ; the phrase a Romantic writer applied to Delacroix was no less descriptive of him : he carried about a sun in his head and a hurricane in his heart. But in his case, a certain

pathological significance must be read into the poetic words. All that this man undertook was carried to a terrific pitch. It is gruesome to see him paint — a kind of orgy, in which the colours were splashed about like blood. He did not paint with hands, but with naked senses; special organs were given him. He became one with the Nature he created, and painted himself in the flaming clouds, wherein a thousand suns threaten the earth with destruction, in the startled trees that seem to cry aloud to Heaven, in the awful immensity of his plains. He seems sometimes to have made himself a hole in the earth and to have painted from it. This was how he executed the picture belonging to the younger Bernheim, which so delighted Monet, *Les Coqueticots*^ a landscape without a sky, a kind of microscopic slide, showing a bit of fruitful earth. He ventured upon still-life, the genre in which Cezanne did his best work. Van Gogh's idea was to calm himself with these essays. He was fond of setting a fruit-basket diagonally across the canvas and filling it with apples. With the great C^anne these subjects were actually "still-life," a splendid and grandiose version of the Dutch "nature morte," the most remarkable creation of a brilliantly selected palette. With Van Gogh, the term "still-life," applied to these amazingly vital masses of fruit seems almost an irony. Vallotton owns one of the "sedatives," as Vincent called them- The apples glow, they seem to be on the point of bursting ; the ' whole essence of their species seems to be concentrated in them ; a piece of furious vitality has fallen by chance into this basket. We marvel at the extraordinary and unerring taste that has placed the basket thus and not otherwise, and piled the fruits just in this fashion. We are often surprised at Cezanne's arbitrariness, his indifference to questions of arrangement in spite of his careful calculation of effects. In the wildest of Van Gogh's fantasies one can always trace a strong, methodical hand, co-ordinating images and welding them into pictures, occasionally by an almost superhuman effort, and often achieving extraordinary delicacy the while. M. Maurice Fabre's *Gipsies with their van*, M. Schuffenecker's *Route de Provence with the mail-coach*, and M. Hessel's *Drawbridge* are lyric harmonies full of the most dainty passages, in which the painter's temperament only serves to make the grace he saw as vital as possible. Of course we must not look for sentimental charm in this grace, and we must accept the means of which it makes use. We must not think of Raphael, but must remember that a smile sometimes broke even into the stupendous decorative art of primitive races.

But indeed it is difficult to express Van Gogh in terms of art. His was animal-art, if we may so express it, because it is always absolutely vital, because it is power ; and power is always beauty. His harmonies are of a physical order, and therefore outside the melancholy or the delight to which the mind is stirred by other sorrowful or cheerful pictures. The reaction induced by his works is at first a purely physical one. The planes of his canvases, which seem to have been produced^ not by brushes, but by the stonemason's implements, scream, and we are sometimes tempted to scream in unison, just as we feel inclined during a storm to shout aloud with the thunder. It is the cry of the human animal, whose blood is quickened by the enigmatic relation of the individual to the cosmos, who yearns to penetrate into his environment, into Nature, and destroys either this or himself

if he does not succeed. Van Gogh did not produce his art ; it was as much a part of himself as is some material function a part of the body ; it was not something external to him, but his closest idiosyncrasy, joy or suffering. To this man, who first turned to art in his later years, and then perhaps only as to a pis

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aller, it was apparently a thing inherent, with which perforce he had to live and die.

That this pathological phenomenon should have resulted in aesthetic achievement is no more remarkable than that Nature, of whatever kind it may be, produces beauty. Van Gogh regarded a striving after perfection as a natural morality. He was a cleanly animal. He owed more to Daumier and to Delacroix than to all the Impressionists.\* Here the peasant, who regretted that Paris did not possess more •\* tableaux en sabots," found a kindred spirit. When he took the group of the three toppers with the child at the table, from Daumier's Buveurs^If he did Daumier the highest honour in his power and — like Delacroix, when he used Raphael's composition in the Vatican for his Heliodorus in St. Sulpice — ^added to his own laurels by producing one of his most individual pictures. He found in Daumier the justification of his own linear exaggerations, the flaming play of his aspiring lines, that seem to crouch in order to strike more surely. He had also a great admiration for Cezanne, and an unbounded veneration for Monticelli, to whom he was drawn more closely by that magic South where Cizanne painted his fruits and the old gipsy his marvellous colour fantasies. In a letter to Aurier, containing perhaps the most complete revelation of an artist's psychology ever penned — it appears in Aurier's CEuvres Posthumes — he almost indignantly assigns the praise awarded to himself to Monticelli, even ranking Jeannin's and the aged Guost'^ flower-pieces above his own works. He esteemed Meissonier, because Mauve thought highly of him, and venerated Ziem, because Ziem venerated Delacroix. This naiveté does not, however, preclude very delicate appreciations. He speaks of a Monticelli at Lille, "\* autrement riche et certes non moins fran^ais que le Depart pour Cy there de Watteau," and opines that no other artist has approved himself so directly the heir of Delacroix, though Monticelli received Delacroix\* teaching at secondhand, through Diaz and Ziem. . . .

These few lines also contain all the physiology of Monticelli that was valuable to Van Gogh. He made his start under the spell of the Impressionists. Pissarro had the same influence upon him as upon Gauguin and later upon Bernard. His Quatorze Juillet i AsniireSy one of the very best of his pre-Arlesian pictures, is painted very thinly, the colour divided into minute green and yellow particles on a gray ground. At Aries he came to think this technique insufficient. He was temperamentally incapable of consistent work on this system, by which Signac fixed the vapourous quality of Southern landscape ; and further, he had not time for it. The exact



opposite attracted him in Monticelli : the heavy fabric of loaded colour, with which the old magician produced his thousand accidents. Van Gogh exaggerated this, but at the same time, he simplified it, he rejected what was petty and incidental, reduced the palette to single pure colours, laid on in large, coarse fragments, and added his own temperament as the amalgam.

There are many pictures in a single picture by Van Gogh. His brush strokes not only give things that force themselves upon the eye from a distance with elemental power, but they combine to produce an extraordinary play on the

♦ He wrote in 1888 from Arles : "Je trouve que ce que j'ai appris à Paris s'en va, et que je reviens aux idées qui m'étaient venues à la campagne avant de connaître les Impressionistes. Et je serais peu étonné si sous peu les Impressionistes trouvaient à redire sur ma façon de faire qui a plutôt été fécondée par les idées de Delacroix que par les leurs."

That Van Gogh's picture belongs to M. Agnion, Paris. The Daumier, which Vincent turned to account, of course only very freely, after the fashion of Millet or Delacroix, is, I think, in America.

VINCENT VAN GOGH: THE GOOD SAMARITAN

PAINTED FROM A LITHOGRAPH AFTER THE PICTURE BY DELACROIX

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surface, forming a free and varied ornament and giving a mysterious animation to the background, as well as a rare splendour of texture to things that stand out against it in sharply defined contours. Fundamentally it is, of course, nothing but a development of the granulations which give the quality to every surface in painting ; a special structure of the brush-strokes, in short, that development of the manual element in brushing which the Venetians began; that which distinguishes the later painting from that of the Primitives ; that which, apart from colour and composition in the vulgar sense, delights us in Titian and Tintoretto, Rubens and Watteau, Delacroix and Monet, that on which the majority of contemporary painters base the whole of their art. But Van Gogh uses it as a means which determines the character of his pictures more clearly than any other element in them, a means whereby he concentrates his material in a colour-extract of all possible materials. Nothing was farther from his purpose than optical illusion ;

no modelling tempts us to believe in a corporeal presence, his picture is always as flat as a Gobelin tapestry ; but it has a richness no textile could approach, even if woven of gold and precious stones, and this richness is so organic, that it affects us like Nature itself. His palette may be told off on the fingers of one hand. Prussian blue, pure yellow to orange, emerald and Veronese green, and red were to him what white, gray, rose-colour and black were to Velazquez, lemon yellow, pale blue, and pearl gray to Vermeer. The problem of complementary colours was in his hand, so to speak, rather than in his head ; it did not dominate him. He ventured on the most daring combinations, juxtaposed a resonant Prussian blue and a tender red, but chose his quantities so unerringly that his most audacious effects seem the most natural. He never used blue without an accompanying yellow, or his luminous red without orange. M. Aghion's extra\* ordinary picture, the avenue with the Roman tombs at Aries, is a marvellous example of this system. Into the two mighty rows of trees, that stand in front against the blue, and behind run into the pure yellow of the sky, brought to a narrow strip by the perspective, shoot streams of orange tinged with red, forming deep blood-red pools upon the ground. It is a colossal combat of colours, that take on an almost objective significance, so convincing is the manner in which they are used.\*

We must grasp Van Gogh thoroughly, to recognise the relative nature of all modern colour-theories, and above all, to get some definite idea of the inscrutable laws that govern the quantitative distribution of colour-masses. Roughly speaking, . it might almost be supposed that the quantity of a colour juxtaposed to one or more other colours, is of greater importance than the quality, and behind this is concealed again, the old, inestimable importance of composition in a picture. Hence it may perhaps be said that Van Gogh's finest work is *Le Son Samaritain*^ which is a free rendering of Delacroix\* lithograph. In this work of from 60 to 70 cm. Van Gogh exhausted his whole palette. The dominant is blue, and to this all the colours of the picture are brought into relation. It begins in the background, which contains in nuce all those elements that are brought into vigorous contrast in the dramatic group. The light blue tones, which also distinguish the famous contemporary ravine-pictures painted at Aries, predominate in the background. They are enriched with white, occasionally with pink, light green, and to the left, with dark orange. The contours of the mountains rise in delicate gradations to pale pink, and at the highest point to pale green, and are given in waved

\* C/. what he himself said of his colour-symbolism, in the foot-note below.

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brush-strokes, which accentuate the direction of the inner hatchings. The group is composed of the somewhat rusty but brilliant colour of the mule, (produced by a mixture of lac de garance, white and blue), the Prussian blue of the wounded man's drapery, and the orange of the Samaritan's. But such dry

enumerations as these fail to suggest any idea of the richness of effect, even when reinforced by our excellent reproduction. The beast in particular, whose strangely deep colour is the focus of the whole picture, defies description. It forms a mysterious ground tone for the still more mysterious flesh-tones of the sufferer and the dark skin of the Samaritan. The blue swells marvellously from the background to the foreground, /.^., from above to below, reaching its utmost volume in the Samaritan's breeches, where it blends into a resonant chord with the orange of the tunic, and the greenish yellow tones of the legs. On the other side, the orange stands on a field made up of strong, bright green splashes of colour on the fading blue. Here the light pink of the road winds upwards into the mountains, is repeated in the soil of the foreground, and above near the pale green of the cleft between the mountains ; it strikes a stronger note in the border of the Samaritan's turban, where it leads up from the tawny flesh tones to the isolated deep-red of the fez, that glows ruby-like in the centre, the fiery eye of the picture.

Apart from Delacroix and Daumier, Van Gogh, when he sought inspiration from others in composition, relied on Millet with a sort of fervid veneration — on that Millet, be it understood, who comprised Daumier. Theodore van Gogh's widow at Bassum has a number of drawings, which Vincent borrowed more or less from Millet. He looked upon Millet, not as a rival to be surpassed, but as the embodiment of a doctrine, almost of a religion, in which he believed. " Rembrandt and Delacroix," he wrote, \*\* painted the person of Jesus, Millet his teaching."

Of this teaching, we are here concerned only with those traditional elements to which Millet gave form. For Van Gogh it was a kind of haven, and I pass over the superfluous question how much he added to Millet, or Millet to him. It was not poverty of invention that drew him to Millet and Delacroix, but rather an excess of productive energy, which he was only able to curb by keeping it within the limits of a prescribed alien form. Let us hear what he sa/s himself in one of his letters :

\*\*Euss£-jeeu les forces pour continuer, j'aurais fait'des saints et des saintes femmes d'apres nature, qui auraient paru d'un autre age : ('auraient 6t6 des bourgeois d' k present, ayant pourtant des rapports avec des chr6ti6ns fort primitifs. — Les Amotions que cela cause sont cependant trop fortes. J'y resterais.

^\* Mais plus tard, plus tard je ne dis pas que je ne viendrai pas i la charge. . . . Il ne faut pas songer a tout cela, il faut faire, fut-ce des 6tudes de chouxtet de salade pour se calmer, et apres avoir 6ti calm6, alors . . . ce dont on sera capable/\*

Well, he painted his saints, after all. Every picture he painted was holy ecstasy, even when the theme was a bunch of lettuces.

A primitive in a sense we can hardly conceive nowadays, lived in this creature. For years he had dreams of a great association of artists. He believed that an individual could do nothing of permanent value, and longed for works " that

transcend the powers of the individual." He frequently begged his friends Gauguin and Bernard to come to Aries and collaborate with him. One was to undertake composition, another colour, etc. The project had also become an *idie fixe* with his brother. Theodore van Gogh, the younger of the two, who provided for Vincent's material wants with touching affection, had slowly gained

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over Boussod et Valadon to the Impressionists ; he arranged exhibitions of Pissarro, Seurats, Monets, Renoirs and the rest, and contributed not a little to their conquest of the public. The brothers wished to found a society which should exhibit the best works of the moderns in the large towns of France and of foreign countries, giving fit representation to recognised painters, and the means of living and working to the others. All that was lacking was a generous banker to provide the funds.

Vincent found in Millet the basis of a primitive popular art, models for portraits of humanity. He made the gravity of Millet graver, I might almost say more Lutheran. The ancient Greek spirit which breathes from many of Millet's soft pencil drawings like a natural sound\* gives place in him to a gigantic, almost a barbaric instinct, in relation to which the Millet form appears only as a softening element. There is nothing classical about him ; he reminds us rather of the early Gothic stonemasons ; the technique of his drawings is that of the old wood-carvers ; some of his faces look as if they had been cut with a blunt knife in hard wood. The ugliness of his personages, the *mangeurs de pommes de terre*,\* carries the primitive ruggedness of the older painters to the region of the colossal, where it occasionally resembles materialised phantoms of horror. He projects such things as *La Berceuse* not for amateurs, but for common folks, and it was one of his — all too natural — disappointments, that no peasant would give himself up to sitting.\* In his painted portraits, the hard wood of the drawings seems sometimes to be blent with gleaming metal. Schuffenecker owns the most masterly of his portraits of himself. No one who has seen this tremendous head with the square forehead, the staring eyes and despairing jaw can ever forget it. It is so full of a terrible grandeur of line, colour, and psychology, that it takes away one's breath, and it is hard to know whether one is repelled by its monstrous exaggeration of beauty, or by the lurking madness in the head that conceived it.

Van Gogh's self-destruction in the cause of artistic expression is tragic, because

\* In \*\* *Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui* " (vol. viii. p. 390) Emile Bernard quotes a passage from a letter about *La Berceuse* : ^ La nuit, en mer, les p^cheurs voient snr l'avant de leur barque une femme

surnaturelle dont Taspect ne les efiraie point, car elle est la berceuse^ celle qui tirait les  
cordes de la  
corbeille oh momej ils geignaient » c'est elle qui revient chanter an roulis du grand  
berceau de planches  
les cantiques de Fenfance, les cantiques qui reposent et qui consolent de la dure vie."  
He sa^s that  
Van Gogh painted La Berceuse intending to hang it up in some sailors' tavern in  
Marseilles or Sainte-  
Marie. Two large suns were to hang upon it right and left, the strong jellow of which  
was to  
symbolise the brightness of love. In these poems we feel the spirit of Zola, whose  
influence  
upon Van Gogh was stronger than that of any other poet of his time. In the beautiful  
letter from  
Aries already quoted, he formulated his symbolism : '\* Au lien de chercher i rendre  
exactement ce que  
j'ai devant les yeuz, je me sen de la couleur plus arbitrairement pour m'ezprimer  
fortement. Laissons  
cela en tant que th^orie, mais je vais te donner un exemple de ce que je veuz dire ; je  
voudrais faire  
le portrait d'un ami artiste qui r^ve de grands r^ves, qui travaille comme le rossignol  
chante, parce que  
c'est ainsi la nature. Cet homme sera blond. Je voudrai mettre dans le tableau l'amonr  
que j'ai pour  
lui. Je le peindrai done tel quel aussi Addlement que je pourrai — pour commencer.  
Mais le tableau  
n'est pas fini ainsi. Pour le finir je vais maintenant £tre coloriste arbitraire. J'exag^re le  
blond.de sa  
chevelure, j 'arrive auz tons oranges, aux chromes, an citron pile. Derri^re la t^te — au  
lieu de  
peindre le mur banal du mesquin appartement — je peins l'infini, je fais un fond simple  
du bleu le plus  
riche, le plus intense que je puisse confectionner, et par cette simple combinaison, la  
tdte blonde  
eclair^e sur ce fond bleu riche obtient un effect myst^rieux comme l^toile dans l'azur  
profond.  
Pareillement, dans le portrait de paysan j'ai proc^6 de cette fa9on. Mais en supposant  
l'homme  
terrible que j'avais i faire, en plein midi, en pleine foumaise de la moisson. De U, des  
oranges  
fnlgurants comme du fer rougi, de li, des tons de vieil or lumineux dans les t^n^bres. Ah,  
mon cher !  
les bonnes personnes ne verront dans cette exag^ration que de la caricature. Mais  
qu'est-ce que cela  
nous fait ? "

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it was a natural sacrifice, not a self -defilement, the act of a perfectly healthy consciousness, shattered by insufficient physical powers of resistance. " The more ill I am, the more of an artist do I become," he writes, with no thoughts of perverse joys in his mind. He records the same simple fact with which Delacroix reckoned, and Rembrandt, " the old wounded lion with a cloth round his head, still grasping his palette."\* The tragic result was inevitable, because it fulfilled a natural doom. The only means by which he could escape despair, retain his self-respect, and repay the devotion of the brother who had spent so much on canvas and colours was, to make constant progress, to loosen more and more the slender threads that bound his individuality to a failing body, and penetrate ever more deeply into the mystery that dazzles the eyes, to give bodily substance to the artistic soul, even when it was parting soul and body. It was heroism, because the result was hardly doubtful to him, a peasant's heroism, because it went straight on its way without any dramatic gesture\* simply and naturally. In one of his letters Vincent speaks of a worthy fellow who died for lack of a proper doctor : '\* He bore it quietly and reasonably, only saying : ^ It is a pity I can't have any other doctor.' He died with a shrug of the shoulders that I shall never forget,"

In some such fashion Vincent's death must be explained. Even in the early days at Aries, when Gauguin was with him, he once threatened to cast off the weary flesh. He came to himself again, and went voluntarily to the Aries asylum, where he painted some wonderful things, among others the Schuffenecker portrait of himself, the cloistered garden of the asylum with the splendid flower-beds (belonging to Hessel), and some beautiful flower-pieces. In his letters to Thio he reveals a marvellous memory, clinging to childish recollections, as if to interpose his home between himself and the strange power that sought his life ; he recovered so far, that he went to Saint Remy, to find a new field of activity there. But his brother was in trouble, and when Vincent came to visit him in Paris he recognised his own danger, and looked about him for help. He found it in Dr. Gachet.

Cachet, who still pursues his avocation and his art robustly,\* had a comfortable, hospitable house at Auvers-sur-Oise, near Valmandois, where Daumier spent his last years of blindness. Daubigny painted there, Cizanne came thither in 1880 at Cachet's recommendation, and lived there for several years, painting many fine things ; to many others the happy land and the old artist-doctor's table were a solace. Even Van Gogh seemed to have painted himself into health at Auvers. He came in the middle of 1889. His Auvers pictures have not, of course, the intoxicating richness of strong colour revealed to him by the south; but on the other hand, he achieved an unprecedented development in his play of line. His own portrait and his portrait of Cachet are purely rhythmic works, quite free from

hardness, marked by a perfectly conscious application of his unrivalled talent for decorative tasks. In the roses, and in the arrangement of chestnut leaves and blossoms, a happy harmonious spirit seems to be weaving its beautiful dreams, remote from all dramatic violence.

Any one who had followed the course of Van Gogh's life could hardly have been deceived by the change. The last epoch was a beautiful interlude, but it could only have preluded night-fall. Van Gogh had said what he had to say. Beings like him must fight fever by fever. When he had raged his fill, as far as this is possible to decent folks, he had to go, swiftly, in the midst of beauty, to escape a

\* He is a painter, and, together with his son, a yearly contributor to the *Indépendants* under the name of Van Ryssel.

## VINCENT VAN GOGH: PUBLIC GARDENS AT ARLES

OUSTAVE FAYET COLLECTION, BfIZIERS

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long decline- into ugliness, into idiotic illness. When the doctor found him with the bullet in his body, and asked him the unnecessary why, he shrugged his shoulders. That night and the day following they smoked several pipes together, talking of art and of other beautiful things. Gachet thinks the smell of turpentine was injurious to Van Gogh, and also that painting in the open air had done him no good ; he could not overcome the habit of tearing his hat off when he was at work, and the sun at last burnt all the hair off his scalp, till it was only separated from the brain by a thin case of bone. He died on July 28, 1890.

They buried him in the little churchyard at Au vers, and the old doctor planted a great cluster of yellow sunflowers over him, which were in full bloom when I was there last.\*

I have dealt elsewhere with Van Gogh's anarchism, showing what seems to me his strong positive instinct, as opposed to the rhetorical anarchism of Morris, Crane, and others. His work is the strongest possible contrast to an indolent, state-supported art, meet to adorn the house of mediocrity. He destroys it. Here he may appear as the ruthless barbarian, casting off all regard for the law of the dwelling. The same hostility shows itself in Munch, another anarchist of equal sincerity. But what seems to the Philistine barbarism in Van Gogh, is

often actually so in Munch. It must be evident that it is impossible to conceive of an interior in which Munch's most typical works would be in keeping, and this at once restricts his importance to the field of the extremest abstract art. Van Gogh merely negatives the contemporary domicile. In this, his pictures have the effect of blows with a club. But a setting where he would be harmonious, which he could adorn, is not only conceivable, but already in process of evolution, and here, again, his sacrifice is glorified with the nimbus of the peasant, who fertilises the earth anew with his own blood. It is improbable that the time will ever come when his pictures will be appreciated by the layman; it is more conceivable that pictures should cease to be produced altogether, than that Van Gogh's should become popular. But his portion in the development of the modern interior is already assured; it is indirect, but all the more penetrating for this reason; his tints and colours are elements, which serve and will serve in the most varied form. This gives him perhaps a greater importance than can be appreciated by a generation so near to William Morris as our own. Here, indeed, there is something new. The mind intent on the consciously decorative effort of our times found in Van Gogh, and not solely in his latest pictures, unlooked-for and very novel sustenance. It is indeed possible that this treasure conceals the one perfectly novel element of our essays in the formation of a style. If the connection seems slight we must remember in all humility that our efforts in this direction are in their infancy, and that this is the reason why this aspect of Van Gogh has hitherto served merely to complete the many-sided relations, which all progressive art will link with his wealth. Even his treatment of the coloured surface is calculated to deepen the teaching of the Japanese, so fruitful at present; it completes what Degas and Lautrec added to the importation, keeping the golden principle of simplification always in view. At the same time he achieves a splendour of effect beyond anything ever yet achieved by easel pictures. His masterpiece, *The Ravine*, a render-

\* Dr. Gachet is at work on a monograph of Van Gogh, to be illustrated with etchings from the artist's pictures. He has pressed his son and several other young men into his service, and they first copy the pictures stroke for stroke in colour, and then etch them on the copper. He intends to deal with C<sup>^</sup>anne in the same manner.

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ing of a remarkable rocky chasm near Aries, an intoxicating harmony of rich blue tones, is a technical model of incalculable value. Nature seems merely to have been used to enhance the richness of the tapestry-like effect by an accidental abnormal concatenation of strong lines, which disappear into an infinity of new planes. If it should prove feasible to transfer such works to large surfaces, and make them durable, we might almost cherish the illusion of having gained a



decorative method equal to that of the old mosaicists, and combining the splendour of Gobelin with its distinction.

Modern decorative artists have not been unmoved by Van Gogh. His surfaces have proved helpful to the young Parisian painters, Denis, Ranson, Sérusier, and Bonnard, and his brush-stroke to the most important of modern ornamentists, Van de Velde. Van Gogh has sifted out from the great epoch of the Impressionists not all, but some highly important results, destined to a far-reaching influence even outside the sphere of abstract painting to which this school confined itself.

If we keep this connection in view and trace the road back from Van Gogh to his greatest exemplar, the beloved master of Barbizon appears in a new light deeply intertwined with all that moves us to-day. Van Gogh drew Millet into the radiant circle of Manet, Monet, and Cézanne, who were in danger of forgetting him, and reminded them what Millet's great fructifier, Daumier, had possessed of pictorial power.

And at the same time, this last of the great Dutchmen who had drifted to a foreign haven maintained his national tradition. He brought back to it what it had lent to the great French generation of 1830, remaining faithful to its noblest law : that we must follow Nature, and more especially our own nature.

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CONSTANTIN MEUNIER

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As line is all that can remain to us of Millet, line, to which so many aspirations are directed in these latter days, Millet was predestined to give an impetus to sculpture, which, down to his time, had never lost touch with Italy, and had always shown embarrassment when brought into the most superficial relation to modernity. It was natural enough that peasant painting should be translated into plaster and bronze, without further result than the attainment of what became in these mediums a doubly deplorable genre-art.

Between the years 1870 and 1880 Belgium was a sanctuary of the Millet cult. While the last descendant of the great Flemish colourists, Henri de Braekeleer, was giving final expression to the old Netherlandish tradition in his richly coloured interiors, a very democratic, sternly realistic community, deriving partly from Millet, partly from G. Urbet, was growing up in and round Brussels. One of its members was Rops, whose first pictures and drawings bear the stamp of Millet very

distinctly — a beautified Millet — ^and who was perhaps indebted to the Barbizon master's line for the one solid element of his art. Meunier, a far more vigorous artist, was his colleague. ^ ,

Meunier was no facile craftsman. More than once he changed his tools ; when the clay was refractory, he tried the brush, and vice versa. For a long time success seemed to elude him. Like many of his generation, and nearly all his school, he was an old man before recognition came to him.

Sculpture, to which he did not devote himself entirely till his maturity, was the one form of expression proper to him. His so-called pictures, mere coloured drawings, are serious narratives. He has things to say, which are interesting because they were unknown till he declared them; but they are not set forth with that richness which creates out of itself, and not out of the thing it envelops.

His sculpture is very different. This man, with his gentle childlike heart, to whom the miners of his native land were not only interesting subjects but beloved brethren, needed an art that should compel a certain compression of ideas. He contented himself by making expressive busts of his people. One thing was of service to him here, his respect for the old masters. This reverence, which tends to destroy the individuality of most sculptors, gave Meunier the realist strength. The classic convention was for him the indispensable restraining influence of a healthy nature. He makes it evident that the comparison of Michelangelo and Millet is no empty phrase. This was perhaps his main achievement: he proclaimed, in his modest language, the connection between these two great men.

The voluntary restrictions, which prevented any strong individualisation in Meunier's work, which necessitated his constant use of the familiar type he had produced years before in a small and exquisite relief of a workman's head, preserved him from those realistic trivialities to which he might have been tempted by his

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materials. We can imagine what a thorough-going \*^ naturalist " would have made of a gang of raw puddlers !

Meunier, unlike the poet of The ff^eavers^ did not spring from the same stock as those whose history he recorded. He knew nothing of social theories and of pathology. But he was as impressionable as the clay he moulded. And everything he felt as he watched his workers going forth to their labour in the morning, and returning bent and weary in the evening, he sought to express in the few forms, the stern convention he had made his law, and to incorporate with classic forms.

It was thus he succeeded in creating his type. Just as the ancients had made theirs to express strength and beauty, so his embodied the ideal of labour. Only thus could he honour the people whom he loved, and thus he contributed to the enlightenment of our age, and did perhaps more for the proletariat than all the social agitators. He gave something better than pity — dignity. He treated them as the ancients had treated their Zeus, their Hector, their David.

He shows us, not the sweat of the worker, but his nobility ; not the individual in the lowliness of his destiny, but the race, the genus of toil ; no episode, but the essence of this solemn history.

His method is that of Millet ; he sacrifices the best of which he is capable, to a single strong expression. There was no genius in this expression ; compared with the mighty fount of light that gushed from Daumier's hand as soon as he touched the clay, his successor's radiance is that of the little lamp which his miners carry to their work, the lamp that is their substitute for the sun.

But Meunier had the sincerest form of talent, which does not seek to give more than it possesses. It is not perhaps possible to say very much that is new by his method, but he will always remain an example of the virtue which was his finest heritage from Millet : honesty.

And for the people with whom he dealt his seems the only possible treatment. They are hardly individuals. The dreary toil that bends their bones all in one direction makes them all alike ; exertion wears away superfluous flesh and leaves only skin, bone, and muscle; the common life under a common pressure even destroys the difference of sex.

And yet from this uniform mass there flows a mighty idea, a revival of the old watchword of the Church : Suffer, that ye may live.

Meunier laid hold of the idea with the same fervour that once inspired the artist-servant of the Church and raised a monument therewith.

Simplicity alone can produce such harmonies. It is evident that this meditative idealism pales before the brilliant gesture of the great cynic, Daumier, who mocked at his own age with all the weight of antiquity. We are deeply touched by the redeeming act of Millet, who found a compromise, winning love from mockery. We stand helpless, with an admiration akin to horror, before Daumier's gigantic force. Millet softens its cruelty, calming the furious line of the conqueror. Meunier shows it to the people.

Meunier stands in much the same relation to Millet as did the painters of the Quattrocento to Donatello. Then it was the sculptor who gave inspiration to the painter ; here it is the painter who gives to the sculptor.

The situation corresponds to the development of our art-history, and makes it almost superfluous to point out those pictorial elements which, in the good and the bad sense, Meunier's art shares with all modern sculpture. We will not insist on the imperfections of an art that approaches another too closely^ not to

## CONSTANTIN MEUNIER: HARVEST

(A RELIEF FROM THE "LABOUR" MONUMENT)

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lose something of its own original compass; let us rejoice rather in the culminating power of that other in Millet, becoming rich enough to give of its abundance.\*

◆◆◆◆ \* ◆ «

In the art of foreign countries Millet was an encouragement to Romanticism that was not without its dangers. Millet's inexhaustible value could only manifest itself to its full extent after a strong revulsion to Nature, after the conquest of physiological knowledge to the fullest extent. In France, where this process was carried out, Millet became a help, at the very moment when this physiological side of painting threatened to lose itself in infinity.

He helped many. To Camille Pissarro, the most diligent conqueror of Nature, Millet gave a line that served the veteran of Eragny in the production of his happiest idyls. But more important and more typical of Millet's position in modern painting was the support he lent to a greater artist. In his desire to resolve painting into divine colours, and into a pictorial rhythm guided by the highest inspiration, Renoir found a safe refuge in Millet, who kept him from stumbling in a very hazardous path. In his red chalk drawings, where Nature herself seems to be singing the sweetest melodies, it is a milder Millet who gives the note. Millet rarely has that germinal quality which whispers in the young man's drawings; when he is in a like tender vein, he makes Greek verses which the Impressionist could not understand. Yet Renoir seems akin to him; he is of the same family. Even Millet's classicism is not altogether lost in his descendant. In his most imposing creations, where the son greatly surpasses the father by other means, a reminiscence of the great master who bore about in his breast a world of which even he himself was hardly conscious, steals into the concert like some familiar melody.

Wholly classical in feeling, Millet nevertheless created a new perspective side by side with that of the classicists, which, being natural, has this advantage over

the old forms, that natural painters can turn it to account. And thus the Fontainebleau master will be of use to many who are not solely concerned with the painting of reflected sunlight.

Delacroix was the flesh. Millet the marrow of French painting. We must not lightly dub the one a Romanticist, the other a Realist. Nothing could be more remote from the genius of Millet than the brutal destruction of high ideals symbolised by Klinger's translations of Menzel into stone. Rather was he the gardener, who fastens up the heavy trusses of drooping blossom, and waters their roots. His genius embraced not only a resistance to the allurements of nebulous worlds, but a strong impulse to the necessary evolutions of our art.

\* The reader is referred to the two recent biographies of Meunier, by Camille Lemonnier (Floury, Paris), and Karl Scheffler (Bard, Berlin).

MANET: AT P6RE LATHUILE'S (1879)

VAN CUTSEN COLLECTION, BRUSSELS

MANET: BOATING (1874)

HAVEMEYER COLLECTION, NEW YORK

BOOK II

THE PILLARS OF MODERN PAINTING

1 E  
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GUSTAVE COURBET

The threads that started from Millet have lured us further afield than the

course of our history allows, and we have been drawn into a consideration of phenomena which, even if they owe most of all to Millet, would be inconceivable without a contribution from a phase of art-history hitherto neglected yet of the highest importance. Van Gogh appears as a Primitive after the manner of Millet, and his enthusiasm was reserved for Delacroix and Daumier. But we know that he served his apprenticeship to the Impressionists. Meunier seems a true adherent of the painter of the Angelus. But at the same time he was strongly influenced by the master who gave a new impulse to the art of his native Belgium : Courbet. We have wilfully given precedence to Millet, for we are no longer in danger of passing for ungrateful recipients of his gifts. It is, therefore, necessary to recognise now, that his influence gave no stimulus and could give none, to the most important school of the nineteenth century. The conquering spirit of our modern painting derives from Courbet.

Not the art alone, but the whole being of this artist was conquest. There is nothing timid, childlike or good-natured about Courbet. He was the individualist with strong elbows. Corot accepted long obscurity as natural, Delacroix smiled disdainfully at it. Millet sighed over it. They lived with their art, they were the children of their Muse, and bad business men. Courbet defended himself tooth and nail. He made a way for himself with unexampled ruthlessness. He was the first "manager" of modern art. His pupil Whistler adopted his methods, but made them subtler and more modish.

Courbet divided his time into two halves, painting in one, and theorising in the other, and as a fact, he did the same thing in both, for his pictures were the documents of his teaching. He did not confine himself to art, but extended his system to all attainable fields, was a politician, and the first artist-cosmopolitan. His subtlety was his brutal boorishness. Nothing could have been better adapted for a new departure. In Paris this unpolished fanatic was like a bear in a nest of bees. He had to pay for his escapades. I think it was less triumphant detestation of his politics after the downfall of the Commune, than fury against his personal art that caused the disastrous prosecution over the Vendôme column, the last nail in the master's coffin.

Never was there a less Parisian painter. Turn and twist him as we will, we shall find all sorts of things in him, save only the typical French qualities. Nothing classic, nothing lyrical, nothing decorative after the manner of the great eighteenth-century landscape painters ; no trace of the playful charm of the Watteau school, nor of Delacroix' dramatic quality. Camille Lemonnier has drawn him as the antithesis of this latter in a brilliant essay.\*

He describes Delacroix' enthusiasm, steeped in literature, impersonal in spite

\* G. Courbet et son (Envre, Parisy Lemerre, 1878,

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of its heroism, calls him the Cid of painting, the conqueror of theatrical action, who substituted a drama that had become flaming colour for the scene-painting of the earlier masters, and beside this creator "i coups de cervelle" he shows us the absolutely unintellectual Courbet, the "grand peintre bête,\*" who could not see why one should paint anything but what we feel beneath our feet, the painter of raw material. But Lemonnier was wrong in denying Courbet's greatness on this account, and only allowing him the merit of having sketched a formula, in ranking him below Millet, Rousseau, Corot, and even Daubigny, because he lacked humanity, in calling him "the brutaliser of painting," the "virtuoso of bestiality." Lemonnier was not alone in this injustice. A contemporary, H. d'Iderville, pronounced a like judgment the same year, and this was shortly after Courbet's death, when opinion had softened to some extent.\*

Before this Courbet had been severely handled by the Parisian critics, perhaps more severely than any other painter. They could not forgive the ugliness of his models. Theophile Gautier declared he had never seen anything uglier in a Spanish slum.

In 1863 Bdrger (Thore) still expressed himself with more than reserve^ Baudelaire, who had stood by him at first, became his bitterest foe. Silvestre,. Castagnary and Champfleury were his first adherents, but they convinced no one» The most enthusiastic of the group, Proudhon, did him more harm than good.

Those who brought themselves to accept the artist, were repelled by the so-called stupidity of the man. This stupidity lay in his programme. His mistake was perhaps not so much the formula itself, as the proclamation of a programme of any sort. Theories sometimes yield good results in England and Germany, but never in France. Even had the formula been an intelligent one^ the Frenchman is too cultured, or shall we say, too much. of a blagueur, to admit of any such demonstration beyond the work itself. Every commentary, even the least plausible, makes him suspicious. On the other hand, the bourgeois in every country likes to make his own commentary. This, however, was Courbet's case : he was identified with a commentary that interested no one, that dealt with socialism and politics ; with an art that attracted no one. The others, too, had programmes, all of them without exception, from Poussin to Ingres and Delacroix. We have documents in plenty to prove this. But they did not talk of them to the public. They buried their theories in journals, allowed their pupils and correspondents to profit by them, but never advertised them. The innovation struck people as a monstrous immodesty ; and they were right. The manner in which Courbet talked to Silvestre about Titian and Leonardo, was revolting to all reasonable men. The formulation of a social theory as a system of aesthetics, which, as soon as it was examined solely from the social point of view, became absolutely puerile, and was only to be tolerated

because Courbet had proclaimed it, excited laughter. But then, and this is the main point, the world overlooked the painter, the artist, and saw only his programme, his limitations as a thinker, and his glaring weaknesses as a man. It never occurred to any one that the one had nothing whatever to do with the other, that all Monsieur Courbet's theory was about as important to his art as his hat or his pipe. Finding the sauce unappetising, people pushed away the roast. They took his theory — the characteristic outpourings of an 'alcoholic' — seriously, and forgot not only that he drank to excess, but that he painted. In the beginning

\* G, Courbet, Notes et Documents sur sa Vie et son (Euvre, Paris 1878,

## COURBET: THE WOMAN AND THE WAVE (LA FEMME A LA VAGUE)

### PHOTOGRAPH DURAND-RUEL

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Courbet never thought at all over his painting. He thought what he did good, and had every right to be proud of it. Feasant that he was, he would not wait for success, and took every means to press forward, even the most perverse. If Proudhon had assured him that his painting could cure the gout, it is probable that he would not have disclaimed the gift.

We should be obliged to repeat Zola, if we were to examine Proudhon's relation to Courbet. Everything there is to say about it is written in " Mes Haines." Proudhon's monstrous blasphemy, " Du Principe de l'Art et de sa Destination sociale " might have been fathered by a German. (Instead of Courbet the writer would have found a Bocklin or a Pre-Raphaelite, and both would have passed for great men to all time.)

The case in France, strange to say, was that the artist was a genius and the interpreter was blind, and that Zola was able to point out the under-estimation of which the idealist had been guilty. The arrogant Courbet, over whose manners well-bred people wrung their hands, was never more modest than when he gave himself up to the " Destination sociale " of his short-sighted friend.

His own theory at its best was not all nonsense. He wanted truth, more truth than his contemporaries offered. But which ? The pictures are here to demonstrate, the demagogue vexes us no longer. Did he really ever paint with a purpose ? I know one picture only which might be supposed to illustrate a theory, the Aumône JPun Mendiant painted at the end of the sixties, in which a



beggar gives a coin to a little boy ; and even in this very uncharacteristic work the painting partly counteracts the painful impression. All the rest, from the first portrait of himself to the grancuose Stag-pictures and *^be Wave* are pure art. The truth he saw was not the coarse Redism which flaunted in huge letters on the sign of the exhibition shed in 1855. *\*^ Faire de l'art vivant, tel est mon but !* " he said in Castagnary's pompous preamble to the catalogue. This was what Courbet brought : a stronger life than any other of his time. And with it came the necessary, the useful. He discovered a new system of cells for art, a form of expression which contained that which man could use, and opened a directly accessible form to genius. It is true that his sense of superiority to his contemporaries verged on insolence. But this self-consciousness was not baseless. It did not rest upon Proudhon's illustration, nor upon his theory. It was the perfectly natural expression of an unapproachable superiority, the consciousness of a being, who felt his muscles to be stronger than those of his neighbours, and was better able to do what he desired to do than any one of them. He could not poetise, would not seek inspiration in the theatre, read even less than Millet, and wrote in the style of a grandiloquent provincial hair-dresser. But he was a painter. Corot made an appreciable approach to instinct, but remained a dreamer. Courbet got ten times nearer, and remained absolutely conscious. And if he expressed his consciousness of having hastened development by several generations in mad phrases, we must remember that in his essential and enduring speech, his painting, he advanced steadily, to the time when he painted his last great picture, and perhaps had more reason for pride than he himself supposed. He might certainly have advanced more tangible claims to importance than he did in the phrases of his pronouncements.

Courbet was born with all the animal instincts of the rustic. Strong, sensual, unfettered by a prejudice that did not rest on the most matter-of-fact consciousness of purpose. I, I and once more I. How shall I arrive at power, at enjoyment \

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This was his gospel. He wanted to paint. He went to the galleries and looked for the masters who did this best. By painting he meant one special thing : the greatest, most direct effect to be won by brush and colour. He did not dream of spiritual things the while, did not translate or reflect, but grasped at the root of the matter. Generations may have deposited their knowledge of nature in him, peasants like himself, who thought only of the riches to be won from the earth, the material use of matter. Now he in his turn, fastens upon Hals and Zurbaran and Ribera, the great materialists, just as our forefathers found the right soil for their needs. The exclusiveness of his tendencies becomes his strength. Not one of his painting predecessors had been able to resist the Italians.\* This lay in their race, their culture. Italianism helped them, brought about the inter-play of kindred elements, introduced a lyrical and

decorative strain, but weakened them, as all eclecticism weakens even the strongest. Courbet was the first Frenchman who turned laughing away from them. What he says about Raphael, is almost identical with the famous dictum of Velazquez. When, on the other hand, he makes use of the Spaniards and the Dutchmen, he does so after the manner of a peasant finding a good manure for his ground. Taine quotes the following: "J'ai traversé la tradition comme un bon nageur passerait une rivière ; les académiciens s'y sont tous noyés." To these themselves he was as indifferent as to the Italians. How did they do it ? interested him — not what did they think, what did they give their age ? How they could be useful to him at the particular moment was the only thing in question. Thus his barbarism helped him, cutting everything away that might have been too much for his purely instinctive genius. Every trace of intellectuality would have weakened him, every spiritual accretion would have diminished his power. He had the intellect and the esprit most serviceable to Courbet, the painter-peasant. Of course, if he had not possessed genius, nothing would have come of it. But the more he remained a peasant, so much the more was he a genius, that was his wisdom. "Savoir pour pouvoir !" was written in the famous preface to the catalogue of 1855. This peasant was by no means ignorant. But he had learnt with eyes, and hands, not with the brain. "C'est dans le doigt qu'est la finesse," he said to his doctor in Switzerland, laughing at his colleagues who were ruining themselves with expensive colours. As a painter, he was akin to Taine as a philosopher. "Penser, surtout penser vite est une affaire. L'esprit y trouve une sorte de bal ; jugez de quel empressement il s'y porte," said Taine. He thought in an animal manner, just as Courbet painted in an animal manner. To paint, and above all, to paint quickly is a festival. And with this he laid his finger on the future. For if art was to preserve some remnant of a relation to life, painting could only be carried on henceforth with the rapidity which is in harmony with modern life. But whereas Taine in his haste dropped the most important things under the table, and suffered from his speed, because a cautious and comprehensive concentration is essential to philosophical thinking, Courbet's narrowness resulted in an incomparable forcefulness, which distinguishes all his masterpieces. And this forcefulness helps us over his defects.

This method, too, was art in the highest sense, or it would have had no result. It was here that Delacroix went astray in his estimate of Courbet. As Paul Flat has rightly said, "Imagination" and "Idealisation" were identical

\* *Histoire de la Littérature anglaise* iii. p. 273 (new edition).

FRANS HALS: PORTRAIT OF WILLEM CROES

HAGUE MUSEUM

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concepts to the painter of the Dant's Boat. The indispensable transformation of nature in his case was effected according to a schema very personally conceived, but nevertheless a heritage from the past, and derived from Rubens, the Rubens who was descended from Michelangelo. The influence exercised by Hals and Ribera upon Courbet is very different.

Delacroix' inheritance from his predecessors was combined with an intellectual permeation of the material by the help of much literature and of original thought. The manner of Hals took the artist back to Nature. Subjectively, of course, both stood in the same relation to their prototypes. The Last Judgment was to Delacroix very much what Hals' portraits or Rembrandt's women were to Courbet. For in Michelangelo's Christ he saw "neither a philosopher nor the hero of a romance ; " he lauded the Last Judgment as a " feast of flesh." To Courbet in like manner the creations of his favourites appeared as flesh. But this fleshiness is a relative concept, which underwent emphatic modifications in the interval that divides Delacroix from Courbet. Courbet found enlargement of purpose in his methods and became freer and freer. On the other hand, we find Delacroix writing: "After all the new aberrations into which art may be seduced by caprice and thirst for novelty, the great style of the Florentine will always be the pole to which men will turn afresh to find the way back to all greatness and all beauty." He was mistaken here. Even a Michelangelo will only have a relative share in our modern history of development, great as our enthusiasm may be for him, great as the enthusiasm of all future art-loving generations must always be. And in painting this share is far more restricted than that of Rembrandt or Velazquez or Frans Hals, as we may now perceive after the generation or two since Delacroix. Fromentin's witty dictum concerning Poussin might be applied to Michelangelo and the whole of the Renaissance in relation to modern art : '\* On le consulte, on l'admire, on ne s'en sert pas." His value is above question, we are more alive to it to-day than was the generation of a hundred years ago, but we know that our relation to him must remain platonic, if we would not be led astray : Gericault's greatness rested on this knowledge, in which he was Delacroix' superior. He found a natural means of achieving, or at least of striving after, what Delacroix once set up as an ideal, an ideal that cannot be consciously realised : a combination of the manner of Velazquez with the manner of Michelangelo. Such combinations when deliberately attempted seem absurd, for the manner of the one excludes that of the other. But earlier, before the mind is conscious of its will, such an exquisite commingling may take place in the obscure motive forces of the artist, and for a moment it seemed to have been realised when Gericault, the creator of the Radeau de la Meduse painted his cavalry-men. Hence Delacroix' unbounded admiration for the predecessor, and his very sceptical attitude to-

wards Millet. The Michelangelesque element in the peasant-painter, who was naïve enough to reveal the insufficiency of his literary knowledge to Delacroix, seemed to the latter "pretentious," f./., superficial, and reading between the lines we can see that with all his aversion from Courbet, he had more respect for him than for Millet. Millet had not thought out Michelangelo. But in Courbet, Delacroix recognised a logic intellectually narrow, but wholly fearless. Courbet's lack of all relation to classic art precluded any approximation of the two. Even Delacroix' brilliant intellect was unable to see that this was non-

\* Preface to the "Journal."

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essential ; but he admired the vigour of the young artist in one of the first pictures by Courbet which came under his notice.\*

He did not get beyond the subject at that time. The master to whom gesture was as important as colour, who painted with it, indeed, was bound to underestimate Courbet's first efforts, even if his esprit had not been repelled by the other's, even if the aristocrat had not recoiled before the proletarian- But his wisdom emerges triumphant even from this, the severest possible test that could have been imposed on his judgment, for we shall see that he recognised qualities in this new world, though they were not such as could suffice for him. That which really repelled Delacroix, Courbet's personal conduct, estranged many other delicately attuned lovers of art from the master of Omans during his lifetime. If we in our turn, would not be misled, we must discriminate carefully, dismissing the hypothesis that there were two different elements in Courbet, his art and his humanity. When we speak of the human frailties of an artist and of his countervailing virtues, we mean no more than the obvious fact that in every personality, no matter how lofty, there are defects side by side with qualities. Wider knowledge will enable us to see that they are bound up together, and have a common origin, the natural disposition. The great artist is the great man. If this seems difficult to believe in the case of a Courbet, we must not forget that our doubts rest on no very solid foundations. For all that has come down to us concerning his personal misdeeds shows evidences of subjective colouring. The witnesses were in general enemies of his art and must be dismissed. At least we can no longer see the connection of all the details in such a manner as to decide the question of guilt. ' But the work of art lies before us, clear and distinct. And so the appearance of dualism is a harmless illusion, when we recognise that every art rests upon humanity ; it is even stimulating, because it forces us to look away from all accidents, and fix our eyes on that which alone deserves higher consideration in the artistic being.

Courbet's evolution is a difficult problem. There is some truth in Duret's assertion that the master of Omans never developed at all, because certain early

defects are repeated in the latest pictures, that he may rather be said to have produced in a vegetable fashion, bringing forth good fruits one year and bad the next, without any obvious reason for the variation, t

The question at any rate is not to be solved by any such simple conception as that of pictorial evolution. Courbet had not one, but several developments. These intersect each other at every point, contradict each other apparently, and complicate the picture to such a degree, that it is easy enough to understand why no one has hitherto attempted to look for an organism in this connection. Even the artist's closest friends made glaring mistakes, and after 1882 Castagnary was guilty of serious errors in dating the works in the catalogue of the Courbet exhibition at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, because the master's evolution was not clear to him.J

\* Tht Baigneuses in the Sabn of 1853. We must distinguish between Delacroix' hostility to realism as a theory, and his repulsion for Courbet. The one was boundless, the other strictly limited. Thus the sentence in the \*\* Journal," i. p. 159, is directed against realism in general, and he certainly did not mean to put the unimportant German painter Denner whom he cites in this connection, on the same level as Courbet.

t Les Peintres fran9ais en 1867, par Theodore Duret (Paris: Dentu, 1867). We must not forget^ however, that Courbet had not finished his course in 1 867.

% He attributes VHommi hlessiy to the year 1854, ^1^^^eas the picture had been refused at the Salon of 1844, ^ ^ indicated in the little note that precedes the catalogue. Estignard, again, is not

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Two things compete in Courbet to heighten expression : the plastic and ^the pictorial tendency. The one indicates a very great artist of the older style, who aims at plastic form, who therefore seeks to suppress all suggestion of his implement, and to paint as smoothly as possible. The other a great artist of the new style, relying more upon instinctive .creation', ' and getting form out of the brush-stroke ; a flat painter, the heir of Rubens, Rembrandt and Velazquez, a creator of material. Confusion arises from the fact that the period of the plastic tendency is not sharply defined. We find contemporary works of both kmds, and even the two tendencies in the same

picture. Courbet the landscape painter is the purer artist, his nature manifested itself most spontaneously before Nature. His portraits of single figures belong to the same category. In each there is a steady augmentation of the purely pictorial charm. This development is occasionally interrupted by the painter of compositions, of genre and figure-pieces. Here the plastic tendency makes itself felt. It is characteristically covered by what may be termed the didactic in Courbet. As I have already insisted, this does not compromise the art. — Courbet's socialism is a journalistic phrase— but adds purely formal elements thereto. The chief thread of the story is complicated thereby, and hence many pictures appear as steps in a transition. We shall see that the final result was the outcome of this.

This period of effort to obtain plastic effect lies therefore within the pictorial period. It comprises works so far apart chronologically as the *Cribleuses de blé* of 1854 and the Proudhon portrait group of the year 1865. Here we have the reverse of the phenomenon we observe in David's, and still more in Ingres' portraits, which show more or less isolated pictorial tendencies in the midst of an evolution of plasticism.

In the beginning Courbet painted with the softest brush. The *Homme blessé* in the Louvre, the *Amanis heureux* of 1844-45, the *Homme à la Pipe* in the Montpelier Museum, and many other early works are handled with extreme tenderness. They recall Van Dyck, whom Courbet was copying at the time, and certain Delacroix doses are akin to Rubens. The great Romanticist undoubtedly influenced him in his first period, as the copy of the *Daniel's Boat* sufficiently shows. The same influence also appears in many a landscape. Delacroix' *Paysage de Nohant* of the Cheramy collection, painted in 1842 or 1843, is strikingly like Courbet's wooded landscape of the same collection, in the flat treatment of the foliage. Delacroix, again, justified Courbet's so-called realism in a few isolated works or fragments. Pictures like the remarkable head of an old nun, painted about 1843, like the cat and the flower-piece — all in the Cheramy collection — or the corner of a studio in the Henri Rouart collection and other sketches of interiors and still-life pieces, are more sharply realistic — one might almost say precise — than the early Courbets.

In the succeeding years, the soft painting gradually became more tense, a modification in which Courbet was helped by the master who had more influence upon him than any other contemporary : Géricault. The magnificent portrait by Géricault in the Salle des Portraits of the Louvre, said to be his own portrait,

is very trustworthy. He dates the two copies after Hals and Rembrandt (painted in 1869), 1842, the *Homme à la Ceinture de cuir* 1844, &c. Even the most important dates are questionable. Thus the Loarre catalogue gives 1851 for the *Entrenimiento* where all the biographers agree (rightly) in

assigning it to the Salon of 1850.

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and the *Homme à la Ceinture de Cuir* of 1849, the best of Courbet's early portraits, are closely allied. They have the same generosity not merely of pose but of conception, a nobility in what is shown and in how it is shown, by which we should recognise a portrait of the artist himself, even if he had painted another person. All that has been written about Courbet's roughness and stupidity is discounted by this picture. We shall see if he deserved the reproach later on ; at the time of his glorious portrait of himself he was, what every artist must be in his art, a patrician. Gericault's portrait is still more subjective than Courbet's. The white, cloudy background makes a simple, vigorous harmony with the dun tone of the figure ; the format, too, is more favourable, the width is pleasant to the eye. The superbly modelled hands give greater elasticity to the Courbet. But here, too, the greater precision is modified by the splendid dark general tone.

In later portraits, such as the black *Roche-forty* the same soft dark modelling achieves perfect miracles of portraiture.

Still more obvious is the relation to Gericault's better-known manner, to the creator of the magnificent *Carabinier* in the Louvre, &c., to the pictures in which the brush swept the surface with vigorous strokes, no longer relying upon a veil of tone to create harmonies. This relation manifests itself in the later Courbet. But we have first to consider his middle period, the most remarkable, when he produced the works with which his name will be written in history for all time.

The pictures of 1850 must have had the effect of a bursting shell. Even now the impression they make is astounding. In the passage-room of the Louvre, where the *Enlèvement* languishes ignominiously, one squeezes oneself flat against the opposite wall, to get at a suitable distance, not so much from the huge canvas with its fifty life-size figures, or the gigantic landscape, whose line of gray rock encloses the background like a natural circus, but rather from the portentous vigour of expression. It is a Resurrection rather than a Burial, and this is true in several senses. Here, for the first time since the seventeenth century, we have a portrait-group equal to the best pictures of Hals and Rembrandt in the same genre, and like these, rich in psychological suggestions, the sum of which is nevertheless far above mere personal expression. Secondly, an art equal to that of the great painters of the past comes to life again here, with all the charm of the early masters, though its masterly gravity repels the facile admiration of the amateur. Even when the *Enlèvement* was painted, there were more modern pictures, by which I mean works which more clearly presage the characteristics

of the Impressionists, and Courbet soon afterwards painted a considerable number of such himself, which had a more far-reaching influence. But there is not one of the whole century which reveals the same powerful mastery of the old artistic methods and makes such a dignified effect by its highly individual treatment of inherited assets. Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* and the *Massacre of Scio* are its predecessors, not relatives, but partners. Throughout the rest of the century, the only painter who approaches Courbet at all as a painter of such representative pictures is Manet. Even in this extremely limited series, the *Enterrement* takes a prominent position. It lacks the special charm of Géricault and Delacroix, for it is without any sort of relation to the classic element of French art, nor has it the special beauty of the later men, for modern colour was denied it. But whereas the others paid for this charm by a loss, a certain sketchiness, which, unimportant as it may seem to us, gives them a touch of decadence as compared with the old masters, the *Enterrement* within certain

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time-limits appears as a work of unrivalled mastery, a piece of painting unique in our age.

What had happened to Courbet when he began the gigantic work we can only guess, in the absence of any biography of the slightest discrimination. Before this as we have seen, he was following after Van Dyck. The Spaniards, of whom he always spoke with enthusiasm, must have seemed a sudden revelation to him ; his admiration was not confined to Velazquez ; the great portrait, painter's long neglected friend, Zurbaran, made a still more penetrating appeal to him. Into the landscape of the *Enterrement* especially the wonderfully veiled farm-buildings on the left, the Velazquez of the *Riding School* the Boar<sup>^</sup> Hunt and kindred work has been transported almost unaltered. In the figures, on the other hand, Spanish and northern elements are marvellously blended, yet the Spanish colourist ousts the Spanish tone-painter. It might be supposed that Courbet had seen Zurbaran's four episodes from the life of St. Bonaventura, which hung together in Soult's collection till the fifties ; two are now in the Louvre, and one in the Dresden and Berlin galleries respectively. The two examples in the English National Gallery were also at the time in Louis Philippe's collection in the Louvre. But the example Courbet had studied most closely was obviously the finest work by Zurbaran in our latitudes, the *Obsequies of*



a Bishop in the Louvre. The similarity of many details, and these the most admirable, is apparent at a glance, especially on the left side of the Enterrement. The bright-eyed chorister in the foreground, in a white surplice, with a red cap on his raven hair, is, as painting, identical with the youth who stands at the Bishop's head in the Zurbaran. It is a proclamatory splendour of the same order as that which distinguishes the Spanish colourist from his more reticent compatriot, marked by a harmony which comes less from the rarity of the colour, than from the extraordinary balance of the unmingled black, white, and red, and the yellow of the censer, and showing a cool brilliance that moves us like the glance of great, shadow-circled eyes. At the same time, Courbet did not forget the Caravaggesque element in Zurbaran, for the wide, white linen bands of the coffin-bearers, whose dignified figures enclose the picture on the left, gleam like the faces in the works of the Italian.

This unabashed exploitation of the Spaniards distinguishes Courbet from the school of Barbizon, and makes him seem like a man of a different race. We cannot credit him with the discovery of Spain, for Daumier had cast a glance into the art of which Goya was the final expression, and it seems to me probable that Goya's sojourn in France had a certain influence upon French art, in spite of the distance between Paris and Bordeaux. Gericault was familiar with Goya's pictures; Delacroix had a work by the painter of the Maja in his studio in the twenties, and often spoke of him with enthusiasm. But all these relations do not go beyond slight shades. Courbet gave the determining impulse, when he brought about a new and rich development by the resolute appropriation of the Spaniards.

From such traits in history we recognise the narrowness of the usual conception

\* In the conversation with Silvestre, already quoted, he said : \*\* Ribera, Zurbaran et surtout Velazquez, je les admire : Ostade et Craesbeeck me s'aduisent entre tous les Hollandais et je venire Holbein."

† Muther has drawn attention to the affinities of Courbet and Caravaggio (Geschichte der Malerei im 19. Jahrhundert, ii. pp. 438, 449).

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of personality. Without the Spaniards, Courbet, the revolutionary, in whom his contemporaries saw only the iconoclast, and even the enemy of art, would be unimaginable, and the achievement of the Impressionists who derive from Courbet, impossible. His indebtedness, so far from minimising his personality, revealed its

value. It made of him just what his own time overlooked in its preoccupation with his realism, the highly objective artist. Of course he did not stop short at the discovery. He conquered in order to possess. To possess the one thing, he added others thereto. Not arbitrarily, he found just the amalgam he could use. He did not draw it all out of his own possession, but reached out after the heritage of the past until he had created a new unity.

Herein lies the progress which Duret failed to recognise. This is the fashion in which all art assets originate. We need but note how the Spanish element in Courbet, which appears in relative isolation in the *Enterrement* is gradually concentrated into a more and more organic, not to say personal method, and we shall find the art-history of his whole life.

With this Spanish element he blended the energy of Frans Hals. The combination is not more striking than the similarity between the young man with the plumed cap in Caravaggio's famous gambling scene at Dresden, and certain coarsely painted heads by the Haarlem master. The relation to Hals is freer than that to the Spaniards. We might call the spirit of the whole group in the *Enterrement* Hals-like, the sturdy life of the personages, the elemental vigour of their faces, the reality with which it is all painted, and even the exaggerated use of black, which, just as in certain examples of Hals seeks in vain to kill the energy of the drawing. Every head is a portrait, and not only every head, every figure, every one of the manifold attitudes. Even in later life Courbet rarely excelled the art of the *Enterrement* as portraiture. Duret's head of Corbinaud of 1863, and many portraits of the sixties, show the same veil of reddish tones over the material, the mirror-like smoothness of which almost invites the hand to stroke it, and the same uncompromising truth of presentment. This was decried as realism by contemporaries, who declaimed against the ugliness of truth. The painter's few friends, Champfleury, for instance, whom he immortalised in the masterly Louvre portrait of 1854, were content to defend realism. They put the blame on the artist's models, on the universal and individual ugliness of the world, for which an honest painter was not to be held responsible ; *because* they were guilty of an assumption arbitrary as, or even more arbitrary than, that of their opponents. No one recognised art in this fidelity to nature ; no one took up a position at the right distance from the picture to receive an impression of unity from the colossal *phenomena*. The fault of which Courbet was accused, the limitation of his conception to the details of nature presented to the eye, was committed by every spectator who exhausted himself in picking out the discords from the whole. People forgot that an orchestra so vast required strong motives to give it animation, and that even caricature, no matter how biting, contributes to the enrichment of material. They overlooked the chief thing : style.

The formation of Courbet's style began in his early period and ended with his last important works. It is not only vital to his own history, but of immense weight in modern painting generally. It does not consist of the modification of details, but of the progressive alteration of his whole conception, and consequently

of all his methods. The Funeral at Omans is one of the first stages on this very devious road. His style lies less in the extraordinary variety of elements than in

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PHOTOGRAPH DURAND-RUEL

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their summary use, as, for instance, in the distribution of the whole group, which, realistic as it seems, has so arranged the numerous faces as to present the greatest possible variety, thus forming an impressive, though non-demonstrable rhythm. Hals had already proved the possibility of such an achievement in his large shooting-pieces\* The colour above all makes for style. Here Courbet parts company with Zurbaran, who was thinking primarily of splendour, when he seemed to give increased breadth to the great planes of his Louvr<sup>e</sup> picture by his colour. Courbet contracts his. The whole picture is built up of the main contrast of black and red against the Velazquez-like background. The red is liquid as blood. It streams from the carnations and hovers over the black figures Uke a symbol of life over the grave. For it emphasises the psychological motive of the picture, the contrast between the sorrow of the mourners and the vivacity of their faces. This vivacity is enhanced by the red, but at the same time the monumental rather than the dramatic element is increased. The red tones, equally distributed over the faces, soften the vivid physiognomical details, obviate a genre-like appearance, and reserve the movement for the animation of the planes. It is most pronounced in the two precentors behind the kneeling sexton. Their alcoholic visages under their singular cozzcomb-hued head-dresses warm the whole picture.

Time, as in the case of all Courbets and all old masters, has refined the colour and contributed not a little to the general effect. In the righthand portion the black has suffered. We must imagine the group of women as rich, relatively, as the garde-champAtre who stands before them, in a gray coat over a reddish waistcoat, orange knee-breeches and grayish-blue stockings. The dark olive tones of the women's dresses have all become black. The Louvre would be well advised to bring them out again.

It may be urged against the Funeral at Omans that, in common with all the large representative pictures of the nineteenth century, it is comparatively non-representative of its author. The unparalleled impression it made upon the public and on the painter's colleagues was due to its subject. The audacity of representing a real funeral, not with sentimental poses, but with the fixed and idiotic

expression of faces on such occasions, and further with portraits of utterly indifferent people, exceeded the far greater audacity of giving such momentary representations by the help of the old masters. The charge of ignorant folly might have been transmuted into condemnation of the all too wise eclectic ; but the one would have been no less unjust than the other, and such a point of view, if logical, would have also depreciated the most exalted works of contemporaries. The little Christ in the Garden of Olives reveals more of Delacroix' characteristic mastery than the Massacre of Scio ; the Carabinier means more for Gericault than the Raft of the Medusa ; and a bunch of flowers of Manet's last period is more individual than his Olymfia. But what we call representative entails the suppression of individuality, in favour of a multiplicity valuable to the representation. We see more in it than a phase of the artist's development. Such pictures create the standard for a whole epoch ; the standard, not only for a degree of artistic expression, but for the generosity, the passion, the morality of a period. In such moments art apparently re-conquers the right to speak to the people, and the lover of art also finds a quiet joy in the beauty of this thought.

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The Funeral at Omans is not Courbet's largest picture ; the Combat de Cerfs is bigger, and the Atelier^ with its three and a half by six metres, was the

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largest of all. These work are not isolated examples. There are dozens of similar dimensions, if not quite as extensive as the three above-named. A comparatively large surface was natural to the master.

This tendency distinguishes Courbet from his contemporaries after Delacroix, and was in itself a cause of distrust to the enemies of his realism. It is one reason of his unpopularity. The French collector likes a picture he can handle, and the stands of the dealers in the Rue Lafitte are made for works of modest dimensions.

He who would work with life-size figures and animate large surfaces must of necessity become a monumental artist. The Funeral at Omans was indeed the solution of a monumental problem, one of the many successfully attempted by the master. A common impulse of great energy informs the long line of figures. In the Stone-breakers of the same Salon, now in the Dresden Gallery, Courbet brought this impulse into a concentrated form of smaller extent, and showed with what variety he proposed to treat his monumental themes.

Everything depends upon this. Style is like minted metal. One has his pocket full of big bronze coins ; the weight is considerable, his pocket gapes. Another carries the same number of coins in gold, and steps out Ughtly with a treasure a thousand times more precious. Artistically, we are living in the sign

of the copper-standard. Plenty of cash, but little value. The few gold pieces disappear under the heap of small change. It is all style. The one ratdes as bravdy as the other in the pocket, nay, the pence make the most noise. Courbet's fall is due to the anomaly, that he filled his pockets with gold pieces and went about with them as if they were so much copper. No wonder that people there-upon took him for a coiner.

Woidd it have been so very difiicult to make an easily legible style out of the form of the Stone-breakers f Any foreman in a furniture-shop can do it now. Was it more difiicult then ? The Englishmen, from whom ingenious critics have traced Courbet's artistic descent, showed the contrary. A more dexterous craftsman would, for instance, have set the lad who is carrying away the stones in a more schematic relation to the breaker, perhaps even paraUel ; he might conceivably have placed three other workers in appropriate attitudes beside them, and then have congratulated himself on having surpassed the iSginetan marbles. Courbet painted his figures as strongly as possible, but he showed that he was concerned not with lines but surface, and not only with surface but with an effect of depth. And this was in no sense an idee fixe with him, but sprang from his desire for richness, for greater power — and from his consciousness of being able to make his effects on these lines. Millet was more modest. The reverence we feel for him does not prevent us from seeing in him an easier manner of writing, well adapted to his personality, and not less sincere, of great charm but not of equal strength. He never painted so powerfully as Courbet painted in that picture which was so closely akin to the Millet world of form. We may assume that Courbet watched the early development of Millet with interest. Although Millet was his senior by five years they started almost simultaneously. Courbet's first landscapes were painted in 1841. The things Millet had done before this date are negligible. Indeed, if we take his first important picture as the starting-point, Courbet was the earlier of the two, for when he was painting his first portraits, Millet exhibited his Laitihe at the Salon, the work Biirger welcomed as " une jolie esquisse dans le gout de Boucher." The Stone-breakers made its appearance after Millet's Vanneur of 1848, and simjiltaneously with his Setneur of

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1850. Even if Courbet received some purely superficial stimulus from these pictures, there is absolutely no basis for the indebtedness to Millet assumed by writers upon art. We might as reasonably, nay, more reasonably, assume that Millet was influenced by Courbet when, in the Cherbourg sea-pieces of the war year, he made an incursion into the domain of his junior.

For in reality there is no more likeness between the pictures of the two masters than there is between anv two persons we might meet in the same room. I have spoken of Millet's relation to Daumier and of his classic origin in another

place. He was truly a painter with a purpose, in contrast to Courbet, on whose purpose all the world, himself included, was for ever insisting ; he expressed his tendency to synthesis with the utmost decision, and made it his goal in all his works from the y'anneur onwards. Courbet's synthesis is only evident now that we can survey the whole man and his following, all of which he himself was unconscious. It was as strong a motive force in him as in Millet, nay, stronger, but it remained instinctive, and this is why it was so mighty — and so clumsy. In Millet more limited gifts came to the help of a more harmonious personality. Courbet was driven hither and thither by an unbridled temperament, among others to the point where Millet stood, but it was only one side among many, and he controlled it as he controlled all others. Millet was always the same; he tottered when he left his narrow path. He carried over a fine formula to a variety of things ; his pictures are differentiated more by symbol than by the pictorial method which he took from the old masters, and reduced, without developing it further. He is therefore monumental in a far more conventional sense than his compatriot, in an essentially weaker sense, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, we must add. Never did he attempt to transpose the exquisite art of his small pictures into larger dimensions without serious loss. The Angelus is inferior to any average Courbet, and Millet's most important essay in monumental effect, the Hagar and Ishmael in the Mesdag Museum at the Hague, is a complete failure. In this, as in many other pictures of Millet's, the essential element, a mastery of pictorial expression, is lacking. This explains why Millet was able to express a great part of his nature by draughtsmanship, whereas Courbet without a brush and colour would have been like a man without limbs. The most brilliant charcoal drawing could give no idea of the Stone-breakers or the Funeral at OmanSy to say nothing of later works. They are only possible as paintings.

This difference might have been purely technical ; Millet might have been as great a draughtsman as was Courbet a painter. But justice towards our two masters demands that we should recognise the difference of potentiality. Style in Millet, whether evolved by brush or pencil, was firmer than Millet himself, and herein lies his limitation. The artist kept nothing over save a one-sided form, which expressed his nature well, but at the same time showed its narrow boundaries, since he could not keep this form fluid, i.e. capable of expansion. He has finished when he first gets the form suitable to him, and afterwards plays the part of artisan rather than of genius to his invention. Courbet, on the other hand, is not to be identified with any one work. He invents until he lays down the brush. In other words, the difference between Millet and Courbet is that between genius and talent, even if we must admit that Millet fulfils the conception of talent in superabundant measure, and that Courbet falls short in some respects of the standard of genius. Millet sought to supply the deficiency by a very distinguished treatment of a literary tendency, and this has drawn a whole herd

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of sentimental adherents and imitators to him since his death. The few great artists who further developed the imperishable part of Millet disappear in the multitude. Here again, without depreciating Millet's greatness, we can easily see that insistence on the element of thought was expedient to help out artistic weakness. Courbet has been unjustly condemned for his renunciation of all such aid.

Millet brought strong lines into the atmosphere of the Dutchmen and Spaniards; Courbet essayed to set plastic bodies therein, *ue.j* to combine the results of the old art with those of the new. His vehemence in the process made it inevitable that he should light upon impossible tasks. Herein lies the problematic quality of his art. As a landscape painter he was pre-eminently a painter of planes, identifying himself at first with Velazquez, giving ever-increasing vigour to tone and colour, and painting with a temperament unrestrained by reflection, just as Hals painted his personages: only material, only brush and colour, only surface. But this did not suffice him. His rhetoric demanded a personification — not that of genre, he was too deeply imbued with the old masters and too honest for that; but at least the significant presence of man and beast in the landscape. As from his youth up he had confronted man as a realistic portrait painter, a difference arose all the more readily in the combination of the two domains, in that the two materials are not found conjoined in Nature in the manner that seemed suitable to him. This difference does not make itself felt in the *Funeral* and the *Stone-breakers*. In each he had a happy inspiration; size and colour came to his aid, while the solution was hastened perhaps unduly by the intermediary black. Courbet recognised the devastating quality of asphaltum, and was too strongly averse to all compromise to content himself with such expedients. But as soon as he attempted to substitute more solid colours, or essayed to make the shadows effective, the problem presented itself in all its intensity. This happened, as we see plainly enough, in the following year, 1851, with the *Demoiselles du Village*. Here Courbet painted the figures and the landscape, each unsurpassable in its way, quite independently the one of the other. The landscape would be a masterpiece in itself without the figures; the three charming female figures with the little shepherdess would be an exquisite group without the landscape. The two in one frame have the effect of a picture by two different hands.

That this was Courbet's method we know from no less a witness than Delacroix, who subjected the *^x^ntj^j* of the Salon of 1853 to a severe but not undeserved criticism.\* He was repelled not only by the lack of psychological relation between the two naked figures, or the fact that "the gesture expressed nothing,"\* but by the non-pictorial connection between the figures and their surroundings. Delacroix justified his criticism by the declaration that he had seen the sketch for the land-

Scape in Courbet's studio. This he found enlarged in the picture, and the two bathing women had been put into it, a proceeding which is even more crudely obvious here than in the *Demoiselles de Village*. To Delacroix, the creator of the most fluid kind of painting, this was peculiarly abhorrent. He pronounced a like unfavourable judgment upon the *Lutteurs* and the *Femme nue* of the same Salon. He thought the background killed the two figures of the former, and that over

\* <sup>1</sup> *Journal* ii. p. 159. In a foot-note he calls this picture *Demoiselles de Village* a title chosen by Courbet for the Catalogue, and still often used to distinguish the picture, now in the Montpellier Museum. It must not be confounded with the *Demoiselles de Village faisant Paumoneune Gardienne de Faches*, of 1851, the work here reproduced.

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3 ft« might have been cut away round them. He bestowed warm praise on the distaff and the sleeping figure, but censured the heaviness of the dress and of the chair. This last criticism seems to us exaggerated when we stand before the gem of the Montpellier Museum. Time has perhaps softened the contrasts to which Delacroix was so sensitive. It seems strange, however, that Delacroix should have been blind to the close relation of these particular pictures to his own works. Or was it that he did not wish to see it? In 1852, a year before the *Baigneuse* Delacroix had painted his *Lever* the interior with the naked woman binding up her heavy tresses before a mirror. It contains much of the younger master's flesh-painting, but is more fused, and therefore more harmonious, the work of a ripper artist, who, for all his skill, never lost sight of his end. Paid Mantz said of Delacroix that "il voyait son tableau avant de le peindre." We might say the opposite of many pictures of Courbet's middle period, the *Baigneuses* among them. Courbet was inspired by an absolutely unconscious instinct, or, to be more exact, purely by an impression of nature, and was only absolutely conscious in the impulse to reproduce this impression. The faster he painted the more slowly did his thought follow, and what this added was, as a rule, opposed to the creation of the instinct. Yet it would seem that Courbet's development required this partitioning of the picture to take in all that was typical of the artist and more especially that which differentiated him and Delacroix. Beneath the fragmentary conception which is in such striking contrast to the organic method of the painter of *Daniel's Boat* the necessities of a new synthesis lie hidden.

We learn from this how inadequate is language for the formulation of the laws of art. Expressed in words, they seem to deal eternally with the reception and the rejection of the same ideas; the degree, on which everything depends,



only becomes intelligible through the name of the artist who accomplishes it. In these days, when perspective is taught in the secondary schools, and every water-colour painter can grapple with its most complicated problems, how little is conveyed by such a phrase as that Courbet was a master of perspective ! But how significant it becomes when we stand before the *Crib Uses de BU* in the Nantes Museum, Courbet's masterpiece of 1854. We should like to have had Delacroix' opinion of this remarkable interior, and to know what Ingres thought of it. At the Exhibition of 1900 people stood before it as before a riddle, and so, no doubt, they did at the Exhibition of 1855. Courbet scarcely went farther than this in the direction of plasticity, and before this picture it is easy to understand that the painter would some day try his hand at sculpture. It is plastic without being classic, a phenomenon unknown in France, save in the case of the Primitives, until we come to Courbet. It has something of the grand old stylelessness [of the North, in which all seems nature and nothing convention, and a ruthless sincerity is the sole form. The room is almost without atmosphere, it is filled with forms only, but these are rendered with such mastery that their apparently arbitrary position fixes every corner of the room in all dimension. The kneeling girl who shakes the sieve — ^About called her indecent — is as much a miracle of foreshortening as one of Michelangelo's Sibyls in a different order of things. There is no question of a pictorial relation of the details ; the boy who is looking into the corn-bin is a creation, almost a work of art, in himself. In the group of the two girls an almost indescribable richness of arabesque is

\* In the Angutte Vacqnerie collection.  
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produced by the forms ; an arabesque of modelling in contrast to the linear arabesque of the old masters. And here again, as in the *Funeral* colour acts as a secret amalgam to the unrelated masses ; but the black of the early work has made way for an exquisite pale gold, with which the grey and pink of the dresses harmonise as perfectly as if Vcdazquez had breathed his spirit into this almost prodigal realism.

The same spirit works its magic still more manifestly in the huge picture of 1855, *The Atelier* is a kind of resting-place in the ascent, a pause in which the artist collects his thoughts. The five years that separate the *Funeral* and the *Atelier* do not constitute a decisive epoch, the strongest phase of development begins later. Who, indeed, could have found the right path unhesitatingly amidst this chaos of gigantic projects, begun in one year, broken off in the next, taken up again ten years later, and yet producing masterpieces every time they appeared. It seems almost as if Courbet had struggled against his own development in order not to sacrifice that portion of his mastery, which had to give

way to some other. In many contemporary pictures heterogeneous conceptions are perceptible. Immediately after the *Cribleuses*<sup>1</sup> the strongest argument for plasticity in all his art, he painted the softest, the most rich-toned of his works, the recapitulation of everything with which the descendant of the Spaniards was occupied. He expressed this after his own fashion by adding to the title in the catalogue the pompous phrase : *^Allegorie reeUe, determinant uhe phase desept annees de ma vie artistique,*" an absolute truth, for in the *Atelier* we have really the artistic quintessence of a part of his nature and his life. The grotesqueness lay only herein, that it was the author himself who formulated the fact. Of course the public laughed, and the critics laid hold of the allegory and believed, rightly or wrongly, that Courbet had used it to proclaim his Socialism afresh, but he had grouped round his easel all kinds of contemporaries with whom he had relations, and various class-types, which, indeed, he had painted elsewhere.\*

To-day the significance of these persons and things has evaporated ; we are scarcely impressed even by the brilliant characterisation of the portraits. What we see is a magnificent piece of decoration.

Of all Courbet's works the *Atelier* is the one most akin to Velazquez. It is an offering to the manes of the great Spaniard of the utmost dignity, for it entails no sacrifice of individuality. Velazquez is not used as a device, there is nothing subservient, nothing he himself would have disdained. One master offers homage to another, and honours both himself and his predecessor in the act.

The *Atelier* is the lyrical pendant to the *Enterrement* ; it is all sunny grace and loveliness, just as the other was all dark and weighty earnest. It is constructed more lightly, more loosely ; the oppressive facade of the Funeral is replaced by a half circle extending far into the background. Where the colossal line of rocks extends in the latter, the studio-walls, of the same Velazquez-tone as the other background, with the effective patches made by the pictures, encloses the scene. The centre of the composition is the painter in a dark gray jacket, his fine profile relieved against the beautiful work on the easel — a brown wooded landscape with a blue sky, closely related to the exquisitely outlined naked model, whose carnations,

\* Courbet himself wrote to a friend concerning his picture : *^Lesajet de mon tableau en 8i long*

*1 expliquer que je veux te le laisser deviner quand tu le verras, c'est l'histoire de mon atelier, ce qui s'y passe moralement et physiquement, c'est passablement m78t6rieux, diviner qui pourra."* *L'Art*, 1883.

natnralistically treated in reddish gray tones, shed a mild radiance throughout the picture. The bojr to the left of the artist is the most animated passage, a concentrated gray with luminous carnations, a reminiscence of the delicious choir-boy in the EnUrremenij but of a warmer simpler nature. The stuff on the floor beside the naked model produces the pink Velazquez-tone\* From this rich centre the colour dies away mto all the comers of the great room. It is the method used by Velazquez in his portraits of the Infanta, monumentally applied. What the face is in the Spaniard's portraits, the central group is here ; the fantastic coiffure answers to the tendril-like offshoots formed by the grotesque subordinate figures, and even in the darkness forms and faces seem to be moving. Courbet did not take advantage of the complaisant shadow to which Velazquez gave such charm, that many of his disciples of to-day are content to paint the nimbus without the body from which it radiates. His touch is always granulated, he does not simulate form but paints it. His unresting skill created a decorative detail in the drapery of the marvellous female figure on the extreme right, which recalls the ornamentation on the stuffs of the Flemish masters. Rather than compromise he preferred to sacrifice unity. Where others, after exerting themselves richly would be content to indicate the limits of the pictures by a few strokes, Courbet paints realistic portraits.

In the Defosses collection this picture enjoys a privilege rarely accorded to our

fictorial art. The enthusiasm of the collector has moved him to a princely deed, le has devoted a whole room to the work, a vast interior lightea from above, finely proportioned and gorgeously fitted. Heavy gilded architecture alternates with panels of Gobelin tapestry, which accustom the eye to a grav-blue basis. At the upper end of the room, extending across the whole width, tne picture is enframed m massive gilded pilasters. The effect is highlv impressive. It affords a proof, unique of its kind, that this much despised realism, the value of whose existence has been at times limited to unessential verities, mav compete with the greatest art that has decorated churches and palaces ; that there are not two arts, monumental and non-monumental, but only one, the art of beauty. No Primitive could make a finer effect here. Imagine Botticelli's Spring in its original place, or the altar-piece of an old Rhenish master. The effect would, no doubt, be stronger, by virtue of the more visible expression of architectonic lines, and the more surprising the less the spectator could find himself again in these lines. But it cannot be accounted a defect in the modem work that it should lack strangeness. Every really vital person will consider this an advantage. And that the power seems less here is due to our inclination for that strangeness, and the impatience of the first moment, which resists the quieter effects. This room gave me an im-movable confidence in our art and confirmed my secret repulsion to everything which does not spring from the natural instinct of a personality. I should have greeted the Botticelli reverentially, but should have thought it less at home here than in the Florentine Academy. I could perhaps have given warmer welcome to the wonderful Last Suffer from San Salvi, whose harmonies are more attuned to our own, but even the del Sarto could not have appealed to me so intimately

then as Courbet's profane work. When I last saw the Atelier I had just come from the Primitives at Dosseldorf, and was about to visit the Sienese. Our agitated existence provides us with sensations of which our grandfathers in post-chaises never dreamt. The antithesis was almost unbearable when, before the rose and pale gold of the modern, I recalled the lurid altar-piece of the old painter

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of the Lower Rhine, one of the wild and grandiose masters who astonished us at the Dosseldorf Exhibition,

Before the Atelier our thoughts turn gratefully to Rubens and Rembrandt. Between us and these two there are centuries also, and yet they are incomparably nearer to us than the Primitives. In another three hundred years, when the space of time has doubled, and the chronological difference between Velazquez and his predecessors seems to have diminished correspondingly, Velazquez and the others will not have become more remote to the painters of the day. Nay, for all time, as long as painting is practised, these men will be held to belong not to a time but to art, just as we already reckon the great Greeks.

What is the reason of this conception, which is too mighty, too rich in hundreds of confirmatory symptoms to be purely imaginary ?

The conditions for research in art-history are never so favourable as when we stand before an extraordinary picture. We think with the eye, testing rapidly ; it is as if such an impression rouses everything that tells for and against it. The keenness with which we grasp the work before us serves us for comprehension of those that are absent, since it is not vision alone that opens art to us, but that clairvoyant condition, akin to creation, in which our vivified experience is reinforced by a thousand memories.

We get nearer to the reason if we carefully examine the various effects which all sorts of typical works make upon us at such moments. The Rhenish or Westphalian master at Dosseldorf struck our souls to earth with his terrific grotesques. We could not at the moment have rejoiced in the warm modelling of Courbet's naked figure. Cognition was in an abnormal state, as if brutalised by a sudden almost animal instinct\* I remember that the delicate complexion of the lady with whom I was standing before the picture, distressed my eye, and that I longed for something even more violent than the painter had given us. It was not a bad picture, but one highly esteemed by experts and belauded by aesthetes ; the effect it had upon me, 500 years after it was painted, bears witness to its power. But it worked upon other and lesser emotions than the Courbet. The latter was like some great human countenance of my own time. It did not drive me away from to-day, but brought me nearer to it, brought me nearer to myself, showed

me things in myself which seemed to me necessary, legitimised me and my instinct. The Primitive led me aside. It was not his subject-matter that repelled me, but his manner of treating it, the wild fervour that seared and scarred, the deep humiliation, not of his martyr but of his own soul, the mocking laughter, not of his tormentors but of his own conception. It was not his legend, but the insistence with which he presented it that repelled me. He appealed to dim eyes, painting as if I were callous, as if it were necessary for him to make manifold mechanical repetition of what I saw at the first glance. It was always the same, a dark event which confronted me, immovable, immutable, and held my eyes captive with the fixity of its compelling gaze.

Men prayed before pictures such as these. Terror brought them to God. And even now they affect us somewhat in the same manner. An unconscious simulated petition creeps into enjoyment, the stammering of senses, no longer related to spirit : hypnotism.

In others this tension was notably relaxed. We moved on, relieved by Schongauer's amenity; the gentleness of Jan Joest's holy convention by the fountain rejoiced us like a landly greeting ; Marmion's quiet musing allowed us to chat

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DORIA-PAMFILI PALACE, ROME

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lightly together. The grimness of the face disappeared, Stephan Lochner smiled\* It was not the milder episode but the manner in which it was treated, the soft emotion of the painter making itself felt even now\* Why do we call this mobile thing painting just as we do the other rigid thing? We never see Lochner twice. As he lives like ourselves, his thousand tones in one colour give an endless variety of new images\* Why, instead of painting simple reds and blues like the Primitive, did he prepare his colour on the picture itself, making it something beyond the episode, a veritable second sacrament, the image of his own personality ?

Düsseldorf had a thousand other differences between men and periods to show. But the mightiest was to be found on the upper storey of the exhibition, where in the first room hung the Cuyp, Rembrandt's Christ at the Column and his portrait of himself, laughing. In a moment everything else had sunk to a lower level, and one felt as if uplifted to freedom. A many-coloured life. Laughter rang out from solemn frames, subdued sobs arose from cheerful pictures. All

were speaking to each other and speaking to us, and we almost permitted ourselves to argue with Rembrandt. This is painting. Painting began when humanity entered into art and myth gave way to it ; when the spectator no longer feigned to pray before a picture, but prostrated his soul consciously and enthusiastically at the feet of great personalities.

Courbet's great decoration belongs to this art. There is but one word to describe both his manner and that of the Primitives : monumental. It depicts the highest spiritual phase of two different worlds. In the one we must forget existence in order to enjoy, in the other we must be able to enjoy in order to rejoice in existence.

Which of the two is the higher — an inquiry which, rising far above the interest

of the amateur, addresses itself to the deepest impulse of beauty-loving personalities — can only be doubted by those who have not yet recognised the importance of the question.

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The influence of Velazquez is no less evident in many other works of the same period, and also in the *Rencontre or B(m jour Monsieur Courbet* of the Exhibition of 1855, now in the Montpellier Museum, in which the young master immortalised his first worshipper, Bruyas, the purchaser of the *Casseurs de Pierre*^ Les Baig<sup>neuse</sup>^ Sy La Fileuse^ &c. But at the same time he retained the antithesis of the Velazquez-idea, his strong modelling. In the *Rencontre* the profiles of the three figures look as if they were cut-out against the high horizon, notably the painter's magnificent head with the much ridiculed ^\* Assyrian " profile, and looking at them we seem to have all the other dimensions of the body before us. Both tendencies are apparent in the *Demoiselles au bord de la Seine* of 1856, and even in the group of the Proudhon family of 1863, now in the Petit Palais. As we know from the two dates to the left of the Proudhon, and the notes in the Catalogue of the Courbet Exhibition of 1882, the artist painted his friend from memory, as Proudhon had appeared to him twelve years before, seated on the threshold of his house. This anecdote, revealing an absolutely phenomenal feat of memory, would be easier to comprehend if Courbet had attempted to make the picture a psychological memorial, which would have been peculiarly appropriate to his relations with the philosopher. But the picture is the most faithful realism, and more purely an artistic, almost a mathematical problem, than any of his works\* The preservation of plastic effect in the foreshortening of the principal figure

verges on the miraculous, and at the same time there is the most amazing fidelity of likeness and truth of detail. The blue trousers and whitish grey blouse are exact in every fold. We cannot quite throw off the impression that the artist painted rather too rigidly here, fixing the body so exactly that it was impossible to preserve the necessary mobility. The squat shape of the work and the lack of connection with the group on the right side increase this effect. The children, in momentary attitudes, are in themselves a picture, of the utmost refinement of colour ; a rose-tint predominates in the dresses, illumined by the delicate pink of the young carnations. The liquid touch shows the most perfect mastery. But nothing of all this found favour with the critics. Even such semi-adherents as Burger condemned it, and even now the work is classed as mediocre because of its "lack of intellectuality." In the biography published by Estignard in 1896, the worst, indeed, of all the notices of the master so far perpetrated, the picture is dismissed with amazing assurance as a fiasco.

Such criticism was facile enough. The defects of the *Demoiselles au Bard de la Seille* of the Praudbany and of many kindred works are obvious. But that there were exquisite things in these pictures too, that their whole manner made it impossible to judge them by the criterion satisfied by every mediocre painter, that it would have been easy enough to give the *Cribleuses* or the *Demoiselles* less strenuous attitudes, to paint Proudhon without the children, or the children without Proudhon — all this escaped these rigorous judges. Courbet lacked a certain harmony, such works as these show it plainly enough ; but we must not forget that this man had to master greater complexities than others. Harsh judgment of him belongs to the same category as the censure audaciously meted out to Michelangelo for centuries, when a gracious boy showed to greater advantage than the greatest genius the world has known. Men who give their all must sometimes give fragments. The defect is a result of their richness, of natures absorbed in production, of a hatred of all compromise. What is wanting in them is supplied by their followers, who gather round such geniuses as the disciples round Christ, and do their part towards turning the gold into current coin.

But in reality the artistic reproach was merely a pretext, masking repulsion to very different aspects of Courbet's personality. The public was indignant, not because his mathematics were occasionally at fault, not because of the manner of his calculation, but because he calculated at all. What they really blamed in him was the antithesis of the criticism they formulated. Courbet was only too successful where the public accused him of failure ; for they were not less clamorous against his single figures, where their criticisms lost even their relative justness, against his portraits and his renderings of naked flesh ; these were indeed perhaps the works that provoked the greatest hostility. This hatred gave the strongest possible impetus to Courbet's development in the sixties. As a Socialist, the character in which he appeared to the multitude in the fifties, he was looked upon as less noxious. His supposed philosophy was discussed, and was pronounced to be possibly a mere pastime for empty hours, the charm of contrast in the

merry time of the Second Empire. When Courbet had satisfied his hankering after "l'allegorie réelle," and had done enough revolutionary things, he devoted himself solely to painting, and became revolutionary in a sense of which the bourgeois had no notion.

The innovation lay in his landscapes. The great series of woodland and hunting scenes was inaugurated as early as the fifties. There is a Stag in a Wood 1855

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in the Marseilles Museum. Four years later he painted La Curie. The most famous of the woodland pictures date from the sixties. The series concludes with the remarkable Halali in the Besançon Museum, also of colossal size ; a dramatic hunting scene in a magnificent snowy landscape, the last great figure-piece, the apotheosis of this aspect of the inexhaustible master.

Of this period also the Louvre possesses about the best examples ; indeed, till quite recently, Courbet was represented more brilliantly and more adequately in the Louvre than any of his contemporaries. The Thomy Thier Collection, with its gems of 1830, has now made the proportion more equitable.

In this interval, from about 1853 to 1870, Courbet developed his landscape. Le Mirage, the large landscape with a pond of 1855, lately acquired for the Schwabach collection, Berlin, for all its peculiar lyric beauty, has a certain tameness of handling. Compared with the Halali the Curie in spite of great charm of modelling, seems hard and dull. Hounds, men, and trees are conscientiously treated, but they look isolated ; the wood is sparse, we count the trees. Courbet, who seems himself to have been conscious of its lack of concentration, took out the dead stag and made one of his finest pictures of it, the work in the Mesdag Museum\* Here the green of the forest flows about the splendid brown of the tree-trunks. The hanging carcass in the foreground is painted with gradations of the same brown in every kind of tone, so that the vigorous modelling of the beast is veiled in superb tone-painting, which produces absolute unity of effect. The picture is painted like an old Dutch picture. Passing the hand over it we discern no inequalities of surface. Beauty of material, which we get from the old masters, quite irrespective of durability, as a special and industrial quality, has also been given us by Courbet in this and in many other pictures.

The large Combat de Cerfs of 1861, plays a part in this period comparable to that of the Atelier and the Enterrement of an earlier stage. It collects results and spreads them out homogeneously. The picture is stored in the Louvre, so that the visitor can rarely get a lively impression of it. Like most of the examples of this period, it is thinly painted with a very restricted palette, and contains one of the master's finest compositions. The three stags form a boldly



curved ornament against the rectilinear system of the trees. The happy choice of the planes, the harmonious relation of the group to the size and shape of the canvas, and the quiet harmony of the colour procure a perfectly balanced effect. It is a fresco in a new style. Were it installed like the *Atelier* it would appear as a rare testimony to Courbet's gifts as a monumental artist. For here he hit upon a composition which divides the whole picture equally, in spite of its colossal size. It is much to be hoped that it may some day be suitably hung, flanked by the other pictures of the same Salon (1861), which nearly all deal with veneration. The exception was the *Roche Oragnon* a rocky tract of the Maizières valley, hailed by Th. Gautier as the work of a "talent magistral," a work in which Courbet entered upon a new phase. About 1865, when the large woodland scenes, the *Puits Noir* the *Remise de Cbevreuil* &c., were painted, Courbet's landscape was at its zenith.

At his best period Courbet's gifts concentrate themselves to very compact expression. The power which had formerly been directed to details of an important but also of a problematic kind, now flowed into a single vigorous form. Form sounds a bold term to apply to rhythms of the brush. A narrow specialist might deem the modelling of the Proudhon more formal than the material of the

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*Puits Noir*. Courbet himself was obviously not quite dear about it. For he had no idea of laying logical hold on that which he achieved in moments of happy inspiration : a surface undulating in a single rhythm. Even in his most brilliant works of this period we trace a lingering tendency, due not to instinct but to deliberation, to differentiate material, directly he introduces figures and animals into his landscapes. The roes in the *Remise de Cbevreuils* are hardly as yet perfectly resolved constituents of the picture. Even in the huge *Siesta* of the .year 1808, now in the Petit Palais, the force of the brown and white hides wars with the green of the landscape. The struggle is certainly a grandiose spectacle, and all the objections that may be urged are insignificant reservations. At most such objections suffice to justify a higher estimate of the pure landscapes, such as

the Ruisseau du Putts Noir in the Louvre. In these the progress for which Courbet stands in the history of art-development is most evident.

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This progress is based on the knowledge that the object per se plays no part in art, and that it may be suppressed without making use of a traditional stylistic method ; that only power asserts itself ; that the form of a tree, however beautiful, cannot be made a substitute for the forest; that a part cannot contain the organic quality of the mass. I do not believe that Courbet arrived at this knowledge by reflection, for the idea is latent in all his early pictures, and even the greatest painter could not produce works of art altogether without it. The advance was rather a logical consequence of his earlier progress.

Zola called him a "fétisseur de chair," thinking only of his women, *la Femme Couchée*, *la Femme à la Vague*, *la Femme au Perroquet* and the like, of whom Courbet painted the animal aspects, the elementary quality of their nature.

Courbet's figures suggest the nude women of Titian and of Rubens, though we cannot class them with either. They are too boisterous for the calmly breathing flesh of the Venetians, too equable for the splendours of Rubens. Of course the affinity to Rubens' flesh-painting is the most obvious. In *Les Baigneuses* this manifests itself even in the choice of subject. But later on Courbet severed himself completely from the great glorifier of woman. He painted his women more as the Dutchmen painted still-life. There is a very beautiful example in the Mesdag Museum. A blond and tender form lies on a bed with a red pillow. The gray background is partly covered by a curtain of dark olive green. The gray is repeated more softly in the folds of the white sheet, and still more soberly in the carnations, where it harmonises with a very tender tone of the red cushion. Like these, all the other colours stand in a well-ordered relation one to another, partly in warm contrast, partly organically blended. There are no significant gestures, nothing that might lead to dramatic developments. On the other hand, the forms are modelled with perfect plasticity and marvellously composed in the space. The woman lies there in a fashion that could not be improved upon for an object the artist seeks to bring into favourable relation with other things in the same frame.

Of course this was no new method discovered by Courbet. The beauty of every picture depends, more or less evidently, on the same principle of design. But in all other renderings of woman the conscious or unconscious - symbolisms of the artist makes a manifest addition. This brings the woman into prominence by a spiritual relation ; and on this account he paints her differently, even if only in slight shades, to all the rest, and makes our enjoyment of the beauty

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of the creature so emphasised irradiate the rest of the composition. Titian's sleeping Fenus in the Tribuna is the queen of the picture, playing with its beauty. An emanation from her lies upon everything in the room. Rubens' women in the Bacchanalia communicate their frenzy to their companions, or, rather, that which drives them and their companions on is a wild love-instinct, which swiftly builds a bridge to our intelligence, transforming what the brush has ruthlessly brought together into a higher degree of sensation. Woman was the chief personage for Courbet too, but only in so far as she is distinguished from a cushion, a curtain, or any other inanimate object by greater richness of planes, lines and colour. Woman is only the richest detail of his pictures, not their subject. He lays stress upon this relation, conceives woman as superficially as possible, and hence he grasps those qualities in her which alone can be rendered with admirable intensity.

Courbet made progress in this conception. He transferred his idea of ^ chair," the idea which sees oidy material in everything that can be painted, to all Nature, and necessarily achieved his greatest effects where he found the greatest multiplicity of objects, in landscape. Fine as his women and animals are, we see plainly that in these his ambition never quite permitted the display of all his individual powers. The remarkable dualism of his talents, which allowed him to make a distinct advance in painting, iTnd at the same time to preserve all the works of the old masters,^ always induced him to work with the methods of the old masters when the motive suggested competition with these. It was only in landscape that he gathered all lus powers together, in the field where the old masters had made comparatively few conquests, and here he actually gave a new conception of Nature, achieving a new, i.e.] a progressive concentration of multiplicity. When he was thinking only of himself, the material of his pictures received a perfectly new physiognomy. The colouring of the Flemings disappeared, his preoccupation with a polished smoothness of surface retired into the background. The brush became a new implement — brush and knife at once. He no longer painted, but forged, modelled, moulded his planes, and so produced effects which leave Courbet, the disciple of the old masters, far behind, great as he was.

The whole history of painting shows a gradual development of surface, a gradual disappearance of contour. The epidermis of the picture becomes more vital, the symbol of Nature comes nearer, the conception of form becomes ever wider and more comprehensive. In this development Courbet pyked a decisive part. He made the beauty of nudity, not only that of woman, but that of landscape the picture, stripped of all that does not make an effect on the eye. He created a new synthesis of the elements of landscape painting, a new material, which wrings a common characteristic from water, wood, rock and earth, and represents their unity. He painted Nature not as something objective but as something one with himself. His brush-strokes are mighty atoms of the life that

breathes under the circumscribed apparition.

Compared with this the landscape of the old masters is tame, in spite of all its charm. No Primitive touched this impulse, which transformed all emotion into power. The strongest line has the effect of trivial detail in comparison. Of course, the new form is, in the last instance, as conventional a conception as line, but the knowledge of this conception remains shrouded by the turmoil of instinct. Form remains form, is not concerned with the understanding, but works like Nature herself, in whom we recognise beauty long before we ask ourselves whence it arises. VOL. I 2 H

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But Courbet is divided from the landscape painters of the seventeenth century by the same thing which separates himself from his old master period. To place him unreservedly above them would be to fail in appreciation of their originality and the necessities of historical development. The essential charm we find in them belongs to them and is unsurpassed in its way Courbet set it aside. But he grasped what appeared to them in its first indications, the substitution of the arabesque of impasto for the smooth surface. At the same time he abandoned himself more unreservedly to his temperament than the lovers of quiet Dutch canals, and painted with greater verve. As compared with them he might be called a dramatic painter, although he never painted a drama. His power was in itself dramatic, for it achieved the concentration of dramatic energy solely by the capacity for penetrating externals.

This is why Courbet has no need of subject, why, indeed, it is injurious to him.

The more restricted the less psychological, the less spiritual the so-called content, the richer, the more demoniacally tempestuous, the more powerful even to the verge of sublimity was the picture.

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We see that Courbet's conception was remote indeed from the accustomed method, in which the effect is got by the scenic composition of the picture. Even the "naturalist," who intends only to represent what he sees, chooses the nature best suited to his purpose ; he corrects it in order to achieve characteristic

effects of some kind by his subject — in other words, he composes. For Courbet, on the other hand, the significance of the object in space — quite apart from its symbolic significance, which, indeed, never existed for him — gradually retired more and more into the background. He who strove so strenuously for form aimed also at painting the conglomerate of Nature, not the forms of isolated objects. Even light and air lost their supreme importance for him. Indeed, he never consciously concerned himself about problems of light. The landscape of 1860, in the Stedelijk Museum, at Amsterdam, where, contrary to his custom, he attempted a play of atmosphere, is peculiarly tame and dull in effect. The lack of atmosphere in the *Proudhon* and many other pictures gave occasion for many justifiable criticisms from his contemporaries. But they overlooked the fact that Courbet could not, in the nature of things, paint otherwise, as long as he desired to preserve the purity of his forms, and that his renunciation of unity in effects of light, or rather of emphasis on such unity, sprang from his reluctance to weaken the splendour of his realities. It is one of the many phenomena of this career that the same man, who approached Ingres in this reluctance, afterwards

beat Nature in a mortar, so to speak, in order to achieve absolute unity. But even here again he was not actuated by considerations of light and atmosphere. It is not air but colour that illumines his later pictures. The particle of colour as moulded by him on the canvas becomes the vehicle of all the suggestive elements which evoke the idea of the organic in the successful pictures of his predecessors. He reduced pictorial expression to natural sound, as it were. For this he required his extraordinary command of all the imaginable methods of his craft, and a cold-blooded audacity. That such a procedure should have seemed like the speech of a savage to spectators accustomed to concise representations and definite thoughts in pictures is hardly surprising. This generalising treatment was the more repellent, when it was applied to the sacred human body. Courbet saw in man a piece of flesh no less than in the ox he gave his pupils as a model, and the

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ox was to him as much a piece of cellular tissue as the bark of a tree or a moss-grown rock. The public took this as a personal affront. Each spectator unconsciously identified himself with the heroes of these pictures — even when the heroes were oxen — and felt himself treated as vegetable matter. That Delacroix himself had not been far from such a conception, when he threw his Christ in the Garden of Olives on the ground as a piece of quivering flesh, was a fact that escaped the Romanticist himself and all his circle. Delacroix too generalised, as does every painter who attempts to relate the part to the whole. In his "Journal," he expressly defines genius as the gift of generalising, and tries to confute Courbet by this very phrase.\* That to all appearances he was doing something different to Courbet proved convincing even to his wisdom. In reality the only difference was that Delacroix allowed the spiritual impetus which led him to generalise to be

divined. He did not conceal his personal sympathy, which caused him to proceed thus, but rather he showed it in his dramatic material, an unconscious and unimportant compromise which nevertheless captivated the spectator. Courbet was taken for something essentially different, at best, respectable perhaps, but deficient in the characteristics of art. Even such a sincere admirer of Courbet as Duret accepts his friend's "absence d'imagination" and "absence d'émotion" as proven as late as 1867, not perceiving that he thereby denied the artist.

Courbet too felt emotion. Otherwise, it would never have occurred to him to paint. He expressed this when he was once asked how he painted his landscapes by the answer: "Je suis ému." The phrase, like all others, especially when he said it with a provincial accent, only served to make him ridiculous. Lafenestre can certainly have met with little comprehension among his readers when, in his discussion of the Salon, he said, in reference to Corot and Courbet, that there are a thousand kinds of emotion roused by Nature, and that Courbet was moved by it no less than Corot, only in a different manner. People did not understand that in Courbet the medium of emotion was only a stage deeper, and that the result of this was a certain modification of the effect upon the spectator — the counter-emotion. They had no idea that here one of those transformations was accomplished which history had already witnessed dozens of times.

For what else is it that distinguishes one art epoch from another, one humanity from another, if not this transformation? The object, the world, the theme, the law, this is always the same. It is only the subject that changes — that is to say, the emotion. The standard varies from time to time. But every change in the standard repels, and must repel, the multitude, for it is accomplished against their will, and consequently appears to them in the light of a humiliation, even when it is solely a question of aesthetic things. Delacroix painted his objects as battle-pieces, and this pleased the mob, although it was by no means martially disposed. Courbet treated them as still life, and this was considered unfeeling. Generalisation was the art of the one no less than of the other; it was only the generaliser who had changed. At the same time, Courbet's art was by no means an absolute novelty. Many of the Dutchmen had painted like him in all essentials. But their manner of generalising, it appeared, was based on a conception, the rollicking gaiety of which amuses posterity. Their genre style helped them. Those, indeed, who went recklessly beyond the genre style, like the aged Rembrandt, came off very badly with the method. The second Anatomy Lesson was, no doubt, just as irritating to contemporaries as Courbet's *Femme Couchée*.

- Journal, ii. p. 159. t "L'Art vivant" (Fischbacher: Paris, 1887).

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It must be admitted that Courbet did all he could personally to make his manner

detestable to the public. He roared with laughter when they talked to him of soul, and would not admit — was perhaps himself unconscious of the fact — that his own things allowed plenty of scope for the discussion of soul, if people did not restrict the term to the souls of painter-poets in action.

For it would be by no means audacious to reckon him among the disciples of Romanticism; not that of the Delacroix worshippers, but that of the widest domain of Delacroix' art, if we strip this of all literary trappings, and go down to essentials. In the beginning we noted certain affinities to the painter of the Dante's Boat. These disappear in the course of years, but recur at the time of full fruition, in the sixties. Courbet aimed at similar ends by different methods. That he strikes us as so different from Delacroix is perhaps less his fault than ours, because we find it so difficult to cast off the fetters of the object, and are deceived by the less apparent character of his Romanticism. His distant affinity to Daumier is more easily recognised. This his contemporaries saw, and of course used to the detriment of Courbet. It was made a reproach to him that he sought inspiration in Daumier's caricatures<sup>^</sup> and emulated Hogarth. This seems less abusive to us now than it did fifty years ago, when the comparison was intended to belittle both<sup>^</sup> reputed exemplar and supposed imitator. The vigorous line of Daumier's drawings may have pleased Courbet, though he knew himself to be of other stuff. But he was nearer to Daumier, the great painter, the creator of the Wagon ie troisieme Classe<sup>^</sup> &c., and we seem to find an echo of this sympathy in many a sketch of Courbet's. More evident — <sup>^</sup>ay, most unmistakable — is the relation to another master of the same period, a painter highly esteemed by both Delacroix and Daumier — Decamps. Decamps and Courbet are near relatives, not only as animal painters, in which genre both made use of the same broad methods — the two hounds in La Cures are of the same breed as Decamps' famous dogs — <sup>^</sup>but more especially as portrait painters, if we can term Courbet's flesh paintings portraits, and can admit studies of four-footed sitters to the category. In both there is the same sincerity, leading by a like road to the monumental. When Decamps in his youth painted the Defaite des Cimbres<sup>Sy</sup> now in the Louvre, he made the human horde grow out of the soil, in order to get the indescribable effect of mass he has achieved. It is hardly necessary to see these hordes at all to feel this same impression of a vast animated field, so strangely dramatic is the formation of the surface. This was Courbet's way of thinking too, and in this he was confirmed by his study of the greatest genius of that generation, the germ of all the rest, Gericault, traces of whom we have already noted in Courbet's early work. But it was at his ripest period that the painter of the Radeau de la Miduse is most apparent, not so much in any special picture as in general outlook, in temperament. Courbet shows the same dramatic quality which Gericault was able to give to a face, a horse, a piece of ground, however flat and bare, the dramatic quality which lies in the conception of the incident and the vigour of its rendering. Not so seductively as his great forerunner, it is true, and without the charm of splendid colour finally achieved by Gericault. Courbet's palette remained old-fashioned. And he lacked the Hellenism of the young giant ; the plebeian

flavour in many of the pseudo-Socialist's pronouncements was very remote from the innate nobility of the cavalier painter. But the vigour of instinct, the audacity of power, is common to both. Both knew where the secret of effect lay.

COURBET: THE GROTTO OF THE LOIRE

PHOTOGRAPH DURAND-RUEL

COURBET: THE GROTTO

PHOTOGRAPH DURAND-RUEL

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Gericault accompanied Courbet to the threshold of his last artistic phase<sup>^</sup> which we may call his phase of pure reason, a short but imperishable epoch. This last stage he travelled quite alone. It is the period of his latest picture in the Louvre, *La Vague*. It is, however, not possible to define it very precisely. There are many contemporary pictures, portraits in particular, which show no relation to this, and might very well have been painted ten years earlier.

The Trouville sea-pieces begin about the middle of the sixties. They are legion. Castagnary asserts that he painted one every day in a few hours, and produced about forty of them in the summer of 1865. They were at first quiet surfaces, brilliantly divided, in which the perspective is only animated by the various tones of the water under the various rays of light. His celebrated phrase, <sup>^</sup>"Le paysage est une affaire de tons," could not be more strikingly illustrated than by his sea-pieces — <sup>^</sup>sea-portraits, as we might call them. At first he painted them lovingly, almost with tenderness, so carefully did he trace the blue surface which casts its lustre into the heavens and is reflected thence again. Here he became a poet. The *Femme d la Vague* of the Faure collection, painted in 1868, which to Courbet was perhaps merely the study of a naked torso in the water, became a symbol. Here again he put all his strength into the modelling of a female body, moulding the bust and the uplifted arms with consummate mastery, and so preserving the rhythm of the sea in spite of the minute painting that we seem to behold a personification of the wave.

But nothing approaches the vigour of expression with which he represented



the element itself without any accessories at this period. He was even a more enthusiastic swimmer than sportsman, and we feel this in the latest sea-pieces. They are painted as seen from the sea, not from the land — ^waves as they appear to one buffeted by them. He expresses on a large scale the maximum of power with a comparative minimum of visible space, sections of the whole raging welter of the waters.

The Wave of 1870, in the Louvre, marks the culminating-point of this period ; and it is not a solitary example. There are about a dozen variants — one in the Berlin Gallery, one in the Stedelijk Museum at Amsterdam, others in private collections. In the Louvre version the relation of the water to the blue-gray sky is unusually beautiful, but on the other hand the over-insistent boats on the shore and the shore itself are disturbing elements. The old fault which Delacroix criticised is not even yet overcome. It is the same fault which dims the splendour of the brilliant grotto pictures to some extent. In one of these a man is sitting in the cave, in another we see a couple of deer. The proportion of these to the "rest is altogether faulty, not only as to size, but as to material. The rock is felt, and translated into a wonderful new material. No detail is given, though we seem to be standing close to it. It is the might of this upheld and upholding homogeneous mass which is painted, and beside it the figures and animals look trivial. In the Berlin example the shore occupies only a little bit of the left side. In others we have only sea and sky. He never succeeded in animating these roaring waves with ships in a credible fashion. All suggestion of humanity seems a crime against this solitary Nature.

In 1870 Courbet reached the summit of his art, and descended rapidly into the valley. He attempted to play a part in the Commune, and this was his undoing. What was the precise degree of his offence, whether he was justly condemned, whether the friends who exonerated him from all share in the destruction

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of the Vendome column were right or not, are matters which no longer interest us greatly. His interference in politics was one of the discords of his life, and, like all the rest, it arose from an excess of vigour. He looked upon politics as a blague, and found people who took the politician seriously, instead of allowing some latitude to the artist.

In his last years he painted, in addition to portraits, a number of still-life pictures, in which his delight in material achieved a final victory. A very beautiful portrait of himself in high tones, painted in 1871 in the prison of Ste. Pelagie, and now in the Mesdag Museum, as a pendant to the remarkable portrait of Delacroix by himself, shows the combination of a mellow stroke-painting with the most delicate tonal art in the hair and beard, a combination only possible to

this versatile master. The still-life pictures of the same period offer a final problem for solution. It is indeed remarkable that at this stage, after his brilliant landscapes and sea-pieces, Courbet should have set aside the results therein achieved, and painted his fruit like an old master. In the same collection at The Hague there is a picture with some wonderful apples, also painted in prison. The fruits, rounded with a very fine brush, glow like the faces in the *Enterrement* but much more tenderly and purely. Whitish lights are reflected in the smooth, deep red material. The apples lie in company with a duck and a blue Delft jar in — a landscape. A stately brown tree enlivens the foreground, and behind it stretches a superb whirish gray sky. This arrangement is still more striking in the similar, but not quite so successful, still-life of the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum.\* The apples here again are glowing red, except one, which stands out in vivid yellow. Here, even more than in the Hague picture, the landscape is treated as if the apples were important active agents. The tree behind them should be by rights four times as large, and the reddish landscape four times as extensive. And even this gross blunder in perspective, obviously the result of unaccustomed painting without models, is overcome by the perfection of the material. We are inclined to think we ourselves must be wrong, rather than attribute a glaring error to the master.

The outlaw painted no more great works. Leaving the Parisian catastrophe out of the question, it may be that his irregular life, and notably his immoderate drinking, hastened his end. He died in the Swiss village of La Tour de Peilz on the last day of 1877, aged fifty-seven years.

If we survey Courbet's life-work, as far as it is possible so to do, his development becomes clear, to a certain extent. We see at least a definite course ; and the fact that this is not the only one, and that the problem is not to be categorically solved, tends to increase the interest rather than to belittle the artist. We understand that the softness of the forties had to go to make way for the momentous works of the *Enterrement* period, and that the atmosphere from which these arose had to be replaced by the mightier material of the later landscape painter. We see the steadily increasing unity which manifests itself in the woodland pictures, and lastly in the sea-pieces, and feel that the constantly recurring contrast between modelling of details and generalisation was necessary to make the end so superb.

We feel some surprise now that no one in the master's lifetime called attention to this, the most important aspect from the artistic point of view, that no one

\* Dated 1872. It is, moreover, the only genuine Courbet in the Rijksmuseum. The two landscapes are forgeries.

pointed out the unique combination of the weightiest problems of painting in a single personality, that, amidst all the wrangling, no voice proclaimed Courbet's loft<sup>^</sup> artistic attitude. To accuse this complexity of manifestations of being limited, to dispose of G<sup>></sup>urbet by dubbing him a stupid fellow, as nearly all the writers who have dealt with him have done, seems to me the height of folly. It is sometimes urged that a critic who censures an artist has no right to be severe, because he himself could not do better. This is, of course, absurd. But it is a different matter when the critic fastens on personal things, as all Courbet's biographers have done hitherto. Courbet's oft-proclaimed stupidity is a biographical detail of secondary importance. It is true that we are not very favourably impressed by sayings of his that have come down to us, or by certain transactions of his that have been recorded. But is it not conceivable that a man who could do what he liked as an artist, and who rose to this omnipotence from humble origin, without finding one sensible companion among his many adherents, may have paid for his consciousness and clarity as an artist by the weakness of other parts of his intelligence ? It requires no great genius for analysis to understand this combination of great artistic gifts with very human failings : a genius spurred by an alcoholic imagination, condemned to carry about with him the mind of a sly, greedy, and tyrannical peasant, and to pose before the coarse spirits of his circle under a mask borrowed partly from Kabelais, partly from Don Quixote. The only sensible book about Courbet that has appeared so far is the raw psychology of a boon companion, who apparently confines himself to a record of the pranks and jests of the man, with such sincerity that the artist's true face looks out most poignantly from the tragi-comedy.\*

As<sup>^</sup>ether those who concerned themselves with art in France really knew him I will not decide. In any case their judgments were over-hasty. The bare fact, for instance, that he was fond of painting his own portrait has been sufficient to establish his narrow-minded vanity in the minds of his biographers — I could quote some half-dozen. There is not a single portrait of Courbet by himself that is not a masterpiece of painting or drawing, and this should sufficiently explain the existence of them all. No one has ever made it a reproach to Rembrandt that he showed a like interest in his own countenance.

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Courbet, the child of Nature, began by working after the fashion of the best painters. He took the methods of the old masters as he found them, because he could use them thus, and modified them afterwards in the manner best suited to his purpose. He handled the brush with the same mastery they showed, and when he saw that he could do more with the palette knife, he threw the brush aside. Even this his critics have made a reproach to him ! Lemonnier writes as if Courbet had been the inventor of this " vice nouveau," just as if Decamps before him. Constable before him again, and before Constable many another glorious master, Rembrandt above all, had not practised this "vice.\*" Indeed,

Courbet continued the old masters, almost in a literal sense, save that in the span of a single lifetime he went through a development similar to that of Rembrandt in olden times, a development only accomplished by whole generations in earlier ages still. If Rembrandt and Hals had lived some centuries later they would have come to Courbet's manner.

\* Gros-Kost: 'Courbet, Souvenirs intimes' (Paris: Derveaux, 1880).

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This brings me to an analytical element which I passed over before^ in the interests of continuity.

To give the Spaniards their full sponsorial rights, I merely glanced at the influence of the Dutchmen. This asserts itself when that of Velazquez and Zurbaran begins to wane. Strange to say, Courbet reminds us less of the great tone-painters of Holland than of the masters whose chief preoccupation was form. He recalls Potter, and even the "hard" Potter who painted the Young Bull in the Mauritshuis. The weakness of this masterpiece, its lack of atmosphere, was also Courbet's weakness. But their beauties are identical too — the fine modelling, the exhaustive handling of the theme to get the desired effect. We seem to recognise the superb figure of the man by the tree in many of the Frenchman's pictures. Among the painters of interiors, Aertsen seems to have attracted him rather than Craesbeeck, in spite of his autobiographical assertions — the Aertsen without the brown sauce, who enamelled rather than painted the cook in the white apron and red skirt of the Brussels Gallery. Hals we found at the beginning. Courbet remained true to him all his life. At his prime the greatest of the Dutchmen came into his orbit. The Puits Noir landscapes are painted like Rembrandt's latest portraits of himself. The relation to Hals is more intimate. Courbet does not rise to the spiritual sphere of the Syndics. His humanity too was akin to Hals. From all we know of the Haarlemer, he must have been a similar personality — a genius who preferred the superficial aspects.

These influences gradually drove Velazquez and Zurbaran into the background. The mature landscape painter shows no trace of their manner. But we find affinities of structure in Goya's landscapes. The fine May-tree sketch in the Berlin National Gallery, with its large planes spread with the palette knife, would certainly have delighted Courbet.

Among the immediate predecessors of Courbet the landscape painter we must

not overlook Constable ; and this relation brought Courbet and Corot into line, though the Englishman's influence on the two was of a very different kind. Corot profited most ; he cleaned his palette. Courbet's colour was not affected in any way, but, on the other hand, he was frequently stimulated by Constable's handling. His temperament differed even more radically from the Englishman's than Corot's less sharply defined individuality. Courbet's technique, like Corot's methods, gained steadily in breadth, whereas Constable became sharper. Courbet's whole field of development, moreover, was more complex. But it is obvious that he had seen Constable. It is not unlikely that Georges Michel may have served as intermediary. Michel, one of the first artists who painted the woods of Fontainebleau, was a precursor whose importance has not been sufficiently insisted upon.\* Michel paid a visit to England at the time of Constable's greatest successes. His resemblance to Courbet not only in the woodland scene in the Louvre, but in certain more important landscapes, is striking. I am not, of course, comparing him with Courbet at his best.

This necessary analysis may have led the reader to think of Courbet as an artist interesting mainly by the various strains that met in him, or by the speculations concerning technique to which he gives rise. If so, the author rather than his hero is at fault. Brilliantly as Courbet painted, no one was ever less absorbed in mere manipulation. An illustration will make my point clearer. A painter I have repeatedly mentioned, who was in certain respects closely related

♦ See Andr<sup>e</sup> Michel, " Notes sur l'Art moderne " (Colin et Cie. : Paris, 1896).

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to Courbet, Decamps, was a craftsman in a much narrower sense, and it was just his technical, or rather technological, preoccupations which placed him so far below the master of Rembrandt. The procedure of his painting so fascinated him that at last he had but one idea — how to make the weft of his picture more solid and more brilliant. His painting became a kind of complicated handicraft; he embroidered his pictures, regardless of all but the embroidery. He became a brilliant artificer, a mannerist.

In Courbet's case the recklessness of the Bohemian tended to preserve him from a declension due in a great measure to commercial considerations. But even he was occasionally betrayed by his dexterity, and gave us pictures that detract from the sum of his achievement. The Brussels Museum has had the luck to acquire three very different examples of the master, all of very inferior quality. The portrait of Stevens, in an unpleasant brownish red tone, shows the painter's painting without any of the obstacles which Courbet had to overcome in the process — obstacles we must feel in order to appreciate the gift. The portrait of Mme. Fontaine shows the same defect in another — a bluish black — tone. In the most important of the three, the picture of the dancer Guerrero, great

qualities underlie every possible weakness. The portrait suffers most of all from the unresolved harmony of the colouring. The degradation of the red skirt into the detonating yellow red of the curtain on the left and the dull background to the right is peculiarly unhappy. The hideous frame is yet another unfortunate factor.

Fortunately these exceptions are rare, and they show none of that organisation in error which mar the mannerist. He never reduced either his vices or his virtues to a formula. It is this which differentiates him most sharply from the old masters, especially from those to whom he is most nearly akin. Rembrandt and Hals satisfy us by their perfectly logical development. With Courbet, as we have seen, this development is to be traced only with certain reservations. It was undoubtedly most prominent in the sixties, but this point of culmination is not invariably above the level of the early works. We see, of course, the same artist. Many sides have progressed ; but many others have remained stationary, though we are conscious that they tended to greatness. The most remarkable thing is the high level of his beginnings. Other artists come into the world with talent. Courbet seems to have been born with mastery. He is like a living receptacle of precious things. If this seems remarkable enough in our traditionless age, the fact that this receptacle was a peasant makes it phenomenal. Examination of his methods of painting rebounds ineffectually from this phenomenon. It may bring us nearer to isolated pictures, but it tells us nothing of the source of the stream.

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Thus, for all the independent glory of his newer art, the audacious revolutionary appears before us linked to the past, with the old masters, the great Dutchmen and Spaniards of the golden age of painting, and not less closely with the most notable artists of the age immediately preceding his own, with those decisive

influences which prepared the way for the art of the nineteenth century.

If any further justification for renewed appreciation of the master were required, we might point to the position occupied by Courbet in the art of the present. The generation of the second half of the nineteenth century in France, Holland, Belgium, and Germany, and also to a certain degree in England, the

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generation which gave us modern paintings pays homage to a beneficent master in Courbet. Modern art has many tendencies. The further art advances, the more various do they become. If we were asked to name the person who has exercised the most momentous influence, and without whom our most important developments would be unthinkable, we should cite Courbet. The most distinguished personalities in France were so dependent upon him in their beginnings that it would hardly be an exaggeration to call them his pupils.

In England, realism assimilated the ideas attributed to Courbet in France rather than the master's painting. In Germany, on the other hand, the painter of *Omans* was accepted with fervour. Viktor MoUer, and afterwards Liebl, drew inspiration from him. Thoma, too, owes the fine works of his early

period to Courbet's influence. Round Liebl and Trübner, and finally round Liebermann, grew up a school, the only one in the Germany of the nineteenth-century that wanted to paint and only to paint. They honour Courbet as their intellectual if not their active and personal founder.

Belgium is no less indebted to the master. Louis Dubois and Arton, Baron, Boulanger, Sacré, and Rods — as far as he attempted to paint — in short, the whole body of serious artists, who, gathering round Courbet's friend, Alfred Stevens, and Henri de Braekeleer, gave the best in Belgian painting, derive more or less directly from Courbet.

In the Holland of Maris, Mauve, and Mesdag he divides the honours of inspiration with Daubigny and the older painters of Fontainebleau. In Scandinavia, in Switzerland, and in all countries where artists concerned themselves with the true nature of painting, Courbet's spirit made for progress.

In spite of this universal importance, in spite of the comprehensive work

which, setting aside all these relationships, strikes one as a mighty, immortal life, Courbet stands in the cold shadow of forgetfulness. The dealer sets prices ten and twenty times higher on his disciples' pictures than on his, and the connoisseur restricts himself to historical appreciation. France is responsible\*-the France who could not forget the man in the great artist\* No doubt this frame of mind will disappear with the eye-witnesses of the events of 1871. Courbet himself is to blame to some extent. In his last years he accepted the help of inferior collaborators, and signed a number of landscapes he had barely touched.\*

Strange to say, the rapidly consummated fame of the Impressionists was of most vital disadvantage to him. France was sighing for more national artists\* The age demanded lighter colour, greater taste, purer harmonies. The Enlèvement d'Omans was eclipsed by the luminous splendour of the Dîjeuner sur l'Herbe. This instinct has given us so many works much more exquisite, and not less — nay, more — important, that we cannot reproach it. No references to history can guide us in questions of feeling, nor any sense of justice to the dead. And if we had to choose, who would not rather forego this one than the many indispensables ? But is this hard choice really imposed upon us ? Is the space for great men in our memory as limited as the room in a theatre ? Have we not reconquered others who were deprived of the affection of humanity for decades and centuries because they did not catch the taste of the day ? And here I may touch on the perverse criterion that we ought all to resist : we ought not to treat great artists as matters of taste. It is not so much justice to them as consideration for ourselves that demands a more serious appreciation. Enjoyment of Rembrandt was denied

\* Many of these were painted by his young friend B. Pata.

JONGKIND: VIEW OF HONFLEUR (1865)

PHOTOGRAPH DURAND-RUEL

SISLEY: THE FLOOD (L'INONDATION) (1875)

CAMONDO COLLECTION, PARIS

GUSTAVE COURBET



to generations while a taste for the rococo prevailed because of the darkness\* of his canvases or the homeliness of his figures. Another period turned away from Rembrandt because its severity condemned him as baroque ; the Primitives^ were a sealed book to another epoch. Fashions pass away. They are legitimate-forms of expression, the fulfilment of certain reactionary requirements. Great artists should stand on a more assured basis, because that relation to taste which their works reveal, in common with all human productions, does not exhaust their value. What we love in them, what gives them their value to us, is more than the directly serviceable impulsion, more than the strengthening of our sense of line or colour, or the enrichment of our feeling for form, important as this is. All these are profitable, but not essential, advantages auxiliary to the artist's achievement. The greatness of that achievement lies in its affording us the possibility of purely spiritual enjoyment. Every work of art is a victory over materials. Its forms and colours are only the banners of the victor. His conquest is what we can conquer afresh at any time ; the enthusiasm which exalts us is inexhaustible, because it is impossible for us to approach the same work twice in precisely the same condition. This is the immortal benefaction of art. And as its gifts enrich us, it is to our interest to diminish the numbers of great forgotten artists. For every forgotten genius means so many hours stolen from our beatitude.

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### THE GENERATION OF 1870

Under the generic term \*\* Impressionists," various artists have been grouped together, some of whom had only this in common, that they exhibited together, that together they endured the abuse of their peers and of the public, and that they sought solace in each other. Their bond of union was what their age scoffed at in their beginnings. It was the age when the luxurious Second Empire was tottering to its fall ; the spirit of the times was singularly sterile in the domain of painting, if we make an exception in the case of Lami and his circle.^ Its instincts were for unrealities of every kind, rather than for the rising splendour of the generation which succeeded the great race of 1830 in France and in the world.

The present age has passed away ; the generation with which Manet came to manhood has been followed by another, which sees with astonishment, as the shadows

of the epoch roll away, how sharply those personalities whom it ignored stand out in relief. All the more glorious therefore is the house which modern reverence has built up round them, the sanctuary to which the best artists of our own day resort to collect their strength for» future works. Four mighty columns bear it aloft : Manet, Degas, Cezanne, Renoir. They do not stand alone. Ought we not perhaps to add to these four\* corner-stones of modern painting several others, notably that of the most vital of contemporary masters, Monet ? We should not hesitate, but that the four are all-sufficient for the structure. To others, no longer among us, piety would fain offer the same tribute. I do not mean Puvis, who built himself a temple of his own, but a less illustrious, though no less inspired master, a contemporary of the men of 1830, whose influence was first felt by the later members of the group : Jongkind, the Hierosolimitan of Europe, whose inimitable little works in oil and water-colour, in the collections of Count Camondo, Tavernier, and several others of our most fastidious connoisseurs, are like premonitions of modern Impressionism. And one of the younger men, too early lost to us, the one most closely akin to Jongkind, with whom he worked for a long time, the artificer of the loveliest jewel of modern landscape, Sisley, who as Roger Milne said, found the gestures of things, and whose death alone

\* This exception is of course, more important than the current parenthesis above would seem to imply. We are only just beginning to appreciate Heim, Bonhomme, Bonvin, and above all, Lami. Eugene Lami, who died a nonagenarian in 1890, embodied the difference between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. With an exquisite tact, in which he concealed the most brilliant satire, he painted the glittering Court of Napoleon III and its women, with more gaiety and good humour than the mordant Guys. He was a \*^ little master \*\* whose minute yet marvellously rich and fine technique is unparalleled in our times. Among other examples, the Centennial Exhibition included his masterpiece, the entry of the Duchess of Orleans at the Tuileries, from the collection of M. Alexb Rouart (brother of the famous collector of Corots), who owns a considerable number of this modern St. Aubin's best works, and also fine examples of Heim and Bonhomme, etc. Strange to say, Lami is unrepresented in the Parisian museums, save by two water-colours at the Luxembourg. We reproduce one of the best sketches of his early period ; it has a charm of colour that recalls Constable, and heralds the sporting pictures of Degas and his school.

MANET: THE NYMPH SURPRISED (NYMPHE SURPRISE) 1861

MANZI COLLECTION, PARIS  
PHOTOGRAPH CAIWENTRON

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made the fortunate possessors of his pictures the owners of property worth ten times its original value.

The rank and file, who fought with less distinction, though with no less merit, are innumerable. A veteran, mourned by many friends, has passed away of late, a white-bearded old Jew, picturesque as any who ever sat to Rembrandt, yet who had nothing of Rembrandt in him : Pissarro. With him and with Monet, the meridional Bazille entered the lists. Manet taught him to open his eyes, which looked through purer air at Montpellier than that vouchsafed to the Parisian. His flower-pieces might have been painted by Manet in his last period, and perhaps he will some day be recognised as the first of his generation, to whom the principle of pleinairisme was revealed. His fame would have been assured long ago, if he had followed Monet and Pissarro to London in 1870, instead of remaining to fall by a German bullet.

To others, whose lives were longer, length of days did not bring renown. Public interest is only just beginning to awaken in Lebourg, a painter whose richness of tone was scarcely surpassed by any member of his school, and Vignon, who so amply filled the space dividing Manet and Monet, had become, like his kinsman, Cezanne, a blind old man before the slow-witted amateur began to appreciate him. Boudin, one of the oldest of the group, Jongkind's best pupil \

and Monet's most beneficent teacher, lived in obscurity till his death a few years ago, when he was approaching his eightieth year. A distinguished woman, immortalised by Mallarmé, Berthe Morisot, interrupts the long line of men. Her sympathy with Manet was that of a man, her complete assimilation of his art was only possible to a woman. Eva Gonzalés was always a pupil only; Berthe Morisot sublimated Manet. The nobility of her colour served her for the representation of a modern symbol of womanhood, and her inimitable taste enabled her to make the symbol purer and more brilliant than the art of her exemplar had taught her. She always reminds me of the hapless Marie Bashkirtseff, who wrote and thought as Berthe Morisot painted; would she had found a Manet instead of a Bastien-Lepage for guide!

I have named a few of these famous moderns of whom, till quite lately, it was usual in conservative circles to speak as impetuous youths, and "Decadents," as we are fond of calling those who are healthier than their neighbours.

I believe their art to be as healthy as it is possible for art to be to-day. It is certainly not sickly, but rather too healthy, too simple for our worship of the old masters, and the only art that deserves to rank with the great art of the past, if, indeed, any does so deserve.

For democratic in its origin as this art may seem to the conservative, it will be easy to convince the true lover of the old masters that it springs from an intimate relation to the great efforts of an earlier age. Not, of course, an organic and methodical relation. It passed over a generation or two, and took from that immediately preceding it only what it could turn to account: Delacroix and Courbet. To that which is eternally the same, not young, not old, merely existent; which brandishes its brushes, claiming to be a pillar of our society, and is so well suited to the world it bedaubes — it had no relation; the abyss between the two was as the difference between the gutturals of a savage and the speech of a Florentine lady. But with the old, the eternally young, the eternally rejuvenescent of a bygone age it has many bonds of union.

It was not its fault that these were not even more numerous. Nothing could

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be more inept than the glib phrase that labels the natural expression of these artists Naturalism. At best it is superfluous. In Paris, even in Courbet's day, Naturalism was a purely artistic formula, which, however independently applied, was bound up with the strongest tradition. The men of 1830, when they went into the forest of Fontainebleau, to paint all day from Nature, took with them something more than their primitive easels, primordial as they may have seemed to themselves, and simple as they truly were as compared with their predecessors

of the eighteenth century. Consider the amazing versatility of Corot, the colouristic magnificence of Daubigny, the monumental art of Millet, but when applied to the painters of 1870 the term Naturalism becomes pure nonsense. It says no more of their art than we should say of our clothes if we called them naturalistic. Renoir is so perfectly human in his pictures, both in good and evil, that we never wish him anything but what he is, though but few of his pictures strike us as absolutely perfect. This modern sometimes shows a tincture of Second Empire vulgarity that may be repulsive to some people ; but he who can make a true estimate of values will be so carried away by the artist, that he will finally accept such things as no less natural and indispensable than the voice of some sympathetic person, which was at first unpleasant to our ears. These artists go deeper perhaps than the favourites of our fathers, because they do not reveal themselves at the first moment, nor, indeed, to every one. A Cteanne or a Gauguin must be won by love ; they are quiet, solitary souls, who do not disclose their secrets in trivial company. They never took part in the fashionable hubbub of the great exhibitions ; at most they appeared in the Salon des Refuses or in the anarchical community of the Indipendants ; and yet they are by no means anarchists. In the midst of the thousand tendencies that make up the art of our day, the Impressionists are a family, which, though each of its members disposes of his own property, seems to be as closely knit t^ether as the famous circle of Florentines who gathered round Filippo Lippi. The parallel is more natural and more evident than the favourite comparison of the English aesthetes with the generation of Botticelli. Even if the Impressionists produce no Quattrocento, if their means and their sphere of influence continue to be superficially circumscribed, the nobility of their conception and the vigour of their expression are none the less lofty on this account ; and if the undaunted championship of many speaks well for a cause, admiration is justified here.

The cause itself is not easy to formulate.\* In this respect the Florentines were more fortunate. Their goal shone forth in far more visible splendour, and was recognised by the patronage of princes as by the consciousness of the people. The comprehension of all surrounded and encouraged it. The later artists are modern painters. But if ever our mourning over our abstract art may be mingled with rejoicing, it is in the contemplation of these men.

\* Camille Mauclair has lately essayed this in the chapter \*\* La Th6orie Impressioniste " of his book \*\* L'Impressionisme " (\*\* Librairie de l'Art Anden and Moderne "), and has succeeded as far as his general thesis is concerned. He is not to be implicitly followed in his grouping of individuals.

MANET: FISHING (LA PECHE) 1861

DURAND-RUEL COLLECTION

MANET: THE AL FRESCO LUNCHEON (LE DEJEUNER SUR L'HERBE) 1863

MOREAU-NALATON COLLECTION, PARIS

EDOUARD MANET. PORTRAIT\* OF COURBET

G. MANET. OLYMPIA

FROM A WOODCUT BY THE PAINTER

MANET: LOLA DE VALENCE 1862

CAMONDO COLLECTION, PARIS  
PHOTOGRAPH CAMENTRON

MANET AND HIS CIRCLE

Manet and his friends had two great harbingers — Delacroix and Courbet. Manet, indeed, had yet another of an earlier period, to whom I should have devoted a chapter here, had not others already written of him inimitably. This was Francesco Goya.

None of the colourists of Manet's generation made men forget the colourist Delacroix ; everything, or nearly everything, that tends to their glory increases his fame ; he was their god. Delacroix' colour had come too early for the weakness of humanity. When the trappings of Romanticism were cleared away, his palette was thrown aside as one of its accessories. After the strong and healthy recognition of reality by the great landscape school of 1830 and the realism of the school of )

Courbet, painters were impelled to get at a right distance from Nature ; this was the logical way between the two manifestations that had come to an end. As soon as it was consciously recognised, the method of Daumier and of Delacroix was necessarily decisive. Why this way is modern, and why it achieves results which respond to vital and weighty needs, I hope at least to indicate in due course. The consciousness of this is a piece of modern culture. It is rooted in the postulate that Manet and his circle gave us not Nature, but the natural, and that all naturalisation of our instincts, i.e. all sharpening, purification, and amelioration, is modern. Every joy is progress, and so therefore was Manet's achievement. That achievement and its results had never occurred even to the magician Rubens, and, going through the whole history of art, we may find something similar, but never quite the same decisive consciousness. There are other values, the perfection of which put us to the blush, but in spite of this we would not exchange for them our own, the resplendent symbol of our best aspirations, our happiness, our epoch. ""^

Manet discovered, to the horrified amazement of the world, that a fine feminine skin is neither yellow nor brown, but . luminously white in the light, especially in juxtaposition to dark colours, and that blood pulses, that nerves and senses tlu\*qb beneath it.

Millet painted the repose of life, and found greatness therein; he transmitted to the simple action he represented a very great and very simple thought, which was expressed in like terms by all his washerwomen, mothers, housewives, and workmen of various kinds, and finally carried conviction by constant repetition of the one sound in so many different forms. It was a generalisation that became the more impressive, the more deliberately it was set forth. In comparison, the realists were clumsy folk, more modest than Millet, for they allowed Nature to think for herself, more presumptuous and more limited, for they expounded what seemed to them the thoughts of Nature in their own narrow fashion.

Manet completed Courbet's material, and refrained from any sort of formulation, in one sense or the other. He made those elements of the material that seemed to him vital to his manner greater and firmer; not in order to subject it the more VOL. I 2 K

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intelligibly to an idea, a theory, but rather to make it as vital as possible, capable of producing the effect of unity, and so of style ; a strong, original organism, beautiful by that which makes it organic This is the ancient process common to all great — that is to say, to all inductive — epochs, when artists were unconscious of any obligation to create for the pleasure of others. Manet discovered a new unity ; no new law, as the aberrations of modern criticism would have us believe,

but a new means of working out the old law.

He had been educated by an enthusiastic study of the Spaniards and the Venetians. Duret's\* statement that Manet's enthusiasm for this Spanish dated from the visit of a troupe of Spanish strollers to Paris contradicts the repeated assertions as to his plagiarisms.

Manet was not the first Frenchman who made the Louvre extend to the Prado. The supersession of the artistic element of Spain by her stronger sister on the other side of the Pyrenees began as soon as French art became natural and independent, no longer an Eighteenth Century,\* and no longer \*\* Empire.\*\* Delacroix foreshadows it, and it becomes more obvious in Ingres and Gavarni. In Courbet it reveals itself decisively. Guys already shows it in Manet's vein. That which served to aggravate the weird deplorable of this pioneer, whom we may call the Blake of the Impressionists, was healthily absorbed by Manet, and remained a precious possession to him and his friends. Most of the early Impressionists are half Spaniards — Cézanne in his finest pictures; even Monet when he painted his magnificent female portraits under the influence of Courbet; Renoir in one of the best works of the whole period. The Naked Bay with the Cai; Bazille in the fine *Salle du Bain* of the Centennial Exhibition (1900), the pendant of Manet's *Olympia*. Ribot adopted characteristic traits of his neighbours in another direction. Monticelli even may have made incursions in their domain. In our own day, the Belgian master, Evenepoel, who died a few years ago, followed in Manet's footsteps to Spain. Sargent and Besnard, among others, are unimaginable without Spain. Many obscure painters have travelled on the same road, and to-day the Spanish element is as much a part of the ordinary painting of the boulevard — though there is little enough of Manet in it — as is Otero's dancing a feature of the Variétés repertory. Zuloaga has retaliated a little by taking back to the land of Velázquez what the Frenchmen learned from his great compatriot.

For the men of 1870, the Spanish importation was very much what the Dutch importation had been for those of 1830. But the purposes and forms of the two operations were very dissimilar. That which was due to Manet was as essentially a deliverance, an awakening, as that of 1830 was a suppression, almost a moral lesson. What this latter gave the French genius was something intimate and spiritual ; the Dutch material, as such, is rarely apparent in French work ; but the Frenchmen who went to Spain painted Spanish pictures as naturally as the Roman Frenchmen had adopted Italian forms.

Nothing could more strongly attest their artistic security than this confident

\* In his *Histoire d'Edoardo Manet* (Paris : H. Florey, 1902). This biography is especially

valuable from the chronological point of view, giving very precise information as to the pictures



Manet painted before he saw the Prado. Zola had already referred to the question. In his study in the 'Revue du XIX<sup>e</sup> Siècle' for 1867 (afterwards republished by Dentu separately and then again in 'Mes Haines') he wrote : 'Il est bon de faire savoir que si E. M. a peint des \* espada ' et des ' maja, ' c'est qu'il avait dans son atelier des vêtements espagnols et qu'il les trouvait beaux de couleur. Il a traversé l'Espagne en 1865 seulement/\* Manet's most important work, the 'Djeiner sur l'Herbe', 'Le Musicien', 'Olympia', 'Le Sec', were all painted before his Spanish journey.

## JOHN SARGENT: MADAME GAUTREAU

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self-surrender. Here again the principle of the preservation of artistic power was omnipotent. A will stronger than that of the individual drove the new to the old, and allowed it to choose, impelled by the unconscious force of dim racial instincts, what was suited to its manner, watched for the moment most favourable to assimilation, rejected, added, and created the right vessel to contain what had been acquired. Goya was the last of the Spaniards, a phenomenon of will and of invention. Like to a harsh, shrill, and wholly disconnected tone, he burst suddenly from the flaccid Spanish art of the day, comparable to a Przybyszewski in contemporary literature ; dramatic, disconcerting, full of deep, exacerbated emotions, but, even in the best of his incomprehensible works, the ill-used foundling of a shattered bankrupt civilisation ; most poignant in his bitter self-analysis ; tried by the loftiest criterion, he seems the frenzy of genius. Goya rushed like a demon upon his unhappy country, and tore the deepest from its depths. After his passage the most precious of its treasures lay together with its rubbish in wild confusion. It was the moment for the merciful and stronger sister to gather up the fragments and to carry the remnant to a new home.

For it needed, setting aside the colour-science of the younger man, the ripe power that Manet added to it, the noble simplicity, the calm coolness, which Goya affects as the pause before the storm, but which is natural to Manet. We are silent before the Olympian whereas before the Maja we twitch and quiver. The one excites, the other gives the highest art can give : repose.

This repose conjoined with tension of every faculty is common only to Manet and the greatest of the Spaniards, who lived at a time when the Spanish grandezza

was not as yet embittered by irony. But the repose which a Court-painter working in the shadow of a Philip IV. was forced by etiquette to portray, the truth which he drew, almost against their will, from the models imposed on him, such as his superb Innocent X., are more alien to us than the naked exuberance of strength in Manet, who displays all the gifts Velazquez had partly to conceal with a boldness limited only by his own moderation. True, he has not the majesty of the master who painted Las Metiinas ; such majesty is not of our period ; Whistler has preserved so much of it as may be adapted to present conditions without absurdity. Manet followed after that which Velazquez concealed, without forfeiting that golden sense of harmony in the distribution of effects, which is the greatest glory of his exemplar. The development of modern art, tending, as it does, to leave this ideal farther and farther behind, seems here to have taken an unexpected turn. Since the passing of the Greeks, this repose has only been seen in the Primitives, and with them, it has sometimes more of immobility than of peace ; it seem to have been only attainable by sequestration, by withdrawal to the silences of cathedral aisles. It disappeared more and more, as the variety of our increasingly material interests took the artistic form of pictures, and the tumult of daily life penetrated to the temple. And lo ! here came one who found dignity and solemnity even in this daily round, steeping triviality in a radiance that transfigures the meanest things ; one who appealed to the soul not through the mind but through the eye, and yet discovered secrets. . . .

This art understood what we demand, or imagine we demand from painting, that hybrid, as to which we do not know for whom or for what it exists ; understood what it may be to us to-day, in our whirling, rushing present, with its lightning images, its crowded impressions, the swift and continuous succession of which incites our receptive faculties to almost superhuman efforts.

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And because nothing is so hateful to it as banality, inertia — because it too adores the moment's grace, the naked fact that may be dealt with successfully once in a thousand times, it foregoes the attempt to moderate its effects. It would rather appear unfinished, if it can only make the happy cast, and concentrate itself in one fortunate moment that belongs wholly to it.

A wit on the staff\* of Charivari^ who discovered a sunset by Monet labelled Impressions in the first exhibition of the new school held at Nadar\*s in 1874, thought it a good joke to christen the group Impressionists. The name has survived, its irony has evaporated. It really . suggests something of the programme, of course, in a deeper conception, which recognises valuable tendencies in what is apparently arbitrary. It covers the efforts of an art based upon Nature, to avoid the circumlocutions induced by the eclecticism of obsolete traditions, to give painting all possible charms, yet only those proper to its means ;

and to renounce the making of smooth formulas, in order to give results the more sharply and strikingly. If the name was new, the thing was old enough ; it was the consciousness of those instincts which had governed a Veronese, a Velazquez, a Rubens, the ancestors of these modern masters. Indeed, did not the unknown pagan, who painted the Roman frescoes, of which there are a few fragments in the Vatican Library, foreshadow Impressionism ? \* In our times, which restrict art more and more to its own domain, a tendency sprang up to create by means that go the deeper, the more fugitive they seem to us in their effects ; homoeopathic methods of the choicest, instead of the coarser gifts of our forefathers.

The criticism that can do justice to this art must also be Impressionism. As it renounces literature, as it appeals to the eye and not to the intellect, criticism, inviting similar sensations by other means^can give but a vague suggestion thereof. The usual methods of analysis soon fail one here. These pictures lack all direct associative elements. The one thing possible so far in the discussion of these matters, where the eye is not yet susceptible solely to sensuous charm, and words dealing therewith necessarily lack the power of appropriate suggestion, is perhaps to determine the domain in which these influences are worked out. It is already difficult enough to talk about pictures. But in actual conversation, some help is found in gesture, and in the possibility of turning to account every opportunity that may present itself for gaining access to another mind, always provided that one's interlocutor is intelligent enough to desire the greatest of conjoint delights : the mutual enjoyment of a purely aesthetic emotion, unspoilt by any pressure of personal equation. In writing, the one doubtful advantage we enjoy is immunity from interruption. . . • And further, it is obvious that the satisfaction derived from this art can only be relative, not only because the eye of the recipient must always remain an unstable medium, but because even in ideal enjoyment, an unrealisable wish to sound the utmost depths of sensation keeps the mind in continual tension. Few modern works leave us with nothing to desire, and this is their secret charm ; like wise women, they never give themselves altogether.

And if one can appreciate what they withhold, and see how they strive to approach ever nearer to unattainable beauty by fresh and vernal paths, can one ever weary of following them on their way, no longer as a spectator, but almost as a collaborator, in the vain hope of being able to co-operate with

\*The exquisite Triumph of Amor y in particular, is freer, lovelier and more poetical than anything these fragments suggested to the painters of the Renaissance.

MANET: TOILERS OF THE SEA 1874

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the eye, and to win dear indications of their bliss from that which they have won ?

It is necessary to have read the great poets, and the power of enjoying Beethoven is a very desirable possession ; it has been asserted that familiarity with Nietzsche is essential and a comprehension of Dostojewskij favourable to culture. We ought to be quite certain that children are not brought by storks, and every man should know something of our social conditions, that he may not fall under the wheels. I do not hesitate to pronounce the appreciation of this French art created by Manet no less beneficial. Of course, be it understood, for him who has the mind for it. Art is not an essential for all. Bismarck got on very well without it, and the majority of rulers carry on the business of government competently enough without its help. Less than ever do we need it in these days, when the joy of living is purchased at the cost of so much pain ; there are weightier things. But if a man's disposition leads him to interest himself in art, if the individual allows himself to enjoy at the expense of others, if within the sphere of the abstract, after due care for material values, there should still be a desire for satisfactions other than those of the stomach, this is the painting, if any, that we must acclaim. We may dismiss once for all the famous tight-rope philosophy which declares that every manner has its pros and cons, that Manet is a fine painter and Böcklin too, that it is possible to admire both, and that both work to the same ends in their different ways. What we must rather recognise is, that Manet is painting, and Böcklin something else. This something may be loftier, it may seem to us Germans more Germanic, and may furnish themes to the poets ; even from the artistic side it may have its value as a stimulant to decorative art, but with the typical art that we reverence as painting, not merely because it is beautiful, but because it is a living portion of ourselves, it has absolutely nothing to do. Böcklin is an unrivalled creator of fanciful conceptions, often highly original, in which the pictorial element is the most arbitrary quality. Manet created a vast collective idea out of the purely pictorial ; all that this art, at which centuries have worked, can give. His sole aim was to give to our senses — and to these alone — the most beautiful impressions, the most beautiful material, the loveliest colour, a concentration of all that we find scattered and intermingled in Nature. This concentration of arbitrary elements, this unerring knowledge, directed to the greatest possible simplification of the main sensuous effect, is the personal quality, not the invention or the fancy, which are by no means sharply distinguished from those of other men. What interests us in the Faure, or the Youth playing the Flute^ the hundred portraits of more or less famous contemporaries, or the many flower-pieces ? Manet's one essay in anecdotic painting, the Murder of the Emperor Maximilian^

is hardly one of his most successful efforts. But let us just make the experiment of hanging one of those flower-pieces of which Manet painted dozens, side by side with one of the most exuberant Bocklins, into which the painter crowded everything the boldest fancy could have dreamed. At a first glance, the handful of flowers will pass unnoticed, and all eyes will be riveted on the horsemen, the cliffs, the extraordinary animals ; every one will want to know what is happening here, and what the man who painted all this was really thinking about. But when we have once grasped it, our interest dies down, slowly but surely; the understanding reposes, satisfied with its work, proudly conscious that it may place this event also ad acta. The senses have played a purely subsidiary part. Then the weary eye falls upon the flowers, and every one who cares for flowers at all will feel a hitherto

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untouched chord vibrating in his soul. The agreeable sensation he has hitherto enjoyed at the sight of flowers is suddenly intensified in a mysterious fashion. He has not the whole of the living flower before him — ^perfume, motion, all that is indispensable in Nature is lacking — and yet there is something here, of which he scarcely dreamed, or which he perhaps dimly wished for, in the natural blossom : a charm that conquers mortal fragility and evanescence, and does not approach us too closely, in spite of its strength ; that avoids the dangers of the extremes in Nature, and does not follow up enjoyment by regret or disgust. Here the eyes feel no fatigue, and the understanding also seems to rest. Something else works upon us through the eye, clarifies, calms, breathes exquisite tones into our being, evokes sensations we have never felt before, yet which fill us with a kind of familiar delight, waxes stronger and stronger, newer and richer, until we see only the two or three flowers, before whose quiet power the frenzy of the other picture pales to something meagre and remote. This is not because flowers are lovelier than charges of cavalry or combats of Tritons. An earlier master whom Bocklin honoured, Titian, also painted such wild scenes. There is in the Uffizi a cavalry skirmish, which could scarcely be wilder or more frenzied ; this, again, has this curious dual life ; and when we look at it, the physical elements retire altogether and we admire the power and vitality of the art, not of the horses and riders.

The art of all the glorious tradition inaugurated by Manet lies in a profound grasp of some small bit of life. Herein lies the beauty we may look for in the present day, the result of the beautiful, the consciousness of delight that inspires us in the enjoyment of perfect works. The world has become very much uglier since the Venus of Milo was produced, but we shall not make it more beautiful by imitating her form. We cannot get round life ; we must make our way through it. When we really knew it, when we realise whence its forms arise, and what purposes they serve, we shall love it. Manet's realism is a symbol of our instinct of self-preservation. He did not record this or that beauty, but ours ; he showed that we may be dignified even in trousers, that beauty is fluid, that it does

not dwell in this or that, but in everything, and more especially among all things. A Rembrandt found it even in the entrails of the slaughtered ox that hangs in the Louvre.

That which oppresses us in life is not the ugliness of certain phenomena, not vice and malice and misery, but the darkness in which we live, our inability to avoid the shock because we are not prepared for it, the stupidly animal, undisciplined nature of our experience. And this very \*\* Impressionism \*' that aims at higher knowledge may b^ acquired from Manet. iThe greatness that lies in his pictures is fragmentary, but even in fragments it gives perfection^ It aims at ^simplification, that it may give in a sinc;le stroke — the elementary, fundamental stroke, which the freely handled brush ot genius lays on the canvas — a thousand strokes, the average of all. It is great in itself, because all it touches develops into the strongest expression of its manner, because everything it sees is seen with such unapproachable certainty that our consciousness reposes in the shadow of a consciousness belonging to one stronger, greater, and richer than ourselves. The marvel is that this something greater lives among us, with us, in us, without seducing us by objective symbolism. The famous Nana is perhaps the most convincing document for the expressive power of the non-essential. It is difficult to imagine anything more pungent in the shallowest sense than this boudoir\*scene, from which Zola's novel has taken every possible element of ambiguity. Yet

MANET: BEF0RETHEM1RR0R(DEVANT LA PSYCHE) 1876

PHOTOGRAPH DURAND-RUEL

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nothing could be greater, and the most pious Mantegna is not more worthy of honour than this coquettish beast in corsets and lace petticoat. This is the true Naturalism, which, like Nature herself, reveals the wonders of creation in the lowest things, and Zola's famous phrase, which became its gospel, is only true if we take the " coin de la nature " for as little, and the " temperament \*\* for as much as possible.

It is not only that Manet's Naturalism was more sympathetic than that of his friend Zola, however little the latter may deserve the depreciation of some youthful poets, which has a touch of the sourness of certain historic grapes. The difference may lie, perhaps, only in the difference of calling, and in the fact that Zola was not only a titanic worker, but also a \*• brave citoyen " whose intentions are. not always in happy harmony with those of the artist. His origin, too,

was obvious : Balzac and Taine are more familiar to us than Velazquez and Goya; it is easier to talk his language, though none has so far shown a like talent in its use ; his technique is more transparent, though it will be long before his plastic symbolism is surpassed. Manet was only a painter, but he was this to such purpose that he has inclined us to look upon colour and brush-stroke as the highest instruments of divine inspiration. His bequest is incomparably greater than Zola's. In its own domain it is hardly to be measured, and it extends far beyond this domain, directly we permit this art to serve for other standards as well as its own. From him, an aristocrat to his finger-tips, our generation, the few who feel themselves to be a generation in these days, learned to shun what is paltry and to love what is noble. The natural vigour, that in Millet was combined with a trace of proletarian ignorance and with obvious technical limitations, was in Manet the consequence of an infallible creative power, able to do everything, but doing only that which beseeemed it.

This gives the measure also of Manet's superiority to Courbet. It is essential to get a clear idea of their relative positions, not in order to arrive at a cheap and misleading pronouncement as to their absolute values, but to understand the development to which both contributed, the most important development of our age. The temperament of the master of Ornans was robuster than that of the creator of the Olympian stronger, if unconsciousness be an element of strength, for, indeed, all Courbet's adoption of Proudhon's theories implied self-depreciation. Manet had the greater intellect, the higher taste, the finer culture, and was the superior of the two in his sagacious use of his medium. He appears as the higher manifestation of Courbet, purified but stripped of certain advantages , in the process. He subdued the animality of Courbet, but he never produced < works so moving as the Enterrement and La Vague. The Olympia and the \ Djeuner sur l'Herbe in which, moreover, there are obvious traces of the predecessor, contain a decorative art, which, as such, minimises the degree of dramatic directness, which Courbet achieved in his happiest moments. The notion of thinking of nothing but Nature made the peasant Courbet strong. He made use of the old masters without premeditation, like an artisan, as suitable means to an end» concerning which he gave himself up to rudimentary ideas, but which he commanded instinctively. Manet recognised his end clearly. In him, as in Delacroix, temperament and knowledge combined to form a rare weapon. He saw a new and logical ideal before him, requiring not only nature, vigour, and power of impression, but also taking thought for the concentration of the impression, and seeking beauty even in the elements of the picture. Hence his

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harmonious colour, his beautiful surface, we might almost say, his beautiful models. Manet's colour, most splendid in his latest works, is colour-art, purer, more essentially effective than Courbet's tone-painting. The latter took the

vapourous brown of Velazquez' background ; Manet took his rare contrasts, and developed them further, without renouncing the rest. There are no passages in Manet's later pictures which do not harmonise melodiously, whereas Courbet neglected the inner parts of many of his surfaces, nay, sometimes killed them by too much black. Manet may be the lesser force, but he applied this force more effectively and placed it more resolutely at the service of his aesthetics. He carried generalisation much further. In some of Courbet's pictures individual planes have the effect of large luminous spots in the darkness. They are comparatively isolated, and are brought together only by repetition of the colour and by the relation of the masses. Manet, in spite of a scheme of colour comprising much stronger contrasts, creates a homogeneous, and apparently fluid material. No one ever laid to heart the truth that no thing, no being of any kind, exists alone, but always appears surrounded by space, by light, and by air, to more brilliant purpose than Manet. He painted with a single sweep of the brush not only his details, but his whole picture, thus providing for the utmost harmony — ^in other words, produced the appearance of material nature in the most natural manner possible. Manet and Courbet stand for soul and body. The mind of the spectator soars as on wings before Manet's pictures, while the greatness of Courbet's creations almost oppresses it. Courbet's genius is great by its terrestrial elements. Manet's might be likened to some magic fluid, in which the eyes bathe and henceforth

see only beauty.



Courbet had cleft the earth with mighty strokes of the spade, and bequeathed us not only brilliant works, but the possibility of a new conception of Nature. Manet realised this possibility beyond all expectation, and in spite of all he owed to Courbet and to others, appears as the more harmonious, the more fruitful artist. To the early end of his days, he created out of a rich abundance. When he could no longer walk, he consoled himself in his arm-chair with the gem-like art of his still-life pieces. These he might fitly have called ^ arrangements \*\* ; arrangements of life, like everything else he touched. His vases of flowers recall Delacroix's natures mortes; the loveliest of these little gems hang in the Salle Thomy Thierry. We feel inclined to fall on our knees before two of them, the Roger dilivrant Angilique and the Fiancee iTAbydos. SjNt know not which to admire most, Manet's still-life pieces, which have the effect of historical pictures, or Delacroix's historical pictures, which look like stilMife pieces!^

Manet's doctrine was the recognition of painting as flat decoration ; the ruthless suppression of all those elements used by the old masters to seduce the eye by plastic illusion ; and the deliberate insistence on all the pictorial elements in their stead. The relative nature of such axioms can only be determined by examples, and we shall presently find in Leibl an antithesis that will give the necessary opportunity for a demonstration.



Manet's most vigorous precursor in these principles was Rubens, and every artist who, as a painter, was mainly concerned with painting, had at least foreshadowed his convictions. He recognised this continuity with the clairvoyance of genius, and propagated his creed like an apostle. This was the point of attack

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for the notorious hostility that assailed him ; not his colour, for Delacroix had accustomed his contemporaries to this, but his apparent indifference to all constructive detail. In his insufferable study on Manet, Albert Wolff records the humorous repartees exchanged between the two great champions of the day, Courbet and Manet. Courbet declared the Olympia was like the Queen of Spades coming from the bath ! Manet retorted that Courbet's ideal was a billiard-ball ! Manet, as Wolff further relates, went so far as to vote against the award of a medal to Puvis de Chavannes, because he could model an eye ! \* Not only was such a feat but the very capacity to commit it, a crime in his eyes !

Thus must differences be emphasised, it seems, to give birth to schools !

\* <^ Lm Capitale de l'Art " (Paris : Havard). Courbet said : \*\* C'est plat, ce n'est pas models, on dirait  
une dame de pique d'un jeu de cartes sortant du bain ! " Ce d qaoi Manet, toujours pr^t i  
la riposte,  
r^pondit : \*\* Courbet nous emb^ce enfin avec ses mode]6s ; son idlal k lui, c'est une  
bille de billard ! "

. . . Qnand il s'est agi de donner la m^daille d'honneur k Puvis . . . Manet s'ecria en plein  
Salon : ^ Jamais je ne voterai pour un homme qui sait modeler un cril ! ' ^

EDOUARD MANET. PORTRAIT OF GUYS.  
FROM A WOODCUT BY BELTRAND.

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## CEZANNE AND HIS CIRCLE

### PAUL CEZANNE

Cezanne was the boldest spirit in the circle of the Ecole de Batignolles that gathered round Manet. The essential principle among all of them was not colour — this varied in every case — but flat painting as opposed to modelling in paint. In this Cezanne surpassed even the leader of the group. We may take it for granted that in periods of evolution the matter round which the efforts of all revolve will be fermenting at the same moment in individual minds, and that he who is most articulate will become the leader of the rest. For this position Cezanne was in no sense fitted. He was a very reserved person ; of the younger generation none ever saw him ; artists who owe him everything never exchanged a word with him. His very existence has been doubted. Since his sojourn with Dr. Cachet he has never, as far as I know, left the South of France. He lives, I have heard, at Aix. Cachet describes him as the exact antithesis of Van Gogh, utterly incapable of formulating his purposes, absolutely unconscious, a bundle of instincts, which he was anxious not to dissipate.

The result with him was a purely sensuous form of art. He gave what he could and what he would, not a fraction more, and in external things not even so much as this. Occasionally he did not even trouble himself to cover over certain small blank spots on his pictures, and these are the despair of honest owners nowadays — others paint them over. But this superficial defect is really nothing more nor less than the frayed out corner of a splendid old tapestry. Sometimes, indeed, the whole tapestry is reduced to the warp. And even with this we cannot quarrel, for the fabric is always lovely, even when it shows but a few threads.

Cezanne's whole character made for obscurity. It never occurred to him to sign his pictures, like Cuys and Van Gogh ; he never gave any sign of life beyond pictures, and these had to be taken from him almost by force. Small wonder, therefore, that he was an old man before it occurred to a few of his friends and compatriots to notice him. It is only for the last few years that he has begun to count at all in the art market. Like Van Gogh, he owes this recognition to the little shop in the Rue Lafitte owned by Voûard, one of those remarkable dealers only produced by Paris, who are sometimes better connoisseurs, or, rather, have surer artistic instincts, than the connoisseurs themselves. The event that established his reputation was his friend Choquet's sale at Petit's in the summer of 1899. For three hot afternoons in the middle of the dead season, when there is not a soul in Paris, purchasers fought for his best things, collected by an oddity who had been laughed at as a madman a short time before.

If this enthusiasm was not merely a frantic outburst of snobbery, it was remarkable enough. For, if we except Van Cogh, no one in modern art has

CEZANNE: THE RAPE (L'ENLEVEMENT)

PHOTOGRAPH DURAND-RUEL

CfiZANNE : THE AL FRESCO LUNCHEON (LE DEJEUNER  
SUR L'HERBE) 1865

VOLLARD GALLERY, PARIS

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made stronger demands on assthetic receptivity than Cezanne. Analysing him, we find Courbet, Delacroix, Daumier, and the Dutchmen. Sometimes we might suppose that he had known the old Am. Gautier, Murger\*s friend, who painted such magnificent still-life pieces. But, in addition to all this, we are astonished by something quite different, something enigmatic, that from a distance strikes us as positive insanity. There is enlargement, and we cannot rightly say what is enlarged. All art is exaggeration in some sense ; but here we are conscious that the sense is hidden. Looking at the arched back of a fine black cat, I have sometimes a very agreeable sensation. What produces it ? Not only colour, for there is no contrast in the fur ; a tactile emotion is combined with pleasure in the intense velvety black of the various almost imperceptible hairs. It sometimes happens that the cat is in a room or against a wall of some pale colour. Her eyes are gleaming through the fur, though I do not see them, and the slender legs are moving imperceptibly. All this makes up the black of the cat\*s fur.

But how can such effects be produced in a picture ? The latent tactile impulse, which plays no inconsiderable part in the preference of cat-lovers, cannot be reckoned with here, and yet the sense of pleasure I feel is even stronger. There is no movement ; the subject before me is a simple still-life ; and yet I feel something in the pupil of my eye quivering, as if set in motion by some movement taking place in a higher dimension. Here again, we miss the accidental effect produced by the wall of the room, which was so favourable to the cat, because it afforded a number of little contrasts for the black ; we have only a large, flat surface enclosed in a frame, and yet in the three or four tints of the picture we

find a wealth of gradually increasing contrasts. The colour-theory of the moderns will not help us here. The Bernheims have things that prove the exact opposite : black pictures ; a green coffee-pot and a green jar on a shelf against a gray wall. The shadows are inky black, and this not fortuitously ; they are like huge black rags, forming the chief value. In the Hessel collection six C<sup>anne</sup>s hang on one wall — one of the wonders of the world, where the most heterogeneous objects combine to produce an effect as of Gobelin tapestry. One feels that the frames are unnecessary, that the pictures might be sewn together without destroying their essential value. Cizanne's system of colour may be compared to a kind of kaleidoscope, in which what we see has been shaken together, and so shaken that mosaic-pictures are produced, amazing in their vigorous contrasts of colour. The relations seem to rise almost accidentally, and yet the coherence of the whole is almost supernatural. His harmonies are so strong, one is tempted to believe that to colour, and colour only, a like convincing power has been given as to rhythmic line. He sometimes makes use of a composition with an apparent pleasure in banality; accident could hardly send a couple of pears and apples rolling across the table more carelessly than he has placed them ; there is no trace of arrangement or intention. His still-life pictures are so much alike that they are often barely distinguishable one from another. How often he has painted the absurd crumpled napkin, with the plate, the jar and the fruit ! And yet, every time I see one of these pieces I feel as if I had been looking at some amazing primitive sculptures or something akin to them. The effects he produces are primitive, though he makes no effort to this end ; primitive, in so far as they give us that icy sense of grandeur which we enjoy in the contemplation of ancient masterpieces ; he achieves style without the help of line, and solely by means of this magical mosaic of colour, which — it seems almost absurd to say so— expresses

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only exact realities. This is the most amazing part of the whole thing ; the mosaic impresses us by its minute fidelity to Nature. C<sup>anne</sup>'s apples are painted like Velazquez' costumes, with that absolute directness which admits of no modification. He has nothing of the revolutionary, save perhaps in some of his nude studies in the open air, in which Daumier's influence is apparent. He is much quieter than Van Gogh afterwards was ; his brushing is less vehement ; his impasto is thin in comparison with that of Van Gogh. He has still less in common with the colour-division of the Neo-Impressionists ; his methods are rather those of the Dutchmen ; one might almost take him for an indirect descendant of Vermeer. He paints life as Vermeer painted a carpet But the melody for which the Dutchmen used many-toned, complicated chords, Cizanne produces by means of stronger, purer single notes. And as I have said, he is never concerned to make an agreeable impression. His "academies" look like lumps of rough-hewn flesh. Anatomy seems to be treated with lordly contempt ; and yet these blocks of flesh live. In his rainy landscapes all Nature seems to be floating away, and yet there

is none of that realistic dexterity with which recognised landscape painters make rain as wet as possible. He never painted a ray of reflected sunshine, and yet there is a light in his pictures that is dangerous to works hung beside them. He belongs to the generation of Manet and is the gospel of the younger painters. They call him the sage. The altar at which he himself worships is Delacroix, as we may see from his copies after the painter of the Medea. He expresses what we divine in Delacroix; he takes from him what Delacroix took from Rubens, when he copied the great Fleming, and what Rubens found, when he copied the Italians. How the one reproduced the other is the history of painting of our new art.

Cizanne was born in 1839, a year after Zola. Zola owned some of his early pictures, painted between 1860-1870, when his friend was still under the immediate influence of Delacroix' Romanticists. At the Zola sale, VoUard bought the large and superb Enlèvement of 1865, a romantic episode, though the episode lay rather in the bold design than in the subject. Cézanne's debut may be placed at about the year 1858. This was the date of Vollard's Donkey, a little grisaille that might have been painted in the seventeenth century by the brothers Le Nain, and a number of nondescript Dutch scenes, which the artist may have copied from some of the little masters in the Marseilles Gallery. As early as 1859 the real Cizanne was foreshadowed in the richly painted Femme au Perroquet also in Vollard's possession. A woman at an open window holds a parrot on her hand. The vehement handling suggests some vagrant disciple of Frans Hals, though such an one would never have achieved the very free treatment of the foliage that overhangs the window. A number of small landscapes, many of them on panels belong to this period, or a little later. They are palette-exercises, recognisable as the work of Cézanne, even for those who have never seen such early things by him. The brushing has already his peculiar vigour of touch, although it was not yet applied to concrete things.

The greatness of Cizanne was manifested between 1860 and 1870, when, under the purely superficial influence of Courbet, he painted his magnificent thick portraits and still-life subjects, one of which I have described. 'Dien came the Auvers time, about 1870. In company with Pissarro and Vignon he painted in Daubigny's favourite district those beautiful landscapes, the broadest and most vigorous works of his maturity. They are akin to the contemporary Pissarros, which will perhaps some day be ranked above all this 'Bit's' work, so rich

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BERNHEIM COLLECTION, PARIS

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in tone, so full of a passionate worship of colour are they. Cezanne's have more virility, more severity of arrangement, greater boldness in the masses. A healthy tincture of Courbet clung to him all his days. He never lost the vigour of

structure, that stimulates like champagne in his best pictures. He followed Pissarro in that development to high tones, which Monet enjoined. It is obvious that Cézanne never troubled himself so much about a revolution in technique as the other Impressionists. Without Pissarro he would probably have gone on quietly painting his blacks, and it is possible that his artistic importance would hardly have suffered. Like Manet, he breathed his own individuality into every technique, and made it significant. By this means he retained the originality which evaporated somewhat with Monet and Pissarro in successive technical evolutions. Monet, too, was never so powerful as during the seventies. We can never be grateful enough to him for the immense refinement of method we owe him, but it cost him something of his strength. Cézanne is said to have expressed himself very brilliantly about Monet, in dicta that prove his conviction of the advantages of the new manner ; he was certainly no innovator himself, but followed quietly after the rest, only to make use of his own marvellous eye more efficiently than any of the others. In a transition period rich in charm, he painted his memorable aerial studies, sketches in which only one thing is complete, the atmosphere. Count Kessler's picture, one of the finest, was probably painted between 1880 and 1885, the master's most prolific period. Compared with that of the earlier landscapes, the palette is much purer. The colour is laid on very thinly, the whitish grey of the canvas showing through everywhere, especially in the foreground, where a thin green is lightly applied, almost like a wash of water-colour. Where the trees are growing, we see a light road, in which the tone of the canvas is merely enriched by pale yellow, gray, and faint touches of blue ; then again we have a green field, flecked with touches of stronger green, but on the whole of exactly the same tone as the foreground. It is separated from the field behind it by the relatively rich gradations of the low green bushes. This richness justifies the pronounced orange of the field, which resolves itself into lighter tones in the background. The facade of the little house is of the same tone as the road near the trees, rather more strongly tinged with yellow, the roof is of the same brick orange as the fields. An airy blue pervades the wide sky, and struggles for mastery with the tone of the ground, which shows through plainly above the green tree-tops.

The transparency of these varied tints, the cohesion of their variety, and the wave-like structure of the chromatically equal planes, produce the illusion of air, which we seem almost to breathe in from these Cézannes.

It is but a step from these to the pictures of 1886, in which the sketches are transformed into works of masterly completeness.

We cannot see Provence without thinking of Cézanne. He paints it with a positive fanaticism, inventing a peculiar style of painting to express its peculiar character. It stands out sharply before our eyes, and we seem to be recognising innumerable details in the pictures. As a fact, again, it is only colour and air, and a structure of little brush-strokes, by which the wonderful land is still more wonderfully recreated. Here, too, he shows a certain likeness to Pissarro, in the

very limited degree possible to artists so different in temperament. Like Manet, Cezanne went on adding to his artistic treasure ; but he never cast away what he had once acquired, and even here he still has something of Delacroix. The

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grandiose Romanticism, that was an element in his immense black still-life pieces, had, of course, disappeared before a system of greater refinement; but the essence of Delacroix, his extraordinary vivacity of touch, his structural use of colour, remained. It was just at this time that Pissarro's handling became uniform; he was approaching his period of Neo-Impressionism. The variety with which Cezanne applied his little brush-strokes sets all systems at defiance, and yet is systematic in the highest sense. The instinct that always guided him, gave to him here in rich abundance, and we enjoy his pictures with a kind of physical instinct. ^ He paints the warmth of his home, and we feel a glow as we look at his landscapes ; he shows us the parched red earth, under which we divine the hard stone, burning with the accumulated fire of centuries. How grateful is the luxuriant vegetation beside this flaming sunshine, the green that overspreads the ground like cooling waters ! The eternal heavens sink down behind it, in all the tones of purest sapphire. The earth is but a puny interruption of this everlasting blue.

In these pictures, which at first sight may seem unimportant in comparison to the more dramatic early works, in this trickling together of colours to form a perfectly natural picture, in the purity of the palette which is restricted to red, orange, blue, and green, and expresses every gradation with the utmost richness and the perfect harmony of a perfectly natural taste, Cezanne's art achieves its highest triumph. It was here that Van Gogh learned how red flows out of orange. Duret owns a superb little Cezanne of this period, i« Serves Rouges y and two of the most remarkable Van Goghs that may be accounted a direct continuation of the older master ; sulphur-coloured houses with deep blue roofs and light blue smoke, round which flame woods of purple-red trees. They are tapestries, worked in yellow and blue and notably in red, painted quite flat — ^which was unusual in his case — encircled in a frankly decorative fashion with uniform red outlines which enclose the exquisite purple tones in gleaming fire.

## PIERRE BONNARD: THE BOULEVARD



## PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

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No member of the school of C<sup>^</sup>anne has succeeded in surpassing the master. But, where there is no teacher, it is inaccurate to talk of a school. It was not by spoken words that the seed was sown in this case. Nor is it Cezanne alone who leads the youth of France. Renoir, Fantin, and, once again, Delacroix, divide their homage. If I have, nevertheless, spoken of the School of Cizanne in this connection, it is because certain essential aims of the younger men at least reveal the influence of C<sup>^</sup>anne, and because this inter-relation is the sole bond of union between a number of very dissimilar punters. The three friends of Maurice Denis, to whom the following all too brief chapter is devoted, should not be grouped with Denis, Vallotton, and Gauguin's circle, to whom their relation is but superficial ; they should be considered quite apart from this society. It is true that like these, they started from synthesis, and claimed at first to be purely decorative artists; each of them worked as an ornamentist, and even as an industrial artist. But this reaction with them was but a recoil, enabling them to rush forward more impetuously on the path of purely pictorial art. They have, as a fact, far more in common with those great masters we have called the pillars of modern painting, save that they lack all trace of that element of Courbet which is perceptible in these their predecessors. The animal strain is altogether foreign to their manner. As opposed to it, they might be called "spirituels." This gives them the aspect of decadents as compared with the others. And they are in fact decadents, in the same sense as their forerunners, and all modern painters are decadent more or less ; and in a greater degree than the others, their painting lacks the strong support of a clearly defined tendency, and of a teacher. But tradition works in their highly developed instinct, and their taste enables them to profit by it. In their technique, however, they are more remote from the old masters, less methodical even than Renoir, who is said to have once despairingly confided to an acquaintance that he had no notion how to paint, and was inclined to give up art altogether, as he could not get beyond dilettantism — or than C<sup>^</sup>nne, whose spleen led him to take his place in a student's class at Aix to learn drawing. All this is less incomprehensible than it sounds. It seems absurd in relation to our admiration for their works ; but it seems natural to them in relation to their admiration for the old masters. Their modesty blinds them to the necessary compensations of development.

The old masters utter well-turned phrases; as compared with these, the

words of the nineteenth-century leaders sound like suppressed exclamations ; the younger men speak in interjections. And yet they echo back to us ; that is the marvellous part of it. We may ask ourselves which is the greater miracle — the pictures evolved from the bearish vigour of Courbet, or the harmonies that breathe from the trembling essays of these young men.

They are all young still, born about the year 1865, are for the most part of the same age — Vuillard is a year younger than Bonnard and Roussel — and made

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their debut early in the nineties, when Denis organised a modest exhibition of his own works and those of his friends at St. Germain. Parisians made their acquaintance through Le Bar de Boutteville, and afterwards in the exhibitions of Les Independants, to which they have remained faithful contributors. They are habitually classed together, because they studied together\* and developed together. But this development was worked out on very dissimilar lines, diverging more and more with years.

All three bear the same relation to Cezanne as did Fantin-Latour to Delacroix. They are another genus, less grandiose, though no less artistic, of smaller dimensions, showing more sympathy with the large kakemono than with the modest engraving. The great simplicity of the elders desired a decisive form of expression, in which there is always something of the combative spirit that drove them to the Salon des Refuses. The younger men are impelled less to fight for watch-words than to collect with all diligence, to enlarge and widen their aims, to keep their eyes on what lies near them, and also on what is far off.

Cezanne was translated into more intimate terms by them. All three retained his mosaic-like technique ; it seems, indeed, to have become more deliberate in their hands. The pattern is changed ; the stitches are smaller, but at the same time more evident. We see how the thing is done. The mysterious element in Cezanne becomes more comprehensible ; the means are used so unerringly that the effect can be demonstrated. There is no genius as yet in the matter, but an extraordinary amount of talent ; their technical development affords a parallel to the progress the Neo-Impressionists owed to Monet. Vuillard, the one whose works are most in demand to-day, remains the still-life painter. He used human beings in the composition of his still-life pieces, but the fact that they are human beings is not the important thing in the composition. All things seem to serve him merely to enrich his palette. He groups them, and they seem to disappear in the process ; in the little interiors he affects we see at first only walls, windows, furniture, curtains, and such-like. The figures are hardly necessary, we divine their presence from the surroundings. No artist has ever so suggested the soul of an interior — the sense of habitation. There are people who see in him only the gifted colourist and hieroglyphist, and it is possible that he desires no

higher fame himself; the unconscious charm of his art is all the more fascinating for this. We enjoy the same sort of intimacy with him as in conversation with certain agreeable people, when the talk results in a mutual perception of subtle things, when thoughts no longer require words for their interchange, and we are silent lest we should disturb them. We are sometimes reminded of little sketches by Whistler ; but when Whistler gives himself up to pleasant intimations, Vuillard begins to paint. There is always something in the background with him. It is possible to have one of his interiors in the house for a month, and one fine day to discover a figure in the corner, and not only a figure, but a whole story. Not a story that can be told in words, be it understood ; they are painted corners. His finest and simplest pictures — those which entitle him to rank among the modern decorative masters— are in tempera.

There are superficial observers, who cannot distinguish Bonnard from Vuillard. The two have as much in common as Andre Theuriet and Pierre Louys ; they both speak French. It might be possible to confuse them, if technique were really everything, and if all that lay behind it were meaningless. Bonnard is the poet of

\* At Julian's under Bouguereau and Robert-Fleury ; Vuillard was also at the Ecole des Beaux Arts  
for a very short time under G6r6me.

PIERRE BONNARD: UNE APRES-MIDI BOURGEOISE

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the two. He makes the most ordinary things into delicious songs. Vtilltrd n a perfecdy simple soul, with delicate senses, who traced out his own circle veiy distinctly. Bonnard has surprises in store for us. He seems to have desired every\* thing, and to have been capable of many things.

He has no special material peculiar to himself, but everything he touches ht treats in some novel fashion ; he is racier than Vuillard — not so quiet and com^ forting, but when he grasps a thing, he does so with more intensity. He seems- to paint with nerves, as the other does with senses. His landscapes quiver aiid tremble with life. He does not meditate his effects like Vuillard, but thinks with gestures that become pictures. We find marvellous ornaments in his surfaces, which he disdains to make more comprehensible than they happen to be ; hts pictures are often more luminous than Vuillard's. He loves the race^coursts

round Paris in misty weather, painting exquisite tones by way of accompaniment to the tiny red and blue particles of the jockeys' silk jackets, like artistic settings\* round gems. And then again he veils his thickets in the grayest green, and in the shadow sets yellow tones dancing one with another, borne by tiny amorette. In certain nudes in the open air he uses C<sup>a</sup>nnes' studies of flesh-tones to make decorations of the nude more rhythmic than Cezanne's, more piquant, more stimulating. Both the friends shine as lithographers, and their prints which they execute themselves at Clot's workshops, demonstrate not only their charm as colourists, but also how much their very individual handling — as distinguished from colour — adds to the beauty of their pictures. Bonnard, in spite of his versatility, seems to have set aims more fixed and definite before him^ which might finally lead him to wall decoration on a grand scale. He has already worked on larger panels in collaboration with Vuillard and Denis, which vm-^ fortunately were never set up in their destined place ; and in the two tripartite pictures of the Hessel collection, notably the exquisite symphony in blue, where the life of the Boulevard Clichy dimples like a bunch of roses, we divine a yearning to expand, and to get effects in larger dimensions. Both in Vuirsd and in Bonnard we find traces of the influence of Lautrec, who essayed a slighter technique in order to win greater flexibility.

Bonnard's most brilliant achievement so far is the large oblong panel, the garden scene of the Salon of 1903, certainly one of the most important pictures of the whole generation, a work that throws Vallotton's beautiful but subdued panel by Vuillard quite into the shade. Once more it is a portrait-group, but not of the kind the masterly possibilities of which Fantin showed. At this Vallotton tried his hand in a portrait-group in the same Salon, where the young men of this generation are gathered, as were the Impressionists in Fantin's picture.\*

Rather does it recall that more seriously conceived group, which rendered not persons, but something of humanity, and was refused by the Jury just forty years ago. Before the Djeuner sur r Her be the spectator received two or three shocks, which excited either enthusiasm or abhorrence, and sometimes both. Bonnaond has multiplied the shocks : they are less violent, but they produce the curious oscillation that follows rhythm. This very remarkable family is certainly calculated to irritate the plain man ; the father on the chaise-longue, the boy bolt upright beside him, the portly matron, the girl gazing thoughtfully at the cat, and the avuncular straw-hat in the foreground — all these invite the shafts of

\* Ironically enough, round Cottet ! We reproduce Bonnard's group.  
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cheap ridicule. But the effect is always the same ; and to one it is grotesque, to another full of tender poetry.

The fragmentary character of the *Dijeuner* has undergone a complete change here. Even Manet could not refrain from a glance at the remarkable pictures his brush set down, when he ordered it to paint men and women, green trees and other beautiful things. Would he have pleased us better, if he had painted these things more with an eye to objective truth than as pictures, if he had been less fragmentary in the one case, more in the other ?

Bonnard carries the Manetian principle to an extreme in his picture; he banished every particle of shadow, and filled all the depths with marvellous colour. As a colourist, Manet triumphs by his brushing, by his breadth ; in actual colour the *Dijeuner* is somewhat poor. Bonnard has shaken together such a wealth of the sublimest effects, that even he who looks upon certain associations as an important expedient, may be satisfied merely to admire this inexhaustible fount of colour-values. It is like some overflowing store of beauty, where every glance suffices to make one proof against ugliness, and where fresh novelties appear every day.

Bonnard's talents as a book-illustrator are now generally recognised. Here he gives us sketches, still more individual than his pictures, and here we catch as it were a distant echo of the melody that underlies his whole being, explaining much and allowing us to hope for much : a gentle, tender reminiscence of Greece, that connects him with Denis. The connection reveals itself even in the poorly printed sketches for Verlaine's "*Parallèlement*" but far more obviously and happily in his last work, the beautiful drawings for "*Daphnis and Chloe*," the loveliest evocation of Greek grace.

Roussel's point of contact is here. He belongs to Bonnard, not to his brother-in-law Vuillard. He is the most delicate of the three, a poet who breathes his pastel-landscapes on to the canvas till they are like the wings of butterflies, and whose one danger is that he may spoil by industry what he has accomplished by intuition. One would fain lead him past wide walls, that he might lay his hand on them to cover them with exquisite things, and then never allow him to see them again. His magic touch marks him out for a decorator. Sometimes Fragonard seems to have revived in him, but his nymphs are still airier than the Graces of the eighteenth century. We appreciate him when we compare his art with the more dazzling manner of such a dexterous painter as Charles Guérin, who gets his decorative effect by a coarsening of Cézanne and the eighteenth century. The youthful Pierre Laprade might be more appropriately grouped with the triad ; he has the same sterling artistic qualities, and the same ambition to translate a great exemplar — Manet in his case — into a more fluid form. It is to be hoped that his charming elegance may avoid the dangerous quicksand of chic and find tasks that will preserve him from mannerism.

Such has been, the privilege of Bonnard and Roussel. It is their immunity from every kind of affectation that has set them so high. They dread monotony, and this is perhaps what has tended to keep them in the shade. Vuillard is more easily classified than the other two ; the amateur remembers him, as soon as he has recognised his ^^ note/\* This is not said in his disparagement ; but perhaps the two others will go farther, for up to the present they seem only to have been playing, as in expectation of the moment that will bring them a great and decisive task. All three are the apprentices of a new craft, and, setting aside all else,

K. X. ROUSSEL: HYLAS

F^N^ON COLLECTION, PARIS

K. X. ROUSSEL: NYMPHS AND FAUN

f6n60N collection, PARIS

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remarkable personalities for this reason, that, in spite of the dazzling brilliance of the Impressionists, they found out a way in which, though they did not ignore the experiences of the others, they nevertheless developed their own individuality. Their works should not be hung side by side with those of Manet and Degas ; not solely for their own sakes, but also a little for that of the greater men. It is easy to overlook them in the company of these heroes ; but there are times when, fatigued with the stronger effects of the others, we give them the preference. They seem better attuned to us, to our dwellings, our moods, our pleasures.\*

\* We reproduce a fine VuiUard as well as Bonnard's family group. These reproductions give at least some suggestion of the originals. The reader will find it more difficult to get an idea of Bonnard,. the most important and remarkable artist of the group, firom the other worb here given. No reproduction could preserve the gem-like efiect of the figures, etc., on the gray ground of the street

scene ; how, for instance, the basket on the left is brought into relation with it by an exquisite blue, and the relation of this gray to the green of the animated background. The girl on the left must be imagined in very dark gray, with touches of pure black. These young painters learned how to use black from Odilon Redon. In Bonnard's nude study the colour of the flesh is a wonderful pale olive of indescribable lustre. Good pictures by Vallotton and Vuillard have lately been acquired by the Luxembourg.

## DEGAS: DANCERS (LES POINTES)

(PASTEL)

## DEGAS AND HIS CIRCLE EDGAR DEGAS

Hatred in a holy thing. — Xglk.

One of the cheering elements in an historical survey of art is the study of its regular and invariable developments. It is deeper and more encouraging than the greatest epic poet could conceive it, simple and logical, but with that simplicity which remains a mystery — the simplicity of such a fact as that two human beings can produce a third.

The age needed an art ; to what end it knew not, having already a large inheritance from other ages. It created one, found its exponents, and these produced just what was needed for a development, of which they had no notion. They worked as if in conclave, each in his little cell with a couple of assistants ; and afterwards, when each had finished his work, it was exactly what was needed to complete the rest.

Manet set forth the general programme : the new art was to be decoration pure and simple; Cezanne exhibited the texture of the stuff; Renoir painted exquisite fragments for it, the feminine element that must be in all real painting ; Degas drew for it.

All were fragmentary, Manet among the rest ; he conjures up but a suggestion of the great billowy curtain, on which the *T^ijeuner sur PHerbe* was to be set ; but

this was just what we wanted to see. His Olympia has as much of Titian as we can have to-day without deliberate imitation of Titian. His yearnings are ours. Degas does not show the great enterprise in outline, but he gives European art an anatomy, a medium, that has to do with the skeleton of art. And this medium too is ours.

Degas is a modern and yet an ancient. In his inmost soul, I believe he despises modern painting. When young painters bring their pictures to him, he passes his hand over them, and only if he finds the surface quite smooth will he look at the bearer. He divines something of the evanescence of painting in relief, and would never practise it. Ingres knew the truth, a pupil of Ingres handed it on to him. The painter must paint in such a manner, that nothing should come from outside, but that all should come from within, that all the glowing radiance should be overlaid with a firm skin. He tried it once upon a time ; and not only long ago, when Lamoignon was still alive. Six years ago he had a large oil picture in his studio, ballet-dancers in a park\*scene, which he had begun some six years before ; it is probably still unfinished. The old finish is no longer to be accomplished; it does not harmonise with our modern nerves, our desires, our passionate delight in colour, our pleasure in the throb and quiver of life. He himself could not resist ; the colour-demon raged in him too, and his hand twitched each time he

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saw a movement of that remarkable modern life which woman showed him. Very seldom did he venture to paint with all his power; he thought it too ephemeral for canvas, and took paper and gaily coloured pencils. With these he could let himself go.

We are conscious of a certain violent chagrin in Degas. Everything in him centres in this : the indifference that allows him to trust his miracles of colour to such fragile materials ; his scorn of publicity which amounts to misanthropy ; the barbarous cynicism with which he empales his women. I can almost imagine that he would take pleasure in hearing men abuse him ; he would look upon their execrations as the howl of pain uttered by the beast beneath his heel.

Degas inspires fear ; one has the feeling of being observed for once in the unflattering nakedness of insdnt. At certain moments, every man is a mere bundle of quivering cells, inordinately ugly and ludicrous. Degas has made such moments monumental.

Liebermann, in his brilliant study on Degas, very justly insists on Degas' relation to Daumier. Degas is not so rich as the slayer of lawyers, but harder. He seems to be combating the classic tradition which transfigures Daumier's most biting caricatures ; his chagrin vents itself even upon Ingres. Out of the faces of



courtesans, out of defiled flesh that rages in silence, out of the smiles of meagre ballet-dancers, out of the pain that is almost pleasure again, he creates a new and grandiose world of form, which follows its codex as strenuously as the doctrine of Ingres. His form is a monstrous mask, like the devil's heads of the Japanese, but more human — ^more bestial. There is not a stroke that is not inevitable. It is hardly permissible to speak of correctness in this connection ; it is all more exact than Nature ; her most secret essence, movement, as it arises in matter, before the brain directs it, is reflected in frigid visions.\*

Over all he sheds an intoxicating splendour of colour, pain bathes in marvellous lights ; his stage-settings become Elysian fields, before which all tropical images pale. His planes are like great butterfly-wings ; it seems as if every motion of the air must stir this ethereal colour-dust, so carelessly strewn. He has laws for the distribution of colour, that defy all analysis. It is not so much colour itself as the flickering, darting quality of the touches. Sometimes ten, twenty rare tones seem to have been produced by nothing but a bit of blue or violet, or that purple, which runs through the picture like a forest path, that yellow, not laid on the paper, but growing from it in organic fashion, like some strange microscopic fungus. In addition, there is an extraordinary certainty of vision, an instinctive grasp of great effects, a renunciation of all that might give a smoother reality to the complexity of forms as created by him, and the mysterious conjunction of a draughtsmanship subserving the keenest synthesis, with this foam-born splendour of colour.

Long ago it was discovered that his draughtsmanship showed the influence of the Japanese. There is certainly a good deal of Japan in it, but also uncommonly little. The calligraphy of the Japanese, the slender curve, is conspicuously

\* Gauguin well understood the paradoxism which Degas seeks in the theatre : \*\* On the stage," says Degas to himself \*\* everything is false, the light, the scenery, the hair of the dancers, their corsets, their smiles. Only the effects produced by these, the arabesques, are right. . . . Sometimes the masculine, the male dancer, intervenes. He holds the danseuse, who gives herself to him. Yes, she gives herself, but only for the moment. All you who expect love from a dancer, never hope to have it when you hold her in your arms. The dancer only gives herself upon the stage."

DEGAS: HARLEQUIN AND COLUMBINE

PASTEL)

## EDGAR DEGAS 279

absent. Rather is Degas Gothic, his devil's mass suggests high cathedral windows, the sunlight shining through their crimson glass. Many of the nude studies in which he lingers over the carnations, the backs of the women he has shown crouching in the bath, recall Japan, the fantastic interlacement of limbs where bodies become mere implements of flesh. But they might also remind us of Ingres, or of Michelangelo, or of any other genius who amused himself with the human body, more especially, indeed, of the painter of the *Bain Turc* and the sinister sweetness of that arabesque of limbs.

Degas has the same flexibility, but he adds a certain angularity to it, to give sharpness and definition ; he seizes the joints, not the flesh. Even in Ingres we note a shade of cruelty. In Degas it looms large and brutal. The puppets Ingres shows us nestling in silken cushions. Degas sets dancing on tense strings ; he rubs the flesh off, and reveals the movement of the bones. A jockey on his horse becomes a combination of human and equine anatomies brought into action by riding, and he carelessly throws a beautiful coloured skin over the whole. He is a hundred times simpler than the Japanese. Where they play with lines, he works with planes, and above all, he is thoroughly European.

Degas has almost given a conventional form to the Europe of our day ; a convention very unlike that of the stylistic nations and epochs. His lines, too, are eloquent of things beyond the subjects they represent. Among his women, man makes himself heard, the modern Monsieur, cosmopolitan humanity, in fact, born to-day with peculiar senses, peculiar nerves; and also the world as mirrored in these nerves and senses. Line, the vehicle of this form, has no longer time for the long-drawn melody the earlier masters gave it in their representative works. It has become more ordinary, more uncompromisingly real ; it gives us Roentgen rays, as it were, and the art it expresses feels itself free from all dissimulation. But it shines gloriously, nevertheless, its splendour is perhaps more genuine ; it harmonises with the discoveries of our age, which has learnt to resist the stupefying influences of illusion, and to draw new beauty from the laws of Nature. Degas works in the smallest space with the slightest means, and in the shortest limit of time, just as in every other domain we of to-day seek to snatch the greatest effects from the slightest means, and endeavour to make the short span of our existence as rich and happy as possible with the smallest amount of effort.

Degas's latest colour-phase is perhaps the finest of all. The earlier pastels, more modest in colour, seek their effects in larger ensembles, occasionally treated with the minuteness of miniatures. I remember one tiny opera scene, measuring perhaps fifteen centimetres, which gave the ballet, the musicians, the people in the

boxes. There are numbers of such subjects on a larger scale. The beautiful pastel of the Caillebotte bequest in the Luxembourg with the *pas seul* is one of many ; Durand-Ruel, Camondo, and LeroUe own dozens. But the little example I have mentioned was a marvel among them all ; it showed the master's almost inconceivable power of dealing with space as he pleases.

Of course, the earlier works are more intimate in effect than the later ones. Among our reproductions, we give the two exquisite pastels formerly in the Tavernier collection, *Les P(9/»/^j* (between 1875--1880) and *jirlequin et Colombine* (about 1880). The old Dutch masters would have worked like this if they had used pastel. In the large example belonging to Durand-Ruel, the two ladies on the sofa in the ante-room, executed probably about the year 1 889, Vermeer seems to

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have come back to us. His superb olive tone is there, and also the marvellous use of colour in an interior which distinguishes the Dutchman. An indescribable effect of cosiness is produced by this corner-sofa, the greenish surface of the back., finished at the top by a checkered upholstery, in the squares of which reddish and bluish tones are used with incredible cunning. The attitudes of the two women are no less masterly ; instinct with a subtle intimacy that has no touch of sharpness here, and only gives a delicate suggestion of individuality to the sitters. Again we are reminded of the great Dutchman, and of the women he painted in rooms.

Such pictures reveal Degas's radical superiority in culture to all his friends. This culture gave him the steadiness that preserved him from stumbling in bold decorative fragments such as his *Sortie de "Bain"* a voluptuous arabesque, that yet remains human and intimate. Later on, he got stronger effects ; he drew the three marvellous pastels owned by Durand-Ruel, each of three dancers in different attitudes and different colours ; one, pink, flame colour, and emerald ; the second blue, violet and green ; the third a still more indescribable symphony of orange and violet. They represent three stage-episodes, fairy scenes. And the dancers are transformed ; they are not human beings, but decorations. Their skin is no human epidermis ; the abnormal pores in which the pigment is secreted suggests the bark of rare trees, the hide of legendary salamanders, a strange earth-crust overlying brass. The development of painting in this disciple of Ingres defies analysis. This discreet manipulator of gray tones, who in his pictures of washerwomen, in his remarkable *Cotton Factory*^ in his early sporting pictures, seemed only to stand aloof from Nature in order to approach her more impressively, this cool observer of life, this severest of realists, has created a world of fantastic beauty in which his realism only serves to make the incredible probable and the impossible a matter of course.

Behind this mystery we divine a man who is at no pains whatever to impress

himself upon the world as a remarkable personality, and his Mephistophelean attitude towards humanity manifests itself finally as a suggestion, which we, his easily hypnotised contemporaries, work out for ourselves. If it be true that he is governed by an abnormal conception of life,— the numerous anecdotes of his personal moroseness have no doubt tended to an exaggerated estimate of this — that he is a scornful misanthropist, with every reason for his attitude, we may find comfort in the positive works due to this apparent or actual pessimism. What strikes us as his chagrin, his cruelty, may be in fact the method of an artist, unusual in these days, of expressing something in the things he represents, other than what we so glibly refer to as Nature. Degas, when he paints his shop-girls, always means something more than hats, dresses and faces, and this significance for which the poor shop-girl and the well-known dancer are in themselves insufficient, offends our less aspiring minds. He invents movements, the mechanism of which appears more significant than anything these movements could express, it translated into actualities. For creatures whose chief pre-occupation seems to be the carrying of band-boxes or the taking of baths, receive a certain hieratic impress which seems to us incompatible with the mental attitude of these small fry, and with that they call forth in ourselves. In a pastel belonging to M. Alexis Rouart, the well-known collector of Chinese art, two milliners standing on severely parallel planes one behind the other stir emotions in us that we are accustomed to feel before the heroic conceptions of the old masters. This parallelism, or the

- In the Tavernier collection ; see reproduction.

DEGAS: THE BATH

PASTEL  
LUXEMBOURG, PARIS

, L J It Mf ^ i™ I ■

DEGAS: A CAFE ON THE BOULEVARD MONTMARTRE

PASTEL  
LUXEMBOURG, PARIS

EDGAR DEGAS

object of this arrangement, is to be found in every Degas of the last thirty years. If we note it carefully, we shall recognise in this also a homage to the master's unique type, a new standpoint, and therewith a new history of his art. Even in the early picture of the Henri Rouart collection, the two dancers exercising at the bar (1878), the arabesque of arms and legs speaks a solemn language, amidst the enchanting harmonies of gray and white and yellow.

It would be superficial indeed to pronounce this language merely a means adopted by the painter to express his ill-temper. The latest pictures, such as Durand-Ruel's series of dancers mentioned above, have nothing left that could interest the expounder of painted philosophies, and everything that might permit us to hope for the return of an art that should pass from the stage into life.

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### THE SUCCESSORS

Degas created a line. Daumier had a share in it, as in all typical results of modern art, but Degas moulded it so strenuously that we must admit his creative rights in it. This line persists among us. It became a sign\*manual for the whole generation of blagueurs, as appropriate to the art of to-day as was the sonorous plu'ase to the period of Romanticism. It was natural that it should also penetrate deeply into art-producing materia, and that it should become the great motor of modern creation, in spite of the manner in which its author held aloof. Citing the whole army of draughtsmen who work at newspaper illustration, from Forain to Capiello, and many artists outside of France, we should only indicate the more transitory side of Degas' influence. Forain has never become more than a very brilliant interpreter, who expanded what Degas expressed more trenchantly in a

few symbols. His wit often produces its effect by means of a mechanical exaggeration, underlying which we detect the same weakness that betrays itself in most of his essays in painting. He is simpler than Degas, but the poorer by this simplicity, and it almost seems as if the value of these abstractions— especially in his later manner — had been over-estimated, with the idea that it is hardly possible to go too far in this stripping away of the superfluous adopted by the moderns. Instead of using Degas for the purpose of synthesis, the fragment is reduced or enlarged in fragmentary fashion. But the indian-ink drawings of a Hokusai remain superior to all European essays in this genre.

The poster was the natural medium for this vivacity, and Chiret and Steinlen have been the most happily inspired of those who have attempted to seize the brief moment which the hasty eye can spare for it

The future of painting lay in a greater task. The problem was, not only to annex Degas' formula for the boulevardier, but to adapt it to tradition. It can hardly be said that this has been accomplished as yet. The time allowed it has been too short, and the strange and stubborn elements of the new line are as yet too novel to assimilate with the spirit of Poussin. It seems piquant enough to entice artists like Besnard to make advances to the bourgeois. But while men are still seeking, the fruit has passed away to other regions, and has brought forth new blossoms. Gauguin took it with him to the tropics. At Pont-Aven — I am anticipating the development we are presently to trace — a school arose, to which Gauguin gave the mighty linear impulse. Here synthesis is the main, nay, the sole preoccupation. Did the old man ever dream of such successors ? Out of his fiery iciness a consuming fire has passed into youth. The great fragments have been pieced together by clumsy fingers, his vitriolic raillery has worked beneficently in scaring away trivialities. The darkness of knowledge is transformed into profound symbolism, and from the flesh of the hetairai of our great capitals men fashion — the images of saints and virgins !

Only one artist capable of grasping all that Degas possessed remained in the vicinity of the great prototype. This was Lautrec, a painter who, under more favourable conditions and with a longer term of life, might have greatly surpassed his exemplar.

TOULOUSE-LAUTREC:

BERNHEIM COLLECTION. PARIS  
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

A LA MIE

HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC 283

HENRI DE TOULOUSE-LAUTREC

Here, again, chagrin became creative force, intensified by purely physiological elements. Lautrec came into the world in 1864, a scion of one of the most ancient families of the French noblesse, with all the hereditary impulses of patrician blood towards power and beauty. At the time when his forefathers, the Counts of Toulouse, made their glorious tradition, such sons as he looked to knightly prowess for distinction, and their descendants nowadays show the same ardour in achieving the kind of hero-hood whose sphere is the narrow circle of club-life. An accident, in which we might fitly recognise the hand of God, determined Lautrec's fate from the outset. When a child, he broke both his legs, and his constitution was not sound enough to accomplish the normal process of recovery. He became a cripple. Only the upper part of his body developed, more especially the head, the brain, which towered above those of his more robust contemporaries. It was not often it met its match in the Paris of the waning nineteenth century.

Lautrec accepted the loss of his legs and adjusted his life to his conditions. He took men and things very much on the surface, not so grimly as Degas, even with a certain bonhomie. He had to seek beauty in the society where money and pleasant speech gained him tolerance, and was not a little surprised to find many beautiful things even there. He would sometimes come to his Montmartre acquaintances and vow that to see such and such a Viennoise or Anglaise <sup>\*^</sup> c'est k se mettre k genoux/" and he was perfectly sincere when he showed his presentments of them, and waxed eloquent in admiration of " la belle bete." If beauty lies in abundant forms, the Parisian " demi-monde " <sup>\*^</sup> is rich in charms. Its women dress to be seen from a distance, like neo-Impressionist pictures ; wishing to suggest the bodies beneath their clothes, they emphasise those details of toilette that harmonise with their anatomy. Of course they caricature the fashions created by the most distinguished of their class, but we do not look to them for refinement. There is a pictorial instinct in their arrangements of mass and colour, which is art here no less than on canvas ; and the more they lay stress on what Nature has made them, the more perfect are they after their kind. We may grant that they get their reliefs with <sup>\*^</sup> shreds and patches," that a painted face seems unappetising to our modern taste, and that the cocotte is a jade. These are details. We need not approach them too closely. Here, again, aesthetics come to the help of morals ; the nearer the spectator gets to these works of art the less attractive do they seem, and intimacy with them strikes one less as sinful than as unintelligent — as though one should attempt to judge a work of art by touching it.

Lautrec, at any rate, thought them beautiful, nor would it be just to call him depraved on this account. It was merely a natural admiration for natural things, and he had the art of making this peculiarity of his objects into pictures. He saw in love with them, as was Leibl with his wrinkled peasants. This antediluvian vigour of vice fascinated him, and in the "toupet" of these castaways he perhaps saw some of the barbaric grandeur of prehistoric epochs. He certainly never dreamed of scourging modern manners with his works. His quest was for pictures, and he felt no repugnance when he took up his abode for months in a certain hospitable house near the Boulevard, where he painted a notable series of portraits, which

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Paris ought to possess. Fragonard has come to life again in these medallions. Nor was he obscene when he painted his figurantes behind the scenes, when their chic had ended in exhaustion, and the flesh relaxed into loose masses on pillows, like ill-tied parcels. He delighted in these shapeless shapes, and painted draperies that looked like women, and women that looked like draperies. He painted human organisms, with scarcely anything human about them, and the marvel of it is that they remain organic, such was the magic of his art. His methods were the same in dealing with men. Bruant's cloak, his broad-brimmed felt hat, his famous shawl, produced masterly planes, which linger in the mind like Volkslieder. His friend and cousin, Tapié de Céleyran, introduced him to Pian. Here he gloried in the broad white surface of the operator's apron, the widely opened jaws of the patient, the surgeon's energetic grip, and painted the grandiose and terrible picture now in his cousin's possession.\*

But women interested him more than all the rest. He made them into poetry, when he was not using them for fresco-drama. Daumier scarcely observed woman at all, or treated her with scant courtesy. In Lautrec's lithographs she becomes the Don Quixote of a fantastic epic, in which the very subordinate male part is occasionally played by Sancho Pansa. Sometimes he draws her slim and slender, a ghostly lath-like figure. Yvette, Lender, and Jane Avril were his born types : he sketched the hallucinations of the consumptive demirep, which take life and substance from exhaustion ; he sought the grotesque in all the ironies of cosmopolis : the mixture of the petty and gigantic peculiar to Paris, the colossal absurdity of a remnant of the ancient forms of culture in the midst of a new world sharply opposed to it, the folly of a traditional gesture to express the unutterable wants of the day. No artist had a keener perception of our modern love of slender forms. He noted our favourite dogs, the large, slim African sighthounds, the Pierrot-like poodles, the weedy horses, with their stilt-like legs. Avril was to him something in the nature of a long-legged thoroughbred. He showed her in dances — as, for instance, in the most brilliant of all posters, Avril au Jardin de Paris — where her dainty leg has the grace of some delicate racer in motion. And La Goulue has affinities with



the robust circus-horses on which he poises his airy acrobats.

In his excellent study in Figaro Illustri for 1902 (No. 145), Arsine Alexandre notes the influence of the sporting painter Princeteau, who was Lautrec's friend and neighbour at the beginning of his career. In 1883 he entered Bonnat's studio, where he vexed his soul with dark heavy colours ; there is an old woman

fraying painted at this period, which gives no hint of Lautrec's later development, in 1884 he spent a barren year with Cormon. In 1885 he met Degas and found his true path.

Lautrec is unimaginable without Degas. In his earlier works there are faces and scenes in which we recognise the typical forms of the early Degas. We are struck in particular by the affinities to the exquisite, but unhappily very rare etchings of the older master. Not only did Degas show him the way to his own special domain ; he taught him to create its special forms. But Lautrec dared to do what Degas scorned, he painted his pictures, and that finally led him away from Degas to a wider field. He belonged to a new generation ; and perfect as his drawing was — certainly the most brilliant basis of his development — his special importance lies in his mastery of large surfaces; it is hardly too much to call him a monumental painter.

\* Dr. Tapi6 de Celeyran also owns the most important collection of Lautrec's lithographs.

## LAUTREC : THE MODEL RESTING (LE REPOS DU MODELE)

BERNHEIM COLLECTION. PARIS  
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

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His vigorous Moulin Rouge pictures affect us like frescoes, frescoes compounded of rouge and tulle and taffetas. Take, for instance, the Tromeade<sup>^</sup> ip M, Bernheim's collection, Paris, where the three cocottes walling arm in arm, fill up the surface powerfully with three robust forms intersected on each side by the frame. In the two pictures with which Lautrec adorned the exterior of La Goulue's booth, his rare talent already revealed itself beneath the farce, especially in the one where the foreground is gay with spectators and La Goulue swings her leg on the stage. It recalls Seurat. Lautrec mocked at fresco, as at everything else, but in spite of this, he found some fine motives for it. Such are his grandiose poster, Reine de joy and his La Goulue at the Moulin Rouge<sup>^</sup> with the decorative black line of the

spectators' heads, and in the foreground the huge figure of the partner — a reminiscence of Daumier's RatapoiL Such again are many of his lithographs ; the most brilliant of all, for instance, the Lender which appeared in Patty with its masterly distribution of line and colour, the completest victory over Japan and the most dazzling illustration of Manet's programme of flat painting ever achieved on a sheet of paper. His pictures teem with decorative details. The drawing Au Cirquey where the little yellow figure dances in the centre, while the three Japanese girls hold up their fans in the foreground, is an amazing linear invention. Here psychology is dumb ; it is pure arabesque.

Lautrec's brushwork was as hasty as his drawing. He liked cardboard for a background, and left as much as possible of the blank surface in his compositions. He would have nothing to do with technical recipes. Seurat interested him, but he would have laughed at the idea of a definite programme. In many of his pictures we find some original little commas, which reveal his pleasure in ornament, but this is not in any degree colour- division. At times he shows an exaggerated negligence, but at his worst he could not be a renegade to his aristocratic taste, and he chose his colours with the same careless confidence with which he scribbled his arabesques. It was only in his last decade that he began to concern himself with technique. Two visits to Spain had revealed Velazquez to him. Here he found the completion of Degas. The result was the series of family portraits, in which the crippled dwarf suddenly revealed himself an inimitable master, whose earnestness, brilliance, and technical accomplishments entitle him to rank among the greatest punters of the nineteenth century. Great things were to be expected of him in those days. There was such a maestria in these pictures, such a classic repose in form and colour, that we bless the South of France which inspired them, and could curse his beloved Paris, which destroyed him.

It was in vain that they gave him a keeper, of whom he made a brilliant portrait, which he inscribed \*\* Mon gardien quand j\*6tais fou." His birth was an extravagance, and it was only by means of extravagances that his artistic being was sustained. When it was forced into normal channels, his art was quenched and with it his life, in the summer of 190 1.

The outcome of Lautrec's fifteen years of activity is very considerable. He must have painted about a hundred and thirty pictures. His lithographs are to be reckoned by hundreds. There are some hundred and fifty important prints, twenty-five posters, and several dozen theatrical programmes, menus, and such like. The trifles he threw off at odd moments are innumerable. It was his habit to draw on the stone at his printer's, Stern's, as other people write. He further distinguished himself as an illustrator of books.

RENOIR: IDYT.

KESSLBR COLLECTION , WEmAR

## RENOIR AND HIS CIRCLE

Apart, yet in close affinity with his friends of the Batignolles group, stands Renoir. There was room for a Frenchman among the Spaniards and Japanese. In one respect he was superior to them all.

It is a credit to France that the most purely French artist of this great generation, to which we owe a new development of painting, should once more manifest the peculiarities of the old masters. He is sharply differentiated from Manet, who was his first inspiration, and still more sharply from Degas, while he seems to have nothing at all in common with Monet and his circle.

He, too, was attracted by decoration, but on the lines laid down so securely in the eighteenth century, that it would have reached a marvellous culmination had not its violent dislocation by the Revolution dimmed our modern appreciation. .

Fragonard bore the same relation to Boucher as did Manet to Courbet. The Du Barry's gifted decorator preluded that development of flat painting, of which Manet was the supreme master. A period rich in forms lay behind him, when he gave himself up to the fancies of his brush. This no painter of a later generation could replace. Renoir, on the other hand, determined to reanimate the tradition which Baudry had falsified, by richer methods.

This explains the superficial aspects, but not the essential qualities of Renoir ; it covers his sympathy with Impressionism, but not his specific value. As a third element, he introduced a rarity, precious as an antique jewel — a perfected material.

Degas may penetrate more deeply into our souls, C<sup>^</sup>anne may stir our emotions more powerfully, Manet may kindle a more glowing enthusiasm in us, but Renoir has one thing that they all lack. Perhaps he is the only contemporary painter whose works would have made Rubens turn to look at them. He is the only one who is not fragmentary after the manner of the others, and his pictures, finished or unfinished, have not that hollowness of the painting ground, over which we look away with the others, to stray after other things. He shows how much that means. Again, we have that marvellous delight in the surface which is painting throughout and not only on the outside ; the perfection that tormented Whistler and drove him and so many others to paint in dark tones, that caused Degas to give up painting altogether, that Velazquez alone possessed ; the goal of the supreme period of painting : the rendering of vitality

with all the resources of the painter.

How he achieved it is a mystery. He showed himself a master very early in his career, when his enthusiasm was stirred by Manet, in the *Use of 1 867*, exhibited at the Salon the following year. It is now in the little museum of Hagen in Westphalia, and has made the spot a sanctuary of noble art, to which the Germans

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should come in troops as pilgrims.\* It seems almost incredible that a young man of twenty-six should have shown such wisdom ; not that he should have been so gifted — for others, his contemporaries, were even more so— but that he should have been capable of such self-restraint in the presence of a dazzling Nature, painting, as he did, in the open air from beginning to end. Against a magnificent background of green, brown, and russet tones formed by the damp shade of a woodland, by the sturdy trunk of a forest tree, on which stray sunbeams flicker with a pearly lustre, stands the life-size figure of the White Lady. The dress is the wonderful muslin of our grandmothers, vaporous and transparent, showing the harder white of the under-dress. Cloud-like it clings about the full figure and exquisite arm, and veils the hand that lifts the skirt. Here a tiny ribbon holds the sleeve into the wrist. The other hand clasps the carved ivory handle of the little sunshade of black lace over white ; another white appears in the narrow brimmed hat, and finally, we have the pearl of the flesh. We might almost venture a comparison with Velazquez\* Papal portrait. His Innocent makes its effect in like manner by means of the draperies. However much we may be carried away by the demoniacal art of the face, we must admit that it could never have made its ineffable effect without the splendours of the red and white costume, which can scarcely be called external, so closely is it interwoven with the imposing personality of the sitter. Here the many-toned white plays about the coarser carnations of a masculine face, reflecting all masculine sensualities. The covering of the left arm seems compounded of foam, and yet it distinctly reveals the masculine skin beneath it. In Renoir's *Lise* on the other hand, the painting subserves woman. The white hue is not foam but vapour. It floats in manifold gradations about the soft cool roundness of the feminine body. These innumerable white tones seem almost to take on the charm of contrasts, asserting themselves in spite of the powerful opposition by which the rich black of the sash and the red of certain details struggle for mastery. Indeed, we find that it is these very oppositions which make the play of the various whites possible. The carnations are warmed by the red. It begins with its strongest note in the coral of the earring, pales perceptibly in the ribbon against the other side of the face, and appears as the highest tone in the curious yellowish pink complexion, which makes the snowy whiteness of the dress appear still whiter and more tender, and itself receives warmth from this cooler white. This *Lise* the Roy with the Cat in the Arnhold collection at Berlin, the *Amazon* of 1873 (here reproduced) in the

H. Rouart collection, Paris, and the double portrait in the Cassirer collection, Berlin, were the first achievements of the youthful genius. He had only left his teacher Gleyre a year or two before. These were documents, with which another might have closed his career : in Renoir's case, they inaugurated a series of immortal portraits, which reached their culminating point in the happy year 1874, when he painted the Ballet Dancer and La Lege.

In the picture of the ballet-girl the vapourous quality of the White Lady became style. The youthful flesh takes an added firmness from the airy envelope of the dress. The bluish gauze of the skirt almost melts into the background. The outline is peculiarly indefinite, the brown hair and the little pink shoes are almost the only touches of positive colour, and yet the general impression is that

\* The picture belonged originally to Duret, who reproduced a fine drawing of it by Renoir in

^'Les Peintres Impresdonittef " (Librairie Parisienne, 1878). The essay without the drawing was

afterwards incorporated in the £imous '\* Critique d'Avant-Garde."

## RENOIR: LADY ON HORSE-BACK (L'AMAZONE)

H. ROUART COLLECTION, PARIS

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of great colouristic richness. If, impelled by a desire to lay hold of something whereby we may indicate the inexplicable effect, as we stand before the picture, we recall the old English masters, we must recognise clearly that what there is of Gainsborough in the work springs from sources so alien to the Englishman's art that we must not press the comparison. No modern could get the air of the Mrs. Siddons^ or of the sumptuous portrait in the Wallace collection. Such things lie outside the domain of modern art\* People who should emulate the style of Mrs. Siddons in these days would be merely ludicrous ; and modern painters who have the distinction of a Gainsborough, manifest the quality otherwise than Reynolds' famous rival. Yet there is nothing more opulent than the wx>rk which most suggests comparisons drawn from the great epochs of painting: La Loge. Heilbut, in his study on the picture,\* very acutely observes that it creates two modern types by the technical methods of the old masters. If this result has been really achieved — and who can deny it ? — these methods have been rejuvenated, and no single quality of the ancient art informs the work, but all that could be of service here. We might trace Watteau and

Gainsborough, Velazquez, and the Venetians in Renoir. Heilbut showed less perception when he said the picture ought to be hung beside a Gainsborough, to test it. Renoir would not lose by such a process, but Gainsborough would ! The English qualities that we detect in Renoir are of course more abundant in Gainsborough — pour cause ! — but what shall we find of Renoir in Gainsborough ! Durand-Ruel's little girl, painted by Renoir two years later, is still more English. It is noteworthy that he had never been in England at the time. When Manet and Pissarro took refuge in London in 1870, Renoir turned soldier. He first saw the Thames several years later, and, like a true Frenchman, he took no pleasure in the land of the hidden sun.

If we wish to define the difference between Renoir and the English, we cannot do so better than by comparing this French portrait of a child with the little girl painted by Whistler — with whom Renoir had more in common at one time than with any other Englishman. The presentments of Miss Alexander and of Mile. Durand-Ruel are as dissimilar as an English and a French child. It is difficult to consider them apart from the differences of costume : Whistler dressed the English girl with consummate elegance ; none of the flesh is visible but the hands and face, and one cannot imagine this little lady without her clothes. The little Durand-Ruel is a " gosse " pure and simple, as evidently made to be kissed as is the other to be looked at, fresh and alluring with her bare neck and little naked arms, wholly a child. And the painting of the Frenchman differs from that of Whistler in the same way : it is immeasurably younger, healthier, more vital. A comparison would be less legitimate, if Renoir had already acquired his later purity of palette when he painted this work, and had thus possessed a more obvious superiority. But of this there is little more than a hint. The beauty lies in the stupendous painting. The shimmering blue-green of the little frock, a shade more pronounced in the sash, cannot be described as a colour-value ; it is a painted tissue, in which the sunlight plays a part. The little creature stands, an extraordinarily piquant apparition, against the faint green wall-paper flecked with red and green. Piquant, but absolutely natural, and standing just as an actual child would stand. Yet the whole composition is no less distinguished than the work of the American : the child is less aristocratic, but not the technique ; this is royal, while

\* ^' Die Impressionisten," Casurer, Berlin.  
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that of the other is no more than lordly. To me the portrait of the little Durand-Ruel is a finer work ; there is more nature in it, more, that is, of the nature of painting, more pictorial wealth. And, in spite of all the subtlety of the Whistler, the purely colouristic qualities of the Frenchman are more sympathetic. This was the miracle of Monet's chromatic achievement, that he placed the nature of painting

on a new basis, a basis of purely physiological and perfectly indisputable effect. Monet is perhaps a barbarian of painting, but he was a phenomenon in his recognition of the fact, that the most enduring among the fascinations by which the eye is governed, must certainly be something that has its root in natural laws, that a picture made up of pure colours must make a more permanent aesthetic impression than a picture equally powerful not so constituted. This is as self-evident as that we never weary of a green meadow full of flowers. Even works so remarkable as Whistler's portrait of his mother, undoubtedly the most brilliant and inspired picture of the Courbet School, are not exceptions. The writer is far from accepting the extreme consequences of the theories of modern colour-virtuosi, which will be dealt with in a later chapter ; but, with all due reserve be it said : a whole world divides us from this Whistler. It is superb in a museum, especially in the Luxembourg, where we seldom see it, where mind and eye are impressed by the greatness of the conception afresh each time we stand before it, without ever arriving at any intimate appreciation of it. In this particular setting. Whistler is perhaps more effective than any of the moderns. But, in spite of the veneration it inspires — nay, perhaps, because of it — we should not wish to have such pictures as this in our houses. Whistler, indeed, sometimes painted pictures it is impossible to see too often, or to have too near. But the Mother is not one of these.

We are impelled to demand nowadays that which Art can use in Nature. Monet brought what it must find use. Nor could Renoir refuse to admit this truth. The struggle for colour was never fiercer in any artist, for none had ever more to lose. None achieved more precious results in the process.

Like Manet, Renoir started from black as his strongest colour, from the *"Bijou rose et noir"* on which Baudelaire wrote his famous quatrain. This black, which became so dangerous to Courbet, Renoir set himself to transform into blue, i.e. he replaced a conventional harmony by a chromatic one. Delacroix helped him in the process. In the cushions below, on the left, in the *Women of Algiers* we may find Renoir's palette after the Courbet period, as he used it in *La Loggia* and many other works. Beautiful as it was, he had to abandon his kinship with the old masters, that he might become entirely master of himself. The problem tormented him for many years. In the large *Moulin de la Galette* of 1876 in the Luxembourg the victory still seems to hang in the balance. There is a tumultuous quivering vitality in this oil fresco dance, in which the sun seems to be taking part, but we are conscious of a certain uneasiness, if we mentally compare it with the Hagen picture. It is undoubtedly a beautiful sketch, but how far short it falls of the perfection of the *Lise* or the *Boy with the Cat* of Manet's broad handling, or of the vigorous roughness of Monet, who seemed to have been born for this kind of art ! Yet in the very same year he reached a certain issue. Near the *Moulin de la Galette* in the Luxembourg hangs *La Balangoire* the young girl leaning against a swing as she chatters to some young men. Here he has found the chromatic basis. In the *Moulin de la Galette* an ugly, colourless black in the men's clothes still contends with the pure blue and yellow tones. The *Swing* is a lovely symphony in blue, of the most enchanting purity ; the checkering of the rosy

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WOMEN BATHING

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RENUik: wuMEN BATHING (LES BAIGNEUSES)

BERNHEIM COLLECTION, PARIS

## RENOIR AND HIS CIRCLE 291

path with patches of sunlight is an exquisite fancy ; the lively figures glow with a refreshing reality. In the next few years he ventured on greater tasks ; he painted the brilliant picture of the girl asleep in a chair, with a sleeping cat on her lap. All the naturalistic suggestiveness of which he was master was set free ; he painted the divinely animal, as Degas had painted the diabolically animal ; the joy of life, as the other had painted the scorn of life. A healthy carnality radiates from innumerable feminine lips and eyes and breasts. Rubens comes to life again, purged of his lewdness. Renoir's women are neither more nor less chaste than his landscapes, his grasses and pools ; theirs is an Elysian carnality, not yet convulsed by passion, still idyllic, still instinct with freedom and beauty. The love of these beautiful creatures is not devastating, but health-giving, as the children Renoir painted testify. Who has depicted babies like his ? They overflow with health, and glow as if tinted with milk and blood. The famous Fair Children Exhibition of 1895 in London lacked its brightest jewels, for Renoir was absent.

This poetry of naturalism, this serene rendering of dazzling flesh is unparalleled in these days of over-heated brains. Looking at these pictures, it is difficult to

believe in the much talked of decadence of the Latin races.

He demonstrates with jubilant tints : a pink, delicate as the bloom on a ripe peach, deepening into the red of a cleft tomato ; a blue brilliant as that of the southern skies under which Renoir painted his best landscapes, an orange like gleaming quartz. Like Degas, he achieves the most intoxicating beauty with pastel. The Bernheims\* picture of a nurse with two children (painted in the nineties) renders the bloom of healthy skin in all its gradations ; the little granules of the material appear as the microscopic down on a childish epidermis.

The small oil picture of children in a wood — another work of this, his most resplendent colour-period — can hardly be appreciated in a reproduction, even in one so excellent as that made for this volume. In the mixture of orange and blue in the dress of the nurse and the coat of the dog, the sun seems to have charmed all the yellow to the surface, that we may divine the floods of purple below. It draws a pink from the boy's blue dress that should rejoice the hearts of the Neo- Impressionists, and the strong blue-rimmed yellow of the famous straw hat is another detail that agrees with their programme. But who would wish to see this indescribable material divided after their fashion 1 — the golden purple of the baby, where the silken texture of the little frock becomes a thousand times more silken in the golden hair ; the rosy white of the little girl's dress beside it, and the magic confluence of all the colours of the foreground in the woodland mystery of fairyland.

This painter does not create colour-harmonies, he makes materials, like Watteau and Lancret, but his are more beautiful than theirs, more beautiful than those of Rubens or even those of the gods of Venice. These artists are superior to him in a thousand ways, they do much more with a poorer material.; but no painter before Renoir ever so bewitched his material, that a little canvas like this one seems to contain the sum of all costly things, and yet remains so true to realities, that the effect is not that of a gem, but of the natural envelope of the objects represented. The picture is by no means unique in Renoir's vast work, and yet there are details in it that seem to spring from the happiest inspiration, that were not necessary, but which, when we see them, affect us as the gifts of some inexhaustible and lavish Croesus. The young girl, for instance, holds a piece of needlework in her rosy fingers, just a wisp of stuff, made up of yellow and blue tones with a

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touch of green. Looking at this, we take it to be the central point of the picture ; the next day we find this in a tree-trunk, the next again in one of the faces. . . .

Here all theories and formulae are at fault ; we have to do with a richness as full of wonders as Nature herself. Renoir's colour is, in fact, a natural in-

instinct, already revealed in the son of the poor Limoges tailor, who was earning a living by painting on china at the age of seventeen. There are china vases decorated by him in the fifties, which are perfect Renoirs. The beautiful colours seemed to bloom of themselves on the white porcelain. The black period, when he and his friends were under the influence of Courbet, was the beginning of the artist, not of the painter. He would, no doubt, have remained a china-painter to the end, had not the unhappy invention of printing on porcelain destroyed the flourishing art. But here again the ruin of the many proved the fortune of the individual. The youth's position was desperate ; his hopes of getting work at Sèvres seemed unlikely to be realised. One day he was walking in the Rue du Bac when he saw a shop, in which transparent blinds for churches were manufactured. The business seemed to be flourishing, and the proprietor wanted more hands. Renoir went in and offered himself. The master made no difficulties; there was the workshop, he could come next day, the pay was 30 francs a blind. At the end of the first week he was the best workman on the premises, at the end of the second he was earning 100 francs a day, because he could work ten times as

Quickly as the rest. He thus made enough money to pay for a course at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, where he met Monet, Bazille, and Sisley. In the summer they all went to Fontainebleau together. Here Renoir made the acquaintance of the aged Diaz, who took a fancy to him, gave him some lessons, and allowed him to make use of his credit with the colourman. The young people panted their dark landscapes no worse than the men of 1830, until one fine day Manet opened their eyes. The reign of Courbet was not yet at an end, however, and in Monet, Cézanne, and Renoir more especially, the influence of Courbet and of Manet strove at first for the mastery. Cézanne's snow-scene, in the Vollard collection, painted, no doubt, in the sixties, is unmistakably inspired by such Courbets as Duret's snow -scene, though it is already mellower than Courbet's ; Manet's influence showed itself at once in an increased fluidity of the palette.

When Renoir had absorbed this new theory of colour, his next pre-occupation was to conquer the solidity of structure he had hitherto neglected, and to abandon the improvisation of the Impressionists.

About the year 1881 he painted the famous *Déjeuner des Canotiers* the young folks seated at a meal under an awning. In parts it is quite in Renoir's old vein, an art that deals with joyous, fugitive charms, as in the dainty " tip-tilted nose " of the grisette, who is coaxing the dog beside her to sit up, the merry animation of the groups in the background, and above all, in the exquisite still-life on the table. But the two bare-armed oarsmen reveal new elements ; they are almost like statues in the midst of the painting.

The next period in Renoir's art is generally looked upon as barren, especially in the circles of the Rue Lafitte, the non plus ultra of Impressionism. In reality it was perhaps the most fruitful in its relation to the influence exercised by Renoir in the development of art.

Even as a student at the École des Beaux Arts, Renoir had been an admirer of Ingres, and in those frequent studies of the nude he made at nearly every period of his activity, he never quite lost sight of the master. The time came when he

## RENOIR AND HIS CIRCLE 293

approached him more closely than any other painter of his generation. Degas himself not excepted.

Degas and Renoir are antithetical in many ways, and among others in their respective attitudes to Ingres. For Degas, Ingres was a starting-point, of which he never quite lost sight ; his reverence for Ingres had a decisive influence on his drawing, but is manifest only in the early Degas the painter. For Renoir, whose artistic genesis was in sharp contrast to that of Degas, Ingres became a consumption. It is this that gives Renoir his distinction. From this moment he possessed to the full all that had lain dormant in him. Financially, his position was still wretched. No painter has had to wait more patiently for the favour of the purchasing public. The early pictures I have described, sold for a few hundred francs. The Hagen example for just 100. Nevertheless, he began to have admirers in the eighties. At this moment he risked all that charmed the amateur — his incomparable facture — and threw himself uncompromisingly into draughtsmanship.

The decisive picture was Mons. E. J. Blanche's bathing-scene, painted about 1885. Two naked women lie on their linen wraps on the bank; a third stands in the water, threatening to splash one of them ; a fourth stands with her back to the spectator and binds up her hair ; and the head and shoulders of yet another emerge from the water in the background. A woodland landscape encloses the figures. The pose of the two women on the bank is purely Ingresque, and indescribably beautiful. The foremost of the pair is seen in sharp profile ; supporting herself with her left hand on the drapery, she raises her right hand and foot at an exquisite angle to repel her playfellow in the water, whose back is turned nearly full to the spectator. The voluptuous figure of the second woman on the bank is even more happily posed ; confronting the spectator, her eyes fixed on her companion, she lifts the drapery over her shoulders with the most enchanting gesture. Ingres would have made it more perfect. Renoir clung to a certain abruptness, and this gives his figure a touch of delightful awkwardness that accords with the subject, and adds to the charm of the expression. Nevertheless, the purely formal inter-play of the limbs on the bank is admirable. The four hands and four feet so close together would have been a danger for a weaker artist. A stylist would have confined the picture to these two figures, and have been content to paint the splendid movement of the rhythmic arms. One is tempted to regret that Renoir did not. The consternation in the Rue Lafitte would have been great, the picture

still greater. The movement is weaker in the remaining figures, and the relations are less convincing. The realist added the third figure ; he wanted to explain the action on the bank. It is only in the distant woman, whose arms encircle her head, that the master of form proclaims himself again.

The picture is, therefore, by no means perfect. If we imagine it hanging between Fragonard's little gem, the *Bathers of the Louvre*, and Ingres' *Odalisque* it loses on both sides. The figures have not the masterly convention of Fragonard's, who distributes his limbs almost like ripples on the water, and suppresses Nature when it would mar the decorative effect, and they are just as remote from the perfect equilibrium of the painter of the *Odalisque*, who made one single immortal line of the whole body. Yet Renoir, too, strove after Ingres' modelling ; even in his early studies of the nude, long before he went to Italy, he reduced the form in order to make the masses more compact. But in this there was nothing of the Michelangelesque modelling that distinguishes French Baroque. Renoir is too

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solid for this. His single figures, which he prefers to show in half-profile, stand out in powerful outline against the sky. One of the most beautiful of these<sup>^</sup> owned by Durand-Ruel and dated 1885, has the effect of a cloisonné enamel.\* Turning her back to the spectator, the model thrusts both hands into her chestnut hair, on which lie heavy blue reflections. This is a *Venus Anadyomene* of a new kind. She sits on an overhanging ledge of cliff, her feet rolled in a bathing-sheet ; from thence the mighty line rises along the exquisite curve of the torso, and the beautiful breast, runs sharply into the hollow under the arm and then sweeps out to the marvellous angle of the elbow. The sharp contour is won only by the perfect differentiation of flesh and of atmosphere, and not by contrasts of colour. This technique is markedly distinguished from that of the earlier and later periods. The figure is a smooth, firm plane, strongly relieved against the surroundings, the background and so on, where Renoir's high-toned palette is used in an airy fashion. Before this work we may be bold, and talk of monumental effects.

A visit to Italy effaced the harshnesses of the period. Renoir went to Venice, where he painted some marvellous landscapes. Here he procured letters of introduction to Richard Wagner, the god of his, as of Fantin's idolatry, and though he lost them he was able to paint a head of the composer at Palermo in a brief sitting. It was a very remarkable, but necessarily hasty performance, which Wagner laughingly pronounced very like a Protestant clergyman's.

Returning to Paris with the sunshine of the south in his palette, Renoir resumed the study of the nude, and now attained the culminating-point of his admirable flesh-painting. The torsoes of his naked figures are always superbly

modelled. In the extremities, his desire for roundness and his inability to forego pictorial effects, sometimes led to malformations, for which there are not always obvious compensations\* In his colour-technique, he continues to experiment to this day, and if some of the excellences of an earlier period are lacking to his last manner, it is only of late years that he has mastered the preparation of his painting ground, that solid splendour which is so painfully deficient in Monet's work. When he began to lay greater stress upon drawing, he reduced the oily element in his colour. At the period of the Blanche picture, his canvases were left so dry that the permanence of the work is endangered. This dryness, very apparent in the Luxembourg picture, the young girls at the piano, exaggerates certain malformations of the body produced by the passion for roundness, which are characteristic of many Renoirs. But Renoir has this lofty affinity with Rubens : he can never sink so low, but that his very weaknesses are capable of producing abnormal elements of beauty. His scrofulous women have always some regal qualities. As Mauclair, in his study on Renoir :|; very truly says, we must always distinguish between "the defects of poverty and those of exuberance." Rubens supplements defective harmonies by the turbulent force of his temperament. His successor must content himself with a smaller field. He is great when he concentrates his powers. Rubens, even when he loses himself in immensity, remains a victorious, though a frenzied god.

\* See reproduction.

It was the day after the completion of the score of Parsifal. Wagner consented to sit, on condition that the sitting should not last more than twenty minutes, and Renoir did not exceed the limit.

The little picture now belongs to M. de Bonnières. Renoir made a replica, in '93, better, but still very sketchy, for Cheramy.

X VArt dicera Nos. 41 and 42 (February and March 1902).

RENOIR: WOMAN BATHING (BAIGNEUSE)

DURAND-RUEL COLLECTION, PARIS



No member of the whole circle has experimented so freely with colour as Renoir. There are, in particular, many pictures of the eighties, painted on a dull blue ground, that seem unsatisfactory at a first glance. I may instance the group of young girls at a piano, on which is a bouquet, at present in the possession of Durand-Ruel. The deliberate uniformity of colour, especially in the dull blue of the ground, repels the naturalist. But if we give it time, the blue begins to work with a mysterious power. It concentrates the scattered yellow tones, shows up the beauty of the white and the vapourous pink and finally brings the spectator to think the whole picture as natural and as perfect as the daintily chosen bouquet. In this unity of tints that displeased him at first, he recognises a special medium of style, whose function it is to show richness in new ways and to complete that which the art that seeks style in outline had attempted.

In spite of its perfection, much of Renoir's vast and prolific work is fragmentary, perhaps because it was only thus that it could retain all its value. Without wasting much time in research Renoir has also made exorbitant demands on his divine gift in the multiplicity of his works. When others have stayed their hands, paralysed by the very intensity of their desire to create, he has gone on producing and producing, even when the outlook has been most gloomy. Like a marvellous river, in which magic forms are reflected, his activity rolls on ; and still he accounts all days as lost when he has been unable at least to hold a pencil in his crippled fingers.



The circle that formed round these great heroes of painting still eludes definitive analysis. The influence of Degas is obvious throughout ; that of Renoir is much more occult. If we should attempt to name all those who are indebted to him, the catalogue would be unending. It would contain elements so diverse as Seurat and Carri re, Gauguin, Bonnard, and Maurice Denis. His life work has been too vast and many-sided to make it possible for us to speak, as yet, of the school of Renoir. The direct affinities which Fauchet and others have attempted to demonstrate are mainly noticeable as a purely technical tendency, making for the production of solid canvases.

But indirectly, Renoir will be an influence reaching far beyond his age. Of all the Impressionists he is the most essentially an artist in the traditional sense, the one who, amidst all the immense progress of his time never forgot the old doctrine, that to paint is above all things the function of the painter ; and wherever and whenever there is painting in France, Renoir's art will remain an example. Renoir's, and that of his three great friends. It may be that the example will have results somewhat different to those we, its contemporaries, look for. The time may come when, though the mighty personal achievement of these pro-

tagonists shall have lost nothing of its prestige, they will be appraised as, after all, but an important consequence of the upheaval accomplished by that great Roman barbarian, David, the last fruits of the Revolution which destroyed all the great national traditions of craftsmanship, and among them the divine prescription that governed Watteau's art. Brilliant as their names appear in the new period of history they inaugurated, they are not exempt from the tragedy inherent in their daring deed. They ate at a new board, sometimes laden with dainties undreamt of by their predecessors, but sometimes lacking necessities, the bread and salt of the old masters.

The old masters possessed not merely a complex tradition, governing compo-

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sition. Their greatest treasure was knowledge of the materials of their craft, of the processes to which panels, canvases and colours should be subjected, before they began to think of artistic creation per se, a sum of experience, to which every great master of technique among them added his quota, without setting aside what had been already won.

Our great moderns never passed through this elementary school, and just as technique was an easy matter to the ancients who had mastered their craft, so it presented colossal difficulties to men who often owed their experience to chance, to a sudden inspiration, to blind groping, and who sometimes had to risk the greatest dangers and make immense exertions, to work out and perfect their conceptions in accordance with their lofty ideals.

They had learnt nothing ; some of them came from the lowest social stratum. They were all revolutionaries, and that which was offered them as long as they had patience to listen to others, was so essentially trivial and ephemeral, that their spirit of revolt drove them to deny the value of teaching altogether, and begin with Nature. Hence the unrest in their careers, and sometimes in their pictures, hence the makeshift and fragmentary element in their art. But these very elements make them belong to us and perhaps to us alone. Distant epochs may reject them perhaps, but if so, they will have to wipe us, their generation, out of history also, and with us a great epoch. For this art expresses nothing more vehemently than the stiff-necked, revolutionary force of our times. This creation by the light of instinct, could not have flourished in any but a strenuous age.

Does it point upwards — will these mighty fragments weld themselves into a great homogeneous force, gaining fresh strength from itself, without going back to the ancient springs ? That is the question. We will examine a series of attempts at organisation, based on the achievements of these pioneers. The logical consequence seems so assured, that we can hardly doubt a happy issue. But, neverthe-

less, it behoves us not to lose sight of the relative nature of this result.

\* ^ Monet, who influenced the whole circle, after he himself had sat at Manet \*s feet, is the most seductive of the group. He was the first to draw conclusions ; he did so with the barbaric ruthlessness that belongs to crucial decisions. If among the great quartet there still lingered some personal reflex of the old art, however they adapted and modified it for their own ends, Monet was untouched by it. He is purely the child of his age, the bold proletarian, trusting only to himself, his reason, and — his luck ! If we failed to recognise the relative quality of his art, we might shut out the Louvre from our future artistic appreciations. For from Monet onward the road leads away uncompromisingly from the old masters. We may ask where it will end.

RENOIR: NUDE FIGURE ON THE BEACH

DURAND-RUEL COLLECTION, PARIS

FROM A DRAWING BY FELIX VALLOTTON

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FROM A DRAWING BY Ff LIX VALLOTTON FOR  
"DIE INSEL"

CLAUDE MONET: THE BRIDGE AT ARGENTEUIL

FAURE COLLECTION PARIS

CLAUDE MONET: SAARDAM

TA VERNIER COLLECTION, PARIS  
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

BOOK III

COLOUR AND COMPOSITION

I. COLOUR

CLAUDE MONET

The chief person in the picture is the light  
in which everything is bathed. — Tains.

Monet, like Manet, painted an *alfresco meal*, and at the time when Manet's star was in the ascendant among the friends. It is blonder, softer, daintier than that of the older man, like dawn before a fine summer day. Under the influence of his friend, Monet painted amazingly impressive things ; his large portrait of a lady in a splendid green gown — in a German collection, like the first-named picture — must be reckoned among the representative portraits of all time.

Monet is just as essentially talent, as Manet was genius. With him, talent manifested itself in a brilliantly trained eye, and the courage to obey it. Manet had more brain ; Monet seems only to incite the eye to thought ; and we can see how, as he grew older, an almost scientific will moulded form in his work. But he who delighted in the Monet of the seventies, and was not himself an old man at this time, will feel no disappointment as he makes the transition the artist judged necessary. In the landscapes of this time we find a style that absolutely determines the composition, and affects the senses like poetry. It is not Manet's great style, but a beneficent lyricism, avoiding the grander chords, that it may be all the lovelier in simple ones.

The most beautiful landscape of our world, that of the environs of Paris, has found the most beautiful artistic expression in Monet. The infinitely feminine element, so caressing to the senses, that characterises this district, the tact, if one may speak of tact in Nature, the sparkling quality which the Parisienne possesses,

and which, whatever may be said against her, always remains child-like and lovable in her — all this is in the Monets painted when the artist was in his thirties.

Parisians cannot be grateful enough for having this landscape so near them. What may be said of Monet is applicable to the whole of Parisian art, indeed, to the whole time-honoured culture of the city. For him who has lived in Paris as a worker, the recollection of a fine Sunday out at Vetheuil, where Monet painted, or anywhere else on the Seine — there is nothing ugly round Paris — is a remembrance of something inexpressibly delightful. The sensation is akin to the psychic value of pleasure in a work of art, the nature of which is best realised, if we picture it as happiness remembered. It is, indeed, not only Nature one enjoys, or the marked contrast between city and country, but the sense of a special dispensation that has spread just such country round just this town — something so absolutely different from and yet so perfectly appropriate to it. Great cities are monstrosities, ugly accidents of the Earth's pure body, appearing here and there

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like warts on the skin. This one city is beautiful, and does not seem to have been built up upon the earth, so much as to have grown out of it. Only here could she have arisen. Were she not here, the woods that surround her, the hills from which we descend to her, the water in which she is mirrored, would not be here either. Everything around has, or seems to have, its relation to Paris — a relation enhanced by the beautiful architectural works we find everywhere embedded in the landscape. The aspect of this Nature seems to reflect the happy temperament of the men who have made Paris, men who know what art is, because they possess Nature.

From the landscape of about 1830 to Monet is a far cry. The gentle lovers who had sat to Watteau and Fragonard were turned to stone at Millet's heavy tread. The harsh art of his northern temperament discovered a monumental gravity therein. The poetry of Corot and Diaz called forth song again, without saying anything very expressive of this particular landscape. Once when the great Rousseau came upon a woodman in the forest, he uttered the beautiful saying recorded by Burty : " Do you know the difference between an oak and a lath ? Out of an oak we can make a million laths, but millions of laths will not make an oak." But he forgot the trees in the tree. Dupri and Daubigny sought ambush in the heart of the forest, and already they have become to us children of the woods. If we did not know where they worked, we should never believe that their models, too, stood at the gates of Paris. They all went into the woods and painted, and as we look at their pictures, saintly legends like that of Genevieve rise to our minds. Monet stayed upon the hill-top and gazed down. His eyes wandered over the garden terraces to the water, followed the coquettish windings

of the river with its swift boats and quiet islands, strayed into the valleys, climbed the wooded hill opposite, and skirted the great line on the horizon that glitters in the sunshine. Monet's landscapes have faces, like Tintoretto's pictures ; he has studied the physiognomy of Nature.

Thoma made a German landscape by the methods necessary to give it the characteristics it seems to German eyes to have ; Monet and Pissarro painted a French landscape. The distinction is significant, no less for the country than for the people. Indeed, the whole racial difference is implied here. The sun shines upon the valleys of the Odenwald ; a French temperament would rejoice in the light and colour here, as at home; but the Germans have read their own melancholy into the scene. The only new element in Thoma's art, however, is this unaffected sadness ; his methods are terribly old-fashioned, though without the beauty of the old works, and he would have passed unnoticed altogether had he not appealed to the sentiment that is one of the " properties " of our cherished Germanism. As a painter, Thoma may be called a colourer rather than a colourist : that is to say, he brushes over his surfaces, and in the choice of colours is guided by certain elementary maxims, which sometimes give curious results. Artistic creation is at an end, in his case, as soon as he has finished his drawing ; and all that this shows of completeness is a primitive renunciation, an application of coarse methods to the makeshift of an ancient convention. We cannot compare a Frenchman and a German it is said, and rightly so ; but that it is impossible in this case is not to the credit of the German. We may imagine the two temperaments, each an optical apparatus producing distinct results ; the one, Thoma's, lets everything related to light and colour pass through it, and retains nothing but a few lines ; the other, that of Monet, shows these phenomena as

CLAUDE MONET: CLIFFS AND BEACH AT POURVILLE

PHOTOGRAPH DURAND-RUEL

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they appear to an eye sensitive to light and colour. Both are methods of reduction, as are all artistic processes that deal with Nature ; the difference between them is, that the one was practised with equal success some centuries ago, while the other was discovered to-day, and has increased our knowledge tenfold. In Germany one is led to the cruel conclusion that intellectual suggestiveness increases in inverse proportion to artistic power of perception. Reaction will be more readily effected in primitive beings before the primitive Thoma than before Monet, and beings still more primitive will be more deeply stirred by an anonymous oleograph

than by either. These limitations are sometimes justified by the good the populace gets out of these things ! Degas was perhaps wrong in maintaining that it is no function of art to become popular. But no amount of popularity will make mediocre art better.

Monet, however, has won popularity far beyond the boundaries of his native land» and this will wax greater and greater, for his works have that peculiarly cosmopolitan quality which makes for universal recognition. He painted not only French landscapes, but landscape in general, as it appears to modern senses. He has made these senses keener and purer, and has added to our natural capital of beautiful things.

Of course, we must be able to bear Monet. It requires strong nerves, nerves such as the people were wont to have ; failing these, we may possibly find him brutal, lacking in that perfect harmony the French call " intimiti,\*" and so on. At every exhibition of French art in London, we read that the Impressionists lack this Whistlerian quality. This is hardly surprising if we take the conceptions of European art that prevail in England into account. But earnest Germans have also striven in vain to kindle before Monet's art, and have recorded kindred judgments. The fault does not lie with Monet. In taking " intimiti " as a standard of excellence, there can be no question of purely personal taste, by virtue of which one person likes a particular picture, another some other of equal merit, and of course it is possible to find a given picture by Sisley more " intimate " than one by Monet ; in certain cases, subjective elements contribute to this result, such as the space for which the picture was meant. But if, on the whole, we find, say Carrivere and the Scotchmen " intimate," and Monet, on the whole, the reverse, this is no mere question of taste, but a misfortune, an almost immoral perversity.

For this would mean that " intimate " stands for subdued, dark or sentimental. As a fact, it can only mean the nicely balanced harmony of tones, which is possible with the most diverse colours, but which can only adequately reveal its charms as long as it remains recognisable. Constable painted and wrote superbly on this text. The English aesthete loves shadow. One cannot live with impunity in a town like London, where the sun only shines on great occasions. But then no one really lives in London. As soon as the normal Englishman leaves off work he rushes into the open air. It would be natural to do the same in English art, and Constable was wise in his generation. But if a man stays in the city and is bent on painting — and God knows no city has more of picturesque material — he should take the impression of misty London not as a means but as an end, not copying the dust with colourless dirt, but using luminous colour to render the London atmosphere, in which the essential element is not the dust, but the colour. How Veronese would have painted this dust ! . . .

Rembrandt is commonly quoted in defence of dark painting — Rembrandt,

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who got his darkness out of yellows and reds, whose gloom warms the eye like glowing coals on which the gases are playing. Rembrandt does not avoid colour, he seeks it to master it. The things he had to say demanded the suppression of all material effects; he banished them to the background, but he never killed them. One always feels as if it would be possible to remove innumerable strata from his pictures, revealing a series of new beauties ; the oftener one sees a fine Rembrandt the more one discovers in it.

Our attitude of to-day differs from that of Rembrandt. We are less discreet, and necessarily so, for a revolutionary initiative has been forced on Art, a definite acknowledgment, which must be followed by other professions of faith. The age in which Rembrandt lived permitted him to concentrate himself in a lofty individualism, and to be, if that were possible, the greatest of artists without art. We need more than ever the physics of artistry, because we are seeking a basis for future developments, in order to oppose a new faith to the superstition, which has destroyed all the fundamental laws of craftsmanship.

The instinct of self-preservation forbids us to compare our art with that of Rembrandt. The points wherein the comparison would be in our favour would make us traitors to him ; those which would put us at a disadvantage would force us to question the whole logic of our progress.

One could almost wish that certain great factors could be withdrawn from circulation at a period of decisive development, since we are not always capable of attaining to the point whence such factors can be seen to confirm the development, if this be a healthy one. The apparent negation of our purposes by these exemplars perplexes us, and we have not always the courage to recognise that this negation has only to be thoroughly examined to become affirmation. Yet we know by experience that just at the moment of fiercest revolt against tradition the most fruitful results have been won therefrom.

The contrast between Monet and his Scottish contemporaries is perhaps seven times greater than that between Monet and Rembrandt, and the people who are startled by a vivid Monet, are merely suffering, perhaps, from a constitutional inability to distinguish rouge from natural bloom. There are persons with a defective sense for material, who, governed by the same defective instinct, put up with badly proportioned walls, inferior stuffs, and artificial flowers. Between these and the enemies of the new painting, who cannot tear themselves free from the old, there is a noticeable shade of difference. These stand convicted of an anachronism more dangerous and unnatural than the archaism of those who turn to the old methods because present conditions forbid the satisfaction of their definite and more particularly, their indefinite desires. It is anachronism to be



incapable of realising that we no longer live in houses such as those in which Rembrandt painted, that Rembrandt is great, not because he worked in the shade, but in spite of it, and that the sun, which Rembrandt saw stealing through the little windows of his low-ceiled rooms to play on the heavy stuffs and gleaming metals of their walls, shines gaily into our dwellings. Archaism may be progression in its infancy, the first step on a new path, as it has often proved in our own times. But the love of Dutch darkness for its own sake, when there are painters like Monet in the world, is retrograde. It is permissible to feel doubtful as to the actual value of pictorial art in the present day ; but it is idiotic to hang pictures in our houses which do not even show symbolically the modernity of our developed instincts, and force us, lest we outrage taste, to revive the gloomy interiors of the citizens of the

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CLAUDE MONET: STILL-LIFE

PHOTOGRAPH, DURAND-RUEL

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seventeenth century. He who seeks in the old masters merely the confirmation of natural perception, has no need of them. They were the vehicles of the impulses of their age, the centres of its culture, the concentrations of its ideas. We are not yet advanced enough to use them, if we are not strong enough to resist them. After the monstrous polygamy of our instinct with all the muses of all the ages and nations, it is time to recognise that salvation lies in the monogamy that produces healthy children. As in every decision of such moment, practical considerations must

govern the issue : the healthiest woman, whose person promises most, is the best mate. For such reasons, this modern French art is to be recommended. She is the youngest and healthiest, and we must not reject her, because she is but moderately endowed with nobility of feeling and moral sense.

The Impressionists have given us back normal vision. It is not their {eeniu\$ so much as their healthiness that raises them above the abstract significance of every purely artistic activity of our times, and gives them an aureole no less splendid than the halo that encircles Nietzsche's head. A pious heart was essential to the deepest conception of ecclesiastical art, a flexible mind to the appreciation of the episodic painting of every kind that followed, an apprehension of the current ]f>athos to the monumental compositions of all periods. For this art, the only one proper to us, the requisite is healthy senses. For the ideal of our age, which no less than all other epochs, seeks to reconcile sense and reason, for this religion, which even to-day has its piety, its rapture, its martyrs, this art has painted many an altar-piece. Manet is its genius, Renoir and Cezanne stand like giant Caryatides beside it. Monet may be accounted its best marksman. His importance lies in his healthiness. It is only on materialists that he works materially. No rude awakening from dreams threatens the beauty of the illusions he creates for us ; their limitations coincide with those of our modern art. And even on the spiritual side Monet's treatment of his themes has been significant and far indeed from brutal. Is there any more sympathetic conception of Dutch Nature than the Saardam^ with the two quaint houses by the waterside ? \* It is more than a landscape. In it Monet has painted the very spirit of the people which delights in landscapes such as this ; not otherwise did the old Dutchmen work, who, when they painted the simplest things, painted not only these, but a far-reaching conception of them.

There is a lyric poetry which needs no castles or ruins to call forth its melodious numbers. It inheres in this French Naturalism, swelling to mightiest passion in Monet's famous Belle-Isle series, the triumphant sequel to Courbet's renderings of sea-waves. These marines, superficially mere pictures of the sea, sound depths far greater than B6cklin's naiad-haunted waves, which too often seem to be made of blue tin. The rush of the seething waters round the red-brown fragments of rock, painted with strokes like breakers, sings a mightier song of the greatness of the elements than the sturdiest of the Swiss master's Tritons ; and the vast horizon in others, terrific, non-imaginative works, showing nothing but the surface of the waters, are more powerful in their effects than all the famous sea-idyls, with which German museums have been furnished during the past decade. Good painting needs none of these objective monstrosities, and if it makes use of them, it merely plays with them, as the wind plays among the leaves, and does not attempt to give us drama or any other hocus-pocus by their means. It is the attribute of good pictures to affect by brushing and colour. Of course,

\* Formerly in the Tavemier collection, now in the Stadel Institute, Fnmkfort.

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externals may impede the play of fancy, and it must be admitted that in his later years, Monet seems almost to have invited such a risk. We can pardon the irritation of susceptible persons at his exhibitions in the Georges Petit Galleries, where we occasionally see some dozens of pictures, which show the same section of the same branch in the same meadow, and are only to be distinguished by gradations in the illumination. At a first glance these collections look like great sets of colour-samples, and, indeed, this is what they very probably are. I have seen people collecting more worthless things with enthusiasm. These have at least a hygienic value. After visiting one of these exhibitions I often have the same sensation as after a Turkish bath, a sensation not especially elevating from the moral point of view, but physically pleasant and beneficent. We must not, however, assume *a priori* that Monet repeated the same bit of Nature again and again in a spirit of mere playfulness, for the same thing has been done by other great artists. That he exhibited such studies is an evidence of true importance he attached to the modification of colour by light. To him, the difference between a tree-stump in the morning and the same in the afternoon was greater than the difference between a man and a woman illuminated by the same sunshine. Of course he carried this somewhat to extremes, especially when we think of the good old times, which had but one illumination for all their requirements — and got it by excluding sunlight. We must not cavil at the tendency, for to this golden zeal, which has in it something of the touching tenderness of the older Fontainebleau painters, and springs from a deeper consciousness, we owe the rich scale of modern colour. France owes him her relative familiarity with sensations that are not only of service to the painter. The process has perhaps done little to increase an extravagant worship of unapproachable genius, but it brings us closer to art. There is no sorcery in the matter.

Monet reveals himself best — so far as there is anything obscure to reveal — in the garden he has planted about his country house. He has made it on the same principle as his pictures. A mass of red — gigantic carnations — stands against a mass of white lilies ; beside them a forest of glowing sunflowers. Beyond, a tangle of purple blossoms among clusters of glistening green. It is brilliant, because every individual blossom contributes to the mass of colour, and beautiful, because the mass is nevertheless homogeneous, a fair garden full of picturesque delights.

Monet's painting resembles a kind of flower which we can hardly imagine to have existed before our times : the chrysanthemum. He paints forms akin to their clusters of sinuous slender-tongued petals, yellow without, red within ; to their huge, snow-white ruffles, fit wear for a Pierrot ; to their ragged golden heads, with thread-like reflexed plumes. We recall this flower-like quality when we talk of his colour, or pronounce him a landscape painter or a naturalist. In reality he is a great decorator, who is not afraid to show the means by which he gets his

effects. He recognised his own powers when he devoted his best hours to his cathedral pictures, when he poured the lava--stream of his lightning-colour over a huge form which presented itself to him as a piece of Nature. Here he set his brush-strokes side by side, almost like stone against stone, creating a reproduction not unworthy of the original. In the Rouen series there is something of the splendour of the great masters who made human gestures the vehicles of their distribution of light, and Monet, with his little flecks of colour, has given us marvels comparable to those of the great glass-painters, with their scenes from the Passion.

CAMILLE PISSARO: THE EDGE OF THE LAKE (AU BORD DE L'EAU)

(WATER COLOUR)

CHERAMY COLLECTION, PARIS

CAMILLE PISSARO: THE FOUNTAIN OF THE TUILERIES

BERNHEIM COLLECTION, PARIS

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In Monet a nervous excitability of temperament wars with the intelligence of the colourist; Courbet's animalism with Delacroix' wisdom. His last period shows the predominance of colour over brushing. He generalises in splendid tones. Many friends of the earlier Monet miss, in his latest renderings of atmosphere, the robustness of the sixties, and are not content with richness of colour. As a fact, even the Monet of the latest period is not merely a colourist. What I said above, of a worthy manner of painting the London mists, was written before the last exhibition of the Thames series. In the interval Monet realised the ideal. In these last pictures we seem to see Westminster Abbey and the bridges gleaming through the prism of a huge brilliant. And this brilliance is not solely due to the

palette. Whistler's Nocturnes have shown us what taste in colour means. But put one of these latest Monets beside the most refined of the Chelsea scenes. We shall see then what genius must add to taste to achieve that higher colour which finally triumphs over all the artifices of the palette. Under the glowing mist the old Monet is still vibrating. And this secret art is not unmeet to depict the mystery which the London fog suggests.

With Monet it is impossible not to consider the laws that govern the painter. There are sensitive minds which this artistic analysis revolts ; others find it profitable. Monet's successors made this physiology very apparent.

## FROM A JAPANESE WOODCUT

SEURAT: BATHING (LA BAIGNADE) FRAGMENT, 1884

f6n60N collection, PARIS

## SEURAT AND HIS CIRCLE

### THE APOSTLE AND THE CONGREGATION

The tendency of modern art is towards a transformation of the aesthetic relation between producer and consumer. It aims at giving an ever-increasing activity to the part of the spectator^ and at restricting the artist to the presentment of elements deliberately disconnected. Enjoyment is thus made to depend upon a capacity for carrying out a synthesis.

In Daumier we recognised the great conqueror of this fruitful domain, in Manet the most mature and universal form of a synthesis of material. It was inevitable and necessary that the tendency should expand among their successors. This it did in both branches of painting, line and colour. It was only Van Gogh's wide humanity which laid hold vigourously of both ends at once. While he was painting his experiences, the two groups had already parted company. That one stood nearest to him which vainly strove for definitive results under the leadership of his friend Gauguin. We shall find it later on at Pont-Aven. All the more resolute was the action of the other group, which derived from

Monet, Pissarro, Guillaumin, and others, and completed what their predecessors had left for them to do. It was the easier part of the task, for the achievement of which logic and an open eye sufficed, the more material part ; it left that element of Jongkind that lurked in Impressionism untouched, and held fast to colour. But we shall see that there was at least one among these successors who was not only a disintegrating, but a contributory force.

The older men had discoursed of effects of distance, of a clean palette, of pure colours ; they had travelled in the East or had learnt something of the secrets of colour science by studying the methods of distinguished predecessors. There was a shorter, simpler, and much safer way, which the calm speculation of great savants had begun to mark out from the beginning of the nineteenth century, and which was ready by the time Monet's successors set to work. In 1807 the Englishman Thomas Young formulated his theory of the three stimulants of the retina; in 1853 Dove's study on colour was published; in 1864 Chevreul's decisive work\* on colour-contrasts, in which the scientist for the first time demanded obedience from the artist. In the eighties important results followed quickly one on the other. In New York, O. N. Rood, in Germany, Helmholtz and many others, shed a flood of light upon the subject and found solutions for all the points with which science is competent to deal.

Once more painters appeared with books under their arms, but these were no longer prescriptions for mythological compositions, dissertations on the ideal, dramas or poems. The volumes looked terribly prosaic, and learned formulas took the

\* \*\* De la Loi du Contraste simultané des Couleurs et de l'Assortiment des Objets colorés."

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place of familiar verse on artistic tongues. Even criticism associated itself with the revolutionaries. Felix Finten, one of the few methodical connoisseurs of France, formulated their doctrines. The poet Gustave Kahn became the Baudelaire of the Neo-Impressionists, and fought for them in many instructive essays.\* Many other young critics and poets, Lecomte, Christophe, Th. Nathanson, Verhaeren, O. Mirbeau, &c., ranged themselves under the same banner and completed the new syntax.

The coalition of art with science was a result no less natural than that with poetry and music in the days of Romanticism, and infinitely more useful. Its value lay less in the single and easily over-rated result than in the apprehension of the idea that it was well for the artist, no less than for other men, to emerge from his abstract sphere and share in the sympathetic study of Nature characteristic of the age ; it was welcome as a symptom of a universal modern attitude.

In the main, it was the realisation of that organisatory idea of Taine's which Zola had developed on other lines in literature. Taine was the first who ventured to discourse to his pupils of the physiology of the Ideal; he laid bare the elements of artistic creation with incomparable wisdom. His *Philosophie de l'Art*<sup>1</sup> remains the basis of every reasonable system of aesthetics. None but a Frenchman could have written it. Compare him with Haeckel in his treatment of artistic questions. Taine combined with the acumen of the investigator the marvellous instinct of a race saturated with art. He possessed what Bayersdorfer demanded in the man of science : 'an organ for the worlds that still await investigation.'

The younger men were well prepared by this method, which succeeded in avoiding the crude distinction between art and science, and yet held of all the physiological elements which could be of service to art. The scientific sense of Neo-Impressionism rested, therefore, on a solid basis. But the great desideratum for its trenchant and logical enforcement was an apostle who should demonstrate the departure unequivocally in his own works.

This apostle came forward in George Seurat.

Seurat, of all who came with him and followed him, was perhaps the only one who needed the technique he found, and in whom it did not tend to destroy any valuable characteristics. Signac does not produce quite the same impression. The recollection of certain early landscapes, of which do not belong to the technique of division, is scarcely to be effaced by the best of his later works. He might have entered the lists with Monet's methods ; his individual gifts would hardly have suffered in the process. Seurat, on the other hand, lacked all that distinguished Monet and his circle ; he made up for it by something they were without : a purely elementary creative force, directed solely to monumental ends. His very first work, the *Baignade*<sup>2</sup> a gigantic composition, has the effect of a fresco. The numerous persons bathing or resting on the bank were not put into the picture merely to serve as patches of sunlight. In the carefully considered attitudes there was nothing of Monet ; everything, in fact, was opposed to his solvent analysis. A vigorous conventional structure manifested itself, that was not lost in the colour, but

• In "La Vie Moderne," April 9, 1887, and "L'Art Moderne" (Brussels), and "La Vogue" (series ii. 1889, dealing with the Universal Exhibition). Fénéon's best critical efforts are to be found in a little volume long out of print, "Les Impressionnistes en 1886" (Tresse and Stock), and in "Les Impressionnistes" (Vanier). His short monographs on Seurat, Signac, Luce<sup>3</sup> Pissarro, Dubois-Pillet, &c., were also published by Vanier. Christophers notices appeared mainly in "Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui," already quoted in connection with Van Gogh.

t We reproduce one of these.

SEURAT: SKETCH FOR "LA GRANDE JATTE" 1884

FENFON COLLECTION, PARIS

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adorned thereby. Seurat was the outcome, not of Turner, but of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. With Aman-Jean and Ernest Laurent, he was a pupil of old Lehmann, who had worked in Ingres' studio. Fenfon has told me of purely classical school pictures which Seurat subsequently worked over, covering them with his fabric of coloured dots. In the red cap of the boy to the right in the Baignade, he had already begun to stipple (pointiller) — 'red on red.'\* He felt impelled to enliven the smooth monotony of the school-piece, and found a method which was of immense advantage to him in other ways. He was a friend of Charles Henry, the much-criticised Professor and Librarian of the Sorbonne, who had endeavoured, with dubious success, to arrive by a more or less scientific process at the significance of the linear and colour forms from which art may be speculatively created, an expansion of the work of the aged Superville, who wrote the 'Essai sur les Signes inconditionnels dans l'Art.'\*\* Henry helped Seurat to construct a scientific basis.

Seurat's recipe for painting contains two elements : first, a prescription of quantity, which gives a conventional application to Fechner's proposition as to perceptible minima, and requires the laying on of colour in particles the size of which shall be determined by the dimensions of the picture ; secondly, a prescription of quality, the unmixed use of the pure colours of the spectrum according to the laws of the complementary problem. This part was taken over almost in its entirety from the Impressionists.

Nothing could have proved more convincing than this simple theory, and no one was better qualified to be its champion than Seurat. His methodical intelligence enabled him not only to communicate it to his friends, but to inoculate them with it. Signac adopted the doctrine at once, and became, if possible, a still more ardent proselytiser, reinforcing the demonstrative force of his brush by that of his pen. When, in 1886, Seurat's Grande Jatte was exhibited, Signac was at his side. Both received the storm of abuse that broke over them with perfect equanimity, and repulsed attacks with unruffled logic. In the course of this same year they made a valuable ally in Dubois-Pillet.

Dubois-Pillet was a retired officer of the Garde Republicaine, who occupied



his leisure with painting, and made up for the absence of positive talent by a strong revolutionary strain. He, with many others, had been rejected by the same Salon that refused Seurat's Baignade. Following the example of a more distinguished circle of eleven years before, the despised innovators banded together and opened an exhibition on May 15, 1884, in the temporary building of the Tuileries. Dubois-Pillet found that, as before, the Refuses had it in them to stand without the help of the Salon, and, with ready talent for organisation, he founded the Salon des Indépendants, which opened in December 1 884, in the Pavillon de la Ville de Paris, in the Champs Elysées. Among the contributions was a study by Seurat for La Grande Jatte. Dubois-Pillet the painter was speedily forgotten, but the creator of the Indépendants deserves to be remembered by posterity, as the leader of that first and freest "Secession," in whose galleries so many brilliant talents that but for him might have waited perhaps twenty years for recognition have made their debut. The list includes nearly every remarkable French artist of to-day, and many foreigners.

\* In this case I must perforce use the term stipple (pointillism) so vehemently tabooed by the Neo-Impressionists, for the red dots are on red, and so do not divide colours, but animate the surface.

This early departure of Seurat's is not without its significance. It was not until later that he began to set his particles of colour on a white ground. We reproduce the Baignade.

† See his biography in "Les Hommes d'Aujourd'hui" by J. Christophe.

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The Neo-Impressionists found a hospitable reception here. Adherents multiplied. In 1887 M. Laice and Ch. Augrand joined their ranks, without adopting their technique unreservedly. Cross followed, and the artists of Brussels, where Seurat had exhibited in 1887 at the Société des XX. In 1888 his pictures had been shown in Amsterdam, and had been much remarked by the younger Dutchmen. Pissarro's adhesion in 1886 had greatly improved the position of the group. Signac won a disciple in the Comte de la Rochefoucauld, who afterwards broke away to paint his remarkable kakemonos. Ernest Laurent used the divisional technique more or less consistently in his portraits; Lauzet, the delicate engraver of Monticelli, followed for a while; Petitjean and many others threw in their lot with the group.

For the first time since the primitive periods, not only in France but anywhere, there was a programme which brought the will of the individual into subjection to a perfectly organic doctrine. It was the purest abstraction, but in a different sense from that which had become usual. Whereas the painting of Monet abstracted from all the processes of the old masters on behalf of the personality of the

author, personality tends to disappear here more and more in a method distinguished from the technical convention of the old masters by deeper research into the laws which the eye obeys. And this doctrine seemed to be not so much the result of research as the product of the art of immediate predecessors, in which the real stimulus to the development so far achieved was rightly recognised. Setting Turner aside, it was enough to point to Delacroix. In his studies on Delacroix' diary \* Signac has shown that Delacroix had recognised the principles of colour-division in Constable's works, and had attempted to paint in accordance therewith himself. He points out how in the Louvre picture, *Women of Algiers in an Interior*^ the strong colouristic effect is won by gradations and the use of complementary colours, and traces the artist's progressive efforts in every new picture to clear his palette and to give greater animation to his surfaces by division of the brush stroke and of colour. It was enough to develop this evident tendency and to sacrifice the rest. The sacrifice was made in respect of the differentiation of texture, as taught by the old Dutch masters. Details of texture, whether that of the skin or of clothing, was entirely subordinated. Even Monet neglected texture, in comparison with Manet, who treated the physiology of flesh, of flowers, and of stuffs all alike admirably. For Seurat there was but one unity of material : colour.

If this is indeed the essential thing, the conclusion is irrefutable. But the point is obviously not whether this theorem is true or false, but how far it becomes a means in the hand of the artist for utilising all the capacities he can show. Signac rightly judges Delacroix to have been greatly superior to Monet, inasmuch as he produced ' greater effects by schematic contrasts and by the avoidance of arbitrary mixtures, although his palette was not composed exclusively of the pure colours used by the Impressionists. Monet and Pissarro, revolutionaries far more arbitrary than the painter of *Dante's Boat*^ are often much dirtier in their general effects than Delacroix, and as this occurs in pictures which can only justify their existence by the utmost luminosity of tint, the difference appears a deficiency. Not merely a deficiency according to the doctrines of research, but above all a relative deficiency judged by the standard of the aspirations roused by these pictures. Gold must glitter like gold if we attempt to use it for demonstration.

\* In the " *Revue Blanche* " and " *Revue Populaire des Beaux Arts*." Reprinted in book form as

\*\*D\*Eugene Delacroix au N<sup>o</sup> Impressionisme/ Paris, 1899.

SEURAT: LE CHAHUT (1890)

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

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But with Seurat the actual purpose lay deeper. His most perfect works are, strange to say, his black and white drawings, the remarkable robe of dots in which he draped his classic studies of the nude. I must not, of course, be understood to wish that Seurat had used the same methods in his pictures ; I would merely point out the momentous fact that the indescribable unity of Seurat's drawings was hardly achieved in the same convincing fashion in his pictures, and that what is lacking in these—judging them by the high standard of the drawings—could not be supplied by the mere technique of Neo-Impressionism.

This would seem to show that only certain compositions admit of a logical application of the technique — i.e. a demonstrable treatment by the method of division. Many of Seurat's marines certainly belong to this class — pictures which show only a skilfully indented bit of shore, a few ships, and a sunlit expanse of sea ; as, for instance, the picture in the Osthaus Museum — vast, placid surfaces, where reduction brings out the charms of the original in the most agreeable fashion. Here we have parts enframed by straight lines which urgently demand animation, and here the eye perceives division to be no less necessary in mass than in colour.\*

The decisive question thus presents itself automatically : how far is division necessary and reasonable ? what laws determine its mechanics, now that its chemistry has been discovered ?

It is hardly possible to over-estimate the debt we owe to Seurat for having devoted his powers to this question rather than to technique as such. His methodical mind sought for composition a solution which should go beyond the limits of individual experience, and should call in the aid of science here as elsewhere. All it could say to him he had already learned more easily in the school of that genius who had endowed France with monumental painting : Ingres. He strove instinctively to enlarge this inheritance, and he certainly came to a truer conclusion than those formulated by savants when he adopted the course of development we may now follow distinctly from his first picture, the *Baignade* to his last, *Le Cirque*. Marines were exercises to him, as portraits were to Ingres ; studies made in order to grasp what Nature has to offer of material for decisive tasks. They also made it possible for him to give in certain phases of his development small finished works, where his own purpose did not as yet permit him to achieve greater and more definitive results.

To achieve monumental painting, he started from the law of parallelism, bequeathed to us by the Egyptians, by which all artists who aim at grandeur of effect are more or less consciously enthralled. In his *Baignade* he liquidates the old school, not in technique alone. *La Grande Jane* is the first picture of the new. This parallelism is terrific in its emptiness : it consists almost entirely of straight lines that run into the picture instead of blending ; they are like the beams of a

house as yet uninhabitable. It is a poor but a very essential and thoroughly healthy picture. During the next few years, when not occupied with landscapes — and even then the tendency is perceptible — he was absorbed in the study of form suitable for introduction into his space. It was now that he produced those delicious little •single figures in colour, and in black and white, in which he sought schematic masses. He sees a slender dancer on the stage with her dress as a triangle\* {F6n6on\*s picture) ; on a plump coryphée the skirt becomes a bell {A FEden Concert^ 1866, reproduced in La Vie Moderne). In his nude studies he seeks to

\* I must perforce use conventional terms here, inadequate though they be. By division of mass,  
I mean the division of the material apart from colour ; by division of colour, the optical division.  
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resolved the masses into the simplest contrasts \$ In his wonderful little landscape sketches he shades the planes that Nature shows him. At the end of three years he succeeded in grouping in a large picture several nude figures very effectively posed individually (Count Kessler's Les Poseuses), but the decisive line of ensemble, a definite rhythm, dominating the whole picture, was still denied him\* The next year he found it, on a small scale, in his schematic arrangement of strolling players in a row in front of their booth {La Parade, at Messn. Bernheim's, Paris). In 1889 he made his first success with a large single figure in a fine attitude {Femme se poudrant, at Pinion's), following this up with his first decorative work, Le Chahut^ of 1890. Before his hand had completed what is in some respects the finest memorial of his genius he has left us, Le Cirque, in which he touched his goal, ^ transition from the harshness of straight lines to the flexibility of curved parallels, the strenuous spirit that had ever striven upwards and knew nothing of decline Was quenched for ever.

Like Degas, Seurat took his types exclusively from the theatrical world. Here we find the last of the mortals who still use gestures strongly directed outwards. To the accentuation of the schematic character of this gesture the success of all contemporary spectacle is due. Le Chahut is the artistic transference of one of these not inartistic presentations of stage-decoration to canvas\* The skeleton of the picture is a pattern of parallel pairs of dancing legs^ each of which rests one foot on the inclined plane of the middle distance, and stretches out the other symmetrically in the air. The perfect straightness of these broken parallels is emphasised by the parallel line of the violon^lo, which cuts off a corner of the picture full of motives. To make the square distinct on the two empty sides of the picture, the lamps are set along them. A broad stripe runs vertically from top to bottom. This structure is enriched by a wealth of sub-

systems, such as the beautiful sweep made by the broad white hem of the first dancer's skirt, which encloses a play of parallel pink curves. The only perpendicular figure is that of the 'cello player, a quiet mass, indispensable just where it is, to hide the very sharp angle which would have been formed in the foreground, and to give a vertical element in the lower part of the picture. If the picture has a weak spot, it is certainly here, as this mass is the most independent detail of the whole, and also stands out in the deepest blue tones. The vanishing line of 'spectators' heads, forming a sharp angle terminating shortly before its junction with that of the plane of the dancers, is a very subtle invention. All the rich details in the upper part of the dancers' bodies, notably the exquisite decoration formed by the eyes, mouths, hair, &c., serve to give the greatest possible variety to the parallel passages, and to emphasise the chief directions. The colour consists exclusively of blue, red, and yellow in equal particles, about the size of the head of a match, on a white ground. The gradations, too, are absolutely schematic.

The advance made on this work in the *Cirque* with its gleaming yellow curves, marks a further progress in the mastery of composition. Its angularity that could be dispensed with has disappeared. The very colour seems softer and rounder. He had conquered the means he had sought after with such mighty efforts, and was capable of coping with the greatest tasks when he died at the age of thirty-one, at the end of March 1891.

## PAUL SIGNAC: THE COAST AT PORT-EN-BASSIN

F60N collection, PARIS

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life.; •-\*\*»'

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CLAUDE MONET: THE FIELD OF POPPIES, VETHEUIL 1883

STERN COLLECTION, BERLIN

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PAUL SIGNAC

Und wenn die That zuweilen  
Ganz etwas anders bringt,

So lasst uns das ereilen.  
Was uAvcrkofft gelingt.

GOBTHB.

I HAVE shown how, at a moment when his artistic intentions were not as yet clearly recognisable, Setirat invented a technique which may be accepted as the logical consequence of Monet's Impressionism ; how he made use of this technique henceforth throughout his life, for the embellishment of his compositions ; and how Seurat's individual development to the works of his highest level gave a solution to a problem of monumental art. In this problem the technique of division was only one among many factors. It was the one he found the most rapidly, and preserved much as he found it, without important modifications. On the other hand, he rose gradually higher from year to year in that part of his work which had to do with composition. In this tendency we recognised a desire to approximate to compact, round forms, and to advance from his primitive parallels to a richer linear structure. This progression is apparent in all his works, even in his landscapes, which might be distinguished as or two classes : the primitive straight-lined, and the richer rounded examples.

It now remains to inquire how far the great programme of the school that grouped itself about Seurat has been carried out since his death.

From the first beginnings of Neo-Impressionism, Signac showed himself possessed of a keener sense of the laws of contrast, and greater logic in their application than Seurat. In the exhibition mentioned above, where the Baignade made its appearance, Signac was represented by several landscapes, in which the chromatic programme was

worked out with far greater mastery. The *Baignade* had fewer pure elements than the contemporary *Monets*, and only achieved harmony by its consummate artistic tact. Signac's landscapes, on the other hand, present only prismatic colours ; and if, in spite of this, they lack the repose of *Seurat's* large picture, this is due to Signac's inferior command of the division of masses, in which the painter of *La Grande Jatte* was a master from the beginning.

Like Monet, Signac achieved his results by a penetrating study of Nature, *Seurat* also declared once that he could only paint what he saw. By this he meant to insist that he could not find support in the elements of the *Ingres* school, but required natural images for his creations. We have seen what he made of these images. Signac, on the other hand, actually kept his eyes on Nature. Gifted with a vision keener than that of *Claude Monet*, and to be reckoned among the greatest wonders of creation — an anomaly of disposition which sometimes strikes us as incomprehensible — he had the courage to produce the maximum of harmony by a purely scientific process ; to determine what were the most purely luminous bodies in Nature, and, relying only on this knowledge, and on an experience chastened by exquisite taste, to paint pictures.

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That it was that he, and not *Seurat*, became the creator of this Impressionism^ which seceded from *Monet's* school in order to continue it in the best sense. The method was far in advance of *Seurat's* doctrine of colour. Compared with the glowing tints and vibrant gradations of tone in *Signac's* pictures, *Seurat's* material seems gray and lifeless^ *Signac* modifies the almost mechanical treatment of *J.M.W. Turner* and *Lt. Chahut* by a differentiation that introduces ten values where *Seurat* was content with one. Even *Monet's* latest colour-lanta»es seem prosaic beside those of his successor, who materialises visions which others only bide in dreams. Modern art here arrives at a goal of development to which centuries have contributed. In his happiest moments he succeeded in giving the modern picture — that makeshift with which we beautify our dwellings — a brilliant and even ideal form, making it a beautiful spot on the wall, that lends itself readily to a frame, and represents, if not all, yet the most valuable thing we need in a rational home — beautiful colour in a beautiful form. In spite of all differences of individual gifts, like stages that lead from *Rembrandt's* slaughtered ox to *Signac's* little sea-pieces denote a great advance in the refinement of pictorial art as such, an unmistakable appropriation of the modern painter to a solution of the problem : how to give us Nature without hanging it bodily on the walls. In the narrower historic sense, *Signac* determined the great achievement of the nineteenth century, the creation of landscape. His distant views of *Mont St Michel*, compared with *Monet's* versions of the same theme, are like the tones of a *Stradivarius* after a fanfare of trumpets. They refine the eye to such an extent that it sometimes seems hardly possible to tolerate anything else beside them. The speckly backgrounds that proclaim the fleeting nature

of all earthly things even in the most brilliant works of his colleagues, the necessity with many works of finding the right place to view them from, in order to avoid ugly glimpses behind the scenes, are here conspicuously absent, and the chief impression we receive is one of normal healthy beauty.

And in small things at least this art was not lacking in the charms which Seurat sought in great ones. Signac, too, works in arabesque. It serves as a delicate substructure for his vapourous punting. We discover it more especially where he groups masses ; one of the most exquisite examples of this is the view of Honfleur in the Kessler collection, here reproduced. Perhaps Signac never composed more happily than here — or it may be that Nature never came to his help in more friendly fashion. Note how delicately the group of trees on the left is balanced by the houses on the right, how exquisitely the steamboat moves along between them, its faint cloud of smoke melting in the warm luminous air. In the group of trees in particular there is a rich play of the most delicate involutions, which run through the mass like coloured veins, and are the medium for the remarkable relations with the surrounding air. Here the problem is solved with positive genius. The colour, too, has extraordinary charm ; it is a play of light blues and light pinks, enriched in the masses right and left by perfectly divided yellow deepening to orange, and gaining also immensely by the very varied formation of the colour-particles. For example, whereas the brilliantly observed movement of the water is suggested by horizontal strokes, that increase in vigour in the centre, where the double pink shimmer falls upon it, the glitter of the sunny sky is produced by touches absolutely different in direction. The feathery quality of the trees on the left bank is due to the fact that here the particles of colour are not in relief; the painting is perfectly flat, and even verges on the dreaded fusion of colours.

AtMM

PAUL SIGNAC: MORNING AT SAMOIS 1900

KESSLER COLLECTION. WEIMAR.

PAUL SIGNAC



In such pictures — ^for this work is no solitary example — ^the problem is solved with a perfection unattainable by any other means. Here division is no longer technique as with Seurat, no makeshift, but the thing itself, a kind of balsam for the eyes. No other means would have approached what is here achieved ; and in the recognition of the appropriate method here shown there is more than intelligence — a clairvoyance that comes near to genius. Signac\*s gifts seem to me no less manifest in all his little colour-sketches, in which the delicate nervous energy of this doctrinaire breaks out in a few dashes of aquatint, and we see in full perfection all that hovered dimly before the old father of Impressionism, Jongkind.

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### NEO-IMPRESSIONISM AS AN ART-FORM

If we coasider Sigtiaac solely as the creator of his best works, as we are bound to do, we shall pronounce him a man full of refinement, intelligence, and artistic sensibility, who delights the eye with exquisite, finely tempered things. But we shall have to judge of him quite differently as the head of a school, the propounder of a theory, the creator of Neo-Impressionism, who is responsible for the far-reaching influence of his work and doctrine on a large circle of like-minded ardsts.

Signac the theorist does battle for his cause with the logic characteristic of that cause, which is eloquent in the pictures.

When we read the admirable study by Signac mentioned above, we might suppose that Delacroix had existed solely to provide a legacy of evidences for the Neo-Impressionists. Is it really possible to forget the vigourous composition of his early works in the colour of his later period, if indeed we are able to comprehend his genius at all ? Such an attitude is as if one should declare Goethe's treatise on colour to be the only thing worth reading among his works. What should we say if yet another should make a claim of the same sort for Turner's *Liber Studiorum*^ in which there is certainly far more of the famous Englishman's essential character than there is of Delacroix' individuality in the colour of his Oriental subjects ? It was certainly not Signac's intention to raise doubts as to the importance of Delacroix, who did a good deal more than write documents for

the Neo-Impressionists. But the marked manner in which a single aspect is here emphasised raises doubts as to the harmony of this conception, and these doubts are justified occasionally in the works themselves of the one-sided disciple. The reverse of the medal appears as soon as we ask how far the Neo-Impressionists maybe accounted followers of Delacroix apart from his relative practice of division; what, for instance, is their attitude to his doctrine of composition, concerning which we might also quote from the Journal ? This is no arbitrary question, but one very pertinent to the matter.

The well-meaning committee of a certain exhibition once hung even a Turner upside down. Nevertheless, all the earlier moderns clung to a composition which, in spite of all its free reliance upon Nature, retains unmistakable common characteristics. It might be called the centripetal impulse as opposed to the centrifugal style of composition adopted by the men of to-day. With those of 1830, with Delacroix, Manet, Renoir, &c., the effect always works up to a central point, which represents the heart of the picture, and, because it is natural, appears as the organic centre and not as the traditional form. Degas and his school discarded this principle for an asymmetry which serves the same purpose, in spite of the apparent opposition. But in Monet's later works the effect is distributed, and with the Neo-Impressionists the compact pictorial form tends more and more to disappear.

If this essential element in painting were replaced by the tasteful document we might thankfully accept as the product of a period of transition, we might rest

HENRI EDMOND CROSS: FISHERMEN (VAR) 1901

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But of all the vast output of the Neo-Impressionists, how many of such documents remain if we exclude Signac's work? And how much of Signac remains if we reckon only his successful essays ?

For we cannot account all such detail that conforms to Chevreul's law. Chevreul discovered a hygiene of optics, and he deserves all honour for his discovery. It is essential as is every hygiene ; very important for the general weal of art, but negligible in particular cases. The ideal observance of all hygienic measures would not ensure a comfortable dwelling, and a neglect of very important hygienic rules may at times prove salutary, once all effective action is compromised. The lack of such observance only becomes painful when it is felt subjectively, when we are alarmed in life by the defects of certain conditions of existence, in a work of art by

the absence of elementary premises. It is perhaps impossible to produce artistic works which we can use, i.e. take into our dwellings without any relation to the modern theory of colour ; for a part of our culture is involved in this development. But it would be breaking down open doors to insist that a relative colour-hygiene will suffice for the creation of immortal and essential works. This relativity is no petty conception of compromise, as Henri Martin's triviality would lead us to suppose. The true relativity is governed by laws much older than the modern theory of colour, laws which served for the guidance of Veronese, Vermeer, and Watteau. It is connected with a question of measure in which it matters less how unity is produced than how the unities are employed. I say "less" advisedly ; I do not mean that the creation of this unity, by which I understand the relative purity of colour, could be left to chance ; nay, more : if it were possible for an artist to achieve his unity by means of a perfectly pure form, as the doctrine of optical fusion requires, he would undoubtedly deserve all praise. But it would seem incomparably more important that he should advance in the right way from his unity, on the path prescribed by his individual gifts. It is evident that this perfect logic of the artist does not imply an exclusive application of Signac's theories, for otherwise all painters who had ever heard of these theories would accept them. The theory is in itself so essentially correct and irrefutable that we can scarcely understand why Pissarro, for instance, abandoned it after having adopted it when he was already in his maturity. It is against all reason to ascribe its rejection to the obstinacy, ambition, and vanity of artists. Setting aside the fact that the doctrine belongs, not to Signac, but to science, of whom artists can hardly feel jealous, every painter must admit that if he has been able to accomplish something without a severe division of colour, he would probably do better still on a better basis. But if Liebermann, for instance, remains faithful to his own methods, he follows a well-justified instinct which recognises certain indefinable but indispensable conditions of expression as those most favourable to his talent. This all applies to the division of colour, not the division of masses, in connection with which other weighty causes make any attempt at generalisation futile. As an educational factor the value of the Neo-Impressionist colour-programme is unassailable. We may admit that the education of the colour-sense which Signac preaches is wholly beneficent. If this education could penetrate the whole artistic body, if that which seems a bondage now should become an obvious gain, and if, consequently, the whole sum of artistic creation should be directed according to Nature's laws, the world would have made a considerable advance.

Before we inquire by what means this propaganda is carried on, and what relation it bears to other factors of artistic creation, let us briefly consider

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the second portion of its programme, its manner of dividing masses. Attacks upon Neo-Impressionism are directed primarily against this aspect of its teaching,

its system of handling. And this is, indeed, its vulnerable side. Not theoretically, for nothing that is founded on exact science can be vulnerable. But here the scientific proposition is so right that it almost becomes wrong: it establishes a principle, that of division into particles, but it allows so much latitude in the manner of the division that it practically determines nothing. The interpretation becomes radically false, if it prevents the artist from exercising the gift we reverence in the art of brushing. Here we are not dealing with a unity which under certain conditions replaces freedom by reflection, but with a natural gift which not only determines the composition of the work of art, but, taken in the abstract, is one of the essential factors in the effects which sum up the evolution of the plastic arts. To abolish this mysterious liberty would be to touch the life itself of art. And as long as it represents not only one of the few joys of the eye, but also the mysterious creator of value, to whom we look for important advancement of the problems that lie beyond the planting of pictures, it must be very carefully handled. The value of the great works of 1870 lies not only in composition, not only in colour, not only in gradation of tone, but also in the wielding of the brush, which, as the vehicle of the linear element, expresses all the intimate charm that the suggestion of the material object affords us.

But do the Neo-Impressionists give an equivalent for this, even in their own sphere? Do they, if we judge them on their average, and not on a few brilliant works, achieve that normal pictorial excellence which they claim to ensure?

Here, as I have said, there is no theoretic certainty. The touch is to be determined by the size of the picture. Is it to be measured by the centimetres of the frame, and not rather by the unity of size which is the basis of the picture? Seurat used particles which, at the normal distance from which we view a picture, produce optical fusion; - he achieves the vibration so advantageous to his large surfaces by very simple means. Many Neo-Impressionist pictures — some indeed of Signac's works, more especially the larger ones — fail to meet this requirement, which should be a matter of course with them; They do not blend. The particles and the distances between them become so large that the quiet general effect is destroyed. The picture is an aggregation of separate effects.

Here we approach the point at which Neo-Impressionism, as represented by its latest disciples, is condemned by its own logic.

If we are to believe that the external fusion of the elements in a picture is unnecessary to the picture in everything outside the pure colour harmony, and that this alone is enough to fulfil the purpose of a work of art, we find ourselves in the domain of more or less abstract ornament. Indeed, a masterly juxtaposition of splashes of colour will produce ornamental effects. If this be the object in view, it is difficult to see why every means should not be employed to make these effects as rich as possible, and it is obvious that artists like Vuillard or Bonnard, who bring all the possibilities of mosaic effects into their domain, are richer than the Neo-Impressionist, who admits but a limited number of these possibilities. But if it is

merely a matter of ornament, the discussion comes to an end, after it has gradually dawned upon souls fully alive to ornament that ornament for its own sake is a lovely but peculiarly superfluous pastime, just as demonstrable in its most secret nature as other things which are without objective.

For thirty years and more we have been trained to the appreciation of \*\* pointil-

DEGAS: M<sup>lle</sup> MALOT, DANCER (1870)

(PASTEL)

BLANCHE COLLECTION, PARIS

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lisme <sup>1</sup>\* ; we have reviewed the old art by its standard, and have made many reversals of judgment which have enriched us\* But if the Neo-Impressionists, who aspire to direct individuality logically, rely upon the effect produced by these touches of pigment as such — ^in other words, if they see in the spot of colour, not merely a particle governed by a higher purpose, but something abstract which, though dispensing with individuality of treatment, demands individual vision, they not only stultify their own logic, but compel us to an wnlless renunciation. Manet possesses the mysterious faculty of giving impresuons that suggest the greatest things, in two or three swift strokes ; this is the mastery of a gUted hand which can only express itself powerfully and creatively. To deprive such genius of inspiration would be to approximate pictorial art to a highly developed form of house-painting. For this we have as yet no use.

Seurat recognised this, or rather he was so radically strong and healthy that it never occurred to him that the particle might become an end in itself. He may have followed the one-sided development of the doctrine with which he was himself identified at the outset, with qmet amusement Now he would probably feel alarmed, and seize his brush with redoubled energy to complete his task. This completion is still lacking in Neo-Impresnonism. It has created a material as inspiring to the great creator, dreaming of monumental tasks, as is a finely veined marble to the sculptor. Wisely employed, it is the most brilliant of materials if there is a question of returning to those tasks which once sufficed to art, before the difficult task of providing artistic joys for others was laid upon individuals. This, the most logical of all perceptions, we shall seek in vain in Neo-Impressionism. Seurat has remained the great primitive ; his achievement has scarcely found one to prosecute it among his disciples, whereas what he used as a means has grown

into innumerable ends. With the exception of the Belgians, not one of the original group has conceived the idea of building with this exquisite building material.

To this we sometimes hear the retort that it is not the fault of Neo-Impressionism if the State and the private patron keep their walls to themselves. A dozen martyrs are to the fore in the twinkling of an eye.

But we are by no means convinced that the originators of the art designed it primarily for large surfaces. It may be a residt of our crazy culture that they no longer desire what their predecessors had accustomed themselves to for<sup>^</sup>p. But even if they did desire it, the exclusive suitability of a technique for certain un-attainable purposes would not excuse its partially perverted application to those at our disposal. Signac and Cross, moreover, have proved conclusively how perfectly adapted the technique is even to the most idyllic landscapes. That which is not always adaptable is themselves, and the more they demonstrate the indubitable justness of their theory the more arguments they adduce for their own relative incapacity for cert<sup>^</sup>n tasks. The technique of Neo-Impressionism and that of the Neo-Impressionists of to-day are two absolutely different things. What we have to urge agsunst it applies not to the theory, but to current practice. It is true that no other technique admits of such luminous power in the surface ; but there are hundreds of Neo-Impressionist pictures which are by no means luminous. They do not produce a luminous effect in the only right sense, which conceives of this quality, as of every other, relatively. The art-loving eye desires to see the conception of luminosity ennobled by deeper aims, just, necessary, and creative. The majority of these pictures are uninteresting. They do not give us what they could

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and ought to give, Tbejr seek what b not within the proriice of the technique, or give only what liea widiin that province, withoat giving art. They are, natundly, helpIna before the incfividual in Nature : the most preaous quality in Nature, her wealth of material, is interpreted by a technique which uses the same form to surest the flesh of a woman's breast and the flagstaff of a sailing-boat. Movement in Nature easily becomes with them a kind of paralyns, the m<Mie obvious for being richly adorned with ookwr. If they work out an idea strictly according to thdr principles, everything impels them to a purely decorative treatment, in which all that works prgudic<sup>^</sup>y to them in a fxture by reason of thdr narrowness may turn to their advantage.

It is therefore impossible to exclude the question of purpose, when achievement tends, more than in any other artistic movement, to confine itself to means. And the mmple retort that the demand for form, for the vessel that should

contain all these lights and colours, is wide of the mark, and that the justness of the Neo-Impressionist theory is not to be impugned by an element which that theory leaves untouched, is not conclusive. For as soon as Neo-Impressionism manifests itself as Painting, it must be judged not on its Neo-Impressionistic, but on its pictorial merits. The law of its ^ being only becomes logical and valuable if it is subordinated to the law of the " more comprehensive style. Here the particularity once so decisive may easily become of slight importance and all the wordy theorising may be made abortive by the far-reaching achievement of a great unconscious master bound by no rules, yet able to reach our emotions. Was it not Delacroix, the buckler of the Neo-Impressionists, who made the blunt assertion : ^ " Donnez-moi de la boue, je vous fends des chefs-d'oeuvre 1 "

DEGAS: COMING FROM THE BATH (LA SORTIE DU BAIN)

(PASTEL)

TA VERNIER COLLECTION, PARIS

## NEO-IMPRESSIONISM IN BRUSSELS

Neo-Impressionism would seem specially adapted for a great school, governing a colossal style, for a scheme such as that conceived by the unhappy idealist van Gogh, who dreamt of the impersonal expression of the individual in favour of a mighty collective activity. The one thing lacking is style ^ the element which worked so powerfully a thousand and two thousand years ago for the mosaicists, the predecessors of the Impressionists. ^

Whether this will come or not, remains to be seen. The result is happily quite independent of the fate of contemporary Neo-Impressionists. However pessimistic our attitude towards certain achievements of the group, we see a rich prospect before them in fields as yet unexplored. Even Denis owes a good deal to their technique, and outside Paris, results are manifesting themselves in rich abundance. France is perhaps least adapted, of all places, for its further evolution. For a century past it has teemed with collectors, and artists come into the world with an instinctive readiness to satisfy their demands. The task of propagation seems to devolve naturally on countries which have further goals in view, and so will not allow Neo-Impressionism to detain them over long.

Belgium first approached Seurat with the idea of continuing him. Finch, the most active of the little colony which afterwards settled in Brussels, took the first step. Whistler taught him to etch\* He painted subdued sea-pieces at Ostend, and

longed for colour. His English blood gave him decorative aptitudes. In the new doctrine he found authority for a flat painting, for which he foresaw greater facilities in Belgium than in Paris. When Octave Maus founded the Societe des XX at Brussels, just when the Indipendants formed their society in Paris, a good deal of enthusiasm was shown in Paris, though on what grounds it was not quite clear. The Twenty, among whom was Finch, consisted of very different elements,\* young and old, and they invited all sorts of artists to exhibit as guests. Whoever was seeking out new paths, and was capable of giving expression to his ambitions, was welcome. The foreign visitor owed Les XX the revelation of many obscure talents, as for instance, the great Henri de Braekeleer, with his inimitable interiors, the aged Xavier Mellery with his delicious little peasant pictures, and, last not least, Constantin Meunier. Scarcely one of the great Parisians was unrepresented. Rodin, who had worked in Brussels as a young man, was better known there at first than in Paris ; Pissarro had many good friends in Belgium. When Seurat appeared, Les XX gave him a brilliant reception.

\* The twenty were : Achille Chainaye, Franz Charlet, Guillaume Charlier, Henri de Groux^  
 Dario de Regoyos, Paul Dubois, James Ensor, A. W. Finch, Fernand Khnopff, Edicien Rops, Willy Schlobachy Jan Toorop, Theo van Rysselberghe, G. van Strydonck, Isidore Verheyden, Guillaume Vogelsy Rodolphe Wytsman, and one woman, MUe. Anna Boch. Octave Maus was the secretary, and the treasurer made up the score. Later, Van de Velde, Lemmen, and Minne joined. The exhibitions were much smaller than those of the Ind^pendants, where all works sent in were hung without reference to a jury. In Brussels they showed a happy talent for selection, and their exhibitions still linger in the memory as ideal. When, after a distinguished career of ten years, Les XX became La Libre Esth^tique (1894), the exhibitions became more extensive, but they lost something of their artistic prestige in the process, though many of these exhibitions may also be recalled with pleasure.

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In Brussels, Neo-Impressionism was less a school of painting than a practical art programme of a comprehensive nature : to one group among Les XX, comprising the most vigorous spirits of the association, it gave a system of colour. They were, in addition to Finch, Theo van Rysselberghe, Henri v. d. Velde, George Lemmen, and Anna Boch. As a painter, Rysselberghe was the happiest



among them. He was a native of Ghent (b. 1862), and when Seurat made his discovery, he was still young enough to crown an education by individual fruition. To him, as to many others, the exhibition of La Grande Jatte in Paris in 1886 was a revelation. He is sharply differentiated from the Parisian painters in this respect : he saw in the technique a means of rendering the human figure, the essential element of all monumental painting. He began with portraits. A journey to Morocco in the winter of 1887 withdrew him, to his great advantage, from the narrow sphere of the group. It may be that he saw larger lines in the East. In 1890 he painted his *Femmes dans un Verger* in which his personal aptitude for decoration on a grand scale stands revealed. He had not as yet made himself master of a strong system of composition ; his gift was manifested in the long series of portraits to which he devoted himself almost exclusively for six years. In these single figures, which he set very effectively in the allotted space, he learnt the division of the surface. An unerring taste preserved him from the temptation to essay superfluous ornament in details, which seduced Signac into the curious rainbow caricature of *Enfants*.<sup>\*</sup> The large group with which he concluded the series seems to set the coping-stone on this portraiture.

All Ryssdberghe's works are rhythmic creations. The art he offers us does not, perhaps, always spring from very profound sources. His conception sometimes recalls Besnard's loose manner. But if it rarely rises to the lofty altitudes of art, it avoids its cliffs ; and it is entitled to respect in these days, as the endeavour of a simple, healthy person to use his art reasonably. In his first great decoration, *L'Heure Chaude* our satisfaction in the very pleasing bathers is marred by the lack of distinction. The picture has undeniable charms, but they lie rather too flat. The composition again, lacks firmness ; it slips from the right — the group on land — to the left where the girls are playing in the water, instead of merely leading the eye along. We note the influence of the flimsy Paris Salon, not that of the great French tradition to which Seurat owed so much. All the more do we rejoice in the advance on this work which marks the Solvay wall-paintings, in which Rysselberghe's best qualities have all combined for the creation of a modern idyl, a masterpiece of the school and, indeed, of contemporary art.

Neo-Impressionism has served the other Bruxellois as a point of departure for industrial art. Finch became a potter. About 1895, Count Sparre took him to Helsingfors, where he directs the manufacture of china by the peasants, though he has not abandoned painting. Lemmen is indebted to the school for the fine colour of his decorations on canvas and paper, in glass mosaic, and carpets. But he perhaps owes more to Seurat the draughtsman than to Seurat the painter. At least, his charcoal portraits heightened with colour seem to me by far the most remarkable productions of his early period. A portrait group of three women exhibited several years ago at the Libre Esthetique Gallery combined a peculiarly firm grasp of physiognomy with a firmly knit and finely balanced form. The brilliant

<sup>\*</sup> It figured in the exhibitions of the early nineties under the characteristic title, *Sur tige*.

Jhnd rkftkmi^ue di mawns it tangles^ di tMs it de teinUs^ portrait di M. Filix FMw^ and was not the only unfortunate essay made by Signac.

## NEO-IMPRESSIONISM IN BRUSSELS

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typographer stood revealed in the rhythmic lines, and yet one could not avoid the impression that the work was a faithful portrait. The manner did not appeal to every one. If Rysselberghe sometimes appears frivolous, a perfect type of the modern enterprising Belgian, the old slow Flemish blood still flows in the veins of Lemmen, and seems almost antagonistic to the new form. His performance is never trivial ; he has indeed given us magnificent inventions, but his very richness is sometimes oppressive; we are no longer accustomed to such opulence. His rhythm inclines to breadth, like his ornament, which, in contrast to Van de Velde's slender line, covers as much surface as possible. Nevertheless — and this is his most beneficent quality — we shall never find a line in Lemmen that is not his own. He has been strangely, we might almost say fortunately, neglected by modern industry, for his ill success has driven him back to painting. For the last few years he has been producing delightful interiors with very refined colour and a draughtsmanship neither more nor less intent on arabesque than that of the old Netherlanders, Unpretentious as they are, these pastels seem to me to represent the most cultivated painting of contemporary Belgium ; they are the equivalent in Brussels for Vuillard in Paris. Lemmen's sojourn in the domain of decoration has given firmness to his hand : he is harsher than the Parisians, less amazing than Bonnard, less subtle than Vuillard ; but, on the other hand, he gives something no less independent in simpler form. He remains a Fleming, unconcerned with the fluctuations of the artistic life about him, and intent on continuing the glorious tradition of his native land, to which end De Braekeleer also worked.

Of all the Belgian Neo-Impressionists, Van de Velde was the one who remained exclusively a painter for the shortest time, if indeed he was ever so. His development into the artist we now honour was in no sense due to Seurat's school. I

shall try to indicate his importance in a later chapter.

◆◆◆◆◆ 4^ «

Thus in little Brussels we see Art mingling its current with Life, and this

result suffices to glorify the whole Impressionistic development. It may even justify its perfunctory painting, the conditional nature of its technique — indeed, its whole existence. Even now many of the Impressionists' pictures are falling from the canvas like crumbling ashes ; others are turning to colourless dust within their frames. The very splendour that most delighted contemporaries has been the first to perish. Yet if we think of the results, for the moment most evident in Brussels, but daily manifesting themselves more and more clearly wherever colour is being used, our melancholy at the evanescence of these documents is relieved by the glad reflection that the light they gave us was not extinguished until it had revealed the way of the future.

FROM A DRAWING BY GEORGE LEMMEN

FROM AN ETCHING BY HENRI DE BRAEKELEER

END OF VOL. I

PIERRE BONNARD: NUDE STUDY

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

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MODERN ART

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RODIN. HEAD OF THE BALZAC

RODIN: FAUN AND NYMPH

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

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MODERN ART

BEING A CONTRIBUTION TO A  
NEW SYSTEM OF ESTHETICS

BY

JULIUS MEIER-GRAEFE

FROM THE GERMAN BY

FLORENCE SIMMONDS

AND

GEORGE W. CHRYSTAL

VOLUME II

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## ERRATA

Page 219, line 25, "were" read "was."  
,, 228, line 1, for "Manet" read "Monet."  
,, 240, line 34, for "Mirabeau" read "Mirbeau."  
And in footnote 1 "Droit" read "Detroit."

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COLOUR IN SCULPTURE

## FROM JEAN GOUJON TO CARPEAUX

Notre sculpture, pour être expressive,  
n'a jamais été bien tranquille.

Ph. DE CHENNEVILLE.

We find in sculpture the same evolution we have observed in painting. Here again we see the movement of a huge, many-limbed body, and the extremities of the unwieldy mass are so far in advance of the rest, and have been so greatly modified on the new road, that they scarcely belong to the body from which they sprang.

Here, even more emphatically than in painting, the nineteenth century was the decisive period. Whereas in four hundred years the solution only advanced by millimetres, our era has covered, with one bound, the important interval by which painting had gained on the sister art.

The development was further retarded by the fact that interest in sculpture declined proportionately to its increase in painting. When the cohesion of the arts relaxed, painting was able to become an independent thing. For the moment it was the more prosperous ; it changed its original function completely ; indeed, it became almost a new art, which apparently possessed not only all the earlier qualities, but had superadded so many others that its variety was dazzling. Sculpture, on the other hand, could only lose by the revolution. It had no part in the new uses which were so favourable to painting, but remained an alien thing, unpopular, because unadaptable to the dwelling-house, by nature unpractical, non-portable, and costly.

This, indeed, saved it, protecting it from over-refinement, in design as in technique, but at the same time depriving it of the genius which had made it pre-eminent in the golden age of art. It was susceptible neither of the benefits nor of the dangers due to strong individuality, which was perpetually removing all landmarks in the other arts. Since the days of Michelangelo there has been a great deal of talent but little genius in sculpture. It followed obediently in the wake of architecture long after painting, which was in advance by all that Holland and Rembrandt had given. Even Carpeaux' Amoretti on the beautiful Pavilion de Flore bow to tradition, and the difference of period between him and the mightiest of those who made a temple of the Louvre, Jean Goujon, seems less than that which divides the contemporaries, Fragonard and Delacroix.

When architecture ceased to develop artistically, sculpture was somewhat at a loss to justify its existence ; at times it found itself in the painful position of a naked lady among fashionably dressed gentlemen !

## 2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ART

This is the part it continues to play in Germany, where, raised on high on its lonely pedestal, it retains its majestic attitudes, while tram-cars jingle below, and things very different from those it is in the habit of immortalising are going on around it. It was finally obliged to don the uniform of the military memorial, as the alternative to complete effacement from the life of the nation.

In France it fared better. In Dalou we still discern the style of the city that prayed to Louis XIV., and in the smallest reliefs with which Desbois decorates his pewter bowls there is a whisper of the lofty language Puget spoke. Artists had style in the blood when they no longer saw it before their eyes.

There had been danger here when classicism threatened to overcome the supple form of Pigalle, Falconet, Houdon, and Clodion, who had perhaps given a more exquisite as it was certainly a nobler image of Watteau's age than the great painters. They had escaped the perils of the Baroque with extraordinary tact. Clodion's drawings justified the strongest misgivings as to his sculpture, and yet how cautiously he avoided extremes here. Houdon especially, the creator of the colossal San Bruno in S. Maria degli Angeli in Rome, and also of the slender Diana in the Louvre, conceived the "noblesse oblige" of his age with great depth and distinction. His Diana is almost as stately as Goujon's Diana with the Doe; its loveliness is free from the ostentation which oppresses in many works of Goujon's and the later sculptors; the naked body has a grace and modesty above all sensuous beauty.

Here classicism found nothing to regenerate; it could only destroy a highly cultured Grecianism, which the Baroque style had not enslaved, but crowned. Its disastrous influence was the more certain, inasmuch as the instrument of this soi-disant classic intention was a David.

The definitive expulsion of the Baroque approximated to the annihilation of French sculpture, a negation of the most glorious records of French history, the destruction of a deeply rooted individuality, which had once distinguished the French from the Italian Renaissance, in spite of the dependence of the one on the other.

Rude frustrated the attempt. He reacted with a gigantic energy which thrust aside the intermediate links between Germain Pilon, Goujon and Michelangelo himself and laid a new colossal foundation for future development. It was the same force that manifested itself in the appearance of Delacroix, who had likewise given the highest expression to the reaction against David by a return, not to Fragonard, but to Rubens. The relief on the Arc de Triomphe sounds like the battle-yell of the ancient Gauls. We can understand why Thiers, Rude's patron, refused a group the artist had designed for the summit of the Arc de Triomphe, fearing diplomatic complications.

Barye toned down this furious passion. He introduced a milder measure, more suited to the age ; the genius of this correct person, more like an accountant than an artist, is more apparent in his incomparable drawings than in his well-modelled animal sculptures. Delacroix helped him, but the result was absolutely novel ; he knew how to organise the fugue in design, and how to give it form much more concisely than his greater friend, and for this he used colours we should expect to find anywhere rather than in the work of a sculptor. When sculptors become colourists in their drawings they generally look like officers in mufti. Barye's pastels are among the loveliest fairy-tales of modern colour, and fore-shadow no less an artist than Degas. On paper, he models his animals in small, in their splendid velvety coats ; his lionesses are more akin to a magnificent striped

## JEAN GOUJON: RELIEFS ON THE FOUNTAIN OF THE INNOCENTS, PARIS

### FROM JEAN GOUJON TO CARPEAUX 3

Angora cat than to the beasts Delacroix drew ; it is a pleasure to watch them crunching a human being ! And yet they are wonderfully lifelike !

Barye's pupil, Carpeaux, returned to the Baroque manner. Sculpture in his hands became more animated than it had ever been in the eighteenth century on a similar scale — more animated not only in action, but in the mass. The Ugolino in the Tuileries Gardens, the first important work by the master of La <sup>^</sup>anse, designed by the youthful " Prix de Rome " at the Villa Medici, horrified the Director by its divergence from all the laws of well-disciplined smoothness. It was the Massacre of Scio in sculpture, exemplifying the axiom of Carpeaux' great successor : " La Sculpture, c'est l'art du trou et de la bosse."

The Ugolino was no solitary essay. It was the beginning of that system of deep hollows Carpeaux applied to his material. The group already mentioned, on the pediment of the Pavilion de Flore, when closely examined looks like a combination of deep clefts; Rubens might have modelled the angels. The work recalls yet another great name. Daumier's drawing in the Calais Museum, the Procession of Silenus<sup>^</sup> has the same exuberant carnality.

With certain reservations we may call this tendency a pictorial one, because, as manifested in our time, it was obviously inspired by painters ; by Watteau, to whom his compatriot Carpeaux raised a statue at Valenciennes, and by all the others

who made the play of light in pictures an important element of their art. But this pictorial tendency is complex, like all modern artistic elements. It belongs in reality in the deepest sense to sculpture, which, in borrowing it from the sister art, only took back what it had given it in ancient times.

When painting ceased to content itself with material colour and outline, it had perforce to encroach on the domain of sculpture. It simulated relief, instead of confining itself to the decoration of the flat surface, as the mosaicists had done. When Giotto decorated his Campanile with reliefs, he was hardly conscious that he was working in a medium other than that in which he had created his frescoes. If we turn to the beautiful relief under the superb St. George of Or San Michele, which seems to ripple like a smile over the surface of the marble, we shall note a tendency even more pronounced to paint, as it were, with the chisel.

But we shall have to go back still further to find the point of departure of the two arts. Perhaps the Egyptians called the characters they cut on the Pyramids sculpture, and the signs they wrote painting. Nothing would be more natural than that relief should be developed from the carved inscription. But painting has no right to arrogate to itself that which makes the beauty of the bas-relief. We might as reasonably describe that which we call picturesque in a metaphorical sense, as plastic.

The truth as to which of the two arts this quality belongs lies in the mean. Both have the same end in view, the effect produced by light. The architect of the ancients, who was neither painter nor sculptor, but everything, placed his ornament where he wished to give animation to his surface ; and the decorator aimed at distributing light by an arabesque more or less vigorous, reproducing the large effects of the architect on a small scale. Such was the most universal aim of these arts, of course in their material aspect only.

The more architecture, the nerve of their common being, declined, leaving the two auxiliary arts to independent development, the more the line of division between them tended to disappear, and the more energetically did both strive after the object of their common aspiration, light. Sculpture was no longer a filling for an empty

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space destined to receive it, a space to which it could give stronger effects of light and shadow than could painting. The Ugolino creates reliefs and hollows in his own body, places his children around him in the guise of an individual, fantastic architecture, and treats every particle as a whole, as he would himself have been treated by earlier creators. The guiding principle which the architect recognised

in a high conception of the laws of space found a parallel in a freer and no less valuable axiom, a sense of the nature of light and shadow in a thing existing for itself alone. The study of the naked body in brilliant light is the best education

he can have.

The doctrine seems as old as Greek plastic art. It is in fact one with it ; what has changed is Nature. The models which showed Phidias the natural ease of accustomed nakedness are no longer attainable. The world has grown uglier, and not only in models. It seems as if all architecture only existed to deceive us concerning this ever-increasing ugliness. The outlook is horrible. If we had not the evidences of earlier human beauty before our eyes, our deformities would not prevent one of us from accepting himself as an Adonis. But Phidias, Scopas, and Praxiteles forbid it. Even when the Renaissance discovered the ancients, the change must have made men wonder.

There is one comfort. It is not only the beauty of these bodies, but the art in them that charms. The Greeks were distinguished, not by their beautiful noses, which many of their statues have lost in the course of centuries, but by their organism.

And now an eager search for organism begins. David d' Angers, Pradier, Rude, Carpeaux, Falguiere, &c., each after his own manner, seek the strongest organism, the conception of Nature most favourable to the play of light according to their respective ideas.

This was the difference with the Greeks : they knew where to seek ; their efforts were directed by the life they led, a life which impelled them, to represent the nude. When men began to clothe themselves, and architecture, doing likewise, came to the fore, it determined the goal. Now we have neither the one nor the other ; we depend on the goodwill of the individual, and each individual attempts to give us something different. There remains but one common goal for the i^w who concern themselves at all with artistic endeavour : to get as much light in the surface as possible. To achieve this end, it is permissible to make up figures of hollows, Daumier's Ratapoil has become our Aphrodite.

And even if, in the place oi Ratapoil^ we take some no less logical but more serious beauty, the development is fundamentally the same. Sculpture has become uglier than it ever was, and has increased in vigour proportionately. Rude's yell would have been hissed in any other age. It is a very robust art, akin to the painting of Cezanne and of Van Gogh ; stronger than Puget's two giants who support the balcony of the Town Hall at Toulon, for the group on the Arc de Triomphe carries nothing but its shriek, and yet it makes the effect of a mass. Carpeaux, too, is more robust than kindred artists in other ages. How much more vigorous are many of his portraits than Houdon's little Voltaire ! â€” Voltaire was all wrinkles, a rich field for the play of light, and Houdon managed to make him quite smooth, once even without his wig.



But there is something strangely poignant in this smoothness ; it recalls another stone skull that gleams from a niche in Rome, crowning a colossal figure which has no hollows at all, only a few gigantic, flat, yet luminous folds in the drapery – that creation of a lofty mind, San Bruno ! . . .

^H^HI

^H

^Hf^H

L. RICHIER: FIGURE OF DEATH

CHURCH OF ST. PIERRE, BAR-LE-DUC  
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

FROM JEAN GOUJON TO CARPEAUX ' 5

Before this statue we feel as we do before Poussin's copy of the Nozze Aldobrandini in the Doria Gallery. Involuntarily these Frenchmen become contemporaries. We seem to be almost tangibly in contact with the greatest of

human creations ; the breath of a divine era passes over us. How discordant is the shrieking present in comparison ! What does it profit us that it lives ? Life seems a small matter in a creation. Is not this quieter existence, in which the resurgent divinity slumbers, a thousand times more vital ?

Slowly the grim ghost of the Ratapoil sinks into the depths, and we say with le Roi Soleil : " Otez moi ces magots ! "

\*t\* \*i\* Â«1Â« â€œ!Â« mim ab vk

Â«t\* ^ ^ ^ gft Sjfi 9fi

The difference between the Baroque of Carpeaux and that of Houdon is the Attic element in the master of the Diana, an occult form in the forms, which can only be described as Greek. It enabled him to resist the seduction of rippling lively planes, and to sacrifice animation in detail to that complete and quiet contour which permits us to view the work from any point, and never lets the spectator come too near.

The relation of the nineteenth century to the eighteenth has a parallel in that of the great sculptor of the seventeenth century, Puget, to the master of the French Cinquecento. Puget was also a painter, and he was always tempted to paint rather than to chisel his forms, Goujon, on the other hand, was an architect, like the Gothic artists, and when he designed his Diana with the deer he was governed by that idea of the common home of all the arts which gives such regal dignity to his female figures for the Fontaine des Innocents.

This Greek element, which we shall also find in French painting down to the present day, has been the guiding principle of French sculpture from its birth, and it may fairly be said that it has only been really happy, and has only shown the generous quality we love in French art, when its masters have had the lofty art of Athens before their eyes or in their minds. Indeed, even in Gothic art, when as yet there was no conscious thought of the ancients, we seem to trace this lofty classicism. Reims Cathedral is full of thirteenth-century figures in which the spirit of Greece seems to slumber. This Grecianism tends to a very different and far more powerful development than that of Italy, which grew out of the style of Phidias. In the remarkable female figure with the mantle and head-cloth, on the north door of Reims Cathedral, we seem to recognise a structure as mighty as in the pre-Phidian sculptures, and we ask ourselves wonderingly why this force did not in like manner become a source of native development. " Such figures," says Gonse, " show what France was doing two hundred years before Donatello. In sculpture, as in architecture, France was then the mistress of Europe." \*

The claims made by Viollet-le-Duc and his successors to this style as the national language of France, and their rejection of the term Gothic as applied thereto, are perfectly justifiable. They attacked the Romanism of the academics

with equal energy. Viollet-le-Duc opposed the "civilisation sympathique" of the Greeks to the "civilisation politique" of the Romans. He demonstrated the vast superiority of Greek to Roman architecture with irresistible logic, and traced the connection between the art of mediaeval France and the Byzantines, with whom he felt himself more in sympathy than with the ideals of the Renaissance. It was the same spirit which inspired Morris and his circle in England, but in the Frenchmen there was further the Greek spirit from which we expect new

\* "La Sculpture française," Paris, 1895.

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achievements. In all the more modern works of French writers on their native art we note, at the sore place where the Renaissance begins, an ill-concealed chagrin. Corroyer, who in his excellent studies on Romanesque and Gothic Architecture traces their close relation to each other and to the antique,\* refuses to admit the French Renaissance into the same circle, and prefers to derive from the Flemings, who contributed to the development of Gothic, rather than from the \*'Italians' of the time of Michelangelo. From many an architect who studied under Viollet-le-Duc we may learn how thoroughly this patriotic artist understood the heart of his people.

No one can fail to respect his somewhat narrow prepossession ; indeed, it is easier to over-estimate such an enthusiasm than to tolerate the eclectics, who turned their backs on Viollet-le-Duc's wholesome doctrine because they were incapable of rising to his level.

It was necessary to surpass him. Who would willingly sacrifice all the beauty we should lose if we could dispense with the French Renaissance ? Perhaps that is the higher patriotism which sees in the movement that took place in France at the end of the fifteenth century a thing necessary and inevitable, with which we have to reckon to-day as had the artists who, when they contributed to the Renaissance, carried out not only their own wills but those of other forces. The only essential point is how they acquitted themselves. Sometimes it seems as if Gothic art had never died, as if Michel Colombe had only found a new form to celebrate the spirit of his fathers when he carved the tomb of the Due de Bretagne and Marguerite de Foix in the cathedral of Nantes. And if the whole wealth of the new style reveals itself in the monument of the two Brézés in Rouen Cathedral, once more the old seems to be crowned by the new. All the splendour of the pillared structure, with its truly Goujonese figures, serves but to glorify the naked corpse on the sarcophagus, which only the heir of Gothic masters could have made so deeply impressive.

This expressive power had to make use of milder forms in a less strenuous age,

and here again the flexibility of the national genius tended to the discovery of its more characteristic manner. The Renaissance might demand indulgence even if it had only served to show the French the primitive style of their Muse – what I have ventured to call their Grecianism.

Call it what we will, this higher consciousness of style, which makes the mysterious primitive genius of the race perceptible in all the changing forms of the day, never died out in France. It has always prevented delight in colour from degenerating into extravagance, both in the painted and the sculptured image. . .

â™| " L'Architecture Romane," 1888, and " L'Architecture Gothique," Quantin, Paris, 1891. C/.  
also Anthyme St. Paul, " Histoire monumentale de la France," Hachette, Paris, 1884.

GERMAIN PILON

LOUVRE, PARIS  
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

THE THREE GRACES

CARPEAUX. SKETCH FOR THE UGOLINO

RODIN. FIGURES DU PURGATOIRE

PIERRE PUGET: CARYATID ON THE TOWN-HALL AT TOULON

AUGUSTE RODIN

J'ai fait cela ainsi, parceque  
je l'ai vu dans la Nature.

Rodin.

Michelangelo and Rodin are congruous phenomena, but this parallelism is not determined so much by the obviously kindred elements as by the mysterious destiny common to their arts. The later master is certainly the weaker of the two, yet not as a personality, but as the product of his age and country. The world is three hundred years older, and proportionately richer "that is to say, fuller, more complicated, and consequently less vigorous. The will is the same" indeed, it has perhaps gained in intensity "but it is as intent on internal things as was that of Michelangelo on externals, in comparison with our art. It aims from the small to the great. Or rather, space has become so circumscribed in the world that art must be content to essay the effects of the ancients with a fragment of their means.

This fragmentary quality springs from the same root in each, and harmonises with the other relations between the two. In the case of Michelangelo, it was excused to some extent by external conditions, such as his wrath with the Medici and Julius II., who spoilt the Moses, and by the political misfortunes, which interrupted his Florentine labours. Rodin, too, had his moments of tribulation : the refusal of his first piece, *Homme au Nez Casqué* by the Salon Jury ; after some years of arduous labour again, the intelligence of critics who accused him of having cast his *Age d'Airain* from nature ; and finally, towards the close of the century to which he had given its greatest sculpture, the stupid insolence of the *Société des Gens de Lettres* who scorned his *Balzac*.

But were not these irritations perhaps beneficial after all : safety-valves, which helped to save from the deeper tragedy of internal conflict ; fortunate pin-pricks spurring the victim to resistance ?

Michelangelo found a point on which he could lay firm hold, an order for which he was able to substitute another. His successor hovers in mid air, and even if he had the strength of the giant who raised the dome of St. Peter's, he could not repeat the experiment. All his strength only serves to increase the disorder of the age which has produced him. His very wealth makes his insufficiency. His genius will drive him from form to form, and at best he will sink down there where he should have begun in order to reach his goal. His destiny resembles the prancing horses that rush forward from the pedestal of the splendid monument at Nancy, snorting with ardour and with the fury of their course, and ever urged onward by the genius, who, his gaze turned away from the direction they are about to take, stares heavenwards to the light that dazzles them.

Rodin has essayed every path on which artistic instincts have travelled, and on some of these has come to the same issue, which many tendencies in modern

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painting have sought and found so successfully that we almost might believe we had reached the utmost limits of art, of the moderns. Is there not but one solution to all the riddles ? That our age has no longer the desire of former periods to avoid extreme consequences. With the magic word Nature it extends to all boundaries, even those of the unnatural.

On the way thither, and especially towards the end, there are sublime moments.

There is an early Greek Rodin of the first decade of the Phidian century, an Egyptian one like the faces found in tombs on the Nile, which look like modern portraits. He is to be found in the drawings of the middle period ; for instance, the head of St. John, which he repeated so often, where the eyes are black holes, as in the old bronzes, and yet look at us with the utmost intensity, because the whole face is governed by an admirable plastic law ; or in those little figures which the Greeks made in bronze, but which Rodin often left in plaster, that the delicate language of the limbs might not be exposed to rough hands.

In the monument to President Lynch he has all the nobility of a North Italian equestrian statue of the early Renaissance. This air of distinction is also found in many of his male busts. In *Le Baiser* he seems to simplify Michelangelo. In the *Eve* he continues him. The French Renaissance proclaims itself in details of the *Porte d'Enfer*. The *Angel of War*, stretching threatening wings and arms into the air on a lofty rock, reminds us of a rejuvenated *Rude* ; the old woman, *Celle qui fut Heaulmiere*, recalls *Daumier*, who is still more strongly suggested in many drawings. In others *Ingres* makes himself felt. The *Bourgeois de Calais* are humanised Gothic ; his portraits of women the purest expression of gentleness in the midst of pride that the sculptors of the eighteenth century could have allowed a modern sculptor to produce. In the little studies of movement in marble and bronze, *L'Amour qui passe*. *La Fille d'Icare*^ *Eternel Printemps* and many others, he seems to personify the convolutions of French Baroque of the finest period ; but Rodin's Baroque seems to have taken over only the poetry, the tenderness, the sweetness of the mock pastoral age, without an atom of its typical form.

Finally, in his *Balzac* and kindred works he completed *Carpeaux*.

Thus the development of genius in all ages shows itself in a single personality. And the wonderful part of it all is that it is only Rodin one enjoys. His is not the thin, decorative manner of the perennial clever artist of our day, who moves us by reminiscences. Here we have nothing of the antique form, nothing that could have been the work of the ancients. All is Rodin. He has not reached his

development in due historical sequence, but has the power to bestow his gifts upon us after the manner of a Greek, of a Renaissance master, of a Frenchman of the eighteenth century simultaneously, bringing the charms of all periods together in a single work.

Rodin is no stylist ; he is less so even than Michelangelo, much less so than Goujon. He conceals the division of masses, for which his predecessors involuntarily made use of a remnant of mathematical thought, beneath the wealth of his forms. The effects are so numerous that those among them which make for rhythm complete the work imperceptibly. He naturalises the style of the earlier masters, so to speak. Where a Puget gets his result by emphasising the muscle, he puts the movement into the limb and gives the muscles only their normal relief, or he makes a single direction in flesh into a great many, and works with complex systems where his predecessors were content with a primitive

PIERRE PUGET:

MARSEILLES MUSEUM  
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

FAUN, TERRACOTTA

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unity of form. His art, like every other, nay, more than any other, impresses by means of exaggeration, and the older he grows the more clearly he recognises this truth. Compare his Age d' Airain with the Eve of a few years later, or his Baiser of about the end of the eighties with the Victor Hugo of 1897, his Antonin Proust of 1885 with the head of Falguieres of 1899, and note how the technique increases in breadth, becomes more and more penetrating, permeates the material more and more. But what he gains thereby by the suggestion of material he loses on the other side. The flesh is monotonous in Le 'Baiser^ but who can give a thought to the flesh before this magnificent structure of limb ? The conception of these lovers silences all other demands ; from whichever side we contemplate them, they are instinct with the loveliest poetry, and an ideal beauty of lines, revealing only the divine elements of human passion. Compared with other groups, in which he multiplies his wealth of movement a hundredfold, and shows us attitudes of unimaginable grace, a tenderness of line which Ingres merely indicated in the form of barely visible arabesques on paper,

Le Baiser may seem a solid, prosaic work ; but the sublime calm with which we gaze here is lost when we approach the others. We stoop and twist to follow their beauties in all their curves and hollows ; the poetry of these marble rhythms makes the gestures of the spectator an ugly travesty. It is not always possible to conceal the reverse of all this beauty. Painting may succeed in the task, as Fragonard has shown us. Imagine his bathing women in sculpture ! Even in his pictures, skilfully as he conceals it, we are conscious of the impossibility of certain compressions of the limb which the convenient frame or the arm of a neighbour cuts off at the decisive moment. Such manoeuvres are denied to sculpture. The arm which appears at a certain point must reappear at another, and threatens to quarrel with the leg with which it harmonised so deliciously at first. Rodin achieves the inconceivable in escaping this danger in some of his most daring essays, but this forces him to adopt arrangements of the utmost complexity. He has been reproached for his method of leaving large surfaces in the rough when he works on a mass of marble, and his critics have condemned it as a puerile straining after originality. Such strictures are barbarously ignorant. It is Rodin's very earnestness which impels him to what sometimes looks like trifling. What he does he must do. He needs the mountain in whose hollows the nixies dance ; he is impelled to the amazing tours de force, which seem at times a kind of jugglery, in order to play his piece to the end. We may wrangle over his scenery, but that which is going on in the cavern is worthy of the magician ; we never follow him without profit.

His magic breathes Nature, that is its strength. There is not a single detail in his work which is not the outcome of a natural impression. He repudiates the charge of literary sculpture vigorously; no reproach, indeed, could be more unjust. He has always seen what he represents, with a marvellous eye that seizes just the most unusual elements ; he has never compromised, and his limitations perhaps lie solely in his inability to compromise. In his axioms, recorded in Judith Cladel's charming book, his boundless veneration for Nature finds continual expression.

" He who thinks himself greater than Nature, and imagines he can make it more beautiful, will never do more than juggle. It is not Nature that is imperfect, but the mind which so conceives of it. It is just as impossible to improve the human body as to transform an element. To alter is to destroy it. Such notions are due to the idealists. I am now able to admire Nature, and I find it so perfect that if God

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asked me what it would be well to alter, I should say everything is right, and nothing must be touched," and so on.\* It might be Courbet speaking.



But it depends upon what a man makes of Nature, his handiwork is everything ; he must see and represent the thing seen. Before he went to Carrier-Belleuse, Rodin was a pupil of Lecocq de Boisbaudran. Young as he was—fourteen years old Lecocq's teaching gave him a basis he never lost, a rational manner of

observing Nature.

\*' If I lay my hand flat on a stone," says Rodin to his pupils, \*' flat upon flat, I have the old unaccented relief; whereas, if I do so"—resting his wrist on the stone and spreading his fingers in the air—"the hand appears in perspective, and gets value. If a sculptor does this, he is acclaimed a genius. All it really means is that he can see." † This was the creed of the Renaissance sculptor. For Rodin too —for him more than for all others —modelling (le modele) is the reflex of life. His work gains in richness as he grows older : this youngest of all artists looks upon youth with suspicion ; no one works when he is young. He grows like a tree : in the beginning we admire the slender bole, and gradually it sends out innumerable shoots, a wealth of foliage, spreading out its mighty superficies farther and farther to the beneficent sunshine.

Thus he approaches the tremendous cosmos of his monument to Victor Hugo.

There have been three momentous works in Rodin's career, three stages : his Porte de l'Enfer^ his Victor Hugo^ and his Balzac.

The Porte was the audacity of youth, always hovering round the impossible, and mated in this case with an almost incredible energy. It was the impulse towards a great organisation of the enthusiasm he felt for the works of his predecessors in Italy and France, an immeasurable, unparalleled creation, with a thousand details in which the many-sided and episodic seems of more importance than great and powerful unity, the nerve of ripe creations. The work became almost his life. The first idea of it came to him in 1875 ; he has gone on toiling at it ever since. It is a work of youth, the source of the most varied studies, and in its completion will be the joy of the artist's old age. The scheme was such that Rodin could only distinguish himself by a brilliant treatment of details. For as a gate, as a concrete object, it has the immensity which makes it difficult to appreciate the Sistine wall-paintings of Rodin's prototype Like these, it is a welter of precious things, and one might spend one's life in bringing its various fragments into port.

The Victor Hugo is altogether different. Here the mystery of a thrice happy inspiration brought about the realisation of Rodin's loftiest aims. The gate will never be finished, even when it has at length been cast, for in addition to the hundreds of beauties that adorn it, it might just as well receive a hundred more. The Victor Hugo was finished at the moment that the marvellous attitude of the poet was conceived —the Zeus-like pose of genius, a great and clear expression, absolutely rounded and homogeneous in spite of the deep and many-sided impressions this work also makes upon the eye. The diagonal motion of the soaring

whispering genius above the poet's mighty body towards the widely outstretched hand is decisive. Thus did Michelangelo create : a titanic synthesis, the creation of an idea, the suggestion of the manner in which a work of art arises. Rodin has made a profound symbol of this, of import far wider than his design, than the

\* Auguste Rodin, *pris sur la Vie* (Paris, La Plume, 1903).  
t I shall have more to say of this under " Fantin Latour."  
X Judith Cladel, " Auguste Rodin," p. 40.

HOUDON: ST. BRUNO

CHURCH OF S. MARIA DEQL. ANQELI, ROME  
REPRODUCED FROM THE CAST IN THE TROCADERO  
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

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significance of the personality to which he does homage, and even than the art he symbolises. It is the glorification of the mind, universal as the art of a Phidias, the glorification of the body. That such a " literary " idea could take form, losing nothing of the colossal significance inherent in such a symbol in this age of ours " the world that rules the world " that we can stand amazed before it, convinced, as we are convinced of the beauty of the world the Greek imagined " this it is which ensures immortality to the creator of this monument.

The skull is enthroned in this cosmos. It is no longer the small Greek head, the capital of the shapely column, but rather the centre, the mighty shrine of life, for which the subservient body is a mere pedestal. The Greeks stood or walked, and floated in space when they walked. This figure sits ; in the attitude best adapted for the bearing of burdens, one leg supported and bent at an angle, the other stretched out, to give as wide a base as possible. So he creates, this deep-breathing priest of beauty. But creation stirs these limbs mightily. Round the head " a battle-field of thought " a cyclopean form hovers as genius, grasping the idea with a powerful gesture, and driving it into the poet's consciousness : the terrible, fruitful daemon of conception, the frenzy of will, that enfolds the world. Behind the two appears the divine form of measure, of reflection " a Greek woman. The conflict is revealed in the poet's vigorous face : everything non-essential is silent, even gravity seems dead, that evolution may not be arrested. The hand is thrust out firmly, balancing the two powers, and groping for the nascent work. A miracle is wrought.

The man who could conceive such a thing may scorn all honours : he can withdraw from the world and from mankind ; all humanity is within him. The genius who can give corporeal and comprehensible form to such a conception is divine, and, with that same expressive gesture with which the outstretched hand controls the elements, it quells the doubts that divide our homage between this beauty and that of tradition, and compels a voiceless adoration. Rodin can only be compared with Rembrandt.

Rodin represents his art as a result of nature, mathematics and taste.

I have dealt with the first of these three factors ; it is the basis of the Hugo monument. But it must be understood that it is inconceivable without the other two, as indeed is any one of the three factors.

He often emphasises the mathematical element of his sculpture : this, and not the poetry of the invention, is the soul of his Victor Hugo. It obtains the space-effect by means of a cube with obtuse and acute angles set diagonally in space. The upper narrow side is formed by the kneeling genius. The outstretched arm gives the longitudinal direction, the draperies follow the corresponding parallel direction, and the end of the outstretched foot completes the cube, this being cut off by the base, which is foreshortened on the side of the draperies. The cube is, of course, irregular, but the fundamental directions are observed throughout, or indicated by decisive points. A system of parallel planes divides the form. The wonderful arc formed by the body of the kneeling genius runs in the same direction as the arm which supports the poet's head, and the shrouded leg. These three parallels lie in three different planes one above the other, outwardly brought together by the drapery, and losing themselves inwardly in a rich complexity of minute planes. As a result, the light flows in a marvellous torrent from the broad curve of the genius over the poet's head to the outermost hand, and also over the

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other front portions of the group, playing among them with a rich variety of movement. . r u l j

This symbolism, which paints the idea of the genius who enfolds the poet and urges him to creation with the purest medium of art, light, is irresistible. It gives the design a depth far beyond any significance built upon convention. We cannot think such lofty thoughts as this ; the spectator feels it flowing into him like some material thing ; an example that will live as long as the sun illumines it. There can be nothing more natural than such mathematics.

The Muse of Meditation behind the group is an addition which hardly seems

indispensable to the composition. But it is most beautiful, more beautiful than the rest, to which it bears but a dreamy relation ; it is all pliancy, abundance, and masterly curves, where the other imposes itself with iron power. It might be a symbol of mourning grace, which always seems half-concealed in modern art, and has not a very audible voice. It is perhaps an embodiment of Rodin's third

factor, taste.

Rodin's taste is in externals that of his times ; we will admit its limitations. But fundamentally it differs widely from the elements that make up contemporary taste. It is a result of admixture. The conflict between the stimulating divinity and the Muse of repose depicts the chequered fate of this inventor. ^ Like Carpeaux, he has made thousands of drawings, which reveal the " Rodin intime " better than his axioms. They quiver with life ; they are nearly all studies of movement, not so much studies for a definite purpose as manual exercises, vehicles for throwing off impressions. The likeness to Michelangelo in the borders commissioned by Gallimard for his copy of the " Fleurs du Mai," and many other drawings, is amazing. But pain is more spasmodic with Rodin ; his drawings twitch like nerves, and the filling in of the outline with his marvellous aquatint washes seems to exist merely to give resonance to this inarticulate moaning of agony. In the magnificent *La Force et la Ruse*, reproduced in " *L'Image*," \* " the galloping centaur, clasping the woman in a wild embrace " in the design for the cover of " *Die Insel*," etc., Delacroix' energy is out-distanced. Rodin is not more powerful, but he is more strenuous ; the spontaneous, simultaneous flight of the highest effects both of draughtsmanship and of thought is more astounding. Rodin presents gesture and deed at once, so to speak.

Still greater is the speech of the latest drawings, where complexity is discarded, and only a few lines, occasionally even a single one, give the exquisite contour. In his earlier days Rodin sought a single direction in ten feverish strokes ; now he draws a single line with all Ingres' certainty, and succeeds in giving this one all the quivering life of his earlier designs. There are outline drawings by him in which he absolutely suppresses light and shadow, after the fashion of the Japanese. In the majority he uses a few splashes of wash, or touches of chalk; Maillard has reproduced a marvel of this kind in his book on Rodin, the three *Figures du Purgatoire*^ graceful as the forms the Greeks painted on their vases, and so natural that I am tempted to speak of carnations in describing these few strokes on

\* For September 1897, with an essay by Roger Marx on Rodin's drawings.

t L6on Maillard, " *Auguste Rodin*," Paris, 1897, so far the most comprehensive work on Rodin, with many fine illustrations. The *Figures du Purgatoire*, after p. 84 in Maillard, are not so perfectly reproduced at the beginning of the present chapter, unfortunately. There is a beautiful etching of th

composition in Gustave Geffrey's " Vie Artistique," Serie II. (Paris, Dentu, 1893), which contains a;  
elaborate study of Rodin.

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RUDE: FRAGMENT FROM THE GROUP ON THE ARC DE TRIOMPHE

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

AUGUSTE RODIN

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tinted paper. Involuntarily we recall the Three Graces of the Cathedral Library at Siena before this arabesque. If among the many wooers of the famous prototype those who have tried to come nearest to it have been just those who have failed most signally, here we find a living artist who has achieved a rhythm not similar, but of the same enchanting quahty.

Rodin is one of those people to whom we may look for a multiplication of our material sum of forms. Even in these three figures on the paper, the lines, naturally as they seem to run, form a complex design, which out of the three figures makes a fourth embracing all three. The arms of the central figure, which rest on the other two, are continued in the outlines of these as if it were another body, and this new body is of captivating beauty.

This is also his method in space. It will be, of course, understood that the whole object of this method is to secure the compactness of the mass, which is the basis of all monumental effect. This Rodin had already sought on the principle of the ancients, when he drew the well-formed outline of his Saiser.

But he carried the principle farther. The ancients had considered the definition of limbs within their groups as no less essential than the contour of the mass.

But Rodin suppressed this more and more. A fantastic pair of lovers kneel upon a rock, breast to breast, lip to lip ; a deep emotion welds them together ; their arms lie close to their bodies, their hands seem to melt into the stone, there is no aperture anywhere. To this end the bronze has been kept as soft as possible. Everything sharp and angular is resolved into yearning desire and soft abandonment ; an exquisite patina overlies the forms like a veil drawn over the two. Thus in the penumbra of the studio, new, almost atmospheric bodies arise, in which the mathematical sense of the artist makes successful use of his fancy. We reproduce the seated figure holding her foot in her outstretched hands, *Le Desespoir*. Its compactness of form gives it a certain affinity to a beautiful vase, and it might almost serve to demonstrate that all beauty, even that of utilitarian objects, has a deep "as yet but dimly presaged" connection with the lines of the human body. Rodin, indeed, formerly designed vases for the Sevres factory.

Here the quality Rodin calls taste enters upon its decisive phase. It drives him to conclusions in which the exact calculation of effects ceases, and restrains him when logic would lead him too far. "Taste is everything," he once said. " He who has a knowledge of sculpture or painting without taste will never become a sculptor or a painter. I have often found that my science could not carry me any farther. I had to set it aside and to trust to my instinct to arrange things for which reflection was insufficient.

" Strange to say, even the things which apparently belong purely to the domain of the exact sciences follow the same rule. A naval constructor who is a friend of mine told me that, to build a great iron-clad, mathematical combinations alone will not suffice. If the parts are not disposed by a person of taste, capable of modifying mathematics intelligently,\* the ship will not be so good, the machine will be a failure.

" There are no hard and fast rules. Taste is the highest law, the compass of

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the universe.

But he added musingly, " And yet there must be absolute laws in Art, since there are such in Nature."

So speaks the modern.

\* " Capable de deranger les mathematiques dans le juste mesure."

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The world begins to dissolve. He finds nature, mathematics, taste. But even these conceptions become fluid. He prays to Nature, but what does faithful reproduction avail him ? He must exaggerate, as did the ancients ; but what is to be the standard of this exaggeration ? Then he discovers mathematics like a rock in the ocean. Here is peace. When figures speak their grave language, passion must obey in silence ; here is Eternity, existent before man ; the first who produced art bowed to this stern mistress. We must go back to science. " But," objects the doubter, "back ? Can science ever go back .-^ What did the ancients really know ? They used figures, because they lacked emotions ; they measured the universe, we live with it ; they built pyramids, because they could prove their immortality in no other way. This was the reign of gross matter ; we have discovered a substitute for material. They made mountains, we have learnt to create men. And not only the beauty of man. We have conquered a knowledge before which beauty and ugliness are as differences of temperature ; we stand outside of every scale ; we want life."

And life begins to seethe tumultuously, Egypt and Greece disappear in the waves ; instead of the smooth-limbed marbles of the past, strange and mighty elements tower before the artist's eyes. The deeper he penetrates into his material, the newer, the stranger, the more terrific do the images become. In all there is Nature, and all, as he desires, are subject to manifold laws; not one, but a hundred verities might be applied to them, without making even an ounce of radiant, irrefutable knowledge. In this chaos, wherein he believes everything and doubts everything, he takes his third quality, taste. It is the weakest of the three, and he takes it at the moment when he requires the strongest, to control the prevailing anarchy. He succeeds most admirably in showing the trinity, life, law, and dignity, in his works, giving to each, indeed, its highest possible expression : Rodin creates his Balzac.

^^\*|B 9|S JJp 3|5 ^

In this sequence we may perceive how all pure knowledge is checked and called in question by the remnants of earlier knowledge. In art, as in other fields, anarchy is the result of the victorious struggle for consciousness, and its destiny reflects the history of all culture that vainly seeks to bridge the gulf between Schopenhauer's advice to deny nature, and Jean Jacques Rousseau's demand that we should be true to her.

In his Balzac Rodin struck out boldly in the direction which he places above all others : Nature. It was the work of an honest man, beneficent as are all momentous works. Mathematics and taste retired modestly into the background.

A wholesome debacle took place in criticism, letting loose torrents of ink. \*\* La Plume " was one of the reservoirs. We turn over these pages of contemporary judgment, feeling that they are already ancient history. The unanimity of opinion is very striking ; there was practically but one " that which the artist's friends upheld. The other, advanced by his enemies, was not genuine. The argument of the Society, that the statue was not a good likeness, was too grotesque to be long maintained.

This one opinion was best formulated by A. Fontainas : " A picture is finished, a piece of sculpture is complete, when the painter or sculptor, who has recognised and has curbed the causes of his emotion, has been able to fix the image thereof

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CHAPU: DANCER, SILVER BRONZE

BOXNAT COLLECTION, PARIS

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with such energy on the canvas or in the clay that his emotion is partly or wholly communicated to the spectator." \*

This formula covers most of the springs of inspiration. The Balzac^ as Arsbie Alexandre more briefly put it, was a " source d'emotion." f

This source was no trivial one. It did not stir literary emotions alone. Alexandre defends himself energetically against the charge of having been impressed by an allegory in the figure. Like Roger Marx, he sees the secret of the effect produced in the movement Rodin succeeded in expressing, and in this he was certainly right.

The Balzac is, in fact, the extreme consequence of a plastic method which used the Greek outline for a time without ceasing to be Gothic within, that was Gothic in order to show itself Baroque, and finally became Baroque to cast all fetters of tradition from it. The Balzac belongs to our age as does hardly any other work



of art.

It follows in the way marked out by Rodin's Victor Hugo ; the head has become everything in the most audacious fashion. In an image of the poet of <sup>1</sup>\* *La Legende des Siecles* " it was important to indicate the "voix interieure et exterieure;" a third figure was even contemplated originally. The worker Balzac, who wrote the psychology of his times in the simplest prose, appears to Rodin without any accessories, a being who lived with his brain. And thus, in this simple aspect, he modelled him.

He might indeed have given the head alone ; it exists independently, and is a brilliant creation. There are reduced examples, about the size of the skull which serves Hamlet for his text, and the soliloquy that might be uttered over it could be as pregnant as that other monologue.

I think it was Henri Rochefort, also one of Rodin's best models, who ridiculed the idea of concentrating the whole *Comedie humaine* in a single head. That great maker of phrases was mistaken. This distorted face shows the heroism of the conqueror better than could any allegories. It is the only method of representation proper to our age : in those eyes that grow inwards, in the shreds and hollows of which this scarcely human face is fashioned, in the grotesque attitude, full of pride and sovereign disdain, the mask of this Caliban, and that which lay behind it, is painted. It is a fabulous symbol, it exaggerates that which should be exaggerated in this case. Ugliness, the proud result of conscious self-destruction, becomes a monument to beauty.

The rest is tame in comparison. The bare throat enhances the grotesqueness, but here it verges on the obscene ; the effect is too crude. True, the terror of the conception is increased by the addition of a gruesome anatomy ; we get nearer to the physiology of the abnormal, and divine all the physical deformity of this genius.

Here, at any rate, Rodin's <sup>1</sup>\* *"compas of the universe"* was more unsteady than ever. We see the reason of the drapery ; it was no mere makeshift. During the wearer's lifetime, criticism was wont to indulge in agreeable pictures of the immortality of this garment. Rodin's cruelty of conviction did hesitate to make a monument of the dressing-gown.

The error lay in the monumental character of the apparition. Its ill-success was not due to disparity of will and power. No artist worthy of the name attempts what he cannot do. Rodin has always achieved what he has desired, and this has

\* *"La Plume,"* July i, 1900, extra number.

t Preface to the Catalogue of the Rodin Exhibition, 1900.

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always been a great deal. In his Balzac he has given us all that rose before him ; but that such a face should have been one of his dreams seems almost incompatible with the instincts of this man.

The question arises : what is to become of sculpture among all this willing and doing ? It is as significant of our aesthetics as is the Balzac of our art, that among the hundreds of arguments for and against the work, not a single one should have attempted to answer this question ; nay, more, that not one among the hostile critics " from these it would have aroused distrust " nor one among the friendly ones " from these it should have come " ever raised it, or examined the relative nature of this great effort.

There was one person in Paris whose neglect in this respect seems inexplicable, and whose opinion would have been the only one of real interest : Rodin himself.

The Burghers of Calais^ one of his richest, most profound creations, presaged many things. It was his idea to set up this group almost level with the street, and he never forgave the municipal authorities of Calais for disregarding his wishes. The Burghers should have taken their places like other mortals among the living :  
\*<sup>1</sup> "mdant leur vie heroique a la vie quotidienne de la ville." \* The moving story of these men seemed to him so important that he felt it ought to be quite natural to have their individual presentment close at hand.

Thus we see that he placed the significance of a national legend, a poetic, heroic tradition, above the art which creates a civic monument. He does not ask : How shall I place my work that the effect may be most favourable } " but, How shall I place this symbol that its symbolic effect may be most striking } For the stranger, ignorant of the town and its history, this question would become : How shall I startle people most .?

It is hardly necessary to say that there was no puerile motive in this. Rodin's premises are purely artistic ; he has no idea of giving a work characteristics that lie outside the domain of sculpture. His development does not come, as might be supposed, from the progress of his symbolism ; it is the evolution of his artistic problem. But the use to be made of the work, the question what the layman is to do with it, for him belongs to the sphere of pure literary importance, which varies with circumstances in every generation, and hence can only be of a very superficial nature.

In face of this decisive conception, we are not concerned to inquire whether it springs from scorn or respect for fellow mortals. In either case, it is a wholly inexcusable defect.

No mention was made of it when, in 1890, the Victor Hugo<sup>^</sup> destined for the interior of the Pantheon, was declined for the enclosed space, but accepted for the Luxembourg Gardens. One criticism which dealt with the refusal opined that it was not Rodin's business to consider the architecture of the Pantheon, which indeed might be looked upon as a kind of gallery. It might pertinently have been asked on this occasion what sort of architecture Rodin ever did consider, and the indignant reply no doubt would have been that a genius does not need to conform to any kind of architecture.

This brings us to the point at once : Rodin's art is gallery-sculpture.

In this respect it does not differ either for good or evil from ninety-nine per cent, of all other sculpture, and an argument which is of general application must not, therefore, be used to its prejudice. I wished to suggest this when I defined

\* J. Cladel, " Auguste Rodin," p. 81.

RODIN: THE MAN WITH THE BROKEN NOSE  
(L'HOMME AU NEZ CASSE)

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

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Rodin's third factor, taste, as the taste of his time. As such it works wonders ; it has even enabled him upon occasion to solve certain problems imposed on him by architecture in the happiest manner. The pediments of Baron Vitta's house, where he was able to group his vapourous figures in a triangle, will not detract from his fame. But these are purely fortuitous exceptions. The lack of definite scope in this art, which seems suitable for any place, really circumscribes its potential uses. In these days it is true that the domain of sculpture, which can be enjoyed apart from architecture, is immeasurable, and Rodin's works which avoid the coarser discords, more than suffice for his immortality. Fate has determined that his tendencies

should drive him beyond the limitations proper to his art. It is indeed hardly conceivable that so grandiose a personality, who embodies all the dramatic fervour of his race, should confine himself to a situation which robs his voice of all its echoes. His very personality, to say nothing of his art, compels him to the forum.

And then, again, the nature of this art shatters the glass doors of the cupboards which attempt to guard it. Its effects cannot be appreciated in a confined space. The broad technique of this Impressionism in the grand manner requires distance.

Yet if we place certain Rodins, the size of which makes them barely conceivable in an interior, in the open air, the tragedy becomes evident. The profundity of their conception, the beauty we divined, the force of expression, to which we were ready to sacrifice all other considerations, do not prevent them from becoming shapeless masses, which call in question the whole edifice of inspiration that surrounded them.

For there are eternal laws which even genius may not cast away, which even a Michelangelo cannot relax with impunity, but which Rodin disregards more than any one of his predecessors – nay, even seems to ignore altogether at times : laws of space which we moderns, whose eyes have been holden, since we have supposed we had learnt to see, can scarcely as yet formulate, and which some few among us first recognise when they turn vengefully against us.

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Yet Rodin is immortal, even if we endorse his own opinion, that he by no means represents our possible degree of perfection ; even if we believe in a further development that will go far beyond Rodin. For as surely as this will take place, so surely will his works have helped to bring it about. I shall try to indicate something of this, more especially in those passages which deal with new developments.

Perhaps Carriere foresaw this consummation when he wrote these beautiful

words of his friend : " L'esprit generalisateur lui a impose la solitude. Il n'a pu collaborer k la cathedrale absente ; mais son desir d'humanit^ le relie aux formes eternelles de la nature."

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RODIN. DRAWING

RODIN: DESPAIR (LE DESESPoir)

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

MEDARDO ROSSO

The Italian Rosso is the Mephistopheles of this art. His example may have encouraged Rodin in the last phase of his structure of colour and light.

When I first visited his studio, and he saw the amazement his works aroused, he built up a little bit of art-history in the form of a singular still-life. He placed on a table a very fine bronze copy, made by himself, of the large head of Vitellius in the Vatican, beside it a wax after Michelangelo's small group of the Madonna and Child at Berlin, then a torso of Rodin's John the Baptist^ and finally a work of his own, the Head of a Child. This he could not stand up, as it had no base ; he was therefore obliged to keep it in his hand.

The Vitellius head is immense. It suggests the triumphal arches and amphitheatres which might have been made for men six times as big as those of to-day. Half a dozen of Rosso's child-heads might go into the Roman's skull. It is like a globe. The gross fat in which the face is buried conceals all trace of the anatomy ; it is a mere mass ; we can scarcely imagine the squalid colossus it

crowned.

Beside it, Michelangelo's group seems full of grace and charm. It has a dignity undreamt of by the coarse Roman, which in these days would perhaps be called Japanese. The body sings with a thousand voices, where before there was only one droning trumpet sound. Everywhere where before there was an inert mass, a thousand movements have arisen, completing each other in rich antiphonies.

The mighty monsters who crushed to death all the small things that came in their way are no more, but we still have the uneasy feeling that, were they yet among us, their breath would blow all this charming play into nothing, that one motion of their ponderous bodies would mean more than the many-toned eloquence of all limbs the of their descendants.

The Rodin example perplexes the spirit which, conceiving itself to be on the right track from the greater to the less, involuntarily prepares to find the same relation between Michelangelo and the modern artist which it had established between ancient Rome and Michelangelo. In spite of the likeness between the two, the later development is in a new direction. It no longer insists so much on the many-sided elements, which in Michelangelo's work are, as we readily see, deliberately brought together into rhythm, but it connects the more important points d'appui of the skeleton by means of a surface animated in a more arbitrary fashion. We shall see the contrast even more clearly if we substitute a later work for this torso, the head of the Balzac^ for instance. Then the old Roman head suddenly seems a dead thing, while life flashes from every line of the Balzac ; on the one side is brute force, on the other sparkling intelligence " Goliath and David. The little Renaissance group, again, retires into the background, it does not share the difference between the Roman head and the Balzac, and achieves neither of the effects we have compared. It has a dwarfish look between the two. We note certain distressing details : the Madonna's hand which rests on the drapery lacks

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fleshly reality ; the fingers are meagre, like the folds of the robe; like all the rest, indeed, they are only present for the sake of rhythm and play of line. Every line in the furrowed face of the Balzac, on the other hand, is directed with obvious intention to the rendering of life, and belongs not only to the sculpture, but to the essence of the being represented, bringing the piece of breathing flesh before the imagination with a perfectly physiological suggestion of a body.

Rosso's head is also a piece of human life, but here the same impression, the vitality of which startles us in the Rodin, is achieved by quieter means : the light does not leap from point to point as in the Balzac, but glides smoothly along. The great differences of plane are avoided " not, of course, merely because of the

difference of the model. What Rodin achieves with a keen incisiveness of touch, with depressions which slash the surface in every direction, Rosso arrives at by gradations which, if we see them aright, are even more impressive than the strong methods of the other, and allow of a relative peacefulness of surface which is very beneficent.

It is a quieter art, of great distinction. Rosso's profiles of women and children are among the noblest things of our day. They belong of right to an age when we flee from the tumult of the world to secluded rooms, and in the gentle light of evening turn for refreshment all the more eagerly to such tender things because of the coarse interests which have absorbed the day. All the work of the earlier sculptors seems material beside that of Rosso, especially that of the vigorous, brutal artists of ancient Rome. Even the superficial demands this latter makes upon us are greater, entailing more effort both for our legs and our sensations ; retreating to the right point of sight is fatiguing. A child's head by Rosso passes from hand to hand, and its gentleness seems rather to nestle into our emotions than to evoke them.

But if when we see the head of the Roman we cannot picture a body for it, because it would be too colossal for us, so with Rosso there are reasons directly opposed to this, which work in like manner against the conception of actual life for such a delicate profile. This art of the brain has no body.

It is characteristic of Rosso that this infant face, like most of his things, has remained in the wax, and is only a face, a mask. It would be too much for him to add the back of the head, and we are driven to doubt whether indeed this completion would be possible. The idea seems almost as strange to one here as in connection with the painted profile of a picture, before which no one dreams of looking behind the canvas to see if it could be carried further. And yet there is nothing non-organic in the face. It is as susceptible of life as the gigantic Roman head ; indeed, if this susceptibility increases with the greatness of the conception Rosso's fragment seems to have the advantage. In certain details, such as the slightly crinkled hair, the Roman head is not free from a pettiness of which there is no trace in Rosso, who, even in this little head gives no detail, but only broad planes. How hard and material the Greeks of the time of Praxiteles seem in comparison, chiselling not only the hair but the horses and sphinxes on the helmets of their goddesses. If the dictum of the painter that art is sacrifice holds good in sculpture as well, our contemporary's place is high indeed.

Rosso represents a great intelligence ; he is a man who has been able to free himself from all those hereditary conceptions which are wont to be sources of unconscious inspiration " perhaps because he never felt them as strongly as others " whose perceptions have perhaps been keener than those of any of his predecessors,

## MEDARDO ROSSO 23

and who has had the courage to act upon them ; the only artist In our time who has not been depressed by compromise, and who deserves all reverence because he has perhaps sacrificed himself for others.

His art could only have developed in Manet's age, but it is perfectly independent. The famous phrase about an art all one's own finds its complete application only in him.

But it was no puerile megalomania which led him to sever all links with the past, no lack of reverence for the old masters. An insufficient knowledge of the past cannot be laid to the charge of the artist who has made the most beautiful copies of the antique and of Donatello \* " bronzes which make one recognise the shortcomings of the famous Kellers, to whom the long corridor in the Louvre owes its reproductions. No one can have felt greater admiration for the wooden statuette of the priestess Toui in the Salle du Scribe of the Louvre, or can have looked at the supple white figure with the jar on its head with intenser vision. No one has understood as he has wherein lies the effect of those little seated divinities, scarcely a span high, which impress us as monumental. These things have left their manifest impress on his mind, making the Elgin marbles seem restless to him, and the favourites of his own people in the Belvedere trivial. Michelangelo seemed to him the representative of a decadence, and the French Renaissance revealed this decadence still more clearly to him. Throughout he noted the same disappearance of unity in favour of agitated limbs, which oppress the actual structure like superfluous ornament, and annihilate the broad, pure surface. It was only in painting that he recognised a different development. Even here he noted a diffusion, a loss of effect, as soon as he turned away from the Primitives. Leonardo's smile did not make up to him for the lack of structure in his female bodies. He preferred the drawing of Isabella d'Este to the famous pictures. In all the church pictures of the Italians he was disturbed by the insistence of the figures, standing out from the surface. These saints sometimes concealed an exquisite landscape, in which alone the artist had revealed himself, and they seemed altogether alien to this rich atmosphere. Raphael painted without any great compelling impulse, to please his patrons, he produced a medley of details, out of which any number of pictures might have been built up. Why this multiplicity, when a single form would have sufficed to give the sum of all the others ." Could that be progress which, in defiance of all economics, distributed energy, and drove the spirit which should have aimed at the highest and sought the utmost concentration, to division, instead of guiding it to unity ?

Such may have been Rosso's train of thought, and the man Inured to hard necessities, who had pushed a hand-cart in Paris for daily bread, the homeless alien, bound by no conscious sympathy to his native land, and knowing only the most repellent aspects of Paris, was hardened against all vague compromise. As soon as



he had enough to eat, he acted upon his own convictions. Then one day he lighted upon Velazquez, and in a moment he recognised the contrast offered by a commanding gravity to the loquacious play of limbs characteristic of the Renaissance. The blooming fair-haired child in her pearl-gray lace-trimmed frock seemed to him to reveal a greater art than anything in the whole Salon Carre. Greater, because more real, because this portrait of a princess suggests majesty in the sweep of its design, and not by any rhetorical flourish imposed by the patron ; because this naturalness which is combined with the proudest bearing, annihilated the

\* There are some very fine examples in the two Rouart collections in Paris.

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empty gestures of all predecessors, and could only be compared to that of the antique masters, whose power has been scattered and destroyed in the course of time. This artist drew inspiration from himself alone, and became the first of painters in the process, an unequalled master of his craft. His style was not an echo of other arts, of other forms, but a thing complete in itself, a creation of his brush alone.

Rosso found the same quality in certain of the Spaniard's contemporaries, in Rembrandt, at times in Rubens. But no one had ever so enveloped his figures that the eye can detach nothing from them, and that no atom remains which does not belong organically to the whole. Never since Velazquez had this art been attempted with like success. The others, the stylists, always got the upper hand. It was not until our own times that art, pondering the elements of Velazquez\* originality, and that second Anatomy Lesson of Rembrandt's, which he painted for himself, evolved an original style. Turner went back to the atmosphere of Rembrandt's landscapes. Manet created a new art in portraiture. He went on from that point where Velazquez had left off two hundred years ago, and in spite of the superstitions which refuse to recognise any greatness in the art of our own times, he succeeded in giving us an irresistible expression of power, the work produced by a single effort. The centuries disappeared. That which the genius of all epochs had been unable to accomplish, an equivalent for the lost unity, was won by the intelligence of an age that needed no more gods. Degas painted his dancers as the Egyptians had carved their kings, giving nothing extraneous to the thing itself, and from this severity there shone a splendour like that in the pictures of the Chinese. It only remained for contemporary sculpture to follow in the same path and to learn from the painters of to-day what these had learnt from the sculpture of the ancients.

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The logic of this conception is of no ordinary kind. The knowledge on which it rests is superior to the tradition of earlier artists. These were atoms without

knowledge. The artist of to-day strikes out his own path. Who can think lightly of the courage which calmly translates conviction into achievement }

But Art is not of the feminine gender for nothing ; the paths by which one approaches her seem to lie remote from the highest spheres of the intellect. She mocks at the intelligence of the thinker, and throws herself into the arms of the frivolous being who happens to be born handsome. Great intellects are not for her, and can seldom obtain anything from her. The exertion necessary to overcome her is certainly of an intellectual kind, but it is remote from the icy eminences of pure personal consciousness.

Rosso has succeeded in creating sculpture which is like nothing else, not even sculpture. He reached the summit with his female heads. A beautiful wax profile by him in the Segantini Room of the Universal Exhibition of 1900 was like a tender muffled voice among fishwives, recalling the pure loveliness of Mino da Fiesole's brows.

The summits of art in these days are narrower than they were wont to be, and unfitted for prolonged repose. Rosso's was the edge of a sword. '

He had perforce to step to the other side, and this one small step carried him beyond his narrow circle, among those who, fearing to fall, climb not ; the catastrophe interests the hasty world in which we live merely as a fait divers.

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RODIN: BRONZE HEAD

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

MEDARDO ROSSO 25

as one of the many accidents which happen every day in the unsteady structure of our art.

That which was more dangerous to him than Rodin was probably his race, or the dread of his race. The powerful figure with the fair hair and thick beard, the broad chest and strong workman's hands looks more Teutonic than Latin, and it is difficult to understand how tender is the soul in this body. He had some trouble in driving the Italian element out at first. In the Gdvroche executed twenty years ago there lurks the contented triviality of the popular contemporary Roman sculptor; it is the highest degree of the cheap smile, which the emigrant Italian artist creates for his patrons. Yet this was already distinguished by the softness of the form. The later relief, the mother kissing the child, is not entirely free from the jarring note ; the composition is not yet brought together, the silly smiling child seems all unconscious of the mother, who almost stifles it in her tenderness. But here he is already painter altogether, and we know at once of what category ; at that time he might justly have been bracketed with Carriere, and not only because of the design. There was the same liquid, vaporous handling, making of the limbs absolutely dematerialised organs of tenderness, notably of those which come in contact with flesh, and recognising no fixed points in flesh, but only light and shadow.

The characteristic wax head. La Rieuse, was executed in 1890 or 1891. Rosso was then between thirty and forty, and at the zenith of his art. As a sculptor he still commands his medium, we still divine the full form under this tender treatment, and it is remarkable indeed that this tenderness should remind us of the great Primitives. Some six years later, naturalism had conquered him. The Femme a la Voilette \* is a trifling with accidents. He has succeeded, certainly, in giving the space with which he wished to unite the figure ; but this does not impress as a well-regulated cosmos, as it does in painting, but as an accidental addition, which neither gives nor receives the life that glances off it. The face is an enigma, but it does not impel the beholder to a reconstructive solution. The veil that shrouds it obscures not this alone, but art.

The limit beyond which delicacy melts into nullity is more favourable to the painter than the sculptor. Indeed, the painter's individual art begins where that of the sculptor ends. The veil with which the sculptor brings his figures together can only be of a palpable kind.

It was reserved for our age to fail to perceive that a fluid thing, the colour of the palette, the painter's medium, presents but one surface to the air, and to the eye of the spectator, whereas a solid body, the sculptor's material, has three dimensions, and can be seen on every side. The one is driven by knowledge of his material to be as fluid as possible, the other should aim at the greatest firmness. Rosso, no doubt, recognised the weakness in the modern evolution of sculpture, the loss of mass. He finds the same retrogression in painting. From this community of defect, he infers the possibility of a common remedy. Here is his mistake. Velazquez achieved the richness of his creations by a marvellous organisation of colour-division. He is quite untrammelled herein ; indeed, the richer he becomes the more perfectly does he fulfil all the natural conditions of his craft. Rosso desires the same effects ; but he can only replace colour by elevations and depressions, as long as he works on reasonable lines. But depressions make holes. He therefore reduces every elevation to the utmost, and

\* Noblet collection.

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suppresses every possible opening. This is the negative method. It leads, of course, to avoidance of the shortcomings of others, but it fails to carry out the natural conditions of his art. His sculpture becomes unsculpturesque to the same degree that Velazquez' painting becomes truly pictorial. One of his best works of recent years is the bronze portrait of Madame Noblet executed in 1896, a relief without a background, so to speak ; in other words, the conventional flat surface of the background is replaced by fragments of the hair or a head-cloth " which of the two it is, is not apparent " which encircle the head wherever it stands against space, and melt into space. In the portrait of Mr. Trebeni of a year or two later " 1900, I think " this attempt to replace the background of the relief is abandoned,, but the execution is even more blurred. We might be looking at a miniature model of a furrowed mountain. The summit only, the forehead, is smooth ; on each side descend planes to which the artist has given all possible animation, and these produce the apparently arbitrary elevations and depressions which form the eyes, cheeks, &c. If we understand the structure, we are amazed at the greatness underlying it ; something faintly akin to the Gothic artists seems to have been given by means very remote from theirs. We recall certain moments at Reims late in the evening, when the cathedral is veiled in twilight, and the statues of the porch disappear in the gloom. The atmosphere seems to magnify the figures we

saw distinctly in the daylight.

Rosso seeks to produce this effect. He was the first to attempt it. Twenty-years before the Balzac was executed, he was making the first studies of this kind at Milan. His Concierge, which he calls Impression d' Omnibus^ was the Alpha of these physiognomical mountains.

Rodin, too, speaks of the " ombre flottante," in which he desires to veil his creations. In his drawings, the line undulates at all the extremities, as if to lose itself in space, and the irregular softly-toned washes seek to efface the contour. His longing for atmosphere prevents him from giving to some of his work a finality which would seem indispensable to any one but himself. He delights in the flaws produced by casting in plaster, and says roundly, that a plastic work shows its highest beauty only in fragments. How right and how absurd all this is ! " to shatter the fragment in fragments, because we cannot give the whole even of a part !

The noxious superstition, that we ought to be grateful to the barbarians for mutilating the statues of the Greeks, finds an echo, of course, in this perversity. Because certain torsoes are finer now than they were with their complement of limbs, it is supposed that there can be no more approved method of achieving beauty than to suppress arms and legs. Rodin and many others, Legros more drastically than any, have tried the experiment, and Rosso has been content to work out the law in a fragment, when all his conclusions should rather lead him to avoid everything fragmentary.

We may admit that the Psyche at Naples has been very skilfully mutilated. We might carry the conceit so far as to call the blow that split the skull exactly parallel with the inclination of the head, and cut off the arms in such beautiful proportions, a stroke of genius. But this is of little moment, seeing that we do not know what the figure was like originally, and I think the premises have been somewhat hasty in this connection. Such calumnies cannot be ventured upon in regard to any work of the best period. Our admiration of these fragments should go far enough to suppose that the fashioners of perfect bodies could also form

RODIN: VICTOR HUGO

PLASTER MODEL  
PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

MEDARDO ROSSO 27

admirable arms and legs. Though mutilation be an advantage " and this it certainly has been in the case of many late works, where the violent action of the body led to exaggeration in the limbs, or where a patron demanded some conventional gesture " yet that which is defective must not be taken as a model, however masterly it may be. Why do we not build houses like the famous isolated columns in the Forum, which are much more beautiful as columns than when they formed part of the temple ! Because we could not live in them. And we can give no more conclusive answer than this to those who admire ruined sculpture on principle. Things which are improved by mutilation were never perfect, even if the degree of perfection which was their standard is unknown to us.

Even in our admiration of art, inability to distinguish between cause and effect bears fantastic blossoms, and each becomes the germ of new errors. Rodin is a perfect compendium of such errors, and this is to some extent the secret of his genius. Rosso is inferior to him, in that he errs less. He founders on the relative plausibility of the axioms which lead him to decisions. Rodin is a happy nature, his instinctive desire for richness restrains him from exaggerated simplification. " Simplification without detail results in poverty," he says to his pupils. " Detail is the blood of the organism ; it must be included in the whole which envelops without killing it." He is Delacroix' true compatriot, he desires to impress, to demonstrate, to charm ; his dramatic instinct awoke when he was still a village school-boy. Other boys wanted to be soldiers or coachmen ; he dreamt of the orator's calling ; in the school intervals, when his comrades romped in the playground, he mounted the desk, and addressed the empty benches. This naive dramatic sense has persisted throughout his life.

[f logical continuity were of great importance, we should have to place Rodin far below Rosso, for he has touched everything and completed nothing. Rosso's work, on the other hand, may be reduced to a definite formula from the beginning. But in art as in life, this is a result only achieved by limited powers, and our admiration of consistent natures is not determined by the logical working out of their decisions, but by the importance of the things decided upon. Rodin suffers from the immense complexity of his knowledge, but he has also all the advantages thereof. It is his inconsequence which gives us the rich abundance of his works, and allows us to hope that only one side of his activity touched finality in the Balzac. It resembles his massive figure, which never abandons a cautious hesitance of gait, a certain indolence of movement, as if it were testing the ground before trusting its weight to it. Rodin has a hundred axioms, and seems to contradict himself as often in his words as in his works. In reality he maintains his equilibrium in each. He has to serve the world he bears within him.

Rosso's endeavours to give the utmost resonance to his speech led him at last to suppress words altogether. He is not the first who has been attacked for his

lack of clarity. In many contemporary busts we have some difficulty in finding the face at the first glance. The genius of our age loves disguises, and it is often difficult not to think of some pictorial rebus before works of this sort. When we have got the face we find the little mark on the nose, and the genius to boot. It is a question whether our posterity will have the same patience in seeking and the same success in finding.

There are persons who laugh at Rosso, and there are enthusiasts who follow

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him. Who is there to-day who does not find scoffers and adherents ! Fundamentally the two are agreed " they follow him when they laugh at him, and laugh at him by following him. The mind that blames or praises here thinks more of itself than of Rosso.

A sincere artist is always a symbol. This man is one, and we must comprehend this if we wish to understand our age. There is something of Rosso in all our modern art. He was more in sympathy with the age than any of the rest, and believed more honestly in its promises. Only time can avail anything, a new epoch, to give a vigorous support to the daring personality. The help which once allowed Michelangelo to forget himself, as in the little Berlin group, cannot serve us now. Only new practical purposes, mightier than those which Michelangelo obeyed, can make sculpture plastic once more.

## FIGURE IN THE PORCH OF REIMS CATHEDRAL

## IMPRESSIONISM IN SCULPTURE

Rien n'est matériel dans l'espace. " Rosso.

The pictorial element now reigns supreme in French sculpture, and has become one of its factors in all artistic lands " often, indeed, the leading factor. It has induced a remarkable increase in production. More sculpture is produced and more is sold than heretofore. A Bourdelles portrait is not only easier to make,

but much more likely to please nowadays than a bust by David d' Angers. The treacherous remainder which would have been left by the talent that essayed a chiselled form conceals itself here occasionally in the convenient accident of uncontrolled and therefore more natural execution. The public in its turn readily receives an art which reflects the accustomed trend of painting, and tries to atone in some measure to Manet and other heroes of Impressionism for the disfavour it showed them by emphasising its amiability to their posterity. This is the more easy to it in that a purely optical harmony suffices for its vitiated conception of art, and the guessing of a riddle in itself satisfies the soul that has no requirements. There never was a time when connoisseurship was more cheaply acquired.

The decline of this art, which seems to recognise no law but its own arbitrary will, is a less edifying spectacle than the decadence of Michelangelo's epigoni. The difference lies in the material. Michelangelo had to reckon with marble, the noble building material of the ancients, on which the Popes insisted as long as the store of old Rome lasted. The stubbornness of the stone was in itself a difficulty which limited the craftsman's caprices. It is a curious irony that an Italian of our own times, denied aU participation in the architect's labours, should have arrived by a logical sequence at a total renunciation of stone. Wax satisfies his caprice, and its price is not prohibitive. Naturally he strives to get all possible charm from this material. The subsequent casting is a matter of secondary importance to him, a mere process of preservation. Like the painter, the sculptor now seeks his effects, not in the solution of a monumental problem "where, indeed, should he find this ? " but in a peculiarity of workmanship entirely manual in the narrowest sense. Here again handwriting comes to the fore. Rodin parried the attacks on his Balzac with the curt retort that this, too, contained his "modeles essentiels."

Perhaps, indeed, the Whistlerian postulate discussed below \* is even less demonstrable here than when applied to painting, and the desire of the modern sculptor may be a result of the knowledge that every ancient work shows traces of the tools with which it was executed.

But this seductive appearance is deceptive. The material division from which colour arises in painting does not enter into the question here. The division of light and shade is all that remains, and this is quite independent of the petty

\* See section \*' Whistler," below.

ROSSO: HEAD OF A CHILD

FOLKWANQ MUSEUM, HAQEN, WESTPHALIA



## IMPRESSIONISM IN SCULPTURE 31

manipulative question to which the Whistlerian axiom is here reduced. The play of light in itself, whether produced in a picture by smaller or larger brush-strokes, or in a bust by smaller or larger pressure of the thumb, is meaningless. Light is of use to us only if it lights something.

This purpose is lost sight of more and more. Harmony, the only reasonable objective, the only one by which the work of art can be separated from the sea of arbitrary activity, loses ground in the piece of painting and the piece of sculpture in the same proportion as once did harmony among the arts as groups. Isolated works arise within the work, the beauty of the whole disappears in details, and the sculptor makes a shapeless colossal figure in order to show an effective head.

This was never the case among the old craftsmen. Far above the question of smooth or rough stood the purpose of the whole, and the sculptor who, carving his wooden Madonnas, should have set this problem before himself and proposed to solve it at the expense of the rest, even had he been a genius, would have been classed with a carpenter who should make the four legs of a chair and forget the seat.

We have seen how in painting Impressionism has only contributed great and important fragments to art. The same thing has happened in sculpture ; but the results, which in painting have been glorified by the glamour of splendid new gifts, are more manifestly pernicious here, and militate against the resignation with which one might rise to the relative enthusiasm due to Rodin's and Rosso's followers. The towering figure of the creator of Balzac makes all other sculptors appear small. Think what we will of him, he at any rate spoils our appreciation of others who attempt great works. It is no wonder that the most gifted of the younger generation that has risen around Rodin confine their efforts to sculpture in small. Desbois and Alexandre Charpentier accompany the epic which Rodin dedicates to humanity by pleasant lyrics. They have given many exquisite things to sculpture in small. Here the one essential is taste, which even in this elusive technique seeks to maintain, if not a decisive, at least a graceful proportion among the forms, and to evoke charm out of trifles. They pass their thumbs over the pewter, and from the undulations of the soft metal grow girlish throats, agreeable to the eye as to the hand. This art is as tender as pastel. With it Charpentier carries on the glorious French tradition which breathed its splendour into everything, even the insignificant, and his delicately modulated taste seeks even to preserve the forms of this tradition. The supple limbs of his group on T. Selmersheim's beautiful wooden clock seem almost more flexible than the bronzes of the Versailles chimney-pieces ; and this daintiness is doubly surprising in an- artist whose broad relief in medals seems to shun all contact with the tradition

of Roty, Chaplain, Dupuis, &c., and who carries Impressionism to an extreme even in this domain. But does not the whole of this plastic Impressionism resolve itself into an extreme of the Baroque ?

A whole series of artists develop this tendency. Bourdelle translates Beethoven's head into "musical sculpture," Fix-Masseau made a hit ten years ago with his fantastic *Emprise* ; Voulot, Milles, Dejean model their charming figurines ; the foreigners Troubetzkoi, Vallgren "who is responsible for the little Viennese snake-women" and latterly the German Hoetger, have become known in Paris. The young Hamburger Barlach seems to be evolving a new form from Baroque Impressionism.

Gustave Vigeland, the Norwegian, is almost the only Scandinavian who has

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worked in Rodin's manner on original lines. His first large work, *Hell* of the early nineties, a relief three metres long, with a number of figures, plainly suggests the creator of the *Porte d'Enfer*, perhaps more in the general design than in details. In Vigeland's work Satan is seated over the door in the same manner as *Le Penseur* ; his elbows on his knees, his head in his hands, he occupies the centre of the groups, and observes the varying procession of the damned. But the manner differs fundamentally from that of Rodin. It lacks the beautiful rounded arabesque, the fulness of the planes, the rich modelling. Vigeland is by no means Baroque. He suggests the Northern Gothic of Trondhjem Cathedral, and we do not think of Rodin's nixies, but of the towering figures of the citizens of Calais. The Norwegian is less robust ; his figures consist chiefly of well-formed bones. As a rule he avoids the undulating line ; the *Dance* executed in Berlin, was an exception. His form lacks the seductive flow of French sculpture, and his symbols belong to the more powerful, but colder, mysticism of the North. The group of a man and woman, happily christened *Le Pardon* was a Munch translated into beautiful form. The exhibition of the Viennese Secessionists of 1903 included a few things by the Norwegian, in addition to Rodin's *Hand of God*. It would hardly be possible to imagine a greater contrast than the form and symbolism of the Frenchman, who succeeded in giving a coquettish charm to his deep, creative idea, and in winning his effect by means of an agreeable, supple roundness, and Vigeland's group of the aged man, tall and erect, his children clinging round his knees "a structure of lofty, aspiring lines, a Gothic Ugolino.

The remaining manifestations of Rodin's influence have been all in the direction of pictorial sculpture. A large proportion of this sculpture looks as if it had tumbled by mistake into some treacly fluid, and, pleased with the result, had retained it. The material used enhances this effect. It is still the fashion in Paris to follow the example set by Carries, who was a better ceramicist than sculptor,

and to execute small statues in flambe ware, and the gr<sup>as</sup> preferred by Delaherche, Dalpayrat, Bigot, &c., whose molten enamels give forms still more arbitrary. The slightest retouch of a work hallowed by the Impressionist idea is forbidden to the founder of a bronze, and a flaw in the casting is revered as if it were some lofty manifestation.

This spirit provokes criticism. A few years ago a French writer set on foot a circular inquiry as to whether it was right to limit sculpture to the functions of a decorative art, content with the creation of harmonious form, or whether it would not be legitimate to allow it to enter into open competition with painting.\* Such an inquiry is unimaginable in any age but our own. But even in our own age it is astonishing that the question was seriously answered by all the persons interrogated, among whom were the best artists, both painters and sculptors, the leading lights of criticism, and distinguished collectors !

Rodin's answer, as is fitting, heads the list. He does not go very closely into the matter, but makes it the pretext for one of his inspired hymns to Nature.

"... I studied the antique, the sculptors of the Middle Ages, and went to healthy Nature. After the first gropings I gained courage with every step, when I saw that I was in the true tradition of freedom and truth.

" I have held fast to tradition ; the Ecole des Beaux Arts broke with it eighty years ago. I uphold the tradition of the primitives, of the Egyptians, the Greeks,

\* In the Nouvelle Revue, June 1 901, and afterwards in book form, "De l'Impressionisme en Sculpture," by Edmond Claris.

ROSSO: TOWARDS EVENING (VERS LE SOIR. IMPRESSION DE BOULEVARD) (1893) wax

NOBLET COLLECTION, PARIS

## IMPRESSIONISM IN SCULPTURE 33

and the Romans. I have striven to copy Nature. I record her as I see her, in accordance with my temperament, my sensibility, the feelings she awakes in me. I have not attempted to transform her; I have never imposed any laws of com-

position upon her, nor tried to harmonise her movements. I have observed them and maintained them in their independence, their full life, their full harmony.

" Nature composes herself, and this composition seems to me much more beautiful than that which is obtained by the application of arbitrary rules. My rule is to leave the model his natural movements. Thus only do we get life and beauty. The conventional attitudes imposed upon models in life schools explain the stiffness and hardness of academic work. These truly disturb the equilibrium and destroy the harmony and composition of Nature. . . ."

He concludes with the proposition that there is but one art, that painting and sculpture are merged in a single art "that of drawing. The field of observation in Nature is so vast that all really strong temperaments can work in it with the means at their disposal, clay or palette.

The very opposite of all this might be urged without being very wide of the truth. Indeed, we might even get nearer to it thus. The love of Nature, that leads to itself by way of the Egyptians and the Greeks, has a large heart. This is the eternal confusion between Nature and natural. Every artist who desires more from the tangible world than to learn the natural from it wanders away from art. It was certainly not naturalism which drew Rodin to the Egyptians and Greeks, but the impulse towards a law that should enable him to stand erect in the presence of Nature, and curb the exaggeration of the impression received from Nature. It was his desire for a formulation of that which does not lie in the visible world, but is grounded in the purposes of art, that which Rodin here calls temperament and feeling, and at other times, as we read in the chapter dealing with him, mathematics and taste. He strays yet farther from the truth when, like Zola, he believes the decisive factor to be temperament. Temperament is included, perhaps, in his vague conception, taste ; but this says nothing of the mathematical ingredient, of the immutable constructive element, which substitutes the organisation of art for the organisation of Nature in order to compass the work of art. He has been interpreted by Rosso rather than by his own work, which is distinguished from that of his comrade, and not to its disadvantage, by the very thing his theory suppresses. He imagines himself to be speaking in the name of his supposed naturalism in another part of his answer, when, as a fact, he is expressing his justifiable aversion from the Pre-Raphaelites. He merely proves herewith that the weighing down of the scale on the other side is no less disastrous, that formula alone is unavailing "if, indeed, the Pre-Raphaelites can be said to have had a serious formula. If he recognises rightly that the English stylists lack Nature, i.e., the motor-force of art, he does not hereby prove that with this resource all would have been well.

As yet we are unable to formulate this law which lies outside the senses, and which the artist must apprehend by his understanding. We recognise the same law in the proportions of an Egyptian colossus and of a tiny Egyptian statuette. The same law must also govern the proportions of a creation of Rodin's, although there need not

therefore be the faintest suggestion in this of an Egyptian work. The fact that this primitive proportion was gradually approached less and less closely, and that nations fell away more and more from this equation, is the main cause of the decline of the fine arts " metaphorically speaking, be it understood. The rectification of

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the millennial error will not be made by discovery of the equation, but rather by an earnest endeavour to avoid the forces which have driven us from the equation. Nature as such can by no means help us. It may possibly contribute one term' of the equation, which deals with material aspects, and without the other it- is absolutely senseless " i.^., indefinite. The prescriptions which the phenomena of Nature obey mock at mathematics ; they are not fixed and immutable from the beginning like those of art, absolute as the proposition that the three angles of a triangle will always make two right angles, but present themselves for our circumscribed consideration on the way of experience. Art is calculable, at any rate, from the standpoint of what it cannot be, although we cannot as yet work out the sum, and shall never succeed in making art by its means. Nature is incalculable, from the very fact that if she were to err we have no means of demonstrating her error, or of correcting it. Until those laws of art which shall prove to us mathematically why we dislike a bad bust are perfectly revealed, the artist has nothing but instinct wherewith to cultivate his genius. He must work like the student of natural science, who gains his experience from a multitude of phenomena ; he must see much, and must approach Nature with a knowledge of all the means which were of service to his predecessors, the exemplars to whom his instinct leads him.

What would Rodin be without this instinct which enabled him to choose exemplars ? We feel distinctly with him that Nature merely affords him a means of fusing the impressions which his genius received before works of art : it is an amalgamating medium.

Baudelaire says in his " Art Romantique " that beauty is always dual, though it may have the appearance of unity : that it consists of an eternal, immutable element, and of a relative element which belongs to the epoch, to fashion, morality, passion. He may have had something touching tradition and freedom in his mind. I believe there is plurality rather than duality " multiple elements, not so various as those of the life of natural objects, but nevertheless so extensive that we cannot yet survey them comprehensively. They are all variable, but the law which welds them into a work remains eternally the same.

Nietzsche said once, " Oh ! stupidity ! Classicism was supposed to be a sort of naturalism."

Rodin's worship of Nature is a kind of noble, unconscious modesty. " It is honourable in an artist to be incapable of criticism," said Nietzsche.

Rosso's answer to the circular (see above, p. 32) is that of the creator of his works, and culminates in the motto at the head of this chapter. If it be true that nothing material can exist in space, we ought to believe that there can be nothing immaterial in art. For if, indeed, we can conceive of a tangible relation between the two, it is this " that art symbolises the consciousness of Nature, the highest conception of the reality of the phenomenon. Nothing is more real than art. Rosso means that, beholding the head of a person, he cannot imagine the head without a trunk ; that he could not make up his mind to contemplate this body apart from its milieu ; that he cannot conceive of anything isolated. It is hard to understand how such things could have been formulated and printed without contradiction. . . .

Claris' inquiry was suggested by Baudelaire's dictum that sculpture will always remain an auxiliary art, destitute of all the expressive resources of painting, because it cannot, like painting, impose a single point of view upon the spectator.

## B. HOETGER: BRONZE FIGURE

### IMPRESSIONISM IN SCULPTURE ^5

Like all Baudelaire's aesthetic appreciations, this proposition lacks clarity and logic. This is Bartholome's point of departure.

It might have been expected that he would take the bull by the horns, and base his argument upon his Monument to the Dead. He could think of nothing better than to point out that Baudelaire had forgotten work in relief, which, like painting, determines the standpoint of unity, and therefore may compete with painting. Fremiet and Desbois take advantage of the opportunity to assure us that a great deal of very bad sculpture is produced nowadays. The painters interrogated, the gentlemen of the rival faculty, are graciously amiable. Raffaelli's answer in particular, that sculpture too is capable of producing very pretty things, is not lacking in humour. The aged Meunier alone puts forward a timid suggestion that after all sculpture is a monumental art, and has very little to do with painting. But in truth he had not given much thought to the subject. . . .

It tends somewhat to the salving of a self-esteem oppressed by the successes of our Western neighbours to recognise the results of their plastic art as soon as it quits a sphere circumscribed by the individuality of a single person or the approval

of a jury " the sphere of exhibitions and ateliers " and collaborates with works from which even these prosaic times have not succeeded in banishing art altogether.

Every monument by modern artists unveiled in the French capital excites a certain uneasiness in the soul of the thoughtful. Perhaps our times are ill-attuned to the custom of marking our reverence by marble memorials. In any case, we no longer have any proper places for them. I have often found myself carried away with admiration for the statues in the parks of Versailles and Fontainebleau, even for the mediocre ones, which we should never glance at in a gallery. They have struck me as indispensable, and yet I think I am as much of a modern as most people. I have a boundless veneration for Rodin, and would advance unhesitatingly to damnation through his *Porte d'Enfer* if so I might prove the sincerity of my opinions. But I cannot imagine the Balzac in any public place in Paris ; indeed, I think the genius of the city would suffer from the presence of this, the greatest genius she has sheltered.

The time is yet to come, but as the decoration of public buildings has now been thrown open to the modern painters, sculpture of the same spirit will slowly conquer public places ; for " and this is the irony of it " this kind is the only one that produces anything of real merit nowadays, anything, that is to say, of permanent value. There are still certain worthy, commonplace " *Prix de Rome*," who owe commissions to their connections, but the decorations of the Universal Exhibition of 1900 showed " and terrible souvenirs thereof have survived " the spirit of the revolutionary era. There will soon be no more trivialities, and then there will be nothing for it but to take to art " to art, which destroys art.

It has already come to this in industrial art. Here such a disposition is a crime. Carabin, who shows such rare charm in the manipulation of bronze and wood, produces monstrosities such as his chairs and tables formed of women's bodies. The dainty Charpentier, who has so delicate a sense of structure in the arrangement of limbs, loses all proportion when he begins to design furniture, and, exquisite as are some of his details, it is unimaginable that any reasonable industrial art should be evolved on such a basis. When Baron Vitta gave him a commission for a billiard table, a friend jestingly asked if all the billiard balls were to be decorated with carvings.

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And Rodin himself, who places taste above everything, would he do better in principle ? The small accessories in his great works, and his bitter criticism of all rational modern essays in industrial art, to which he would refuse all he permits to abstract art, make it highly improbable.

How would it fare with the bold spirit who ventured to say that here lies the criterion of a practical kind, that we require an art which shows a paternal spirit to industry, and once more takes up that very quality of an art which is above all things form, which the Claris circular condemned root and branch ?

\*^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^

^|k ^p ^ T\* 'f^ \*^

Hitherto we have tried to recognise results independently of particular productions in the history of French painting and sculpture. The two arts show an evident community of aims. They introduce new methods, destined to give a powerful extension to art, and lose many important possessions of the ancients, which were deemed indispensable during the development of earlier art epochs. Thus we conquer and are conquered. Many methods, few purposes, was the fate in both camps hitherto. Dissolution was imminent.

It remains to us to recognise the tendency that seeks to reconstruct, that connects to-day with yesterday, and endeavours to build a new house with the fragments that lie around us in rich profusion.

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AMAURY DUVAL: A YOUNG GIRL (salon i864)

CALAIS MUSEUM

G. VIGELAND. THE DANCE.

FROM A DRAWING OF THE GROUP.

CHASSERIAU. DRAWING.

ARTHUR CHASSERIAU COLLECTION, PARIS.

## II. COMPOSITION

### THE INGRES TRADITION

In all the conflict concerning colour and light which distinguishes Impressionism there is so little question as to what has become of the old tradition on which composition relied that we are sometimes greatly astonished to find it still in being, and recognise the last streams from this spring of the greatest artistic activity of France almost as abnormal phenomena.

Ingres painted wonderful pictures, which contain the germ of great compositions, but were perhaps too highly concentrated to become decorations of a flat surface. His whole manner was directed towards reduction. In the narrow compass of the modern picture, which he was forced to accept as the ultimate

means of expression, he sought all the art of the old masters, which is so great in frescoes. It was the most brilliant form of that expediency created by the poverty of the age. Poussin's easel pictures look like reductions of the vast decorations of a palace, made for purposes Ingres no longer possessed, and could no longer fulfil when they presented themselves.

Once only did he find a task commensurate with the capacity of his genius, if we except the Apotheosis of Horne<sup>1</sup> in the Louvre, originally designed for a ceiling — the beginning of monumental painting in France, according to Maurice Denis. This was when the Due de Luynes commissioned him to decorate a room in the Chateau de Dampierre. The work was interrupted by one of those tragicomic incidents dear to history, and remains a fragment rich in beauties. Fortunately the studies and drawings are extant. The reader may gather some faint idea of the projected work from our reproduction of the Age d'Or\*

\* Hebert, the last survivor of those pupils who worked under Ingres at the Academy in Rome, told me that the rupture with the Due de Luynes was brought about by a most trivial affair. Ingres was installed in the Chateau with his wife, and Madame Ingres took a remark made by the Duke in reference to some domestic occurrence connected with "vegetables, to herself. Ingres, susceptible as a Spaniard, and already irritated by the importunities of his patron, who wanted him to get on faster with the work, threw up his commission, repaid the not inconsiderable advances already made by the Duke, and left the Chateau, never to return. The commission had been given as early as 1839, when Ingres was still in Rome. The yige de Fer was to have been the pendant to the Age d'Or. The ground for the former had only just been prepared by Ingres' pupils when the rupture took place (1850). VJge dOr was completely sketched, and some of the figures were finished. There were eighty nude figures in all, of which Ingres himself said, " Ce sont des paresseux qui se gobergent et boivent dans un doux far niente le lait et le miel des ruisseaux " (Th. Silvestre, " Histoire des Artistes vivants," E. Blanchard, Paris, 1856). There are many drawings for the work in the Montauban Museum. Twelve years after the quarrel Ingres painted a small picture from the drawings {cf. " Ingres," by J. Mommeja, Paris, Laurens), which bears the inscription quoted upon it, and from

which our reproduction is made. Two years later, in 1864, Ingres painted the Bain l'ure at the age of eighty-four.

In his list of Ingres' works Silvestre further mentions as decorative designs by Ingres the life-size cartoons for painted glass in the chapels of Dreux and St. Ferdinand ordered by Louis Philippe.

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To all the talk about Ingres' so-called academicism we need merely oppose three things : that little gem, the Francesca da Rimini<sup>^</sup> at Chantilly, the Bain l'ure, in the Princesse de Broglie's collection, and the wall painting in the Chateau de Dampierre. The man who had these three arrows in his quiver was academic in the same sense as Raphael.

The variety of the three subjects is unimportant. It is rather their similarity which we admire, the measure manifested in all three ; the marvellous sagacity which made subject, drawing, colours, all work together to a desired end in each case, and knew how to be always rich, always perfect. Here the true " doctrine " of Ingres is manifest. It is akin to that of his great prototype, who painted the Ezekiel in the Pitti Palace, the Madonnas, and the frescoes of the Stanze.

It is true that many of their forms, which delighted contemporaries, are but relics to us, and that certain of the master's pictures which have a place of honour in the Louvre are antipathetic to us. We have no longer patience enough for all the moods of that exuberant life, which lasted longer than that of ordinary mortals. Our need demands a graver art than the varied play of limbs in the Age cTOfy which the old man proudly inscribed " Aetatis 82." The wealth here displayed has become too vast for us ; we require greater unity. It is only his doctrine, stripped of all the objective elements he chose, the rhythm, whose living force compels our admiration before all Ingres' pictures, even when we dislike their episodes, that can serve us now.

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Two very diverse tendencies had their source in Ingres, or, rather, were first associated in him. Both found Impressionism insufficient, and strove for linear development. Degas plays the part of protagonist in one, and it seems almost a jest of history that he, the most malicious of all the moderns, in whose footprints a Lautrec has followed, should have woven Ingres' tenderness into the Satanic web of his lusts. The other tendency is of a more decorous nature ; it even seeks to enlist Ingres as an apostle of religion, and turns the line which formed

the marvellous contour of the Odalisque's thigh to excellent account in Christian legend. This again is an irony of history, no more sentimental now than of old, when naive Christianity girded on the armour of Paganism, and used the vessels of concupiscence for solemn oblation to the Holy Ghost.

It must be admitted that the Catholicism of Ingres' pupils was of no particular service to art. Zeal and honest endeavour were not lacking, but all exertions failed to bring about more than a St. Martin's summer of ecclesiastical art, no more virile than the work of contemporary Englishmen. A whole generation of cultured and well-meaning artists set up their studios in the churches of Paris and Southern France. The greater part of the church painting which greets the tired eyes of strangers here is the work either of direct pupils of Ingres or artists who became his converts later. A contemporary member of the band, Maurice Denis, who at times seems disposed to reckon himself among this generation, but whom justice forbids us to confound with it, has sketched their history with pious affection,\* and makes an attempt to distinguish the academics from the artists. Mottez, Janmot, and the aristocratic Hippolyte Flandrin, to whom the Louvre owes a pair of remark-

\* In a little periodical, " L'Occident " (17 Rue Eble, Paris), numbers for July, August, and September 1902, with illustrations after Amaury-Duval, Mottez, Janmot, and notably Chass<sup>^</sup>riau, under the title " Les El<sup>^</sup>ves d'Ingres." It is a pity that he has omitted Court, of whom it would be interesting to know something, even were he not so closely associated with the group.

PRUD'HON: POTIPHAR'S WIFE

MARCILLE COLLECTION, PARIS

## THE INGRES TRADITION 41

ably delicate portraits, are welcome to a period that longs for rest; the drawings of Amaury-Duval and Lamothe will perhaps endure longer. Chenavard and Orsel are preserved by their own literature, or that of their pupils. They nearly all wrote, and were brilliant teachers. Lamothe is the one who has become best known in this way post festum. Degas went to school under him, as did that remarkable draughtsman Ch. Serret, who died almost unnoticed a few years ago. In course of time he broke away from Ingres' sharp line, and approximated to Renoir's mellow forms ; he made many delightful drawings of children, which recall the aged Frolich. VoUard owns a fine collection of these drawings. Many

are to be found in the studios of the younger painters.

Taking it all for all, it was the same tendency that manifested itself in Germany under Overbeck, who was closely connected with the Frenchmen ; but whereas the pious Germans are now relegated to the spare bedrooms of good families, where they appear in the form of faded engravings, the Frenchmen are enshrined in the churches. Mottez learned the technique of fresco in Italy. At the Centennial Exhibition Roger Marx showed a beautiful sample of his work — a portrait in fresco — which was afterwards acquired by the Luxembourg. Like the Germans, these Frenchmen represented the reaction against the paganism of the older artists ; the Nazarenes had as their medium a profoundly national legend, the pious, but by no means Catholic, German Volkslied. Compare the Wartburg frescoes or Rethel's Dance of Death with the languid French legends. Here the Germans were invariably superior ; they had their Nuremberg, and the tradition of Holbein. For them the movement was a field in which they found themselves the last muster of purely Germanic artistic forces, which might have resulted in a German monumental art, if a fitting receptacle had been available, a worthy treasure-house, which would have incited the following generation to carry on the work with more powerful artistic means. For the French, on the contrary, every open advance upon the path was a national aberration. Ingres' indebtedness to Holbein is obvious. When Degas copied the Anne of Cleves he was going back to the fountain-head. But the result of the influence ought to have remained purely French. Ingres never appears so unnatural — I had almost said so insufferable — as when he seems to approach this German pietism.

The most important results of all the well-meant exertions of Ingres' disciples are a few fine studies of the nude, which lurk among the sacred garments here and there, suggesting the possibility of a great composition better than the legends of the pictures. The only great artist who came from Ingres' studio placed himself in direct opposition to his comrades. He was the Masaccio of the nineteenth century, Chasseriau, whose fate was in many respects akin to that of the great precursor of the Quattrocento. Like him, he came out of a severely formal school, the vital elements of which he saved for posterity. He lived but little longer than the painter of the Brancacci Chapel. His works, too, are in danger of falling into dust, and he has a common title to fame with his prototype, for he survived in the generation of artists which outlived him.

## THEODORE CHASSERIAU

Regrettez vous le temps ou le ciel sur la terre  
Marchait et respirait dans un peuple de dieux ;  
Où Venus Astarte, fille de l'onde amère,

Secouait, vierge encore, les larmes de sa m<sup>^</sup>re,  
Et fecondait le monde en tordant ses cheveux ?

MUSSET.

Chasseriau was one of the wonder-children of art. Chevillard, in his well-informed work upon this painter,\* tells the remarkable story of the boy who at ten years old begged to be allowed to go into Ingres' studio instead of to school, and who, when he was allowed his own way for fear of an illness, very soon became the master's favourite pupil. His apprenticeship lasted but a few years, for Chasseriau was too young to accompany Ingres when he was summoned to the Academy in Rome. It was only the very sensible opposition of the youth's family which put an end to the project.

We should perhaps be grateful to chance which so arranged matters. Chasseriau had learnt just as much as he needed to make him conscious of the linear task of the school. Ingres' absence enabled him to approach France's other great star, Delacroix, who, shortly before the fifteen-year-old Chasseriau made his debut at the Salon, had painted his first Oriental pictures, and, to Ingres' bitter chagrin, had exercised a decisive influence on the boy.

Criticism has long assigned Chasseriau the place between Ingres and Delacroix, which is apparently so natural a one for him. Those of his works which approximate to Delacroix' domain have given rise to controversies which ignore the decisive spirit of these. In reality nothing was more natural than that one of his temperament and with such a natural aptitude for painting should not have resisted the impression made by a similar temperament, by a Delacroix, the artist who decided the fate of painting. In this case not to have followed would have meant incapacity to follow. Delacroix' conquest was decisive from the purely technical standpoint ; chance further ordained that Chasseriau should complete himself. He too learned the possibilities of colour in nature in the East, and went forth on this journey from the same circle as Delacroix. Similar tasks were assigned to each in Paris : Delacroix lithographed Manfred, Chasseriau etched Othello. Their literary inspiration was the same. They looked at the world with kindred eyes ; Chasseriau's notes seem to give us the completion of Delacroix' journal. f He had just time to assimilate the new doctrine of colour.

\* Valbert Chevillard, " Theodore Chasseriau," with a fairly complete catalogue of works (Lemerre, Paris, 1893).

t M. Arthur de Chasseriau, the artist's nephew, possesses a large number of these notes, many of them illustrated by drawings. Chevillard's book contains a selection from these. Unfortunately many of the notes, as also the letters to his brother, have perished. They happened to be in the

Palais des Comptes at the time of the Commune, in the office of a relative who had a post there.

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## THEODORE CHASSERIAU 43

He visited the East in 1846, and died in 1856. It is no wonder that many of the easel pictures painted during these ten years, now the most important items of the Arthur Chasseriau collection, should reveal the influence of Delacroix very clearly. There are marvellous things among them. The Skirmish between Arab Horsemen is gem-like in colour, and hardly less fiery than many a Delacroix. In his harem pictures he gave himself up to the seduction of colour with an ardour untrammelled by any recollection of the severe Ingres tradition. His last work, the sketch of a harem interior, was an exquisite reminiscence which suggests Fragonard.

Nevertheless, the Chasseriau we have before us now is separated from Delacroix by a whole world. The one was mighty passion, the other enthusiasm. The difference makes itself felt even in Chasseriau's copy of the Medea of his prototype (in the Cheramy collection). Leonardo, whom he also copied,\* and with far more mastery, was much more congenial to him.

The continuation of Delacroix in colouristic development could, in fact, only

proceed on the lines laid down by modern art. There were at one time a thousand forces capable of accomplishing this task in a variety of manners ; whereas, on the other side, that of the task bequeathed by Ingres, collaborators who have really created must be reckoned by units.

When Chasseriau, a youth of nineteen, produced his Venus Anadyomene " she stands half in profile on an island coast, both hands uplifted to her hair " the hour of his epiphany struck. We might enumerate a divine series of such figures of Venus in art, which should begin with that ascribed to Botticelli in the Berlin Museum and include the marvel by Lorenzo di Credi in the Uffizi. In this series Chasseriau's work should find a place. The little picture is still weak in colour. The lithographic reproduction by the artist himself gives the measure of his creative power better, and has all the bloom of youthful tenderness. In the further manifestation of this art, the Apollo and Daphne of the Arthur Chasseriau collection, the colour of the brush was an adverse rather than a contributory element. Chasseriau's colour was never seen to greater advantage than when he lithographed this beautiful composition for " L' Artiste." When in his Venus he expressed the yearning of a belated worshipper of Italy's great past, he had never left France. When he painted the Apollo and Daphne he had been to Rome, and it was there that this remarkable pictorial manner, so alien to the French Academy in Rome, first found expression. Compare the Daphne with the Venus. The Venus is almost completely enveloped in the modelling of the pencil, and very cleanly, as Ingres required. In the Daphne the white of the paper plays a part ; we have only the outline, very much less definite than formerly, and a little shading here and there. And how superbly the beautiful body rises from the arms of the kneeling singer ! The pose is very similar to that of the Venus, It has gained nothing in correctness ; there are glaring blunders in the junction of the splendid outstretched arm with the shoulder ; but, on the other hand, how wonderfully the gestures of the suppliant god respond to every trail of the naked figure ! The trees of the wood complete the rhythm. We feel how this nude form is growing into the large movement of the vegetation, without any of the petty details with which the favourite episode is invested by others ; it is true poetry. The Venus was a beautiful arabesque, with something of the voluptuous

\* The Gioconda, in the same collection.

t Now in the possession of M. Pierre Marcotte de Quiviere, Paris.  
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tenderness to which Ingres himself gave way in happy moments ; but she has an air of detachment, seems hardly to belong to us. For the Daphne any of our most modern poets might write the verses which the kneeling singer stammers, and we

should all understand them, without thinking of the beautiful myth.\*

This wonderful sensuous medium of expression, which caresses the eye, as it were, with its delicate bloom, Chasseriau owed neither to Delacroix nor to Ingres. We never find it again. Court, another artist too soon forgotten, of whom; we were reminded at the Centennial Exhibition by the fascinating Daphnis conducting Chlo'e to the Bath, had perhaps tones faintly akin to these in his lyre, but he made them over-dulcet, whereas Chasseriau's irresistible charm lies in this, that he is never sickly in his sensuousness, but preserves the natural attitude characteristic of the Oriental in this connection. Like Degas and Gauguin, he was a creole, and although he was brought up in Europe the East must have moulded him. It was an elementary, I might almost say a conventional, addition with which he modified the tradition of Ingres. Theophile Gautier calls him an Indian who had studied in Greece. It is as if the West had given him words, the East melody. Even in the pictures in which he is most Ingresque this impression persists. There is nothing that conforms more perfectly to his master's doctrine than the *MMi-tation et V Etude*, one of the frescoes of the *Cour des Comptes*. Two women typify the theme. One lies in picturesque abandon, with a flower, the flower, in her hand, her beautiful meditative head supported on her arm. The second figure studies the usual book. Ingres can have found nothing to move his wrath in this arrangement; nor was Orientalism in itself repellent to the painter of the *Odalisque*, But this Oriental atmosphere may well have been so. The figures are not only beautiful lines and voluptuously modelled planes; they are also women. A natural Oriental indolence pervades the symbolic forms. Behind the high philosophy of these attitudes we divine the sweet idleness of the very unphilosophic women of the harem, the contented lassitude of the flesh, the play of seductive secret meditations. A smile trembles over all this solemnity, giving the faintest pucker to the brows, and bedewing glances and gestures with a gentle humanity. Far more important, to my mind, than Chasseriau's emulation of his great rival's colour was his mysterious application of Delacroix' pictorial element in the richer development of his drawing. This is apparent not only in his figures, but above all in landscape, in the peculiar treatment of trees, &c. Hereby Chasseriau contributed to a development of the linear element, and transmitted to his successors not only a part of Ingres, but also Delacroix' gift merged into line, which was thus preserved to monumental decoration. Chasseriau came into the world with the capacity for fertilisation from the East, which may compare in importance with Manet's assimilation of Spanish influences. His contact with Delacroix was a result, not a cause; it deepened and beautified his Orientalism. But this was developed long before he saw Delacroix. We are distinctly conscious of it in the fine portrait of himself with the jet-black hair, enframing the dark complexion, the large, deep-set eyes, and the over-full lips. Again, in his famous portrait of his sisters, *Les deux Sceurs*, a barely perceptible exotic tinge adds a singular charm to the conception. Where among all the works of a period so rich in portraits, even in those of Ingres or of David, shall we find such a combination of tenderness with gravity? and this in spite of the subdued colour, which hardly gives a hint here of the future colourist. It might be called a monumental private portrait, so

â€¢ The picture was, I believe, two years later than the lithograph.

## INGRES: LE BAIN TURC

THE ABOVE IS NOT IDENTICAL WITH THE PRINCESSE DE BROGUE'S "BAIN TURC", WHICH IS OVAL, AND SHOWS IMPORTANT VARIATIONS IN THE FOREGROUND AND ON THE LEFT, THOUGH THE GENERAL ARRANGEMENT IS THE SAME.

## THEODORE CHASSERIAU 45

grandly are the two figures brought together, their family likeness turned to account for a masterly parallelism, worthy of a fresco painter. But this would not suggest the charm of the dusky blossom that lurks in its heart. In the Toilette of Esther, painted at about the same time, this blossom stands revealed.\*

The Esther seems to me the gem of the easel pictures. Earlier than the others, it has not, as yet, the full, free poetry of the Daphne ; it is a further evolution of the Venus, which it recalls in the gesture of the hands, uplifted to the hair. But no one who saw the Venus could have foreseen such a development. This time the figure is seated, facing the spectator. The exquisite plane of the naked torso occupies the centre of the picture ; slaves on either side present the jewels with which Esther is to appear before the king. The dreamy, far-away expression of the sweet figure. is of exquisite beauty. Here the East blossoms in a fashion quite unlike that of Delacroix' orgies of colour ; we seem to catch a glimpse of the soul of exotic beauty, whereof Delacroix saw the outward splendour. We are reminded of a much later artist, of Gauguin, in his rare moments of calm and happiness.

This is perhaps the secret of Chasseriau's monumental art, the natural calm which only the East possesses. The intention of the monumental painter is also clearly apparent. The whole picture lies in the action of the arms. The black slave holds her casket with the typical gesture of the ancients. A delicious play of line, never contradicting itself, and expanding in vigorous breadth at the base, runs from her head over the hands and arms of Esther and the bust of the other slightly higher figure. The bodies of the two flanking figures are cut off almost schematically by the frame â€” a masterly touch. I am inclined to rate this little picture even higher than the gorgeous Tepidarium in the Louvre, the beautiful monument he raised to the master of the Bain Turc, in which we may admire both what the pupil took from his teacher and what he added. In spite of its beauty

this remains a brilliant school picture. The new elements that went beyond Ingres lie in the Esther. M. Cheramy's little Ariadne, too, has strangely modern features. In the marvellous simplification of the action here we seem to discern, not Puvis, but Maurice Denis.

This art found a task worthy of it on the staircase of the demolished Palais de la Cour des Comptes. The historian has little to detain him here. The Palais has disappeared, and where the great panels of Peace and War stood before the Franco-Prussian conflict the engines of a modern railway station now rush past. I saw the frescoes. Ten years ago it was still possible to form an idea of their original splendour. The Commune, which set fire to the Palais, is not responsible for the almost complete destruction of the paintings : a large portion survived the fire, and this was not altogether disfigured by the flames, but had acquired something of a venerable tone, which gave a deeper tinge to Chasseriau's tender melancholy. The monstrous neglect of survivors, who left the frescoes to the mercy of wind and weather for nearly thirty years, must answer for our loss—the same authorities who are allowing Chasseriau's few church paintings to perish in dark, damp corners, just as they are allowing Delacroix' decorations to perish. The preservation of a fragment of the gigantic work is due to one or two private

—The Two Sisters was at the Salon of 1843, and was not understood. The latter had already figured in the Salon of 1842. Both are in the A. Chasseriau collection, as well as the little picture mentioned above, Judith and Daphne (1846), and the artist's own portrait (1838).

at Church of S. Merri, Rue St. Martin.

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individuals, notably the artist's nephew, Arthur Chasseriau, Roger Marx, and the late Ary Renan.\* The frescoes were removed from the walls with infinite labour. A large portion of the rescued fragments are still packed in chests. The large fragment, almost half of the Peace, was put together and transferred to canvas ; it was exhibited at the Universal Exhibition of 1900, and now hangs in the vestibule of the Louvre beside the Botticelli fresco. The drawing for the panels, in the possession of M. Arthur Chasseriau, gives some idea of the general effect. In the Louvre fragment there is a lack of atmosphere about the crowded figures ; we miss the vast background, which allowed the eye to divide the effect. Chasseriau's art is distorted by the arbitrary nature of the enforced lesion\* It is as if one should strike two or three chords on the piano which call imperatively for a continuation, and then walk away. Nevertheless it is sometimes possible among these few tones to recognise in fragmentary fashion the grandiose harmony of those Elysian Fields which inspired Theophile Gautier's finest prose. He little thought

that his description of the frescoes would one day prove a powerful factor for their reconstruction.

In the two panels Chasseriau has written the history of the synthesis he accomplished. It is significant that in the Peace, the colourless school of Ingres, tempered by the Oriental softness of the modelling, prevails, whereas the forms of the smiths, who are preparing for war, are akin to Delacroix, both in the painting of their muscular nudity and in their strong colour. We might call the Peace Day, and the War Night. In one we have the cheerful, careless lyric poetry which recalls Poussin, in the other the drama of the Rubens temperament. Both are Chasseriau. He at least came very near to a solution of the problem involved in penetrating both the scenes of this fresco with his own individuality, and thereby also approached the solution of the great artistic problem of modern times. He did not finally accomplish it. His life was too short by some ten or twenty years. A consideration of his prolific life convinces us that harsh Death robbed us of his ripest and most brilliant period.

If this period would have followed immediately on the time which was interrupted by his sudden death seems doubtful. In spite of Paul de St. Victor's glowing hymns in their praise, it is impossible to rank the last great decorations in the Chapel of St. Roch and the dome of the apse in St. Philippe du Roule with, or even very close to, the earlier works. In the two frescoes of the baptistery, as far as they are still recognisable, there is scarcely a trace of personal charm, in spite of the Oriental theme. In the interim the artist seems himself to have undergone the rite he painted, for his own individual Greek manner evidently rebelled against the specifically Christian sentiment essential in this, as in the Descent from the Cross in the cupola. He did his best to keep out the pagan element, the exquisite dreaminess of his Peace, the sweet, feminine aroma of his Tepidarium, and in so doing lost what was best in his art, in order, strangely enough, to come into the dangerous vicinity of Delacroix, whose shadow has certainly not been overcome in the painting of the cupola.

All his best works clearly indicate that he would have found it hard to free himself immediately from the influence of the mightier spirit. Rarely do we return to the springs from which we issued, and these, in his case, contained the sources of his true value. The Chasseriau we love, the Chasseriau who is of great

See his illustrated article in the "Gaz. des Beaux Arts" for February 1898, and Roger Marx's illustrated article in the "Revue Populaire" of the same date.

POUSSIN : ARIADNE AND BACCHUS. DRAWING

## THEODORE CHASSERIAU

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and inestimable importance to the monumental art of France, is the Primitive who was never too young to give the most individual elements of his manner.

The great Puvis accomplished what was still left to do. In his youth he was on terms of friendship with the painter of the Peace fresco. A romance of no ordinary kind separated them, and the worshippers of the great president of modern artistry deliberately suppress the name of the man who proved his St. John. This helped to make the veil of oblivion that overhung Chasseriau still denser. With the exception of a few slight hints given by Roger Marx, there is to this day no document recording the thanks due to Chasseriau's manes for having proclaimed the advent of the decorator of the Pantheon. Chevillard's book is full of exaltations of his hero at the expense of that Delacroix whom he never equalled, and says not a word of his influence on his successors. Now both protagonists and secondary personages have left the scene. The fame of the creator of the Ludus -pro Patria is brighter and purer than ever. He was not only greater, but more fortunate than his predecessor. All the more does it behove us ungrudgingly to recognise that all a contemporary could give to the master of the Pantheon frescoes was lavished on him by the gentle hand which created the Venus Anadyomene. Puvis is not belittled by such recognition, but it raises Chasseriau to high Olympus, to sit on the right hand of the venerable master.

CHASSERIAU. Etching.

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PUVIS DE CHAVANNES



As long as Puvis lived people went to the Salon to see pictures, and put up with all its audacities. When one got to him at last through the tumult of the rooms, all the trumpets of the big and brutal musicians and all the squealing of the little pipers seemed to cease. It was like coming into a church.

The mighty stream of Impressionism broke at Puvis' feet too, but not as against a stony dam which repels the waters and drives them into another direction; rather as on a broad alluvial shore, grateful for the fertilising flood, and sucking it in at a thousand pores. Puvis was like a filter, through which all the colour of the moderns passed, issuing therefrom in a purified form. Many have called him sickly and pale on this account, whereas his was in fact the moderation of omnipotence, the most perfect form of health. His highly spiritual art has been contrasted with Besnard's sensual Impressionism, because the latter is better fitted to satisfy, or, indeed, to satiate, the appetite. Besnard, most dexterous of the dexterous, was not saved from bankruptcy on various occasions by his determined prodigality of colour. He is at his worst in this respect in the wall-paintings of the chemical laboratory of the Sorbonne. I recall with a shudder that chemographic inauguration, when reds and yellows swam before one's eyes, and the printed scenario handed to each participant proved powerless to give the much-desired enlightenment. Besnard was the more culpable here in that the want of division in the colour was aggravated by a systematic avoidance of any sort of harmony in the composition. Only the early Besnard, who painted the Ecole de Pharmacie, is innocuous as a decorator, if we except certain agreeable drawing-room pieces, such as M. Bing's ceiling. And in the Ecole de Pharmacie colour played him the opposite trick; here he is more subdued than he ever dreamt of being, and very soon there will be nothing of the pristine splendour left. Moderation is the Alpha and Omega of decorative painting. Giotto knew what he was doing, and Puvis was his disciple. His mighty shadow is to be seen growing up in Puvis far above the youthful form of Chassériau, and blessing his latest progeny. We still have no line, which belongs entirely to us, and is fitted for such tasks. But from the traditional line, Puvis subtracted everything that could possibly be dispensed with, so that the conventional is only to be found in his work as in that of a more modern Japanese. He had the singular good fortune to possess a personality in perfect harmony with this convention, which in him produces unity, and appears as instinct. Every one of his attitudes is to be found in every drawing which he made on the spur of the moment, with no thought of future use. Repose seems as much a personal characteristic of his, as movement of Degas, or softness of Renoir. He achieves it by an extremely simple form, which could hardly be reduced further without impoverishment. Under the impression that we are dealing with a descendant of Giotto, we look involuntarily for the characteristics of the style, and find good nude studies instead.

He did not always show this mastery of the human form. We hear that his

## CHASSERIAU: FRAGMENT OF THE FRESCO IN THE DEMOLISHED PALAIS DE LA COUR DES COMPTES

LOUVRE, PARIS

### PUVIS DE CHAVANNES 49

His drawing was conspicuous when he was in Couture's studio. Synthesis tormented him, before he had got the parts together, and even later he often sacrificed detail to it. When several hundreds of his chalk drawings were brought together in the Salon of 1896, it was impossible not to feel a certain sense of monotony.

But between them hung two lifesize nudes, three-quarters length, which he had painted for Duran-Ruel, a dark and a fair beauty, one seen from in front, the other from behind. The flesh, especially in the dark figure, has the cool tightness which Cranach always suggests – it is only to be found in art – but without the virginal quality of our primitive master. It is, indeed, by no means primitive ; full, and at the same time fresh, somewhat as if Titian had been tempered by a few ounces of Cranach. And this was apparently drawn without the obviously wonderful technique which good Manets or early Renoirs display in the lively play of light upon the flesh, without the fleshly element, one might almost say, only with a marvellous gift for retaining all that is cool, full and plastic.

Such beauty of material is rare with Puvis. Sometimes his single figures look like fragments of architecture. He stretched out the boldly sweeping Ingresque line, thinking the while, like Raphael, of Michelangelo, and he distributed the effect over a wider surface. Above all, he thought of large spaces.

The secret of his composition is the same which makes the beauty of the city of Paris. There is space in it. It has the wisdom we miss so sorely in Michelangelo's tremendous Last Judgment, the lack of which will lead a less enthusiastic generation to regard many an Italian fresco more coolly than we do to-day : the art of rightly estimating the cohesion of well-placed figures in a picture. With him we never find the puerilities employed by others no less famous for the purpose of stopping up holes. He leaves empty everything that can possibly be left empty. We have to get accustomed to this ; we are so accustomed to a beautiful abundance that we sometimes feel chilled by Puvis. The emptiness in Puvis often produces this feeling, and it is by no means always deliberate, even when it arises naturally. Puvis was a very sincere artist, who preferred to renounce altogether when he could not say something that seemed to him necessary. With the old masters the opposite is just as natural. Chasseriau's enthusiasm filled up the surface as the popular poet of the East filled out

his legend : invention flows from him as from a dreamer, and his variety was no impediment to the well-weighed gesture, to which he looked for his distant effects. Even in his pictures the spirit of Ingres has swept away the superfluous : we clearly see the trees which people the grove of his culture. Puvis stripped the trees even of their leaves to get more air.

It is a new art for France. In the eighteenth century a thousand episodes claim our attention. There is not a corner where we do not espy the curve of some amorous cheek, the flutter of some dainty petticoat. We forego the stately attitude of the older masters with light hearts. Throughout the whole period there was nothing which could or which ought to have been seen from a distance ; the right point of view was from the canopied bed of the discreet interior to the opposite white and gold wall.

The great Poussin had the right standard. His pictures are splendid old dishes in which he piled rare fruits. With him, again, the standard of his time was his. It is nearer to us than that of the later men. To appreciate Puvis, we must worship Poussin.

Poussin is commonly blamed by us for the things which made his age superior

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to ours. We do not find him individual enough. That it was not necessary for such people to proclaim their individuality, that they were able to balance their meaning on a little finger, that they could express the highest qualities with a smile, with a gracious movement, and further, that they lived in Rome, is made a reproach to them by the self-interest of the modern revolutionary. To me, the particularity of a work of art seems the deeper the more varied its affinities with other works of art are. In many works, the element which appears to us their most intimate personal charm, is their impersonal quality. I should like to know what would remain of Fantin-Latour, if we could not find Poussin in him, and whether the relation between certain portraits by Manet and by Frans Hals is anything but a source of pleasure to the spectator ? An artist who offers us only himself is inconceivable, and the modern tendency to demand this, especially marked in Germany, is the canker of our modern culture. There is nothing more dependent than the freedom of certain artists, who do not dare to expose their individuality to the shadow of the museum. The Berserkers who look upon the art of the old masters as a bygone thing, often fall into a more servile dependence on contemporary coteries. The art of the modern exhibition is not only unlike that of the ancients, but unlike anything. All numbers may be reduced to unity, except zero. Compare the beautiful early works of Carolus Duran, founded on the old masters, with the puerilities he manufactures now. It is not their academicism which makes contemporary painters insupportable, but their lack of all culture.

Puvis de Chavannes' achievement in venturing on such an art without the surroundings proper to a Poussin was without parallel. To wish that it had been more perfect, more convincing in all its manifestations, is to fail to understand our being. The fact that it persists and opens up possibilities to us hardly dreamt of before the time of Puvis would be of itself enough to give it value. In an age absolutely out of sympathy with the tendencies by which Puvis was governed, an age that belongs to a Forain, and in which all is haste and turmoil, he painted things the legends of which signify something like eternity. Just a little apart from us, an Arcadia ! Close to the Boulevard, a world of beauty ! Poets have compared him with BOcklin. Why not ? Poetic criticism is a person of light manners, who offers her favours to-day to Puvis, to-morrow to BcJcklin, and afterwards is not very clear which is which. BOcklin must certainly have been more to her taste.

The most essential difference between the two probably is, that the one embodies his invention in a form, the other his form in an invention. This latter way has not saved Puvis from a second comparison, which the more enlightened have forced upon him — a comparison with Burne-Jones.

There are some very early drawings by Puvis. They were at the general exhibition at Durand Ruel's a few years ago. I should say that he was about eighteen at the time of their execution. They resemble Burne-Jones' latest works, and this is to the Englishman's credit.

Puvis lived in Arcadia as an artist, Burne-Jones as a dilettante. Or indeed, was Burne-Jones ever in Arcadia at all ? Did he ever get beyond his secluded book-lined rooms in London ? Not Puvis, but Gustave Moreau was his French counterpart, the man who founded the art of beautiful souls, and decked Chasseriau's exquisite nudités with sham pearls. Theirs is not the art that could restore fresco to our age. The only picture in which Puvis is like Moreau, the early Beheading of John the Baptist, is finer and more pictorial than all the Symbolists put together. It is only the relation to a common prototype which gives him at

CHASSERIAU: VENUS ANADYOMENE

LITHOGRAPH

times an apparent likeness to the jewel-painter. Like the whole of Chasseriau's circle down to Odilon Redon, Puvis has evident affinities with Leonardo da Vinci. No trait is so characteristic of each member of the circle as this relation. Chasseriau created his poems in the atmosphere of the Gioconda ; he did not philosophise, did not conventionalise the sensations of his great ancestor as did Moreau, but he aimed at a like conception of the sensual charm of the whole world that was revealed to him. He was the one who approached most nearly to Leonardo, not because he aspired to resemble him, but because he felt himself akin to Leonardo's humanity in his innate tendencies. He seems like a member of the Florentine's family, more closely allied to him than were the Florentines to Leonardo, for he was a continuation of that strain in Verrocchio's pupil which was not Florentine. Puvis, on the other hand, saw not the personal but only the artistic aspect of Leonardo, and followed him as a disciple of genius follows the master, not to reach the same point, but to continue. At times he comes very near to Leonardo's pupil, Luini, and bears the same relation to the latter as does Luini to his master. His prototype was to him a principle of technique, the peculiar illumination which makes Luini's pictures appear so modern, and he carried over this principle, expanded and at the same time simplified, to the domain which Chasseriau left behind. He is very closely connected with the latter. In many of Chasseriau's decorations we may find indications of Puvis' pictures. Puvis began, where his predecessor had culminated. There is something mysterious in the relation, it strikes us through all the obvious and profound differences between the two. The one is all sensuous impulse, struggling between heights and depths, the other, calm wisdom, accomplishing only what it has well considered. It is as if two persons, strangers to each other, had met at one and the same spring. Chasseriau came there first, but he often left it ; youth carried him away to more fervid joys. Puvis never sought any other inspiration.

Instead of calling Puvis pallid and sickly, the logic of his works might almost tempt us to call them brutal. At the time when Monet's school was dissolving everything solid in colour and light, and every half-defined detail gave its devotees a nervous shock, Puvis went on calmly setting his broad dark contours against the atmosphere, giving his faded brownish gray to the earth, and getting his flesh-tints by making the tone of his ground a shade or two higher. Save for the exquisite blue of his skies, there is often no pure colour at all upon his palette. He contented himself with a wise manipulation of tones within the same colour, and employed the colour of the moderns only where he could use it. Yet in his *Doux Pays* there is not a spot which does not show traces of the noble vitality he was able to breathe into his figures. Roger Marx records a saying of his to the effect that the true function of painting is to animate walls. Beyond this, only pictures about a hand's breadth in size should be painted. He was the only artist in this age of artistic plethora, who was quite clear as to the true tasks of painting, and who knew how to master them. To this end, he invented a free, half classic, half modern legend, very far removed from the instruction which

sometimes compelled the earlier painters to exchange their palettes for archaeological text-books. This too is empty, stripped of all essential symbols. One can imagine everything with Puvis, but it is not necessary so to do. He wrote in one of his letters : " A picture should always be looked at from in front, and peacefully, never from behind, where the painter has hidden nothing." The legend is no more important to him than it was to Poussin. He did not paint this or that

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myth of the Greeks, but the poetry of their culture. While others, the German Greeks more especially, have always remained in the narthex of the temple, Puvis has something of the perfume of the cella, in which Aphrodite stood. He is the finest expression of that deep interpenetration of the Greek spirit which distinguishes the artistic life of France, despite her Forains and Lautrecs, and has shown renewed vitality in our own days. This Grecianism is of course not an artistic tendency, but a result of the French morale. We must remember that the " Daphnis and Chloe " of Longus enjoys the importance of a popular epic in France, and is more in touch with the national spirit than Corneille and Racine. When Bonnard made his drawings for it, and thereby manifested his own truly classic nature, he did something akin to the achievement of William Morris and his circle in England, when they recalled the Arthurian legend, save that he was much more natural and popular in his assimilation. Pierre Louys, in his sweet songs of Bilitis to her Mnasiidika has a natural charm, which makes the pretty conceit of the discovery of these songs in old inscriptions credible enough. Puvis was the purest expression of this tendency and exercised the strongest influence upon it. The erotic tinge, which the literature of Young France afterwards evolved from Greek tendencies, was incompatible with the visibility of his works from a distance, but he did not deliberately avoid it. The pure sensuality of the Greeks, which found a resurrection due to racial affinity in him, gave his superb naked figures a deeper significance than the symbolism which its legend served. If the master of the Odalisques may be called the guardian of the classical line, then the painter of the Bois Sacre, who once more made this line meet for the highest adornment of the temple, must be accorded the greater title of the creator of a classic spirit, which disregards the amateur's pleasure in strange details to show the value of greater things, more classic than the works of the classicists.

All French activities that were not merged in Impressionism, naturally grouped themselves with Puvis. The majority remained nearer to the pictorial, notably Cazin, whom Degas, when he saw the beautiful ceiling at LeroUe's called " the Puvis of the dwelling-house." Few ventured on the linear manner in which Puvis was so great.

Odilon Redon owed to him, and gave to his successors, a wealth of kindred stimulants, which ensured him a place of honour in the present generation.

MAURICE DENIS. Woodcut.

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CHASSAUB: APOLLO AND DAPHNE

ORIGINAL LITHOGRAPH

MAURICE DENIS

Die blaue Blume sehne ich mich  
zu erblicken.

NOVALIS.

Puvis has been called the eternal youth. I do not quite know why ; he might as fitly be called the eternal old man, using the term to connote wisdom, and to exclude infirmity. But Denis is young, typically young, a rejuvenated Puvis, who comes very near to the master, when the latter gives himself up to a pious cheerfulness, as in that work which is so closely related to the legends of the school of Giotto, Christian Inspiration. Denis' religious sentiment is even more nearly akin to the early Italians. Puvis stood above religion very much as did Goethe in another manner. The Christianity of his legends accords with the scenery of Poussin, with Greek nymphs and all other " antique visions." Denis transforms the nymphs into angels.

In art that piety is always the best which comes from without, from pictures, to go to pictures. The youthfulness in Denis, too, prevents his piety from making a painful impression on our godlessness. He is the Christian damoiseau, who does not suggest scourging and chastisement. His scene is laid in the fresh morning when the boy Tobias set forth with the fish slung over his shoulder, in the sunny wood when the cross gleamed forth between the antlers of the stag before the astonished eyes of the hunter, in the cheerful room of the pious mother, newly delivered,

receiving visits from her friends. It is the idealised piety of the French, and demonstrates in the most attractive fashion why the nation of the Revolution willingly endures the bonds of religion. The frank freshness of this expression has nothing hypocritical about it.

In colour he is richer than Puvis de Chavannes, although he too knows how to control his effects of colour for his purposes. He uses only pure colour, so that the Neo-Impressionists, whose technique he used freely for a time in his early days, might claim him as one of themselves (an honour which must not be lightly estimated, taking into account the natural antagonism of his circle to the Chevreul doctrine), and his gradations are so delicate, that his planes are like a crystal veiled in gossamer, and reflecting the sunbeams. His line is no less delicate ; a breath draws it ; Ingres' contour made finer by a fraction ; and in this delicate envelope everything that art ever gave of grace to line seems to be united. Denis is sharply differentiated from the school of Ingres by this, that he did not absorb any result, but checked it for his own purposes ; he went to Italy, and saw not only Giotto and Fra Angelico, but also their successors, more especially the misjudged Lorenzo di Credi, whose tender mannerism was of great value to him. \* He rounded what he found in the Grecian spirit, dipped it in the richest colour, and with it filled the planes which Puvis had left empty.

\* He made a very characteristic copy of the Venus in the Uffizi, which hangs in his studio.

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If he thereby took something away from the masterly expression with which Puvis spoke, he gained in charm and created the more fitting form for the smaller scale, which was all he had been able to deal with so far. Puvis was fortunate enough to find large surfaces, even when as at Amiens, sacrificing every material consideration, he gave away his decorations in part, in order to find a place for them. Denis is too essentially a modern artist not to be governed by the available dimensions. But when in 1897 the *Figures dans la Forêt frintaniere* and the portrait of a young girl from three points of view appeared at the Salon, even the sceptics, who had not seen his decorations at Lerolle's and Chausson's, acknowledged that a great ornamental style was combined with this grace, the harmony of which produced the sweetest music. These pictures are perhaps Denis' masterpieces. The naked female forms move in the flowery garden like exquisite blossoms, matured by a sun of the utmost purity. The bodies have a softness that makes them very unlike the pale leanness of aesthetic womanhood painted from the familiar receipt ; perfect, healthily rounded and youthful forms ; maidens, who make Paradise seductive, in attitudes proper to goddesses, absolutely nude and full of the most natural, the most adorable chastity. Such things, let the devotees of Nature say what they will, can only be rendered by means of a style.



It is not possible to paint them if the artist allows only his own personality to speak. Neither can they be written nor set to music, without this third element between the author and the world, which, even if it be only a veil of transparent threads, causes his expression to be different, better because more universal, than his good will alone could make it. There is a certain modesty in being conventional, in life as in art, an altruism of the highest order, something we can only designate as religion.

Denis does not always show his admirable feeling for this universal law. Among his pictures, as in the works of all moderns, there are things which seem to aim at other things than perfection ; and which, at the moment when they appear, deserve that the pretension to perfection should be sacrificed to them. They are the more personal things, which are necessary, in order to reach the others, the impersonal. The artist shouts himself hoarse a thousand times, before he at last succeeds in speaking calmly, and ever afterwards, audibly. Puvis often spoke so, Goethe too, and Mozart. We yearn so persistently for this in the present day, that the exotic in art and literature is agreeable to us, because, in addition to those elements which can be rendered into our own tongue, there is also a kind of intangible cosmic envelope, which gives its undertone to these unaccustomed things, a hidden but perceptible background, which we miss at home. Pleasure in a foreign tongue, in foreign customs, and other periods is a secret yearning for tradition, a kind of nostalgia. Artists whose aims lie in this direction are nearly always optimists, and extremely prolific, because they are governed not only by personal ideas but also by an impulse from without. Denis is no exception to the rule. His most extensive work, so far, is to be found at Le Vesinet, between his own home at St. Germain and Paris. He has decorated several chapels in this district within the last few years, first that of the educational institution of the Ste. Croix Community, then two chapels in the little church of Les Ortes.

The school chapel was an ideal commission. It stands in the midst of a beautiful, bosky garden, and is a simple, snow-white room on a level with the ground. The two lateral walls are taken up with huge windows, through which the green leaves laugh; on the wall behind the altar are Denis' three panels, painted in

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splendid pure luminous colours. The large central panel is an open landscape, the favourite motive of the terrace of St. Germain, with radiant figures and a still more radiant sky in which hovers the Cross. Two narrow architectonic side panels with dainty choir-boys enframe the landscape. They were exhibited at the Salon and made very little impression. Here, their effect is indescribable. No splendour, no sublimer art could suit the place so well. Involuntarily, one recalls the chapel in the garden at Padua. Here, one would not exchange this radiant simplicity for the exquisite prototype. Not that we would be understood

to blaspheme, it is not a question of Giotto or Denis, but of the difference between two epochs, shadow and light. Who would not wish to come into the light ?

The more important decoration of the two church-chapels is in fresco. \* The art is greater, but the setting is not nearly as favourable. The chapels are small circular places with domed vaults, partitioned by heavy ribs, which naturally added a good deal to the difficulty of the work. The painter began with the Lady Chapel, using a palette similar to that of the school chapel, blue, pink, lilac with a great deal of white. Pure lyric poetry ; the Holy Maiden and a band of angels amidst great clusters of blossom-white clouds. The religious element remains entirely in the bud, is all joy ; salvation, not from the bloody sacrifice of the sacred drama, but from the almost more convincing smile of purity. The Chausson ceilings strike the same note. One, where the whole family is represented on the terrace at Fiesole, is just as devout, though here there is no religious intention, and this seems to me the best sort of piety.

The second chapel " of the Sacred Heart " is very much more serious, the most serious work the artist has yet produced, and the most religious ; one must believe or deny here, as Gabriel Mourey says.<sup>f</sup> It represents the distribution of grace throughout the world ; the very numerous figures, which for the first time betray a distinct, though still poetic official ecclesiastical diction, move upon a rainbow-hued background ; a magnificent full orange, melting into yellow, predominates. The splendour is quite distinct from that of Denis' other works, both in the colour which seems to show a new application of the Neo-Impressionistic principle, and in the unusually rich and significant composition. The spandrels formed by the ribs of the vault below are turned to account with great skill. The cathedrals of France " reservoirs of salvation " are beautifully portrayed in these triangular spaces. The Christ Himself leaves one cold, because He has been made the chief personage, without any apparent necessity arising from the structural law that governs the whole composition. He might rather have been left out with advantage, especially as He appears below in natura, i.e., in a terrible " commercial " statue. How beautiful a statue by Maillol would have been here, the only sculptor capable of producing sculpture in harmony with Denis' decorations.

The Christ of these frescoes is perhaps the only work which entitles Denis to a place in the ecclesiastical school that grew up among the disciples of Ingres. It is obviously the result of an intention to turn away from the soft whispers of the

\* More correctly speaking, oil-painting on the wall.

<sup>t</sup> Mourey wrote a detailed description of the Le Vesinet decoration in the " Revue Universelle " (November i, 1903). Of the Sacre Coeur Chapel, he says : Une atmosphere enflammee y regne ; les rouges, les violets ardents, les jaunes sulfureux flamboient ; les oranges et les verts fulgurent ; on

À«st dans un brasier. La Chapelle de la Vierge est un acte de tendresse humaine, la Chapelle du Sacre Coeur est un acte de foi d'une autorite male, d'une vigueur tyrannique. Il faut croire ici on ne pas croire, mais toute tiedeur est impossible. Je vois peu de peinture religieuse au monde qui s'impose plus victorieusement et promulgue avec plus de franchise ses convictions et sa croyance.

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earlier works, religious only in so far as they suggest the perfume of incense; like Puvis, jDenis had found piety compatible with delight in the noble nudity of beautiful bodies. They show a determination to serve legend with ecclesiastical forms and demonstrate the positive aspect of Christian conviction. To see Denis embarking on such a course might give occasion for anxiety, if he had not clearly shown in a large number of contemporary works his possession of the cool steadfastness of purpose of the modern, who knows exactly what he wants, and is not only religious, but pre-eminently intelligent. No Church has ever been dangerous to genius.

By way of guarantee thereof, Denis has hung a small easel picture on canvas in each of the chapels, on the wall beneath the decorations of the cupola, the sign-manual of a great personality, which, when it serves, only becomes serviceable to itself in the higher sense. They are both on a gold ground ; in the Lady Chapel a Marriage in Cana â€” a very subtle choice of subject â€” in the Sacre Cœur a Crucifixion, of course. This, in spite of the small size, is an imposing work, as weighty, as intent on all a picture can give as the art which has decorated the ceiling is intent on its fitness for the given surface.

Le Vesinet will no doubt be the last church painting in France. Denis had to go to the country, to find tolerably suitable employment. There is no place for him in the bombastic splendour of the modern town-church, where pure colour is as unfamiliar as pure faith. The Sacre Coeur in Paris is still waiting for its internal decoration. But the conditions of light in this vast place are not suited to frescoes. It is true that the master's latest studies reveal a possible capacity for designing great mosaic decorations. His line has the power of retaining expression, even without the richness that the brush adds to the surface. This is evident even in the modest dimensions of his cartoons for painted glass and wall-papers, and in his outline drawings for book illustrations, even though these lack the warmth of his lithographs or wood engravings for books, such as the admirable early illustrations for the " Voyage d'Urien," and the recent ones for the " Imitation of Christ,"

In the Salon of 1903 there were, among others, two little pictures, which are full of promise for the artist's still immeasurable future : a number of naked or half-naked figures move about on the seashore in all imaginable positions, chosen with the sole intention of giving the greatest possible animation to the surface. In the centre is an abnormally large horseman ; no one can imagine what he means ; in the background we note other persons, on horseback, apparently as meaningless, and abnormally small. Throughout are details, rendering certain things in Nature with disconcerting exactness, and indeed, we come to be able to identify all the details somewhere in Nature, if we take them one by one.

The first moment is the critical thing in such works. Among the all too reasonable art of others, which makes no demands upon our powers of divination, we seem to be face to face with a pair of mad rebuses, for the solution of which time fails us. A certain measure of derangement is certainly necessary in the brain of the spectator. He must undertake translations, fulfil highly complicated, dark conditions, forget all sorts of things, above all, give up every hankering after meanings, and when his eye has got so far, that it does nothing but see, then perhaps, he will be able to divine fabulous things. Objects will then be found together, which obey a very remote but very definite organism, which are together not because they say this or that, but because together they dance a round of lines

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES: STUDY

WOODCUT BY L. PERRICHON (L'IMAGE)

MAURICE DENIS ^j

and planes and of thoughts, which has a nature of its own, and takes from externals just what suits it, without troubling in the least about the results. In every good ballet, it is possible to note how the general spectacle is made up of extremely unnatural single movements. Degas occasionally fixed such separate movements. Out of what is purely schematic in itself a marvellously fluid, mellow general form is evolved. This schematic element has been reckoned with from time immemorial, but we have been accustomed to find it in combination with certain familiar phenomena, which present themselves as symptoms to the current conception of style. Here an isolated artist ventured to experiment with such effects, apparently without placing himself in the protective shadow of a current style. Denis' piety now appears in a different aspect. Ecclesiastical legend allowed him

liberties, which freedom from convention denied. This sufficed for a while. But when, like Denis, one is not only pious, this incense-shrouded dance becomes too monotonous at last, and then the dance treats of things which can no longer be believed, and suddenly resolve themselves into the frivolities, which are made a reproach to him, and even more, to one so essentially an artist as Bonnard.

If one of the pictures by Denis mentioned above, could be translated into mosaic in the right place, no one would find fault with it, and Bonnard's panel with the family in the garden would not excite the horror even of fairly intelligent people, but would be generally appreciated. But such an " If " becomes a serpent without an end. For should some philanthropist afford these artists the opportunity of working in mosaic, the result would no doubt be futile, because the splendour which is produced by modern fragmentary painting would always cast that of the natural material into the shade. \*

I hope to work out this problem more clearly further on. The origin of the form it has assumed in France will be explained in the next chapter. It cannot find clearer expression than in the manner in which it presents itself nowadays to the artists who alone can solve it. It is perhaps the weightiest of all problems, demanding the greatest sacrifices, and working (often subconsciously) even in the artists, who are apparently intent on a personal conception of Nature. We must examine all the great artistic personalities for it, from Delacroix and Daumier to Bonnard, and when we note the many threads by which it binds them together, we shall feel that work on the great composition of France, which culminated in Puvis de Chavannes, is far from finished. The line of classic origin, which I have tried to sketch, which originated with Poussin, was confirmed by Ingres in the nineteenth century, and handed on to others by Maurice Denis in the twentieth, is the most distinct. In Chassériau it already compounded with the modern element contributed by Delacroix ; more evidently still in Puvis, the comrade of Jongkind and Manet ; and most fully in Maurice Denis, who began his first wall-painting when Seurat died.

This classic line is far from the only one, though it still appears the most successful. Beside it runs another which often crosses it, seems, indeed, sometimes to melt into it, and yet diverges as widely from it as do the swarthy skins of our Antipodes from the white flesh of our women. But just as the finest types of the one race may be not merely compared with those of the other as measures of value,

â€¢ Bing, when he first began with his Art Nouveau, commissioned Vuillard, Serusier and others, to make designs for coloured glass. They were very artistically executed by Tiffany, but, of course, were very much less effective than a draughtsman of inferior pictorial gifts could have made them with the simplest designs. Denis alone shows some of his powers in the process.

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but also form contrasts, strong antitheses of pure colour which rejoice the eye, so these currents of contrast do not move the spectator to a personal decision between one and another, but to enjoyment of the variety of this complementary phenomenon.

MAURICE DENIS.

FROM A WOODCUT IN THE "IMITATION OF CHRIST."

PUVIS DE CHAVANNES: THE FISHERMAN'S FAMILY  
(FAMILLE DE PECHEUR)

DURAND-RUEL COLLECTION, PARIS

GAUGUIN AND HIS CIRCLE

PAUL GAUGUIN

C'est là que j'ai construit mon âme,  
Dites, serai-je seul avec mon âme ?  
Mon âme, hélas ! maison d'ébène,  
Où s'est fendu sans bruit, un soir

Le grand miroir de mon espoir.

Verhaeren.

The art which, lives in Denis, is, as we have seen, no reaction, but an organically enriched continuation of the classical movement. The revolutionary element lay in the school of Pont Aven, which set up its scaffolding in front of Denis ; but, as I hope to be able to show, this school again was only one of the many means, for the strengthening of a painting and sculpture subservient to closely knit composition. Either in those remotely influenced by it, or in its immediate disciples, it also flows in the great river-bed of Franco-Hellenic form-language, after helping strong spirits like Denis to accomplish their tasks in the fullest manner, and saving others like Maillol from banality.

Reactions come about, when the methods of a school fall into hands unable to make use of them. A peculiarly happy adventure was required in this case, where the healthy, vigorous doctrine of the Impressionists was at stake. Gauguin accomplished it.

His father, a Parisian journalist, a Breton by birth, had died at an early age during a journey to Lima.\* His mother, a daughter of Proud'hon's friend, the Creole, Flora Tristan, the first woman who wrote Socialistic books, was born in Peru. Her boy ran away to sea when he was fourteen. He spent years between sky and water, and never quite lost his thirst for adventure. All his life he was a kind of Robinson Crusoe, and gave an interpretation to the romance, which gives a new and striking aspect to old Defoe's creation.

Returning to Paris, earnestly advised and firmly determined to pursue a sensible calling, he became the employee of a well-known banker. For the second time he showed a surprising capacity for doing well anywhere, and earned a great deal of money. Everything seemed to indicate that France was the richer by another worthy bourgeois. He married, had several children, and led an exemplary life. Then one day he found Nature again, this time in Art. He saw pictures suggestive of the yearning after sun, water and earth, and recognised in them a reflection of his own natural emotions in the presence of landscape. He went to their authors, to Pissarro and Guillaumin, found them simple cordial persons, told them about his travels, and they told him about their art\* At last he began to try his own

â– \* See the biography by Charles Morice in the " Mercure de France," October 1903. VOL. II I

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hand at this, and still devoting the week to his business, painted on Sundays with

his friends. Like Van Gogh, Gauguin " commenced artist " at the age of thirty. He was thirty-two when he first exhibited in 1880,\* his first pictures being simply painted landscapes, in the manner of Pissarro. But the following year he showed, together with some similar landscapes, a nude study of a woman, in profile on a divan, mending a chemise, of which Huysman wrote that no painter had as yet struck " une note aussi vehemente dans le reel," and a wooden statue, which the critic of symbolism pronounced Gothic, f

From this time forward his tendency seemed to change. As Mirbeau rightly pointed out at an early date, Gauguin's emancipation was as swift and hasty as the preparation had been slow and deliberate : his case was like that of Van Gogh, but he lacked the Dutchman's healthy peasant blood ; his was a mixed Parisian fluid. Reaction set him against the very tendency from which he had started, against the newer Impressionism. He began to see something different, something more elemental in Manet as compared with Pissarro and Monet. Guillaumin's characteristic figures seemed to him, in spite of their vigour, a weakening of Manet's forms, and he sought behind Manet for that figural core, which appears in the pictures as an image in a glass. Degas made the decisive impression on him, by his systematic division of large planes of colour and above all, by his strong drawing. Gauguin learned from him how to express himself personally through his mise-en-scene. The essays in sculpture, which Degas exhibited just at the beginning of the eighties, may also have had a decisive influence on the younger man.

Gauguin sought to simplify Degas. It was easy to become athirst for strong external beauty in the process. The luxuriant lands he had coasted in his sea-faring days came into his mind. All that Pissarro and Monet painted seemed to him artificial compared with the colours he remembered. They were undoubtedly sincere, and so, he argued, the fault must be in the model. Accordingly, in 1886, what Roger Marx calls " obeissance au genie interieur " + sent him back to Brittany. Here he saw what Van Gogh had found in Holland, big, simple mortals and an unspoilt Nature. He painted his first peasants, his first independent landscapes, but here again his personality was still struggling in the Impressionistic current ; he was only able to show his difference from the rest in shades, and despaired of ever equalling them. Once more he sought to improve his expression by a change of models ; his Breton sojourn was interrupted by a journey to Martinique in 1887. He returned in 1888, his eyes full of pictures, which he was scarcely capable of putting upon canvas. His friends f^ted him at the exhibition held in Boussod Valadon's galleries. Roger Marx owns one of the finest works of this period. La Baignade^ two nude figures in an enchantingly lovely woodland setting (painted in 1887). Gauguin had seen a new world, new colours and forms, and felt certain of one thing â€” that anything was possible to him rather than Pissarro's reflective

\* He was born in Paris on June 7, 1848.

t Huysmans on the Exposition des Independants, 1881 (reprinted in " L'Art Moderne," Stock,



Paris), an elaborate and enthusiastic hymn of praise to Gauguin, proclaiming his future greatness unhesitatingly ; it suffers somewhat from the fact that it is obviously aimed at the arch-enemy, Courbet. Huysmans\* enthusiasm had cooled, however, by the following year (see Appendix to " L'Art Moderne ").

X Voltaire, February 20, 1891. See also Marx' essays in the "Revue Encyclopedique " of September 15, 1891, and notably the study on Gauguin in the number for February i, 1894.

Finally, Mirbeau's essays and those by Aurier, collected in the " CEuvres Posthumes " already quoted {" Le Symbolisme en Peinture and Les Peintres Symbolistes ").

## MAURICE DENIS: THE ORCHARD

STERN COLLECTION, BERLIN

## PAUL GAUGUIN 6i

art, the portraiture of Nature. He now made up his mind definitely in favour of Cezanne and Manet, whose Olympia he copied in his own manner about 1888.

It was about this time that he went to the South of France. Van Gogh had at last persuaded the friend he had found in Paris in 1886 to come to him at Aries. The meeting of these two lonely souls, each at the psychological moment of his development, resulted in a drama, the external circumstances of which were determined by their abnormal temperaments ; its internal history may have been still more poignant. It closed with the horrible catastrophe Gauguin has himself recorded, giving the narrative a shade of his hidalgo-manner which it is not easy to forgive.\*

According to Gauguin, it was Van Gogh who profited most by their acquaintance. But the statement that Vincent was still at the time in the full flood of Neo-Impressionism, from which Gauguin " saved " him, must be received with a certain amount of caution. To Gauguin, who always preferred a smooth surface. Van Gogh's very arbitrary division, i.e., his brush-stroke, may have seemed the property of Seurat, whereas it was, as a fact, peculiarly Van Gogh's characteristic means of expression. At any rate, we can scarcely suppose that at Aries Vincent was still working in the extremely relative Neo-Impressionism of the Paris days,

for this was abandoned as soon as the South gave him yellow.

It is probable that each gave something to the other, perhaps chiefly because the individuality of each was confirmed by the daily friction of inevitable contradiction. Van Gogh, however, always retained the greatest reverence for his older comrade. It is characteristic of him, that in a letter he wrote to Gauguin shortly before his death, he addresses the latter as " Maltre," and no less characteristic of Gauguin, that he could not refrain from mentioning this detail in a letter to Morice.

In any case, it was during, or shortly after his sojourn at Aries that Gauguin painted the most important pictures, from the colouristic standpoint, of his European period, such as the remarkable yellow Christ, now belonging to Schuffenecker, and others in which the Gauguin synthesis developed more and more distinctly. He went back to Brittany from Aries, and here a circle of disciples soon gathered round him, who grew into a school, and helped him to live, supplementing the generosity of the worthy Theodore van Gogh.

Was it the effect of his narrow means, or did he feel, in spite of all encouragement and stimulus, that he could never achieve complete fruition here ? He suffered from Europe and longed to be back in the tropics. His friends took pity on him. Maurice Denis and Lugne-Poe brought him to the notice of the modern symbolistic poets, Verlaine, Mor^as, Aurier, Charles Morice, Rett6, Stuart Merrill, Julien Leclerc, &c., who saw in his painting a curious repetition and fulfilment of

\* Van Gogh was irritated into one of his most violent attacks of mania, by living with his friend, with whom he disagreed on many points, and whose whole individuality, setting aside his art, was the exact opposite of his own. One evening, as Gauguin tells in a recent manuscript addressed to Fontainas, he flung his glass at his friend's head in a tavern. Gauguin retreated, and on the following morning told his remorseful comrade that he should prefer to quit Aries, and that he should tell Van Gogh's brother Theodore about the matter. A^incet said nothing, but in the evening he attacked Gauguin in the street with a razor. Gauguin managed to restrain him, whereupon Van Gogh went home, and cut his own ear off at the root. Gauguin slept the night at an hotel, and the next morning found his friend's house besieged by a mob, which had heard of the event. He sent for a doctor, and left the city. Van Gogh was taken to the hospital, and afterwards to the lunatic asylum at Aries.

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their most secret purposes. The fraternisation of poets and painters was inaugurated, afterwards so beautifully celebrated in the Theatre d'Art, for which Bonnard, Serusier, Vuillard, and Maurice Denis painted the decorations. On May 21, 1891, a performance was given at the Vaudeville, the foyer of which was decorated with pictures by Gauguin, for the joint benefit of him and of Verlaine. Verlaine, Catulle Mendes and Charles Morice appeared on the boards, Maeterlinck's "L'Intruse" was played for the first time, Gamier recited Edgar Poe's "Raven" in Mallarmé's version. The proceeds of the entertainment covered the cost of the longed-for journey to Tahiti.

Since this date, Gauguin has been in Europe only as a visitor. He left in April 1891, returned in September 1893, to offer the poets the beautiful book, *Noa-Noa* \* and the painters the superb pictures, which Durand-Ruel exhibited in November of the same year. They had no success. The public, Durand-Ruel's customers in particular, thought the pictures extremely curious, as curious as their author, who seemed strangely out of place on the boulevard, with his remarkable costume, the blue and yellow embroidered waistcoat, the heavy rings on his fingers, the monumental stick carved by himself, and the hidalgo-like hauteur on his coarse features. The blow fell heavily on Gauguin. In Tahiti he had dreamt of the whole world at his feet, as his pupils had been at Pont-Aven. It even seemed as if the world were not inclined to repulse him as he would have wished, failing a complete triumph. He failed to interest it.

In February 1895, he had a sale at the Hotel Drouot. As a preface to the catalogue he printed a letter from Strindberg, declining to write the introduction as requested by Gauguin, and also his own reply. Strindberg's well-chosen words barely veil the poet's indifference. He felt the wild charm of Gauguin's scenes, for he too had "an immense yearning to become a savage and create a new world," but Gauguin's world was not his. "It is too sunny," he wrote, "for me, the lover of chiaroscuro. And in your Eden dwells an Eve, who is not my ideal" — "for indeed, I too have a feminine ideal" — "or two." The man of letters is not to be suppressed, nor the question which of the two is the barbarian: the cultivated writer, lacking every relation to art, or the painter striving after form. Gauguin's answer puts the discussion on the right level, and the significance of his words is very striking when we remember to whom they were addressed: "Your civilisation is your disease," he says, "my barbarism is my restoration to health. The Eve of your civilised conception makes us nearly all misogynists. The old Eve, who shocked you in my studio, will perhaps seem less odious to you some day. I have perhaps been unable to do more than suggest my world, which seems unreal to you. It is a far cry from the sketch to the realisation of the dream. But even the suggestion of this happiness is like a foretaste of Nirvana." — "Only the Eve I have painted can stand naked before us. Yours would always be shameless in this natural state, and

if beautiful, the source of pain and evil. ..."

We are beginning now to understand the deeper meaning of these words. Then, only some twelve years ago, they woke no echoes. The sale at the Hotel Drouot realised a contemptible sum. Gauguin longed to be back in his Promised Land and rejoiced when Carrière procured him a cheap passage on the pretext of an official mission. Since then Europe has seen him no more.

â™¦ â™¦ â™¦ â™¦ \* \* Hf

â€¢ It appeared first in the "Revue Blanche," and afterwards as a book, published by "La Plume."  
Morice wrote poems for Gauguin's pictures.

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## PAUL GAUGUIN 63

In his narrower significance, Gauguin is a continuation of the exotic element in French art from Degas and Lautrec ; in a wider sense, he is an immeasurable extension of artistic boundaries in general. A continuation into barbarism, if you will, because he creates faces we cannot reckon as ours, because he does not restrict himself to the strange but recognised tradition given us by Japan, because he deals in and with forms the genealogy of which is not noted in our museums. He may be charged with having always wanted something else. He tells us in " Noa Noa " how he first sojourned with the Europeans in Tahiti, then in that part of the country where they rarely appear, and finally how he went into the wilderness, to be alone in an Elysian nature. Here he found courage to take a wife, not Titi, beloved of Europeans, but the chaste Tehura, who had never seen a white man. With her he shares his hut. And here an idyl unfolds itself, while in the background the old story of the conquest of the island by what we call European culture goes on. Tehura knows nothing of him, he knows nothing of her. Sex brings them nearer together. He tells her as much as he can. The child listens to him quietly and he admires her silence. Not until he has unbosomed himself completely does she speak to him in her turn, filling the old, empty European slowly with the knowledge, the legends, the poetry, the genius of the Maoris. They begin to love each other. One day he goes fishing with his neighbours. He is lucky, and the neighbours jest ; when the tunny comes to a man's hook, he has a faithless Vahina at home. . . He does not think much of this, laughs with the others, but as he goes home, doubt torments him. Tehura is the same as ever ; the thought of his age and of her fifteen years fills him with fear, and finally he confesses what the fish have told him. She answers not a word, rises slowly and goes softly to the door to see that no one is listening, and then she stands in front of him and prays aloud to Taaroa to save her. Mute before this naked majesty, he gazes at her, and when she prays him to strike her, because she has given him such evil thoughts, he sinks on his knees and together they offer up the fervid prayers of the heathen.

The book is not merely a unique poem in contemporary literature, a legend of the Homeric stamp ; it is also the history of Gauguin's art. Here it is more welcome to the European than in the painting of the artist of Tahiti. The poem adapts itself to our language, and the vivid episodes, the names with their wealth

of vowels minister to our pleasure in splendour, without forcing us into exotic forms. The spirit is European ; nothing, indeed, speaks more decisively for the European than Gauguin's flight from Europe.

In painting, on the other hand, this flight seems to have carried him to the utmost limits of representation. Here it is not the story-teller sojourning among us. The charm would compel us to set sail ourselves in these strange structures and share our food with the savages. Mistrust of the uncertain stirs within us, and habit hugs the fetters of time-honoured ennui. No listener to the story, however deeply moved thereby, really believed in the strange tale ; nay more, his very emotion was increased by his consciousness of sitting as he listened in the old rocking-chair of Europe. We defend ourselves against the spell. It may be true that Nirvana lies smiling at us from afar, that delights are beckoning to us, things we have not and would fain have, conditions which may have prevailed among us too, when we were barbarians, but . . .

Every one is of Strindberg's opinion now, even the boldest of those who owe their culture to literature. They love chiaroscuro, twilight facts, which are

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altered by a change of illumination, the meaning of which is inspiring but obscure. When one appears who would break through the gloom and who offers us elements shining in all the undimmed lustre of their nature, they screen their eyes angrily with a hand, and judge by what they believe they see through their fingers. Of course all that remains is the detail so dear to criticism. The beauty has been shut out.

For all that Gauguin has done is beautiful, though we may say it is fragmentary, though we may not always grasp its objective meaning, though we may regret that in certain large panels the harmony of colour and line is not always so pure and strong as in Van Gogh's very much simpler pictures. There is a Gauguin in M. Fayet's possession in Paris, half-lengths of three savages, so exquisitely grouped and so pure in line, so masterly in the arabesque and so fine in colour that it suggests the avatar of a lovelier, more Grecian Giotto. The grace he found upon his island, by some incomprehensible connection caused him to find not motives, but means for the representation of the naked body in Nature, means which seem to us novel, because we have so long been unaccustomed to such naive solutions by richly endowed artists. This man, who had nothing but his eyes with him in wilds, looked himself into an ordination of forms, which people only bring into the world with them in periods of very exceptional brilliance. Had he given more, we should to-day be standing before an absolutely classic artist. Very often his fear of Europe drove him to extremes, where his power failed him ; he was all his life a self-taught genius, and in certain minutiae we are spoilt creatures. Sometimes

his planes appear tame to us, just in those passages where the brush should have been wielded like a club. Van Gogh was brilliantly inspired, when he wished to collaborate with his friend ; he was thinking of these languid planes, enframed by passages of the utmost boldness. But at times such tender, half-effaced charms spring from the languor, that we rejoice to have what we have.

Gauguin could do everything. He was a great lithographer, a great sculptor, and a skilful potter. When his medium is plastic, the danger of driving his synthesis into the barbaric is doubled or quadrupled. At the same time, the perversity of the European sometimes seduces him into making the primitive as wild and terrifying as possible.

All his life long Gauguin remained a great child, anxious to appear phenomenal at all hazards, more from a profound, fantastic ambition to be remarkable in his own eyes, than to impress others. This drove him to follow up every idea which could minister to this auto-suggestion. The artist in him took care of the rest instinctively. The unsuccessful exceptions in his work are atoned for by many splendid things, such as Schuffenecker's large relief *Soyez amoureuses vous serez heureuse* of 1888, and the later and more harmonious panels belonging to M. Fayet, which are full of enchantment for those who are content to rely upon the eyes alone.

All Gauguin's sculptures are in wood or porcelain. He did everything himself, and seldom do sculptures reveal, as do his wooden surfaces, the joy of the artist in animating the material with every pressure of his hand. The eye glides over them without sinking in, and does not work, but is gently caressed.

In his ceramics, the technique of which he learned from Chaplet, the good is less conspicuous. Here he sometimes appears, not as the barbarian, but as a Parisian designer of bibelots of an exotic kind. A large proportions of Schuffenecker's once unique collection is poor stuff. The two Gauguin-lovers, Fabre and Fayet,

MAURICE DENIS: OUR LADY WITH THE SCHOOL-CHILDREN  
(NOTRE DAME A L'ECOLE)

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

PAUL GAUGUIN 65

have secured the best examples, beautiful quiet planes, where the reflections harmonise with the movements, and are found in the right places.

Gauguin's complete work is immense ; a great deal of it has no doubt been lost. Much of it may adorn the huts of his friends in Tahiti, where cataloguing ceases. With the exception of Vollard, there is not a single dealer in Paris who is really interested in him. Amateurs are repelled by him, with a few exceptions. They could accept his exoticism, but the non-exotic, the primitive European strain, subservient, not to the frame, but to large planes, is acceptable to very few Europeans. What he required was what G. A. Aurier vainly demanded. Walls ! Walls ! give him walls !

Gauguin died May 9, 1903, on the Island of Dominica.\*

In him Europe art lost not only a marvellous artist, but also a profound observer of its activities, who, far from severing the connection between himself and European culture, turned his leisure in the primeval forests of his new home to good account by pondering over his old one. His writings, which I shall perhaps some day

\* This was the date given to Montfreid, Gauguin's executor, in a short official note from the

\*' Administrateur par interim des lies Marquises." The cause of Gauguin's premature death is not at present known. He certainly did not die of leprosy, as was reported in one newspaper. Montfreid told me that Gauguin had been ill a long time, suffering from an eczematic wound in his leg, the result of breaking it in Brittany. He had also an affection of the heart, which may have been aggravated by an excessive indulgence in nicotine. His last letter, dated a few days before his death, on April 27, has been courteously placed at my disposal by M. G. Fayet. From this it appears that he was subjected to gross indignities by the French administrators of the island. I quote the original passage : " A la suite de faits scandaleux de l'administration j'ai ecrit au gouverneur. Cette lettre m'a valu une condamnation a trois mois de prison et mille francs d'amende. Je vais faire appel devant le tribunal de Papeete. Mais que de frais ! ... Il sera dit que je passerai ma vie a tomber et a me relever pour tomber encore.

" Ces preoccupations et ces tracas m'auront la vie a bref delai " (See the extract from " La Depeche " below).



A letter to Charles Morice, also written in April 1903, and published in the "Mercure de France" (October 1903, p. 105) agrees with the above ; it further contains a typical profession of the  
â– writer's artistic faith :

" I am on the ground, but I am not beaten. The Indian, who smiles as he is tortured, is not  
conquered. You are mistaken if you meant that I am wrong in calling myself a savage. I  
am a  
savage, and the civilised feel this, for there is nothing in my work which could produce  
bewilderment,  
save this savage strain in me, for which I am not myself responsible. It is therefore  
inimitable.  
Every human work is a revelation of the individual. Hence there are two kinds of beauty  
; one  
comes from instinct, the other from labour. The union of the two â€” with the  
modifications  
resulting therefrom â€” produces great and very complicated richness. Art-criticism has  
yet to discover  
it. . . . Raphael's great science does not for a moment prevent me from discovering the  
instinct of  
the beautiful in him as the essential quality. Raphael was born with beauty. All the rest  
in him is  
modification.

"Physics, chemistry, and above all, the study of Nature have produced an epoch of  
confusion in  
art, and it may truly be said that artists, robbed of all their savagery, have wandered into  
all kinds of  
paths in search of the productive element which they no longer possess. They now act  
only in  
disorderly groups, and are terrified as if lost when they find themselves alone. Solitude  
is not to be  
recommended to every one, for a man must have the strength to bear it and to act  
alone. All I have  
learnt from others has been an impediment to me. It is true that I know little, but what I  
do know  
is my own. . . ."

The Toulouse newspaper, "La Depeche," gave certain details of his end in an article by  
A. Leblond  
(October 1, 1903), which should probably be accepted with a certain amount of caution.  
In  
accordance with the anarchical character of the paper, Gauguin is depicted as a  
revolutionary, who

fought against Church and State with ever-increasing boldness. In the Marquesas Islands, whither he went from Tahiti, he was engaged in constant quarrels with the Bishop {cf. another article in the *Revue Universelle* of October 15, 1903, contains a number of errors. The most trustworthy account is probably Montfreid's study in the December number of the little periodical, "L'Ermitage" (1903).

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be privileged to publish, are the utterances of one of those rare beings who are all harmony, in whom the incomplete and discordant in details reflect the vaster harmony of a manifestation embracing all existence, and not merely an individual artistic expression. His writings have shared the fate of his pictures. Very few have reached us in Europe. In the little French papers of Papeete in Tahiti, "Les Guepes" and "L'Indépendant" he published revolutionary articles, of a satirico-political character. Europe, as represented by the French colonial administration and the French missions, was Gauguin's *bête noire*. The spirit of his grandmother, who had worked for the natives, a deep instinctive sympathy with the dark races that was in his blood, made him look upon every European influence, especially European bureaucracy, as disastrous, and he scoffed at it whenever he could. A number of *vers libres*, well worth preserving, also appeared in these papers, and in "Le Sourire," which he published occasionally from 1899 to 1901. -\*.

Exhibitions, as usual, were organised after the death of the neglected artist. Gauguin's pictures appeared for the first time in a real "Salon." The autumn Salon of 1903 contained ten fine works of various periods. At the same time, Vollard exhibited fifty of the best Tahitian pictures, among them the grandiose caricature of himself with the two women, *Contes Barbares*, the inexorable protest of the great barbarian, and some two dozen charcoal drawings on white paper, perhaps more powerful still. They hung side by side haphazard, with no attempt at artistic arrangement, mingling their splendour of colour and of line. The language of these frescoes seemed to make the place larger and larger, transforming the little shop into a Pantheon.

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PAUL GAUGUIN: TAHITIANS

FAYET COLLECTION, BEZIERS (HERAULT)

THE SCHOOL OF PONT-AVEN

I have lately returned from an expedition to Brittany, bearing few spoils with me. A wretched, dreary land, the people stupid and dirty. I heard not a sound of the beautiful folk-songs which I had hoped to collect there. Heine. September 21, 1840.

Gauguin's influence was and is immense ; setting aside the leaders of Impressionism, it may indeed be described as unrivalled. This painter, endowed with all the charms of personality, ready alike with tongue and pen, who, like his art, always suggested rather than unveiled truth, and hence wielded all the more potent an influence, became the hero of the generation which followed his own contemporaries. The manner in which Hellenism, as preserved by Puvis, had to be conquered anew, proves that artists had still no very definite consciousness of the aims which had already been realised in the Pantheon. That Gauguin's work should have been hailed as novel is comprehensible enough ; but that his theory should have been received as a sudden manifestation from heaven is a riddle. It shows in what isolation the great leaders of French art had worked.

Puvis was too perfect, perhaps also he was too modest in his latest pretensions, both towards himself and others, to form a strong school at once by personal attraction ; he had formulated too rapidly. Not he, but Gauguin was the sparkling light that drew the moths. This self-taught artist succeeded in making Pont-Aven, where he spent the first years of his Breton sojourn, into a second Fontainebleau.

Emile Bernard was the first of his adherents. He came from Paris on foot in 1888, and paid his way by painting portraits in return for board and lodging on the road. He discovered Gauguin the same year he found Van Gogh, with whom he had worked in Cormon's studio in Paris after 1886. He was then about 18; Gauguin might have been his father. Mistrustful of everything that came out of Paris, Gauguin refused to receive him in spite of the recommendations of Schuffenecker the painter, his first and best friend. They became friends two years later

by the intervention of Theodore van Gogh, when Bernard returned to Pont-Aven after decorating his inn at St. Briac with frescoes and glass-paintings.\*

Bernard followed every innovator in Parisian painting and imitated them all with extraordinary facility : Pissarro, Seurat, and most fervently of all, Cezanne. His remarkable talent seemed to succeed in everything. He composed creditable pictures when he was a schoolboy of sixteen ; he was an adept in the treatment of wood, both as an engraver and carver, could weave carpets and paint glass, and his literary works offer very important documents for the history of modern art. Bernard's development is the typical progress of an artist of great mental powers but without genius : logic without inspiration. He began with neutral

\* Aurier is mistaken in attributing these to Gauguin.

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pictures and suddenly approached synthesis, almost at a bound. His pictures, and more especially his lithographs of about 1888, might almost be mistaken for Gauguin's. After this he had a fancy for very archaistic drawings. In Germany he sought out the early masters, in France Jehan du Pr6 and Antoine Verard, in Italy the Primitives, and under these influences he produced wood-engravings for " L'Ymagier," which might have been executed in the fifteenth century. Then he remembered that he was a painter and began to rise again by slow degrees to the pictorial idea. He shows most facility with Cezanne. The Bernards inspired by Cezanne early in the nineties are brilliant pasticci ; the best is, perhaps, the Marche Breton, M. Schuffenecker's market-scene with the magnificent fruit and the peasant-women in their white caps – simpler, flatter, but more luminous than Cezanne. In his still-life pieces he is sometimes very like his exemplar. He too turned away from Europe ; he went to the East, taking Cezanne's weapons to Constantinople, and in 1893 he painted the brilliant watercolours now in the keeping of his mother at Colombes, near Paris, where is also the rest of the artist's very extensive work. I have rarely seen better watercolours. The method consists of a few loose, almost straight strokes and lightly washed planes, and presents not only an amazing animation, but a restful norm, which one is never weary of admiring. It was doubtless his desire to enrich this norm which sent Bernard back to painting, and caused him to diverge more and more from Gauguin's ideals, even to the complete suppression of all boundaries between colours and planes. He had expressed himself with so much vigour against the complementary processes of the Impressionists and Seurat's doctrine of division, that he could not return to Pont-Aven ; and so he fell into the languid, superabundant manner of his Oriental pictures. In 1892 he painted his women on the banks of the Nile, a picture full of just those respectable qualities, against the inadequacy of which Gauguin had rebelled. A journey to Spain in 1897 gave him nothing but some

remarkable popular types, which he introduced inter alia in his large picture, *Cbanteurs esfagnols a Seville*.

Since this he has been living in Cairo, regularly sending well-painted, respectably conceived and perfectly uninteresting pictures to the exhibitions of the Independants and writing books of little value. One of his best pictures has been in the Luxembourg for the last few years, where it suits its position only too well, and justifies Gauguin's severe prophecy that Bernard would yet end with Benjamin Constant.

At a decisive moment Bernard exercised a certain influence on Gauguin's circle. In an open letter to Mauclair, in which he refutes the very unjustifiable attacks made upon him by that writer, \* he even attempts to arrogate Gauguin's invention to himself, an attempt which shows how even in the most emancipated artistic community instincts have the same effects as in a commonplace society. A careful comparison of the works of both artists at the same date (1888) is unfavourable to Bernard's contention, even setting aside the fact that Gauguin had given the first indications of his manner some half-dozen years earlier, and had painted purely synthetic pictures in Martinique in 1887. At the most it permits the assumption that Bernard arrived more rapidly at a conscious stylistic manner, the all too facile application of which had never been desired by Gauguin. Bernard's development was more superficial, and only thus can we explain that he should have looked upon his painting at this period as in any sense a concrete invention. On

\* "Mercure de France" No. 66, June 1895.

PAUL GAUGUIN: SAVAGE LEGENDS (CONTES BARBARES)

FOLKWANQ MUSEUM, HAQEN, WESTPHALIA

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the other hand, he ma<sup>^</sup> very possibly have given Gauguin an opportunity of expressing himself, and he may have promulgated the ideas of his greater friend by argument and counter-argument. He was, at any rate, the real spokesman of the circle. Whereas Ganguin never took the trouble to discuss details, never looked upon himself as the renewer of his handicraft, but always judged his art and wished to have it judged from the highest standpoint, Bernard was full of theories of painting, and often indulged in formulae when there was nothing to

formulate. In those days he was considered the boldest of the group. If courage failed the others to accept the logical consequences of their doctrines, it was he who always carried these latter still farther. His exhortations were of the greatest service to them, as they gratefully acknowledge now. Such persons are commonly more helpful to others than to themselves.

The circle increased daily after Bernard had found speech. Laval, who has since died, had already accompanied Gauguin to Martinique and shared his every thought. The landscape painter Moret joined them, and in the autumn of 1888 the most influential of all Gauguin's school, Paul Serusier.

Serurier took to painting somewhat late. He was born in Paris in 1864, studied till he was twenty, and then went into business at the wish of his well-to-do parents. He began to paint when he was twenty-four, and then in Julien's academy under Lefevre, Boulanger and Doucet. There he found Denis, Bonnard, Ibels, Ranson and Vallotton. Vuillard and Roussel were working in the neighbouring studio under Bouguereau and Robert Fleury. They all honestly did their best to satisfy their masters, and gave no hint of the development which was soon to give France a new generation of artists. In 1888 Serurier exhibited at the Salon a very dull picture of weavers at work. He came to Pont-Aven with the reputation thus acquired, and was received with the utmost distrust. He was a Salon-painter, not without means, tormented himself with futile studies of Nature, and looked upon the methods of Gauguin and his friends as rank madness. It was not till the end of his visit that he made the acquaintance of Gauguin, who was at no pains to conceal what he thought of Salon-painting in general and Bouguereau in particular, and gave him to understand in most energetic fashion that acceptable things could only be produced by exactly opposite methods. Serurier shook his head incredulously and went back to Paris to toil at the old last. But when he saw all his friends at work again on the same patient and characterless canvases, each resembling each other and nothing else in Nature, he began to reflect. After seeing a few more pictures by Gauguin, scales seemed to fall from his eyes ; he began to seek after planes, strong lines, surfaces in his pictures. The cry of revolt penetrated to Julien's atelier. Serurier was treated as a lunatic at first, but the attack upon Bouguereau was looked upon as excellent sport.

It is important to recognise the immediate relation of all the artists who are working out the development of French painting to the school of Gauguin, although they may not have worked at Pont-Aven. Serurier grouped together all the available elements in Julien's academy, and he himself came straight from Gauguin. Various as these elements have developed, the point of departure was the same for all, and in the first works which show the new ideals Gauguin's influence is the common bond between the friends. For the first time, the elementary conceptions of the adornment of interiors in the great style of decoration became living ideas to these young artists. Their enthusiasm was great, it even swallowed up individual effort ; all worked together, careless whether the canvas

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in hand was to be distinguished from that of a colleague or not. Their chief pre-occupation was to free themselves from the schools, and to oppose to the education which had taught them to go to Nature without selection, another which sent them to Art. The exhibits of the " Groupe Impressioniste et Synthetiste " at the Champ de Mars during the Universal Exhibition of 1899 decided the victory. In the middle of the false splendour, the commercial frippery of all the nations, the wanderer who strayed by chance into the Cafe Volpini, where the little show was held, was startled by the spectacle of a new world. The brief catalogue contained nine names : Paul Gauguin, Charles Laval, Leon Fauch<sup>^</sup>, E. Schuffenecker, Louis Anquetin, Georges Daniel, Emile Bernard, Louis Ray, Ludovic Nemo (Two petroleum-paintings by Bernard masqueraded under this last pseudonym).

The lithographs of the catalogue sufficiently attest the community of the works. Here in this little caf<sup>^</sup> which the younger artists, Denis, Bonnard and the rest zealously frequented, the only art in the huge world's fair which was not entirely alien to Eiffel's iron miracles manifested itself.

S<sup>6</sup>rusier returned to Pont-Aven in 1889, and as the village had now become too fashionable for the school, it removed to Pouldu, where the inn in which the painters lived, and the shed in which they worked together were the only buildings.

Here the circle was increased by a few new members. Holland, who it seemed had not exhausted her resources in Van Gogh, sent the little hunchbacked sculptor De Hahn, who strove to produce his own image in the form of a little Gauguinesque gnome, and later, Verkade, who attached himself more closely to S<sup>6</sup>rusier when Gauguin left Europe. With De Hahn came Filiger, whose figures of saints in strong relief against mosaic backgrounds may still be found occasionally on the market, and Chamaillard, the enfant terrible of the group. Seguin did not join the circle till after Gauguin's first visit to Tahiti. To him we owe the spirited account of the remarkable life and work at Pouldu. \*

They talked and worked each other into the paroxysms that such movements must pass through, and even went so far as to hail the infantile lisplings of Chamaillard, which are hardly to be distinguished from the scribbles of an inventive child, as individual manifestations. " Don't talk to me of pictures, there are only decorations ! " cried S<sup>6</sup>rusier, shaking his tawny mane. " Peignous pour nous-m<sup>^</sup>mes et pour deux amis" said the philosophic Filiger. The ears of Monet and of Signac must have burnt sometimes ! Gauguin became terrible when he detected anything in the nature of complementary colours or essays in division. They looked at the sea to paint landscapes, and into the country to make their sea-pieces. t



They looked heavenwards too. The desire to confront Nature with a definite

\* " L'Occident," 1903, Nos. 16, 17 and 18. Cf. also Maurice Denis' " Notes d'Art " in "Art et Critique," 1889, which sum up the ideas of the time.

t Gauguin formulated the essentials of his doctrine (Charles Morice in the \*\* Mercure de France," October 1903). I give an abstract : "Always use colours of the same origin.

Indigo is the

best basis ; it becomes yellow in saltpetre, acid red (?) in vinegar. Keep to these three colours. With

patience you will get all tones from them. Get light and white from your paper ground, but never

leave this quite naked. . . ,

Avoid black, and the mixture of black and white called gray. Nothing is black, nothing is gray. ...

It is well for young painters to have a model, but draw a curtain before it when you are painting.

It is better to paint from memory, then your work will be your own property. Who said that one

CHARLES GUERIN

PHOTOGRAPH DRUET

THE PARK

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intellectual complexity with laws of its own, an external element which might serve as the goal of temperaments too highly strung for abstractions, drove them to religion. Monet may claim to have made a number of Christian converts without much effort on his part. Landscape was replaced almost en bloc by devotional pictures. Denis, Seguin, and Verkade in particular carried this Christianity to extreme conclusions. When they had the form, they added the contents. It forced its way out beyond the form. It was a wild sort of Christianity. They ran about in grotesque costumes, more brigand-like than the Romanticists in their

time. Callot might have found models among them. Red came to the fore again in costumes and pictures, as among the early masters. It was applied to everything that seemed beautiful to the eye, though not as Chevreul recommended ; but they began to show less repugnance to Seurat's efforts to discover the mathematical rules of composition ; Serusier and Verkade in particular achieved results by such means. But woe to him who ventured to recommend his invention as a doctrine of universal application ! Was it, perhaps, fear of the spirits he had called up which finally drove Gauguin out to the other savages ?

Verkade, too, left the country. He went to Germany. Chance made the existence of the Beuron art school known to him. He contributed to the fame of this later San Marco.

What become of the other Synthesists and Cloisonnists ? Anquetin, one of the most important of the group, and the most talented after Gauguin, attempted colossal pictures, the creation of a new Baroque style, essays which, though of greater importance than is now admitted, are far from results which might be of use to us in these days : fundamentally, they are retrogressions to domains already conquered. De Hahn, Filiger, Laval and finally Seguin, who had become a good critic of his circle, but a very mediocre illustrator, are dead. Chamaillard is a barrister in the provinces, Bernard paints exhibition-pictures ; Fauche is trying to find a technique in a close reliance upon Renoir ; Moret has approached the arch-enemy Monet closely, too closely, and has landed at Durand-Ruel's ; Schuffenecker paints languid generalisations ; Roy, who painted delicious little pictures of Dutch peasants has, I think, disappeared.

Time's revenges have been terrible ; the boldest have become the most long-suffering of lambs. The hopes which were painted on the walls at Pouldu in the

should seek contrast in colour ? ... If this were so, one ought not to put two flowers of the same colour in a bouquet.

Seek harmony, not contrast. Go from light to dark, not from dark to light ; your work is never light enough ; the eye seeks refreshment in painting : give it joy, not mourning. . . .

If you repeat what another has done, you will only make a wretched mixture ; it may stimulate your sensibility, but it kills fresh colour. . . .

All you do should breathe peace, the repose of the soul. Avoid animated attitudes. Let every one of your figures be perfectly statical. . . .

Give everything a distinct outline. ...

Avoid over-finish ; an impression is not so robust but that its first inspiration will be lost if we try to strengthen it with minute details. . . . Would you turn hot blood into a stone ? Even were the stone a ruby, cast it from you," etc.

Maurice Denis has described Gauguin's influence very simply and beautifully in an article in " L'Occident " (No. 23, October 1903), written under the pseudonym P.L.Maud. In it he lays very proper stress upon the non-professional character of Gauguin's teaching. He influenced others by the strong manifestation of an irresistible instinct, rather than by the logic of his theories. It was Serusier who contributed the logic, and Aurier who formulated it in literary form ; as Denis remarks, Gauguin scarcely looked upon this formulation of his ideas as his own property, though he had been its sole source of inspiration. He always remained purely intuitive.

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fieriest fashion, have been the first to dissolve into water. Only the friends of the Julien academy have held their own, and were they not supported by the academy? Serusier, who remained faithful to the old vows the longest, his financial independence standing him in good stead, went on till lately courageously painting his dusky splendours, monumental landscapes, in which the tones are too black, with conventional figures. Lack of commissions, doubly painful for the decorator, who is unable to work without an assured destination, compels him to leave the majority of his sketches unused. Of late he has, it seems, turned to Nature as seen by Bonnard and Roussel, and has painted delicately toned landscapes, in which he experiences the reflex action of the influence he himself once exercised on his friends. What has become of these " the best of those on whom contemporary France relies " has been shown in earlier chapters.

It will suffice if history records with due emphasis that this school of Pont-Aven was necessary as such, that there was a moment when the worst heresies against the Impressionism of Monet and Signac, against the Nature of the venerated landscape painters, against all that was normal, enshrined glowing truths. Time cools faster than is necessary. French art needed this glowing furnace, not only to blow sparks out of Monet, but also to warm the creations of the aged Puvis. When he made them, they were beautiful and good, but they were not to be repeated ; with the one more line was required, with the other more

colour, and Bonnard on the one hand, Denis on the other, have achieved the golden mean.

In France, every extension of the decorative programme leads back to Pont-Aven. Unfortunately, there has been but little practical result from the efforts of Denis, Ranson, Jossot and others to carry the new fruit into the domain of industrial art. Denis painted his first wall-papers in *Le Mystere Catholique* and Ranson continued in embroidery. Jossot gave a purely ornamental form, not without charm. Unfortunately Denis found no manufacturers to take his cartoons, and happily he found something better to do.

But foreign lands too partook of the banquet. We have seen that the Swiss artist Vallotton was a guest. His early *Baignade* is a purely synthetic picture, his woodcuts, beginning in 1891, were very happy attempts to popularise the school. His compatriot Amiet, who painted the richly coloured picture *The Invalid*, probably owed Gauguin something also. The foreigners who visited Paris, saw the successes of the school, notably at the *Independants* exhibitions, and turned them to account. Here the Belgians gained new strength ; the Dane Willumsen found courage to renew the art of his native land by Gauguin's side ; the Norwegian Munch sought forms for his enigmas here, the Hungarian Rippl Ronai his idyls.

F. VALLOTTON: PORTRAIT OF J. JASINSKY 1887

PROPERTY OF THE ARTIST

EDUARD MUNCH

Et maintenant fakirs voiles, spectres errants  
entre les piliers de cette demeure, et qui, cachant  
vos cruelles mains, apparaissez par intervalles,  
reveles seulement par l'ombre rapide que vous  
projetez sur les murailles.

VILLIERS DE l'IsLE-Adam.

No wilder was the uproar in Pouldu, where the lone fisherman crossed himself in terror as he rowed his boat past the lighted casements of the artist's home on the beach, than in a scantily furnished room in a quiet street of north Berlin, where

the same unspeakable things were danced, drunk, and sometimes uttered early in the nineties.

What Monet was to the horde who fell upon him, gnashing their teeth, in Pouldu, Liebermann was to these others. He did not fare worse than his French colleague.

The ways of development, and more especially of artistic development, are never the shortest cuts to what seem to the retrospective eye the decisive points. They led Gauguin away into idyllic savagery. But he brought a fine stock of Parisian colours with him to Tahiti, although he chose to combine them in a fashion of his own. And he was a cultured and tender poet. Munch lacked tenderness and certain other treasures of culture. Gauguin had still something to which he clung ; he sought the native type of beauty in a luxuriant island, which, though many miles of ocean divide us from it, certainly exists. Munch's Tahiti is thoroughly unreal, and yet we cannot take from him that he was sometimes able to be more convincing than our own landscape painters who give us faithful transcripts of the scenery outside our gates. What he gives us are sometimes hallucinations, but if at the time to all appearances one only studied the epopee of the little human brain, in reality one felt oneself impelled by strong forms. These forms may not always have had their origin in wholesome order. But " the depth of an artist lies herein, that his aesthetic instinct surveys the more distant results, that he does not stand shortsightedly by what is nearest to him, that in the main he affirms the economy which justifies the terrible, the evil, the questionable." What the man who had meditated on the transmutation of all values says here of the artist, should also serve criticism as a guide.

Lautrec belongs to the same sphere as Munch, and he may have been more helpful to the Norwegian than all the rest. Munch's first notable works, for instance, the woman lying by the table with glasses, his pictures of cocottes, &c., show the relation very clearly. But even in the first pictures the very differently constituted, more ponderous, gravity of the Norseman makes itself felt, the earnest endeavour to make art a profound symbol, infinitely more far-seeing than the Frenchman's mockery. In Munch's actual art, all these influences were neither more nor less dominant than in that of Van Gogh, with whom Munch may be most aptly

compared, to show the peculiar power of resistance characteristic of his race. Just as Van Gogh always remained a Dutchman to the core, even when he was copying Delacroix, so too, Munch is always the child of his people, save that what the Norwegian can create with his Northern world, and what he would fain give with the Northern fancy, does not seem so homogeneous as in Van Gogh's tempered handwriting. Compared with Gauguin, Munch seems freer, freer in his programme, though poorer in charm. He creates with what his home gives him. Gauguin may only have driven him to follow his racial promptings the more fervently.

The long list of those to whom Gauguin's sphere was of service, might be still farther extended. It shall suffice us to cite the youngest child of Gauguin's school, who promises to give that school its highest fruition.

ARISTIDE MAILLOL. DESIGN FOR TAPESTRY.

EDVARD MUNCH: PORTRAIT OF STRINDBERG

(LITHOGRAPH)

ARISTIDE MAILLOL

Maillol is the eldest of the school in years " he was born in 1861 " and produced his decisive works latest " about six years ago. He remained in the clutches of a perverted system of education longer than his friends of Julien's academy, held captive by a scholarship at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

Like so many of the best French artists, he came from the South. Banyuls-sur-Mer, by the blue sea, is his home. In those regions where so many marvels came to pass in early days, men are still born who are half Greeks, who pick up a piece of clay, and when they drop it, have given it form almost unconsciously. They play with it, while we rack our brains over it. They have this immeasurable advantage over others, that they speak the language of the things they fashion. This happy being needed nothing but a friendly helper to tell him where to begin, and to set his hand free. It took fifteen years. He came to Cabanel at the age of twenty-one, and painted Cabanels ; he would have painted anything else quite as readily. This went on for five years, and he had learnt just enough to make him afraid of trying anything different. He worked at painting as at something

quite foreign to him, as school-work, and would have gone on painting in this fashion to this very day, had he not by chance seen a few pictures of Gauguin's. There are primitive beings who require to have Nietzsche's gospel, with which others are born, whipped into them. It seems so easy to be their own masters that they never risk it. He noticed that much the same had happened to Gauguin. He did not yet venture upon actual sculpture, although some time before, when he was painting by day, he had tried carving by night. But he took courage to work occasionally at something that amused him. This was his tapestries. Here he did exactly what he pleased. He found that the rich and aristocratic Parisians, with all their money, had not the faintest conception of good textiles, that the famous Gobelins factory had produced nothing but rubbish since the Revolution had beheaded the owners of the good receipts. In all the great city of Paris, where nothing else was lacking, there was not a single piece of pure wool. It had always an admixture of cotton, like the chicory in the coffee. He procured pure materials for himself, and showed himself more expert here than in the discovery of his teacher ; I believe he ordered them from the land of Carmen Sylva. But his chief difficulty was with the colours. It was not so much on account of the wretched drawings "with these he was not concerned" as of the dull colours, that the factory, which formerly produced such masterly works, could now only put forth contemptible things, worthy at most to serve as decorations for a Republican fete. Everything imaginable was used, with the exception of the pure material as it comes from the earth, the only thing which is pleasant to the eye, and yields rich shadows. Maillol spared no pains to find what was lacking in his own beloved district ; he knew the earth better than any Parisian. He had the greatest difficulty over yellow, the "gaude" of the ancients ; he found it one night when he had been sleeping out of doors, just under his head, in the gorgeous Reseda lute-

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ola. He squeezed his red out of madder-roots, and carried on his search among all kind of barks and plants until he had completed his palette. Then he turned dyer himself, set up his frames and began to work. It is worthy of record that the only embroideries executed in France with genuine colours in the nineteenth century were produced by Maillol. The few men who cared for fine material and good technique in their tapestries "like Rippl Ronai" were his pupils. And the carpets made by the master himself "those belonging to Prince Emanuel Bibesco among others" may be reckoned among the best things in modern decorative art.

Finally, he applied the same principles to sculpture.

Art is to Maillol a question of materials. He began with pictures. Then he

changed the painter's canvas for a firmer textile. Becoming firmer still, he took wood and carved it, and finally metal. He never took stone ; herein lies the characteristic of his art. He is neither one of the many, who paint with tone, nor of those who hew their figures out of stone to preserve unity of form. Even Michelangelo had been satisfied with the classic comparison of the water in a bath, which gives the bather's body back to the air as it runs away. The ancients, indeed, required no intellectual representation as they carved.

With Maillol we receive a similar impression ; and this comes from a method of modelling, which is directly opposed to the manner of Michelangelo. Maillol fills out his forms instead of hollowing them. The thin material of his figures overlies the mass more supply than the robe Phidias gave his Athene^ more closely than the artistic veil about the enchanting Venus without head and limbs in the Thermae at Rome.\*

Only among those marvels of early Grecian art which rose under the gaze of the great Sphinx, do we find kindred phenomena.

It seems almost criminal, to speak of a young and unknown man in a connection which gives him importance apparently impossible to justify. But it would hardly be less so, if, standing before the Rameses at Turin, we could not retain our admiration for the thousand art-activities of the thousands of subsequent years in front of which this black stone and kindred works, these forefathers of all art, go like priests before their congregation. All that comes after seems weak and imperfect, measured by the lofty greatness of these stones. What after-generations sought to lay hold of in changeful contest, the highest power, the highest charm, seems happily blended in these figures, more god-like than any subsequent gods of stone.

There is no more serious task for the man of culture in these days, than the deep and organic realisation of this relative aspect of all appreciation. The famous asses' bridge, which deprecates comparison because " it is something else," does not lead to maturity ; in these days, when we have lost the power to be one-sided and our utterances are controlled by our own personality, the criticism which does not lose sight of the vast development of the whole in its appreciation of a part, will be the salvation of the future. We can only advance by evolving the one-sided again from our many-sided activities, a rich criterion, which grasps and orders all phenomena from one visual angle. This difficulty is immeasurable, and it is not to be solved by smooth formularies. What words have power to bind the thousand things together, that they may no longer appear as logical contradictions, but as correlated things ? Only art can do this, a rich creation

â€¢ Plaster feet have been added now. Our illustration shows it before this restoration.



## RAMESES II

### TURIN MUSEUM

#### ARISTIDE MAILLOL jj

which repeats in small all that is great, and at least offers perfect indications, when strength and space are lacking for the whole.

As a contribution to this knowledge, as a critical instinct, this young Maillol seems to me to have genius, not so much as the creator of the sculptures which bear his name, but as the manifestation of an instinct for things we most conspicuously lack in this generation, an instinct which finds expression without calling the rest of our heritage in question.

He does not play with a style as did the English Pre-Raphaelites. Maillol does not seek an Egyptian or a Greek form, in order to make something new "and necessarily antagonistic" out of it. If he seems archaistic at times, this is an effect of his immaturity, unable as yet to free the law from its husk. If involuntarily we think of antique things when we see his sculptures, things such as the magnificent Throne of Venus in the Ludovisi collection, and then are naturally unfavourably affected by the difference in capacity, we yet feel a distinct hope that this rich and natural talent will succeed in accomplishing the highest purpose.

We are justified in this belief by the fact that subjectively Maillol works quite independently. He has never seen either the Rameses or the Throne of Venus. He went to the Louvre, and I believe, that the mere sight of some mediocre little clay figure of the Greek period sufficed to open his eyes. Race speaks its unquenchable language in him, and the sight of the reliefs on the Fontaine des Innocents may have given him as truly Egyptian an inspiration as if he had been in the Turin Museum.

For this Egyptian element still lurked in the Romanesque tradition. It was audible, a still small voice, in the Goujon of the reliefs. Is not Maillol's relief like an echo of this lost voice? There, where Goujon was thinking of the style of the time, he seems to have given himself up to the greater, higher, older style, which broadens the mass and concentrates power.

Relying on the understanding which will, I trust, be brought to bear upon these lines, I have ventured to group the examples I have quoted above together in my reproductions. If we compare Maillol's wooden statue with the Venus relief, or the Rameses^ we see at once what is lacking in the modern example. It is not archaism which is his danger, not the approximation of a man of to-day to the art of thousands of years ago. There is no trace of this dreaded archaism. Nature speaks so convincingly in these forms that a slight effort of fancy will suffice to evoke the models for this sculpture in flesh and blood. On the other hand, Maillol is unsatisfactory in certain details, the feet of the wooden statue, for instance, which grow out of the stuff in an awkward manner, and do not stand perfectly, and the junction of the hand and arm, where there is a hollow between the body and the hand. The gesture of this hand, too, as it pulls the stuff together, is insignificant. We should like to see the limb closer against the body, making this more compact, as in the lateral relief of the Throne of Venus, where the space round the figure and between the limbs is as beautiful and as harmonious as the body itself, and no arbitrary touch, however slight, disturbs the nature of the whole ; and in a still higher degree in the Rameses, where complete dematerialisation of the stone is achieved by the inimitable unity of the material. This solution of the material, the highest achievement of art in the time of the Egyptians, remains unaltered though what was accounted the highest may have changed a thousand times. In such a perfect work does not perfection make its effect

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felt beyond all styles and periods ? Could we not live more contentedly with this relic than with the inconsequences of our own times ?

Thus Maillol's details are, as a fact, not Egyptian enough, i.e.^ not near enough to this perfection. If he had worked like these his prototypes after his own fashion, that is to say, had he absolutely followed out those rules which he divined, he would have been happier.

It is scarcely necessary to say that he would not have become either more or less Egyptian on this account. For this is not an ethnographic question. It turns upon a law which the same nations have interpreted in perfectly different ways, and which cannot therefore be used as an illustration of the differences between them. Rodin touched upon it when he said that sculpture is the art of bosses and hollows.

In the section devoted to French sculpture I attempted to show how it has hitherto been dealt with. Maillol has contributed the novel element in this development, and this gift does not lose in value, if it proves to be of great antiquity. He is perhaps the first Frenchman since the Gothic artists who shows no trace of the Baroque. No zephyr could flutter the scanty folds of his draperies ; the

rhetoric that lies in these limbs does not rely upon outspread fingers for emphasis. Nothing is rounder than what Maillol understands by roundness. There are no strongly marked divisions between the limbs. The law of the economy of material seems to create new beauties here. His bodies are always in complete repose ; he prefers the standing attitude " the primitive pose of the Greeks " or one in which the figure is calmly seated. No drama clouds his serene brows, no excited muscles disturb the clear convex surface. It is only in the luxuriance of the gently animated contour that a secret life breathes.

Compared with Gauguin, Maillol is a sage. Gauguin, like all the men of his generation, was a vigorous fighter. He irritated people with a deliberately primitive form, and purposely over-emphasised his healthy tendency, as if to enable his disciples to hit the mark by a slight retrogression. Maillol discards those symbolical elements which Gauguin does not always succeed in resolving into his materials ; he withholds all that might disturb perfect symmetry. The civilisation of pure culture is evolved from the beauty of the savage. Gauguin too felt a deep reverence for the art of the Pharaohs, but he loved it more in the rigid hieroglyphics, and he sometimes concealed his quarrel with the world in these stiff, enigmatic forms. Maillol loved the gentleness of this antique greatness, which also enchanted the Greeks ; which reappeared in the Renaissance in a Mino da Fiesole and in certain painters, in Lorenzo di Credi, in Leonardo, which we admire in Ingres, the enemy of the play of muscle, in whom it had become tenderness, and which finally we find in Maillol's friends, in Odilon Redon and Maurice Denis. This distinguished him from all the comrades, who were inspired by Gauguin's sculpture, among whom the little Spaniard, Durio, once gave considerable promise, as did Lacombe, who carved a remarkable bed. They nearly all lapsed into Gothicism, though they could not become Gothic. It now seems easier in France to go back two thousand years, than to overstep the eight hundred that separate us from the time which produced the woman with the mantle and head-cloth in the porch of Rheims Cathedral.

Maillol exhibited his first plastic essays in the Salon of 1896, twenty figurines and little reliefs in one of the glass cases assigned to objets d'art. To the same time belongs a relief of two melancholy figures, Christian in conception.

RELIEF FROM THE THRONE OF VENUS

LUDOVISI COLLECTION, ROME

ARISTIDE MAILLOL 79

Since this, despondency has given way to a glad consciousness of victory, A new, joyfully transfigured soul has informed the works of the last few years, refreshing us with its purified gladness.

The honour of inclusion among the sculptors exhibiting at the Salon first fell to his share in 1903. When Rodin, who had the casting vote of the Jury, awarded the best place in the garden of the Champs Elysées exhibition to the relief here reproduced, he acted with admirable generosity, even from the French point of view. For in so doing he perhaps himself laid the stone, from which the future will rise to resist the crushing remembrance of his creations, and to replace an unattainable art by a richer harmony. He too, as I learned at Turin, stood before the great Rameses deeply moved, and what he once said in the Louvre admiring an early Greek Hera-torso sounds like a prophecy : " We are too uneasy, too agitated to-day. But we shall return to this art of vigorous health, and this will become the art of future centuries."

Should this significant prophecy be fulfilled, Maillol will have contributed his part to the consummation, and the great master of the little school of Pont-Aven who encouraged him, will also claim some of the honour.

## GEORGE MINNE

If it can be said that there is any reaction against the historic current, the main tendencies of which are outlined above, it cannot be said that it has been at all dramatic in detail. It has had no personal significance in the destinies of individuals ; its victory did not compel the adherents of one theory to adopt another. It took place in generations and countries, but individuals, and even countries, were spared. Its exponents were naturally found in nations, which had not already committed themselves too far, in whose conceptions of form there were still living impulses capable of expansion, or which had not yet found a place among the moderns, and seized the opportunity to join the movement. Unencumbered by the baggage of tradition, they even forced their way to the head of the column.

We have already seen what fruit Neo-Impressionism bore in Belgium and how it gave a new palette without compromising the strong native bent of the youthful country towards line. Here, in the country of Constantin Meunier, a young sculptor broke with the seductions of the new enchantress and, absolutely single-handed, brought his art back to ideals at once new and old. This was George Minne.

It is a pity that the Parisian circular inquiry into the relative merits of painting and sculpture was not addressed to this quarter, where it would have received no ambiguous answer. It is true that no one would have understood that answer,

least of all the Parisian clique who started the inquiry.

The vehemence of Minne's assertion is indeed almost inexplicable, and though of course there is a natural explanation, it appears still more remarkable when one discovers that Minne in his early work, in the recumbent group of the Man with the Dog, in the Mother and Children<sup>^</sup> in the Petit Blesse, was by no means so very far from Rodin. The explanation of this is that he had perceived the Gothic element in Rodin whom he continues to resemble even in the much later sketch of the two men for the Voider monument. This, however, is only true of the sketch : the completed work, which I was fortunate enough to see before it was destroyed, would not have recalled Rodin.

This fact is of great importance, for a mere synthesis of Rodin's peculiarities, however daringly attempted, would never have produced the mature Minne. Minne is related to the Rodin of the Bourgeois de Calais, of Ugolino, of La Misere (the prototype of Minne's recumbent man with the dog), of the old woman Celle qui jut Heaulmiere, and so forth, in short, to the mediaeval element in Rodin as opposed to the Greek and Latin elements. It would be impossible to describe even Rodin's mediaeval phase as purely Gothic ; but in these works the sum of the qualities which approach Gothic art seems to outweigh the sum of all the rest. Minne, on the other hand, was dubbed Gothic almost from his first appearance, and this condemned him for many people ; he appeared to lack precisely that

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## MUSEUM OF THE THERMAE, ROME

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which<sup>^</sup>prevents one from calling Rodin's art Gothic " those elements, in short, which transcend Gothic.

Minne certainly has not that originality which we admire in Rodin, which passes all words to describe, and which it is all but impossible to bring within the compass of a definition. His merits are of an entirely different order ; a different destiny guided the course of his art. Compared with that of his contemporaries his art seems poor in achievements, undistinguished by the magnificent, ever-changing series of triumphs which we admire in Rodin no less than in other great artists. It seems at first sight to move in a narrow path where all that makes the others great must be renounced. There are striking external peculiarities in his work which still further emphasise the contrast. A marked characteristic of Minne's

sculpture is that it is not transportable. We have seen that it is always difficult to choose a site for Rodin's figures, and an idea has grown up that as they have no definite place, they may be placed anywhere. We are delighted to take them as they come ; they give the highest pleasure they are capable of yielding in exhibitions and galleries, where one's mind is already intolerably excited by a wild medley of artistic sensation. Minne comes very badly out of such an ordeal. In the Expositions des XX at Brussels and later at the Libre Esthetique his statues always produced the effect of doleful notes of interrogation which aroused the indignation of the bourgeois because they seemed mere excesses of eccentricity. There was so little in them of what people had been accustomed to see in others that they regarded their author as a demented seeker of originality at any price. This was hardly to be wondered at, for how could one so different from all the rest fail to seem abnormal ? Our vast artistic caravanseraï is the last place where Minne can be understood. Only in one exhibition has it been possible to appreciate him properly. This was a few years ago at the exhibition of the Secessionists at Vienna where many an exhibitor has made a fortunate venture. Here one could see and enjoy him simply because he was exhibited in a small room reserved specially for his works ; the fountain \* was arranged as a fountain, and his figures, placed in niches, were brought into some sort of a relation to the room. Here it was possible to judge him.

The Vienna of the Secessionists perhaps found Minne hard to swallow. People had been believers in Khnopff, in whom an " indefinable something " had compelled attention, that " something " which the snob never fails to detect alike in the cut of a pair of foreign trousers and in an alien work of art, and which he calls originality. They had accepted Meunier's earnestness with much enthusiasm and perhaps with equally little understanding. Meunier's nude was " not beautiful in the traditional sense, but it was serious, had a social significance, was a sign of the times, &c. &c." But Minne's had absolutely no message for them ; it provoked no train of thought ; it had no drama either high or low, no edifying detail, no originality. What, then, had it ?

Did not something like an answer to all those questions which rustled like bat's wings through the beautiful temple where the fountain stood, come from these white figures, from the sense of divine peace and eternal seclusion from the

\* Compare my article in "Ver Sacrum," 190 1, Part II., with many plates. The fountain will now find a permanent home in the Osthaus Museum, at Hagen, where it will be set up in stone in a place worthy of it, and as far as possible suitable, though a park would of course have been better. The same museum has also several of his later works, among the bust here reproduced in woodcut, The Orator, &c.

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world with which their limbs are instinct ? I have seen ingenuous persons enter alone and receive a deep impression, that is to say, they had no clear idea of the why or the wherefore of what they were seeing. They then looked round anxiously to find some acquaintance, and it was only when they had found one that they were able, by a joint effort, to break out into the ugly discord of indignation. .

Minne represents a victory over his own originality, the severest self-discipline, the raising of ambition to a higher plane. There was something of the same kind in the air at Vienna about this time. In this very exhibition, in which the first attempts at modern architecture were exhibited, there were traces of it in other things also. There was a sense of longing for something impersonal and therefore personal in a higher sense – an impulse towards some common ideal, towards conventions which would curb the excesses of self-conceit, towards peace. That is Minne's goal also, and for him the goal is more important than the means of reaching it. His putative archaism is a secondary matter, as also the question whether his detail is beautiful. His dreams are haunted by the beauty of the wonderful figures which adorn the portals of Northern cathedrals, and are lovely where they are. He dreams of architecture in sculpture. These are dreams which are new and yet old ; ideals which have been forgotten since the passion for colour has extinguished all considerations relating to pure sculpture ; but necessities of life now that we have discovered how poor we have become for all our art and all our originality.

It was this that gave actuality to the Flemish peasant's son who excogitated his figures near Bruges and far from all influences of culture. But he was no momentary phenomenon, he is more than one who understands his age. He worked long in this manner, and long before people began to quarrel about ornament, he wrote his theory of ornament at the price of a decade of hunger and misery. He evolved his strict programme quite informally as others have done, with a sort of conscious unconsciousness, save that he was not governed merely by the suggestions of his handicraft ; he remembered everything that the others had forgotten. His first works were illustrations of archaistic poems, and his drawings show a more convincing simplicity and sincerity in their ancient garb than the poems themselves. It was no accident that he chose the books of his countrymen, Verhaeren and Maeterlinck, to illustrate. His larger drawings show, perhaps, more of the characteristic traces of this archaism than he himself intended or desired. Nothing more profoundly Gothic can be imagined than the kneeling couple in their flowing garments who clasp hands in a passionate longing for the forbidden ; it would be impossible to find in any Gothic artist so much personality, such a lofty conception of suffering. Minne in his early days was a perfect virtuoso of pain. Nothing can be more pitiful than the emaciated bodies of his

heroes, whose bones seem to bend under the burden of their sorrow, as if many generations had borne it.

In spite of the fact that he has represented a definite class of men in quite a definite manner, which was hardly known in sculpture before, Meunier has nothing of that mere strangeness which gratifies curiosity quite independently of its artistic appeal. He is also protected from temptations by a self-imposed convention with which, as we saw. Millet had something to do. We may justly rank Meunier high, but, compared with Minne, he is not quite free from a tinge of sentimentalism which, even in the case of Millet, produces a disturbing effect on sensitive modern

## ARISTIDE MAILLOL: WOODEN STATUETTE

VOLLARD COLLECTION, PARIS

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nerves. With Minne we are safe from this, and yet his tragic elements are infinitely more poignant. Meunier represents Labour ; his figures bear the stigmata of their work sturdily. They are no mere victims of misery ; what they lack in fat they make up in muscle ; they are heroes of toil who, even when they crouch on the ground, have a dignity of their own. Minne's embodiments of misery lie trampled in the dust ; they represent the despair of the atom before the savagery of Fate, man crushed beneath the final blow. Vigeland is the only other artist who produces a similar effect, but his drama is more emphatic, and he occasionally strays into literature. The psychical interest predominates ; not so much so, indeed, as to crowd out the artistic interest, but enough to compromise the purity of the monumental effect. Vigeland forces us to pursue some train of thought, but we never want to know what psychical impression Minne wishes to produce, we are content to admire the beauty of his lines. Some of his groups attain the rigid beauty of plastic ornament. This is the effect produced by that wonderful recumbent figure of the man with his arm round the neck of the dog which lies beside him. The group, composed entirely in horizontal lines, rises in abrupt terraces from the ground to the body of the dog and thence to the body of the man. Each movement, each line in the dog has its counterpart in the man's body. Whatever point of view we choose, this play of line seems more varied, always quiet, always interesting, finding its climax in the wide curve of the back. His powers of expression are at their height in the early drawing of the mother with the naked child at her breast, and the girl by her side who is kissing the child's foot. In this fine plate, with which the periodical " Van Nu en Straks " introduced Minne to a narrow circle of art-lovers, the future master stands revealed.



One can hardly talk of Gothic, although the outward relation is still evident. We feel that we are in the presence of an independent constructive artist who can no more be summed up in the term " Gothic " than can Maillol in the term " Greek." The archaism of Minne's book-illustration, which sought out the primitive even in the principle of its technique, retires into the background. Perhaps his conventions " the draping of his figures in long swathing folds (carried to an extreme later in the Holy Women, which are veritable Gothic wood-carvings) and the oblique lines of the whole group " may be described as Gothic in a much wider sense. In this drawing he reveals himself already as a master of contour. Save for the dishevelled tresses of the Virgin, which might well have been dispensed with, the whole composition is mere outline and has a plasticity only to be attained by a hand accustomed to the chisel. One always imagines this group in stone, never in line. The quality of individuality we expect in a modern drawing is freely sacrificed to the outline. Yet the picture floods the soul like a great wave, sweeping into it what no pen could have described, the majestic misery of the three figures, the sombre intensity of their grief. And yet the hand that holds the pencil is calm ; we are not invited to concentrate attention on any one detail which reveals individuality ; our impulse is rather to hold the print away, not because the technique makes it necessary " there is no division, no impressionism " but because we desire to enjoy the effect in broader surfaces.

Many years ago, when Minne showed Rodin some photographs of his works, the master could not understand how so young a man could have completed so many large sculptures ; he was much astonished when Minne confessed that they were really all on a small scale. In Rodin's case the reverse effect is produced ; one always wishes his things were smaller so that one could take them up in one's

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hand in order the more easily to penetrate every corner of their charm. For the centre that attracts us lies in the folds, and there is a new centre on every side.

Minne's modelling has no such foci ; it does not compel the eye of the spectator. The gaze on which Rodin casts an irresistible spell, rebounds from Minne's statues ; it would almost seem as if he deliberately intended to repel it. Not that there is any physical repulsion ; Minne is not ugly " Rodin deals in much uglier things " but because this non-arresting quality allows the eye to pass on to another field of vision. Rodin dreams of uniting his sculpture with the surrounding atmosphere, at making his figures melt into space. Minne defines the outlines of his as sharply as he can ; for him the natural, uncompromising difference between the stone and the surrounding air is in itself a means. He has no desire to transform his solids into fluids ; he tries, on the contrary, to make the contrast heighten the effect of

space. His aim is felt as much in things extraneous to his work as in the work itself. He is following the instincts of ancient religious art, which referred the gaze from the picture to a higher world, to space, to the Church, to the Universe, to God.

Minne's derivation from Rodin impoverishes the effect of his work. Rodin's is an opulent genius which unites in itself all possible charms, whose taste is almost as unerring as its creative force is strong, which can almost conceal its sins against law behind the force of its emotion. Minne has no such power ; not only is his form organically poorer, but he fails to make the most of it. His inventive gift is a tiny rill compared with the torrent of creation poured forth by the author of the *Porte de l'Enfer*. And yet, poor as he is in some respects, he is capable of much. Few monuments in our time have so much dignity as the two men of the unfinished memorial to Volder, to which I have already referred. The group was intended to glorify a subject of contemporary interest – the self-help of the modern worker. It commemorated the founder of the *parti ouvrier* in Brussels. We can imagine what an anecdotic artist of the old school would have made of it. Meunier, on the other hand, would have produced a finely-designed group of puddlers without any particular reference to the motive of the composition. Minne's idea might have occurred to the sculptor of the *Balzac*. Two naked men are shown on a rolling ship, the outlines of which are only faintly suggested ; they clasp each other by the arms for mutual support. The symbolism is very fine and as comprehensive as possible. There is no trivial realism about it ; no obvious drama. The clasping of the hands, which is the only external piece of action, is no more distinct than Rodin himself would have made it. This annoys the Philistine ; for him all the beauty of the work cannot atone for the fact that the two figures are not really supporting each other, as their hands do not clasp, but merely lie on the respective arms. Rodin would have given an inner meaning to his design, finding for it an expressive form with as much individuality as he could put into it. He would have created two citizens of Calais, as rugged as his Victor Hugo or his *Balzac* with monstrous limbs and monstrous gestures ; suggesting less the outward than the inward grasp ; he would have given us a mixture of many emotions in one form which remains open in order to take us in, and to unite our emotions with his own.

Minne's form is much more tense ; it is well-guarded on all sides. He does not reverse the methods of Rodin, nor does he replace the naturalness of the great master by an exotic conventionalism. The mathematical principles of which the French sculptor had but a dim idea and against which it was his nature to revolt,

ARISTIDE MAILLOL: RELIEF IN PLASTER

VOLLARD COLLECTION, PARIS

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force the Fleming to the evolution of a formula which is attainable only through symmetry. Minne, so to speak, takes one half of Rodin's art and constructs another half to suit. The result of this is not only that he is restricted to a mere fragment of Rodin's resources ; he is also compelled so to arrange his first half that its real completion consists in duplication. In order to limit the parts of his design, he is compelled to simplify the complication which in Rodin's works pervades the matter with an inexhaustible charm. His eye seeks for such fundamental lines of a body as may reveal the type. He has worked on this plan from the small *Petit Blesse* down to the *Fountain*. Meunier's type is a profile whose applications are limited in advance ; Minne's is an abstraction of the most catholic character. His figures are no longer dressed in the usual convenient costume ; they are almost always naked. When they are clothed the body vanishes ; the dress becomes the body, an organic thing. The two figures on the ship are nude and are almost identical with each other. From whichever side they are regarded the complex arrangement of the limbs is clearly visible. The similarity of the component parts of Minne's work was their most serious defect in the eyes of the public. They failed to see that the resemblances of these noble figures emphasised the idea of mutual assistance which the artist sought to express. They found nothing better to do than to regard this monument, which was great, even when it was a tiny sketch, as a sort of Japanese mask, a thing full of surprises, the discovery of which gives a childish pleasure. The verdict was conclusive. The artist should not have betrayed that he had repeated himself ; he should have concealed his inability to create two men, he should at least have made a show of having produced two.

The force of all these wise observations was doubled when Minne produced the model of his fountain, the circular well head with the five figures all cast in one mould. It had the effect of an open scandal, a very prostitution of impotence ! At the exhibition in Brussels I myself saw intelligent people inspecting one figure after another in quest of some trace of differentiation, of individuality. The comical part of it all was that discoverers were not lacking who were afterwards prepared to swear that there were in fact five different originals ! What need have we of further witness that Minne required no more than one ! Even one was too many for his critics ! The public could not accept even his single figures. His *Reliquary Bearer* angered them by the monotony of its gesture. One would ask what the thing in the figure's hands meant ; another was not convinced by the narrow angle of the arm, or had qualms about the anatomy of the thighs, or was shocked to find that the body must inevitably fall forward.

The fountain remains Minne's happiest creation. The figure is perfectly adapted to form the chain which surrounds the well-head though, strange to say,

it was not originally designed for that purpose.\* The only criticism to be made is, as may be readily understood, that there is here the same defect as in Maillol. Minne is not always Gothic enough. All the details are not under the control of the style. The flow of the rhythm should overwhelm the details of certain parts such as ears, fingers, and toes, to give greater concentration to the masses. A successful rivalry with real Gothic is only possible on these lines ; the new hand must fulfil the old law in a new way. Minne's latest works give promise of such an evolution. The most important of these is the Rodenbach monu-

\* Count Kessler thinks that it was originally intended for the monument to Voider, and that

two such figures were to have been placed opposite one another.

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merit at Ghent, the outline of which is magnificent. The elongated form with its air of brooding sorrow rises from the ground in two wonderful lines, the one running down precipitously, the other sweeping upward in a soft, full curve ; it has the majesty and the charm of one of our northern mountains. It was a poetic thought to lay the broken hand on the face, but it might have been dispensed with, for one is surprised by the intrusion of this fragment in a completed harmony. It is a remnant of a fragmentary art, and its combination with the calm completeness of the figure is, as it were, symbolic of the new art, drinking its life from the broken hand of the old.

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GEORGE MINNE. DRAWING.

GEORGE MINNE : BUST OF A WOMAN (limestone)

FOLKWANQ MUSEUM, HAQEN, WESTPHALIA

GEORGE MINNE. ILLUSTRATION FOR MAETERLINCK'S

"SISTER BEATRICE."

OCCULT ROMANTICISM

THE SHADOW OF REMBRANDT

When the mob breaks into the palace to send the poor king into exile or to give him swift access to the joys of the world to come, there are always one or two faithful servants, who take note of their master's last wishes, preserve the things he had in daily use, and guard mementoes of him as relics. When Delacroix disappeared, the tragedy was not so great. Romanticism did not fall in the tumult of a revolution, but because the king had no heir, and the people had anointed no successor. It concealed itself to appear again at a more favourable moment, or at any rate, to live on hope. Klosowski saw it quite lately at Montmartre.\*

Long before this, Corot and Diaz had fled with their ideal to the secret woods, and Monticelli had hidden his passion in a mosaic of colour. Smaller men, such as Faller, paid for their silent Romanticism by cruel neglect, f

Fantin was the most enthusiastic of them all. He threw a thick veil over his Muse.

Those who bear themselves in this fashion are always persons of great refinement. Were they of a coarser fibre, they would have hurried after the king boldly. They refrained, not for lack of courage, but because this would not have harmonised with their nature. All their lives they carry about a devout air of exile, they are not well matched with their fellow men ; they do not stand aloof " such an attitude would seem to them too self-assertive " but they are different to all others, and when we go in from the street to visit them, we seem to be entering another world, and spend delicious moments in their company.

One trait is common to all these masked Romanticists, whom I will group together here in an intimate sketch. I can only describe it in dilettante fashion by a borrowed conception, and call them all musical. I am not speaking merely in metaphor, however ; all these personalities share a common passion, love for the world of sound. They have all been and all are enthusiastic lovers of music ; in two of their number, Monticelli and Fantin-Latour, this love verged on fanaticism. The former could listen to gipsy music half the night, and would then spend the remaining half painting. The whole greatness of Fantin is hardly to be realised by the non-musical. Carriere suggests a splendid deep melancholy 'cello ; Odilon Redon affects one like an echo among high rocks, half shrill, half sweet.

If we desire to test the connection by art-history we shall find numerous

\* Klosowski, " Die Maler von Montmartre." J. Bard, Berlin.

t Loris Clement Faller (1819-1901). He was one of the first who attempted to transpose Turner's rhythmic air-pictures into landscape ; he was akin to Corot, and foreshadowed Fantin, though he made no mark himself. M. Christian Cherfils, of Paris, owns the sole important collection of his works.

MONTICELLI: IDYL

HAVILAND COLLECTION, PARIS

MONTICELLI: THE DANCE (LA RONDE)

RAMBAUD COLLECTION, PARIS

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evidences of this close relationship from the first to the last. I prefer to take the most remote characteristic of all as the first : their common descent from an immortal ancestor, not Delacroix, but an earlier and greater master, the greatest musician that ever played with the palette.

They are all masters of chiaroscuro, not according to the grotesque conception which sees in Rembrandt nothing but a painter of shadow, but rather in the beautiful sense Constable gave it, when he called it " the power of creating space," a phrase in which he both defined Rembrandt's infinity, and unconsciously condemned his own very finite Scottish descendants.

At the Rembrandt Exhibition at Amsterdam there was a sketch lent by Lord Spencer, whether a Circumcision or an Adoration, critics were not quite agreed. Before the seated Mother with the Infant kneels a mighty old man ; figures and stuffs quiver in the background, the light shines only on splendid coloured things.

May Rembrandt forgive me, but when I first glanced at the old man's yellow robe, I thought of Monticelli ! As I came nearer, Fantin flashed into my mind, and when I saw the Mother's divine face, Odilon Redon rose before my eyes.

There was a colossal music in this exhibition, the deep-toned voice of an invisible man, saying clear things not to be understood. Sometimes it was as if a giant organ were swelling through the rooms, and one had to cover one's eyes, lest they should burst. Each glance seemed to gather up vast truths that one would fain have carried, each alone, into the wilderness, to listen, look and think to the full. The thought was terrible that space fails us, that the world is too narrow-to afford sufficient solitude for each ; that instead of the years necessary to carry it all away, there were but as many minutes.

When I got home, I loved the occult masters of Paris even more than before.

This ancestry does them honour. It requires incredible courage to have such forefathers, greater than the equity which accounts the father of all artistic conception as of the past, because " the pen is loth to write it down " he was only an Impressionist after his own fashion.

## ADOLPHE MONTICELLI

This Rembrandt-shadow, which was to become deep and wide enough to embrace the two greatest contrasts of the century, Delacroix and Ingres, rose originally in the most natural manner in the forest of Fontainebleau. Rousseau built within it. In his own time he was accounted a formless colourist, not the unrivalled master of space, who exhorted his pupils to paint a tree so that one could walk all round it, and who looked upon colour only as a means, sometimes indeed as a makeshift. His pupil Diaz was the first, who, to the horror of his serious friends, swerved away in the direction of colour, and was always half in Barbizon and half in Correggio. We can understand Millet's antipathy. Diaz hardly went to the root of the matter, when he said to his friend : " Toi, tu peins des orties. Moi, j'aime mieux peindre les roses." He did not know how to set his roses in space

as the others did their nettles ; Dutch mastery was not easy to his Spanish decadence. Muther calls him a juggler. In his delightful fantasies in the Thomy Thier collection he appears as a subtle, but a small Little Master.

The great figure of this art, worthy to rank with the men of 1830, was Monticelli. His depreciators, who saw in him a tattered disciple of Diaz, received a lesson at the Centennale. Roger Marx hung the two side by side on the same wall " it is true that Diaz was not represented by his best works " and even the blindest had to admit, that if the elder gave anything to the younger, the latter had made something different out of it, not only as regards subject, but manner, and that this manner is as far above that of Diaz as Rembrandt is above Van Goyen.

The art of the great painters is always a kind of architecture. The smaller men are content with a bit of wall. Diaz was one of the greatest among them. The others create rooms. They are genius, the others talent. The life-work of a genius is a cosmos ; it is immeasurable ; whether it seems great or small to us, it goes down into the depths.

Monticelli was such a genius. He has been called a hero of colour, and this says little enough. Mauclair speaks in his study of Monticelli's " Pantheistic joy in light " \* and this is more explicit, it indicates a greater complexity of emotions. Such personalities are always compounds, like Delacroix, like Rubens ; it is sometimes possible to point out talents more original in certain details flourishing beside them, from which they took something. Thus Monticelli took something from the other Provencal, Gustave Ricard, as did Delacroix from Gericault and Cezanne from Pissarro.

It is in the result that they become indivisible, and if in spite of this they in their turn gain an influence upon those who succeed them through individual qualities, it is because each concomitant in them proceeds from their general mastery, and is therefore more convincing than the same quality in other artists, who perhaps exhibit it more brilliantly. At the same time it explains how

\* \*' Revue de l'Art Ancien et Moderne," Paris, 1903.

FANTIN-LATOURE: WOMEN BATHING (BAIGNEUSES)

LITHOGRAPH

ADOLPHE MONTICELLI 91



dangerous the influence of such special qualities may become if it falls upon people, who are incapable of creating the same cosmos or another as secure.

That which strikes us as individual at the first glance in this moulding of the mass is the material. Compounded of all sorts of different elements, the mixture which can no longer be divided is unique.

With Monticelli it seems like a lava of precious metals ; a broth, with the peculiarity of mingling colours without mixing them, in an impasto so fat, that it can't not be laid on with the brush, but has to be applied with the palette-knife. This explains the superficial aspect, this asphalt of purple and gold, of a thousand tiny gems. That which is inexplicable is the immaterial element in this coarse material, the life of tenderest structure ; a fantasy breathed upon the canvas, for which the brush seemed too forcible to the painters of the eighteenth century, which Fragonard painted as thinly as possible. Monticelli is more tender, more airy than any of them, more splendid than Watteau, softer than Greuze, and I am inclined to say, truer, firmer than any of them.

This Rembrandtesque " truth and poetry " in colour was undreamt of at Versailles, in spite of all the poetry of the life there ; painters rendered the perfume of the Court, not that of woman. Monticelli has painted woman more fancifully and at the same time more intimately ; richer in costume, gorgeous with the brocade of her gown, and the proud plumes of her hat with its sparkling stones, she is at the same time richer in emotion ; he has woven erotics into a fairy-tale. As his excellent biographer and compatriot Gouirand tells us \* he was much in bondage to the lusts of the flesh, and passion seems only to have driven him to portray the satisfaction of desires beyond all carnal lusts. It is only the glow of his colour that is erotic ; what he paints with it is chaste as the breath of flowers.

To express his poetry in words, one would need to be at least a Montesquiou,<sup>f</sup> and indeed, the best painted poetry is of a kind that cannot be written. Monticelli was by no means literary ; he was pure instinct, not unlike Rembrandt in his life.

He came to Paris as long as Paris had an Emperor ; one of his biographers tells us that he was in love with the Empress. When the brilliant rulers fell he was between thirty and forty, he had the Louvre in his head, friends at his side and hope in his heart. The war drove him away. Then disaster began. He set out on foot for Marseilles, lived on the sale of little pictures by the way, and arrived at last quite destitute.

Monticelli is one of those artists for whom poverty seems to be a necessary antecedent to production. They live so much in dreams, that the relative well-being they might attain to by a certain amount of luck and good management is not sufficiently attractive to them to entice them out of their world. If they were very rich they would use their wealth like princes ; as beggars, they are able to

imagine themselves princes, if only they possess the two or three francs that represent the essential ingredients of their existence, their intoxication. Their art gives them so much, that the terrors of their economic situation escape them. During Monticelli's most brilliant period of production, from 1870 to 1880, he

\* Monticelli, par Andre Gouirand (" Les Peintres Provencaux," Henry May, 1900).  
t Montesquiou contributed a charming study on the artist to the "Gazette des Beaux Arts" of 1901. This, as well as Mauclair's study mentioned above, is illustrated. The best reproductions are Lauzet's twenty-two lithographs (Boussod Valadon), with text by Guigou, Monticelli's friend and comrade.

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lived in the most miserable conditions, and was probably one of the happiest of mortals. In his old age he was selling his pictures for the same prices as Diaz in his youth : from one to two louis ; with this he was richer than any Carolus Duran. His work amounts to many thousands of pictures.

He judged his time very accurately when he said, not without a certain pride : " Je peins pour dans trente ans." But before the amateur began to think of him, the artists of Scotland and of France had discovered him. The one who best understood him was the Dutchman, who, like Monticelli himself at last, paid for eternal light by mental eclipse : Vincent van Gogh.

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FANTIN-LATOURE: RHEINGOLD

LITHOGRAPH

I

## FANTIN-LATOIR

We are amazed at the likeness between so many dissimilar people. They are almost like brothers, each of whom should have journeyed to a distant country, to say the same things each according to his temperament, worlds apart from one another. Monticelli appears almost as the long-lost son, a gipsy, dancing himself out of his wits, and by the wildest freaks of fancy lighting upon the songs which the other has elaborated in quiet rhythms. Monticelli, the genius, in whom everything was confused, save his artistic principles ; Fantin, the limpid spirit, one of the rare temperaments, in whom a perfectly conscious conception becomes art, and to whom it is nevertheless granted, to keep the happy smile of an enviable disposition.

Fantin first wrote prose, before he ventured on his verses. His first pictures show him as a simple, solid Dutchman. Roger Marx has a little interior by him, two women embroidering near a window, dated 1857. The youth of twenty was graver, simpler, colder than the old man. In the same collection hangs the remarkable sketch of the year 1895, the apotheosis of Berlioz, the most passionate hymn which ever fired him, a hymn in which Fantin's idol, Delacroix,, was acclaimed even more than Berlioz.

In 1857 he became a pupil of Courbet, but he could not stand the swash-buckler for long, although he owed him much, like all his generation. His god, as he confessed to the comrade of his youth, Antonin Proust,\* was not Courbet, but Ingres, whose pupil he had been at the Ecole des Beaux Arts ; his father, a painter of little importance, had guided his first footsteps. Later on he went to the Ecole d'Art decoratif, where Lecocq de Boisbaudran gave him sound principles.

But Fantin learnt from many. Bonvin and Ribot gave him as much as Courbet. Most of his teachers could only speak to him through their works. No other student knew the Louvre as he did, notably the rooms where the Venetians and their descendants, Watteau and his school, are hanging. No other was so familiar with Delacroix. He was one of the most cultured artists of his day. Degas alone rivals him in this respect. The early Fantin has, indeed, affinities with the early Degas. The beautiful double portrait, *Mes Deux Sœurs*, in which one young girl is seated at an embroidery frame while the other reads "the first picture intended by the painter, of course in vain, for the Salon" belongs to a world from which Degas also took his first pictures. It is marked by the same reality, but Fantin is more human. From the first he created an atmosphere in his pictures that makes the painted walls of his rooms a living and sympathetic interior. Degas treated his with a supreme calm, Fantin came nearer to Corot's interiors, making his still more attractive, and yet preserved the personal atmosphere of his figures. He is the quietest, the most peaceful of the three. Before M. van Cutsen's picture

\* "L'Art de Fantin-Latour, par Antonin Proust," "The Studio," January 1902.

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at Brussels, the girl at an easel,\* every spectator is charmed by the grace that breathes, not only from the gentle sitter, but from all the accessories. He always gave his models some quiet occupation ; often placing books in their hands, which they really read ; the motive of *La Lecture* of 1861 recurs frequently ; and the meditative calm which his girls and women reveal communicates itself to the spectator. We cannot understand how the public could have felt itself outraged by this revolutionary : he paints a very delicate, refined social life, innocent of any straining after effect, and is in truth that which many people try to see in Whistler. He has no chic, no elegance even, no sparkling wit, rather, a cool demureness, which we absorb unconsciously. Fantin had visited London before 1860, and like his comrade Whistler, he loved the gray mystery of the city. He made friends there more readily than at home. Many of his early pictures went to England, as for instance, the beautiful still-life pieces painted about 1865, now in the Tavernier collection in Paris. There is more force of colour and of form in the large *Breakfast*, with dahlias, a basket from which the grapes are rolling out on to the table, and a plate with apples and pears, than in any of his later pictures, The glass vases with single blossoms in the same collection rival the Manets of the same period.

He also painted one of his double portraits for an Englishman. It represents the engraver Edwards and his wife. It was exhibited at the Salon of 1875, and is now in the London National Gallery. Edwards is seated by a portfolio on a stand, looking at a print he has taken from it. His wife stands behind him with folded arms, and looks out calmly at the spectator. It is a picture in which naturalness and psychological tact unite to produce a pleasant, if somewhat laborious effect.

To appreciate Fantin's groups, we must get accustomed to them. At first they give us a sense of discomfort. The enthusiasm that inspired him in the earliest of these pictures, the *Hommage a Delacroix* (1864), in his *Atelier a Batignolles* (1870) now in the Luxembourg, in the piano-picture at JuUien's, and in other examples, where he shows his heroes surrounded by their retinue, is deliberately concealed under an almost icy coldness. We miss the gay unity which distinguishes the patrician Dutch groups, and which Fantin replaces in many of his family pictures by the natural relation of the figures one to the other. We can almost detect that annoyance of the different artists at their enforced juxtaposition, which, as Arsene Alexandre laughingly relates, they so freely expressed to Fantin. f

In spite of this, these pictures already make the effect of great historical docu-

ments, so convincingly are the characteristic figures painted, and their lack of agreeable composition becomes almost an advantage ; we divine something of the reality of this changeful relationship, which has no need of externals to confirm its very intimate sense. Besides, the tone of these pictures is all the more harmonious on this account. The two portraits of Fantin's friends, Edmond Maitre and his wife, are masterpieces of this tonal art, which is indispensable to Fantin's portraiture. %

\* Reproduced here from an original drawing by Fantin. M. van Cutsen owns some other fine examples of the master.

t Arsene Alexandre, \*' Fantin-Latour," in "Le Monde Moderne," December 1895.

+ Both portraits are now in the possession of Maitre's brother in Paris. Maitre was a painter, and figures in the piano-picture on the chair in the foreground, and in the Batignolles picture between Zola and Bazille.

G. RICARD: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S MOTHER

THE PROPERTY OF M. E. RICARD

FANTIN-LATOURE 95

"In some of the portraits we seem to trace a distant reminiscence of Gustave Ricard, whose works in the Blanche collection harmonise so well with the Fantins in their neighbourhood. y^ij-^-4/^ij^ '^

Fantin had a double name ; the first has a cool sound, the second is soft and insinuating and recalls a master of the great dix-huitieme siecle. He seems to have a double nature ; if we examine closely, we shall find in him too, in this dual being, painting on the one hand prosaic subjects, on the other the sweetest Roman-ticism, the unity of that artist, who produced the portrait of Bertin and the Odalisques at the same time. One of the earliest pictures of this kind, the Feerie which was refused at the Salon of 1863, appeared at the Centennial Exhibition.\* It shows distinctly in various passages, I might almost say, in the various figures, the great influences of the Louvre, Veronese, Rembrandt and Watteau. In the pictures that followed immediately after this, the wonderful harmony of composition, of colour, of detail which makes Fantin great, and

seems enigmatic when we remember the multitudinous influences that met in him, is already won.

Fantin is an admirable example of the perfect normal being, his development is one of the most instructive of studies. Of him we may say what we could wish to say of every young artist, that the school in which he was formed gave him a receptive apparatus which made him capable of becoming the greater, the more he assimilated.

He owed this to his teacher, Lecocq de Boisbaudran, whose immeasurable importance shall at least be indicated by a few words here. Boisbaudran was by no means a distinguished artist ; I do not think there is a single important picture by him. He was originally an architect, but above all, a clear thinker, who had a capacity for reasoning out the things which a sentimental yet barbaric and persistently noxious tradition leaves entirely to emotion. He recognised the physiological side of the origin of artistic creation, was a rationalist by disposition like Leon de Laborde, Viollet-le-Duc and Chevreul, did not allow himself to be deceived by the artistic nimbus, and recognised that the momentous decline of French handicrafts since the Revolution could only be arrested by a thorough elementary education of the artist. What was lacking were productive elements. The Ecole des Beaux Arts with its eternal principle of reproduction only succeeded in spreading an epidemic of obsolete and uncomprehended forms throughout France. Ingres was a genius so subtle, so difficult to understand, that he could not convey the differentiation with which he approached the old masters to pupils who had not as yet the organs necessary to follow him. Like many other distinguished teachers, he lacked a preparatory method calculated to awaken that power of resistance in the pupil, which alone ensures a right use of the master's gift.

This introductory training was provided by Lecocq de Boisbaudran, when he became Director of the little Ecole de l'Art decoratif, and the phalanx of remarkable artists who issued from it will make his memory imperishable.

This success places the folly of two successive regimes in the worst possible light ; the one, under the third Napoleon, incited by the envious spirits of the Ecole des Beaux Arts, was guilty of depriving this benefactor of art of his office, who was without reason ; the other, the Republic, committed an unpardonable sin of omission in not reinstating him, to profit by his last years.

\* In the Haviland Collection. It was at the Salon des Refuses in 1863.

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Boisbaudran was a born teacher. He had his doctrine not in his head, but in

his fingers, and could communicate it in the simplest fashion. The literary-form of his instruction, which he set forth in 1847 in the once famous pamphlet, " Education de la Memoire pittoresque applicable aux Lois du Dessin," \* seems simple and even jejune now. We lose the vivifying example with which the teacher was ready in every concrete case, the application as the work proceeded, which is praised by the pupils who still survive. Boisbaudran started from the premise that the artist who is to create requires a system, which could not be evolved from the oppression exercised by the classicists of the Ecole des Beaux Arts towards their pupils.

He did not oppose a ruthless study of Nature, such as Courbet enjoined, to the insistence on form of the official school ; indeed, he turned away, to some extent from Nature. But he believed that the pupil must learn this recession himself with the personal means given him by Nature, not by a method of style. To strengthen these means, he showed his pupils the essential elements of the model, the constructive parts of the anatomy, the division of colour, of light, &c. and made them then paint from memory the study they had repeatedly copied, until he was satisfied. In other words, he did not teach drawing, like the Ecole des Beaux Arts, but seeing. He forced the pupil to look attentively, by removing the model after a time, and this necessity produced an involuntary exercise of mnemotechnical methods, which in receptive temperaments became artistic methods.

It is easy to see how helpful the personal tact of a teacher might be in such a process, a teacher who knew the weaknesses of each pupil, and could recommend individual methods. The lessons were not always given in the studio. Boisbaudran would take his pupils out into the open air, to an intelligently chosen spot.

But even Boisbaudran could not have made a genius of Fantin, unless he had found the possibilities of genius within him. On the other hand, we cannot imagine Fantin without the rationalistic training which formed him. Neither Ingres, nor Delacroix, nor Prud'hon created him, but rather his admirable faculty for assimilating these factors, a faculty which was certainly not born with him. This well-tilled field Ingres fertilised. Not that he was the only, or indeed the most easily recognised procreative force here.

Ingres' influence upon Fantin was as his influence upon Degas. To both he served as a gymnastic. But the result of the influence was radically different. Here the two comrades parted company. Degas' chilly vision was warmed by Ingres, who inspired him with a desire for arabesque, and when he found the Japanese in his further progress, Ingres struck the balance again. For Fantin again, as for Renoir, the Odalisque-painter was a beneficent moderating force. He restrained him from sinking altogether into the seductive depths of chiaroscuro " Carriere lacked this wholesome restraint " and from following the fascinating dix-huitieme siecle over the border, and made him give form as purely as

\* It was reprinted in 1862. Ten years later he published the "Coup d'Œil sur l'Enseignement des Beaux Arts." His doctrine is to be found most synthetically set forth in his "Lettre a un jeune Professeur, Sommaire d'une Methode pour l'Enseignement du Dessin et de la Peinture." (Morel et Cie., 1877.) His last work was "Quelques Idees et Propositions Philosophiques." He died in Paris in 1897, aged 95.

Felix Regamey, one of his pupils, has lately published a short biography of him, "Horace Lecoq de Boisbaudran et ses Eleves" (Honore Champion, Paris),

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## FANTIN-LATOURE 97

possible, even though it was not the form of the schools. Sometimes he approaches very closely to Prud'hon, as in M. Henri Rouart's gem, *La Lune*, with the exquisite female form in the moonlight. But that which Prud'hon was only able to achieve by his linear rhythm, is here completed by a magical atmosphere, Fantin's pictorial means.

We are always conscious of the school of Watteau in this worshipper of Ingres. In the Rheingold plate of 1876 \* the draped figure among the three daughters of the Rhine is taken almost literally from a Fragonard ; the naked leg under the folds is typical. But close beside it we recognise Prud'hon again, and Prud'hon served Fantin as a stepping-stone to Ingres.

Herein lies the difference between Fantin and Monticelli. The gifted vagabond had only his unconquerable colour-instinct and his love of France's most brilliant period. He decked his canvases so thickly with jewels that he never had room for a large quiet figure, but all the rest is so entrancing that we never think of looking for details. It is different with Carriere.

Monticelli loved gipsy music, Fantin was one of the first Frenchmen who

appreciated Wagner. But we cannot draw any immediate conclusions from this. They are both painters. Monticelli was the colourist. Fantin does not possess his marvellous palette ; his colours are dipped in shadow, his contrasts are light and dark. Hence he never shows to greater advantage than on stone.

We may find Fantin's oil-pictures old-fashioned, deliberately limited just where we are accustomed to breadth and fulness, conventional in method, with a conventionality whose beneficence we have not the organs to appreciate ; this manner is essential in lithography. Here the porous quality of work upon the stone gives the typical Fantinesque form.

That which the modern Frenchmen have made of the German invention, an art which we would not forego for the world, is more an expedient than an independent genre, a method of reproduction, which brilliantly adapted as it is to the fugitive manner of a Lautrec, a Cheret or a Whistler, impresses by virtue of what these artists recall by its means of their colour and their drawing, and not by the intimate use of the special qualities proper to the technique. But Fantin on the other hand, by the contrast between the black dots of the printing colour and the white of the paper, gets the peculiar network of his effects of light, the exquisite transparency in deepest shadow, the ideal means wherewith to continue what Prud'hon began in his drawings. One of the loveliest and simplest examples is the often reproduced print for the Duo in Berlioz' " Trojans," f the moonlight-scene with ^neas kneeling before Dido. She sits, bathed in the moonshine, against a pillar, while the dark outline of the wooing hero disappears in the shadow, preserving the attitude from any suggestion of importunate sentimentality.

Fantin shows himself here much more freely than in his pictures, which indeed were often painted after his lithographs ; his colour is richer in the latter, richer even than Delacroix in his. Delacroix' lithographs were hand drawings, in which the hand burns with fever. Note his Shakespeare illustrations, or the marvellous print of the horse and the panther here reproduced. Fantin succeeded in winning a kind of chastened abstraction from Delacroix, which completes the purely formal quality that was born in the Dante's Boat. He makes a calmer effect, because all that might seem exaggerated in the movement is drowned in shadow. This Fantinesque shadow plays somewhat the same part as the orchestra in Wagner's

\* No. 8 in the Hediard Catalogue. f No. li6 in the Catalogue Hediard.

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operas, which does not accompany the voices, but envelops them, and the peculiar gliding magic of this musical web may be the real explanation of Fantin's preference. Of the 150 lithographs emunerated by Hediard,\* a large proportion were inspired by the Bayreuth master ; the first, the Tannhauser plate (Venus-

berg), appeared as early as 1862.

Fantin succeeded in modelling monumental nude figures with his delicate black granules. Seurat made incomparable use of them. We shall hardly be wrong if we look upon Fantin as one of the sources of Neo-Impressionism, or rather, of the method sought after by Seurat. This influence is that which divides Seurat from his followers. Signac's circle neglected it, but many others of the younger generation, Aman-Jean &c., have listened reverently to the same music. Of all Fantin's younger comrades, Renoir is most akin to him. They have the glory of having served both traditions, that of the Dante's Boat and that of the Bain ^urc. It is perhaps this which gives them their great importance for Young France, which groups Renoir and Fantin together, honouring them as its best loved masters.

\* Germain Hediard in the spring numbers of " L'Artiste " for 1892, and also in book form. See also for the later lithographs (down to 1899), "Lithographies Nouvelles de Fantin-Latour," by the same author (E. Sagot, Paris, 1899). The two reproductions in this volume were courteously placed at our disposal by M. Sagot.

The original plates were published by various Parisian firms and in various periodicals, (in addition to " L'Artiste," the " Gazette des Beaux-Arts," " L'Estampe Originale," by Roger Marx (E. Marty), " L'Epreuve " (" Peintres Lithographes," &c.). Some of the Wagner plates were for JuUien's work on Wagner (Paris, 1 881), the later ones by Vollard.

## EUGENE CARRIERE: PORTRAIT

### EUGENE CARRIERE

Carrierre is the pictorial extreme of this tendency. He replaced the classic ideal, that glimmered as through a finely meshed curtain with his predecessors^ by Velazquez. The round was his objective also, a full form, secure from the hatchet strokes of the Degas school. He achieved it with a broad brush, which twines the dark colour like heavy plaits about his high lights, and develops a rare tonal art in the process.

In the early works, the portrait of Roger Marx, for instance, and the two children of the years 1883 and 1885, which I was permitted to photograph, he does not only draw flesh, but paints it with a pale radiance which suggests a transfigured Rembrandt. It was only in his latest things that he once more attained this youthful delicacy of tone. He too is one of the quiet spirits, who dream in shadow ; indeed, he sometimes conceals what we would fain see more than is necessary.

Hence lithography provides a technique well suited to him also. Carriere was rarely finer than in his portraits of the Goncourts, Verlaine and others, which he painted on stone, or in the marvellous illustrations of feminine gesture which under his supple hand became true form-poems of mysticism.

Lithography also prescribes the natural format for this art, and it seems almost a pity that it did not keep to it entirely. Carriere's large pictures, which fall short in colour in proportion to their increase in size, offend against the wise tact shown by Fantin, who had a similar tendency to lose himself in darkness, but obviated it by his artistic compromise. This defect, which was perhaps intensified by the inspired criticisms of enraptured feuilletonists, has made a paradoxical phenomenon of Carriere, which might almost have arisen in Germany, the land of " Schwarmerei." It affords an unexpected refutation of the superstition as to the Parisian's want of feeling. One would pass it by with a light heart, did we not divine so much charm in the beauty that sportively blacks its face.

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## ODILON REDON

Redon's appearance on the horizon coincides more or less with that of Carriere, though he was ten years older than the latter ; he was born in 1840. Beyond this, they had nothing in common, not even social position. The inspiration which abounds in the shadow of the painter of darkness, finds little or no echo in the other. Mysticism is congenial to it only in so far as it is made easy.

Redon, too, is attracted by the secrets of shadow, and he saw tangible things in it, which make many worthy persons tear their hair. The naturalness with which the Japanese treat their pleasant spirit-apparitions found a sympathetic temperament in Redon, compounded of all imaginable ghost-stories " ghost-fragments rather than stories, perhaps. If he always seemed something of an amateur to the great artists of his generation, he at least saw images, apparitions ; the fantastic element was in the presentment, not in the idea. Fundamentally, all this mysticism seems quite unimportant, no more characteristic of Redon than

the actuality of Daumier's caricatures, which escapes us already, is characteristic of Daumier. In France it was so little understood, that he could not even find a publisher for his first series of lithographs, Edgar Poe, he Reve, &c., and was obliged to print them at his own expense. On the other hand, the extraordinary synthetism of his drawing roused the interest of artists from the very beginning. His name first appears as an exhibitor in Parisian galleries in 1881. When he exhibited a complete collection of his drawings in the Salle des Depeches of the " Gaulois " newspaper the following spring, he was as famous at the end of the opening day as he could ever become. He has never got any nearer to the public since.

The cult which mysticism carried on in connection with Redon, his relations with Huysmans, who immortalised him in his " Certains," made him interesting abroad. E. Deman of Brussels published a number of his lithographs, some of them as frontispieces for Verhaeren's and Gilkin's books, and also the first catalogue of the lithographs. \*

Redon's influence on Fernand Khnopff and other Belgians is so obvious that the results are not particularly interesting. On the other hand, he acted as a most valuable stimulus to the Dutchmen, Toorop among others.

Finally, he penetrated to Germany, where he combined with Goya and Munch as a suggestive force among the younger artists.

The first critic who concerned himself with the " Gaulois " exhibition, the late E. Hennequin pointed out the perfection of Redon's drawing, and saw in him

\* Unfortunately the plates were all published in very limited editions. Jules Destrees " Catalogue Descriptif," which was published by the same house in 1891 has long been out of print. He enumerates seventy-five plates. Andre Mellerio is at present at work on an illustrated catalogue embracing all the artist's lithographs.

t In the "Revue Litteraire et Artistique " (May 4, 1882), which published several important contributions by Huysmans and others during the brief period of its existence. It was the fore-runner of the " Revue Independante."

EUGENE CARRIERE: STUDY

WOODCUT BY PERRICHON, CORPORATION FRANg. DES ORAVEURS SUR BOIS

## ODILON REDON loi

not only a visionary, but an artist who could give amazing vitality to his material. This is the great difference between him and Gustave Moreau, who, with all his soul-reading, never succeeded in producing the spiritual in art, the life of the matter. Moreau was a naturalist who never went near Nature. He painted still-life pieces of the worst sort, which were only popular because, instead of well-preserved fish and fruit, he used ghosts equally well-preserved. The grotesque fashion in which Huysmans overrated him at the expense of Puvis has availed him nothing. There is more splendour in a fragment by Redon than in Moreau's finest jewels. We need only follow the division of black and white in his fantastic plates to penetrate the artistic secret of his invention. There are passages in which he reminds us of Delacroix. Out of the wild tumult rise solid monuments, as in the magnificent plate of the winged horse, which seems to perpetuate the culminating moment of a Delacroixian inspiration. While Delacroix makes his effect by means of life, Redon impresses us by the silence of his forms. " Ghosts are silence, that is why they are so imposing," said Jan Veth in his study. \*

The simplest pieces seem to me the best. None of Ingres' successors has a like power over line. Janmot, the mystic among Ingres' pupils, was moved to a lively sympathy with the novice by this quality. There is a tenderness in his female heads – they almost suggest Leonardo – that makes one understand why his art must remain fragmentary. The head of Beatrice, belonging to M. Fabre of Paris, one of the most perfect of the drawings, is like a divine marble reflected in a mirror, f Here he is purely Greek, with a line that is only animated in gradations, a line that has had a fruitful influence on Denis and Maillol. In others he seems to have barbaric forms in his mind. I have a man's face by him, forged out of a few strong lines, that resembles early Gothic wood-carving, a barbaric Christ, or something of that kind. Such drawings inspired Gauguin.

They are all executed in pencil and charcoal, and designed for lithography. He did not begin to paint till later ; indeed, he did not begin to produce at all, till the age at which Chasseriau died. His paintings are little landscapes, for the most part insignificant, colourless things. He was considerably past fifty when he at last discovered his own domain as a painter. About seven years ago he suddenly appeared in some remarkable decorative pictures, in which we hailed a new artist, who had only his name in common with the earlier Redon. They were pastels of a magic of colour which could be compared with nothing pictorial, still less with anything in Nature. Any sort of compositional intention was rigidly excluded ; there are no lines, no planes, a shimmer of specks strewn over the canvas like flowers, of strangely material colours, compounded of gold, silver, gems, and the black of rare butterflies ; in splendour comparable to certain early Japanese

caskets inlaid with mother-of-pearl. When Durand-Ruel organised an exhibition of these things in 1900, they were generally acclaimed. The public was won over. Redon painted a number of these flower-pictures for a chateau at Dombey, in Burgundy. Madame Chausson among others in Paris commissioned him to decorate a room for her. In certain portraits, as for instance, those in M. Fabre's possession, Redon combined his purity of line with the charm of this

\* " Odilon Redon's Lithographische Serien," in " Kunst und Kiinstler," December 1903, (B. Cassirer, Berlin), with excellent illustrations, one of the best of which has been courteously placed at my disposal.

t Reproduced here in a wood-cut.

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richly tinted still-life. While admitting to the fuU the beauty of these works, we cannot shut our eyes to the (in some respects) mournful fact, that the real Redon, an indispensable element in the development of contemporary art, ceased to be when this exquisite trifling began, and we can only regret that it was necessary to relieve the sexagenarian from anxiety as to his daily bread.

ODILON REDON: BEATRICE  
DRAWING

FABRE COLLECTION, PARIS  
FROM A WOODCUT BY RUFFE

BOOK IV

MODERN ART IN GERMANY

ODILON REDON: LITHOGRAPH

FROM "KUNST UND KUNSTLER" (CASSIRER, BERLIN)

## MENZEL AND HIS CIRCLE

### MENZEL

The group of German artists we have already considered owed their inspiration to Italy, and were but slightly affected by the life of modern Germany. German history of the nineteenth century is the transformation of Germany into Prussia. Logically, we can only look for the artistic representatives of this new Germany at the centre of Prussianism, i.e. in Berlin.

Chodowiecki was the first of these. He belonged altogether to the French dix-huitieme siecle beloved of Frederick the Great, and was the painter, the engraver and the draughtsman of the French colony in Berlin. The typically Prussian element only appears in certain demure representations of the bourgeoisie on a small scale. Franz Kriiger, also born in the eighteenth century, was the first representative Prussian Court painter, a self-taught artist, wholly uncultured but remarkable for a sincerity and a truth to Nature which make his works documents of the greatest value for the times of Frederick William III. and Frederick William IV. His work consists of innumerable excellent drawings, among which I include his pictures in oil. His Parades, belonging respectively to the King of Prussia and the Emperor of Russia, are huge groups of portraits, unadorned, precise, reticent as people were then in Prussia, thoroughly bourgeois – we can almost smell the long tobacco-pipe as we look ! – but with the rough charm inherent in the rendering of one who reproduces plainly and faithfully what he has seen. Kriiger was a friend of Horace Vernet, who sometimes had commissions in Berlin, and he occasionally visited Paris. The curious harmony of certain little interiors by him in the Berlin National Gallery may be due to Parisian influences. In these, drawing is not altogether predominant ; a timid but not unattractive painting asserts itself. The charm does not lie solely in the Biedermeier style, which was excellently reproduced by the Hamburg artist, Julius Oldach, and afterwards by G. F. Kersting and others, but is a personal addition made by the author. The horse was Kriiger's speciality. Indeed, he created a tradition founded on a keen observation of nature in the rendering of horses, traces of which are still to be found in Marees' first studies. He had many pupils, among whom Steffek, Marees' master, was the best, but only one successor, Menzel.

Menzel personifies the typical problem of German art so perfectly, that the story of his life might almost stand for a history, not of German art but of the German artist. I have already attempted this in a book,\* so shall confine myself to a brief sketch here. Menzel, like all the gifted Germans, began very



\* Der junge Menzel : Ein Problem der Kunst-Oekonomie Deutschlands. (Insel Verlag, Leipzig, 1906.)

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brilliantly, and, of course, as a draughtsman. His illustrations for Kugler's " History of Frederick the Great " (i 839-1 842) are as important to Germany as the works of Callot and Daumier to France. They appear more objective, but, nevertheless, they re-create the episodes they illustrate. Menzel's Frederick is his own, and the fact that the Germans have taken him as their own, only proves the extraordinary power of Menzel's creation. Every stroke of these delicate little drawings is an invention. It never occurs to him to choose his pictures with the help of the historian. He composed joyfully within the sphere of his own art, invented things susceptible of plastic treatment, using his text as a framework, after the manner of Hogarth, Guys and Beardsley. In the later drawings, preoccupation with objective truth hampers the freedom of the artist.

In his first oil-pictures, Menzel is a feeble dilettante, inferior to Caspar, David Friedrich and other self-taught predecessors. About 1845, he saw an exhibition of Constable's works in Berlin ; he noticed with amazement, that it was just as possible to paint naturally as to draw naturally. He produced a series of remarkable little pictures, which stand out from the German art of the period like rays of light. They are pendants to the landscapes of Wasmann, Jacob Gensler, and others, but they are rather larger than the minute works of these Hamburgers, and are by no means restricted to landscape. Menzel's best pictures of this early period are interiors, such as the incomparable room with the fluttering curtain, in which there is nothing but light and air. Within the last few years nearly all Menzel's gems have been brought together in the Berlin National Gallery. Their creator threw them off carelessly ; he painted them for amusement, giving himself up to very different things in his more serious mood : historical pictures, for which he carried on researches, that would have given him a place of honour in a German university. He drew from Nature with all Krtlger's conscientious exactness. But whereas Krtlger's realism had been curbed by the natural taste of the Biedermeier period, Menzel, the child of a generation without style, gave himself up more and more to the object, and thought it impossible to go too far in the direction of minute imitation. This tendency was held in check by the genius of the artist throughout the forties and fifties ; the year 1858 was, indeed, signalised by the production of his masterpiece, the ThMtre Gymnase, conceived during a fortnight's visit to Paris in 1855, a picture that suggests Goya, Daumier, and Corot, and yet bears the stamp of the perfect independence of a bold temperament. He declined steadily after painting this picture. He lived fifty years longer and

worked unceasingly. If it were possible to obliterate this larger portion of his life, he would be a greater man.

Krillger and Menzel, those two painters of soldiers, those laureates of the most martial and momentous period of our history, are pacific artists. In Krillger we still find traces of the humanitarianism which distinguished the classical Germans, who sang the beauties of peace, and were the first to attack a naïve and illiberal patriotism. There is little of this nobility of sentiment in Menzel ; the normal egotism of his generation finds expression in him, and also the ugly side of that materialism of which Krillger knew nothing. There is an aroma of peace and contented well-being about their work. Krillger's *Parades* are like middle-class idylls, and a student of Menzel's work might suppose him to have lived in the most pacific of epochs. They reveal two typical German

## GOTTFRIED SCHADOW: THE TWO PRINCESSES

NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN

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qualities, strength and weakness. Weakness — for the enthusiasm evoked by a series of great victories did not suffice to give them an adequate artistic form ; strength, for they are free from any taint of false sentiment, and the success of the German arms could not disturb the equilibrium of these good citizens. As he grew older, Menzel, though he remained a middle-class Philistine, gradually diverged from the peaceful and equable ideal of Krillger, and transformed the qualities of the latter into faults. Menzel is not pacific after the manner of Krillger ; he lacks the charm of discretion and moderation that characterises Krillger's works in the National Gallery, nor has he the same delicacy of feeling. We recognise in him the class which is gradually becoming dominant in Germany, a bourgeoisie no longer satisfied with its honest and obscure activities, directed to homely perfection, and aspiring with a simple dignity to the virtues of the heart. It is becoming coarse and impure, non-civic, as we might say non-patrician, inflated by ideas of universal greatness which betray an absolutely mediocre mind. The townsman of the little community is changing into the citizen of the great city. No one has ever reproduced more faithfully than he unconsciously did, the growth of Berlin, the city which increases steadily in size, becoming more complex and more noisy, without ever achieving greatness, that city where we find everything and nothing, and where everything, in spite of the order and exactitude that reign, seems slightly ridiculous. Krillger's Berlin was infantine ; Menzel's is an ill-behaved child, who has forgotten his

nursery training, and great boy though he is, seems altogether unformed.

In no other artist could we find so striking an analogy with the typical character of modern Germany. The plastic arts had already lost all relation to the spirit of the age. Germany deliberately turned still further away from them, fearing a closer contact as if they had been some contagious disease. We may, indeed, find an analogous phenomenon in the literature of the day. Menzel has something in common with Lotze, the author of the "Microcosm." They are akin in their cheap scepticism, as in their prosaic optimism. Menzel more especially, had no conception of anything in the nature of a conscious philosophy. No one could have been less in sympathy with Hebbel's idea, that art is philosophy realised. He never fell into such an error — unhappily. He had a kind of Philistine philosophy which finds a quotation for every circumstance, feels everything and reflects everything, is surprised at everything and nothing, goes through all the experiences of life without one real experience. He was no "divine Philistine" as Riehl called Otto Ludwig; but Ludwig's device, "this little corner is the true Paradise of the heart," might have served for Menzel without much modification. There is something of Menzel in Ludwig, in Freytag, and in Fontane; we read it between the lines of these writers, more particularly those of Fontane, the painter's sincere admirer. Both have the same taste for detail and for uniformity. Like Fontane, Menzel puts man before everything else, and in man he loves speech above all. This passion for the characteristic word sometimes led the master of dialogue astray, and it was a kindred passion for making his figures talk which diverted Menzel from the path of art. With him it worked greater havoc than with the writer. There was but one quality Menzel did not share with Fontane, and upon reflection we shall see that this was the one thing which makes us love the writer and forgive his little faults. It is the vast resonance of his words, that expansion of the sense, which, surpassing the skilful artifice of question and answer, goes to the reader's heart. It is his

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humour or his melancholy, the human element he mingled with his narrative, which lifted him above material details into the domain of the absolute, a region unknown to Menzel, the eternal copyist of material detail.

Menzel has no humour, and this must not be made a reproach to him. But he had nothing to take its place; he lacked that emanation, grave or gay, which, escaping from a personality, gives a plastic envelope to the forms of his art. Menzel had something intermediary, which we might call a sense of the comical. And though I am not now thinking of the comedy in certain of his scenes, I am thinking of his attitude towards this comedy, and of the difference that makes

itself felt between his attitude and our own when we are face to face with the same situation. He reproduced things that were unworthy of him ; not that ridiculous or trivial subjects are necessarily forbidden to the artist " a thousand examples contradict such an assertion " but he was unable to detach himself from his theme and stand aloof from it ; he became entangled in it, assimilated something of its character, and became himself ridiculous. Aristotle called comedy an " inoffensive " genre, and this vague definition finds its application here, when we recognise in Menzel's lack of a certain quality the cause of his artistic ineffectiveness. Menzel's art " I am speaking of his work as a whole, not of certain exceptions of his youth " is inoffensive ; I mean that it does not pierce through our being to our souls. It provokes only a superficial emotion because the artist has not himself penetrated the phenomenon, because his own activity is purely receptive, capable at most of colouring an event, and not of creating it. This activity Menzel exercised with great zeal ; his vivacious energy showed the comic aspect of his case with ever-increasing distinctness. Such an anomaly is and should be unique in history. Menzel is almost a genius in the skill with which he silences his own genius. But if, departing from this extreme case, we stand at a certain distance, we shall easily find the relation between this apparently isolated phenomenon and certain fundamental characteristics of German art. Many German artists who enjoy great popularity are " inoffensive " in the same sense. Menzel is but the most notable type of this numerous family.

MENZEL: INTERIOR (1845)

NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN

A. MENZEL. DRAWING. FROM A WOOD-CUT BY PR. UNZELMANN.

ANSELM FEUERBACH

Despised and neglected at home, I can find an answer to the riddle of my survival only in my own strong and unbending character. To put it better I may be said to have found salvation in heredity and in my art . . . We live in a century of art chatter ; some of the chatterers have been so good as to represent

me as a peculiarly German artist. This is a lie, against which I most solemnly protest. What I am I owe in the first place to the modern Frenchmen of '48, next to old and new Italy, and finally to myself.

A. F.

(Allgeyer's Monograph. Ed. Neumann.)

Feuerbach and Leibl represent two such different worlds that one hesitates to mention them in the same breath. The implied comparison may even be considered wanting in reverence. Leibl was an artist pre-eminent among all his contemporaries for power ; above all things he knew what he wanted. Feuerbach on the other hand lacked many of the qualities for which the other was distinguished. Yet I know no one who is more worthy of this comparison, and I can think of scarcely a single German artist to whom more respect is due than the creator of Medea. It is not so much what he has produced that deserves the palm. You look in vain for a single masterpiece by Feuerbach which will instantly open a foreigner's eyes to his merit, one of these works, so numerous in the case of Leibl, which at once command enthusiasm and make an appeal quite independent of a merely historical interest. You have to take a bad photograph of one of Feuerbach's pictures, select a gesture here, a tone there, add, subtract and strike a balance, and the result is that you are apt to throw photographs and arguments to the winds and to maintain against all reason that he was the greatest of German artists. You are answered, very justly, that the best intentions in the world never made a picture sublime. But Feuerbach had more than the proverbial good intention. In one of his earliest works, Hafiz in the Tavern, he painted a recumbent nude in a manner worthy of Chasseriau. In spite of the natural awkwardness of the beginner he placed his figures as only the subtlest instinct for composition could have placed them. In the Roman child-pictures again the action of the little figures is altogether delightful, while in the interval between these and Iphigenia he grew from a child into a man. In the spring pictures of 1868 he produced the only German portrait-groups which can be compared with those then and previously seen in France. Finally in his Medea, in Plato's Symposium, in the Battle with the Amazons and in the Vienna pictures he reached the summit of his powers.

In the course of the usual rush through a gallery of modern German Art one often finds oneself standing rooted before a Feuerbach. Amid all the sentimental ugliness and triviality, the bombast of false patriotism, and ill-construed tags from

ANSELM FEUERBACH in

the classics we have longed for a quiet spot for the repose of our eyes and spirit, or it may be only for the shadow of a strong man in which we may be at

rest. Feuerbach opens before us a great and spacious garden, not, indeed, completely beautiful, for there is no sunlight there and no flowers are to be seen. Figures clad in robes with many complicated folds pace slowly up and down. They have the air of being apart from earthly things and hold mysterious silent converse with each other or remain at rest, quiet as the columns on the great terrace. Their eyes look away, far beyond our questioning glances, and they live in a world whose dramas are exhausted, whose battles are all won and lost, whose feasting and revelry are over.

Feuerbach was the first of the lonely spirits who fled into the wilderness to fulfil a high mission. That mission was to bring to completion a great creative work which should be excellent in force and form, and which should answer to the needs of the culture of a great people. He had the wisdom to recognise what was necessary and his actual achievement was not small. It was not greater because the race for whom he worked could give him nothing which he could carry with him into the wilderness, and because he lacked what alone could have availed to guide him – a language of form which was his mother tongue. In default of these advantages he was helped by the neglect of his contemporaries. Schack's desertion of him at the critical moment of his career is a melancholy example of complacent error. He, the only patron Feuerbach ever found, treated the artist as the slave of his caprices, and records in his book as a matter of course his resolve to have nothing more to do with him. When at last the world was good enough to provide Feuerbach with decent conditions of work, the offer came from the one place where he could never be at home – the Vienna of Makart's megalomania.

We cannot be wrong in attaching the greatest importance to the material misery by which Feuerbach was persecuted from the outset, and which made his very benefactors obstacles in his path. Marees' lot was inward loneliness, the consciousness that his growth was stunted from the first. Feuerbach was more fortunate in his instinct; his genius moved in an ever -ascending line. What hindered him was his cruel outward loneliness and the want of that material comfort necessary to artistic production. It may be guessed that hundreds of pictures died with him.

The two sketches in the Berlin National Gallery, the Flight of Medea, which is worthy to stand beside the study at Breslau, and the Battle with the Amazons, seem to be the fruit of a vague but quite invincible creative impulse. Let any one, if he can, show me a greater conception in the work of any contemporary painter, or an equal genius for grasping what is essential to the action of a picture. This is not contained in the individual gesture of this or that personage represented, but in a certain unity bringing into all the details of the painting a mighty rhythm which pervades the whole. In the Berlin Medea the group of sailors pushing the vessel into the sea could not be better; it is not a hair's-breadth short of perfection. The parallelism, which in later days served him so well in the central group of the Giants, is a brilliant invention. There is a large harmony of form, sharp and clear as a Greek relief, soft and full as a verse of

Goethe's. There is nothing trivial, nothing that could be dispensed with to spoil the mighty unity of the whole, yet there is no deliberate renunciation, none of the usual makeshift primitivism to impair the richness of the effect. The style is compact of space and light and colour ; no line obtrudes itself ; there is no trace

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## THE DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN ART

of those mechanical contrasts which strive to gain an effect by dint of sheer contradiction. All the details of the picture are harmoniously combined ; it has the organisation which distinguishes great art.

It is possible that even the lonely figure of Medea with the boy on the shore might not have been completely successful. The piquant charm of the perpendicular line is not a truly characteristic effect of Feuerbach's genius. Moreover, the lilac tone is slightly out of keeping with the quiet colour-scheme of the whole which, as in all great pictures, depends for its effect on the movement of the masses and not on actual pigment. The mere completion of this study with its merits concentrated and its substance unaltered would have given us a work worthy of all admiration.

The final conception in the Pinacothek, Munich, is a composition of genius ; in all the German painting of the nineteenth century there is no worthier effort. When we compare it with the Berlin study and with the earlier sketch at Breslau, which awake the keenest anxieties about the treatment of these scattered groups on the shore, we may well be amazed at the success with which the architecture of the picture is worked out. The three pictures are here reproduced together upon one page. Seldom indeed does a piece of pure composition in which construction is everything, produce so strong an impression that of all possible solutions of the problem the most brilliant, the only true solution has been found. The group on land contains the dominant tones and these are carried on to the group of sailors, which was the leading motive in the earlier stages of the work. The relation between the two very dissimilar groups is perfect, yet this correspondence is maintained by purely artistic means, and the mere connection of the two ideas has singularly little to do with it. Starting with the full mass of Medea with the nurse and children in the foreground, the composition required that the next plane should be full of animation, a requirement fully satisfied by the group of sailors. Feuerbach altered the terminal lines of the picture in every successive handling. The first draft shows the whole of the ship and the motive

is treated as a mere episode ; the effect is diffused. In the second sketch a portion of the ship is cut off and this has a decisive effect on the picture, little as it is altered in other respects, except that the nurse is noticeably nearer the frame. In the finished painting the landscape also is brought more into harmony with the whole. The peaks of the mountains are no longer seen ; the frame cuts through the range. This process of development is exceedingly instructive.

The Medea group is the most precious fruit of the efforts of Feuerbach's predecessors to make the pose express dignity and sublimity. It is the final solution of a problem first attempted in his fine Family at the Well painted in 1866, the year of the Breslau sketch. Germany has produced no finer study of drapery ; these large and splendid folds veil plastic forms. Allgeyer was the first to praise the skilful gradation of the personages secured by introducing the cowering figure of the nurse. This in itself would be merely theatrical if the artist had not made it inevitable by its ingenious relevance to the two main divisions of the picture. The landscape makes a fine setting for the group, affording a quiet background for Medea and leaving a shining strip of sea between her and the nurse in order to preserve as far as possible the monumental contours of both figures.

The colour is worthy of the composition ; Medea is one of the few pictures of the artist's perfect maturity in which the painting is not inferior to the drawing.

FEUERBACH: MEDEA, first sketch (tempera) isse

BRESLAU MUSEUM

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FEUERBACH: MEDEA (under-painting) i867

NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN

FEUERBACH: MEDEA, isro

NEW PINACOTHEK, MUNICH

### ANSELM FEUERBACH 113

The first version of Plato's Symposium in the Karlsruhe Gallery with its full violet harmony and its delicacy of tone is much superior to the cold glitter of the Berlin picture. But the colour of the completed Medea as compared with that of the studies, is the realisation of early promise. Many people will at first prefer the sketches ; they will be charmed with their soft violet tones, which suggest a comparison with the great performances of Puvis " a genius who has become more familiar to us. But Feuerbach would not have been the master we delight to honour had he contented himself with such cautious manifestations of his powers.

As in almost all the work of his best period the groundwork of the colour-scheme is a wonderful brownish violet. This appears in varying shades in the rocky foreground, in the sky and in Medea's undergarment, where it emphasises the high light on the beautiful naked foot in its sandal. It is repeated in the under-dress of the nurse and is strongest in the trousers of the first sailor. In the landscape, in the nurse's mantle, in the hose of the second sailor and elsewhere it changes to the warm brown which is characteristic of the master. The blood-red surface of Medea's overdress stands directly upon the ground-tone ; her breast is clothed in white which brings out the warm flesh tints and the lustrous blue black hair. The same cold red skilfully distributed lights up the caps of the sailors. The greenish blue sea flecked with foam is bounded at the horizon by a narrow strip of brilliant blue.

This scheme of colour greatly helps Feuerbach in the realisation of his conceptions. In the decorative work at Vienna the division of the colours gives a relative repose to the extremely animated composition. In his portraits of himself this becomes a warm harmony ; the brown is at its best in the Munich picture. It seems sometimes to be produced by an admixture of orange and has none of the character of the Munich brown sauce, but is organic like the swarthy flesh tints of dark races. In this picture its peculiar success is due to the dark reddish violet background and the harmonious gradation of the flesh tints which appear as a lighter shade of the colour of the coat. The brilliant white collar and the shimmering black of the tie make an extremely clever transition. For pure painting the Karlsruhe portrait is even more remarkable ; I have unfor-

tunately not seen the newly discovered one.

The flowering time of Feuerbach's genius did not last long. Fine as the groups of children and the Pietà are, the Schack period can only be regarded as a preparation for the climax which came about the end of the sixties. Idyllic painting was as certainly not Feuerbach's line as it was undoubtedly Böcklin's ; it was, however, the style which his patron preferred. We may well bless the day when he cast it off as unworthy of him. He had earned the right to pass to something higher.

Circumstances were against him from the beginning. He had a clear idea of the importance of his position as the first German artist who had been to Paris. He entered Couture's studio in 1851, attracted, like all the pupils of that artist, by the *Romains de la Décadence* which had been exhibited in the Salon of 1847. Manet had entered the studio in 1850 – Duret used to compare him to the wolf in the fold – and he remained until 1856. Puvis de Chavannes also was a fellow student for a time, but in 1854 Feuerbach left, early enough by common consent to escape any trace of the influence of either. Their works belong to a later date, but it would have been far better for the German artist if he had become the intimate associate of

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the men whose spirit transcended Couture, whom he accepted as supplying the most convenient formula for the new thing that people were seeking in Paris. Couture's success in 1847, duly rewarded with a medal and with the Legion of Honour put Delacroix, whose pictures had been smaller, completely in the shade. Couture did all he could to justify his grotesque rivalry and Delacroix behaved admirably, as he always did. Feuerbach knew Delacroix' work, but he knew it as an enthusiastic disciple of Couture. It was natural enough that people who had been accustomed to Cornelius and Kaulbach should regard Couture as having reached the ultimate perfection of art. Meanwhile the painter of *Dante's Boat* had culminated as a colourist. While Feuerbach was in Paris the Louvre ceiling was painted and the master's oriental pictures were exhibited. To German eyes these must have seemed both exaggerated and eccentric, and the few critics who took any trouble over them spoke a language which could hardly have been intelligible to the son of an archaeologist. And yet a German who was acquainted with all that was then going on in the intellectual life of Germany would have found a very great deal that was congenial in the circle of Delacroix.

Had Feuerbach had a few more years in Paris he would probably have found his true master. Manet left Couture's studio to make his admirable little copy of Delacroix' *Dante*. It could hardly have interfered with Feuerbach's development had he gained a profounder insight into the real nature of French art, of which Couture could only give a pale reflection. Such an experience can harm

no one who has a sense of proportion. " To conceive nobly and to think correctly are natural gifts," he writes in his " Vermachtniss " ; " they may be used well but they cannot be acquired by study ; taste alone can preserve the artist from aberrations."

It remains a wonder how Couture's three great pupils got the better of their master's influence. In the Cheramy collection at Paris, besides Manet's copy of the Dante above referred to, there is a studio piece by Puvis painted while he was still with Couture, an intolerably sentimental fiddler who, if possible, is flabbier than Couture himself could have made him. There is also a later work, *Madeleine au Desert*^ which, while not so completely emancipated in colour as the best work of Puvis, has already the commanding quality visible in *St. Genevieve watching over Paris* and is a world apart from Couture. Couture himself is represented in this collection by a full-length portrait of a lady, which recalls Feuerbach's female figures, and by a good half-length of a girl which might almost be a Feuerbach. The colours of the dress are the same that Feuerbach afterwards used, and the broad cold white of the shift low cut upon the breast is harmonised with the brownish tones of the German artist's palette. It shows that of all three it was the German who remained nearest to his teacher.

His wholesome distaste for Couture's laxity, a kind of profound and noble dignity, probably helped him more than the consciousness of a definitely new artistic purpose. The grim earnestness of the *Iphigenia* and of the *Pietà* was not calculated to attract Couture, but it would also have displeased Puvis. Such thoroughgoing seriousness was not compatible with the mild dignity of the *Ludus -pro f atria* in which there is no lack of Greek playfulness. Feuerbach is more pious than the Catholic Puvis, and he is a German with a strong inward consciousness of nationality. The boy playing the lute in the Schack collection, beside the girl with her hands clasped over her knees, is as German as a Steinle. It is remarkable how as time went on, and much more gradually than Manet, he came

HANS VON MAREES: PORTRAIT OF HILDEBRAND AND GRANT

HILDEBRAND COLLECTION, MUNICH

ANSELM FEUERBACH

nearer and nearer to his master's antagonist. There were many hesitations by the way. Their temperaments were very different ; they painted the same subject, but the Medea pictures by the German recall the Frenchman only in details such as the naked child " if indeed at all. The affinity is more apparent in the Battle vAth the Amazons. There, as in the studies for the Massacre at Scio, are the first stammerings, full of longing and allurements, of a new language of colour such as had never yet been known in Germany. The coldness of the classicists has melted in the flames unfurled by Rubens. As in the Massacre, there is an infinity of marvellous details. Delacroix is the stronger personality ; in Feuerbach's greatness there are more distinct traces of the tradition of Genelli. In the Vienna pictures Michelangelo, the great exemplar, seems to fuse with a remnant of the German school of composition and with a reminiscence of Delacroix. Is it astonishing that in this culmination the defects of the school are most clearly to be seen ? He should have begun at the point where he left off !

Feuerbach had a natural moderation which enabled him to escape the barbarism against which Goethe warned men. He avoided the feeble form of the aesthetes ; he symbolised wholesome things, he expressed the symmetry of a high civilisation. This moderation implied no such compromise with his public as the claptrap of his Paris teacher ; it was the natural compromise between the passion of the man and the intellect of the pure artist. The result was aristocratic art in contradistinction to BOcklin's, which has survived him.

BOcklin gave the Germans just what they wanted ; it was some time before they opened their eyes to his highly coloured idyls, but once they had started, all thought and sentiment seemed to them to find expression in these. Allgeyer, who in his book \* on Feuerbach gave some idea of the limits which divide one artist from the other, felt Feuerbach's superiority. There would be no point here in setting one up against the other. Marees forms a more natural connection between the two.

\* " Anselm Feuerbach," by J. Allgeyer, Bamberg, 1894. New edition, with modifications by Karl Neumann. (W. Spemann, Berlin and Stuttgart, 1904.)

OTTO ECKMANN. VIGNETTE.

VOL. II

## HANS VON MAREES

In alien Tiefen  
Musst du dich priifen  
In deinen Zielen  
Dich klar zu fiihlen.

Dehmel.

All art which serves the higher interests of culture is a language of form fulfilling the need of the race to see its reflection in another world which shall materialise the noblest impulses of the present and perpetuate those of the past. Our age is the first in which there have been artists who, though ignorant of this language, are determined to speak at any cost. For them art is a purely arbitrary vehicle of self-expression. They are sufficiently important and sufficiently original to command attention ; they have enriched the world with some new phenomena, but they have done nothing to increase its stock of culture. It is self-evident that every great artist has the power to add to the language of form, but such a language has its own laws, and was emancipated long since from the caprices of individuals. Even a great poet with the happiest turn for neologism can never do away with the ancient framework of his mother tongue ; he can only strive after a deeper understanding of its laws ; his new departures must be upon the old lines. Thus people who can paint or write or compose, whose performances are instinct with fire and temperament and whose personalities are full of originality, may produce beautiful things of all sorts and yet in no way increase the means of expression. It is rare indeed that the fame of the radiant stars whose advent awakes a storm of human questioning, throws off a ray which contributes to the general glory of the firmament. They experience the martyr's joy of being hated, or the thorny pleasures of having a following. Thenceforth they must be content with lesser things. Those who have had to bear that indifference which is the bitterest lot of the artist find in their far-off goal an assurance of a place among the constellations, where the truly great would rather be last than they would be first in the earthly kingdom of contemporary renown.

Feuerbach's generation contains several examples of men who missed the fame which was their due ; Marees is one of the most notable. He was one of those who disdain to speak before they know the language, and he spent his life trying to learn it. Goethe sent us back to the ancients ; he did not know Paris and, even if he had known it, even if some unimaginable enlightenment had shown him the importance of the future which lay before French art, his champion-

ship of the Greeks would have been all the more vehement. His sound instincts of culture revolted against the monstrous idea that a great people can make any progress without laying their account with the past, and he was one of the first to point out the duty of mastering the treasures of the classics. He himself probably sacrificed much to this duty and German culture has reason to be grateful.

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HANS VON MAREES: A WOODLAND INN

HILDEBRAND COLLECTION, MUNICH

HANS VON MAREES: A WOODLAND DRINKING TROUGH

HILDEBRAND COLLECTION, MUNICH

HANS VON MAREES 117

By numbering himself with the Homeridae he prepared the way for the victories of future generations.

The racial instinct has always been against this discipline ; but the race of the future cannot shut itself up in the narrow chamber of its nationalism where at any



moment a gust of wind may burst in through a broken window and upset all its little comforts. A race with no power of absorption perishes from in-breeding. Why is there a danger at the present moment that our painting may be Gallicised ? It is not because our painters go to Paris. Free men are at liberty to educate themselves as they please. It is because they do not bring enough back, because they have not the sense to grasp the underlying quality of the French, which might just as well be called Spanish, Dutch, Japanese ; above all because they do not understand the classic element of the Frenchmen, the true basis of all Latin art. In Frederick the Great's time it was the correct thing to import art from Paris as it now is to import the fashions. Goethe was all the more a German for becoming a Grecian. He selected from foreign countries that minimum of culture which every nation with its eyes open must make its own in order to understand the rest. It was natural that the first German classicists should go astray with the classic forms just as the eighteenth century did with its French modes. But while the classical importations were less substantial in themselves, their effect was more profound from the first. They immediately awoke instincts which favoured a truer understanding of the classics, and the way was paved for a generation who busied themselves with the essentials of ancient art.

This generation looked the moderns in the face ; perhaps it would be truer to say that the moderns looked at them ; and then they went out into the desert like the saints of old. Marees was the greatest hermit of them all. He is the most striking manifestation in the struggle between the race and the individual, and his case is made more interesting but is also complicated by the fact that he was descended from a French Huguenot family \* who found a new home in Germany. This descent may have enriched his sensuous perceptions, but it embittered his conflict with the German pedants.

Marees was a seeker after truth : he refused to do anything which he could not see before him in its remotest consequences. His hand was allowed no privileges at the expense of his understanding ; he refused to allow his inspiration to be guided by chance, and he refused equally to express anything in the appearance of his subject which was merely accidental. This implies the creation of form in accordance with a set of ideal rules " in a word it implies a tradition. But what tradition could there be for a German at Rome in the middle of last century who wanted to be a painter, and a monumental painter, and who was proud enough to cast off the " tradition " of Cornelius ! The more intelligent he was in his loneliness the more surely must his hand have recoiled from every attempt at production. Full comprehension must almost inevitably have led him to artistic self-destruction.

This was the man who at Rome cut himself off completely from the present and the past alike, went back to Nature alone, and discovered " the new painting.

The first Frenchman to whom I showed some bad reproductions of Marees' pictures said to me, " Tiens, Cezanne ! " I could not help thinking of that other

who, when he saw the work of a greater than Marees' in the Sistine Chapel

\* He was the great-nephew of the eighteenth- century Marees whose picture hangs in the lower room of the gallery at Schleissheim.

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exclaimed, " Tiens, Daumier ! " There is something uncanny about it ; if one had not had the previous example of Feuerbach who prepares one for many surprises, one would be disposed to believe in witchcraft. A few great Frenchmen, weary of an art which resolved every clod into its minutest components, were driven to create an art which was synthetic. This art which was made possible only by the concurrence of a thousand favourable circumstances, found a mighty exponent in Cezanne ; it is only in our own time that a dozen or more artists can be found who even understand it. Yet Maries, to say the least, foreshadowed it in all essentials ; nay, he fully understood what Cezanne practised unconsciously, and had his colour had the necessary backing of a century or two of evolution he could have given it complete expression.

In saying this I do not of course refer to Cezanne the colourist who had all that was to be known at his finger tips, but to Cezanne the great artist in masses. For him the sun was the analyst that divided the human body into a few great parts and who loved to paint what he saw as he saw it. It was Marees who said that " the effect of flesh in the nude is conditioned by the form," and Cezanne, who never troubled about the skeleton, might equally well have said it if he had ever said anything.

In Cezanne's case the synthesis is almost a caprice. It is constantly disappearing altogether, for the painter of still life constantly returns to his worship of the material. (This was his way to greatness ; let us be thankful that he took it !) With Maries it is an iron principle of determination. Regrettable as it is that we possess so few completed pictures by him, it may be said that even his most trifling sketch is important. It is not necessary to see the best of these things we now regard as practically finished, to appreciate him. Any of these hundreds of studies, even a miserable pencil drawing, is enough. They have always a completeness, a massiveness as of architecture. They have not, it is true, the rich play of line of the early Italians, of Daumier and Rodin. He has too much of a certain static quality which goes near to primitive simplicity and which we sometimes miss in the art of our neighbours, for that. But he might have scratched his nudes with his nails on the sole of his shoe and the figures would have been instinct with life. His creations were brilliantly projected ; before they were ever embodied their arrangement was perfect. He had an instinct for great composition such as hardly any other of his contemporaries possessed.

What then was wanting ? Was it merely commissions which would have enabled him to carry out his purpose to the end ? Was it a better patron than Schack, the ideal connoisseur to whom he appealed in vain in eloquent letters? Was it a better State which would have found a place for him and his like ? Or was there really some fatal deficiency in his nature, a deficiency so great that we must deplore in him an example of artistic vagabondage and aberration ?

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The Schleissheim pictures which we owe to Fiedler's public spirit are all that is generally known of Maries' work. Among these the larger canvases usually monopolise attention to the exclusion of the remarkable double portrait of the artist and Lenbach, the portrait of an officer, the portraits of himself and of his father.

It is obvious that the painter of the larger pictures drew his inspiration from almost contradictory sources. The Horse pond of the Schack Gallery, the landscapes in the possession of Fiedler's widow, and above all Hildebrand's fine Marees

HANS VON MAREES: HOMAGE (CARTOON)

SCHLEISSHEIM GALLERY

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collection, contain the very marrow of his art. He was essentially a painter of animals and of landscape ; he clung to nature like the Dutchmen of old. The Horse'pond marks an epoch in German painting ; the distribution of the lights which radiate from the horse in the centre to the edges of this picture, its realistic conception combined with perfect artistic completeness, had never been equalled in 1864 when it was painted. It would be interesting to put it beside the early works of Liebermann or to see how it would stand comparison with a good Decamps.

All these early pictures are pure oil painting, almost invariably mere sketches, but they possess an indescribable charm of sure observation combined with rapid execution. They awaken curiously contradictory reminiscences of great pictures, especially those of an earlier age, and are almost as Dutch in feeling as Manet's work is Spanish. They are Dutch, but they are broader, larger, and freer in feeling than Dutch works ; they are more decorative, and have none of the Dutch detail. Had the Dutch produced a Watteau, he might perhaps have painted like

Marees, for Marees went back to the fundamental principles of the Dutch gift for painting space, the "cubic quality," as Rodin calls it, in Dutch art. Marees constructs his pictures on Dutch principles but he tolerates no makeshift. He gets his masses so unerringly that it is unnecessary to equip them with details. The action is usually nothing – a few figures in the landscape in natural attitudes. In one picture \* there are two groups of men and women at two separate tables in the open air. At the women's table the outermost figure is in the artist's favourite red, the others in a violet that is almost gray ; the neighbouring group is hardly distinguishable but gives the necessary mass. At the table of the three men one with his coat off has a red cap and a glimmering white shirt ; he stands upright and shines like a daemonic flame in the blue of the night.

These pictures are all quite unfinished – mere coloured shadows in which the figures move. Yet they have more of a kind of superhuman reality, for all their mysterious atmosphere, than the work of Courbet. The reason of this is the extraordinary effect of space which is suggested in all their dimensions and especially in that of depth. The drawing is given by the colour as it was given by Manet, of whose portrait groups these sketches by Marees are strikingly reminiscent, as may be seen by comparing the reproductions in this book. The bluish gray background beloved of Velazquez, which Marees took from the equestrian portrait of Philip IV. in the Pitti (a picture he copied for Schack), is the basis of his colour. It forms a cool, soft twilight from which the figures emerge in a dull red glow. He is fond of a rich effect of shadow, as in the picture we are discussing where, in the background, is seen the head of a half-hidden horse, and where the heavy masses of the trees produce a feeling of profound mystery. The Scotch who hang by dozens in the Pinakothek – a questionable Hall of Fame as yet undecorated by a single example of this German – never had an inkling of the art of shadows as Marees understood it. Marees creates space therewith, dimensions, as Rembrandt could. Rembrandt was his inspiration in the portraits also. The remarkable head of Hildebrand, now at Florence, which was painted in 1867-68, recalls Rembrandt's early manner ; and the fine head of the artist's father, its beautiful flesh tints relieved against deep black, is of the same family. The climax is reached in the portrait group, now in Hildebrand's possession, which is repro-

\* This picture, as well as others of the collection which once belonged to Fiedler, is now in the Berlin National Gallery.

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duced here. It was painted the year 1871 when Marees was in Berlin with Hildebrand. Hildebrand is seated in the foreground and behind, bolt upright, stands the dark grave figure of an Englishman named Grant, who was at that time much in the company of both Marees and Hildebrand. The placing of

the figures is marvellous ; it combines the quality of perfect naturalness with the deep mystery which distinguishes a Rembrandt group. It has that unerring kind of construction which cannot be reduced to a formula. Hildebrand's fine profile grows out of the dark brown tone of the whole with a blonde splendour which seems to be the product of anything rather than mere colour. It is soul, energy, the very look of a man's eyes, in paint. The blue eyes gaze out into the room with a keenness that transcends all petty realism and expresses only the spirit which looks through them. It is a true portrait of an artist by an artist, not so powerful as Rembrandt could have made it, but perhaps even more instinct with mind. In the same room at Munich hangs another portrait of Hildebrand, the well-known Thoma. Compared with Marees' picture its effect is dry and weak ; it shows how incalculable is the inferiority of superficially perfect form without content to an unfinished performance which is living art.

While he was copying for Schack, Marees was for a time supervised by Lenbach ; the portrait at Schleissheim in which they both appear is a lasting monument of this early friendship. To this no doubt is due the fact that Lenbach is sometimes represented as Marees' teacher. If this were true it would assure a certain measure of fame to Lenbach ; but even if there was any such relation between them, which of course cannot seriously be asserted, the portrait of the two artists would be a very brilliant triumph for the younger man. Lenbach with all his curious learning in the old masters never dreamt of an art like this. He discovered an approved method of modernising the ancients at the least possible expense of time and money. He was great, as great as he had it in him to be, when he made faithful copies of their works.

Marees' second period, which commences about the middle of the seventies, has almost nothing in common with his first. The transition is marked by certain figure studies which come under the general designation of sacred pictures, but for which, as part of his work, there is no very appropriate name. I refer to the St. Hubert, St. Martin Dividing his Cloak, now at Schleissheim, the St. George in the Berlin National Gallery, and others. The St. Martin, which reminds one so strongly of Puvis' Pauvre Pecheur in the Luxembourg, is one of the most remarkable of the series. The less complete variant in the Berlin National Gallery seems to me almost better, so convincing are the men and the colossal horse, with its faint reminiscence of Velazquez. At Munich Marees always makes me think of the -gina marbles in the Glyptothek with their simply clasped hands and other elementary gestures. It was this instinctive grasp of movement which enabled him to resist successfully the most dangerous temptations in composition, and which made the play of shadow in his earlier pictures possible. In the horseman plucking oranges in the Berlin National Gallery he succeeds in producing an effect of the deepest mystery by this means. This picture is even more sketchy than the others. Only the pale horse with its bluish white tints is at all well defined. In front sits the nude figure of a woman quite motionless, and between her and the horseman there is the suggestion of a child. The monumental figure of the man reaches up to the branches ;

hardly more can be made out than the shining reddish mass of his body " the red

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which appears in the flesh-tints of many of Velazquez' darker portraits, ^ and which Marees used for the figures in almost all his early work.

All these pictures are painted in oil on canvas in the ordinary way ; but even before this the artist had completed a larger monumental commission (the only one ever entrusted to him) the frescoes in the upper room of the Zoological Station at Naples. They were done in 1873 and they form the only one of his larger works which is completely successful. He was happily unable to spoil them by retouches. The library which contains them is a long, moderately lofty apartment, but it is unfortunately too narrow to enable one to stand at a proper distance from the pictures on the side walls. P. Schubring gave an account \* of the pictures some years ago. It is rare to find a work of art which produces so strong an impression of having been inspired by its environment. The blue Neapolitan sky, the sun, the Bay " all have their share. The chief picture opposite the window, of the fisherman in the boat, is an " occasional " picture ; but, like the occasional poems of Goethe it glorifies the insignificance of the occasion. Such figures as that of the old fisherman are common enough on the beach, yet in the realism with which he is presented there is a generalising touch. The grouping of the boat's crew of four with the parallel effect of the oars is thoroughly natural, and thus the moment represented acquires the sort of permanency which is seen in an ancient bas-relief. Marees was at that time full of the antique. The frieze is in grisaille and has unfortunately never been reproduced ; it is one of the happiest and freest transcriptions in modern painting of the light-effects of the ancient relief. In the two panels over the windows, where he used the motive of the Roman mosaic frieze with the masks in the museum, his colour may be considered too garish, but just under one of these pieces there is a wonderful example of his earlier manner as a colourist. Two women are represented sitting on a bench in the deep green of a forest through which there is a glimpse of blue sky. The younger of the two with her flaxen hair, her strawberry red gown and yellow silk neck-cloth, might be a creation of Veronese. The gem of the cycle, however, in my opinion, is the group of male figures on the steps which is painted on one of the end walls. As in the case of the Hildebrand, one is astonished at the Rembrandt-esque quality of the painting. By the mere magic of the lighting these commonplace, honest faces are transported into a diviner air, and even seem to owe their individualities to the light alone.

In the fresco by the window on the right the new Marees at last appears. Here for the first time he used his favourite motive, the Hesperides. A naked youth is plucking fruit from a tree, and the drawing of the figure is full of rhythm clearly pointing to a Greek origin, while in the old man digging there is still a hint

of the previous period.

The whole of Marees seems to live in the Neapolitan frescoes ; they are an instantaneous picture of a creative genius. The haste with which he had to do the work forbade the attempt to find a harmonious style for the whole. Thus he gave a section of his many-sided intelligence in which the two parts of the great elements of his nature (the Rembrandtesque and the antique) lie side by side but do not intermingle. It is the moment before the struggle in which he appears, not indeed so great as afterwards, but far happier and healthier. He had enormously raised the standard by which he wished to be judged ; the work for which he lived only began after Naples, and it was at once his glory and his tragedy.

\* " Die Kunst für Alle," vol. xvii. part viii. The article is illustrated- but the reproductions are poor.

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There can be no doubt that his French blood helped him with the foundations which he strove to lay. He came of a different race from Feuerbach. His will was stronger ; he was beyond all question more independent, and in victorious power he stood quite alone in Germany. Nothing is easier and nothing is more stupid than to say of him that he did not reach the goal. Who even in our time has achieved what he tried to do ? He was eight years younger than Feuerbach and thus was junior by a whole artistic generation of the greatest importance. This brings him close to Manet, but the requirements which dictated the art of the painter of the *Dejeuner sur l'herbe* were absent in his case. Manet pressed on triumphantly while he was painting the pictures of the sixties ; but once he had reached this level his task was to maintain his ground, just as Delacroix spent his life in consolidating the conquests of his youth. Marees had aims which could appeal only to an isolated German who received no encouragement to pause and work out what he had already attained. The consequence was that he undertook too much. He thought he could accomplish alone what two distinct generations in France were working out by a wise division of labour. When he became conscious of his power to paint space he pressed on to monumental work. The German Manet was trying to become a Puvis.

It has already been hinted that in order to accomplish his purpose Puvis needed the compromise dictated by his great wisdom which knew how to renounce and how to curb ambition in details. For him, as for Marees, and for every monumental painter, the detail was but the creation of the type. Puvis was happier in this than Marees, but it must in fairness be admitted that he went about it more soberly. For the decorator of the Pantheon the human body was a mere vehicle for gesture — "Denis carried this tradition further —" poor in itself, often without substance, merely a link in a chain. Marees wished to make his decoration three

dimensional ; that is to say he refused to give up any of the resources of his talent for the plastic presentation of space. Any one who has been to Schleissheim must remember the three nude female figures of the Hesperides as three mighty statues. There was something of the honesty of the Dutchmen in his conduct when he cut himself off from nature and from his friends alike and risked everything. This modern lacked the supple adroitness of our time ; he was a creator in the boldest sense of the word. He had a theory, but he had a sense of duty which was even more creditable. The flat road lay before him which a thousand others might have chosen. He had the courage not to run counter to the deep-seated instinct which bade him pause until he had gathered in all the riches of nature.

What he lacked most painfully was the new technique which was necessary for the new painting. Puvis had only to read it off his friends' pictures. Marees knew that the medium in which he had expressed his earlier conceptions, the free capricious style, half reminiscence, half playful invention, was not sufficient for his new purpose. Unlike Puvis he did not take canvas but went back to the wooden panel. His attempt to improvise a technique suited to panel painting led to his ill-starred experiments with varnish.

Marees was always a creature of instinct. Common sense and candid friends might make clear to him ten times over that this or that could not be a success. He simply returned to the charge, heaped coat upon coat of varnish and destroyed what was good in order to get what was better. Hildebrand tells how he painted the beautiful blue sky of the landscape in his early manner which belongs to Frau

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Fiedler-Levi twenty times over, and finally left a result far inferior to his first attempt. With the new technique this repainting led infallibly to destruction. It did not occur to him that in many places you could not see the surface of the picture for the varnish, that the repeated layers of colour often positively rose into high relief, and that his fine drawing was smothered under these shapeless masses. It is hardly possible now to form any idea of what the pictures may have been. Eye-witnesses are enthusiastic about their strong harmonies at certain stages. What remains is enough to make posterity mourn ; we stand in the presence of ruins.

Even these ruins however are full of power ; it is indeed extraordinary to find that the grotesque deformation produced by these misplaced reliefs hardly prejudices their essential beauty. In his great picture, the triptych of the Hesferides, the central panel is tolerably preserved. The two side pieces with their oblique effects make a happy contrast with the three chief female figures whose parallelism is emphasised by the severe perpendicularity of the trees. In the study the old man with the children was placed on the right of the women and the two men plucking oranges on the left. This arrangement had its charm ; the strongest of the three women, she who rests her hand on the tree trunk, was then opposed in striking contrast to the two nude male figures, upright and stooping respectively, while the more animated action of the other two women found its best conclusion in the horizontal motive of the arms in the other and more complicated group. The arrangement adopted in the picture at Schleissheim is however preserved in our reproduction because it answers to the author's intention and because on the whole it is the happier. Here the varying heights of the children lead the eye very happily down from the steep line of the isolated woman in the central panel. The legs of the boy in the foreground, who is pressing the large orange to his breast and clasping his head with the other hand, almost repeat the attitude of the woman's legs. The seated old man carries on the action of the woman's hips and left arm, and at the same time provides a fine contrast to the slanting lines of the three children. It is owing to this very elementary contrivance that the spectator fails to notice the gross blemishes of the work. The relief is at its height in the woman who stands apart, where it rises several centimetres above the surface of the panel. If it were more regular one might believe it to be intentional, for it is by no means a contradiction of the artist's constructive intentions. It sets nature at defiance no doubt, but only to enhance the nature of the picture, and it enriches the work by methods which distract us from the painting but which would be applauded as excellent if the pictures were built into some noble room. Even as it is the relief which at times swells into veritable bosses does not destroy the surface. The distribution of the parts is so just and sure that details which are quite non-pictorial pass unnoticed.

The concentrated energy with which Marees fought for his own nature against external nature suggests that there was a morbid element in his composition. He was assuredly near to madness when he approached the climax of his achievement ; but we must not infer that there are manifestations of insanity in his work. His exhaustion was a perfectly natural consequence of the drain on his inward powers due to the constant expression of them. He poured forth his soul in brilliant works.

His last work. The Wooing, is probably his greatest. It is very badly hung at Schleissheim opposite the windows, and one has to run backwards and forwards

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in order to evade the glitter of the varnish. Instead of the trees of the Hesperides we have here mighty brown red pillars which give a fine architectural richness to the background. From these three steps descend into the foreground and form a like organic division of the breadth of the picture. Between the pillars appears a slender female figure in a dark blue robe finely posed in profile ; her arm outstretched towards the pillar suggests the parallel movement ; the man in purple, with the garland in his hair, forms a pendant to her. The action of his arms, both extended in the same direction, is very rhythmical and runs parallel with the hand of the man holding the flower, who appears in one of the groups of the foreground. The sole diagonal is given by the small boy lying on the steps who continues the action of the naked man's left leg and grows up to the oblique line made by the leg of the man in the purple dress. The diagonal ends in the other boy who is looking at the boy on the steps and who is half hidden behind the pillar on the extreme right. The dress of the man with the flower is quite spoiled with black varnish. On him leans the fine nude figure of a man, with a double curve in his back and a foot badly disfigured by the abnormal relief. On this side of the picture, as in the case of the Hesperides, the highest lights are to be found. The man's body is a clear olive, flecked here and there with glowing orange. The same colour, less pure, recurs in the robe of the woman standing by the Bride. The group of these two women is the finest piece of creative work in the picture. The chief figure with her hands crossed on her ruby red gown is a very Athene. The other woman's arm is a further continuation of the arm of the man with the flower and completes the indispensable parallel to the arms of the man between the columns. The angle formed by the two women is peculiarly subtle. This almost mathematical invention becomes a strongly dramatic element here.

Costume visibly embarrassed Marees ; the nudity of the Hesperides suited him better. There he had already achieved a harmony of colour in the mysterious light which comes not from the sun but is rather the pale glimmer of the moon or of a constellation that he alone could see ; the olive flesh-tints, the dark brown foliage and the shining oranges ; the bluish landscape with the more vivid stripe of blue behind. And yet one can understand that the artist was conscious of a kind of barbarism in the Hesperides and looked on *The Wooing* as a decisive advance ; it was so. The problem he set before him was not solved even here, but its statement was becoming clearer as its complication increased. The invention of the architectural background of steps and pillars was a brilliant expedient. In the *Golden Age* and similar pictures the ideas of composition are still extremely primitive. Later his creative powers became precise. The Hesperides is in fine contrast to the much earlier picture showing three men, one sitting, one lying, one standing. The drawing is full of energy ; it is a masculine pendant to the Hesperides. The latter is the poem of the woman, who invites to pleasure and passively awaits it ; the former is the poem of the man, who sees, thinks, and

creates. Both are symbolic pictures in the grandest style of a symbolism which works with simple means and without subtlety. The difference between them is the fundamental difference of sex. Marees' figures, when they are of the same sex, resemble one another very closely. Among the men the only differences are those of age ; the women are always mature, fully developed and almost alike. In The Wooing he tried to bring both sexes together to take part in a complete drama of human life. The two side panels were to have presented the phases

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which precede and follow the decisive incident of the main picture. On the right is Narcissus looking at his image in the water ; on the left the betrothed couple. Both, while still on canvas and still unfinished, were destroyed.

Marees died in harness. At the moment when, not without reason, he had begun to hope that he saw his way through the forest of problems to a surer grasp of form he was seized with a sudden illness. It began in a carbuncle on the neck which operative treatment would no doubt have promptly cured. But he was without assistance; his pupil Volkmann, who was with him, did not himself know what to do and neglected to call in a doctor in time. Marees died at Rome on June 5, 1888, at about the same age as Feuerbach ; he was not fifty.

HANS THOMA, DRAWING FROM "PAN.

HANS THOMA. DRAWING FROM "PAN.'

BOCKLIN: IDYL

ULLMANN COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

## ARNOLD BOCKLIN

Das antike Magische und Zauberische  
hat Stil, das Moderne nicht. "Goethe.

When Schack was choosing his artists he found at least one who was well qualified to satisfy his desire for idyls. His sympathy with Feuerbach and Marees now appears in a light rather different from that in which it was regarded ten years ago, and his reputation in this respect, though still acknowledged, has been reduced to its proper proportions. It is now clear that he did not understand the two greatest artists of his circle and let slip the opportunity of being their patron in the days when they were making themselves immortal. But he certainly captured one artist at least at the very height of his powers, and that artist was Bocklin.

Bocklin's mission was to produce a series of gay lyric creations to set beside Feuerbach's classic earnestness, and the heroic art of Marees. His gift was just as precious as those of the others, for it provided an indispensable relief from the continual high seriousness of the works of our greatest artists. He was indeed far from being called to the high task which has so often been the tragedy of a great man's life, the task of widening the boundaries of artistic creation, which for its fulfilment demands not only a new artist but a new art. His business was neither more nor less than to renovate and to people the German landscape which arose about the middle of last century. His domain was the idyl Feuerbach had abandoned. Bocklin's Shepherdess and the picture by Feuerbach above referred to with the child musicians, are, superficially speaking, in much the same vein, and how happy that vein can be is shown by Bocklin's work. In him lay the possibility of a German Corot, the Corot of the landscapes, of course, not so subtly sensitive in tone, not so rich in colour as his French counterpart, quite without the Frenchman's indescribable art in rendering atmosphere, but no less amiable. The delightful little picture of a pair of lovers in a wood, owned by Herr Ullmann of Frankfurt, and here reproduced for the first time, is full of a charming poetry which is rare in Germany. The artist, strange to say, is reported to have repudiated this picture, which is assuredly as much his as the Shepherdess ; it shows that the Bocklin of the sixties had an excellent artistic equipment.

His early pictures have the smooth aridity of his master Schirmer, but out of this style he gets all the charm of which it is capable while displaying an incomparably more vivacious invention. The Frightened Shepherd^ The Anchorite, the landscapes in Max Klinger's collection, and kindred works may seem old-fashioned, but they are all the more engaging for that. The gem of this period seems to me to be The Shepherd's Complaint of 1865. There is more art in this than in all the others, and the colour is something of which Schirmer never dreamed. The warm

brown tone of the shepherd is wonderfully soft. This effect is unexpected in such close proximity to the magic mystery of Amaryllis' grotto, but the dramatic

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impulse was already too strong in the artist to permit him to work out the contrast by means of colour alone. The veiled beauty herself is most delicately painted and the pink rose garland completes a beautiful harmony, rich yet simple and full of charm. With this picture the evolution of Bocklin as a colourist begins. At first it follows the specific development of Couture's German pupils, Feuerbach, Victor MilUer and the rest, which may be studied in the Schack Gallery better than anywhere else, and it forces us to hark back once more to Feuerbach for an indispensable comparison.

The Venetians rescued Feuerbach from Couture's sauce. We can follow, almost step by step, the impulse towards logical division which mastered even his very individual colour. In the earliest Feuerbach in the Gallery, *The Garden of Ariosto* (1863), the palette of Veronese appears in the drapery.\* It is still a sober palette and the silky tones are pleasantly juxtaposed. Compare with this picture the *Paolo and Francesca* of the following year. Here there is already an attempt at a complete colour synthesis ; the contrasts grow out of an organic ground tone which in this case benefits only Francesca, as her lover is entirely in shadow. The shimmering gray of the wide surfaces of her skirt changes in the bodice to a reddish violet already foreshadowed in the gray, and the colour of the face and of the bare arm is an exceedingly subtle degradation of the same. An identical effect is to be seen in the fine *Laura* of 1865, but here it is attuned to the full chord of colour which dominates the whole. The next year Feuerbach painted the wonderful *Mother and Children*^ perhaps the most important modern outcome of Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*. In it there is a symphony of tone in which colour is transcended, a harmony which, by abandoning strong contrasts, secures a far richer variety of gradations. The colour ranges from the well-known Feuerbach brown red in the gown to the dark blue violet of the jacket and deepens into the black of the hair in which the brilliant Prussian blue ribbon gives the one striking contrast. The respective flesh tints of mother and child carry on the harmony. The child leaning against the gown is a higher tone of the colour of the skirt ; the mother's face a higher tone of the jacket surrounding it. Hence, even the feeling of the colour is made to suggest the charming and profound idea of the relation of the child to its mother's breast.

The *Mother and Children* hangs above *The Shepherdess* in which Bocklin seems to aim at more or less the same effect. The skirt that covers these saucy limbs is of the Feuerbach violet, but with a stronger admixture of red, which works up to the fine reddish blonde of the girl's hair. The colour quality of the whole figure is most fascinating and harmonises well with the neutral tints of the background which

is naively flecked with red poppies. Many of the pictures painted by Bocklin about 1870 maintain this very creditable standard. In the Murderer Pursued by Furies the three Erinnyes are clothed in Feuerbach's silky colours, the first in pink, the second in green, the third, with the greenish snakes about her head, in olive. These colours are repeated in the group of the murderer and his victim, the Venetian rose in the corpse, the olive darkening into brown in the murderer. The tone of the whole is very fine ; it holds the figures well together and envelops the horror of the situation in a pleasant vaporous atmosphere which accords with the green of the landscape and the ragged blue of the sky.

The dragon among the rocks is similarly handled. The fantasy of the idea

\* The Death of Aretino (1854), in the Gallery at Bale, and the Meeting of Dante and Beatrice (1858), at Karlsruhe are the first stages of the Venetian phase of Feuerbach's colour

PRUD'HON: DRAWING

LOUVRE, PARIS

PRUD'HON: PSYCHE CARRIED OFF BY ZEPHYRUS  
(L'ENLEVEMENT DE PSYCHE PAR ZEPHIR) salon isos

LOUVRE, PARIS

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is not discordant ; the very harmony of the atmosphere makes it appear natural and probable and a legitimate effect of art.

In the later landscapes in the Schack collection unmeaning contrasts have already begun to spoil Bocklin's work. The red of the pillars in his ancient Roman wineshop suggest the intervention of an awkward auxiliary hand. In another place this red becomes harsh brick colour, sharply and arbitrarily defined as if a patch had been deliberately cut out. In the autumn landscape with the figure of Death on horseback there is not a trace of any feeling for colour.

Whereas then in Feuerbach we can trace, step by step, a logical development towards harmonious self-expression in colour, reminding us of the great Poussin, who also came from Venice and who also worked out a similar reddish brown tone which distinguishes the works of his maturity,\* Bocklin never gets beyond a feeble effort to follow the ideals of this high art. His attainment consists merely in a capricious choice of colour which seems capable of expressing only the external semblance of things, and which, compared with Feuerbach's art, is as the bludgeon of a savage to a splendidly chased dagger.

\* \* \* \* \*

Bocklin has left some characteristic drawings ; among them some charming things done in the sixties and seventies which are far indeed from foreshadowing the ponderous manner of his later pictures. They are the creation of a soft poetic hand which plays round the form it depicts and in whose very hesitations there is a charm. The Swiss artist reminded Muther of Prud'hon, and of all the comparisons to which his desire to honour Bocklin has tempted him this is by far the subtlest. Bocklin's talent did in fact bear a distant resemblance to Prud'hon's ; he too had a touch of that baroque feeling which led the painter of *La Justice et la Vengeance* to perfect rhythm.

The twenty-six drawings by Prud'hon at Chantilly form the modern counterpart of the forty Fouquet miniatures in that splendid collection. They express a refined spirit as modern as if they had been the work of a young man of to-day. They are so permeated with the culture of an age deeply skilled in form that one finds it hard to believe that they were produced at the very moment of the most appalling convulsions in the history of France. We might explain them, as we explain the much earlier work of Fragonard, as the last survival of an arcadian age ; but the eighteenth century had no notion of this classic calm expressed in graceful curves, of this Hellenism in a relatively baroque mould. The artist who drew the study for the *Vengeance*, the two *Potiphar* sketches, the *Bath of Daphnis* and *Chloe* had form at his fingers' ends like the Greeks. His was no monumental art such as Puvis discovered in Poussin. Prud'hon appropriated only the exquisite delicacy of Poussin's drawing, not its passion ; and when he made his drawings into pictures he aimed not at the majestic proportions of the antique but at the downy softness of Correggio, and concentrated all his skill in an effort to preserve in the finished work the seductive charm of his sketches. In the Louvre we may compare *The Rape of Psyche*, one of the miracles of French gracefulness, with the study for the picture. Here are two works by the same hand on

\* There is no doubt that Feuerbach sat at the feet of Poussin. True, he could not have seen the Chantilly pictures (*Numa Pompilius et la Nymphé Egerie*, *Le Massacre des Innocents*, &c.) which most clearly show the



relation of his colour to that of the French master ; but he must have admired the Poussin pictures in the Louvre and profited by the example of the wide grasp of this clear spirit, this mighty intellect which might almost have foregone its pure genius for art, and yet lost none of its essential greatness.

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the same subject, and yet the differences are as fundamental as the resemblances. Prud'hon's love for softness never destroyed his sense of proportion. The study grows into the picture as a young girl grows to the mature charms of womanhood ; so far as its limited proportions permit it is full of suggested charms and beauties half revealed. In the finished picture the effect is enriched with every detail which can further the harmony, but this detail is not newly introduced at this stage from outside but grows naturally out of the plastic idea of the work. This idea as it appears on paper in the first draft is as it were an organism. Soft as the body in the picture is, exquisite as is that delicate flesh (an incarnation of Leonardo's smile), perfect beyond all conception as is the whole presentation of female loveliness, all these charms are controlled by the laws of that organism. I do not know any instance in which the portent of a body floating in the air without the help of surrounding architecture has been made so credible, so plausibly real. The artist has carefully avoided anything abnormal in his presentation of space. He brings his group of figures as near as possible to the other masses of the picture and so prevents an optical appraisal of the space. He then develops his central conception. The body of the dainty creature is posed in the manner most ideally appropriate to the action. Prud'hon paints sleep not only in the face but in the whole soft, easy slumbrous pose, in which the limbs move automatically and suggest an impersonal, supernormal state of dream. Both landscape and atmosphere are dreamy and governed by the laws of dreams. Thus he places slender, nimble winged creatures under the soft burden of Psyche's body at every point where that body has the least need of support. He lets the feet hang but takes care that they do not dangle alone in the air and repeats their action three or four times in the legs of the other figures. The greater and lesser bodies of the spirits who uphold the billowy folds of the drapery become a soft cushion for Psyche's form and the miracle seems just as natural as the floating clouds or any other of the enchantments of Nature.

Let us not ascribe the effect to the pleasing quality of the work. In comparing Prud'hon with Bocklin that explanation might be proffered ; but without the profound architecture of the picture this quality would be merely the cloying banality of which we have so many examples and would hide its head before the robust qualities of the German's work. The reasons of Bocklin's failure are the

reasons of Prud'hon's triumph. Bocklin had none of that deeply organised form which we admire in Prud'hon as in all great artists. Bocklin is baroque in the lowest sense of the term, in other words altogether formless.

If we compare the drawings of Bocklin's best period with his pictures we often feel as if graceful and idyllic forms were being thrust into ugly uniforms. This, fortunately, is not always so, for Bocklin tried so many things that every now and then he happened upon something which he thoroughly understood. Sometimes his invention was brilliant. His first sketch for the Triton and Nereids merited the benediction of the angel of true greatness, but the transition from the study to â–

the picture was even here already fatal. There is an enlargement of the scale but I

no proportional enlargement of the treatment. And the more he persisted in j

burdening an art which was essentially idyllic with external and purely theatrical I

effects the more painful this discrepancy became. Prud'hon also had his dramatic power, but he knew his own limitations and was more cautious. Bocklin attempted things which could be accomplished only by a genius such as Rubens,

BOCKLIN: A PIPING SILENUS

DRAWING IN "PAN"

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BOCKLIN: SKETCH FOR TRITON AND NEREID

DRAWING IN "PAN"

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who had a lightning power of expressing fleeting visions. BOcklin never thought about visions. His ambition was to reproduce phenomena.

An estimate of Bocklin's imaginative work is rather a delicate matter, for one must be careful not to be confounded with the foolish people who object on principle to the fantastic character of his subjects. An instructive book \* was recently written, in which among other things these errors were collected and refuted. Nothing is further from my mind than to deny the realism of Bocklin's creations. To doubt the power of Bocklin's imagination, to deny that it can conceive the things of the fancy as sharply as if they were real, seems to me as unreasonable as to doubt the reality of a living creature that one sees before one. These things are conceivable. Natural science may deny their existence but they are alive for all that. It is precisely this to which I take exception.

Bocklin stands for naturalism in its most blatant form ; for naturalism is not merely the bare imitation, however accomplished, of anything we see or know or can conceive. It is any kind of presentation which aims solely at recording the thing seen so faithfully that it has the air of reality. Moreover it is clear that it matters nothing whether the artist has seen the thing in question or not ; we

cannot pursue a painter to the East in order to check the accuracy of his oriental landscapes. If what he has painted has the semblance of reality without other qualities, that is enough to bring it under the category of naturalism.

Naturalistic art is tedious in proportion to the familiarity of its subjects. Interest begins when we make the acquaintance of new things such as an enlargement of a microscopic photograph of the infusoria or a section of the epidermis, a picture of a curious formation of rock or of a bone of the mammoth. When we see such things our aesthetic sense has some share in the experience just as it forms the measure of our feelings of pleasure or the reverse in the presence of a forest or a mountain.

One's feelings towards Bocklin's pictures are more or less of this kind. One finds a collection of likenesses of astonishing creatures which extend to a remarkable degree our knowledge of life on this planet, and at the same time heighten certain traditional ideas which man associates with the organic world around him. Most people in the presence of a caged python or a hippopotamus or an elk have a vague feeling compounded of curiosity and terror. This feeling invests the ideas of these rare beasts with a kind of mysterious poetry which in some cases recurs with the precision of an intellectual stimulus.

This is what Bocklin works with. His pictures arouse these feelings, and because the effect they produce is strong the beholder confounds it with an aesthetic sensation. When he has recovered from the shock of discovering Prometheus in the clouds it becomes a source of artistic pleasure to him. There is, besides the simple pleasure the ordinary man takes in any kind of anthropomorphism, the satisfaction he derives from his comprehension of the allegory and so on.

All this has almost as little to do with art as the python with Phidias. I say almost, for, as indicated at the outset, Bocklin was not a mere naturalist from the beginning. In most of his works the crude effects above described are mixed with attempts at the pure aesthetic appeal. This appears in his arrangement of masses, and in other points. But these compensations are not always present and are combined with a rich choice of means which, happily for painters of a less

\* Hermann Popp : " Maler ^sthetik." (Heitz, Strassburg, 1902.)  
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exuberant imagination, are more inexhaustible than the fantasy of a hundred Bocklins – they are the only possible compensations.

Bocklin's art declines as he grows older like the art of every man who depends

more on his physical than on his intellectual powers. There is a terrible disproportion between the task he set himself and his power to perform it. Even in the worst periods of the history of art no decadence has ever produced such barbarities as his Cholera, and other things in the same vein. Studies of these pictures are extant which are almost worse than the pictures themselves.

We may be thankful that the duty of publishing these things was not neglected. They help us as nothing else can to a clear appreciation of Bocklin's work. Paradoxical as it may sound, Bocklin in his later period contrives to obliterate the most crying defects of his work in the transition from the study to the large picture, just as in his early days he obliterated its merits. In the process of enlargement he, in common with all monumental painters, suppresses certain details. Accident provides him with others whose unforeseen emergence has a surprising effect. He chooses his format with great sureness and adroitness and clothes it fearfully and wonderfully with colour compounded of the best materials known to the old masters. By these means he endeavours to produce an effect of strength to enhance which he invents, with a remarkable play of fancy, the most suitable subjects he can evolve. But this cannot hide the vicious framework of the whole, which becomes preposterously complicated and obtrusive, proclaiming itself in a theatrical quality which is accentuated by the obvious good faith of the actor and the naivete of his declamation.

Any admirer of Bocklin's will smile if you take his colour and contrast it with Marees' for example, not necessarily in order to set one above the other, but even with a view to showing that both fell equally short of the ideal. Yet many a modern German thinks nothing of hanging pure colourists near his pictures. I completely fail to understand this and it fills me with profound mistrust of the very praiseworthy efforts of the younger generation of German connoisseurs to get into closer touch with modern ideas of colour. The very people who are enthusiastic about the splendid Manet in the top storey of the Berlin National Gallery, whose sincerity it would be insulting to doubt, and who can feel and express genuine pleasure in Manet's essential qualities, go downstairs and bow down before Bocklin's Pietà. The Pietà of all things, the most abominable piece of colour Bocklin ever perpetrated ! Is this merely an irrational impulse of piety awakened by a sacred picture, the product of a habit of mind which persists though faith is dead ? Or is it really the case that these red rags, because they are red, have power to awaken some old lust ?

But enough about colour ! Painting would be come to a pretty pass if all it could do was to give us agreeable colour-schemes. Bocklin might defy this requirement even more boldly than he did yet be a great artist. If he would only give us pictures, real pictures, not copies of the outsides of things violently plastered, but never painted, on the canvas ! If his symbols gave us some idea of himself, not merely of the shadows which he tries to symbolise ! But the power which he aims at begets no new power ; it has no principle of progress in it ; all his elaborate apparatus never animates his canvases, there is nothing in them which

the senses can carry away. The noisiness of his pictures challenges curiosity ; they are fragments of pretentious phrases which at a distance sound like revelations and tempt us to come near. A great thing is being attempted, here is a man who

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is to speak to his contemporaries in the tongue of the old masters ! Painful indeed is the disillusion when one realises the paltry result of these clamorous preparations, the triviality of these bombastic splendours. We expected a philosophy of life and find nothing but a turgid melodrama.

His technique is that of the old masters. Bocklin has studied Vitruvius and Theophilus ; his head is full of Leonardo's Trattato, Armenino's axioms, and Vasari's precepts. According to trustworthy accounts he has even incorporated Pettenkofer's methods with his own. He succeeded " and this was a notable achievement " in getting the diagonals used by the old masters in the preparation of their panels, and taught his contemporaries how to make their pictures indestructible. His pictures will exist when not a shred of Manet, Renoir and Cezanne survive. So much the worse for those who think only of the present. So much the better for posterity who will no longer have any need for Manet, Renoir and Cezanne and who will admire Bocklin's pictures as one of the most remarkable curiosities of an age rich in wonders. A time will come when people will be genuinely glad to have him because he invented things for which the next age will have no leisure and which, since they do exist, are worth preserving.

But the essence of Bocklin will not endure. There is no reason to wish that it should do so ; and, even if one did wish it, it could not, because, however obstinately these colours stick to the panel, they somehow do not impress themselves on the human spirit like the ephemeral productions of Manet, Cezanne and Renoir.

The theory of colour that the excellent Schick learned from his master might be good if it were not always used for scene-painting. Far better would it have been if, deserting his eternal receipts, he had pointed the way to a single creative act, even if it had been produced by the aid of minerals which would make old Armenino turn in his grave. Nothing of the sort however is to be discovered in his very copious notes. On the other hand we find one or two criticisms on a few old painters such as Veronese and some recent ones such as Feuerbach, which, as a clever Parisian said of a similar judgment by Couture on Delacroix, pass the limits of ordinary absurdity.

Nothing is uglier than to gird at the popularity of a respectable artist. It is with reluctance that I repeat here what I have often said less publicly. So little that is not commonplace ever goes to the heart of the people that one must rejoice at any favourable instance to the contrary, even when it is not in accordance

with one's own taste. Bocklin was anything but commonplace and for that very reason he had much to endure. But here we have not to do with Bocklin but with all the rest, and to favour one would be to fail in one's duty to all. He lies like a log in the way of the future though he helped to shake off from our shoulders many an incubus of the past. For many he was a stepping-stone to the Elysian fields, but now he hangs upon our wings like a heavy colossus and threatens to drag us down lower than we have ever been. There was a way past him or over him to a sane art worthy of clear senses and strong brains. He pursues us closely not only to the upper storey of the Berlin National Gallery but downstairs, too, where the Germans hang of whom I am about to write and where others might well hang too if there were room.

Away with Bocklin ! Not because he is a German : there are more thorough Germans than he. Not because he has imagination " there are more imaginative people ! Not because he is a poet " there are greater poets !

Away with him because he has been false to all that was greatest in the past

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achievement of the old German masters, and because his empty panels bar the way to the future for which Goethe hoped, and for which our noblest have fallen, because there is no principle of development in him.

Rather set your heart on Ludwig Richter : that can do no harm ; on Genelli : that may even help you. Love Cornelius if you like ; though that is unlikely. Admire Schwind and Rethel ! And if you need stronger food take Feuerbach and Marees or a score of others whom I will name hereafter.

Only when all the others who give us what is most necessary have the same vogue as Bocklin has to-day will it be possible to advise people not to forget that he was their colleague.\*

\* Since writing the above I have made an exhaustive study of the Bocklin problem in my book, " Der Fall Bocklin." (Hoffmann, Stuttgart.)

MAX KLINGER, FROM THE "RETTUNGEN OVIDISCHER OFFER."  
AFTER THE DRAWING IN "PAN."

KARL SPITZWEG: THE CACTUS GROWER

NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN

MAX KLINGER. ETCHING FROM "AMOR AND PSYCHE."

E. R. WEISS. PEN DRAWING FROM "DER INSEL."

HILDEBRAND: FIGURE IN RELIEF

HILDEBRAND: DIONYSOS

ADOLF HILDEBRAND

"As if one needed a new language in order to  
say something new!" — A. Hildebrand.

Marees' ideals were to a great extent those of a sculptor; but it would be a mistake to infer that he confused the boundaries of sculpture and painting as they were confused in the theories of Winckelmann and Lessing, which recognised no difference between the two arts. Nothing could be further from the truth. Marees was by instinct exclusively a painter; his hand had a natural aptitude for the brush. His profound instinct for pure painting, his talent for the material embodiment of ideas without previously formulating them as conceptions reveals his remarkable affinities with the French moderns. Germans seldom possess this



gift, which is common among Frenchmen. But Marees had more than instinct, and in the stern conflict of his instincts with his consciousness of the demands of monumental painting he lacked the weapon of practical method. He tried to help himself out by using some of the resources of the plastic arts and in this he succumbed to some of the most ancient temptations of German artists.

To judge by the plastic element in their pictures the Germans must have a natural aptitude for plastic art. Every characteristically German picture from Dürer and Cranach down to Schwind and Rethel, is an imitation of relief. This points to the conclusion that our countrymen should be good sculptors ; and as a matter of fact from the appearance of Schiöuter, our Pierre Puget, a giant in the Baroque style, until the rise of the great painters of the nineteenth century our sculpture had the upper hand. At the very time when men's minds were occupied on the one hand with the seductive graces of Pigalle, the darling of the royal amateur of Sans Souci, and when on the other the spirit of Winckelmann dominated all our national endeavours, genuine German statues were being chiselled. In the capital of Prussia the great Schadow had diffused an amiable atmosphere for which Schinkel supplied the setting and for which all the pride we feel in the subsequent growth of Berlin hardly compensates. After the two winsome princesses in the National Gallery, one finds it hard to be equally enthusiastic about the rows of male ancestors in the Tiergarten. Ranch with all his dryness knew far better how to execute such commissions when he had his way. His work was better done and very much more pleasing.

We might quote a number of respectable names, and an enumeration of their characteristic merits would show that we had a surprising galaxy of excellent sculptors in a period which twenty years ago was regarded as peculiarly arid. The one defect of each and all of them was the lack of a personal feeling for their medium. They conventionalised cleverly according to one foreign pattern or another ; in their way they grappled with the customary local difficulties of detail which they understood ; they knew how to give personality to honorific statuary and how to improve upon the ideas of their patrons. But they gave us no models which could

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has been lavished in the last fifteen years. Such an act of recognition would have secured for generations the prestige of royal power, which alone can exercise an influence of this kind on art.

Hildebrand is an architect in the widest sense of the term, and the sculptor in him is to some extent subordinate to the architect. In order to get near his individual figures, we must thrust aside all sorts of qualities we have learned to prize. We are not used to this clear-cut art which rejects at whatever cost the dreamy technique of melting shadows, and preserves its proportions from every possible

point of view.

I think— Hildebrand embodies a rational ideal of art. His work condenses the whole experience of spatial presentation in a severely logical spirit. His importance in modern art can hardly yet be properly measured, for we are out of sympathy with his creative aims. We are in the midst of a development which flies in the face of all logic and is great not because of the impulse which is behind it but in spite of it. Its efforts seem so important and symbolise our own irregular strivings so well that to repudiate it would be to repudiate ourselves. If we accept it, however, we are led into a thicket of compromise so dense that we can no longer see where we are going. In the midst of so much vagueness Hildebrand's precision seems narrow. He leads us by a way which is mapped out beforehand and of which he is sure ; he permits no fancies and is prepared to reject anything that a clear formula cannot express. Thus he appears to lack all the qualities which we reverence in our favourites. We are enthusiastic followers of those who see " reality in the magic of their dreams." We are delighted if we can faintly express fragments of our consciousness in a few broken words, or lines or surfaces. We accept outlines as perspective and we are as disgusted with the robust forms of Hildebrand as Huysmans was with people whom he saw eating. Even if we go so far as to discuss the formula and to accept it as a kind of wholesome discipline we hardly grasp Hildebrand's peculiar personal relation to it. It is easy to miss the charm of the type that he created ; it is easy not to see that his self-imposed limitations are scarcely any hindrance to the free play of his joyous fancy. But this fancy aims at more than the praise of amateurs. Posterity will treasure the later works of Rodin in its museums, and the world will bow down in reverence before them for all time to come. Our architects will learn from Hildebrand's Wittelsbach fountain how to build the palaces of the future.

Compare this fountain with Rodin's finest monuments, the Nancy memorial of Claude Lorrain, or the Bourgeois de Calais. Such comparisons are not idle ; on the contrary a rational artistic estimate can only be secured by carrying them out thoroughly. There was a time when Rodin and Hildebrand were not so very far apart. In his earlier figures, *Uhomme au nez casse*, or *St. John reaching*, only certain qualitative differences give the Frenchman his great superiority over the German as represented by his *Adam*. Moreover, while Rodin has left unity of form further and further behind, and has squandered his tremendous gifts in hare-brained enterprises, Hildebrand's insight has been becoming clearer and more profound. His power grows with his accomplishment. One foresees a moment when even Rodin's resources will collapse under the weight of his superhuman exactions. Hildebrand fills up the measure to the brim and gives us what he can. Never were genius and self-restraint so evenly matched. Hildebrand has not a scintilla of Rodin's gift for playing with material ; the German's iron energy can only wring from it a beauty which we do not always find interesting. His

## KLINGER: THE DRAMA (FRAGMENT)

### ADOLF HILDEBRAND 141

cool masses will never glow with the charm of the other, nor will he ever be praised for Rodin's unforeseen effects. Even when Rodin fails he has power to move us to tears ; if Hildebrand stumbles we simply will not look at him. That, however, has always been the respective fate of ourselves and our neighbours, and we have learned to put up with it. It only remains to draw what conclusions may be useful to those who come after us. The material is abundant enough.

Hildebrand has laid down his conclusions, as we might have expected. His classic chapter on stone work should be learned by heart in the schools. His occasional writings on architecture place him beside Viollet-le-Duc. The spirit of Goethe finds a fulfilment of what before was dim conjecture in the clearness of his exposition, and greets him with approval.

Rodin on the other hand, emotional as his words are, never conveys the slightest idea of the greatness of his art. So far as he conceives it at all he conceives it in vacuo. Thus his admirers are as much puzzled by his work as he is himself. This time it is the Frenchman who has the flow of sentiment, the German who maintains the cool supremacy of the intellect. They are two values : < on the one hand the unadorned building, on the other ornament worthy of a fairy palace. If the two could be united, what a marvellous work the world would see !

### KLINGER

El suefio de la razon produce monstruos.

Goya.

Klinger is indicative of the present position of the Marees tradition in Germany ; he also has that metaphysical outlook on art which is characteristic of so many cultured people who do not belong to what is held to be the opposite faction. The tradition itself, which was nothing if not logical, or rather aesthetic, seems to be broken at this point, but the fact is that Klinger has never really been directly in

touch with it. On the other hand, the metaphysical view of art for which he is responsible has itself in the few years of its existence become almost a tradition. It has produced too many great figures " Dehmel at their head " for us to treat it as unimportant ; it is deeply rooted in all our methods of expression, and in it are involved so many of the essential peculiarities of our race that we cannot airily pass from it to the real order of the day.

Klinger has made a strenuous effort to justify our weakness in the face of Bocklin. Unlike Stuck he did not attempt to do this in a series of naive pictorial works ; he tried to intellectualise Bocklin. For this task he was equipped with a poetic gift so remarkable that I have never been able to understand how it never found its natural outlet in an important body of written verse. Up to a certain point he seems to have an equal talent for all the arts " for drawing, etching, painting, sculpture and music. He has also written. This has its importance, for Klinger has always known how to express himself intelligently, and how to choose the appropriate form in which to do so. At first the flow of his thoughts was so copious that drawing was his only means of keeping them within bounds. It was for him a substitute for writing and one could fill volumes in the attempt to analyse all that he put into it. His etchings are in the nature of fair copies of his drawings. When, in the course of his individual experiments greater complexities arose " symbols which he considered worthy of expression " he painted pictures. Finally the reduction of this symbolism to single figures has led him to sculpture.

" The beauty of a plastic work," said Taine in his " Philosophie de l'Art," " is necessarily plastic ; an art always degrades itself when it lays aside its proper means of arousing interest and borrows those of another art." Happily Klinger does more than this. He is not in the least like the modern symbolist who splashes a few fragments of his conception on to the canvas and is content to inscribe the rest in a table of contents on the frame. None of our artists has ever been less sparing of his labour. His drawings and etchings are prodigies of calligraphy ; they suggest a Dürer or a Holbein wandering in the paths of the Greeks. Sometimes the actual content of a drawing (as in the case of the Rettungen Ovidischer Opfer) is cast into the shade by the exquisite line of the border. There is a refined naturalism in these things, combined with a gift for the happy use of stylistic reminiscence,

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which reminds one of Runge's allegory. This, too, is Baroque, but it is much more piquant than Bocklin's. I could cite early book illustrations by Klinger which would have delighted Aubrey Beardsley. In the draughtsmanship of Klinger and Geyger the last manifestations of the epoch of Carstens find an unhoped-for fruition. Klinger's errors in the choice of format have been as disastrous to him as they were to Bocklin. In the Temptation, the Mother and Child, Time and Fame, where as in so

many of his etchings the peculiarly piquant technique produces an effect of almost excessive richness, means are used which are in their very nature typographical, and which only admit of a somewhat arbitrary handling of the material in the small scale of drawings. This microscopic method, of the nature of miniature though it is certainly not petty, he applied to pictures such as, for example, his *Venus in the Shell* in the Berlin National Gallery.

The dissonance becomes more acute when the same method is applied to sculptures on a large scale. The *Beethoven* derives indirectly from such etchings as the *Evocation*. Any appreciation of him, to be just, must be made from the standpoint of industrial art. Even his etchings are often mere combinations of details, but the more modest technique of the etcher enables him to keep the details together. In monumental art, episodes, even successful episodes, cannot form a complete whole, and no triumph in detail can atone for the miscarriage of the total effect.

It is easy to trace Klinger's mental development, which was guided by such heterogeneous influences as Gussow, Menzel, Rops and Bocklin. In Paris it was Goya who affected him most. Manet had discovered the Spaniard some few years before Klinger discovered the etched illustrations for himself. Goya the painter was lost upon him.

The artist of the *Caprichos* has wrought havoc among the younger generation of Germans. Von Loga's well-documented work on Goya has performed a real service by approaching the question in a cool scientific spirit, and by putting the etchings in their proper place among the works of the great painter. Goya's merit is not summed up in these audacious ghost stories, although indeed, if he had done nothing else, they would have been enough to make him the greatest artist of contemporary Spain. Who could learn this trick of genius ? What artist could ever again combine those unique conditions which enabled Goya to find another form amid the uproar of his titanic fancies ? His mastery of form, the irresistible movement in his masses, which nevertheless remain true to Nature, as if the storm which heaped them together had torn away from man and beast all that veiled the secret of their organisation, and had at the same time hurled them into a new atmosphere, where they speak a new tongue and where their vitality is multiplied tenfold – all this marvellous world is Goya's genius. He reveals himself not in the actual subject, but in the manner in which he evokes it from the canvas. His imagination is just as great in the wonderful portrait of his wife in the Prado as in the Inquisition scenes at Brussels or the drawings of bull-fights, where the lights, as in the best things of Rembrandt, both live and give life.

Slight as an artist's thinking powers may be, his work must necessarily suggest innumerable thoughts to others. The mere effort to come as near to the perfection which reveals itself to the seeing eye as the powers at its disposal permit is enough to raise the observant spirit into the clouds. One rejoices in Olympus, another pours out his soul in the joy of Nature, a third remains sunk in contempla-

tion ; it is a matter for each individual. The artist must be in his work, in the

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very middle of it, and not an atom of him must remain outside. In many of his portraits Rembrandt thought more of the splendid glitter of a helmet than of the profound expression of the countenance beneath. Perhaps he might even have achieved this effect of expression though he had left out the face altogether ! Such things have been. I once saw a Vermeer, a painting of a piece of carpet, which suggested the most extraordinary things to me. Cezanne painted still life pieces which have the effect of strange and monstrous beasts, and Menzel, who cannot be reproached with an unchastened fancy, has in the Berlin National Gallery an interior painted in 1845, in which there is no living thing, not a fly, far less a human being, and which is yet more alive than all his crowded pictures.

Klinger has two sides ; one is the intellectual tendency which will interest the philosopher ; in the other one divines an artistic programme, a tendency to work towards repose and once more to effect a junction with the tradition which he honours in Hildebrand. These two sides are not to be separated. They appear in the same work, always in conflict. Here there is a passage in which the artist, intent on form, alone speaks ; there that form is complicated by a thought leading to amplifications which imperil the whole work. In his sculpture, as in his painting, we see this second side of his talent of which he is himself conscious, as appears from his chapter on Drawing and Painting ; it is particularly apparent in his large pictures in which he tries to focus his ideas ; but on what ?

In Christ on Olympus there are at least five pictures, four figure-pieces and one landscape. The picture would certainly lose nothing if it were divided about the middle, so that Christ with the nude figures formed one part and the clothed woman with the two nude women the other. Clearly in this case he wished to give prominence to the mythical element and to yield himself up to purely artistic inspiration. Yet it is impossible to comprehend the basis of the picture, or the intention of the composition. Any one who looks at it without a fixed determination to read into it an intelligible confession of religious faith will see nothing but a purely arbitrary arrangement of nude figures. Quite apart from colour and brushwork, with which I do not propose to deal here, there are certain fundamental laws, certain requirements as natural as our need to be clothed, to eat or sleep ; we want some principle of division to enable the beholder to enter into a living relation with the subject "not with the artist. How can he do this ? Can he drink without a cup ? Now Klinger's treatment of the nude is passable enough, but above all things, even before we can make good studies of the nude, if we undertake to cover such large surfaces as Klinger does we must mean something. I refer of course to a pictorial meaning, which in default of better may be as primitive as that expressed by Hodler, or Melchior Lechter, or Willemsen. It may be

objected that in many of Marees' pictures the compositional idea appears to be very loose ; for instance, in the panels of the Golden Age. I answer that there is no question of postulating an absolute, but merely a relative, composition, such as Liebermann, no less than Maurice Denis, keeps in view. When Marees abandons the vigorous architecture of the drawing in such things as The Victor, or Homage, here reproduced, the abandonment is more apparent than real. He merely modifies the rhythm. These impetuous masses of nude bodies, if expressed in a light and fluent rhythm, would be like a large bee in a spider's web, or a chorale by Bach played in waltz time. Bocklin does the converse.

In formative art the sense of space is everything. In the yEgina pediment at Munich it was enough to give schematic suggestions of the relation of the parts ;

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the Parthenon groups are knit together like figures that embrace ; the frieze of the Altar of Pergamum in comparison looks like a piece of Gobelins tapestry.

It is all a question of the stitches. This is the head and front of Klinger's offending. He does not embroider his pictures ; he plasters them on the canvas with no thought for the texture, so that his large figures, which are intended to express power, are empty phantoms. Often they have great beauty of gesture, action of far greater refinement than anything ever done by Bocklin. Sometimes, as in the case of the Pietd, this is almost enough to make a picture. But amid all this barrenness how one longs for a little sunshine, for vegetation, for atmosphere ! How warm by comparison seems the cold Feuerbach, how abounding in health the sickly Marees ! In nobility of soul the younger man is their equal ; a great gulf separates him from the Swiss barbarian ; but beyond, far away from these, and, indeed, from all others, he is pursuing a chimaera.

How can a generation which does homage to Goethe, the most harmonious spirit that ever shone upon the world, which possesses in its schools means of rational culture, which rejoices in a well-ordered civic life, and whose surroundings are in all respects tolerable, produce an art so devoid of all order ? How is it that the qualities of knowledge and scientific method which are our support, nay our salvation, in our dealings with other peoples, in the overcoming of our economic disadvantages in trade and commerce, make shipwreck in this, the most important province of all ?

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Perhaps after all the production of the large pictures may be considered fortunate, not for us but as a warning to Klinger of what would become of him if he did not put on the brake with an iron hand. If it were happily the case that this

strong man could forge for himself a rhythm, a form whereby he could communicate to us what every man with a feeling for art would be glad to hear, then all these acres of spoiled canvas need not stand in the way of the enthusiasm which every completed act of creation demands.

The question is whether Klinger will find his way. There is at least some hope that he will. The fine relief of Leda, the standing figure of the girl bathing, the brilliant sketch of the combatants, in the Leipzig Museum, the head and hand, and the crouching woman (the finest thing he has yet done), are strong pledges that he will successfully solve his plastic problem. If so, a compromise with Hildebrand is inevitable. No doubt Klinger recognises the healthy tone of the Florentine master. It is quite comprehensible that he wishes to make advances on him, but he is wrong in seeking to make this progress by different paths. There is no question here of Hildebrand's personality, but of the formulation of laws which Hildebrand has neither invented nor exhausted. We can indeed imagine a development in which he would only have the importance of a pioneer ; but the subsequent progress must be on his lines.

Klinger tries to give more colour to Hildebrand, a very natural and wholesome endeavour. It is only his method that is questionable. No man can colour sculpture by simply making it out of polychrome materials as Klinger has tried to do. Those works of his which are poorest in colour are the costly things in the Leipzig Museum which can hardly be called plastic at all. Volkmann's attempts in this style are even more disastrous failures ; and I recall with positive horror a friend of Stuck, Rudolph Maison, who thought he had mastered the secrets of polychrome art when he displayed the coal-black head of a negro on a pole. Colour

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in sculpture, as in painting, as in poetry, as in music, is movement ; everything else is mere daubing and will not stand. Klinger knows this very well ; he seeks for movement, but it is often a movement of detail — not enough or too much to impart motion to the whole. As in his pictures what is wanting is atmosphere, the fluid which should surround the figures and transubstantiate the stone. His work does not live, does not breathe ; it only gesticulates. His bust of Nietzsche is certainly the best portrait we have hitherto had of that great man, and is calculated to make us forget the Stoving reminiscences. But that is not saying much ! A work which would worthily decorate the Weimar Archiv and be a real memorial of the philosopher must be full of passionate life. Klinger wished to make his work monumental in character ; he built up the face with this in view. But the immense variations in the planes of the face spoiled the effect. They are quite unmeaning, although they appear to correspond with the reality as presented in Hans Olde's faithful etching. In the picture these variations may be dwelt upon with effect. In sculpture this effect must be sought in quite a different way. In what



way I know not, but Hildebrand knows and in this matter Rodin is an immortal exemplar.

In Klinger's studio stands his great marble Drama, the man rooted in the earth ;  
â€” again a tremendous effort, and again a great advance. We may regret that the artist cumbers his progress with works of such enormous proportions. A man who is growing changes ten times over in the course of such a work â€” Klinger has already been years at it â€” and the marble does not grow again.

The plan of the work is such that complete success is impossible. Not Michelangelo himself could conquer this monstrous block. But it is a piece of work in which a man might be victorious though defeated, and the grandiose fragment of the Genius whose form is growing round about the stone below is certainly the finest victory that Klinger has ever gained so far. Here unity seemed assured, the material should have been exactly used up by the whole. The body, which covers one of the sides and is parallel with the chief figure (the parallelism is not quite successful), and whose feet now spoil the front view, should have been hewn out, as Hildebrand says, stone in stone, not laid on as it now seems to be. Hollows appear in the central figure where there should have been solid masses. The head produces its happiest effect at present because, unlike the limbs which are already finished, it does not disturb the lighting of the whole with individual reflections. Is it an accident that Klinger has never been able to make up his mind to finish this head ?

But â€” and this is the great thing â€” here are effects of perspective, let the group turn out as it may. Klinger's energy borders on the fabulous. Difficulties which would break another man like rotten wood seem only to steel his strength. The complication of his self-imposed problem which may seem to those who look on from a distance to be a kind of labour of the Danaides, at least gives a pledge that if he solves it he will make a more profound use of his victory than others who have been more fortunate.

Until then Hildebrand's example will remain unsurpassed in Germany. If we are to get beyond it we must turn our eyes back to France, where young Maillol is playfully achieving what remains to be done after Hildebrand. He has never troubled his head about problems.

Hoffmann, the last of the German Romans, is the only artist who seems at times to recall the pictorial ideal of the Feuerbach group.

LEIBL: IN CHURCH

VON SCHOEN COLLECTION, WORMS

FROM AN ENGRAVING PUBLISHED BY F. GURLITT

I

## LEIBL AND HIS CIRCLE

### WILHELM LEIBL

" But let every man look to it that he make not impossibilities, insufferable to Nature."

DuRER.

In Leibl there was a remarkable union of pure painting and pure draughtsman-ship, two things which in most of the great Germans are incompatible ; the lesser are driven to the one extreme or the other, and Leibl is the most brilliant representative of our art in the nineteenth century because at moments he brought the two into complete harmony. At these moments he was not only the greatest artist in Germany but one of the greatest artists in the world.

He fought against the pictorial. No doubt it is the component of his work which is easiest to recognise, a reflection of the Piloty school, of Lenbach and other associates. But Leibl never forgot whence this reflection came and concentrated all that had gone to the making of it, Van Eyck, the Venetians, and the old Dutchmen. Perhaps the Dutch strain in him is the finest. In the *Cocotte* he is a Vermeer with more of chiaroscuro, in the *Dachauerinnen* a Vermeer with more plastic power, a Vermeer with a more monumental quality in the *Worms picture of the three women in church*.

His drawing goes back to our oldest artists. His studies of costume, that is, those fragments which he has cut out of his pictures in so extraordinary a fashion, recall the old masters of his native town. His pencil drawings of hands suggest Gothic saints, but not such as appeared to Rethel and his like. And his genre pictures ! His intention was to make his works really cheerful, but perhaps, too, there was a touch of Defregger in him and this led to the production of such monstrous things as the picture which was very recently in Herr von Defregger's house in Munich,\* the girl on the bench beside the old man whose smile affects one like the faces on the roof of Notre Dame.

I said monstrous ; they are also incomprehensible. If one could discover anything susceptible of stylistic exposition in the same way as modern architecture, the effect would be easier to explain. But this is notoriously naturalism, " playing the eavesdropper to reality."

In the Worms picture one feels that one is getting nearer to the secret. A volume might be written on the innumerable effects of parallelism which it contains. The introduction of the rococo woodwork in combination with the varying swell of the skirts of the sitting figures, most daring in the case of the middle one, is a stroke of genius. Besides this (as Georg Gronau rightly recognises in his excellent

â€¢ The picture was sold in 1902 by Herr von Defregger to the Stadel Museumverein for 33,000 marks and now hangs in the Stadel Institute at Frankfurt.

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biography \*) one of the chief sources of the effect of the picture lies in the passage of the high white lights from the foreground to the background and in the smooth brightness of the flat wall against which the head of the third woman is relieved.

This is Leibl's naturalism. He takes a laughing girl, not because it rejoices his heart to see her laugh, but because her mouth as she laughs gives two or three broken curves which, with the graining of the table top and the stove pipe, compose an interesting study in ellipses. He makes his poacher look ferocious, not in order to tickle us with the idea of robbery under arms, but because it produces two cross-wrinkles and a whole system of neighbouring wrinkles in his face which, regarded as perpendiculars in ideal space, work together with a horizontal system of lines in the man's coat and a branch or two of the neighbouring tree and thus complete the architectonic scheme. He puts a pipe in some worthy old man's mouth, not in order to suggest to us the pretty song, " Gott grüß Euch, Alter," but because the white of the clay is indispensable to the colour of the coat.

Of course he picks and chooses his models. The old peasant with the crutch (No. 14 in Gronau's collection of engravings) did not possess these rugged wrinkles for nothing ; Leibl saw that they exactly suited the technique of etching just as foliage suited Monticelli's mosaic of blurs, giving animation to the surface.

There are people who insist that Leibl is great because he is such an excellent observer of Nature. This is no doubt true, but it was a nature of his own that

he observed.

Yet, if his ultimate object was merely to express certain geometrical ideas, why, it is asked, did he paint as a rule from Nature ; why was the very existence of the Worms picture endangered because the good priest died who had permitted painting from models in the church ? Why did Leibl not follow the practice of other great artists who it is said, often painted from hurried sketches, and often even entirely from memory ? The reason is that no one can play chess without a chessboard. Leibl was just as independent of Nature as Manet, and Manet, as every one knows, also painted from Nature only. But Manet's technique was simpler. His system was easier to hold together in his head or in a sketch than Leibl's. Leibl had to deal with a programme so complicated that only the continual presence before his eyes of that Nature which in a sense contained his sketch enabled him to realise his picture. And it is no objection to say that in his work he depended on accidents, or that he left things as they were. The arrangement was a matter of the mind, and for this external circumstances were as indifferent as the source of the preparation to one who is examining a section of skin under the microscope. These outward things were a mere safeguard ; yet every group he painted shows the importance he attached to the arrangement of objective detail. Every person sits exactly to a millimetre as Leibl designed, and not as it pleased himself, as some one has foolishly said. Where he left reality as it was, as he did in the case of all essentially immovable things, it was because it suited him. As for the most part he restricted himself to peasants and their surroundings, he met with fewer difficulties than would have been offered by cultured persons and cultured interiors.

Most modern painters determine the scheme of a picture in a superficial general sketch and then endeavour to preserve the freshness of the sketch in the completion  
\* Kiinstler-Monographien (Velhagen und Klaring, Bielfeld und Leipzig, 1901).

LEIBL: COCOTTE (1869)

SEEQER COLLECTION, BERLIN

BY PERMISSION OF THE BERLIN PHOT. CO.

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of the work. With Leibl on the contrary this first draft was the picture itself. This throws some light on the fact, \* hardly conceivable as it is, that he used to begin with one feature of a face and finish it without reference to the rest.

Leibl could see no reason why he should not begin by finishing the nose or the eye ; on the contrary he had every motive for adopting this method provided his model's endurance held out. The ramifications of his system were so complicated that his only chance of arriving at a conception of the work as a whole was to fix some one point of it definitely by completing one detail of the picture, however minute. This point fixed, the system enabled him to analyse the image offered by Nature.

Here is to be found the explanation of the startling effect of the pieces cut out from his pictures. These pieces if regarded as parts of a copy of reality would be stupid enough. He knew what he was doing when he made these sections, for in making them he struck particularly good examples of his system, which perhaps would not have been so effective as parts of a whole.

One sometimes thinks that a section of this sort might with advantage have been made in Arnhold's picture. The Village Politicians^ the unity of which seems to be imperilled by many contradictory elements.

Of course the painter's work rested on a foundation of extremely exact drawing. He first drew all the essential parts of the picture, then painted in the chief planes and rubbed the whole down with pumice-stone so that only a vague suggestion remained. Then the painting proper was begun. He was continually amending his work, the method, in his best days at least, always being to cut out any part of a picture that did not satisfy him. That is to say he scraped off that portion down to the wood of the panel and painted it over again from the beginning.

It sometimes turned out that the new piece was better than the rest and he was compelled to rub out other parts or even the whole. He thus gradually brought the work to an ever higher pitch of perfection, and the process I have described may have been very frequently repeated in the case of the Women in Church. This would explain the long time devoted to the work and at the same time the remarkable intensity of its charm. How he managed to efface all traces of this mosaic method remains inexplicable. It appears that in the case of the Village Politicians he did not always rub out to the very ground. While in his best works he always painted " alia prima," he probably sometimes left some remnants of the old colour when he repainted portions of the Arnhold picture.

Leibl's portraits, which he often finished in a few days, show that he could work as fast as Manet when he chose. The head of Schuch, which was originally a full length and was cut down, the portrait of Trilbner and others, were painted in two days.f

Leibl's intermittent practice of concealing the processes of his technique, which was more or less pronounced at various periods of his career, and led at times to a high surface polish, is open to dispute. But his so-called " hardness " seems to me a thoroughly excellent quality, for the same reasons that make me prize the

\* F. H. Meissner in his study on Leibl ("Deutsche Kunst," October 16, 1897), as well as G. Gronau

in the biography above quoted record this. Meissner writes that Leibl began with the eye of the leading

figure in the Peasant Women in Church and in the Poacher. I learnt from his friends that it was only in

portraits that he painted in this way. Compare also Schlittgens' interesting "Erinnerung an Wilhelm

Leibl" in "Kunst und Künstler," i. 4.

Leibl regarded his portrait painting as a recreation. So far as I know he received hardly a single commission to paint a portrait and always presented the pictures to the sitters.

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so-called hardness of Ingres. All such qualities are relative. "Hardness" on one side promotes tenderness on another. Ingres' perfect modelling could not have been achieved without his hardness. Leibl is a master of the same art. As opposed to Ingres' work Leibl's is Gothic, and indeed German Gothic, modelling which does not shrink from sharp angles. This tendency sets Leibl in opposition to the moderns. Manet would have put him on the same plane as Ingres.

This may be held indifferent or even honourable to Leibl's memory. The great fight for or against modelling involves an essential distinction of the greatest importance. I believe that it was only because Manet fought against it with his characteristic energy that he was able to prepare the way for a modern art of flat painting while at the same time he restored the tradition of the most important epochs of painting. Manet's significance, not in the relatively unimportant domain of Impressionism but in this evolution of an art of flat painting, is unquestionable; and it is delightful to see the courage with which he despatched his opponents. But from the point of view of the universal history of art this significance does not in itself account for the high quality of the pleasure which we now derive from his works, and which our descendants will continue to enjoy even if the plane problem has by that time long since passed into a new phase. This value springs from the mastery with which Manet by virtue of his principles evolved a brilliant form for his creations. He is great not because he set the eye "that favourite detail of the old masters" like a fleck of colour in the face, but because his art in placing these spots created the marvellous material which so

far he alone has given us in such perfection.

Leibl's present importance in the history of art seems by comparison very limited. No modern temperament will venture to present things in his manner again. He went back to the past, and his art, historically speaking, is a magnificent concentration (perhaps the last that we shall see) of the old rules of art which we have forsaken. On the other hand, independently of historic estimate, and from the standpoint of the history which only asks whether a picture is beautiful or not, Leibl's place is by the greatest. He is as secure as Rembrandt or Rubens. On his merits it is unnecessary to compare him with others. No one has ever surpassed the Dachauerinnen or the Peasant Women in Churchy and the rejoinder that it would never occur to any to try is nothing to the purpose.

Having made this clear let us now see what Leibl did in Paris. The writer has purposely attempted to give a sketch of the master's art without starting at the beginning. For it was above all important to realise that Courbet, who met Leibl in the early days of his development, though not before he had done splendid things, had no real influence on the essential character of his work. We should be at pains to preserve the little that is exclusively our own.

The meeting with Courbet was, as Bocklin was fond of telling, hardly more than an exchange of toasts. Courbet had the French temperament. His passion fills his largest pictures with a clangorous harmony which falls mightily on the beholder and carries him away. Every stroke of his brush quivers with creative instinct. The more he subordinated himself to Nature the richer became the play of his genius. It was like a noble steed rearing under the bit. All his almost sexual passion for the earth, more monumentally recorded than in the prose of his relative Zola, is in his work, and all Manet's generation shared it. The wrangling between Manet and Courbet is a jocular altercation between brothers of different ages. The blood of the elder flows in Manet's pictures "we have only to examine

SCHUCH:

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST (1876)

THE PROPERTY OF HIS WIDOW

HIRTH DU FRENES:

PORTRAIT OF SCHUCH (1874)

NEW PINACOTHEK, MUNICH

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LEIBL: PORTRAIT OF SCHUCH (1866)

TRUBNER COLLECTION, KARLSRUHE

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the portrait of the dancer here reproduced " and Courbet himself is the youngest of the generation of Fontainebleau.

There is nothing of all this in Leibl. He had no family history which gave him any right to it. Where in our country is the generation of 1830 on which he could have leaned ? Where are the Daumiers and the Delacroix the great kindlers of colour ? Where is the host of the younger generation the lively earnest of the future ? He had to be more modest ; passion would have suited him ill.

Ddrer's advice to the artist concerns both :



" The closer thy work accords with life in its forms the better thy work shall appear. This is the truth. Take it not therefore upon thyself to offer to make anything better than God hath given power to His creation to effect. For thy skill is powerless against God's creation. No man surely can ever make a fine picture of his own device, if he have not filled his head with much planning. But this is not to be called his own work but is art, handed down and learned, which sows itself, groweth, and bringeth forth fruit after its kind. And thence is made manifest the gathered secret treasure of the heart through the work and the new creature which a man may create in his soul."

It would be interesting to have Leibl's letters from Paris. Six years before his arrival Manet had painted Olympia and the Dejeuner sur l'herbe, his two decisive things. They were hanging quietly in his studio among the fifty works shown at the exhibition at the Pont de l'Alma in the year 1867. Leibl never went to see them. It is doubtful whether he ever knew the creator of Olympia at all. At Paris he lived in the set of Courbet and Alfred Stevens which was not in touch with the Ecole de Batignolles, and if he had any opinion on Manet no doubt he shared that of his friends or at least that of the great Daumier " Manet sickens us of the painting of the schools without making us like his own." And as Leibl did not see this natural continuation of the French leader, he missed what was capable of development, the Spanish element in Courbet. It was not in his race, he was much too simple to wish to master it, and we have no reason to regret this. He could only give what he had after the manner of the German old masters " a limitation with which the Leibl school had afterwards to reckon.

Leibl owed a model to his Parisian episode. He saw for the first time an elaborately dressed Parisienne without a crease, clean, not in the German sense of the term, which is never free from an aroma of soap, but dainty, fragrant, very delicate of flesh, powdered and manicured to a nicety. He saw a hand lying on a pillow with voluptuously extended fingers which had never sought to make the acquaintance of any harder material, and which of all the things they might have achieved had only learned how to caress. The other hand, holding between three fingers a long thin tube, played idly in the air. Small wonder that this comely piece of flesh which one divines in its dazzling whiteness through the dark stuff of the dress as a sun behind clouds, had a magnetic attraction for the German artist, and that he produced the remarkable Cocotte of 1869. It is our Olympia.

It is significant, I might almost say it is essential, for the understanding of the difference between our art and the French to note how the two greatest representatives of either race arranged their respective masterpieces, the milieu, and therefore the conditions being much the same in each case. The one gave his cocotte naked, showing his greatness in the nude ; the other left her clothed, revealing himself no less significantly by this means. The one when he painted his most important group planted naked women among clothed men in the open

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air ; the other dressed his women in all the clothes they could carry, set them in a church and put prayer books in their hands. We see different habits of life^ opposed systems of morals, races fundamentally diverse, each of which keeps to- that which is suited to its own needs. The Olympia is the re-awakening of Titian who painted the most womanly of nuditities, the Queen of the Tribuna. The Cocotte is the relative femininity of the race that created Holbein's men. The difference is the difference in age of the two cultures ; it is all to the advantage of the Latin who is old enough to have had a glimpse of the Gods of Greece and it is our misfortune that we were Christians when we first appeared in history. Whenever we try our skill in the field which our neighbours have made their own the ultimate felicities will escape us, because those who possess all the qualities of our race in that intensity which impels a man to produce great work never either can or will bring themselves to paint their Cocottes nude. Even in the first flush of northern painting, when the mighty genius of Van Eyck was dominating all northern artists, the difference was already manifest. Fouquet's masterpiece, Th^ Virgin with the Child, in the Antwerp Museum, could only have been painted by a Frenchman. You may find a suggestion of Van Eyck's manner in the Child,, but the grace with which Fouquet used the mistress of Charles VI L as his model for the Madonna, the all but imperceptible and yet seductive coquetry of the charming figure with the half -open bodice disclosing one breast, is as thoroughly French as if it had been painted by a master of the eighteenth century. The Eve at Brussels should be compared with this picture. In the presence of this colossal conception of the first woman in whose body all humanity is slumber- ing the other artist is forgotten, but so also are all those poetic feelings which are excited by the beauty of women.

No one could think of Van Eyck's Adam as beautiful ; his Eve is more than fair. She is the rib that was taken from the man. Fouquet was the first to paint woman independently of man and his Madonna is already the charming goddess at whose feet men lie prostrate.

The true German has never painted woman as woman. Were he to do so he would lie, not only because Agnes Sorels are absent from our history, but also because in all our philosophy there is no place for such. It is mere perversity to extract from Cranach something allied to the French manner. He had to hide himself behind some lustful old man in order to impart coquetry to his women. This is not coquetry in the French sense. There is as little lust in the intention of Olympia as there is effeminacy in Manet, the most virile of French painters, wha reminds us, not unworthily, of Frans Hals.

Leibl's painting in all its successive stages never again reached the perfection of the Cocotte. This was natural enough : he was never again exposed to such

seductions, and in most of his other works he was obliged to regard painting in the French sense merely as a stage to be passed through. But though in the works to which he gave complete a pictorial envelope the monumental quality of the *Women in Church* is lacking, the material contained in these frequently unfinished pictures is all the more precious. How wide was the range of his art, even where it only aims at rendering Nature, may be seen in the three portraits in the museum of his native town of Cologne, the early picture of his father where all his art seems to be devoted to the portrayal of the narrow, close buttoned correctness of the old gentleman, the blonde study of the man with the brown hat, one of his greatest works, which.

### WILHELM LEIBL 153

approaches certain portraits by Marees', and finally the masterly portrait of Pallenberg, of 1871, with its wonderful flesh painting. Nothing better has ever been done in Germany.

His brushwork always keeps itself aloof from the thick colour of the moderns, but the spontaneity and the vivacity of this style are by no means foreign to him. Even in his later days he handled his canvas with great care. Such studies as the man's head with the hat in the Stuttgart Gallery astonish us by the virtuosity of the method. The painting is here a combination of very various but quite distinct textures, but even when the brush is most vigorous, it remains quite flat. Some parts seem to have been painted in with a broad, fine-haired brush. As always, the tone-values are extraordinarily sure ; the degradations are so delicate that they seem to arise out of the very flatness of the fine-haired brush-strokes. This flatness with Liebl is always one means among others ; it is contrasted with certain other methods of treatment and springs from them on certain occasions when it makes for emphasis and gives a climax in the effect often coinciding with the point of highest light. One never, to my knowledge, finds in Liebl that splashing method which was introduced into Germany by Liebermann ; the details are always fused in the whole. Liebl would have received the applause of Vasari and the approval of Holbein. Yet the pictorial qualities of his painting had in one sense a strong progressive significance. The bold schemes of his division of masses are astonishing, especially in his sketches. His use of straight lines in composition and especially of rectangles in his doors and windows to secure a restful arrangement, reinforce his curved lines by a sort of solid construction. The fine sketch made late in his career (1899) of the young girl by the door, now in the New Pinakothek at Munich, is one example among many. He borrowed these principles from the old Dutchmen but there was genius in the way in which he renewed them and they have become indispensable to German painting.

Liebl's material fortunes, and to a certain extent his artistic destiny, were determined by his seclusion. This great man, like Feuerbach and Marees, also

worked in loneliness. After a brilliant beginning, in which he was assisted by his reception in Paris, the success of his pictures steadily fell off. His *Women in Church* seemed to be the beginning of better things. The few friends who had remained faithful to Leibl at Munich, above all Gedon, saw the picture at Aibling in 1881 and persuaded the artist to exhibit it alone \* in Munich.

The success of the exhibition was gratifying ; artists made pilgrimages to â– see the picture. Leibl, under the advice of Gedon who wrote to Goupil, Schon, and other amateurs, determined to ask 100,000 marks for the picture. Goupil came and declined the bargain. A German amateur offered 50,000 marks. Leibl â€œcommitted the imprudence of not closing with the offer at once, and by the time he did accept, keen competitors had taught the amateur a better way of disposing of his money. It was only a year later, after the picture had been tested by a series of triumphs at the exhibitions, that it passed into the hands of this buyer at a greatly reduced price. The greatest calamity that befell Leibl was the failure in Paris in 1888 of *The Poachers*, the picture on which he had worked with high hopes for several years. How far the Paris public was right in disappointing the artist it is impossible to say now that the painter has cut the picture to pieces. To judge by the fragments in Seeger's possession it must have been a remarkable work.

\* In the building of the Kiinstlerunterstiitzungsverein in the Augustenstrasse. The entry money went :nto the coffers of the society.

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Leibl never recovered from this blow ; his disease itself seems to have originated at this time. He retired into complete seclusion with his faithful Sperl. In the middle of the nineties he was aroused. The idea was mooted of arranging a show of his collected works at the great Berlin exhibition and the managers applied to Trabner as they could get no reply from Leibl. Trabner drove out and found the artist already so far gone in the German disease of loneliness, for which it remains to discover a specific name, that it was only with the greatest difficulty that he could be persuaded to take any part in the scheme. \* The triumph caused by this revelation of his work to an astonished multitude seemed to cause him little pleasure.

\* A passage from Schlittgen will illustrate the psychology of his loneliness :

" Leibl used to relate with great bitterness how in his early days pictures of his had been ' improved-'

Either he had not painted them well enough, in which case individual passages were painted over to make them better, or they were too empty, in which case something used to be painted in.

" One evening a painter appeared at our table (at Aibling). As usual, Leibl was very reserved with the visitor who, in order to make a good impression, began, ' You will be surprised, Herr Professor, to learn that I am a collaborator of yours.' Leibl looked sharply at the collaborator. ' Yes, I once put a piece of background into one of your pictures ' (then slyly), ' you had taken it rather easy over that background ; anyhow, nohow, you know ! ' Leibl sprang up, and I thought that something terrible would happen, but he mastered himself and went out into the garden. As he did not return I grew anxious and went out to look for him. He was striding up and down and cried, ' Is that man still there ? I'll knock him down.' I succeeded at last in calming him, but our guest had to content himself with a view of Leibl's back for the rest of the evening. Without a notion that he had offended, he whispered to me : ' Leibl is really very unapproachable ! ' "

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HANS VON MAREES: PORTRAIT OF LENBACH AND MAREES

SCHLEISSHEIM GALLERY

VICTOR MULLER : PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

MULLER COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

## THE SCHOOL OF LEIBL

It might be demonstrated that all the important German artists who do not belong to the composition school discussed in the first section of this book are in the closest relation with Leibl. In view of the solitude to which the Aibling master condemned himself this is remarkable enough. But he makes himself felt even within the borders of the composition school itself. He is, in fact, indirectly connected with it, and among the artists of his immediate circle there were not a few who forsook him and went over to Bocklin, while some hesitated all their lives between these two very different tendencies. Victor MtiUer, Feuerbach's friend, gives the immediate connecting link. His importance lay more in the influence that he acquired than in any performance of his own, and he has the credit of having encouraged Leibl himself.

Mailer's work is the art of the transition. He was a true romantic, studied with Feuerbach at Antwerp, and then with Couture, whose flabby ineptitude he recognised. He had a glimpse of Courbet, but had no time to work out the consequences of this discovery though he handed them on to others. For Muller too was of the elect who pay for a premature grasp of new knowledge by an early death.

The small collection piously maintained by the artist's son. Dr. Mailer, at Frankfort suggests a temperament to whom it was not given to sound the depths. The Schneewittchen at Frankfort, the study for which is in the Berlin National Gallery, is far the best example of his work with its fresh colour and its rare grace of composition. It has the charming directness of the sketch with an added richness. In most of his other pictures the impression tends to fade ; his romanticism often betrays him into the laxities of his Paris teacher. The half-length of Herodias suggests a relative of Makart with a greater gift than he. The companion of this picture in the collection is more effective, it is also a woman with her bosom exposed ; the blonde hair and the rosy flesh tints of the face are very fine. Mailer is always entirely pictorial. In his drawings he gets rid of the hard pencil lines of the German illustrators, but sometimes only to fall into the effeminacy of the French epigoni. I cannot quite understand the attempt of Miiller's biographers, even of Berlepsch, in his loyal and penetrating study,\* to found his claim to be a great colourist on later pictures. In the Hamlet at the Stadel Institute the gray note is not carried out with sufficient completeness to allow of a perfectly undisturbed satisfaction. In the Romeo and Juliet of the Pinakothek the beautiful detail of the drapery does not atone for a certain staginess. It is only necessary to think of Feuerbach in order to have the contrast of a real colourist who always understands how to adorn his form with colour.

But Victor Mailer was a painter. The vapourous beauty of such a portrait as the child with the dog maintains its charm even yet, and the portrait of himself in

\* " Die Kunst fur Alle," December 15, 1896, with many Plates,  
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Dr. Muller's collection shows a very profound \* pictorial sense. Such pictures show clearly the influence of Courbet's *l'Homme blessé* and other pictures and show what it was that Leibl learned from Mailer. The greatest benefit however that Moller conferred upon Leibl was that he made him acquainted with the great Frenchmen. He himself lacked the strong essence of Courbet, and more still the Holbein tradition which Leibl added to this.

Strict observation of Nature was Leibl's substitute for romantic leanings. He was the first German who came back from Paris without bringing with him an atom of Couture. The uncompromising character of his art resulted in a marked artistic antagonism between him and Victor Miiller which, however, had no effect upon their personal relations. In 1870 we find the two parties definitely constituted. On the one side stand Miiller, Böcklin, Henneberg, and others ; their quondam associate Feuerbach eclipsed them all. On the other side was Leibl. For a moment his party seemed likely to prove the stronger. A splendid host of talented artists gathered round the youthful leader. There were Munkacsy, Eysen, Karl Haider and Thoma, besides his old friends of Ramberg's school — Theodor Alt, Rudolf Hirth du Frdnés, Schider, Sperl,t and finally TrQbner, with his friends Karl Schuch and Albert Lang.

Miller's art was too incomplete to be a very strong stimulant to others. Of his more immediate circle Burnitz % alone is important. He was a few years older than his friend and had worked at Paris with the painters of Fontainebleau. Like Eysen he produced landscapes restful in feeling and refined in tone. Anton Burger, the scholar of Veit, was a forerunner of the school of Frankfort, where one finds many beautiful pictures by him. He was the first German to discover Courbet in Paris (in the fifties) and at Cronberg he became the head of a school Â§ of some importance, in which Burnitz, who took up painting comparatively late, was a pupil. Some half successful attempts of Scholderer's are preserved. |1

Leibl, on the other hand, had every quality necessary in a leader. Above all he was a model of certainty in his mastery of the means of his art ; every stage was perfection. He had moreover the one-sidedness which is appropriate in a prophet,

\* Miiller had manifestl)' too much of the merit which the other Germans lacked, and did not quite master the seductions of the picturesque. The portrait of Scholderer, his brother-in-law, in the same collection, depends for its effect on the blurring of the outlines, which is carried to an extreme. In the large

sketch which Dr. Miiller has lately discovered, the woman sitting in the open air, one sees clearly that the colour was an afterthought. The chief picture in the collection, a subject from Victor Hugo's " Les Miserables," hardly comes within the sphere of artistic interest.

For Miiller (as for most of his friends at Antwerp and Paris) a strong dose of Delacroix would have been veritable manna. We can find but very superficial traces of that influence of Delacroix on Miiller, of which Muther speaks in his " History of Painting in the Nineteenth Century." Miiller's romanticism had nothing to do with Delacroix. It was merely Couture. On the other hand, he may have seen Corot.

t Schider and Sperl were not influenced by Leibl from the first ; they began as genre painters after the fashion of Ramberg. Schider, an Austrian by birth, was not very fertile as a painter, and is now professor in the Arts and Crafts School at Bale. Sperl shared Leibl's exile in the country, and his devotion was rewarded by Leibl, who occasionally painted figures in his landscapes.

X Unfortunately, he is poorly represented in the public galleries. There are many beautiful things of his in private collections at Frankfort, the best of them in the possession of Dr. Miiller, above referred to, who also possesses early examples of Thoma. The picture in the Berlin National Gallery is not one of his best. Eysen is another artist who is absent from our galleries. Besides the beautiful picture in the Berlin National Gallery, the only picture of his we have is, so far as I know, the charming forest study with the high lights in the Stadel Institute.

Â§ Heinrich Weizsacker has treated of the Cronberg School in " Pan " (1897, iii. 4).

II Scholderer oscillated between Miiller and Thoma, with whom he became associated at Dusseldorf. He ruined himself utterly in London and in his old age returned to Frankfort, where he died six years ago.

VICTOR MULLER: PORTRAIT OF A CHILD

## MULLER COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

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and a power of personal suggestion which was never negligible and often drastic. He used to thunder mightily against the fantastic art which unlike that of Titian, Rubens, Holbein and Dürer was not founded on Nature and which attempted vast compositions before it had mastered heads and hands lifesize. Bocklin and Lenbach, especially Lenbach, were very severely handled. With his passion for the old masters Leibl naturally regarded the coloured photographs of certain eminent persons, à la Rembrandt, à la Van Dyck, à la Reynolds as a decorative imposture. He honoured the profound honesty of the ancients and approached them with a kindred depth of feeling. This was the best lesson that he taught his friends.

Munkacsy had a large share in promoting Leibl's reputation, and he carried on his influence in a remarkable way. The Hungarian who was soon to become famous divided himself, so to say, between Alfred Stevens, who had been a friend of Leibl's in the Paris days, and Leibl himself, but he announced himself as Leibl's pupil whenever he exhibited. At first he painted quite in the style of his master ; this is apparent even so late as in the celebrated picture, Milton dictating Paradise Lost. In Christ before Pilate the technique is also quite that of Leibl and his best portraits are very near the manner of his teacher. There is no essential difference between the old Hungarian woman in the Cologne Museum and Leibl's above-mentioned study of the man which hangs on the same wall. Munkacsy all his life remained faithful to Leibl's sombre colour, but instead of Leibl's ivory black he used exclusively asphaltum which gave his pictures the greasy brown tone of Lenbach's. Munkacsy went backward instead of forward, and even in the eighties his powers were constantly waning. His illness may have contributed to this. We have him to thank for Liebermann's connection with the Aibling master and to some extent also for Uhde's attachment to him.

The Munich clique at first exhibited all the outward signs of a strictly organised school ; there was a common code of rules the observance of which gave an air of similarity to the earlier pictures of Alt, Hirth, Trübner, Lang and the rest. The chief rule was strict observation of Nature, and the fine old painter's ideal of painting pictures to be as durable as possible, which Leibl declared could only be attained by " *alla prima* " painting. Time has already proved that he was right. For time has begun that mysterious process of completion which is the reward of excellent handiwork and which has given to the pictures of this school that wonderful fusion of colour we are accustomed to admire only in the works of the old masters.

Leibl's portraits in the sixties mark the richest period of his artistic work.

Marees himself may here have given and received benefit. The Hildebrand-Grant portrait (1871) most certainly stands in the closest relation to these great days. In 1874 Trübner and Hirth, following the example set by Leibl in 1866, painted their friend Schuch, a portrait of whom by himself is also extant. These four portraits from the same model, which are here reproduced together, show how little the external relations of the artists hindered the growth of their respective individualities.

Hirth had at this time a short and happy period. The gay sketch of Leibl and Sperl sitting together in a boat which hangs in a corner at Karlsruhe shows a rapid grasp of the essential which gives a value to its hastiness and is much superior to the later picture at Breslau,\* The Hop-pickers. Karlsruhe also owns

\* Painted in 1879. Besides this the Museum at Breslau has a dark study of a head by Hirth. As far as can be seen (it is hung very high) it is unimportant. At Emil Richter's art-gallery at Dresden, a fairly

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the bright little landscape by Lang with its beautiful trees on a lush water-meadow, painted in delicate gray-blue-green tones reminiscent of water-colour. Albert Lang was originally an architect, and entered Leibl's circle as a painter along with Trübner. At first his progress was remarkable and he produced many fine studies, especially of still life, in the powerful manner of his teacher. Under the influence of Bocklin and of a misunderstanding of the later manner of Marees, he turned from the true path and since his association with Thoma at Frankfurt in the eighties he has done nothing of any importance. His female portrait at Karlsruhe, painted in the year 1891, is typical of his decline.

This aberration did not stand alone. Leibl's influence declined as Bocklin's approached its supremacy. Moreover his disciples could not follow his development from painting to draughtsmanship without stumbling. Such a development was too individual to succeed perfectly with any one but Leibl himself, or at all events was suited only to a special genius like Karl Haider, whom it encouraged in a narrowly conceived imitation of the old masters. Most of the others were landed in errors which had serious consequences, for they thought they could correct the so-called deficiencies of the later Leibls in pictorial effects by an infusion of Bocklin.

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This is the case with Thoma. He began under the happiest auspices. As opposed to Leibl he was fundamentally a draughtsman. Thoma reproduced

Schirmer's dryness in his peasant figures, but unlike his teacher he took care that they were sincere. Just as, even in his latest pictures, one divines the porcelain worker of Limoges in Renoir, there always remained in Thoma a remnant of the honest, clumsy handicraftsman who had seen the wood carving of the Black Forest<sup>^</sup> and whose original occupation had been sign painting. He drew what he saw simply and neatly without passing beyond the intellectual horizon of a man of his origin. Before his journey to Paris his pictures represent the impression made by Courbet on a naïve intelligence. It is possible that when he was producing the peasant pictures of the middle sixties he as yet knew nothing of Courbet. The manner is so natural that any man sound of limb could discover it for himself. Sunday Morning, the picture of the grandmother with the cloth on her head and her spectacles on her nose, with the little girl near by who is reading the Bible with her is an artless emanation of the honesty which afterwards inspired Leibl's more refined creations in his epoch of draughtsmanship. It is old German without being Holbein. The young girl writing a letter, the drawing from which he made a lithograph twenty-five years later, is real German peasant art. There is a whole world between it and Leibl's supreme drawings, but the spirit is the same. Such phenomena appeared in the great ages of craftsmanship, when in the country or in little towns men untouched by direct artistic influences produced sincere and convincing work, unimportant indeed to the connoisseur, but displaying a high and growing development of popular culture. It is a thousand pities that nowadays such men are confined to the artistic life of cities, that they cannot remain among the people to whom they belong, and that there is no longer any public for a truly popular art. Such men are now made directors of academies and professors<sup>^</sup> while the Leibls of our generation, the great men who come to grips with the highest

large number of Hirth's works were brought together in January 1903, besides some pictures by Sperl and Alt. There are biographical notes on Hirth in a memoir by Robert Bruck in the "Dresdner Anzeiger" of September 1, 1903, No. 242.

HANS THOMA: FLOWER PIECE

ULLMANN COLLECTION, FRANKFORT-ON-THE-MAIN

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problems of art and who know more of it than any scholar, the men who could teach again the things that have been forgotten and for lack of whom our schools are languishing, are banished to live among the peasants.

We cannot hold Thoma responsible for what he became. He is a symptom of that very perversity which, neglecting our villages and filling our towns to overflowing with the proletariat, brings industrialism into matters to which it has no application. Just as Marees lacked a basis for his art, Thoma could find no foundation for his handicraft. Several of his observations show that the situation weighed upon his mind for a long time. When he became known the crafts had reached their lowest ebb in Germany. Even book illustration was in a hopeless condition. Perhaps posterity will prize most highly what Thoma achieved in this art, the only one which he completely mastered. Of this he might have made almost anything.

As a painter Thoma made one very energetic effort to obtain a thorough technical grounding. He went to Paris in the year 1868. The event could not be doubtful; Thoma was as much in his element in Paris as "une dame de chez Maxim" at Bernau. It is extraordinary that in spite of this it was he, the German miller's son, who clearly recognised the new man in Paris who was to determine the destinies of art. Edouard Manet was not discovered by Liebermann but by Hans Thoma. On his return to Germany he spoke with enthusiasm of the painter of Olympia, and had no small share in introducing Manet to Leibl's circle at Munich. Meanwhile Leibl too had been in Paris. Perhaps he saw in Manet merely a colleague who stood in the same relation to Courbet as he did himself, and whom he had therefore a perfect right to consider negligible. Thoma seems to have realised the profound difference between the two Frenchmen ; perhaps this was owing to an unconscious feeling of weakness which made a breach with convention more than welcome to him. Of course he made a terrible mistake when he thought himself in sympathy with Manet's disdain of effects of shadow. Manet had no need of the method of Courbet and Leibl. Thoma was incapable of it and had nothing to put in its place.

The artist's best works belong to this time. \* His pictures were full of sunshine ; he painted interiors with sunlit figures half lifesize. There is, among others, a charming portrait of his mother sitting in a room with patches of sunlight on the floor. In another picture there is a girl standing on the shore with the foliage of a tree about her. All these pictures are painted strictly from Nature and with a warm pictorial feeling. Manet's influence, which is traceable in all these pictures, but which, owing to Thoma's entirely antagonistic nature, only produces a marked inclination towards the French school, is at its strongest in the still -life pictures of the year 1870. One of these fine flower studies, from the Ullmann collection in Frankfort, is reproduced here.f

The years he spent in Munich brought him into touch with the best German artists. The one disadvantage was that too great a demand was made on the resisting powers of a weak nature, or rather on its assimilative capacity. Perhaps he dreamed of a compromise between the opposed influences of Leibl and Bocklin. Such a compromise would have been possible if their differences on external

â€¢ Ostini in his biography of Thoma (V^elhagen and Klasing) mentions many pictures of this period which

Thoma painted over and so destroyed in order to conciliate the public.

t In Herr Albert Ullmann's house there are also early frescoes (alluded to below), which Thoma painted

for Herr Albert Gerlach, the former owner. There are not four landscapes, as Ostini says, but six, exclusive of the dessus de porte. They were painted in 1874.

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matters had had an identical artistic basis as was the case with Leibl in his early days and the painter of Schneewittchen. Between Leibl and Bocklin, regarded from a purely aesthetic point of view, no bridge was possible. It was a question of art or no art, for Bocklin's very individual power of sometimes producing comparatively good things in spite of his insecure basis, was in no sense communicable to others. A journey to Italy, where he learned to know the early Florentines and made the acquaintance of Marees, confused Thoma still further. At first there is little trace of all this. The frescoes which he painted for Herr Gerlach at Frankfort after he came back from Italy are obviously the work of an honest man whose power breaks down before vast surfaces, and who prefers to keep himself simply and modestly to natural objects and not to risk his neck in wild experiments. The pictures down to the small dessus de porte, probably of later date, have a pleasing effect. What a gulf there is between them and the wretched frescoes of the Ravenstein house, which date from the early eighties !

In these garden room pictures Victor Milller's influence is obvious, especially in the dancing children, a subject which he often repeated. The height of the room no doubt determined that of the trees, but this is nothing ; the idea is charming. Why should this modest man have given up painting idyls ?

Thoma could never create Milller's " envelope " which is so delightful in the Schneewittchen pictures. He lost his friend and teacher too soon. Moreover like Leibl he grew harder and harder as the years passed, but while Leibl attained to a fuller revelation of the beauty of his art, Thoma unveiled what he should have kept hidden.

The flowering time of Thoma's art ended with its first ten years, which should only have been the beginning. Compared with what followed one is compelled to say that it attained its relative perfection in that time.

The Leibl circle was broken up about 1877. Thoma, Haider and Hirth married

and left Munich. Triibner had for some time been frequently absent on his travels. The unhappy Alt was in an asylum. Schider went to Bale ; Leibl himself to the country, and the master's influence on his associates vanished as soon as his personal admonitions were withdrawn. Of all that he had learned Thoma took little that was of any use with him to Frankfort. He forgot the lessons of Manet and Leibl, who had taught him to keep Nature ever before his eyes and reduced the influence of MilUer, who had combined poetic sentiment with painting from Nature, to a purely objective sphere. His colleagues at Frankfort, Steinhäusen, Von Pidoll and others, were no substitute for the healthy atmosphere of the Munich circle. PidoU's enthusiasm for his master produced the most unfortunate effects on Thoma. What could a peasant's son make of the solemn palaces of Marees' architecture ? He was rather of the type of Anton Burger, the old Cronberger, but he lacked that small but safe world in which one may with impunity abandon a strict dependence on Nature.

Thoma, moreover, was no doubt driven to superficial work by the increasing needs of his family. He produced a great deal and constantly repeated himself. These repetitions, which with some artists answer to some inner purpose and result at least in some sort of subjective improvement, led in Thoma's case to a horrible mannerism. His work was a continual decline, and though he was fortunate in being unconscious of this deterioration, one can only regret that the public administration of the Fine Arts first thought of him when he was reduced to a shadow of his former merit. So far as I know the Berlin National Gallery only

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possesses one good landscape by him, a work of his earlier days, due to the generosity of Trilbner. The woman at the pillar with the flowers which is in the Gallery at Karlsruhe is the happiest manifestation of his Italian sojourn. In the Taunus landscape of 1890 in the Pinakothek there is a vivid memory of his early promise ; and in the Naiad at Stuttgart the influence of Marees may be said to be unobjectionable. The lithograph (1894) of the same subject is bad.

In the same gallery hangs one of his later landscapes which is contemporary with the Naiad. In this picture the composition is entirely haphazard ; the figures are an afterthought ; there is a complete want of any underlying purpose which could assist the superficial and symbolic meaning.

The whole foreshadows the coarseness of Thoma's latest developments which it is unnecessary to discuss here.

Thoma deliberately turns his back on Nature, although in honesty he has no right to be anything but a naturalist, as Leibl was falsely represented to be by people who did not understand him. In the many discussions on naturalism an



important fact has been overlooked – the intellectual honesty of this method, its avoidance of humbug. Only a thorough discipline in the study of previous achievement might possibly have enabled Thoma to find a substitute for Nature. In an age in which a feeling for style was strong and universal he might have become a good stylist. It is preposterous to suppose that such incompetence can supply the great want of our time.

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It is much to be hoped that the art-history of the future will veto the grotesque antithesis implied in the terms " imaginative art " and " realistic art." In Art as in Nature, life is everything. The place, the man, the animal, the object in a picture, are alike unimportant and give no notion of the nature of the work. Only one of the customary categories – history, portraiture, religious painting – has a grain of meaning : still life. We can never begin to enjoy art, till we have learnt to look upon every picture as still life. Leibl's importance to Germany, apart from his artistic achievement, lies in his propagation of this simple truth. Few of his inner circle remain ; that of the future will be all the greater.

Only one of his pupils has remained faithful to him to this day : Wilhelm Trübner.

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Trübner is the outcome of Leibl the colourist. Leibl is the archetypal German, the successor of Holbein, whose task it was to express himself as a draughtsman. In Trübner we recognise that variant of the German genius which was produced in Holland a century after the painter of the English portraits.

This tendency of Trübner was scarcely obvious in his first work (the two figures at prayer in church) which is in the Karlsruhe Gallery ; it was painted in his twentieth year. The picture displays the colourless dryness of the Karlsruhe school ; but there is a realism in the drawing, a certainty in the structure of the figures sitting behind each other, which places the future of his talent beyond doubt. Its natural destiny, however, would have seemed to be the emulation of Leibl's Women in Church.

A very sound instinct restrained Trübner from this course. The danger which Leibl successfully defied in this celebrated picture is well known, indeed I think it has been overestimated. In his study of Trübner \* Rosenhagen considers that Leibl reached a " dead point " when he had finished the Worms picture, and he probably means by this that, after this venture, the artist should have been content to sing his Nunc dimittis. It is given to very few people to exhaust themselves so completely in a single work that there is nothing further left to them but

to accept immortality. For contemporaries such points are indispensable ; they have the value of the fixed stars which guide the traveller, not to mount the sky, but to find his way upon the earth. The principle of Leibl's art is to be found neither in colour nor in draughtsmanship, it lies in the perfect fusion of the two. Like all facts it evades theory and it is unduly belittled if one regards it merely as the realisation of a tendency. It is only to contemporaries that these heights of achievement appear to be isolated in a deathlike loneliness. They leave the circle of customary evolution and seem to exhaust the possibilities of progress. But was this not so with the contemporaries who understood the perfection of Ingres ? Did not all progress seem impossible after Leonardo da Vinci ? And among the Greeks who would have dared to dream of an evolution transcending Phidias ? Yet there always comes a generation that suddenly transforms the most daring monuments of tradition into the stone of new buildings, and ever demonstrates anew the ineradicable vitality of these " dead points."

This may be the case with Leibl. He seems to be a conclusion, the end of a whole world, only to the generation of painters which is following the very path that he forsook. I can easily conceive a monumental art to which Leibl's drawing would offer patterns of design. That our eyes cannot discern such an art to-day proves nothing. The star-like remoteness of his creations merely suggests that other generations may come nearer to them on the other side of the firmament.

Triebner's soundness was shown by his recognition that in drawing he had

\* " Kunst für Alle," May 15, 1902, with many plates.

TRUBNER: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST (1902)

TRUBNER COLLECTION, KARLSRUHE

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nothing to look for ; his instinct was attracted towards another consummation which his master had only touched in passing.

In this Feuerbach may have guided him. Triibner's father, a Heidelberg goldsmith of the good old days, showed Feuerbach his son's first attempts at drawing. The artist declared they were better than what he himself had done at that age, and the father made up his mind to consent to his son's choice of a profession. The painter of Medea acted as a stimulus to Triibner in later days when he had attained his full artistic stature, and this relationship between two such characteristic representatives of the two diametrically opposed tendencies in German art is not without significance. It shows how little such an opposition matters so long as there is agreement in essentials "and talent !

TrUbner's relation to Leibl was like that of Monet to Manet. In comparing this epoch in Germany with the almost contemporary artistic period in France we must begin by getting rid of all idea of direct resemblance.

The irreconcilable difference lies in the want of any essential relation between the respective protagonists of which we have already spoken in the chapter on Leibl. Apart from this there are parallel phenomena. Leibl created a school of German painters in succession to Holbein, and left it in order to follow his own star. Manet did much the same thing in France ; manifold as were his relations with his school he always held himself apart in all essentials from the development he had brought about in Monet. TrObner and Monet (each in his own way) are more normal and more logical than their respective masters ; both have the instinct of organisation, each consciously seeks to pay the price for his genius. Monet was the more fortunate because he found the path already indicated for him by his predecessors, and because he had a milieu of his own and friends who were ready to follow and therefore to help him. TrQbner, like every gifted German, was alone. Beyond the development of Leibl, who drew away from him as he did from others, he had no models to look to. The field was ploughed but no one could guess what the crop would be. Artistic problems had absolutely no interest for his immediate contemporaries, and in the past history of Germany there was not the slightest indication of the path that must be followed. Triibner hit upon the only sensible issue from the difficulty, which was to look for guidance by studying the ancient art of other countries. It was the only intelligible part of the programme of Leibl, Feuerbach, Lenbach and the rest, that he could put in practice. They had all clearly referred him to the old masters instead of themselves laying down precise courses of study. Each man was to seek what was necessary to his purpose.

The natural evolution of the national art, which was the guiding star of the French, was quite wanting in Germany. Manet, when he absorbed a foreign Spanish element into his art, was almost more national than Leibl when he strove to follow in Holbein's footsteps. Manet's work was fruitful exceedingly ; others might share in it, might see in it a symbol which had some meaning for them, even when the master chose to go his own way. Leibl brought his school, not himself, to a " dead point " ; or he would, had they followed him.

In these circumstances Triibner took the only rational course. He studied the ancients with great intelligence ; in the winter of 1872-1873 the Italian galleries, next all those of Holland and Belgium ; he had already gone through the German museums in 1870. The only ones he did not see were the most necessary to him, the French. Except for a single week in the year 1879 and 1889

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respectively he never visited Paris, and on both these occasions the Great Exhibitions monopolised the attention of the sightseer.

He had of course, seen the French pictures at Munich in the famous exhibition of 1869 ; but this was too early for him. He was then only 18, hardly out of Canon's school, and unable to begin at the point where he was destined to end. This exhibition, the memory of which even yet stirs the enthusiasm of those who can remember it, remained an isolated event. \* One cannot help considering what Germany would have gained if it had been the beginning of a series of powerful and well-organised presentations of great French art. Nietzsche would have had historical evidences in support of his view of the war of 1870-71. For German art our victory was an unparalleled catastrophe. Munich has never again reached the level attained in 1869. The Secession improved the character of the exhibitions, not the pictures, and certainly succeeded in bringing together the average of what was good but never the highest excellence. It was not till thirty years after the glorious beginning made before the war that people (not in Munich but in Berlin) bethought themselves of the lesson of importation, and continued the progress which normally should have taken place in the seventies. The blind guides who have not learned this lesson and who talk nonsense about " Gallicism " may be silenced by the fact that the French have made us conscious of the existence of our own great men. They gave Leibl when he appeared among them the only encouragement he ever got, whereas at home he was rewarded with enmity and was placed below people of the seventh rank. When we began to understand their works it was they who opened our eyes to the similar qualities in the art of our own country. It is no accident that the National Gallery at Berlin, the only one of our galleries which possesses good examples of the French masters, also shelters a well-arranged collection of the best German pictures.

Triibner's career is a strong argument against the defective administration of the fine arts in Germany. This mismanagement does no apparent harm to genius ; we have so much delight in the work it has given us that we forget to consider what it might have done. But it is disastrous to talent. Nothing can be more barbarous and stupid than the celebrated theory propounded by silly people that genius will triumph in spite of everything. Such persons console themselves by

a belief in the indestructibility of talent, and imagine that genius, like the violet, will go on blooming in obscurity even though it be trampled upon by military boots. Nothing can be more unscientific than the science which denies the application of the idea of evolution to art, to art where all is evolution, and where one can say with absolute certainty that the man who really stands outside all sources of influence and produces from his own consciousness alone must infallibly produce what is worthless. " As if a man could get anything out of himself alone but stupidity and ineptitude ! " said Goethe to the faithful Eckermann a year before his death.

The artistic prodigy who plays truant in order to paint the flowers of the heath as they appear to his childish eyes will remain a bungler all his life if he does not see the mighty masterpieces of art. He needs not only his handicraft which

\* The exhibition included fine pictures by Ingres (the Dante, and various studies of heads and drawings), several good Delacroix (Numa Pampilius and Egeria, Chiron and Achilles, and a Sibyl), several Corots, among them St. Sebastian, a Millet, many fine Diaz, two landscapes by Daubigny, good examples of Decamps, Troyon, and Ribot, and, above all, a large collection of Courbets, among them The Stonebreakers. Manet, who was the only representative of the generation of 1870, had two early pictures, the Danseur Espagnol and the Philosopher. A melancholy episode by Israels represented Millet's circle.

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he must learn like any craftsman (any conscientious guildsman can teach him that), he needs also to know the art, and the greatest art, of his contemporaries if he is to comprehend what his instinct will tell him is the way of artistic salvation when his powers reach their physical maturity. If, and only if, he then finds himself possessed of knowledge strong enough to bring his intellect into harmony with his special creative gift, and to divine the artistic needs of his age, the realisation of his talent will be complete. It will hardly be denied that the Batignolles school was sound in that it chose methods rationally adapted to the needs of the time and chose them not so much with the object of profiting individuals as of imparting to painting as a whole a tendency which, for good or for evil, was inevitable. And yet this collective work was done by individuals whose diversities no one can mistake. Doubtless had they been separated from one another and lived in different surroundings they would each have developed quite differently. Doubtless also they would even so have accomplished great things, but it is certain that they would not have achieved the high distinction of carrying out an indispensable artistic work, whose results have become a controlling influence in

European art and have settled questions which belong, not to painting alone but to culture as a whole. So long as German artists are placed in the position of Leibl and Triebner, Feuerbach and Marees, we shall have interesting biographies to read, but we shall always be wearied in the end by the recurrence of the same depressing story. The story of German art can only become a history of culture when it becomes possible to speak less of individuals and more of the community.

Our more prominent living artists profited in their early days only by the old masters in our museums. Triebner and Liebermann are two illustrations of this fact. At a point which is easy to divine both had to go through a crisis which cost them many of the best years of their lives. Frenchmen of the same eminence reached stages of development at which they paused for a quiet survey and then proceeded at their ease to further triumphs. The Germans at analogous moments in their careers passed through catastrophes in which they had to struggle for their lives and in which energy, intelligence and coolness were more necessary than artistic talent ; had they miscarried their ruin could scarcely have been ascribed to want of genius.

Triebner's instinct brought him nearer to Ter Borch than to any other artist. The pictures of 1872 suggest a Ter Borch approximating to Frans Hals, and cognisant of the profound insight of Velazquez. Thus there is no trace of the exquisite silky colour of the painter of the Concerts, nothing of the piquant elegance of the gallant episodes, in which the greatest of the Dutch novellists sets his blonde ladies in their white and yellow draperies, nothing of Ter Borch's sublime drollery. Triebner is much more actual, and his relationship is closest with the Ter Borch who painted simpler things, such as the picture, now at Munich, of the young man picking the fleas out of his dog's coat.

Triebner's early picture, painted in 1872, and now in the Stuttgart Gallery, is of this episodic order. A reddish brown cabinet stands before a very dark dull olive background. A young man holding a bottle cowers behind the open door. The picture is very sombre, almost colourless, yet extraordinarily effective. It has the sure organisation of the Dutchmen and a sobriety which, since it presents no more than the artist saw, has absolutely nothing of the quality of popular German genre painting to which the nature of the subject might have tempted the painter. This is the case with all Triebner's work ; perhaps he could not help

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himself. It sometimes seems as if he deliberately chose to paint a curious subject with the intention of producing a cheap effect upon the public. His titles are often most suspicious ; but he always put so much art into the picture that one can see nothing else. It is by no means easy for an artist of talent to paint bad pictures.

The advance on the Stuttgart picture which is visible in the Studio in the Pinakothek is so great that their almost simultaneous production is difficult to explain. The colour is of an unexampled delicacy and shows that he must have made the acquaintance of Velazquez without forgetting the opulence of the Dutch. The dress of the seated lady is of a shade that is hard to define – a sort of coffee colour shot with rose, which makes a delightfully subtle contrast with the greenish red of the patterned covering of the cushions, a new variety of the celebrated carpets of the Dutch school. The tone of the hair develops very charmingly out of the colour of the dress and the face-tints make a perfect transition. The composition is brilliant. The piquant action of the man who is leaning on the back of the chair is something not often seen in German art. It is elegant in the best sense and almost reminds us of certain Englishmen who had Van Dyck for their master.

The Moor reading a newspaper also belongs to this group of pictures. It was painted at Rome in 1873 and now hangs in the Stadel Institute. It is an arrangement in blue-green and coffee colour of great harmony and refinement. The blue-green predominates so much – the sofa differs only in texture from the tone of the wall – that the Moor himself, who is most carefully painted in great detail, has the effect of a cunningly placed patch of colour, and is an admirably organised passage in the picture, akin in effect to the yellow gloves lying beside him. Perhaps the hat with its band of red leather, so happily introduced in the later portrait in the National Gallery, might have been dispensed with here. The red is a little incongruous among these quiet tones.

Even before the Studio Triebner had painted that little gem now in the Berlin National Gallery, the Young Girl on the Sofa. In this picture he combines what is best in himself with what is best in Leibl. It is the freshest Triebner of the seventies, and the richest in colour. The Dutch influence is still obvious, but, as in the transmutation of Rubens and Frans Hals which Hogarth effected when he painted the Shrimp Girl, it is dominated by a new temperament. All the details of the room are admirable, the blue-gray pattern of the wall-paper, the flowered chintz of the sofa, the quality of the table-cover with its red squares on which stand the blooming flowers. The girl herself recalls Leibl in his best days, but she is more vivid ; the black and white is richer ; it almost suggests Manet. Triebner modelled only at the beginning of his career, Leibl's tendency to draughtsmanship took no permanent hold on him. The consequence is that of the two he is the more animated. There is always more air in his pictures than in Leibl's. One divines the landscape painter even when he paints interiors.

The Girl on the Sofa opens the series of fine female portraits into which Triebner put the best of his art. Here there is no more Ter Borch, nor of the clever art of pleasing superficialities. He succeeds in adapting his mastery of colour to strong and highly individual powers of expression. Velazquez had previously taught him how to handle the charm of colour objectively, he was now to become

his model in a narrower sense and to teach him how to give his subjects that grand air which creates types out of those characteristics of a model which have been most

TRUBNER: THE GIRL ON THE SOFA (1872)

NATIONAL GALLERY, BERLIN

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happily seized. This development shows what a gifted man may learn even in cases where his own senses alone appear to be productive. In his portraits of women Trubner grasps the inner significance of Velazquez just as if he had worked beside the master in his studio, and at the same time he assimilated the essence of his art without any narrowness in a way only possible to a vision clarified by the lapse of centuries. In the Lady in Gray he comes nearest to the Spaniard, what keeps him apart is nationality and social conditions. Velazquez painted princesses and splendid courtiers, Trubner painted women of the German middle class. The two artists resemble each other only in essentials – the marvellous reticence of composition and colour, the monumental simplicity of their work. This is no blasphemy against Velazquez. Of course I suggest not a comparison of powers, but of methods. In Herr Weigand's fine portrait at Munich a trace of Frans Hals is mixed with the influence of the Spaniard. The anatomy of the face, the side glance which converges so brilliantly with the hat set aslant over the ear, is pure Hals ; but Trubner, in producing this effect, only added to the distinction of his picture.

Triibner's connection with the real Leibl school appears much more clearly in his portraits of men, and this is easy to understand. Leibl's peculiar technique was splendidly adapted for this kind of work. He carved, as it were, with his brush. Leibl's portrait of Pallenberg at Cologne and his Katheder portrait are Triibner's models. He painted his father's portrait in 1873 with a broad but short-cut brush exactly like Leibl's, so that there are many angles and edges which break up the colour at the right points. This rich effect, produced by modelling, replaced the colour of his earlier pictures and reduced the scale of his palette more and more. Even the portrait of his mother painted in the same year, the full face bust with the white ruffle and the chain round the neck, is painted in this way. Seen close at hand the head looks like a polyhedron with innumerable facets which are of course most prominent at the curve of the cheeks, and less conspicuous in the broad spaces of the forehead. The only important differences of colour are in the face, the dress and the background. In the fine head of the man with the red beard painted in 1876, now in the Ullmann collection at Frankfurt, the colour is still



relatively rich. The consummate skill with which the fur on the coat is painted reminds one of Van Eyck no less than the muff of the Cocotte in Leibl's picture. Trübner becomes quite black in the portrait of Schuch (1876), the masterpiece in the National Gallery. It is the best thing he ever did, and indeed one of the best of all German pictures, in which the deepest colour "the black which is so much out of favour nowadays" attains its greatest magnificence.

So far Trübner's development was as simple and logical as that of a Dutchman of the seventeenth century. He had worked hard and shown himself worthy to be received as master in his guild, and like his predecessors to produce one accomplished work after another in quiet succession.

It now appeared that the guild had ceased to exist. Leibl's circle quietly broke up having lost the cohesion given by the stimulus of sympathetic associates. The outer world never knew of this secret Golden Age of German painting.

These circumstances began to have their effect on Trübner also, as was natural. Everywhere he saw beginnings but no clear end in view. Moreover he did not fail to see how after Leibl's retirement the tendency of Bocklin and Thoma began to prevail. This had become familiar to him through Feuerbach and just because it was foreign to his nature this loyal disciple thought it his duty to master it.

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Trübner's Giants^ all of which as far as I know still remain in the painter's possession, enjoy the unconcealed contempt of all the amateurs of fantastic art. When he painted them he had the idea that even in such things artistic qualities were of importance and that when a man painted naked giants he would give satisfaction if he painted the nude as well as possible. The public did not mind so much that he treated the rules of composition somewhat cavalierly, as that he carefully avoided befogging people in the usual way and introducing elements into his picture other than those directly concerned with palette or brush or pencil. He was content to paint without poetising.

The inspiration of the Battle of the Giants did not come to him like a gift from heaven, but from a very beautiful Renaissance shield belonging to the collection of Prince Karl which was exhibited at the Glaspalast in Munich in 1876 in a section of the exhibition prettily entitled "The Works of our Forefathers," which had a special attraction for the son of a goldsmith. It now hangs in the Arsenal at Berlin. Trübner thought that the naïve joy which our ancestors expressed in this and many another shield was not unworthy to be transferred to canvas at the present day. His method differed from that of Feuerbach, whose Battle of the Giants was not exhibited at Munich until about two years after Trübner's picture was painted. Feuerbach was not thinking of shields but of great expanses of wall ;

yet in principle the point of departure for both painters was precisely similar, while the effect in each case is completely different from, say, that produced by Bocklin. Triibner painted these pictures much as he painted his landscapes, with a simplicity wonderful in a German. In the numerous nude figures he found welcome points of light ; the variation of level and the many diversities of the bodies in the picture provide so many varieties of light charged with colour. And when all these elements are thoroughly shaken together as is usual in treating this subject, the result is a remarkable play of high and low tones which imparts a great vivacity to the surfaces.

It requires no great acuteness to perceive that these elements are not quite all that is necessary to the production of a work of art of this kind. The idea which reduces chaos to order and gives depth to the painter's treatment is an indispensable addition, and it is further necessary that his composition should be in harmony with certain traditions. A man's life is too short for him to pass through all the accumulated experience of the past in his own person. Triibner's genius was more akin to the Dutchmen than to Rubens, and valuable as this short phase of his art may seem (its very weaknesses are signs of health), we may congratulate ourselves and him that he soon returned to subjects in which the scheme of light and colour was less complicated.

The days of struggle were not over, in fact they only began when Triibner left the Giants, which had for a time concealed from him the real nature of the problem. As a portrait painter he had discovered that the seductions of black led to narrowness in a painter of the nineteenth century. He realised that it was necessary even in painting to give full play to the highly developed scientific impulse of our time. The Chinese Wall which his associates built round themselves in the eighties, and which at best did not shut off the view of many unprofitable things, and the want of all relations with the Paris of Monet and Pissarro where the answer to all the questions of the lonely Germans had long since been found, cost Triibner many years. He always looked to Munich for new inspiration ; and fortified as he was against the Scotch dishes which the exhibitions there began to serve in such

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profusion, he could not guess that, fortunately, the future held other possibilities. At last a new movement was improvised by Liebermann from Berlin. The enormous advance which France had again made, and to which the Germans had come so near at one time, became at once apparent, and Triibner as well as others reaped a belated harvest. The later Triibner, who paints the luminous, finely-toned landscapes, who has renewed the brilliant technique of his youth, the painter of the splendid pictures of horses and the strong portraits is, as he always was, one of our greatest artists. The days of aberration which we find in the history of his copious production correspond to an interregnum in German

art as a whole. He himself was in no greater danger than was the whole of our painting in the ten years of drift. But while many another fatally compromised himself, Triibner always gave us sincere documents that testify to his great abilities.

Amateurs to this day prefer the Triibners of the seventies, which also yielded the fruits most prized by lovers of Leibl and Liebermann.\* It may be expected that in time, as the new century advances, Liebermann as well as Triibner will go up in value. This will greatly benefit not only the dealers but also modern German art.

Triibner is now working as a professor at Karlsruhe and it is to be hoped that the rising generation will attend to his instructions. For he can tell them from his own experience what a great German of the eighteenth century wrote : " If you

\* I give a list below of some of the chief pictures of the first period. Those to which no owner's name is attached are for the most part in the the artist's possession.  
1870-71. In Church (Karlsruhe Gallery).

The Coin Collector (Oberrheinische Bank, Heidelberg).

1872. The Touth in the Cupboard (Stuttgart Gallery).

Girl on the Sofa (Berlin National Gallery). '

In the Studio (Pinakothek, Munich).

1872-73. Portrait of the Artist's Father.

Portrait of the Artisfs Mother.

Portrait of Himself at Table (painted at Rome, owner Herr Heubach, Heidelberg),

1873. Moor Reading the Newspaper (painted at Rome, Stadel Institute, Frankfort).  
Negro with an Empty Purse (painted at Rome).

Negro with Peonies (painted at Rome).

In the Castle of Heidelberg (Darmstadt Gallery).

1874. Variants of Christ in the Tomb (painted in spring at Brussels).

1874. Various landscapes, among which are the one in the Berlin National Gallery and the one in the Pinakothek at Munich. Painted in summer at Herreninsel.

1875. Portrait of Himself as a Soldier.

1876. Portrait of the Man with the Red Beard in Furs (Herr Ullmann, Frankfort).

Blonde lady with Furs and Hat.

Old Woman with both Hands showing.

Portrait of a Lady showing one Hand (Herr W. Weigand, Munich).

Lady in Gray.

Portrait of Schuch (Berlin National Gallery).

1876-77. The Battle of the Giants.

iSjj. Battle of the Lapiths and the Centaurs.

1878. Crucifixion,

Hunting Scene.

Ccesar at the Rubicon (a dog looking at sausage on a table) (Carlsruhe Gallery).

Zimmermannsplatz (Kunsthalle, Hamburg).

1879. Dante's Inferno.

1880. Tilly.

1881. Battle of Ampfing.

Battle of Wimpfen.

1882. Parade of the Munich Guard.

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have an earnest purpose of doing or producing something which shall bear the stamp of honesty and thoroughness, so that when complete it is the true image of your inmost soul, any makeshift method, any want of understanding of the material will be as much against that purpose as a lie is against truth. If there are words that you do not understand and with which you wish to say something which they do not express, it is not only better that they should be left unsaid, but it is a great misfortune that they should be said even under compulsion." \*

â€œ " Literary Remains of Philipp Otto Runge," published by his eldest brother.  
(Hamburg, Perthes, 1840.)

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L. V. HOFMANN. DRAWING FROM " PAN

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MAX LIEBERMANN: HOME FOR OLD MEN IN AMSTERDAM (1880)

MAX LIEBERMANN: COURTYARD OF THE ORPHANAGE IN  
AMSTERDAM (1881)

STADEL INSTITUTE, FRANKFORT-ON-THEMAIN

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LIEBERMANN AND HIS CIRCLE

LIEBERMANN is Connected with the school of Leibl through Munkacsy, with whom he was associated much as was Manet with Stevens. His relations with the Hungarian were closer, however, than those of the Frenchman with the

Belgian. The difference between Manet and Stevens was essentially greater, if only because they belonged to different races. The Hungarian Jew and the Berlin Jew were nearer to each other. They had a community of methods and expression, but happily, as in the case of the other pair, no community of taste. Liebermann emerged from Leibl's sphere of influence and re-acted upon it. Munkacsy's Lint-makers^ Liebermann's first work, the Goose-pluckers, and Hirth du Frenes' Hop-pickers, which appeared six years later, form a series. Uhde's Concert may be added to the number. The influence exercised by Liebermann in his later days continues the history of German painting down to the present time.

We traced the revival of painting in Germany to the exhibition of the Frenchmen in Munich in 1869, and found that the halt in its development was due to the break in our relations with French art almost as soon as they were formed. At this time Liebermann was at Weimar, Genelli's town, and was a student in Thumann's studio — a raven in the dovecote. The youth from Berlin had not a spark of comprehension for things which he could not see and count on his fingers. He came from a Berlin that was preparing to play a part, and was also beginning to lay aside its accustomed respect for the past. His development, like that of his native town, was astonishingly logical and startlingly rapid. It was a development which was thoroughly unpopular with the old leaven that wished to reckon, not with art in Germany, but with German art ; and it sought on its own responsibility and found what was needful.

The teachers to whom he went were foreign ; first, the very school in which Feuerbach had studied, the colour of Wappers which had been brought to Weimar by Pauwels, the pupil of the Belgian ; then Paris.

Liebermann was more practical than Triibner, who set out to establish the glory of German painting at the same time as he, but in another direction. Triibner, with the thoroughness of his race, wished to assimilate all art from the Middle Ages down to his own day, and perhaps he overlooked the possibility that he might not have time to carry out this programme. In 1873, the year in which Triibner went to Rome, Liebermann went to Paris. Triibner's typically German countenance would scarcely have been welcomed on the banks of the Seine two years after the end of the war.

In taking this step Liebermann began by casting off what he did not want. When we study his work, notably of his first period, memories of the old masters are not absent, but there is nothing to challenge comparisons. Its obvious inspiration was the achievement of the Millet-Courbet generation, who were just finishing their day's work when Liebermann came to Paris. He followed them more closely than any of the Germans.

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Liebermann, however, was a German, and a German of the school of Leibl, inasmuch as what he looked for in the first instance among the Frenchmen was shadow. Manet, though so near, was if possible more completely a stranger to him than to his colleague Triibner, who knew of the Olympia quite early. This Spanish manner may at first merely have disturbed him, and there is no reason to regret his delayed knowledge. It made it possible for him to develop the art neglected at that time even in France, of which Millet and Courbet were both exponents, and to find the form most suited to the type of his creative genius. To this Manet added a further attribute, which was well controlled.

The use Liebermann made of Courbet was a different matter to the study which the true Leibl circle had bestowed on the Frenchman. They had tried to beautify realism by treating it in the manner of the old masters ; they looked to him only for an objective stimulus. Liebermann, on the contrary, was seeking for an organic form for his talent.

The consistency with which he pursued this object all his life is reflected in all his pictures. It was some time before this constant effort produced the Liebermann whom, in the presence of his great achievement, we revere to-day, yet it is extraordinarily strong even in his first pictures. It is the racial instinct for organisation. In Leibl's circle this same tendency was present but it concentrated itself on fragmentary painting, and in the case of the head of the school it led to those bewildering complexities the ramifications of which I have tried to indicate. Liebermann's instinct drives him to deal with larger surfaces, and in this he follows the natural endeavours of all modern art.

Only one of his pictures (representing, I think, an engraver in his studio and painted before the Goose-pluckers) is detail painting in the manner of the school of Wappers ; it gives things that have nothing to do with the picture. In the Goose-pluckers he gets his first grasp of form. Following the old proverb which he had made his own, he had only to leave out of the picture all that was unessential in order to realise his art. Liebermann is the painter of energy. He has the virtue which characterises his compatriots in the narrower sense ; the charm that he exercises is above all things the charm of energy. Superb early sketches by him are extant, the Preserve-makers in the Leipzig Museum, the sketch for the Infant School which lately appeared in Paris and so forth : they suggest the palette of Ribot suddenly possessed by a devil. In these sketches and such as these, the same Ribot, of whom Leibl faintly reminds us, has acquired a stronger temperament. In the finished picture this impetuous technique was often smoothed down and Liebermann's pictures always suffered more than Leibl's by such translation. Leibl could always paint a finished picture. Liebermann had to finish his in the sketch. How should he have acquired a taste for leisurely work ? If, after the first draft, Leibl paused to reflect,

he thought of Holbein. Liebermann thought of himself ! It was he therefore who ran the risk of being trivial.

He overcame this danger by methods of his own. Modern as he is, he did not shut his eyes to the necessity of finding a schema that would enable him to give expression to what was in him. He sought a method of separating from the myriads of phenomena a group of tasks which would be suited to his genius and which would enable him to proceed from smaller to greater achievements.

For a nature so concrete, which regarded all fancy as a mere makeshift, this

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schema could not be literary in character. The world of sensation which Millet called into being meant almost nothing to Liebermann. Millet affected him always by his details, never by his synthesis ; the anatomy of his painting was helpful to the German, not its character.

Emil Heilbut, the first biographer of Liebermann, goes to the root of the matter in his study of *Germinal*. He reminds us how Etienne and Suvarin met by the canal and observes : " When Zola attributed to these two a taste for simple landscape of this kind he premised a common attitude of mind in those whose natures are most clearly stamped with the essential characteristics of the new age. Socialists and Nihilists like Etienne and Suvarin have a fondness for the flattest landscape, whose straight lines are very far from giving any sensual pleasure, and this feeling has been expressed in art by a group of painters extremely modern in their views, who are important rather owing to their character than to their number. Their sensibility is charmed by the monotony of plains with low, isolated houses and cowering figures that hardly stand out against the landscape, in which the puddles seem to soil the light of day as they reflect it, and the ribbon of road that cuts through it loses itself in distance and darkness, mournful, vague, hopeless and endless.

" These artists have kept themselves far from the dwellings of the rich, far from their ideas and their comfort. They make their work impossible for the walls of rich amateurs. Yet it seems that the rich themselves are giving way and adopting the new fashion, adapting themselves to the ugly, dismal colour, though hitherto they could suffer only pleasant and pretty things.

" But the question is. What is there in common between the Etiennes and the Suvarins and these artists of the new epoch ? The feeling for Nature of hopeless mortals seeking solace has taken possession of them. They are unable to endure the godlessness of their age which they have so sharply formulated and so clearly under-



stood, and which they represent by their intellects. They are weighed down by a nostalgia for an earlier time, the golden age in which all things were simple and childlike. An immense sadness has fallen on them like a burden. They are the enthusiastic partisans of the poor and the suffering just as if these were better than the rest of the world, and as the poor are more paintable in their rags they find in them something that is almost a consolation for the gods that they have lost. Through all their modernity runs an anachronism ; they are in fact the mystics of our century. They find their inspiration in the lowliest corner, in the smallest matters. They are intoxicated with creation ; they are drunk with adoration of Nature, the mighty mother, in her simplest manifestations. There is something immature in their impulses and they have no clear consciousness of themselves ; it is a kind of prescience in which as yet they can only feel . . ." \*

It is twenty years since these lines were written. The feeling they express crystallised into a theory, and as the group of artists in question grew in numbers and declined in importance people learned more and more to appreciate Liebermann's individuality.

First his shadows, then his high lights startled the eyes of both his friends and his enemies in Germany, much as Manet's plain air had startled Frenchmen before 1870. This was a good thing so far as it went, as it suggested something beyond the eternal question of the Beautiful and the Ugly. This change helped to

â€œ " Max Liebermann and Naturalism," by Herman Helfreich, Kunst fUr Alle, II. 14 and 15 (April 15 and May i, 1887). See also an article by the same author in the same journal XII. 15 (May I, 1897).

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spread a knowledge of physiology and thus tended to deliver artistic judgment from the unspeakable follies of the moralist connoisseur.

Since then people have acquired some sense of proportion, and in Liebermann's case as in Manet's, the question of light and shade has become, not indeed a matter of indifference, but one of secondary importance. This involves no innovation in the rules of art ; it only shows more practically and more decisively than was shown by his immediate predecessors how eternal these rules are.

Liebermann's system, if we may so describe the relation to Nature which he sought to subordinate to his purpose, was a spatial system. It is clearly traceable in all his early pictures, and at first it is even the criterion of value of many of his works. That is to say, that the pictures wherein we see it seem better inspired than others in which we find less concrete methods and which seem to possess less

artistic unity. It is otherwise with his later pictures, where the artist has learned to work without any obvious recourse to a system and where outward movement has become inward meaning and style a part of his being.

The system seems to act as a sort of channel for the sources of light with which the artist was accustomed to work. This effect is very marked in the fine pictures, painted about 1880, which were brought to Berlin a few years ago from the Faure and Maitre collections. Liebermann was fond of shady alleys, as in the case of the Old Men's Almshouse or the Courtyard of the Orphanage at Amsterdam, where the sun falls through the foliage on a row of old men or girls. He was aiming at a similar effect in his school pictures, where he paints a crowd of children, and in his Preserve-makers, where he paints a company of girls in an interior. In the Flax Shed in the National Gallery the system is carried to its extreme limits. On the benches under the four windows of the long room the children sit at work presenting an arabesque of innumerable backs and heads. The threads of flax run like rays of sunlight into the room from the window, parallel with the beams of the roof, and are held by the women who animate the foreground.

All these men, women, girls and children in the various pictures are as it were receptacles for light and colour, arranged so as to collect and distribute the splendour in an agreeable manner. The light comes to them through gaps in the foliage, from the door, from the windows ; and they for their part supply the tones and colours from which arise the effects of the light upon their clothes, their hands, and their faces. Liebermann's naturalism consists in using this contrivance only for the natural purpose of the picture, and in the fact that he does not attempt to juggle with these simple materials.

Now Menzel is a naturalist. Heilbut very acutely calls him a mannerist, because he seeks his methods in Nature, not in himself, and because he does not achieve the synthesis which Liebermann's manner does achieve. Liebl himself did a few things of the Menzel type and they were among his least successful ventures. Menzel represents Chaos ; he depends on the chance that the excerpt from Nature with which he intends to present us has been happily selected. He is like realistic novelists who try to make their characters individual by peculiarity of diction or similar tricks. His works are studies from memory, good in favourable circumstances, for he can both draw and paint ; satisfying, even, if he is lucky and Nature happens to suit him. Liebermann happened to suit Nature and that is just the difference.

Liebermann's energy, which I have praised so highly, and which so often makes Menzel appear lukewarm in comparison, is not a moral but as it were a caloric

MAX LIEBERMANN: PILOTS (1874)

ARNOLD'S GALLERY, DRESDEN

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MAX LIEBERMANN: HORSEMEN BY THE SEA

FRIEDMANN COLLECTION, BERLIN

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energy. As he props himself on no spiritual crutches people have called him unintellectual and have wondered at his cleverness. It was a deliverance for Germany when a technical way was found out of her difficulties through technique alone. But this sort of energy is as spiritual as any other, and in art as in life it involves a struggle with Nature against Nature.

In Liebermann's case the spectacle of this struggle has its charm. He had his method from the first ; it was as primitive as that of the old pictures of the saints. He gradually reduced the number of details and eliminated the many in order to strengthen the one. He followed the rule of economising his strength as far as possible and at last achieved the vigorous type of his art which contains all the expression of his groups in a few rugged lines.

Muther. \* so far as I know, was the first to give any idea of Liebermann's monumental quality. He rated his conception more highly than his technique, which was right, and he spoke of the confusion of Menzel and of the sobriety of Liebermann's surfaces. More recently an artist of the modern decorative school, Schultze-Naumburg, has carefully analysed this quality and by a consideration of the character of the action represented by the artist, he arrives at an appreciation of his greatness as the exponent of a monumental art. f This seems to go to the root of the matter. Liebermann is above all things a monumental artist.

Our perverse age has accustomed us to compromises ; we use the names of past ages to distinguish tendencies the direction of which we divine, even when the concrete object which gave definiteness to the aims of the old masters has disappeared. Thus we have monumental artists but no monuments. When Liebermann painted his Woman with the Goats or the peasants striding over the dunes, he was not thinking of the great wall which would have been the fitting surface for

these mighty things, and when on a later occasion he did get one commission to decorate a hall it was much the same to him as if he had been asked to paint an ordinary picture. In Rosenhagen's exhaustive biography, in which, among other things, these remarkable Miihlenburg decorations are reproduced, it is said that Millet, Segantini and Liebermann fell short of what they might have done because they had no opportunity of practising monumental decoration. This does not sound convincing. It is even absurd in the case of Segantini, who had great difficulty in filling his spaces properly even in his pictures and who never managed to retain the charm of his little drawings in these. It is certainly not true of Millet ; one might as well wish that Rembrandt had painted frescoes. It is mere heresy to assert that Millet, in whom so divine a harmony reigns, could have brought it to a higher perfection in another form. It seems impossible that that little gem in the Louvre "the mother and her child" could be stronger or more effective if the art which inspires it had expressed itself on a whole wall. Art only begins when such trifles as questions of format are ruled out.

No monumental art is possible without a background ; the mind of a multitude must be expressed in the individual. The multitude behind Liebermann is the new Berlin, of which he is the symbol. This has at first sight as little to do with his painting as the fact that he talks Berlin slang, and yet it is the most striking feature of his work. It is not the character of Holland that he paints "what interest have we in the soul of Holland !" but Berlin, Berlin which as yet has no

â€œ " Geschichte der Malerei im XIXten Jahrhundert," vol. iii, p. 421.

t "Neues von Max Liebermann," " Kunst fur AUe," XVI. 7 (January 1901).

X " Liebermann," Ha^s von Rosenhagen (" Kunstlermonographien," VeUagen und Klasing, 1900).

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traditions, which with its Emperor, its soldiers, and the motley bourgeoisie drawn from every state in the empire, seems an amorphous body and yet has mighty aspirations. It is sustained by nothing but its energy, a wild life force that cannot be put down and is now beginning to seek a language for itself.

Liebermann presages the future aspects of this body. He renders the charm of Berlin which is already dimly divined, the pleasing side of a sincerity which some day will be expressed without impudence and even with grace. A Parisian in good society speaks to-day as his forefathers spoke just before the Revolution when the most threatening symptoms of disorder were admired as intellectual originality. His blague is the same as the clever and charming unpracticality of the people who took care not to get dirty when they laid their powdered heads

and pigtails under the guillotine. Liebermann represents a more serious, a less charming and a less frivolous people who have something better to do with their heads. Their style is far from the sentimentality of the days of good Queen Luise whose generation would be horrified at our present desert of ugliness, which is so excessive that it continues to surprise Paris and Vienna. But we have done the only thing possible ; we have organised our ugliness, and if it does not delight the rest of mankind it begins to impress them.

Liebermann is typical of this *beaute de diable* of Berlin. The beauty of his work is hygienic in a sense ; it is quite unscented, like the soap so much used by the Berlin folks. It is not only cleanly, it is clean, noble and solid throughout – a cold beauty, to possess which is as much a necessity of intellectual health as a matter of inclination.

In this sort of form draughtsmanship plays the principal part. Liebermann's development, like that of others, displays the peculiar German evolution from colour to line. His energy seems to throw off its envelope of colour as the years go by ; his style is bare, far from Millet's atmosphere, which was coloured by Pissarro, but far also from the sauce of his beloved Israels. Yet the effect of his work is never poor ; there is something of modern comfort in Liebermann ; there is no gold, no jewellery, no pomp, but he has the conciseness of contemporary elegance. In the *Boys bathing*, of 1897, now at Frankfort, this characteristic is strongly marked. There is a strict simplicity of colour ; the lines are straight ; there is a touch of coldness in the atmosphere, in the subject, and in the feeling of the picture. One is very far from the *Baigneuses* of the Frenchmen who cannot imagine any one but a woman bathing. In Germany the male form tempts the artist. It lends itself to drawing not to colour ; it is a sinewy form which makes one think not of love but of the gymnasium ; the bones are sound and there is but little fat. In Liebermann's pictures it becomes more and more austere. Compare with these nude studies of youths the early picture *Brother and Sister*, from which Koepping made his fine engraving, the girl with the child on her arm. Israels' influence is clear – a feeble edition of Rembrandt. Since then Liebermann has thrown a good deal of ballast overboard, and with it all that remained of the sentimentality that in the seventies still threatened him at times.

Even without sentiment it is possible to show much wit, not merely on a great and monumental scale, but in an intimate and amusing manner – Liebermann is one of the best of artist-humorists. Nothing can be more charming than his pig pictures, especially the one at Wiesbaden in which the young Httter is rushing greedily into the trough while the old sow lumbers up grunting heavily. There is a squeal of delight in this picture. The pen-and-ink study,

here reproduced, although it deals with swine, seems to me as elegant in its fine lines as the studies for his portraits of ladies.

As is almost natural in a Berliner, Liebermann is cosmopolitan. His style came from Leibl, a draughtsman, but he adopted everything that he found needful elsewhere. As a young man he learnt his art at Barbizon, and his development gradually completed itself, running parallel with the most characteristic currents in the artistic life of Paris. He could not introduce Monet's Impressionism with all its consequences into Berlin. That would have been abnormal. An art, successful as this was, which staked everything on colour, was at the time impossible in Germany. The pure colour of that school was not to be transplanted, nor were the decorative idea of Manet and the consequent teaching of Monet. The streets of Berlin cannot be set with trees to flourish after the fashion of Paris. Liebermann observed and learned to love these men, but the Parisian draughtsmen were more useful to him. Degas was his affinity.

In his brilliant study \* Liebermann places Degas highest among the Frenchmen. His enthusiasm is not only that of one extolling a pioneer in his own paths. There are whole worlds in Degas which Liebermann could not enter, the privileges of his race, the classic feeling, the reminiscence of Ingres. He is the most abrupt of the Frenchmen ; his lines are the straightest among their arabesques, and yet how voluptuous are his women compared with Liebermann's sobriety ! It was Degas' taste, his choicest gift, that the German sought to rival. He could find no more exalted model. Whether he attains it is almost entirely a matter of taste too. He seems to me to have reached the same eminence in Germany as Degas in France. If we set an ideal Germany (the realisation of our presentiments of the future taste) over against an ideal France (the actual exquisite French taste which is the inheritance of the past) so that the best qualities of the two races are opposed to each other, we shall find that, when he is compared with the foreigner, the Jew in Liebermann is lost in the German.

Liebermann could not reach these heights by a direct approximation to Degas ; the more he came to resemble him the further he would have departed from him. He went to the sources which Degas used, so to speak, experimentally, to the foreigners with whom even Degas had nothing racial in common, to Japan. It might be possible to show that certain qualities in Liebermann grew finer in proportion as his Japanese collection improved. For Degas the Japanese were models. He did what he liked with them ; they enhanced his qualities, made his works greater, more fluent, more decorative. Japan had been the property of Parisian artists since Rousseau in the sixties used to sell his pictures for a mere song in order to buy Japanese things. Degas, too, was among the first who sought them out, and he knew how to reproduce the result in a natural manner. Liebermann learned a deeper vision from them. Japan helped him to build up more freely the system of which I spoke at the beginning and made him a European instead of a Dutchman.

This addition differentiates Liebermann in the most piquant manner from the school of Leibl. Leibl had power, never wit. Menzel's wit is of another kind, which does not consist in having a supple wrist like the Japanese and the fortunate Europeans who have learned in their school. It is only possible to appreciate Liebermann's wit when one has given up liking Menzel's.

The Liebermann of the equine pictures was the product of a remarkable training.

\* Published by B. Cassirer, Berlin, previously in " Fan " IV.

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The effect of his art is like the movement of a blood horse which knows not effort and answers to the slightest pressure of the knee. Liebermann has always performed what he promised. His earlier pictures are a trifle empty at times ; his principles led him to avoid anything like profusion. The monumental vein in him inclined to austerity. He required to be older in order to reach his final aim.

The value of this aim seems to me to lie in the unique success he attained without sacrificing what he had gained already. There is no weak line pointing to compromise in the whole picture of this man's life. The maturity of his best days which we are now witnessing is the full realisation of his powers ; the astonishing sense of proportion in the drawing which sustains the colour, in the colour itself, in the whole and in every detail, is the expression of a complete theory which had the good fortune as it had the will and the power to develop in harmony with a happy instinct. Liebermann seems to me to be one of the few men who have every reason to be satisfied with fate. It was certainly a most fortunate concatenation of circumstances that enabled him to climb so high. He was lucky in happening on the right time and place, lucky also in being able to satisfy all the necessities of his creative instinct. This good fortune makes him all the more acceptable in this age in which the fighters are so many and the conquerors so few. There is none of the pessimism in his pictures that old-fashioned people used to see in them. They are splendid evidences of an unconquerable belief in health.

The characteristics of Liebermann's associates do not belong to the consideration of art in the narrower sense. Their history, like a great part of Liebermann's, comes under the heading of German culture, which deals less with personalities than with ideas. Details in the case of the lesser people are not important here^ where we are dealing only with a few great men. Uhde, Liebermann's intimate friend, has not justified his early promise or fulfilled the hopes which Heilbut expressed in his first well-known study of Naturalism. Ten years after this was

written the critics, with Heilbut at their head, altered the order of merit and placed Liebermann before Uhde. In another ten years it is possible that the interval between the two will be increased.

Uhde's fate may be described as the contrary of Liebermann's as I have just described it. He never had any luck, even though worldly success came sooner to him than to his colleague. All the circumstances which combined to favour Liebermann, and among them the fact that success did not come so quickly, were against Uhde. The most decisive of all was that which no one can alter : the inborn capacity "the racial factor. When all is said and done, all artistic evolution is as it were a process of sloughing off old skin. There must be the right sort of friction from without to make the scales fall, but there must also be a strong impulse from within in order to burst one old skin after another. '

Uhde changed his skin frequently, but there was no natural inward necessity about the process ; it was always a mere change of costume. Nothing injures delicate organs so much as capricious external tampering with them. It is hardly to be supposed that he did it in mere wantonness ; the disquiet of the time was to blame, perhaps also the want of a proper environment. The ex-Saxon officer could never be so much at home at Munich as Liebermann was among his

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FRANS HALS: PORTRAIT OF JEAN HONEBEEK



## BRUSSELS MUSEUM

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Berlin friends. It must never be forgotten what a help this consciousness of being at home was to the latter, even when people provoked him. Uhde lacked alike the system and the cool malice of Liebermann. He could not hold out long enough to overcome a superficial impression. Frans Hals helped him to get clear of Munkacsy, who had been of much service to him, but neither the one nor the other gave him the plastic quality of a solid form which he could make his own.

The importance of Frans Hals to the generation of 1870 can hardly be exaggerated. Each of these artists who are his debtors is characterised by what he owes to him. Manet drew most largely upon him ; the Dutchman was as indispensable to Manet as Goya. There is a surprising resemblance between Manet's best male portraits and the 'Jean Honeheek at Brussels, the young fisherman in the Antwerp Museum, and other works of the first class in which Hals attains the height of his quiet majesty and paints flesh in his best manner without lacerating it. Perhaps Manet found this art with its brilliant black, its glittering white and its vigorous brushing, even more helpful than the work of the Madrid masters. Courbet on the other hand preferred the other and more popular sides of the Dutchman, the Hille Bobbe which he copied at Aix.\* Uhde also copied it, but the laughing faces in the Schwerin collection and the pleased grin of the mandoline players in the Rijksmuseum suited him even better. In spite of his great admiration for Hals, Leibl remained free from his influence ; indeed one of the most important differences between him and his school is the adoption of Frans Hals by the latter. Triibner, strong in his own technique, began by reducing his model, and retained in his own work only so much of Hals' impetuosity as his colour could control. It was only in his latest period, for instance in the equestrian portrait here reproduced, that he uses the great brush-strokes of Frans Hals, and even then he orders them much more strictly than his master. Liebermann, also, in his travels in Holland was not unaffected. In 1875 he had already copied the Bohemienne in the Louvre ; in the next few years he painted a few of the figures from the great guild pictures at Haarlem, the latest in 1884, and he often planned to paint the child with the nurse of the picture in the Berlin Museum. Frans Hals was the only master he ever copied. The audacious play of his model's brush hardened his drawing, but the traces of the Dutch master are barely perceptible, and the influence of Hals seems to become fainter year by year, or rather to be more absorbed among the other elements of his character. Uhde, however, lacked this capacity for absorption. In him Frans Hals' impetuosity becomes a bald sobriety. The sense that can perceive only gesture loses itself in emptiness. Uhde's art is purely intellectual ; characteristic in so far as it has nothing to do with painting, it is utterly wanting in character to those who demand a strong creative impulse. Even

the religious element does not help him out. The much talked of new ideal of Christ which is ascribed to Uhde is as completely superficial as many a mannered picture by the godless Hals, though it lacks his incisive bravura.

Other Germans are threatened with another danger ; they are becoming specialists. In so doing they seem at first sight to be following the same course as so many of their contemporaries in Paris, who are active in a narrow field ; but their method, earnest as it is, is less interesting than the specialisms which flourish by the Seine. Pissarro, Guillaumin, and their associates helped forward the movement by single steps ; they prepared things which others carried further, and they perfected in their way what they had taken up. It was a case of division of

\* Courbet's copy is now in the Cheramy collection, and is almost finer than the original at Berlin.

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labour. In Germany it is more a division of the material. The individualisation is always superficial. There are many brilliant successes such as Banzer's Dancing Peasants, Kalckreuth's Toy Theatre, Kuhl's fine Elbe pictures. Liebermann's sure average, his power of finding a reasonable norm for his temperament, is given to very few of our artists. What we still lack, much as it has been talked about, is a concerted movement. How disciplined was the fight made by the French Impressionists ! There each little problem finds some one whose work, in the great combined whole, is to find its solution. Think of Monet's hundred landscapes, of Cezanne's innumerable studies of still life, of Sisley's repetitions. These people form a school ; their invention begins where German invention leaves off. This was the way in which the old masters understood actuality. Of course repetition alone is useless. Leibl, Triebner, and Liebermann are models, the first for perseverance, the second for courage, the third for judgment in choosing his task. The third contains the other two. There is no better type of mastery in the sense in which the word is used to-day than Liebermann. His defects are known to everybody ; he proclaims them himself. If he seems one-sided so much the better ! This kind of narrowness which falls back upon the best things is not an evil. I consider the aversion to symbolism which he used sometimes to express in a very uncompromising way in the early nineties, to have been more due to a want of enthusiasm for Bocklin and Thoma than to any superstitious belief that painting only existed to express certain definite things, that is to say, the things in which he was interested. The symbolism of Ingres and Delacroix, of Puvis and Maurice Denis, would not have been so distasteful to him. And indeed is he not himself a symbolist of the first water ? He showed Germans who gabbled about their nationality (behaving the while like savages !) what the true position of Germany was, and laid it down definitely that no one can be German without being Euro-

pean. Schiller's dictum about the effect of a good man upon his contemporaries is particularly apposite in his case ; even if his pictures are not valued in the future as they are now, he will have done enough for us.

Apart altogether from his painting no one had a greater gift for agitation than Liebermann, and no agitation ever had a worthier aim. Each of his pungent sentences was aimed at that darling of the German heart, the useless genius, and spoke out for a new kind of intellect by which it is possible to live. He did not hide his light under a bushel. His wit attracted people who did not believe in his pictures. He made amateurs of them, and if he insisted on liberal purchase as the touchstone of appreciation, it was not so much his purse that was interested as his desire to see this type of art established in Berlin. Many of his suggestions bore good fruit ; it is certainly due to him that fewer Bocklins have found their way into public and private collections. With his wit and his charm he gradually acquired a power which is nowadays becoming more legendary than ever and is having its effect. In the Berlin Secession it was partly organised by him.

TJiis healthy spirit has emboldened the more courageous Germans to do things which ten years ago one would have supposed our countrymen would have been the last to attempt. Liebermann himself was not able to work out the consequences of following the French even as colourists, but others who were associated with him have taken up the task. Thus we see in Germany in a small compass the drama which was played in Paris with Delacroix and Seurat in the

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chief parts. As in the provinces, the German stage contents itself with a smaller company. There is no hero "no Delacroix. Courbet's part was well played ; Liebermann and Triibner represented the generation of 1870. But no one has as yet attempted the part of Monet.

Liebermann followed up the discoveries of Impressionism in a wholly superficial manner. He had no inclination to carry on Monet's division of the surface ; he set too much store by his drawing to risk any experiments with it. He is now in fact a stronger Whistler, but a Whistler who is by no means inclined to allow his method to be seen in its primitive condition. His tendency was to evolve regular brushstrokes from the splashes of Munkacsy, as seen for example in the Visit to the Woman in Childbed in the Pinakothek, and these strokes lengthened in proportion as the composition strove to express itself in large lines. Its use was to emphasise the directions of the picture, and thus to help him to attain full command of his monumental art.

The transition to the pure art of flat painting in Germany may therefore be said to have taken place almost abruptly. It might indeed be traced back to the charming Weimar landscapes of Gleichen-Russwurm, an artist who has never been appreciated as he deserves and who introduced Impressionism single-handed into German painting. He was a pupil of Hagen at Weimar and was then an admirer of Bocklin, as his picture in the National Gallery shows. Monet rescued him from this aberration, and Monet's colour with its mixture of pure tints was thenceforth his ideal. He lacked the Frenchman's temperament ; his pictures are always fresh and very pleasing, in them one always feels the joyous touch of a man who was in close sympathy with Nature ; but there is nothing of that distinction which is so unmistakable in Monet's most ephemeral productions. It was owing to his influence that his old teacher Hagen took to the same methods late in life. Though the attempt was not altogether successful, the spectacle of an old pupil of Achenbach who had had his successes in the days of his youth beginning as it were all over again is not without a beauty of its own.

Max Stremel and Paul Baum, two Germans of a younger generation, tried more deliberately to carry on among us the development begun by Seurat in Paris. Stremel went to Paris with Uhde in 1879, when he was twenty, and joined Munkacsy. He left the school, however, without showing a trace of the influence experienced by Uhde. He copied Rubens in the Louvre and among contemporaries Corot interested him most. Jettel took him to Holland, and it was probably there in the presence of the Vermeers in the Six Gallery, and the Delft landscapes in the Mauritshuis that some dim notion of the technique first dawned upon him. There is no doubt that Stremel and Baum got their results without contact with Seurat. No doubt they saw the Impressionists in Paris, but the subsequent movement remained hidden from them in their retreat at Knocke in Belgium. Their first exhibition of pictures on the divisionist principle was held in Berlin at Gurlitt's in 1891. It was three years later, at the first exhibition of the Libre Esthetique, that they met with Signac and Rysselberghe. At the same time they made the acquaintance of Pissarro and his friends at Knocke, as well as of the controversial writers of the movement ; Gustave Kahn told them the history of Seurat.

With all due respect for this independence, we must admit the superiority of the Parisians. Perhaps the self-imposed toil of the Germans in acquiring their technique was in itself a hindrance. Stremel never gets clear away from his

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palette ; his colour is always a burden on the canvas instead of an adornment. He is no pedant in his technique and even mixes his colours occasionally, when he is anxious to bring out the qualities of his material. What he lacks has nothing to do with technique at all ; it is the sparkling intelligence of a Signac or a Cross,

the mobility of these great virtuosi. Baum, less rich and less logical, often gets more vivacity. The effect of his landscapes is fluent, whereas Stremel often seems to stagnate. It is the same phenomenon as in Hans Olde's conscientious pictures. Germany has for so long been unaccustomed to any technical discipline that those artists who strive to correct former errors have become curiously materialistic. Either their temperament flies over the canvas and leaves nothing of any importance behind, as in the case of Slevogt, or it gets lost altogether in the colour.

Neo-Impressionism received a decisive impulse in Germany when the Parisians themselves crossed the frontier in the nineties. Pachter, whose death was sadly premature and whose claim to a monument will appear when a history of taste in Berlin is written, engineered the transition from Menzel to Liebermann via Japan with some success. This clever and discreet connoisseur, who years before had been bold enough to exhibit the first example of Degas in his comfortable private office, began to bring the first landscapes of Signac and his school seen in Germany to the notice of the intimate circle who were admitted to that sanctum. Soon afterwards these pictures found their way into picture exhibitions at Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, and elsewhere and excited a certain number of belated strictures among the critics. The youthful circle led by Van de Velde which gathered round Count Kessler \* became enthusiastic partisans and purchasers.

There is nothing surprising in the progress which the movement made in C. Hermann, Rohlf, Richter, E. R. Weiss and in the Dresden artists W. Ritter and Berta Schrader, who followed Signac more or less closely and were remarkably quick to seize the essential principle of his work. Why should a country without any conscious artistic tradition not be ready to welcome a movement which fills so many gaps with its systematic programme and helps the individual artist over difficulties which he could otherwise only overcome by a refined and purified instinct ? The mere fact that here there is a tendency, an organised effort, to break through the unfortunate isolation of our artists, will appear a blessing to any one who takes a philosophic view of art. There may be various opinions as to the permanent value of the method ; as an educative influence among us who have no rational school of painting, it can do nothing but good. The danger that in maladroit hands this method of expression may become even less personal in Germany than it is in Paris need not alarm us, to whom it is of paramount importance that our artistic outlook should be freed from extra-artistic influences. Even if a decent harmony of colour is in itself no great achievement, it is certainly better for the eyes than the deceptive seductions of Scotch reminiscences or the banality of cheap anecdote. Everything, indeed, suggests that in Germany as in Belgium, Neo-Impressionism is merely a transition stage whose value is that it enables artists who are not committed to painting by compelling tasks, to break new ground with greater confi-

\* Author of the article, " The Artistic Value of Neo-Impressionism," which appeared first in the

" Tag," and then separately as a rejoinder to an attack on the movement by Von Oettingen in the same journal.

## LIEBERMANN AND HIS CIRCLE

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dence. This new ground is attracting so much undisciplined talent, which in its present state can accomplish nothing in either field, that one can only rejoice if by this means the present exodus from painting to decorative art may at least be accompanied by some disciplined sense of colour.

It remains for me to consider the nature of this exodus.

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## MAX LIEBERMANN PEN AND INK DRAWING.

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## THE ENGLISH REACTION

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The author is conscious of having done some violence to history in previous chapters. It was necessary to draw as sharp a distinction as possible between Minne and Maillol and the English movement, and clearly to emphasise the connection which unites these two men with the most characteristic art of our time. This anticipation was justified, not so much by the moderate amount of work which Minne and Maillol have achieved, as by the living instinct of which they are the expression, the hopes which they aroused and the path which they have struck out. Parallel with this solitary path runs the broad high road of familiar history which began in England. This has been regarded almost as a renaissance, the fourth, as it were, in the series which begins with the Augustan age.

Difficult as it is to ascribe such vivifying power to the Empire which produced David, as to that which, four centuries previously, founded a new world on the ruins of the old, the aspect of the epoch introduced by Blake is incomparably poorer. A characteristic of this epoch is the attempt of an independent art, confining itself to painting, to create a universal style. The Empire had pursued a great ideal, and had been in a sense necessary ; it coincided with an epoch in which the people were struggling for a new language, while it so identified itself with the fate of the great cause which created it, that the premature collapse of Napoleon brought this phase of art to an end also. Here one man had been the centre of the movement ; but the abnormality of this fact is explained if we remember that this man was the master of the world. It was reserved for the English to repeat the experiment without Napoleon.

It is difficult to understand why Blake should enjoy a reputation above that of Raphael Mengs or his successors, and why the strange nimbus that encircles him should have been conferred upon him rather than upon his compatriot Flaxman or upon any other of the many classicists of the time. Some of Flaxman's outline drawings illustrating Dante seem to me more valuable than all Blake's illustrations put together. Flaxman's art is exceedingly thin and hardly adapted to meet the demands of to-day, but it is art after all ; it is a clearly realised language of form. It flows like the crystal waters of a clear, bright brook. Blake's pictures remind one of a damp and dismal bog, deep and mysterious " chaos is always mysterious " but pestilential and repulsive. We no longer find the generation which arose a century ago and crept after the old masters, very repulsive. The naivete with which they minimised the marble grandeurs of the ancients, the transformation of marble into porcelain, all this reverential helplessness before the great standards of antiquity, is touching when we have learned not to be irritated by it. The best works of the period have at any rate something systematic in their inadequacy ; this

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rendering in little of the great models is not entirely without its charm ; the scale is reduced by rule, not arbitrarily. But Blake is sickly. His illustrations are like the obscene hallucinations of a fever-stricken dwarf obsessed by the figures of Michelangelo. They are formless things. Times of decadence are full of such manifestations ; it would surprise no one to find such an artist at the present day in a Whitechapel garret or an aristocratic club in the West End, but at that time, in the most glorious century of England, in the only century in its history which produced real art, in the age of Hogarth and Gainsborough, Blake and his works are a dark and dismal problem. England had just given the strongest impulse to Continental painting, had produced Constable and Turner, the progenitors of modern painting, when this confused dreamer, born twenty years before them, smothered English art with his fantasies.

The reaction of the Pre-Raphaelites was ostensibly directed against the obscure classicists of the Royal Academy, whose banalities were felt to be pseudo-pictorial. They determined to destroy all this false painting, and painting itself was thrown overboard in the effort. In their wild animosity against the dreary draperies of the official painters, they forgot the fiery speech of Turner, and the reaction affected, not the Academicians who were proof against any serious attack, but the best traditions of the country, the vital forces of English painting as aroused by Constable. Even their appeal to Hogarth was tinged with irony. When in 1858 the famous club in Piccadilly was formed, and named after the painter of the Shrimp Girl, all genuine appreciation of what was best in Hogarth had disappeared.



The realism of Millais, Holman Hunt, and Ford Madox Brown, has been regarded as the counterpart of Courbet's ; this is not altogether complimentary to the Frenchman. The art which speaks in the *Casseurs de Pierres*, has little but community of name with Brown's famous *Work*. Courbet was a great creator ; he has been reproached for adopting tedious subjects without raising them from the commonplace. Yet these things seem impressive enough now, and we would not willingly be without any of them, even the commonplace, though indeed it is difficult to say in what their banality consists. There is a sense of space in his pictures, the mind expands as it contemplates them, and is conscious not so much of the realism of this or that detail, which has been decried as ugly, as of the realism of the effect produced by this sum of forces " ^its harmony. It is a realism wanting in English painting, which does not stand in space, but is stuck on the surface, giving the effect of a cross-section taken at random, the depth of which the eye is expected to divine. What we see is unco-ordinated, a mere heap of details uninspired by any artistic purpose which might give them meaning. Objective extravagance fails to hide this want of inward meaning.

*Work*, with its innumerable symbolical allusions, produces the effect of a collection of hieroglyphs, and the eye is tortured by the effort to understand. When Brown and Holman Hunt become more human, they are sentimental to the point of insipidity. Hunt's *Light of the World* is the English *Sunday* in paint, wearisome to the last degree. Its dramatic qualities are bad theatrical effects. Brown's picture of *King Lear's Curse* reminds one of the provincial stage, and his love-scene from "*Romeo and Juliet*" arouses regretful memories of Victor Müller's picture in Munich, which treats the same subject with infinitely more warmth and sense of form, in spite of all its weaknesses.

To make things more interesting, the dress of the time at which Melozzo da Forlì painted his frescoes was adopted. The last traces of the national genius

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were buried under this costume ; all that could be called English was the incredible audacity which connected these productions in any way with Raphael, and tried to emphasise in this comic manner the aesthetic appreciation that dethroned the Urbinate.

It was a stroke of genius. Two or three men of some discrimination suddenly discovered the irrefutable truth that painting was understood in Florence even before the splendid epoch of Roman art. As a truth it was not even new. Wackenroder and Friedrich Schlegel had demonstrated it fifty years before with no less energy, and the German Nazarenes were the first Pre-Raphaelites. Even Goethe, little as he thought of emotional aesthetics, revered its early originators none the

less, and wrote his " Mantegna " in 1823. The first Frenchman who appreciated the Primitives was Ingres, unless we are to believe Heinse, who reports in the " Ardinghello," a saying of Poussin, to the effect that Raphael was an ass. In 1806 Ingres was copying Giotto's frescoes and buying small Era Angelicos. About the same time or a little earlier the Chevalier Artand de Monthor began his famous collection of the Quattrocentisti.\* Between 1820 and 1830 the Berlin Museum, under the administration of Waagen, secured the Primitives from the collection of Solly. The first Englishman who gave any attention to the period before Raphael, apart from Charles I., who possessed the Mantegna cartoons, was Reynolds, the first president of that Academy so hated by the Pre-Raphaelites ; as early as 1750 he preferred the Italian painters before Raphael to those after his time.

Though the discovery was not new, the moment was favourable for its wide popularity. The Pre-Raphaelites backed their conviction with the announcement that they proposed to paint in the style of the rediscovered artists so far as they could, while the public was moved by this manifestation of devotion to accept with gratitude not only their aesthetic position, but also its practical demonstration. This demonstration indeed, went far beyond that which it sought to establish. Madox Brown, Holman Hunt and some others were the first to win recognition as early Florentines from a grateful public. A London lady is said to have asked a member of the brotherhood: " How is Mr. Botticelli to-day ? "and if the anecdote is not authentic, it is very apposite. Ruskin's voyages of discovery in Italy proved a great stimulus to the appreciation of the beautiful. The reaction against Raphael was necessary to provide a standard for the modern painters. The depreciation of the preceding generation was succeeded by a calmer judgment, which combined enthusiasm for the creators of Italian painting with admiration for the genius which concentrated their attractions. People began to appreciate the grandeur of the period which set the loveliness of the Urbinate beside the Jove-like figure of Michelangelo. An appeal to facts was fatal to the distorted views of the Ruskin school, and, if humour is not out of place in such matters, there is a certain humour in the fact that any Englishmen who can be said to be at all in touch with these models, followed the admitted weaknesses of Raphael much more closely than the virtues of his predecessors. Raphael's limitations are shown in his allusive symbolism. In the Sistine Chapel we see a giant creating a world expressed in vast unifying conceptions. The mighty sweep of his expression far transcends even such a theme as the story of the creation. When we reach the Stanze we must be content with less than the high ideals aroused by what we have seen if we are to enjoy this cheerful and decorous humanism,

\* Monthor was a French consul in Italy. The first edition of the catalogue of his collection (\* Peintres primitifs : Collection de tableaux rapportes de l'Italie") appeared in 1808.

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if we are to attune our senses still resounding with the speech of a god, to the appreciation of these smaller episodes. The wiseacres who find a deep and symbolical meaning in these episodes and who refer to Michelangelo in terms purely material, praising the art of his foreshortening, the boldness of his exaggerations and so forth, are apt to rouse an irritation which blunts our perception of Raphael's lighter graces. When we leave the little chapel near the Stanze where Fra Angelico painted San Lorenzo, the legend of the aged monk may seem more full of youth than the work of the young Raphael. The paintings in the Stanze always seem to lose something of their effect, whether we approach them from the glittering splendour of Pintoricchio in the Borgia apartments, or from the picture of Sixtus IV. and his nephews, in the picture gallery upstairs, or from any other part of the wonderful palace which was decorated in the Pre-Raphaelite age.

But when the solitary visitor sinks under his impressions of the Eternal City ; when the vast demands which it makes on his powers of appreciation reduce him to impotence ; when his spirit is quelled by the spirit of the ancients which becomes harder to grasp in proportion as the discoveries of its vestiges become more numerous, and which is so great that ambition itself makes success or failure depend upon understanding and possessing it ; when he loses courage and fears to take upon himself the weight of such a heritage, Raphael's smile brings relief in his depression. Among the mighty creative forces he seems a co-ordinator, a man who was less than the others and yet was blest, a youth whose charm gave him the right to wander upon Parnassus in joyous converse with the great. The superficiality of his symbolism becomes a triumphant subjectivity, an irresistible resolution to work in a sphere other than that of the mighty powers. In his limitations he finds his wisdom, and refuses to stir the depths of " the great sea of beauty " because he fears to destroy the tender ripples which only the zephyr breaths of genius can arouse. At such moments, nothing can be more refreshing to the eye than the lunette in the Stanza della Segnatura, where a garland of angels unites the three virtues of Prudence, Temperance and Fortitude, or the sibyls in Santa Maria della Pace, or the Galatea in the Villa Farnesina. Uplifted by the precious interplay of these rhythmical designs, the eye appreciates all the poetry which adorns the Stanza dell' Incendio.

It is a mere question of nerves how far a mind saturated with the contemplation of such things can reconcile itself with the art of the present day. He who recoils and turns away has either not seen what is best in modern art or he lacks that prudence in appreciation which is necessary when one passes from the Quattrocento to Raphael. The mind rebels against these sudden changes ; nevertheless it is stimulated, and the result is a profound distaste, almost a hatred, for all ineffectual compromise. With the ancients in mind, we are less repelled by a Claude Monet than by a Walter Crane.

The masquerade affected by the Englishmen served only to emphasise their barbarism. Millais' early picture, Lorenzo and Isabella, a representation of a company of Florentines at table, which was regarded as a masterpiece of the school,

is unpleasant to the point of indecency, for it is impossible to say whether it is intended for a masquerade or whether these pompous persons are really meant for Florentines, and whether the extraordinary legs of the gentleman in the foreground are intended to be historically exact. Millais cannot make us believe in him, and yet he lived in our time and must have known what we can and what we cannot believe. Now the old masters, whose histories have long been forgotten, who

WATTS: ORPHEUS AND EURYDICE

BEER COLLECTION

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worked only on commission, and for men whose ideas are now barely conceivable, succeed in inspiring belief in whatever they produced. They too looked to the past, to which, indeed, their debt is obvious. It is easy to find the ancestors of Donatello, the greatest of them all, in the museum at Naples, the place that now contains his horse's head, which Goethe took for an antique. Donatello's immortal successor in the art of sculpture was not ashamed to betray his origin yet more clearly ; what would Michelangelo be without this obvious and essential antique spirit which betrays his debt to Donatello with a thousand voices ? But the relationship was essential and not superficial. It was not the caprice of a dilettante who invites his friends to a masquerade, but the fulfilment of a supreme purpose. It rose to consciousness when the age, concentrating its impulses, rose to the height of its artistic splendour, and when the vision of an earlier artistic avatar of the race became so vivid that men were moved to ransack the earth for marbles, and would have created models for themselves had they not been discovered by excavation.

How was it possible that centuries later this instinct should suddenly produce a natural illumination in a people that owned not the smallest bond of kinship with the ancients ? For them the marble fragments imported from abroad were marvellous works of art, good enough to have a museum specially built for them ; they did not strike that personal note which the Italians had once found in them, when their shattered sanctity brought the inspiring affirmation of a glorious past.

English Pre-Raphaelitism, posturing before the Italian painters, was a wild aberration. Every painter must learn from great men ; no one, for instance, could object if the South Sea Islanders put themselves to school under ours. So far the Englishmen were well justified. But their mode of self-edification, seeing without perceiving, the system of plagiarising and then persuading one's self that one has been following a profound spiritual impulse, is vulgar. The English architects

of the last generation who attempted to reproduce the Greek spirit in London buildings, made themselves generally ridiculous ; none the less the spirit which inspires the architecture of the Bank of England is more respectable than the feeble sentiment of the Burne-Jones' school with its knightly gestures and crooked backbones. Whistler's fiercest enemy cannot find fault with his indignation upon this subject. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, the poet of the brotherhood, had Italian blood in his veins. He was a gentle, thoughtful character, the most sincere artist of this romanticism ; he was as great as an Italian can be who lives upon the past and has no present. He certainly was no genius, for genius does not bloom in deserts ; he was scarcely a form and could not give life even to the simplest subjects ; but his infinite sweetness of nature is obvious, and even in the depths of his despair he strikes chords which prove his distinction as a man if not as an artist.

But this tender and refined spirit had none of the intellectual power of his models. His head of Astarte is crudely materialistic compared with Leonardo's divine face ; the attempted softness degenerates into insipidity, and the smile has nothing of that heavenly loveliness which the creator of La Gioconda learned from the granite lips of the statues of Egyptian kings. The lips of Rossetti's lovers are a convention, and it is his strange use of this convention rather than the sensuous power of his art that gives them their attraction ; the same may be said of his sonnets, which are incomparably superior. Watts, the portrait painter of the group, is a better and indeed the best painter, though possibly the smallest artist, of them all. He has material where the others have only ideas, but how irredeemably ugly is this material !

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The essential quality of the art of all these painters is what is called their spirit. When this spirit is discussed in England, it might be supposed that it is something in the nature of music, something completely immaterial, which requires special organs for its appreciation, as even the eye is too gross to grasp it fully. Yet when we stand before their pictures it seems as if they had not the smallest capacity for making their material anything more than it was before they set their palettes. One is inclined to ask whether they have a palette at all, but one hesitates to put the question lest one should be stigmatised as an irrelevant idiot.

But indeed the history of the Pre-Raphaelites contains the answer itself. It corresponds with the beginnings of the movement in Blake, who called his papers frescoes with some pride, and it becomes clearer and clearer as it approaches the present time. Burne-Jones marks the decisive point. His great inventive power forced him to express so much that no side of his nature remains obscure, and his limitations are consequent)- obvious. These allowed of a considerable extension of the domain. Near as he was to Rossetti, his numerous formal innovations produced a material change in the character of the whole movement. He seems to

have laid aside his friend's aversion from Raphael. His Mirror of Venus is, lungo intervallo, but none the less certainly, a feminine pendant to Leo X.'s Miraculous Draught of Fishes. It is, however, much more monotonous. One phrase alone in the rich work of the exhausted Raphael seems enough to satisfy his successor, and this is a feeble melody indeed in comparison with the exaggerated muscularity of the cartoon. It is not, however, without its charm. Burne-Jones always contrives to make a picture of some kind. His song, though slight, is true. There is an unfailing rhythmical beauty in his figures. The earlier exponents of the Pre-Raphaelite theory were satisfied with the idea of the Florentine period ; Burne-Jones has succeeded in making use of its forms. He displays a Madonna by Perugino nude, or clothes her with the draperies of Mantegna, puts in an angel from the fragment of a primitive nimbus and makes a background of an English village church, some conventional foliage à la Botticelli, or a piece of Renaissance architecture. The influence of Rossetti is manifest throughout and to him Burne-Jones owes the predominant type of his faces. These are, of course, almost exclusively female ; men become women when he paints them.

This is mere handicraft. Rossetti was more competent and had an actual experience of life out of which he made pictures. Even where outward harmony is wanting in his works their spiritual harmony is all the more profound. Burne-Jones secures outward consistency in his pictures notwithstanding the heterogeneous character of their components. But this unity is as fleeting as the tableaux in a ballet at a London music-hall ; it suffers from the fact that action which can only be effective in whirling dances is here petrified. The cycle of the Creation of the World is a scene taken from a great Creation ballet at the moment when the curtain falls. If this has not yet been staged at the Empire it is probably because such a momentary effect is insufficient for an evening's entertainment. How much less fitted this art must be for immortality.

The malicious remark of Talmi to the effect that Degas coined in the mint of Gustave Moreau is also applicable to the Burne-Jones who painted Cophetua and the Beggar Maid. There is a remarkable similarity between the two. Moreau seems to be marked by greater preciousness. The technique of the Englishman is far too obvious ; one realises so soon that his whole art consists of but one melodious chord that one hardly requires to go on looking at his pictures. He

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should never have sat down to paint. Morris rescued what was best in his friend when he forced him to draw. This delivered us from the salamander-hues of his female nude figures, which even in photographic reproductions sometimes make the observer's flesh creep.

The pictures of all the Pre-Raphaelites look best in reproductions. Blake showed a true understanding of the scope of this sort of art when he restricted himself to little things. Burne-Jones seldom rises above the art of the typographer. His repeated attempts at decoration on a larger scale all display this systematic diminutiveness. London possesses so few great frescoes that even Richmond's mosaics in St. Paul's are by no means displeasing to eyes dimmed by fog. Sir Edward, however, has ventured outside London ; he has not hesitated to appear in an area where artists of all periods have depicted their ideas of space. The mosaics in the apse of the little American chapel at Rome were made from his drawings. They are his poorest extant productions and in full consonance with the monotonous domesticity of the homely building. Very different must be the prayers of the modern Christian in such excellent dwelling rooms, from those of the worshippers on whom the bearded Christ looked down !

It only remained to commercialise his methods and to bring them from the canvas back to the paper from which they sprang. Walter Crane effected this transition with a sure and a rapid hand, nor is he to blame for so doing. He restricted his ambitions, and like an honest craftsman he did not attempt more than he could perform. Blake should have begun where this latest representative of the school left off. Crane's modesty secured him many sympathies, even beyond the circle of his grateful countrymen and made people forgive him his pictures. For this most capable of the Pre-Raphaelites takes the brush in hand at times. Between the execution of his illustrations for children's books and friezes for wall-papers, he paints pictures and has even ventured upon sculpture. Three or four years ago the Arts and Crafts Society showed some examples. They were in plaster, and looked like paper, things only possible in a country where sculpture is practically non-existent.

WALTER CRANE. DRAWING.

#### ENGLISH SCULPTURE: ALFRED STEVENS

Crane's sculpture supplies an obvious explanation of the weakness of modern English art. Such things are impossible in a country where any attention is given to sculpture.

There is no plastic art in England. The nineteenth century produced but one solitary sculptor, Alfred Stevens, and he has left almost nothing behind him. His best known work is the unfinished Wellington monument in St. Paul's. Unfortunately the position of the monument against the light makes it very difficult to see, apart from the fact that few visitors would look for beauty among the miserable poverty of the surrounding monuments. The four prophets in the mosaic of the dome, which are also from his drawings, are quite ineffective in their present position. The design for the Isaiah in the Tate Gallery gives a better idea of the work, an impression which does not depend on the contrast it offers to the dreary mediocrity of contemporary English art surrounding it. It has a breadth and an absolute certainty of execution the very opposite of the characteristics which other Englishmen display to excess ; there is nothing cloying, sentimental or decadent about it. Yet Stevens has none of the realism of Holman Hunt and Madox Brown, with whom he was at least contemporary, having been born in 1817. The portrait of Mrs. Colman in the Tate Gallery is quieter and more distinguished than most of its companions.

Stevens, like the others, owes a debt to Italy, but he certainly did not draw from sources patronised by the Pre-Raphaelites. If the Brotherhood is to be taken seriously as a school, Stevens must be reckoned among its opponents. He was so in fact, though indirectly, for, in spite of Ruskin, he found much worth learning in Raphael. He came to Rome as a very young man and became imbued with the creative art of the Renaissance, not because he had any special enthusiasm for the history of this period, but because he had no teacher and no tradition, and found in it a school from which he could easily learn. It was only natural that certain outward idiosyncrasies of this school should have clung to him. It was indeed by its teaching, that he became a master.

The pictures of Burne-Jones never suggest a man whose art comes naturally to him ; Stevens, on the other hand, does not work in the style of the Renaissance, he is a Renaissance artist, and might have been born in the Cinquecento. He was sculptor, painter, and above all things, architect, by nature. At Hampstead he built one storey of a house for himself ; in the garden was the studio for the Wellington monument, and he decorated one of the rooms with carved panels which are unfortunately not quite finished.\* The house is at present occupied by a school. Externally the architecture is as undistinguished as that of many other houses in London. The panelling within is of a rare correctness ; the ornament is admirably distributed ; there is no apparent effort to break with tradi-

\* Wellington House, Eton Road.



## ALFRED STEVENS: MARBLE FIREPLACE piece IN DORCHESTER HOUSE, LONDON

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tion and yet the detail is extraordinarily strong. His architectural ideas are more clearly expressed in Captain Holford's dining room in Dorchester House, which he completed in 1872, three years before his death. The house is situated in Park Lane, a street in which it would be possible to spend ten years without exhausting the artistic treasures of its palaces. The Holford collection is one of the most famous in England. Before reaching the dining-room, the finest examples of Rembrandt, Velazquez and Van Dyck possessed by any private person in London may be studied ; and this, as may be supposed, does not produce the mood most favourable for the appreciation of modern art. None the less my impression of Stevens's fireplace is one of the most remarkable I brought away with me from London.

I owe it to the efforts of Count Kessler that I am able to offer my readers excellent illustrations of this practically unique example of English art.\* The reader must imagine a vast hall, severe in style, colder and sterner than the Renaissance rooms which inspired it, in which the chimneypiece of gray marble with its white figures forms a natural centre. We are reminded of the tombs of the Cinquecento, but the effect in this London room is more austere. It is no mere architectural sculpture. The constructive idea uses the splendid decorative material in accordance with principles which consistently exploit everything that can be logically justified in this decorative art. The two bowed female figures, which must be imagined as larger than life interrupt the columns supporting the wide shelf, above which rise two narrower stages. The central stage is decorated with a heavy ornament of garlands, and at the centre of the upper stage stands a child holding the shield with a dog in relief. The distribution of the gray and white marble is -very happily conceived, although at first the great size of the cold gray mass with the heavy veins in the main shelf produces a disagreeable impression. The frame of white marble with its red and green inlay which surrounds the huge fireplace greatly helps the effect of the whole. The same red and green framework is used throughout the hall, the colour-scheme of which is perhaps not entirely suited to the numerous wood panels. The general effect is so unexpected in the London of the effeminate Pre-Raphaelites, and one's eye has grown so accustomed to dim draperies, that it can hardly appreciate the full strength of this art at the first glance. The modelling of the two bowed bodies defies description ; the spectator vainly tries to combat his impression with a theory that here is a man who took what was not his, that he is stealing from Michelangelo, and that these same figures recline in other poses on the tombs of Florence. For they are not the same, and if they were, we could but rejoice at an additional masterpiece from the hand of Michelangelo ;

possibly a youthful work, when the teaching of Verrocchio had still the power to restrain his soaring ambition. There is a similarity in certain details ; the face of one of the figures is like a rejuvenated face of Michelangelo's, and the mighty thigh of the other figure to the left of the fireplace also reminds one of the master. The richness of the masses, the lines of which run in every conceivable direction, is astounding. Observe how the almost horizontal leg of the left hand figure forms a perfect curve around the other foot, and how the other leg repeats the angle

â™¡ The plaster model in the South Kensington Museum gives but a very feeble idea of the work. The

two books upon Stevens, one by H. Stannus and the other by W. Armstrong with very mediocre illustrations,

have long been out of print. My warmest thanks are due to Count Kessler for the infinite trouble which he

took to get permission for the taking of photographs.

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of the former, while at the same time the thigh turns inward ; the continuity of leg and thigh is extraordinary at this point ; then note how the body turns slowly toward the fireplace, and the posture of the arms. Both figures are set in the corners precisely so as to harmonise with the sharp and weighty lines of the gray marble. How it was done is a mystery. The conditions to be fulfilled are so manifold that the realisation is bewildering at first. One looks voluntarily for the weakness of this many-sided achievement, and from every point of view one finds the same beneficent richness, the same grace, and the same certainty. The rendering of the strain upon the bodies of the caryatides, which was the most difficult of the problems presented, is wonderfully achieved. Every line that should express strain does so in fact, yet the figures do not seem to be overwhelmed by a material burden. There is nothing to remind us of the groaning slaves of the Renaissance. A marvellous taste, like that of Raphael, has discovered a middle course, satisfying the realism which demands a symbolical treatment of the subject and yet excluding everything which would vulgarise verisimilitude and destroy the logic of the whole. The composition has been compressed into the smallest possible space ; the heads have as much room as they require and no more. Here, at the point of strain, the lines all run together as closely as possible ; the shoulders are given the least possible freedom, and the heads immediately divert the eye from the heavy plinth ; the elbows on the inner side are widely extended so as to prolong the supporting surface, the outer elbows form exquisite brackets. Beneath, the effect naturally forces the figures outwards, but the strongly bent knees thrust it vigorously inwards again. This is the decisive action ; the manner in which the figures bear their load depends on the manner in which they sit.

Whenever the eye attempts to follow up one element, it is arrested by another. The combination of soaring and carrying in the movement, the wonderful relation of the two figures to the whole construction, and the details which serve to enframe the fire-place, make up the beauty of the whole.

Criticism will always attack the angel at the summit, but the brilliant coat of arms would have been an insufficient conclusion to the whole. It is too flat and too small ; yet it could not be made any larger, as otherwise the beautiful curve which fits almost to a hair would have been destroyed. The sculptor himself realised with true insight that something of the pliancy of the two supporting figures must be repeated above. He exaggerated the hair of the boy, which seems like a rag of drapery ; he very delicately displayed a leg, which leads the eye to the plane of the background, and mitigates the mathematical effect of the shield. It must, however, be admitted that in this part of the work one does not feel the same absolute certainty of touch which distinguishes the remainder.

MacCoU, in his study of Stevens, speaks of the artist's " masculine decoration " which left but few traces behind, and those speedily effaced by the movement which was directed by Morris. It is somewhat extraordinary, especially in England, that any one should attempt to pit this Italianate Englishman against the Gothic School as the virile force ; yet he is absolutely right. In every work of Stevens, whether painting, sculpture, or architecture, the prominent characteristics are strength and a sense of proportion. " A wonderful man " was the phrase of the worthy teacher who showed us over Wellington House. He must indeed have been a man of wonderful character and very different from those pious somnambulists who contented themselves with the wonders of the feminine world. He was truly of the stuff of the old masters and could take pride in the fact. There was no trace of

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eclecticism in this successor of Michelangelo. His work has the quality of inevitability, and it was so perfect as he produced it that a discussion as to whether it derives from the Renaissance is as unmeaning as inquiries about the quarry from which he got his marble. " I know of but one art " was his motto. He had but one style, which did not depend on the introduction of women nude or clothed, but on balance and proportion. He is of the tribe of Hildebrand.

Of course he remained practically unknown. The only Frenchman who has ever heard of him is Rodin. Germans who write upon art never mention his name. In England he is known to the young men who know everything.

It is thus easy to understand how it is that the calm energy, which we admire in Dorchester House and from which we might have expected a hundred works, should have left no single example of equal perfection. The Wellington monu-

ment is but half complete. In its present condition it seems to suffer from the baroque style of the two interesting groups on either side. But the main figure, the equestrian statue, to which the whole construction in its present form was to serve as a pedestal, may entirely change this impression. The young sculptor, Tweed, is at work on this figure from the sketches left behind by Stevens, and as far as can be judged from the great plaster model which I saw in his studio, he has carried out the master's intentions with great tact.

These and a few sketches are all that remain of England's greatest sculptor. It is said that he was chiefly occupied in designing iron plaques for fire-places, which are all extremely beautiful. Were he to return to-day, he would probably find even this branch of industry closed to him.

## WHISTLER

### THE ENGLISHMAN

The lack of archaeological lore in English painting which had delighted Gericault and his friends, distressed England even before Constable's death. She overtook the Continental advance with amazing agility, and as all the preliminaries for French classicism were absent in her case, she constructed something which had indeed as little national justification : a gigantic exaggeration of German Nazarenism, more imposing, cruder, and, if realism within the limits of an imitative conception can be healthy, healthier. This realism was satisfied with a naturalistic treatment of details in a rendering that was by no means natural, and made use of lighter colours than had hitherto been applied to history-painting. Inferior as this unnatural art was to the most modest efforts of the landscape painters, and even to the mannerism of the " portrait-manufacturers," to whom by comparison it almost gave the appearance of a great school, it made a successful appeal to the public. It was comprehensible. Its forms left nothing to the imagination, and that which the mob failed to understand in the laboriously executed work only tended to raise its repute. Even in the more recondite efforts of a Holman Hunt or a Millais there was always something perfectly obvious, a well drawn leg, a significant look, a monitory hand, which the public took home contentedly. When finally Rossetti expressed the fervour of his emotion in the curved lips of an ecstatic female head, he found utterance for the soul of the people. The message was accepted after a short struggle as a divine gift. For the first time, Nature made the heart of the multitude beat more quickly, a Nature that had been discovered by the circuitous way of Florence, and was found to be more English than the farmsteads of the Bergholt master. Popularity, denied to England's most faithful son, who had done more for native art than Gainsborough, or even the great Hogarth, was accorded to these enthusiasts. Ruskin managed

to include them in the sanctuary of his heart where Turner was enthroned, and pronounced these practitioners of his barbaric theory concerning Italian painting the non plus ultra of contemporary art. Pre-Raphaelitism was not a tendency. So utterly did it absorb all the artistic interest of the country, that we must perforce recognise it as representative, unless we are to deny the existence of any English art since Constable.

This immense prestige was the advantage the great English Nazarenism enjoyed over the little German movement. We Germans may be thankful that our pious painters in Italy never organised their criminal conspiracy so perfectly. A strain of the Kohler creed is still to be found, it is true, in some of our ideologues, and we have a dozen of their breed for one of Constable's. But we resist. We have a minority that stands out against the mass. In England the reaction seems

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to have torn up by the roots all the centenarian elements of a native art capable of development. The only notable painter who was able to assert himself in England simultaneously with the dominant tendency, was an American trained in Paris, and even he, whom Ruskin involuntarily raised to the status of a hostile force, was fundamentally an unfrocked Pre-Raphaelite.

His nationality was a paradox, like the man himself. His origin in a country which in art still retains the dependence of a colony on the mother-country, may account for the fact that he appears as a pure native among his adopted fellow countrymen. The hundred skins in which nature and his own dexterity in disguises enveloped him conceal a perfectly English core. This is apparent, not only in his preference for English models, especially for London, which did not exist for the Pre-Raphaelites, and, indeed, had received no real recognition from art before Whistler, not only in his renderings of typical qualities of the populace, as far as it can be said to exist in the gigantic city and to draw a character therefrom. Whistler is an Englishman in a still wider sense. He is the only modern artist who is responsible for the further development of the English tradition. He at least attempted to deal with those tendencies which give physiognomy to the history of English painting, and must therefore be recognised so far as the coping-stone of the structure. His internationalism, of course, was un-English. Everything that happened in Europe towards the middle of the nineteenth century had its echo in him. It was to his advantage that he did not overlook all contemporary activities like the Pre-Raphaelites, nor feel a certain coldness or contempt for the French, like Constable and Hogarth. The cool self-confidence which has become proverbial was merely a screen interposed between himself and the world. His cosmopolitanism was not only useful to him ; it was solely by its means that he became the figure whose originality has given rise to positive myths in London and in Paris. Indeed, we cannot conceive of him without this mercurial essence, that made him at home everywhere, both in life

and art ; but it is open to question whether in the future he will find or keep a place in the hearts of any one people, or of the world at large.

Even now it is difficult to say where he belongs. When some one suggested that he was the kinsman of Velazquez, Whistler replied by the delightful impertinence which his devoted biographer Duret seeks mistakenly to soften. Others say he began with Rembrandt. Then he Europeanised Rossetti. Then he is supposed to have conquered Courbet. That he invented the Japanese is almost an historic fact. And all this was really too amusing to be considered seriously. It is unpardonable to spoil a good joke, whether we agree with it or not. I feel convinced that he is still smiling over it among the shades.

Whistler the painter had already achieved a certain eminence when he painted his first large work, the Piano picture. The essential qualities of the Carlyle and the Portrait of the Artist's Mother are more than indicated here, the brilliant pattern, the dexterity with which a profile is set against the right sort of wall effectively, the distinction of the scene. It is difficult to understand why it was refused at the Salon. It has all the qualities of a true Salon-picture, and a degree of expression which it might have been supposed even the public of 1859 would have tolerated. It is superior to most of his later works. The fine black of the lady's dress against the white wall, the careful execution of Lady Seymour Haden's delicate profile, the juxtaposition with the child in white, the happy choice of the warm mahogany-colour of the piano, the best portrait of the three "such simple

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and relatively powerful effects he rarely found later, and more rarely sought. On the other hand, few of his weaknesses appear in the picture. The pictorial execution is not quite in harmony with the design. The simplicity is somewhat forced, and hardly conceals the determination to make more of the quiet scene than is proper to it. A thoughtfulness akin to Fantin-Latour softens the pretentiousness. It is an indispensable element, and reveals Whistler's debt to his first friend on French soil. Indulgent critics of the future will no doubt bracket Whistler with Fantin. They were very similar powers of a totally different kind. Both stand aloof from the great artistic achievements of the nineteenth century, the one deliberately, the other involuntarily. Neither was a creator in the true sense ; both transformed inherited materials, and the results of their activity were not indispensable to modern art-development. Fantin, by stern self-discipline, arrived in the process at an organic expression, so that each separate work gains as we recall his general level of excellence. Whistler loses when tried by the same criterion. His most brilliant achievements suffer from the lack of economy in the sum of his work.

They became acquainted soon after Whistler's arrival from America in 1855,

in the Louvre, where Fantin was painting his brilliant copies, and Whistler was nibbling, somewhat indiscriminately, at the Old Masters, to refresh himself a little after the barren hours spent in Gleyre's studio. According to H. Beraldi, he copied Ingres' *Angélique*, the little picture of cavaliers ascribed to Velazquez, and, as the London exhibition of 1905 showed, Boucher's *Diana*, in the Louvre. His first portrait of himself, as Duret remarks, may be referred to Rembrandt's head of a young man in the same collection. Fantin's masterly talent was the first momentous influence on his as yet embryonic personality. The prudence of the modest master, who never promised more than he could perform, curbed the ambition that was thirsting for cheap laurels. His technique, matured by long-continued copying of the old masters, spurred the novice to more serious study. His susceptibility to intimate charm added depth to the superficiality of his comrade, and revealed the quiet world of the interior to him also. There are many connecting links between the Frenchman's early pictures, his portrait of himself before the easel, and more especially the *Deux Sœurs* of 1858, and Whistler's *Piano* picture. The influence is also apparent in the finest work of 1861, the *Music Room*, with the lady in the riding-habit; it becomes more evident in the small *Fille Blanche* before the fireplace of 1865, and seems even to linger in certain interiors of the seventies. The distinguished repose of the *Mother and the Carlyle* was certainly inspired by Fantin's spirit. The moral advantage derived from the comrade of his youth was stronger than the material. Fantin's quiet manner dies out among Whistler's multiple tendencies. It was too solid to chain the butterfly for long. But he owed many a lesson to the advice of this friend, with whom he remained in intimate relation, more especially during the first ten years of his artistic activity.

The *Piano* picture was the starting-point of two roads. The one led to the portraits which were christened *Harmonies in White* later on, of which the famous large *Fille Blanche* of 1862 was *Opus i*. This was the English road, on which the ideologue walked. The other reveals the more solid qualities of a conception closer to Nature, and leads to the series of landscapes inaugurated in 1861 by the *Coast of Brittany*. This is the French road. The two run parallel — the *Fille Blanche* and the *Blue Wave* belong to the same year — and end in a foreign

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land. They have no more in common than a Rossetti and a Courbet. Whistler's unwillingness to decide for one or the other is characteristic of his art and of himself. It was his misfortune to have inclined most to Rossetti. Duret denies this important influence, and here offers one of the many instances of Whistler's irresistible power of suggestion. The "*Avant-Garde*," famous as the first defender of Manet, has lately associated his name just as unconditionally with that of Whistler. \*



The exaggerated modesty which leads him to take up the position of a scrupulous narrator, confining himself to the presentation of valuable documents, has not saved him from overlooking what may be called an historic fact here. Benedite. Count Kessler and others have confirmed it, without drawing the inevitable conclusions. Duret was shrewd enough to see that if Rossetti had really exercised a decisive influence upon his hero, the less a hero would he be. He came to the conclusion that the similarity was due to accident. The sister of Rossetti's Fiammetta sat to Whistler for the *Princesse du Pays de la Porcelaine* of 1864, and it was the models and not the works that were akin. The techniques had nothing in common. But the *Princesse* is the direct descendant of the *Fille Blanche*<sup>^</sup> differently dressed, and Fiammetta's sister did not sit for this first blossom of the Rossetti graft in Whistler's work. The difference in technique is superficial, though Kessler insists upon it also. "The purpose is Pre-Raphaelite," he writes, "the hand, the eye, the execution is modern." f And accordingly, he infers the essential difference of these pictures, and the works of Rossetti, Millais, &c., with which they invite comparison. I believe, on the contrary, that this emphasises the more intimate connection. The conclusion goes beyond the Q.E.D. Rossetti's execution is modern too, because, unhappily, it is not quattrocento; Burne-Jones is, if possible, more modern still; and in this scale there is no reason why the superlative should not be accorded to Whistler. The arrangement of the *Fille Blanche* with the bluish white bear-skin recalls Alfred Stevens, who was then, at the period of his first successes, as actual as possible, and the Japanese *mise en scene* of the *Princesse* may have seemed

a great advance in Makart's time. Unmodern, on the other hand, or, in plain words, insufficient, is the conception, the phantom-like yet insupportably material quality of the apparition, the incapacity for making a body stand on its legs in any medium, and for preserving the relation of the parts in the attempted plasticity. The whole tendency to give a spiritual appearance without any spiritual essence, the ghostly by means of a trap-door, is Rossettian. The artist simply asserts what he had to demonstrate, reproduces his mystery instead of creating it and making it effectual. It is the trick of a juggler at a fair. But we do not want to see the artist behind his white lady, but in her: we want to know how she works, how the puppet comes to life, how she moves and lives, and if there is a mystery we like to have it explained without so much wear and tear of our senses. But the apparatus is unequal to these demands. It remains merely glass eyes, false hair, clothes, carpet and curtains. The more energetically we contemplate it, the more cruelly is the illusion unveiled, and we recognise the affinity of the puppet to those works which demand of the spectator the inspiration which failed the artist. There are no spirits, and nothing happens of itself least of all in art, which knows nothing of the arbitrary and accidental. But there are works

\* Theodore Duret, "Histoire de J. McNeill Whistler et de son CEuvre," Floury, Paris, 1904.

t In "Kunst und Kunstler," iii. p. 460.

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of such power, that we seem to see spirits rather than mortals before us. They arise only by the creation of a stronger reality than the wonted sphere of our existence. They are never exhausted, no matter how often we stand greedily before them. Not because they satiate us, but because they are continually lifting our desires into higher regions. We learn to see better ; it is not what we see that is novel. But Pre-Raphaelitism made its effects by a strangeness, a remoteness inherent in the style, and not created by the painter as such. Whistler modified the strangeness with which Rossetti had been content. The mysterious quality was taken from the curved lips and Leonardesque hair and distributed over the whole surface of the object, becoming less tangible, less specifically conventional, and more pictorial, because less linear ; but this did not alter the nature of the Pre-Raphaelite product. It is only the lesser precision of the outline which prevents us from recognising Rossetti's world forthwith. With all my antipathy to the painter of Beatrice, Whistler's variation on the theme seems to me inferior. Rossetti's spleen is his excuse. His barbaric painting has the significance of the fixed idea. The artist's error loses something of its virulence from the fact that the ecstasy which becomes so rigid in the pictures found harmonious form in the sonnets. Whistler, on the other hand, only simulates ecstasy, and therefore is capable of more deliberate rendering. He excites himself mirror in hand, notes richer details, and is able to take care that sentimentality shall not proclaim itself too nakedly. For this very reason, however, he arouses a stronger antagonism. The fragmentary character of his cultivated creation, an obvious reflection of fragmentary emotions, irritates more than the asceticism of Rossettian fervour. The excitement of a Primitive, who makes use of lower forms, is more respectable than the inconsequence of a higher intellect.

Leonce Benedite considered Millais the source of inspiration, supporting his opinion by citing Fantin's and Whistler's enthusiasm for the St. Agnes' Eve in the Academy of 1863. \* The relation to Millais is no more evident than to other Englishmen of the same period. But personally Whistler had much in common with the lively master of the Pears' soap advertisement. He too loved to gambol in all the fields of painting, and both shook off their vague relation to the Pre-Raphaelites with equal facility. He made, at a due interval, the remarkable transition from the school of Rossetti to the so-called antique, to which the era of the Queen lent such unusually adequate relief. The immediate impulse was given by the youthful Albert Moore, who

as Benedite said, " was perhaps the first to develop that elegant taste for antique things which blends so agreeably with the English character." In the correspondence with Fantin " the most important source of information as to Whistler's psychology " could he but have guessed what he left for posterity here ! " the enthusiastic introduction of this new friend synchronises with the production of the third Symphony in White, the picture of the two agreeably posed draped figures on a sofa, exhibited at the Royal Academy of 1867. It is easy to recognise Moore's method of arranging a piece of furniture with draperies of multitudinous folds in which female forms are hidden. But whereas Alma Tadema and Co. proceeded to conjure up a whole five o'clock tea antiquity for the delighted public by these methods. Whistler, always less drastic than his prototypes, contented himself with the rhythm. He renounced the antique furniture as he had before renounced the Florentine, and only allowed

\* "Gazette des Beaux Arts," June 1905, pp. 510, 511 ; r/l also id. August 1905, pp. 146, 147.

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a gentle echo of the teasing play of line to fill his quiet rooms. Rossetti's ethereal mood also floats round these more feminine figures, about whose slender limbs the soft Liberty silk flows caressingly. A beautiful still-life is produced by the delicate colours of the stuff. The title Symphony suits it better than the earlier arrangements on the same basis. The only dubious element is the determination to offer more than his inspirers, and to create human beings by means of the higher decorative arts.

Together with the echoes of Moore we find traces of the influence of Leighton, the Reynolds of the latest development of English academicism. Whistler's pretty pastels on gray paper, of youthful Greek girls in clinging draperies, are an agreeable homage to the President, who, according to Muther, " felt more intensely than any modern the beauty of the Hellenic line."

FROM A WOODCUT. BY OKUMURA MASANOBU.

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### THE FRENCHMAN

The English element in Whistler is an easily recognisable quality in his whole work, rather than in any special work. We can never say of this or that picture that it is English, for it is always something else as well. We saw him participating in a curve of the London movement from afar, separated by a medium which possessed the quality of refining its prototypes. He took away their brutality of movement, softened their colour, eliminated insistent detail, made them more pictorial. The medium clearly contains more of Whistler than the silhouette reflected in it. It may be recognised as a French envelope. He watched what was going on in London from Paris. There are a few pictures, in which he concentrates his gaze entirely upon France, in which there is no trace of any English influence. They are not his most characteristic works, for the English strain is indispensable to a perfect impression of his personality. But they are his most promising works, I might say his strongest, were this not contrary to logic. Courbet carried the beginner away with him far more powerfully than Fantin. This difference was natural. The enthusiasm with which the whole generation from Manet to Monet hailed the revelation of the master of Ornans took hold on the stranger within the gates also, though comparatively late. The Piano picture shows as yet no trace of Courbet. It was not until 1861, some two years later, almost six years after his arrival in Paris, that the first dated document appears testifying to Courbet's entrance into the circle of the painter, the coast landscape with the stones. The Coast of Brittany. A rough hand seizes the brush. The meditative artist becomes the eager observer of Nature, and paints as well as he can, not what he thinks, but what he sees before him. This new conception tears down the whole artistic structure already reared. The sureness of hand that characterised the Piano picture is wholly absent. Whistler's first steps in the new path remind us of a pupil who has been for many years under a bad teacher, and

is less apt than the novice in the hands of a new master trying to instil more rational methods. The stones on the beach are painted with all the laboriousness of a child, each one separately, with sharp contours, and without any research of colour. A dark Havana brown is laid upon a lighter shade of the same colour. The girl in the foreground is lying as awkwardly as possible ; and even in the primitive rendering we see in certain gradations that this detail was not treated with the same realism as the land, the stones, and the blue sea. So sharply does the sincerity even of a beginner react in the presence of Nature. In spite of its awkwardness, the picture is effective, and not only as a touching exhibition of unskilfulness. The absolute self-surrender to Nature gives the fragmentary form a breath of life. It is a very bad, a very amateurish work, but nearer to art than all the phrases of the Pre-Raphaelites. The studies of heads of this period are also quite foreign to them. The Mere Gerard and the woman's head belonging to Comtesse Beam have not the faintest resemblance to the Beatrice ; the old Marchand de Faience, with his pipe, rather suggests an early Van Gogh. The portrait of Ionides, which has unfortunately cracked as a result of loading the dark pigment on an ill-prepared ground, does not suggest the " arrangeur," but an artist intent on the rendering of life. It would be interesting to know the exact date of these heads. The

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biographers place them vaguely in the first Parisian period, perhaps, therefore, before the Piano picture. In this case the anomaly would be still greater. But against this we have the fact that the portrait of himself of 1857-58, the natural predecessor of the Piano picture, does not at all agree with the heads. In addition we know positively that La Mere Gerard was exhibited at the Academy in 1861. We may therefore fairly assume that the heads were contemporary with the Coast of Brittany of this year. Nevertheless, we have no reason to suppose that they were painted under the same influence as the sea-piece. The Mere Gerard has very little in common with Courbet's heads of the same period. The reddish, coarsely brushed face with the white shawl, rather suggests Bonington's housekeeper, and the splashes of colour in parts. Constable. It is not impossible that this marks Whistler's first contact with the master of the Hay-Wain, who was occasionally of service to the landscape painter later on. The Courbet-like character studies inaugurated by these heads had no further results. The tendency of the elegant portrait painter admitted of no ruthless sincerity. To achieve originality and dexterity on this road demanded more earnest efforts than the indication of enthusiastic girlish emotion. On the other hand, he continued on the path he had struck out in the coast picture for some time, and with brilliant

success. The Blue Wave of Biarritz, painted in the summer of 1862, on the projected but abandoned journey to Madrid, was the artist's first great venture. No one could have foreseen such an advance on the coast scene in such a comparatively short time. The awkwardness and uncertainty, the fumbling of the beginner, are completely overcome, and the intensity of outlook is not weakened. The relation to Courbet is not that of a mere imitator, and exists only as the natural result of an impulse received. Whistler received the task from Courbet. He took the problem and worked it out independently. The impulse served only to give birth to a new form. Courbet never painted, still less desired to paint, such a lovely sea-piece. His sea is immeasurably mightier. The impact of the material drives us out of that meditative mood in which we can take account of the accidental grace of a curve or the harmony of colour. We are too close to the elementary power of the water, and the consciousness of this proximity makes it easy "nay, desirable" to sacrifice the rest. Whistler had not the almost physically impressive power of the great naturalist. He is the metropolitan, who has grown nervous in the turmoil of streets and the exertions of intellectual activity. But with admirable taste, with a refinement denied to the peasant of Ornans, here, where his sincerity was no less than that of the other, he sought after a form corresponding to his strength and giving full expression to his gifts. Courbet was a coarse fellow, but to suit his coarseness he invented the right wide-meshed net, which made it into strength. Whistler organised his weaknesses, made his manner pulsate in so many small channels that it became rich, and only tenderness and supple grace remained. His gift was more ornamental. He removes himself and us from the power of the element, and makes us enjoy its curves and colour. But the removal does not divorce us from Nature. The curves ripple, the colour retains expression. The blue is exquisitely related to the brown, the foam plays enchantingly over the terraced waves, but more beautiful still is the watery expanse under the vaporous sky. This means that the harmony of the colours is no mere effect of the palette, no "arrangement," like so many inventions of the tasteful colourist; the supple line is not invented for the sake of the arabesque, like so many of the skilful painter's poses. The artist unites with Nature, and adds strength to what is natural. The

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water flows; it has the joyous wilfulness of the element; and the eye, gliding over the waves, and startled by no secondary intention, communicates a like joyous movement to the soul.

Whistler, like Manet and all his successors, as long as he felt himself akin to this circle, strove after some differentiation of Courbet's animalism. The beauty of the Blue Wave cannot conceal what a penalty his temperament had to pay in the process, as compared with Manet. Manet, with all his enrichment, with all his cultivation of instinct, retained the primitive force, the concentration, the penetrating quality of Courbet's vigour. We divine even in this, the best of Whistler's

sea-pieces, what it cost him to achieve the necessary concentration of the boldly conceived reality. The representation of so elementary a side of Nature demanded a gift of invention which the painter, rich as he was in ideas, did not possess, and the solution of a problem so little suited to his manner was a tour de force which could scarcely succeed a second time. For Whistler it was necessary that he should be able to relate. Here he was like Liebermann, who never arrived at a full expansion of his characteristic style in a rendering of Nature unenlivened by man or beast. He required a model richer in details, more variety of material, things better expressed by the pencil than by the brush, animated silhouettes, and so was obliged to turn away very soon from the totally different art of Courbet. The step is very apparent in the *Frozen Thames*, painted shortly after the *Blue Wave*. Here the theme has nothing to do with Courbet. Such a multitude of straight, thin lines as the rigging of the ship presents would have been a nightmare to Courbet. To Whistler, on the contrary, the design was absolutely congenial, much more so than the *Blue Wave*. We get nearer to him here, although he did not take nearly so much trouble over the picture. It looks as if it had been painted at one sitting. The colour is less choice, the grace less tangible, but the demure distinction of the rapid rendering is irresistible. There is not a stroke too few or too many ; these nervous strokes paint, giving silhouettes more and more vaporous towards the background. The technique approaches that of lithography ; but, what is more important, it expresses perfectly what the artist saw ; and in this presentment, so adequate to his nature, we grasp him as he grasped Nature. While Courbet disappears entirely from this conception. Whistler's relation to Manet's circle is revealed. From the *Frozen Thames* we might place him somewhere in the neighbourhood of Sisley, the similarity of certain forms counting for less in this connection than the affinity of temperament. This is borne out by the picture of the following year (1862), *Old Westminster Bridge*, with the building of the new bridge in progress, which is a kind of solidified Sisley, of more compact forms, and shows a detail in the figures which approaches Manet. Whistler never painted anything more solid ; and it is a cruel irony that this picture should have suffered by the numerous cracks in the thick impasto. Its superiority to preceding works lies in the amazing extension of the pictorial quality. It is obvious that the draughtsman was attracted by the cross-beams of the numerous scaffolds, with the swarming workmen. But the brush gave the means for the representation. The suggestion of a uniform surface and yet of structure, the veiling of the frankly accepted detail, the wealth of the material, which has shades for the richly toned water, the wood, the stone, the workmen, and finally the panorama on the other side of the river, could only have been invented by a painter. And it was a great painter who advanced from this to the beautiful picture of 1865, *Old Batter sea Bridge*, the work which, regardless of

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what followed, we may call Whistler's ultimate form. Here Whistler not only accomplished the natural task of making the pictorial qualities of his work more pronounced, but also found a richer and more precise expression for his personal conception. Not only did the draughtsman retire into the background, but also the specifically Parisian painter who recalled Sisley. The sparkling element in the picture of Westminster Bridge, the lively variety which harmonises with the design, seems somewhat superfluous beside the new picture, over-loquacious and not simple enough. Here, on the other hand, a perfectly undivided form gradually discloses the same lightly touched things, without showing them to us.

The delivery has more breath, so to speak, and expresses itself without exhaustion, with a quiet ease, which makes the subject-matter much more impressive. The brush has rendered the broad surface of the river more supple than the structure of the Westminster Bridge allowed it to do, in a more liquid fashion than it had ever done before. Water, bridge, and banks hang together like a single being, and at the same time display richer intervals than the earlier picture.

The detail retires in favour of the masses, without becoming indistinct. We see all that is necessary, even to the girders between the posts and the olive-coloured balustrade behind which people and vehicles are passing. The magic lies in the rich bluish atmosphere, which was as carefully detailed here as the objects in the former work. Hence the rich gradations of the animated Constable-like points of colour from the figures of the nearer bank to the vanishing houses and towers of the farther shore. The stages are so unobtrusive that even the things in the distance seem distinct and tangible. The painter compels us to go over the bridge with him. His renewed intimacy with Courbet, with whom he was painting during the summers of 1865 and 1866 at Trouville, obviously contributed to the stronger development of tones which distinguishes the painter of Battersea Bridge from the Impressionists. The latter tried to keep the colour as effective as possible in gradation. Manet and Monet too used contrasts for gradation, i.e. they essayed variety, to give the utmost animation to the surface, a process which was only to be carried out by an extremely flexible structure of spots, and left the lion's share of the modelling to the brush-stroke. The harmony de-

pendent on the unison of all the parts of the picture, not on the relation of its details. Each detail, therefore, had to be sketched out with the greatest precision, because it could not afterwards be altered without modifying the whole. Whistler, on the other hand, could reel off his scale cautiously. He enriched his planes, like the old Dutch masters, by means of glazes, intent on the sequence of the colour he had taken as his point of departure. The contrasts he introduced could be added gradually, just as a river may be enlivened by boats, shadow by points of light, a luminous passage by dark details. The process had the advantage of never mis-carrying altogether, and of making the result dependent on diligent execution. It had the disadvantage of being too slow for instantaneous impressions, of keeping the painter at a distance from his model, and of forcing him to a manual rendering of detail. Techniques are differentiated by the degree of their demands on the painter's concentration. Those rank highest which demand most from the conception of the mind and least from the execution on the canvas. The most difficult are those which are the least specific, the least technical, which depend least on manual dexterity, and seem to make the picture grow of itself. These, too, are the only modern methods, because they alone correspond to the given multiplicity of Nature, in contrast to those of earlier epochs, when the limited

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task still allowed and necessitated a specific technique. Whistler's danger lay in the disproportion of his form to his modernism. A rapid intelligence like his must have lost patience over a technique entailing so much manual labour, and then have been forced to put up with the defects of the method.

Batter sea Bridge is the apogee of his landscape painting, *Sea and Rain*, the charming sea-piece of the same year in the Young collection, with its amber sea and rich-toned blue-white sky, show already how the painter was seeking to help himself. The forms are much more fluid than before ; they float in the vaporous atmosphere, and so the colour has become richer. The comparatively strongly coloured but very tender material makes the laborious gradation unnecessary. Instead of starting from a precise foreground with strongly defined forms and running through the whole gamut of tones, Whistler took a vaporous consistency as the basis, thereby minimising all the differentiation. By this process he produced perfectly artistic effects in *Sea and Rain* and a few other pictures of the same time without any perceptible loss of variety. The slight remaining distance is divided with all the greater finesse, and suffices to suggest the animation of Nature. The reproduction shows the most delicate motions of the atmosphere, and where the state of existence represented becomes nebulous it still remains an organic form. It is easy to see that, without the tonic of a painful artistic rectitude, one might speedily arrive at degeneration of the natural pictorial instinct on this road. I will not say at a non-pictorial method. The conception of the picturesque embraces a thousand degrees, and is notoriously applicable to many

works which are not painted at all. We apply the term indifferently to a house, to the corner of an old street, to the furrowed face of a bearded old man, &c. No dilettante with any touch of artistic gift paints a picture in which a certain degree of picturesqueness may not be discerned. But in art all qualities have a practicable sense only when they exist as (relative) maxima. A picture which does not approach the extreme of beauty at which it aims is not merely rather less beautiful than it should be, but worthless, as meaningless as a sheet of blank paper. There are not two arts, but one only. This ideal and sole rational definition does not take completion into consideration, but reckons with the aspiration of the man who wields the brush. We do not judge by what an artist does, but by what he aims at doing, and examine the result only when this is determined. Nay, if an artist even succeeds in conveying his high purpose definitely he has accomplished his task. We are less concerned to see what Whistler could do, for which we have no safe and just standard, than what he wanted to do.

Whistler's aspirations as a landscape painter gradually weakened after the pictures of 1865, without even an effort towards rehabilitation. The *Nocturne in Blue and Green, the Thames with the view of Chelsea and the solitary figure on the right*, may serve as type for the continuation of the sea-pieces above mentioned. The painting is confined to a tasteful colouristic schema and the indication of outlines. The water still reveals an attempt to suggest a certain material. Subsequent works, such as the *Arrangement in Gray and Gold, with Battersea Bridge*, in Mrs. Flower's collection, or the famous *Nocturne in Blue and Silver, with the pilaster of the bridge*, are only so far painting that they were executed with a paint-brush. Even of this fact we can only be sure after minute investigation.

On the other hand, these things are not without charm, and even certain relations to Nature, and many of them show a highly cultivated taste. Only the higher aspiration of the painter is needed to make them works of art. Whistler became the painter of the London atmosphere, of the dimness of night. No one

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can say that he did not paint realities, and against the sceptic to whom such negative arguments do not make the works more palatable it might be urged that he demands more from the painter than Nature offers to the eye in the given example. And does not Whistler give more ? Not materially, of course. That would be falsehood. But spiritually ? Who ever walks on the banks of the Thames in Chelsea or Hammersmith on a misty evening without thinking of him ? Even memory, the eager handmaid of all enjoyment, rebukes the sceptic. There are many persons who think Whistler's fog truer than the fog of the London streets, so well has he suggested the impalpable. The thoughts which the ideal inspires are rarely vouchsafed us by crude reality. The artist, says experience, should conquer Nature, should stamp the image of the cosmos upon

his Nature. If I choose Nature in her weaker manifestations, said Whistler, I shall conquer her more easily. He chose her so small that nothing remains of her but a nebulous veil. But did he even conquer this minimum of a shrouded Nature ? He did not use it, but reproduced it as faithfully as he could. He did not paint atmosphere in order to give the things in it richer planes, greater reality, but for its own sake. " Whistler," writes Kessler, " does not express night by antithesis, by a contrasting appearance of light, but by itself, through its characteristic tones and harmonies. He paints that dark basis of its tone, the mysterious quality proper to even the lightest night. He shows all colours dissolved in brightness, in the gradations of a pale, shimmering tint. He gives the softness of forms without contours, the tenderness of the movement of light as it pulses through sleeping Nature. Where a bright gleam, a colour, the red sparks of a firework, fall across the blue night, it is there merely as a superfluity. Whistler does not need these objects." \* Is he then a magician, a genius without a peer, who puts Rembrandt and Velazquez in the shade, an artist who creates his cosmos out of nothing, a painter who paints without painting ? Is there then an art which can represent night without antithesis, without any contrasting appearance of light, but nevertheless by the special character of its tones and harmonies ? If so, night is blackness in itself, and mist is grayness in itself, and it is enough to lay these colours alone with proper feeling upon the canvas. A pall becomes the symbol of night, and a well-prepared gray enshrines all the secrets of atmosphere. And, indeed, the enthusiasm of the master's worshippers does not stick at this. " Ce n'est ni le crepuscule ni la nuit," writes Mauclair ; " c'est l'ombre en soi-même, un element distinct des heures, et oii se deroule une existence qui n'est point la vie ordinaire . . ."t And Benedite takes up the strain : " Apparences ! illusions ! c'est la grande chimere et la grande poesie de la nuit elle-meme. D'autres avant lui avaient aime l'ombre pour faire valoir la lumiere ; lui a aime l'ombre pour l'ombre et la nuit pour la nuit. . . ." |

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In the year 1878, in the brightest of the months, when the sun was shining one day convincingly into his Tusculum, Ruskin, still hale and vigorous, rose up against the painter of nocturnes, and wrote the historic phrases touching the artist who did not hesitate even at intentional fraud, of the " cox-comb " who asked two hundred guineas " for throwing a pot of paint in the face of the public." Â§ Six months later the famous lawsuit took place.

\* In " Kunst and Kiinstler," loc. at. above.

t " De Watteau a Whistler," p. 310 (Fasquelle, Paris, 1905). The chapter heading is in itself

typical : " Whistler et le Mystere dans la Peinture."

t "Gazette des Beaux Arts," August 1905, p. 152.

Â§ In the letters to English artisans, published under the title " Fors Clavigera," under date July 2, 1878.

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No dramatist could invent dramas or comedies of such subtle psychology as those with which the student of art history is constantly confronted. Whistler's lawsuit is a comedy of unusually striking effects. Ruskin, the apostle of Turner, felt himself impelled by the same reasons which led him to declare Turner the greatest genius the world had seen, to rid the earth of the coxcomb, Turner's successor ! He did not appear at the trial, but even without him it was comical enough. It is difficult to imagine anything more absurd than his counsel, who threatened the jury with the evil days in store for England should their verdict deter his client in future from discriminating between beauty and ugliness, or than the ineffable Baron Huddleston, who gravely asked the clerk, when the Battersea Bridge was exhibited in court, which part of the picture represented the bridge ; or the strange figure of the witness " Mr. Jones " afterwards Sir Edward " who did not fail to point out certain merits in the pictures, took occasion to lay down certain definitive rules on composition in particular and form in general, and on the basis of these arguments finally pulverised the bold complainant, though preserving throughout a touch of indulgent mildness ; or the complainant himself, the leading character, in reality the accused, who, with a humour worthy of a Dickens, conducted his own case, and magnificently acquiesced in the award of one farthing damages instead of 1000. An incomparable satire upon all the nonsense that has been preached for fifty years against progress was given with all the traits of reality. But the best part of it all was what gives value to all true comedy, the invisible irony ; for all these hostile witnesses, who accomplished impossibilities in the way of making themselves ridiculous, were unconsciously fighting for the right, and stupidity had become the wise judge. After the trial, of course. During the comedy the most virtuous sage would hardly have ranged himself on Ruskin's side, still less when the victorious and vanquished " coxcomb " made his marginal notes on the report of the suit in " The Gentle Art of Making Enemies." \*

He was neither stupid nor tragic ; the traditional unpractical qualities of the artist had never oppressed him, nor was he the man to follow after chimaeras. Rather the most dexterous mystifier the world has ever known. A " blagueur " in the great manner, who took no one and nothing seriously but his " blague," himself not excepted. He knew his age, understood the susceptibility of its supposed matter-of-fact mind to everything that can be looked at poetically, to the strangeness of all secrets, especially those that need no solution. When he noticed one day that harmony played a certain part in oil pictures, and forthwith began to bestow musical titles on his pictures, a new age seemed to have dawned for painting. The novelty did not fail to whet the opposition of the great public, which after the Ruskin lawsuit demanded its victims in the painter's little circle. But Whistler was man enough to present a point to the stream, and he not only continued to christen his arrangements and harmonies, but also applied the rubric retrospec-

tively to those early works which had not profited by the master's progress in his art. Thus many a picture became a harmony without much exertion on the part of its author. And Whistler was right to bear the ill-humour of the moment calmly. The relation to music, at a time when the dream of universal peace was in the air, and the thought of a universal artistic ideal began to occupy men's minds, was a far-sighted idea that was certain to bear fruit sooner or later. Indirectly Whistler owed it to his friend Fantin, the devotee of Wagner, f Fantin

\* William Heinemann, London, 1890.

t He owed the title " Nocturne " to his friend Mr. Leyland. Cf. the letter in the " Art Journal " of August 1892.

WHISTLER: NOCTURNE, BLUE AND SILVER  
(BATTERSEA REACH)

FREER COLLECTION, DETROIT, U. S. A.

COURBET: THE BEACH, TROUVILLE (1866)

DURET COLLECTION, PARIS

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never concealed his passion in conversation, and showed the advantages he derived from his delight plainly enough in his works. But whereas with him music was a strain that ran through his whole being and echoes in everj^ picture and every stroke, an organic part of his pictorial gift. Whistler was thoroughly non-musical in this sense, and used music only to give suggestive titles to his pictures and an additional note of interest to his personality.\* All that was not atmosphere, the disciple could expound as the higher music. It would be interesting to know what the sincere Fantin, who stoutly defended himself against the charge of being a musician, thought of this game.

The musical label was France's last involuntary gift. It profited Whistler

more than what he had gained from his friend, the embryo master, Courbet. From Courbet, indeed, he turned away energetically. Nothing is more instructive as to the psychology of the versatile artist than his attitude to the master of Ornans, shortly after he had parted from him at Trouville. A letter to Fantin, which Benedite dates 1867, contains the most exhaustive criticism, not only of the influence, but of its subject.

Ah, mon cher Fantin, quelle education je me suis donnee, ou plutot quel manque terrible d' education je me sens ! avec les belles qualites que je tiens de la nature, quel peintre je serais maintenant si, vaniteux et content de ses qualites je n'avais fait fi de toute autre chose ! Non, vois tu, le temps oh je suis venu etait bien mauvais pour moi ! Courbet et son influence a ete degoutant. Ce regret que je sens et la rage et la haine meme que j'ai pour cela maintenant t'etonneraient peut-etre, mais voici l'explication.

And this explanation is a veritable human document :

Ce n'est pas le pauvre Courbet qui me repugne ni ses oeuvres non plus. J'en reconnais, comme toujours, les qualites. Je ne me plains pas non plus de l'influence de sa peinture sur la mienne. Il n'y en a paseu eton n'en trouvera pas dans mes toiles. ^a ne pouvait pas etre autrement parce que je suis tres personnel et que j'ai ete riche en qualites qu'il n'avait pas et qui me suffisaient. Mais, voici pourquoi tout cela a ete bien pemicieux pour moi. C'est que ce damne Realisme faisait appel immediat a ma vanite de peintre et, se moquant de toutes les traditions, criait tout haut avec l'assurance de l'ignorance : Vive la nature ! La nature, mon cher, ce cri-la a ete un grand malheur pour moi. Oii pouvait-on trouver un apotre plus pret a accepter cette theorie si commode pour lui, ce calmant pour toute inquietude ? Quoi ! il n'avait plus qu'a ouvrir ses yeux et peindre ce qui se trouvait devant lui, la belle nature et tout le bataclan ! Ce n'etait que 9a ? Eh bien, on allait voir ! Et l'on a vu le Piano, la Fille Blanche, les Tamises, les vues de mer . . . des toiles enfin produites par un polisson qui se gonflait de vanite de pouvoir raontrer aux peintres des dons splendides, des qualites qui ne demandaient qu'une education severe pour faire de leur possesseur un maitre au moment qu'il est, et non un ecolier debauché. . . .

And he ends up with a te deum to Ingres !

In this spirit Whistler betook himself to his nocturnes.

The positive element of the musical mysteries was a very dexterous pose. It was derived neither from the Pre-Raphaelites nor the French, but was necessarily of exotic origin.

\* He was, in fact, quite unmusical in the literal sense, Cf. Menpes' " Whistler as I knew Him " (Adam and C. Black, London, 1904), pp. 54, 56.

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The analysis of a man so simple and healthy as Constable demands the whole of our powers, because his development accomplished itself unconsciously, like the growth of a mass consisting of blood and muscle, which presents to the eye merely the indivisible unity of flesh. To examine the complexity of a being so subtle and versatile as Whistler is comparatively easy, because it does not hold together " we see the seams. He did not grow ; he combined, and happened upon a variety of things which could not blend. A synthesis may be evolved from Delacroix and Ingres, from Raphael and Titian, from Rembrandt and the antique, from the most opposite powers, in short, but Courbet and Rossetti are mutually exclusive, not because they are extremes, but because the factor called Courbet contains the manner of the other without a remainder. It is not possible to create a new body with iron and cardboard. The utmost one can do is to paste them together.

The exotic was Whistler's happiest combination, inasmuch as it suited him best, and gave the essential motive to his masquerade. It was the unhappiest, because it definitively closed the vistas of his artistic activity. His Japonism was at once the strongest lever of his success and his greatest error. It manifested itself somewhat later than the two tendencies we have considered so far, and grew round them, becoming the cement between them and other things which were added later, and giving the artist his ultimate physiognomy.



The conquest of Japan, the jubilee of which we might now celebrate, is closely connected with Whistler. Its inception was not due to him, as has been occasionally asserted in England and Germany. The first impulse came from Bracquemond, who in the year 1856 discovered a book by Hokusai in the possession of his print engraver, Delatre, and soon made the discovery public with great enthusiasm. Whistler was, however, one of the first collectors of Chinese and Japanese treasures. His collection of blue and white china included some fine pieces, and I remember two lacquers, which belonged to the first golden period. In his pictures Whistler has attested the momentous discovery more clearly than any other great artist of his generation. I say nothing of the little ones.

Japan entered the circle of European art at the most favourable moment possible. It helped Manet and his friends to overcome the toughness of Courbet's material and to restrain the prolixity of the landscape painters of 1830. It expanded naturalism, made the brush looser, colour more liquid, and restored the rights of the idea. We owe it an extension of the surface, a delight in lively contrasts, movement in composition, to which it gave the charms of asymmetry, and above all a new pictorial pattern. The revolt against the schema of classicism found here at once accretion and modification. The fear of a conventional contour became less acute. Drawing, which had been battling for existence since Delacroix, received new aims.

All this is to be found in the works of Manet and his comrades about the year 1860, though it is impossible to determine the exact point at which the influence began to be felt. Where we seem to trace a reflection of Japan in Manet we light upon Goya, who also helped him to a more rapid method of representation, or upon Guys, whose lightness is not surpassed by the improvisation of any Japanese

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aquarellist, or upon Constable, whose sketches are sometimes strikingly akin to certain effects of the artists of Nippon. In other words, the tendencies fostered by Japan were already in operation before Hokusai and Hieroshige were discovered. The influence merely confirmed what it found, co-operated, settled a point in questions of detail, but it had to make its account with many other tendencies in similar or opposite directions, and in the friction lost all that determined its ethnographical position. The Orient serves to make the European more occidental. Whistler plunged headlong into the gay miscellany of the wonderland, and for a time had no higher aim than to appear as exotic as possible. In 1864 and 1865 he painted Japanese scenes as faithfully as he could. The Fille Blanche was dressed up in gaily coloured garments, placed before a real Japanese screen, and given a Japanese fan to hold in a little hand bent geisha-fashion ; or the Japanese lady sat before another screen between little tables and lacquered boxes and contemplated the woodcuts of her native land ; or several Japanese girls in

other garments stood and reclined on a balcony and gazed dreamily into space. The details were always copied from genuine specimens, for at that time Parisian industry made no provision for the wants of the island empire. But even now that our organs have become blunted to the abuse of decades the pictures reek of imitation.

It was the landscape painter who succeeded in conquering Japan. The struggle was not without its comical aspect. Whistler cast off the exotic costumes, forswore all his bibelots, and finally emerged as victor from the entanglements of literal imitations. And when in a small circle he began to be hailed as a personality and as one of the most European of painters, he had become half a Japanese.

The painter of Battersea Bridge discovered the schema of the Impressionists of Nippon, the amusing organisation from a low or a high point of sight with which Hieroshige had made his astonishing effects ; he transposed Hokusai's joyous bridge perspective to the London model, and learnt the bold ornament of dots from the painters of Fushi. There is scarcely a picture in which the dainty branch does not spring up in some corner. Whistler's inventive genius accomplished an incalculable number of variations with this branch. He placed it above and below, left and right, always in some new place, and each time a new opus arose. Often the entire picture hangs on one frail twig. There are nocturnes whose whole physiognomy depends on this support and on the well-placed butterfly signature, and this physiognomy is unmistakably Japanese in type. Whistler carried out the final transition by his adoption of the flat surface. His landscapes took on an essential peculiarity of the pictorial representation of Japan, and at the same time made a proportionate sacrifice of the character of European oil painting.

His advance in imitation is obvious. The ugly difference between an exotic content and a European form disappears. There are dozens of nocturnes and the like which go so completely or to such a degree into the Japanese world of sensation that we are conscious of no disturbing remainder. And these pictures give what their author meant to give, a colour harmony, a surface agreeable to the eye, a reflection of certain aspects of Nature. If an artist has done enough when he achieves what he proposed to himself, there is nothing to be urged against Whistler.

But I protest against this axiom. Capacity remains a non-essential conception if we renounce criticism of the intention. And our reason revolts at the approximately Japanese intention of a European. It is not the idea of our heritage that forbids gravitation to Oriental aims ; it has waxed faint in the age of eclecticism.

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and does not prevent us from hankering after many more primitive images ; but logic, the law of beauty immanent in all the arts alike, the perception that we,

with our European means, ought not to aim at things that satisfy Orientals because the difference of the means not only makes it impossible to accomplish them, but also sets aside the obstacles necessary to all ideal effort.

There are collectors of Japanese works of art who prefer the kakemono of a Chinese primitive to a Van Eyck, and a well-preserved print by Hokusai to a Rembrandt. Over such questions it is impossible to argue. Others would exchange the kakemono for a postage stamp of the same zone. Collectors are lunatics of a harmless kind. All artists are collectors, and, as we learn from a hundred examples of all periods, there are fanatics among them. Many neglect Constable's rule to forget all about art when creating, and the strikingly small number of masters of wealthy origin may be explained in our day, by the dilettantism which is denied to the poor. Whistler's art was obscured by his love of collecting. The vessel in which talent is refined to art was filled with his dilettantism. This outgrew the normal dimensions ; few of his contemporaries appreciated delicate things as he did ; but his art lost the space and power necessary to it. This defect seemed to harmonise with the character of his borrowed art. Its slight demands on personality suited his incapacity to concentrate himself. In Japanese prints we admire the development of a linear type, which unites the certainty of stenography with the grace of calligraphy. The delicate material harmonises with the slightness of the charm, and at once excludes some portion of the claims we are wont to make on painting. (I do not say European painting, for there is but one.) It is capable of embracing the harmony of objective forms together with richness of script; in other words, everything which taste can choose out of a given abundance. But subjective colour, which can only come from practice in our methods, and which we rightly rank far above the other, as yielding richer variations and as the sign of a freer art, is denied to it. The development of modern Japanese pictorial art that corresponds to our painting took place mainly in wood-engraving, and spent itself in the ideal exploitation of all the possibilities of this technique. This specifically industrial estimate of a portion of Japanese art answers to the character of the whole. The difference between a comb and a picture is confined to the materials and the destination. The European conception of art is therefore inapplicable to the creations of Japan, and it was a natural consequence that she should have been of essential service to us only in our industrial art. The individual qualities of our painting could only suffer from the contact, inasmuch as the abstraction of our artistic conception had to lose in breadth therefrom, an abstraction which has been purchased with the effort of centuries, and by the sacrifice of all the advantages inherent in a comprehensive art comparable to that of Japan. These sacrifices are without prejudice to the superiority of which I have just spoken. They resemble the beneficent loss of blood prescribed by the physician for the overheated body.

The advantages derived by Whistler from his self-surrender, which he carried further than any other of our Japanistic masters, could also only lie in the domain of industrial art ; and here, indeed, he achieved irreproachable results, of which we

shall speak presently. Our estimate of him is very different when we judge him as an industrial instead of a pictorial artist. Greatly as the latter was over-estimated, the former was ignored. Of course, this non-recognition was essential to Whistler,

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and no one contributed more to it than himself. This, indeed, is the moral of his history. His Americanism in the manipulation of ideas, which, because they are not strongly differentiated superficially, can be easily multiplied, is a continuation of the process which Whistler began under the inspiration of Rossetti and Courbet. The compromise is less obvious because it is not based upon the tangible qualities of well-known personalities, and does not drive the spectator to criticism of the idea so quickly. The naked results of the compromise were the same. The painter cannot strengthen his pretensions by means of an art which lacks the most important premises of painting. Whistler strove with a brush and with the capacities of a brush after effects which the Japanese achieve mainly in wood-engraving. He profited for a time by the remoteness of his models. But the nearer we came to the originals " it took a long time ; the trade was confined for years to a very limited circle " the less need was there, or should have been, for intermediaries, and the more easy was it to note the differences. The balance is not to Whistler's credit. Here too his brush confined itself to a weakening of the model. It is only the material detail of his tones that is richer. Even in the most diaphanous of his pictures we still recognise the separate brush-strokes, whereas in the Japanese prints the planes are only animated by the tint and by schematic effects of relief. But this particularity, which is only discoverable at times after careful examination, is in hundreds of cases merely defective covering of the surface, sometimes the result of detailing, but never of deliberate division, which obtains a system of effects embracing the whole work from the characteristic laying on of colour with the brush. The system " so far, indeed, as we can talk of system in connection with Whistler's pictures " is based on the flat ornament of the Japanese ; and since it cannot rival their dexterity, since it is impossible to get that cleanness of the surface, the indispensable quality of the technique, by means of the brush, since, further, the contour lacks the richness of rhythm and the delicacy of the stroke, and must necessarily lack them, the result of the rivalry is beyond doubt.

The mistake is comprehensible to some extent when we think of a positive quality of Whistler's with which I have not yet dealt " his unquestionable talent as an engraver. He was, as Duret says, " un graveur d'instinct et de race," born an etcher, and later a most brilliant lithographer. Before he laid hold of the brush he had already made a name among his Parisian comrades with his etchings, and while as a painter he was still seeking a form in all possible directions, as an etcher he had long found a perfectly adequate expression. There are few pictures which show him to such advantage as the plates of about 1860, when he was twenty-

five " very sincere renderings of Nature, renderings of Whistler himself, with all his esprit, his mobility, his love of banter, and without any of his less admirable qualities. At the same time that he was vexing his soul over the Piano picture he drew in a few hours the view of the Thames with the crowded houses on the bank, the swarm of boats on the river painted with the white of the paper, with the admirable boatmen in the foreground,\* or set down the island of houses in the Seine from one of the windows of the Louvre, f or seized upon the types of the streets. The sheets seem to have grown of themselves. He was not thinking of art here ; he wanted to do what he had done in the topographical office at Washington, when, to the horror of his chief, he had covered the borders of his maps

\* Black Lion Wharf, dated 1 859 (Wedmore's Catalogue, No. 40).

t Wedmore's Catalogue, No. 55.

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with caricatures " amuse himself with existence, see how the world could be recreated with the pencil, putting as little purpose into the process as might be. In many of the earlier etchings, especially the interiors, such as the *Vieille aux Loques*, *The Kitchen*, &c., we recognise the shadow of Rembrandt. But he does not linger here ; he presses forward to something different, looser, more playful and lighter ; smaller too, certainly, but free from the pettiness of the epigone.

And this impression persists if we follow the whole " *oeuvre gravee* " to its close. There are weak plates among it, but none that challenge criticism by weakness. The impulse towards progress always comes from his own experience. Here too there is a tendency to dissolve, which was carried furthest in the lithographs ; but it makes form more pliant, and does not sacrifice it. It induced Whistler to simplify detail, but to multiply all that was to be gained from the copper. Much deeper things, no doubt, have been said with the needle, but it must be admitted that no one has ever given us things so exclusively conceived for it. It is this thinking with his instrument which gives the engraver such an advantage over the painter, who with all possible technical inventions vainly seeks to bridge over the chasm between emotion and form. Whistler is as near to himself in the etchings as is the scribe to his handwriting. He wrote down his Venice, his London, his Paris in pictures. The *Doorways*, the *Balcony*, the *Garden*, are more sincere than the letters to Fantin. Never did the painter achieve the splendour of these plates. The web of tiny, imperceptibly bent strokes makes an effect like that of rich laces. Compare an etching of the piazza of St. Mark with a picture of the same. The etching records a typical impression which its means are wholly adequate to render, the peculiar breaks and apertures of the buildings, with their many arches and thousand ornaments. This it exaggerates. Whistler's etched Venice is much more ornate, the Gothic architecture far more rococo than the reality. With the

sparkling filigree which repeats the objective impression in manifold variations there gradually arises not only the given object, the building, which we see clearly at the first glance, but the atmosphere which surrounds it and dissolves it again, moulding it into the fantastic image our eyes carry away of the magic city in blissful nights, in the sun-mist of noon, or in the delicate twilight of evening. The painter, however, wanted more ; and who would gainsay him ? For he could do more with his richer means ; he could give the massiveness of structure, which the filigree of the etching could not suggest, could add to the ornament that delights us the threatening darkness that mingles awe of the invisible with our admiration for the city of the lagoons. But greatly as the possibilities of pictorial means per se surpass those of the mesh-like technique of the etchings, they are only effectual if they are made so in exactly the same way, when the painter too succeeds in weaving a net in which he captures reality. This, however, was too much for Whistler. He thought that as a painter he could seize from without the charm of Venice, which as an etcher he had caused to grow from within, and confused cause and effect. He tried to fix the atmosphere about St. Mark, and painted it as if the vaporous charm produced the building, instead of the reverse. He might as well have tried to make a rose grow out of painted perfume, and by this fantastic naturalism he only succeeded in producing a lifeless rendering of a living apparition. It was the same false conclusion which led Turner astray, and yields strikingly similar

\* " The Art of J. McN, Whistler : An Appreciation," by T. R. Way and G. R. Dennis (Bell and Sons, London, 1903). Cf. also Duret, p. 5, and Menpes, p. 88.

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results. The picture has a fantastic effect before it is formed, and is therefore swifter in its effect than the etching. It disturbs the spectator more violently, but the effect is lost as soon as he recovers from his astonishment and begins to observe. Whistler looked upon atmospheric phenomena as vapour, and therefore painted vapour. In reality, however, the atmosphere is no more ephemeral than any other piece of Nature ; it is only made up of more complex dimensions than the usual ones, and a rendering which only gives the changeful appearance not only fails to suggest its nature, but by the literalness of the reproduction produces the antithesis of the model. Whistler's seductive Nocturne, Blue and Gold, in Mr. J. J. Cowan's collection, attempts to give the colour of the impression by means of a strange tone, which harmonises with another yet more strange. But even were the yellowish golden brown of the marble still more choice and the blue of the atmosphere yet more tender, they would still be only brown and blue, with but a slight relation one to the other, and their resemblance to the blue and yellow of reality embraces such a minute portion of the monument bathed in the evening light that one only feels the woeful difference between Nature and art.

Pride in the wealth of his manipulative means makes the artificer strong, insight into its limitations makes the artist. Whistler certainly got the maximum out of the copper. Things his pupil Menpes tells us about the printing of the etchings remind us of the meticulous care of the Japanese.\* But it is just in those plates which show the utmost delicacy of treatment, such as the Putney Bridge or the Upright Venice that the free poetry soars above routine. Nocturnes which promise more than they perform are rare among the etchings. The last series of Venice etchings, published in 1886, are preceded by certain propositions for etchers, the first of which is : " Qu'en art il est criminel de vouloir aller au delà des moyens employés pour son exercice." If the painter had taken this axiom for his motto, he would have avoided many errors. The etcher, who had only a steel point for a brush and printing ink for colour, was a great painter, not because he effected more with his tools than others before him, but because he recognised his limits more keenly, and within the impassable boundaries produced colour and picturesqueness like an artist of unlimited means. By this pride in the riches of his poverty he was a European, the representative of the noblest capacities of our culture – a higher culture than that of the naive children of the East, who have received too much of the gay variety of colour as a free gift to be able to evolve the highest conception of colour from their own consciousness. That this pride failed the painter so signally, that he envied the Japanese that which industrial art and a less strenuous manner of life had given them, robs his silhouette of its pure outline.

\* "Whistler as I knew Him," p. 87 et seq.

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### THE SPANIARD

Whistler's portraits were his trump cards. His power of assimilation was in his favour here. His habit of seeing in Nature only a costume for his own moods, and his capacity for winning the appearance of a form from an impression before he had thoroughly received it, were decisive factors here again. The unrivalled juggler, who slipped into strange people before he understood their language, and trusted himself to use the idiom of things before he had grasped their nature, brought valuable qualities to the help of the portrait painter ; above all that rapidity of the receptive apparatus so indispensable in our democratic age, prized since the time of Van Dyck, and expanded by Reynolds. His method was not, indeed, nearly so rapid as the old one, but it was even better suited to every face whose owner could afford the necessary outlay of time and money. The arranger who by means of a nothing succeeded in Rossetti-ising Fantin's type, with the same nothing gave a Pre-Raphaelite figure the charm of Japan and made a

Japanese landscape into a view of Chelsea, had everything that the transformation artist of fashionable circles required. He was very strong in transformations. I have seen contemporaries to whom Nature had given but little aplomb, going into his studio in Fitzroy Street and, transmuted in the portrait, they have left the house as Spanish grandees. And yet they were still themselves. The characteristic manner had not effaced all their features. It was not, like the over-summary manner of the Reynolds period, a face-style. It lurked in apparently unimportant, very unobtrusive trifles, in a something, a nothing, difficult to define with a word, but attractive to sitters just because it was so discreet.

Menpes has given us some very intimate details touching the master. He shows him at his tailor's and his hairdresser's, knows the secret of the shape of his hat and of the famous long cane, describes his manner of eating and speaking, and in all these manifestations we find the same circle of "artistic conceptions," the same style. Whistler had style. He had the courage to defy the antiquated judgment of the world, which declares absorbing interest in externals to be incompatible with intellectual eminence. To that little circle in London (more especially) and in Paris who dethroned the poet from his eminence on the radiant heights of society and hailed the painter as the true artist of life. Whistler was an apostle. He even ventured to dress not only well, but with a delicate suggestion of personality, and avoided the crude antics of the Romanticists, who were not distinguished but put into a uniform by their fluttering neck-ties and oddly cut velvet jackets. There was a tailor of genius latent in him, and his painting, if I may say so, was a high, a universal tailor's art, which was not content with fashion, but sought to invent, which gave not only the costume, but all its accessories, even the deportment which best suited the sitter, even a something which suggested his higher culture. He observed the characteristics of his clients, and found the right cut for them, always in a sparkling and modish manner. Future generations will go to his pictures to see how we dressed rather than to the vulgar drawings of fashion specialists. A little more, and he had been our Moroni; and what makes him fall short of this is perhaps rather our defect than his. All that was possible to do with our materials

WHISTLER: HARMONY IN GRAY AND GREEN,  
PORTRAIT OF CICELY HENRIETTA, MISS ALEXANDER


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he did. As Kessler says, he developed the elegance of his curves from modern



costume.

Even the painter as such had a certain share in these creations. His work was above all the *mise en toile*. In the best examples he produces an extraordinary effect. It would be difficult to seat a figure more advantageously than the Mother in the famous picture of the Luxembourg, or the Carlyle at Glasgow, or to present a little girl more charmingly than the Miss Alexander of Whistler's best portrait. A brilliant decorator designed the division of the wall space in all three pictures. There is exquisite invention in such details as the position of the mother's head, not just in the middle between the two framed prints, but a little to the right ; the fact that of the second engraving we see only the narrow border of the frame and a tiny bit of white paper ; the relation of the upper wall space to the lower part, and that of the whole wall to the masses of the portiere and the floor ; above all, the outline of the face and of the whole black-robed figure on the black chair against the gray background, balanced by the black of the Chinese curtain with the beautiful white-flecked pattern. The same taste governs every detail in the other two pictures. In the Carlyle we could not displace the little circle with the butterfly signature, or in the Miss Alexander the chair with its exquisite gray stuff, by a millimetre without taking away from the charm — a very distinguished charm, much more refined than the fluttering fantasy of the nocturnes, immeasurably superior to the sensuous gourmandise of the boudoir scenes, rare enough to justify the prestige of the proverbial taste. In spite of this, the pictures not only failed to please at first, but were considered hideous. Duret relates that the little miss was ashamed to be recognised as the original. Painted in 1874,  picture, as well as the Carlyle<sup>^</sup> were first generally acclaimed some ten years later, when they were exhibited at the Salon. The portrait of the Mother, painted in 1871, had had even a longer probation before it made the final conquest of the public in the Salon of 1883. This seems incomprehensible to us now. That unusual things require time we learn on every page of art history, and we are so familiar with this experience, and know the reasons for it so well, that the fate of a Constable seems quite natural to us. The uses of such geniuses are not evident to the multitude, and thus they have themselves to pay for the superfluity of their gifts. Fame was not so long denied to Whistler ; but it surprises us more to find that it was withheld so long than that it was altogether refused to Manet. For these pictures paint an ideal which is at least sympathetic to every cultivated person in the present. Who would not wish to have about him the atmosphere of the aristocratic old lady, of the quiet thinker, or of the delightful little girl ? Every one who has any sort of sentiment for refinement of surroundings must have recognised in these pictures a material progress not only of an individual kind, but of universal utilitarian value, which, it might have been supposed, would have raised Whistler to the pinnacle proper to him. And this would have been only fair, for posterity will pay no homage to this art. For even here, where he offers us the utmost of which his art is capable, making his admirers wonder whether Velazquez himself reached such heights. Whistler does not actually produce himself, but makes us produce for him. Not so nonchalantly as in his nocturnes ; he exerted himself honestly ; but it was again upon an image created by the

external world, not by the "ingenium" of the artist himself. He would be blind who could not see the pleasant quality of the colour and the drawing ; but this colour and this drawing belong not to Whistler the painter, but to the dexterous  
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arranger who is only making use of the painter to reproduce his inventions. The invention inheres in the reality ; colour and form are objective facts, external to the frame. The effect of the mother might be got in all essentials by a real figure against a real wall. The masterpiece, on the contrary, proclaims its beauty before we know what it represents in detail, and therefore retains it even after we have discovered the superficial meaning ; it is only afterwards that this meaning brings about an enlargement of the elementary nature. Whistler's picture, on the other hand, lacks the elementary, and should we try to call it up, without making use of reproduction, we should inevitably come to think the drawing weak and the material crude, because the constituents are only logically and not organically combined. In the case of the Carlyle one would need to demand little indeed from a work of art to accept the weaknesses of the picture. The coat, the cloak, the hat, the whole artistic structure of folds seems to have been built up only for the purpose of throwing original shadows on the wall, and it makes us uneasy to find a further dimension suggested in this Japanesque silhouette art. The body becomes a kind of flat ornament through its exclusive relation to the wall ; and as Whistler was not content with the natural conditions of this form, crass differences arise between the various parts " between the treatment of the coat and of the head, notably in the hair. No less disturbing is the false relation of the body to the wall. The detailed painting of the features, which, as Benedite has said, have the gravity of a medal, demands much more precision in the treatment of the wall. The values of the wall are very delicate, but the portrait, for which they should serve as an effective background, calls them in question.

The Miss Alexander is on a much higher level. When English collectors brought together the gems of child portraiture for the Fair Children Exhibition of 1895 the little lady asserted herself victoriously amongst many famous masterpieces. The intensely modern, white-gray dress threw all the finery of the old English masters into the shade. Their much-praised grace looked coarse and obtrusive beside it. Reynolds' numerous children had not an atom of its natural childish dignity, and Lawrence's fluent sketch, one of his most surprising ideas, had none of its distinction among its surprises. Its reality was the amazing thing about it. The truth not only of the portrayer, but of the portrayed. The whole nature of the little maiden seemed different from that of the children of a hundred years ago. We divine the soul of the modern child, to whom the capital soon teaches a certain gravity of demeanour, who can scarcely find space to play, and

yet is still young. More girl than child, more lady than girl, and yet still childish, a brilliant paraphrase of all we can think of as perfection in a child. The frock is a dream. The white of the muslin and the various grays, the dull green of the sash and the black of the shoes, make an ideal setting for the slender figure, with its small face enframed in cloudy hair. And just as the clothes suit the little lady, so does she harmonise with the green carpet and the discreet pattern and the gray wall with the gray-black skirting-board. A princess ! We may rank the work that dignity and taste have created here very highly and bestow all kinds of praise upon it, save one — the eulogy which is always heard before this picture — its likeness to Velazquez. This is not a blasphemy against the great Spaniard, but against him whom it is intended to honour. But we cannot pass over the comparison. Not only does Whistler's prestige, which has been nourished on it for decades, evoke it, but the manner of this and of many other pictures the use of colours.

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which bear no accidental resemblance to those of the Infantas, the echoes of effects with which we have become familiar since Velazquez.

Velazquez too decked his queens and princesses and princes sumptuously, and they are so fascinating to us in their splendour that every detail of the pictures is made a merit in the painter. Yet it would never occur to any one to call the creator of these pictures a glorious tailor. For we see too plainly that the adornment of these persons lies not only in their costumes. The Vienna Infanta is a huge round bonbon-box, in which is set a tight-laced child. The one in the Prado with the handkerchief is considerably broader than she is long. Set before us as a reality, this apparatus would move us to laughter or to tears of pity, and the painter who drew the outline of his Venus' hip must have endured tortures when he was condemned to paint persons who were robbed of nearly all semblance of human form by Court dress. If he succeeded in making miracles of art of them in spite of their clothes, it was because he transported the given object into a new world, where costume as such lost its significance. We cannot say that he altered anything in it. He gave just what he saw. But if there were a hundred proofs that the portraits did not agree with the originals, we should still believe in their likeness. Velazquez added nothing real to the real. We cannot even credit him with any special dexterity in arrangement, or he would hardly have made his Meninas into the " facsimile of an accidental moment," as Justi says. And if this disposition of the figures, scarcely intelligible at a first glance, appears to us like life itself, this is not due to the strange milieu, but to the art of the painter. What he invented was not what reality gives or can give, but the transposition of the given object into the metier of the painter. He discovered qualities in his objects which only the brush can represent, and confined himself to these peculiarities, the only ones accessible to their painter's means.

These were phenomena of light and air, not emanating from the persons or things to be represented, but merely making use of these as accidental points of support. And it is because we perceive these things better in pictures than in reality, when our consciousness sleeps and our vision only embraces a part of the organs of perception, when we hear, smell, and touch more than we see, that pictorial exaggeration of the perceptible adds strength to Nature.

The light Velazquez gives us is stronger than that of the sun, because it fulfils the finite purpose of its creator more absolutely than the sun can fulfil the infinity of its purposes. It is this light we enjoy when we admire the pictures of Velazquez, the wealth of a system of immense extent, not the haughty bearing of the king, the gallant little Don Balthazar Carlos on his prancing horse, or the taste of the weavers of Mariana's rich brocades. And so perhaps it is too much to say that the great Spaniard's artist-eye was offended by the structures which encased the Infantas. It may be that he delighted in them as in the contorted bodies of Philip's dwarfs or the horrible mask of the idiot of Coria, because their forms offered a rich field for the play of light. He triumphed over our shifting conceptions of beauty and ugliness by laying the stamp of his own norm upon them.

But Whistler has no norm on the basis of the painter. What he offers instead is of lower origin, it is Nature, because it is not purged of the accidental, because it is not natural according to a higher system. The reminiscences of primitive possibilities in his pictures are too strong not to kindle the looked-for associations in the

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mind of the spectator ; but these only point to the reality, as we can imagine it, not to the representation of a form that enhances, secures, and immortalises. Even the Miss Alexander is no exception. The picture is less displeasing than others, because it has not the comparative defects of the rest. But there is nothing positive in this superiority, nothing which could give Whistler a place anywhere near the great Spaniard.

The portrait of Sarasate, The Fur Jacket, and Lady Archibald Campbell are about on the same level, accomplished productions, which do not, however, rival the taste in arrangement of the three best portraits.

In 1877 he painted Irving as Philip II. "black upon black, a scheme he used for a whole series of similar male portraits. It was of these Stevenson was thinking when he recalled Whistler's figures before the Philosophers in the Prado.\* After this it only remained for Ruskin to declare Velazquez a dauber beside Whistler ! He who sees affinities between the Menippus and Whistler's sombre reflections

is incapable of forming an opinion of Velazquez. The fact that such a criticism did not debar its author from writing a book on the Spaniard full of very just observations, shows the elasticity of our art conceptions and of our art language in an amusing light.

It is not Whistler we have to thank for a revelation of the master of Las Meninas. He did all he could to withhold us from him. He treated him as Turner had treated Claude, and as Reynolds had treated Rembrandt. Manet's relation to Velazquez was very different – more reverent, yet less platonic, and above more fruitful. Manet grasped sturdily at all he needed from the Spaniards, his racial affinity to them enabling him to seize their essential quality. I have shown elsewhere how gradually his individuality resolved itself into crystals of increasing purity, and how race was finally merged in a new personality. Whistler, lacking all inward relation to the conditions of a Velazquez, could take nothing from the Spaniard, much as he sought to absorb. He confined himself to turning over his work like a careful collector. He concealed his Spanish inspiration as discreetly as Manet proclaimed it openly, veiling it under decorative arts, under masquerades, under the culture of a European aesthete. But in the process he concealed what the work of art must proclaim as openly as possible, if it is to affirm its nature. Whistler clothed his people. Manet showed them naked. Every line plays and makes its effect in the nervous structure of his works, like the muscles in the body of a wrestler. There is no portion of idle flesh, no movement without its significance, no spot that does not correspond to the organism of the whole. The absurd axiom with which Whistler led off his contradictory "Propositions" for painters – "A picture is finished when all trace of the means employed has disappeared" – turns against himself, confirming what his pictures proclaim, f A finely treated surface is not in itself a work of art, and what Whistler calls the traces of work are the organs of the picture. The idea of suppressing them could only have occurred to a man who saw in painting a makeshift for the reproduction of realities. If the strokes of the brush were imperceptible in the portrait of Pope Innocent in the Doria Gallery, it might be anything else, but it would not be the glorious Velazquez. And yet the astonished Italians were right when they exclaimed, " Pare sporcati cosi a caso ! " – " Made out

\* "Velazquez," Robert M. Stevenson.

t The programme he constantly proclaimed is set forth officially in the document that used to hang in his art-school in Paris.

WHISTLER: ARRANGEMENT IN FLESH  
COLOUR AND BLACK, PORTRAIT OF  
MONSIEUR DURET (1883)

DURET COLLECTION, PARIS

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of not King, and there it is ! " We may say the same of Manet's portraits, of some, indeed, even more justly, and we ought to be able to say it of all works that claim to be great. It could not be applied to any portrait of Whistler's.

The Irving was painted shortly after Manet's Faure as Hamlet, and was exhibited in London in 1877, the year in which Manet's picture appeared at the Salon. We may safely conclude that the coincidence was no mere accident : certain details in the Irving even betray Manet's influence plainly enough. Whistler has made his actor more elegant. Nothing could be happier than the gray tights and the black velvet, with its yellow binding. But Irving really looked even more magnificent in the costume, and was, in addition, a great actor. Whistler's picture does not act ; it stands still " 3. clothes-stand ! The vigour of Manet's Faure has something of Shakespeare himself.

Whistler interrupted the series of male portraits against black backgrounds in 1883 with his Duret whom he set against a soft gray ground shot with pink. Blanche, Gandara, and the Scotch painters who follow in Whistler's footsteps never succeed in giving Whistler's rich material to their backgrounds. The black of the dress-coat, the delicate pink of the domino and the flesh tones, which seem to bloom from the background, and the different whites of gloves and linen make a beautiful harmony with the gray. The choice of colour would be perfect but for the vermilion of the fan. The picture is painted with a masterly regard to its permanent beauty. Whistler worked at it for three months, painting and repainting till he had got absolute smoothness of surface, and then veiled it with a colourless porous glaze. It offers a perfect exemplification of his theory concerning " finish." Among the few pictures Duret still owns is another portrait of himself, painted by Manet in 1868. It is hardly comparable to the other, for, as Duret has told us,\* it was not intended for public inspection, and has none of the careful elaboration of the work of Whistler, who was not unmindful that the portrait was to represent him in what was then a brilliant collection. Manet painted his in two or three sittings. It is inelegant, in the well-known brown tone of the early period, the only relief a few dashes of colour in the neck-tie and the accessory still-life, and it has not stood so well as the other ; yet it is far above it.

With all its finish. Whistler's elaborate portrait is less complete than Manet's little picture. This is a swift, spontaneous creation, a work of the mind rather than of the hand, an invention so convincing that faulty details, did they exist in it, would seem unimportant. The other is handicraft, the outcome of industry rather than inspiration, the harmony of which is made up of so many trifles that the slightest defect, such, for instance, as the want of definition on the top of the head, irritates the spectator. The one creates life, the other an artistic illusion. Manet is "more artless," as Constable would have said. We can imagine how minutely Whistler arranged every detail of his composition. Sitting to him was a purgatorial process. The question of the costume was no slight matter in this case. Duret gives a detailed account of this part of the business ; f and it is interesting to compare this with his description of his sittings to the painter of Olympia, of Manet's nonchalance, of how the still-life on the stool was an after-thought, although, in spite of its lack of all logical connection with the figure, it seems to bear a far closer relation to it than the domino in the Whistler, which hangs so naturally from the arm. It is difficult to believe that the two pictures

\* "Histoire d'Edouard Manet," p, 117.  
t Buret's "Whistler," pp. IOo, loi.

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represent the same person ; nay, they seem hardly to belong to the same species. We note the bones and flesh in the Manet. Whistler's Duret stands on trousers. When Manet painted the hat he observed that " il est tres facile de mettre un chapeau sur une t6te, mais il est rudement difficile de mettre une t6te dans un chapeau." Here we have the difference between the two in a phrase !

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Analysis brings us closer to other artists. We get a clearer idea of Rubens, of Titian, of Velazquez, of Delacroix, the more we succeed in reducing them to their constituent parts. In each part we feel the positive element the artist contributed. In dealing with Whistler we seem like a chemist always proceeding

to new divisions, and perceiving, to his alarm, as the last distillation runs through the filter, that nothing is left in the cornet. The worshipper who believes in an independent Whistler body will say that the coarse texture of the paper is at fault. The exasperated chemist blames the preparation with equal energy, and declares that the metal he was seeking was non-existent, or, as the analysts say, existed only in particles. But Whistler exists. He has given us exquisite things. Who would be willing to forego the Miss Alexander^ many a water-colour, many of the etchings and lithographs ? Perhaps our experience will be that of the chemist who was searching for a metal, and after having successfully destroyed the preparation with his acids discovers that he was not dealing with a non-organic material at all. Perhaps in Whistler we have not to deal with a painter, but with another body, which has teased us, and, although it has evaporated under our fingers, remains, outside painting, but not outside of art. There is certainly nothing to urge against this hypothesis. Setting the painter aside, there is still enough over, though what remains is a very different figure from that hitherto presented by European art history. No painter of spiritual conditions and the like, not the creator of an art that gave us more by slight means than our great masters, but a " little master," an industrial artist of delicate taste, a stimulating influence which we may turn to good account. He has left us things which reflect his nature exactly; and as this was intensely modern the reflection becomes almost a symbol. In a very great epoch of painting, one which has done more for the concentration of art than any period since the seventeenth century, a personality like his, which served to modify the dominant tendency, found adequate tasks, and also very definite limitations.

I have taken him to represent the conclusion of English art, because he was connected with Rossetti, had various tendencies in common with Turner, and sometimes tried to approach Constable ; because he founded a school of portraiture in which we find, in an altered form, all that we reprobate in Reynolds and his generation. He did nothing for the advancement of the best in English art, that which links Constable to Hogarth. Many nationalities met in him. Fundamentally he was, I think, most faithful to the land of his birth. This is shown in his eagerness to substitute industrial tendencies for art, the expedient of all barbaric countries. If America, the race without traditions, had brought forth a painter, it would have been an event unprecedented, and, indeed, miraculous. His exoticism, his tendency to mingle Oriental and European forms, was essentially American. His most brilliant industrial achievement, the decoration for the famous Peacock Room, has lately reached its true home. It is a better translation of Japanese art than aU his nocturnes and boudoir scenes. His attention to effect was also truly American. He had no equal

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in his knowledge of its mechanism. He took care that whenever and however



he appeared all suggestions should contribute to the impression, preparing, completing, and even providing for the prolongation of the effect after the fall of the curtain. It is open to question whether art owed him much, but as long as the strange institution of art-exhibitions persists, his special faculty "his gift of arrangement" will hardly be rivalled.

## YOUNG ENGLAND

The characteristic deficiency of England in sculpture has determined the latest developments of her art. The deficiency was cleverly concealed. For fifty years the attention of the country had been directed upon so many interests that people had no time to consider such a detail. So many new things were being produced that this ancient mode of expression was entirely thrown into the shade ; there was no demand for it in England. Since the days of Gothic architecture which saw the rise of the magnificent tombs in Westminster Abbey, it had never been a popular art. The great epoch of English painting was dominated by an element essentially opposed to sculpture. The successors of Van Dyck did everything to enrich this tradition, but nothing to supplement the defect, notwithstanding Reynolds' enthusiasm for Michelangelo. Of late years, at exhibitions of the International Society over which Whistler presided, if one saw a bronze from the Continent it looked as if it had somehow strayed out of its proper environment, and almost seemed to have been chosen in order to heighten, by its coarser realism, the more tender spirit of the other works. Whistler's painting is absolutely unplastic. His best pupil, Walter Sickert, has evolved a non-plastic style which has its charm ; with the Scotch school this has become a mannerism. It is this defect above all which makes the Pre-Raphaelites suffer from a comparison with Courbet. Perhaps Rossetti's circle required nothing so much as the shadow of a Donatello.

The eclecticism of the rising generation in England has not hesitated to include the French school of sculpture within the wide range of its admirations. Rodin, who has succeeded Whistler as president of the International, has long been a welcome guest by the Thames and has beneficially influenced Tweed, especially by the elegance of his portraiture. Some male busts by the young Englishman display great taste and a capacity for using the inspiration to enforce the high traditions of English portraiture. The pretty miniature sculptures of Wells are also akin to the Impressionism of the French school. These are, however, transitory and ephemeral details, promises but lately made. England remains without any school of sculpture, and to this defect all the decadence of English art may be attributed.

This defect of the English genius may seem, as such, unimportant, for the reason that there is apparently no demand for sculpture in England. Appearances, however, are deceptive. When a nation feels no necessity of this kind, its genius is

the sufferer. The idea that a nation can abandon one department of art without suffering for it is a consequence of the separation of the arts from each other. The development of some one department in isolation is no less unnatural and inconceivable than the separation itself. We must conceive of artistic creation as a living body which it is impossible to lop at one end or the other without damage to its existence, or at least to its health.

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Sculpture is the eldest of the arts, and we need not be surprised if it is the first to leave the scene ; its departure is the beginning of the end. It was so in countries the artistic life of which is already petrified, in Italy, for instance, and afterwards in Spain. Painting cannot survive isolation. Countries which formerly attained success only in one kind of artistic production have never escaped artistic decay. It is true that the peculiar style of Dutch painting was made possible only by the absence of sculpture. A Rembrandt could only be produced by the concentration of the national genius upon painting alone. Yet it was perhaps this concentration that brought about the untimely end of Dutch art. If, on the other hand, we wish to understand the versatility which makes the greatness of the Florentines, we have only to look at any one of their pictures, their buildings or their statues. When we discover that this or that painter was also a sculptor we are not at all surprised ; it is merely the verification of a conviction which we have long held. Even if Verrocchio had never produced a single monument, he would still have been a sculptor.

It is the preponderance of one or the other activity which produces the various phases in the history of art. Entire equipoise between them probably existed only in classical times. The few extant relics of the Roman frescoes astonish us by the taste shown in the recognition of what is properly pictorial. This wisdom may proceed from the same source as the capacity, never since recovered, for treating Nature within the limitation of a strict convention and yet giving it an air of perfect freedom, which is manifested in ancient stucco ornament. In such brilliant evidences of the old culture as, for instance, the slender figure of the youth with the hoop, in the upper storey of the Naples Museum, or the delicate ornament of the ceiling in the Thermae Museum at Rome, we seem to trace a genius which still painted, carved, and built at one and the same moment with undivided energy. This organic coherence is weakened even so early as the Renaissance, and the fact is nowhere more strongly apparent than in decorations which follow the patterns of the ancients. But it survives in a relative degree, and gives personalities such as Raphael the peculiar sphere of their effects. When we reach the modern art of France, the problem becomes deeper. The plastic ideal of Ingres no less than the pictorial ideal of Delacroix speaks volumes for the versatility and the richness of the French genius. In Ingres, together with his drawing, we enjoy many charming qualities which belong to pure painting ; we are conscious, in the structure

of Delacroix' colour, of plastic potentialities ; these assumptions are borne out in the work of their successors.

The problem takes an even more remarkable form in the Impressionist school, where even the conscious opposition of painting and sculpture cannot disturb this latent equipoise. Manet is at feud with every plastic element in painting, and tries to eliminate anything which might lead to competition with the sister art. Since shadow weakens colour he suppresses it ; yet even in this reduction, the secret force of the plastic feeling springs to life. The modelling disappears from the noses and cheeks of his portraits only to make the artist's touch more powerful and comprehensive. The rejected elements are replaced by manifold resources and by a pictorial strength which is no less impressive to the eye in search of effects of perspective than the play of shadow of the earlier artists. The genius of France is declining, and the organism no longer shows the perfect harmony of a calm omnipotence. Delacroix becomes theatrical in the endeavour to snatch an effect of movement. Even so the contraction of one organ seems but to give a stronger

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impetus to the other. Even in the solvent art of Manet, even in Seurat and his school, these stores of vital force are apparent in action and insist upon a use of colour which goes far beyond their scientific programme. Here the process of disruption seems barely to have begun and the artistic genius is still strong enough to produce a reaction ; some fortunate collectivist may yet be able to seize the dominant note amid these movements and countermovements and secure some sort of relative harmony.

English art is a dreary level by comparison. The so-called reaction of the Pre-Raphaelites failed chiefly for want of a starting-point, some shore from which it might strike out with a vigorous determination to reach the other side. There was no question here of any inward tension, any struggle for expression ; it was an effort to escape flaccidity and death. The genius which had nothing more to say was taught a foreign language in the vain hope that her tongue would thus be loosed.

Such attempts are like physic given to an aged man. English art, and Scottish as well, is a mere sick-room. The last attempt was made by courtesy of a grateful France through the medium of resourceful pupils of Lecoq de Boisbaudran. We have already spoken of the English episodes in Fantin's career and of Rodin's popularity in London. Cazin was there in 1871. The only man who effected anything and who is still at work after forty years' residence in England is Alphonse Legros, the comrade of Fantin, Cazin and Rodin.

Legros may have been the favourite pupil of Lecoq ; he was not the most talented, and perhaps in temperament he was the weakest ; but of them all he was the best fitted to assimilate his master's teaching, and therefore the best able to carry it to a foreign country. It was Whistler's idea ; he wished to help a friend who was having a hard struggle in France.

He can hardly have suspected that this friendly action was to raise up for him a helper in England who would supplement the influence which he himself was to exert.

Legros' talent found a readier recognition in England than in Paris. Lecoq's drill had produced a capacity for solving every problem that could present itself to an artist as completely as his temperament permits, and it was perhaps this which impaired Legros' value in the eyes of the Parisian amateur, whose artistic tastes are invariably one-sided. On the other hand the sound practical instinct of England, insisting upon a symmetrical training, found in this artist-teacher an ideal instrument.

In France Legros had passed through the development undergone by the rest of his generation. He was profoundly influenced by Courbet ; he was unable to oppose to this influence that ample sense of rhythm which preserved Fantin from becoming a mere epigone, but selected from the style of his model as much as he could control. Considered as a residuum of Courbet, Legros is weak indeed ; the *Ex Voto* in Dijon, which was painted during his French period, seems infinitely thin, both in expression and execution, when compared with the *Stone-breakers*. The picture betrays the sentimentalism which was absent in the *Funeral at Ornans*, and we divine which aspect of Legros England found it easiest to understand. In the much later pictures in the Tate Gallery the same characteristic has been even better accommodated to the English taste. Yet even here the spirit of Courbet is plainly to be seen, the spirit which divides the Frenchman from the English by such a world of difference.

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The attenuation of Courbet which Legros affected resulted in a very delicately-articulated draughtsmanship. Fantin had returned to the draughtsmanship of Ingres ; it was the enchantment of this which supplied his art with the impulse which enabled it to escape from the world of Courbet. Legros remained faithful, but even so he got no nearer to Courbet. Many of his drawings show a similarity with those of Lecoq. When the two are compared, Lecoq, with his more slender resources, seems to contain almost more than his successor. Legros appears to dwell more on detail, though the value of his detail shrinks to nothing when we think of so great an artist in detail as Leibl. Like Leibl, Legros was helped by reminiscences of Holbein. The result was as entirely feminine as

the work of Leibl is masculine in every stroke. It is a feeble and uncertain handwriting, the merest shadow of Courbet's energy. Nothing is left of that but its honesty. Legros succeeded in developing this style to unusual richness, and even produced sculpture, the most remarkable example of which is the little torso, now with other works of his in the Luxembourg. Benedite exaggerates when he puts this work on the level of the antique.\* It is primarily a linear figure, like those of the ancients but very different in intention ; the form is as empty as that of the ancients was full, but it is the handiwork of an artist who seems to find in this very emptiness a means of art. His medals were more within his reach, and Roger Marx' praise of his grasp of this format is well justified, f In my opinion he is at his best in his few decorative sculptures " for instance, the beautifully composed fountains for the Duke of Portland, where the softness of Prud'hon's forms awakes to new life, a renaissance which is a portent in the land of Hogarth.

Legros became the teacher of the present artistic generation in England ; in expounding his theories he had at command the same eloquence with which Lecoq had once awakened the enthusiasm of his pupils. The only material difference was the fact that his listeners were English. The question whether Legros was the best man to inspire the so-called realism of the Pre-Raphaelites with the spirit of Courbet is beside the mark. In any case the effort came too late, and if we strike a balance we shall find that Legros probably lost more than the Englishmen gained The exhibition of his later pictures at Bing's in 1898 clearly showed that the painter's powers were failing. His English environment is driving him more and more to drawing and etching. For years past he has ceased to count as a painter, but he has done more than any other man to continue the beneficial influence of Meryon upon modern England and to enrich the art of engraving, the only department where England is still supreme.

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Most of the young Englishmen who are not members of the Morris School, of which we shall speak later, make use of Legros' line. William Strang most nearly approaches the master, and among younger men the pupils of Legros are numberless. As far as draughtsmanship is concerned, be it understood ; but they all paint, and as painters there seems to be no bond of union between them. This anomaly is highly disturbing to the onlooker ; there is nothing which seems to connect the drawings and the pictures of these artists. When one looks at the drawings,

\* In an article in the " Studio " for June 1903, which contains fine illustrations of the artist's decorative sculpture for the Duke of Portland's fountains.

t In the "Revue Encyclopedique " for December 10, 1898, wdth illustrations. This essay is full of original information on the subject of Legros.

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one completely fails to picture to one's self the kind of painting which would naturally belong to them. One conjectures that this is an art which has given up painting and is profoundly astonished to find in the exhibitions of the New English Art Club a collection of every imaginable kind of painting. There is a little of Monet and Degas, a little of Carri'ere, a trace of the Pre-Raphaelites and even of those continental painters who were formerly influenced by the English school and are now reacting upon it ; something is to be found of Whistler, and, in short, of every conceivable personality, including Matthys Maris, the idol of the English, the eccentric Dutchman, who does what he can to raise Scottish mannerism to a heroic plane.

The painting is neither good nor bad, it is simply nothing. The eye passes over it without pleasure or dissatisfaction ; we seem to be hearing polite phrases which we accept without heeding. If there could be a kind of painting which was culture and yet was not art, we should have it here. One feels that one is meeting clever painters who are so unfortunate as to be unable to paint.

Everything is explicable, even this tragedy. This young generation has grown up under the eye of Burne-Jones and his friends.

The personal eminence of the Pre-Raphaelites, who were without exception men of much distinction, forced the young men to take their elders seriously ; in order to do this they had to follow Burne-Jones' train of thought, which dealt with literature, aesthetic theories, and all sorts of fine things. Any deficiency in a picture was supplied by the eye of the individual beholder, who required all the resources of culture and refinement not to notice or to betray in conversation any shortcomings in the treatment of the subject.

Reynolds once told his pupils that the cultivated taste which can appreciate every beauty in a masterpiece was almost equivalent to the power of creating masterpieces ; this was a portentous piece of folly and the kind of training it implies has borne its fruit. The young artists of London are men of the highest culture, more learned than many an expert, and are able to utter well expressed truths upon the most recondite subjects. They pursue art, wherever it appears, as eagerly as the youths of other lands run after a pretty woman. The vast city, every corner of which hides some rare treasure, gratifies their inclinations completely. London has the best museums in the world and the private collections are unique. The public and private artistic agencies give every year, almost every day, exhibitions of the choicest nature, which are enough to drive any lover of art out of his senses if he is not strong against temptation. The rising generation moreover, became conscious of the one-sidedness of the Rossetti school and

conceived a longing to make the acquaintance of Continental art, even of that which came after the Quattrocento. A receptivity so wide as that of these artists is inconceivable in the most broad-minded of Continental painters. The brutal one-sidedness, the finer shades of which even a Degas cannot quite disown, and which occasionally appears in the maturest and most serene minds, has here given place to an all-pervading, all-comprehending passion for beauty. To hear these men talk is almost as enjoyable as to see the pictures of the others. Daumier has no more secrets for them than has Fra Angelico, the favourite of the older generation, and Fragonard is as familiar to them as the latest French artist. They are so perfectly acquainted with all traditions that they have failed to discover a tradition of their own. None the less they are English in effect, though their nationalism has a purely negative savour. They are all afraid of that gay impulsiveness

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which is the essence of artistic production, and in their efforts to avoid anything out of harmony with their culture they achieve nothing.

"We understand the art of making pictures," said one of them to me, with some irony; "our painting is picture-manufacture brought to perfection." Even this, however, is too high a claim. Their pictures suffer from primitive defects which any Montmartre student could avoid. Their painting has no body; they paint as people conceive painting should be and not as it is; their drawing alone has technical structure. C. H. Shannon and Ricketts, the two inseparables, have for many years been producing a series of plates. Shannon's are soft lithographs which recall Carriere, but do not possess the Frenchman's breadth; Ricketts produces brilliant arabesques on wood in which, by the intermixture of almost every traditional arrangement of line, he contrives to strike a personal note. These drawings are in entire harmony with their mode of life, with their house and its rare things, and with the fascinating, impenetrable distinction of their talk. But when one stands before their pictures one receives a sudden shock. The refinement of their nature leaves no trace there, and the spectator feels that he has been deluded. The mystic twilight of drawing, language and gesture issues in unmeaning sentimentalism, brutal in its insignificance, marked not by the softness of poetry but by the flabbiness of the mollusc; this is not the tender dialogue of subtle sensations, but the disconnected prattle of a disordered imagination. Ricketts has still a fragment of personal form, the sole consolation for his utter failure as a colourist; Shannon is becoming academic to no better purpose than Sir Frederic Leighton; at times even the organised commonplace of Leighton seems superior to his work. In the New English Art Club, the leading figure at the present moment seems to be Augustus E. John, who draws gipsy heads well. I saw a book of his in the gipsy language, of which he professes to be a master, with a rich decorative design in Indian ink as frontispiece. He is the imaginative member of the group and seems at times to be a refinement on Goya. When he paints his gipsies

the result is a thing which would never be admitted to a Berlin exhibition. The two Scotsmen, Muirhead Bone and D. Y. Cameron, follow Meryon's draughtsmanship. Fry has also a sense of the charm of architecture in landscape, which the English school has recorded for a century, and if he confined himself to pencil sketches and did not make large oil paintings out of them, one's appreciation of his work would be more cordial. Slight as is his mastery of painting he has a wide knowledge of the old masters, whom he restores with high intelligence. In the case of the painter MacColl, the same knowledge has found expression in literature. MacColl's written works, especially the book I have already mentioned upon nineteenth-century art, are superior to his pictures. W. Rothenstein, than whom no one has a better knowledge of English collections, and who is acquainted with every Continental movement, has lithographed a gallery of famous artists. His pictures never get beyond a certain agreeable emptiness. In the New English Art Club I saw a clever piece of decorative work by Wilson Steer, a rendering in gay and pleasant colour, of the French eighteenth century. William Orpen and Henry Tonks are prominent members of the Club, as was also the late C. W. Furse.

It is with a sense of deep depression that one leaves an environment such as this. In Berlin or Munich or Vienna, there are no doubt many exhibitions which rouse one's anger more, but it is healthy anger which may find a happy issue in future achievements. But here we stand as it were paralysed, powerless even to conceive

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of any issue. The artistic aspirations of all these earnest persons are unquestionably lofty ; it would be impossible to treat them with disrespect. It is with an effort that one subordinates personal appreciation to aesthetic condemnation. And yet one is glad to leave them and to see the cheerful sunbeams which these unfortunates can only behold through a thousand prisms. This generation is like a tiny brook, the levels of which have been altered artificially in the hope of making a broad river, with the result that the stream has run dry. Nothing is wanting except matter. The brook is just deep enough to contain charming ideas. People sit comfortably on the bank and fish for them, yet strangely enough no one has ever seriously entertained the idea of using the stream for new purposes. They are content with it and it would be impious to disturb this resignation. But the solemn prestige of their forerunners calls for more vigorous denunciation. The Pre-Raphaelites are to blame for the defects of the modern English artists who are not satisfied merely to design furniture. These latter-day artists have to thank their predecessors for the fact that they have been forced to go to the Continent to learn what has become of Turner and Constable. England is now among the mightiest of nations, she possesses wealth in plenty to buy works of art ; she has produced the very men which modern art requires if it is to come by its own. If proud Albion should be the first nation to experience



the tragedy of abandonment by the light of art, the Pre-Raphaelites will be responsible. It may, however, be that even these misguided men were but the instruments of higher powers. It may have been written in the stars that here, too, the march of culture from east to west should manifest its mysterious problem, leaving old and effete elements to perish, and bringing forth the new that make for progress.

A. J. GASKIN. DRAWING.

A. J. GASKIN. DRAWING.

MORRIS AND HIS CIRCLE

" I love art and I love history ; but it is living art and living history that I love."

W. Morris.

English manufactures have compensated for the decay of English art. The Renaissance, which failed miserably in painting, was here successful beyond all expectation. Scepticism may press for a premature answer to the question how it is that a decaying art has been able to produce such many-sided results, and may draw unjustifiable conclusions from the lack of response ; the fact of successful achievement is so unquestionable that any theoretical depreciation of it would seem merely ill-natured. The story of it is, indeed, one of the most delightful chapters in the history of modern art. The underlying problem is one of the most complicated of our generation ; for while it obliges us to appreciate England's progress in this respect, it also suggests the possibility of finding an issue from the labyrinth into which the decay of art drives nations from time to time.

The theory which the author has so constantly combated that art and manufacture are separate things, finds an apparent confirmation in the history of the English movement, in the course of which a partition was made which seems in accordance with this view. It is a theory which we must at any rate accept for the moment. Though we entirely endorse the aesthetic principle of the unity of all art, none the less must we recognise the fact that this necessary unity was by no means apparent at an earlier date ; our fathers were quite undisturbed when one department overshadowed another ; manufacture reached a stage of neglect

from which the smallest trace of artistic influence, if guided by a little logic and moderation, could have saved it. The defective organisation to which is due the weakness of the Pre-Raphaelite pictures was of course an equal bar to the construction of houses in accordance with the prescribed formulae " " Pre-Raphaelite " houses, let us say. Yet we are confronted by the phenomenon that the very people whose pictures were but weak and wandering phrase-making, whose sculpture was utterly formless, whose literature lived upon archaism, none the less dwelt without complaint in houses which we must allow to be sensible constructions in accordance with the needs of their age.

The explanation is that these people did not build their own houses. The industrial movement, erroneously ascribed to the Pre-Raphaelites, is in fact of much earlier origin. To trace its source, we must follow the history of modern Gothic architecture in England, which had erected a national monument in the Houses of Parliament in the heart of London before the first Pre-Raphaelites began their career. The transformation of this formal Gothic was not their work. There remained for them only the task of house decoration, and their co-operation, far from changing the spirit of English architecture, merely conferred an advantage upon themselves. Thus we observe two tendencies in which modern England is expressed. The fact that these tendencies met and were successfully

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amalgamated at certain points is due to the work of one man, the representative of ancient England, William Morris,

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Kelmscott House, where Morris printed his books in later days, is a pretty old-fashioned house with a green garden in front, situated on the Thames at Hammersmith. The hand press with its great wheel stood in a narrow room on the ground floor, and the proof sheets were read in the first storey. It was here that I made Morris' acquaintance in the early nineties. While I admired the brilliant black arabesques, upon the large printed sheets which lay before him, he talked about his anarchism. I could not read the sheets with much ease nor could I quite understand what he was saying, but it was all very beautiful. Morris was one of those men whose personality is more convincing than their arguments. Nearly opposite stood the house of Cobden-Sanderson, where the books were bound and decorated with costly tooling for such as could pay. Here also at times violent anarchical theories were canvassed ; the mild-mannered man whose tools conjured a veritable lacework of gold upon the volumes and tastefully apportioned the colouring of his exquisite mosaics, seemed even more energetic in his idealism

than his friend, the Old English master. But even the anarchism, which was originally in close connection with the aesthetic theories of the group, finally resolved itself into a delicate arabesque too. Bombs were replaced by books, more or less well written and always magnificently printed, which were boldly cast before the respectful multitude and were at once gathered up by collectors.

The most tangible part of the revolutionary ideas which Morris, Crane, Cobden-Sanderson and others professed at Socialist meetings in England and sometimes even abroad, dealt not so much with the material improvement of the conditions of labour as with the desirability of dignifying the labourer's position and especially his work. The enthusiasm of these idealists could not appreciate the vast complexities of the social problem and hardly touched the main mass of the workers affected ; but they were able to carry out their ideas within a small but conspicuous field. Morris introduced a moral element into the treatment of material which proved more effective than any aesthetic rules ; as a matter of principle as well as of art, he demanded that material should be properly treated, and rejected the modern adulterative processes as immoral. The immediate result was that many artists exchanged the brush for the tools of industry and thus the number of starving painters decreased. Of course hardly a painter or sculptor who was tolerably satisfied with his productions was willing to resign his ambitions ; but people were found who, while unable to produce good pictures or sculpture, displayed surprising talent in the service of industrial art.

The explanation is simple. In abstract art these men had piously shrunk from every rational method of presentation and, even when they possessed talent, had done their best to be not merely painters or sculptors but also the exponents of a higher calling ; in industry they were ready to follow a sound and logical principle which demanded no more than they could give. This principle Morris, both as a literary man and as an artist, had discovered in Gothic, the traditional style of the country. It was in 1858, a year of importance for the English movement, that he published, at the age of twenty-four, the book to which we have already referred, " The Defence of Guinevere," which was dedicated to Rossetti. As William Scott observed, it showed the mediaeval spirit in a new light, and it was welcomed by Pater as the first typical example of aesthetic poetry.

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Morris became the most determined champion of the romanticism inspired by the Canterbury Tales of Chaucer. This movement in the direction of the Gothic spirit was at first entirely literary, and indeed the original impulse can be traced directly to two or three books. To the Pre-Raphaelites, the spirit of Dante, as they understood it, had appealed ; but here the written word in its strictest sense became the guide. This word, however, was a stronger stimulus to the English public than the poetry of Dante. It aroused the dearest sense of patriotism, and once

it had laid hold upon men's minds, its inherent power was able to secure the most manifold realisation. It was indeed inspired by a living principle which was in no way concealed by the antiquity of its dress. Every comparison with modernity urged a clearer recognition of this spirit, and for every rational mind there was a new world to discover.

Morris was not a poet of the first rank, but he was a man of rich and wide sympathies. Much is owing to the chance which denied him the specific talents for some one form of artistic expression. It was this which enabled him to retain his freedom of outlook, his delight in the simultaneous pursuit of many objects, and the resignation or the courage which permitted him to go on using the old forms. He cannot be reproached with archaism. Every development is a mixture of old and new, and is not determined by the manner of the old, which may be separated from the new by a thousand years. Archaism properly so-called is found only when ancient forms are chosen for purposes which disregard the level of contemporary attainment, interrupt the growth of the national spirit and run counter to the logic of history. Thus such men as Constable, Turner and Bonington were forgotten in the pursuit of another sort of painting which had none of the special qualities of these forerunners, a painting in which the borrowed form and not the creative power of the painter was the sole pictorial element ; this was true archaism. Its achievements were capricious and purposeless ; in short, as arbitrary as its name. The work of Morris, on the other hand, was necessary. His borrowings from the wealth of the ancients were not dictated by the secret misgivings of a weak man, who decks out his poverty in borrowed plumes, nor were they dictated by the despotic choice of a patron, though they were indeed misused for this purpose after the fashion of the time. The movement begun by Morris was the first uncompromising protest of a healthy mind against contemporary proletarianism, which is all-powerful, undisciplined and incapable of producing the smallest harmony. It was most important that this step should have been taken in England, the country which had outpaced all Europe in this respect, which considered industrialism the final realisation of progress, and in which the reaction of this materialism upon the intellectual life of the nation had been plainly visible in the Pre-Raphaelite generation. Art had become a mere business of accessories ; ideas moved like lay figures in the pictures of the Brotherhood ; the narrowmindedness with which Ruskin's lead was followed, and indeed the whole of this miserable idealism was only possible in a country abandoned to materialism.

Amidst this inartistic activity Morris appears like a Robinson Crusoe. With remarkable acuteness he recognised that certain things were of paramount necessity at this moment, harmony of form and a house in which one could live a decent life. He also recognised that discussion of this form could not become general until a sense of form had been recreated.

The one available element in the wholly materialistic progress of England, that rational common sense which needs only to become clearly conscious of the end

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in order to find the right means for its attainment, was now turned triumphantly to account. The history of this episode forms an admirable counterpart to the story of English conquests. Morris conquered the new house, step by step, with extraordinary energy. He began at the beginning, and before considering the form, he created the material to be used. If Morris needed an apology this preparation of material would be ample. Nothing was more necessary. The previous tendencies of the Pre-Raphaelites, the carelessness in respect of which they were only too typical of all later efforts to form a style, their vain desire to reap without sowing, their yearning for art without drudgery, were facts recognised by this very limited painter and his ambitions were so great that he renounced all the prestige that the others had acquired in order to secure this one indispensable object. It was no mere archaism when he returned to the past in order to find genuine colours for his fabrics, a good texture for his carpets, sound technique for his glass and metal ware, for his furniture, for everything from pottery to tablecloths, things of which one may almost say that they were practically non-existent in his time. How little he was inspired by the spirit of real archaism, that is, by mere imitation, is obvious from his many energetic protests, following Ruskin, against the mania for restoration which was characteristic of the period. He considered it as indisputably wrong that irreverent hands, vainly attempting to improve, should be laid upon the work of the ancients, as it was natural and right to apply in practice the principles to which the ancients owed their achievements. In these principles he recognised the true method of creation. In one of his many propagandist writings he says, that he will use every faculty which he possesses, and that he is resolved to avoid shoddy as far as in him lies.

He kept his word. In all his work no feature was so prominent as the obstinate expression of his resolve to have nothing but the best. On this point he insisted as much as most manufacturers do on the necessity of producing everything of the cheapest. It may be asked whence this poet derived the determination to content himself with no compromise, whence he gained the power to discover the capacities of his material, and the instinct for the means to attain his end. It was an elementary instinct of purity. Van de Velde's comparison with the stream in which men need only plunge to gain new strength, may be taken literally when applied to Morris ; there is nothing more inspiring than the work of this man.

Our own period would be in evil case if such a manner could not be accounted suitable to the age. What Morris did was in reality exactly what the best art of our time attempted in its own way ; he clarified and purified material and also the sense of material. The frame of mind which acknowledges an obligation to Manet, which praises Monet and his school, may admire Morris without any change of front. In his hands the deeper meaning of Turner's work and of all that Ruskin wrote under Turner's influence receives an unexpected applica-

tion. If the French must be admitted to have made a better use of the English tradition than England's own painters, Morris, overleaping this abstract intermediary fulfilled the boldest demands of painting with greater certainty and success than the industry of any other country. In the France of to-day vain attempts are being made to turn Impressionism to account in departments other than those of abstract aesthetics. Morris has at least attained one of the finest and most necessary results of modern art, a perfect taste in colour, and any improvement of European fabrics in recent times is due primarily to him and not to modern painters. He had, of course a profound comprehension of the significance of

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colour. In his writings he continually recurs to the laws of contrast, which he found ruthlessly neglected by contemporary industry. It must not, however, be forgotten that from his standpoint colour was but one decorative element among others, though an element of the highest importance (just as I hold it to be in painting), and that for him the problem that dealt with material colour, ultimately resolved itself into that of the animation of the surface generally. His whole decorative style was closely bound up with this conception. He insisted very strongly on the view that careful handling of the means whereby an effect is produced was more important than the originality of the means themselves. To him indeed ornament differed little from the colours which he mixed to wash in his designs. He was entirely penetrated by the tradition of form which had dominated the past of his countrymen, and this he sought to revivify as poet, as antiquarian, and as artist ; hence the decorative lines of his forefathers were not only not strange to him, but were heirlooms which he appropriated as a poet may take a word or an image which he finds in an old song and thinks worthy to be preserved. Out of these things he made a language of his own, a language so harmonious, and expressive of ideas so valuable, that it would be impious to cavil at its details. What seemed to him essential in this was not so much originality, as expression, the organ of a being who desired order in himself and in his surroundings. In the old masters he was chiefly impressed by the fact that their ambitions were wholly free from the modern passion for originality and that they were dominated by a profound and consistent purpose in the face of which our individual desires are but petty whims. It was perhaps this advantage, which at the present day people are prone to regard as a defect, that made the success of his great plan certain. Morris and his circle were fortunate indeed in the fact that their art was not marked by the salient characteristics of modern artistic individuality ; this was why he succeeded better than Van de Velde in avoiding distracting personal controversy. Jealousies, general and particular, would never have allowed the expression of a single personality that precedence which Morris demanded ; but it occurred to no one to be jealous of Gothic art. It was not so much Morris as the intense nationalism of his form that conquered the Pre-Raphaelites. The poetry of Dante, which had been the inspiration of Rossetti was forgotten in the solemn splendour of

the Arthurian legend. The delicate female figures of Burne-Jones were surrounded by the austere ornament of Early English churches.

Morris did not merely take Gothic as he found it, he enriched it with every addition which could serve his purpose. An oriental influence rather than the spirit of Chaucer is apparent in his earliest and most successful work in textiles, and in the wall-paper designs which almost owe their origin to him as a modern art. His first and most famous " Daisy " paper with its charming blossoms is a free rendering of a Persian pattern. The colour-schemes of his carpets and many of their patterns show how thoroughly he had studied the principles which guide the weavers of Damascus. Besides his extensive knowledge he had an incomparable artistic sense. A few hundred years hence one can imagine a historian doubting to what period these productions should be assigned, but they will be treasured by the taste of every epoch. Morris understood elaborate ornament as none of his many successors have understood it. He made it so rich that in the wealth of detail the design disappears, leaving but an unusual sense of structure behind. In the magnificent textile. The Dove and the Rose, we see only the silvery gray-blue effects, and the design seems merely to express the nature of the materials

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employed, silk and the finest wool. For coarser stuffs he invented bolder patterns, but his patterns invariably avoided the fatal disconnectedness of modern design ; they cover the ground which they decorate and carry the eye agreeably over it. In rooms decorated by Morris, even before we admire the imagination of the decorator, we have a sense of well-being.

Morris was a highly complicated character. In reading the biography with its many extracts from first-hand records by Aymer Vallance \* we are astounded at the versatility of his interests. His strong literary inclinations lead us involuntarily to the conclusion that here was a fine character taking refuge in thought, making a house of fancies and asking but little of reality. What is irresistible in Morris is the tangible character of his productions, the fact that his comprehensive culture took a visible form and became reality, made by a sound mind for the comfort of other sound minds, while his many-sidedness merely served to increase the perfection of his work. His was a purely English culture. It was truly English of him to omit Goethe from his list of the hundred best books, because he did not understand German, f He was indeed profoundly English. No nation is likely to produce a man who combines all the virtues of the race to such an extent as Morris combined the advantages of his own nation ; a culture very one-sided, but with every gradation of this one-sidedness ; a patriotism the strength of which overpowered all obstacles and even compensated for defective powers, and a view of life inspired by the keenest sense of its necessities, which made this poet, whom another poet praises as Chaucer's favourite child, a man of commerce.

His influence was irresistible. Artists, including older men who did not need his counsel and whose artistic power was greater than his own, came to him as to a father. His moral influence was so great and his powerful spirit so inspiring that no one thought of questioning his capacity as a pure artist. The atmosphere of his house breathed homeliness, and it was this that made it possible for him successfully to put friendship to the severest test by associating his friends' names with his own in the commercial style of his firm.]

This union under the flag of commerce immortalised the Pre-Raphaelites far more effectually than the brotherhood with the mysterious initials. The greatest exploits of the English movement are written in the books of the firm of Morris and Co. The venture was not only a test of good fellowship, which can rarely resist the malicious saying of Mirabeau, " Les affaires sont les affaires," but was also a test of the practical value of Morris' work, and indeed of all modern art. The revolution was not produced by the fact that a few artists went into business. Morris and his friends might have produced things just as beautiful and have placed them on the market without exciting the attention of more than a

â€¢ " William Morris, his Art, his Writings, and his Public Life." London : G. Bell and Sons, 1897.

t In the essay, " The Hundred Best Books," in the " Pall MaU Gazette," No. 24 (1886).

t Aymer Vallance has written the history of the firm in the book above mentioned. No precise date can be given for its foundation, vvrhich apparently took place in 1 861. The original idea is said to have been due to Ford Madox Brown, The founders, apart from Morris, were, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Madoi Brown, Burne-Jones, Arthur Hughes the painter, the architect PhiHp Webb, the engineer P. P. Marshall, and C. J. Faulkner. The firm was originally styled Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co, Morris conducted the business from the outset, and became independent manager in 1874. ^^^ 7^^^ other partners retired and the firm was thenceforth styled Morris and Co. In the sixties the premises of the company were at 26 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, where Morris himself lived. The well-known shop in Oxford Street was not opened until 1877, The chief workshops were concentrated about 1880 in an old abbey at Merton in Surrey, of which a charming description is to be found in the " Spectator " of November 1883. Cf. also Gabriel Mourey's account in his delightful book, " Passe le Deroit."



## WILLIAM MORRIS: THE ROSE AND THE DOVE

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few critics. Success was due to the form of the establishment. At first perhaps it was merely a form, for the firm did not require a strict business mechanism and its prosperity did not depend upon the chance passer-by, as the customers were friends. Moreover the first prospectus emphatically excluded purely commercial views. The firm did not even go so far as to assert that they wished to make money, nor indeed was any one wedded to this logical result of trade. In this case the form of the foundation was all-important. It was the token of a new period, the prelude of a great drama, which the world was to behold with astonishment, and which speedily produced the most important results. It was not the moral importance that produced an immediately decisive effect, though even in the London of the sixties a highly romantic era full of sentimental painting and tender poetry, the sudden appearance of the artists apparently least in touch with practical life, in the character of tradesmen, must have amazed every citizen interested in art. It may have been regarded as one of the many eccentric ideas no one but an artist would be mad enough to take up, a new kind of masquerade. The importance of the step, however, lay in the fact that the firm had business to do and that its relations were forthwith changed, both, towards its customers and still more towards the mass of other producers. The artist's role in executing commissions for the rich, had formerly been that of middleman between the customer and the manufacturer. The latter undertook the responsibility, the artist furnished the design. His influence was limited and in the last resort he could not guarantee that the customer would not be cheated. These conditions were now changed, for the artist became the deliverer of his own goods. As early as 1859, when he was twenty-five years of age, Morris had set up his own home, the Red House at Upton, which he built in co-operation with Philip Webb, and which Burne-Jones, Rossetti, and others decorated with paintings ; he had thus acquired a number of experiences, the most important being the fact that it was possible to work with friends. The limited resources at his disposal in a small country town and the invincible determination of the architect to work out Ruskin's ideas, obliged Morris to act for himself. This task must have seemed much easier to him in London. Where he could not secure the help of others he produced what he required for himself. This confident beginning produced an immediate effect upon many manufacturers, who perhaps had also read " The Stones of Venice " or who found it advisable to make use of this difficult, but well-to-do customer, who might become a rival at any moment. Nothing was more welcome to Morris. He had a gift for agitation which was perhaps even greater than that of Ruskin himself, and he had also the inestimable advantages of thorough practical knowledge, which

enabled him to prove the superiority of artistic honesty decisively, and by actual achievement, to people who regarded Ruskin's ideas as Utopian. Production on a large scale was not immediately affected by this movement ; Morris, who hated aU commercialism, did not attempt to exert influence of this kind and would not have secured a hearing if he had ; his public were the craftsmen and the artists. Here his influence increased from day to day. The chief business of the firm of Morris and Co., was at first the erection of painted church windows, the designs for which were drawn by Burne-Jones and Ford Madox Brown. Some of these windows were exhibited in 1862 at the International Exhibition in London, and with such success that rivals asserted that the windows were composed of ancient fragments and were therefore disqualified for competition. Experts were actually called in to settle the discussion, which of course ended in a complete triumph

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for the artists.\* This won over the architects, ecclesiastical and secular, and this was of decisive importance. The movement on the Continent was especially-injured by the fact that people began, not with the foundations of the edifice but with the weathercock. Painters in England lent their names, but not any material help. The first commissions were successful, not by reason of any special originality in the designs, but by the thorough completeness of the execution. The architect Seddon, one of the first to place orders with the firm, gave them the task of executing his own furniture designs, thus treating Morris, not only as a designer, but also as a craftsman, and had the decorations he required executed by the painters of the firm.f

Finally there was one important point that made everything easy. Morris did not regard himself as a revolutionary leader, and he was not generally considered to be so ; he merely organised an existing tendency, which even Ruskin had not created, but had simply brought to clear consciousness. The want of this tradition is what stands in the way of Belgians, French and Dutch and of all the enthusiasts who have followed the English. Their efforts were invariably isolated, and though their subjective value might be infinite, nothing could replace the quiet co-operation of the national genius of which Morris was the standard-bearer.

The architecture which had created a simple model in the Red House at Upton was developed upon sensible lines by Webb, Nesfield, and in particular by Norman Shaw. Of this movement men like Baillie-Scott, Newton, and many others of the younger generation are the true continuation. The rough characteristics of the older men were softened and made more graceful, the style was freed from detail too obviously Gothic, but the framework remained unchanged. At the present day the low built country houses with their broad roofs, their little windows, and the sturdy turrets of Voysey and his friends, reflect the sil-

houette of the Red House.

Development in every other department proceeded no less steadily. Morris created new industries for manufactures of every kind. His influence, if not his hand, secured that a rational use should be made of the new sources of supply which were discovered in the English colonies and which laid the foundation of the wealth of Liberty and Co. De Morgan was ready to make tiles for Morris, Jeffrey and Co. printed his papers ; younger men, such as Crane, Voysey, Heywood Sumner, Lewis Day, and others, gave their friezes for the most part to the younger firm of Essex and Co. Benson turned Morris's ideas to account in metal work, introducing some modern improvements with advantage. Rathbone, Ashbee and the Birmingham artists mastered the art of chasing, while Wilson, Alexander Fisher, and others turned their attention to jewellery.

The rise of William Morris nearly coincides with the organisation of the technical schools, the industrial schools and guilds which distributed in many directions the ideas of Ruskin and of his prophet, to whom indeed is chiefly due the impression made by this new spirit upon the heart of the nation. The complex organisation of English societies also took its share in the work, and Morris neglected no opportunity to avail himself of this help. Among other bodies he

\* Vallance, p. 60.

t Ibid. The interior of Seddon's house, displayed at the Exhibition of 1862, is fully described in the " Century Guild Hobby Horse," October 1888. One of the decorative panels was painted by Madox Brown and the others by Rossetti and Burne- Jones.

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founded the Arts and Crafts Society in London and thus secured a place of exhibition worthy of the movement. Every three years all who followed his artistic theories gathered together under his presidency. Upon the day when the society opened its fifth exhibition in the New Gallery, the founder died. This was in the first days of October 1896, early enough to spare the master the anxious questions whether the impulse which he had given to the movement could be maintained and whither it would eventually lead.

^ 4s i|e^ 9|i % 4: 9H

Criticism of this artistic movement as a whole is not difficult. It is the only one which has produced great and visible results in our day. In other countries it may be necessary to seek out our evidences in the quiet

of private houses, in England they are to be found in the streets ; in other countries we have to consider individual symptoms, but in England they are so numerous and point with such unanimity to the same thing that we can hardly be mistaken in our estimate. It tends to become an underestimate. In the few years that have elapsed since the death of the great Morris so much has been done everywhere that the recent stagnation of England is the more marked. Here, as in the history of art, the comparative method seems to apply, and as soon as we admit the charm of originality as the most natural point of comparison, the inferiority of England becomes obvious.

This, however, involves a peculiar injustice. All discussion upon England, to be honest, must proceed from the postulate that. England has something that other nations have not ; that there is a common aesthetic characteristic observable in every department of English art and that no other style can be compared with the English, because hitherto no other has existed. If, then, without further reflection, we reproach England with stagnation we are but criticising to some extent this, her general advantage. A movement which is spread over a wide area naturally presents a different picture from a movement no less vigorous which is embodied in a few personalities. In the general estimate of public culture, the only criterion by which we can measure the strength of a style such as that which characterises England, individual exploits, however brilliant, are almost meaningless.

The English certainly owe their record, not merely to the strength of their form, but also to their gift for accommodating themselves to circumstances, and to the advantages of a communistic instinct which has maintained its ground in England better than anywhere else in Europe. Moreover the events which brought about the decay of Continental industrial production made less impression upon the nation in England. The country still possessed an inexhaustible number of examples of ancient popular art, which have been unharmed by revolution or by civil war, and the Englishman with his great love of country life could regard the productions of Morris and his circle as symbolical of this dearest passion, if they were nothing more to him. As the internal development of England proceeded more naturally than that of other countries and was spared the disturbance of great shocks and upheavals, so the power of England expanded outwards, like a well-managed family estate. England began to enjoy her wealth when the resources of France were strained to the uttermost and when Germany was but beginning to build up her fortune with toil and pain. London was never so extravagant as was Paris under the Second Empire and never so economical as was Berlin during the same period. In advance of the Continent by some genera-

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tions in respect of her social and economical development, England already possessed the means for developing a middle class art at the time when the French were quarrelling for the favour of the Empress in the Tuileries and when German capitals, more piously minded, were awaiting some artistic stimulus from on high. Morris and his friends appealed primarily to a social class which was accessible to them, which possessed sufficient education to understand their ideas or to simulate understanding, and sufficient wealth to buy their productions. They were also fortunate in being rich enough to go their own way in economic independence and to produce their first and most necessary examples at their own expense. These were facts which contributed to save Morris from that enforced isolation with which our artists are obliged to struggle, and which would certainly have overwhelmed this distinguished genius in any other country. Even his Socialist propaganda could not check the growth of his popularity. For this he had to thank the profoundly popular character of his art, which was more obvious in any one of the things made by his hand than in all his economic writings. He did not aim at popularity. Crane is the truly popular man, the idol of the national taste, who can conjure with pictures great and small.

If we attempt to sum up the characteristics of all that Morris produced, we are struck by one invariable geometrical peculiarity – the flat surface of his form. That there is no sculpture in England, may be seen by a glance at any table or chair. The practical purpose which rediscovered the Gothic style was satisfied by the combination of straight lines, both for the building of a house and for every piece of furniture which was to decorate the interior. It was the simplest and therefore the most economical form, the most capable of independent elaboration, the most indispensable foundation of any further development, and above all the form most capable of benefiting by the perfection of modern manufacturing processes. Morris remained faithful to Ruskin in so far as he resisted these. In his workshops machines were forbidden, except in so far as they implied the transference of the workman's power, as in the case of a handpress. He even refused the aid of machinery in cases where it would have been a most admirable instrument for his propaganda. The protest of the artist against the industrialism which he rightly regarded as the root of the evil was so vehement that he always hated industrial implements as such ; they were to him a symbol of ugliness even after he had discovered their value in disseminating his gospel of beauty. This mode of reasoning, however, was not the blind obstinacy of the peasant who plants himself astride on a line of rails in order to stop a locomotive ; it was the sure intuition that thousands would co-operate to complete this course of development, but that no one would feel obliged to place the ideal so high as he had placed it, and that it was therefore his task to concentrate his method as strongly as possible without regard to the future. He created a model which offered to the spectator the same strong beauty, defiant of all compromise, from whatever side it was regarded. Had he acted differently, he would not have been Morris.

Morris and his friends did their best to make this very simple form as attractive as possible. Apart from the work of the individual craftsman, this result could

only be secured by beauty in the relation of the several parts, and English architects, with their fine feeling for these effects, have produced excellent works. Plastic decoration was replaced by flat ornament. The thin painting of the Pre-Raphaelites, who had retained the definite outlines, combined very naturally with this kind of decoration ; Morris was able to give it the best imaginable setting, though

## BURNE-JONES AND WILLIAM MORRIS: TAPESTRY AT STANMORE HALL

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in so doing he betrayed the limitations of his own powers, and those of his friends. The morning room, with the famous frieze by Burne-Jones, in the excellent house which Webb built for Lord Carlisle, is a case in point.\* The frieze on wooden panels, painted with the history of Cupid and Psyche, runs round the upper part of the wall ; above it meets a beautiful ceiling, designed by Morris, and below, the wainscot, which Morris divided into panels decorated partly with beautiful Roman script and partly with a simple leaf pattern. The room proclaims the love of the artist for his work ; nothing has been forgotten which could help his scheme, and the result could scarcely be improved. Yet the impression produced is not entirely satisfactory. It is not so much the details as the general scheme that has a certain pettiness of effect, suggesting that the artists were only concerned to fill the space as conscientiously as possible. In this they have succeeded ; Burne-Jones is perhaps at his best here ; and yet, though the result is perfectly agreeable, it lacks any touch of genius. Every dividing line is clearly defined, and there is no great or striking motive to make the room more than an apartment of so many square yards ; the architecture sticks to the walls ; but it does not live in them, and, instead of experiencing one strong effect, we feel that our own sensations have been carefully analysed and neatly distributed. The whole scheme is not the decoration of a room but the illustration of a book tremendously enlarged. The beauty and accuracy which please us in English books is here to be found on a huge scale, but the charm does not increase in the same proportion. Indeed, the effect is depressing at last, like every other disproportion. There is an ultimate and a fatal weakness in this deliberate over-emphasis of individual detail.

According to the " Studio " Burne-Jones' designs for the frieze were originally intended as ornaments for one of Morris' books, and were probably enlarged by more or less mechanical means as were the designs of Burne-Jones for the Arras tapestry of William Morris, to which the same observations apply. J

Thus again the furniture in the house of the Cupid and Psyche frieze is refined

.and simple but inconsiderable. If we look closely the material seems good ; the design of Webb's chimney-piece has purity. But from a wider point of view the material comes to nothing, because it does not achieve any definite form. In the room which contains the Arras tapestries, even the most superficial coherence of the details is lost. Some pieces of the furniture seem to betray the horribly practical wardrobe style, which protests loudly against the luxury of the Gobelins. It is the same in many English interiors. They are comfortable and suited to the space available ; the furniture is coherent in style, but has no deeper relationship to the room. The pieces stand about the apartments like the metal ornamentation stuck on many pieces of English furniture, outwardly secured, but with no inward cohesion. There is no intensive effect of colour or relief. We do not require such effects as a sculptor or a painter could give, but we do look for

at Palace Green, Kensington, London. Apart from this frieze the house contains a number of pictures by Burne-Jones and Crane, who also worked at the frieze under the guidance of Burne-Jones. Illustrations are given in the " Studio," October 15, 1898.

They were drawn in 1865 for the " Earthly Paradise." Morris himself cut wood blocks for most of them. The book never appeared. In the above-quoted number of the " Studio," mention is made of a prospectus of the book, which was printed at the Chiswick Press, and of which one copy is said to be extant, containing the designs of the frieze. It would be interesting to compare this prospectus, which I have unfortunately not been able to see, with the decorations in Lord Carlisle's house. X See " Studio," No. 68, November 15, 1898.

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such as the architect, with his paper before him and the room in his mind, can discover.

Room decoration is not to be developed in this way. Even the ideal union of friends on which Morris relied could not secure the large unity which alone can make such work powerful. He secured honesty of material, which was his aim, and was so fortunate as to aim no higher. Had he set his thoughts upon high art such as alone seems to us worth striving for, he would certainly have made shipwreck. For this purpose he required the strength which England had lost, the giant hand which arranges a room as Manet arranged a picture, the art to which, so far, the painters alone have brought us back, but which cannot be compassed by men of Burne-Jones' calibre.

The greatness of Morris consists in the fact that the compromise which he attempted was quite unconscious, and that he fulfilled to the uttermost, with entire faithfulness, all that could be accomplished with means which were infinitely meagre. He was deceived by his unity in ideas with his friends. The joys of friendship, with which he was blessed beyond any one of our time, brought him to the erroneous conclusion that the value of so many sympathetic efforts must be great and striking. He thought of the ancients who had worked in this manner. Every tangible fact which was to be found in the great epochs of collaboration seemed to be here ; there was unity of purpose, common faith in an ideal, and mutual understanding. But one incomprehensible and intangible thing was lacking, the element of genius.

LAURENCE HOUSMAN. DRAWING.

## ENGLISH BOOK-ILLUSTRATION

The illustrative character of the English style found its most natural expression in the art of book-illustration. The whole movement of English art begins in literature. Blake had started it by painting pictures round his verses and every one of his poetical successors followed his example, which they never forgot. The poet Morris, whom Rossetti thought would be reckoned by posterity among the great English singers \* (so strongly did the form of a harmonious spirit work upon weaker minds), was obliged, in England at least, to expend greater care upon the form in which his poems should be printed than upon other manifestations of his talent. In England book decoration is not a branch of industry ; it is the source of all art, as painting is in France. The absurdity of this assertion expresses the latent absurdity of the whole English movement, over the history of which the saying of Morris, quoted by Vallance, might be placed as a motto :  
\*<sup>1</sup> The only work of art which surpasses a complete mediaeval book is a complete mediaeval building.\*

People naturally love an art of which they are masters. The Italians of the great period painted frescoes. Northern races contented themselves with framed pictures, while our moderns design borders. English books contain the highest degree of the pictorial emotion which can be satisfied by this means.

Morris did not make book production a part of his business until comparatively late, that is to say, he did not print the Kelmscott books from his own press until within the last seven years of his life, f He regarded them as a kind of apotheosis of his whole theory of art, and redoubled if possible the anxious care which he



devoted to all questions of material.. His books, indeed, can only be compared with the most splendid examples of Caxton, Julian Notary, Pynson, and others. They are, at the same time, much akin to the ancients in form. Nowhere did Morris indulge more in archaism than in his printing.

And yet he was very far from confining himself to the mere mechanical reproduction of a model. He never gave way to the folly which forgets that the main purpose of a book's existence is that it should be read. The comparative clearness of his type, even in books which were printed in the stout black letter of Chaucer, is very remarkable. Of course, these books were not intended for the half- educated City man, who gulps down his newspaper on his way from his home to his office. They were books for quiet edification, when the reader is glad to concentrate his mind upon every word, books which were to be as perfect in form as the thoughts they expressed, and these thoughts Morris printed, so to speak, in louder and clearer accents, which might almost replace the sound of the spoken word.

\* " Among the greatest English singers of the past, perhaps only four have possessed this assimilative power in pure perfection, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Byron and Burns, and to their names the world may probably add in the future that of William Morris." {The Academy, February 1871}.

t From 1891 to 1897 about fifty works were printed in the Kelmscott Press. A list of these and of earlier works is to be found at the end of Vallance's book.

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The limitations of this art may be narrow, but within them it is admirable. One is sometimes inclined to think that Morris was actually able to produce effects of colour with simple black-and-white ; such pages as the beautiful title-page of " A Tale of Over-sea," with the rich ornamentation winding among the capital letters, produces an effect like that of the most brilliantly-coloured oriental miniature. The masterly pages of the " Golden Legend " and other productions of the kind have a solemn splendour, an animated richness which dispel all thought of the mechanism of his technique. It is impossible to read the endless dissertations of Morris on type, large or small margins, the never-ending paper problem and the complications of making true printers' ink without impatience. But a glance at the result of these diverse efforts removes all idea of artificiality and leaves only delight in its high artistic merits. In black and white Burne- Jones also succeeded very much better than in large pictures. His pictorial instinct here found its proper sphere and attained a level of expression which was within his reach. Morris was able to make some use even of Crane, but his best work was always that which he did alone.

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In England, the book was the medium in which the most important artistic developments were brought to the most decisive issue. This was particularly the case when the younger generation of Englishmen came to reckon with Morris' conceptions of form. The vigorous one-sidedness of the master clearly suggested points at which others could begin. In comprehensiveness and universality of grasp, no Englishman has surpassed him. No examples in textiles or wall-papers, his favourite departments, produced either during his lifetime or a few years after his death, can compare with his own work ; and in book production also his ambition is as unapproachable as the splendour of his materials. There were some, however, who abandoned the attempt to compete with the old masters and made successful efforts to enrich the tradition they were handing down. Progress necessarily broke through the narrow limits of primitive English form and gathered up the elements which Morris had neglected. Among these influences there was one which the master of Kelmscott had rejected as useless for his purposes, Japanese draughtsmanship. Morris, with sound instinct, suspected danger from the influence of this " unarchitectonically " minded people. Strangely enough he included both China and Japan in this criticism, probably because he could only see the exotic side of both as displayed by Whistler, whom he cordially detested. No doubt a deeper experience would have made him one of the first to recognise the infinite superiority of the Chinese genius over that of its successor and the living value of Chinese art for our own aesthetic conceptions, while he would have admired in Japan all that she had retained of her prototype. In any case the rising generation in England has to thank William Morris for a relative resistance to the fantastic draughtsmanship of Japan. His sound example was too immediate and too convincing not to cause some reserve in the acceptance of Japanese influence. The majority were, of course, conquered by bric-a-brac and attenuated even the floral art of Walter Crane with Japanese flowers. Some few artists of talent had a deeper conception of the problem at issue. Of these one of the foremost is Charles Ricketts, to whom I have already referred as a painter. All the imperfections of his pictures are forgotten in view of his books. As compared with Morris, Ricketts, in his drawings, stood for a more reticent, delicate and

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profound method, and notwithstanding the unusual complexity of his ideas, he is able to retain a conventional form. Japanese art forms but a small element in his style ; it is difficult, in fact, to indicate the full extent of his eclecticism. Every

influence which can attract a man to the strange and the rare in art, is present in his works in finely regulated quantities. In addition, in his earlier books from 1890 to 1895, he occasionally employed a technique which increased the confusing impression of his style. In the illustrations to the edition of Lord de Tabley's poems, published by John Lane, he employed a style of etching which reminds us in part of Diirer's woodcuts. The cover for Oscar Wilde's " Sphinx," on the other hand, displays delicate figures in perpendicular hieroglyphs ; the woodcuts within this beautiful book are in delicate red brown on white and the initials in green. The decorations of " Hero and Leander," \* in which he was helped by his friend C. H. Shannon, show the same attenuated distinction. The cover-design consists merely of a few simple geometrical lines in gold upon parchment. Together with these books the two friends produced a magazine known as " The Dial," to which Shannon contributed beautiful lithographs and Ricketts brilliant woodcuts. Unless I am mistaken, the text was printed by the old Chiswick Press in a masterly style. The whole was marked by a delicate taste, in comparison with which the master of the Kelmscott Press must have seemed unduly ponderous. Morris, indeed, could hardly be called tasteful. He was too mathematical, and his effects were secured by the sagacious employment of logical precepts. He neither had the art of startling his admirers nor ever cared to have it, but he was always perfectly safe. The typography of his successors, on the other hand, was an experiment. In the case of the early books by Ricketts, it is not always easy to decide how much was his and how much was due to the publisher, so that it would be wrong to compare these productions with the Kelmscott works, which Morris produced alone with unlimited means at his disposal. Ricketts, too, soon felt impelled to set up for himself. "The Dial" appeared as an independent publication. In 1894 he published the little picture book, " The Queen of the Fishes," all of which Lucien Pissaro, the son of Camille, cut on wood and printed with his little press at Epping ; it is one of the most charming achievements of modern book production, a union of French and English art which was only brought about by the happiest of chances. f Shortly afterwards Ricketts founded the publishing house of Hacon and Ricketts, from which a number of beautiful books have since been issued. He learnt simplicity and wholly abandoned the methods of Morris in favour of a more tractable and modern form of simple and natural elegance ; at the present day he is one of the most capable of those London artists who maintain the prestige of English book production. In spite of England's great wealth in books the number of these artists is not great. There is, indeed, no lack of illustrators, who include such refined artists as Laurence Housman, William Strang, Selwyn Image, A. J. Gaskin and many others, but it would be vain to look for men like Ricketts, who approached the problem of book production as a task

â€¢ Published by Elkin Matthews and John Lane in London.

t It must be said that among other qualities, vast industry was expended on the work. Pissaro not only cut the blocks with their delightful borders, but also the whole of the text of the seventeen pages. The

fundamental colour of the text and of most of the pictures is a warm grey which goes very well with the yellow

Japanese paper. The side notes are in a red shading towards yellow. Where there is a border, and this is

only on pages with coloured pictures, it is pale green, gold on the first page. Five of the pictures are coloured.

The effect of the whole is highly variegated and yet in perfect taste, while the little pictures, in which the old

Pissaro seems to smile, are strong and vigorous. The text is as clear as is possible with this process.

## ENGLISH BOOK-ILLUSTRATION 251

no less worthy than architecture, and went to work in their own way, as did William Morris. It would be surprising if it were otherwise. For the realisation of Morris' ideal requires not merely an artist of unusual strength of will, but also a combination of fortunate circumstances, such as are rarely within the power of any one artist : practical common sense, commercial talent, great energy, and, above all things, money. Morris could never be more than a model, and an estimate of his whole work must invariably consider the individualism that characterises his entire production, notwithstanding the numerous popular features which it may reveal. That in an epoch like ours, characterised by the most complete division of labour, such centralisation of work and craftsmanship should be regarded as a model of organisation, is a beautiful and perhaps an inevitable but certainly an unattainable ideal. One young architect in London, C. R. Ashbee, has followed the example of Morris. He is the author of a series of aphorisms typical of English aesthetics,\* a many-sided artist and president of the Guild and School of Handicraft, which set up its workshops in Whitechapel. To the numerous branches of his enterprise Ashbee has also added book production, and since the death of Morris he has brought out many beautiful books.

Such productions and the countless works privately printed for English collectors have many points of special interest ; but they are lost among the mass of books which English publishers place upon the market and in the hands of the masses. The average production in this latter case reaches a highly respectable level. One could easily name more than a dozen houses which produce and publish none but books which are unexceptionable in form. The modern publishing firms of London began to gather their special artists round them before Morris set up the Kelmscott Press ; they aimed at a tasteful format, which should be characteristic of the books produced by their own firms as a whole, if not of individual volumes, and they all contributed to improve the tradition of this industry. Morris showed what excellence could be attained by such culture. It could not fail to produce a man of genius. This happened when the tradition had become familiar to young and eclectic artists, and when the Gothic style of their old leader was

becoming too narrow. It did not spread beyond the boundaries within which it originated, but within its own small province it produced such magical beauty that we might be inclined for a moment to believe the perishable paper of a book could stimulate creative genius, no less than the great frescoes^ panels and canvases which inspired the genius of the old masters.

â€¢ Collected in "Chapters on Workshop Reconstruction and Citizenship" (London, 1894, Guild and School of Handicraft). The workshops of the guild have been for some time at Campden.

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#### AUBREY BEARDSLEY AND HIS CIRCLE

By ways remote and distant waters sped,  
Brother, to thy sad graveside am I come,  
That I may give the last gifts to the dead.  
And vainly parley with thine ashes dumb ;  
Since she who now bestows and now denies  
Hath ta'en thee, hapless brother, from mine eyes.  
But lo ! these gifts, the heirlooms of past years.  
Are made sad things to grace thy coffin shell  
Take them, aU drenched with a brother's tears,  
And, brother, for all time, hail and farewell !

A. B.

At Beardsley's house one used to see the finest and most explicitly erotic Japanese prints in London. They hung in plain frames against delicately coloured backgrounds, the wildest phantasies of Utamaro, and were by no means decent, though when seen from a distance delicate, proper and harmless enough. There are but few collectors of these things, as they cannot be exhibited, so they were comparatively cheap ten years ago, and among them the best preserved pi;ints are to be found.

To talk with Beardsley among these pictures was to enter into a new world of thought, and the pictures seemed as natural to the room as the grandparents' portraits over the sofa of a middle-class citizen. Coming from Burne-Jones, where there was nothing to be seen but Christian primitives, and where the conversation, like the master, seemed to move in list slippers, it was necessary to twist oneself into a new attitude, which was less restrained but no less delicate. Beardsley's conversation,

at any rate, was distinguished by a refreshing moderation. Flitting delicately from theme to theme, he had the art of making those observations which are accidental and yet necessary.

Who knows Beardsley ? It has often happened to me when speaking with artists and poets who are unconsciously wandering in his shadow, to receive, upon mention of his name, a somewhat diplomatic answer, the speaker being unwilling to admit that he heard for the first time a name which his questioner considered so important. Ours is an age which is rapidly overpowered by the commonplace, when people learn, read, and see with great rapidity ; so that the excess of their experience or some other reason produces the gloomy result that not only men like ourselves, but even men of genius like Beardsley, are unknown even to those whose artistic style is entirely in harmony with his. Thus many a man wanders astray without hope of return, or misses the final flower of maturity which is essential to the perfection of his art, either because certain echoes never reach his ears, or because his hearing has lost its delicacy amid the uproar of grosser sounds.

The one point which I trust that this book will make clear is the necessity for clearer views upon an organic system of aesthetics, an organic culture from which

AUBREY BEARDSLEY: CHOPIN, BALLADE III OP. 47

FROM "THE STUDIO"

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we are worlds removed, and of which we have not the slightest inkling. I hope to show that certain things belong not to culture, but to life, that these things are necessary to the expression of intellectual needs, and are to be accepted even more unquestioningly than the convention that we shall not eat with our knives or introduce ladies to gentlemen. Culture is the due completion of our consciousness with everything necessary to the comprehension and furtherance of the claims of the present. Of a hundred important artists born within so many years, a certain number are indispensable, not because they produce this or that effect upon the mind, but because they affect their age and because they are symbolical of ourselves, and to know them is to have a true knowledge of our own life, to possess a means of resistance to that pessimism which can see nothing good in our own time, and a valuable weapon against the wild optimism which

declines to see what is bad in it. These men, in one word, give us knowledge ; they are themselves concentrated knowledge. Beardsley is one of them, and to have seen every one of his fragments is a more urgent necessity than to know a single picture by Burne-Jones or Watts, even were the works of these artists ten times more beautiful than they are. To follow the evolution of art, as we have here occasionally attempted, is interesting and certainly more useful and dignified than to collect postage stamps or to play piquet, but at the same time a knowledge of certain contemporary artists is wholly indispensable. Not until we have learnt to understand Beardsley or Dostojewski or Manet as we understand Bismarck, shall we reach the stage of culture. The point is not whether these men were artists, statesmen, or anything else ; they have our age at their fingers' ends, each in the art peculiar to himself ; the individuality of each is such that if we know only one our knowledge will be distorted. This knowledge is not necessary to genius, and may even be harmful on occasion to a creative mind. We may entertain an infinite distrust of such prophylactics and regard them as nothing more or less than original sin of the worst kind which in Goethe's days had not yet been infused into our blood. Not until a later date was it fashionable for poets to dress as negligently as possible, and it is no mere coincidence that these people know nothing of painting except that it is made with oil like a salad, and commit the appalling lapses of taste in their writings which for some time were worshipped as originality. There are some ages when good taste requires more gifts than genius.

In this sense we are pleased to speak of Beardsley as a man of genius, though he only illustrated books and did not even make furniture ; our estimate is based on the elements of modern life and not on comparison with those of other epochs, although these provide reason enough for reverencing him.

His genius consisted in the fact that he was able to give objectivity and therefore style to the whole practice of this period of English art. He, too, had known Botticelli and had worshipped Beatrice ; his origins were those of Rossetti. But the language of the Quattrocento was not his and he did not prattle in it like the others ; he preferred to jest, and in general to express himself in his own tongue. His Beatrice has the features of Rejane. Beardsley was the first Englishman who turned whole-heartedly to France ; not only had he seen Rejane, but had seen her with the eyes of a Parisian, with the eyes of Forain. He did not turn to Chaucer literature, but illustrated " Manon Lescaut," designed pictures for " Madame Bovary " and Gautier's " Mademoiselle de Maupin," busied himself with Balzac, was amused by Zola like any other member of the Quartier Latin,

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and was a devoted admirer of Mallarmé. In Paris he would have become a Lautrec, and he became what he was because he deemed this development

the best for him as an Englishman and the best for his art. Some of his India ink drawings remind us of Gavarni, others of Guys, while others, and these more precious, show his delicate pencil playing with wavy lines breathed on the paper like the hair of a young girl and recalling a Frenchman of the eighteenth century, a St. Aubin, as Whistler would have conceived him. It was not Japan, but France that determined his style. He often went to France, and went there finally to die. His appreciation of Puvis was not that of his compatriots, and the French rising generation thought more of him than of Burne-Jones. In Paris he deepened his manner and sharpened his wit which had a honeyed quality in London ; into the extravagance of the enthusiastic poet painter he introduced the coquettish impudence of his own graceful Pierrots. He was the gentleman artist of England.

Japanese art had an important influence on his technique. He found that the small format of book illustration which is close to the eye and restricted to black and white, requires a handling of detail different from that required by the larger surface of oil painting : Harunobu and Utamaro were to him different stages of a masterly art, perfectly suited to its format. At first he confined himself to a Japanese treatment of the brilliant line of Forain, and to writing satires in the lyric language of Japan. The employment of the Empire for scenic accessories added a further attraction that was no less Japanese. This he rendered, typographically, by means of slender perpendicular lines, and a style of furniture which by no means recalled Napoleon, but rather Louis XVI. and still more Beardsley. It was the Empire, again, which provided him with the costume of his heroes, with these rich fabrics woven of black and white dots, and with the confusion of laces and ruches and braids, and the fabulous elegance of their environment.

A whole book might be written upon Beardsley's art of costume. The fashion which he led, or which he followed, consciously or unconsciously, is plutocratic, but he understood how to make clothes immaterial " to resolve them into line and shimmer, and to cover a petticoat with roses without making it clumsy and formless. He put his soul into it. It was not only in his pictures that he spoke of clothes ; he was proud of making them his exclusive theme, and he showed how completely satisfied his heroes were to take this for their life-work. Our utilitarianism was never rebuked in stronger or haughtier terms. He dreamed of a theatre in which Grace was heroine, in which the silk of the dresses whispered the dialogue, and the fold of a garment gave the pose. At times, but rarely, his compositions show some touch of action, but in such cases the subjects are such as to seem somewhat venturesome, even to those unaffected by English prejudices. He dresses them, however, not after the manner of the lascivious scoundrels of the eighteenth century, who hide what they allow to be seen, but boldly as the Spaniard who shows his coat-of-arms and as innocently and delightfully as the Japanese. The gesture is sublime even when it is shameless. He brings style even into the coarsest theme, and makes it not only possible, but respectable, indeed of unimpeachable morality. Analysis of the materials of his domain brings us no nearer to him. f k ^ - " ^



The passions of humanity are no worse to-day than they were two thousand years ago in Greece and its neighbouring islands. The difference is only a matter of gesture, but this we have lost. Beardsley should be described less prosaically,

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and in a form of poetry or prose which touches only the thousand beautiful external details and goes no deeper, in order not to tarnish the chaste indecency which he affected. This was the style of language which he himself employed upon the few occasions when he wrote ; \* as in the romantic novel, " Under the Hill," the delightful history of the Abbe Fanfreluche. Any one who knows Beardsley's drawings and reads these writings will be grateful for an additional means of recalling them to his memory. He does not sound every chord, and often the most exquisite are silent, but we can obtain some idea of his unexampled wealth of ideas, of the delicate discriminations of his taste, almost magical in so young a man, of the unrestrained creative power in the case of subjects which are usually anything rather than the transitory productions of the moment, and therefore betray no youthful touch so far as their creative ability is concerned. The logical quality is the most remarkable thing here ; we learn to know, not the artist or the writer, but the man himself; who does not only don his velvet coat when inspired by the muse, but is an artist even in n6glig6 ; whatever we may find in his work, we never find a motive which is out of harmony with his art. Of how many artists can so much be said ?

The thing which is not expressed in Beardsley's writings, is the strength which lies behind his delicacy. As a writer he was an amateur, but the lines of his draughtsmanship are often so strong and simple that the greatest Japanese artists are outdone. His minuteness is not trivial, nor is it an attempt to find contributory detail, however brilliantly conceived ; every touch is inevitable. This is comprehensible in certain cases where there was a serious note in his humour. Elsewhere he was only the virtuoso, amusing himself with the play of incomparable artistic powers, turning to every conceivable style with his extraordinary versatility, sometimes half in jest, sometimes half in earnest, but invariably brilliant. He resembles an artist like Rubinstein, who sometimes after a brilliant concert would play to a lingering group of admirers in the hail, fantasias upon Beethoven or Chopin or Glick, which evoked tears and laughter at the same time. In these extravaganzas Beardsley did not retain the current fashionable style. We have ornament by him in all the styles of the late renaissance, details of great or small size which he drew for the purpose, as it were, of sharpening his pencil, in the intervals between some infamous portrait of Messalina or Salome, or some splendid interior. In one day he could be Baroque, Empire, Pre-Raphaelite or Japanese, and was sometimes all of these together in the same picture. Yet he was always Beardsley. Our culture, which knows and

loves everything, and in spite of that, or perhaps because of that, desires to retain its individuality, became in him a brilliant and attractive reality.

The Greek spirit of modern dreamers, which of all things was least superficially obvious in his work, affected him more decisively than any other influence in the end. This frail youth attained that for which the old and new academicians of London were earnestly striving, and which they missed perhaps, not so much because of their own deficiencies as because of the English atmosphere ; he achieved what had never so much as been dreamed of by Sir Frederic Leighton, the most dignified of all those who attempted to assume the garb of Greece. Beardsley is thought an impudent rascal, but compared with this stupendous academician, how mild and modest he appears ! His lusts respected the

\* Beardsley's writings appeared in a collection entitled " Under the HiU," issued by John Lane (London).

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sanctuary ; his self-knowledge forbade him to venture on profanation. He flew by like a delicate butterfly, filling his eyes with beauty and forming a marvellous fabric of what he had seen, a little world in miniature representing the great marvels of creation.

Phidias, had he been so unfortunate as to behold his English successors, would not have remarked them ; his eye had not the gift of seeing things that were not there. But to Beardsley he might have given a friendly touch of the hand, as in his own days he may have walked among the potters after a day's hard work, to delight himself with the cleverness of an artist painting an Athene upon an amphora.

Since Furtwangler issued his magnificent work with its beautiful illustrations of Greek vases, it is possible to compare modern artists who imitated the ancients conveniently and easily with their models.\* Of all these painters none approached one side of the Greek artists so nearly as Beardsley ; not so much their line as the ph)'siology and intelligence of their line. Most artists had seen nothing but the form and that usually from the point of view of sculpture, the great temptress of the painter. The enthusiasm of the admirer who was anxious, not to understand the Greek laws of form but to emulate their achievements, underestimated the

task before him from two points of view. He, the modern, dreamt that he could reproduce a work of the Golden Age, and ventured to transcribe the subjects of the one art in the terms of the other, for which the Greeks had their own code of laws, laws applying not to sculpture but to painting, that is, to coloured drawing. It was these laws, and no mere external detail, that Beardsley learnt from the Greek vases. He discovered something of the cunning of the hand that held the unknown instrument which decorated the clay ; he took the lines before they had become form, that is to say, the system of wide and narrow curves with their points and strokes, discovered the underlying design, the brilliant sketch of the vase painter, which sometimes seems a sublime refinement of these black and red pictures. He studied the relation between the outline and the delicate inner lines which gave the anatomy, the manner of depicting the hair of the head and the body ; the net work of their ornamentation from its strongest and most animated passages to the caressing by-play of the minor details.

Rodin also examined these vases closely. Furtwangler gives a reproduction of the first design for an Attic crater of the Periclean period which, if it were provided with a red wash and a signature and placed in Rodin's portfolio, would be accepted as an authentic example of the master. For Rodin, however, the study of Greek design was but an exercise for higher purposes ; he followed every path of ancient genius in order to broaden his style. Beardsley turned the same study to opposite account. He found in it a means for producing work which was minute without being diminutive.

He cared less for the solemn processions or the vigorous drawings of the battles with the giants, than for the playful struggles of baldheaded satyrs with gay nymphs, the favourite pictures of the Greeks as designed by the brilliant Brygos in the last quarter of the fifth century, or by Duris, the most unrestrained of these artists, who could venture anything with success, a man but little younger than his teacher, Brygos, and perhaps yet more delicately audacious in his figures. The British Museum possesses wonderful examples of this group. The side of them which we would prefer to see is generally turned to the wall, and in some cases the dainty details have been painted out by well-meaning

\* Furtwangler-Reichhold, " Griechische Vasenmalerei " (Bruckmann, Munich).

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guardians of the public morals. As these are necessary for the understanding of the whole design, as in the case of the detail of the famous bronze tripod at Naples, the best elements are often lost. The most beautiful Duris vase is the psykter in the British Museum with the dancing satyrs, inspired by wine to perform all kinds of acrobatic feats as they drink. It was here that Beardsley learnt the most precious secrets of his work, and certainly he had none of the

prudishness of the curators. He owed it even more to the Greeks than to the Japanese that he had no need to be prudish and that the unrestrained eroticism of certain pages remains what it was intended to be, a device to intensify the rhythm. He loved both the Greeks and the Japanese, and his love was such that he attained in play what intellect fails to perceive and scholars regard as a regrettable aesthetic accident, accomplishing a union of divided worlds which our historians do not like to mention in the same breath. This alone gives Beardsley a very high place and makes clear how closely he is in touch with our age. He displayed the freedom of a new aestheticism which breaks with all irrelevant history and draws its strength from dominant instinct alone. He took subjects suited to his pencil and his achievements showed that he was right. Among the many eclectic artists of England who have dissipated their powers in the pursuit of universal beauty, Beardsley was the first to prove the Taoiality of eclecticism by the fact that he turned it to practical account and created a unity of diverse elements, a beautiful handwriting, a calligraphy of taste.

The results of Beardsley are as yet veiled in obscurity. The fact that his art was limited to paper is of no importance, in view of the influence of Blake upon English art history. This limitation of means will speedily be discounted by the reproductive processes which it facilitates and which are now all important. Even now people profess to trace this influence where one would least expect it and point to Beardsley figures and the Beardsley style as they used to speak and still speak of the style of Watteau. Modern comparisons always have to make a silent compromise with large abstractions. Possibly, Beardsley is to become the Watteau of modern England. One conceives the painter of the eighteenth-century pastorals as a being very like this Englishman. The amalgamation of Flemish and Venetian was no less bold a venture at that date, and it was equally successful. Gersaint describes his friend as a lustful spirit but a moral character. Caylus refers to him as pleasant and tender and perhaps a trifle Arcadian. Beardsley preferred to treat the delicate subjects of his dreams and perished with them as the butterfly dies with the flowers, possibly a vicious and yet a lovely life. Both were unhealthy, melancholic temperaments who gladly escaped from the world to their dreams as if anxious to prepare for an early death. Beardsley reached his appointed term even more rapidly than Watteau. He died at the age of twenty-six, weary and perhaps satiated.

The creative energy of this consumptive young man was incredible. Within some seven years he produced, apart from his literary work and his pictures, over a thousand drawings, the majority of which were made for some definite illustrative purpose. Like every artist of his circle his first tribute was paid to the Arthurian legend. This consisted in the illustration, when he was twenty, of two stout volumes which he adorned with no less than five hundred and forty-eight drawings. A biographer has counted them.\* In each volume a frontispiece

\* "Le Morte Darthur" (London, Dent and Co., 1893 and 1894). A large number of sketches were

collected by John Lane after the artist's death in the two volumes entitled " The Early Work of Aubrey

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appeared in rich colouring which even then displayed the perfection of his art, especially that in the first volume representing King Arthur with the Questing Beast, where the exotic splendour of his imagination found full expression. A short time previously his drawings adorned the first number of the "Studio," to which Joseph Pennell introduced him. Possibly it was no mere chance that the zealous friend of Whistler should have stood sponsor to the young man, who was a Pre-Raphaelite only in his mode of wearing his hair, and was soon to give a rich and unexpected vigour to the eternal line of Rossetti. In the *Morte Darthur*, we can follow the steps by which Beardsley's women were evolved from the contemplative female type of Burne-Jones. His *Isolde* displays all the characteristics of the female figures which follow, and these are no healthier than the figures of Burne-Jones, but the art expended upon them is the more so. Beardsley's art made a formula of morbidity, healthy inasmuch as it was a deliberate, scientifically exact representation that achieved the desired effect. Certain details, even in the latest works remind us of the school in which he learned. The women's mouths retain some resemblance to the exaggerated lips of Rossetti's *Beatrice*. In the case of Rossetti this oddity is nothing more than a curiosity in feature drawing without interest because it is purely superficial ; Beardsley, however, without undue stress upon the lips, puts them in as he does a ruffle on the sleeve or a feather in the hat of his latter-day *Aphrodites*. The Pre-Raphaelites attempted to draw human beings and produced marionettes ; Beardsley in his extravaganzas intended to draw marionettes, but he turned them into human beings.

In the " *Yellow Book* " pictures the Burne-Jones elements have entirely vanished, and Beardsley appears in full splendour.\* The first drawing in the first volume, " *L'Education Sentimentale*," in which an appalling old hag is instructing a grown-up daughter (they must surely be *Nanna* and *Pippa*), was a kind of prelude to the work of this diviner *Aretino*.

Like *Huysmans*, he eventually became a Catholic. Religion is to such people a question of perfume. Caylus tells us of *Watteau*, that shortly before his death he destroyed his few indecent pictures. Beardsley did the same or begged his publisher to fulfil this last wish, and the latter accordingly is said to have committed this iniquity and to have burned a large proportion of the best examples of the " *Lysistrata* " drawings as well as other unpublished material. When I saw the news of his death at *Mentone*, I remembered a four-post bed with a high lace-trimmed canopy under which *Pierrot* seems to be asleep. His head is sunk in the pillow, the long thin hand which so often guided the mad

dance lies wearily upon the counterpane : a motley company approaches solemnly on tiptoe. Columbine comes first in a high black mantilla, her hooped skirts

Beardsley " (1899) with a biographical note by Marillier, and " The Later Work of Aubrey Beardsley "

(1901). Compare also the biography by Gleeson White in the " Studio " for May 1898.

The German, Franz

Blei, has written a good appreciation of Beardsley (Pan. 5, last number) ; were it not for the confusing com-

parison with Rops, the essay would be even better ; see also R. KJein in Muther (Bard), and Emil

Hannover (" Kunst and Kunstler," i., No. 11).

\* EUcin Matthews and John Lane, London, vols. i. to iv. (April 1894 to January 1895).

t Herr Wardorfer of Vienna, who possesses many fine originals Beardsleys, some for the " Lysistrata "

series, has also a letter from the dying artist to his publisher, wherein he adjures the latter " in my death

agony " to destroy all the obscene sketches. Numerous illustrations to the Morte

Darthur, recently in the

possession of John Lane, of London, and a collection of the best later originals, belong to Jerome Pollitt,

a friend of Beardsley.

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AUBREY BEARDSLEY:  
L'EDUCATION SENTIMENTALE

FROM THE "YELLOW BOOK"

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seamed with roses, and under them her saucy leg, peeping out from drawers indicated by dots ; then Harlequin in a white domino with his mask before his cunning eyes, tiptoeing forward in beautifully embroidered tights. Then follow the worthy Doctor and the fantastic Pantaloon in his wide velvet breeches and Spanish doublet. Columbine listens to the breathing of Pierrot and motions the others to silence with her finger upon her little mouth ; Harlequin, too, is taken aback and lays a monitory finger on his lips, the doctor stands stiff and dignified, while Pantaloon bows his head breathlessly. Thus they stand upon tiptoe, scarce daring to look, and listen as Pierrot's spirit gently leaves his audacious body.

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Beardsley belongs to the generation immediately following that of ourselves, who are between forty and fifty years of age. It is a generation which in the intervals of schooling has accomplished what was an eternal puzzle to mature men like ourselves, and at the age of twenty is more educated than we are now, and a hundred times more imaginative than we can ever hope to become. The members of this generation are to be found everywhere, in London, in Paris, and in Germany. They are more refined and distinguished than we. They make verses where we struggled, and suffer where we rejoiced. We might christen them " Super-boys," if it were not an injustice, for they are all that they would be ; precocious princes who have learnt the art of government before attaining their manhood; artists who conventionalise where we worked with all the fiery enthusiasm of objective realism ; aristocrats who carelessly greet us poor creatures with a gesture, polish their nails with that attention which we devoted to art, and write verses with the passion that we brought to love.

Whether they will survive is another question ; they have some life in them " more, indeed, than we formerly had ; such at least is their opinion. They are spared our late regret that we passed through half our lives with blinkers before our eyes, and notwithstanding their butterfly existence they will probably leave behind clearer if more transitory traces of their work than we left with all the intensity of our more plebeian existence.

There is nothing surprising in Beardsley's direct influence upon the artists who work in his genre. The facility which could follow every chance whim, and which brought such a delicate convention to every task, was certain to attract many. He was assimilated most readily abroad and most rapidly in America.

The publishing trade in the United States is naturally in close and constant relations with England. The more important London publishers all have their branches in New York or Boston, while the Americans are also able to sell their books in London. American printing from a technical point of view is far superior to ours, and photographic reproductions have been developed in popular publications to a pitch of perfection which we do not attain in editions de luxe. On the other hand, no native style of book-illustration has yet been formed which surpasses the English style. It is only in a certain type of grotesque that an individual American character is to be found, as in the delightful little magazine, " The Lark," which prints on coarse paper the most amusing things illustrated by the maddest pictures, negro pantomimes and so forth.\* The book-illustration is a coarser

\* Published, among others, by W. Doxey in San Francisco. J. M. Bowles, in Boston, has also produced similar illustrations, if I am not misinformed, and here, without illustrations, one of the best printed American  
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variety of the English manner. The English artists who design for the American publishers are not of the highest class and take no particular pains to secure a reputation abroad. Anning Bell is, if possible, even more popular in America than in England. Among others he illustrated the great ecclesiastical work, " The Altar Book," with which a Boston publisher \* vainly attempted to overshadow Morris, a very clumsy performance. An infinite number of other illustrators follow the style invented in London.† Here, too, the best books are those which are not illustrated.

Beardsley exerted a special influence upon W. H. Bradley ; shortly after his



first drawings had appeared in the "Yellow Book," Bradley printed his first book covers, large surfaces with bold borders, reminding us of the covers of the "Yellow Book," but simpler and with larger curves. One of the most beautiful was the cover for the December number (1894) of "The Inland Printer" of Chicago, a red-haired woman bearing a light, with the colours brilliantly divided. J

This increase of size, led obviously to the poster, in which Bradley and many others turned Beardsley's methods to account, and it was most successfully employed by Bradley in the "Chap Book" poster. This form adopted those methods which could be most naturally and rapidly employed, but remained entirely out of touch with the deeper side of Beardsley, which found no sympathy in America. It was inevitable that the atmosphere of this brilliant artist should be discovered by more delicate talents which attempted to realise the world of marionettes.

It is difficult and certainly of no great interest to consider who has actually borrowed from Beardsley. It would undoubtedly be wrong if we judged by appearances and described this man or that as the artistic descendant of Aubrey Beardsley, who was but a clerk in an insurance office in the City at a time when many Englishmen were already making drawings which strongly remind us of his manner, and were succeeded by others who resemble him even more closely. Beardsley's ideas were in the air ; he grasped them better than any other, indeed, with unique effect. As a black-and-white artist he has no equal in modern England. Whether the others achieved what they did with or without his assistance is little to the point, seeing that he is superior to them all. It is only when one goes outside of his own narrow sphere, the book, that one finds things which approach the same level or show something of the same spirit. A kindred artist is still living in England who was certainly closely allied to Beardsley, and who can conjure the same graceful charm out of a different material ; this is Charles Conder. Here Beardsley's superiority is more purely physical. Conder is as idle as his

books appeared, R. B. Gruelle's "Notes, Critical and Biographical," a masterpiece of high class printing of the utmost simplicity and in the best taste, dealing with the collection of W. T. Walters, in Baltimore ; six copies were printed for the owner by Carlon and HoUenbeck at Indianapolis. The title-pages and the initials are from designs by Bruce Rogers.

\* The initial letters were designed by B. G. Goodhue, who has also worked for English books. He is responsible for the borders as well. The book was printed at the Devinne Press in Boston, which has produced a number of the best American books, including a work upon the American printing trade ;

" Sketches of Printers and Printing in Colonial New York," by Hildeburn. " The Altar Book " was published by Berkeley Updike in Boston.

t G. W. Edwards, Frank Mills Day, M. Corter, Ethel Reed, Frost, L. J. Rhead, F. M. Parrish, E, Penfield, J. M. Ball, B. Sherwin, &c.

X Many of Bradley's drawings were made for the publications of Harper Bros., in New York. At a later date Bradley printed from his own press.

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unfortunate compatriot was industrious, is as unmethodical as the other was methodical, is a Bohemian in practice, whereas Beardsley was lax only intellectually. None the less, Conder has produced one or two admirable works which will pre-serve his memory as a distinguished artist, if they themselves survive.

Paper for Beardsley was a white surface which cried out for printer's ink, and what paper was to him silk is to Conder. Conder's pictures are as colourless as Beardsley's. His brush only achieves beauty when it is gliding over the silk. This is in so far a disadvantage as it limits his effects and obliges him to renounce those popular suggestions which proceed from the artist and return to him with redoubled force, unfolding fresh resources. Conder's work, even were he more industrious than he is, would naturally appeal only to the few. He is unimaginable without his silken medium ; nothing is more remarkable than this idiosyncrasy. He paints upon silk exactly as Degas puts his pastels upon paper, and as the pastels cannot be conceived in any other material, so approximately is Conder fettered to the peculiar faint sheen of his silk. He seems the reincarnation of some delicate eighteenth-century painter, who adorned the fans of the ladies who walked in the park of Versailles. But the truth is that Conder has as much and as little to do with these men as Beardsley with the Empire. He does not paint the eighteenth century as it was, but as we like to imagine it. He conventionalises our sensations and uses colour just as Beardsley for his interpretations used the black stroke, which gave exactly what we wished to see. His painting is as minute as the microscopic points and strokes of the designer of Lysistrata, it is as effective as the art of his predecessor. Its strength lies in the wonderful feeling of space which pervades these diminutive worlds and in an application of colour which forces the observer to magnify the effect produced by these delicate spots of lilac, yellow, brown, green and red. His art lies not only in the distribution of his touches with an inimitable sense of rhythm, but in the vivacity he imparts to them by letting the lighter and the darker shades run together, and thus still further emphasising the rhythm. A romantic water-colour, a heroic landscape upon silk,

a smiling comedy, might be admirably conceived and wretchedly executed, and we are inclined at times to think that the slightest lapse of taste would destroy the whole illusion. This dexterity, which keeps its balance on the blade of a knife, is the only thing which Conder has in common with the eighteenth century. He belongs to it as Fragonard belongs, for the reason that close to him we divine a dreary abyss of mannerism.

Conder, like Sickert, the best pupil of Whistler, is not of pure English blood. He was born in Australia, and was brought up on French art and the French genius, and seems indeed to have been especially favoured by the most charming of the French muses. It is no more possible, however, to conceive of him as pure French than as pure English. Equally alien to either nation is that lofty modesty, which accomplishes upon a narrow fragment of silk, achievements never attained in great pictures by such Englishmen as Frank Brangwyn, or such Frenchmen as Menard. The great artists of France have, indeed, always produced bibelots. Monet painted door-panels for Durand-Ruel, Renoir decorated vases, and Degas painted the plates which hang on Alexis Rouart's staircase. These, however, were but amusements, the delicate pastimes of genius and if these men, like Lautrec, painted dainty fans for their nieces, their usual occupations were different. This kind of art, however, is Conder's business. He has extraordinary tact in avoiding any exaggeration of his claims and a happy gift of getting all the

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charm out of his technique. He stands far above his productions, though his hand is obvious in every one of them, after the manner of Beardsley, who could guide a pencil with his little finger alone, yet did not disdain to take pains over every dot in his laces. Beardsley remains more English than Conder, notwithstanding his greater versatility. The naive attempt to make something truly female out of the femininity of English art draws Conder rather towards the banks of the Seine. Here, too, he was first appreciated. When Bing opened his L'Art Nouveau, the long, narrow silken panels of the Englishman were hung in a mysterious corner of the house. In every room the visitor had seen nothing but things whose object was to express the new age and then, as he passed from the bedroom with the Denis into the narrow boudoir at the further end of the first storey, where the silk displayed its sheen between white Louis Seize panels, he was met by the roguish laughter of another world. Only a very few people ever saw them at all. The opponents of modernity never got so far ; in the Van de Velde rooms they had had enough of Neo-Impressionism and turned away in disgust. Enthusiasts, on the other hand, regarded the silk with suspicion as an offshoot of Versailles and shunned its seductions.

The painter Thaulow has some beautiful curtains and cushions by the Englishman. The painter Blanche, in whose house many exquisite little things are to

be found side by side with great works, and who owns the best Parisian collection of Walter Sickert's pictures, has also some of the gems of Conder's work. Many examples occur in private collections in London, and among them are some beautiful fans.

Between Beardsley and Conder, the Russian, Constantin Somoff, has found a place. He does in oil what they did respectively in black-and-white and in water-colour, an achievement for which both Beardsley and Conder lacked the inclination and perhaps also the equipment.

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The genius of English art at the present day seems rather a collecting and distributing influence than a true creative power ; it collects and distributes at least aU that it finds congenial. We find it rejecting everything manly offered by great individualities, even such achievements as those of Stevens, which would seem akin to its nature. Its greatest performance within the last twenty-five years has been the creation of a well-printed book, a new empire, within which Beardsley moved with the dignity of a prince. It was hoped in England that this empire would be extended to include more practical necessities. Morris made the attempt with a closely articulated form, which, by producing a soothing impression of outward order, concealed its lack of power. Others there were who attempted in their more material way to realise the variegated life which Beardsley had called into being, and to create a reality out of the mirage of their dreams. The movement took place in Scotland, where some years previously the Glasgow youths had displayed their dexterity in the manufacture of artistic movements. The new men, Macdonald, Macintosh, MacNair, &c., were but a few years younger than the favourites of the Munich people and were already working when the latter began to acquire a reputation in Germany. At that time they were in advance of Continental ideas. Ten years ago during the Munich Secession, there would have been much astonishment had George Henry, Roche, Paterson and others sent over, along with their own pictures, a few specimens of what was even then being produced in Glasgow in the immediate neighbourhood of their studios.

## CHARLES CONDER: DESIGNS FOR FANS

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Startling as the difference may seem between these contemporary painters and draughtsmen, there are many fundamental points of agreement. Even George

Henry and his friends are decorators ; they drape their pictures after the manner of the prudent housewife, who seeks to confer new charms on shabby furniture by the application of Persian shawls. George Henry's pictures were like Japanese rooms which seem genuine at a distance, and in Germany were at any rate a great improvement on the Makart bouquets of the preceding generation. The Scottish draughtsmen are men of more refined taste. The painters inevitably become decorators of moderate capacity, while the decorators, on the contrary, nearly reach the level of painters and are artists from the beginning.

In Glasgow English art lost its hermaphrodite character. It passed into the hands of women. Two sisters, Margaret and Frances Macdonald, exhibited at the London Arts and Crafts Exhibition in the spring of 1896, the same exhibition whose opening was saddened by the death of Morris. Their first works were narrow panels of aluminium and brass, characterised by extremely attenuated ornament consisting of slim, highly conventionalised Madonnas. To Londoners the " Spooky School " seemed at first no more than a bad joke. These Madonnas had nothing English about them. The emphatic aureoles round the egg-shaped heads were regarded as a satire upon Pre-Raphaelite pietism, which had recently received decent burial. The bodies disappeared in garments of mathematical perpendicularity like those of the mummies of the Pharaohs, or else they consisted of a few carving lines which defied all anatomy. Foreigners, however, were delighted, for they were weary of the eternal commonplace of the other exhibits, and they found at last in these things a new mode of expression and a bold revolt against the persistent norm. The abnormality of these productions was in itself a relief. There was an obvious enthusiasm in them ; they were the joyous work of people who had something to say, and who had not merely observed a detail here and there casually, but had constructed for themselves a definite picture of the world, however curious it might be. The curious element, indeed, was by no means arbitrary. These works used the new drawing to express larger and wider surfaces than had been seen in London. The treatment of the nimbus certainly appeared arbitrary ; it was placed where it would look well, and not where sentimentalism required it. The faces were long, not because they were intended to symbolise some intellectual sublimation, but because the panels were long and the artists preferred to work with simplified unities instead of telling stories. The architect Mackintosh, who had meanwhile married one of the two sisters, had also exhibited ; he was more English than the ladies, but by no means so original. The few pieces of furniture which he showed might have been made by Voysey if it had not been for the ornament of their surfaces. His ornament, moreover, was not so attractive ; it crept across the solidly bordered surface with nothing of the proper swing, or ran out into lines which seemed laboured. It was the work of a man who had been accustomed to another style, and who was doing his best to avoid a relapse into his old manner. The delightful element in the work of the ladies was their bold carelessness, and a taste which was as wholly consistent with an utterly remote world as if it had never seen any other.

The eclecticism which Ricketts and his friends deliberately attempted to bring into favour was no novelty to the more naive posterity of Walter Scott, and lost much of its many-sidedness in consequence. The primitive style of the Scots

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women is entirely unconscious ; it is simply the expedient of a woman without the innate prepossessions of the male artist who attempts things which would never occur to a man. Mrs. Mackintosh used to produce conventionalised roses by crumpling paper or muslin with her fingers, smoothing out the lines with feminine taste. She makes her panels of canvas and colour, not because she desires to paint, but for lack of better material. The strokes upon her pictures are like strings. She abstracts all the charm from the technique of gesso-painting, and unconsciously imitates everything you can think of, but as she has not been spoiled by training charming ideas are the result. This feminine taste rounded off the corners of the furniture made in Glasgow and gave more repose to the constructive lines of Mackintosh, who remained above all an excellent architect. MacNair, Talwyn. Morris, and others complete the group.

Ornamental work was naturally the central point of the innovation. Books and posters rapidly popularised a style which shows a remarkable likeness to certain Continental performances, especially those of the Dutch school, which derives from allied exotic sources. MacNair's glass is very similar to some domestic glass by Koepping, while his windows are akin to Van de Velde's, though there is no question of borrowing. The Scots accomplished a simplification comparable with that which on the Continent followed upon the flower-like prettiness of Japanese art, but the romantic spirit of their country enabled them to retain certain leading features of their models which were capable of interpretation, though on a very much reduced scale. Even in objects of everyday use they were unable to get rid of every trace of symbolism, and their style was formed out of a kind of compromise which no longer recalls natural objects to the memory, but cannot yet afford to break entirely with the visible world.

In Glasgow the charm of all this was great, especially when one had just come from London. Meanwhile the Scots had exhibited on the Continent, at first at Vienna in the winter of 1900, and two years later at Turin. The few fragmentary rooms exhibited in Turin were apartments in exquisite taste. Tiny pieces of furniture stood upon white cloths which served as carpets, while there were little chairs with very low seats and high backs covered with different shades of lilac. Artificial flowers of coloured paper with glass buds decorated the tables ; electric bulbs were hung upon long parallel threads, while as decoration for the walls, coloured birds' eggs large and small, were hung at regular intervals, the intention of which proved a great puzzle to the onlookers, though they seemed to me an entirely intelligible, indeed, a necessary symbol. To prostitute these things to

everyday use would be a mistake, and I was always horrified when I saw my German acquaintances shambling through these quiet rooms. The eye rested here with delight ; these were intellectual chambers garnished for fair souls, not for corporeal habitation.

The inevitable consequence came upon the Scots even more rapidly than might have been expected. After a poetry which stammered, a music which aimed at a tumult of sound, a painting which was content with chords of colour, a sculpture which renounced mere form, a dematerialised architecture was bound to arise. Its discoverers are perhaps the cleverest people of all, as they fly most directly in the face of Nature and can most easily be ridiculed. The powers of abstraction possessed by our art passes beyond the usual limits in their hands ; the luxury which would create not merely pictures and statues, but the whole environment for the poet's figures, is certainly the most regal of all attempts

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of the kind. To characterise it as unpractical would be shortsighted. It deserves such a reproach as little as Beardsley's drawings, which retain a value apart from that illustrative purpose which they fulfil better than the Scots fulfil their tasks. They deepen knowledge in a manner that may some day bear fruit. The effect is as permanent and as real as that produced by the perfect acting of a play, though the action represented may rest upon wholly imaginary hypotheses. The still-life of Scottish furniture may, indeed, only serve for the moment to show Continental competitors what to avoid if they want to make sensible interiors. At the same time, however, it displays an artistic taste which, merely pictorial as it is, points to an ideal the demonstration of which is always valuable, though we lack the organs to use it.

Thus England, to whom Hogarth, Gainsborough, and Constable have proved useless, is at last creating out of utilitarian objects the fantastic chimaera of a new form of beauty.

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AUBREY BEARDSLEY. VIGNETTE FROM  
"the PIERROT OF, THE MINUTE."

AUBREY BEARDSLEY. THE DEATH OF PIERROT,  
FROM "THE SAVOY."

THE STYLISTIC MOVEMENT ON THE

CONTINENT

FRANCE

On the Continent vain attempts are being made to discover the plan on which  
England built her new house. Up to a certain point the poverty of English art

had been a positive advantage to Morris. His outlook was confined by no abstract aesthetic specialism ; artists were not obliged to surrender anything in order to follow him, and since the Gothic period architecture had produced nothing which could efface the great memories enshrined in Westminster Abbey, the national sanctuary of London, which drew men's minds back to ancient times. Morris and his generation were therefore able to discover a means of expression, which had at any rate one advantage – a definite unity. This advantage reacted upon the Continent where, notwithstanding the infinitely greater artistic wealth, any kind of system was impossible and where, therefore, it was necessary to accept the importation of this new style even in cases where English art was wholly exotic in character, or in other words had nothing in common with the history of the country.

The importance which the people, notoriously the weakest of modern times in artistic genius, thus acquired, is amusing in its way ; it was not Morris himself who provided the material for importation, but one of his least important satellites. In the land of Poussin and Ingres the English predominance became grotesque.

France is like the house of some rich collector ; pictures from floor to ceiling, so that not an inch of the wall can be seen, statues in every corner, upon the chimneypieces, everywhere ; panels by great painters upon the doors ; transparencies with famous signatures in the windows ; costly bibelots for furniture, and contorted nudes by Rodin for door handles. A new instinct has in fact arisen which shuns utility in every form and which makes people ready to face the wildest sacrifices and inconveniences in order to have nothing about them which does not suggest the connoisseur. This development has nothing in it of snobbery or vain-glory or of any other morbid view of life. It proceeds from the curious relationship between the amateur and the artist of which I spoke at the outset of this book. In France, the country of the collector, this relationship has been carried to a surprising pitch of intensity. The house of the amateur is in France nothing more than a studio on a large scale, the workshop of a man who has undertaken the task of collecting and preserving the precious productions of others. The Revolution cut off the grands seigneurs ; our art has no longer any need of them. It is a matter of indifference where a Degas or a Renoir is hung ; one takes it in one's hand and becomes oblivious of all else. True connoisseurship in France is anything rather than an aristocratic spirit ; it belongs rather to the kitchen of

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art. The connoisseur who is obliged to keep in close touch with the artist so that his appreciation may be as keen as possible, catches something of the artist's nature. For humanity it is of the utmost importance that the artist should be

undisturbed by his surroundings and should think only of his painting, that he may produce as much as possible ; the amateur, therefore, as the trainer of the artist, feels himself obliged to get the last ounce out of him. Thus indeed he fulfils the object of his existence ; were it not for him, our artists and sculptors would cease to exist. It is nothing but fidelity to his calling if he invests hundreds of thousands in works of art and stints himself and his family, if he goes about in an old and ragged coat and travels third class to auctions outside Paris, as a collector recently deceased was accustomed to do. For art his money increases its value a hundredfold, since it forms the greater part of the capital upon which art can count.

This instinct has been trained for generations, and in many cases has been transmitted from father to son, even though the object of the passion for collecting may change. To some extent it is a national characteristic. The Louvre Museum was founded in the terrible year 1793. While a victorious enemy was devastating the country David ventured to propose to the Convention that the old royal palace should be transformed into a national museum, and his proposal was accepted on the very day on which Valenciennes, the last fortress of the North, fell into the hands of the Austrians. To have a miniature Louvre in his own house is the dream of every citizen. I know the concierge of a private house, whose lodge is a mouse-trap a few metres wide and has been the home of his family for twenty years, but it contains several Corots and a number of brilliant drawings by Daumier, which he has picked up from time to time at the Hotel Drouot.

Not only has the amateur no money for other purposes, but he has no instinct whatever for the beauty of utilitarian objects.

For the formation of a collection, respectable according to Parisian ideas, so much intelligence is required, such iron industry and perseverance, that one finds it hard to understand how the owner finds time for any other business. He therefore leaves all the rest to others and, as he is the sole part of the nation accessible to artistic ideas, the rest is forgotten or arranged according to tradition. The importance attached to tradition in the most revolutionary country in the world, whose social progress justly arouses general admiration, is almost incredible. The smallest greengrocer, nay, the thief who spends his nights in the ditches of the fortifications, clings firmly to his Louis XV., and the fairest of his dreams is to spend his midday rest in a modern imitation of the chair in which the oppressors of the people once sat. The ferocity of the Jacobins extirpated the outward and visible signs of monarchy only so long as they lacked a salon to set them up in, and they are defended to-day with greater fury than was once brought to their destruction. Deep as is the popular reverence for Napoleon, the Empire style is for France a mere phantasmagoria, which only the richness of its bronzes made tolerable. A dozen Napoleons would not bring about the acceptance of a more rational form. Should the State conceive the idea of imposing such a form by force, it would have to face, not a question of aesthetics, but a revolution, and in my opinion it would be easier for the Government to carry out its Republican programme

to its utmost extremity than to induce the true Parisian to renounce his favourite style. Logically speaking, modern ideas can imply nothing but the strongest opposition to all the traditions of the age which luxuriated in the

## DEGAS: A DANCER ON THE STAGE (DANSEUSE EN SCENE)

PASTEL  
LUXEMBOURG, PARIS

## THE STYLISTIC MOVEMENT ON THE CONTINENT 269

gardens of Versailles ; not only in this republican country but everywhere, and whether in connection with art or anything else. It is obvious that the two great generations of French painters symbolise this opposition. Delacroix, Daumier, Millet, Courbet, Manet, Degas and Gauguin, are, so to speak, the strongholds of a modern sense of freedom opposed to all royalism. Their pictures could have been conceived only by independent minds, and would have been clear evidence of their attitude, even if their authors had appeared as supporters of the old regime.

Possibly the class which rejected them felt the force of their protest, though without full consciousness of its deeper significance, and while people were crying out about the Massacre and scoffing at the hideousness of the *Casseurs de Pierres* and the nudity of the *Olympia*, they were in reality raising barriers against the first approach of the new representatives of our age. The heart of the genial amateur is naturally quite hardened against these obvious symptoms. He regards the modern pictures he collects from the standpoint of the kitchen, is delighted by their originality and their personal note, and finds, moreover, in his favourites, so strong a reminiscence of the masters of the past that he never perceives a significance in this art beyond the picture-frames. He takes a pleasure in calling Delacroix the Rubens of our age, Manet its Velazquez, and Renoir its Fragonard ; he borrows terms from the kitchen to express their community of aim, and remains unaffected by the profound meaning which the moderns have for their own age. What is still more remarkable is that these great artists themselves are often unconscious of their heroic stature. They carefully shut themselves up in their studios, and this indeed is often the only thing they can do ; when they appear, it sometimes happens that they come forward to demonstrate against movements which work entirely in their direction. In the famous " *Affaire*," the great artists were on the side of the reaction, and Zola was abandoned by the men on whose behalf he had broken many a lance in the enthusiasm of his youth. The counterpart of this spirit is the tragical comedy to which Menzel devotes himself

among ourselves. The want of critical power in matters artistic displayed by this and many other leaders springs from the same obscure source. In the case of our great artists, who are rightly praised for their struggles for humanity one is sometimes forced to leave the man morally and very often aesthetically speaking out of the question. They know the morality which constrains them to sacrifice everything to their art, the aesthetics which urge them to give charm to their works. They carry their heroism further than any artistic generation in the past has done, so far, indeed, that they have no energy for anything else.

This is the reason why French art is great and French general aesthetics as a rule beneath contempt. The taste which displays its inimitable nobility and its inexorable logic in the works of the French School, becomes a sort of faint-hearted compromise the moment that it attempts to deal with anything but a work of art. It is not exactly bad, for it always retains certain of the innate qualities which constitute the chic of a French toilette.

Nothing more deeply impressed the few Frenchmen who were not content to live and die on the Boulevard than the superiority which England enjoyed owing to her possession of logical principles of taste. They overlooked the irreconcilable racial difference, the fact that the situation in England was exactly the reverse of what it was in France, and that for this very reason, it could not be reproduced there. In England art was feminine, essentially calculated for women,

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but the prevailing taste was virile. In France, on the other hand, there was a manly aesthetic tradition carried on wholly by men, while the taste of the time was feminine, and kept itself as far as possible removed from the centres of production.

To import English ideas into France was to run counter to a deeply seated French instinct, to demand of Frenchmen something more intolerable than if one had forced them to strike up a friendship with Germany. England is their hereditary enemy, not Germany. They have already acquired a taste for our musicians and for the classics of our poetic literature ; they regard us as essentially bons enfants whom the wicked Bismarck led astray. But England has nothing which has the slightest charm for the true Frenchman. He perambulates London as he would another world, and the whole nature of the English is as incomprehensible to him as their speech.

Thus the influence of England on Paris "to say nothing of France" remained entirely superficial. It did not touch a single artist. It did not even succeed in regenerating French book-production where its effects were most to be desired, and where the superiority of England was least questionable. In 1880 Crane's

picture books had already appeared in Paris in a French edition. In the same year Kate Greenaway's " Under the Window " was translated and had a great success. Huysmans praised Caldecott as the successor of Thomas Rowlandson and Cruikshank. These volumes had an immense sale as Christmas presents, but they never got beyond the sphere of the livre d'etrennes. The printer at best learned a lesson in chromolithography ; serious publishers ignored them.

Even now French books, so far as they occupy the attention of artists, are merely collections of illustrations, and show a sovereign disregard for the most elementary principles of typography. In Paris there has been no tolerable example of printing on the market for the last fifty years. Not one of the great generation .of French caricaturists who spent their lives in making illustrations ever dreamed of doing work specially suitable for a book. Gustave Dore, the favourite in Germany and in England, who in his " Contes Drolatiques " and other similar examples came nearest to fulfilling the necessary conditions, was the least gifted artist of them all. Since his time they have been producing either picture books in the homelier romantic vein or volumes of sketches. The drawings are reproduced as faithfully as possible in line by means of woodcuts ; France, even since the death of the great Leveille, has still a fine array of wood engravers. In 1896 they even ventured to publish a remarkable periodical called " L'Image " \* which for a whole year produced a very valuable series of plates after modern artists without a single page of letterpress.

There is no country in which bibliomania engulfs such enormous sums as in France. Bing's Book Exhibition in the Spring of 1896 revealed a positively monstrous luxury displayed in illustrations consisting of original drawings by the greatest artists and similar excesses. In the following year the Goncourt sale exposed to the eyes of the curious the treasures of the library possessed by the two most celebrated of French connoisseurs. On that occasion bindings of certain precious editions were sold which these two eighteenth-century enthusiasts had

\* The single volume was published by Floury under the direction of the woodcutters, T. Beltrand

A. Lepere, and L. Ruffe of the " Corporation des Graveurs sur bois," and included reproductions of Rodin, Carriere, Degas, Daumier and others. Some examples of German wood-engraving were also published by this corporation.

## THE STYLISTIC MOVEMENT ON THE CONTINENT 271

had painted in oil by Renoir, Carriere and others. One did not dare lay a finger on them !

Of course there is no lack of artists capable of producing plates suitable for the illustration of books, under the guidance of a good publisher. G. Auriol \* M. Dufrene t and the artists mentioned apropos of Gauguin, Ranson,t and Jossot, Â§ thejSharaku of France, have skill enough. VoUard, who had the text of Maurice Denis's " Imitation " printed on the hand-presses of the Imprimerie Nationale and who ordered the exquisite Elzevir type of the days of Villon to be recast for Bonnard's " ParaUelement," produced works in the best taste without making them into books.

It is only in book-binding that the French maintain the old tradition of handi-craft for which they are so famous, and it is significant that their " finishers " still use the old stamps, or, if they modify their models at all, do so in strict accordance with the tradition.

Grasset was the French Crane, and was no better, but a great deal stiffer, than the Englishman. Crane may have reminded him of Viollet-le-Duc, and he may have attempted a new development of French Gothic in flat ornament. His school, to which Follot, among others, belonged, has not been fruitful. Felix Aubert, the designer of many French textiles and the resuscitator of Chantilly point lace, has tried flat ornament with greater modesty and at least equal success.

There are a hundred sources in Paris from which the most unbridled luxury may draw satisfaction ; simple and useful things are not to be had for love or money. The prestige of a Lalique who can put the poetry of the " Thousand and one Nights " into a jewel, of a Galle who succeeds at times in recreating the glory of Chinese glass, and of a hundred other makers of bibelots who prepare the equipment of drawing-rooms is certainly well deserved, but it does not avail to hide the terrible emptiness which lies behind the luxury.

Even in industrial art inspiration comes only from the amateur. On him the influence of the English movement was nil. The eighteenth-century collector developed into the patron of modern art, and refined his taste by contact with the minor arts of Japan. Edmond de Goncourt, who concluded a long series of literary works with lives of Utamaro and Hokusai, is typical of this development. Oriental influence was useful only to the great painters who in the best Parisian collections such as those of Camondo, Manzi, Rouart and many others find themselves side by side with the foremost artists of Nippon. Here Japanese art raised the standard still higher and profoundly influenced creation. At the same time it stimulated the engraving and the poster, the one means which the French artists have found of popularising their work without harming it. Riviere, one of the most popular of them, who made his impressions of Hieroshig6 available in the schools, himself became almost Japanese in the process.

In France Japan played the revolutionary role which was played in England by Morris' Gothic. Bing, the founder of " L'Art Nouveau " was one of the finest

\* Auriol has done some charming drawings for Larousse's firm.

t Dufrene makes pretty bindings and his ornaments are very delicate.

X Ranson is responsible for "Le Livre de la Naissance," by A. F. Herold ("Mercure de France"), and other things.

Â§ Jossot, besides his well-known merciless posters, has produced several picture books, the best of which is "Artistes et Bourgeois" (Boudet, 1894). He also illustrated "Mince de Trognon" (G. Hazard, 1896), "Les Rats," after Heine ("La Critique," 1899), and "Femelles" (OUendorft, 1901).

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connoisseurs of Japanese art, and the first dealer who initiated importations from the East. So soon as the spirit of this art transcended the narrow limits of painting its influence was necessarily that which Morris had branded as dangerous. It wrought actual havoc in applied art, disintegrating a tradition already shaken. Louis Quatorze whorls burgeoned with Japanese blossoms. Architecture was neglected. Even now no French artist, apart from the professed architects, gives serious attention to this department and the few architects like De Baudot, Gout, Vaudremer and the rest who have for years been trying to popularise a rational style are hardly known, not to say supported, by any prominent painter or sculptor. It may even be said that they are carrying on their difficult task in opposition to the great art of modern France. The younger men like Bonnier, Plumet, the two Selmersheims, Dufrene and others are trying to mould the old grace into new forms. In his furniture De Feure conventionalises Louis Seize ; Guimard, the only one of them who has completely freed himself from the old tradition, makes huge houses entirely composed of ornament. The modern element in the new French architecture is in the clouds ; it is as superficial as the modern element in French painting is profoundly characteristic of this age. It would be unjust to hold the few men of courage among Parisian architects responsible for this. The spirit which produces a great architecture could not be created by individuals, however gifted. Creation depends



on strong conceptions answering to imperious needs, and these are out of the question in a country whose art is dominated by collectors.

Yet in one respect, and that by no means the least important, the first impulse towards a new architecture came from France. It was in the Paris of Notre Dame and the Louvre that the importance of iron in modern architecture was first recognised. Viollet-le-Duc, and many modern spirits, his contemporaries and predecessors, recognised iron as the mother of new forms. More than fifty years ago the second Empire, as much out of sympathy with this as with the new world created by its young painters, beheld the Halles Centrales arise as the first intimation of a new age. " Ceci tuera cela," says Lantier in " Le Ventre de Paris " of the new iron building opposite the old Renaissance church of St. Eustache. There is a regular line of progression from the Halles to the iron palaces of the great Exhibitions. Yet the Eiffel Tower is a doubtful omen. It is no longer unpopular ; people lay their account with it as with the Metropolitan. But if any one suggested to the Parisian of to-day that it was more than a curious make-shift, or that it was not far from the prestige still possessed by their darling Louis Quinze tradition he would find every one against him, Degas and Rodin no less than the bourgeoisie.

MAURICE DUFRENE. ORNAMENT.

G. MUNTHER: DESIGN FOR A CARPET

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JOSSOT. VIGNETTE.

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## SCANDINAVIA

We shall see that in other countries the situation has in it an element of English influence and a dash of France. England's example roused the young men everywhere. The first thing they did was to grope after the ancients as a child seeks its mother when danger threatens. All countries which still had some feeling for the original art of their forefathers and were ashamed of the centuries they had spent in dependence on foreign, French, or " classic " influences, went back to the beginnings of their national art, went, in fact, as far back as they could, in order to deliver themselves from any foreign alloy. Gothic, as in England, was almost everywhere the end, or at least one of the ends, of every man's desire. In Scandinavia they went back if possible even further, and tried to reconstitute the semi-barbaric forms of the earliest Northern style. Gauguin's personal history is typical of all the decorative art of our time. Men were so weary of the outworn conventions which obtained, disgust at the ignoble borrowing of forms which were imported without regard to the individuality of the people and only because they happened to be convenient, grew so fast, that the most barbarous style was adopted with a veritable passion if only it showed any manifest difference from the flaccidity of the accepted order of things.

In Scandinavia the strength of the reaction was in direct proportion to the distance of the artist from Paris the unattainable. There were young men who, wearied by the long journey, began to realise that with the best will in the world they could not transport the atmosphere of the Louvre to Stockholm or Copenhagen, still less to Christiania, and that it was better to draw upon their own resources. The movement began in painting with a naturalisation of conception. The transference of the hegemony from the German to the French School " as represented in Norway by Normann and Heyerdahl " was an important beginning. The generation which exchanged Düsseldorf for Paris was more closely in touch with its native land. Thaulow was the one painter of note who settled down in Paris, and his attempt to be Norwegian and Parisian at the same time, and his failure to be either, may have had a deterrent effect. Werenskiöld, eight years younger than Thaulow, brought Impressionism back with him when he returned home, and it is significant that he was the first artist of any eminence to illustrate Norwegian folk-lore. He had only to reproduce popular types sincerely in order to get decorative images. Gunnar Berg, one of the most talented of the younger generation,

who was barely thirty when he died, set up his studio in the late eighties on Svolvær, a tiny island in the Lofoten group, where it was perched against a hill like a gaily coloured birdcage. There he produced his charming sketches of fishermen which have been too soon forgotten. His Fisher War which was exhibited in Berlin, in the early nineties, if I remember rightly, was a vivid impression of Nature – a little painted epic. Shortly afterwards Gerhard

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Munthe, a much older man, also a fellow student of Werenskiöld's in the Munich days, reacted strongly and deliberately upon the dawning naturalism, and produced a wonderful series of pictures full of angular and fluttering lines, a representation of the legends of the peasantry in the gay colours with which they are wont to paint their cabins on the seashore. Their geometrical design required a coarser technique than painting. They were, in fact, designs for tapestry, and hands were very soon found which were capable of weaving them. \*

Much the same thing, strongly individualised in each case, happened in all the Scandinavian countries. Morris' programme was carried out with the greatest zeal as far as it was possible in Copenhagen and Stockholm. The handicrafts of the people were re-established. Societies were founded for the preservation of forgotten national traditions and for the collection of examples of the best periods. That the movement should make rapid progress is impossible, owing to the economic limitations of these countries. The art has not the advantage, possessed by the art of England, of being supported by a powerful and sympathetic literary propaganda. No doubt the early works of Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Holger Drachmann, and the rest, gave Scandinavian art its first impulses towards nationalism ; but it has been so long about following up these suggestions that in the meantime the poets have gone off on another track. The literary school which dominates Scandinavia to-day, the psychological school of Strindberg, Arne Garborg, Knut Hamsun, Heiberg and others, is the typical expression of a country averse from the formative arts. The extraordinary concentration which constitutes the charm of this sort of literature would indeed be impossible without some sacrifice. The greatest critic of Scandinavia, George Brandes, restricts himself to literature ; and in Germany the continental movement which he has started finds its supporters in intellectual but non-artistic circles.

The movement in Denmark is older and already embraces a wider field. Here also it started with the painters who took to illustrative art, such as the two Skovgaards and the two Slot-Møllers, and others whose pictures were as detestable as their drawings were excellent. The architect Bindesbøll was the centre of the circle, though it must be admitted that his department has as yet accomplished least. Throughout Scandinavia the development of new forms in architec-

ture is proceeding very slowly. The comparative simplicity of the older work has in it nothing which would precipitate a reaction, and the demands of comfort, which naturally accelerate change, are here still far behind those of the rest of Europe, though Nyrup's stately Town Hall in Copenhagen has no doubt given an impetus to the propaganda in favour of a national style.

Bindesboll's ornament with its bold outlines is at its best when used to decorate one of his coarse plates which one hangs on the wall like a painting. Articles of common use are made practically only in their most luxurious form, fine porcelain, pretty books with even prettier bindings, f

\* Most of these designs were carried out by Frau Frida Hausen, who also worked from designs of her own.

The Princess Tenischew of St. Petersburg possesses the finest examples of Norwegian tapestries. Jens Thiis, director of the small museum at Trondhjem, who is also eminent as a critic {cf. his concise summary of Norwegian art in " La Norvege " for 1900), has founded a school of weaving in that town.

t Hendriksen has done good work for binding in founding a school of that art. Besides BindesboU,

J. L. Flegge, H. Tegner, Lundbye, Kund Larsen, and others, have designed fine, simple stamps for the volumes bound by Flegge, Clement and Anker Kyster.

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Willumsen provided the new art with more refined aesthetics, which had been fortified in Paris by the study of Gauguin. A more consciously decorative style arose out of the national symbolism. Willumsen makes use of sculpture, painting and carving with equal propriety. His monumental sculpture, of which a brilliant example was shown at the International Exhibition of 1900, follows the Egyptian tradition ; it has no detail and is made up of broad surfaces. His danger is the danger to which all transition artists are exposed who have fought their way to a comprehension of the laws that govern monumental art. He is apt to express only the law, not the intelligence which the law has purified. Artists who come from countries without a strong tradition " Willumsen in Scandinavia, Hodler in Switzerland and several that one could name in Germany " are always apt to bore us with stock clichés of subject or action, owing to their lack of rational purpose. They have no faith in the fiction of a reproduction of nature which is the first condition of pictorial art. The Dane Hansen-Jacobsen is typical

of this attitude of mind. He made a style of ornament for himself out of the grotesque figures of the Trolls of Danish folk-lore which he simplified again and again, not in order to subject it to some structural scheme but constrained by the irresistible law of the economy of material, until he finally evolved the conception of his Militarism, also exhibited in 1900, that monstrous figure composed of bayonet edges rising from a heap of skulls. Artists like this necessarily miss their connection ; they go their way guided by pure instinct. When I once remarked to Hansen-Jacobsen that his work might be very useful to the architects he was astonished beyond measure. They strip their works of all the conditions of abstract art, and they are hardly aware that they have finally reduced it to pure mathematics. These simple people merely need a few rays of sense from without to illuminate the fog of thought which darkens their studios. Sometimes | only a new material is wanted to complete the abstraction which makes nonsense in a framed picture. The factory of Bing and Grondahl in Copenhagen, in which Willumsen undertook the supervision of the modelling, at once became a workshop of the most refined works of art after many years during which it had been inferior to the Royal Factory. Its success at the Universal Exhibition was unparalleled. The very ideas which in Willumsen's pictures leave one cold attracted every lover of beauty when expressed in the form of applied art. How many powers are locked up in silent studios consuming themselves and turning to morbid phenomena, which might have the most fruitful results in great industries !

It was from Denmark that about ten years ago the young generation in Germany received its first impulse towards decorative art. Leistikow profited by it from the ideal side, yet none the less effectually. The influence of Bindesboll on Eckmann's ornament is unmistakable.

Sweden lags behind ; the Swedes are occupied in reproducing peasant art. The few artists they have are painters who, like Zorn, belong rather to Paris than to their own country. Those who aim at anything more original are undistinguished. Boberg, who is one of the few independent spirits, occasionally has happy ideas.

In Finland, art is becoming the cry of the enslaved consciousness of a nation. We do not understand their pictures because we have no time to read the Kalevala or the other Finnish epics. And yet their sombre rigidity is as impressive in its way as the battle pieces of primitive peoples.

DEGAS: A DANCER

FROM A WOODCUT BY ANDRIN

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Axel Gallen's illustrative pictures are typical of this vein. The serious portraiture of the Finns is even more convincing. The psychology of a whole race is latent in the manner in which Gallen, Enhel, Jaerenfelt and their fellows create their types. Louis Sparre is trying to organise the rise of a popular Finnish art for industry. Saarinen is the architect of the movement, which as yet can hardly be said to have achieved an independent form. But the fact remains that even now there are greater potentialities of artistic development in the small town of Helsingfors than in all the gigantic empire of Russia. Perhaps the new province will reveal European art to the Empire of the Czar.

If one is not content to regard Scandinavian art as a symptom of the general spirit of activity and organisation prevalent in the North, and if one looks for actual contributions to the art treasures of Europe, its proportions are necessarily altered. There is one general feature in the art of all Scandinavian countries – the weakness of the connection of the rising generation of artists with the spirit of modern art. The young men have broken with Paris whither their predecessors went to school, and archaism flourishes nowhere as it does in Scandinavia, where our artistic contemporaries have returned to the gods of their national idolatry as the prodigal son returned to his father's bosom. For enthusiasm like theirs a century or a millennium is as the lifetime of a single man. They believed they could trace in themselves the life of the people who in the mists of antiquity created the original artistic forms of their race. The paralogism involved shows that the spirit which is in them is more primitive than that which has been found most profitable for the arts. They go back to their father but their hands are empty, and they expect him to bestow upon them the treasures which they have been too indolent to amass. The difference between such men as Zorn, Wereskiold and Thaulow, and the next generation who are no longer satisfied with the so-called naturalism of their predecessors, is exactly the difference between the art of Constable and that of the Pre-Raphaelites. They are throwing over, or at least they are in danger of throwing over, not merely painting but the pictorial. It is not simply that they are making no effort to surpass their elders ; they are repudiating all aesthetic relations with them, and they imagine that they are entitled to do this by their acquaintance with the old forms, which they copy and reconstruct and combine in every possible way. Because in this way they are able to make a chair, a cradle or a pot, or at any rate things which have some resemblance to these objects, they believe themselves to be stronger than the older men, who were not interested in such things. When once they have evolved a decent house that has definite advantages over older houses, they conclude that all the art of the earlier generation is not worth sixpence. It is the Walter Crane spirit in another form, handled by a more robust race, with more robust ideals, but when all is said and done, it is equally unfruitful. We cannot learn the gestures of antiquity,

for we have as little use for them as for the garments or the speech of our ancestors. A modern Norwegian would find it easier to arrive at an understanding, spiritually, intellectually, or physically, with a negro porter of San Francisco than with a Viking. All belief in the racial spirit which ignores evolution falls into superstition. Absolutely all that remains of the ancients is their art, and that any San Francisco negro can appreciate as well as a Norwegian, provided he has the

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good fortune to possess artistic instincts. The " Norwegian spirit " has nothing to do with it. The racial quality which the Norwegian finds in an ancient work of Norse art is nothing but line and colour and action — things that a foreigner calls by a different name but understands quite as well. No doubt the creative genius of the native is more strongly stimulated by such works than that of the foreigner can be ; but progress does not come of the knowledge that such and such things arose among one's own people in primeval times, but of the consciousness of a continuous development from these antique days down to our own time. All other feelings on the subject are merely refined forms of curiosity, of archaeology and sentimentalism. Now it is clear, without further demonstration, that such a development, if it is really progressive, such a consciousness, if it is really vital, cannot possibly deal with points of detail. What brain is big enough to contain all the thousands of modifications which come into being in a thousand years ? It is only the system and the resulting law which can take shape and produce an instinct. This is the work of tradition.

Very few of the Northern artists of our day impress us as having grasped this deeper significance of tradition. They are, rightly or wrongly, doubtful of the existence of this tradition after the Middle Ages, and they feel that they cannot do better than begin where they believe the break occurs. This attitude of mind is against Nature. One may be displeased with one's father — most people are — but one cannot make away with him. Their attempt to do so, if it were made in earnest, would involve getting themselves born again two thousand years sooner. But of course they are not in earnest ; it is mere make-believe, They wish to improve upon their parents' errors, and, as far as possible, to make good their deficiencies ; at the same time they do not wish to drop out of the present ; they even feel themselves to be moderns at heart, and desire to play their part in modern movements ; they are, in fact, creatures of compromise. But, compromise as they may, other elements than mere prudence determine the result. The modern, not by virtue of his racial instinct but by the power of his individual intellect, comes and sees what elements in the ancients are of use in the problems that we have now to face. He becomes a foreigner in his own country, the conqueror who profits soberly by the opportunity which puts instructive antique works in his way. He has certain obvious advantages over the actual foreigner ; he knows the ground better, and he knows every nook and corner of the

national consciousness. The foreigner, however, when he is better equipped than the native, may be his superior, and in such a case even local knowledge will be of no avail. There have been cases in which one people has built up a great art with the resources of another people, and this because they took what was profitable and not what lay nearest to hand, while the heirs of the old masters stayed at home and produced nothing but rubbish. Indeed the examples in which foreigners have made more of a country's resources than its own citizens are so frequent, that we must regard the collision of aliens and natives as entirely advantageous. A study of history, from the Egyptians onward, has taught us to seek the salvation of cultures in the same way as that of races "by intermarriage."

From this point of view, then, it appears that the national method, if it is to have any good result, must depend on a mixture of elements. The art of a thousand years ago is so far from that of to-day that there is no fear of in-breeding. It

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may be of service to the living, not because it is so near to them, but because it is so far away. We may ask ourselves whether the art of Munthe, Willumsen and Skovgaard really shows a sincere combination of the qualities of the men of to-day and those of the vanished world of our forefathers. It seems to me that in them several ancient worlds are brought together. In Munthe old Norwegian forms are mingled with geometrical patterns from the East. In Willumsen old Danish forms are combined with Egyptian and many other elements. Joachim Skovgaard's pictures of his own country are full of early Italian touches. Possibly one may find in many of the younger men an even greater number of elements, almost everything, in fact, but the modern, which is as indispensable as mortar to the mason.

The mosaic may be made up of an even greater number of components ; there are artists in whom we divine, if we cannot demonstrate, the presence of all the artistic elements with which we are accustomed to deal. When we can demonstrate their presence we honour the artist all the more, for the more he borrows the richer he appears. It is no mere scientific pleasure to detect\* in Hokusai's drawings something akin to Rembrandt, to find in Rembrandt a trace of the plastic method of the early Greeks. It is a heightening of one's enjoyment, like the enrichment of a chord in music which the ear, by frequent hearing of the same phrase, accomplishes for itself. But if the combination is inharmonious all is confusion, and however precious may be the component parts, the general effect is an impression of vain and foolish excess. Many of these modern Scandinavians who believe that they are in revolt against the naturalism of their seniors, are themselves in their own way naturalists in a worse sense than the older men. They look at the old models just as they accuse their Impressionist fellow countrymen of



looking at Nature. They copy what they find and think, as what they find has already got form, that they may leave it just as they find it, and that it is capable of expressing a more majestic symbolic meaning than a picture by Zorn representing a cowhouse. But what they find when used for artistic purposes has just the same value as the manure in which Zorn deals : it is no more national and no more dignified in itself, and it is equally uninteresting. In both cases the interest depends entirely on the treatment, and treatment can transform a cowhouse into a sanctuary which may remind us of Egypt and a thousand other splendid things. The same result may be obtained by the archaistic method ; but one misses in most of the conventionalising Scandinavians the relative power which one admires in artists like Zorn. They are playing with the ancestral style.

One artist alone, Edvard Munch, has managed to combine the two methods, and he did it unconsciously. What he had to say did not admit of the application of a traditional form ; indeed it may be doubted whether form concerns him at all. He is impelled to conjure up powerful feelings latent in his own consciousness, but in spite of the wildness of his visions there is a material result, and this is because they are his expression of Nature, because he desires to see them again in order to complete himself by them. In his pictures one finds ornament which did not exist in the days of the Vikings, yet in my opinion this modern has more of the old Norse spirit than all the archaistic artists. Sometimes he gives us glimpses of the past just as Ibsen does at certain moments in his plays, when he succeeds in making one quite forget the dramatic combination and in creating a delightful picture as comprehensible as it is improbable. At such moments one almost

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believes that Norway lies in a region quite different from the rest of the world, in which things move according to strange yet profound laws, and men have other and more wonderful thoughts than ourselves. One has almost a physical feeling as of the impact of a foreign body, and one's longing to grasp the strange thing more closely impels one to the conquest of a new form of beauty.

### A. ZORN. ETCHING.

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L. ZIJL: BRONZE

FROM "BOUW-EN-SIERKUNST"

HOLLAND

If it be asked what country is at present producing the finest art, every one will agree to reply France. If it be asked where the most curious art is being produced, where one experiences the greatest, though in my opinion the most superficial surprises, where it is only necessary to go out into the street in order to see clear signs of a new form of artistic expression quite different from the old, the answer will certainly be Holland. To laymen nothing is so startling as the change which has come over the country of Rembrandt. Israels and his circle were a natural development, and their normality and a natural respect for the sources of this respectable school mitigated the insignificance of its productions, or heightened the pleasure with which they were received.

The young men have nothing in common with them and that is not surprising, for Israels has nothing which could stir the enthusiasm of the young. Van Gogh, the most remarkable painter since the old masters, was the natural reaction against this generation ; all the mystery in his methods does not prevent one from recognising him as a Dutchman, yet even this great enthusiast left hardly a trace behind him in his native land.

The change which is visible in the art of the rising generation is so violent that one is tempted to believe that men themselves have changed, that their forms, their

senses and their blood have suddenly come under a new influence, unconscious of the old life which was illustrated by the greatest painting of all time. Holland, with all its idiosyncrasies, seems to have been transported in a single night to India or to Java, like the bewitched people in the quaint fairy-tale of Multatuli the Dutch poet.

The original leaders of the movement belonged to the school of Israels. Even Toorop, who was born in Borneo, at first followed the old ways. In fact, he has taken part in almost everything that has been going on in Holland, France and Belgium for the last twenty years. At the end of the eighties he forsook dark painting for Impressionism, and on the appearance of Seurat he became a Neo-Impressionist, though without the profound conviction of the Frenchmen. He adopted pointillisme somewhat after the manner of Henri Martin, but on a smaller scale and in much better taste. The pictures were pleasant to look at and had nothing in them of the aims of Signac and his friends ; they retained the early Seurat much as Dubois-Pillet saw him. Toorop found his true vocation in illustrative painting, representing the sagas of Buddhistic culture in soft colours and slender lines. He became the Dutch Burne-Jones, but his more natural transcendentalism, though it made no attempt to secure strength of form, never dispensed with the warmth of a certain honest simplicity, and this protected him against the banality of his English predecessor. Toorop never succeeds at the decisive moment in achieving the concentrated expression of a great temperament ; but this want makes itself felt not as a personal shortcoming of the artist, but rather as a peculiarity of his race and of the artistic elements which he uses. In his fancy, in the luxuriance

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of his intoxicating images, one feels only a happier, warmer sky than our own ; he is always the Oriental who finds it irksome to restrict himself to the limits of a picture and longs to work in gold and jewels rather than in colour. Indeed, Toorop has made lovely things of ivory and the precious metals. His symbolism is not terrifying even when it deals with terrible things ; it passes before us like a series of gorgeous dissolving views. One looks at his pictures as one reads certain attractive books, which please us, though at the end we cannot remember the contents. The artist is like some exotic plant unfolding its strange beauty in the botanical garden of a Western capital, not so healthy and natural in its growth as it would be on its native soil, but interesting to the connoisseur because of the very changes wrought upon it by our climate.

Toorop's popularity rather unfairly obscures the incomparably more profound personality of Joan Thorn Prikker. Ten years younger than Toorop, he was born in 1870 and pursued the inevitable course of Dutch training. His debut in 1892

with Choux roughs was pure Impressionism. In the same year the poems of Verhaeren were the occasion of his conversion to Symbolism, and he produced a Descent from the Cross which was exhibited at the Loan Exhibition at Amsterdam. In Prikker all that was best in the old Continental school resisted the exotic invasion. Sensitive as he was to the charms of foreign ornament, he could not keep his thoughts from dwelling on the grandeur of our own primitives ; and, unlike many of the moderns, he went to the East, not to find some substitute for the lack of organising faculty characteristic of decadent Europeans, but in order to strengthen his own impulse to synthesis. His destiny wavers between fresco and Indian Batik. Contemplation of the richer and more joyous art of India, whose symbolism is free from the shadow of the Cross, weakened his faith in the ancient ideals, and yet the Christian symbol, the spirit of Christian art, is always prominent in his pictures. He does not use it as an emblem of victory, he paints confused masses of ruins. Shattered saints bear shattered crosses. They are disfigured by martyrdoms more horrible than those of history. Profiles of faces set in a fixed grin of pain appear dimly between headless trunks ; priests in splendid vestments kneel between pools of blood. All these things are drawn with a hard pencil on very large-sized paper covered with a faint wash ; there is not the slightest tendency to reduce the chaos to order by the use of defined colour or the like. There is no perspective to adjust the planes, the parts of the pictures lie in kaleidoscopic confusion. The psychologist would see in these apocalyptic pictures, the cross-section of the brain of a modern who is open to metaphysical influences. They seem to me to represent the spiritual struggles of a serious artist who lacks the wisdom of Puvis, and who is honest enough to acquiesce in disorder rather than miscarry on a compromise. Modern literature in every country has made us familiar with such phenomena.

Prikker starts from the fragmentary outline of a crucifixion and loses himself in entirely abstract forms.

The technique of Batik was the ostensible occasion of his attempts to resolve the abstraction in his work. While he was occupied with fresco ideas his delight in the precious cloths of the Indies, which play much the same part in Holland as Botticelli's Primavera or Fra Angelico's Coronation of the Virgin in London, led him to attempt to discover the secrets of this handicraft. Its technique, as everybody knows, is fairly simple. The difficulty lies in the management of the colour, and this he discovered after years of labour. I once possessed a manuscript by

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Prikker in which all the receipts for the vegetable compounds used by the Indians in their colouring were noted with prodigious exactitude. His studio at The Hague stank of benzine. There you would find him hovering between an unfinished cartoon and a steaming pot of colour with which he was burning his fingers. All

round him hung strips of canvas half covered with wax. It is easy to understand the ambition of an independent artist to achieve by means of our pretentious colour at least what long ago was revealed to a little Javanese girl in her sleep. Prikker did more than this. Out of the intricate web of colour which was characteristic of the old " Batik " work, and which could only be attained by a monstrous expenditure of time, he created a modern decorative method of the greatest importance. He succeeded in keeping the design as simple and expressive as possible and in making the most of the exquisite marbled effects of the stuff, which are produced by the fortuitous cracking of the waxed surface.\* These stuffs are among the few productions of our superbly equipped modern industrial art which can be compared with the glories of the antique. Prikker owes some of his inspiration to Colenbrander, the veteran of Dutch decorative art, who in the early nineties was making beautifully coloured pottery at the Rozenburg factory, then for a short time under his direction, and who has since gone in for carpet making, to which he has applied methods equally original, f For all our admiration of Colenbrander a comparison between him and Prikker shows clearly the great advantage which an artist trained in modern methods of colour has over a self-educated man.

After a period of fruitful activity in all departments of applied art, Prikker not long since returned to painting, like so many other artists who were shocked at the commercial character assumed by the movement and its consequences. His principal work is at the house of Dr. Leuring at The Hague, for whom he painted a wall-decoration in fresco, and who, besides several large pictures, possesses a great number of drawings full of colour, nature studies which the artist is fond of making with a soft pencil at Vise in Belgium.

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The Hague has for generations been the hearth and centre of Dutch art. In Amsterdam it has turned to industry ; there is hardly a single painter there. Der Kinderen is a good illustrator, whether in a book or on a wall, who has recourse to exotic methods in order not to paint like Walter Crane. In Amsterdam people work with exoticism as if they had never known anything else. Dijsselhof paints his Indian ornaments with the same zest that inspired the little Dutch masters. There are also stiU-life pieces, but they are of the strangest sort. At Van Wisselingh's, at Amsterdam, one sometimes sees huge pictures with microscopic details, long fish whose every scale, and the pattern on each individual scale, is closely copied in dark tones with a metallic glitter. To make a somewhat jesting comparison, it is a kind of pointillisme without the colour, the exact opposite of Neo-Impressionism. You must come near, as near as possible, in order to perceive the beauty of this art. The Dutch have a mania for these things. If their authors went to Paris or London they could not command the wages of a day labourer. But it never occurs to the Dutch to leave their own country.

\* Uiterwijk, who founded an " Art Nouveau " at The Hague, set up workshops near the town in which

for several years Prikker's designs were carried out in Batik under his direction.

t Rozenburg pieces of the Colenbrander period are now only to be found in Dutch collections, for instance, in that of H. W. Mesdag at The Hague. The carpets, with strictly geometrical patterns, are carried out by the Amersfoort Factory.

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Dijsselhof lives in the charming environs of Amsterdam, not far from Bussum, where there used to be the famous barn with the Van Goghs. He is a few years younger than the author of the *Mangeurs de Pommes de Terre*. They may have known each other and might have lived under the same roof.

As in England, the happiest results of such experiments are to be found in the domain of books. Nothing can be more original than Dijsselhof's books. \* They are as carefully put together as those of the London school and are superior to the latter in so far as they depend less on outworn ornament for their initials and borders.

In Holland, as in most other countries, the first stage in the progress of the rising generation was a masquerade. They felt themselves to be naked and endeavoured to clothe themselves. Motley was all the more popular as it was sharply differentiated from ordinary attire. Indian forms exactly suited this manifestation. It is clear that the exotic phase did not arise casually. It is the most natural thing in the world in countries which possess scattered colonies and have busied themselves about them sufficiently long. For Holland, even more than for England, the colonies are of immediate and decisive importance. The East India Companies were founded nearly three hundred years ago, and out of them grew the English and the Dutch dominions beyond the seas. Holland has possessed the Sunda Islands for an equally long time, and trade with the colonies has become a factor of ever-increasing importance to the motherland. In a comparatively small country it absorbs more and more men and it tempts merchants, artisans, soldiers and civil servants, in fact, all classes of the population, to emigrate. In the colonies marriages take place. It is the male parties to those unions who come from Europe ; the women are natives. The children visit the old continent and form new relations. You can observe the results of the mixture of blood in the streets of Amsterdam. The time is past when the healthy, rosy-cheeked peasant-girl who wears a gorgeous petticoat on Sunday could be looked upon as typical of Holland.

The colonies are eating up the mother country. They not only monopolise money and intelligence and soldiers and the only real interests of the governing classes ; they are also absorbing, right and left, the old traditions of the country. It is a question who loses by it. The impossibility of finding sufficient sources of



industry in the old land stimulates emigration. European art showed the same tendency when its natural development seemed to have come to its appointed end and the home soil was exhausted and refused new fruits. Holland, the country whose national obstinacy successfully resisted the invasion of the most powerful European tendencies of the seventeenth century, and declined to accept the Renaissance language which the whole continent was talking, is now ripe for subjection to the culture of the Sunda Islands. What in France in such a case as Gauguin's is regarded as an isolated and a monstrous achievement is here pursued, or at any rate approved, by a whole people. European materialism "the brutal sacrifice of everything that does not whet our appetites, the laziness which contents itself with fiction because there is no time for fact, above all, the hideous want of leisure which is fatal to all culture" all these things conspire to make barbarians of us, and we are on our knees before the Javanese maiden or before any other incarna-

\* Books by Dijsselhof and others were published by Scheltema and Holkema, Amsterdam ; Erven F. Bohn, Kleinmann and Co., Haarlem. In the middle of the nineties the latter published the organ of the movement, the "Revue bi-mestrielle pour l'Art Applique," edited by Boersma and filled with illustrations by the contributing artists. In 1898 this developed into the brilliant periodical "Bouw en Sierkunst," edited and published by de Bazel and Lauwerike.

MENDES DA COSTA- AMSTERDAM. Steingut: Â» David Â«

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MENDES DA COSTA: PIERROT

STONEWARE FIGURE

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tion of beauty which is not yet soiled by our sins, and which points the way to a new era.

Holland's dalliance with Java placed her in the front rank of the nations who are preoccupied with new forms. The many-coloured raiment of their colonies taught the Dutch to bethink themselves of the great art of primitive Buddhist times, of which their museums possess brilliant examples. Their aesthetics soon hit upon the greatest, the simplest, therefore the least exotic, of these and chose them as models. From these were deduced rational rules of universal application, which maintained a balance of just proportions in ornament, in furniture, and in architecture. In this way they got back from Java to Europe. Their purified senses took up Gothic again, renounced all superfluous ornamentation, and aimed at the monumental quality of mature utilitarian constructions. Of course this was a very gradual process. Lauweriks attempted rich Empire furniture with Egyptian caryatides ; De Bazel made sideboards, carved formidable sphinxes on the panels, and so forth. But the adjustment of the planes was right, the division of the masses was satisfactory, the work was conscientious. The venerable Guypers had already given the note in architecture when he insisted on good material and bold surfaces in his monuments, and when he skilfully modified the mediaeval element which here too, had to express the national character. Berlage, the builder of the new Bourse, and others who, if possible, laid even more stress on material, were his successors. Like a true Socialist, who shuns every mere luxury as he would the plague, he did his best to secure an even stricter honesty in this particular than the English school had insisted on, and compelled his patrons to sit in drawing-rooms with bare brick walls. His zeal was also directed to more important matters. Zijl the sculptor has to thank Berlage not only for his first commissions, but for the chance of having his sculpture built into architecture. This is a boon the lack of which had painful consequences for Minne, and which would be of the greatest use to Maillol. These sculptures were at first ornaments of an exceedingly barbaric type ; they were even more grotesque than was required by the great distance at which they were intended to be seen, more distorted than the faces on Notre Dame and similar Gothic carving, and they lacked the spectral grandeur which characterises these great works. They produced their impression by imperfect modelling rather than by the conscious exercise of the powers of genius. But in the production of these sculptures Zijl learned surprising things. In the career of this contemporary of ours we can get a good idea of the advantage which the sculptor of the olden time gained by the participation of sculpture in architecture. Some of his bronzes rival Minne's, but he lacks the inward strength and the mature spirituality which we admire in the Rodenbach monument. He is a gayer, more youthful spirit, less self-contained, and therefore an ideal collaborator. The architecture to which Minne's work could be a successful accessory is yet to be invented.

More recently Zijl has been producing some very remarkable statuettes in ivory and other materials, little plastic ornaments representing strange animals, brilliant pieces of conventionalisation in which rich motives are evolved from the few leading lines of the body.

Mendes da Costa was the first in this country to develop a new art for collectors. His works are also statuettes, but unlike most French objets d'art they are not mere reductions of larger works deliberately made, but delightful microcosms thought out in little and extraordinarily expressive. There are Liliputian

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peasants grotesquely comic, pregnant women, touchingly serious and reminiscent of Flemish pictures, little apes like the Astartes on the tombs of the courtesans of Mytilene, or heathen goddesses which remind one of Gothic Madonnas. They are all in gr<sup>^</sup>s, but of a much finer quality than the viscous mass in which the French shroud their sculpture. The Dutchman's gr<sup>^</sup>s does not spoil the form ; it merely separates the structure and the colour. They are the best cabinet objects that we have, and are worthy to be set beside the little brown and black figures of Japan. The culture which produces and loves such bibelots as these is not to be despised. It is the same as that which produced the massive silver work or the fine pottery on which Dijsselhof inlaid his black and yellow decoration of animals in the Persian style. It is genuine Dutch culture in spite of the exotic leaven, and it has the peculiar homeliness of the great little painters of Dutch interiors.

## DIJSSELHOF. ORNAMENT.

## THORN-PRIKKER. ORNAMENT

## BELGIUM

In the modern stylistic movement Belgium has already played a thoroughly decisive part, highly personal, because honest enthusiasm and equally honest opposition were alike awakened, extremely useful because, whatever might be said against

it, discussions arose out of which some modicum of truth necessarily resulted. Holland's experiment, aesthetically more interesting, was lost upon the other nations if only because of the exclusive temperament of her people. Hundreds of Frenchmen and Germans went to Brussels, for every one who undertook the journey to Amsterdam. Moreover, the essential features of the Dutch movement can hardly be appreciated in other countries. It was only when freed from its exotic wrappings that the result of that movement could produce its full effect, and in the meantime the same result had been more directly reached at Vienna, in a country nearer to our own.

Even in Belgium there were certain essential conditions of the movement which could not be reproduced elsewhere. There was a remarkable amalgamation of old customs and very modern ideas, of the blackest ultramontanism and the most refined industrialism, of the spirit of a bourgeois aristocracy and of revolutionary Socialism. The first modern monumental building which in Denmark was a Town Hall, in Paris a market, in Berlin a bazaar, was at Brussels a Maison du Peuple. In spite of this, it was the bourgeoisie who nourished, just as its peculiarities determined the character of, the movement. From the king, the intelligent manager of the Congo State, down to the clerk, the whole people have the same gift for economics which is the one thing these very different worlds have in common. This is particularly observable in the domestic sentiment of the Belgians. Old custom keeps their cities, in spite of all industrialism, faithful to the principle of the small town, and even when his means are limited, the citizen's impulse is to have a house of his own to live in. This has an important bearing on national aesthetics, and brings architecture more within his reach than is the case with dwellers in great cities. Under this system the architect fares better than in large towns. Instead of a single client, who is not even building for his own needs, but is thinking of the return on his money, and whose only object is to make the building as neutral as possible, and to give it a form acceptable to the average man's want of taste, in Brussels there are ten, each with his individual needs to be satisfied, or at least ready to have such needs suggested to him. The propaganda of the modern school has therefore more chances of a public capable of appreciating it.

The Belgians have yet another peculiarity which makes them extremely important to the critic. Apart from Serrurier-Bovy,\* a Liegeois cabinet maker, who took the first steps under English influence^ the whole movement was started

\* He imported English stuffs and tapestries into Belgium, influenced, no doubt, by the Paris Exhibition of 1889, where there was an exhibition of English industrial art, but he had no further influence on the Brussels artists.

by painters, and, indeed, by people who to the best of their ability followed the evolution of French painting. Their career supplies no final estimate of the value of this training for the new purposes, but it at least offers an important contribution to knowledge. The artists in question were the small Seurat circle at Brussels, of whom I have already spoken, and the beginnings that they made are hardly ten years old. England gave the outward impulse, as she did everywhere, but as in Holland Crane's ornament immediately passed over into the exotic manner of the rising generation, so in Brussels hardly a trace of the foreign influence remains. The example of Amsterdam and The Hague artists who took part in the Expositions des XX may have accelerated this process of absorption. The Dutchmen had some slight start of the Flemings of Brussels, and the latter certainly followed the first efforts of their kinsmen attentively. None the less, the Belgian development was much more independent. There was no eclecticism in it, no Gothic even. It grew visibly from the canvas and had all the marks of a personal and individual destiny working outwards from within.

The character of the easel picture marked the movement decisively from the outset. In Finch, Van de Velde and Lemmen the brush-stroke of the painter became the constructive factor. Finch, although the first to practise purely industrial art, never gave up his etching, and thus kept close to Nature. Neither of the others could resist the tendency to give themselves up entirely to ornament. This natural evolution of ornamental from pictorial art is in a way very remarkable, and it surprised the spectators no less than those who were concerned in it. The phenomenon was quite unusual. As a rule, the conventionaliser, if he was not born like the English artists with the consciousness of a high and solemn mission, was driven by a moral feeling, by some chance incitement or by sheer boredom to exchange his brush for a hard pencil. Often mere inability to achieve style in paint drove a man to try another line. Artists of whom it is said that they can draw wonderful likenesses and also execute pretty borders in the modern style are never to be trusted. This is not because it would be impossible to do both things admirably — the old masters can show a thousand examples to the contrary. Nor, again, is it because it is particularly difficult to invent ornament — I believe it to be exceedingly easy. But nowadays the hand that paints worthily from nature in the portrait is incapable of other things. In our time the one department has nothing to do with the other, for each springs from a radically different development, and the union of the two in one artist, which was natural enough of old, is now merely fortuitous. The ancients had no more to invent their ornament than they had to invent the style of the houses which they built ; they found methods ready to their hands which, in the course of use and of the modification of the purposes for which they were used, changed imperceptibly. In our time such a relationship, if not entirely fictitious, can only arise from some curiosity of artistic physiology. Doubtless, the development of flat painting which was led by Delacroix, Daumier, Manet and Monet, had in it the possibility of ornament. This was demonstrated in Van Gogh's pictures. His convention was much

more natural than, for instance, Gauguin's ; his outline grows outward from within, surrounding similar systems of brush-strokes. Gauguin, on the other hand, bases himself on the works of art he found in Tahiti, and consciously uses these and other primitive models, in a much narrower sense than Van Gogh used, say, Millet or the Japanese, to construct a form which he adapts to his needs with tremendous energy, and which he enriches with his inimitable instinct

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for the most effective colour. He has never quite managed to make us forget the construction. His school has never completely overcome this lack of physiological elements which only in his own case ceased to be a defect. The numerous failures who allowed themselves to be bewildered by his moral or immoral arguments came to grief owing to the want of flesh and blood in his teaching. Those of his followers who succeeded went to other teachers, to Cezanne, for example, for what was necessary.

The physiological relation is explicit in the ornament of the Belgian school. Seurat had directed their attention to the importance of washes ; they had seen Monet, they were seeing Van Gogh. If the connection is no longer obvious, it was clear enough to those who were taking part in the movement. They found the transition quite natural. What but the consciousness of a natural development based on great predecessors could have justified the first steps of these serious-minded revolutionaries, or could have given them the courage to offer their freely invented form for general use ?

On the other hand, the application of their invention lagged behind. This was the essential difference between them and the English. Morris reached his ideal through literature, and when he recognised what that ideal was, he devoted himself to a search for the means of realising it. Van de Velde had a form, and when he became conscious of what it was he cast about for a suitable content. He was fortified with the Socialism of his countrymen ; he was gifted with a fine instinct of culture which hardly needed the education it had had ; and he became acquainted with the Morris programme at the right moment. He accepted it as his fate, as the artist accepts the plan of a work which he sees before him, with that lightning intuition of its structure which the intelligence is hardly swift enough to express. He found himself at the end of a logical principle of development. Nothing was more logical than to see in himself the beginning of a new one. He began his work equipped with energy above the average, and an intelligence equally distinguished, and he was sustained by an optimism which believed in itself and had the further merit of being able to inculcate its beliefs. In Belgium also the new art at first placed itself at the disposal of the literature which had turned its attention to its Flemish fatherland. Van de Velde himself

had found a personal form in literature before attaining a convincing expression of himself in art. His lectures and essays, which appeared in the early nineties, are far from being mere occasional writings. One finds in them the longing to reach a broader conception of the universe through arguments in themselves trifling. The earnestness of the poet which overflows in a torrent of words often conceals the import of his thesis. One feels the obscure creative impulses of a passionate soul striving to express itself powerfully in words. Something of this incomplete striving has passed into the early book illustrations \* ; they are

â€¢ Covers for the works of the naive poet. Max Elskamp : " Dominical " (1892), " Salutations " (1893), " En Symbole vers l'Apostolat " (1895). All these were published in limited editions by Lacomblez at Brussels. From the same house, in 1895, came Van de Velde's delightful edition of Elskamp's verses, " Six Chansons de Pauvre Homme," which he printed on a hand-press with ornaments by the author. Van de Velde's first successful ornaments appeared in the little edition of his lecture to the Libre Esthetique : " Deblaiement d'Art" (1894, printed by Veuve Monnom at Brussels). Compare also the Flemish periodical " VanNuen Straks," founded in 1896 by Vermeylen and Van de Velde.

Van de Velde's later work on books deals with binding. Claessens, of Brussels, has executed most of his elaborate bindings, of which the best are in the possession of the Baron van Ertvelde at Brussels. Lemmen has also done a great deal of designing for books, especially some fine type. His finest work was done for an

PAUL GAUGUIN: PEACE AND WAR. (bas-reliefs in wood)

FAYET COLLECTION, BEZIERS, (HERAULT)

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unpractised attempts to attain the abstract. I love the clumsiness of these first essays, which are like the awkward movements of young animals. Only talent could show itself so unskilful.

An astonishing revival of abstractions by an intelligence intent on realities

gives the complete Van de Velde. Nothing should be accident, all should be due to intellect. His programme was determined when he designed his first wall-paper. It was, and could be, nothing else than the natural consequence of this first development of the artist into the designer. He deprecated the glory of invention which his friends sought to confer upon him and only claimed that he was a normal man. In this he underrated himself, for he is pre-eminently an inventor, and an inventor in the same sense as a great painter who evolves his form from Nature. It is precisely for this reason that his assertion that his creations are those of a healthy man is of no importance. Health is far from being the only impulse to such creation. What is normal in it is its observance of law, but the norm itself is a pure and inviolate abstraction ; so strong that it keeps his intellect in subjection, and enables this sagacious man to believe that his furniture is constructed on rational principles. Reason has nothing to do with Van de Velde's furniture ; it is the commonest of commonplaces to condemn it as unreasonable. It is made by an artist. Only a fool would deny the intellect of this form, but it is always the intellect of a modern artist, that is, of a man who has suffered much from the development of our art.

Van de Velde recognised the anarchism of the people who were responsible for the modern house. " Good sense," he wrote, " lies buried under a desolate heap of archaeological erudition and capricious aberrations. It would be a herculean task to clear away these piles of debris and to track down what has been so long hidden beneath ; and, even if it were successful, reason coming to light out of all this corruption would be so senile and decrepit, that it is far better to begin at the beginning and create for ourselves a new reason, which knows nothing, and indeed, wishes to know nothing, of the past."

In practice, however, he cannot do without the elements of his predecessors' work. Even his chairs must have some principle of construction. He colours these elements and transforms them, never capriciously, always strictly in accordance with his programme. He creates a new construction which is derived not from the material but from his abstract principle, from the laws of line which he has discovered in his ornament. You will never catch him in any amateurish blunder ; all that he does is well considered. There is not the slightest rift in his system. But his deliberations have no foundation in objective fact. He first imagines his chair and then tries to make it suitable to sit on. But as all superior minds make the problems they have to solve as complicated as possible. Van de Velde imposes on himself the task of avoiding any crude discrepancy between the idea and reality ; while, whether he will or no, the tendencies of the metaphysician are more and more repressed by the experience of actual practice. In certain of his works the two worlds coincide ; the form harmonises with the intention, as happens when a great painter gets a subject for a portrait which exactly suits his genius. Then we get startling likenesses, possessing all the qualities which in less favourable instances the likeness would have been sacrificed to secure. It is in cases such as these that Van de Velde succeeds in the most real sense in



edition de luxe of " Zarathrustra," which was to have been decorated by Van dc Velde, but which remains unpublished.

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achieving a construction. Where he fails his form is nevertheless beautiful, because it obeys its own law. We have at any rate the same tolerant affection for it as for the mediocre works of good artists who have done better things. For the idea so prevalent in Germany, that if industrial objects miss the purpose for which they were intended they are necessarily ugly, is a silly superstition.

It is self-evident that the artist's preference for curved lines increases the danger of failure, notably where, as in architecture, the perpendicular is essential or where the material is in obvious conflict with the forms. He was illogical when he declared that his own guiding principle was the old handicraftsman's maxim about the appropriateness of material, and his answer on another occasion to an objector was more characteristic. He declared he had become convinced of the inadequacy of wood as the material of his furniture and that he anticipated the discovery of a more suitable material that could be moulded. The preference for moulded forms of an artist who by origin was an Impressionist requires no explanation. This is the reason why Van de Velde's happiest inventions were in the domain of the metal-worker.

Van de Velde is separated from Morris by his fearless modernism. Morris depended on a Utopian insistence on handiwork. His hatred for industrialism confined his practical idealism from the outset to narrow paths. The Socialism of Van de Velde was more logical in its demands. He conquered the superstition that machinery was unwholesome, and showed that it was men who were to blame for not understanding how to use the means at their command. Morris' renunciation compelled him to restrict himself to the most extreme simplicity. If his practice was not to flout his principles he could not exact from human hands the slavish toil incident to wealth of detail. His compensation for this poverty was delight in a familiar form, the suggestion of the national style which warmed the heart although it did not comfort the body. Van de Velde, who will have nothing to do with Gothic, has the more personal note of the two, and is the better endowed as an artist. He moderates the severity of the discipline and takes from the age in order to give to it. Both he and Morris are symbols, not models for workers. Van de Velde recognised the legitimacy of machinery, but made no use of it ; his furniture is anything but machine-made. Yet he makes the reasonable suggestion that we must work with machinery. Morris, on the other hand, the real Morris, the artist, is not belittled by the narrowness of his teaching. Behind his work, too, there was a complete man, and it was no archaism, it was hardly even an

old-fashioned sentiment, which impelled him to impress on the world something of his conviction that we must work with our hands.

The decoration of flat surfaces was naturally Van de Velde's favourite field. His creative impulses necessarily found themselves more or less under constraint in all other departments of handicraft owing to primary and unalterable conditions. Here he was free to pursue his abstractions with no apparent external restrictions, and to express his personality in the purest imaginable form. Everything that contained a symbol for the modern eye could be turned to account in the working out of ornament. The many-sidedness of the field of observation compelled a neutralisation of the first element taken from Nature. He required a form entirely pliable, undisturbed by anything objective, a new language of convention in which at least a hint of the new spirit could be conveyed. Scheffler sees something baroque in this form. He is right in so far as this lurks in all degenerescent

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Impressionism ; but it is merely an accidental characteristic, not the moving spirit of the work, which has absolutely nothing to do with the past, and, as far as the will of the artist is concerned, is not intended to have anything to do with it. It is more natural to think of the world of form which modern machinery has opened to us. Van de Velde is not unconscious of this relationship. His motives have something in common with the elasticity of a motor-car, and recall such things as levers, pistons, and sections of machinery. The beauty he creates has manifestly laid its account with the dynamometer ; it harmonises with the awakening instinct which finds its aesthetics even in the Machinery Hall. The fallacy is obvious, for in the process of transcription the best part of the world that is to be symbolised is undoubtedly lost. The machine is beautiful so long as it goes. It possesses force in action which accomplishes miracles and yet is based on absolute probability ; the sense of purpose in it has the strongest possible effect on the imagination and the manifestation of that purpose satisfies with a kind of mathematical certainty. But it is essential that the eye should see how the purpose is accomplished. If the machine stops, the eye of the layman can take no pleasure in it ; it then appears to be what it is, a dead thing, mere old iron, and only the memory of the spectator who saw it in motion or the mind of the engineer who can easily imagine its action, is capable of enjoying some pale reflection of its real nature. Now Van de Velde is always running the risk of making things immovable, which have no meaning unless they are in motion. He can preserve the practical element ; nothing prevents him from bringing out the interrelations of the parts much more clearly in the picture than is often the case in the concealed mechanism of the machine ; but he can never preserve the machine's purpose. The apparatus which in the machinery hall is used for pushing, hammering, or dragging great weights by means of a material provided with all the necessary power of resistance, and a nice calculation of gravities

is here analysed into its details ; that is to say, an attempt is made to show its beauty from a totally different point of view. The beauty of a piece of machinery does not depend on the multitude of its details, but on the fact that as soon as it begins to move, every detail vanishes in a mighty torrent of unity " a phenomenon which in principle closely resembles that of a work of art. For a work of art, too, can only be said to be produced when all details, noses, ears, clothes, trees, everything which forms the material of the picture is brought together like the screws in the machine into a mighty movement which we call the unity of the whole.

Van de Velde seeks to obtain movement by applying his system, not to pictures, but to continuous ornament. In this way the sense of motion is to some extent attained by the recurrent intersection of the parts. But this motion lacks collective effect " the most essential element of beauty. It perhaps produces the suggestion of physical running ; but the nearer it comes to that goal the further it departs from the level on which lies the pleasure we take in art " a pleasure which is anything but physical.

We are nearing the end of the story and are coming to the questions which were considered in the introduction. The cry " Away with pictures ! " is rising, though it is partly drowned by the triumphal music of French art. The menace is strongest among the young men who accept the ideal of the division of labour and of enjoyment. It is being sternly pressed in countries far from the rays of the setting sun of thrice blessed Paris, which are striving after a warmth of

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their own. They waited as long as the grandiose spectacle lasted in Paris. The nations, as it were, held their breath and gazed as the procession of genius unrolled itself. But now, even before the end is quite come, they have risen like impatient spectators in a theatre who cannot wait till the curtain falls, and through the applause, the words come in a barbaric hiss : " Away with pictures ! "

## VAN DE VELDE. ORNAMENT.

### ORNAMENT

Enough ornament has been designed in the last ten years to suffice this old world of ours for all the centuries it may yet survive. In addition to the Neo-

Gothic, Neo-Japanese, Neo-Assyrian, and so forth, a new style has arisen at Brussels which has been christened the Belgian style. These groups fall into hundreds of subdivisions. Since the last epoch in the history of style there has indeed been a manifest and complete change in the part played by ornament in art. Formerly it was more of the nature of handwriting, in which no doubt the idiosyncrasy of individuals gave rise to unconscious peculiarities, but so far from being a field for the display of individuality, it was, on the contrary, the symbol of some sort of community. It was a concomitant of style as idiom is of human speech. It was one of the many means of artistic expression of the period, by no means the most important for the definition of style, merely one subordinate member among others. Morris was quite untroubled if people reproached him with archaism and want of independence because his motives were not entirely the product of his own wits, but were taken from the capital he had inherited from the past. It was enough for him if, when he had modified and transformed them, they answered his purposes, covered the surfaces before him as he thought best, and brought out the charm of the colour in the way he wished. His successors have tried to make what with him was a means into a fundamental principle ; it is the eternal error which decides the course of all modern art. Beginners in industrial art whose hair was still of the length which tradition ascribes to genius, aimed above all things at an original handwriting even though they had nothing to write. Houses and furniture were painted as pictures had been painted in earlier days. The easel became a signboard. As we saw, the whole of our new industrial art starts from the illustration of books, and even now often takes the form of an ornamental border. Even artists of real power hide their art in work of this kind ; it is a throw-back to the old art of detail, " style-architecture," as Muthesius calls it in his excellent work.\*

Among the many moderns at Brussels who practise architecture, there are a few who deserve the name of architect. The greatest of these is Horta, who has an instinct for his art to which there is no existing parallel, and a brilliant gift of invention precisely suited to the problems of the present day. He knows how to get double the accommodation out of a house on the old Belgian plan by skilful arrangements of the rooms, and has the true master builder's capacity for making space obedient to his purpose. He can make you go up three steps without noticing it, because he has a happy knack of choosing the position of his landings and the view you get from them. A refined appreciation of hygiene lays on air, light, and water, just how and where the man who thinks only of his comfort

\* " Stilarchitektur und Baukunst." The changes of architecture in the nineteenth century and its present standpoint (K. Schummelpfeng, Miihlheim-Riihr, 1902).

has imagined it in his dreams. But, much as he has done for the Belgian dwelling house, his talent is only half displayed when he works on a small scale. He should never design furniture, but should keep all his strength for large construction. Fortunately, he has now at last obtained a wider field for his abilities and has been entrusted with one of the most important commissions in Germany, which will give scope to the further developments of the powers of the bold constructor in iron and stone and glass whose first achievement was the Brussels Maison du Peuple. Yet this brilliant artist prides himself above all on his ornament, which wriggles like a coloured thread from hall to weather-cock, and still pursues the spectator in his dreams. This would be unimportant, but for the consequences. We can forgive it in a Horta in whom we feel the accumulation of a joyous energy, of a power which transcends the scale of a private dwelling-house, for if we removed his ornament we should only improve the building. It is otherwise with his successors, who have nothing left when you suppress their accessories. The confusion of their lines embraces a whole world, the highest ideal of this cheap renaissance : universal artistry.

As soon as the conception of a universal aesthetic culture came into being the artists set themselves to construct the elements of this harmony out of their own heads. It would have been a very fine conception, if only the obstinate thoroughness, the ripe education, and the means of Morris had been behind it. Failing these, it was the worst form of dilettantism. People plastered a house, a box, a piece of clay, a piece of gold or silver, with reductions or enlargements of the same motive, and became at one fell swoop, architects, decorators, potters, goldsmiths, in a word, universal artists.

Nowadays people are probing themselves to the quick in search of traditions which are recruited from the remotest parts of the world, or answer to some kind of national consciousness of which no one but an artist can make anything. People have no time, no room, and no ready money, and are clothed up to the nose in a thousand warm things which seem more needful than the most edifying reforms of style. They have found interests of all kinds which are naturally more important to them than the ideas of the great lords of the Cinquecento at Florence and Rome, and the management of these interests has changed the face of the world more in one or two centuries than in the ten times greater span of time between Praxiteles and Michelangelo.

But then, even at a time when much was possible that is unthinkable to-day, people were attacking the problem in a more sensible way by beginning at the beginning. They did not design hangings before they had houses ; they were not quite so ready as the present generation of artists to fancy that they had created a world when they had designed a chair. They had not yet discovered those blessed words, " Industrial Art," and, if we except the worthy Vasari, there was as yet nothing in the way of artistic advertisement. The passion was in the work, not in the words of the artist. It is the passion of our contemporaries that I suspect most. We are accustomed from of old to see it displayed in things from

which the public is excluded. It always flourished among painters and poets who scorned the world around them. But is industrial art to adopt the same attitude ?

On the Continent this artistic passion translates itself unmistakably into the curving lines of modern flat decoration. Ornament was the weapon with which people thought they could conquer Morris. Morris stuck to the old

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idea that it was not worth a great man's while to pursue the fame of inventing trifles of this kind. Nowadays, Mr. So-and-so, of somewhere or other, takes pencil and paper and blossoms out into the " original inventor," parades the twirls of his peacocks' tails like a clerk displaying his Sunday tie, and is prouder than any Morris. But of the taste, the dignity and the decency of the Master there is nothing left. Antique form for Morris was less a model to be copied than a school for the mind. It was to him what the teaching of Latin in schools is for general education, a discipline which produces great indirect advantages precisely because it has no direct practical application. Under Morris' regime one had to be an educated man in order to be an artist. So much was said about the dangers of this preservative that its advantages are now completely forgotten. The ornamentist of the present generation by no means always derives from the sources of Van de Velde, but sometimes from the faded ideals of the decorative painter. The State should place the right to bedaub the face of the world under restraints at least as strict as those which govern the trade in poisons. Formerly, when people like this produced bad sculpture and bad pictures they did no harm, for the State and the various organisations concerned in such matters locked up their works in dim museums and galleries where they disturbed nobody's peace of mind. Now one cannot walk a step in the street without being held up by some horror in line or colour.

Modern interior decoration is a protest of the individualistic consciousness against the encroachments of the levelling spirit which accompanies the progress of the world. An attempt has been made to represent it as an emanation of the spirit of contemporary life. But it is much more in the nature of a revulsion, an attempt at self-protection on the part of the artist, who sees with alarm that there is less and less room for him in this world, and who therefore works against his age with every means he can find, even with those supplied to him by the age itself. Artists claimed that art should have its proper place in modern life, more because they were pursuing an unconscious policy of self-preservation than because they hoped that they were making an important contribution to a more profound theory of that life. Or perhaps they deceived themselves about the importance of their symbolic trappings. It was only when the activities of the symbolists learned self-sacrifice from the sterility of the material with which they had to work,

and when they began to be uncomfortable about the genuineness of the shibboleths which in the heat of propaganda they had been wont to accept, that it became gradually possible to take the rationalist programme seriously.

The modern private house is an extraordinary example of the hypnotic powers of art. The artist persuades Mr. X to have his measure taken for a house as he would for a pair of trousers, and thereupon provides him with a dwelling which is the latest product of his (the artist's) artistic evolution ; and Mr. X, after a week or two, feels quite at home. Of course, it is himself that the artist instals. I have no space for the inquiry how far it is possible to give a living expression to the personality of Mr. X, through the furniture of the artist Y. To ensure such a result the personalities both of patron and artist must be markedly objective. But the artist's relation to his client when the latter has ideas of his own must always be unpleasant, as unpleasant as that of the painter to the picture buyer, who requires him to make his clouds a trifle greener. Advanced artists decline commissions on these terms and thus express only their own personalities. Horta will not accept a single suggestion ; other architects go so far as to prescribe

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what costume shall be worn in their rooms. Pictures and bookbindings are predetermined in the contract. Jews are sometimes ordered to get themselves baptized, and one of the first clients of a star of the new movement was forced to cut off his beard !

Meanwhile, the question is being timidly raised whether this brutality is really necessary to put the culture of the householder in the right light. That comfortable contempt which one begins to feel in the very vestibule of a house in which one can calculate the owner's artistic views from every pot or pan is easy enough to produce. Far finer is the effect of an impersonal apartment which is smooth and inoffensive like a well-cut coat, and which attains its full form and colour only when the master of the house comes into it. I do not deny that it is possible to make a work of art out of a middle-class room, still less do I deny that any one is at liberty to try. But I do protest against the type of art which does not get beyond the antechamber. There is a want of the taste which connects the landing and the ante-room, or even the vestibule and the street. Taste also is necessary in the inhabitants. It is obvious, even now, that the splendour of the Appartamento Borgia did not sin against the contemporary taste. Where there is to be splendour, it is above all necessary that it should suit ordinary mortals, as the Borgia rooms suited the ordinary mortals of that period. One feels much more at home there than one does even in the best of the rooms decorated by the Scottish school. It is precisely in the best of them that the effect

is so strong, that one is forced to regulate one's attitudes, gestures, one's very words, in a very definite and wholly unnatural way, just as the star of the modern movement above referred to demanded. And this is merely theatrical.

Taste is what we need in our houses, not art. Only uncultivated people want art. Art, as we understand it, can never come from our artists in furniture. They must recognise that no chair or piano, however instinct with genius, can replace a good picture, that it would be brazen audacity to mention their handiwork in the same breath with such art as three strokes of Manet's brush could create.

TH. HEINE. DRAWING. LOIE FULLER.

a.

MARCUS BEHMER. DRAWING.

## THE NEW VIENNA

When, at the end of the eighties, Young Berlin began to bestir itself, it gave rise to a good deal of literature, and this was hardly surprising, for the leaders of the movement were all men of letters. The movement retained its literary character. But only its chief pre-occupation, the reflex action on the social system, is to be traced in the contemporary poetry of Berlin ; the new tendency showed no desire for form, for as yet it was unconscious of form. Indeed, its literature was essentially hostile to formalism of every kind. Realism translated such art as it could see into psychology ; what it could not so translate was judged not to be art. Its exponents strove after extreme objectivity in this psychology. It was Impressionism, more pictorial than the contemporary activities of Berlin painters. The early Gerhart Hauptmann is an Impressionist whose gradations are like Monet's.

Vienna took a different line. Here literature already had a coat of many colours when the " Freie Biihne " was fighting its first battles in Berlin and men were throwing off their raiment in order to have their arms free. Bahr's programme was more and yet less than a literary programme, aiming at less and more than Hauptmann and his friends. We have only to compare Anzengruber's dialect with that of the " Weavers " to realise the difference between the groups.



They never got so far as the principle of " l'art pour l'art " at Vienna, but after all what inkling of it had Hauptmann's school, or, indeed, have we such a thing as a school at all ? The older generation of Vienna had no literature under which *Quod erat demonstrandum* was not written, and Bahr, who wrote his " Gute Schule " at Paris, grew as a journalist into this Austrian tradition. The method suffers from its summary character, which excludes subjects that might be left vague and imposes a limitation on itself. But others transcend it, often not by genius, but by caution, and occasionally by sheer intellectual dishonesty. It is easier to find the weak spots in a finished picture than in a sketch.

Bahr undertook to create a new Vienna. The success that followed was not wholly due to his work ; he had hardly realised the scope of his task when he was at work on it. His share of the achievement is more marked because it can be traced in his writings, but he was, in fact, one of the leaders. And his method fairly represents that of the others even of the older generation. In Berlin people clawed each other and thus progressed ; it was the right way to evolve personalities where there was no common aim and where each could only lose by approximation to his fellows. At Vienna they helped each other and this was the only way, not merely because there were no great personalities who would have been the better for being alone, but also because at Vienna there were many forces which were compelled to work together. There was much real enthusiasm, a capacity for guarding against compromise and a willingness to work with the means which were available. The elder men showed a kindness to the young which at Berlin would have been received with insults ; the young men showed a good breeding which would have

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been derided as insipid at Berlin. Women influenced all this art, good and bad alike ; even revolutionaries could and did rejoice in the beauty of the Empress. In Austria, as in the Latin countries, the worship of women is an integral part of the national culture.

Artistic revolutions nowadays happen with the rapidity of our means of transport and are therefore generally superficial. The ancients travelled more slowly but enjoyed the advantage that their reformations, though laborious, were exhaustive. Ours are like hotel linen washed in a hurry, in which the old stains reappear after a time. The Viennese Secession against all expectation was genuine. It seems to me only yesterday that there appeared " *Ver Sacrum*," a joint and much decorated production of the new group of artists which dates, as a matter of fact, only from about six years ago. Hermann Bahr and Max Burckhard figured as literary assessors. Old Rudolf Alt, the honorary president, contributed one of his imperishable drawings of the Stephansplatz. For the rest the first number was rather worse than the first numbers of magazines usually are. There was nothing startling, no good picture, hardly a decent study. But there was one thing "â€"

style. Better still, there was a diminutive of style, a style in little, that accomplished hitherto unheard-of tricks, and provided a delightful accompaniment to the mediaeval letterpress. Pedants said it could not last, others advised that judgment should be suspended and rejoiced in the courage of men who knew how to help themselves. Bahr clearly expressed the essential character of the Secession. It was no part of the programme to set up a new art beside the old. "We are neither for nor against tradition," he wrote, "for we have none. There is no conflict between the old art, of which we have none, and a new art. There is no question of a development, or a change in art, but merely of art." Bahr advised the rising generation to agitate and not to fear ridicule. He did not say for or against what the agitation was to be. They were to agitate, to attract attention, it mattered not by what means.

The young people took a short way. There was nothing to be made of the native domestic art of Vienna. A few mouldy ruins of the Makart epoch still survived, which were no good to any one. The elements which Feuerbach had to overcome in his day had dwindled to grotesque phantoms. So they wrote off the past and began again from the beginning. It was one of the most startling episodes in the history of European art, and it has hardly a parallel even in America. For American architects who have to build thirty-storey houses find a kind of form prescribed by the very technical difficulties inherent in the task. The public is familiarised with these things by force of necessity, and never thinks of approving or condemning the innovation as a style. There was no past in America but a tremendous present which clamoured for creative activity. Every one knows how this advantage has been used in the United States, and how it has been wasted ; how every large town is divided into two parts, the business part which is modern, that is, American, and the residential quarter, which is a medley of European styles often grotesquely misunderstood ; and how artists like Lafarge, Tiffany and a few others also make bibelots over there, and are impelled to study emotional English pictures and Oriental glass to this end.

At Vienna there was no serviceable past, and it was the conviction of the younger men that there was a present which was longing for a new art. The Emperor in his palace, the nobles in parliament, and the citizen in the cafe felt not the slightest trace of this aspiration. The artists invented it and agitation did the rest. Here,

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too, people began with a fiction, with a kind of symbolism. The means used were quite unique. There was no rediscovery of a national form, no renaissance of popular art, no individual strokes of genius. The result was attained very much in the manner of the chemist who makes a mixture for some definite purpose, taking some of this and some of that and shaking them together. No question of race decided the elements of the mixture. For the Dutch their colonies

were a justification. At Vienna they were Greek, Celtic, Egyptian and Japanese in the course of a single morning. It was easy for them to see that a highly developed art like the French was incapable of getting out of its own groove. They were aware of the notorious untrustworthiness of the amateur who allows himself on every possible occasion to be led by the nose by a few dealers, and of the hideous blunders of the scholars whose only mission seemed to be the correction of the errors of other people while committing just as many themselves. All these significant concomitants of our modern art lessened their respect for organised aesthetics and heightened their reckless valour. Whatever pleases is right. These completely natural people, untroubled by the crazy gospel of an abstract art which one may love but must not touch on pain of being taken for a pickpocket ; simple souls, accustomed to forms that required no veils ; enthusiasts, to whom art meant all that they and their fathers had found it so hard to do without, grasped the cup and drank. Public patronage of art could never have had a greater task than here; ne\^er would a museum have been of greater service ; no professor of art has ever let slip a better opportunity of usefulness. The State did nothing. The Emperor's only contribution to the movement was to refuse the title of professor to the eminent painter, Klimt. So the young men had to do everything for themselves, and, in view of the natural incompetence of the State in such matters, one cannot now be sure whether its assistance might not have been a mere embarrassment. They took what seemed useful from every country, and brought it to their exhibitions, which, apart from the intrinsic value of the exhibits, have at least had a definite influence on the art of organising such shows.

Their achievement was as brand new as a pretty necktie in a smart shop in the Graben and cheap at the price. It fulfilled only the negative conditions of style by making no attempt to sound the depths and stir the deepest spiritual problems. Its aim was rather to disseminate itself, and in a month or two it was everywhere. English influence had very little to do with it. Walter Crane's subdued ornament was too dry for the Viennese. They had not allowed themselves to be cuffed about all these years in order to plant a modest flower in some quiet corner. They did not want the ornament to express anything but to make people feel. Everything for which other nations had for years had an elaborate system of symbolic expression came to birth here in confused form and found utterance in the first pictures, the first designs for houses, the first tables and chairs made by Klimt, Olbrich, Moser and their friends. There was no domain in which they did not try their hands from the first, to the best of their ability.

They had a tremendous success. The public railed like madmen and flew to the Secession at all hours of the day. This gave the society courage to make a house for itself, the very original premises built by Olbrich in the Getreide-markt, with the charming pierced gold dome and Moser's frescoes of Egyptian women. Here, in the course of educating the Vienna public, several lessons were learned. It will never be forgotten how the Secession brought George Minne to Vienna, how they gave a show of the Scottish School, how Meunier and Rodin

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were put in their true light, and how Klinger's Beethoven was set up, how also, theirs was the first attempt to group the art of the Impressionists historically, or how they anticipated even German patriots in exhibiting our beloved Mares. All this was done quite easily and simply, and cost not a tenth of the sum voted to art by many a small and impoverished State. It has done more good than the expenditure of all the Viennese museums put together. Some result serviceable to synthesis remained from each of these exhibitions which showed people what was going on in the world and what was lacking on the Danube. The Scots made the deepest impression. Van de Velde was respected, but was too heavy for this atmosphere. The thin lines of the Scots, on the other hand, their nervous, exiguous ornament, and their delicate colour, had the effect of a revelation. Every young movement worships the phenomena of decadence at first. The Mackintoshes aroused almost more enthusiasm than Beardsley, whose certainty perhaps was thought to display too much virtuosity ; the gentle Khnopff had been the first to charm the Viennese with exotic fancies ; Toorop spread the passion. Minne invigorated them, and so did the Kalewala pictures of the Finns. The Swiss Hodler found a second home at Vienna and was good enough to share with his Viennese friends his discoveries in parallelism which enabled one to see far beyond Puvis de Chavannes, and other little people whose ideas were not so advanced.

The question was whether Vienna would absorb too little or too much. Klimt's great enthusiasm struggled vainly for a technique capable of immortalising all the yearning for utterance. The enthusiasm of the friends who surrounded him hardly deceived him as to the gulf which lies between intention and performance. In this case the new aim which the others were trying to realise and which, of course, remained at the stage of a pious wish could not fill the gaps in his own development, could not replace the creative instinct which is never an intellectual product. The others had furniture, wall-papers and glass to make. The more pictures they absorbed, the better it was for their ambition to give all possible richness to these things. Klimt's experiments, if he remains a painter, must always do him harm. The ambition to try to deal with the many stimuli to which he was exposed by devoting his own energies to the symbolism of his stimulators drives him to abstract constructions. These are outside the domain of aesthetic effect, not because their subjects are pregnant women and other things distasteful to the Viennese, but because he fails to bring them into any formal unity. As in many of D'Annunzio's novels, all manner of things are introduced which are relevant only to the instinct of the author as a connoisseur and not as an artist, and which, in fact, are mere padding. But while the Italian uses these weaknesses as a sort of personal adornment, Klimt flies to this makeshift of art as to a refuge, and by honest work tries to make a sort of architecture out of them. This is just as impossible as if a builder tried to begin his rooms from the roof.

When the Viennese wrote off the past and decided to begin again at the beginning they, of course, found themselves at the stage of nations beginning their artist career a thousand years ago and more. But they had an advantage over these, in the possibility of accelerating their development by intellect, and thus making as much progress in a year as other people achieved in a century. The only thing that was indispensable was that they should really begin at the beginning and should, like a nation, at first restrict themselves to what was necessary. Fresco, which was the goal of Klimt, has never been the vehicle for complicated thought. It was

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always a folk-song, solemn and earnest, a simplified expression of the thought of the age clothed in contemporary garments. Its meaning was plain to the meanest intelligence and the lover of the Muses bowed before its beauty. Why should not this be so to-day ? In the whole Viennese movement, literary as well as artistic, there is not a single artist who is content or able to follow art for art's sake. Even their best lyric poet is an unfrocked moralist who nevertheless gives us splendid things. Why then should the one man capable of grasping a means of art whose immemorial tradition is the telling of beautiful stories, use that means in vain strivings after the impossible, in order to produce *l'art pour l'art* ?

When Klinger's Beethoven was exhibited at the Secession, Klimt's mosaics adorned the walls. When afterwards the Impressionists made their entry, the mosaics were respectfully covered up. It was strange to think of this decoration being there behind the Vermeers, the Velazquez, the Goyas, Monets, Cezannes, Van Goghs, and all the other giants of the past who were the lords of all the treasures of painting, yet only accomplished what was required for their age. Yet in these mosaics, separated from the pictures by the thinnest veil, there is the work of a courageous modern as passionate in the pursuit of beauty as any of them. Would that this fortuitous proximity had been symbolic of a community between the two, and that the immortals could inspire the misguided art of the modern with a breath of its living force !

The many-sided activities of the movement were not restricted to the exhibition building. They invaded the streets, the houses, and the workshops ; they took possession of the manufacturers and the craftsmen and brought new life into the sleepy town by the Danube which according to popular report was already being outstripped by the capital of Hungary. In 1900, when Austria appeared at the Paris Exhibition, she was already the only country acknowledged to possess a modern style. At the same time one could not conceal from oneself that this courageous energy had its seamy side. This young Vienna was like a lad who has grown too quickly, tremendously tall but shockingly thin, weak of bone and precociously diseased. The great danger was that the enthusiasm might exhaust

itself in fancies to be manufactured wholesale in Vienna factories. There was a swarm of forms of every conceivable sort, every day contributed something new. This eclecticism ran wild, trying its stomach with things which were hard to digest. The fiasco of the Darmstadt exhibition in the summer of 1901 was the catastrophe. Olbrich, the chief contributor, seemed the very type of the new Vienna. He produced interiors and built houses as modern painters sketch a portrait "à la" at a single sitting. Ideas came to him as flies to sugar. And they were capital ideas ; no artist is more inventive ; his fancy is never at a loss. But Liebermann's celebrated saying that fancy is a makeshift is approximately true of architecture. Olbrich's success was so great that his projects never had time to cool ; they reeked of wash and paper even when they became bricks and mortar. This made him popular ; the little Olbrichs multiplied like the illegitimate children of foreign potentates. The decorative carnage of the Turin Exhibition of 1902, the work of an Italian, who resides in Constantinople and takes in German technical journals, was an offshoot of his, and it must have been a curious experience for Olbrich, who sent some excellent things to this exhibition, to find in his host a caricature of himself.

After all this, one naturally had the gloomiest anticipations of what Vienna itself would come to. These, however, were not fulfilled. When the well-meaning Grand Duke of Hesse summoned Olbrich to his dominions he took away from  
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Vienna its greatest talent but not by any means the spirit of the movement. That remained at home in the work. The great object of which Hermann Bahr had spoken in his programme, " a time of rest in which agitators are no longer required," came sooner than was expected. Art stepped in at the very moment at which the artists were becoming artisans. The audacity of their form gradually disappeared ; the ornaments slipped from the outside to the inside of the cupboard and gradually disappeared altogether; limbs became stronger, proportions simpler, and the whole material correspondingly richer. Furniture had formerly been made in order to be exhibited ; people now took to making it in order to use it. Here, as in all other countries, most of the artists had at one time been, or had believed themselves to be, painters, and there were one or two architects among them. They had been pupils of old Wagner, the only master builder in Vienna, who had for years been fighting for a rational form ; they took care that the groundwork should be solid, and imparted to the painters the rules of architecture, getting in return a feeling for colour. Progress resulted from this mutual support. No individual, however important, could in detail have attained the quiet success of the whole. It was like the old times in which no man who was working together with his neighbour sought any advantage over him. The celebrated Socialism about which so many modern artists talk so big became in this case a thing of course. This communion triumphed over all differ-

ences of race and class, and even profited by them. The friendship of Hoffmann and Moser is typical of this. Hoffmann the squat, sturdy, incurably healthy child of Nature from Moravia, sensible almost to insensibility, is the architect. The decorator is the slim Moser, a true Viennese, amiable, deficient in sharp contrasts, all suppleness and grace. It may be seen from both what two fundamentally different temperaments united in one enterprise can achieve.

From an exaggerated complexity of form the Viennese have gone over to the extremest simplicity. Loos, architect and author, artist and thinker, pushed the principle so far as to exclude all but mathematically straight lines. It was inevitable that in the course of these wanderings they should at last get on the track of a norm and learn to render it naturally. After this it was only necessary to use whatever came first in order to be right.

All this sounds extremely simple, but Vienna was the first to achieve it. Perhaps this is not so much a credit to Vienna as a discredit to the rest of the world. The others had a bewildering variety of ideas and made such a confusion that one is quite astonished to find in Vienna things which cannot be turned to any purpose save that for which they are intended. This is characteristic of the modesty and the wholesome knowledge of human nature which distinguishes these people. Their ideas are reflected in their intercourse with their pupils. Roller forces personality on his scholars, so to say, not by talking nonsense to them about the personal consciousness, but by leading them naturally on to self-help, compelling them from the beginning to aim at their goal by personal methods. By means of well thought out changes in the materials with which his pupils have to work he draws out their talents, notes himself what this or that one lacks, or for what he is distinguished, and brings about the realisation of their individualities. Lecoq de Boisbaudran has found an unexpected successor here. No text-book can replace this simple method, and it is therefore to be hoped that Roller, who at present is devoting himself entirely to the theatre, his favourite province, and is renewing

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the decorations of the Vienna Opera, will not give up teaching altogether. Behrens has summoned some pupils of his to the industrial school at Diisseldorf.

It only remains to describe the Viennese style itself, though its superiority lies in the fact that there is nothing to say about it. Hoffmann makes his

houses comfortable and decent, gives them outlines suited to the neighbourhood and takes care to secure wide views of the line surrounding country, and as much interior comfort as he can. His chairs are made to sit on. Moser designs coverings for them which are quite as suitable for us as English brocades. When once the Viennese have a standard as unforgettable as the decency which the normal man acquires by education, there is nothing to prevent them from profiting by the happy difference between the taste of Vienna and that of Berlin, and from clothing themselves with such simplicity and naturalness that the old Viennese elegance will reappear. When the Viennese artists lost the love of beauty it did not die but took refuge among the women. In spite of all revolutionary assertions that everything had to be begun all over again, good taste never disappeared in the old imperial city, and this excellent tradition has been the greatest advantage enjoyed by New Vienna.

J. HOFFMANN, SKETCH FROM  
VER SACRUM, 1898.

TH. HEINE. DRAWING

## THE GENERATION OF 1890

If we were to look for the sources of a rational decorative art in the present day, we might very well find these in the German Runge. He evolved a system from Romanticism, and was the first German who recognised the physiological conditions of modern painting. Strong and sincere, incomparably freer than the Frenchmen of his day, he was pre-eminently fitted to inaugurate our series of great solitaires. He disappeared as did Marees and Feuerbach, dying at the age of thirty-three. Lichtwark discovered him some few years back. All our great artists have aimed at creating an art which should reach the hearts of the people. They lacked nothing for this end — but the people — and their useless efforts to evoke some

echo of their passionate utterances broke their voices, often after a cry of anguish which had nothing articulate for their contemporaries. In France, measured speech was all-sufficient. There was no necessity to scream, and the artist remained in harmony with himself and his neighbour. Art production was preserved naturally and the many-sidedness of the continuous creativeness even now obscures the question of purpose. The tree has so many new boughs, that no one thinks of the roots. And yet even here it seems doubtful whether the great period of history has not



come to an end, whether men like Manet could ever arise under the new order of things, whether the delicacy of the younger artists is not an indication of the end. The art-history of Germany, on the other hand, is a chain of accidents. All attempts to form a school failed, owing to the lack of definite aims ; they depended entirely on personal suggestion, and fell to pieces when personalities disappeared. Tendencies arose in a purely arbitrary fashion. " During the first ten years of my stay in Rome," writes Feuerbach, " a painter was not expected to paint ; the spirit, the spirit was the watchword ! We had no time to learn how to paint a head or a hand. As is always the case, a reaction speedily set in after these idiotic proceedings, and artists plunged head over heels into the decorative paint-pot." The manner of the reaction was desperately unreal. The new generation sought moral, not aesthetic antitheses to the older art, and this morality once more resulted in isolation or triviality, in new symbols, which no one understood or which every one could have expounded without the help of the pictures, garnishings designed to hide the lack of essentials. What Feuerbach wrote about his Roman period, applied with equal force to the New Romanticism of twenty years later. " The ridiculous cult of accessories in these days is merely the necessary counterpoise to the ignorance of human body and soul. When ideas are lacking, the skilful introduction of some pot or pan works wonders." This was a hit at Makart, a more harmless manufacturer of properties than our present-day Symbolists, and therefore easier to refute. Our generation of 1870 was quite destitute of this passion for accessories. The painting of Leibl's circle was the last artistic attempt to create a German art, and found scant favour in the new Empire. All the traces it left were a few pictures which disappeared among certain quiet people. It is difficult

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to realise now that there was any painting at all in the first decade of the newly founded state. When some few years ago certain incontestable evidences thereof came to light, it was as if we were unearthing precious antiquities.

It was not possible to create a representative art in the new Empire by means of the palette alone. The public began to take an interest in Liebermann's and Uhde's pictures, when they discovered Socialistic tendencies in them. The much later literature of Hauptmann and his friends gave the key. The opposition to Zola formulated by Arno Holz was accepted, not as an attempt to refine upon his technique, but as an intensification of his plainness, subserving not the nature of the work of art, but reality, preferably of an ugly kind, with greater zeal than the art of the Frenchman. Many amateurs of the period took all the pains imaginable to persuade themselves that a cowshed is more beautiful than a Greek temple. Most of them detested the whole business in their hearts.

The first sign of a new era was the rapprochement between painters and poets. The instinct which drew them together did not at first rise above certain apparently

heterogeneous qualities, and was originally by no means the outcome of liberal aesthetics. Those very poets who easily recognised hidden values in literary work and allowed free play and every instinct here, if it made for art, were impervious to discreet beauties in the work of their painting brethren, and drew their inspiration readily from coarser, and in some cases, hardly formed works. As under certain circumstances the picture resolved itself into a melodious lyric, they concluded that the optical result must also be harmonious.

It seems incredible, and is a more significant evidence of the tendencies of our race than all the theories, that no definite and catholic system of aesthetics should have been formulated in Berlin at this period with momentous results. That essence of the Schlaf-Holz-Hauptmann period which lends itself to formulation contained an admirably pure aesthetic programme. These men themselves gave utterance to it indeed. As conceived by Joh. Schlaf, it applies to every art, and not to literature alone. What, in short, did it amount to, save the creation of rhythm with the physiological means of art, renunciation of the accidental stimulus of arbitrary episodes, creation of the work out of the material itself, not out of the extraneous sentimentality of the spectator ? Treatment was recognised as the power which causes phenomena to reach the soul. Hauptmann replaced the dramatic phrase by a broad handling of the surface which embraced all detail, however multifarious, and moved the masses naturally. The Weavers was a strongly woven texture, the rich colours of which threw Sudermann's reflections into the shade. Dostojewski, Ibsen, and finally Strindberg had an influence among us comparable to that of Turner on Monet's circle. The painter's atmosphere became " mood," which led to catastrophe more inevitably than the subjective emotion of the earlier artists. What was called reality was organism, and the much-decried Naturalists did not forget in the presence of Nature to bring all that with them, which made the pictures of the Impressionists something very different to casts from Nature.

Richard Wagner's Naturalism had similar aims, or at least we seem to recognise in the Bayreuth master's music that Rembrandtesque veiling of masses which has become dear to the moderns. But even he showed the limitations of the German genius, as soon as he attempted to fix the boundaries of his art.

The aesthetic system common to Wagner and many other Germans is defective less because of insufficient gifts in its own domain than by its depreciation of the

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other arts. This defect, the sign manual of the German, is the necessary consequence of the isolation of individual artists and individual arts. Concentrated upon himself, the vision of the hermit leads his interpretative powers to a universality which, subjectively considered, may be the embodiment of order, but objectively

regarded, does not escape disorder.

The new culture of the Empire began by taking this condition of things more or less seriously into account. Every improvement brought about an aggravation of individual evils to begin with. The rapprochement between art and literature made painting all the more pictorial at first. But advance was so rapid, the two came so near each other, that the writer really looked into the problems of pictorial art, and the laws of the sister arts revealed themselves to the painter.

The first external effort to organise these relations was made at the end of 1894 at Berlin, some few years earlier the scene of the "Freie Bühne" ("Free Stage"), but the folks who baptized the new child had practically nothing to do with the old Otto Brahm circle, and it was a mere accident that the thing was planned in Berlin, though it was indeed only possible in Berlin. Here it naturally became a confederation. The name "Pan," suggested by the unfortunate Dagny Przybyszewska was to indicate both a careless joyousness in the spirit of the Greek God, and the manifold arts to which its members were to devote themselves: a periodical, well-printed books, industrial art, a Berlin Salon and other fine things. The enthusiasm of the band was great. The aged Bocklin who came to Berlin at the psychological moment, gave prestige to the movement, the Thiergartenstrasse ; /

found the preliminary funds ; the provinces, hearing something of modern art for the first time, provided associates. Princes of the German federation figured among these. As, however, opinions upon modern art differed even among those most closely associated, disputes arose after the first two or three issues of the periodical, which consequently became the exclusive undertaking of the society, and was transformed from a medium of agitation for lofty ends, into an aristocratic organ of dilettanti without any well-defined dilettantism. It served, nevertheless, for a rapprochement of the arts. The poems of the younger writers were enframed in the arabesques of the painters of Young Germany. Eckmann, Heine, Von Hofmann, Leistikow, Sattler, Strathmann and many others here placed the first of their drawings that showed decorative aspiration at the service of literature. "Pan" failed to exercise a decisive influence in art life, owing to lack of publicity. The expensive nature of their enterprise showed the restricted field with which these young people reckoned from the first. They judged rightly that a purely artistic programme would interest scarce a thousand people in Germany. But they judged wrongly if they imagined that it would have a fertilising effect upon art.

In Germany we have as yet no sharply defined art, much less a system of aesthetics. We have an intermediate domain. Journalism has absorbed all that was wont to lie concealed in voluminous correspondence, in memoirs, in occasional literature. The journals which the thinker used to write only for himself or for posterity, now become newspaper articles, for no writer can feel assured in a world which lives so rapidly that there will be time to read him after his death. Many a one comes to literature who in former days would have remained a reader ; many a one remains a writer, who would once have become a poet.

All countries have masters of this kind of raw material. I may name one of our own : Maximilian Harden. The work Harden has carried on in Germany within the last twelve years is antipathetic to most people. Few people like to see

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humanity put through a filter, so to speak. It has been made a reproach to Harden, that he belongs to no political or artistic party ; those who feel this to be a defect fail to understand him. He would be a bad kind of filter if he were different.

The " Zukunft " was founded in the interval between the " Freie Biihne " and " Pan." Harden had, or retained, no part in either of the latter. No artist in " Pan " would have dreamt of attributing any influence in the lofty sphere of the Muses to this politician. We are always inclined to look upon the Muses somewhat as elderly ladies and to forget that they must go with us through thick and thin, even if they are privileged to hold somewhat aloof from us on the march.

Harden combines the features of the new race, not altogether an artist, for he is a politician, and no mere politician, for he is an artist too. In his intermediate domain he is more intensive than most artists of his generation in their higher sphere. His art is directed solely to keen observation and to an incisive reproduction of what he sees, stripped of all that obscures the typical, yet furnished with all the inimitable naturalness of actuality.

The difference between Harden and the ordinary journalist is, that we do not need to know Harden's heroes, or to take part for or against them. We can read his articles twice over, as politician and as artist, and the second time it is even an advantage that the first time they were no use to us. Harden has not been very warmly welcomed either by artists or politicians. This is unfortunate for him, but it enhances his value to us. It is for this reason that his blows have such crushing effect.

High art, on the other hand, behaved at first in the most dilettante fashion in the new generation. It tried to make the new time-monster digestible by pre-Christian receipts. Symbolism grew to colossal dimensions, that the new tendencies might be contained in the old vessels. Adam and Eve appeared in forms more and more grotesque, and the serpent became the cherished domestic pet of the guild. In literature, the consecrated language of our fathers broke

down at every turn. Writers took refuge in stammering dialogue, in blanks and dashes. But here the irresistible musical genius of the race soon evolved a new form from these deformities. In art, the inspiration was more dangerous. It threatened to imperil possessions that were hardly assured, and to reduce the artistic development which had maintained itself painfully through all the adverse forces of the age, to anarchy.

It was not Berlin, the centre of the new state, which was to direct the artistic movement. It could not offer the same field to art as to the literature of the generation of 1890, for it possessed no combatants of the same standing. It was not the political and economical centre, but the central point of Germany's art, the home of what was relatively the strongest artistic activity of the land, which naturally became the medium. » This inevitable dualism of Berlin-Munich gave characteristic features to the movement. The division of the movement and its consequences between two different places, the capitals of the two most important countries of the new State, the centres of two absolutely opposite stocks and cultures with a different outlook, different habits, and populations at least unsympathetic, seems the strangest anomaly. Yet it is probably a great blessing. For the Berlin influence was too mighty to be shaken off entirely by the Munich men ; it was too obviously a part of the great modern tendency we recognise, if not at home, at any rate in all other countries. But the dualism had one inestimable advantage ; it prevented the triumphant materialism of Berlin from penetrating directly into the

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artist's studio. And finally a sturdy flower grew up out of the personal hostility between North and South.

Nevertheless, Munich had certainly no modern elements at her disposal. Her plein-airisme was perfectly unserviceable. It treated of patches of sunlight and sought in vain to produce Nature as purely as possible as an artistic means. Here Lenbach certainly gave more than his exemplars had given. Among his successors, sympathy might have been looked for from Habermann and similar artists. Marees, the only one who might have given some decisive aid, died at the critical moment, just when Stuck began. On the other hand, Munich still possesses the workshop, in which the remarkable renaissance had been botched up after the war. Lenbach and this renaissance were intrinsically one and the same thing became the generators of the new idea.

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The first stirrings of the new art at Munich date from about the same time as the appearance of the new literature at Berlin ; but in the nature of things it needed a few more years to reach its manifestation, which came in the shape of

the Secession. The energy displayed on this occasion was more good-natured, the protest less acrimonious than that of the North German poets. Stuck struck the characteristic note of the native artist – it was industrial art.

Stuck is the most important product of the carnival renaissance of Munich. He underwent a process hitherto unheard of in any country. Everywhere else artists had abandoned the easel for industry ; Stuck's evolution followed the inverse course. Like Thoma, he is of the following of Miiller, but he took things more humorously than his older compatriot. Thoma represents the old-fashioned, sentimental, good-hearted Germany, Stuck the Neo-Greek, light-hearted Germany. The former is edifying, the latter amusing. The most amusing thing in both seems to have been their public. One of them was held to be a pretty wit in his youth, and even now seems not to have forgotten how to amuse himself hugely at the expense of the public. He began with comical emblems and curly ornaments for bills of fare, adding a little of everything, modern colours and new sunlight, Lucifer and the deadly sins, the familiar serpent and the guardian of Paradise with the flaming sword. The mermaids which formerly decorated the borders swelled out into Bocklin bodies with Munich countenances. He made sphinxes into barmaids and barmaids into sphinxes. Lenbach taught him the art of portraiture – how to express everything in a single glance of the sitter – and Stuck translated into a plastic form that understanding of the decorative value ancient art which was the other side of his master's genius.

Strange to say these extravagances left practically no trace on the final Munich movement which they preceded. This Stuck took as seriously as did the public. The beginnings of the new industrial art were earnest, almost sombre. Its first products were picture-frames and some of the symbolism of the pictures entered into the furniture. The forms affected followed every style but the English. English furniture had been taken up in Germany by the wholesale manufacturer and its patterns had been multiplied and debased in every provincial town by the time our artists began to occupy themselves with industry. For them English art was too smooth ; it offered no foothold for their symbols. They made, as it were, purely human furniture. The abstract ornament of Brussels could not satisfy them. The appeal to Nature which had been made by so many voices seemed here at last to be bearing fruit. The chair legs recalled real limbs and were

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united by articulations to the seat. Cunning cushions were piled on voluptuous sofas, threatening lamps hung from the ceilings ; majestic ash-trays reposed on the monumental tables.

All that was beautiful in these ugly things was their na'iveté, the honesty of the artist in applying his method to the material on which he was working, the work itself which required honest effort from the worker, his courage in following out his idiosyncrasy to its logical conclusions. No doubt the form was awkward, barbarous, anything you like ; but it was form, or rather the promise of a form. The school displayed the rudeness and want of proportion natural in young men who do not know how to manage their limbs, enthusiasts, who wanted to put a whole palace into a chair ; it was superabundance, not poverty. Even yet the works of the Munich artists clearly show that they do not recognise the utility of any object as the supreme law of its construction. But does not this recognition come soon enough ? Our artistic power is so much awakened that every manifestation of youth gives us hope, even though we break our shins over it now and then. We need not fear that our age will not discover how to make sensible tables and chairs. That is a task which requires not art but only a wholesome knowledge of the world and a certain amount of taste. The Viennese are nowadays making normal furniture, and in ten years' time, perhaps this will be so everywhere, as soon as the creative instinct which is being spent on this department of production has appeased itself. Then the desire for other things will become the more eager, and it will be the turn of the people whose souls have not gone entirely into their sofas. The recalcitrants, who opposed the movement most strongly, will then perhaps appear as saviours. It is not for nothing that France struggles so obstinately against her engineers, but for the same reason that Vienna acclaims them. In the latter, the new element is important, in the former relatively negligible.

Besides, the Munich folks have the architecture of older contemporaries before their eyes, which does not urge them to extreme reduction, and they would not be the children of this prosperous town, if they were concerned solely with cold reason. The North, the other centre, takes care of this part of the programme. When wholesale industry begins to interfere energetically in the business, the purpose will soon be clear enough to the people.

The painter Krüger, in the " Vereinigten Werkstätten," organised the better part of the abilities of the Munich school. Similar societies have been founded in other places ; and more recently Riemerschmid, Pankok, B. Paul, Obrist, Endell, and many others, have found plastic solutions for many interesting problems in domestic architecture.\*

This movement was far from absorbing all the strength of the young men of Munich. Indeed, it only became known to the public gradually in the exhibitions. Their work was at first regarded as a fashion, a reflection of English and Belgian decoration, not the manifestation of a new generation. The Dresden International Exhibition of 1897 was hardly enough to enlighten the North German public about the nature of the Munich movement ; but shortly before that they had hit on the right way to attract attention. In 1895-1896 two new journals appeared at Munich " Die Jugend," founded by Georg Hirth, who had already taken a

prominent part in the foundation of the Secession, and "Simplizissimus,"

\* Compare "Dekorative Kunst" (Bruckmann), "Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration" (A. Koch, Darmstadt), two journals founded in 1897, and other similar periodicals.

## THOMAS THEODORE HEINE: TEMPTATION

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founded by Langen who had been educated in Paris. They were weekly papers, anything but conservative in tone, and intended for popular consumption. Unlike "Pan" they had no artistic programme and no didactic aim; neither had they any abstract ideal to defend. They initiated an attack, but against whom or what was not clear in the first numbers of "Simplizissimus." In the introductory poem, Philistines and hypocrites are dealt with. There were ardent modern lyrics in prose and verse; Georg Herwegh, the hero of '48 was dug out, to be the standard-bearer of freedom. The intention was plain, the manner perverse. On the first page was written, "The worst fools are the good fools"; but this was not the note of the first pictures. The artists of "Fliegende Blätter" revealed themselves here more freely and characteristically on their own lines without finding the new path. The mixture was new. Munich jests alternated with French and Scandinavian drawings. The boulevard contributed its softest graces in Steinlen, who threatened to make absurdity sentimental; the danger was that instead of being bitter they would become bitter-sweet, and share the popularity of "Die Jugend." A German, Thomas Theodor Heine, averted this mischance and carried out the original programme with unexpected pungency. He gave the right colour to the paper and inspired his whole circle with the courage to seek out new ways, finding for himself an original means of achieving a highly original kind of artistic result.

Heine was to all appearance born for the situation. His earlier youth was spent in the studio of Jansen, the historical painter at Düsseldorf. This meant drawing from the cast until you were black in the face. His relaxations from this pursuit were the making of drawings into which he put all his heart. He spent half a year on a head of Hermes, found one day that he had had enough of it, tore his drawing across and left for Munich. Here the academic fashion of dark painting was in full bloom. Even Düsseldorf was better than this, so he went back repentant. His master mended the drawing of Hermes, gave it back to him and invited him to finish it. Heine remained nearly six years at this work, the formulae of which, dry as they seemed at the time, obviously laid a great foundation, and



were very useful to his subsequent draughtsmanship.

Of course, he wanted to be a painter. Until 1890 the department of art in which, as experience shows, German artists are least proficient, was almost the only one which was not considered beneath their dignity. Heine justified his choice better than most of his comrades. In his studio in the Theresienstrasse at Munich there are landscapes and interiors done by him in 1886, which are no worse than many pictures in the New Pinakothek, fluently painted things in fluid colour. When he came to Munich, in 1889, pleinairisme had just been discovered. Heine took part in the movement and probably would have remained all his life one of the multitude, but one day his father suspended payment and the young man was forced to hasten his career. In order to earn money he took to illustration.

In the landscapes of the first Munich period there is already manifest the composer who seeks in Nature not merely a motive, but actual contributions to the pictures that have risen before his mind's eye. The picture, *Before Sunrise*, painted in 1890, when it was exhibited at the Munich Kunstverein, already displays the typical and familiar method of Heine. We have a steep winding street full of workmen on their way to the factory in the background, and beside it a deep valley. The tones of the picture are cold green and brown, there is a sinister tint

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of red in the sky. This sky was a literary sky, and the person in the foreground, the seductive woman at the sharp parting of the ways, belonged also to literature ; neither is convincing. But these superficial and superfluous things, just because of their superficiality and superfluity, are easily removed. The kernel of the picture points to the beginning of a new architecture made up of line and colour, not of thoughts.

The picture with the Hauptmann title is knocked together with touching audacity. The sharp angle of the stone causeway in the foreground, and the two curves which enframe the factory above are well invented. In spite of the uncertainty of the two lines of the valley, one seizes the artist's intention and rejoices in the boldness of his construction. In a later drawing he again took up the same architectonic motive. Here the road again divides, leading on the left to a factory and on the right to a prison ; at the parting stands a policeman talking to a workman.\* In the interval between the two pictures the artist had found his purpose.

Heine's qualities as a painter would never have made him a great artist. The role of the " Simplizissimus " draughtsman in painting is not fully explained by the analogy of Harden's position in literature. But if we set aside the personal results which Heine, the younger man, is already able to derive from his " Simplizissimus " work, the comparison is fairly just. They are similar temperaments ; they belong to

the same race. Heine has the advantage of a more lyrical talent ; the nature of his art admits of a richer form of humour. But without the volumes of " Die Zukunft " and the development of German journalism which they represent, " Simplizissimus " could hardly have existed. It was not only that Harden's readers furnished a public for it ; the artists themselves took their cue from journalism. The sense of the inscriptions of the Munich prints is contained in many of Harden's monologues. In the drawings the power of his concentrated satire becomes mightier still, for in them all attempts at conclusions is abandoned. They give instantaneous pictures whose meaning every one understands and grasps more profoundly than if they had been accompanied by explanations. The law of Impressionism was here exemplified with renewed force.

Heine remains the subtlest satirist of the Munich school. His is an intellect which does not always find that drawing suffices to express all it has to say. Many of his plates do not reach their full effect without the lines at the bottom of the picture, but these lines are always touched with a wit that seems to give salt to the picture. The reader has a twofold enjoyment. On the death of Bismarck Heine drew an Iron Chancellor being conducted by a shining angel to the heavenly sphere ; in his face is reflected the joy he feels at " the approaching meeting with his august and blessed Master." Heine makes the angel say, " Impossible, your Highness, his Imperial Majesty is in the department for great men, your Highness is in the understrappers' section." The words alter the whole scene ; the cheerful pale blue sky flecked with clouds, the delicate lilac of the flowers, seem to change colour ; the angel, almost as spiritual as a Burne-Jones creation, becomes a pert miss well versed in tables of precedence. Even in the best of the early plates the effect is heightened by the words : a good instance is the visit of the newly married couple in cycling costume to the rustic grandparents of the husband. Grandmamma, who has fainted at the sight of her strangely-attired grand-daughter-in-law, is being recalled to life by her sobbing relatives with the aid of a watering-

\* " Simplizissimus," iii. (1898-99), No. 27, The Solution of the Social Problem : " You have absolute freedom, my good man, you may go to the right or to the left, just as you like."

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pot. Here Heine throws the title into the form of a letter from the fair bicyclist to a friend, and, as it were, secures two effects at once.

Heine never takes a side ; he conventionalises his people, not in order to magnify their eccentricities, but in order to put them at the distance at which the effect is strongest. When he does not change them into animals, he places them in the dear old days of Biedermeyer and clothes them in the garments which are so suitable to their sentimentality, and which, better than words, symbolise the contrast

between these people and their thoughts, or the real feelings and the moral pretensions of the Philistine. By this means Heine develops his ornament, and in so doing he approaches Beardsley. There is as yet no question of any influence ; for in 1890 when Heine painted *Before Sunrise*^ Beardsley was only eighteen and as yet undiscovered. The "*Morte Darthur*" appeared in 1893 and 1894, and Pennell's notice in the first number of the "*Studio*" with plates, was published in April of the former year. Heine's first book decoration "the cover for Stephan George's "*Blatter für die Kunst*" " was produced in 1893 ; the cover-design for the "*Demi-Vierges*" belongs to the end of 1894. It was not till later that Beardsley's influence began to tell.

Beardsley and Heine are allied natures marked by great differences. Their resemblance becomes obvious if one compares Heine with the other artists of his circle ; it is less conspicuous if one compares him closely with the English artist. At the first glance the latter seems to have the best of it ; the total absence of the journalistic spirit from his art seems to give him the advantage. He had no actualities to work out ; he was a pure artist who thought only of himself and who spent his life in perfecting his wit. Heine has absolutely none of his Gallic vein. The work Beardsley did for the press was negligible ; the art of his interiors could appeal only to a small circle of men of letters and connoisseurs. If the German, whose contributions to his penny paper have become the raw material of Socialistic politics, was to have any effect on his public at all he could not dream of attempting Beardsley's achievements. Heine's satire is coarse compared with the wit of his English contemporary who worked for the audience for which Oscar Wilde wrote : while Heine's public was composed of the bourgeois of the opposition, who only began to buy "*Simplizissimus*" when it ceased to be sold at railway stations, But the wit of Beardsley was perhaps even more terrible than that of Heine. Heine, like Harden and Nietzsche, is an instinctive optimist, who makes use of the formulae of pessimism. Beardsley's wit was always directed against itself, it was the flower of a fantastic pessimism which was always entrenching itself within narrower limits. Lysistrata's patron shut himself up in his melancholy and made it almost joyous. He needed his *mise en scene* in order to die beautifully, and his sufferings and early death lay the world under an eternal obligation. But though his end came too soon for those who loved him and his work, he left nothing unfinished which it was in him to complete.

Anything may still be expected of Heine. It is often thought that he is merely playing with his treasures, practising for some much greater undertaking. He is a person of a much coarser fibre than the quiet youth who died at Mentone ; but in spite of all the other's charm he is greater, because stronger and healthier and better armed for the battle of life. Beardsley's one source of enjoyment was his own beauty ; he loved and admired the long thin hand that made his drawings. Heine knows no such joys as these. Art for him is but a means to an end. We are often astonished at the primitive character of the detail, and he himself often makes

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merely at the expense of his "scratches." But, indeed, detail is little to him ; he takes his inspiration where he finds it, whether it be baroque furniture or rustic signboard, a Burne-Jones angel or a drawing by Jossot, and in his hands these never become still-life. His intellect seizes hold of them, changes them and creates out of them a great new fact, in scorn of God and all the world. What holds true of Daumier's caricatures cannot be said of Heine's work. There is absolutely nothing of classical culture behind it ; nothing of the line which Beardsley took from Greek vases, nothing grandiose, nothing elegant. It is something poorer and newer, something of to-day or to-morrow, patched together, unclear in detail, but fundamentally genuine. Herein lies the greatest difference between him and Beardsley. Heine is anything but a decorator of books. No doubt in his drawings for "Pan," "Die Insel," &c., there is much charm ; indeed, the finest book-illustration yet made in Germany has been done by him. But compared with his other work they are but the fringes of an art which aims at greater things, the art from which the fragile Beardsley was debarred, the art which covers great surfaces.

Heine's pictures in the Secession exhibitions of recent years have not much interested the German public. It is always difficult for the comedian to appear in a serious role. In his pictures Heine attempts the same seriousness and the same absurdity as in his "Simplizissimus" drawings on a large scale. Of course, he avoids the sharp discords which in a work of small format become themselves a means towards artistic effect. But he could not change his nature, simply because he had canvas and not paper before him, and even a limited dose of the gall with which his gentlest imaginings are usually mixed seems to clash with the effect which is generally expected of a wall decoration. Without going into the interesting question of the proper limits of the use of irony in art, it is clear that a picture which presents nothing but the mental attitude of its author disturbs the peace of mind of the lover of art, and, like any other kind of sentimentality, arouses painful feelings which disturb his aesthetic enjoyment. The question here, as always, is simply what else does the artist give us ; how is it done ? Then comes the discovery that a sentimentality whose end is serious is measured by different standards from that which is suspected of being comic. Segantini may be as sentimental as he likes ; he carries us along with him, and the German public will pardon Thoma anything because of his geniality. Personally, I find the heterogeneous character of Thoma's or Bocklin's pictures much more disturbing than Heine's irony. The evil of the former is that it does not spring from the intention of the artist, while Heine's irony is too obviously significant to disquiet me. Heine appeals to a more wholesome view of art than that of the emotional school. His humour draws a salutary line between his aesthetics and theirs. His rejection of their ideas leaves him all the freer in his quest of form. If we find a line in Heine comic which in Toorop produces an effect of deepest mysticism, the fault or the merit of this is perhaps not justly to be ascribed to the artist. It is possible that a future race will enjoy both without finding them either comic

or mystical, and then it may be said of Heine that he was the more fortunate of the two. When Art cheers us she has fulfilled no small part of her heavenly mission.

The other " Simplizissimus " artists who come within the purview of this study have one advantage over Heine, who was so much richer than they : they got closer to Nature. For them, the paper of " Simplizissimus " was a substitute for canvas, and it gave them manual dexterity, which they would not have acquired so readily

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with the brush. The external purpose of caricature has much less to do with their personalities than with that of Heine, on whom the law keeps a particularly watchful eye, not without reason. They are less mordant as satirists, less witty, but there are stronger temperaments among them, or they give their temperaments freer play.

Rudolf Wilke and Bruno Paul are painters before they evolve a sarcasm, and even before they draw. They have but one form, whereas Heine produces a new one every day, but this form is peculiarly their own, it is like their handwriting. It arises from the natural desire to give the characteristic elements as strongly as possible with the primitive material. Their experiments are therefore more restricted and more logical. There is no question of Heine's influence. All they have in common is their common work on the revolutionary periodical ; that which they oppose to the bourgeois, is remote from all political actuality. It is merely what Liebermann showed before them and what was coined in France before Liebermann ; a natural art, aiming at the utmost simplicity and honesty. There are very few among the pictures that have fetched high prices in Germany which can stand beside these drawings ; their authors have had the advantage of working quietly ; they have been spared the ordeal of seeing themselves acclaimed as masters of their art while still disciples, a fate that threatens to overtake Slevogt. On the other hand, it behoves the historian to protest against the absurdity of denying them their rightful place in modern art, because they remain faithful to paper and pencil. In these days, when so many painters produce pictures which would look just as well in wood-mosaic or any other material, we must not refuse to reverence these workers in a more modest medium who understand their paper much better than Slevogt and others understand their canvases. There are, of course, defects in the best publications. Nowhere is there greater danger of mannerism than here, where the necessary haste of production tempts the artist to repeat details that have once served him well, and the necessity of bringing the type before the public often results in commonplaces. All the more honourable is the high level generally attained by Wilke, Paul, Steigerwaldt, and Gulbransson, and the respectable average of Thony, Manzer, and others.

Paris and Japan contribute to the result, of course. Lautrec, Forain and Vallotton have given an inspiration here and there, but no more. The thing that produces such an unpleasant effect in Slevogt, is the monstrous superficiality of his stroke, whether he is thinking of Trübner, of Manet, or even of Delacroix. The greater his exemplars, the poorer are his results, for the simple reason that he does not follow the current of thought, the organisation of these men – he could have no better models – but takes some snippets from them which he imagines to be technique. The point of view of Slevogt and his kind implies the victory of the idea that art produces the animation of the material, when it is operative at all, in other words, the victory of Courbet over Bocklin. But the victory should have not only symbolical, but practical results, to be of any value. The "Simplizissimus" people seem to me to demonstrate this value better. They have recognised the purpose of the simplification practised by the Frenchmen, the enhancement of expression, and continuing on this road, they have achieved results which they owe, not to their exemplars, but to their own practised hands. It is solely by this command of a form, evolved with the utmost economy, that they achieve their phenomenal effects of Nature, and attain a pictorial beauty that triumphs over caricature. However grotesque the part may be, the part

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they play in the whole transforms them. Just as Van Gogh got wonderful beauty from light in his *Mangeurs de Pommes de Terre*, so the Munich artists succeed with their peasants. It is not for nothing that the great Dutchman comes into my mind in this connection, and it is of good omen for the Munich men that they can evoke him. For what they have in common with him they have evolved from themselves. There are many drawings by Bruno Paul which suggest the comparison. The drawing reproduced at the end of this chapter appeared in the second year of "Simplizissimus" (1897) at a time when Van Gogh was entirely unknown in Germany. The dancing peasants in the background recall certain of Gauguin's forms, and he too was unknown to Paul.

The attractive element in Paul and Wilke is their pictorial quality. They are painters and colourists no less than draughtsmen. Here, again, the limitations of their technique, the necessity of restricting themselves to essentials, have stood them in good stead. The richness of effect they get with three or four colours, a skilful use of overprint, dots, squares &c., is amazing. Wilke is the most distinguished of the two, the Whistler of this little noisy world. Paul prefers the bold

surface, which he cloisonnes with fresh tones, but Wilke attempts more discreet charms. His drawing, made up of very fine strokes, is sometimes more powerful in its effect than Paul's ; sometimes he suppresses the stroke altogether, and models entirely with gradations, from white and black through all the tones of gray. Such things have a dazzling pictorial beauty and, without a touch of colour, they seem richer than strongly coloured plates.

It is naturally the draughtsmanship of the circle which is the most prominent feature. Its physiology is determined to some extent by the elements with which the artists have to deal. The creation of an individual form common to the whole group was brought about by the reproduction of the remarkable types, which adorn the renderings of life in German cities. It was natural that these peculiarities, which seem specialties to every stranger in Germany, should become valuable to the artists of the new generation. The lieutenant and the corps student, for instance, are perhaps the last purely vegetative products of the town. The city, as such, destroys art, because it suppresses all forms ; the inhabitants of great cities become neutral entities, like our great, well-arranged stores and railway stations ; they provide no gesture for art. Gesture belongs to the being who can neither read nor write, to the peasant. The generation of 1830 went to the woods. Van Gogh to the country, Gauguin to Tahiti. Our Germans find the exotic in the streets, and the material is better prepared than that of the peasants and savages, because in those last uniformed figures of the age, class-consciousness has become typical gesture. Wilke and Paul seem hostile to the lieutenant and the student ; in reality they are fond of them, just as Van Gogh loved his potato-eaters and Gauguin his savages. This love does not move them to make pictures of saints with their types, after the fashion of the brethren at Pouldu, but in the end, the goal they set before them is the same : the monumental.

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Heine's narrower circle before the foundation of "Simplizissimus" consisted of Corinth, Schlittgen, Eckmann, Strathmann and Behrens; an older man went with them, Trübner. Slevogt attached himself to them. This band of artists carried the movement to North Germany. It is not without significance that the majority of the artists who restored the waning prestige of Munich for a time were North Germans. They left their home in order to learn, and came back when

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they felt themselves sufficiently equipped for their task. They had to go back because the field offered them in Munich was too narrow for that task. It is no argument against this to say that "Simplizissimus" was founded at Munich. This purely North German production is only conceivable as a periodical for and about North Germany. It may be that Strathmann's adherence to his native swamps is the only thing that retards the creative manifestation we have been expecting from his great talent from the very beginning of the movement. If he had followed his friends, Eckmann and Behrens, he would probably long since have found worthy tasks such as those which fell to Melchior Lechter. Eckmann was the first disciple in the North of that much-discussed "applied art," in which the application is more apparent than the art. "Modifying art" would be a juster description; yet it had its uses, for there was a reason for it. It clarified the confused theory of colour that obtained in the nineties. The Germans were so much in love with Bocklin, that they took his blue as a symbol. They talked of colour-idealism and similar absurdities, forgetting that colour, per se, is a house painter's material, and that any colourman can supply a bluer blue than Bocklin's. Eckmann's wall-papers drew the attention of the public to effects of contrast and the value of tones, even though they were not always models of distinction. The modifying factor employed by Eckmann and his quickly won adherents, was Japan.

Japan has worked positive havoc among us. An art that lives by a breath, and has learnt, as the climax of a long development, to walk without legs, exquisite within its limits, but inadequate as compared with its predecessors and its great European rivals, could only exercise a favourable influence upon a perfected art like that of France. It became our guiding star in Germany when we were beginning to learn to walk. The result was an aggravation of the confusion. Makart's times came back again. Where Makart and his school had daubed on colour, lines were applied, but all that lay beneath was left untouched. This purely superficial ornament was nowhere so general as among us, a race of profound thinkers. The Belgian influence superseded the Japanese, without diminishing the evil in any way. It was epigonism of the worse kind, favourable



to the manufacturers, who, by simply changing the ornament, were able to follow all the phases of modern art.

Happily, the architects began to bestir themselves. The sumptuous official buildings of the early nineties were useless to domestic architecture, though Wallot's influence must be gratefully acknowledged. The architecture of utilitarian buildings, on the other hand, says more for the possibility of a German metropolis. The works of Bruno Schmitz, Messel and Mohring were symptomatic expressions of Berlin's individual character, in its natural growth, not its artistic development. Berlin pure and simple, the city of bank directors and engineers, would not be amiss. The distressing aspect of Berlin is its mixture of crusader and bank director. The spirit of opposition which Berlin manifests<sup>j</sup> and must manifest, is only valuable as impulsion ; were it otherwise, we might accept the paradox, that the present Emperor has done more for art than all his predecessors, because he has opposed it so strenuously that the most implacable political opponents in the Reichstag have clasped hands over the question. But if such impulsions never achieve a quiet solution, all they bring about is chatter on both sides, a policy of words and emotions, behind which the object of the dispute sinks into the shade. Thus in Germany all we produce are symptoms, a crusader's

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castle side by side with a modern house, and generally there are two or three symptoms of the Middle Ages to every one of modern times. With such, one can build houses, but not streets, nor towns, still less that organic sense of civilisation, culture. All the more should we value those who strive for unity, who do not use their art to advertise themselves as loudly as possible, but desire repose.

To these few belongs the latest North German artist who has returned from Munich : Peter Behrens. He seems to me typical of the development of the last few years, less as the author of tangible works " he has lacked opportunity for these hitherto " than as a vigorous agitator for non-revolutionary art. He began in Munich, producing pictures with large lines, which aimed at the expression of solemn dignity, without degenerating into commonplace. Behrens took part in the Darmstadt experiment, and came out of it more successfully than any of his comrades, because he not only designed an agreeable house, but put into it some suggestion of an agreeable householder. His work proclaimed, not the eccentric artist, but the concentrated individual. Though he had an ungrateful task at the Turin Exhibition, where the small German entrance hall with the fountain fell to his share, he made a dignified interior, the gravity of which contrasted very favourably with the many audacious pranks played at this exhibition. He learned from the Viennese the rational part of their system, to treat simple things simply,

but retained his North German nature, the instinct that there are other things to toil for than chairs and tables.

Generations soon come to maturity in these days. The worthy Naturalists took a lifetime and all their art, and finally achieved the consummation of making good chairs and tables. The danger is lest, at the end of this development, they should think themselves in possession of culture. There is nothing more treacherous than this cheap self-satisfaction. Our youngest generation needs neither the long detour nor all the superfluous speech. I have never seen a more attractive dwelling than Heymel's house at Munich, built by Schroder with the help of Dtlfer and Vogeler, and, above all, with taste.

What said the youthful Goethe ? " They try to make you believe that the origin of the fine arts was the natural tendency we are supposed to have to beautify the objects around us. This is not true ; for in the sense in which it might be true, the citizen and the workman may use the words, but not the philosopher."

It is no more true to-day in the sense in which it is current. For the much-praised sincerity of our new furniture does not show us the great achievement of conscience which we call style. It says as little of the value of art as the praise of honesty says of the value of a man, and they who insist upon it are always poor creatures.

Our epoch contains more important things. They are so familiar to every one at present, that they are hardly recognised as style. Our grandsons will say two things of our age : that it had a proud art, which was above it, a conscience of which it knew nothing ; and that it acquired an industry, a new grandiose means of subsistence, in which it did not dare to rejoice. It will be the part of our grandsons to amalgamate the two. Our own efforts threaten but to injure either the one or the other.

THE END

BRUNO PAUL. DRAWING FROM " SIMPLIZISSIMUS."

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