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The *DIAL*

edited by
CHAS SHANNON
& Ricketts



THE FIRST NUMBER of THE SERIES

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THE DIAL. No. I.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

- AA. Illustration to THE GREAT WORM. Lithograph
designed by C. Ricketts. . . Executed by M. and N. Hanhart.
AB. RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL. C. H. Shannon.
AC. THE MIRACLE OF THE ROSES. Reginald Savage.
AD. THE QUEEN OF SHEBA (after a pastel). . . . C. H. Shannon.
AE. Illustration to THE GREAT WORM. Etched
by C. Ricketts.
AF. Illustration to A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN. . . . C. H. Shannon.
AG. CIRCE THE ENCHANTRESS (after a watercolour). C. H. Shannon.

The -cover, initials, and tail pieces are designed by C. Ricketts.
The cover is engraved by C. H. Shannon.

This number is published by C. H. Shannon, The Vale, King's
Road, Chelsea, S.W., from whom copies can be obtained ; price seven
shillings and sixpence.





PUVIS DE CHAVANNES.



Past works have long since had their shortcomings pointed out by every magazine. This is very gratifying. Frank and interesting workers of later days have each HIS shortcomings duly filed against him.

Individual rendering in a decorative form, whether in line or colour, is daily disappearing—in the name of France! humanity in the workmanship, called technique, is abandoned—in the name of France! and the very interest in an object that moves the artist to its expression has gone—also in the name of France!

I have never understood how this has come about: Why France, so busy in reconstructing and beautifying her public buildings with the remembrance of her past; striving with chisel and brush to give expression to her active present, should, in the face of so much earnestly directed energy, create a school of NO-INTEREST; why rumours are abroad that certain phases of modern life only are artistic, that a silhouette is unnecessary, and personality in the rendering impertinent.

We usually ignore, or at best, dislike, what is new until it has ceased to be so. We have had scarcely any statuary; have never dreamed of mural decoration. On these subjects we are therefore uninformed, our attention going into other channels; and a few months' stay in an atelier, with its blatant voyouism, is not the place in which to gather the necessary information. In casual reviews on important artistic events, half-facts are stated quite naively, and with too frequent inaccuracies in mere names. So Puvis de Chavannes is, to some, a wicked impressionist; to others, a

mere decorator, a name on Salon committees ; and, generally, with few exceptions, a somebody once vaguely heard of. I can recall only a few honestly catalogued statements referring to him, and one intelligent, really sympathetic, review ; that by Mr. Claude Phillips. The article in question leaves little to be said, save on the possible influence of this great artist. I would, therefore, separately analyse his characteristics and tendencies, which have influenced such strikingly original workers as Bastien-Lepage, Cazin, Besnard, Renan. Though it is no easy task to describe qualities so magnetic, so widespeading in their simple sweetness, so largely human.

Puvis de Chavannes' greatest claim is the positive establishing, I may almost say, conscious discovery, of man's position relatively to his natural surroundings. With the Renaissance, man and human interest filled the given frame, and decorative space was divided to that end. The middle Venetian school has to a great extent been bound to religious portraiture, and its frequently low and false perspective is due to the works, as altar pieces, being literally looked up to. This mistake has clung to all subsequent art. The ponderous schools of historic painting, full of crammed nothingness, influenced garrulous genre. Increased space was utilised for introduction of more figures, and all largeness and dignity was lost. Art became smaller, more incidental, stupidly prolix ; and complying strictly with venerable mistakes, was utterly void of that personality one finds in the largest decoration, or the smallest portrait, by an old master. The decorative blot belonging to the early simple works was lost ; the clamorous crew of landscape artists made its rediscovery seem impossible ; yet with one earnest, almost inarticulate artist, himself little more than a landscape painter, lingered the possible germ. Looking naively on what he saw, man seemed a silhouette bathed in space, pathetic by his very humbleness. I refer to Jean François Millet.

Courbet, with his powerful hand and clear-seeing eye, painted on a canvas till he came to the edges. (This extreme was also of use.)

Puvis de Chavannes, almost contemporary with these, was from the first an old master ; from the first had discovered the simplicity of natural beauty, was widening his horizons ; and when at last, after seven years' refusal, admitted to the Salon, at once gave us his large and tender poems, becoming more and more local every year, touching us more nearly by their aspect more northern ; showing eloquently the dignity of simple daily actions, and in their large surfaces, the truth and decorative value of the sky, knitting man to the ground to which he belongs.

Rapt by the beauty, the supreme truth of the whole, one first feels, then sees, the actions he has drawn. One is touched by their naturalness ; the feeling with which he treats his horizons ; the broidery of simple leaves in space ; the silhouette of tree trunks, of figures in action ; the sweetness of homely weeds upon the ground, and wild flowers growing timidly, as they do in fields.

His large human poems, "Peace," "War," "Work," "Repose," and "Sleep" are not works of NO-INTEREST. Large in actual surface, highly decorative in effect, they certainly do not preach the absence of silhouette. But by it seize and fix the attention.

I have never been able to account for the apparent apathy in England towards Puvis de Chavannes, that I have already remarked. Men influenced by him have, when known, been accepted; and, unlike some other great Frenchmen, he has exhibited in Salons. It is pathetic to see the well-informed, the man well versed in all our artistic shortcomings, eloquent on the largeness and naivety of great work, overawed by the blaring orientalisms the Salon exhibits annually, the technical accomplishment of underbred "stuff"; and overlooking the tender poetic work annually sent there, reflecting, though with most original treatment, some of the qualities of Puvis de Chavannes; even overlooking the master himself, as he tells, in language of his own, of the loveableness of woman, the pathetic charm of extreme youth, and the voice of tree and stream.

It perplexes me that the strange harmony, silver in colour, of his larger works has not fixed itself in the mind of the most casual observer, at least as something to dislike. For every Englishman is born, not only with an ideal Shakesperian Hamlet, but also with an eye sensitive to Venetian colour, contrived nowadays by a judicious mixture of brown and pink.

Puvis de Chavannes has discarded brown altogether, and all other clumsy tone mediums; nor has he been initiated into the saving advantages of realistic grey. His figures touch the impressionist way of seeing, being frankly lit up by the enveloping atmosphere, and controlled in modelling and tone by the form and colour of their surroundings.

Usually situated in a clearer atmosphere than our own, blue and lilac predominate in his compositions. I have heard people allege this as a reproach, as if in those two colours no harmony were possible, because they are blue and lilac. It probably never occurred to such that here might be a new truth; that the lilac chord, a very late one to develop, may be what is generally called grey (commonly something between brown and yellow).

His harmonising influence has done much to modify impressionism, so called, and shows how to apply many of its truths without destroying the texture of each object into the appearance of an Axminster carpet.

I think he best, or, at all events, most distinctly, illustrates his tact, in the arrangement of his smaller works; where the eye, thrown on a limited space, sees the ground as the dominant compositional quantity, and not the sky, which plays such an important part in the construction of his larger. The French public, having been taught the greater rarity of his wall decorations, is strangely blind to these. No English gallery would be prepared to give wall-space to what would get rid of so much gold framing, and these smaller works bear more distinctly on what may

be considered art in England. Thick and assuming the appearance of fresco elsewhere, the earnest naivety of his brushwork is easier to follow in these works, floating lightly within an undisguised contour, pausing tremulously on a plant, touching with a line or two a form to be accentuated.

Above all things anxious to keep the music belonging to each picture, Puvis de Chavannes avoids the twist-of-wrist, process-like cleanliness we are taught to consider French technique.

With the vividness of a larger work, he shows us Orpheus weeping Eurydice, his laurels torn, as his fingers linger expressively on his lyre; the "Pauvre Pecheur" earnestly working, half at prayer, in simple landscape sweet with tiny flowers, among which play his children. Or, again, it is "Hope," strangely frail in her hesitating youthfulness, holding the oak-twig she has plucked from a tomb, in strange weird surroundings of ruin and cross-crowned tumuli.

In the handling, his works are diametrically opposed to those of our English Preraphaelites. While THEY explain their emotions, glazing actual pieces of magnetism in the minute rendering of each part, HIS poetic instincts lead him to a synthetic treatment. Yet both kinds of work are eminently emotional, based alike on love of nature.

(To be continued.)

A SIMPLE STORY.



HAD risen earlier than usual, for this was the long-expected day when the Holy Father Hilarion would stop and bless her hearth. With him her son Felix, whom it had pleased God to make a priest.

A wreath of polished ivy leaves made the door quite bright. The floor was fresh-strewn with rushes and sweet-smelling herbs; the roughly-hewn table stained red; a cross painted in red above the hearth, and by its foot a trimmed lamp placed. All this in honour of the Holy Father and her dear son, both now on their way to the Seven Isles, to bless and baptise there in the

name of God.

Her eyes swelled with tears of pride, though she found so many matters to attend to. She bustled the two girls, Matilda and Basine, and her tearful face grew flushed over the wheaten cakes that would not bake. Those wheaten cakes still flat! and the Holy Father so near and probably so hungry!

The morning was radiant; something sang in the tangled hedge, something sang in the pale blue sky; these she did not heed, the cakes destroyed the smell of the fresh earth. Her wrath boiled over when Basine upset a precious earthen jar, and buried in her hands a crying head decked with yellow flowers. She had not noticed that before; yellow flowers in her yellow hair! and so much to do! She bustled the girls still more—sat down to moan with despair. She became

still more tearful and active when the village people began to stir, to walk up to the hill-top and shade their eyes with their hands, waiting for the Holy Father. The sheep, still penned, thrust out perplexed and bleating heads, wondering when they would be led to pasture; the dogs were as active as Batilda. Young men congregated about the tall elm near the stream. Every one looked anxious, and their little brother ran backwards and forwards, distracting the two crazy girls with the news that the Holy Father had not yet come.

The sky grew paler, the pale green sea turned silver towards noon, and still no Holy Father. Everything had been ready some time, but Batilda still fretted, bustling the two girls for talking to everyone who came to see the wonderfully clean room, with the pretty ivy wreath, always with the question, Had the Holy Father come? so futile, since they knew as well as she did that he had not. The men put up with cold porridges without the usual lordly complaints, the excitement had been so great. Batilda stood robed in washed clothes, fretful but full of pride. The crowd on the hill-top stirred; her little boy ran down to say, There is a mule with brother Felix by it, and the Holy Father on top of the mule. Batilda wept with joy. People left their straw and clay covered huts. Radegond and her daughter ran past in blue robes, crying Batilda! Batilda! will you not come to meet the Holy Father? There were women who had time to think of blue gowns with fringes; they had not been up before the day to work for the Holy Father. The two crazy girls turned pale with excitement when Hilarion appeared, surrounded by the whole village out to welcome him; the aged dropped on their knees at their doors as he passed. After three hours' suspense and despair, the cakes had baked as if by a miracle—how tall and handsome her boy Felix had grown! how like a saint he looked, supporting with his arm the Holy Father! how proud her husband would have been could he only have lived! She sank on her knees under the blessing of the Bishop, and her heart sang like the little black speck singing ecstatically, almost at the throne of God, lost in the pale blue sky.

The whole village of course flocked round. Some began to pray very audibly to make up for the five years since the Father last came. Little children were pushed forward; children with little square faces, pale blue eyes, hair almost the colour of their blonde flesh. Some hung back tearfully, frightened at their fathers beckoning solemnly to them; some kept their fists doubled in their eyes; but most looked frankly at the Bishop, with legs firmly apart and little bellies in dignified prominence.

The red table had been spread by active hands, with fresh porridge, baked fish, cakes, milk and tender herbs. Batilda almost wished to push the Bishop in at the door, so slow was he to enter, recognising this old man, that decrepit old woman, gutturally venting in holy exclamations. People now came forward with cheeses and shell-fish. The cows lowed as the frothing milk was brought from the stables by children who stopped obstinately at the door. As if she meant to starve the Holy

Father! Stupid Basine was weeping for her sins, but Matilda laughed loudly as she sent people from the door, which grew more and more obstructed. Even the wicked Nazie, the one-eyed shepherd, was there, with his wicked dog, the terror of all the children. Young men pushed the children away, and stared sheepishly, their huge hands and arms hanging heavily at their sides. The Father would eat scarcely anything, nodding kindly to the crowd that looked almost alarmed each time he did so. Both the crazy girls now laughed loudly, pushing the people away. Batilda, shocked, wished to close the door; the very dogs would be coming in next! The Bishop, however, had finished with "those excellent cakes" as he called them.—Could a man eat so little?—He motioned the foremost of the crowd to come forward. All swayed nervously, so he rose and spoke kindly to them. There were two couples to marry and their little children to baptise; three quarrels to arbitrate, and much kindness to teach. Though it was broad daylight, Batilda lit the lamp and placed it near him. Felix stood solemnly by, like a bishop; he could not think of his mother only. The day advanced. People had come on mules from the hamlets. The Holy Father had stepped out on the common to speak to all; to console and chide. He spoke at length of a father in his home, told them that you must not move boundary stones in the night, nor strike a neighbour in a dark road because he had taken your corn from the big common granary (where the wheat stood in jars under a roof of rushes). He spoke of God's goodness in sending leaves and fruits every year, in putting fish in the waters. As he spoke he looked at the sky, becoming coloured with lovely clouds; some birds flew across it, and he almost wept, thinking if only the Holy Ghost might fly down to him with flaming wings.

Felix was to tarry the night with his mother, and join the Father next day in the Isles. The sea was becoming golden, golden as the sky. He still spoke to them, while Radegond in her blue robes sobbed audibly. Loic the sailor was ready; his boat looked black against the yellow sea; he would get the holy man across before sundown.

The crowd was dense around the Father; women holding dazed children to be blest; children dazed at seeing their parents weep, and smaller children washed by the Bishop. Radegond gave little moans, which the women took up with interest as the Father neared the beach, the sun shining in his eyes. When he turned towards them the sun flamed like a halo round his sparsely-locked head. Footsteps clattered on the beach, and the water gently lapped, lapped in golden ripples lined with green. The Father entered the boat, which had been bowing solemnly to him, and stood against the sun—Peace be with you—he bowed three times in the names of the three spirits. Men shoved away the boat. Some one came too late, rattling down the beach, to see the Bishop. The crowd, swaying with wistful faces, felt something was leaving them,—Peace be with you—he raised his hand and bent fingers. Some women went on their knees; the men still stood in the water. He

blessed them again; they waded further, making large glittering circles, flashing with blue and green.—Peace be with you—they waded still further, while the oars beat rhythmically, slowly drowning his voice. He stood up, his arms outstretched like a cross, still blessing them, till he was lost against the sail. Two or three swam out a short distance. The boat now looked like a bird flying towards the violet horizon, where stood the Seven Isles.

CHAS. H. SHANNON.



LES GONCOURT.



was great work more destitute of charm for the vulgar than that of MM. Edmond and Jules de Goncourt. To the few, to artists in fact, their studies, aphorisms, epithets, are exquisite beyond praise; but by no effort can they prevail upon the applauding public to perform its proper functions. For the multitude they are far too mature. Working upon a formula still young, broad work was necessary in order to be generally appreciated. If Zola found it so great a task to force his way, shouting through the main thoroughfares in the language of the trottoir; smiting with heavy fists the heads insensible to any other influence, where shall MM. de Goncourt be found? With every quality so fresh, so rare, words so daintily chosen and attuned, small wonder they make mediocrity nervous and irascible. It takes the mass of people whole decades to get rid of habitudes once thoroughly acquired; and we must not forget that while readers of the *XIXth Century*, frequenters of artistic salons, and those who go to supper with leading men of science, are in the year 1889, people on the outer edges of culture circles are beginning to recommend George Eliot to their young friends, talking about Millet in subdued voices, and quoting the Duke of Argyll on the theory of evolution.

But though their work is appreciated, however warmly, by comparatively few only, its indirect influence can already be widely traced. It has shown the present

generation of realists most unmistakably that there is no salvation in a formula. Work great in itself is helped by being erected upon a sound scientific basis; it has better chances of being understood if it rests upon a foundation consistent with the spirit of its time; but poor, it gains nothing from the advantage in question.

The artist is always an abnormal creature, a being with an over-developed brain, or diseased nerves, as some express it. As specially distinguished from the literary grocer, he cannot choose but give his own personality in his work. His greatness is in the insight that discovers new motives, and in the earnestness with which he carries them out. It is quite the rule that the really great only gain their place after fierce struggling; for apart from the actual work, they have to create a taste for it, a task generally tedious in proportion to its worth.

If the Goncourts not only announce, but also give effect to, their intention to war with conventionality, no exception will be made in their case, that those whose united tastes and opinions makes conventionality should be defeated at the challenge only—on the contrary.

Documentary fiction is now accepted. The real thing, and variously pretentious imitations of it, are even fashionable. The realist, as we sometimes call him, is sent out to tell us what he sees and hears and feels, but the commission includes authority to select at his discretion. Now the peculiar temperament of the Goncourt personality, its passion for the choice, the rare, makes it produce results too strange. Though they believed strongly in the far superior value of the actually seen and felt, their particular predilections sometimes came in to defeat the immediate purpose, when they reproduced what they, and but a very few similar temperaments, feel and see. I do not mean to say that they exaggerate. Where there is unusual insistence over trivialities, it is merely nature seen by two exceptional organisms of peculiarly rare culture. What they give us is, as a rule, intelligible to any sentient being, which is enough; for writings all of nerve are not for readers made all of gristle.

When we know their aims, how could we remain apathetic towards their work? Understood that the description of some actual scene is preferable to that of one purely imaginary or faintly remembered; agreed that a study of some individual dustman has a higher artistic value than a character composed of the second-hand sentiments of a dozen Christian gentlemen, they carry the superior aim in each case a little farther than it has been carried before. Developing in a direction different from that Zola and Balzac have taken, they do not care so much to include a great variety of types as to exhaustively study a few. So closely is the specimen examined, that the description rendered seems fanciful to the superficial. And for figures so patiently observed, so exquisitely drawn, their artistic minds demand equally perfect environments.

How they manage their still life! The whole art with which they arranged backgrounds and accessories was largely their own invention.

True, the revolt against conventional artistic surroundings was already begun elsewhere. Some of the best English art, for instance (the Preraphaelite work affords a notable example), had been strongly characterised by its freedom from the trammels of tradition. At the present moment, alas! the movement seems to have died down in our midst, and when it returns it will be through France. In moments of supreme emotion, a trivial or irrelevant fact, a strange shape, an unexpected sound, have a value the artist cannot afford to neglect. If the Goncourts were not the first to discover this principle, at all events no one hitherto has so thoroughly understood and consciously applied it as they.

By the judicious use of apparently accidental surroundings, and, secondarily, of epithets quite fit, touching the very essence of the thing described, they sought to retain about an incident precisely those details the absence of which usually distinguishes a description from the recollection of an event. And with what success! Certain of their scenes seem to throb with the very emotion proper to them; that, for instance, where Germinie sits immobile in her room watching the hands of the dispassionate cou-cou, so deliberate in its utterance to-night. Quite a detail in *Chérie*; the mother is tending the last hours of her soldier husband in some fetid shed, where, from beneath blankets thrown over corpses, rats dart with bloody whiskers. All war in one swift phrase.

The Goncourts saw clearly how poverty-stricken was the contemporary novel; and their dream was, no doubt, that the obvious superiority of *their* work would, as soon as it appeared, hurry them to a high seat of honour. Their reception by the public was at first almost favourable; early historical works are praised in a guarded way. Their first novel, published by an ill-chance on the morning of the Coup d'Etat, was entirely overlooked. Then frank hostility met every succeeding volume, until "*Manette Salomon*," when the sudden change of attitude on the part of the critics might very well have persuaded them that patient persistence had overcome their opponents, and that at last they had arrived. But if they suffered the illusion, how brief it was! At the theatre their experience was very similar. To get "*Henriette Maréchal*" requested for the *Française* looked like unmixed appreciation of their talents; but, the great day of its production arrived, the gallery is filled with shrieking students, assembled by circular to hoot the play before the rising of the curtain; it being alleged that it is only put on through Imperial patronage. The brilliancy, the originality of the first act (it is not worth while adding, the grace of the arrangement, the swiftness of the dialogue) fail to shame the supporters of the cruel conspiracy, who patiently yell until the piece is withdrawn. Immediately afterwards the printed play sells phenomenally.

One sees very clearly the reason of their being hissed one day and bought the next, congratulated in the salons, and spit at in the journals.

The fact is, the more enlightened of the critics could not with any conscience at once defer to the popular opinion; and perhaps the herd at first thought that the originality of the Goncourts was of that specious kind with which the lover of the commonplace likes to be tickled occasionally. But soon, when their seriousness is doubted by no one, when the vulgar find that these authors absolutely refuse to flatter and soothe, the vote of the majority takes effect. No; this sort of thing cannot be tolerated a moment! Life is stern enough as it is; we want the sugary, the ideal, in our scanty leisure. Why these descriptions, so accurate, so irresistible? Who wants to be wrung with another's agony? Unpleasant! Nauseating!

And what shall we, we English, say? we the chosen? we who understand so well that a book, to be good, must recount a series of good actions? we who like the shadow thrown across the hero's path only for the pleasure of seeing it swept away again? who feel impatient if the wedding is delayed? Germinie Lacerteux stayed out late at night? stole from her mistress? Manette Salomon was not married to Coriolis? Put it away! put it away! Dear me! if Freddy should get hold of it! Shocking blemishes, happily so soon discovered. Let us beware of the glittering poison.

To more intelligent people in England they give the same impression as, now, to the corresponding class in France; except perhaps that the English aversion to the exotic is stronger than the French. The concentration, the devotion to the subject, that enables the Goncourts to impart to the reader's nerves the smart of the pain they describe, is condemned, because it is "unpleasant," with more persistence here than there. For the French can certainly claim a higher average artistic intelligence than we, in that at least some appreciable proportion of them understand the phrase "art for art's sake."

Beyond their mere literary achievements, we owe them much. It was they who discovered the youthfulness in the art of the last century; a truth yet to reach us.

Then theirs was the appreciative discovery of the art of Japan, which has so improved the best modern art; has helped us out of our artificial horizons, the conceited tameness of our landscape; has shown us the surprise, the instantaneousness, of action; taught us the great value of blank space, and what a large motive the surface itself can be in the decoration of material.

The example is an unique one, of literary men influencing the manner of seeing, not thinking, of contemporary painters. As opposed to it, see how the German literature has dragged the whole German school into their ponderous pictorial tracts and sermons. It is true they had an advantage in the possession of no ordinary graphic skill; but compared with their contemporaries, the impartiality of their eyes is simply marvellous. The artistic penetration displayed in "Manette Salomon" astonishes us in this year of grace 1889; and it must be remembered

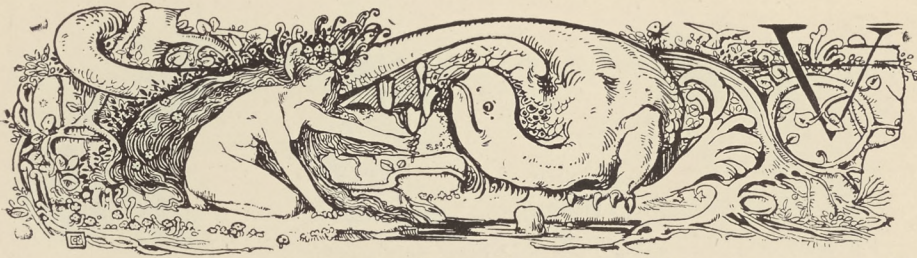
that when it was written the mass of French art seemed devoted to a pleasant "officialism," exhausted with the previous efforts of romanticism, while the tenets of the school of Barbizon had drifted into a mannerism for Goupil.

Rising from realism merely, they seem at some moment to have definitely chosen for their task the study of woman. If we know them at all intimately, we can imagine how the rarity of the undertaking (as they undertook it), and the greater complexity of the feminine nature, would have allured those who said, "Where woman is a masterpiece she is the greatest *objêt d'art*. To the time of Jules' death they had drawn *Sœur Philomèle*, *Renée Mauperin*, *Germinie*, *Manette*, *Madame Gervaisais*. Years afterwards, when Edmond again writes, it seems as if he is only impelled by a desire to make a plunge while any force remains in him, to complete a series of portraits planned long since; for he gives us *La Faustin*, *La fille Elisa*, *Chérie*.

Besides their admirable studies of historic women, which cannot here be noticed, what a gallery their fiction affords! The devoted hospital nurse; the robust *Renée*; *Germinie*, a triumph of psychological analysis; the terrible Jewess; *Madame Gervaisais*, whose femininity is for a time obscured in learned pursuits, but afterwards asserts itself in Rome, the seat of learning and art, but also of the Christian religion; the superb list finishing with the most audaciously rare (I do not mean the best) of all in its ambitiousness, the short life of the young mondaine, granddaughter of Napoleon III.'s War Minister, *Chérie*.

JOHN GRAY.

THE GREAT WORM.



affected beast that he was, the great worm lived in quite the sort of place where one would have gone to look for him,

somewhere in the belly of one of those mountain ranges in Central Asia, with a name as ragged as its silhouette. When taking exercise, his manner was to climb, rather than walk, along the ground, in undisguised worm fashion, when to a distant observer it seemed that not only was his skin loose from his muscles, but that his four short crooked legs and his two little wings were stuck about his body quite promiscuously. He was perfectly satisfied with his natural colours—white and gold—nor did the vain ambition to be painted green like other worms even so much as enter his head. He did not snort lightning, and none but honeyed words ever left his gentle lips.

He came into the city one day, choosing his steps most carefully, so as not to derange public edifices, and threading himself through triumphal arches with marvellous dexterity. He inquired his way to the palace; and, when he reached it, he found, as will readily be believed, that the entrance was too small to admit him. Not being pressed for time, he stretched himself out the full length of the terrace, with a part of his tail hanging over the battlements.

Meanwhile, the traffic of the city had adroitly diverted itself into the suburbs.

When the worm had lain some time without any special manifestation, one of the doorkeepers of the palace, acting under orders which he obeyed implicitly out of deference to the military spirit of his age, galloped up to his ear and asked, What does my lord require? The worm took no notice of the doorkeeper, but continued to smile because of the warmth of the sun's rays. What do you want here? the horseman repeated in his other ear. He replied, without impatience, that he had called to see the prince, but as the doorway was not large enough for him to enter, he was going home again presently when he had warmed himself.

Whereupon, the horseman wheeled about and trotted into the palace, his lance, twenty feet long, quivering erect in the air.

Soon there was great din of brass and wailing of reeds; piercing screams, which were words of command, rang within the wall, to which noise was added the clatter of many hoofs. This demonstration, intended to impress the worm, was misjudged, for it might have been performed on his chest without disturbing him. At a distance from which one could get a general view of the visitor, layers of carpets were thrown down and unrolled one upon another until a comfortable surface was attained. Sunshades were then arranged to throw a deep shade upon a black velvet cushion streaked with gold, on which the prince was deposited, after the Chamberlain, with customary politeness, had scattered a few priceless diamonds upon it. The worm cast an occasional glance on these preparations from over his eyebrows, for he was lying on his back with the crown of his head towards them.

— Speak, worm! shouted an officer, thou gold worm!

— He isn't gold, remarked a philosopher.

— I come, he answered, my lord, to enlist in your royal armies.

— Yes, he is, only he's out of repair.

— Ah! Ha! is that so, you long animal, said the distinguished prince, as his vizier held his lorgnon in position. Ha! let me see—yes! he went on, as he was raised and supported over to the recruit. The worm still remained lying on his back, for he had an exceedingly long tongue, which enabled him to kiss the royal hand without altering position. The regulation suit of armour and supply of weapons for a private of the militia had meanwhile been brought; this blunder greatly incensed the prince, who had mentally appointed the worm commander-in-chief. In accordance with this decision he directed the supply of a silk-lined suit of armour, tested weapons, and a body of attendants to look after them. When the senior officers of the staff heard this order, their hair curled behind where their master could not observe it.

— Stay, though; would you prefer a horse or a camel, general? The worm hesitated to reply, for apart from the perplexity of the question, two rival recruiting sergeants on the far side of him were trying to elicit his age and whether he was married. Seeing his embarrassment, the prince explained that a horse wore the plume above his head, while a

camel wore it under his chin. Of course, the worm at once decided to have the former.

— Cough, said the surgeon-major.

— Ugh! Ugh!

— Ever had

— The medical officer, interrupted a philosopher, ought to know that the general could not have attained his present rank

— Ugh! Ugh!

— Ever had measles?

— Ugh! Ugh!

. . . . if he had not already answered these questions satisfactorily.

— Will the philosopher mind his own business?

— Is the carpenter in attendance? asked the prince, while the vizier obtruded the lorgnon for his master to scan the court.

— Ugh! Ugh! The horse was now led up, its shiny coat purple in the sun. The worm admired the strings of beads with which it was decorated, and the bridle straps crusted with gold. But oh, the plume! That was the best of all! So pleased indeed was he with it, that he begged one for his own wear.

— No, he ain't, whispered a philosopher.

— No, he isn't, I suppose you mean, answered the surgeon-major, in the tone of voice habitual to him when he thought of the gallows.

The medical officer was examining his ankle with a vexed countenance, as a scribe wrote out for the worm a coupon for the annual Grand-cross lottery by way of a quarter's salary in advance. This would have ended the formalities, had not the court poet found an opportunity to commence reciting the worm's military antecedents.

— Is that that man again? asked the prince; I abolish the office. The laureate ceased.

At this time, most of the tribes on the outskirts of the principality had already forgotten their allegiance, or but faintly remembered it. The prince thought, therefore, that he would send his new general marching round his dominions with an expedition, to freshen the memories of these subjects.

The worm found that he had scarcely to show himself to the first rebel he came across. The news of his march spread like overflowing water.

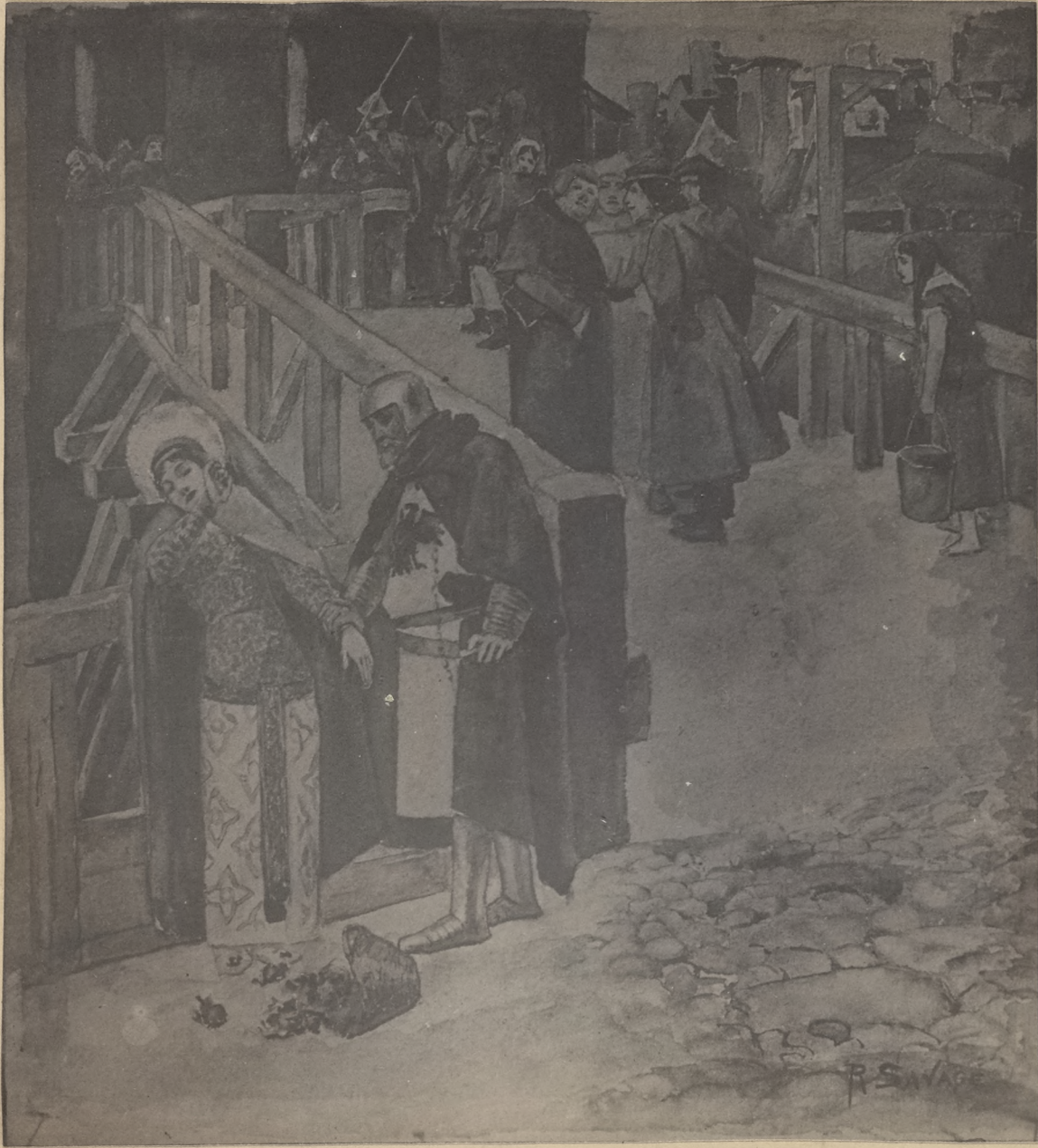
— An army of worms, said the panting messenger, is approaching!

— What colour?

— White, I think, with pink banners. And the news fled past, leaving the municipality to hurry home and prepare with all haste flattering memorials and presentation caskets of odious workmanship.

Then, when he arrived, a few days afterwards, the worm would find a head citizen shivering at the extremity of a strip of red carpet leading from the city gate beckoning to others within the walls, to come out and support him.





Thus the army left everywhere peace and order with its hoof-prints, daily growing deeper with the weight of presents the dromedaries had to bear.

— What is the name of the green city yonder? was a question that ran round the camp one morning. No one could tell. In fact, it had scarcely been sighted when white curtains dropped before it and obscured it from view. As the day advanced, the curtains were found to be composed of graceful white beings, for the vanguard saw them swing in the air, stand upright, stretching their arms and craning their necks to the sky, then sink again in repose. Where the white host parted its ranks, glimpses were caught of the superb details of the city, its columns of silver, domes of emerald, and minarets.

At length, when these white folk rose up and departed in sheets, like morning mist, went as he was to see living things fly at his approach, their disappearance caused the worm no surprise. He still preserved his steady oscillations, regular as the wheeze and thud of a steamer's engines, and so manipulated that his train could follow him without difficulty.

The soldiers thought to have reached their destination in a few hours; but at noon, when they threw themselves down on the ground for a halt, overcome with the fierce heat, the splendid city had faded to a milky blue, so like the colour of the sky that its contour could scarcely be traced.

The weary animals and men trudged on, scarcely hoping to reach the city that day, always watching the changing blue. It is a city of gold, said some. Its minarets are topped with amber. No, it is all of amber. But at evening no one doubted any longer; all saw plainly that the city was upheld by silver columns, trunks of the birch; its battlements, daring minarets in the shape of palms, towers like the cypress, domes like masses of foliage, golden all in the setting sun. Within, its streets were streams, and lilies grew along the roadside.

But, curious to say, not a soul was to be seen about. The worm began to fear he had pushed his conquering way too far; and that at last he was before a city whose inhabitants were not even interested in worms, far less afraid of them.

However, he drew his army up in line and banged all his cymbals, at which clouds of birds arose, screeching as they crossed and circled. Presently he saw come gliding out from the colonnade, a figure of silent whiteness. She passed over the rippled gold around the city, smoothly as her chariot upon the highways of the city. Her body had the undulations of a pod, ripe swollen to bursting; her breasts were like mounds under moonlit snow. Her hair, gold as corn at noon, was prodigal as a waterfall; and her eyes were like pansies. Her tiara, wrought of blue lichens and down of the night-moth, was crowned with dainty fronds. Straight she came to the general, gliding ever, gave him the flower she bore in her hands; then turned about and passed

away as she had appeared. The worm stuck the lily in one of the scales upon his breast, and briefly gave order for a camp to be pitched.

Strange sounds that night made the frightened soldiers start from sleep, and the pale sentinels saw their leader writhing round and round the city, ploughing deep furrows as he went; and heard him moaning in the cold moonlight—Why am I a worm?

Ah! it was too horrible; he remembered that he had been human.

Next day the march was resumed, but not many mornings from his departure from the city of the white child, the worm sank down, a corpse. And the lily upon his breast?—it had taken root there; and beads of his heart's blood smiled on every petal.

EPILOGUE.

A poet lay in a white garden of lilies, shaping the images of his fancy, as the river ran through his trailing hair.

But in his garden a long worm shook himself after sleep; forgotten his face like a pearl, his beautiful eyes like a snake's, his breathing hair—all. He had complete reminiscences of a worm, and sought the deserts and ravines the dragon loves.

JOHN GRAY.



A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN.



The night was dismal. Dismal! thought the lamps, as they shuddered in the cold.

The wind moaned with weariness, and flung the rain at the windows with a rattling sound as it went by, clutching desperately at the branches.

What misery it had seen! so had the lamps! they winked at each other; while the river sobbed and sobbed under the arches of the bridge.

People hurried by—somewhere—against the wind; the carriage lamps flashed; the mud, delighted, clung to your clothes to make you look to see how it glittered in the road. The street-lamps winked again, knowingly this time; what of the carriage-lamps and the mud? Do not *we* shine like stars? Is not each one of us the loadstone of a glittering snake, winding always passionately towards us, not in the mud forsooth, but in the river? They blushed with contempt, then shone forth again with a buzzing sound, to astonish the rain-drops on their panes; the wind moaned, and the river sobbed, with weariness.

A drunkard wept. What a lot of water! what a dismal night! Dismal! moaned the wind. Give us the money, he sobbed—the money, won't you? The money, he repeated, his eyes wandering towards the lamps. They blinked at him; he blinked too. The money, he thought, money, mon—— His little girl also thought of the

money. Could she get him home without having to give it him? She looked at the lamps, like her eyes, filled with rain; and the river murmured Money, money, round its basements.

No, decidedly it would be difficult. Father had taken to drinking to quench his sorrow since poor mother had gone. If she could only get him home! The wind laughed at this, rushed round a corner, wafting bad beer, bad spirit, as the doors of the public-house swung in the light, then hurried by.

How prettily the little drops glitter on the window-panes! Inside the ceiling is golden with light and gilding; it must be warm in there! Even the rain-drops thought so, for they flew to the windows and blinked, dazzled. She risked a look inside. No wonder poor father liked to be in there. Everything shone; lovely pink bottles, green bottles, gold bottles, and the bar was of silver.

He had taken the money; she knew he would. Ah, well! she would wait until he came out; he could not spend all *that*, and she might yet get something for the children. The wind rushed by, and plunged down a dark passage. The lamps felt it was colder, for they shuddered and looked blue. The brass-bound doors of the gin-palace swung lazily. Go home, little girl; go home, little girl. Ah! he was a long time.

The other side of the passage was more sheltered. She leant her head against the cool window. How nice everything looked! The walls were of a beautiful red, which it made you feel warm to look at. A clock went tic! tac! tic! tac! with a wreath of artificial flowers on its head; and how many nice things! shining hams, crimson sausages, jellies that trembled when you looked at them, golden pies, all trimmed with paper roses. Oh! it was most pretty.

How she would like to take some home! she would have some of this, then some of that; a little of this, not quite so much of that. Patty and Peggy were laughing when she brought the things to them; and perhaps she might get a paper rose with gilt leaves; she would put in on the mantelpiece under mamma's portrait, in which papa was standing by in new clothes. How bright it would look!

Perhaps if she went in and told the lady she would give her some nice things; she moved towards the door; or perhaps somebody would ask her what she would like to have; she looked at each passer-by hurrying on; even the wind hurried by without saying anything. It was a wretched night.

The lady in the shop had gold earrings, curls on her back, and she wore a grey dress trimmed with black velvet and little buckles. She looked into the street, not at the little girl; then she looked at the clock, and two ladies came in.

What a lot of things they bought and put under their aprons!

That little girl ain't overfed, said one lady, giving the child a mince pie. I don't like to see children starving, she added sententiously to the other lady, who looked hard at the little girl trying to say Thank you,

lady. But the wind flew by, and laughed round the corner ; it had seen so much charity in its time !

People had gone into Hengler's Circus. The shops shut up one by one, after the shopkeeper had stepped out to look inquiringly at the sky.

The street grew darker, darker ; and father was still there.

The wind had ceased, and the rain wept on the quieting town, till the little girl was soaked through and felt a little dizzy.

The almost empty street was exhaling the smell of soot that belongs to London mud when wetted. Here and there a solitary woman, covering her red hands in her ornamented ulster, turned her face anxiously towards the town. Footsteps sounded distinctly as each woman presented the same vague ulstered silhouette, walking in the rain—somewhere.

A train rattled and rumbled over a bridge into the night. A signal fell with a jerk. It was a long way home.

Patty and Peggy were asleep ; the room seemed damper and colder than outside. She would try to go to sleep if the cold did not prevent her. But—the room became bright with bursts of sunlight ; she heard the murmur of pleasant streams. How delicious the sunlight would be if her feet were not so cold ! She wrapt herself up as well as she could ; then the stains on the wall-paper became beautiful pictures of fields and hills and water ; the monotonous magenta roses shot out from the paper, waved themselves over her, nodding their heads, far more beautiful than those in the shop ; they opened, and filled the room with a passionate scent, sighing fragrantly for very voluptuousness. Then, in a shower of velvety petals glittering in the sunlight, they tickled her as they fell, making her laugh.

Ah ! what a beautiful dream it was ; and how kind of mere strangers to put her into a pretty box with bright nails, where she knew she could think of her beautiful dream for a long, long time, without being disturbed.

Some one knocked on the lid. Oh, dear me ! she thought, this must be the day of judgment ! She opened her eyes. There was an angel, brilliant as a rocket. You must come to heaven ! said the angel. To heaven ? To heaven ! nodded the angel. The little brass nails on the coffin looked wistfully at the angel. She was not ungrateful, oh, no ! but she had not counted on going there so soon. To heaven ! the angel said again, and the little girl felt herself far away from the pretty box. The pink morning clouds floated round them ; upwards they flew through sheets of gold, exquisitely tinted. Purple clouds swam by, trimmed with little glowing ones, shooting about, changing colour, rose, orange ; the clouds seemed to sing in her ears as she floated upwards. Upwards ! the planets smiled at her with delight, not like the street lamps ; and the stars peeped over each other's shoulders to look at the angel and the little girl. Upwards ! the clouds were left behind, and the world was only a speck of soot against the dazzling sun, like a floor of gold beneath you. We are in heaven, said the angel, and the little girl looked up.

Ah, no! she was not ungrateful, but she had not thought of going to heaven so soon; though it did seem so beautiful, you can't think! She looked at the angel, who pointed out to her the colours that are sent to the flowers, and washed her eyes with liquid light, that she might see everything more distinctly. Angels hovered round, and looked into her eyes; she felt lighter; they placed a star on her heart, and each angel kissed her. Everything was so lovely; everybody was so kind. If only Patty and Peggy could have some of the stars! But what is that shining over there, she asked, like a sea of light, with waves of light that make you shine when you look at it? The Almighty, the angel said softly, and smiled. The sea now burned so brightly that the angel became wan, and looked like a violet mist. The Almighty spoke to the little girl.

The Voice thrilled her; It rolled in wells of unutterable tenderness, more beautiful far than the sweet, swelling music she had heard in a church, when a plate was handed round by a fine gentleman. She closed her eyes, and forgot all about the beautiful dream and the pretty box. No, she was not ungrateful; she courtesied very carefully, but—what should she call Him?—but poor mamma left us, and Patty and Peggy are alone, for poor papa since her death drinks to quench his sorrow, and there is a little rice in the cupboard, and a little sugar; she courtesied again; they will both cry without me to give it them and tell them a story; there will scarcely be enough for both without a story. I could not forget all about this if I heard them cry, now I am in heaven, because of their hunger. If I may—she did not dare courtesy again—might I go back again, only for a short time, to see all is right? for I don't know what they or poor papa will do without me. The Lord smiled, and she became a lily, blue, the colour of mercy, with leaves of violet. He kissed her and put her about His throne with the flowers whose beauty form the veil of light that surrounds Him. And each heart-shaped petal in its fragrance murmured, Peace! peace! peace!

C. RICKETTS.



NOTES.

Any mention of the quiet failure of the Théâtre Libre in London would interfere with an article on M. Antoine and his theatre, shortly to appear. The ahurissement of the audiences was comic to behold ; the expressions of awkward ennui, of mistrust, spoke the complete lack of sympathy they felt with the aims of this earnest and original movement.

As I write, the Exposition des Vingt in Brussels is still open, but it shuts before this will be seen. Imagine a collection of such varied works of those of MM. Paul Dubois, Besnard, Fremiet, Rops, Rodin, Pissaro, such variety of aims and modes of expression in one English exhibition ! Imagine such appreciative catholicity to make it possible ! sufficient reverence for the conscious aims of different artists to make a combination so free from the narrowness of cliques, the bigoted aims of those whose privilege it is for the time being to guard the door !

The success of Mr. Stott's exhibition in Paris caused no small surprise, and it is but just to add that the artist stood the test bravely. If scarcely a thinker, or large in his sympathies, he displayed an earnest and manful wish to show what he feels, and escaped certain square-brush mannerisms so dear to some of our younger realists.

It is unnecessary to say anything of Mr. Seymour Hayden, one of those rare artists appreciated alike by his own cloth and the public. I would speak of Mr. Strang, destined to great things; one of those artists sufficiently out of date to keep his aims and his method in harmony and under control. If he is greatly indebted to Legros, he has not for the rest stooped to employ the technical means which are public property, but has shown a wide sympathy with the rarer masters, with Holbein, with Rembrandt, with Dürer, with Millet.

M. Degas does not himself exhibit this year at the New English Art Club, and M. Jacques Blanche is all but absent. There are two brilliant studies by Sargent, that varied and undulating artist, and exquisitenesses by Mr. Whistler.

Though M. Claude Monet's exhibition proved a shilling *trappe à bêtises* pour les bourgeois, it was a breath of fresh air, turning into snuff and treacle the pictures in the next room. I will not press the point that Monet's work is not so original as some English artists appear to think, but accede to the entreaty of the catalogue not to criticise the pictures too hastily, as they are *so* new.

In the Salon, M. Roll is bravely to the fore. It is curious to note the incapacity of the English to grasp the note this artist has struck, to follow his variety of subject, the genuine manliness that characterises everything he has laid his hand to, that variety of aim, enabling him to paint such deeply moving poems as his *War*, his *Work*, and like a real master, strengthen these works with vivid studies of the poetry of a back in sunlight, of living portraits standing in full light and atmosphere. I suppose these debar him, according to our English notions, from ever being a poet, and a poet in the highest sense.

Madame Cazin makes her appearance again. It is unnecessary to add that her picture is full of that charm, that perfume, so delightful, so rare.

M. Besnard once more shocks the public with the best picture in the Salon, a radiant piece of colour, of which it is difficult to convey an idea, with our deeply rooted conviction that good colour must be brown. This artist has for some time been startling the honest Salon walls with pictures full of a poetry of vision to be found elsewhere only in Turner. Besides the distinct *éblouissement* one feels before his canvases, the visible melody they emit, he has the exceptional gift of understanding that something rare that floats round a face, that something Da Vinci and Boticelli understood. I do not mean each work of his contains all these qualities, as well as the distinct and almost literary imagination he has displayed in larger works; this would actually destroy the oneness of each picture



which is his greatest trait, and enables him frankly to vary himself, and be genuine each time.

La Sirene is not valuable as a piece of literature, has nothing to do with the moral tract. A modern woman near some water, it is frankly visual, and yet possesses that poetry of vision, the painter's poetry par excellence, to such a degree that the impression left is a deeply moving one.

M. Dagnan Bouveret has won the Médaille d'Honneur, and few artists have better deserved it. Admirable in every detail, his quiet picture delights the art world after Lepage, as J. Breton delighted after Millet. Pages might be written to describe its excellent qualities, yet like all his works, this picture will not push art one step towards its future; it belongs simply to its time and the past.

M. Falguiere's *Juno*, though very graceful, is hardly worthy of him; it remains a sweet piece of colour and true painter's drawing, drawn with the brush.

One cannot praise too highly Uhde's tryptich, with its solemn homeliness and holiness. The bevy of children, tumbling about like bees, on the side wing, is very charming, but the whole work is a little too small for the artist's touch, which tells to greater advantage in larger works. The central panel is beyond praise.

M. Raffaelli's picture has the strange and piquant aroma that belongs to so much of his work.

The same thing may be said of M. Ary Renan's subtle contribution.

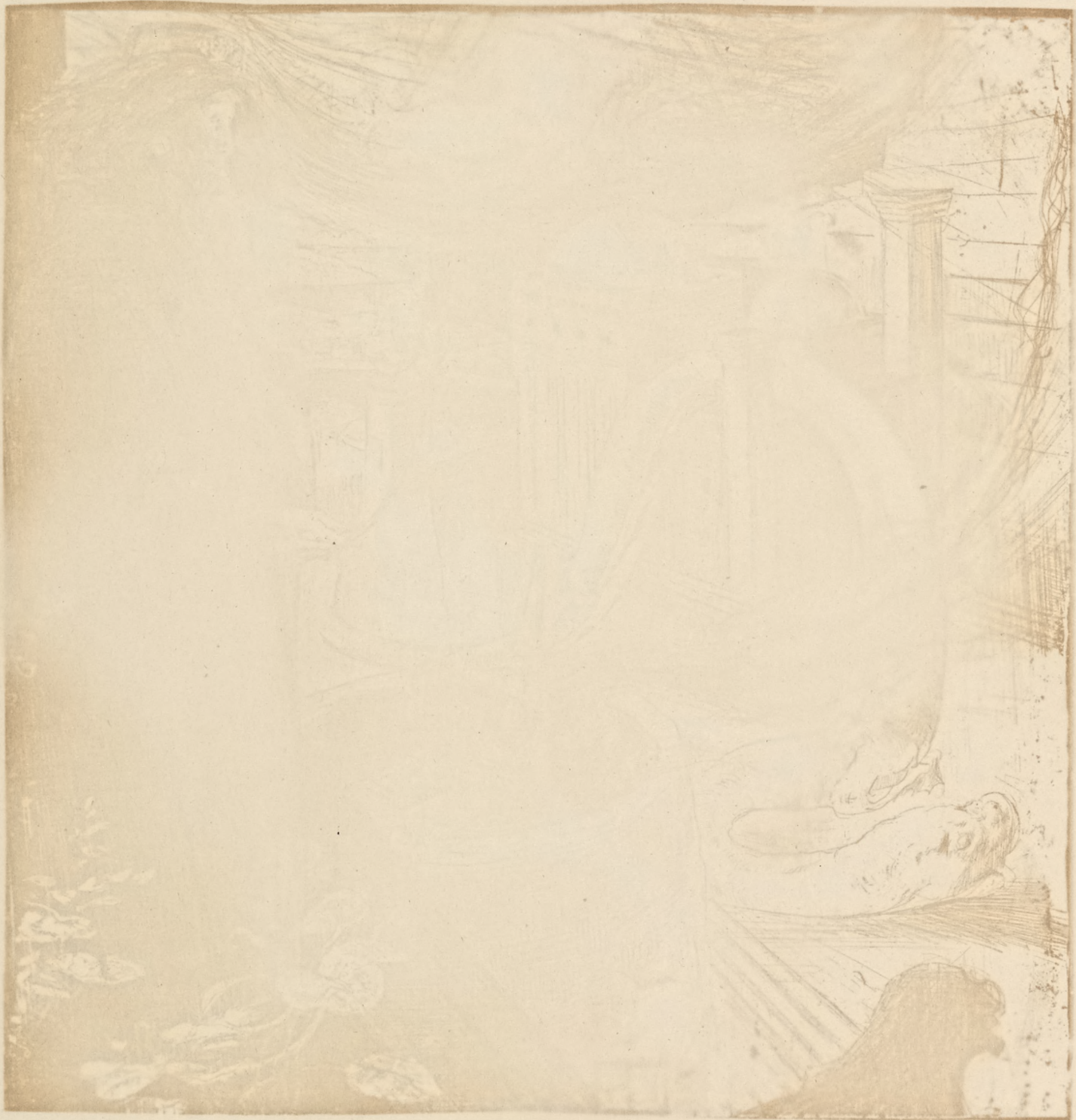
'Tis hard not to experience a slight feeling of disappointment before M. Falguiere's statue, and yet how to express that disappointment, when all he does displays such temperament? Has M. Fremiet improved his *Joan of Arc*? The original statue made such a deep impression on me that I can scarcely feel grateful for any alteration. The rumour of M. Albert Wolff's influence in the matter is almost an excuse for my sense of irritation. It is a thing to be deeply thankful for that we are not blessed with a M. Albert Wolff.

M. Dubois' *Joan of Arc* is very interesting. I feel great difficulty to follow his ideal of the heroine in this naive and strange little woman with her face like M. Dubois' exquisite *Faith*. My objection, I know, is outside the question, as the statue is, after all, M. Dubois'. I feel a slight sense of complication about it, and quite outside the superior originality of M. Fremiet's design, much prefer its energetic sense of oneness, the more ardent and square-jawed heroine.

Madame Besnard sends one of the sweetest things in the Salon, full of delicate things in modelling.

A new technical method infallibly contains, to the average artist, the secret which belongs to the admired past, and it is almost impossible to appear sincere in appreciating work quite obviously without this ease, this freedom, which is the last phase of artistic development. M. Christophle has no learnt graces; he is, in fact, a little dry, yet his statue kills the realistic knees and feet, the liquid workmanship that surrounds him. The poetry of conception, the genuinely manly poetry, is striking. His statue arrests you with its dramatic enigma, with its original and forcible lines; it throbs with intention and the impress of a human mind. All this the artist has done with a very old myth; and besides the technical side, in defiance of the newest theories that modern clothes alone give value to a work, the work is nothing if not modern.

R. SAVAGE.





THE CUP OF HAPPINESS.



THE sound rolls through the reddening air, the muffled *thum!* the *dumb!* of a monotonous drum. Lamps flash ruddily on gaudy pictures of the promised piece, The Giant and Maiden. Again 'tis the chart of the human frame flaming by lamp-light, with bright red veins, and liver a beautiful yellow. Shouting clowns hoarsely proclaim the virtues and cures of an elixir, a magic goblet; or lift the curtain to show the careworn princess in her tinsel and spangles. And drums are rolled.

Come in! Come in!

'Tis a trick; a dear old-world trick; and in my quality of clown, I pray you, let me rattle my bells, show my happy cup, or make each weary puppet walk before the crowd, shout, declare the oldness of my piece; for it is a play, and not a medicine after all, my Cup of Happiness; not an elixir, a cure for the liver; it is a farce, an old farce; I vouch to its age, for it was begun by Madam Thalia, when the world was still young, still a delightful green, the beautiful green of a newly-painted cupboard; but the play lasted too long, and has changed considerably since; however, do not hesitate, I vow the play is old, old as Comedy herself.

In a bright garden, near a rail, stands a strange statue, but bitten to death is La Comédie Humaine, and writhes behind her stone-white mask.

The muse laughed on ; so did the mask, grimly, growing heavy, too heavy. She danced with mad rapture, laughing shrilly, whilst her nervous hands, convulsed, clutched its grinning cheeks ; but the mask of stone laughed the more at this, growing heavy, heavier still. Then her agonized hands could hold it no longer, the mask fell to the ground and broke its nose.

The muse ? she vanished in a frenzied hickup, for all the world like the snapping string of a violin.

Since this the white mask has been shown, with its sunken eyes, its broken nose, and its hollow awful eternal laugh, with castagnettes rattled to an ominous tune, with exaggerated tibias.

Schumann, like many, once saw this mask, this fatal mask, and has sung of it, a sob that is sobbed with clenched hands, accompanied by the throbs of a beating heart—Warum.

But this song is older than father Schumann's song ; the swelling waves chant the older melody, a Warum more minor, but laugh ironically as they sweep from the beach, trimmed with rippling bubbles, inviting to their liquidness, to the secret of their song, Warum ?

How the water splashes and spreads, in grinning circles, if you fling it a stone. Is it a laugh ? No,—a sob ; for though rimmed with golden sands it is not a cup of happiness after all ; frankly, the water is sad.

You see it can think back for a considerable time, and since the breaking of the mask, so many things have changed.

Once the sweet and gracious lady Venus rose from its depths, through trails of these bright chiming bubbles, on dancing foam. The worlds of Gods and men went mad ; the stars danced, till they fell like drunken bees—hark ! the trees still groan, and the rivers moan !

Oh beautiful Lady Aphrodite Anadyomene ! mercifully wring the glittering drops from your flaming mane into my cup, my Cup of Happiness ; and for the sake of your beauty, I beseech you do not be dumb, and in plaster, with your eyes fixed afar on desolate Cnydos.

Ah, if my fancy, with exquisite tints, could quicken your limbs into supple life ! perhaps—who knows ?—you might tell me you are not Venus after all, but Eve, a Jewess ; and not wring balm from your splendid tresses.

Friends ! you will see all I say is old, an old tune, with orthodox Princess and Prince ; even an occasional, and quite accidental, virtue in the story is drawn as an initial. It was on a certain night when that virtue lost her head—but this is not quite true, as the play will show, for all virtues are Byzantine, and cannot bend their limbs.

As clown, I have shouted my talents, vaunted my magic goblet ; and if my young fingers pull too nervously and obviously at my puppet strings, know I am only a pleasant amateur, and not a poor devil ; let me laughingly rattle my fool's bells, my symbolical bells, shaped like happy cups reversed ; for all plays want bells, or the Warum song would continue monotonously throughout, till the veiled god of comedy, like



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that mythical old man at the theatre door, puts out the lights one by one, and shrouds most things with dusty covers ; for he is deaf to unlimited Warum songs, deaf even to the song of the crumbling and changing atoms,—so away with narrowing symbolism ! laugh ! and rattle the bells, not hung on a hyacinth sash as a prelude to a mystery—there is no mystery—I have pulled up the curtain.

BY WAY OF PROLOGUE.

The name of my prince is formed of the names of all the Cardinal Virtues, composed into an euphonic whole. The greatest care, the most loving pains, had been lavished on his education ; his bon mots were printed on pink paper by public subscription, trimmed with lace designed by the best artists only—yet he was not happy ! though the welfare of his kingdom could only be gauged by the literary degradation of his foreign neighbours, and public opinion had placed his portrait in the National Gallery as an old master—no, he was not happy.

He tossed, in his troubled sleep, on his orthodox and princely cushions, on a golden and orthodox couch ; he sighed in his painted chamber, the walls politely re-echoing his sighs, for they were painted with virtues each overcoming a dragon, each holding a hall-marked Cup of Happiness in tapering hands, each daintily curving the little finger in so doing.

The Cup of Happiness ! The Cup of Happiness ! groaned the prince, in his attempts to recall gems of modern poetry ; he suffered from insomnia, as should all well-bred and crowned heads, on cushions and couches of gold.

His princely eyes were dizzied with following the allegorical twist of the enamelled and painted dragons, mysterious in the moonlit room. Here glistened a gem, lighted by a gem, twinkling in the gray light that trickled down delicate tracings of incrustated silver, to flash in one vivid spot, where a virtue held an embossed cup beneath her face, wreathed with lingering light gliding round a contour. The faces smiled in the luminous gloom.

How his temples ached, as he clasped them with dissolving hands ! how the obstinate smile of one virtue haunted his brain ! Yea, in his very orthodox cushions.

She lingeringly moved her taper fingers round the rim of the cup, her eyes fixed on his, weaving circles of exquisite sound, distant, faint, but full of passion, like a bar from Lohengrin. ; round and round ; slowly, caressingly ; the web of visible melody floated from the golden rim. She poured a gummy liquid, opalescent at her touch ; it glowed, bubbled, throbbed, and rose passionately towards her ; now incandescent it sweeps through the prince's veins, dancing and seething there ; it bubbles round him, blending his being with its dazzling liquidness. The prince staggered to his feet, the cold floor electrified him ; he flung away his heavy wreath, heavy with a relentless and sickly scent.

The moonlight flowed on the veined pavement.

The breath of endless flowers was tossed towards him as from a censer, sickening him ; sickly was the colour of his royal robes, sickly the pavement reflecting the sinuous yellow folds gliding languidly on the glassy surface of polished steps.

The moonlight flowed on moon-coloured jade, slept in a dreamy haze on steps of jet, in a copper basin it melted among strange dreaming water-plants with fat buds.

The Prince feared he loathed all flowers, as he bathed his head with wetted hands, then flung himself on a grassy bank.

There swarmed small tribes in worlds of mosses, in worlds of lichen on tree trunks ; a moth flew by, brave with its symbols painted on its wings, its rainbows, its blood-coloured hearts.

The Cup of Happiness ! The Cup of Happiness !

The grasses sighed, and rolled, to the night air, full of that passionate murmur, the pulsing of the sap, the yearning lisp of the whispering leaves and rustle of heavy petals.

Something tinkled and trilled, ecstatically kissing soft mosses, and chiming through pebbles, to swim through lush stalks, where pined some melancholy toad, gasping a mournful, monotonous croak that made the drooping poppies swoon on their stalks. A flower hung near, shaped like an amorous mouth, a flower with lips ! He flung his slipper into a fragrant bush, and the rose petals fell in a mass, with the swish of a trailing robe.

The king felt sick, so he left his kingdom.

The orchestra rolls into a despairing wail. The curtain rises 'mid peals of thunder ; twisted trees sway to and fro in agony. In the foreground, filled with trailing thorns, beneath which crawl wicked snakes, croaks a raven. The sun sets lurid in the distance with extended and poetical rays. Now and again a faint flash of lightning shines fitfully at a side wing, near a palm-tree.

PALM-TREE.

Colophium, away ! you are singeing my leaves. I was painted by an Academician. You must strike that conceited Oak ; 'tis your part. I am a symbol of virtue.

LIGHTNING.

I flash where I am told, pitiful canvas. Do you not believe in Providence ? You have made me miss my thunder, which has rolled twice.

THUNDER (behind).

Silence there ! how came you in this scene ? Your place is in the next act. We are in an imaginative landscape.

Snakes hiss approvingly ; carrion birds, flying across the sun, cry, Away ! away ! On the other hand some Oak-trees in the background blame the levity of the Lightning, for a palm-tree is a palm-tree, etc., after all. The Lightning flashes again.

PALM-TREE.

Ugh! it has singed my paint. The world has turned atheist since I was young.

Gnarled roots and brambles writhe and clutch. A bird is caught by thorny branches to be devoured by a snake gliding from a rose-bush on which hangs a spider web with a butterfly wing earnestly painted.

Enter MONSTER

who, fortunately for our story, has spent years in getting a regulation thorn quite thoroughly into his right paw, that a hero or saint passing his way might be the means to higher ends; for he felt himself worthy of higher things, longed to be fed on tipsy-cake, to own a pastrycook's shop, and saw the Cup of Happiness in a mincemeat bowl.

When? whither? where?

Takes out a pocket-book, eagerly notes this down to write verses on, and groans aloud. Trees, Orchestra, Thunder, all groan lugubriously. The Lightning flashes near Palm-tree; this excites universal indignation, and the snakes and thorns shout Away with both of them! Away! Away!

LIGHTNING (to Palm-tree).

We are misunderstood. I did not notice how beautifully you are drawn. Thorns and snakes are a great mistake in nature.

PALM-TREE.

Young friend! you are wise for your years; let us form a society to suppress them—and immodest literature.

MONSTER.

I swirled into Renaissance arabesques unnoticed. The world is without decorative instincts.

The limelight falls on the floor, flashes on the Palm-tree (who feels flattered), and settles itself on right entrance.

Enter PRINCE.

For three days I have wandered in a too uncongenial atmosphere; all strength lacks grace—how true!—all grace, of course, lacks strength—so I was offered a post on a review. There is an incompleteness about most things, if I may be allowed to say so. This spot, however, seems tuned to a nobler key, not so grossly realistic as most; I really think my higher nature will be touched presently, and my ominously swelling cloak makes, I feel, a nobly decorative mass against the setting sun.

Monster introduces himself with frank manliness. The thorn is extracted to the huge appreciation of pit and gallery. The situation is too literary—The Prince and Monster—the latter rubs his claws complacently; gives so full and fruity a sound to "Your Highness," the honest scenery feels quite jealous; quotes a few well-chosen verses on Happiness, and remains in an ecstasy with tearful eyes before a vision of a mincemeat bowl floating through space to slow music.

PALM-TREE (sotto voce).

If you don't flash brightly against me, I'll break up the partnership.

BUTTERFLY-WING.

All is not gold that glitters.

Enter FANTASY.

Her form, sinuous as a willow, is swathed in some light exquisite material, and garlanded with dainty twigs of jessamine, and nodding columbine; her jewelled and braided hair knots

round an opal ; above her brow flutters a black butterfly, circled by her nimbus tinted like a dissolved topaz ; she holds an iris twined with ivy, and looks at the Prince over her shoulder whilst she holds a red carnation to her parted lips.

Ah ! sweet my love ! sweet Prince, dear wretch ! I love thee ! The word lies softer than soft velvet tinged a deepening violet, not softer than my passion. The word is a poor counterfeit, and apes the truth ; as a dark shadow, crawling from the sun, is image of the truth that gives it being. The word is loured and gross, I would give sound to it, with a deep cello's note, or sigh of some flossy petal falling with scarce audible sound, on floor of ivory flooded with living sun.

How many, how many have been my lovers ! They kissed my eyes, and passionately my neck, for I am, and was, beautiful. But look you on my face, my white face, how many have shed heavy tears ; their tears circle my throat ; for gently I gathered these, and they became bright pearls to place upon my bosom, my white breasts like to the domes of some fair silvered shrine.

At this she bares her bosom, a pale tea-rose nestles there, the butterfly flutters to her mouth.

List ! the frightened birds have chirped themselves to drowsiness ; the muffled sound of distant thunder gives but a deepening zest to the mad song of that fond silly bird, that lifts its voice to passion's utterance. Ah ! I could love you thus, and trill a sweet linked text, to melt your senses into rapt delight, till dazed by throbbing notes, that dance so swiftly, your heart stops faint within you ; and lo ! the next notes drown all remembrance of what has passed—in full enjoyment.

PRINCE.

Bright spirit ! your name ? I do not know you.

FANTASY.

My name, my name ? I have many names ; men called me after some fair women. I was born of flowers in Adam's brain ; the warm wind gave me breath ; this I remember me ; poor Adam damned !—They called me Lilith. But the blossoms still remember me, mimic the soft veinings of my skin, and glow with hidden passion they had not then confessed. Then angels fell, because that I was sweet to look upon, and brought from sleepy depths quaint coral wreaths that yet blush red with the remembrance. (She sighs.) My presence moved man to lovely song ; it echoes still, and ever will resound ; great cities grew, piled high like cliffs, fronted in image of my face, painted pink in reverence for my flesh. Soft lyres were turned to curvings of my waist, to tell how I was fed by doves. But that was not so royal, or so glad, as Solomon's idolatry ; he kissed my footsteps and my dress, on polished floor of crystal that multiplied my image. Poor king ! Poor kings ! But no ! My love, if death, is life !

She weaves garlands round her wrists ; gradually her eyes close ; she makes a vague gesture towards her head.

Ah me! list! list! I hear the tread, the growing dread re-echoes in my heart. Tread! tread! and dust in dark clouds as a sign. (She gives a scream.) The violet sea is stained with crow-black sails, and sets a bloody sun. The city is on flames! on flames! and blots with lurid red the circling heaven.

She pauses, dreamily looks for a wound near her bosom, but finds nothing. Slowly she takes a pearl from her throat and sadly drops it. The sound makes her start; but laughingly she loosens her hair; it falls round her in a golden cloud; she holds her face with both hands, and says:

Ah love! I had many, many, lovers, lovers! look at these amethysts and pomegranate blossoms; these opals that hold fallen and still passionate spirits, glowing in cells of milky crystal; faint beryls that have dreamt the dreams of the sea at noon; these sapphires like dying eyes; listen to the song of this splendid ruby, how full of glowing mirth and rich delight; it calls the damask rose sick and sentimental. All these, and much besides, have men found and devised, to my good pleasure.

She kisses her hand to the Prince, who leans against the Palm-tree. She beckons to him.

PALM-TREE (severely).

Madam, I am married!

Enter LIGHTNING

with a pair of spectacles he has borrowed from a satirist.

Madam still possesses her illusions!

FANTASY.

Do you wish to appeal to the gallery? Away, poor fly-blown stage property; or I'll blow you out.

[Exit LIGHTNING.

The whole stage looks shocked, even the limelight blushes.

PALM-TREE.

When I was young, however

But Fantasy escapes from her clothes, and with her hair streaming behind her like a comet dances about the stage naked.

PRINCE and BACK SCENERY.

The play must stop if this goes on!

MONSTER,

though quite a freethinker, is even more shocked than the Palm-tree.

The Cup of Happiness will be compromised!

He pulls out an article on But Fantasy, knotting her white arms behind her head, dissolves into space, leaving behind her only the glimmer of her feet.

[Exeunt.

A SEED.

I swell, I grow, I am growing, I shall be a beautiful tree.

A WORM (pulling at it).

Nonsense! a tree? We are worms! worms!

(*To be continued.*)

C. RICKETTS.

SENSATIONS.



little by little the air grew thick and oily; the sky, colour of oil, was strangely streaked with slowly lengthening shafts of smoke, rising from the whitish houses. The window panes, instead of being cool and soothing, gave a harsh shock, almost painful, suggesting a shudder. The traffic on the stony road passed with a sound distinct without blare, almost veiled. The morning was unpleasant, and a sudden forked flash was not altogether unexpected. Seen clearly, it seemed to descend slowly as if selecting a comfortable pinnacle on which to alight.—I must close the

window.—The rictus of the thunder was decidedly nasty; the shudder suggested itself again, and the window was closed.

The room danced. Each repetition of vivid light gave almost the impression of a blow; the eye, puzzled, seemed to see from the back of the head—flash! flash!—blue, lilac, rose—flash! flash! Then other sensations rushed upon me, the consciousness of an awful tearing, crackling, and rolling round; something rolling wantonly in the glory of its strength, falling in key like a phrase of Bach; and still that awful sensation of dancing light—flash! flash! destroying all sense of touch, of space; all, save that of hearing, concentrated into one awful sense of sight. A friend in the room, naturally red-faced and florid, looked a pale grey almost like cigar ashes, while blue, rose, danced about the room, seemingly for minutes. While still realising my bodily presence, I felt myself rooted to the floor, my lips cold; my brain, flashing like the lightning, was becoming frenzied with the idea that my friend was as frightened as myself. I felt enraged, but powerless. I was panic-stricken.

Thank goodness it was over; what had happened?

A second endless flash lit up the room as I closed my



eyes, conscious of each throb repeated at the back of my skull with the distinctness of a telegraph machine under nimble fingers. Then the roar of the thunder simultaneously, less awful, happily, than the dancing light.

The rain at last fallen, suddenly poured down the sloping street. I talked rapidly, my thoughts were galloping indiscriminately in the future and the past. The lightning was in the room. Or cramped in the corner of a railway carriage, the train was bearing me, three years ago, through the black night, to the certain deathbed of a friend (if it were not already too late), while the night was made awful by a thunderstorm that swept across England. My thoughts still rushed wildly; dreading the next flash, I chattered on in an altered voice. A few doors in the house slammed, feet ran up and down. The lightning flashed again as I closed my eyes. Somebody knocked at the door—*Monsieur, vous est-il arrivé quelque chose? la maison a été frappée.*

ET CUM SPIRITU TUO.

I enter the church for Solemn High Mass. I know I am pacing like a priest in procession and feel an irresistible desire to place my finger-tips together. An old Irishman, late of the Horse Artillery, takes the red tickets, shows us to places, performs a slovenly genuflexion and returns to his station midway in the nave. I am trying to place my hat where I shall not compel some one else, or be myself obliged, to kneel upon it; for the church will be full, Father Somebody O.J. is going to preach. The air is oppressive from the earlier celebrations; the chattering girls and craped old women dotted with tottering octogenarians who have to bend both knees if at all, smell of vile soap and hidden dirt. The devout child at my side is ruminating Latin sentences which she approximates to the sound of English words. Two overfed young Englishwomen, vilely dressed, are planted just in front; one wears crimson plush, the other has constantly clipped the straggling hairs upon the nuque till now she has a festoon of bristles from ear to ear. The screen of light woodwork is overtrailed with ivy, and fairy lamps hang in each arcade. The weeping of the fiddles, the moans of the organ, warm the church. Without warning there is a loud Oh! oh! oh! . . . on my right. I turn suddenly; the sight transfixes me; it is a Saint Jerome drawn all of wriggles, stretching his hands towards the altar, with his plaintive cries, as the procession enters the church; his body is gradually collapsing under the progress of a paralytic fit. We rise and the priests begin to murmur while a small crowd around the inert sufferer under the cramped seats are baring his chest and slapping the palms of his hands. He is carried away, one man at his knees, two at his shoulders; his arms are lifeless, his beard trails upon his chest where the shirt has been rudely torn open; only his eyes are full of strength, starting as though he had been strangled, wondering if it is purgatory or hell. Sally smiles, to show me she is not frightened.

Breakfast delayed has unstrung my nerves ; the drowsy smell of spiced cigarettes ; it all passes like a dream where white and green and gold things dance a religious redowa before a flower-decked altar. The devout child tips out the contents of a purse made of a shell with a clatter. We pace, pace, pace ; we worship the Saviour, the life-giving cross ; we press unworthy lips to the feet bleeding scarlet, not less blessed that they are preposterously out of drawing and skewered with a gold nail.

APOLOGY.

The sole aim of this magazine is to gain sympathy with its views.

Intelligent ostracism meets one at every door for any view whatsoever, from choice of subject to choice of frame. If our entrance is not through an orthodox channel, it is not, therefore, entirely our fault ; we are out of date in our belief that the artist's conscientiousness cannot be controlled by the paying public, and just as far as this notion is prevalent we hope we shall be pardoned our seeming aggressiveness.



