CONVERSATIONS

ON

ART METHODS

(METHODE ET ENTRÉTIENS D'ATELIER)

BY

THOMAS COUTURE

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY S. E. STEWART.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY ROBERT SWAIN GIFFORD.

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PREFACE.

THIS book is the result of personal observation. Rebellious against all science, it has been impossible for me to learn by academic means. Were these teachings bad? I cannot say, I never understood them. The sight of nature, the eager desire to produce that which captivated me, guided me better than the words which seemed useless; and besides, I confess to my shame, I did not wish to listen. This independence has cost me dear; I have often mistaken the way, sometimes entirely lost myself; but there has come to me from these failures great results, great light. I come out from them more robust, torn to pieces, it is true, but no less valiant. These intellectual gymnastics have formed within me a good artistic temperament.

I have made the tour of painting, as many make the tour of the world. I shall relate to you my voyages, my discoveries. They are not numerous and I believe very simple. I have found moreover short paths, which are now fully open. You will not have the difficulties which I had, but will learn easily what is necessary to know.

I now see that I might have avoided many of my labors; as I said above, the desire to put upon canvas that which captivated me, guided me better than words which seemed useless. It was instinct in me, and to follow the dictates of my heart was easy, but you object to this, and think it is always difficult to acquire knowledge. I see . . . you also wish to make the tour of the world. . . Wait, do not start yet, perhaps I may make the journey no longer necessary.

To try is a duty, to succeed is my hope.

M. C.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN I learned that a translation of *Methode et Entretiens d'Atelier* was about to be published in this country, I was delighted, for I felt that hundreds of earnest art students, all over the country, would not only receive from it valuable technical hints, but that they would be stimulated to fresh efforts by the encouragement and earnestness of the celebrated author.

I have often felt that I would like to express to Couture, in some way, my gratitude for the help he had unconsciously given me, early in my studies.

Many years ago, in 1857, I think, while I was painting in a little village in Massachusetts, and making every exertion to acquire some knowledge

of painting, everything about my work went wrong, nothing was satisfactory.

One morning I received a letter and a package from a friend, who was studying architecture in Paris.

My friend wrote me that during a vacation he had taken some lessons of Couture, in painting, and he thought I would be glad to know something of his method of beginning a work; thereupon followed a careful description of the first *preparation* of a picture.

On opening the package I found many kinds of brushes and some colors, such as were used for the early stages of the work. I was supremely happy!

Finding a subject near the shore, close at hand, I set at work: by following the direction given in the letter, I found I got much greater purity of tone and color than before; the picture had a luminous quality which came from the warm colors thinly distributed over the canvas in the first stages of the work, and which had not been entirely covered over in the subsequent paintings.

After this I had opportunities to learn the methods of many other celebrated painters, but I always returned to this first with great satisfaction.

About seven years since, I read *Methode et Entretiens d'Atelier*, and translated portions of it for the use of some of my more advanced pupils.

This method of working had one disadvantage—it seemed to me that the shadows were left too thin—but with this exception it was preferable to any other.

The chapter on Painting touches upon the purity of colors in a way that has not been specially pronounced in any book that I am familiar with.

We have paid too little attention to this subject in this country, particularly in the mixing of colors on the palette.

The usual way has been to mix the colors with a *knife* before putting them on the canvas, thus destroying the vitality of the colors; the *brush* only partly mixes them and their individuality is preserved, although when the picture is a few inches away from us, they seem perfectly mixed.

Very few writers on the technicalities of art touch upon the subject of "Values." Couture gives us an admirable discourse on this subject, in Chapter VI.

This volume is essentially a painter's book, but any one at all interested in art will be fascinated by the earnestness and picturesque eloquence of the author, as well as charmed and amused by his vivid descriptions and anecdotes.

ROBERT SWAIN GIFFORD.

NEW YORK, *May 3d*, 1879.

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CONVERSATIONS ON ART.

I.

ELEMENTARY DRAWING.

I COMMENCE by saying that I know nothing more simple than what is called the art of imitation; I will explain elementary things, the material means which are all easy to understand. Later, when we touch true Art, you will see that the art of drawing surpasses everything else, and that the qualities of color and light are only secondary to it.

I will proceed in order, and will for the time separate the art from the trade, and will ignore the antique (those beautiful things,) in my first lessons. It is a monstrosity to use them with beginners. By the use of relievos you profane your greatest resource, and while you try to make your student feel the beauties of the antique statues, you are

giving him false impressions, and familiarizing him with what he cannot understand. It is a folly in education which is fatal; do not confound art with material things.

You can make your pupil copy a table, a book; you can have plaster casts of them if you like; but to teach from the antique is impossible; he has many things to study before he can comprehend it. I pause to make a reflection, although it is not my affair; elementary art, which is of so much importance, and the teaching of which ought to be confided to the best instructors, falls to the share of the most incompetent.

What must one do to draw well?

You must place yourself before the object you wish to represent, have good tools, always in order; give much more attention to what you are trying to draw, than to the drawing itself. Allow me to make a suggestion; use three-quarters of your eyes for observation, and one-quarter for drawing.

In beginning your drawing, take one point of distance, and compare all the others with it. Es-

tablish, either in imagination or in reality, a perpendicular and a horizontal line before the object you wish to reproduce; this is an excellent guide and ought always to be remembered. When, by slight points and lines, you have marked all your places, then partly close your eyes and look at your model. This way of looking simplifies objects, and causes the details to disappear; you perceive only the great divisions of light and shade. Then you establish your bases; when they are well placed, open your eyes wide, and add the details within your marks. It is necessary to determine the "dominants" of lights and shadows. Look well at your model and ask yourself where the light is greatest, and place the light in your drawing at the point it appears in nature; by this means, you mark a "dominant" which ought not to be exceeded; all the other lights must be subordinate. The same rule must be observed in shadows; establish the point at which the shadow is deepest, the black the most intense. It serves as a guide, as a standard for finding the different value, of your shadows and your half tints.

Work always with order and recapitulation, value of distance, value of light, value of shadow. It now remains for us to speak of the value of outline, and the value of texture. A drawing, like a natural body, offers many varieties of outline; one form is marked by indefinite lines; another by features or by vigorous shadows. You must avoid making strong that which is delicate, or delicate that which is strong; the putting of a heavy in place of a light line, or a light in place of a heavy one; you must submit yourself to the same rules, and by incessant comparison establish these differences. As to texture, you must not make a rough cloth, coarse linen, or an old wall with the same delicate touch you employ to produce fine stuffs, precious objects, the flesh of a woman, etc. You must adapt your execution to the thing represented; as to the rest, the object itself will serve as a guide.

II.

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES OF DRAWING FROM NATURE.

YOU can only copy the movable things of nature when you can work rapidly; the same rules must be observed, but they are more difficult of application. Constant exercise is necessary; a musician would say to you: the scales, the scales! I say to you, draw! draw! Draw morning and evening to exercise your eyes, and to secure a sure hand. You will farther on see drawing viewed from an artistic point, but do not let us anticipate. I have at present said all that is necessary.

III.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF PAINTING.

YOU ought not to commence painting until you are certain of your drawing; a sure hand is necessary to obtain good results.

I will not yet speak to you of the great resources of execution, which you will only be able to employ after much exercise; precision, and dexterity of hand, are the qualities which result from hard work and from time.

Simplify your means of action, work with system, and with your mind free from all irrelevant thoughts, for you need the use of all your faculties.

Do not chase, as they say vulgarly, two hares at a time; divide the force of an art which you are not able to understand entirely, and which, besides, would crush you if taken all at once. Study each of the parts separately. You will soon be able to

unite them, and to master that which if attempted would have overwhelmed you at starting.

This is nothing more than Method.

LET US COMMENCE.

Trace your drawing on the canvas with charcoal, which is preferable to chalk; your points well determined, you mix strong boiled oil and spirits of turpentine, half and half, making what is called "sauce;" put upon your palette the necessary color for the first preparation, such as ivory black, bitumen, brown red, and cobalt.

With a tint composed of black and brown red, you will obtain bistrè; bitumen, cobalt and brown red will give you nearly the same result.

Return now to your drawing.

Brushes of sable, a little long, are necessary to trace the design; your charcoal dust would spoil the effect of the color; therefore, with a maul stick strike the canvas as upon a drum; the charcoal falls, the drawings become lighter, but sufficient remains to guide you. Then you take the sable

brush, dip it into your "sauce," then into the bistrè tint, and trace all your outline. These outlines being made, mass your shadows and you obtain a kind of sepia drawing in oil.

This first preparation must be allowed to dry; the execution will require a day's work. It will dry in the night, and the next day you work with the same preparation; wet your shadows and arrange your lights.

Clean your palette, and set it in the following manner:

Lead white, or silver white.
Naples yellow.
Yellow ochre.
Cobalt.
Vermilion.
Brown red.
Lake (the madders are the best).
Burnt sienna.
Cobalt.
Bitumen.
Ivory black.

I leave you to your own inspiration in mixing your colors; experiment and make mistakes, but above all, acquire habits of accuracy. I cannot say any more to you.

IV.

THE OCCUPATION OF A YOUNG PAINTER FIRST COMMENCING HIS ART.

WE will suppose you have drawn morning and evening, that you have daubed much canvas, used many colors, and much time has passed. These gymnastic exercises not being very fatiguing, you have been able to cultivate your mind by reading good books; the ancient and our French classics are all good. But as you are to be a painter, I will mention certain works which you can read with profit. Homer, Virgil, Shakspere, Moliére, Cervantes, Rousseau, Bernardin de Saint Pierre.

In the first three, you will find grand teaching for your art. Homer gives you primitive simplicity, Virgil harmony, Shakspere passion, Moliére, as you no doubt know, uses the most beautiful language, and clothes truth in the most perfect imagery.

Read much; you are young, digestion will be easy. Live in good company, and cultivate intimacy with young people who are well advanced in art.

Never wish to appear greater than you are; above all things beware of expressing other people's opinions as if they were your own; that brings ruin; it leads to darkness; dare to be yourself; that will bring you light.

Be truly christian, cultivate your heart; above all things, be humble; in the art of painting, humility is the greatest strength.

V.

ELEMENTS OF COMPOSITION.

BEING prepared by the reading of good books, you will give to your studies the proper direction. Above all things avoid ugliness.

You ought always to carry about with you a small album, in which you can trace beauties that strike you, startling effects, natural poses, etc. Never forget to make yourself into an ant, or a bee; pillage everywhere in order to have an abundant granary, practice composition while you are young, but always with materials drawn from your own observation.

Acquire habits of accuracy.

The things I now tell you are only the elements of composition; we will later take up the same theme; you must understand all the parts to

be able to draw with truth, and by this method to arrive at truly poetical composition; do not anticipate, and as I always tell you, commence modestly.

VI.

INTRODUCTION TO HIGH ART.

MY young friends, I am now about to introduce you to advanced art, an enchanted country; your eye is cultivated, your hand is trained; the time has come to initiate you. Here I pause; to say a few wise and prudent words to you before raising the curtain.

You are impatient and full of ardor; it is a good augury; you believe that you are going to be astonished, intoxicated by what I shall show you; undeceive yourselves. The sight of beauty never creates these raptures in those who do not understand her.

She is so simple, she only speaks to the initiated.

Those who look upon the sea for the first time, are astonished at the slight impression it produces

upon them; a straight line marks the horizon, a large quantity of water, that is all, for those who do not know it, but for those who understand its mysteries how wonderful is the sea.

The sight of beautiful antique things, the pictures of Raphael, Michael Angelo, Rubens, Titian, Rembrandt; everything which is great and immense does not astonish you.

I wish to forewarn you, lest you may think you have been deceived.

I will adopt what I believe to be a good means of making you understand it, by relating to you a story.

One day, wishing to amuse myself, I ordered a bottle of excellent champagne for a peasant: I invited him to drink, and waited to hear his expressions of admiration, but my man tossed off his wine without appearing any more pleased than if he had drunk cider. Astonished, I said to him: "Do you like this wine?" "It is not bad," he replied, "but a little flat." A little flat, first class champagne! I felt like beating him. I made him drink this wine

for fifteen days, and I obtained some bottles of the wine he habitually drank, and which he had so much praised. At the end of the time, I poured out for him a glass of his own sour wine without his perceiving it. He drank it off rapidly, and making a grimace, exclaimed—"My goodness, what have you given me." "Your own wine which you so much like," was my reply. "Is it possible? It now appears detestable to me. Give me yours; I am now used to it."

I will give you an intellectual champagne, to make you detest your sour wine.

My task is difficult, I hardly know how to begin.

Let me relate to you another little anecdote.

Fatigued with work, I needed fresh air, the fields, the woods, the sweet verdure. I went and found it in a charming place where no human being was to be seen. A single cow was browsing a little distance from me; lying upon my back, my face caressed by beautiful fresh leaves, I chewed the verdure, and was happy to feel myself also an animal like my companion. To let one's imagination run

wild is very sweet, but to relax the brain in order to let the thoughts wander, to let them play truant, is not this to a fatigued thinker a very pleasant thing? Such was my case. A limpid stream ran at my feet; I looked at the surface of it, but without attention, almost without seeing it; nature enveloped me, I observed it not. My perception was that of an animal, I saw only a small space. This space was covered by spiders, who glided over the water with great rapidity; I took pleasure in the sight. My thinking faculties awakened themselves unknown to me, for soon I remarked the trees on the shore were delineated under the water, like beautiful embroideries; then the birds, the butterflies, the clouds, the depth; and over all a veil of incredible fineness, which gave to what I saw the appearance of a terrestrial paradise. Strange thing; what change of scene. Is it a mirage? Let us examine. In thought, I again came to the surface of the water, and to my great surprise, again saw the black spiders upon the metallic surface, which seemed to hide with an impenetrable cover

the paradise at which I had a glimpse. It was too absurd. I rose, I rubbed my eyes, quite determined to give an account of this phenomenon; however, nothing was changed. If I looked attentively at the surface of the water, the beautiful spectacle disappeared; if on the contrary I gave my whole attention to the reflection in the water, I found again my enchanted paradise.

Is not this the explanation of art?

If you look superficially, you have only a common image; look longer and deeper, the image becomes sublime.

To a man of narrow mind, a poor, disinherited, infirm cripple will be a laughing stock, while a Shakspere will see in the same man a being possessed of a great soul, and immense powers of enduring suffering and grief. He will create a sublime poem from that which has made another laugh. The great secret is to see well, to choose well. What is called the interpretation of a thing is simply to choose well from the domain of truth.

To choose the most beautiful thing is not the

utmost expression of art. If the most beautiful thing is perfect, we exalt it in its beauty, in its splendor; we examine if the thing chosen is according to the constituted laws of beauty. This is where Raphael is so admirable; all that he creates seems to go out from the hand of God; by a divine perception he reinstates man, he removes from him the taint of earth, he purifies him. He alone is able to paint an Eve. This all justifies the thought of Plato, and we painters can say with him, Art or beauty is the splendor of truth.

VI.

ON DRAWING—IN ITS MOST BEAUTIFUL EXPRESSION.

YOU must obtain the best materials, for they are indispensable.

By practice you have made of yourself a skilful workman: the artist in you need have no fear now, for you are sure of having all necessary assistance.

Now that we have the instrument, let us have the soul.

DRAWING IS THE FOUNDATION.

Make good foundations, and use good materials.

Here two things become indispensable, a knowledge of anatomy, and the study of the antique, but of a kind of antique; I wish to speak of that in which the most perfect human form is shown, the Gladiator, the Laocoon, the Faun and Child, etc.

A deep study of anatomy is useless; it is only necessary to know perfectly the chart of Houdon, and to make some drawings from natural subjects.

Add to this a study of these antiques, and you will have a perfect knowledge of the human body.

Without perceiving it, you will acquire habits of style and of elegance. Naturally you will compare these beautiful forms with the forms of our models which are unfinished or imperfect.

The sight of the head beautifully set on the shoulders, fine limbs well proportioned, perfect extremities, all will captivate you; you will be under a charm, and not able to understand your own feelings; you will be absorbed in your work.

Be patient and calm; the beauty of the antique having become familiar to you, you will naturally exclaim: Why is this beautiful?

You have taken a long step, you are probing the mystery.

You may always observe in these admirable statues, that the straight line is in just relation with the curve. Is this a system? No, it is the perfect

knowledge of nature. Seize a natural free movement, and you will have what the antique gives: perfect harmony, and just proportion in all its different lines.

Observe certain divisions in the heads. Take for example those of the Apollo, and the Venus de Milo; the line of the forehead with the nose is almost straight, the line of the eyebrow is very near the upper eyelid, the forehead low, or rather the hair growing low; the nose rather large and at a short distance from the upper lip; the chin by its bulk and prominence balances the size of the nose; the ears stand out from the skull, the neck is large and long; broad surfaces, grand divisions, few details; these principles are observed in all the busts of the beautiful Roman epoch.

These laws of beauty were taught among the ancients; all submitted themselves to them and this gave magnificent unity to their productions.

Do not believe that the observance of rules will alter your own individuality, you can conform to them and yet remain faithful to what you represent.

There are in nature individual characteristics full of charm. The features and forms which give to beings a particular character, are the points necessary to respect, and to develop, and you may without fear make the corrections dictated by sense and established rules of beauty.

You can find in nature types very similar to the antique. Take these models and pose them, like the figures they suggest, make a conscientious study from them, and then compare it with the antique, marking the difference.

These studies will cause you to make rapid progress.

I will now mention the masters you should study for the science of drawing.

Raphael, in his drawings from nature, those of Leonardo da Vinci, the beautiful series of Lesueur, the drawings of Poussin and of Andréa del Sarto. During these exercises, make drawings from nature: the people who sleep in public places, the workman at work, men rowing boats, bathers, those who are listening to strolling singers, children, women wash-

ing; draw in all places, and in every position where men or women are perfectly natural.

Nature belongs to you; she is like a vast garden. Go, look, choose; what flowers, what fruits! With these flowers form splendid bouquets, but do not destroy the life of the flower, leave it in the sun and air. Do not forget that your mission is to make every one love the work of God, and that to destroy is a bad thing. Come to nature as to a friend, make yourself her servant, she will well repay you. If, on the contrary, you cut the flower from the bush, you carry with you a victim; you act as a murderer; can you have the proper sentiments to represent it well?

This recalls to me those poor painters who believe they copy nature when studying from men and women of the lowest class, whom they drape in old curtains or ancient drapery. When they have these ridiculous objects before them, they copy what? something outside of nature.

If you wish models, it is better to surprise them and draw when they are not aware you are doing

so. Lines drawn rapidly, observation and notes taken under the fire of first impression will guide you better than these frightful models, who only lead you astray; use them with great caution and guard against putting a human manikin in the place of the ideal.

You need to have sympathy and love for whatever is living; movement, intelligence, passion, and thought; follow all these marvels of life as the hunter follows his game.

See that beautiful child overheated by play; the lovely tints of his face, the beautiful disorder of his hair, and the sun which throws over all that golden light. Quick, your sketch-book, make your lines and notes, that is sufficient; be satisfied, you have made a good study.

If after you have sketched a good movement, or a natural pose, you can obtain a sitting from the person observed, you will then be able to make a perfect study, but you must only use the model, in order to assist you in carrying out your first impression.

CONCERNING CHOICE.

This must come from yourself; one is able to do well only what one can understand.

You have acquired habits of style and elegance, and have benefited by good company; you feel that the beauty of expression is no shackle, but that as the expression becomes more delicate and at the same time more powerful, it is nearer the truth.

From the point that you have reached it would be impossible to return to ugliness or vulgarity. You would have no choice, but to say like the good peasant; Give me beautiful things, I am accustomed to them.

I now return to an elementary principle which plays an important part in the art of drawing.

I speak of values.

The word value, as we employ it, applies rather to drawing, than to coloring. Value is the greater or less intensity of a tint, so that we say a strong value, or a weak value. To the painter we say, observe your values, and your coloring. Colors are

the different tones, as red, green, blue, yellow; but these colors can be made either more or less deep. We mean this difference by the word value.

Coloring, by the just observation of values, is perhaps the most beautiful; certainly the most distinguished. Rembrandt is a colorist by the beauty of his values, as Rubens is by the richness of his coloring.

But we must not discard drawing. Rembrandt by his values, produces admirable colors; with black and white alone he makes light. What a marvel, with means so limited, to render color and light! Rubens, in his desire for color, found the means, with black, of giving a very just idea of red, of blue, etc. Genius always finds means to manifest what it feels and loves.

I have myself been astonished at the results arising from a comparison of values; and also from the great mistake of not observing them.

A young German came to my studio to perfect himself in his art; he had made a drawing with great skill.

I complimented him on his dexterity; but at the same time, said to him that he did not copy his model.

"But, my dear sir," said this young man, "I have copied, I assure you, with great exactness."

"You believe so? look carefully."

"Yes, I have looked well."

"It is possible," and while speaking I returned him his drawing.

"With whom have you studied in Germany."

. . . . . .

The conversation continued, then looking at the model, I said, "You have a superb model, beautiful in form, beautiful in color, is it not?"

"Yes, sir."

"Look how the light falls upon the breast, it is evident that the brightest spot is there."

"Yes."

"Are you certain of it."

"Yes, quite certain."

"Then show it to me."

"See," he said showing me the brightest part, "here is the most brilliant point."

"I am willing to believe you. I see with pleasure that to a skilful hand, you have joined a good judgment," saying which I put his drawing in sight. "Decidedly you have a delicate perception of values, and will be able to render me some service. Look at your drawing, where is the highest light?"

Not seeing the point to which I wished to bring him, he simply replied, that it was upon the knee.

"It is not possible!"

"Yes, sir, permit me to remark that if we compare this light with the lights in other parts of the drawing, this is certainly the greatest."

"Then, why is your light not placed as it is in nature? You see it is on the breast, and you put it on the knee; why not at the heel? and you say you exactly copy your model; permit me to say you have not paid any attention to the differences of light.

"That is true. I see now that for my lights, I" . . .

"Very well, we often deceive ourselves!" and I returned his drawing. . . "You have great artists

in Germany, Overbeck, Cornelius, Kaulbach, all men of beautiful talents. . . Oh! look at your model as it is lighted up, what brightness, and vigor in the shadows! Look at the hair, it is like velvet; and the shadows of the head, how transparent and strong; that recalls Titian, do you not see it? This curling unbound hair, the blood suffusing the face and neck, all of a superb color. What do you think of it? Turn to your drawing, and see if you have represented all that we have admired. It is singular, you have forgotten these things."

"Yes, sir, I see it now."

"Observe that your head is badly colored, and gives the idea of a figure of papier maché, and that you have made the same faults in your shadows as in your lights. Compare your proportions: in your model, the height of the body is of great importance in regard to the rest, and gives to it an individual character; in your work you have compared nothing; absorbed by detail, you did not *grasp* the whole.

"You are like men who bandage their eyes and then try to walk straight upon a grassy lawn; no

longer being able to direct themselves by comparison and sight, they go astray to the amusement of the lookers on."

I will go back to the subject of values, so important and grave in its results.

You now see how important these considerations are.

I believe I have made you feel sufficiently the different qualities of drawing, exact drawing, good choice of studies regulated by the rules of ancient art.

This is what is necessary to know, what is known by all great artists.

I have not yet said all I wish about drawing; the divisions necessitated by teaching restrain me, and make me fear to go beyond the proper limit; soon we shall come to the philosophy of art. Free from all shackles, I will speak to you of my gods. Like a true gourmand, I leave that for a *bonne bouchée*.

VII.

THE PORTRAIT.

ANTIQUE art had immutable rules, even laws in regard to beauty. I have already spoken of the invariable divisions reproduced in Greek faces, it is useless to repeat them here.

Your model has not perhaps the antique form of face, you rarely meet with it; the forehead forms with the nose two very different lines; between the eye and the eyelid you have an enormous distance, the mouth is quite far from the nose, and you have a retreating chin. Something else is added to complete the want of resemblance; the ears are flat, the neck small and thin, and the whole scarred by wrinkles or other causes.

All this is not beautiful, and you have now more than ever need of the rules which I gave you before; make all your forms and lines in accordance with

that which constitutes beauty, keeping within the limits of truth, and you will obtain a result astonishing to every one. That which you put upon your canvas will be much less ugly than the model.

There are in nature, as I have said, "individual characteristics which are charming. The features, and forms which give to every one a particular character, are what are necessary to respect; it is well even to develop them, and you can without fear reconcile this development to the corrections made according to the prescribed rules of beauty."

Be careful not to give to your portrait, theatrical positions; be simple and modest in your pose, as in your expression; we ought to feel in symyathy with the portrait that we work upon. Give above all things, an air of gentility to what you represent. If a woman is your model, let her direct you. She knows well her best physical qualities. In the space of an hour, being face to face with the painter, she will show all her most beautiful points, she will put on the most favorable expression. Profit by it, do not let it escape you. If you appear indifferent,

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your female model will change her batteries, will do all she can to captivate your attention and your admiration; she will at first show you all her natural graces, later, those which have been acquired. Born to please, she stops only when she has conquered.

If she possesses irregular features, she will hide the defects by a lively and joyous expression, and by graceful motions; if her hair is abundant and silky, if her teeth are sparkling, by a burst of laughter you will see these wonders; and she will so far forget herself in her joy, that her beautiful hair will fall and will need rearranging.

This coquetry is the best help that a true artist can have; whatever is thus seen or shown may with profit be preserved on the canvas.

But, you say, a portrait cannot converse nor act like a living being, and besides it is the features you wish to represent. I reply, you must charm others with what charms you. If you impose perfect immobility upon your sitter, she will have the pain of seeing her greatest defects brought to light.

Add to this the ennui and fatigue of sitting, the pallor which results from it; would you copy your model under these conditions? No, a hundred times no; for it would not resemble the woman, and the artist ought to have taste and talent enough to paint the true woman as he knows and admires her. The painter ought to converse with his model,—if a man, interest him as much as possible, and keep him from becoming stiff.

The only thing to fear is the anxiety of the sitter; desiring to have a good portrait, he will overdo the thing; you have to fight against this, try to give him confidence in you, and talk to him in a way to make him natural. To know how to converse with a model is one of the talents of a portrait-painter; I have told you before, that an elementary principle in drawing, is to use one quarter of the time in drawing and three quarters in looking at nature. As a portrait-painter, accustom yourself to divide your forces, one half of you must be the painter, the other the agreeable companion. You have the care of your model as the shepherd's dog

has of his flock; you ought to laugh and joke until he forgets he is your model; during this time the painter half of you must not lose a second; work without stopping, and do not forget that rapidity in execution is one of the elements of success in portrait painting.

This recalls to me an anecdote which I will relate to you,—an instance in which I have put these principles into practice.

BÉRANGER.

I was asked to paint a portrait of Béranger. I did not care to do it. I had great admiration for him, and feared an intimate acquaintance might destroy my ideal. One of my peculiarities has always been the desire to cherish these ideals, and never to let the light of truth upon them, fearing by so doing they might vanish. I shut them up in my intellectual seraglio, and disguise myself that I may defend them better.

It was necessary to risk the most beautiful jewel of my crown: my Béranger! this sublime intelli-

gence, united to so much simplicity. It is good to rest one's self by the contemplation of so truly beautiful a thing, fatigued as we are by the sight of the fools of this world!

At last a charming letter of introduction from Madame Sand decided me. I went out, and soon arrived at the Rue d'Enfer.

I asked the porter for M. Béranger.

At the end of the court by a staircase to the right, I ascended, and finding the door, knocked. Slow steps were heard within, an old man appeared enveloped in a dressing gown of common grey stuff.

"M. Béranger?"

"I am he."

While replying to me, he held the door fast, leaving only a small crack open.

"What do you want?"

It would have been easy for me to have presented my letter, but I was selfish enough to wish to keep it. It was a precious autograph, signed with a celebrated name; it mentioned me in too flattering terms; but it is easy to accommodate one's self to

these exaggerations; my beloved poet was spoken of too; the temptation was too great for me not to yield. I stammered out some words, showing the paper and pencil I had brought to make my drawing, for it was necessary to add gesture to words, the old man's position was so hostile. Alas! I was completely defeated, the door was opened no wider. "No, Monsieur," he said, "it is very disagreeable to me; many persons have taken my portrait, among them I have been variously represented; be satisfied and let me alone." The door was shut. Ah, well, M. Béranger, I have deserved it, for making the mistake of not presenting my letter. So great was my vanity I thought I could present myself without aid, and so committed the petty larceny. I am punished and it is but just. I was retiring, ashamed and confused, when the door was again opened.

"What is your name?"

I turned and replied, "My name is Couture."

"You are not Couture, the painter of the Decadence of Rome?"

"Yes, sir, I am."

I felt myself taken by my waistcoat, pulled in violently, then I heard that terrible door slam, but this time I was within and nailed to the wall near the entrace.

"You Couture, is it possible? you so young: what was I going to do? to shut my door upon you."

"It was already done, M. Béranger."

"But you do not know that I adore you, that it is one of the dreams of my old age to have my portrait painted by you. I am now entirely at your service." Then taking me by the hand he drew me into a second room and presented me to his old companion, saying:

"It is Couture, and I was going to put him out."

I was greatly confused by his reception. When we were somewhat calmed down, I told him I had brought the necessary things, and could make my sketch in his own house, without putting him to inconvenience. He would not listen to me; put himself entirely at my disposal; made me name the day and hour, and at the appointed time was at my door.

It was no little matter for an old man to come from the Rue d'Enfer, to the barrier Blanche where I lived. He was much fatigued; with an air of great kindness he said to me,

"Dear child, I am glad to be with you; where shall I sit? Ah! I think if I could take a little nap it would be well, for I have had a long walk."

I drew up a lounge, he threw himself upon it and soon fell fast asleep. . . I walked softly in my studio so as not to disturb him; then I drew nearer to watch him while he slept. He had a vast brain; by its dimensions and form I could comprehend the grandeur of his mind. The lower part of his face did not accord with the upper part; it showed only the good nature of a brave man. Age had changed his features, and I recognized with difficulty the Béranger I had known from his portraits. My task was a difficult one; to be true to reality, and yet give to the public a portrait showing an unimpaired intelligence. I was making these reflections when he woke. I looked at him for some time, and saw his eyelids rise and fall, he glanced feebly

around, even his skin showed age and want of strength. I was in despair, and felt I must make an effort to rouse him.

"M. Béranger have you heard the new air composed for your "Old Corporal?"

"No," he said, "some persons came to my house to sing it to me, bringing a piano in a wagon, but I would not listen. I choose the airs myself, and will not encourage encroachments upon my work."

"I know how you dismiss people; permit me to tell you, you are wrong; the new air is more dramatic than the one you had chosen; let me sing it for you, you can then better judge." I sang one verse of the "Old Corporal."

"Yes, you are right, it suits admirably; sing me the second verse, sing the whole of it. I enjoy hearing you."

When I had finished, his features had changed, his eyelids were well open, and I could see his clear eyes which were the windows of this beautiful intelligence. I continued to talk to him of things that

had occurred in his youth, spoke to him of Manuel his friend. What a resurrection! He threw aside old age and was again a young man. We were in 1850; in memory he returned to the struggles of the Restoration of 1820; thirty years seemed to have disappeared by enchantment. This great genius had revived. He rose, walked, returned to his seat, spoke to me of the two hundred and twenty-one, as if they were still here; the troubles of Charles X., the end attained, the shouts of the crowd, he seemed to hear it all. Béranger was before me. I had only to copy.

I then saw a characteristic trait which had disappeared for a long time from the lips of the old man,—if I may so express it, a stifled smile; he had some movements like a bird; leaning his head on one side and listening to what was said, replying with raillery or with caustic wit, but all clothed with good nature. When he looked at my drawing he said, "you have made me a worthy looking man," then jogging my elbow he added, "A worthy man upon whom you must not depend too much."

I have not been able to resist the desire of relating this anecdote, doubtless too flattering to myself. I have been so often tormented by imbeciles, that it is excusable to be pleased with the approbation of a wise man.

. . . . . .

I see you are surprised; you ask if I know well where I am going, and hesitate to follow me. It is therefore necessary to give you some explanations.

You may have remarked that above all else, I desire order in what I teach, nothing must be anticipated. It is well to pause and meditate upon what you already know, that you may be prepared to understand what I will teach you later. I hope you have observed that I attach little importance to so called rules, and sacrifice them willingly for the expression of natural sentiment. Spirit, like matter, having its laws of equilibrium, we can say that sentiment is nothing but the rule to a state of grace.

A true spirit will find in rules a consecration of his aspirations, and rules and sentiments unite and become a power in him. But we must not stray

into subtleties, for you cannot understand them. I will content myself with telling you, you have to reflect upon what I have taught, employ your time in reviewing; study the world, the better to paint it, and guard yourself from resembling those workers who show in their pictures only a multitude of good fellows, or represent excessively picturesque commonplaces.

Never forget that for us men are words; it is necessary that these words or these men express ideas, and let us try to merit, by the beauty of our thoughts, the title of artists.

A PROPOS OF PORTRAITS.

I am very anxious to draw some likenesses for you with my pen. I am urged to do this by many reasons; first because I ought not to do it. I go away from my subject, which is without doubt a fault; but why should there not be in literature as in everything else in the world, pauses for repose? And then, what I am writing is not literature, it is a simple talk. I recall my thoughts for those who

have known me and who will recognize our conversations in the studio. We are far from the time when, reunited, we can dream of an art, spirited and national. Our ideas seem to us so just and so practical that we do not doubt their success. What do we wish? to paint our manners, our passions, our wives, our children, our sentiments; this is very simple, alas! too simple; it is not grand enough. The grandeur of the present style is to crowd together many subjects, excluding everything that is true to nature. If I had the time, I would make you a very useful catalogue, in which I would mention all serious or grand subjects; when I say if I had the time, I deceive myself, or rather deceive you, for really I have a horror of what is called a serious painting; it is necessary to say that I have had the misfortune to be educated in serious things. My father, a capable man, wished to instruct me, and to make me understand the most beautiful serious literature. He read to me books which taught of all things in heaven and earth; then he asked if I understood. I replied naively that I did not under-

stand any thing, which distressed my poor father. I received many corrections to brighten my intelligence; my mind gained nothing but the remembrance of the punishments. In despair of doing anything else with me, they made me a painter, hoping I might become a painter of serious subjects; unfortunately I was born an artist. My happiness was to seek and represent natural objects, —light, life; but I soon knew my instincts were bad, and, above all, they were far from being serious; but with work and time, I learned what was necessary to take rank. I entered the lists for Rome and obtained the second great prize. There had been some thought of giving me the first, but I was young, just twenty, I could wait. I went, as is the custom, to pay a visit to my judges, and was complimented; my painting, they said, gave promise of good things in the future; but I still lacked the true academic style; I was not yet quite serious enough. They showed me their pictures, gave me advice which was no doubt good, only I did not understand it, my bad disposition prevented me; and if I

must be truthful, their Biblical subjects made me think of frightful Turks. I deceived myself, no doubt, but my nature revolted against rule, so I became one to myself.

I will give you after a while a classified catalogue of serious subjects. This catalogue is familiar to every good Frenchman, who compares all pictures by its standard. "See, he says, this picture is neither historical nor religious; the traditional Turk is not there, nor yet the so called poetical subjects, which we are in the habit of seeing represented. This is not true Art, I cannot be mistaken, my eye is too well educated." Ah! that is it, too well instructed not to follow in a beaten track.

Happily for me I had the aid of some strangers, and set myself to work for the dealers. I was not alone, others had preceded me, among them a man named Decamps. He had been refused many times at the Expositions, but notwithstanding, I believed him to have genius. I remember one of my comrades at the academy saying to me, "If I cannot paint serious pictures, I will be a painter like

Decamps;" fortunately for him he succeeded. I would name him, did I not fear to injure his standing as an academician.

I continued obstinate in my bad ideas; shocking my academic guides, by saying that the pictures of Greek statues, however beautifully drawn, looked to me, as if they were impaled; religious pictures were positively odious to me.

I ought to have had Christian sentiment enough to have held me back, but alas, the first step downwards was fatal; I glided on, finding what I ought to have admired more and more horrible.

The old painters of Biblical Turks have passed away; but they had the kindness to find some aged youths who could perpetuate the style of the old French school. And indeed I acknowledge that I should regret to see pass away, the traditions of the Troubadours, with which we have had our cradles rocked; and some day I shall comprehend even these Greeks, who are as French as I am.

Meanwhile I was in despair; I had hydrophobia

in regard to Academy pictures, and in order to remain calm, never went near the places where I would be likely to meet with them; but to escape them was not possible.

I lived in the quarter St George's. I was far from the serious nest. If by chance in a store I came upon any Biblical Turks, even a St. Polycarp, I turned quickly away, and tried to forget it.

But I had not taken into account the public monuments, the new houses with statues which represent,

Cities,
Arts,
Industries,
Passions,
Trades,
All represented by the same figure:
The Apollo Belvidere,
Which is dressed as a man.
" " " woman.
" " in a short petticoat.
" " etc., etc.

What a rage for eel pies; I cannot understand it. It is a weakness among us, for I see the most simple citizens fall into it. If one of them loses his nose, he buys a beautiful one of silver; of course he has had it made after the Apollo's, and it is really that of which he is proud.

I think a very handsome nose, even of gold, would not take the place of my poor little one of flesh, but then that is owing to my bad organization.

I have given you the laws constituting beauty: make use of them and do not take bad antique masks in the place of real figures; let your lines and features tend towards the fundamental laws of beauty, always being true to nature.

Be Natural, be True.

Apply these excellent rules with delicacy. Imitate the dog of the fable, never be the ass.

A REMINISCENCE OF MY YOUTHFUL DAYS.

I do not wish to place myself outside of the privileged social class. I have no right to do so, for

my father, an intelligent and well educated man, gave me the benefits of instruction. But I learned nothing from books; they spoke to me an incomprehensible language. I learned only from images. Not having any idea of drawing, and wishing to produce what pleased me, I cut with the scissors silhouettes of what I wanted; living in the midst of people indifferent to works of art, no attention was paid to my amusement. One day, my father saw a travelling artist cutting portraits to the great admiration of all who saw them; my father said to him:

"I have a little boy who makes those things."

The artist smiled at the paternal pride.

"I may be deceived, not knowing much about art, but if you will lend me one of those cuttings, I will soon bring you one exactly like it."

My father showed me the paper, and in a few moments I had produced an exact copy of my model. The artist would not believe it was the work of a child, but I came, and executed with great dexterity all he presented to me. The charlatan was surprised. He pronounced me a phe-

nomenon, said I ought to be an artist, ought to be shown, and made to cut figures in public places; my father put an end to his enthusiasm by sending me into the house. Meanwhile this little scene had drawn attention to my aptitude, and induced my father to buy me models, and give me colors and brushes, but I always preferred to represent what was living; so my models remained unused. I became the painter of my little comrades, making them all very handsome gentlemen; those in color had the greatest success; they quarrelled over them, made me brilliant offers for them; here a whirligig, there a marble; at length, thanks to my little gentlemen, I had all I could desire. I had also my preferences; those who appeared to understand what I did, received my best pieces. In exchange for this preference, they protected me in difficult adventures, so that I was sheltered from much evil.

One day we had been robbing an orchard, and were returning in gay spirits. I had my share in my little blouse. We saw near one of the old gates of the city, a party of artists drawing. Approaching

near them, one of my most enthusiastic comrades said,

"You are not more skilful than little Thomas."

"Where is little Thomas?"

"There he is."

Turning towards me he said,

"Do you draw, little boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Would you like to draw with us?"

"Yes sir, very much."

"Let me see what you can do."

They gave me paper and pencil and set me to work. In a short time one of the artists left his work, and came to look at my drawing; he uttered a cry, which attracted the attention of the others.

"This is extraordinary! Who are you, little boy? Who are your parents?"

These questions frightened me; I knew I had committed a fault in stealing the apples, and I saw in these reiterated demands a commencement of punishment.

"Let him alone," said my comrades, probably as much frightened as myself.

"We do not wish to do you any harm," replied the artists, "Come!" and they led me to my father's house.

My companions flew, as if they had had wings. I was not able to restrain my tears, and I remember how, as we walked, I let my apples fall one by one, in order to hide my disobedience. When I arrived at home, I had not one in my blouse.

I knew later that they offered to take me, and give me the education of an artist. To this my father replied, that to be a painter it was necessary to be instructed in history and science, architecture, anatomy, and many other things; that his child had a talent only for representation; in all other things I was the veriest simpleton; he would not consent to make me an artist, knowing very well I would be but a mediocre, but that having a remarkable cleverness with my hand, I would make a good mechanic.

In this way the adventure ended, with no better result than having given me a good fright.

My father wished, good father as he was, to have me taught. He gave me a drawing-master, who made me study and draw according to elementary principles, eyes, mouths, ears; they seemed to me very cold and ugly. He denounced what I had done, and said it was hurtful to science. I was taken from the study of nature, and at the end of two months, my professor of drawing decided I had no talent, and my lessons were suspended.

It was a long time before my father could recover from this defeat. But I had been judged, the edict was irrevocable. Then it was almost decided that I should be taught watchmaking, but I was so stupid it was well to pause before going to the expense of an apprenticeship. I was ten years old, and could hardly read, but wrote with marvellous facility; writing was drawing to me, the words had no signification, it was simply the tracing of outlines. I often forgot the letters, and drew unreadable figures; I can recall now, the regret I felt when a good Christian Brother corrected me, adding the necessary letters to my beautiful picture writing.

I had the misfortune to obtain the prize for writing, with these words (I hear them now): *He is a simple fool who has not the sense to be able to read his own writings.*

I was humiliated, feeling that an unfavorable judgment weighed upon me; afraid to show myself in my true nature, believing it to be so entirely wrong. But I had a great longing to re-establish myself in my father's good opinion. He was a capable man, and exercised great influence in his neighborhood. If I could but stand well with him, all was saved, and I would be relieved from the heavy weight under which I suffered.

What could I do? what could I say? All I thought of was so simple, and I wished to strike a great blow. Ah! I had found it; I had thought of something which would answer. It was not necessary to fatigue my brain to find a suitable thing; but after all we never regret fatigue, when we have found what we seek.

The next day after my discovery, by a happy chance, my father took me with him to walk

around the city. The weather was magnificent, he appeared pleased; nothing was wanting now but a place in which to say what I wanted. I found it in a precipitous road, great trees above our heads, the green turf studded with white marguerites under our feet, a lovely morning, the sun gilding everything. I halted and looked at my father with a rather knowing air, then said,

"*Papa, is to-day to-morrow?*"

My father let go my hand, took out his handkerchief and began to cry; then suddenly stopped in his walk, and returned home. His countenance was much disturbed, for I heard my mother say to him,

"What is the matter, what has happened?"

He repeated what I had said, and exclaimed he was so much grieved to have his child a simpleton. I held down my head and my mantle of lead was increased to that of a mountain.

You laugh perhaps at this recital. I can assure you I have never felt a greater grief than I felt when I made my father weep. It would have been a relief to me to have been crushed by blows; many

years have passed since then, but I have never forgotten that terrible scene.

This childish simplicity is often found among men of arts and sciences, who also ask: *is to-day to-morrow?*

. . . . . .

I had an elder brother who was clever at Latin; all my father's interest was centered in him; while I, cut off from all instruction, drew near and listened. The voice of my father, softened by love reached me like an echo, and although I could not understand a great deal, still my mind became gentle in the sweet quiet, and I chose from this scientific budget what suited me. Whatever was according to rule, displeased me, the word gerund filled me with horror, and the only thing remaining to me of all my Latin is the word *rosa*, the rose, simply because that speaks of flowers, and I have always adored them.

In the histories of the Greeks and Romans I lost not a word. I thought of them day and night, and was in turn, Coriolanus, Brutus, Alcibiades, or Alexander. Not willing to let others know of my

great interest, I cherished my own imaginings until an opportunity occurred to relieve myself. There was a boarding school composed of young aristocrats, who amused themselves by laughing at the humble rank of the Christian Brothers. This had provoked me, and I wished to be revenged upon them. In consequence of repairs which had been made to the roof of our house, a great many laths had been left in the garret. I determined to give these to my comrades as weapons against our enemies; these simple laths, however, appeared to me to be too vulgar and not in accord with my heroic sentiments. So with great care and patience I fashioned them into swords of different forms. At length the arms were ready, it only remained to distribute them and march to combat. The great day arrived; I placed myself at the end of a rising street, but in such a position that I could see all our ranks; then with my arms full of weapons, I rushed before them, threw the swords at their feet, saying: "let us march." They took my sabres, thought them pretty, the very little boys seized them eagerly, to carry home.

I felt I was not understood; I wanted to speak, my heart was very full, but not one word could I utter; wishing to make up for my want of eloquence by action, I stepped forward to take one of the sabres; a larger boy than myself also wanted it; as it was the last one, he did not hesitate to struggle with me for it; I resisted; he pushed me; I fell, God knows how, and all my warlike illusions flew away with my sabres.

A short time after, my father came to Paris, and I was reinstated in his regard by a singular adventure. My brother, who was his favorite always appealed to him in our quarrels, knowing he would be on his side.

One day when we were blacking our boots, we had a dispute, and angered by the preference which was shown him, I threw my brush full of blacking at Benjamin; he called my father. The brush was a large one, and had thrown a quantity of blacking into his mouth. Happy in having so good a proof of my bad conduct, he carefully avoided spitting it out.

When my father came, he looked at his pet in a singular manner. I waited to be corrected, but bore myself bravely, not seeking to soften my fault; on the contrary, I said, speaking of his hesitating to swallow, "Why it is not the sea you have to drink!"*

What I said so well described the situation, that at the sight of the great booby, my father burst into a laugh, and pointing me out to some people present said, "This simpleton has considerable wit when he is naughty."

I was not, as you see, completely reinstated; but in the meantime I felt a great difference in his manner towards me, and I shared his attention with my elder brother. They judged me more favorably; and appeared even sometimes to think that perhaps I was not imbecile, but that I was developing into intelligence.

My father took me to the museum of the Louvre, and the first picture I saw was the "Marriage in Cana" by Veronèse.

"Oh! father, the Marriage in Cana!"

* The literal meaning of the idiom "it is not so very difficult" must be given to explain the following sentence.

"No, no, my child, that does not represent the Marriage in Cana; all these figures are dressed in the costumes of the Middle Ages, and you ought to know that Christ came in the reign of Tiberius, the Roman Emperor; that the Jews who were under the Roman rule, wore tunics and mantles, and that— . . But wait, here is a gentleman with a catalogue, I will ask him the subject of the picture, and will explain it to you." Having asked, the gentleman replied, it was the Marriage in Cana. "You are right," he said to me, "but the artist has made a great mistake in not putting the costumes of the times, and by his failure to instruct he has injured the beauty of his work."

I do not know why, but it appeared to me very beautiful! And to his surprise, I explained to him all the pictures of the museum, without a fault; while he, an educated man, did not recognize them.

Drawing still remained a passion with me; at night, unknown to my parents, I would get out of bed and draw. In consequence of this persistence, my father resolved to make me an artist. I entered

the studio of Baron Gros, who was astonished at my facility in drawing.

"My little friend, you draw like an old academician."

It is right to say, that remembering the teachings of my first professor, I thought it my duty to exhibit some hackneyed academic subjects.

I profited as much as possible from the teachings of this celebrated master, and I worked, I can truly say, with my ears wide open. I did not understand all I heard, or rather believing I did understand, applied badly what I was taught.

I then found I had as many difficulties with the great man as with my provincial teacher. Despairing of success, I said to one of my comrades who was not more clever than myself:

"After our lessons are over, suppose we remain in the studio, and paint according to our fancy. I will commence by taking your portrait."

He agreed to it, and his portrait was painted; he thought it superb, and wished to show it to our master, but I would not, for all the gold of the

world, have had him see a painting which did not seem to me to be done according to his teaching. One day all the students worked in profound silence, for it was the day that Monsieur Gros criticised their work. As he walked up and down the room, he suddenly exclaimed, "Oh! what a beautiful thing."

We all raised our heads, and looked to see what had attracted his attention. To my great surprise I saw it was the portrait of my comrade.

"Who did this? It is admirable; I would be proud to put my name to it."

"It was done by Couture."

"It is not possible; is this true, Couture?"

"Yes, sir."

"If you continue to paint pictures like that you will be the Titian of France."

It was such exaggerated praise that my comrades joked me about it; they were well justified; for, wishing to please my master, I redoubled my efforts, and made detestable pictures.

In a short time my success was forgotten; and I

ranked as a mediocre student. I despaired of myself, and thought it better I should learn a trade than continue to study an art I could not understand.

In this state of mind I had the audacity to contend for the prize for expression, instituted by Monthyon. The audacity was born of despair, so throwing aside all control I began to work.

Our master said he was not recompensed for all the trouble he took with his students, and that he had the pain of seeing other professors more favored than he was. He then gave us a description of the head that had taken the prize. His description somewhat recalled to me the head I had drawn, but I did not dare to say anything, for fear of being mistaken. One of my comrades also thought it my work, and exclaimed, "That must be the head painted by Couture." They ran to the Academy, and learned I had taken the prize.

This new success caused my master to give me more of his care, but again my great desire to satisfy him plunged me into difficulties, and I painted bad pictures.

At length, leaving the studio and all instruction, I made studies which were successful; encouraged by this, I presented myself for examination for "le grand concours." Awaiting the result of the first trial, that of an original sketch, I saw my master come out of the school. He appeared to seek some one, going from one group of young men to another. At last seeing me, he came towards me and said: "You have made a chef-d'œuvre, and have obtained the first place. You must now make a painted figure; listen to my direction, go to the studio and paint there." I did so, and soon fell into the same groove. At the second trial I failed, but thanks to my composition, was entered for competition for the great prize. I commenced my first picture. When I saw my master again he said to me; "My dear child, be governed by your own instinct, I have remarked that it is your best guide, and that you are hindered by my advice." These words mortified me, for I felt my master despaired of my success, and did not wish to direct me. In this emergency, I had recourse to one of my companions who had not the scruples of the professor, and in consequence I made the most frightful picture that was ever seen.

Baron Gros was very much disappointed and I became seriously ill, and was for a long time unable to continue my studies; my distress was increased at this time by the death of my dear master.

Two years after, I again presented myself before the concours; I listened to no one, but followed my own instincts and the result was a picture which obtained for me the good will of the Professors. They offered me the prize of Rome.

I gave so much promise, that the eyes of the artists were upon me. The following year, Paul Delaroche gave me his advice, and I wished to follow it, but alas! it proved my misfortune.

At length, worn out by my academic reverses, I determined to give up the contest and resign myself to my instincts.

I have thought it necessary to enter into these details in order to show that some natures are trammeled by what is called science. But at the same

time, I ask myself if trials are not necessary, and if the man who has something in him does not learn better through his mistakes. I freely own, I have certain doubts. Meanwhile I plead earnestly for instinct, for its development; and I cannot forbear sympathizing in the happiness of those who escape from Professors. I am of the opinion of Gros, who said:

"We are great fools in wishing to direct nature; as Professors, our endeavors always ought to be not to trammel it."

CONTINUATION OF OUR CONVERSATION.

Let us see where our strength must come from.

I promised you some portraits and I will now draw one. It is a type with which we have to struggle for our interest; as it is part of our business, it is well to know it.

One day a gentleman came to my studio.

"Good morning, sir, I wish to possess one of your works."

"Alas! I have not one on hand."

"Oh! that is not possible; you can find something for me."

"No, I assure you, but you have my permission to find one if you can."

"Thank you, this female head is pretty."

"Yes, that is charming, but it is not mine."

"You did that," he said, pointing to another picture.

"No, I did none of those, but you may buy without fear; it is a good thing. I could not do better, and for mine you would have to pay a very large price while you may obtain this picture for a small sum; it is done by one of my scholars, who I am certain will make a name for himself; look, there he is talking to that old gentleman."

"You think this is really good? but he is not known, you have named a price which I think too high for his reputation."

"Make your offer, perhaps you may obtain it for less."

"Young man! young man! is this your work?"

"Yes, sir."

"Your master has asked me too high a price for it; but if you wish to sell it, I will give you five beautiful louis d'ors for it. Think of it, young man, five little yellow pieces. There, one, two, three, four, five, will you take them?"

"Yes, sir, you may have it."

"I am satisfied," said the amateur, turning toward me, "I believe I have made a good bargain; you are certain this young man will distinguish himself?"

"Yes, I am certain of it; he can devote himself exclusively to art, as he has fifty thousand livres a year."

"Fifty thousand livres a year! This gentleman has fifty thousand a year! I am mortified at having bargained with this gentleman, who has fifty thousand a year! What can this gentleman who has fifty thousand a year think of me? I only bargained with him because I thought him a poor devil."

Do not be frightened by this fierceness of speculation; it is your guarantee. This class interposes between you and the true amateur; he is the buyer,

and with him you get rid of the vulgar side of art; with him you may discuss your price, without fear; he will rush furiously out of the door, and return sweet as honey by the window. Face to face with your own work, you will never be satisfied; a feeling of insignificance will make you depreciate your own picture; the prosaic merchant gives you confidence by making your work famous; he is, as I said, your guarantee.

ANOTHER PORTRAIT.

Some time after this, about the year 1842, I occupied a modest studio near the Bois de Boulogne; I had exhibited, the year previous, a picture representing a young Venetian after a revel; this picture had been noticed, and bought. I had ceased to contend for prizes, and sought my support from the public. Afterwards the purchaser very kindly placed it upon exhibition. One day I heard a timid knock at my door. After the word "enter," the most singular person appeared; his clothes were neat but badly made; he had thick shoes, very

short pantaloons, showing blue stockings, to which feet had been added of a lighter blue. He carried under his arm, one of those strong country umbrellas covered with dark blue linen; his hat in his hand, he remained fixed, the door forming a frame. He seemed afraid to enter; I looked at him attentively for some moments; his face was pale and troubled, his head covered with very thin hair; he had thick lips, and large mouth, his eyes were small and searching; in his appearance were united the sacristan and the beggar.

"Sir," he said in a timid voice, "I shall be happy to receive your instructions. I have come to see if you will take me as a scholar?"

Believing he would be no profit, but merely embarrass me, I refused rather roughly.

It was a bad thing, for the poor man appeared so contrite, he smoothed his hat with the lining of his coat, his head drooped like a condemned person; seeing so much modesty, I thought he might be useful to me, and said,

"You wish to be my assistant pupil?"

"I should be too happy, sir!"

"Well," I said, "go get your things and instal yourself." He returned with an easel of white wood, a small box, two stools, a modest mat; all poor, but neat as his person. I gave him directions as to what he would be obliged to do in the studio; usually we employed young boys for these duties, as we did not like to ask a man to do them, but this one was so humble, that we had no hesitation in employing him. I was satisfied with his services; my studio was well taken care of, my palettes were resplendent; he was very attentive, and if by chance a brush fell from my hand, he would pick it up, give it to me, then make a bow, such a bow as is taught by provincial dancing masters. When the day was over he went with me to my lodging, and repeated his bow: one step in advance, three steps behind, retiring respectfully. After some days he said to me in an embarrassed manner,

"My dear master, we have not spoken of what I owe you for your valuable instructions, and I see if I do not speak you will not. I have thought of

offering you seventy-five francs a month, does this sum appear sufficient?"

"Seventy-five francs! it is too much; our great masters do not charge but twenty-five, and besides, you do a great deal for me. I did not intend to charge you anything."

"Twenty-five francs will answer in many studios, where the scholars have not the advantage of working with the master, but I enjoy a crowd of advantages, all of which I recognize."

As he insisted, I said to him,

"Speaking seriously, can you afford to give me seventy-five francs? Yes? Well, give them to me, and we will not talk any more about it." At the end of some months, he had become so important to me, that I did not wish any longer to take his money. I found in seeking some necessary thing in my secretary that he had made up the sum each month into a packet, and placed them in one of the drawers. When one is young and a painter, one does not roll in gold, and I can recall the pleasure it gave me to find these little parcels. He sometimes asked permission to spend the evening with me. I did not always consent; when I did, it gave him a pleasure which was like that of a child.

He went and came; sometimes he pressed me to dine with him, and took me to a restaurant that I did not know; we were served in the most comfortable manner. This made me anxious about my student's purse, and I remonstrated.

"Oh!" he said, "do not fear, I know the master of this house. I have had the opportunity of rendering him some service, which he recognizes, and knowing that my dear master is my guest, he serves everything nicely and makes it suit my purse." In the same way he accounted for a box at the theatre, where we heard the best music; he was also a fancier of old paintings, and frequently persuaded me to go to the sales; afterwards he would say to me:

"You remember the Hobbéma, that you so much admired; it was sold for thirty-seven thousand francs."

"Really, that is a large price, but it is a very beautiful picture; he is happy who is able to purchase such works."

"Yes, I agree with you."

He continued to work, never neglecting his duty; though not a deep man he was intelligent, of an artless nature; and he often said interesting things. It was very hard to tell his age; he might be from twenty-eight to sixty years. I loved him very much, for it is pleasant to see simple natures take their happiness from the happiness of others, beings who without any thought of self give you the devotion of a dog. I would not change this kind of friendship for one more flattering and brilliant: nothing is more desirable than a devoted heart.

We were happy for eighteen months, working together; order and neatness had come to my studio; a new assistant pupil, a real one, did my work; my pupil had become my friend.

One day he appeared with a sad face:

"What is the matter?"

"My dear master, I am obliged to leave you for a long time, perhaps for two months."

"When do you go?"

"Immediately, this evening."

We passed this last day together. I went with him to the stage, and saw him disappear, into what they call the rotunda. He was in the midst of nurses and children.

"Adieu, my dear friend, pleasant journey." I returned home, with a sad heart; poor boy! so generous to others, so economical to himself.

The next day a female model put her head in at my door saying,

"Is he here?"

"Who?"

"Your student."

"No, why?"

"Oh!" she said, "you do not know it?"

"What?"

"Who he is?"

"What do you mean?"

"You do not yet know him?"

"No, speak."

"He is a millionaire, he is in pursuit of a person who robbed him of fifteen hundred thousand francs."

I knew the exaggeration of the world; and supposed he had lost his all, for he had confessed to me that he had four or five thousand francs income. What a frightful act! to take advantage of such a simple heart; but I believed he would return to the studio, when I would show him how to make his living.

But the months rolled on, and he did not return, evidently because he had lost his all; he did not know how much I loved him.

A long time after, I made a journey to Rouen. Rouen! he had often spoken to me of it; perhaps it was his home. I determined to seek him, and applied for information to some men who were standing before a large gateway. Describing his singular appearance, and giving his name, I asked if they knew such a person.

"No," they said, "but there is a person of that name, who is very rich."

I thanked them, saying he was not the person I sought. I entered a modest café, thinking I might hear of his taking portraits of the people.

"Madame, are you acquainted, etc., etc."

"Yes, sir, he is our very rich man."

I was hopeless of finding my friend, but determined to inquire of the rich man, their names being the same.

I arrived in front of a beautiful house, rapped at the door, which opened of itself, then a large bell sounded, and a servant appeared. I gave my name, and asked to see his master; he ushered me into a room, where I found an old man, seated upon a lounge covered with Russia leather. I immediately recognized in him a likeness to my pupil, and remembering what the female model had told me, asked without hesitation,

"Have you not a son who amuses himself with art?"

"Yes," said he smiling, "my son was your pupil, and by a happy chance he arrived last evening from Italy. I have sent to let him know you are here."

At the same moment my old pupil appeared. I was so much surprised I could not speak. He welcomed me with cordiality, and led me out of the room, along a corridor, until we came to a door covered by the most beautiful tapestry. Drawing it aside, he said, "My dear master, no one enters here, but for you all rules are laid aside." We entered, and I saw the most wonderful works of art, and among them, those we had admired together at the different sales we had visited.

"You are rich?"

"Yes."

"Why did you not tell me?"

"I wished to have sincere advice from you."

"But you do not know how much pain it gave me, to see you spending more than I thought you could afford."

"Well, do not think any more of it, and now that you understand my position, let me take you to Italy; we will travel like princes. But what is the matter, you look sad?" he continued.

"Yes, it is true, I am discouraged. I work very

hard for success at the Exhibitions, and find all the good places are given to others."

"You do not know how to get good places?"

"No."

"It is now my turn to be pilot; remain here to-night, and to-morrow we will go to Paris."

Clic-clac! Clic-clac—a barouche and pair; we are enveloped in dust, relays at every few miles—we arrive at the Palais Royal.

"Have you any money with you?"

"Yes."

"Follow me."

I commenced to have confidence in my guide; he made me walk through the dirty streets which surround the Louvre, and brought me to the door of the Museum. The concierge seeing us, said to my pupil, "Good morning, is Monsieur with you?"

"Pass on."

The pictures for the Exhibition were in an anteroom of the hall; my pupil said to me, "Go to that man, and say to him, 'I have brought a picture here marked 334, if by chance you are able to have it

well placed, I shall be much obliged to you,' and leave in his hand ten francs."

I obeyed him, doing the same by each one of the assistants. Pointing out another, he said; "To that one you must give twenty francs, he is the chief."

All of these men came forward and spoke to him in the most familiar manner. "Now, let us go," he said, "there is nothing more to be done here. I shall stay in Paris a week to enjoy your triumph."

Eight days after, the Exhibition opened; I had a superb place, and obtained my first public success.

"Well, my dear master, the farce is played out; the public have their eyes upon you, now they will be obliged to hang your pictures well.

"I leave you, but before going let me give you a piece of advice; never forget that you cannot attain eminence by the favor of the great, who turn the weakness of any one to their profit. Believe me, when I tell you to pay inferior people for what you want, you are then sure of being served."

We embraced each other and parted; I have never seen him since.

I have always thought that this singular man played the part of Providence to me, and finding me sufficiently prosperous, left me to accomplish other benevolent actions.

VIII.

CONFESSION.

I WILL here relate a little indiscretion which perhaps justified my never again appearing at the Exhibitions. From what I now write, you will perhaps suppose I am a spiritualist, or at least one of the followers of Mesmer, but I can affirm that in opposition to these two beliefs, I have the doubts of my patron St. Thomas.

I merely recall a fact which seems to me to be very curious.

I was upon a scaffolding at St. Eustache, painting the Virgin, and giving my whole attention to the work. In a singular manner which I never could explain, I was incessantly troubled by a strange vision; the door of the chapel opened after a little noise at the lock, and admitted a charming harlequin. He made me a gracious salute, which had nothing in

common with those of our world. He commenced by a delicious pirouette, then bending one knee to the ground, rested his two hands on his wand; his head was a little turned and expressed the delight that one feels in seeing a friend. This contemplation was of short duration; he raised himself, running with the grace of a cat around the chapel, striking my paintings; he darted up and down my scaffolding, and by his many motions made the light scintillate on his spangles; then with a rapid bound he lighted upon my palette, making a pirouette and disappearing, to reappear immediately, running along the cornices with superhuman lightness and rapidity; he let himself glide along the immense columns, often interrupted by the projecting pieces of sculpture; then he would stop and utter short cries; he remained quiet a little while, then placed himself behind me, watching me paint, and chirping like a swallow. He was so charming, and so graceful that I enjoyed looking at him, and did not budge, for fear of frightening him.

The least movement on my part to approach,

caused him immediately to disappear, but if on the contrary I remained perfectly quiet, I heard a noise like wings, and little affectionate sighs.

After the vision had disappeared, I came down the stairs and walked all around the chapel, everything was as usual. I tried the door, it was ajar. I shut it again with care, and went on with my work. At the end of a short time, I again heard a noise at the lock, and the same vision appeared. I could not understand it; the wretched door would not stay closed.

For eight days I was pursued by these apparitions. I at first thought my blood was out of order, and had myself bled. I sought in different ways to distract my attention, but all in vain. During this time an amateur found me upon my scaffolding painting and said to me, "Why is it I cannot obtain one of your pictures?" The idea came into my mind to use what has been called an old woman's remedy, so I said to the amateur that I was ready to satisfy him, provided he would let me paint a harlequin; persuaded that

only in this way would I be able to get rid of my visions.

He readily accepted.

It is my habit to study the subject which I am going to paint. It occurred to me, in this connection, to look into Italian Comedy. I left the church intending to go to the libraries for some book of the kind; just as I came to the corner of the Boulevard and the rue Montmartre, I was attracted by a row of old books, very much defaced, in the middle of which I saw an unique volume, titled,

"Life of Dominick, celebrated harlequin of Italian Comedy."

What a singular chance!

I bought the book; and in the evening comfortably in bed made acquaintance with the celebrated person.

He was very much beloved by Louis XIV. His gayety and grace amused the Princes of France.

Some of his *bons mots* are still related. One day when he was at the table of the great king, Louis XIV. said,

"Give this plate to Dominick."

The comedian seized it, and smelling the contents, said,

"And the partridge also, Sire." (The plate was of gold.)

There were related many interesting details of his life, and also the regrets that were felt at his death. I learned with great surprise that by will, he had given the greater part of his fortune to the church of St. Eustache, on condition of being buried in the chapel of the Virgin.

All the harlequins which I have painted were suggested by this adventure.

I have believed it my duty as a good Christian to assure you that I never represented a harlequin that came from hell.

IX.

THE TIMES IN WHICH WE LIVE.

THE Poet wishes to be a Statesman.

The Historian wishes to be a Poet.

The Novelist wishes to be a Historian.

The Journalist wishes to be a Novelist.

The Art Critic wishes to be a Painter.

The Painter wishes to be a Journalist.

These are some of the pretentions which lead people away from the track. It is this which produces so much exaggeration in everything; for the present, however, we will only speak of painters.

Now the painter of episodes wishes to absorb grand painting.

The realistic painter to absorb genre painting.

The landscape painter, the least of all, to absorb every kind.

We must not forget the plebeian artist, who wishes to absorb even landscape painting.

But it is always the way; he who is at the bottom of the social ladder regards himself as a repressed king, and the poorest of our artists considers himself equal to Michael Angelo.

. . . . . .

One may satisfy kings, may satisfy the desires of a woman, but cannot satisfy a modern artist. . . . . If you compass that, you obtain my applause. We see little artists, with little minds, who make little pictures puffed up like the frog in the fable, placing themselves in opposition to the great painters of antiquity, and of the middle ages, who produced sublime works, and yet were thoroughly modest.

X.

THE CRITIC.

"Some one said to me, your book will raise a tempest: To which I replied, the reed is too feeble."

LITERARY men have written on Art, in very good French, but unfortunately without any knowledge of the subject; it is then our duty to tell some truths, which, though badly expressed, are better than words beautifully written but without meaning.

From the year 1830 to the present time, the modern critic has done harm.

LET US SEE HOW HE WORKS.

He has no faith in great talent, and always shows hatred of those who succeed by their merit, and without his assistance.

Ignorant and foolish, he is even hurtful to the doubtful talents that he defends. Flattering without conviction, but simply in the interest of his newspaper, he destroys to-day, what he upheld yesterday.

Yes, these writers for journals create an idol, which they use as an arm to strike at reputations legitimately acquired; if the idol has merit they soon drop him, for these amiable critics are jealous of their productions, and wish that talent shall not count for anything, in the reputations which they create.

These agitators destroy all they touch. The modern critic has generally been either a scholar or one of the middle class; incapable of producing, or of submitting to honorable work, he becomes an art critic.

I know that there are some who have produced charming books, and who have without doubt deprived us of interesting works to give us bad criticisms.

There is one of these men whose writings I very

much admire; he devotes himself to criticism, although he acknowledges he knows nothing of art. I have taken him at his word, and counselled him to write a book, which he knows how to do.

For some time past, men of really good talents have not exhibited at the salons; they feel they would lose by exposing themselves to malevolence of all sorts, and notwithstanding the desire they have to show their work, abstain for fear of injuring their interests. It is a usual thing for the picture of an artist of talent to be the property of an amateur at the time it is on exhibition, and it is not unusual to find the owner very near his property. Let me give you an idea of the test to which they put the modern Mæcenas who is deprived of his picture to embellish the Exhibition. This is an anecdote from real life.

Two loafers.

"Look at this daub, what fool would ever buy it! Oh! it is very bad, it is not nature, see there." (They put their fingers on the canvas.)

"Gentlemen must not touch works of art."

"Do not fear, sir, this is not art, but rubbish." (They pass on.)

A young painter with a critic.

The Painter. I tell you it is scandalous, there is nothing in him; he has no longer the least particle of talent; his picture needs *tonality* (the critic notes the word, which will be very good in the next paper) believe me, it is necessary to put an end to these old undeserved reputations.

A friend of the amateur, accompanied by a lady.

Come and see this picture, it is really frightful; our friend believes himself a good judge, but in this he has failed, it is an abominable caricature. The amateur turns and shows himself; he has heard all that has been said.

The Friend. Oh! I did not see you; I suppose you have come to enjoy your picture. (The friend and lady turn away smiling.)

The Exhibition closes and the work is reported injured, the frame which was very beautiful is broken. The amateur, disgusted with his picture, sold it without caring for the price; two years after,

he saw it again at a public sale; this detestable thing brought forty thousand francs; in his chagrin, he had parted with it for four thousand. This amateur was never after willing to lend pictures to the Exhibition. I will cite another new and hateful proceeding.

Some people think that art critics are interested in the artists personally, so they invent scandalous stories about them, denying their true merit and turning honorable things into ridicule. Painters without talent spread these stories as a consolation to themselves for their want of success.

I protest against their right to judge us; they are at liberty like the rest of the world to say that they like, or do not like our pictures, but to give their advice, to take, as it were, the brush of the painter, and direct it, talk of the *chiaro scuro* of style, of color, of drawing, it is not to be borne; they know nothing of the work, but use the words of the trade, like apes; their articles are read, and seem to carry some weight with them, until some foolish statement betrays them and people see they are talking

as a blind man would talk on color. To those who must write about what they do not understand, I would suggest: choose a subject which would not trouble those who are at work; if you cannot find it, I will aid you. Write upon cockchafers; they are injurious insects, and I think you will then understand each other.

The year 1848 has given a great impulse to sales; fear of confiscation has caused many persons to dispose of their pictures.

The revolution has brought many persons to this country, with the hope of buying pictures at low prices; those who bought for the sake of investment, have shown taste in purchasing; the timid have only ventured upon small things, believing in case of pillage, they would be able to protect a small better than a bulky thing of value; in some instances I have known persons carry their galleries on their own bodies, always ready to escape if necessary. These causes formed a great many amateurs; sales, competition, the passion born of dispute, the constant sight of objects of art, have

educated men into true appreciators, and strange to say, timid speculators, and men of the world who buy only from selfishness, all have become connoisseurs; and you are astonished, at our public sales, to see how justly various talents are estimated.

That which would seem to have ruined art has saved it, or rather a part of it: pictures of small dimensions. We hope later that large ones may also be appreciated.

Our railroads, our large associations have given artists work. The state, we hope, will not confine herself to monumental art, but that a new impulse will be given to produce beautiful things.

To return to our subject; criticism is very much modified, amateurs are themselves educated, and do not care for the judgment of writers. Artists and amateurs form a world of their own; the artist knows that his guarantee is the amateur, as the amateur is very certain that his judgment is preferable to that of the journalist. Having found the work leaving their hands, it will not be long before

critics entirely disappear. You, young people, who are artists, do not forget that your natural judges are the amateurs.

There are some men who are born to produce, as there are others born to appreciate.

Listen to those who love art, and who give you the proofs of it in sustaining you in your work.

From those only are you able to obtain a good criticism.

XI.

A REVIEW OF THE SCHOOLS FOR MORE THAN THIRTY YEARS.

YES, my dear friends, I have the sad advantage of being able to speak knowingly of this long time. I have seen mediocre talent prominent in sects, clubs and schools.

I have seen bad classical painters followed by bad romantic ones, and in every case they have shown themselves fully satisfied with their work.

True talent is uneasy, always seeking; it suffers, does all it can, and is never satisfied; while the plagiarist, who believes that he belongs to the romantic or realistic school, never doubts himself; the class is legion; it basks in its own mediocrity. I propose to pass in review all these classes.

We will take: *the Romantic, the Angelic, the Turkish, the Realistic.*

The romantic fever was at its height in 1832.

For a long time they fought very unjustly against the large pictures of the Revolution, and of the Empire; to equal them was impossible. The pigmies who fought them were like rats, nibbling at the base to make them fall.

These *nibbling pleiades* were composed of many kinds.

They had made common cause, with a very disreputable set of artists.

The romantic phalanx wore brilliant, strange, and exaggerated costumes. They were generally rich young men, who allied themselves to poor devils who became their fags. The first wore long waistcoats of satin, cut in old style, cuffs turned back, white and sparkling, broad-brimmed hats, the hair shaved, and the beard as long and as full as nature allowed. Almost always they had a mantle thrown over one shoulder, even if the weather was warm; it answered for drapery; they invariably wore a dagger, with an agate pommel. Their phrases were very peculiar. One of them, whom I knew, imitating the famous "*vieillard stupide, il l'aime*" of Hernani, said to his father: "you stupid old man, hold your tongue." These things did not shock the world, indeed, it was the fashion for the young to throw off control. It was not unusual to meet one of these *beaux* with a beggar friend. These last had the same aspirations for things of the past, but not having the means, they dressed themselves on a simpler model; the former tried to imitate young lords; the latter, artists of the Renaissance. They cut the visors off of their caps and transformed them into bérets of the fifteenth century; they made their vests to imitate doublets; and the vulgar pantaloon was tied with pack thread, and looked like swaddling clothes; deprived of the mantle, they allowed their hair to grow long and cover their shoulders, so rich is youth in resources. Added to this our Paris mud so spattered them that one would suppose they had been out in a storm. They also had their set phrases, which had a biblical flavor. "*And it came to pass, my brother,*" or, "*Verily, verily I say unto you, the soup is too hot.*" This comedy I

have seen; it is not exaggerated; those who, like me, remember this period, can judge of my exactness. The pictures which this class painted contained figures dressed as doorkeepers.

Lower and lower we fall until we come to the period of Realism.

Permit me to talk to you a little about this famous school.

I am only a painter, and cannot make you understand except by illustrations. I would like to draw for you one of my last compositions, but as that is impossible, I must employ my unskilful pen to give you an idea of it.

I represent the interior of a modern studio, which has nothing in common with the old studios; in those are seen the head of the Laocoon, the feet of the Gladiator, the Venus de Milo; on the wall Raphael's stanzas and Poussin's sacraments and landscapes. But thanks to the present taste, I find strange things represented in the modern studio. The Laocoon is replaced by a cabbage, the feet of the Gladiator by that of a candlestick covered with

tallow, or by a shoe. (I do not know why the word shoe shocks me; it is cold, and without color, I like the word *paf* better; what do you say? is it not prettier?) There is a painter in this studio, industrious and zealous, a bright light of the new religion. He is copying, what? the head of a pig; and seated on, what do you suppose? the head of Jupiter Olympus. As one of the accessories of this studio, I should have liked to introduce a Turk, for you have heard of the Turkish art religion, but the Turk has disappeared. You have without doubt seen one of this class walking in the Champs Elysées; he had a superb head, and his air a little fierce. I can see him now, as he appeared when the boys would try to tease him, not the least discomposed, losing none of his dignity. What has become of him? I have looked for him every where, for I only like to paint from nature. He has completely disappeared, and might now be placed among the antiques.

A propos of the Turks, I will tell you a little anecdote.

There was an artist of much talent, who painted

a picture of the Virgin. There was at the same time another artist who had charming talents, but in an entirely different style. This latter, full of ardor, wished to surpass his fellow artist, and determined to paint a Virgin; he was totally unfit for it; all his taste was in the Turkish style, small and full of grace, but still Turkish.

He took a canvas, worked with ardor, and at the end of the day had finished his Virgin. An amateur arrived, and looking at it exclaimed, "Oh! what a beautiful Turk."

"No, it is not," said the painter, "My Virgin is perfectly successful."

"If you do not ask too much for your Turk, I would like to have it."

"I do not think my price too high for my Virgin."

The bargain was concluded.

The amateur is satisfied that he possesses a Turk, while the artist is happy in having his Virgin in good hands. . . . I hope neither of them will object to my laughing at them.

XII.

THE GOLDEN MEDIUM.

* * * * * * * * * * * 137, 138, 139.

Your pages are large, the writing is close, and we have great difficulty in making 300 pages; you must add fifty more, to make a respectable volume. This is what my Editor said to me. But, my dear sir, you give me credit for having what I do not possess. I am not a man of letters, capable of writing so much a line; I assure you I know but little, and find that little hard to say. I am like a miller able to speak knowingly of wheat, but I have not any gift at interesting by literary means.

You have related some anecdotes which appeared to me not to have any direct connection with your method. I do not object to it, for I find them amusing. I only ask for more of them.

Permit me to reply in my turn, that these his-

tories are not simply fantasies, but facts, which have gone far towards my education as a painter. These lessons taken from life, I share with my pupils, and am jealous of the least invention. I copy with servility; and even in my pictures guard myself against creating even a blade of grass. I know that this humility may appear unpoetical, and many men condemn it as a sign of a poor spirit. . . What would you have me do? I do what I can.

I wish to show in my method, the long time which ought to elapse between the elementary principles and serious studies; I tell the stories to fill the pause, and like a careful professor, try to instruct while I give amusement to my pupils.

What more ought I to say? that I teach my pupils to become familiar with nature, until they love it in its simplicity; they understand its secrets, and having once found it so charming, remain faithful; if by chance they go to the theatre, they are astonished to see men weep at what makes them laugh.

This is a matter of habit; those who go constantly give themselves up to the excitement of it, and it ends by clouding their intelligence and taking possession of their whole mind; they only understand what they see upon the boards, and the footlights are brighter to them than the sun. The dramatists provide grand dénouements, knowing that the habitues demand it, as they do their cup of black coffee after dinner.

I will give you an idea of this kind of fabrication. . . . The traitor is discovered and taken by the police.

You hear at the end of the scene the words, saved! saved!

She comes in a white robe, symbol of chastity, and exclaims, "My mother! my mother!" A bosom covered with brown stuff receives her; she expresses her great joy; when she has proven to the public her filial qualities, she raises her head, and looking up, "Oh! holy," see saw, "is it possible, is it he! oh! cascade of happiness, it is Saint Oscar." She gives to this young man, so well dressed (in leather breeches and long boots), she gives to him, I say,

one of her hands, that this poetical young man may impress a kiss upon . . . the cosmetic. Dear reader, if this interests you, I know you want to know who these charming lovers were.

Saint Oscar had been left under the porch of a church one winter evening, etc., etc. . . . He was raised with a farmer's son, but his aristocratic tendencies soon showed themselves; he was very different from the children of the village, so that very young he adopted breeches of yellow leather, and long boots. No one was astonished when they learned he was the son of a prince.

Enough. I only speak of this to persuade you to avoid such falsities.

But all this does not cover sufficient space. I can now remember but one anecdote, so small it will only fill you a few pages.

I can see, my dear sir, that writing is not your trade, you put all your eggs in one basket instead of husbanding your resources; you arrive too quickly at your wits' end.

I hope the unrolling of this last little budget

will satisfy you, dear Editor, and you will be willing to let me go back to my painting; for it is very difficult to write when one has nothing to say; you must take the responsibility for this anecdote. You know that often the sky is enveloped in three curtains of clouds; sometimes for a long time the days (if they can be called days when the light only shows itself through the rain) succeed one another and make every one feel gloomy. I ought not to say every one, for we find a class who carry with them portable suns, portable gardens, portable seasons; they are sufficient to themselves, and even the ills of life seem to have occurred for their benefit.

One morning I wake, and seeing something upon my bed, put out my hand, when behold it is the sun. After the darkness what joy to see it again, so fresh, bright and golden, spreading itself everywhere. I hear sounds from the street, every one rejoices, it is a day in which to enjoy nature. I must profit by the occasion and go out.

I dress myself and leave the house, the spark-

ling air makes me soon feel there is something in the world besides five per cents.

It is one of those days when everything sings; unknown birds warble in your heart. On such days you speak to your worst enemies, the birds even seem to feel that goodness has returned to man; they become familiar and will eat out of your pocket.

Everybody was walking, the dogs ran from one to another, so happy in the sunshine; new clothes were seen on every side, the children threw up their red balloons to make the air look bright.

A man stepped in front of me whom I recognized as having known a quarter of a century ago.

"Do you not know me?" he said. "They say I have not changed."

"That is exactly the reason, I think, I do not know you."

I looked at him attentively; not a wrinkle, his eyes as clear as an infant's, a little stouter, but this was an advantage; the man seemed to have lived on happiness.

"And how are you?"

"Thanks, I am very well. It is not necessary to ask you the same question."

"Yes," said he, "I am very well. I can truly say I am a happy man; you know I am at the theatre, my voice improves every day, it has more timbre; come and hear me! I have been very successful. The manager holds me in high esteem. Ah! my dear sir, I have seen many stars vanish, beautiful for the time, but evanescent, while I remain, for my talents are not like theirs, ephemeral."

I complimented him, and said that such happiness was rare, that often envy destroyed the benefits of success.

"Oh!" he replied, "not for true talent, my friends know I owe my position to hard work, and that I am incapable of intrigue. You ought to see my fête day. My numerous friends all come; my house is full of flowers; I enjoy my well acquired glory."

"Adieu," I said sadly, and left him. I do not think I am wicked, yet such happiness as this I

have described, won by work, crowned by talent, is not this only a dream to most of us?

Can one have a little merit in this world, and yet have friends? What have I done, that I have so few friends, and have so often been deceived? Without doubt I have been very wrong. I placed myself at the feet of those I loved, but I had no patience. When I raised myself, my foolish dignity made them fly from me. These sad thoughts remained with me all day. In the evening I received a box for the theatre, sent by a famous singer. I determined to go in, as I was fond of music, and it would also give me the opportunity of seeing the friend of my childhood.

Three Acts are understood.

The curtain rises, the grand seneschal appears; his voice is full and rich, bravo, he sings very well, they applaud him loudly, I add mine, for I feel ashamed of my jealousy.

After the second act, I go upon the stage and

express my delight to the prima donna, saying to her, that she is admirably supported by one of my old friends.

"Do you know A?"

"No not A, but Z."

"Z? no, it is A."

"It is possible," I reply, "he may have changed his name."

"Oh! no, I can assure you not, for I know his family."

"Then I am mistaken; but you have among you a man named Z?"

"I do not know."

They called the manager, and consulted the register; in the first list no one like Z; in the utility list, the same absence. The manager thought a few moments, hesitated, for I had spoken of Z. as a friend.

"We have," said he, a man named Z. "who fills the role of the third savage."

The charming singer burst into a laugh; covered with confusion, I returned to my place. At

last the third savage makes his appearance; alas! it is my friend.

To be happy in this life it is necessary to be only *the third savage.*

The end of the Interlude.

XIII.

JEAN GOUJON.

TO speak of this great artist of the Renaissance, I must recall all I can remember; I do not wish to say one word of my own, only what I have heard.

On a sunshiny day I was attacked by my children. Earnestly they begged to be taken to the Jardin des Plantes; they had been told of the bear Martin, of the beautiful lambs, of the gold and silver fish; in their imagination it was a paradise, and must be seen.

"Papa, papa, do come with us."

"But I must do my work, be quiet. You are walking on my drawings, do not touch my pictures, you push me, and make my hand unsteady."

"No, no, do not work, but come with us."

They pulled at my coat and laughed; how could

I resist; how easy in childhood to make smiles chase away tears; I went with them to look for a carriage. We soon found a very large one able to hold all of us. The horses appeared very gentle: one had his head on the neck of the other; the young coachman stood in front of them, and rubbed the nose of the one which supported the other; evidently these three were on good terms, and understood one another. The man appeared intelligent; his complexion was pale and dull; his eyes, shaded by beautiful eyebrows, were deep set; his nose fine, and nostrils dilated and mobile, denoting great nervous sensibility; his mouth was a little large, but arched and furnished with sparkling teeth: his chin by its projection showed great energy.

"Coachman, are you free?"

"Yes, sir."

The children get into the carriage, the mother and good aunt who had come, and the nurse who is never willing to be separated from us, and who has provided herself with a pocket full of provision for our little journey. They are all in, the door is

shut, the carriage more than filled by my dear family, so I mount on top with the driver, and compliment him on his horses.

He replies, *I love my beasts*, which does not astonish me. I am surprised at the whiteness of his hands, when he takes up his reins; he asks me the usual question,

"Where do you wish to go?"

"To the Jardin des Plantes; go by the Quartier des Halles."

On the road I make him stop at the fountain of the Innocents, so that I may admire the carvings.

"I am glad to be your guide here," he said, "you are looking at the figures of Jean Goujon, which are very superior to those of Pajou on the other side."

Much surprised, I asked him how he had obtained his art knowledge.

He replied that being the child of a tradesman, he was destined to follow the work of his father, but having an irresistible taste for beautiful things, he saw that incessant labor in a close shop would

would deprive him of what he most loved, so he had become a coachman, a business easy to learn and one which gave him the leisure for thought. While waiting for customers, he studied what he wanted to know; then raising a cushion, he showed me some volumes, saying,

"This is my library, but I will not touch them to-day, for I see Monsieur loves art, and will let me talk to him."

"I not only permit you to talk to me, but beg you will explain to me your ideas about Jean Goujon; what you have said has interested me very much."

"Willingly, sir, for it is not my good fortune often to meet with any one to whom I can talk."

"Look," he said to me, "at that admirable sample of the Renaissance. These lovely images recount to us the loves, and I would even say the perfidies of the chivalric world. Jean Goujon, who was their interpreter, has always represented woman and water; a great poet has said, you know; perfidious as the waves; and Francis I. wrote upon a window glass at Chenonceaux:

'Woman often changes—
He is a fool who trusts her.'"

My literary coachman paused a moment, and a bitter expression passed over his face.

He appeared to make an effort, and continued,

"Egotism and perfidy appear in the productions of the Renaissance. Feminine beauty triumphs over brute force.

"The artists of that time represented Hercules spinning at the feet of Omphale, Delilah delivering Samson to his enemies, or the mistress of a powerful Jewish king demanding of him, besotted by love, the head of a saint for her pleasure.

"Leonardo da Vinci, another subtle interpreter, gave to his Syrens an eternal smile.

"Woman never indulges emotions which diminish her beauty; she guards well that which is her power. Like the sea, she swallows all, and remains calm upon the surface.

"Thanks to this egotism, the cold Diana remains beautiful at fifty.

"You will find this intense egotism in the works of our sculptor who profits by it.

"Listen now:

"They sound the tocsin, cries of death are heard, women, old men, and children, all are victims; it is St Bartholomew's Day.

"What does Jean Goujon do?

"He continues his work; this massacre only recalls to him the frailness of life. He wishes for immortality: eager for glory, our civil discords are nothing to him. He strengthens his raft, his works, to float upon our waves of blood. Follow him in his conceptions; see the long waving locks mingle with true waves, these draperies waving upon the beautiful bodies, with undulating movements.

"This genius is a river, made man; in his wanderings he sees everything; flowery banks, refreshing shade, the animated poetry of solitude. Follow him; we shall meet arid mountains, natural barriers opposed to his passage; the shackled and enslaved waters collect, break their chains and are changed into cataracts; boiling up, they wind and

fly around the rocks which they meet, until they at last fall into a lake with enchanted borders.

"It is in this way his works impress me. Here this fountain forms a frame and prevents our hearing the words of these naiads created by this Pygmalion of the Renaissance.

. . . . . .

"If a painter, sculptor or musician, remain in the sphere of his art, if he possesses all the science of it, he will merit an honorable place in the noble phalanx; but what will render him truly superior, is to add to his works that which is outside of the art he professes; the more he produces his base, the greater he is.

"Take for example an artist like Scalf, he reproduces wonderfully whatever he attempts; it is not a deception of the eye, but upon his canvas is a good picture; he never passes the picturesque line; *he is only a painter.*

"But if in the work of a painter in the true acceptation of the word, you find the sentiment of poetry, of philosophy; if a great heart manifests

itself, if you feel the harmony—this celestial music inseparable from all beautiful thoughts; if you find this, you have not only a painter or sculptor, but a great man.

"Jean Goujon is of this number. This sculptor is painter and poet, and the melodies of his lines equal the symphonies of Beethoven.

"This artist loved paganism too much to believe in the Christian's God; he had no tenderness, he saw not, sang not of anything but BEAUTY. This voluntary Athenian, this rival of Phidias in the eternal domain of art, made his times celebrated, as his predecessor had the century of Pericles.

"I have called him a painter, and I think I am right. His bas-reliefs have infinite depth of feeling; if he sculptures the sea, under his chisel it appears white and blue, and by some magic the solid marble becomes a starry sky.

"I have called him a poet, because I constantly find proofs of it in his images, which give rise to thought, and make us forget ourselves in dreams.

"I have said that he was a musical genius. Do you not, like me, hear the breaking of the sea, the blowing of a fresh sweet breeze in the trees, the murmurs of the water, and I know not what far off song which comes from Greece."

. . . . . .

He had ceased speaking, his hands had let the reins fall, the horses, accustomed to his abstractions, remained perfectly quiet.

I was so astonished, and carried away from my surroundings, that it required the impatience of my children to bring me back to reality. This time they took hold of the tails of my coat, saying, *Papa take us to see the bears.*

The carriage moved on. I had not yet recovered from my surprise, when he said,

"Have you not been struck by the grossness of the men who crawl at the base of this elegant fountain? It is the living image of the epoch which has created it, and do you not find these muddy beings represent perfectly our century?

"You are unjust in taking the sixteenth century

as the most poetical, while you place our own times under its feet.

"I know that my comparison is strong, but you admit that the material passions invade every thing, that money satisfies, and that the beings who have preserved a certain ideal are soon victims of this ideality; while those who accept frankly the provincial spirit which puts *chous chur chous*, soon reach consideration, and make large profits, while the most intelligent remain at the foot of the social ladder."

Then wishing again to return to his character of coachman, he added,

"I would be very glad if you, who know so much better than I do, would explain the demoralization of these practices."

"My dear friend, I cannot reply to you; these are difficult questions to sound; it is necessary to have more intelligence than either you or I have; if I had made great financial operations, in which often poor families are ruined, and sometimes the most reckless players succeed, I might be able to

reply to you; but you are only a poor devil of a coachman, and I only a modest painter; I believe the wisest thing for us to do, is not to look beyond our sphere. Such things touch political questions, and it is safest to let them pass from us."

We were at the gate of the garden; I expressed to him my sympathy with his ideas of art, and my hope of seeing him take a higher place in the world. He smiled, and I was again astonished at the ironical expression of his mouth. He whipped his horses and disappeared.

I wanted to know something of this man, and returned to the station. To my question the inspector replied,

"Oh! he is a priest."

Certainly a fallen priest.

XIV.

MONSIEUR X.

IT is in art as in everything else—all are born, all die. The artists of the fourteenth century represented young life; look at the doors of the Baptistery, the paintings of the Campo Santo, it is a world of children.

Through Michael Angelo art was developed, and became more robust, the types changed; the force, energy and development of forms corresponded to the age of the art.

In Raphael we see passion; as ardent as a first love.

In Primaticcio and all the painters of that time we have the mistakes of luxury.

Later, in Rubens, we see that ambition has taken the place of the lightness of youth; painting

is now fully grown and wishes only to manifest itself.

Still later, in Poussin it reaches maturity; it has become grave, and reserved; it returns to the past, gathers everything together and gives us beautiful lessons.

Giotto, Ghirlandajo, Donatello loved infancy; Raphael the budding spring time, while Michael Angelo had force, which includes all. Rubens vitalized his pictures with nervous energy; loving life, he gave to his works his whole life. Poussin is the sage who has felt everything.

We possess, at this time, an artist who is but a dying echo of this art. He of whom I speak, is rather a great phenomenon than a great artist; he seems to have a profound aversion for that which represents life. If he has a love, it is for death.

He has a wonderful power of representing things as they appear, but in order to do this, the thing represented must be dead, or immovable; for this reason he is often wonderful in his representation of antique types.

You no doubt know of this terrible operation called embalming. It consists in cutting an artery of a corpse, and introducing some kind of poison which spreads through the body, making it a delicate rose color; this is intended to simulate life, but it is in fact, more death than real death.

In order to complete the work, they put in eyes of enamel which seem to laugh.

It is infernal! . .

In looking at these human transformations, I have been struck by the resemblance to persons in pictures of artists whom I will not name.

The great artists of whom I spoke above, passionately loved one of the beauties of nature: youth, strength, or light; they made a choice and gave themselves faithfully to it.

He whom I do not name, is like death; with his brush he mows down all.

His pictures impress me like an open tomb, he makes me feel the damp odors; his figures are the ghosts of young women, their eyes fixed and heavy; he represents beautiful objects, but always in the

domain of death. His pictures have the majesty of the corpse; the gestures of his personages are slow and calm, seeming to murmur to you the secrets of the tomb. Soon you are as frozen as those you look at; you remain for a time under a spell, but when life asserts itself, you fly from the sepulchral spectacle. You run to the sun to cleanse yourself from the fright of death.

. . . . . .

Raphael sacrificed himself to beauty; all the great artists have impregnated their pictures with their own vitality, and almost always have died young. He of whom I spoke is very different, he takes care of himself. A lesser artist than his predecessors, he is yet one of the great men of our times; but far inferior to those of the Empire.

. . . . . .

Sometimes we use a word without clearly understanding it. By chance I have done so in writing.

MASTER, he who commands and directs, rubs out and puts in, follows entirely his own will, and so is entitled to be called MASTER. Look at Michael

Angelo, he rules his conception, like the eternal Father, in his creation of man; he erases or adds according to his wish; his work is his slave.

Raphael, Titian, Rubens, Veronèse, Correggio, Rembrandt, Poussin, and others always created for themselves. We have abused the word "*master*," not understanding its real value, and have allowed our servants to use it.

To be a good servant of art is well; this is not being a slave to nature and the masters.

He of whom I have spoken is of this number; he is ruled by the past; follower of those artists, he guards religiously their memory and their ashes. He has his place with the great Italians of tradition; he sits—as the servants of the middle ages—at the feet of those he has served.

XV.

EUGENE DELACROIX.

THEY have made Delacroix the chief of the Romantic school.

I wish to know what is understood by the word Romantic, in the art of the painter.

Is it absolute independence of the rules consecrated by time? Then, as these rules have been established upon the purest sentiments, those who do not submit to them are badly organized.

Is it complete indifference to the beauties of the antique? This insensibility to beauty, nobleness and grandeur, shows a narrow mind.

Is it obedience to one's instincts? We should be apt to find natural expressions often admirable, and in sympathy with the greatest minds; without knowing it, one would become the rival of Homer, Virgil, Shakespere, Cervantes, Molière and Rousseau;

one would belong to a large family, and it would be an offence to give them the title of Romantic.

Is it imitation of nature, accepting its beauties and its imperfections? That shows a superior understanding.

The poet Racine composed his bouquet of roses only; Shakespere added leaves, making it more splendid.

If you admit Shakespere to be romantic, then I have something to judge from.

For me, Shakespere is the greatest poet. Like all artists, he has chosen from the richness of the world; he has taken for study, and for worship, the heart of man.

Having a great heart himself he understands the hearts of others. From the heart he knows so well, he draws all it contains: infinite love, tenderness without bounds, despair, groans, longings for the unknown world, meanness, blasphemy. But how name all that this genius has produced; this intellectual diver, who has brought up the most beautiful pearls from the depths of the human mind?

Admirable writer, he leaves nothing to be done after him.

If I was not afraid of being misled into a dissertation a little out of place, I believe I could prove that this poet was governed by the most difficult rules, and also that he had rules of his own, which guided him in the expression of his poetry.

What I have said, I think, proves that the word romantic only serves to designate those who are ignorant of what they ought to know, in order to produce beautiful things.

According to this, Delacroix is not a romantic painter, but an incomplete classic one.

Now, let us return to our painter, and observe how he applies the eternal rules of art.

You have seen that Raphael chose the beauty of youth;

Michael Angelo preferred strength;

Correggio sang of love.

Almost all have made a choice, easy to distinguish; but I confess Delacroix embarrasses me. I can find so few distinctive marks of a specialty.

I see two men in Delacroix, the man of talent, and the man of creation.

As a man of talent he paints all the picturesque qualities which charm him.

He must have support; endowed with exquisite taste, he recognizes what is beautiful in art; he takes as godfathers, Rubens, Veronese, Titian, the antique, and particularly the author of the Column of Trajan.

Altogether they are insufficient, and produce in him a false originality. Where most people see new creations, I only see efforts to reproduce beautiful known things.

What he does is incomplete, because he tries to give form to the darkness of his own mind. Not being a creator, he wishes to take the role, and where our masters find splendid worlds, our poor Delacroix finds only chaos. He interests us by his ardor, but he has no force.

He has one very attractive talent; in this he is almost a genius; he would have been a wonderful copyist, but full of courage, he wished to enter the

heaven of genius which opened a little toward him.

He needs order in his organization; there is fire in him, but he uses it so badly, that the flame destroys him.

I have spoken of chaos; let us speak of those creatures who are in a state of progression; they keep in low grounds, they seek out depths, they hide their attempt at a better life; if by chance you surprise them, you find in their eyes a human and sad expression; they will fly if they know themselves observed, as if to hide their shame.

There are certain plants which seem to say, "Fly from me, do not approach me; do not trouble me in my humid solitude; I vegetate and submit to the test. I suffer and envy the privileged ones of this world; if they approach me I kill them."

I find these sighs of the damned in the pictures of Delacroix; they impress me as those I have described. In looking at Delacroix's paintings I feel the want of the sun, of healthy flowers, of pure air, of life without fear; in short, I must have

Rubens, Veronese, Titian, Rembrandt. Perhaps some of these days, the genius of Delacroix will come to us in another form, to add a name to the glorious ones of whom I have written.

Let us now look at the healthy part of his talent.

At first he gives us an admirable picture which is the result of association. The robust genius of Géricault comes to the aid of his weakness, and furnishes a beautiful form, in uneasy positions.

The picture of Dante is marvellous, he has the modesty that Géricault seldom has; he is full of the sad melancholy poetry, of the beings who die young, it is the soul of Millevoye, cast in bronze by Géricault.

Later, he gives us a beautiful work; his Massacre of Chio; full of sympathy and ardor for those unjustly crushed. Ah! he himself suffers. These Greeks whom he represents are his brothers.

Medea is an excellent picture, a true Rubens poisoned.

Then there are beautiful sketches, among them;

the Assassination of the Bishop of Liege, and the shipwrecks of Don Juan.

At length we arrive at his most admired picture; the Entrance of the Crusaders into Constantinople. Evidently, this is entirely his own, he has no tutors; Géricault sustained him in his first picture, Gros helped him in his Massacre, Rubens aided him in his Medea.

Here he stands alone. You now see his frightfully dark productions.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

These numerous dots represent the pictures I pass in silence.

This painter left many works behind him. He was not a MASTER, but had interesting talents.

He had not the power of creating, but he thoroughly understood the works of others.

XVI.

DECAMPS.

WE return to the light of the sun in speaking of Decamps, and of all his picturesque qualities.

His pictures recall to me the names of Salvator, Teniers, Poussin, Titian, Rembrandt, Phidias. . . They speak to me of our world, its infancy, old age, poverty, the sumptuousness of its riches, war in all its horrors, smiling rural scenes, shady villas; all the intimacies of the family, all the tempests of the imagination. A picturesque Shakespere, who translates everything into adorable language; he recalls the masters without copying them; a knife upon a table painted by this genius awakens a poem; and a few lines of his are enchanting.

I have had the happiness of seeing this great artist; he was very simple, living often in the country. He was a little under medium height, his head fine, nervous, and light haired. He was supposed to be an intrepid hunter, but I saw the chase was merely a pretext. Often I have seen him in a field take his gun, stop, and while one was waiting for the explosion, return it to his shoulder and continue his walk, repeating frequently the same manœuvre. He almost always returned with an empty bag to the inn of the "Great Conqueror" in the little village of Verberie; there he would take an old register, which served him as an album, and make sketches of effects which he had observed during his walks. I had in my possession many of these precious pages; but unfortunately they have been stolen from me.

After supper, he would sit at table, and roll in his fingers balls of bread, then with pieces of matches would fashion his dough in a certain manner, and make charming figures. I can recall a hunter, followed by his dog; the man seemed to bend under the game he carried; the tired dog followed his master, his ears drooping. It was charm-

ing; he was an extraordinary artist, who gave life to all he touched. He loved to paint among his confrères. It was at the house of one of our common friends he prepared his charming picture, the Horses of the Market Place, which is at the Louvre. His sketch was reddish, he used for the preparations much brown red and burnt sienna.

I saw him one day make a drawing; under his fingers appeared the most charming head of an ass. As soon as one of the ears of the animal was abandoned by the artist, it seemed to shake itself with impatience at having been held. I saw successively a head, a neck, a body covered with disorderly hair; you felt he had a name and character, you could write his history.

In his picture of the Bataille des Cimbres we have a grand drawing; see the enormous chariot drawn by oxen, the men so full of ardor, you feel as if you wanted to aid them in saving the women and children.

Look farther, they come, they crush everything in their passage. What a formidable mass. The

feet of their horses raise immense clouds of dust, which are joined by the clouds of heaven, and seem to be full of armed soldiers; and above, do you see? no—what is that? Here.—No, higher yet. This flock of ravens. They await the end of the carnage.

It is not a drawing, it is not a picture, it is an animated world, which appears as by enchantment, transformed into marble, and gilded by the sun of Greece. You look at it, admire it, and return repeatedly, never feeling fatigued; you go away from so beautiful a thing with regret, and dream of it at night.

I would like to tell you of his Joseph, his Samson, his Turkish Café, his Monkey Cooks, and of all his marvels; but they would carry me too far. I must stop.

Decamps has a rare organization; he knows how to give to his smallest pictures the very best effects. On the small canvas of Rubens, of Rembrandt, and even of the great Italian painters, we see less genius than they display in large pictures,

but it is not so in Decamps, his small are equal to his great works.

About some qualities I should hesitate to speak, but in this respect he will hold a first place among painters.

I have made this chapter a little long, but the last was gloomy, and I wanted to finish by giving you the remembrance of an artist for whom I have so intense an admiration as Decamps.

Now, let us go back to our lesson.

XVII.

ON PAINTING.

IT is a great mistake to believe our colors are not as good as those employed by the ancients; they are not different in any respect, they are the same, the best are the most simple, and are used by house painters. If there is a difference, it is in the excessive care bestowed on some colors, which are expensive, complicated, and therefore bad. The Rubens red, the Van Dyck brown, the Veronese green, are made of different colors and give ready-made tones to the amateurs, who believe by using more expensive productions, that they will have what are called fine colors. But you ask me why are the old pictures so much better preserved than the modern? Does it come from a more careful preparation of color? No.

It comes only from a better use of them.

Let me Explain.

The ochres and the earths are the most solid. Those obtained by chemical processes are excellent, when they are used with boldness. The bitumen and lakes may be unchangeable.

This is how it is done.

As much as possible, use your colors pure, without mixing; if it is absolutely necessary to employ several colors to obtain exactly what you need, never go beyond three; if you increase this number, you introduce into your picture a bad element. If you use four, five, six, then your picture has no longer any life, it becomes scrofulous, it vegetates and dies. Never forget simplicity in the composition of tone, and freedom in execution. Mix your three colors as you would twist three differently colored threads, so that they could be distinguished. If as sometimes happens you need a fourth color, wait until the three are dry; moisten your brush with linseed oil, and with lightness and rapidity put

a thin glaze upon the surface only, with your fourth color.

Ask your merchant for finely ground colors. One can get fine results by superposition; thus, for flesh, prepare with bitumen, the brown red, or vermilion —you may have a ground the color of amber and a preparation suggesting the sepias of the masters— let this dry, then moisten again all the shadows, and manage the lights with care; if these lights are sufficiently ambered in their preparation, you will obtain all the shadings of the skin by means of one flesh color made simply, and by laying on the colors with more or less vigor.

Example.

For a tone of the skin, in light, take flake white, Naples yellow, vermilion.

Paint the light parts thickly, what I have called the secondary lights more or less so, and by a singular phenomenon you obtain azure tones not possible to be obtained in any other way.

Another Guide, another Phenomenon.

I have spoken to you of the necessity of great simplicity in the composition of tone, and of mixing your colors, always using them finely ground.

If you use more than three, you will feel it in a moment, having less body, less elasticity in your color; the numbers five, six, decompose it, and even if you have employed only thick colors, your tone becomes flabby, viscous, and without consistency; it is death if you employ it, it will not adhere to your canvas, it will dry with difficulty (indeed sometimes it never dries), it blackens, and at last falls entirely from the canvas.

Now let us speak of Shadows.

I have said it was necessary to moisten anew by a preparation like that already used; it is necessary to work the shadows with more freedom than even the lights; touch them and leave them; if you do not do it in this way your shadows become heavy and without transparency.

This is the way in which it should be done.

You wait until your preparation is set, (try it with your finger to see if it sticks sufficiently) then take yellow ochre and cobalt which you mix, for your light places, and put on the tint with a single stroke of your brush; this stroke will necessarily mix a little with the under preparation and lighten your greenish tone: then with a long supple brush, which you dip into a mixture of boiled oil and essence of turpentine, dilute the vermilion, which gives you a tint somewhat like that of a water colorist; with this you lightly glaze your shadows, and find you obtain a satisfactory result.

Thus, you see, bitumen and vermilion, two for preparation; yellow ochre and cobalt blue, two more, already four; then vermilion over them makes five colors; we have gone beyond three; but the way in which we have put the colors one over the other without mixing them, has made them unchangeable.

Pictures are judged by their preservation. The great masters understood not only the beauties of

nature, but they rendered and developed them to make us understand them; and they also understood the secrets of matter. Rubens, who is certainly one of the greatest, understood best the secrets of which I speak: his paintings are admirably preserved, not only preserved but improved. We have had an example of this lately, in the cleaning of the pictures in the gallery of the Medicis; all painted by Rubens, or by Van Dyck, his equal, have remained pure. These pictures are as hard as diamonds, but those painted by inferior men, or retouched by bad artists have disappeared.

Time, as you see, judges pictures. Rubens, Titian, Correggio, Veronese, Raphael, Velasquez, Murillo, Van Dyck, Watteau, Greuze, etc., all remain; bad pictures painted at the same time have passed away.

XVIII.

TITIAN.

TITIAN is the greatest colorist, because he is the simplest.

Loving color, he tried to make himself master of it. He said that great light attenuated color, and so kept his pictures free from it, although he accepted it under certain conditions. When the sun is on the decline, and the heavens a flame of light, the earth not brightened by direct rays, is reflected by a fiery canopy; in this condition of the atmosphere, the tones are full of richness, they are what Titian adored.

We will now speak of his execution, which seems to be a mystery.

It is not right to believe that he painted in greys as most people believe. I have had the happiness of seeing one of his pictures in an unfinished state.

It was very simple, the tones a little crude, but well placed, and vigorously painted ; he did not seek delicacy in his color. He observed his values, and established his bases, the picture was to a certain degree rustic, but remarkably painted ; he let his work dry, then he went over it with a glaze of a neutral color.

Nothing is more simple or true ; it is not advisable to use the same means of cleaning his pictures as those of Rubens ; for in that case one would lose all the delicacy ; the mystery of tone is owing to the lightness with which the colors are put upon a solid base. Titian's pictures are all grave and profound ; he understands the mysterious splendors of color.

The tones of an organ give me sensations like those I feel when I see his imposing work.

PAUL VERONÈSE.

If he is not the greatest colorist, he is certainly the greatest of painters. He has not the high quality nor the poetical sentiment of color which Titian has ; but if he is inferior in this respect,

he has a key-board of such great extent, he shows himself so wonderfully endowed in all that constitutes a painter, that we ask sometimes if he is not first of all. Other qualities of Titian he possessed, but not in an equal degree. His drawing and color are less firm ; more light than his master, he has less feeling in tone, but he is more delicate and true, more varied and more attractive.

In regard to his manner of painting, it is not the same as Titian's. I do not hesitate to say that this is painting, par excellence, there is nothing beyond ; this is the apogee.

He paints with a full brush, and a single stroke; processes, called Venetian, are employed by him, only for certain draperies, and with so much freedom that he has no doubt of them ; for the remainder, he uses the simple color of his model ; beyond that, his painting is like that of all good artists, but very superior.

He seldom mixes his colors ; in the skin which requires many, he gives samples, as it were, he places grey greenish tones by the side of red tones ; but

so manages as to give an extreme fineness to his color.

This colorist has none of the tricks of the "luminarist." His pictures are full of light, which spreads itself everywhere. He establishes a high light, and places in his picture a depth of value, which exceeds the rest, and towards which every thing must have a relation.

His painting is a great orchestra, and is remarkable for its harmony; he plays upon all the qualities of color with a master hand; in his immense pictures, the multiplicity might have the disagreeable effect of samples. What does he do? Like all strong workers he carefully simplifies; he arranges his flowers in groups. I say flowers because I love them, and with them it is easier to make you understand what I mean; he reunites and forms into bouquets the different reds, greens, yellows, etc.

When he has arranged his flowers in this way, in the place of dividing and subdividing infinitely, he takes one part of his picture and colors it with his bouquet of reds, greens, or yellows, varied in values.

He often doubles and triples a tone; he does the same thing as a musician; in a large space, a poor little violinist is not heard, but by doubling and tripling the performers he augments the sound. In this way Veronese makes his immense pictures.

Like all Venetians, he loves strong, deep color, heroic harmonies, which he obtains by a proper accord of contraries; his paintings are softened and dignified by the introduction of neutral tones, and above all, beautiful neutral greys spread over all his architectural work.

His manner is admirable, his dexterity is never too prominent; compare it with Rubens, the difference is very marked; with Rubens the execution astonishes you, it strikes the eye; with Veronese it is what it ought to be, sufficient for representation, and modest enough not to distract.

His painting is truly virginal, it has the velvet of the peach; the freedom of youth and beauty, with all the modesty of which I have just spoken.

His drawing is as good as his color; no manner-

ism to be seen in his painting; patrician born, he expresses himself without effort.

THE COLORISTS AND THE LUMINARISTS.

One is a colorist by values, by color, and light; there are colorists who are luminarists as there are colorists pure and simple. Titian is a colorist but not a luminarist, while Correggio is a colorist and a luminarist.

The simple colorists are those who content themselves with representing the tones in their value and color without troubling about the magic of light; they also give to tones all their intensity.

The luminarists, as the word indicates, make light the most important thing. Three names will make you understand; Rembrandt, Correggio and Claude Lorraine.

Claude, taking the light of the sun for a starting point, justifies his method by nature; you know that he starts from a luminous point, and that point is the sun. To make this brilliant you must make great sacrifices, for you have no doubt remarked

that we painters always begin with a half tint; as our paintings are not brightened by the light of the sun, and start with a half tint, it is necessary by the magic of tones to make this half tint shine like a luminous thing. You see that it is a difficult problem to solve; how does Claude do it? He does not copy the exact tones of nature, since beginning with a dull one, he is obliged to make it luminous. He transposes as in music; he observes all things constituting light, remarks that the rays prevent us from seizing the outline of a bright object, that then the flame is enveloped by a bright halo; then by a second one less vivid, and so on until the tones become dull and sombre. In short, to make myself understood, his picture seen from a distance, represents a flame.

Correggio also works in this way. Take for example his picture of Antiope.

The woman, enveloped in a panther skin, is as bright as a flame. The soft red tone forms the first halo, then the light blue draperies with a slight greenish tint, form the second halo. The Satyr

has a value a few degrees below that of the draperies, making it the third halo. When the bouquet is thus formed, Correggio surrounds it with beautiful dark leaves, shading towards the extremities of the canvas. These gradations are so well observed, that if you put the picture at so great a distance that you cannot see the figures, you will still have the representation of light.

I am glad to have this picture in my eye, for it seems to express all the different qualities of color.

The beautiful light in Antiope is golden; it partakes of an orange tint; the reddish soft tones which envelop her, spread the light, making the tone clear and warm. Then follows light blue, which balances the importance of the central light and opposes freshness to brilliancy. You see: a warm orange tone, a cold blue tone; then the strong red color of the fawn, opposed or refreshed by the green tints at the bottom; this is our rule of warm and cold tones, in just proportion, and bringing together contraries; as orange with blue, red with green.

I do not hesitate to repeat my explanations, as I hope to make you better understand.

I advise you to make a sketch of this picture, that you may always have before your eyes the laws constituting color.

Rembrandt has the same principle of light; his picture is always in a flame. He is a colorist by his values, even more than by his colors. What I have explained to you is very palpable in his paintings. You invariably find with all the masters a feeling of their base; amber in Titian, grey in Veronese, bitumen in Rembrandt; like architects, they build upon strong foundations.

Upon these bases, work; but guard yourself against forgetting your substructure; let it appear, at different intervals, or your picture will not be well constructed as to color.

It has been believed for a long time that harmony of color is obtained with analogous color; it is a false idea.

True harmony comes from the accord of contraries; the colors have their different sexes; we have

males and females, as for instance red, which is certainly a robust tone, is never truly happy or complete, unless it has near it the color green; orange in its turn demands the color blue; this is antithesis, an immutable law. These harmonies, which would be too robust if employed without softening, are modified by neutral tones: the whites, black, and grey. Meanwhile, if you are representing a god, or a figure which ought to excel all the other persons in your picture, employ freely the accord of contraries; in lines, as in color, it is by this means that you will attain strong character.

Already, in speaking of the copy of a simple piece of nature, I have said to you, that you must establish your "dominants" of light and shadow. I now say you must do it in all pictures. There must be a principal light, all the others should be subordinate to it, and should become fainter towards the extremities of the canvas; the same principle holds good in shadows, but in an inverse way, that is to say, that the strong values ought to lessen in approaching the centre.

You can gain charming effects by other means. In this way draw in first a clear base, and upon this place your deep shadows. But in this case be very sparing towards the centre, and keep the black for the extremities, taking care that when you reach them, you connect the strong values with secondary ones to close in the composition. If you forget these directions you will, as they say, have a fly in your milk.

These effects are agreeable; nature gives them to us in her splendid sunsets; at the moment before the sun disappears, the earth is entirely in shadows, the heavens are inundated with light, so that you have two opposing values; the strong and the clear. First the sun, the dominant light, then the luminous reflections, coming from the clouds, growing weaker as they are removed from the centre; and almost always sombre vapors crown this magnificence. You see, a sunset gives you all the conditions of harmony and beauty needed for a picture.

What I wish to demonstrate to you, the ancients

explained by a bunch of grapes. Each grape, they said, represents a person, and where the light strikes with force, the grape or person of the picture, ought to be luminous, and strongly reflected; following the same comparison, the grapes removed from the light being in deep strong shadow, show what must be done to the persons in the picture.

Here is our addition:

The base first of all; then the accord of contraries; red-green, yellow-blue; the dominant light bright and central; the sombre values, increasing toward the extremities.

Total. Good conditions of harmony.

There are three primitive colors; red, yellow and blue.

You remark that the rainbow does the work of the painter, it mingles and obtains the primitive consecrated tones.

Three! They are very few; but you will see that with differences of value and of color you will have an immense key-board.

Take for instance the Reds. You obtain by

values, seven varieties of reds, and you may have quite as many by the differences of coloring.

Red absolute, lake red, yellow red, violet red, rose red, crimson red, and I have even found more, but these are sufficient.

You can have the same variety of values and colorings in other primitive tones; in using neutral tones you follow the same rule, which gives you, as I have said, a key-board of immense extent.

XIX.

THE SKETCH.

I WISH to warn you against making a too beautiful sketch; it is a rock upon which many fall.

The strength of a picture is dependent on its bases, its lines, and its color; you must be watchful against being led into any coquetries of manner; if you indulge them, your work will paralyze you, and when you wish to push your execution farther you will find that your pleasantest parts have lost sentiment by having too much work put upon them; you have no longer the satisfaction of improving your work, and the fear of lessening it leads you to the fatal mistake of destroying what you had too well commenced.

Too well commenced is not the right expression; I ought to say that which seemed well commenced.

It is necessary to guard yourself from flattery; put your picture in a frame after it is completely finished and retouch it now and then in unimportant places.

Look at it on the most unfavorable days, and always have the desire of making your work perfect.

If your sketch is truly good, you may finish one part, and the difference between that and the unfinished part will give you courage, and you will work rapidly in order to see the effect of the whole.

Sometimes when you have made a beautiful sketch which is much admired by your friends, you are seized with fright, afraid to do more, for fear of spoiling that already done. In such a case, take another canvas, copy your sketch, preserve that which has excited admiration, let it serve as a guide and risk all without hesitation on the second sketch.

This recalls to me a little anecdote.

I had made a sketch of a picture which my friends said could not be improved.

I painted on this canvas a head of a woman which appeared to me very superior, but it was not

the opinion of those around me; they said I had not preserved the sentiment of the first sketch.

Troubled in my work, this is what I did.

I shut myself in my studio and executed a second sketch. I painted the head of the woman up to the point at which my friends had seen it, so that when they came again to the studio, they did not perceive the substitution. They never ceased to regret the sketch which disappeared day by day to make place for the more finished idea.

Each day, when I was alone, I took the hidden canvas; I compared it with my new work, which seemed to me far superior.

At last I finished; my friends appeared partially satisfied, but still said: "what a misfortune that you did not preserve your first sketch; it was a master piece."

"My friends, console yourselves, that which you regret is preserved. I have too much confidence in your judgment to destroy what you admire.

"I will show it to you and place it near the picture that we may judge it." No sooner said than done.

"Is it possible! that is not what we admired, for there is a great difference between what we now see and your picture; all in favor of the latter."

"It is the same, my good friends, and I will explain to you your astonishment.

"When you saw my sketch you did not know how I would treat my subject. The sight of the canvas was new, your impressions were fresh and vivid; time has blunted your admiration, and you now look calmly and with indifference upon what gave you pleasure in its commencement." . . . .

If it is necessary to take these precautions with your friends, how much more must you guard against your enemies.

The Grand Expression of Color.

Those who exactly reproduce color are not colorists.

Like the true designer, the true colorist improves and embellishes. Like a true artist he carries into color all the laws of art.

Choice, Development, Advancement.

I cannot help thinking of those critics who in

their ignorance always make a difference between colorists and designer; so they are persuaded that an artist who draws well is unable to color—that when they see a picture they always find it defective in color, or in drawing.

They do not know that all is in all, and that the value of execution is in just accord with its conception.

Among great artists are those who are captivated by beauty; like true lovers, they sacrifice everything to their passion, but sacrifice is not insufficiency. With Raphael and Poussin, the absence of color is voluntary; besides they have colorings which are peculiar to them and very fine, which suit the expression of what they wish to convey. The two names that I mention have proved themselves colorists, but the pictures in which they show these qualities have little importance among their works.

Now if you turn towards the colorists, Rubens appears like a king of color; but king though he is, he does not equal Raphael, who is an angel. Rubens is of the earth, his qualities are human, he is

more at his ease in the domain of matter than in that of spirit. He has all the qualities which constitute a colorist. But this does not exclude him from thoroughly understanding the art of drawing. If Raphael expressed himself through a sober and chaste color, Rubens made his beautiful drawing (peculiar to himself,) aid in the expression of his magnificent color.

They say flowers have a language: color, which is the flowering side of painting, also has a language.

There are gay and smiling harmonies, there are sad and gloomy ones. If you place a sad scene in the midst of bright tones, it is an incongruity; all in a work ought to agree with the sentiment which you wish to render. If you choose grief, then every thing must speak of grief; lines, color, trees, sky. If you look for gloomy harmonies you will find them in the venomous plants, and in the animals whose bite brings death. The dry devastated land, like the souls in pain, the shattered trees, all these things together will make us hear, so to speak, a hymn of grief. Violence is expressed by broken intense

tones, pure color, without being mixed. The stroke of your brush must be like that of a sword. If your personages are killing each other, then let the clouds above their heads be rolling and breaking and fighting, and let the thunder traverse them. But let us leave the carnage. Let me show you more simple and beautiful subjects, for which brilliant colors are necessary.

Put horrible subjects from you; your mission is one of peace and love. The richness of the earth, noble human sentiments, ought to be sufficient to inspire you; everything has a place in this world; flowers have been created to rejoice the sight. As a painter, your mission is to make the beauties of the earth loved and understood.

XX.

ON COMPOSITION.

WHAT I have just written is more applicable to composition than to color; but I prefer uniting the two articles, so as not to destroy my own train of thought. Division is the first thing a scholar must attend to. By this division many things are concealed; it is an inevitable mutilation, made to profit those who are beginners.

If we break away from the lines of division, we can never free ourselves from certain elementary rules. I have spoken to you of the importance of values; I recall this to you at the beginning of this subject.

You ought always to carry about with you an album; sketch the beautiful things which you see, startling effects, natural positions. Never forget to make yourself into an ant or a bee; plunder every

where, have an abundant granary as soon as possible. Practice composition, but use materials gained by your own observation.

You have made acquaintance with the works of our good masters. In the public places you have often said: This is after Andria del Sarto; these women bathing recall to us by their characters the figures of Poussin. You also often see Poussin in looking at nature. In your morning walk, when the sun is veiled by a sheet of clouds, then tones regain their value; now follow this little path; see this road which leads upwards, then downward, turns away and appears again; is it not like Poussin? And then at the end of the valley, these large trees with their dark green foliage, in imposing masses; is it not also Poussin? The wind freshens, the heavens open; the beautiful mountains of white clouds rise, but they are crossed by black lines which announce a storm—still Poussin. This lover of nature, we meet him everywhere. But the wind blows violently; we must wrap our coats around us and hold on to our hats. What a storm! You

are walking very fast, your only thought is to gain shelter, you will look at nature another time. But for my sake, for your guide, raise your head and look across the sheets of water as they fall from your hair; it is the deluge of Poussin. It is generally believed that this master interprets, creates a style which recalls nature somewhat, but which is nevertheless conventional. It is not so, he copies nature. It is our corrupt judgment which causes us to believe in this way. We are so in the habit of lying, that truth, when it shows itself in its grandeur, in its pride. troubles, and intimidates us; we willingly shut our eyes. This semblance of modesty excuses us from rendering him justice. . . . Love, that is the secret; love makes us see everything. We are always astonished at the tenderness we find in parents for their children, and at the qualities they believe them to possess; we believe they are deceived, but we are the ones deceived. We are astonished at the sight of lovers, when the object loved seems far from justifying the passion; we think them blind, and that they deceive themselves.

Ah! no, they are far-seeing and as they look at one with solicitude and another with that sympathy which is love, they discover, by the fact of their great attention, beauties and charms, which we as we stand gaping in the air deny.

If you read a book with little attention, turning over the first pages, rapidly, then skipping twenty, then forty pages and finally glancing at the end, what pleasure can you take in it? You certainly are not able to judge the work. But if you take the time to read it carefully, leaf by leaf, then the work may take you captive, and you do not leave it until it is all read, and you can say, this book is charming.

The same thing is true of nature, if you read her page by page.

You have been anticipated; everywhere you have found traces of the most celebrated painters, but they are some who appear to have found materials elsewhere than upon our globe, and although their pictures represent the things of our earth, they are so transfigured that we cannot recognize them. How does this happen? Let us see. Lesueur is of

this number. You find few traces of him in nature, for he draws his inspiration from himself. Poussin looks at nature, and copies it. Lesueur obeys his own instincts; without seeking, without fatigue, he paints as a bird sings. His world is in himself; but the world as it ought to be, not as it is. Child of truth, he cannot understand it in any other way; the personages of his pictures act as he would himself act; they are good, trusting, believing, submissive; they all have the same soul; that of Lesueur. It is a world of the just. He is so overflowing with simplicity, that all he creates is tinted from the same source; the trees, the heavens, as well as the men of his pictures, all seem to have the same soul.

Lesueur is a perfect child, obedient to his heart, and his God. By his extreme submission, all appears easy to him, and like Raphael, he cannot understand why his works are admired, for it all is so simple to him. He obeys the divine voice; he feels so strongly that what he does, is not of himself but of God, that he has no vanity. An imperfect echo of what he feels, his work is of little value to him; but

he acknowledges his inferiority with humility. The higher he rises, the smaller he believes himself to be; this is what constitutes his greatness. . . . Poussin sees, understands, and wishes to make others understand. There is in his works the violence of a contending spirit; he affirms too much, and does not always know how to convince. Lesueur loves, consoles, and draws all the world to him.

You have seen for yourself, you have seen by the eyes of the masters, and I hear you say,

"What can we do? Everything has been done! We have looked at everything, and see each beauty interpreted. Raphael has rendered youth in all its splendor; Michael Angelo, strength and power; the Gothics, faith; Titian, magnificence of color; Veronese, its richness; Rubens, its splendor; Rembrandt, its sombre poetry, Greuze, freshness; Watteau, gallantry. Around these great men are grouped artists of secondary talent, who complete their genius and leave us nothing to do."

Ah! I shall be sorry if my teachings should render you such sad service, as to leave you in despair.

All is new, all is to be done; I will try and make you understand. Human nature is always the same; but the changes in states, in religions, in beliefs, cause human sentiment to manifest itself in new ways; it takes other forms, and other aspects, and causes new arts to be born. As Frenchmen, we are evidently surrounded by unexplored riches. Let us examine and see if our own idleness has not been the cause of our insufficiency. I have not made you study the masters that you should copy them. The studies were indispensable to give you a vocabulary, but now that you possess it, speak and tell of your own times.

Why have you an antipathy for our earth, our manners, our inventions? How can you justify it?

You say; the ancients did not use such subjects! For a good reason, they did not exist; if they had, you may be sure they would have profited by them. Your resources are immense and you abandon them; this is not from want of intelligence, but from idleness of spirit, from habit.

But the serious painter has not touched these

modern things, perhaps with good reason, men of small talent have attempted them and failed.

I shall speak very soon of what are called the serious painters, but first let us speak

Of the Locomotive.

It is the moment of departure; all are at their posts; the powerful machinery glitters in the light; its bright furnace glows and seems to wish to throw light upon the route. Look at the man standing in the middle, he is the master; with his hand upon the valve, he waits the signal. He is proudly placed! his mission elevates him; he knows that the least error on his part would cause the death of many. See these firemen in the glare of the furnace; then this light, this inspector, watching everything. . . . In this grand and modern car I see intelligence, strength, watchfulness. . . . What a beautiful picture!

"But many locomotives have been painted, and they are horrible to see." I know the attempts of which you speak, they are bad; but the fault was in

the painters, who did not love their work nor understand what they had undertaken to paint; they attempted to lessen that which they ought to have developed.

I have seen these little stoves, surmounted by little pipes, from which escaped a little smoke. You call this a locomotive? You were easily satisfied. What! this strange mysterious power, which contains a vulcan in its sides, this monster of bronze, with mouth of fire, devouring space, and crushing all that resists it. . . . I find it necessary to use for it, the largest canvas, and the most vigorous talent. Believe me, the locomotive has not been painted.

Of Workmen.

Have you taken notice of the scaffoldings which are raised for the construction of monuments, and the immense derricks by which heavy stones are raised in the air? Have you remarked the faces of the workmen, who are no longer beasts of burden, but directors of the forces which mechanical genius has put at their disposal? Their bearing is more

dignified, their clothes better fitting, having even a sort of elegance. Look at these young fellows, so well built, with their ornamental red belts, their heads generally fine, burned by the sun; see the rich amber color which sets off their silver earrings, their arms young and hairy, tattooed with symbols of their work, and above all see their hopefulness for the morrow, for all know that with work and economy at first, followed by intelligence and activity, they have the chance of rising in the social scale. These workmen are not like those of the middle ages, and of the renaissance. They are more intelligent, more proud, and I see in them a patrician distinction.

Who are these men who walk two and two, three and three? They have a serious, reflective air, their bearing is simple, they appear very intelligent. They are the mechanics who are on a strike and are going to ask an increase of pay. Follow them: masters and workmen salute each other. The workman states his case, pleading for the daily bread of his family; the manufacturer, the impossibility of yielding to

his demands. Look well at these uncovered heads, these veteran workmen, these men chosen from among their own class to defend their interests. How well they speak! I have heard many lawyers speak more correctly, but as they did not know so well what they wished to say, they were certainly less interesting.

These are new subjects. Our workmen have not been represented; they remain yet to be put upon canvas.

Upon the beautiful public promenade, I perceive a cavalier accompanying a young girl. The solicitude of the young man for his companion, and their resemblance show them to be brother and sister. Observe the pretty costume of the rider; the close fitting waist, then the fullness of the skirt, and the beautiful pedestal; it is a horse of pure blood, who appears proud to be carrying his mistress. The seat of the cavalier is elegant and easy, his breeches are of grey leather, boots soft and pliable, and he has a short jacket. His head, covered with a little round hat, lets you see his young frank face, surrounded

by a blond and youthful beard. I cannot help comparing what I see with the portraits left by the old masters. I do not wish to detract from their value, but without hesitation I give the preference to what I admire here. Our horses are more beautiful, our harness more elegant, our costumes more charming; and I am persuaded, that if a painter would put all his strength into such a scene as I describe, he would make a picture which would equal in merit the portraits of the great masters, and would have entirely new features.

The children run, the air resounds with military music. We do not disturb ourselves, they are coming toward us. We see a flag riddled with balls; at this moment a ray of light enables us to see the man who carries it. He has a very fine head, still young; but see what a wound across his face. His eyes are lowered, he is very grave. Ah! he knows, loves, and venerates, what he carries, the flag of his country. . . . And these young soldiers in the first rank, the same ray brightens them; are they not beautiful! You say it is the light which gives them

such an advantage; no, no. They know that what is before them is sacred; they are young and valiant; then they are united; they are as one; they feel strong within themselves, and accept without reserve the necessary discipline. Why? because though soldiers to-day, they may be chiefs to-morrow. The hope of what they may become by courage ennobles them. Seeking to be glorious, they respect those who have already proved themselves so, persuaded that they also will be honored some day.

"But so many have painted soldiers, too many soldiers." . . .

No, my dear friends, they have not yet made true soldiers. I know uniforms have been painted; I know there have been represented certain fools, who have the military *chic* and who roll their R R's, but the soldier who thinks has not yet been represented.

Of Woman.

Now we will speak of woman, who is by nature eminently artistic. You will find in her the senti-

ment of choice in an eminent degree, an elevated ideal, sensibility, enthusiasm; indeed all the qualities of the greatest artists are found in woman.

When you are going to take the portrait of a woman, if you arrange your model, it will never be anything but a disarrangement. Look at a woman, and you see a sublime artist; she knows what suits her, she has the melody of taste. In the multiplicity of poses she is always graceful, often adorable; she captivates you, and your sentiments in the presence of such native graces are like those that music gives you; but in a superior degree. She is mistress of the art of grace, not only in the dance, but wherever supreme elegance can be effective. The peasant Jean, who undertakes to instruct his pastor, is not more impertinent than the artist who attempts to direct a woman in the choice of the beautiful; she is skilled in the art of taste; she submits herself to the fashion and subdues it. The true woman uses fashion as a theme; far from letting it enslave her, she directs it, and through it shows her genius.

She has, like an artist, the gift and the incessant

desire to please; it seems as if she were created for our delectation: gentle, submissive, she appears destitute of egotistical instincts; all for her is summed up in one word; to please. For that she gives herself without reserve; devoted to him whom she has chosen, and always sublime in her devotion to her children.

The greatest of our painters resembled women; Raphael, Lesueur; both had their gentleness, Raphael had their beauty.

No one has better judgment than a woman. Study theories, examine everything, take every precaution and you find yourself deceived. A woman who does not pretend to know anything, and who appears never to look at the serious side of life will choose well. Why? Because it is her instinct.

The governments of women have always been glorious, because queens have known how to draw around them sensible men. Men never know how to judge men; but women always judge men wisely, it is their instinct.

We are speaking of her ideal which is without

limit, she has not like man responsibility, action, execution; she remains in the domain of imagination. Never speak to her of what is or is not practical; she disturbs herself very little with your insufficiency. You ought to do everything, even the impossible, because all seems possible to her. Never being stopped in her empire of dreams, her ideal always grows more noble. Some day she will have a son; he will inherit her soul, he will understand her, through him she can have action.

The child comes, he grows, he passes his examination. A little idle at first, he redeems himself later, for he is capable. The father is very happy, and hopes to have a lawyer in the family; it is owing to him, to his firmness, that this may take place. Ah, if one should listen to women, one would do nothing.

The son arrives, and is sad.

"What is the matter with you? what do you want? speak!"

"I wish to be a soldier!"

He has gone, nothing has been able to stop him.

. . . . . .

Educated, capable, courageous, he has made rapid progress. One name is in all mouths, that of the glorious son. . . . What I have related to you is a true story. Do you wish to see the complement to it? Look at the corner of that table at the lady with white hair, embroidering; if her eyelids were raised you would see that her eyes were sweet and gentle. Look farther and you will see this brilliant general surrounded by his friends. . . . . There is the son . . . the action. And this mother, so modest, is the flame, the torch which kindled the whole.

Let us stop and review what we have learned, or rather see if we understand it. Give me a resumé of what I have told you of the art of composition.

"You have not spoken of the rules of composition, but in speaking to us of the masters and of their best works, you have made us understand what was necessary to be done. Then you have made us feel that when we have a picturesque vocabulary we ought to use it for the purpose of describing our own times; we have understood this so well that we

are in haste to begin our work, that we may realize some of these ideas which charm us. These beautiful plans have not made us forget your recommendation in regard to women; we fear to think of them too much, but we are glad to learn from you that it is not a crime."

Bravo, my friends, you understand wonderfully, and I have not lost my time. Yes, in woman, and above all in your mother, you will find your best counsellor.

You see there are beautiful pictures everywhere, those already made are nothing to what may be made.

Go, go, the earth is rich and unexplored; you are young, profit by the wonders of this new California.

To those who do not receive what I say, I would give this caution: put away from you this fatal habit, of shutting your eyes to the beauty of your own country. Why be Italians, Arabs or Turks? Be Parisians as they of Athens were Athenians. Have confidence in your own strength, and do not kill yourself

with the past. After you have spent your life among the Greeks, do you think you will equal Phidias. If you have this foolish thought, you are deceiving yourself! You will never be anything but a copyist, and when you cease to be in communication with life, your art will be icy as the tomb.

These admirers of Turkish expression often ridicule those of modern times. It seems to me it would be to their advantage, if they would study some of the subjects I have mentioned. Have confidence. I know why you paint Turks, tigers, serpents, all that we are not familiar with; it is because you fear comparison with the original. Such fear is puerile. Give to the public what it knows and loves, and for the love of the Christian's God, let the Turks alone.

Be a painter, but be a man. Do not forget that painting is a language, and the more noble it is, the more elevated is your work.

Shall I speak of the rules of composition, of the necessity of concentrating your interest upon the principal object, of establishing a pyramid formed of the different objects which compose the group in

the centre; of strong shadows which ought to frame the lights of the centre? No, it is useless; if these rules were badly followed, they would give detestable results; if on the contrary they were understood, their application would form conventional pictures, which would be disagreeable.

It is then necessary to look for something besides these material rules of composition which are instinctively felt by those gifted as painters. But we can find strong bases, fundamental principles which serve to support, without cramping the liberty of the spirit, and which will serve as light-houses, giving their light as a surety to the operations of intelligence.

In art some are faithful to exterior things, others to the creations of dreams.

From the first we have what is called *genre* painting; from the second what we term "grand painting." From these two landmarks I can make my explanations clear.

You know, dear friends, that we are never satisfied with our work. Looking at nature, and trying

to copy her, we are conquered by her; we have with the love of our art an unhappy passion.

This despair is the distinctive sign of a true artist.

I remember a conversation with an artist friend who noticed my depression, and asked the cause; I replied I never could be satisfied with my work.

"Oh! is that all," said he, "I used to be in that way, but now I am quite satisfied."

"Quite satisfied," I was excited at his success, and went to see his "quite satisfied." I was consoled and willingly bore my toil; I hope I may have the sense to stop my brush the day it begins to "satisfy."

No, no, never be quite satisfied! We cannot wrestle with impunity with the forms, the color, and the light of God, and we who love our art, know that our incessant defeats lead us to great humility; but this humility saves us, for when we place our efforts near those of vain workers, we have our reward, and we enjoy in our turn the nullities of those who are quite satisfied.

From all this we conclude one thing; it is this;

what constitutes a good painter is good will face to face with nature.

Great Art ought to be as true to the creations of the spirit, as the genre painting ought to be to reality.

The historical picture is not always a great picture—I will tell you why.

A great frame demands great sentiments; the figures must be large and the color heroic. If the large canvas does not possess all these qualities it does not merit the title of historic, and becomes a genre picture.

I look at certain modern pictures, and I see genteel soldiers, with genteel cannons. Where are they going, and where have they been? On drill, no doubt. I am very certain this genteel officer would not spatter his genteel uniform by crossing this genteel brook.

In another the French are killing the Austrians, who, it must be confessed, submit with great politeness; one certainly cannot accuse them of not knowing how to die.

Opposed to these is true historical art.

The Plague at Jaffa, by Gros.

At the sight of the heavens, one suspects a plague; the clouds look pestilential, they fire the cannon of alarm; upon the fortress floats the national flag; through the arches of the mosques you can see the sea, the great ocean that separates from home. They are all lying around, some rolling in pain, others looking upon the sea and thinking of those whom they love. What a terrestrial hell! you would write upon the walls.

"*Here dies all hope.*"

"But see! some are rising; let us listen."

"It is *he*, his name runs from mouth to mouth, he looks from side to side. My eyes are obscured. . . . but I hear his voice; how is he?"

He is dressed in the costume of the general-in-chief; his body is enveloped in the national colors.

"Raise my head a little, you who are less sick than I; I would like to see him before I die; yes, I see him! he comes to us; young, glorious, he shares

our dangers, he touches our hands; he who can make all our enemies fly, will make this pestilence fly also; why fear? why regret? Behold the colors and the heart of our country!". . . This page represents an action, a fact; and the painter, by making us feel the solicitude of the chief for his soldiers, by recalling the absent country, by showing the love of the soldiers for their guide, allures us into a moral world and merits the title of historical, in the fullest acceptation of the word.

The highest artistic qualities can be employed in historical subjects. The organizations which possess these creative faculties, however, generally prefer to be free from all rule, and to be guided only by their own imaginations.

You will understand the explanation I have made, when you see that the painter of genre commences by exactly reproducing matter, but by enlarging his domain he may rise to the noblest sentiments; while grand painting in its turn, starts with the sentiment and makes it transfigure matter.

I believe I am not mistaken in saying, we are on

the eve of a great advance in French art; I see signs of it in the return of our young artists to the study of nature, and I believe they have taken the first step on the road to beauty.

I am far from being of the opinion of those who say that art has declined: they are worshippers of the old school, who prefer the gallantries of corrupt actors to the childlike taste of our modern art.

From the day when the eye turns itself inward and studies its own heart, we shall have good work

The Germans, who are intelligent and poetical, forget too often that the art of painting ought to have different means of manifestation from that of poetry. They represent in the same composition the most contrary sentiments, and the most impossible scenes; these are so unnatural that they do not touch the spectator; remember this fault and always group your figures in such a manner as to make the action true to life.

Sometimes these Germans have very curious successes. As an example I take a composition of Rethel very well known to students: "Death wishes

to excite the populace to revolt, and tries to make them believe that a crown weighs no more than a pipe in the scale of Reason."

In illustrating this thought, he gives death the costume of a charlatan, and places him at a table with goblets. This terrible juggler raises a balance in which we see the two symbols. His wily words draw attention to the objects in the balance, so that he takes the opportunity of placing his hand on the pipe on a level with the crown; all the spectators laugh, and applaud this lying proof.

It is a trait of genius to express yourself by a picturesque and sympathetic image, which is at the same time natural.

. . . . . .

Let us return to our subject.

I wish to make two pictures; the one representing "The Enrolling of Volunteers in 1792," the other the "Baptism of the Prince Imperial."

How do I do it?

For the first, I ask myself what these men were, what they wished to gain by revolution. They wish

to destroy all privileges, to put justice in the place of disorder; they wished to give to the entire world that liberty which had become their religion.

We painters ought not to discuss the politics that we wish to represent; if we choose them, all our efforts ought to tend to exalting them.

In my picture, they are carrying liberty to the world; truth shows itself in "Théroigne de Méricourt," placed on the limber of a cannon, clothed as their idol, and drawn by all the people. Where are they going? to the frontier. They are all united in one spirit; their hands clasped, their hearts beating in sympathy. Priests, laborers, workmen have the same end in view, to defend their country in danger! The country, what is the country? It is the wife, the child, the parents and grandparents, all feeble, all loved. They enlist to defend them, the women take the children and raise them in the air; from the bosom of the crowd rises the generation to come.

. . . . . .

Vive la France! we are going to die for you.

But the country is threatened, she presses her children to the fight, and covers them with her wings. Will they succeed? What a tempest! All the heads are surging like a sea in a fury; their banners add to the illusion; the heavens are stormy and the lightning flashes through the clouds.

The Baptism of the Prince Imperial.

The ceremony of receiving an infant into the bosom of the Church, if literally represented, will be merely a reminder of Christian unity; but you perceive that on this occasion there is a prince who ought to continue a dynasty, a national hope.

As in the first picture we ask ourselves certain questions. With what feelings does France look upon this ceremony?

The nation sees an heir to a dynasty which she acknowledges; she sees in this infant a guaranty of order, fortified by remembrances of the past, to be consolidated in the future. Remark, that I do not impose upon any one my manner of conception, and I accept in advance all contradiction.

This child is received into the bosom of the

Church, the great moral force which rules over everything. The army in its turn, simple and devoted, will give him protection; but the most imposing of forces will be that of memory: Napoleon the First descends upon the earth to bless his posterity and to touch his eagles with his redoubtable sword.

The infant is presented to the Legate, the women who carry him, raise him to the height of the throne, and form with the draperies which envelope him a cradle, which gives him the appearance of Moses in the waters . . . his mother, his poor mother, ... that I should for a moment forget the Empress, prays for her child, . . . all gives way to this maternity.

The little vanities disappear; we suppress them, and envelope this mother in a religious halo. The Emperor leaves the first role to the Empress, and appears grand in his modesty.

In this manner I recall the great human forces; and I shall succeed in making them loved by painting their weakness in a poetical form.

XXII.

SIMPLICITY IN COMPOSITION

I SAY to you like all other teachers: Be simple in your outlines, in your form and in your color.

These directions often give the scholar a great deal of trouble. I know how embarrassed I was, repeating over what was told me, and feeling that the only way to be simple, was to suppress some of the things which appeared. From want of experience, I copied everything, perhaps the better thing to do.

These counsels, not felt, but repeated by the masters, are terrible, they are real enigmas for the poor beginner; if an audacious scholar ask for an explanation, the professor replies: study.

Study—I see I must find it out, for you have made me lose my way, and do not know your road any better than I did.

One does not know how bad these poor instructions are; but for the loss of time, it is a good thing to hunt for something which can finally be found; but to hunt in a labyrinth, to weary with useless work, a poor creature who needs all his strength, makes him despair, and takes from him the vigor which he needs for conquering real difficulties.

The questions of style, of character, of simplicity in execution are difficult to define, and can only be taught by exceptional practitioners in a limited degree; knowing very well that these qualities are the result of observation and close work, they only speak of them when the pupil can understand without being troubled.

The scholar must never be anything but sincere, in dealing with nature. The impassioned interpretation of it comes only with time.

If he is not true, he puts himself under rule, and loses all hope of return.

This terrible "study!" without help, without explanation, frightened me and made me feel that human science was very difficult; I was often in de-

spair. I can recall now how sad I was in my garret, with no courage to work; work, why? I did not understand what I had been taught, I did not even know how to begin.

I looked from my dormer windows, at this nature which I thought I understood; towards the evening, the roofs, the houses, the trees, all that I could distinguish, was bathed in a beautiful half light, which threw out the magnificence of the sky; and I asked myself why, at certain hours, the view from my window was so much more beautiful; in the middle of the day it was not remarkable.

Why is this?

It is because the brillant light of the morning spreads over everything, and shows the multiplicity of form, and color; while in the evening, the great divisions are marked by beautiful masses of shadow, which cause insipid details to disappear.

Why should I not do the same thing in my copying; I will choose a light which will give definiteness to forms; then removing all accidentals, I shall obtain without doubt more style in my drawing.

I will do the same with my outlines; in place of dwelling upon small points of form, I will look at my model as a whole and sacrifice all details, in order to keep my lines simple.

I will do the same with my color. If I let myself be absorbed by the varieties of tone, I might give samples of color, but not have any one prominent; but I know that details destroy the breadth, so I shall take great care to establish my color in the proper place; details will come afterwards without injury, or if they do not come the color will be only more beautiful. In the masses of light and shade, I can add details without harm; but if I do not put them in, my execution will have more character.

So you see we can again say—

Beauty of outline, beauty of masses, as beauty of color, require an incessant sacrifice of detail.

This simplicity, recommended in a traditional way, constitutes what we call *Character*, which springs from simplicity as prettiness comes from variety.

XXIII.

EXALTATION.

IN the preceding chapter, we have seen that removing details gives to forms more simplicity and character; we have only removed useless things and given more brightness to the beauty of our model. Like a good gardener, we have pulled up all the weeds. But it is not enough to prune your work, you must embellish it; this is the moment to add to nature and to enter with full sails upon what I call passionate development.

I take three types: youth, grace, strength.

YOUTH.

You observe in youth that the slight form enables you to see the articulations so lightly put together. You find great simplicity of outline and of color; the head a little large, the eyes limpid and innocent,

the hair fine, silky, and free, restless under a comb, and quickly regaining its natural grace; but besides all this is an inexhaustible gayety, yielding only to sleep, which in its turn, is accompanied by a charming smile. The gesture is quick, the action direct, all is frank, sentiments never mingle, each has its separate function; the child passes rapidly from smiles to tears, and is at once as profoundly grieved as he was completely joyous.

Observe, feel, and develop all these pretty ways of youth; whatever you may do, you will never go beyond its freshness and gayety.

ON GRACE.

Yesterday she was a child, she was ignorant of herself; in playing with her companions, near a limpid stream, she notices the beauty of her face, she asks of her mirror a confirmation, and is soon convinced; the attention she attracts helps to her enlightenment—she blushes.

Grace is born.

This reserve, modesty and trouble occasioned

by too great admiration, is a veil, which nature throws over her beauties; the eyelids, ornamented by beautiful eyelashes, can fall, and her abundant hair may serve as a protection.

Grace shows and hides itself; it starts with joy, and at the same time is offended with too much admiration; it never exists without modesty but does not exclude the desire to please.

True grace is better expressed by Raphael, than in the antique Venus. He has found how to show this admirable combination unknown to those before him and he has kept all their beauties.

The woman whom Raphael paints is yet a child. Modest, she veils her charms, and finds a refuge in the arms of those whom she loves; this reassures her, and if you surprise her into raising her eyes, you then see true maternal tenderness.

She is a child, sweetheart, and mother.

The antique Venus is simply a woman; she possesses all beauty, but less grace.

I wish to make you understand how to render

this supreme quality. A heart inflamed by love, fears to say or do too much, prefers sacrificing itself rather than to wound its idol. This condition of heart and mind expresses itself in A SIGH.

See now, how you can profit by it in your art.

For this same art, you must have all the ardor of passion; but you must have knowledge to direct your flame. If you possess only love, you will be destroyed by it. Only wisdom can play with fire.

But if your love is elevated and passes terrestrial limits, it participates in the eternal life, and subdues your passions, in giving them life. Thus you will arrive at creative execution, which excites us to penetrate the secrets of life.

Life, that is what you ought constantly to seek. Life in movement, in form, in color, in texture; so that your flesh palpitates, your veins seem to be filled with warm blood, your eyes reflect the soul, a warm breath escapes from between the lips, the leaves of your trees are full of sap, your flowers throw off their fragrance, your canvas is bright with

light, and envelopes the spectator with intoxicating warmth.

Never forget that you are lovers of life.

Observe this life; you have the entire world for your model; you can study it in its depths; sound your own heart, speak, suffer, love, with those that you create.

If you are excited by the love of your art, you will find a celestial harmony in your outlines, your coloring, and in your expressions; you will find what we all admire, what cannot be defined, what man cannot teach, and what God alone can give, this is

STRENGTH.

It contains everything in itself; he who possesses it has no need of struggling like those I have mentioned, he rules his human passions, or has them not. Michael Angelo is an example of this. His creations possess his own great soul; strong and proud, they do not seem to partake of our feeblenesses. In their calm reveries, they appear to await eternal life.

We feel in him a superiority we cannot define. His men appear to possess the infinite splendors of heaven; yet they seem to have the elements of passion.

What can we do with the furious Ocean? How speak to the thunder and lightning? What can we say at the sight of the starry heavens?

We fear, tremble, admire, and remain silent.

. . . . . .

Dear master, what you say comes under the head of literature, and far removed from the art that you are teaching us; we are your pupils, and gladly receive your opinions upon literature, but still would be glad if you will return to your subject.—Yes, dear friends, I know I wander, but I think it is useful for me to speak to you of other things than the practical means of your art. Poetry is one of your forces, and I would like you to understand it.

I wish also to speak of the musical sentiment, which you ought to have, and which you cannot too much develop; but I stop myself. I love music,

it moves me, and transports me, but I cannot define it.

Lastly, I would speak to you of all that stirs the heart; I would appeal to family affection, love of country, and all the emotions which fill the eyes with tears.

Give your heart full play; love changes sad into diamonds. Like the lovers of heaven, bring all the richness of beauty to your work.

XXIV.

ORIGINALITY.

DO not listen to those who say to you, these rules are useless, and even hurtful to those who have originality.

There are not two ways of painting, there is but one, which has always been employed by those who understand the art.

Knowing how to paint and to use one's colors rightly, has not any connection with originality.

This originality consists in properly expressing your own impressions. Take for example the most personal and original: Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, Watteau; these four great names are sufficient to make you understand.

RAPHAEL.

Raphael expresses beauty in its sweetest form; he embellishes youth in such a way that it capti-

vates us. Everything in his pictures is represented in the spring-time of life; men, women, flowers; all are young; elegance, gracefulness, purity, simplicity of lines. This beautiful flesh, firm and round on the slender forms, the reserved bearing, this reminder of the flower which is opening, but not yet fully blown; the green turf enamelled with marguerites, the shrubs ornamented with small leaves, showing themselves against the pure morning sky; all is born, all breathes, but has not yet lived. All is perfect with this truly divine painter; here is life without its wear; this is what I wish you to feel, and what gives to the works of Raphael an angelic aspect.

You see he does more than copy, he chooses first, he develops afterwards, then he throws aside all that is not in the domain of youthful beauty; this is what makes his style and originality.

RUBENS.

Rubens loves grandeur and richness above all things. Nature is for him a bouquet of brilliant

flowers. His love of red shows itself in all his pictures.

Of a temperament sanguine and strong, his paintings give the idea of a colossus of health. His genius is very great, but it deals only with matter. He inundates his canvas with all the richness of the earth; flowers, fruits, gold, ermine, purple, and light, light, everywhere.

In this magnificence he represents all passions, and all sentiments; youth, love, war, suffering, pleasure, torture, triumph; he throws all together liberally, a little pell mell, but with admirable energy, and covers all with a slight mantle of purple. This is Rubens.

REMBRANDT.

His is a very different genius from Raphael's, but not less grand; he has the rare gift of never fatiguing you. A profound observer and thinker, he is sad and sombre; it pleases him, to picture man fatigued, tired of life. If Raphael represents man as he comes from the hand of the Creator, Rembrandt, on the contrary shows him to us in a state of wreck,

in human rags. The face drawn by suffering, the wrinkles, the eyes full of tears; nothing escapes him; then profound and mysterious shadows envelope all this sadness. Rubens might make an execution cheerful or at least embellish it: Rembrandt saddens all joy and gayety; he is a profound misanthrope; his work takes the impress of what fills his soul; solemn as those who suffer, he seems to paint with tears and with shadow. . . .

Not a color, not a flower, a simple ray to brighten the face. But what a head and what eyes! It is life itself; it frightens us and overthrows the idea we have of art; for here there is not development, interpretation, nothing of that, it is simply truth.

This wonderful genius is a mystery. In his depths what intensity! I cannot explain, only admire.

WATTEAU

Is the painter of gallantry, of fickle love. All is amiable in him; his pictures have no angles, his trees are flowing like silky feathers, his colors tender and fleeting. Like the sentiments he represents, nothing is serious and all is charming, all is caressing; a simple ribbon on the grass, made by this painter, sings of love.

Now I wish to convince you, that the manner of painting, has nothing to do with what constitutes originality. Watteau paints like Rubens; the same freedom, the same methods, and yet we never confound Rubens with Watteau. Van Dyck follows the manner of his master, but his reserved elegance, his grand feminine peculiarities make him an eminently original painter. Rembrandt has, much more than is generally believed, the same manner of working as Rubens.

Let us resume.

There is no manner of working which will give us originality, that comes from the soul.

The artist who feels intensely, throws the love which fills him, into his composition and execution; this is what we call style, and his thought is called originality.

XXV.

A FEW WORDS ON ANTIQUE ART.

WHAT is God? This is the first interrogation man makes to immensity: his first desire, that of giving definite form to Divinity.

How render this immeasurable power?

In admiring the richness of the earth, the abundance of its products, the variety of beings who are upon it, man says:

God is the immense maternity. The elements, the convulsions of the earth, the noise of thunder, cause him to say:

God is strength.

The contemplation of the stars, the routine of day and night, the regularity of our seasons, make him say:

God is order.

To represent maternity men have taken the

breast of the woman; for strength, the lion; for order, unity of movement; and they have created the sphinx, which varies in its forms, but always represents the three powers I have named.

Having found the symbol, they repeat it, and represent it everywhere.

The sense of the Infinite among the Egyptians is shown in their architecture, which, like the earth, contains everything: men, animals, inscriptions, all mingled, forming the beauty of the whole.

This nation is impersonal, it is absorbed in Divinity; its life seems to be that of a long prayer never interrupted. These people, as well disciplined in life as in death, erect for tombs, pyramids, which are the symbols of aspirations towards God.

Greek Art.

Greek Art has material instincts, but it also contains the religious ideal of the Egyptians.

When Greece produced gods, she borrowed majesty from the sphinx, and if you will compare the

primitive Greek statues with the Egyptian divinities, you will see how alike they are.

The god-men created by Phidias, are calm as strength itself, they are strangers to human passion. His creations are radiant like the stars.

To this divine ideality, among the early Greek sculptors, succeeded a human ideality. Man being only a detail in the universe, is seen from a distance. But soon man forgets his gods, in thinking of himself; he exalts his beauty and strength, in life and in death. Not having the power to represent divinity, he makes it descend to him, and his efforts are expressed in Jupiter. I remember the passage in Scripture where the most beautiful angel compares himself to God, and believes himself his equal; he revolts, and his pride precipitates him into hell.

This sublime image is a poetical expression of what I want you to understand, for the pride which has made art human, has caused us to lose all the graces of celestial art.

The universe is almost forgotten; man only is looked at. Science now comes to our aid, enabling us

to see a great deal, so that perfect execution takes the place of sublime ideality. . . .

We can then establish three distinct phases of antique art:

That of divine ideality, which gives a sublime art;

That of human exaltation, which gives an admirable art;

That of individuality, which, resembling our own, is not superior to modern art.

We have seen among the Greeks, humanity transfigured by the reflection of the infinite; soon follows a great epoch, that of Christian art, which, from the earth rises towards heaven. It seems as if the Egyptians and Greeks of the noblest epoch, came from the Infinite, while men of the Christian era returned to the Infinite.

May it not be that the human spirit, while it remains in the divine sight like the stars, has also its evolutions? Who knows. . . .

I am going to speak of the art of the French Revolution, whose masters were those of antiquity. These slaves broke their chains, thinking only of their

rights; in this thirst for freedom, divinity is almost forgotten.

They produced beautiful works, equal to the second period of Greek art, but very inferior to the first.

XXVI.

ON FRENCH ART.

WHAT is the mission of the artist? Ought he to consider his art, from the point of view of art only, or ought he, respecting the rules that I consider eternal, make his art bend to the taste and the customs of his country?

Yes, the artist ought to submit himself to the taste and the customs of his country, for his mission is to please and to charm; but you say, if the taste of the public is false, ought he not to combat it; if he is more enlightened than it is, ought he not to advance his age. . . Great words these, they have often been repeated, but it was only for the benefit of very doubtful talent.

In France, a simple imitation is far from satisfying us; it is necessary that art should be elevated by thought, poetry, philosophy, or Christian senti-

ment; the more qualities an artist adds to his work, the greater he is. At the present day many people think that the artist ought never to go beyond making exact copies; but if you imitate without ideal, without poetry, your copies will be insipid; thought alone vivifies the execution; without thought no art is possible.

The public takes no interest in these professional disputes; the people want beautiful and great things; they wish you to speak to their hearts, and to represent what they love and admire.

The public has never been ungrateful; it has always applauded, not only beautiful works, but even simple attempts, when made in the right spirit.

Let us return to our French traditions. Poussin and Lesueur have the religious ideal; David, Gros, Prudhon, Girodet, Guérin, Géricault have the philosophic ideal.

It is needful not only to point out their tendencies, but also to make you understand them; this I will try to do.

We will take the pictures exposed in a salon

the *Sabines* of David; the *Plague at Jaffa*, by Gros; *Justice following Crime*, by Prudhon; *Marcus Sextus*, by Guérin; and the *Shipwreck of the Medusa*, by Géricault.

The Sabines.

So many people say this picture is cold, systematic, that men never fought in that manner, that it is false, false in color, false in action, false in expression.

These accusations I will answer one by one, and I will make you feel how stupid they are, when I explain this beautiful painting.

This picture of the *Sabines* was conceived at a time when France was divided by contrary opinions. Many times in the heart of the National Assembly was felt the want of unity, the need for concessions; appeals were made for concord, and members embraced one another, shouting "Vive La France." . . Alas! the next day they were more divided than ever. A great artist like David could not be insensible to the situation of public affairs; he was moved by it, and created the *Sabines*, as an appeal to con-

cord; concord in the name of what is most loved; in the name of the family; this is what David wished to represent. Has he succeeded? Yes, and I can say without fear, this work is a marvel of art.

The forms in this picture are as pure as the sentiment which created them; nothing can be more beautiful and chaste than Hersilie, more admirable in form or expression than the woman mounted upon the ruins of a temple; the old mother who wishes to die before seeing her loved ones sacrificed, is sublime, as are all those women, with chaste breasts full of milk; the picture itself has a harmony in which all parts seem to blend. Cold! this picture comes from a great soul; ah, you must be very blind or very insensible not to be touched by this beautiful work.

Like a true artist, he echoed the ideas of his times, and with the means which were peculiar to him, has left us an eloquent appeal for concord.

The Plague at Jaffa.

This is an admirable subject: a young general loving glory, and making a whole country sympathize with him, the chief and army are as one. What unity of feeling! They share their successes and reverses. The plague attacks them . . . "be reassured, soldiers, your guide is here, he is near you, death will be sweet near him. . . Thou who art cured, follow after him, his road leads to victory."

Field of Eylau.

Everything is covered with snow, they suffer, they are wounded, they are conquered by arms and by cold.

. . . . . .

On this frozen plain appears the friend of all the warriors of the world, he who afterwards saw the English soldiers running to salute him; this noble heart is in a glow; he puts new life into them, he honors the courage of the unfortunate.

Aboukir.

Surrender! No, rather die! this is what the old wounded Pasha expresses, as he holds with his one remaining hand some frightened runaway. Victim

of courage, he will be sacrificed, but his son seizes his father's cimeter and returns it to the conqueror.

All is lost but honor. . . .

In this touching picture the terrible sides are veiled, the few dead forms are so imposing that they seem to have fallen asleep after having performed their duty.

The Shipwreck of the Medusa.

Another popular echo; this picture had been preceded by the *Chasseur on Horseback*, and the *Cuirassier;* the chasseur in 1812 represented the beginning of war, and the necessity of trebling the forces to oppose a powerful enemy; the cuirassier, in 1814, the fatigued soldier; this giant is conquered. . . Like two flashes of lightning these pictures announced the storm . . . 1815, the hundred days, the shipwreck, the great nation has foundered. There is only a plank, dead bodies, a few giants who survive; but far, far on the horizon, a mere point, a new vessel, hope; we are saved! . . Alas! we know now who directed it.

Marcus Sextus.

The exiles return, they find the hearth deserted, their dearest possessions falling in ruins, oblivion, death. . . . Like Eolian harps, these great spirits resound again to the breath of patriotism.

They quiet and console us in giving a poetical form to the thoughts which agitate us.

Endowed with superior sensibility, they enlighten us, for they see into the future. These great artists, essentially moral, can have only a salutary effect.

This is what we have had, and I hope we may have such again.

XXVII.

PRUDHON.

HE escapes like all other tender souls from the tumult of the city, he seeks solitude; the sight of nature and the calmness of his own heart, are necessary to him.

When our cities are noisy we all love the country; we cannot help comparing its delightful solitude with what we have left; the mosses so pure and clean, the air balsamed from the forests, the trees covered with ivy, the purity of their bark, the sight of the burrows, which are seen everywhere, all show it is not the home of many men.

You are upon a high elevation; it was necessary to climb slowly up the difficult road, but you are rewarded. You fly from the city because you have been disappointed, discouraged, and you say; here, no one will come.

The hour of absolute repose has come for you, the memory of your struggles, of your fatigues wearies you. Throw yourself upon this mossy carpet, turn your head and look at these branches of verdure, . . then listen to the sweet concert from the woods—and —you sleep. While you slept, the sun has declined, the only light is upon the summit of the mountains; the trees which surround you are in a sweet half light, the wood pigeon smooths with his bill the feathers of his wings, and you hear his cooing. . . . This image of solitude, of tenderness, and of love is the life of Prudhon; it is his work: he has painted nothing else, he has sung of nothing but love.

An eminently tender soul, it was reserved for him to paint *justice following crime;* the dove only could find these accents, in which to paint wickedness.

XXVIII.

THE FATHERS OF THEIR COUNTRY.

THESE children of thought have been for a long time banished from France. I claim for them the place they merit, which is near the heart.

These great geniuses have made us powerful; we owe them the most profound sentiments, the noblest emotions.

Let us see how we honor their memories.

DAVID.

David, the great, he who has given us immortal pages, he who has nobly taught us; David who is great among the greatest!

What have we done with his pictures? What have we done with his ashes?

I will tell you.

His works have been divided, and placed as if by chance; and as for his ashes, I one day saw in an

abandoned road, a tomb, upon which I read the name of David, and this simple epitaph: "I repose at last, near the companion of all my misfortunes."

It is very little for him who has given us so much.

GROS.

Gros is one of the glories of our modern art. What have we done with his pictures? What have we done with his ashes? His pictures are not placed by chance, chance is sometimes happy. No, they are systematically removed, far from the eye, and like those of David, divided and scattered; for his ashes a too modest tomb.

You know his misfortunes. . . .

PRUDHON.

Prudhon was, as I have tried to make you understand, not an echo of his epoch: of a dreamy and gentle nature, he lived in solitude and took no part in the political ideas of his times. For this reason his works have escaped; but as you know, he did not escape misfortune.

GIRODET.

Girodet, when he felt himself dying, expressed a wish to see his studio once more and his unfinished pictures. He was carried there, when falling upon his knees, and raising his hands, he exclaimed: "Adieu, beautiful art of painting; I shall never see you again," and died immediately.

. . . . . .

Happy Girodet, you died happy, believing in the morrow.

And on this morrow, we can also say, Adieu, great art, we shall never see you any more; for Antoine Gros, the most meritorious of this noble phalanx, has drained the chalice to the dregs.

GÉRICAULT.

Happy Géricault, you died young, you waited not the recompense of your fellow citizens.

Wicked political passion has reviled these great geniuses; but thanks be to God, their admirable works are more resplendent than ever.

Let us make haste to give them the place they merit; gather together these beautiful works; build, if it is necessary, a temple for them.

Do not believe that these pictures are historical, and consequently must be placed with those of the same kind; no, they are much more than that.

They give us a sublime art, a splendid echo of the fatherland; this is the heart, the soul of France!

Separate. Separate quickly, these *chefs d'œuvre* from vulgar productions; let us make haste to bring to light our most beautiful jewels.

Revenge this banishment of thought; let us surround these pictures with immortal palms; and let the place which contains them become the sanctuary of the country.

But I hear you say: Of what do you complain? What you demand is already done.

Show me where and how! You place works of the first order by chance. I see grand art which I am defending, confounded with that of an ante-room; the Horaces by the side of a Boucher or a Lancret. I see the *Plague at Jaffa* perched up by the ceiling;

Eylau the same; a sublime canvas like *Aboukir*, with what is called historical art, but would be better described as anecdotal; I see mean servility side by side with courage, grandeur, heroism; and you say I have nothing to demand?

I who venerate them, prefer persecution for them rather than such lukewarmness.

A son who revolts against his father can, by a violent reaction, return, submit himself, and become again a good son; but he who coldly performs his filial obligations, he is a monster, who will never return. Let us venerate the works of these men, as we venerate our ancestors, giving them the first place in our houses.

I know that this is an oversight on the part of those who have the arrangement of the pictures, for they have always shown a great deal of zeal for these ideas that I defend. And I hope they will no longer delay being guided by them.

XXIX.

MY MASTER GROS.

DEAR and venerated master, I have seen you defend this sublime art, of which you were the most complete expression. I have seen you carrying your banner, when you were bruised and bloody; you were alone, and alone you fought with the courage of the lion; but you were wounded by the age, you, the unconquered, you felt that victory was impossible; you wrapped yourself in your colors, and shut your eyes.

Dear master, time has well revenged you!

I have seen you die gloriously . . . those who insulted you . . . I have seen live despicably.

Your words still sound in my ears. "Ah! Couture, if you were only older, we could crush these abominable romancers." Alas! I was only a child;

but, dear master, these words were the sigh of your wounded heart; for you were too noble and too grand, to be willing to crush them. If I had been able to come to your aid, God knows how devoted I should have been, but I who lived, know that I should have had only the honor of falling with you.

While you lived, I was too young to serve you, and now when it is possible to continue your interrupted works, I feel too old to do anything worthy of you; only one thing I shall try for, and that is to make them render you justice. I have not done anything, I have not been able to do anything, so that I have no title to be listened to. I can only pray and hope to be able to do something to serve your memory.

XXX.

IS ART SUPERIOR TO NATURE?

A GREAT question, often asked and never answered.

We can reply yes and no. The reason is:

If we pronounce the word art in this connection, we take in all its perfection. We know already by our conversations, that the most gifted are the most impassioned; that they abandon themselves to that which captivates them, developing that which they love with so much force that they end by making us share their enthusiasm.

The word development is not very exact, it is enough for them to banish from their pictures everything that is not their idol.

Man has too feeble intelligence to admire at once all the splendors of nature; he is only able to understand it in detail; this detail, while it is deep, is indeed so immense that it requires a peculiar organi-

zation to fathom it, and to make others share the admiration.

The whole magnificence of God dazzles us. The feebleness of our minds can no more bear it, than our eyes can bear the light of the sun; for this reason we should be as modest in our choice of subject, as we are in our means of execution.

This simplicity of working cannot excel the object selected; a beautiful head of a young girl, chosen by Raphael as a model, will be superior to what he will paint; the splendid color of Titian loses very much when compared with the original.

So you see we can say: nature is superior to art.

Yes, that is true; but if we look at this question from a human point of view, we see that these simple effects, given by genius, surround us, quiet us, and satisfy our intellectual desires; since we are satisfied, even overwhelmed, we can truly say: art is superior to nature, because art combines beauties which we can see, in a way that nature never does.

It is what they call in literature, unity of time, unity of place; it is a simple frame given to a sentiment, or a passion. Everything must be subordinate to this thought. I have said yes and no. This is the doubt, I have developed as well as I could, what I wished to make you understand, and like every writer, I believed it was conclusive. I find everywhere this wish to convince, and this affirmative tone towards those taught; why not rest satisfied? It is better to leave your reader in a poetical uncertainty, rather than impose upon him a bad conclusion.

What I have just explained is far from satisfying me; there is in me a violent reaction, and freed from the uncertainty which I have expressed, I am sensible that certain chosen spirits of the Eternal seem to continue His work; these children of God recall us to the divine truth; they are more true than our terrestrial truths, which are always more or less injured by corruption; they reclothe creation in its original dress. This divine mission is manifested in Phidias and Raphael.

We can then say, their works are superior to the nature that we see, since it is this same nature reclothed.

XXXI.

DIVINE ART.

HEIGHT. . . . . Decline. We are on the threshold of great art; here man ceases to manifest himself, he has a glimpse of the ETERNAL; understanding his inferiority, he becomes humble; he expresses only what God breathes into him, and refrains from putting a man's name to what he looks upon as a holy thing. An echo of God himself, what he does will remain upon the earth, will tower above everything, will be as inexplicable as the Infinite.

The Greeks, those we class as Primitives, reached this supreme art.

The Greeks.

The Greeks watched, suffered, bore fatigue, endured everything for their country. . . Must we die

that she may be more glorious, more beautiful still? Let us die.

It is infinite love, the maternal sentiment applied to one's country, self abnegation, sacrifice, impersonality.

Impersonality, that is the word.

Exaltation in love gives them a glimpse of the Divine; they produce wonders. In vain you will seek their names. . . . Later, the patriotic sentiment becomes less lively; exaltation in love disappears; personality begins to show itself, and we see at the base of statues, such a one, son of such a one has done this.

In the time of the middle ages, when men suffered from wars, and slavery, intelligent men endured much; they could own nothing; the rich possessed land, and water; and their wives and children were at the mercy of the masters.

Certain proud spirits did not willingly accept life under these conditions. They would gladly have renounced it: led to God by the excess of their mis-

eries, they found in his bosom happiness without bounds; yesterday they wished to revolt against their oppressors, to-day they realize that there is a greater good than that of this earth; they return to their enemies, with hands full of flowers and of pardon, and the strength they have drawn from the bosom of their God is so grand and irresistible, that they subdue in their turn those who had crushed them.

But they subdue them as they subdue themselves; they see and judge the miseries of the earth; the most powerful king is no more to them than a brother, as small and as miserable as they are; what do I say? even more miserable, for they enjoy a grand ideal, while the ruler on the earth possesses in their eyes only earthly tinsel.

The master is no more a tyrannical conqueror, he is the patron, the protector of all his followers; being humble, his heart is full of brotherly love.

Lords, Priests, People, are but as one. From this unity arise these grand cathedrals which tower to the sky; all rising, all seeking to climb to eternal felicity. . . .

Look at the churches, so varied and admirable in form and style; visit them, climb up and down; wonders everywhere: in the most inaccessible places, where the eye can hardly reach, if you are capable of climbing, you will find treasures of sculpture.

Do you not see with me, these divine artists suspended between heaven and earth! Their day is over, the angelus rings, their work stops, they pray with crossed hands, and repeat impressively the prayer of all: "*Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name!* They retire to their beds at the hour when the birds put their heads under their wings; the rising sun finds them at their work, which grows like the grass of the fields; without excitement, without fatigue, they have in their simplicity a divine equilibrium. The most gigantic works finished, they recommence the next day, as if they had not accomplished wonders the day before; children of God, like their Father, they never stop; modest and strong, gentle and simple, they are the echoes of their God; they never breathe a name or

a vanity in their prayer; this vanity they cannot have; living in the infinite, their thoughts in the stars, they find this world is only mire; not being troubled by the deceptions of pride, they give what they can, and sincerely regard themselves as unworthy workmen.

There is a divine manifestation which belongs only to the chosen ones; it seems as if God created by their hands, for the thing is always expressed in the same way; it is not like human execution, varying according to individuals, but is immutable, and produces a variety without limit; it is inexhaustible.

Look at a capital of the thirteenth century, you see how wonderful it is, as beautiful as the finest Greek capital. Now look at a hundred of them, a thousand of them; they are never alike, but all of equal beauty; it is the infinity of creation.

In sculpture, where the figures are very different, you see this eternal unity, but great variety, all in the same spirit, and drawn from a source that never fails.

They are as varied as the productions of the

earth. In looking at a gothic statue it is the same as if one should look at an oak: the oak may be more or less grand, more or less beautiful, but it is always an oak. The gothic statue is the same, more or less perfect in execution, but what makes it more interesting, is that it is a marked work of the middle ages. I deceive myself; there is no epoch for the sentiment of which I speak. Whenever there is impersonality, submission to God, a mere echo, the maker of the work seizes something eternal, I cannot say what; you will find it among the Greeks as well as among the artists of the middle ages.

Yes, it is always the same; in all countries, in all time, it is as easy to recognize it as the light.

How I wish I could write so that you would understand me! How I wish I could show you certain statues of Christian art, and let you compare them with the antique Achilles or fragments of Phidias. You would see and feel how much they are alike: the same calmness, the same simplicity, a complete absence of pedantic science; science is there, but

hidden; strength is there also; they possess everything, but veiled mysteriously.

He who created the *Gladiator*, made certainly a beautiful statue; I do not believe it is possible for man to excel it. But it is far from having the beauty of which I speak. In the *Gladiator* everything wishes to be seen; see my power, my knowledge, I show it in the plainest way; admire me, do not forget me, and besides I am such a one, son of so and so.

Yes I admire you, you represent a difficult art, requiring knowledge; but my happiness is found in an art which feels no effort, no labor; in that art which leaves me liberty, because it does not call upon me to admire it.

One fatigues me, without ever satisfying me.

The other overpowers me, without ever fatiguing me.

Great Art comes from God; he gives it.

Human art is a little beggar, who is asking for a penny.

In the midst of the middle ages appeared this

sentiment of personality, the first principle of decline. I will give you an anecdote to illustrate it.

Michael Angelo had exposed his divine group of the *Pieta;* the success of it was immense; one day among its admirers he heard some one say, "We owe this master-piece to our Gobbo of Milan." He felt himself bitten to the heart, by this gnawing worm of personality; he ran to his studio, took a hammer and other tools necessary for his purpose; when night came, with a dark lantern, he went like a thief to the place where his work was exposed, and engraved upon the girdle of the virgin: *Michael Angelo made this.*

Ah! at this moment, the great, the divine artist, he who had been chosen by Providence to give perfect expression to the Christian art, had signed the treaty of decline. . . . Poor Michael Angelo! thou wilt never rub off this stain of personality; thy great soul will produce wonders, but thou hast failed, thou wilt no more have grace in all its virginity.

Thou hast set a bad example, thou wilt be the first punished; thou wilt never again be able to

express the feeling, the divine equilibrium of thy *Picta*.

But thou remainest a child of God; thou wilt be an echo of his power, and of his anger; thy works impress us like the noise of thunder. . . .

If he does not sign, he is afraid of not being recognized; this is what creates a *manner* in spite of himself; unknown to himself, personality is at the bottom of his heart.

Our human perceptions are gross; we see things when they are accomplished; we see the flower in bud, and enjoy it in full bloom. But we cannot tell the moment when it begins to decline; when we perceive it, the destruction is almost complete.

This is true of what we call the decline; we do not notice it until it has made great depredations.

Where commenced this decline? It commenced with the appearance of *personality*. Do not seek it elsewhere, it is there the worm gnaws.

A new worship appears.

The world rouses itself to benefit by the things of this life. These children of heaven descend upon

earth; the sweetness of women captivates them; they choose companions, they love religiously, have faith in love; their hearts are exalted; the religion of woman is born.

It is personified in the VIRGIN MARY.

Painting profits by this commencement of materialism; it grows more sensuous, and this gives to it an unspeakable charm; then the beautiful paintings of Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Fra Bartholomeo, Correggio, etc., delight our eyes. . . .

This period was of short duration; the plant is touched at the root; we soon see it die.

Rivalry begins: We are far from our great divine aspirations; artists are no longer elevated in their productions, they no longer serve God. Slaves of their passions, they are spinning at the feet of Omphale. Art is lost. . . .

Everything speaks of heaven in the art of the middle ages; everything speaks of the boudoir in what is called the RENAISSANCE; it is a time of jewels, of lace and finery; the painters, incapable of rendering beauty, console themselves with richness.

But always descending! A singular phase of art appears; what is it? men pale, mean, and worn out; they wear necklaces, pearls are upon their vestments; they bedeck themselves to be admired; turn from them, these minions are horrible! Still descending, I see shapeless wrecks, until the reign of the Great King; then commences the worship of man. Do you know anything worse than the painting of Lebrun, puffed up like a bird in a poultry yard; I know nothing of the author, but his painting is my antipathy. Near this puffed up style of painting, an admirable artist—Lesueur. Abandoned by the great, without resources, he retired from the world. A born painter, he found refuge in the bosom of nature, and returning to the traditions of the middle ages, he obtained benefits from it, and created master-pieces.

Poussin, who preceded Lesueur, revolted against the bad taste of the age; he wished to revive true taste; not being able to do so, he exiled himself; and to this fact we owe his master-pieces

These two names console us, and show us that

one can produce beautiful works under most humble conditions.

We have run over a long time; the height and the end; I have shown you the cause of decline, and you ought to understand that in art the ideal is everything.

Among painters of inferior degree, we find science, and a surprising skilfulness of hand; but being without the ideal, and without morality, their productions are indifferent to us.

The ideal is everything; no, the ideal is not sufficient, the painter must submit himself to nature, and be absolutely humble in himself.

To dare to avow himself is his greatest strength.

Michael Angelo is shown a design that he made in his youth. He looks at it a long time and says: "forty years of work have not advanced me." In saying this he was sincere and unjust; the same genius tainted with pride; why always wish to rise, and to surpass others? to surpass one's self. In the beginning God gives him grace to show the truth; he only has to extend his hand to seize it; let him

continue to serve it, to reproduce this truth which has been unveiled to him.

A true genius is born with the man; it undergoes the modifications caused by advancing age. If his genius is vigorous, he finds his full expression in maturity; if, on the contrary, it is young, he will find like Raphael its accomplishment in youth.

Have confidence in yourself, and bathe in this great ocean of truth.

Take Michael Angelo as an example, you will find in him the sentiments, truths and *submissions* which can originate beautiful works, and you will also find the faults which may spoil them.

I finish with these words—

IDEALITY, IMPERSONALITY.

XXXII.

ADIEU.

I HAVE raised your courage; your sympathy, I feel, increases my strength, I have hope. Shall I live to see true French Art revive? I see it coming. Ah, how happy you are in being young!

Everything announces this art of which I have dreamed; the indifference of the public for that which exists is a good augury—why should they, so alive, be interrupted in what comes from the tomb?

There are a few painters, clients of a world almost extinguished, whose productions still please the bourgeois taste. National art is to be born, or at least to continue, for since Gros and Géricault it has been interrupted, and I say, notwithstanding my admiration for the art of the revolution, that they had not completely founded French Art. They seemed to attack modern subjects with regret. Study and

the flowers of rhetoric were too perceptible; in short this new art was still a pupil at school.

Take up this interrupted painting; follow the teachings of the earth; be more frankly French in form, and your art will equal in grandeur and in majesty the most splendid Venetian pages. You become not copyists but equals of the Greeks.

Look around you and create. I have followed the order of nature, in planting in you the seed of truth; I do not doubt that it will grow; by simplifying your methods, by keeping yourself from the trouble which comes from complication, you will have a good underground growth. When your stalk comes above the ground, surround it as the plant does with a protecting cloak; this shelter, this protection, this guardian, is your INSTINCT.

Grow—strengthen yourself—cover yourself with leaves and fruit and give us beautiful shade.

THE END.

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