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THE
Great Modern Painters

ENGLISH, FRENCH GERMAN ETC.



Paris
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MUSEO DEL PRADO

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LOUIS KNAUS



Having to write of Louis Knaus, I will commence by greeting him as the leader of a group of meritorious artists whose ambition it is to bequeath to posterity an exact delineation of contemporary customs, from an intimate and familiar point of view, apart from official pomps and social solemnities where men only appear as masks! Correctly speaking Knaus is not a creator because long before him others have celebrated in pictures the joys and griefs of every day life, studied among the good people who wage the daily battle for existence, without anger, bitterness or affectation, always ready to laugh when not forced to weep.

But if this german artist is not an inventor, he has the merit of having

revived a forgotten style and this should be counted in his honor. Art owes to this style of painting innumerable chefs-d'œuvre; it was sufficient to procure a century of glory to Holland; England is justly proud of her Hogarth; and France of the charming masters of the last century: Greuze, Fragonard and Chardin. More modest without doubt is the name of Martin Drolling, pupil and successor of these french masters, but it should be preserved, for without it the line would be interrupted; and it is through him that Louis Knaus can join hands with the painters of the past century.



In 1849 an artist needed to be endowed with unusual courage who, conscious of possessing the talent, should attempt to regenerate genre painting, that for a long time had devolved upon incapable and discredited painters. France was divided into two camps: on one side they were contending for the false classical style of David and his school, the others sustained decaying romanticism; and the public stunned by the disturbance made by the struggle did not perceive the new efflorescence of art: Delacroix, Millet, Corot, Rousseau and Troyon were miserably vegetating unknown to the crowd and disdained by their brothers artists.

In Germany, the fatherland of Louis Knaus, it was even worse: The so-called national art, the only style that found scope, floated in clouds of mysticism. Cornelius Overbeck, Kaulbach, Schadon and Schnorr, men of real talent, were bowed down under the yoke of the new generation; it was forbidden to look at nature for they had decreed that painting was an art of the imagination and its aim the illustration in colors of german ballads. Wagner was coming who would take his part in the national ideal and find for its expression grander accents in music than the painters had been able to obtain in color.

“It was a happy day for Germany, we have written in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, when some of her best artists renounced idealistic compositions for the realistic things of this world. Menzel had already shown all that might be made, without ceasing to be *natural*, in the datum furnished by

history, in studying men as they are, great or small, without magniloquence or a preconceived idea of constructing an epic poem. The romances of Immermann, Auerbach and others that were in fashion at this time accelerated the work of renovation so brilliantly conducted by the painter of the Great Frederic. The ground was prepared for the coming of the new art: the familiar bourgeoisie painting of subjects taken from contemporaneous life, in a word genre of which Mr. Louis Knaus has been and is still incontestably a master."

I do not know why the public has been inclined to place in the second rank the genre painters. The public has been told that they are not counted among the producers of *grand art* and this consideration diminishes the respect felt for them. For we are so constituted the label increases or belittles both men and things, and it does not occur to us to control the exactness of the judgments that are imposed upon us. There is neither grand or little art, but there are great and small subjects and it is the art with which they are treated that makes them great or small according to the value of the incident. Teniers,

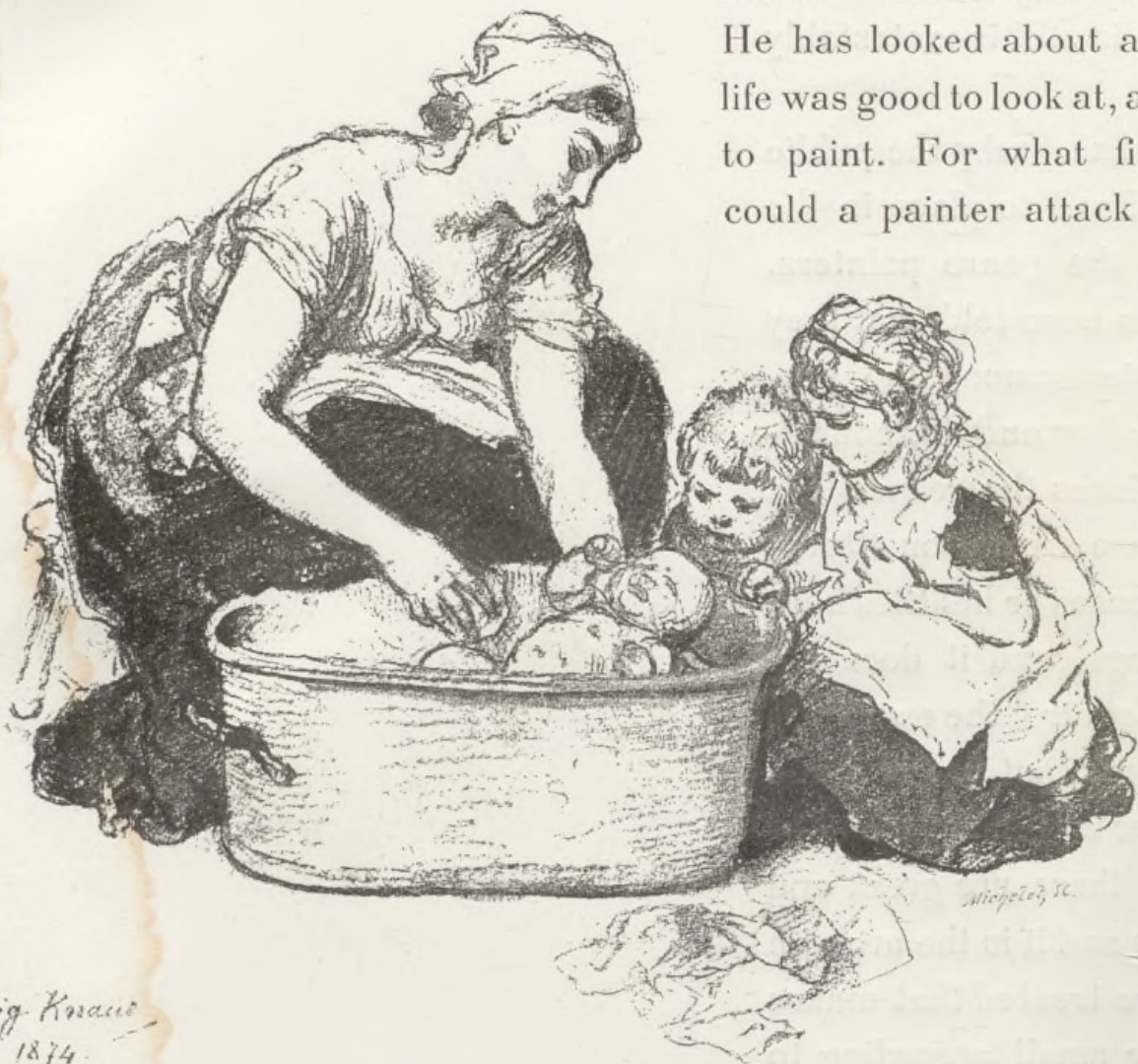
Brauwer, Ostade with their pictures of taverns have more claims to grand art than numberless artists who have employed all their talent in decorating churches or in brushing vast scenes taken from mythology or history. Each must be judged for itself, be it a fresco or a cabinet picture. There are three capital things that we have to consider: the composition, drawing, and color these are the three factors that permit us to decide the question in one way or another. The other considerations, drawn from the subject, of its historical or philosophical bearing are of less importance: they may guide us in our literary appreciation and admiration of an artist,



and in personal taste and ideal, but they add nothing to the real value from the art point of view.

Louis Knaus has been very successful in accomplishing all that he has attempted and it is sufficient to place him among the most prominent painters of our epoch. A sagacious observer with a sensitive heart easily moved, he is not forced to seek far to find subjects for study that are attractive to him

and to those interested in his work. He has looked about and seen that life was good to look at, and profitable to paint. For what finer subjects could a painter attack than human



Ludwig Knaus
1874.

beings represented in their natural surroundings? In the being there is everything both matter and mind; the charming covering of a purely physical character is already very difficult

to render in its moving reality, and the physiognomy is yet more variable because the thought that decides it delights to hide under a deceitful exterior. Those realists who pretend to interpret reality more often give us but the half of the truth: if they are able to place on canvas the objective signs, they believe they have accomplished their task. The ambition of really observing artists, and Mr. Knaus is of the number, is not so easily satisfied; and this is the cause of their persistence in working over, sometimes deadening the freshness that distinguishes their manner and this is often a cause of reproach.

Every one agrees that Louis Knaus thoroughly understands the science

of making pictures. All his paintings are remarkable as *mise en scene*, they are irreproachably composed as much from the point of optical equilibrium as because they express the subject. This is why they captivate and hold the passing public; they are in reality so many episodes of current life scrupulously observed and treated in a charming manner that everyone understands and remembers. There is wit with a touch of irony in these scenes that accentuates their effect.

His actors he takes generally from the middle class or from the lower



ranks of society, that is, everywhere where life is found untravested; he likes to represent the cunning simplicity of the peasant, the naive importance of the big citizen; his young girls are charming, his children are adorable, we do not know any other painter who is penetrated in the same degree by infantile graces, attitudes and manners. This is possibly the secret of the immense popularity of Knaus in Germany: for all Germans love children; so it is not astonishing that a painter who understands them so well is considered the best of painters.

In the execution of his pictures Knaus shows rare qualities, doubtless he is not a virtuoso in the modern sense, but he knows his trade thoroughly

and pursues it with real authority. He paints with an ample firm touch, and he never transgresses the rules of harmony. The excellence of his facture is as strongly felt as that of composition : he writes as he thinks, with method and cleverness. His figures are always well drawn both in form and



character, we do not need to ask him to put style where there is none in nature. Style is a creation of the mind, of a high order without doubt, but we think it would be prejudicial in genre painting, which is the only kind Mr. Knaus has attempted and it has been sufficient for his glory. Mention however among his work some rare incursions into the domain of religious art. The pictures of sanctity that we owe to him have not the original character nor the artistic value of his genre pictures, but they are excellently painted. This proves that in respect to the facture, when one

knows perfectly his handicraft the size of the canvas is of small importance. Having a large canvas to cover the true artist know how to change his manner, but the incapables remain poor workmen whether they paint great or small.

We have tried to define the particular talent of Louis Knaus and to characterize his merit, it now remains to speak of his life and of his works.

The life of a German artist can be told in a few lines. It is simple, honest and without many incidents : romance has no place in it. Knaus had no ancestry; but is a self made man.

He was born in the charming city of Wiesbaden in 1829; his father was an optician : there had been no artist in his family. From a tender age he was fond of drawing, and his sketches attracted the attention of a court painter, who intimated that perhaps here was a vocation worthy of encouragement, the father did not object, though it is well known that at that time the profession was not in high repute.

At the age of fifteen the young man entered the academy of Dusseldorf: here he again had the chance of being patronized by a painter, the

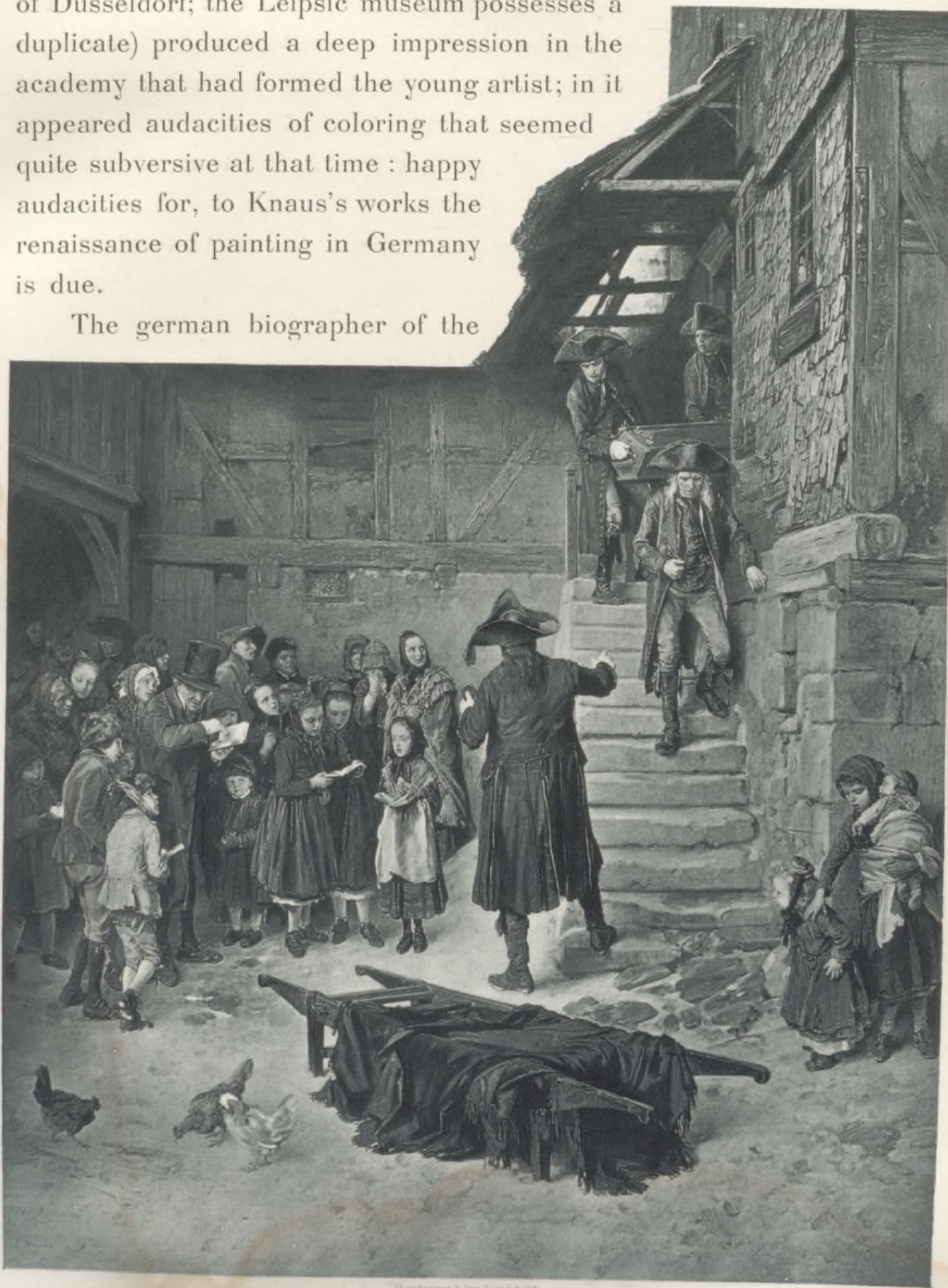


professor Karl Sohn, who took great interest in his work and had the good sense to let him follow his own way. The tree planted in favorable ground soon bore fruit.

The first exhibition of Louis Knaus was in 1849 : Dusseldorf, of whom he was to become the glory, applauded his first appearance, " Dame sous un tilleul". A year later, he was received at Berlin with " L'Enterrement" in which the subject presents a distant analogy with the picture he exhibited at Paris in 1878. This is the composition of the first Enterrement : some children, led by the schoolmaster follow, singing psalms, the hearse of a companion : in the foreground a bizarre group is formed by a sort of grotesque malefactor whom the local authorities have just arrested. The painter has rendered with spirit the dismay of these little people, who without ceasing their singing fix astonished eyes on this unexpected spectacle.

In his subsequent pictures, Mr. Knaus breaks through the insipid manner of his contemporaries; his painting becomes stronger and more healthy. "Les Joueurs" (this canvas is in the municipal gallery of Dusseldorf; the Leipsic museum possesses a duplicate) produced a deep impression in the academy that had formed the young artist; in it appeared audacities of coloring that seemed quite subversive at that time : happy audacities for, to Knaus's works the renaissance of painting in Germany is due.

The german biographer of the



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painter, Mr. L. Pietsch, explains in a very plausible manner his precocious emancipation. Knaus had not read the romantic writings that have been the destruction of so many painters, in Germany and elsewhere; thanks to this prophylactic measure, his natural good health easily carried the day against the unhealthy effluvia floating in the air. From the first his manner was quite different from that in use in the ateliers of his time; to the tormented and dull painting of his masters and brother-painters he substituted a clear, transparent color that gladdened the eye with the freshness of its tone and easy application.

Thus he was a master-workman at an age when others were but commencing their craft: at twenty years of age he had nothing more to learn in the handling of his brushes, it only remained for him to perfect himself in drawing, enlarge his field of observation and develop the *mise en scene* of his pictures. Just the reverse of what so often happens at present, Knaus's works have followed in natural progression: those of his maturer years being more valuable than those of his youth thus he has fully justified the hopes that those who saw his early works entertained for him.

From 1851 we see revealed in the "Market" (gallery Reichenheim, at Berlin) a strong sentiment of reality, the exact and minute observation that distinguishes his later works: at the same time the painter asserted the qualities of his mind, a perfect mixture of humor and true sensibility;



equally removed from ridicule or whining, the picture of which we have spoken could easily have been made ridiculous: we see the police in pursuit of a thief who has been exercising his talents in the market of a small town. The appearance of the victims is in itself quite laughable,

any other than Knaus would have forced the note but he was contented to narrate it with spirit; and the scene gains in interest and probability.

“L'Incendie au village” that was exhibited at Berlin the following year is not equal to the “Market”. It is a trait of true artists not to be equal to themselves; so we must not consider this a crime in a young man of twenty two, beside his reputation was solidly established in Germany and was in nowise injured.

The year 1852 marked an important date in the life of Knaus. It was the year he left his native land, and his absence lasted nearly twelve years. At that time we may say an artist's renown could not dispense

with a parisian consecration. Knaus did as so many other german artists that have since been forgotten he came to Paris, was admirably received and his talent increased by coming in contact with the great painters that were there at that time.

Mr. Pietsch has insinuated that we had the culpable intention of denationalizing the young german painter, for the purpose of usurping



his incipient glory. It is an error, France was then sufficiently rich and had no need to envy other nations. Delacroix, Rousseau, Millet, Troyon, Corot, Meissonier, Ingres, to mention only the greater names, form an aureole of peerless brilliancy the radiance still endures and does not seem ready to fade. Our country can welcome without reservation the artists that other lands send here, and when they have talent openly recognise their merit.

The first appearance of Knaus in the Salon of 1852 created a sensation: he exhibited two pictures "Tziganes dans un bois" and the "Lendemain de fête dans un estaminet de village". The first subject has been repeated since by the artist who has made of it one of his best pictures. The second canvas was excellent in every way and at once conquered the favor of the public. It is the representation of a very dramatic



tavern scene that unhappily occurs too often in the real life of the peasants. A blonde girl is sobbing on the body of her lover, who is in a state of intoxication: the crafty smile of an old professional drunkard sitting in a corner gives us the measure of the drama; the young man will not be the worse for his frolic but what a sad presage for the future household!

As Louis Knaus had brilliantly succeeded in a semi-tragic style, he might have continued to exploit the vein but he did nothing of the kind, he desired to show that he had several strings to his bow. Without

changing his objective he undertook under other aspects to represent the people who posed before him. Life is not always sad, she has her smiling hours why not then paint them in their good moments when one has all that is necessary for it, talent, good health and pleasant humor?



Putting aside for a time at least, morose subjects, Knaus having arranged his palette with gayest tones started in quest of pleasant subjects. "Le Printemps" was the first work of this happy epoch. The subject popularised by the excellent engraving of Mr. Wihlmann can be described in two words. A young girl gathering flowers; the girl is blonde, her little red bonnet seem like a poppy in the midst of the may flowers, with which the field is covered; her little pink hands gather at random with feverish haste her first bouquet; nature seems to smile on her youth as if the child was one of her most beautiful blossoms.

The picture that followed, "Bébé" has been painted and repainted by many artists : none have equalled Mr. Knaus : a big personage only a few months old, sit enthroned in a high chair. The subject of "La Souris" is more complicated; baby is no longer alone, he is all drawn up with fright in the arms of a cobbler's apprentice who is showing him a mouse trap with an unfortunate prisoner.

The same personages are again found together in a pleasing picture that belongs to the collection of Mr. Edouard André, at Paris, it has been engraved by Mr. Gilbert, in the "*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*". Here we find baby in one of his bad moments : the face contracted with anger, the fists crisped, he tries in vain to attract by his cries the attention of his young guardian who carries him negligently in his right arm. The cobbler's appren-

tice deaf to the baby's clamors devours an apple philosophically : "A hungry stomach has no ears".

The three infantine pictures we have just analysed are among the best pieces of painting by Louis Knaus : he knows his subject so well, that the arrangement does not seem to cost him any effort. Thus the facture is so easy, daring even, that it surprised those who had reproached him with not knowing how to paint as well as he thought and composed.

Among the pictures painted in Paris are a "Comédie d'amateurs", "Convoi funèbre" a repetition with variations of the "Burial", "Enfant avec sa bonne", a scene taken from the Tuileries, this last is at the Luxembourg gallery and gives a faint idea of the artist value.

The interest of these pictures fade before those that are to follow in the estimation of many. "La Cinquantaine" and "Le Baptême" are the most remarkable pictures in the works of Knaus : if not so accepted they are at least the most celebrated and have given the painter greatest honor.

We must retrace our steps to describe two important events in the life of Knaus; in 1859 he left Paris to visit Italy; in 1860 he married. The voyage to Italy did not leave any important trace in the works of Knaus; his marriage took him definitely away from France.

The young couple went to their native city, with the intention of establishing definitely their residence. But their stay at Wiesbaden was not of long duration; two years later in 1862 we find the painter at Berlin, and he did not leave there until 1866. From Berlin, Knaus returned to his native place, and in 1867 we find him at Dusseldorf constructing a



dwelling house with a magnificent atelier, as if he intended spending the rest of his days there.

Here he painted "Son Altesse en voyage"; "La Sorcière du village"; "Dans les transes"; "Le Goûter des oies"; a serie of popular types: "Le Joueur d'orgue"; "La Sieste"; "Les petits Cochons"; "Sur une mauvaise pente"; "Dans la coulisse"; "Tels pères, tels fils"; "Un élève plein d'avenir" and "Une bonne affaire"; figured at the Universal Exhibition 1878. In terminating we must mention "L'Enterrement" the crowning work of our artist, the jewel of his exhibition at Paris in 1878. That the excellent critic Duranty, after describing, this sums up: "All this is the outcome of a rare artistic nature, where simplicity, naivete, wit, observation and tenderness are touchingly and graciously united". And this appreciation of one picture faithfully resumes the qualities that distinguish the works of Louis Knaus.

ALFRED DE LOSTALOT.





Photographie & Imp. Goussier & Co.

LÉON BONNAT



The place where one is born is not a matter of slight importance for, if it be in a land of fogs or in a sunny clime, nestled in a valley or on expansive hill-tops, the man always retains something of his native soil, a something that is found later in his work and that escapes from his artistic conceptions like the bouquet from a choice wine.

Léon Bonnat was born on the banks of the Nive and the Adour, in the lovely city of Bayonne so elegant and valiant, in the virgin city that fourteen assaults have not yet succeeded in overcoming. Do we not find in the works of this painter the sunniness of his native place and the bravery of his people?

A reverse of fortune caused the Bonnat family to leave Bayonne and

then they established themselves in Madrid, in the heart of that beautiful Spain where our castles are, and to which our dreams as poets and colorists turn. The child developed in this motley and picturesque capital where everything forms into pictures. The people and things seen in the street gave to his happily gifted mind profound and fertile impressions of art. The education of the eye, the first education for a painter, was obtained by itself without his knowing it. There silhouettes are so fine, the harmonies of color melt together so naturally, the contrasts of light and shade have such perfect clearness in that ambient atmosphere! Carpeaux said that in Italy all the people in their most ordinary manifestations of life, in their work as in their enjoyment, seemed to be posing before the artist as a model does in an atelier. The instinctive attitude, a graceful carriage and interesting gestures are not less natural to the Spanish people particularly to the population of Madrid. At every step one discovers a motive: in the pedler of anise-water crying his wares, the cigarmaker placing a pink in her thick,

heavy hair, even to the beggar more superb than a king.



At Madrid the commentator is near to nature, a general commentary bearing the signatures of Velasquez, Murillo, Zurbaran, Ribera and Goya. The streets and the museums vividly impressed the imagination of Léon Bonnat and removed the hesitations and uncertainty of childhood. He early felt his vocation firmly fixed, and obeyed the interior force that pushed him towards the art of painting.

One day in the year 1847, Bonnat, who was then fourteen years old, went and quietly presented himself to Federico de Madrazo, the well known Spanish master, and solicited the honor of being admitted among his pupils. The duty of every honest man to whom such a request was addressed in 1847, at present things have greatly changed, was to divert the solicitant from his project. "Painting! what are you thinking of young man? have you considered all the disappointments of this deplorable career? For one who succeeds, how many others, as worthy perhaps, remain a prey to all the tortures of misery and wounded selflove! I do not know how capable you

may be, I do not permit myself to suppose you to be without ability, I will concede hypothetically that you have talent, even genius. Thus I allow you the best position; but do you know that the fate of genius is usually to be denied and unrecognized. How many glories have only blossomed on tombs! There is a long, inexhaustible martyrology of great painters who have died of hunger without knowing the joy of triumph... after this if you have made up your mind..."

Madrazzo did not fail in his duty as admonisher; but he found in the timid child who fixed his ardent glance upon him the most obstinate of auditors. To the list of evils that the master complacently spread before him:

"So be it, responded Bonnath, but I want to be a painter.

—Then, come tomorrow, the atelier is open to you."



Bonnath commenced to work with courage, finding a charm in the study of drawing that was helping him to his goal, multiplying his efforts to satisfy his master who was becoming more and more attached to him. However color attracted him invincibly, outside the atelier, he commenced studies that he kept secret during a certain time but one day taking de Madrazzo one side he begged him to look at a picture that he had composed and painted in secret: "Giotto devant ses chèvres". Madrazzo looked at the canvas a moment then, joyously, he cordially embraced his pupil.

"You, my boy, you will make your way."

Recalled to France by a death in the family, Bonnath was obliged to leave Madrid and his excellent master Madrazzo and settle in Paris.

It was under the direction of Léon Cogniet that he pursued his studies. Cogniet, like all professors who really understand teaching, had the great merit of never turning his pupils from their natural bent. Respecting each

pupils qualities and desiring that they should retain their own originality he was satisfied to give counsel, teach the handicraft without imposing either his taste or his manner. Thus we are surprised to see what a fine pleiade of artists, of varying talents have come from his atelier. In 1857, Léon Bonnat entered *en loge* to compete for the *prix de Rome*. It was an error that must be pardoned him on account of his youth. The words "Prix de Rome, Lauréat de l'Institut" have for young men a prestige that has not yet been effaced. And yet how often has it been proved that the *prix de Rome* is nothing more than a patent of docility. For in art, impetuosity, independence



and wilfulness are often the qualities of those who become masters. Bonnat possessed all the qualities necessary to attain the mastership, but he had not the patient mediocrity that obtains the prize for a greek theme or the prize of Rome.

In this year 1857, Mr. Sellier obtained the first prize; Mr. Hector Leroux received the second grand prize; Léon Bonnat only received the second prize. At present, Mr. Bonnat, commandeur de la Légion d'honneur, membre de l'Institut, membre du jury, honored with the grand medal, judges the works of Mr. Sellier. I say this not intending any unkind reflection towards Mr. Sellier whom I have not the honor of knowing and who received a medal in 1865 and a second class medal in 1872.

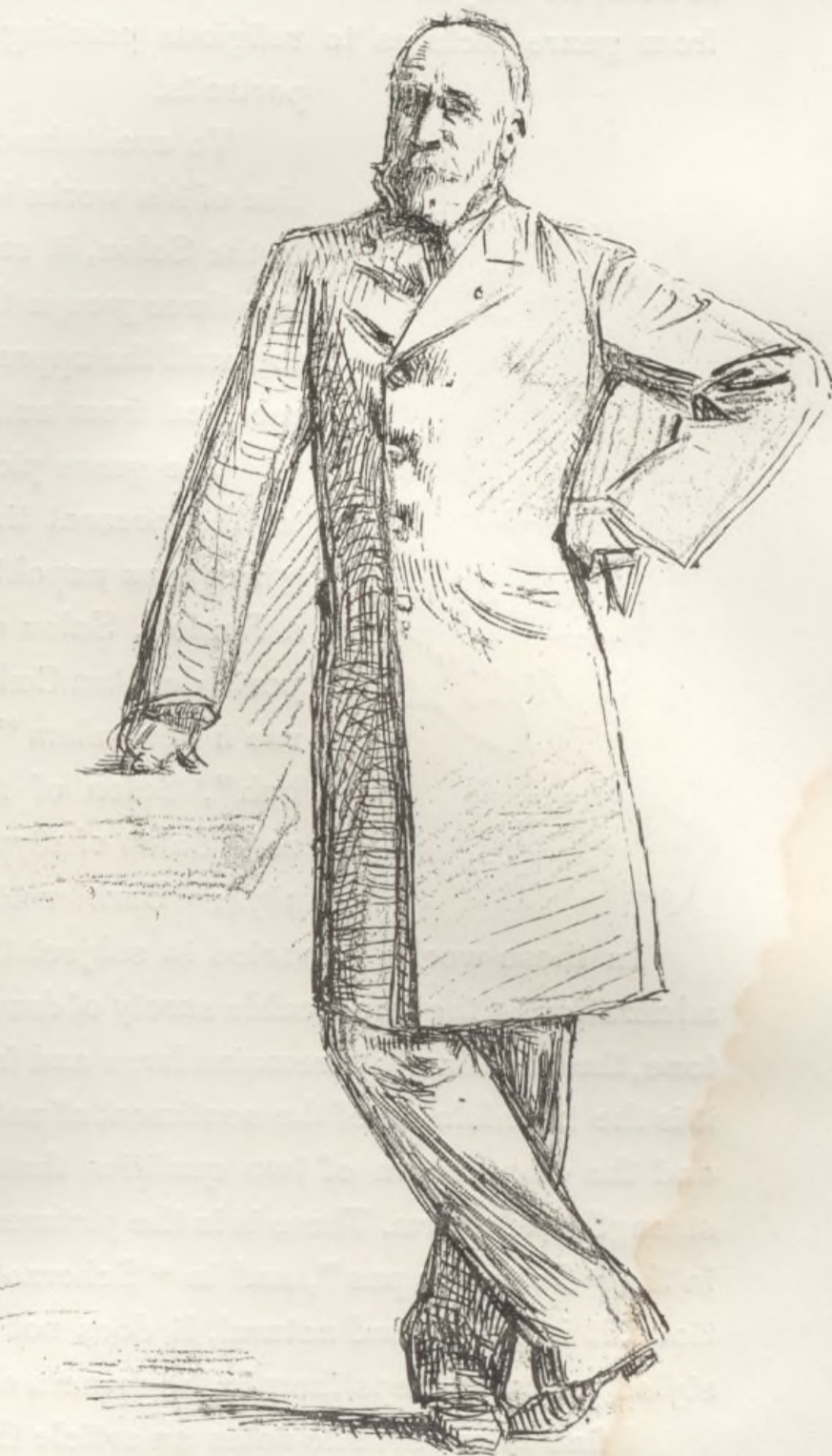
The second prize did not confer on Bonnat the right of residence at the

Villa Medici. This was to be regretted as after having worked in Spain and in France, it is beneficial to live for a time in Italy. Madrid, Paris, and Rome are the three great art schools. Happily for the future of Bonnat, his native town furnished him the means to go and paint on the banks of the Tiber.

From this time it is by the varied interest of his pictures that Léon Bonnat has marked each year of his life. I will mention first, apart from the numerous studies painted in Italy, the three pictures that Léon Bonnat executed at Rome and were exhibited at the Salon. They are : "The good Samaritan", exhibited in 1859; "Adam and Eve finding the body of Abel", exhibited in 1861; "Saint André en croix", exhibited in 1863. Immediately after appeared the "Pasqua Maria". When the public had seen these four pictures there no longer existed any doubts as to the value of the artist who had signed them, nor of the brilliant future that awaited him. Nor was the jury blind for it conferred a second class medal on Bonnat in 1861 and a *rappel* in 1863.

Thus as we have seen the conquest of public opinion was rapidly accomplished by the young master, a complete conquest that Bonnat has known how to retain and strengthen by the production of masterly works in very different genres.

This talent of his is broad and wide-spreading, it disdains the narrow



divisions in which the picture-dealer's greediness and the imitative taste of the public ever seeks to confine the artist's conceptions. Léon Bonnat is not of a spirit to endure this constraint, his fancy must remain free and his art is bold, he only listen to his inspiration and passes as his caprice dictates from genre pictures to religious painting and from religious pictures to portraits.



To avoid the dulness of a successive enumeration of his works in the order of their appearance in the Salon, it seems preferable to us to divide into three groups the canvases of Leon Bonnat and to recall the appreciations the principal ones have received from authorized critics.

The genre pictures that he has exhibited up to the present time bear the following titles : " Paysans napolitains devant le palais Farnèse, à Rome ", Salon of 1866; " Ribera dessinant à la porte de l'Ara Cœli, à Rome ", Salon of 1867; " Une rue à Jérusalem ", Salon of 1870; " Cheik d'Akabah ", Salon of 1872; " Barbier turc "; " Scherzo ", Salon of 1873; " les Premiers pas ", Salon of 1874; " Barbier nègre, à Suez ", Salon of 1876.

In these works so varied in subject that which appeals most to our admiration is the impeccable surety of drawing, the vigor and brilliancy of tone, the handling that remains large and frank although carried so far; also it is the truthfulness of the sentiment of nature, the delicacy of observation and the close union of two qualities that too often exclude each other : strength and charm. There is in the pictures of Mr. Bonnat a grace notably in the " Premiers pas ", and in " Scherzo ", but this grace is not pretentious, it is simple and natural. It does not permit that these works shall be styled pretty, it keeps them in the domain of the beautiful.

I find in my artistic notes an article that my friend Jules Claretie has devoted to the Salon of Léon Bonnat in 1873, that is during the year that the master has most sacrificed himself to genre painting. The appreciation of so competent a critic on the Scherzo will be read with interest. " This Scherzo, is an Italian mother laughing in a fine hearty manner with her little daughter who shakes with pleasure on her mother's lap. Impossible to be at once

stronger or more charming than Mr. Bonnat has been in this scene. There is sunshine in this duet of two laughs, the maternal laugh and the infantile laugh clear and healthy in a luminous atmosphere. The teeth and lips of the little girl are adorable. And what richness of tone in the color of the clothing, in the blues, yellows, copper reflections, those accessories illuminated so to say from a light coming from above. In a word this Scherzo is admirable, and certainly this is one of the four or five pictures what will survive from the Salon of 1873."

In religious painting, Leon Bonnat is yet more successful. This style that demands such elevation of thought, so much science and imagination in the composition, so much power and elegance in the execution suits his talent, his aspirations and memories. During the childish years that he lived at Madrid and during his youth that he passed at Rome the master was imbued by the grandeur of christianism, in the pious shadows of fine cathedrals, in the religious freshness of their museums. The art of the ancient schools, that had aroused his vocation, breathed an ardent faith, for in those extinct epochs the greatest

artist considered it a glory to decorate a chapel. The stations of the cross in chromos that are now sold by the gross had not been invented, nor the manufacturing of virgins and saints in plaster that are forwarded by dozens to be paid on delivery. The painter then did not enter the church like a tradesman he was some-



thing between the deacon and the pontiff; he approached when he did not outstrip the preacher. He interpreted the Holy scriptures, and the religious instruction of his works penetrated more profoundly the hearts of the faithful, than the monotonous voice of the priest reading the evangel from the altar. *I buoni christiani sempre facevano i buoni scultori*, Michael-

Angelo has said. Unless one is possessed with the faith of olden times, or has an imagination sufficiently powerful to evoke the past, they cannot at present in religious painting do work that is as valuable, and this is why so few of our contemporaries cultivate successfully this style of painting.

This will be one of Leon Bonnat's great titles to glory that he has revived in France religious paintings by means of the following works, here is the list: "The good Samaritan", Salon of 1869; "Adam and Eve finding the body of Abel", Salon of 1861; "Saint André en croix", Salon of 1863; "Saint Peter", Salon of 1864; "Saint Vincent de Paul prenant les fers d'un galérien", Salon of 1866; "The Assumption, for the Virgin's chapel in the church of Saint-André at Bayonne," medal of honor, Salon of 1869; "Christ", for one of the court rooms at the Palais de Justice,

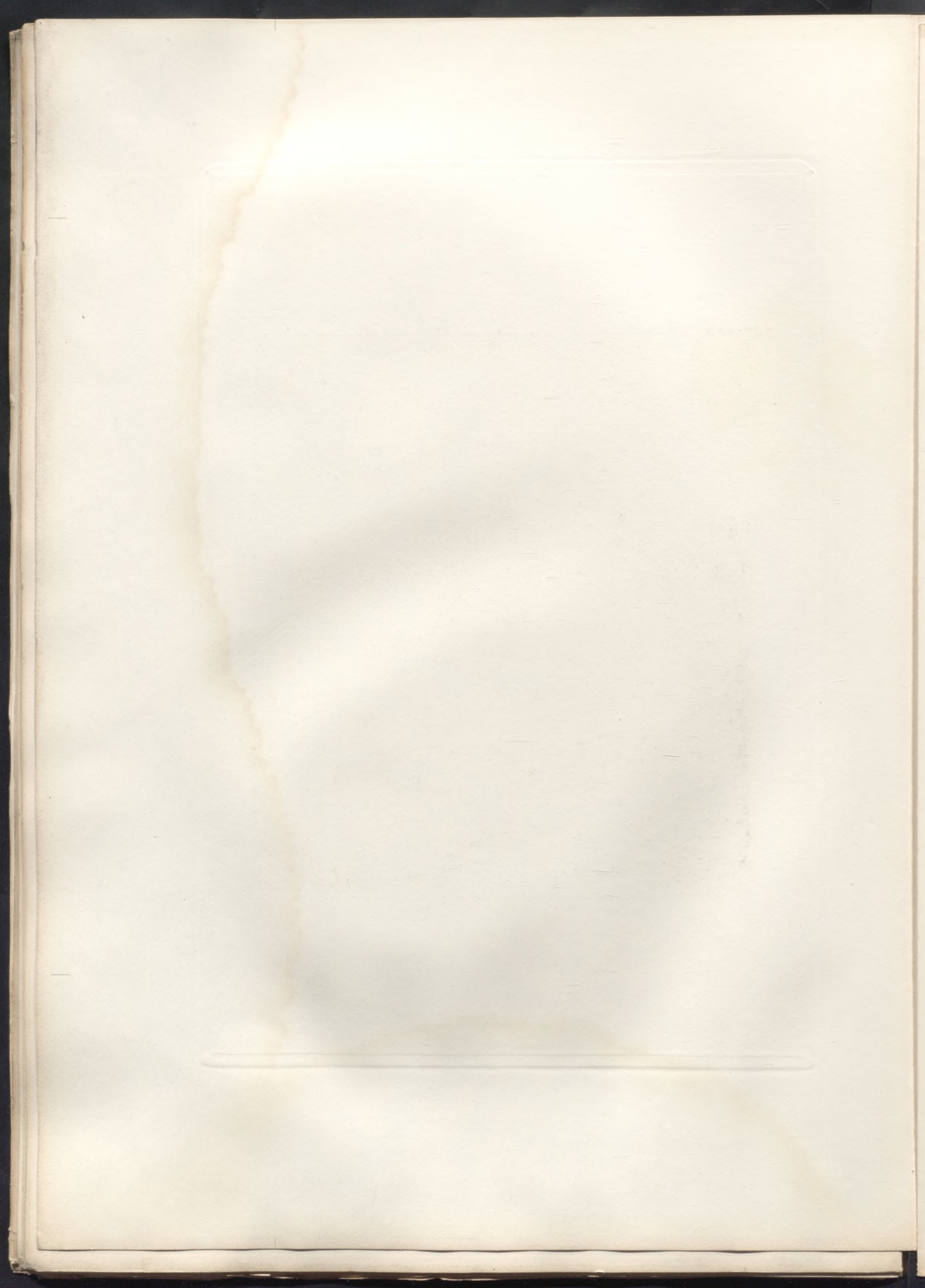


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M. Bonnafant



Salon of 1874; "Jacob wrestling with the angel", Salon of 1876; "Job", Salon of 1880. In these wonderful works what strikes me most forcibly is the new harmony that Bonnat has established between the ideally, religious, christianism of his subject and the intense reality of the personages placed before us. The Scriptures have found in him a naturalistic commentator. The Son of God was made man, his anguish was not a decoy it was a real anguish: Jesus suffered and died for us on the cross, nails pierced his hands and feet and made cruel wounds, the crown of thorns tore his forehead, his legs were swollen in the cruel position of a crucified. The martyr was flesh and blood although of divine essence therefore the phenomenon that ordinarily accompanies the punishment should be manifested in



him as in the thieves. The more he suffered the deeper would be his wounds and the more acute his suffering the greater should be our love. This is the doctrine according to Bonnat, and I am of those that agree with him.

This reproach of realism is often found in the appreciations of Bonnat's religious pictures. But is not this one of the interesting and original forms of his work. This character of naturalism, of precision, this scientific spirit that is to be seen in literature, in poetry, in music, even in our manners is the distinctive mark of our time. Léon Bonnat is of his century and this realism gives better than the figures the date of his pictures. Job, Jacob wrestling with the angel, and the Christ are conceived according to the modern spirit, hungry for truth. And I cannot see how these high conceptions of christianism can lose in taking form and substance.

Théophile Gautier judging the "Assomption de la Vierge" of Bonnat thus expresses his criticisms and praises: "No more complete antithesis could be imagined than "l'Apollon et les Muses" of Bouguereau and l'Assomption de la Vierge" of Bonnat to whom the medal of honor has been awarded. The picture of Bonnat is intended for a church in Bayonne the

ogive form is favorable to the arrangement of the subject. Around an antique sarcophagus, where can be seen winged funereal spirits, the apostles are kneeling in positions indicating adoration and surprise. A few raising their heads follow with their eyes the mother of the Saviour who rises in the heavens sitting on a cloud, and sustained by angels, in the midst of a floating drapery that forms a nimbus and is penetrated by a gleam of glory. The point of the ogive is thus well filled by the celestial group that forms a pyramid, while the composition spreading out in the lower portion is occupied by the apostles grouped around the tomb that the Virgin has just left.



“ Nothing could resemble less the episodic scenes of Italian life that founded the reputation of Bonnat than this Assumption. The historical painter in him differs totally from the genre painter. As the genre painter showed himself fine and delicate in the same degree the historical painter shows himself vigorous and strong. In this new style he seems to prefer original ugliness to classic beauty and to be much more preoccupied by character than by style.

“ It is not from Raphael nor Titians that he seeks his inspirations, he belongs to the naturalists rather than to the idealists, and he closely approaches under this head to the Neapolitan school. During our voyage to Constantinople, the steamer touched at Malta and we had time to visit the ancient church of the knights of Malta, painted by Matias Preti, called the Calabrese, an artist but little known, who had represented around the vault the life of Saint John, and in the pendentifs trophies of bizarre oriental arms, and barbarous and ferocious groups. All this painted with a strength, boldness and unparalleled spirit like a master in his art, perhaps too much of a master

as frequently the great painters of the decadence were for whom the manipulations of the brush had no secrets. In looking at this "Assomption de la Vierge" by Bonnat our thoughts involuntarily turned back to the church of the knights of Malta and to Matias Preti.

Do not let the comparison shock you, the Calabrese was a great painter, for example, we believe that Preti by accentuating with the same energy the drawing and color of the types of the prostrate apostles would have given more elegance and buoyancy to the Virgin that we find a little heavy in Bonnat's picture; he would have made more clearly felt the difference that should exist between the celestial and terrestrial parts of the picture, he would not have made the foot of the



apostle kneeling to the left of the sarcophagus deformed and dirty, without doubt the disciples of Christ were poor men, but their humble condition would not prevent their having the fine extremities of the semitic races. This ugly foot had never walked on the impalpable dust of Judea's roads. Mr. Bonnat should know this better than any one, he who has visited the

east. But leave these details to admire the solidity, color and tempered brilliancy of this robust painting whose faults are only an excess of energy, and praise without restriction the masculine qualities that have obtained for him the signal honor of the grand medal."

It is above all on the Job that the critics became excited, finding it difficult to accustom themselves to this new conception of the beautiful. However the beautiful in art does not consist entirely in physical beauty. The painter is not eternally condemned to represent only the divine Apollo and the chaste Diana. Caliban is beautiful, Quasimodo also; Shakspeare and Hugo agree with the creator of "Job" in finding another kind of beauty, than classic beauty in character and expression.

Less militant in tendency and less modern the "Saint Vincent de Paul" has on the contrary obtained the unanimous admiration of the public and the critics.

Mr. Bonnat whom we have found interesting and charming in his production of genre pictures, powerful and personal in his treatment of historical painting, has also treated portraits with an incomparable talent and incontestable superiority. In the struggle with the austerity and monotony of modern costume he has known how, without accentuating the accessories, to animate the figures of the present time with their individual thought, with that special reflection that the intelligence places on the brow and in the eyes of a man, either in the cabinet or atelier. It is especially in this kind of work that he has given proof of style and it can be said of his work as a portraitist that it forms a most precious historical gallery for posterity. It was in 1874 that Léon Bonnat exhibited his first portraits; but long before this date he had shown studies of heads and of typical figures, that served as a prelude before attacking the principal movement. One of the preludes, the most melodious perhaps was the "Pasqua Maria" of which we have already spoken; then followed Gaby in 1867 and the "Femme fellah et son enfant" in 1870. Permit me to divide the portraits painted by Bonnat in two categories; first those of women and young girls: Portraits of M^{lles} Dreyfus, Salon of 1874; portrait of M^{me} Pasca, Salon of 1875; portrait of M^{me} la comtesse de V..., Salon of 1878; portrait de M^{me} la comtesse de P..., Salon of 1881. I love this fine serie of feminine portraits where the grace is noble and always remains grande dame; if it were not unjust to make a choice between these works I should adhere to the opinion of one of my compeers who has openly declared for

the three portraits of 1874. "Les portraits de mesdemoiselles Dreyfus (three little girls in turkish costumes, one in blue silk, the second rose, the other a yellow stuff) are perfectly charming and gay, it reminds one from afar and in a smaller frame work of that admirable work of van Dyck that is at Turin, "les Enfants de Charles I^{er}", the three forming, in their silken garments, the tricolored flag". Respecting the serie of men's portraits they comprise the following personages: "Thiers", Salon of 1877; "le comte de Montalivet", Salon of 1878; "Victor Hugo", Salon of 1879; "Mr. Grévy", Salon of 1880; "Léon Cogniet", Salon of 1881; "Puvis de Chavannes", Salon of 1882; "Mr. Morton", ministre plénipotentiaire des États-Unis, Salon of 1883. These are great and distinguished figures whose places are marked in history. I do not only mean those of Thiers and Grévy, chief magistrates of the Republic, nor of Messrs. Montalivet and Morton, statesmen of importance but, principally Victor Hugo, Cogniet and Puvis de Chavannes, who have assured the immortality of their names.

Being unable to describe all these illustrious men I will limit myself to reproducing an article of Bergerat's on the portrait of Victor Hugo. "I do not know how any other painter than Bonnat would have come off from the severe and powerful theme that the august visage of the greatest poet of modern times offers to the portraitist. Here are no seductive accessories, no brilliant stuffs, nothing that could lighten the agony of an artist's soul face to face with tangible and visible genius. In our contemporary school only, Leon Bonnat was sufficiently strong to undertake such a task, but what a stake he played for! for this time it was not before the public but before immortality that he placed his easel. In art, Bonnat is intrepid, he accepted his work in its formidable simplicity: Victor Hugo, in a black frockcoat seated in an armchair his hand in his waistcoat, looking steadily in front of him. Those who have had the not to be forgotten honor of being admitted to the poet's intimacy, well know that black, profound glance that shines inwardly. It is the look of him who see beyond the present, how Leon Bonnat has seized it I do not know but it will be an eternal glory to him. By an artifice familiar to him, the painter has made the head and hands to stand out on a brownish black background which has permitted him to model the clothes in all their shades of grayishness. But why should I talk of the handicraft before such a picture, and what eulogy can one address to the artist who, has been able to remain a master before such a master?"

In regard to the portrait of Bonnat by himself, it is a simple and vigorous study, where the painter has succeeded in reproducing his brown energetic visage with the flaming glance that astonished Federico Madrazzo thirty seven years ago, and that sparkles brighter than ever under the shade of his arched eyebrows.

The pupil of the atelier of Madrid, commandeur of the Légion d'honneur since 1882, and membre d'Institut, has succeeded Mr. Hebert in the direction of a very important atelier for pupils and in that founded by his former master Cogniet; no one could be better prepared than he to fill the high and difficult mission of educator for which urbanity of character, a respect for the tendencies of each, and the authority of uncontested works is necessary.

SAINT-JUIRS.



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ALMA - TADEMA



The eighth of January 1836 should mark an era at Dronryp, a picturesque little village in Dutch Friesland, for on that day was born to the notary Peter Tadema, who was himself a man of talent, a son destined to become one of the most remarkable of modern painters. The name of this ancient Frisian family was far from being obscure, it is to be found in the legends that treat of the formation of the Zuyderzee, but without the prefix Alma, which the painter received from his godfather and has always used.

Whilst still a child, his favorite plaything was a pencil, and he relates that at the age of four years, moved by that instinctive sureness which never forsakes him, he indicated in the drawing of an artist an error, that the artist had the rare wisdom to rectify. And it was at this tender age that Lawrence lost his father. The family was numerous

and the fortune small but the widow, although delicate, was equal to her task. Difficulties did not dismay her. Gifted with a strong will she taught her son to look obstacles steadily in the face and overcome them. This education necessarily produced its fruits, for notwithstanding the child's remarkable inclination for painting, and in spite of his prayers that he might be allowed to devote himself entirely to it, his mother and guardians decided that they would have him follow a university course.

So Lawrence, notwithstanding his remonstrances, was sent to the college of Leeuwarden. Here the study of latin and greek classics soon



aroused his curiosity, he longed to know the mode of life of the ancients, which later, he was to make known to us by his pictures, that are so many revelations. During these school years, it was only between times, in hours taken from recreation or from his sleep, that he indulged his artistic instincts. For this purpose, he coaxed his mother to awaken him, as soon as it was light, by pulling a cord that he had tied to his foot before falling asleep. Do you not admire this child thus shaking off the torpor that threatened to

overcome him, and devoting himself courageously to his favorite occupation? His only master was a professor of drawing, an unsuccessful pupil of the great painter Van der Kooy, the David of Holland; but he worked with so much ardor that in the year 1851 his first picture, a portrait of his sister, was exhibited in a Dutch exhibition. About the same epoch, he painted his own portrait, which now hangs in his elder daughter's study. It is perhaps a little hard in tone, although the vigorous drawing shows that the hand will be that of a master and the background already indicates a marked preference for the study of architecture and perspective.

These earlier years of Alma-Tadema were a period of real torment: must he quench forever the sacred fire that drew him towards his ideal, and follow an arid career of study without an aim?

Lawrence at fifteen was pale and ailing, and it seemed as though the body would succumb to the struggle that was taking place in this delicate and ardent mind. All work became an insurmountable fatigue. The physi-

cians who were called in declared that Lawrence was consumptive and would not attain the age of manhood.

Then the poor, disconsolate mother determined that at least the last years of her child's life should be years of happiness, gave him the use of his brushes.



Today we all bless the physician's sentence, for as soon as the young artist could give free vent to his aspirations and live entirely for art, the malady was conquered and conquered for ever.

But where find a school suitable to develop his talent? He applied in vain to the Dutch artists, they did not understand him; then he went to Antwerp where at that time a great artistic activity reigned and where romanticism was at its height.

Alma-Tadema felt himself drawn towards the Flemish school: he entered the academy then under the intelligent direction of Wappers. Of an energetic and persevering nature, Alma-Tadema would no longer allow himself repose: had he not to make up for lost years? Rendered strong by feeling that his vocation was understood, he followed it with ardor, but he was ambitious to rise high and always to go higher. The route that he followed later is indicated by the subjects that he chose. Almost all are taken from fabulous history; it was necessary for him to conjecture, to reconstruct. Alas! it is impossible to judge of these studies, for, unable to attain the desired goal, the artist's hand destroyed them remorselessly. Nothing went from his atelier that did not in a measure correspond with what he sought to do. For that matter we still see at the present time the same sentiment that guided the artist at that epoch. He will sacrifice the work of many weeks in search after the desired tone, in efforts to render with fidelity the details of expression and science, that not one person in a thousand can appreciate. Most of his pictures are painted over others equally beautiful; and it is calmly and without regret that he effaces figures



and details that have held us entranced. But the animated and clear-seeing eye of the poet-painter that penetrates beyond our vision tells us "that art is sacerdotal; that every artist should efface and work again and again at the same theme until he has in some slight degree approached the truth."

In 1863, Alma-Tadema had the sorrow to lose his worthy mother whom he adored and who with his sister has joined him at Antwerp. It is sad to think that she did not live long enough to enjoy her son's reputation, but at least she saw the picture that marked the commencement of his success :



"The Education of Clothilde's grandsons", exhibited in 1861 at Antwerp. This was the first picture painted under the influence of Leys, of whom to this day the artist feels it an honor to proclaim himself a pupil. He had all the more opportunity to profit by the counsels of this great artist as he worked on his pictures, in the same manner as did the pupils in former times in the great era of art. The exactness of the historical and archæological details of the picture that we have just cited, the vigor of the coloring, the manner in which the subject was treated, the finish of the old Dutch school joined to the sentiment of the beautiful of the modern French school, foretold the artist that we know today.

The Antwerp Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts bought this picture for the miserable sum of sixteen hundred francs : but this was a matter of less importance to Alma-Tadema as his reputation was now made.

That the partially fabulous Merovingian chronicles attracted him irresistibly is proved by his picture of "Gontran-Boson", and that of "Prétextat adressant des reproches à Frédégonde, qui vient le visiter à son lit de mort".

And in 1878, it was from this same source that he again drew, when he executed his great picture of "Frédégonde". The abandoned wife looks from her window upon the nuptial festivals of her rival Galswinthe, sister

of queen Brunehaut. It is in this picture especially that the painter has known how to render with marvellous intuition the barbaric splendor and indomitable passion, the transition from paganism to christianity that characterized that epoch. "Why do you so often paint these Merovingian, barbarians?"

he was once asked "It is true," he answered, "they are not worth much, but then they are so picturesque."

But the barbarous ages have not alone occupied this painter who is pre-eminently the painter of all that civilization has created to embellish life and make it lovely. Alma-Tadema also



turned his gaze towards the source of all culture, the great mysterious country of Isis and Osiris; towards Greece and Italy and especially towards imperial Rome.

To treat his favorite themes from a strictly archæological point of view, and to delineate classic antiquity by servilely copying what remains to us, did not fulfill Alma-Tadema's idea. He desired to show us that Egypt was

something else besides an empire, that men and women had lived there who experienced the same joys and griefs as ourselves; and those who have seen these canvases so rich in poetic instinct, in daring and original conception, must agree with us that the master has in reality caused those vanished times to live again.

Let us mention some of these pictures: "Comment on s'amusait en Égypte, il y a trois mille ans"; "Un Égyptien debout contre sa porte entr'ouverte"; "Les Joueurs d'échecs"; etc. His finest Egyptian picture is



most surely that taken from the Bible illustrating: "The death of the first born". Prayers, offerings, sacred songs, could not prevail against the terrible avenger. Death has entered the royal dwelling and the oldest son of Pharaoh lies there lifeless on the lap of his father. Observe the Egyptian immobility of Pharaoh who wills to appear calm, but whose trembling lips betray in spite of him self his re-

strained emotion. This picture of profound sentiment seems to us the most extraordinarily pathetic and lifelike that the master has painted. In every effect of light it reveals to us new aspects of grief. And yet there is nothing that is too painful in the picture. The painter of the joyous and sensuous people of ancient times does not understand the exaggerated and complex sentiments of modern days. Alma-Tadema abhors all that is false or forced, there is nothing morbid in his nature. He has no comprehension for great passions, or involved emotions.

In 1864, Alma-Tadema was married to Marie-Pauline Gressin Dumoulin du Bois-Girard, a French woman. Three children were the fruit of this union, but the son was not destined to perpetuate the father's name. In 1869, the mother died also, and a year later, Alma-Tadema, who at the epoch of

his marriage had settled in Brussels, left that city and went to live in London.

England, her people and institutions were sympathetic to him in many ways for is he not also of the Anglo-Saxon race? Do not the Frisian peasants still speak almost the same idiom as that of the Anglo-Saxons who crossed over to Scotland where they have preserved it to the present time? It was in England too that in 1871 he again knew domestic happiness, and was enabled to give his daughters a second mother in Laura-Theresa Epps, a talented and gifted artist whose pictures have often been exhibited at the Paris Salon and other International Exhibitions.

In 1873, he received from Queen Victoria letters of naturalization, and he is proud to call himself a subject of Great Britain.

Guided by the experience of the great masters, Alma-Tadema's theory is that travelling during the student period only serves to perplex an artist in the beginning of his career. So he refused to leave Antwerp although offers were made to enable him to travel. Consequently he saw positively nothing but the art that surrounded him until in 1861 the success of his picture "L'éducation des petits-fils de Clothilde" assured him that he had made his mark. Then, feeling that he could now travel with profit, he left Antwerp and went to Cologne to see the Exhibition of German Art. The following year, 1862, he went to London to visit the Universal Exhibition. He did not see Rome until 1863. Since then he has often visited Italy, for like a grateful son he loves the land whose ancient history has inspired so many of his successes. But he has never been to Greece or Egypt; the Orient has in a manner been revealed to him by his archaeological studies and by his creative imagination. He did not come to Paris until 1864, when he received a gold medal for his picture "Il y a trois mille ans".

It is easy to understand how later Alma-Tadema sought his subjects in the Latin and Hellenic countries. What other civilisation combined the characteristic traits for which he had so great a sympathy? And permit us to insist on this point. The pictures that the master gives us are not modern scenes travestied as classic scenes by the aid of garments and accessories, nor are they servile imitations of Pompeian paintings, like so many that we see at present, now that the Orient is the fashion of the day; the "arranged East" as the French say with a convenient phrase.

Alma-Tadema has grasped the vestiges of costumes and manners as they

have survived in monuments and literary allusions, and, after passing them through the alembic of his brains he has penetrated to the real life, into the moral atmosphere of these people that have been dead for centuries, he

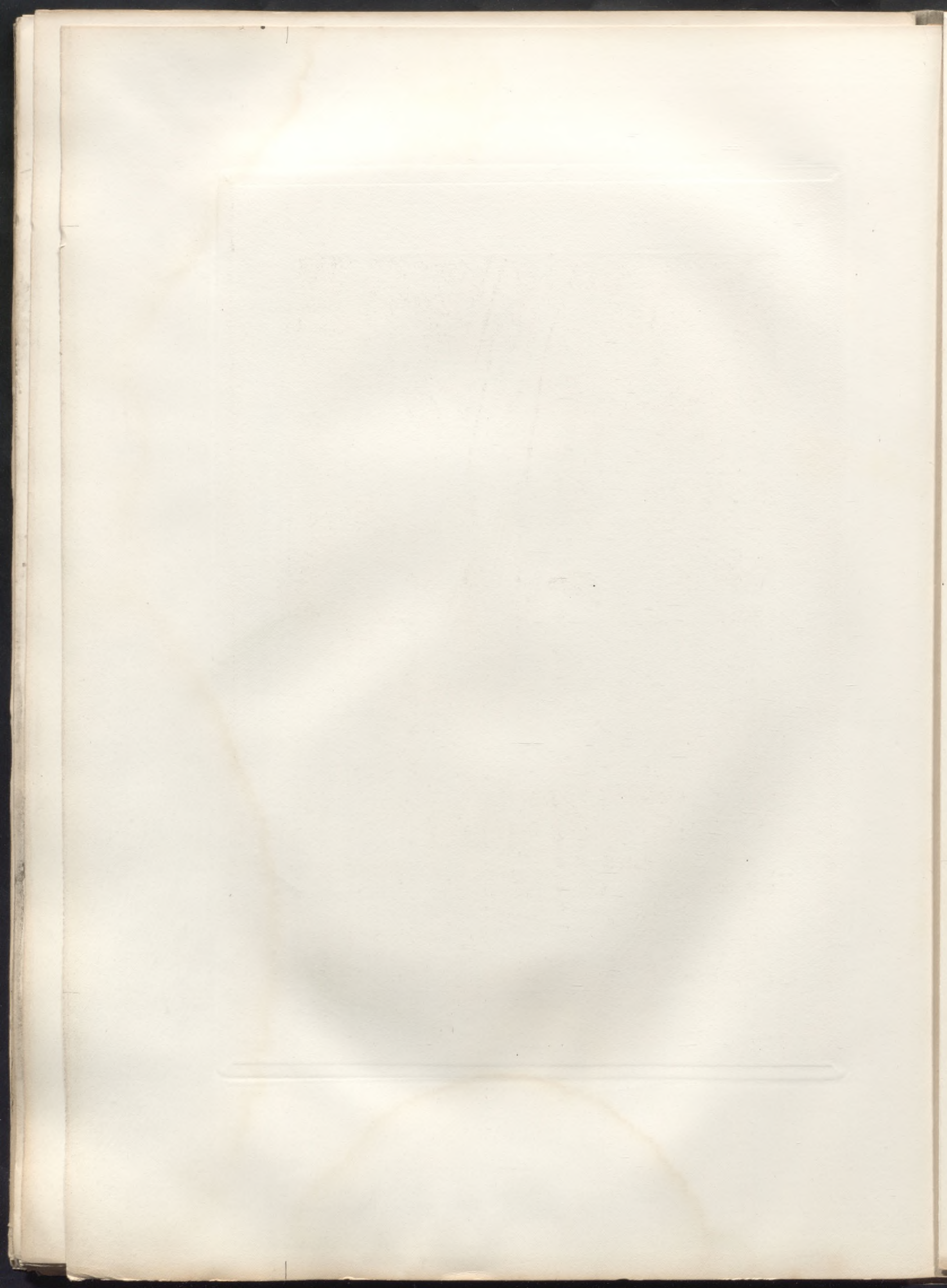


makes them alive to us again like human beings whom we understand and have known. We accompany them to the public games, to the Forum, to the Temple, to their business; we take part in their "Vintage festivals" their "Pyrrhic dances". We see Phidias showing with worthy pride, to the art connoisseurs, the immortal friezes of the Acropolis. We almost believe ourselves in Rome while we look at "Tarquinus Superbus" knocking off the heads of the tallest poppies in his garden; our gaze follows Agrippa as he goes to give audience to

his clients, we are present while the Pretorians proclaim Emperor, the catiff Claudius, who, hidden behind a curtain, is paralyzed by fear. Alma-Tadema also makes us acquainted with their "Fêtes intimes"; we are permitted to be present at their siesta, to peep into the tepida-



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rium where beautiful young women and irresistible girls sport in the water. Here are great roman ladies at play with their favorite aquatic pets; there illustrious senators during the great summer heat find nothing nobler to rest them from their fatigue than to intoxicate themselves with the perfume of flowers whilst listening to sweet languorous music. We seem to almost hear their declarations of love, we are in their home, living their life. The odes of Horace, the love songs of Catullus and of Anacreon, the idyls of Theocritus take form before our eyes.

Croyez-vous qu'il soit facile
De nous rendre ainsi vivant
Théocrite de Sicile?
Il veut un pinceau docile
De poète et de savant,
Ce maître du doux Virgile (1).

But in thus rendering us spectators of the lives of the ancients, in showing them freed from the constraints of etiquette, Alma-Tadema removes from them all modern incongruities he does not forget to note with particular care that these people lived in an intellectual world different from ours and that their life and character showed the impression of this difference. The revelers keep within bounds, religious enthusiasm is there, joy is depicted, but not the extravagant frenzy of sensual passion. There is movement and life but the limits of the picturesque are never overstepped, for Alma-Tadema is never theatrical.

"Everything which concerns my art" he has said "is the expression of an idea; my pictures represents different subjects, but in them I have but expressed a homogeneous artistic research."

The reputation of Alma-Tadema is universal; honors and decorations have come to him from all sides. Orders arrive faster than he can execute them, notwithstanding the fertility of his brain and his incessant labor.

(1) Joseph Boulmier.



Gifted with quick ability he paints rapidly it is true, but he paints with too great care and conscience ever to finish one of his pictures hastily, even the least of them has cost him a fund of patience and study. He has, like musicians, the praiseworthy habit of numbering each of his works; so it is impossible to mistake their chronological order.

Happily for him and for the public, Alma-Tadema is not spoilt by success; he becomes if it is possible more difficult to please and more critical in his work. He never loses sight of the motto "noblesse oblige", his

researches after his ideal, after the truth are incessant. It is a great pleasure to see him use his brushes, or rapidly indicate a new work, each feature of which has a meaning or tells a fact. In his manner, in the finish that he produces, Alma-Tadema has remained a follower of the Dutch school and pre-eminently in his pursuit of light he recalls to us Peter de Hooghe, the great master of his native land.



Alma-Tadema's nature is as ardent as his art; kindness forms the basis of his character; but, in principle, he has a holy horror of all negligence in work and above all in painting. "I am too fond of my art", he has said, "to admit that a picture patched up in haste is a work of art, and it enrages me to see that the public often accepts it as such."

We are happy to be able to add that the man is equal to the painter. Kind-hearted he is always ready to lend a helping hand to those who appeal to him as an example of this is "l'Escalier", an engraving. Of which illustrates these pages. It was given by him in 1870 to the lottery for the benefit of the French peasants.

It was by portraits that Alma-Tadema made his entrance into the art world, and these last years he has desired to occupy himself seriously with that branch of art.

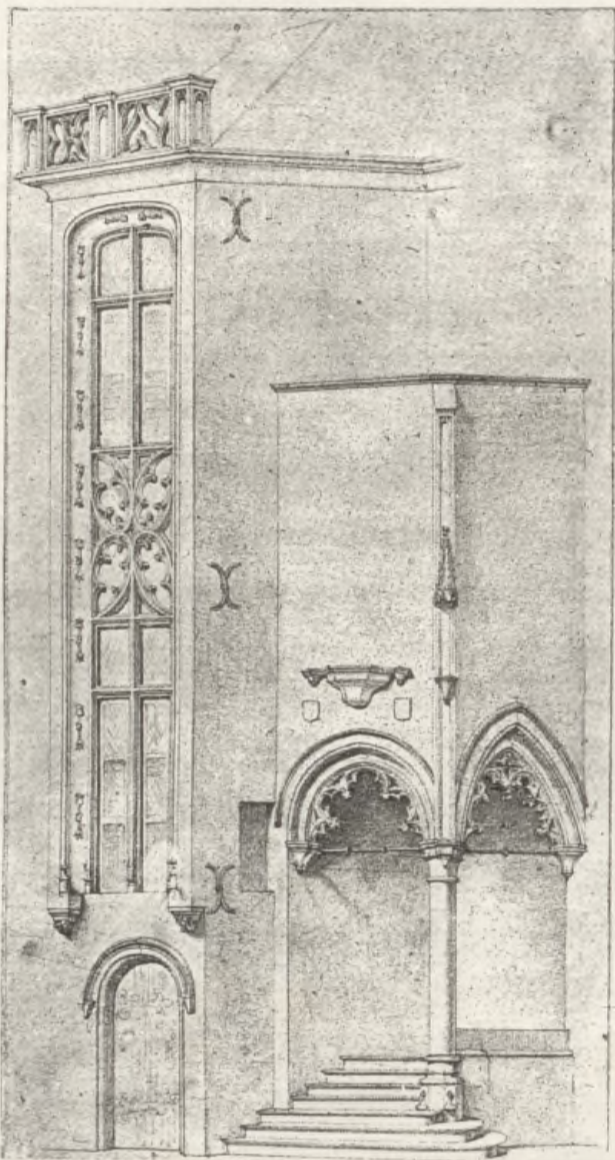
Let us mention the portrait of Hans Richter, the great orchestral leader of Vienna, who has caused the name of Berlioz to live again in London; that of Ludwig Barnay, the Hungarian actor, represented as Mark-Antony; then those of the Count Bylandt and the Duchess of Cleveland, exhibited May 1883, at the Grosvenor gallery; the first is so lifelike, the hands alone would make one understand the science of Lavater; the second is a chef-d'œuvre in flesh tints and in this is especially seen Alma-Tadema's predilection for the gothic, as also in the portrait of his second daughter. And let us not forget to mention his portrait-pictures among which one of the most successful is that of Madame Semon so well known in the musical world, under the name of Miss Redecker; she is singing, standing, accompanied by her husband.

Still it is not as a portrait painter that Alma-Tadema will ever reap his greatest triumphs, nor as a portrait painter that he will be remembered. Excellent as these works are in themselves, they are, with two exceptions, that of the Italian sculptor Amendola and of the Dutch etcher Lœwenstam, not picture-portraits, such as a future generation would care to possess, whether they had known the originals or no. It is the weak point in Alma-Tadema's art, as well perhaps as its strength and that which enables him so well to reproduce the classical character, that facial expression is not his forte. He can therefore better put before us the rather immobile, stereotyped features of the men and women who lived in Greece and Rome than our moderns with their complex emotions, their hyper-sensitive, highly strung nerves. For this he has no comprehension, neither by temperament nor race. For him feelings and events are simple, direct, as they were, or as we suppose they were in ancient days, ere the world had grown feverish, analytic; and hence his grandest works will ever be found among those that reproduce the earlier period.

Where so much is excellent it is almost invidious to specialize, but his chefs-d'œuvre in that direction are perhaps the "Sculpture Gallery" and the "Picture Gallery", in both of which Roman amateurs are visiting the studios of their artistic contemporaries, admiring and criticising their labours, after the manner also of to-day. They may truly be regarded as typical Alma-Ta-

dema's. Both are full of accurate archeological research, displayed in the minutest detail, in both the artist's extraordinary imitative power of reproducing textures is seen to highest advantage; yet both are indicative of the error into which more or less all his pictures are apt to fall, namely that the inanimate element is not sufficiently subjugated to the human, and that hence marbles, silks, statues, pictures and so forth, take the eye as prominently as

the living personages.



Alma-Tadema has of late years been inclined to repeat the same motifs with slight variations. Probably this arises rather from a desire to attain to ever greater perfection than from a falling off in invention. This feature is specially noticeable in a graceful idyl of a young girl seated on an exhedra beyond which is seen the deep blue southern sea. Her lover lies on the bench beside her, plucking at her flowing white robes in supplicating attitude or offering her the roses she carelessly plucks to pieces as she hesitates what reply to give to his question. This idea which has been repeated in oil and water color and always kept of a small size, is among the gems of the artist's brush for luminousness of color and charm of handling. One of the

variants is that exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery of 1885 called "Expectation". In this the girl sits on her seat alone, overlooking the blue bay with its distant classic town, and watching the approach of a small sailing boat that doubtless bears to her the absent lover. Exquisite in its harmony of coloring is this small canvas literally bathed in sunshine. The white marble, mellowed and heated by the sun's rays is a marvel of execution, and no less so is the blossoming Judea tree that casts the shadow of its pink blossoms on the bench and floor.

This artist, who in all things is the accurate precise Dutchman, has the

laudable habit which he has borrowed from musicians of numbering all his works. Opus 300 has some time ago been left behind. The practice, which it is to be desired that other artists would follow has much to recommend it. It would save both amateurs and dealers an infinitude of trouble and doubt and establish the sequence of an artist's works beyond dispute.

It was Diderot who pronounced the maxim : " *Le milieu explique l'homme, l'atelier commente l'œuvre* ", and so true is this of Alma-Tadema that it would be scarcely just to close a notice of his art without naming his house, also a work of art from his own brain. Architecture has always had an attraction for him, he is fond of constructing, contriving, especially fond of decorating. As might have been expected in his house, his affinity for the lucid in color, the translucent in surface is prominent. No one especial style or period is preserved throughout. The house is eclectic like its creator's art. The studio is naturally the centre of interest. This is a by no means large room, square, on the first floor, with no special means of admitting light beyond a wide high window. Its decoration in color and general character is Pompeian, the walls being painted in fresco from the artist's own hand; frescoes that at a distance look like grave Pompeian themes and looked into more closely are found to be so many *jeux d'esprit*; for this genial man dearly loves a joke. The fine painted ceiling, also from his own hand is an adaptation of one in the Baths of Titus in Rome. No artistic litter pervades the place, no canvases except those on which the painter is at work are to be seen. Everything is tidily put away in the pigeon holed classical cupboard that lines one end of the room. Descending three brass steps the visitor finds himself in a small apartment that is wholly Dutch in design, with vaulted roof and dark oaken pannelled walls, and from this by a sharp transition in style divided off only by a curtain that hangs from a double-headed archway, he passes into a room that is entirely gilt, ceiling and walls being overlaid with burnished gold leaf. Into this lovely room, the light falls through a window formed of Mexican onyx, an effect as beautiful by day as by night, when by an arrangement of candles put behind, an effect of artificial moonlight is produced. Thence a third sitting room is approached. This is supported by yellow marble columns, and is hung with gorgeous embroideries culled from an old Venetian palace. Turkish rugs and Oriental stuffs are piled about this salon which is one of the most comfortable of the whole suite. From this again a little Pompeian room is reached which in its turn again admits into

the studio. The worker's room is thus placed in the very midst of the reception apartments, and shut off from them only by a curtain.

Alma-Tadema so well known in London, is a stoutly built man of medium height, with an expression of strength and kindliness. His observing eye is extremely animated and pleasing; his strong sonorous voice welcomes you as no other can. Full of energy, his ardent enthusiasm for all that is beautiful and good seems to be communicated to all who come in contact with him, one feels better and stronger after having talked with him in that atelier where the littleness of every day life is forgotten.

“ The secret of my success in my art ”, we have heard him say, “ proceeds from this that I have always remained faithful to my programme, that I have worked after my own inspiration and have never imitated other artists. To succeed in whatsoever, it may be in this life, it is first necessary to be faithful to one's self, and I believe that I have been this. ”

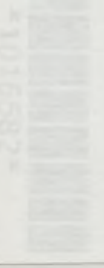
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