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E. MEISSONIER



Lately I was rereading the *Fantasio* of Alfred de Musset, and as my mind was already occupied by the idea of writing a study on Mr. Meissonier I was particularly struck by a passage in this brilliant comedy. I quote it from memory. "Who? I do not know, some beautiful girl plump as the women painted by Mieris; something soft as the west wind and pale as a moonbeam; something pensive like the little tavern maids in Flemish pictures, as they serve the stirrup cup to a traveller in high boots; sitting straight as a rod on a large white horse. What a delightful thing is this stirrup cup! A young woman on the threshold, a cheerful fire that we perceive in the distance behind her, the soup all prepared, and the children asleep; all the tranquility of peaceful contem-

plative life, in the corner of a picture! And the man still breathless, but firm in his saddle, having rode twenty leagues and having thirty more to ride; a glass of brandy, and adieu. The night is dark, the weather threatening and the forest dangerous; the woman follows him with her eyes for a minute, then returning to her fire she lets fall, that sublime alms of the poor: God keep you!"

All Mr. Meissonier art is summed up in the following: observation, intelligence and emotion enclosed in a panel the size of a hand. For the last fifty



years this painter, who is a master, has steadily pursued, with a measured tread the route that he had laid out for himself and if sometimes in following it, he has renewed the works of Metz, Mieris, Gérard Dow and Terburg, it has been by making for himself a path by their side. He was very daring at the outset of his career about 1830, for surely it was very bold to be other than classic, and required great courage not to join the romantics; but he navigated between these two currents that were carrying french Art towards unknown regions; and settled himself in a style that in the course of years was raised to the level of historical painting.

It was not through fear that Mr. Meissonier acted thus, for fear and he were never fellow travellers, but by necessity, inclination and by the very legitimate desire to be some one between Mr. Ingres and Mr. Delacroix, if not to take a place by their side. From his birth his life was a struggle, and he seems to have been cradled with misery. This he has in common with many of his brother craftsmen. There have been many stories told of the early years of Mr. Meissonier, charming and false legends have been carefully constructed, and like all other legends show him to us as a new Lantara painting tavern signs and immortalizing the counter of a wine seller by a touch of his brush.

What we know is that as an illustrator he was inventive, ingenious and sparkling, and that he strove in piquant vignettes to restore past times and

dead and buried centuries with little figures, that had the stamp of the time and manners of long ago. Thus he executed a prelude to his future works; already he had sureness of touch, a consummate cleverness and a personal accent. That which Michelet excelled in stating concisely with a stroke of his pen, in his works on retrospective history, Mr. Meissonier narrates with the point of his pencil.

Although Meissonier's temperament inclined him towards the Romantic school never for an instant did he contemplate joining them. He admired the romantics for others but not for himself, and he defended and admired them without following. Eugene Delacroix, who was not very communicative, rendered Meissonier justice. "Meissonier, so one day said the author of the "Massacres de Scio", is the most unquestioned master of our epoch." Eugene Delacroix knew the obstacles that are strewn in the paths of artists and how multiplied and grievous are the stations he has to go over. Therefore he esteemed his confrere who was able to paint grand pictures on small canvases.

Meissonier is in art a kind of evocator. An epoch, a reign or a century strikes him; immediately with an isolated figure or a group of several personages placed in an architectural centre where the most fervent archæologist could find nothing to reprove. He will show you the customs and habits of a royalty that has vanished in the perspective of years, but that has been faithfully treasured by the memorialists of the time that they



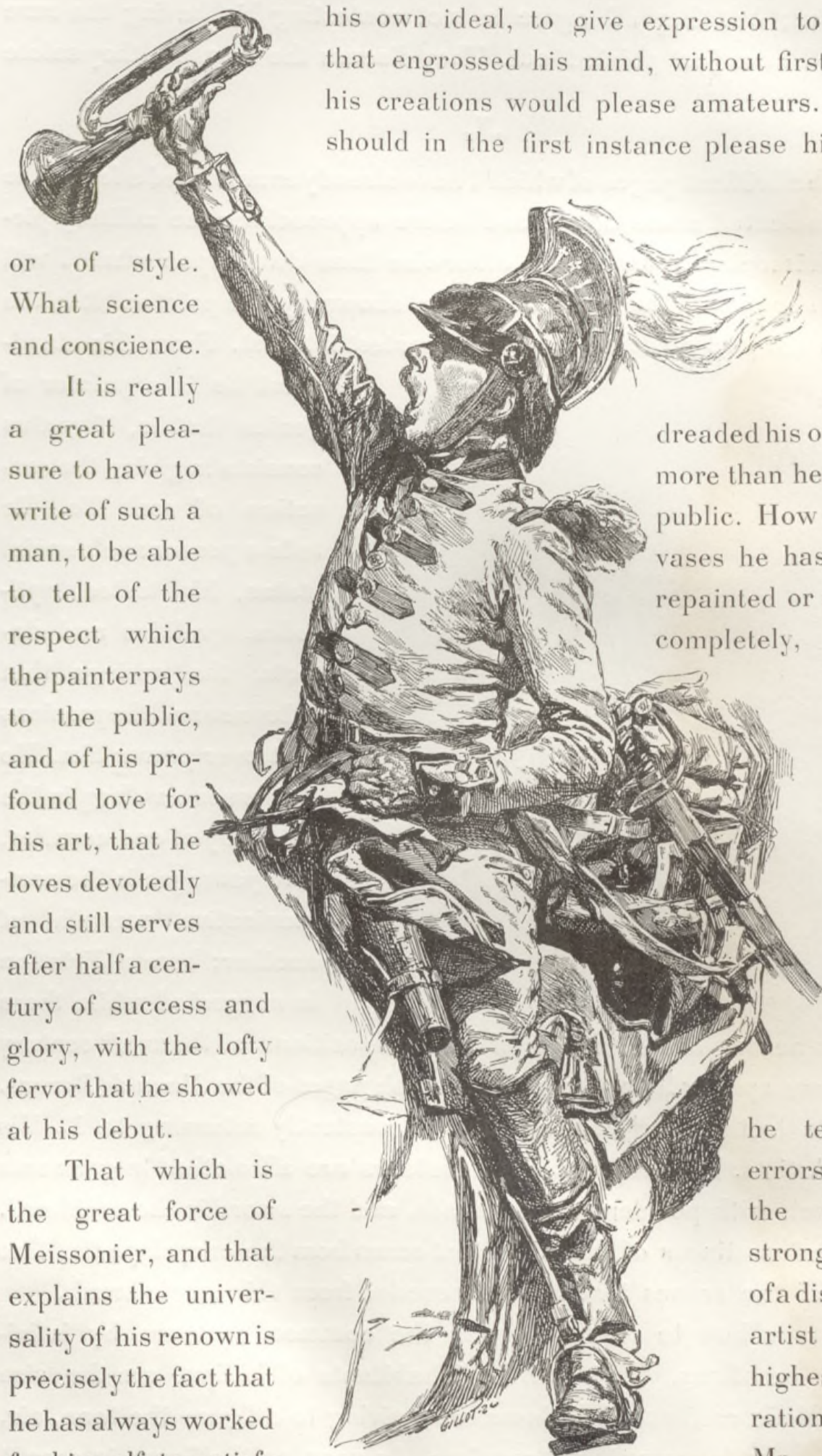
recall. He delights in everything that is elegant, distinguished and heroic, nevertheless he does not disdain the picturesque of a bandit, the ferocious courage of a ruffian, or the feline savageness of a cut-throat. Only provided that there are shimmering of stuffs and flashing arms, that men are struggling one against another, showing by a gesture, in a movement of the body in a physiognomy ennobled by courage or debased by brutality, haughty passion or inherent vice and he is satisfied; for he has been able to paint humanity thus, under two aspects: one that smiles and one that menaces.



In this order of ideas, I will mention: "Un Hallebardier" (1840); "L'Homme à l'épée" (1851); "Troupe en marche" (1851); "Les Bravi" (1852); "La Garde civique" (1853); "Cavalier Louis XIII" (1854); "La Rixe" (1855); "Un Bravo" (1857); "La Halte" (1864); "Le Cavalier à la pipe" (1864); "Un Officier" (1865).

This is one aspect of Meissonier's art, the bright colored, and beplumed side, full of humor and fantasy, of glitter and gashes; where often the profile makes grimaces like the vagabond of Callot; where knives and rapiers are exercised as Goya's heroes used them. What brilliancy and animation, what *furia* penetrates these episodes so varied, novel and skillfully

presented! With what an expert hand the painter has indicated everything, without any error in taste or anachronism, without either lapse of memory



or of style.
What science
and conscience.

It is really a great pleasure to have to write of such a man, to be able to tell of the respect which the painter pays to the public, and of his profound love for his art, that he loves devotedly and still serves after half a century of success and glory, with the lofty fervor that he showed at his debut.

That which is the great force of Meissonier, and that explains the universality of his renown is precisely the fact that he has always worked for himself, to satisfy

his own ideal, to give expression to chimeras that engrossed his mind, without first asking if his creations would please amateurs. That they should in the first instance please himself was

his ambition, for he knew he was severe to himself and he

dreaded his own censure more than he feared the public. How many canvases he has modified; repainted or rubbed out completely,

sacrificing thus, to his own dignity, the heaps of gold with which, might have been covered these canvases that

he termed his errors! This is the act of a strong character of a distinguished artist worthy the highest consideration. Certainly Mr. Meissonier

has enemies; but they all agree in not contesting his having the rare virtue that I have just pointed out. They discuss the man but they salute the artist.



After the brilliant pages of which I have already enumerated a few of the titles and indicated some dates, and before approaching the military pictures of Meissonier, I cannot do otherwise than dwell upon what I will name the *veine intime*, the marvellous vein shown by the painter. It is the most important part of his work; and of greatest interest. From this stand-



point he is a painter of genius that is, if genius consists in giving the sensation of real life. He tells a personage's social status, his tastes, aptitudes, qualities and defects, the springs that influence and the passions that over power him. He expresses an elegy in the soliloquy of one cavalier, love passages in the communicative warmth of another; here a flirtation is suggested while there

a drama is accomplished. Some of his compositions of the xviiith century seem to have sprung living from the feverish pages of the *Neveu de Rameau*. He delights in the xviiith century, and is constantly returning to it. His Readers, Artists, Philosophers and Amateurs are all clothed in garments silk or velvet, with powder on their heads, and the sword in the scabbard. It is a kind of mustiness of the mind, that oozes from the encyclopedia, that embalms all the scenes that have proceeded from this magic brush.

He knows how to extend beyond the common measure by infinitely small creations. With him the inhabitants of Lilliput are the size of giants. None can excell Meissonier in giving to a figure the tone, air, attitude and physiognomy that it requires. As soon as the figure is seen it

can be classified. Such a one personifies a dreamer, another the learned professor; this an artist, and that an amateur. Here idleness predominates, there labor commands. The drawing is always perfect, enveloped and large, the arrangement is agreeable to the most prejudiced; the color is pleasing and the harmony exquisite. Only to name the subjects chosen by Mr. Meis-



sonier would fill a volume; and then the analyst would fall below the inventor. Since the "Bourgeois Flamands" (1834) and the first "Partie d'échecs" (1835), how many amusing repetitions and adorable commencements we have seen. Mr. Meissonier has striven to change and vary the themes that preoccupy him, always finding a new

youth for the subjects that come from his brush and seem to become animate upon his palette. However he shows a preference for an isolated figure, and the greater portion of the canvases that compose his second manner are either the passion of the musician, as a "Violoncelliste" (1841) striving to execute correctly the "Romanesca" or the love of letters, as personified by the "Liseur" (1851); or the "Jeune homme travaillant" (1852); the "Amateur d'Estampes" (1854); the "Liseur rose" (1856); the "Fumeur" (1857); the "Liseur" (1857) a variation of the panel painted in 1851; the "Incroyable" (1858) perfumed, shining with his cane of grape-vine stock his eyeglass and flashy trinkets hanging from his fob. On a little hand made placard on the left of this picture, that recalls the good old days of the Palais-Royal, we read: "An apprentice wanted by the citizen Meissonier, painter, rue de l'Homme-Armé". The "Joueur de flûte" dates from 1858; the "Ecrivain du temps de Louis XV", is of the same year; the "Philosophe" from 1860; the "Graveur" from 1862. This last picture is a marvel, a jewel. Seated, leaning on a table placed in front of the window, the light softened by passing through a paper that is stretched over a frame, the engraver; with a cigarette in his hand, examines attentively the action of the acid on the plate. It is a portrait of Mr. Meissonier's son. The table is covered with phials and different objects. On the floor a earthen vessel near it a Louis XV regulator.



In 1871, we must mention the "Recherche littéraire", a young man in a

dressing-gown is reading a manuscript. He is seated in an armchair near the mantle-piece, pen in hand, with a folio open before him and others on a table and chair placed near. In this nomenclature that I have undertaken, I know there are omissions and chasms; this arises from the fact that Mr. Meissonier's work is dispersed through the four quarters of the world, and one would need a conducting line, or the hand of an Ariane to follow the pieces that compose it. My enumeration will in any case be sufficiently important to give an idea of the labor this indefatigable and prodigious charmer has performed.

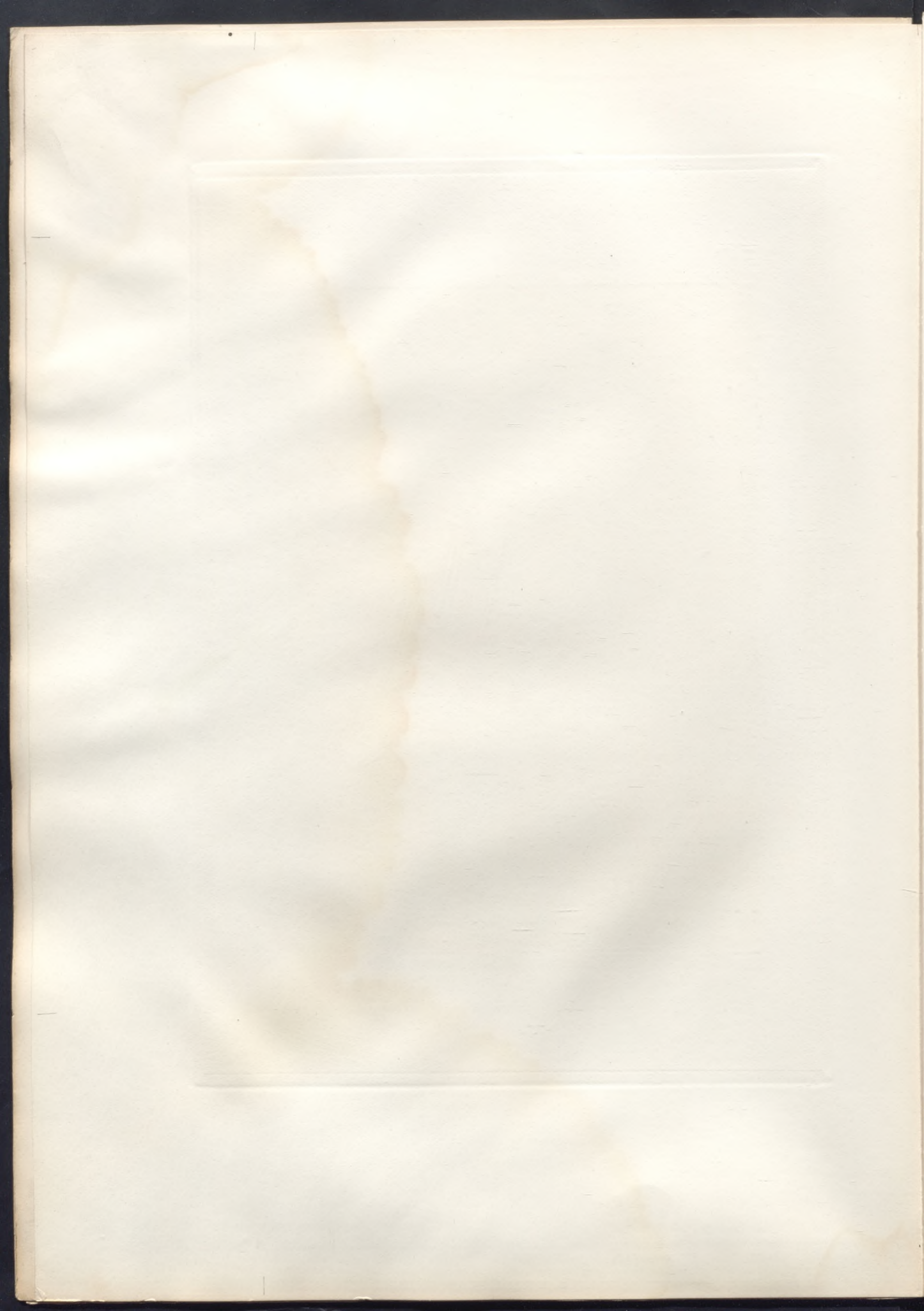
Among the compositions that are interesting on account of the number of figures represented, special



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W. Verelst del. & sculp.



mention must be made of the "Partie d'échecs" (1841) where, dressed in black, the painter Emile Béranger figures, and the figure in brown is Mr. Dromont, both friends of Mr. Meissonier; in the "Amateurs de peinture" (1843). The painter is Mr. Steinheil, brother-in-law of Mr. Meissonier, and the man dressed in rose leaning on the back of a chair, is Mr. Decaisne, the botanist.

The "Peintre montrant des dessins" dates from 1850. An atelier in charming disorder, with incongruous objects scattered here and there; a portfolio full of drawings open on a stool, another, behind, overflowing with sheets larger than it can hold, some faded roses on the table, and on the mantle-piece a conglomeration of phials and brushes. The painter, dressed in black, holding on his knee a portfolio, is showing his visitor, a man of mark, in light colored garments, an engraving. A portrait of a man hanging on the wall, is the portrait of Meissonier himself at the side is a picture representing Samson this composition was made, by the author of the picture, for an edition of Bossuet's *Histoire universelle*.



The "Joueurs de boules à Saint-Germain" continues this marvellous serie full of animation, brio, refinement and penetration, that has given to Meissonier so important a place in contemporary art.



A canvas whose date I cannot discover, entitled "Innocents and Malins", belongs to the serie of anecdotes that Mr. Meissonier relates so happily. The picture in question represents soldiers of Louis XIIIth time, assembled through the chances of warfare in the low ceilinged room of a farm, and refreshing themselves after the fatigues of their trade by playing cards. There are six of them seated on either side of the table; two players, and four giving advice, but all interested in the chances of the game. And as the title indicates, the wolf struggles with the lamb; the latter will surely be eaten, but he will put off as long as possible the disagreeable

moment. The left side of the table is held by the rogues or malins, to whom the trick is familiar. The player on this side is sure of winning whilst his adversary on the contrary hesitates, fumbles and finally throws down the card he ought not to have thrown. Three cavaliers standing look on impassable, one smokes his pipe, another fingers the pommel of his rapier. On a bench is placed a stone ware jug and a glass. This picture is reproduced in this work it is one of the finest the master has painted.



And what have I not still to describe? "Partie gagnée" and "Partie perdue" (1858); "Amateur de tableaux chez un peintre" (1859); and that pearl: "La Lecture chez Diderot" (1859). They are all there those friends of intellect, those contributors to the monument: the Encyclopedia. There surely is Grimm, d'Alembert, Holbach and Helvetius. Standing or seated, in different positions, they listen attentively to the reading of his *Salons* by the platonic lover of M^{lle} Volland. The characteristic expression of each of the auditors, the variety in their costumes, the piquancy of their physiognomies, that indefinable winged and spiritual something, that floats in the atmosphere, the enveloping light striking here and there a sparkle, gives to this page a remarkable intensity of intimate life. "Les Amateurs de peinture" (1860) shows us the painter at his easel with three visitors watching attentively the work of his brush; one who is standing dressed in grey, bends down to get a better view, another seated, is seen in profile, holding his hat and cane in his hand; the third standing against a screen, pauses in the act of taking snuff; he is going to break the silence and risk a criticism... Hanging

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on the walls are pictures representing, the first the "Martyr de Saint Laurent;" the second "Le Meunier, son fils et l'âne," a severe epigram of the painter, against officious advisers.

A military painter in a century that comprised Géricault, Gros, Gérard, Bellangé, Charlet and Raffet (I will only mention those that are dead), Meissonier has been able to be pathetic in his manner. He has not painted the war scenes with the tragic emotion of those who were witnesses of the victories and defeats of the first Empire, but he has interpreted them more coldly as if he already was a part of the posterity, who alone can judge without prejudice the events that disturbed the first fifteen years of the nineteenth century. Thanks to the documents we have received, and thanks to the historians who have studied the reign of Napoleon Ist nothing connected with this César can be hid from us at present. His greatness and his weaknesses are known, those of the beginning as well as those of the apogee and the catastrophe that followed. Mr. Meissonier was particularly struck by the three dates that were so significant in the annals of the Empire: 1805, 1807, 1814.

1805, is the epopee springing up and marching towards triumphal destinies; 1807 is the epopee in the height of frenzy and inclining fatally towards a descent that will be vertiginous; 1814, is the fulminating catastrophe that precipitated the sovereign, until yesterday redoubted by Europe entire, but from then to be pursued, overtaken and vanquished; an epopee without a second, that not having had a Shakspeare to



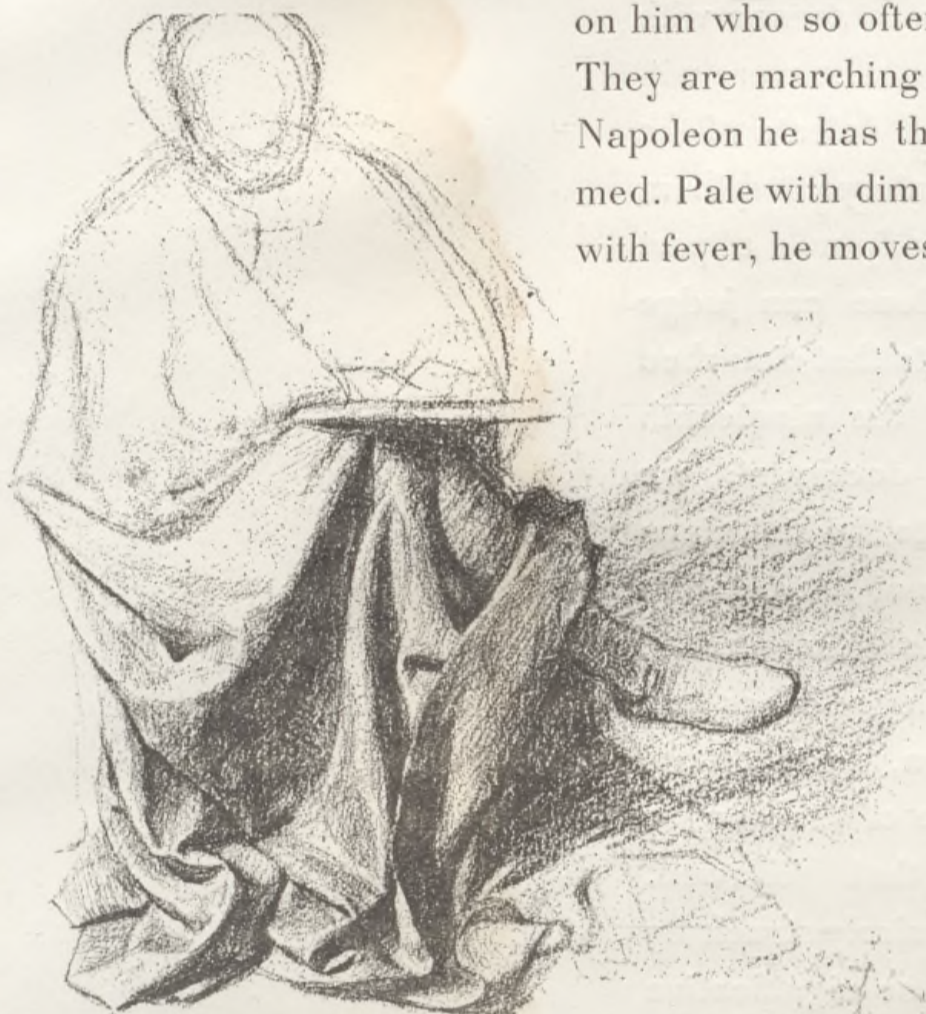
explain it, has been sung by a Hugo. We give on the first page of this analysis of the painter, a reproduction of the picture "1814". We have desired to call attention to this episode that other painters have treated but in which Mr. Meissonier has surpassed himself. "1814" was executed in 1863 and figured in the Salon of 1864. — In a hollow, broken up road, furrowed with ruts and soaked with half melted snow, Napoleon advances at a foot pace on his white horse, followed by his staff. The generals are dejected and depressed, and dare not break the silence that has fallen

on him who so often has led them to success. They are marching under a dismal sky. As to Napoleon he has the air of a Titan overwhelmed. Pale with dim eyes, the mouth contorted with fever, he moves as one in a dream letting

the hand that holds his riding whip hang down, the legendary grey coat is wrapped around his febrile shaken body but seems too large; under the crush that weighs him down he seems almost lessened in size. His marshals follow him tired out, and humiliated in despair. Ney however show a good

front, but Berthier appears stupified, the others drag along their fatigue and shame. One of them is sleeping in his saddle rocked by the cadence of his animal's step. In the distance a column fights in full retreat and is lost to view in the foggy horizon. Routed on every side, the route is strewn with bloody vestiges, the halting places are lugubriously marked by corpses. But the spectators eyes leaves the mass to return to that figure of Napoleon, with the convulsed mask, where all kinds of grief have placed their stigma, to that colossus that a child's hand could overthrow, to the god of yesterday, crumbling to dust under the breath of destiny.

At the universal Exhibition of 1867, Mr. Meissonier had four pictures



genre, battle pictures and portraits. The united juries conferred on him one of the eight grand medals of honor. Besides his portrait and that of Mr. Delahante, fine as the Bertin of Ingres, — for Mr. Delahante is the happy possessor of “1814”, — we admired “Les Renseignements,” “L’Ordonnance”, of which Mongin has made a superb etching, some “Cavaliers se faisant servir à boire”, “Le Maréchal ferrant”, “L’Empereur à Solférino”, “1814”, etc.

“Les Renseignements” proves if we had not known it long before that Meissonier interprets nature with the same power that he shows when representing humanity. Certain landscapes are magical; like the “Route d’Antibes”, others are sinister and lugubrious, harmonising with the scenes that they enclose or the catastrophes they enfold.

“Solférino” (in the Luxembourg museum) represents Napoléon III and his staff on a hillock, at the base of which we perceive artillery men with their guns. “The genius of the infinitely small has never been carried farther.” Charles Blanc has written, and effectively, in



this canvas as well as in those that have preceded it and those that follow Mr. Meissonier, has known how to render miniature heads and that without minutiae. “The depressions and the reliefs of form, the imperceptible differences in the planes of the cheek, nose, brow, of the mouth; the wrinkles in the skin, the warts, the brown or grayish, blond or red hair of each personage; he has expressed, without littleness, the most delicate shades in each horses coat; he has made us feel the presence of bones, tendons and veins; he has been able to strike the luminous point in the eye as well as the high light on the shining stirrup; he has touched with an unheard of exactness the buckles of the chargers

bridle, the braiding on the uniform and the trimmings on the soldier's cap.

My space is limited, so I must pass over in silence a quantity of superior works devoted to isolated individuals, or to groups; pages full of the brilliant, blinding brightness of the sun of southern France; country bits penetrated with the sweet odors of the fields and the strengthening fragrance of the woods; portraits struck off as clear as medals, with the date of the time in which they were produced, anecdotes and pages full of the history we have lived, such as the "Barricade" and the "Tuileries"; the former reddened by the blood of riot, the latter corroded by the fire of vandals.

Thus as may be perceived in reading the preceding pages, the career of Mr. Meissonier has been pursued with courage, perseverance and superb force of will, and that during fifty years he has never been willing to sacrifice the dignity or nobility of his art.

EUGÈNE MONTROSIER.



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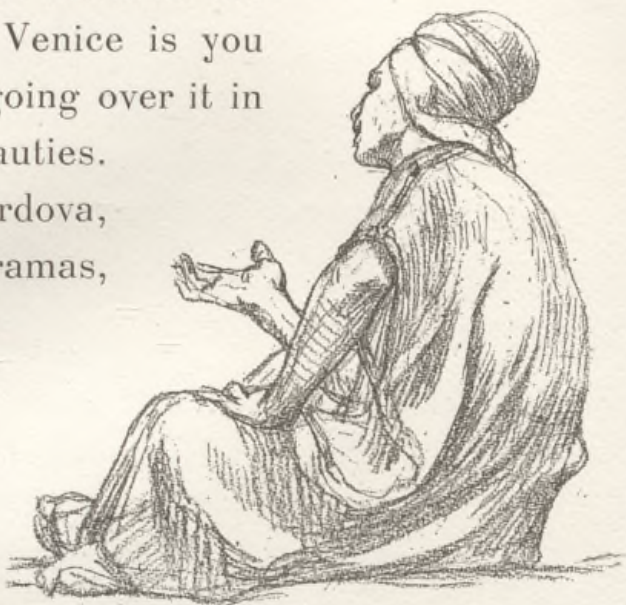
GUSTAVE BOULANGER



On leaving Greece, I proceeded to Rome. This was early in the year 1854. I had met with Beulé, About, Guérin, Fustel de Coulanges at the School in Athens; and I found Baudry, Benouville, Charles Garnier, Bouguereau, Thomas and Gustave Boulanger at the villa Medici. It was reserved to the future to decide what that generation of writers, archæologists, painters, sculptors and architects would add to literature, art and historical science. At that time they were without solicitude for what later maturity might produce, the present was devoted to work : which is the joy and power of youth.

According to my travelling scheme, I had but a few days to stay in the eternal city; but man proposes and Rome disposes. Naples can be seen in twenty-four hours, a day is sufficient to gain an impression of

Constantinople, as it stretches along the banks of the Bosphorus with its wooden houses hidden by the cypress trees of the surrounding gardens. As beautiful as Venice is you can, between sunrise and sunset by going over it in a gondola, master all its exterior beauties. Thus can be visited Genoa, Smyrna, Cordova, Toledo or Palermo, marvellous panoramas, dazzling with brightness and effect that are spread before you. But Rome cannot be seen thus, in passing by. She does not attract at first sight; for she is neither gay nor smiling. Like serious minds, and severe souls she



must be known to be understood. A traveller asked Seroux d'Agincourt how long a time was necessary to become acquainted with Rome? "A lifetime" d'Agincourt answered. He was right. Rome with its monuments of the sixth century before our era, with its Forum, its Temples of the republic, the baths, circus and theatres, with its palaces of Emperors, its Catacombs, the earliest refuge of the rising church, its basilics that were the first christian churches; with its houses of the thirteenth century, its cathedrals and palaces of the sixteenth; the Rome of Tarquinus, of Augustus, of Constantine, of Innocent III and of Julius II, Rome that is still full of monuments of the ancient times, of the middle ages and of the modern period, Rome is not so much a city as a science.

Notwithstanding my desire to return to France after nearly a year's absence, I remained there; the more readily that I had found at the French Academy a family of comrades and our intercourse from the commencement aroused

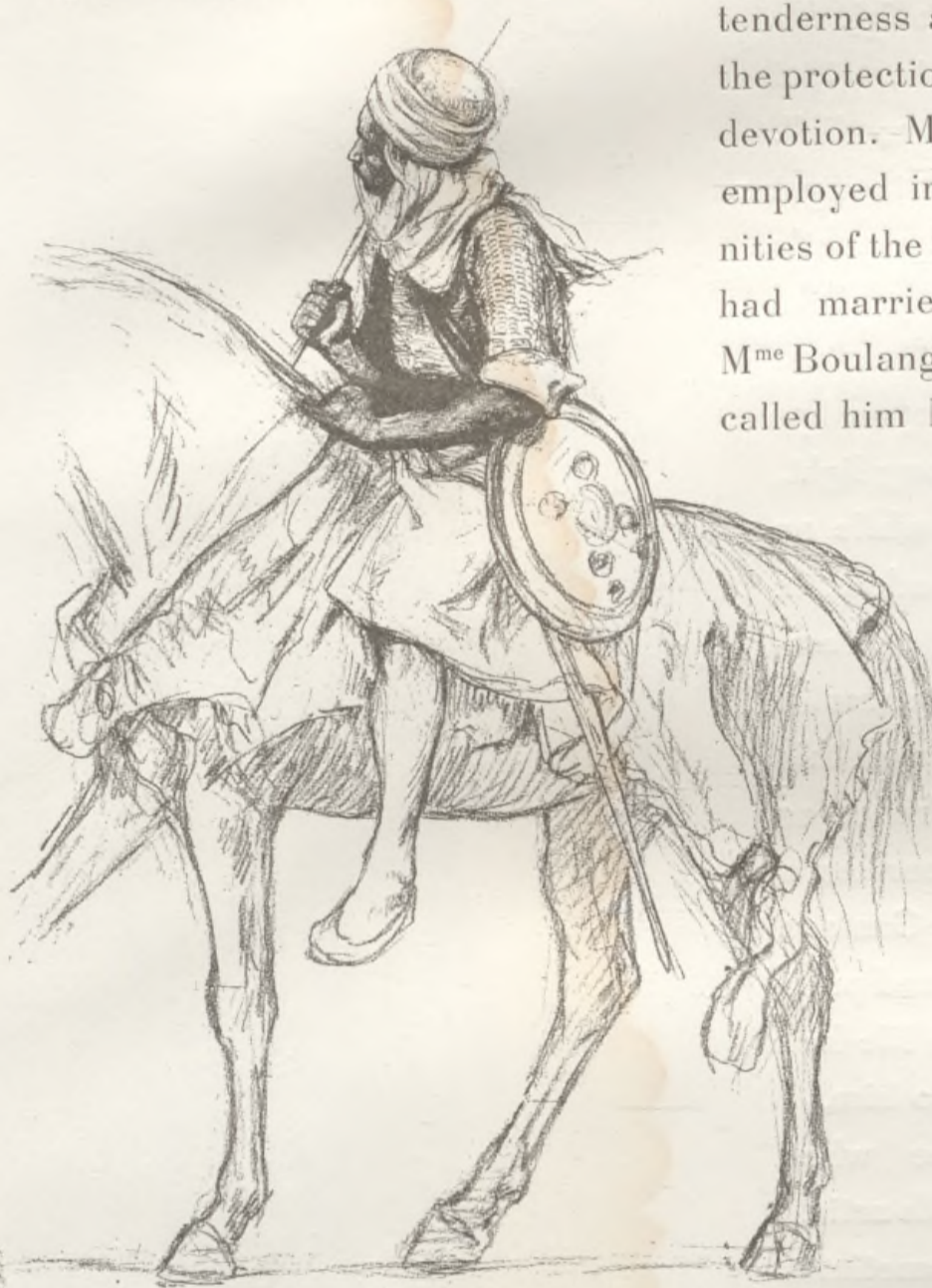
sympathies that promised future friendships. And I was not mistaken. More than thirty years have passed since then. How many things time has touched in my mind and heart without reaching these friendships of my youth! I appeal to you Baudry and Garnier, I appeal to you my dear Boulanger!

I can still see Boulanger in his atelier at the villa Medici. He was then finishing the picture that had for its title "Et ego in Arcadia". The Arcadia in the painter's thought differed somewhat from the poet's text, it is the country of youthful delight, where a pair of lovers are dancing, eyes gazing into eyes, lips pressed upon lips, in strong light, in the full sunlight of life, while an old man seated in the shadow, in an angle of a tomb sadly contemplates these vanished dreams of love and happiness; it was this picture that he sent to France as the work of his fourth year as a prize pupil in Rome. For Gustave Boulanger received the grand prize in 1849. Up to that period life had been severe if not cruel to him.

At the present time when fortune has made peace with artists to such an extent, that sometimes the liberal payments seem to include the arrears due to their predecessors in glory and talent. As if she could by so doing recognize and repair the slights of the past. How some good people must be scandalized by such a change in matters here below! Let them be consoled, for when success does come, if talent brings its reward, there has always been the trials, disappointments, privations and miseries of the beginning. Boulanger has known these hours and days of sadness and misfortune.



His family, of creole origin, saw their fortune, a fine fortune, entirely compromised by the painter's grand-father who had a genius for ruinous inventions. This was a disaster. But a greater misfortune followed! Boulanger when fourteen years old was orphaned. A relative extended his generous protection to this unfortunate child, and the orphan found in the



tenderness and devotion of an uncle the protection and strength of paternal devotion. Mr. Desbrosses, who was employed in liquidating the indemnities of the Saint-Domingo colonists, had married the elder sister of M^{me} Boulanger. He consoled the child, called him his son and promised to

replace those that were no more. These spontaneous adoptions never go astray. The heart in its fulness seems to foresee the good it is to accomplish and that the future will render in return by recognition of benefits. The compact was tacitly signed between the protector and protege, or it would be better to say between the father

and son; and has since been religiously carried out.

Mr. Desbrosses observed in Boulanger great aptness for drawing: he took him to the atelier of Jollivet, a painter that has left no mark in contemporary art and that doubted of others from having too much doubted himself. The brave man was too conscientious to advise pupils to undertake a career in which he himself had made so slight a success.

He attempted to prove to Mr. Desbrosses that his nephew would have to practice his profession for fifteen years before it would bring him in a

centime ; and that this result could only be attained by great sacrifices. The uncle was obstinate and so Jollivet received into his atelier a pupil who was obliged to leave it after a short time. Mr. Desbrosses had interests in Africa ; he sent Boulanger to oversee them. His mission was to occupy two months, but it extended to eight, to such a degree did this wonderful country tempt the young painter to make studies and excite him to work. If we turn back in thought to those times, already far removed from us, when the Orient appeared in art as a mirage where Decaen, Delacroix and Marilhat sought a renewal of poesy, sentiment and effect. Today it is comparatively familiar, then it was the unknown. To this Africa, that was then less sought for, perhaps because it was nearer to us, Boulanger, in the prolific years of his early youth, owed the strong impressions, ardent souvenirs and profound emotions that forms an artist.



A large portion of this master's work was created there. The portfolios of the young painter were full, his studies were ready : these were the reserves for the future. The documents were numerous but richer and more fruitful was the fund of impressions received, for the soul of an artist is a perpetual vibration.

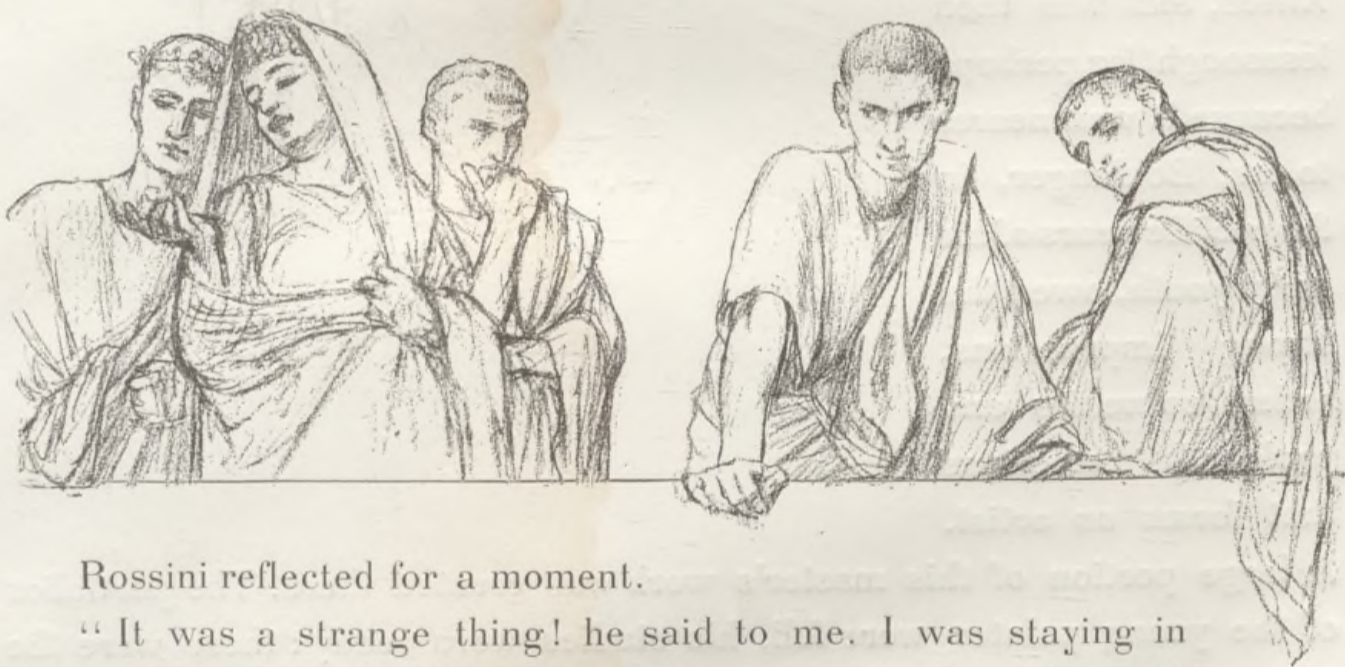
I once learned of a man the secret of what is genius. This celebrity was named Rossini. I conversed with him, it was at Florence, and I shall never forget it. He was talking to me of music and of the inferiority of position that

she was obliged to endure among the other arts, in being subjected to a fashion, to an interpretation, to have only an influence as a passing force, in a word, to have in art but a life interest.

“What will live of mine, said the master, of the many works that have been applauded? *Guillaume Tell* and the *Barbier*, and what else? — *Moïse*! I suggested to him. — No. — *Comte Ory*? — Even less. — *Otello*? — Less still. — In any case, I replied, somewhat discouraged and wounded in my admiration, I will answer for the third act of *Otello*. — The third act! Perhaps”, said Rossini with a smile.



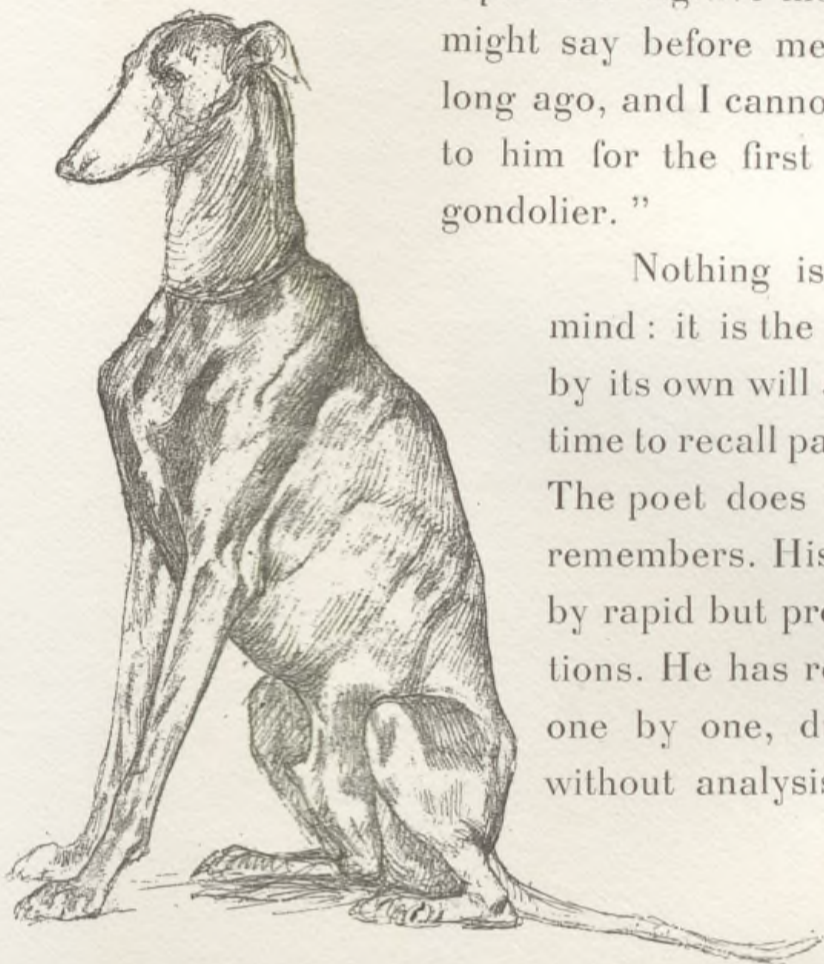
After this conversation, I asked, master how did that song of the gondolier, that admirable lament, that is a tear and sob, come to you, to you the author of the *Barbier*, the brilliant genius of gaiety.



Rossini reflected for a moment.

“It was a strange thing! he said to me. I was staying in Naples when I was quite young. Some young friends and myself were one evening in a boat near the Sorrento coast: we were laughing and shouting and making a great noise. There passed near us a boat rowed by a man alone who was singing. What? I do not remember for I did not pay any attention to him as he floated softly by, passed us and disappeared from view. Some years after they brought me the libretto of

Otello. At the time I was writing the third scene with the romance of the willow, that boatman came back to me in memory. I saw him not in his rapid and fugitive movement; but he paused as you might say before me; he recommenced his song of long ago, and I cannot say but that I may be indebted to him for the first measures of the song of the gondolier."

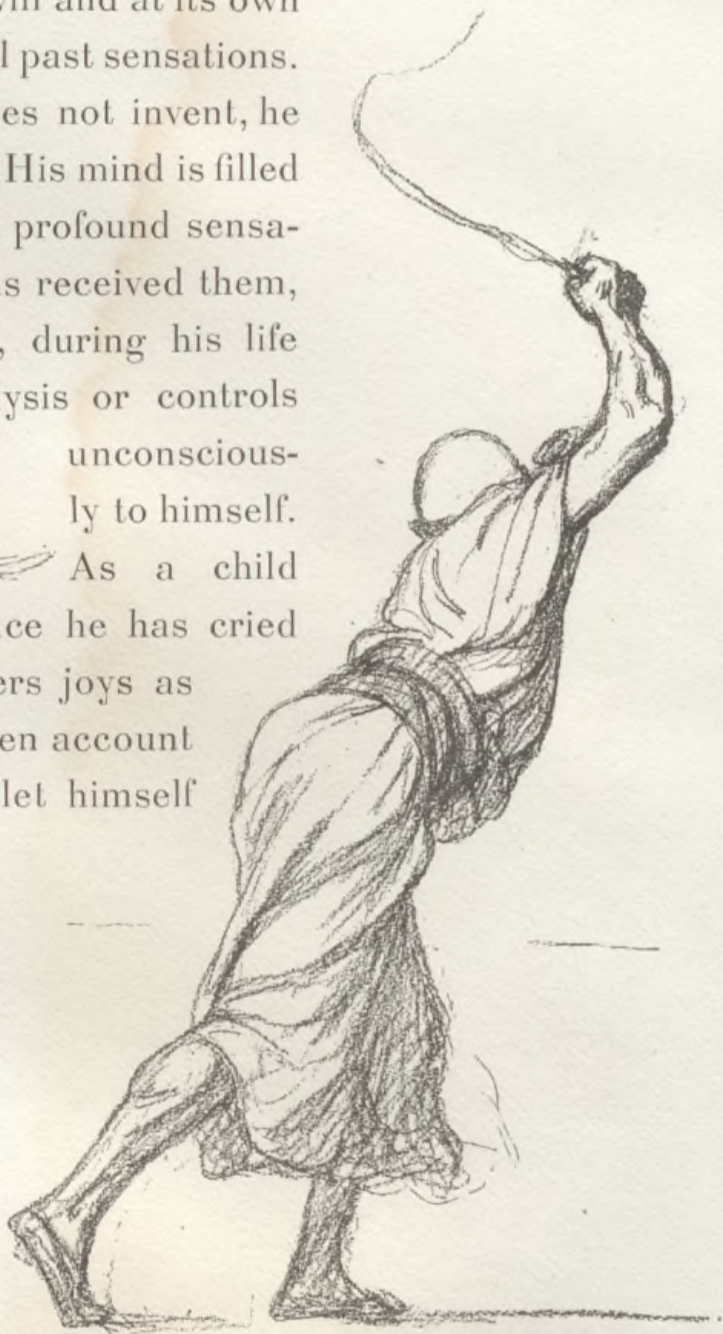


Nothing is lost to the artistic or poetic mind: it is the first faculty of genius to be able by its own will and at its own time to recall past sensations. The poet does not invent, he remembers. His mind is filled by rapid but profound sensations. He has received them, one by one, during his life without analysis or controls

unconsciously to himself.

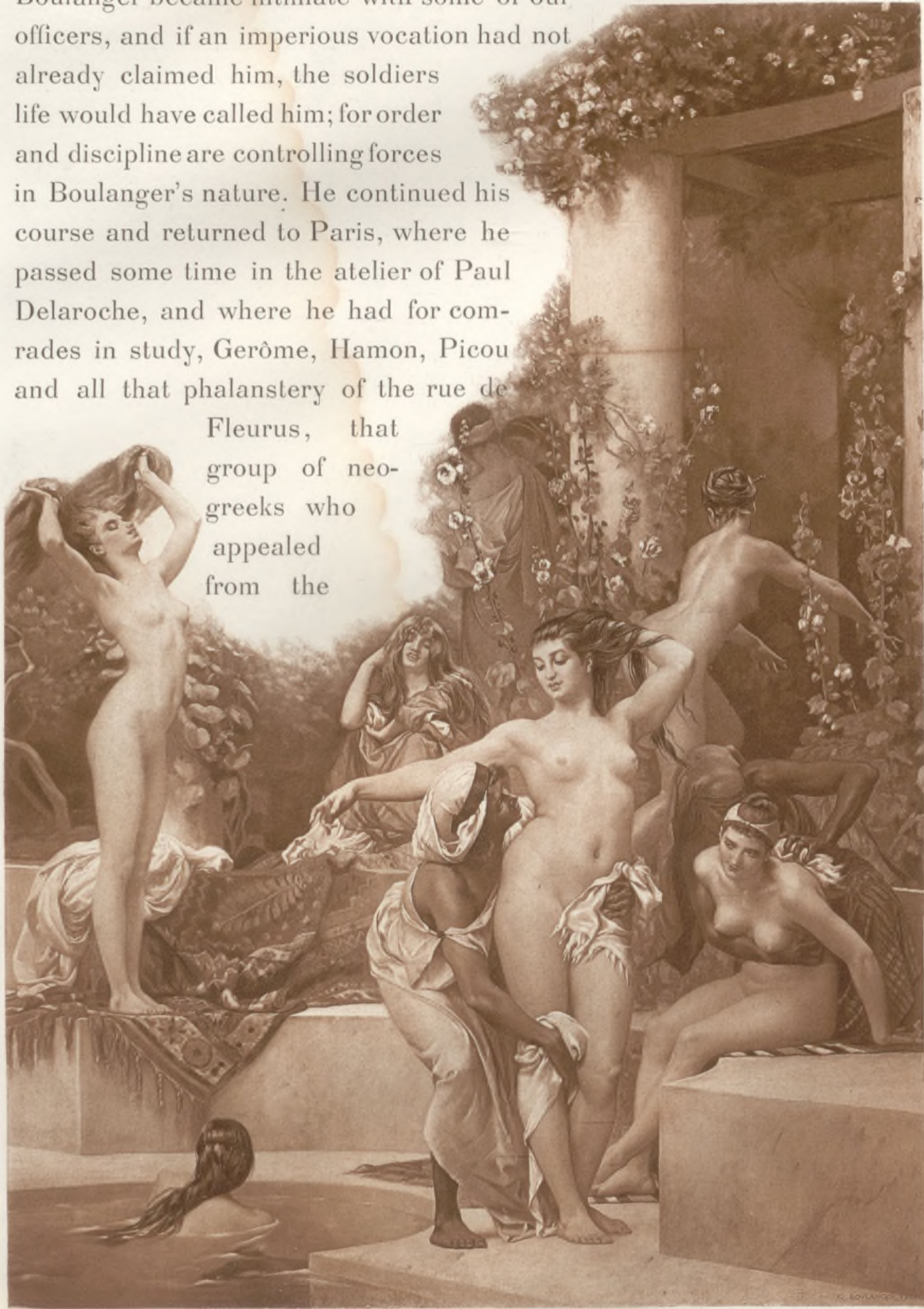
As a child

when others have cried in his presence he has cried also; later his heart has beat to others joys as well as to his own; he has neither taken account of his tears nor his pleasures. He has let himself live, or it would be juster to say he has let his mind work without the control of his will; storing up emotions; thus one by one the poet's riches have accumulated, his fortune prepared for the expenditure of the future, and when the time comes he can draw from this fertile and inexhaustible source. He believes he creates, he remembers or rather his past sensations relive, thus eternalizing his youth and genius. Wonderful gift, the greatest gift to an artist for whom nothing is indifferent and in whom nothing dies!



We will return to Gustave Boulanger. This voyage in Algiers, this first campaign of the painter decided his future. In this portion of France in arms, Boulanger became intimate with some of our officers, and if an imperious vocation had not already claimed him, the soldiers life would have called him; for order and discipline are controlling forces in Boulanger's nature. He continued his course and returned to Paris, where he passed some time in the atelier of Paul Delaroche, and where he had for comrades in study, Gerôme, Hamon, Picou and all that phalanstery of the rue de

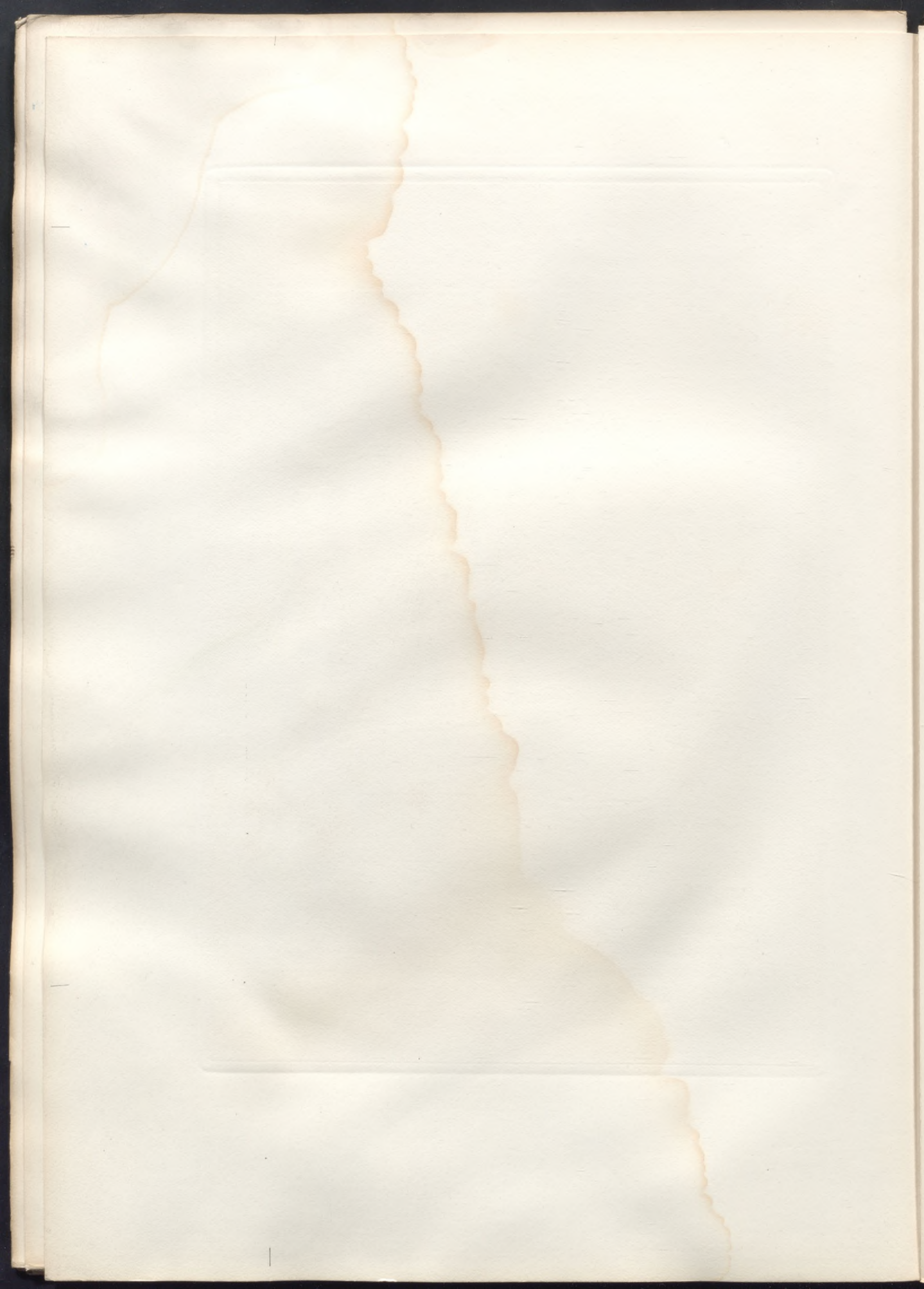
Fleurus, that group of neo-greeks who appealed from the



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Photography by E. Bay, Chicago, 1907



imposing and solemn Greece; to a simple, charming but more familiar Greece. Apart from her majestic poets, Greece had also her *Poetæ minores*, that held a place in her literature, and in her anthology was to be found both epopee and tragedy. *Paulo minora canamus*; surely one of the least elevated is not on that account less attractive and true. This school had the novelty of it, in its favor. And strange coincidence! antiquity itself has justified these renovators of greek art. For during the last fifteen years figures in terre cuite have been found in the excavations in Greece and Asia Minor. Tanagra alone could fill our museums and private collections. They represent greek life in the agora, in the street and in the houses. The children are going to school with their lyre under their arm, or with tablets in their hands, and in the farm yards they call the cocks to fight; maidens occupied with the care of their toilets or out walking with their mantles folded on their heads to form a veil like the turkish "Yasmak," or with the flat hat with a point rising over it; the head-dresses, are of infinite variety with the hair braided, curled or raised in a knot on the front and colored red. Then the youthful elegants, the lesser people, the soldiers, and even the spectators of the Punch and Judy shows. Those who still remain of the phalanstery of the rue de Fleurus must be very triumphant over these discoveries. Boulanger followed his friends but at a distance, he also was greek, but after the style of Theocritus: he borrowed from the sicilian poet the mythological scene of Acis and Galatée, this was one of the first pictures he exhibited, in the year 1849 and that same year he left for Rome.

The number of Gustave Boulanger works is considerable. This master, who is submissive and faithful to nature, has interpreted Africa with most truthful exactness. He has represented her in her real character and with



her personal physiognomy. Others have seen her grander and more poetic. Boulanger has made her living in the proportions of daily life, exact according to the scale of reality. Here is the family of Kady in the patio or



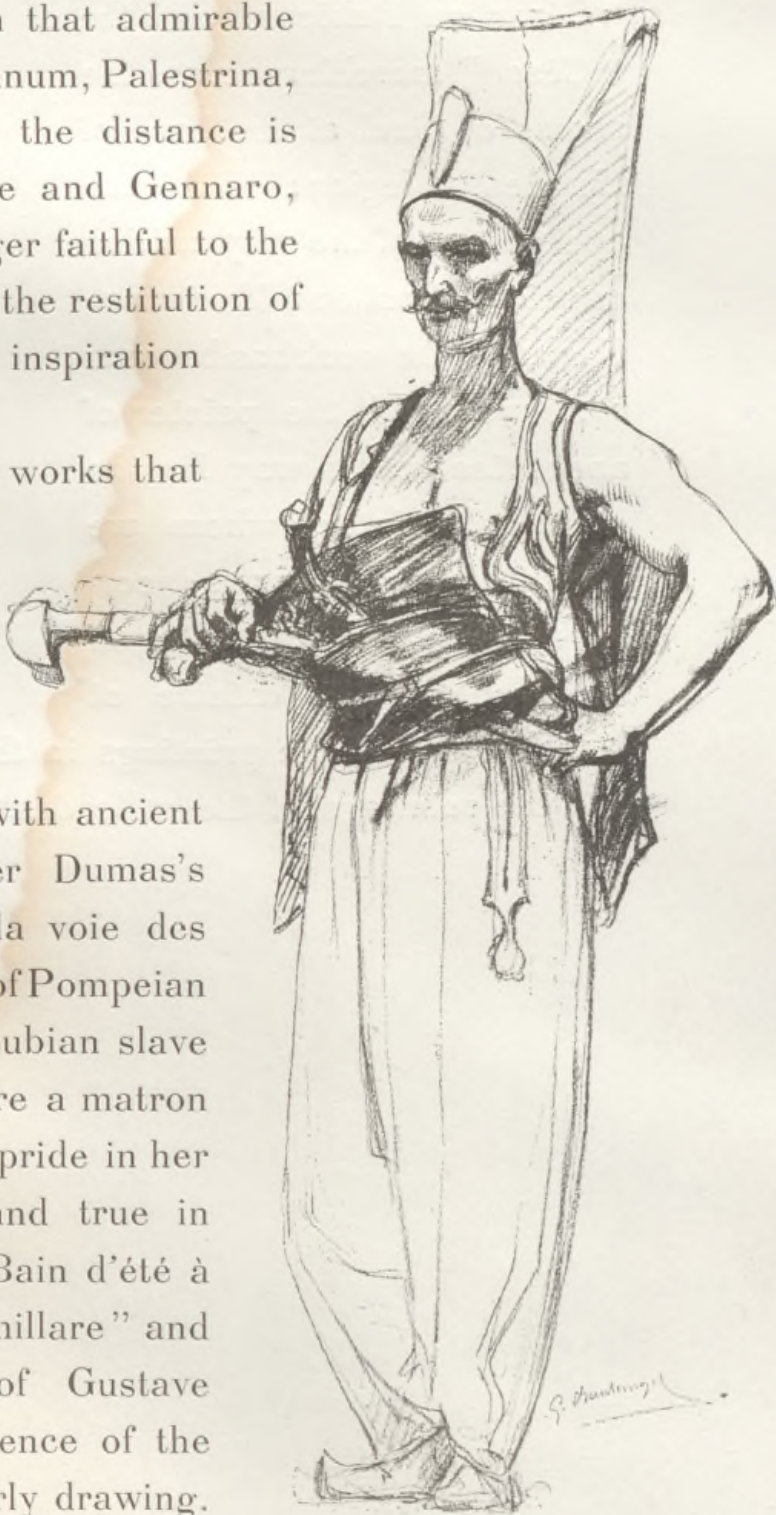
courtyard, where arcades in ogive are supported on small columns that the vines have encircled with wreaths, where the palm trees spread their large leaves, mats are hung about, and daylight filters discreetly through the moucharabiehs. The Aïd-Srir, the festival of the children armed with broadswords, whom the Arab enveloped in his burnous proudly surveys in their military accoutrements. It is El Hiasseub, relating, like Harriri, stories under his tent, the khetma or house of skins. The marabout, the djeid, the armed nobleman on horseback passing near the shepherd shrouded in his cloak and leaning on a kezoula. Les Choassa, or scouts lying flat on a hillock and searching the horizon. The shepherds of Kabylie, night having come, listening to the song of the djouak or primitive flute. Here is the landscape of the "Gué", the "Rendez-vous", and the "Fuite". The algerian water carrier, the jew Hamal or a scene in the Aurès, a woman passing with a heavy burden on her head, her eyes lengthened by kohhel, the half opened mouth like a pomegranate, while a horseman, his hand resting on the back of the horse behind the saddle, turns round to look at her : it is a chef-d'œuvre. Omitting many others but it would be unjust to forget the "Femme des Ouleds Nahil" with her plaits of hair, her fan and jewels.

This phalanx of the rue de Fleurus to which Boulanger belonged, this group of fine delicate and ingenious minded young painters commenced a research in grounds unknown to art : they had dreamed of reconstructing the familiar daily life of Greece. We must admit that some among them mistook the avenues of the Luxembourg garden for the garden of Aca-

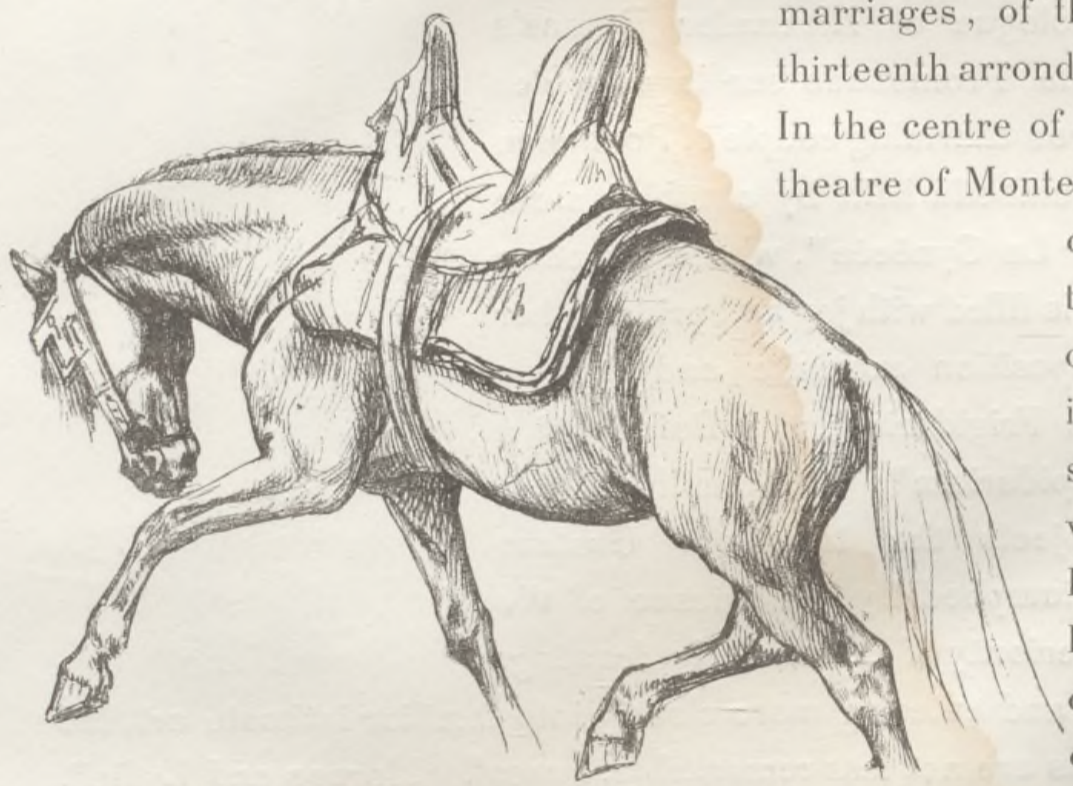
demus. There was a good deal of Paris in this Athens seen from a distance both as to time and space; but if the end was not reached they aimed well and they only needed to rectify the firing. Others came better informed or more fortunate. When at the villa Médici, in the midst of ancient Rome, near the Forum, the Appian way, in that admirable roman campagna that encloses Tusculanum, Palestrina, Æsula, Cenina, Tibur, and where in the distance is seen the mountain chains of Ausonie and Gennaro, and where Soracte spring up, Boulanger faithful to the programme of his school, attempted the restitution of roman society. Rome furnished the inspiration and Pompeii the documents.

From this emanated many of the works that we have seen in exhibitions and that form the personality of Gustave Boulanger in contemporary art. Let us recall la "Via Appia," under the reign of Augustus; la "Boutique du barbier Licinius" on the Forum, overflowing with ancient life like the prologue of Alexander Dumas's "Caligula;" "La Promenade sur la voie des Tombeaux," where a charming couple of Pompeian women under an umbrella held by a nubian slave are to be seen; "La Gynécée," where a matron seated on a chair is filled with joy and pride in her children. A composition exquisite and true in taste. "La Cella Frigidaria"; "le Bain d'été à Pompéi"; "le Tepidarium"; "le Mamillare" and many other subjects the talent of Gustave Boulanger has triumphed by his science of the nude and the superiority of his masterly drawing.

Aiming less high and entering more closely into familiar intimate art, the other compositions are not less remarkable. I recall "Horace and Lydie", that translation of "Donec gratus eram"; "La Répétition des Comédiens romains"; "La Marchande de Bijoux", a young woman standing with her hair raised; "La Marchande de Couronnes" tempting young maidens



by showing her flowers; "La Marchande de Statuettes", one of the personages in which, seems to question the young merchant by a glance. But grander horizons are opened before him; in his "César au Rubicon" and the "César" marching across the snows of Gaul at the head of his tenth legion; with the appearance of the "Apparition de saint Sébastien à Maximien-Hercule", the work has become more powerful, the painter of anecdotes makes way for the historical painter, whom we shall find later on, as a decorative painter in the ceiling of the Monte-Carlo théâtre at Monaco, and in the paintings in the foyer de danse of the Opéra house;



and the paintings of the salle des mariages, the salon reserved for civil marriages, of the Mairie of the thirteenth arrondissement in Paris. In the centre of the ceiling of the theatre of Monte-Carlo, the genius of Music beats the time with a ciste; on the right celestial Music is represented by young women bearing harps and mandolines; to the left is dramatic music. A composition remarkably fine as a whole and admirable in perspective. In the work of ornamenting the new Opéra house, Baudry had charge of the public foyer, Lenepveu the ceiling of the salle, Boulanger of the foyer of dance. The

painter has personified the warriors dance, the mythological dance, the lover's dance and silvan dancing. First it is the pyrrhic : three warriors of whom the centre one, who wears a golden helmet, raises like the corybantes a shield in his left hand. The other two are armed with helmets and



shields. In the second panel, a blond woman with head thrown back, and breasts protruding, the right hand holding a golden canthare; on her left a woman flourishes a thyrsus, a pithon is wound about her arm. A man, with a panther's skin thrown over his shoulder and a tambourin in his hand, excites the dancers ; this is the bacchic dance. The amorous dance is represented by a woman whose tunic is fastened by a belt of flowers holding her dress in her right hand and extending the left to her young companion, whilst her dancer kisses her on the brow. In the silvan dance scene, there is a group of three women, one of them nude, the other two, who are slightly draped in their veils, raise above their heads wreaths of flowers.

The public is well acquainted with these panels. The exhibition of them, in one of the salles of l'École des Beaux-Arts in the month of may 1874, is still remembered, it was a great success.

The decoration of the salle des mariages in the thirteenth arrondissement is elevated in character and powerful, the latest in date of the master's work, it is as it were the concentration of his talent, and its crowning glory : it represents the roman betrothal, which is the origin of our civil marriage; in all its nobleness and holiness. All the virtues and forces of man surround it : Labor, the Family, Study, the Fatherland, the Law ; the union of the man and woman is the centre of all. In the middle of the triptyque, the husband is seated, holding the hand of his spouse ; a woman is scattering flowers at their feet while another woman holds the corbeille and distaff, the emblems of the spouse sacred duty. Then a group of women with lyres and flowers. At

the side the witnesses of the marriage and those who signed the contract, that is to say the figures of the painter's friends : Guillaume, Augier, Hébert, Cabanel, Gérôme, Dumas, Garnier and the author himself behind a column. In another compartment, the Family ; the mother, surrounded by her sisters and friends, leans back in her chair while the father lifts the first-born to his lips. After this comes Study, with children working under the master's eye. Then Labor is represented by a forge and workman ; next is the Fatherland : the mother bidding adieu to the father and son as they leave home to defend the soil, the trumpet's call to the rescue of the country. *Munus, Patria*, the entire life of man.

By his words he is continuing the instruction, commenced by his works. Under the title : *A nos Élèves*, in a few pages the master has stated his doctrine. For Gustave Boulanger, membre de l'Institut, is at present professor of l'École nationale des Beaux-Arts.

HENRI LAVOIX.



Photographie & Imp. Goussier & Co



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PUVIS DE CHAVANNES



Puvis de Chavannes is one of the most interesting painters of contemporary art.

From whom does he derive his art, or from whence does it spring? Who were his first masters, the initiators who indicated to him the Ideal as the supreme goal? Some biographers have pronounced the names of Ary Scheffer and Couture. Without doubt, these two painters, who had their hour of celebrity, had taught their pupil the practical side of art, shown him their preferences that were confined to the rather narrow

circle in which they turned, protected him from certain errors, withdrawn him from sights that in their estimation were condemnable; we believe that their influence was confined to general principles but had no hold on the incipient volition of the new-beginner, who fostered other projects than

those that had been suggested to him, and who longed to attain heights until then deemed inaccessible. Ary Scheffer and Couture sought inspiration from legends, romances and history; Mr. Puvis de Chavannes found inspiration in his own thoughts, and we have seen the superb figures that came fully armed from his brain.

For those who enjoy tracing back the career of a man, as one remounts the course of a river, so as to be able to admire the salutary effects that it has spread in its course, there are happy statements to be noted and comforting examples to be related. Whilst some are but pale reflections or feeble echoes that strive to please the crowd by flattering its tastes, others, on the contrary attempt a reaction that is often prejudicial to their interests and



réputation, they extricate themselves from grovelling, and rising slowly at first, finish by attaining great heights. Their aim is to syn-

thetize devotions, virtues and heroisms; to always belong to humanity by keeping near to nature.



Mr. Puvis de Chavannes has painted a number of canvases of small dimensions such as the "Décollation de saint Jean-Baptiste", "l'Espérance", "Madeleine au désert", "Jeunes filles au bord de la mer", "Pauvre Pêcheur". When I say "of small dimensions" I mean in comparison to the more important of his pages which average ten yards in length by three yards in height. It is principally in these last that his genius develops at ease. Canvases that equal the largeness of his dreams are necessary to the epic side of his conception, on which he can represent in elysian landscapes his never to be forgotten figures.

It is to Amiens, Marseille, Poitiers, Lyon and to the Panthéon at Paris; that we must go to see these creations of this virgilian poet, who sometimes strings his lyre with Tyrtæus's strings. But let us proceed in order and

recall summarily the themes that the artist has invented, at an epoch when everything is but a perpetual recommencing.

The work executed for the museum of Amiens is the most important that Mr. Puvis de Chavannes has produced. It is composed of six compositions of large proportions accompanied with ornaments and figure heads between the arches and over the doors, etc. Three of the compositions are on the principal staircase. These are "Picardie", "Repos" and "Travail". Two others representing "Paix" and "Guerre" decorate the transversal gallery on the first story. Finally, "*Ludus pro Patria*" (young Picards prac-



tising with the lance) that obtained for the painter the *médaille d'honneur*, will complete this wonderful ensemble. — That is if the architect of the Amiens museum kindly consents.

These six pieces are homogeneous and varied. They tell of the beautiful spectacle of joyous nature and the laboring peasant who blesses the sun as it rises above the horizon. They narrate their hard labor: of the furrow that they dig, the seed they sow, the grain they cut; they make us hear the woodman's axe as it falls on the creaking tree, and the blow of the hammer as it falls on the twisted iron.

And after the labor: it is the dearly earned repose, but which is enjoyed with all the more pleasure in the midst of such repose, the husband and wife

clasp hands while their children play at their feet, and near them the grandparents contemplate with eyes dimmed by age this aurora that they also have known!

Then it is Peace, ineluctable felicity in a perfumed landscape where a breath of Arcadia passes.

But here is War! All the happiness,



courage and sacrifices, all the riches we have just noted have disappeared. There where calm reigned, in labor, and where we saw the family; a tainted breath has passed, the furrow is filled with torrents of blood, the hearthstone is cold, houses destroyed, harvests burning and the family is either dead or commencing a sorrowful exodus on the way to exile. Barbarians are camped where peace reigned; three of these mounted on heavy horses jet defiance at the heavens by sounding harsh blasts on their trumpets.



But those who died had sons and we find them in "Ludus pro Patria". They are mature for their years and have substituted in place of youthful sports manly exercises. All are forming themselves to the handling of arms

under the eyes of their mothers and young maidens. Around them all is in active movement. Labor has recovered its rights and liberty its noble ambitions. It is the awakening of a people, desirous of peace but exercising for war.

It is evident that the cycle embraced by Mr. Puvis de Chavannes is large and profound. It is at once a poet and philosopher, who has traced these grand lines, that has circumscribed the different portions, that has placed here tenderness, there violence, that has sung and mourned; who has conceived this superb crowning of the devotion of all for the adored mother: the Native-land!



The subject is quite different in the grand staircase of the city hall at Marseille, for Mr. Puvis de Chavannes invents without ever repeating. He has opposed to "Marseille, colonie grecque; Marseille, porte de l'Orient". In the first composition workmen are cutting stone, building houses, gathering olives and transporting bales. In the foreground some young girls are examining stuffs, spinning wool, etc.—



In the second composition, the sea. A ship, with swarthy complexioned sailors, loaded with merchandise is proceeding towards the port of Marseille, and we see the silhouette of the city in the distance.

The different paintings that we have passed in review, are all conceived in the same manner, and executed by the same processes, they somewhat resembles fresco painting but with a more penetrating accent. We know how concise Mr. Puvis de Chavannes is in his manifestations for he has the eloquence of taciturn people whose every word has its value. If he imagines a landscape he indicates soberly its lines; but



they are exact with a precision that is almost mathematic. They are lightened by slight undulations; a river murmurs between two banks; a vast sky is reflected in the water; here and there a few thatched roofed cottages. In such valleys beautiful silhouettes with rhythmical movements appear, like the attitudes of allegorical figures, with draperies arranged in the manner of Tanagra. The coloration of these colossal canvases is delicate in sentiment and form an exquisite palette, refined and true in thought. We can enter there with our eyes, mind and soul. And like all bright visions that seem to have escaped from fairyland they are full of air and seem enveloped in atmosphere! We see them continually and are haunted by them.



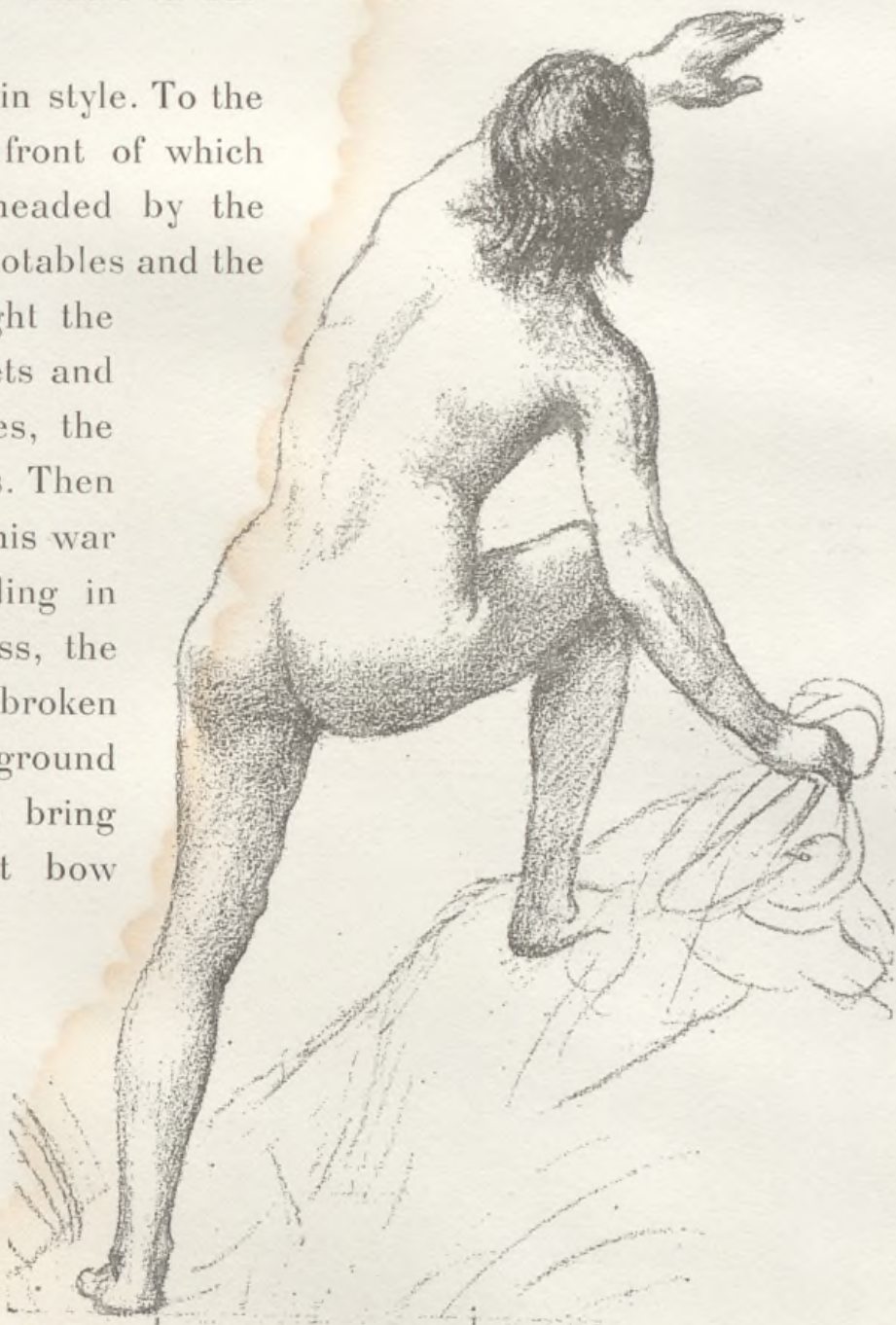
The city of Poitiers possesses like Amiens and Marseille two mas-

terly pages by Mr. Puvis de Chavannes. Their exact titles are : " La Réception triomphale par le clergé et les habitants de Poitiers de Charles Martel, vainqueur des Sarrasins, aux portes de la ville", and " Sainte Radegonde retirée au couvent de Sainte-Croix donne asile aux poètes et protège les lettres contre la barbarie du temps".

The first subject is lofty in style. To the left the gates of the city in front of which press forward the clergy headed by the bishop, and behind them the notables and the people cheering. To the right the army of knights wearing helmets and holding in their hands lances, the wind agitating their pennons. Then in front of them, alone upon his war palfrey, Charles Martel holding in the air, in sign of friendliness, the battleaxe with which he has broken so many skulls. In the foreground a group of the townswomen bring food for the prisoners that bow before the conquerers.

The second subject for the decoration of the city hall of Poitiers is just the opposite. Here all is calm and revery. In the hall of the convent sainte Radegonde is seated. Around her poets and learned

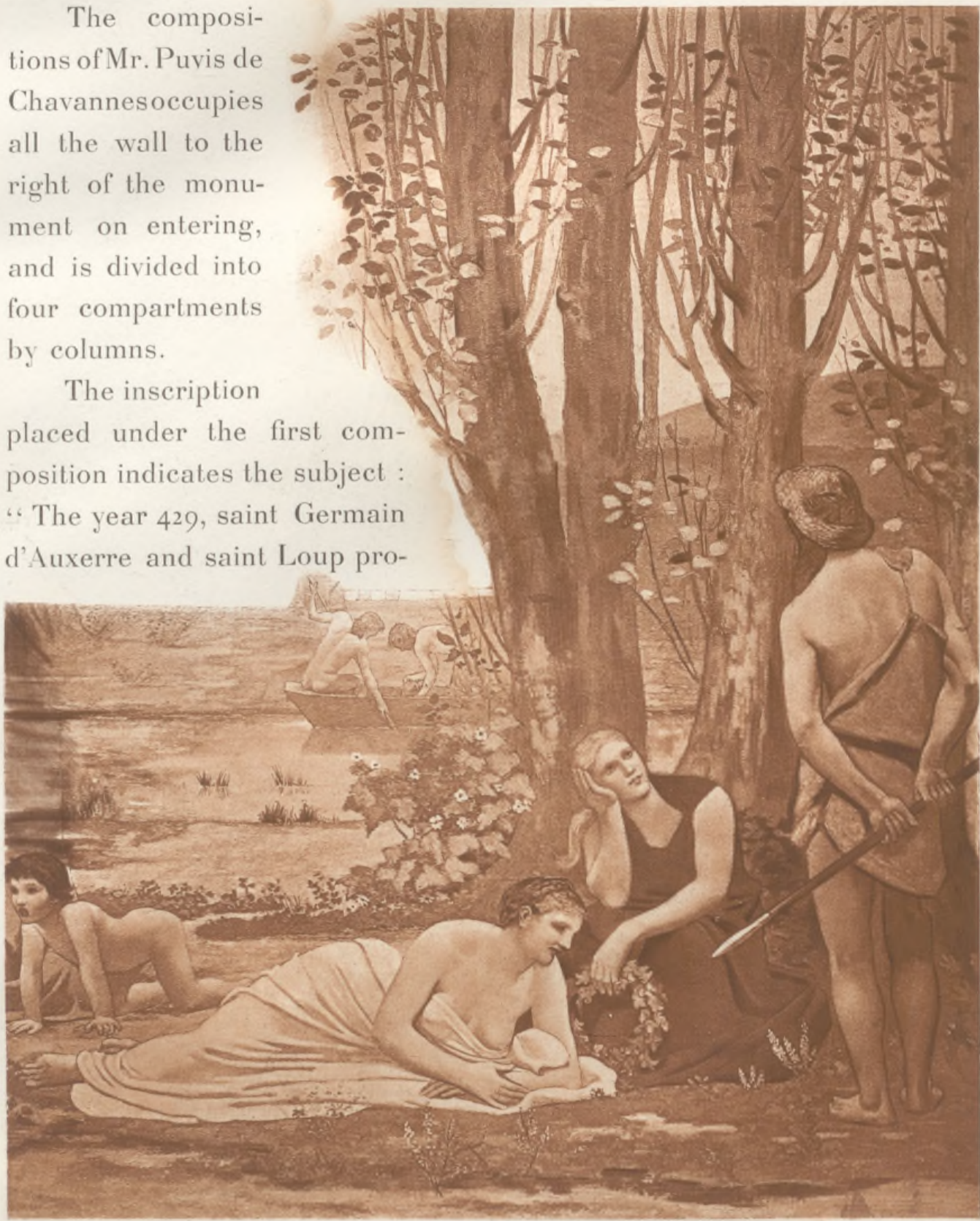
men press. Before her a trouvère scans some fine inspired strophe. A laurel tree raises its branches towards the sky, and the soft murmur of a fountain mingles with the sweet song of the trouvère. It is delicate and charming in style. Before continuing my study I will point out the piquant particulars that the picture of sainte Radegonde presents ; it is that among the poets the intimate friend of the painter figures, Théophile Gautier, and the painter himself, both good likenesses.



All those who are interested in fine works in painting have seen at the Salon of Paris, and afterwards in its place at the Pantheon, the trilogy consecrated by Puvis de Chavannes to the glorification of the patroness of Paris. The success obtained by this vast ensemble was considerable and the fame of the artist has sustained the consequences of the enthusiasm that it provoked.

The compositions of Mr. Puvis de Chavannes occupies all the wall to the right of the monument on entering, and is divided into four compartments by columns.

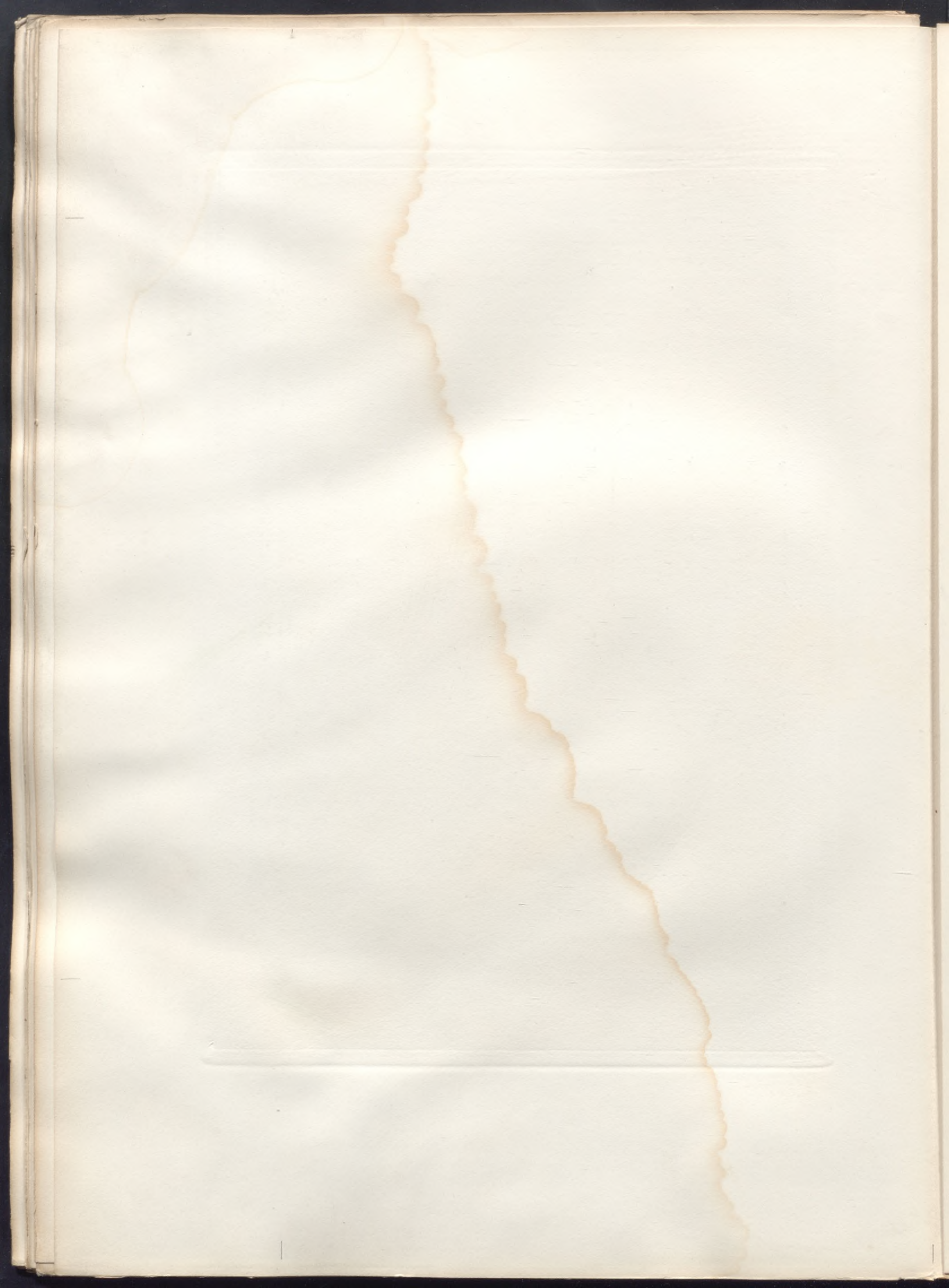
The inscription placed under the first composition indicates the subject :
"The year 429, saint Germain d'Auxerre and saint Loup pro-



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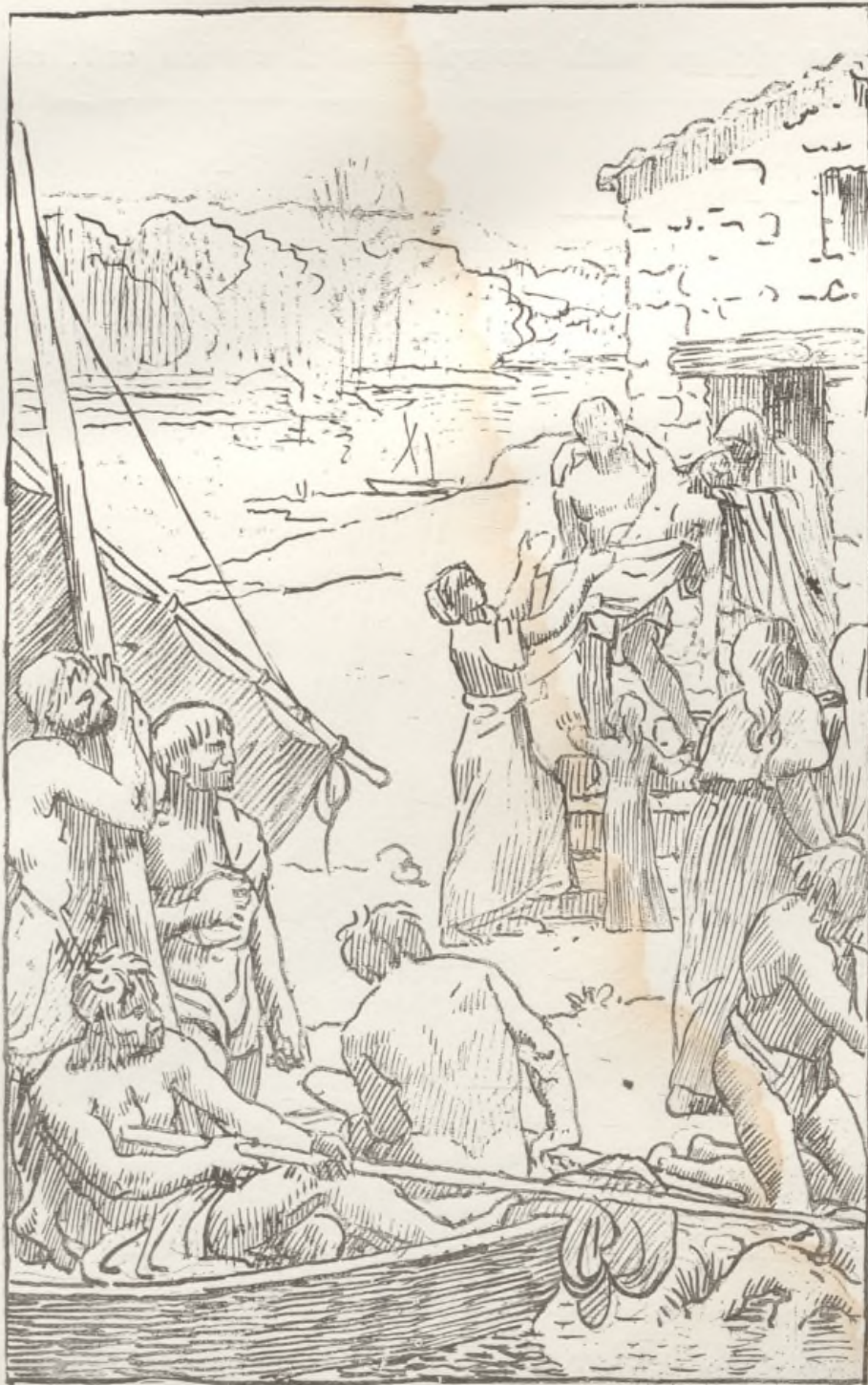
ceeding to England to combat the heresy of the Pelagians, arriving on the outskirts of Nanterre; saint Germain distinguishes, in the crowd that has come to meet them, a child which he believes to be marked with the divine seal. He interrogates her and predicts to her parents the high destiny to which she is called."

This scene which is a picture with complemental scenes cut, as I have stated, by the position of the columns forms however a very distinct whole. And it is the same for the other portions, so that when examined separately an entire episode, that explains itself, is before us; and this is a very valuable quality for the comprehension of the drama that is traced upon the walls.

The central panel shows us saint Germain d'Auxerre and saint Loup passing through Nanterre before embarking for England. The people who have heard of their coming incline before the words of peace that fall from their lips. For to all these unfortunates riveted to the furrow that procures for them their daily bread, living their miserable life, exposed to all sorts of miseries and privations, it was like dew that had come to refresh their emaciated brows. On the wings of faith they ascend, forgetting the heavy labor, towards more clement regions. See the mothers holding up to saint Germain their sons born and raised amidst tears; and the husbands and fathers are cheered by the words that will later develop into flowers of hope. In the groups formed by all



these valiant men, we see our ancestors, Parisians of Paris ! Some types of unparalleled melancholy : the woman to the left near a column with transfigured mask ; that one, raising an little infant ; and the old woman bent to the ground, prostrated for a supreme invocation. In the center



the child who is to be the safeguard of Lutetia, the eyes filled with mystic flames, and the body shaken in a sublime exaltation of renunciation.

In the panel to the left in the foreground is a boat, manned with four sailors, on which the travellers are about to embark to go down the Seine. In the middle distance some men are bringing a sick man to be presented to the bishops that they may heal him.

In the panel to the right phases of rural life are represented. Here women are milking cows; there some donkeys are about to leave for the day's work; the healthy activity of the buzzing and productive human hive. An old man of viril aspect is looking on with interest at what is passing about him ; as a contrast, a charming group of children is seen a little to the right.

The second composition represents sainte Geneviève at prayer. She is kneeling at the foot of a tree before a roughly made cross. A woodcutter and

his wife gaze at the girl with a sort of rapture. In the landscape superbly treated, and which has the august solemnity of a page of Millet's, some sheep are grazing.

The poesy of the painter is shown here more fully than in his other decorations. He has painted nature with a sentiment of rustic and incisive truth which is assuredly the most sincere "naturalism" that we have discovered outside the pictures of the painter of the "Angelus". He has endowed these commonplace beings with thoughts, inspiration, a soul. He has bathed in sunlight denuded heights, and covered with rare grasses the pasture where lean sheep were browsing. In the stormy and lowering sky he has traced streaks of blue to indicate the firmament above that floats like fragments of hope above this vale of tears.



I return to the Pantheon from which this digression diverted me. The episodes already described are completed by a frieze also divided into four compartments and in which the general work is symbolized. I will only point out the living personages that figure there. Thus in the third compartment the two last personages, saint Paul de Narbonne and saint Trupheme are Messrs. Puvis de Chavannes and the marquis de Chennevières, former director

des Beaux-Arts. The latter gives the artist a pastoral wand as if to invest him with his new mission. The pastoral wand figures here emblematically, as a brush. Mr. Delaunay the distinguished painter posed for saint Paterne de Vannes, M. V. Durangel for saint Lucien of Beauvais.

Before mentioning the "Bois Sacré" of the exhibition of 1884, I must not forget "Le doux Pays", a composition made for Bonnat's house, an adorable idyl escaped from the pages of Mistral, fraught with the suave perfumes that the myrtle and orange trees shed on the shores of the implacably blue Mediterranean. Thus we see again the fascinating mirage of this fragrant country with its women, children and flowers, its sky that draws you towards the great unknown and its billows that soothes all griefs. Ah! these painters, poets, musicians, all these workers of the Ideal, how we love them when they drag us away from prosaic forms of life and the debasement of noble sentiments. They have the words of Pauline on their lips; they believe in something superior, divine, and they draw us with them towards infinity.



The museum of Lyon is to be enriched by a set of compositions by Mr. Puvis de Chavannes: "Le Bois sacré cher aux Muses et aux Arts", that had such a success at the last Salon but one, is the commencement of this imposing work. We still remember the emotion the painters felt and the enthusiasm they showed when this superb canvas was carried to the Palais de l'Industrie. They talked of nothing less than of voting in a body the médaille d'honneur for their illustrious confrère. Certainly if it could have been voted for at once he would have received it by acclamation, and the public would have ratified the verdict. But time did its work, cabals agitated and finally he did not receive that year the medal of honor. But in fact it made little difference to Mr. Puvis de Chavannes for his equals and the public were for him, and he had produced a chef-d'œuvre! He could have rested and awaited the judgment of posterity. He preferred to continue to give us pleasure and the right to be proud, for such men are an honor to their country. Let us then encourage him to pursue his task and be prepared to recount his new victories.

"Le Bois sacré aux Muses et aux Arts" is like a primordial and generative composition around which complementary subjects are grouped. The

arts and muses symbolize and bring forth all the compositions that a monument consecrated to art will admit.

“ In the center of the picture at the base of a double ionian portico appears the three plastic arts : Architecture seated on the fragment of a column, Sculpture standing at her side, and painting accepting the homage of a child who is scattering flowers on her white robe (in allusion to the particular art in which the lyonnais artists have been illustrious); near them are dispersed the inspiring Muses : Polymnie one arm raised charms and exalts by her eloquence; Clio holding her tablets, prepares to write impartial history. Calliope, is seated and about to sing the glory of heroes, while two genii gather laurel branches and weave them into wreaths. — Upon the left Thalia the muse of comedy stands attentive, and Terpsichore suspends the rhythm of her steps to listen to the divine accord of Erato and Euterpe, the arts of poesy and music, that mysteriously traverse space in their long floating robes. In the second plane Uranie stretched on the bank of a lake contemplates the constellations, which are reflected in the water rendered light by the golden tints of the setting sun. — At one side under a willow Melpomene meditates sombre scenes of tragedy.



“ The landscape bathed in silent evening light is limited by high mountains that close the access to this place of predilection, and only shows a narrow band of sky. — On the ground sown with shrubs and flowers rises aloft trees of epic altitudes : the laurel, pine, and oak ”.

This is as complete a genesis as is possible to give of the work that

Mr. Puvis de Chavannes has undertaken for the museum of Lyon, and of which he was kind enough to indicate to me the principal ideas. In this concentrated analysis the painter's thought is developed with fullness of conception, and remarkable sureness of interpretation.

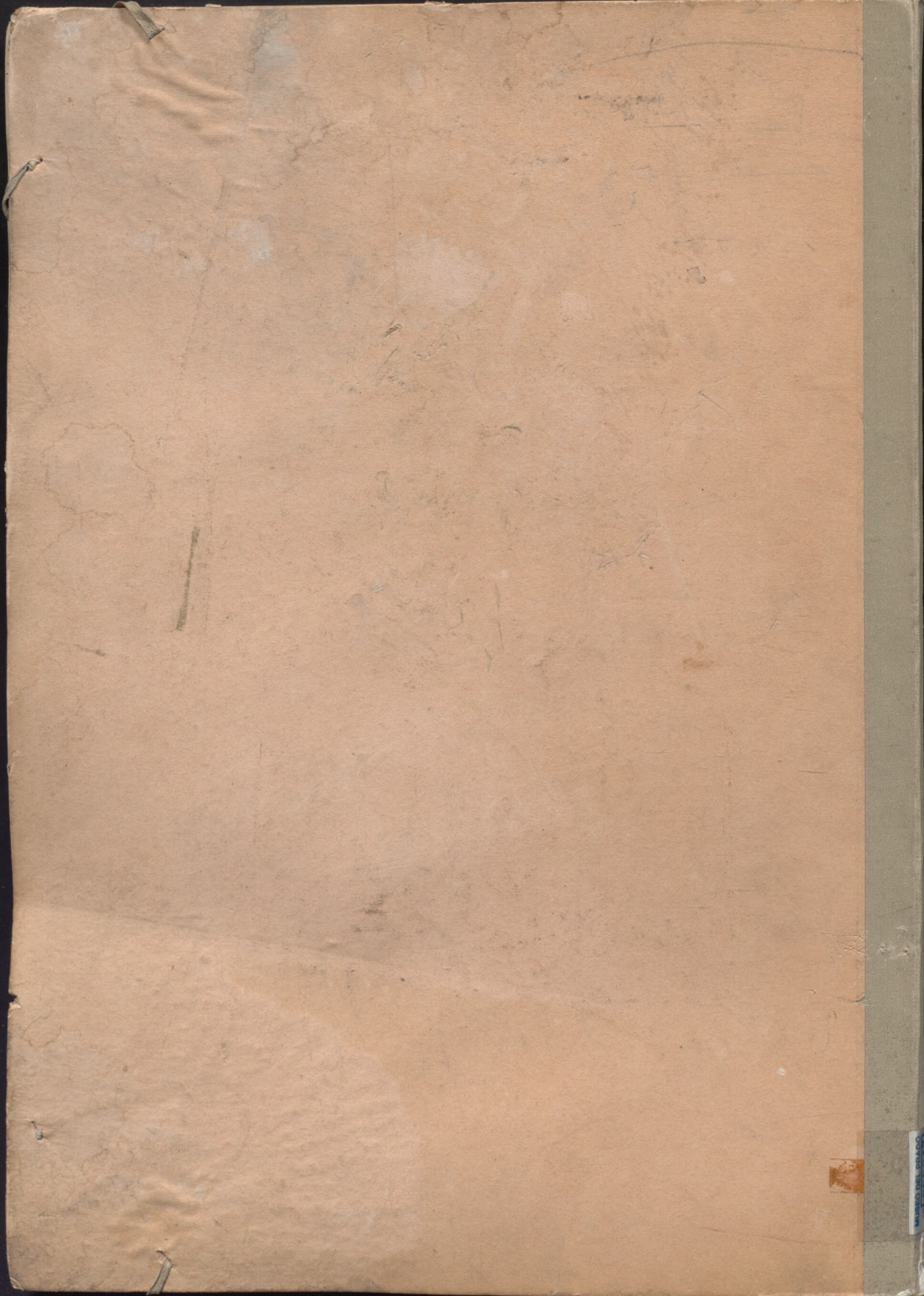
I proudly confess that my affection for Mr. Puvis de Chavannes equals my admiration; I am pleased to write it here, and am proud of a friendship that elates without blinding me. I know that I form part of a choice company, and that the most celebrated artists of the present time will countersign my opinion.

In this study I have tried to recall to remembrance the principal works of the artist. I have intentionally passed in silence the numerous drawings that he has made, because the visitors to the *Exposition des dessins du siècle* have seen specimens at l'École des Beaux-Arts. These drawings belong in museums and are worthy to be hung beside those of the old masters.

EUGÈNE MONTROSIER.



Photographie de Eug. Oudin & Co.



MUSEO DEL PRADO
C. 1875