

Of criticism it may be said that it rarely, if ever, reached beyond the artist's style. Catch-word and invective were freely used, but deeper than surface method the arrows did not pierce. The underlying great questions of theme and motive and principle rest unimpeached. Upon these must the deliberate verdict of the future be given.

Of his technique, which has been the cause of so much acid, I believe it to be so intimately a part of the life of the man as to be safe in the custody of the future. But it might be well to note the tribute paid in the many imitators his manner of working has found; and to add, that not one of them has been able to catch the masterful excellence of its charm.

The career of our subject has been no meteor-flash, but rather the waxing in magnitude of a star in the constellation that has circled across the later nineteenth century. His success was the triumph of ardent, tireless and capacious toil. As a lad of eleven years in La Rochelle (1836) he won, by good application, a scholarship in drawing. This genius for work carried him to Paris, or, if you take his word for it, he carried it with him all the way to his winning the Prix de Rome in 1850. Nor did he rest with this achievement, for a steady improvement can be seen in his subsequent work, visible especially in the direction of finer thought and richer color, which contribute so much to the value of what he has given us.

His career has been marked by no great changes in style. There is nothing of the fickle weather-vane about M. Bouguereau. In fact, there seems wanting entirely that Bohemian readiness to fall in with any new influence that might seek the fellowship of such a man. This may account for the lack of that splendor of genius such as

bursts in occasional *tours de force*, or as yields itself to a catchy, applause-winning cleverness. But there is no lack of courage or of strength.

In following his career it is a pleasure to note his first important work after his return from Italy. "The Triumph of Martyrdom" is a truly devout inspiration. And although the years of the Last Empire marked, in France, a moral decadence that found swift echo in its art—a decadence from which, by the way, France has seemed slow to recover—he gave us during those years many pictures full of true domestic charm. The purity of his spirit refused to defile itself with the wanton spirit against which it had to contend. One can indeed fancy the pain it gave to a nature like his. We are told that the impulse to paint "Orestes pursued by the Furies" was as a jeremiad against the spirit of the times, or a prophecy of impending and inevitable doom.

The end of the Empire found him a volunteer on the ramparts of Paris. The bitterness of that "baptism of fire," followed by the still more sad and sickening year of the Commune, were not without their influence upon the artist. In this relation his "Madonna of Consolation" has always seemed a fitting expression in every way of the patriot soul that saw his country prostrate in the abandon of humiliation and loss, and sought the consolation he would here proclaim.

Historically, Monsieur Bouguereau was a product of the First Empire. The undertow of the wave of romanticism, which had rolled forward and spent itself earlier in the century, was partially caught in the advancing wave of classicism that marked the movement of Louis-Philippian art and literature. We are not surprised, therefore, when he gave rein to his true impulses, to find him roving in