

PETER PAUL RUBENS.

RUBENS was the most eminent among the great painters of the Flemish school. He was born at a time when his family were in adversity. John Rubens, the father of the painter, had fled from Antwerp during the political and religious troubles in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and sought refuge in Cologne. There, on the 29th of June, 1577, (St. Peter's and St. Paul's day), a son, destined to possess great genius, and to achieve distinction, came as if to comfort his parents in their exile. As was customary in those times, the boy was called by the names of the two Apostles to whom his birthday was dedicated. The house is still shown in Cologne—a sculptured medallion of the great painter over the entrance—where Peter Paul Rubens was born, and where, ten years after (1587), his father, John, died.

Rubens was a very bright, beautiful boy, both quick and diligent in learning. His widowed mother returned to Antwerp; and, after a few years of desultory study, the fatherless boy was placed, at the age of sixteen, as a page in the household of a lady of rank, the Countess of Lalain. The youth disliked this employment, and, at his urgent desire, he became the pupil of Adam Von Oort, an eminent painter. So diligent was the youth that even his leisure hours, intended for recreation, were generally devoted to his favourite study. The surprise and delight of the teacher on one occasion have been handed down to us by Steyer's beautiful painting. After studying with this master some time, he went to a famous court painter, Otto Venius, who was painter to the Infanta Isabella of Spain. By this second master, who appreciated the genius of his pupil, he was advised to go to Italy to pursue his studies.

Rubens was twenty-three when he visited Venice, Mantua, and other places famous as schools of art. Being of good family he was appointed to a post as Gentleman of the Chamber to the Duke Vincenzo Gonzaga, under whose patronage he had opportunities of study afforded him, which he eagerly availed himself of. The great lesson of the life of Rubens is his wonderful industry. No temptations of society, or allurements of pleasure, ever diverted him from his diligent practice of his noble art. True, he had not, as so many men of genius had, to contend with the bitterness of poverty, or the obscurity of a humble lot; but every condition of life has its special and peculiar temptations and besetments; and the young, handsome, brilliant painter, with his poetic temperament, and the seductions of courtly circles, might have lapsed into the mere man of indolence and pleasure. Industry was his great safeguard. It is most likely that the adversity which had to some extent shadowed the first ten years of his life had been salutary in its influence as God's discipline. One fact is clear, from the immense number of his works, that, however he was helped by noble patronage, he was far more effectually helped by his own noble diligence. Ever, by God's blessing, a man's best earthly helper is himself.

Rubens was a most tender son to his widowed mother, and it was one of the deepest sorrows of his manhood that tidings of her illness reaching him at Genoa, he hastened as quickly as the then modes of travelling permitted to Antwerp, and was too late to see her in life.

In 1609, Peter Paul married his first wife, Elizabeth Brants, and settled at Antwerp. A famous picture in the Munich gallery represents himself and his wife—a very lovely woman—seated in a garden.

Marie de Medici, the wife of Henry IV., of France, (the mother of Louis XIII., and of Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles I., and Queen Consort of England), became the patroness of Rubens. At her command he painted the series of pictures in the Louvre, at Paris, mostly representing scenes in the life of this Queen. It is said that he must have been greatly aided by his large staff of pupils, as it has been pronounced impossible that he alone could in the time have completed so great a number of pictures.

In 1626, Rubens lost the beloved wife whose sweet face it is said glows with loveliness in so many of his pictures, and three years after his bereavement (1629), the great painter visited England as ambassador from the Court of Spain to Charles I.

It is very rare in the history of the Fine Arts, or statesmanship, to find the office of ambassador filled by an eminent painter. But Rubens was equally a student of courts and of nature. His manners were at once so courtly and prepossessing that he became a great favorite in England. Charles I. was a lover of Fine Arts, and Vandyck, who has given us the best portrait of the unfortunate Charles, and of many nobles of his court, was a pupil of Rubens.

A lady, justly celebrated as an art critic, Mrs. Jameson, tells us that at first she disliked Rubens' pictures, but studying them at Munich, where there are eighty-eight, she came to marvel at their beauty as much as at their number. Of one in particular, a religious subject, she says:—

"As I gazed, a feeling sank deep into my heart, which did not pass away with the tears it made to flow, but has ever remained there. One instance out of many of the moral effect which has been produced by painting."

The "Descent from the Cross," in the cathedral at Antwerp, is a picture of world-wide fame. In our own National Gallery the allegorical picture of "War and Peace" is a specimen of this great master, which is accessible to all visitors; so also the ceiling at Whitehall, which was sketched by Rubens while in England, and finished afterwards at Antwerp.

The writer of this sketch has visited the house of Rubens, at Cologne, which is always pointed out with pride to tourists, and seen his paintings at the Louvre, and at Brussels; and, while marvelling both at his genius and facility, has felt that there is more of the earthly than the heavenly in his pictures—a strong and rather coarse type of beauty. The painter, Rubens, has been compared in this respect to the poet Dryden, as having more human passion than spiritual power.

In 1631, Rubens married Helena Forman, a young bride equalling the painter's first wife in personal graces, and, like the former, often represented in his paintings.

Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the grace and charm of his pictures, there can be none as to the fine and generous character of the man. His hand was ever open to relieve the distresses of the less fortunate devotees of Art. He helped Vandyck with the most liberal aid; and was so alive to the claims of gratitude, that when Queen Marie de Medici was expelled by her heartless son, King Louis XIII., from France, and had wandered in search of an asylum to the Netherlands, and thence to England, and was from political troubles unwelcome everywhere—becoming at length exposed to absolute want—it was Rubens who came to her aid. She

had in the days of her prosperity patronized him, and in her adversity the painter sheltered her. Under his hospitable roof, at Cologne, the widow and mother of kings found a peaceful refuge in which to die, closing a career of startling changes soothed by the fidelity and gratitude of this loyal friend.

Rubens, full of honours and wealth, died the 30th of May, 1640, in the sixty-third year of his age, and is buried in the church of St. Jacques, at Antwerp, where his genius is regarded with pride. But though that may be honoured, it is his industry, liberality, and gratitude that make his life valuable to us, for they are qualities that all can emulate.—*British Workman.*

ALLAN EDSON'S "MOUNTAIN TORRENT"

We have already had occasion more than once to reproduce works by this talented and rising artist, all of which have been received with great favour by lovers of art. The picture we reproduce this week—a scene in the Eastern Townships—is the property of Mr. G. E. Desbarats, and is at present on exhibition in this city.

SIGNOR HAZAZER'S DANCING ACADEMY.

Within the past few weeks Signor Hazazer, the well-known Professor of Dancing and Department in this city, has opened his academy in the new Cathedral Block on St. Catherine Street, where he has taken a handsome and commodious suite of rooms. On another page will be found an illustration, after a sketch by our own artist, of the scene in the large ball-room, on the occasion of a Saturday afternoon class.

MISCELLANEOUS.

According to a late communication by Ehrenberg to the Academy of Sciences at Berlin, he has succeeded in determining the existence of 548 species of organic forms, absolutely invisible to the naked eye, and yet held in suspension in the atmosphere.

The aggregate international commerce of the world, at the present time, is estimated at \$9,237,000,000 in value. Of this large amount Great Britain, mainly through her subsidized steamship lines, is able to control within a fraction of \$3,000,000—or nearly one-third of the entire world's commerce.

MINERAL CAOUTCHOUC.—A Parisian journal reports the finding, in Australia, of a mineral substance resembling caoutchouc in most of its characteristics. It contains 82 per cent. of an oily hydrocarbon. We shall be interested in any further particulars of this discovery, as they may lead, on future investigation, to the production, by synthesis, of one more organic substance.

AMMONIA AS A CURE FOR SNAKE BITES.—As many as 8,000 persons die annually, in British India and Burmah, from the effects of snake bites. The Inspector of Police to the Bengal Government now reports that of 933 cases, in which ammonia was freely administered, 792 victims have recovered, and in the cured instances, the remedy was not administered till 3½ hours after the attack, on the average. In the fatal cases, the corresponding duration of time was 4½ hours.

A RIVAL TO TEA AND COFFEE.—Tea and coffee are threatened with a Brazilian rival, called guarana. Guarana consists of the seeds of a tree known to botanists as the *paullinia sorbitis*, which is very abundant. The tree produces a fruit about the size of a walnut, containing five or six seeds. The seeds are roasted, mixed with water and dried. Before being used they require grinding, when they fall into a kind of powder. The active principle is an alkaloid, identical with that found in tea or coffee, but there is twice as much of it in guarana as there is in tea. The effects are similar to those of tea and coffee.

CARE OF THE FEET.—Concerning this subject the *Scientific American* very truly says: "Many are careless in the keeping of the feet. If they wash them once a week they think they are doing well. They do not consider that the largest pores are located in the bottom of the foot, and that the most offensive matter is discharged through the pores. They wear stockings from the beginning to the end of the week without change, which become perfectly saturated with offensive matter. Ill health is generated by such treatment of the feet. The pores are not repellants but absorbents, and this fetid matter, to a greater or less extent, is taken back into the system. The feet should be washed every day with pure water only, as well as the armpits, from which an offensive odour is also emitted, unless daily ablution is practised. Stockings should not be worn more than a day or two at a time. They may be worn one day, and then aired and sunned and worn another day, if necessary."

PULVERIZED SOLID COD LIVER OIL.—The difficulty of overcoming the nauseating qualities of cod liver oil has attracted the attention of many pharmacologists, among others of M. Tissier. He takes of white gelatine, 4 parts, distilled water, 25 parts, simple syrup, 25 parts, refined sugar in powder, 50 parts. The gelatine should be heated, in a water bath, with the water and syrup till dissolved, the cod liver oil and sugar being mixed in a mortar; the two compounds should then be stirred together, and the stirring continued till the mixture is cold. It will then appear as a gelatinous mass, and powdered sugar should then be added till a firm paste is made, which, after being cut in small pieces, must be left to become so hard as to be easily granulated in a mortar. The second addition of powdered sugar will bring the quantity up to 250 parts, 20 per cent of which will be cod liver oil. It should be kept in a tightly stoppered bottle.

A very distinguished Paris physician says: "I believe that during the twenty years I have practised my profession, twenty thousand children have been carried to the cemeteries, a sacrifice to the absurd custom of exposing their arms. Put the bulb of a thermometer into a baby's mouth and the mercury rises to ninety degrees. Now carry the same to its little hand; if the arm be bare and even cool, the mercury will sink to fifty degrees. Of course, all the blood that flows through these arms must fall from ten to forty degrees below the temperature of the heart. Need I say, when these currents of the blood flow back to the chest, the child's vitality must be more or less compromised? And need I add that we ought not to be surprised at the frequently recurring affections of the tongue, throat, or stomach? I have seen more than

one child, with habitual cough or hoarseness, entirely relieved by simply keeping the hands and arms warm."

Guest: "How came this dead fly in my soup?" Waiter: "In fact, sir, I have no positive idea how the poor thing came to his death. Perhaps it had not taken any food for a long time, dashed upon the soup, ate too much of it, contracted an inflammation of the stomach, that brought on death. The fly must have a very weak constitution, for when I served the soup it was dancing merrily upon the surface. Perhaps—and the idea presents itself only at this moment—it endeavoured to swallow too large a piece of vegetable; this remained fast in his throat, caused a choking in the windpipe. This is the only reason I could give for the death of the insect."

A Sunday's dinner is made the most sumptuous meal of the week in a great many households, and the guests retire from the table more like gorged anacondas than intellectual human beings, with the result that during the whole afternoon there is such an amount of mental, physical and religious sleepiness, if not actual stupidity, that no duties whatever are performed with alacrity, efficiency, and acceptableness. The Sunday dinner made of a cup of hot tea, some bread and butter, with a slice of cold meat, and absolutely nothing else, would be wiser and better for all; it would give the servants more leisure; the appetite would be as completely satisfied half an hour afterward, while body, brain and heart would be in a fitting condition to perform the duties of the Sabbath with pleasure to ourselves, with greater efficiency to others, and doubtless with larger acceptance to him toward whom all our service is due.

A new system of photographic lithography has been introduced in Berlin. It is found that caoutchouc, like Jew's pitch and some other hydrocarbons, is capable of receiving a photographic impression; and a thin film of caoutchouc dissolved in benzole is spread upon paper, which is exposed in the camera in the usual manner. The portions which have been subjected to the action of the light are rendered insoluble, and the other portions are then washed away, as in Mr. Poncey's process, which on former occasions we have explained. The caoutchouc wherever it remains on the paper will receive a greasy ink from a roller which is now passed over the damped sheet, and the impression thus obtained may be transferred to the lithographic stone and printed from in the usual manner. The plan is virtually a reproduction of Poncey's, with the substitution of caoutchouc for pitch of Judea.

ON BATHING.—The benefit to be derived by all classes from personal ablution is of universal interest, and highly esteemed in ancient record. The physical strength and vigorous constitution of the Greeks and Romans are justly attributed as much to their habits of bathing as to their regular exercise. It must be remarked generally, in reference to cold bathing, that the head should touch the water first, as the blood naturally recedes from that part of the body which first comes in contact with the cold. The water, on touching the surface of the body, gives a shock to the whole system, and the blood is forced from the superficial to the deep-seated vessels; and, on leaving the water, provided the bather has been in a moderate time, a reaction takes place from the centre to the surface; this kind of circulation is very healthy, and in it consists the great benefit of the cold bath. Warm baths are of greater importance than is generally supposed. They may be taken with advantage both summer and winter, and while the body is at any degree of temperature. They are not in any degree, when used in moderation, debilitating; but on the contrary, are attended with health and vigour. The warm bath has a powerful effect in exciting the circulation of the blood, and in promoting perspiration and other natural secretions, thereby effectually arresting many incipient diseases. In connection with the bath, for any partial ablution, common salt may be advantageously used. It dissolves in water, and prevents any risk of taking cold; it is also a powerful tonic, and general invigorator of the system.

A SCENE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS BEFORE KING WILLIAM ENTERED TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT.—Having to go home in order to dress, the gold gown being required, I got to the House soon after two o'clock, the hour to which we had adjourned; and after prayers I left the Wool-sack, in order that I might be in readiness to receive his Majesty. Lord Shaftesbury, on the motion of Lord Mansfield, then took the Wool-sack, and Wharnclyffe rose to move the address, of which he had given notice. Then began a scene which, as it was represented to me, was never exceeded in violence and uproar by any bear-garden exhibition. The Duke of Richmond, interrupting Wharnclyffe, moved that the Lords take their seats in their proper places; for, said he, I see a junior baron (Lyndhurst) sitting on the dukes' bench. Lyndhurst, starting up, exclaimed that Richmond's conduct was most disorderly, and shook his fist at him. This brought up Londonderry, who did not speak, but screamed that the noble Duke, in his attempt to stop Wharnclyffe, had resorted to a wretched shift. Wharnclyffe then began by reading the word of his motion. I was here told by Durham what was going on, and that unless the King came soon the Lords would vote the address because Wharnclyffe meant to make no speech; so I rushed back into the House, and began by exclaiming again the unheard-of doctrine that the Crown ought not to dissolve at a moment when the House of Commons had refused the supplies. This was loudly denied, but I persisted that the vote I referred to had in fact that effect. I went on purposely speaking until we heard the guns. Then came great interruptions and cries of order which continued till a messenger summoned me, when I said I had the King's command to attend him in the Painted Chamber. Shaftesbury again took the Wool-sack, and they continued debating until the procession entered. When the door was thrown open, the King asked me "What noise was that?" and I answered, "If it please your Majesty, it is the Lords debating." He asked if we should stop, but was told that all would be silent the moment he entered. The Commons were summoned to the usual way; and, having received the Speech, he read it with a clear and firm voice. I doubt if any part of it was listened to beyond the first sentence, prefixed to the draft, and which I alone had any hand in writing: "I am come to meet you for the purpose of proroguing this Parliament, with a view to its immediate dissolution." He dwelt upon immediate. While we were waiting for the rest of the Commons, beside the Speaker and the few who accompanied him, the King asked me many questions, as to who such and such peers were, and what were the names of the commoners who stood behind the bar. I remember Cobbett was one, whom he had never seen before.—*Life and Times of Lord Brougham.*