

Literature Music Art

ART CRITICISM

Some Views on Painters and Paintings, From Charles Blanc, 1813-1882

"The great artist," wrote Blanc, "is he who guides us into the region of his own thoughts, into the palaces and fields of his own imagination, and while there, speaks to us in the language of the gods."

Rembrandt

(From 'The Dutch School of Painters.')

Rembrandt has taken great pains to transmit to us painting of his person, or at least of his face, from the time of his youth up to that of shrunken old age. He was a man at once robust and delicate. His broad and slightly rounded forehead presented a development that indicated a powerful imagination. His eyes were small, deep-set, bright, intelligent, and full of fire. His hair, of a warm color bordering on red and curling naturally, may possibly have indicated a Jewish extraction. His head had great character, a large flat nose, high cheek-bones, and a copper-colored complexion imparted to his face a vulgarity which, however, was relieved by the form of his mouth, the haughty outline of his eyebrows, and the brilliancy of his eyes. Such was Rembrandt; and the character of the figures he painted partakes of that of his own person. That is to say, they have great expression, but are not noble; they possess much pathos, while deficient in what is termed style.

An artist thus constituted could not but be exceedingly original, intelligent and independent, though selfish and entirely swayed by caprice. When he began to study nature at entered upon his task not with that good nature which is the distinctive characteristic of so many of the Dutch painters, but with an innate desire to stamp upon every object his own peculiarity, supplementing imagination by an attentive observation of real life. Of all the phenomena of nature, that which gave him most trouble was light; the difficulty he most desired to conquer was that of expression."

Moral Influence of Art

(From 'Grammar of Painting and Engraving.')

Painting purifies people by its mute eloquence. The philosopher writes his thoughts for those who can think and read. The painter shows his thought to all who have eyes to see. That hidden and naked virgin, Truth, the artist finds without seeking. He throws a veil over her, encourages her to please, proves to her that she is beautiful, and when he has reproduced her image he makes us take her, and takes her himself, for Beauty.

In communicating to us what has been seen and felt by others, the painter gives new strength and compass to the soul. Who can say of how many apparently fugitive impressions a man's morality is composed, and upon what depends the gentleness of his manners, the correctness of his habits, the elevation of his thoughts? If the painter represents acts of cruelty or injustice, he inspires us with horror. The 'Unhappy Family' of Proudhon moves the fibre of charity better than the homilies of a preacher. Examples of the sublime are rare in painting, as the painter is compelled to imprison every idea in a form. It may happen, nevertheless, that moved by thoughts to which he has given no form, the artist strikes the soul as a thunderbolt would the ear. It is then by virtue of the thought perceived, but not formulated, that the picture becomes sublime."

Landscape

The poetry of the fields and forests is inseparable from truth. But the painter must idealize this truth by making it express some sentiment, faithfulness of imitation alone would not suffice. The artist, master of reality, enlightens it with his eyes, transfigures it according to his heart, and makes it utter what is not in it—sentiment; and that which neither possesses nor understands—thought."

Style

The artist sees in the creations of nature what he himself carries in the depth of his soul, tints them with the colors of his imagination, lends them the witchery of his genius. The temperament of the artist modifies the character of objects, and even that of living figures. But this power of taking possession is the appanage of great hearts, of great artists, of those whom we call masters,—who, instead of being the slaves of reality, dominate it. These have a style; their imitators have only a manner.

Aside from the style peculiar to every great master, there is in art something still superior and impersonal, which is true style proper. Style is truth aggrandized, simplified, freed from all insignificant details, restored to its original essence, its typical aspect. This 'style' par excellence, in which instead of recognizing the soul of an artist we feel the breath of the universal soul, was realized in the Greek sculpture of the time of Pericles."

IN THE WORLD OF BOOKS

"None Other Gods," by Robert Hugh Benson. This story has one distinctive merit, if no other: it is quite apart from the commonplace. Personally, we think Father Benson should have said more than he did, or else a great deal less; but then many readers will not agree with this view. The genial writer leaves

much to the imagination, and orthodox people will not find it difficult to fill in between Mr. Benson's lines. But people who are not Roman Catholics or very advanced Anglicans, people of no confirmed religious belief whatever, or people of an agnostic turn of mind, would pronounce "None Other Gods" lacking in power of suggestion. The bare outline of the story is sordid enough. Frank Guiseley, one of the sons of a hot-tempered but thoroughly respectable member of the nobility, turns Roman Catholic. This is only the culmination, in the old gentleman's eyes, of a number of misdemeanors, mischievous pranks for which his son has been nearly expelled from college several times. So the parental relative delivers his ultimatum that unless Frank consents to renounce his newly-adopted faith and behave in consistency with established precedent, he shall be cut off with a shilling, and must earn his own way, unaided, in the world. Frank's strongest point seems to be his obstinacy; he renounces family name, and all obligations which one would fancy he might feel inclined to assume for the sake of that family, sells by auction anything he possesses except a change of clothing, and quits Oxford to go "on the road." He scours the country for days, in fact until the story closes he never stops scouring the country, doing odd jobs when he can get them, begging when he cannot find work. In fact he adopts apparently by choice that profession which we in this country, at all events, hold in the utmost contempt; he becomes a tramp, pure and simple.

He meets the Major and his lady, who is not a lady and who is not the Major's wife, quite by accident, and throws in his lot with them. They are members of the same profession as himself. By some dint of unreasonable reasoning Frank feels that it has now become his duty to induce Gertie, the lady, to return to her home. Regardless of his father, of the girl to whom he is engaged, of the brother who stands by him, and the friend who loves him, Frank, with his incorrigible obstinacy, sticks to his idea that his life's duty is to rescue this woman, an untaught, weak-minded creature, who only leaves the Major ultimately, hoping her deliverer will accept her for himself. And in the end, when Frank has brought about her reconciliation with her people, the Major meets him and, misunderstanding his motive, assaults him, managing in some way or other to kick him to death.

The above all sounds very vulgar, and the end is disgusting, and it is only a great ability that could clothe such a theme so that it would be at all presentable. Mr. Benson has made an interesting story of it, but we think the tale would have served as good a purpose if the hero had not been so brutally and, shall we say? ignominiously murdered.

Now, for the benefit of those who can follow the hero's reasoning, we give the following extract, describing his "illumination":

"The new 'process' began quite suddenly when I awoke in the shepherd's hut one morning at Ripon. The instant I awoke I knew it. It was very early in the morning, just before sunrise, but there was a little wood behind me, and the birds were beginning to chirp.

"It's very hard to describe it in words, but the first thing to say is that I was not exactly happy; just then, but absolutely content. I think I should say that it was like this: I saw suddenly that what had been wrong in me was that I had made myself the centre of things, and God a kind of circumference. When He did or allowed things, I said, 'Why does He?'—from my point of view. 'That is to say, I set up my ideas of justice and love, and so forth, and then compared His with mine, not mine with His. And I suddenly say—or, rather, I knew already when I awoke—that this was simply stupid. Even now I cannot imagine why I didn't see it before. I had heard people say it, of course—in sermons and books—but I suppose it had meant nothing to me (Father Hildebrand tells me that had seen it intellectually, but had never embraced it with my will.) Because when one once really sees that, there's no longer any puzzle about anything. One can simply never say 'Why?' again. The thing is finished.

"Now this 'process' (as Father H. calls it) has gone on in a most extraordinary manner ever since. That beginning near Ripon was like opening a door into another country, and I've been walking ever since and seeing new things. All sorts of things that I had believed as a Catholic-thing, I mean, which I assent to simply because the Church said so, have, so to speak, come up and turned themselves inside out. I couldn't write them down, because you can't write these things down, or even put them intelligibly to yourself. You just see that they are so. For instance, one morning at mass—quite suddenly—I saw how the substance of the bread was changed, and how our Lord is united with the soul at Communion—of course it's a mystery (that's what I mean by saying that it can't be written down)—but I saw it in a flash, and I can see it still in a sort of way. Then another day, when the Major was talking about something or other (I think it was about the club he used to belong to in Piccadilly), I understood about our Lady and how she is just everything from one point of view. And so on. I had that kind of thing at Doctor Whitty's a good deal, particularly when I was getting better. I could talk to him all the time, too, or count the knobs on the wardrobe, or listen to the Major and Gertie in the garden—and yet go on all the time seeing things. I knew it wasn't any good talking to Doctor Whitty himself

much, though I can't imagine why a man like that doesn't see it all for himself.

"It seems to me most extraordinary now that I ever could have had those other thoughts I told Father H. about—I mean about sins, and about wondering whether, after all, the Church was actually true. In a sort of way, of course, they come back to me still, and I know perfectly well I must be on my guard but somehow it's different.

"Well, all this is what Father H. calls the 'Illuminative Way,' and I think I understand what he means. It came to a sort of point on All Souls' Eve at the monastery. I saw the whole thing then for a moment or two, and not only Purgatory. But I will write that down later. And Father H. tells me that I must begin to look forward to a new 'process,' what he calls the 'Way of Union.' I don't understand much what he means by that; I don't see that more could happen to me. I am absolutely and entirely happy; though I must say that there has seemed a sort of lull for the last day or two—ever since All Souls' Day, in fact. Perhaps something is going to happen. It's all right, anyhow. It seems very odd to me that all this kind of thing is perfectly well known to priests. I thought I was the first person who had ever felt quite like this."

Macmillan & Co., Toronto, Canada.

"Fruit Ranching in British Columbia," by J. T. Bealby, M.A.

A very interesting and helpful book to would-be fruit-growers, which will serve a good purpose in enlightening the English immigrant in regard to the conditions in this country. It is profusely illustrated.

Macmillan & Co., Toronto, Canada.

"Members of the Family," a collection of short stories by Owen Wister, author of "The Virginian."

The author's many friends will be pleased with this book, for in it they will find many old friends endeared to them by his story of some years ago.

WHEN THE THAMES WAS GAY

"On Coronation Day many persons of importance, peers and other members of Parliament, traveled by steamboat from Chelsea Pier to Westminster—just as their predecessors in authority have traveled since the Norman Conquest provided England with a leadership of business men for the first time in history. For centuries the Thames was the only Royal road to the city of glory and governance that centred about Westminster Abbey, and to the other city of wealth and commerce of which the four-fold traffic at London Bridge (across it in both directions, up stream and down stream) in Saxon times was the aboriginal germ," says a writer in the Times.

"In Tudor times the Royal residences were situated along the Middlesex bank, and splendid barges manned by oarsmen in livery were constantly coming and going between them. The city companies all had their state barges and liveried watermen. Great river pageants were numerous; high-placed criminals traveled down to their death on the ebbing tide. Ambassadors and other envoys of foreign Powers were met at Gravesend by the Lord Mayor and his Aldermen and taken by river in a stately progress to Tower Stairs. The regular route westward was by river to Putney, thence by road across Putney Heath.

"That way went Wolsey, when deprived of the Great Seal, traveling from York House, to Esher in disgrace—until he fell in with the king's messenger on the heath and knew he was his master's man once more. In a later age the entry into London of Catharine of Braganza, the consort of Charles II., was a memorable example of the river pageant.

Roads as Markets

"In old days the city roads were markets rather than thoroughfares; so that even if anybody wished to go from one part of the city to another, he went by river. And so if he had to travel to Chelsea, Fulham, or Greenwich; for the roads were quagmires in bad weather and at all times haunted by highwaymen and footpads. Pepsys, that type of the patriotic permanent official, always used the river. Such phrases as 'by water to Whitehall' and 'so by water home' constantly occur in his Diary. In Queen Anne's reign there were 40,000 watermen plying for hire on the Thames and over a hundred 'stairs' or landing places in London proper. These watermen were the 'cabbies' of that age. The really curious thing is that the Thames was still a main thoroughfare less than sixty years ago. Not until 1537 did the Lord Mayor's show proceed to Westminster otherwise than by water.

"It will be seen from the foregoing that until the day before yesterday the Thames was London's chief street. But there is much older writing on the storied scroll that unwinds itself as one travels down the river from Chelsea Pier to Westminster, and thence after parting with the Lords and Commons on their penny steamboat, to London Bridge, where the modern seaport begins and the masts of dock-land are visible.

What the Storied Scroll Tells

London Bridge itself is the causa causans of London's existence. Invariably the all-important point of division which separates the lower from the upper part of a great navigable river is marked by the first bridge;

and there the first town of economic and political consequence comes into being. It generally happens that this first town is the most important of all that are seated along the river. Rome on the Tiber is one example; London on the Thames is another; Rouen on the Seine was a third until Normandy, now celebrating its millenary, was merged in France.

London Bridge as a Story

"It would seem that London Bridge did not exist when Julius Caesar invaded this island, since he crossed higher up the river into what was then the less wealthy portion of the southern land. Or, it may be, there was a bridge there even then and that it was wrecked to impede the invader's operations. The ancient children's singing-game, with its strange suggestion of the bridge-builder's human sacrifice and its fateful burden.

London Bridge is broken down may well have been a Druid sacrificial ceremony long before Caesar crowned his incessant labors from the 'short and narrow-verged shade' of the evergreen laurel. Indeed, it may have been that the dread ceremony, which is still remotely remembered by the little children of this most ancient city, originated in the very act of destruction that seemed the only way of gaining time to cope with the first disciplined army seen in Britain. But if the bridge was there, London was also there to see it all.

The Story of Watling Street

"Higher up the stream we come on another piece of very ancient history. Watling street, the most important of the four primeval routes across the Thames, comes, over where the hideous suspension bridge runs from Lambeth to the Horseferry road in Westminster. Horseferry road? The ferry existed there up to the time of the building of Westminster Bridge, and produced a fine revenue for the Archbishop of Canterbury in his neighboring Palace. It is easy enough to trace Watling street up to the water's edge on the Surrey side. On the Middlesex side it is lost for a short distance. But it probably curved away in front of Buckingham Palace and proceeded in a direction parallel with, or perhaps identical with, Park Lane, and so into Edgware road, where its clear track across Northwest England begins.

"Note how some of the houses in Park Lane stand further back than others. That is because they are lined up to the boundaries of ancient 'long acres,' elongated farms that have frontages on the river and must have exactly resembled the ribbon-like tilths of the French-Canadian farmers which the traveler to Quebec sees along the St. Lawrence. The prehistoric Park Lane may have been an irregular line of tiny shacks lined up with staring ox-eye windows (glasses, of course) along the street's beginning.

The New Watermen

"So to the traveler by London's deserted waterway the antiquity of the city and the principle of its vitality are clearly revealed, if he will only do a little thinking. And presently all the facts that he has observed in his journeyings fall into a just and poetical perspective, and he becomes possessed of a clear impression of the city's impersonal personality, so old and so gay, so wise in the world's service, so mysterious, so reticent.

THE MARCH OF FORTY THOUSAND WOMEN

The very remarkable march of 40,000 women last Saturday through London is more remarkable in many respects than the march of men in this week's Coronation procession. This greatest procession of women ever seen in the world's history was five miles long with seven women abreast and certainly impressed the imagination of the great crowd of visitors now in London from all parts of the world.

A Remarkable Procession

"With sure and certain steps the cause of women's suffrage is marching to victory," says the Chronicle. "Saturday's remarkable procession in London served as a prelude to the inevitable triumph. This beautiful pageant was one of the most impressive demonstrations that London has ever witnessed. It had been organized with consummate ability."

"Their experience—the experience of strenuous years—of pomp and circumstance, ripened by the clash of battle, stood them in good stead," says the Morning Leader. "Organization with the suffrage bodies has never been firmer or more sure; and the result was that the great 'Coronation Procession' of Saturday beat all their past records in engaging political panorama. It was a wonderful show. But for its earnestness, one might have described it as a transcendental circus, all gold and glitter and sparkling pageantry. But there was no clowning. The finest that was necessary to make the grand effect was but a means to the end; this was no pinbeck parade, but a magnificently marshalled army of stern young women and impressive matrons, who marched not so much with the light of battle as with the gleam of victory in their eyes.

"With their numbers and their well-remembered craft in skirmishing, they could, indeed, have stormed the Houses of Parliament,

or made matchwood of the wooden monstrosities that have transformed our beautiful London into a packing-case wilderness. They could have made hash of us all. This, however, was not their business. They had other fish to fry."

"The greatest Suffragette procession ever organized paraded through London on Saturday, from the Victoria Embankment to the Albert Hall," says the Mail. "It was six miles long and included about 40,000 women of all classes, from the earl's daughter to the 'sweated' worker. It took over three hours to pass a given point, and the Coronation traffic cheerfully allowed itself to be dislocated.

"No Suffragette procession has ever approached this in picturesqueness, variety, size, and significance. The views of Londoners about votes for women may or may not have changed, but it is certain that their attitude towards the women who demand the franchise has undergone alteration. The cheeriest relations existed between the women and the crowd. Everybody was in good temper.

"Perhaps the most striking feature of the demonstration followed—a solid band of 700 women, dressed in white, who have all been to prison for their convictions," adds the Mail. "From the promoters' point of view this mobilization was a stroke of genius. At first the crowd just looked at them and their banners as part of the show, but in a little while as the 700 went on marching, five abreast, the crowd realized that these women had dared to suffer hardships and humiliations for an idea. There was nothing in their looks to suggest why they in particular should have done it. Some were handsome and some had personality, but taken as a whole they looked just ordinary women."

The Coming Triumph

The procession, which took place in London on Saturday was a most impressive demonstration in favor of women's suffrage. It seems to have been a triumph of successful organization, says the Irish Times. Those who have had any experience in these matters will appreciate the difficulty of assembling some 30,000 people, and marching them through crowded streets. On Saturday the problem was complicated by the great throngs of people assembled for the Coronation. Yet the great enterprise seems to have been carried through without a hitch. The procession was as widely representative as could be gathered for any political cause. The University graduates, in their robes, walked beside the industrial workers in the drab garments of their toil. The wives of colonial statesmen and English politicians joined hand with the smartly-dressed ladies of the Actresses' Franchise League. The great pageant represented all the women who are working for the state today, and all into the fruits of whose labors we have entered. From Boadicea to Elizabeth, and on again to Queen Victoria, the Queens of England have been among her greatest Monarchs. Joan of Arc, the most wholly romantic figure of her time, bore her testimony to that triumph of ideals over physical force for which women should stand in the life of a nation. But among the victories of Saturday, the one upon which we congratulate the organizers most heartily is the announcement which was made in the evening that militant methods are to be abandoned. We need not pry too closely into the reasons for that decision, but we believe the decision itself to be of the happiest augury. We who have consistently supported a guarded and rational extension of the suffrage to women may rejoice at the removal of the weightiest objection to it. So long as methods of lawlessness and violence were permitted to continue it was difficult for those who believed most strongly in the claim of educated women to the franchise to advocate it without reserve. We can no longer see any reason to deprive the state of the advice and assistance of capable and responsible women. We do not imagine that the old cry of female infirmity is likely to be revived. It was never a cry that had any reasonable basis, for the smallest study of history will show that, under favorable conditions of education and environment, women have repeatedly equalled and excelled the achievements of men. Women are undoubtedly differently constituted from men, and we do not think that, under any circumstances, they will either seek or obtain a controlling influence in the state. But, because of that very difference, they ought to receive a fair measure of representation if the higher and more delicate factors in human life are to be given their proper expression. We agree that, after years of disappointment in the wilderness, the leaders of the suffrage movement are at last within sight of the promised land. We who have sought to help and cheer them in the way will rejoice if they are near success. But we may remind them that much will depend upon the way in which they act at first. We believe that their genuine desire is, not to rival or out-step men, but to become more truly their help-mates than has been possible in the past. The need of the time is for womanliness as it ever was—for more intelligent comradeship, but not, even in foolish talk, for any division of the sexes.

Friend—What you need, old chap, is a tonic in the shape of fresh air.

Purist—And what is the shape of fresh air, pray?