

Art Notes.

A GRAPHIC HUMORIST.

Magazine of Art.

NOWADAYS, the artist who aspires to make a name with the greatest, studies from the life, works at the night-schools, enters a Parisian *atelier*, and then settles down—not to rival the frescoes of Michael Angelo, or make a bid for the Presidency of the Academy, but to draw for the comic press, with Punch as the goal of his ambitions. Mr. L. Raven Hill was born in Bath, but received his artistic training at the Bristol Art School. About the year 1882 he entered as a pupil at the Lambeth Art School—that cradle of so many of our most successful artists—and there had the good fortune to work side by side with Mr. Charles Ricketts and Mr. Shannon; and the three became inseparables thenceforward, not only working together, but developing their art and living in company. At that time Mr. Ricketts was among the students the chief artistic influence, and that influence, as exercised upon Mr. Raven Hill, was salutary, and it was unquestionable. In 1885 Mr. Raven Hill proceeded to Paris, and there studied under various masters, deriving most of the benefit, perhaps, from M. Aimé Morot—he was a painter, then, and had some reputation as a *chercheur*—and after two years' absence in France, returned to England as a contributor to the exhibitions of pictures conceived and painted in the modern manner. But, in spite of a certain success, he found that the chief opening was for black-and-white work, and that the best way to "realise" it was to illustrate comic ideas rather than serious ones; and thus he drifted into a world of gaiety and humour for which he had not been specially educated, and for which he certainly had not suspected himself of any particular fitness. He had, it is true, drawn for Judy before he went to Paris, without any notion of finding his destiny in any such direction as that; but on his return he worked extensively for Pick-Me-Up, Black and White, and The Butterfly, and in all of them he displayed capacity of a high order. The last-named magazine he started in 1893, in company with a small band of artists and writers who shared his ingenious surprise that no paper in existence would give an artist an absolutely free hand—letting him do what he liked, and contenting itself with paying him a good price for his best work. In due course The Butterfly failed, though, in truth, it deserved a very different fate; and then the artist transferred his allegiance to the Pall Mall Budget, until it also died. In the pages of that journal appeared much of Mr. Raven Hill's best work. Then followed The Unicorn, which, born to an ineffectual struggle of only three weeks, succumbed to its birth-throes through misunderstanding and financial mismanagement. It was thus as an artist carefully bred and educated, but attended in his publications by singular ill-luck, that Mr. Raven Hill entered the ranks of the humorists. Nevertheless, he was not faultless; for, although an acknowledged disciple of Charles Keene, he was one, as I have said, of the admirable trio of which Mr. Ricketts and Mr. Shannon were the other members. As a matter of fact, he shared their fault of occasional incorrectness of drawing; for they all belong to that school, or class, of artists of whom Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Ford Madox Brown were the greatest exemplars—who, however highly gifted with artistic instinct and inspiration, could never (whether through lack of severe education or through inherent indisposition) assure themselves of impeccable draughtsmanship. Although the early drawings of Charles Keene were tight to a singular extent, he rarely was out of drawing. This tightness never was a fault of Mr. Raven Hill's; but inaccuracy of drawing, often. Nor is this shortcoming unknown to the artist—a shortcoming which, I imagine, arises somewhat from his practical belief in the principle of the Japanese artist, that impression—otherwise, memory—is of greater value in giving vitality to a drawing than any amount of deliberate searching after accuracy of proportion and truth of outline. At least, it may be said that it is the means of introducing the utmost unforced character into the drawing, while suggesting a sense of movement and actuality.

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Suffer not your mind to be either a drudge or a wanton. Exercise it ever, but overlay it not.

The Cry from Ararat.

Promethean East, chained to a corpse whose hand
Affrights not but invites the bird of prey.
Is there no Hercules to arise and slay
Thy torturer? Shame on the callous band
Who watch the anguish of their mother-land,
Yet make no slightest movement to allay.
Shame England! slothful laggard to obey
The call of mercy, swift at greed's command.

The priest rid Past from its dishonoured grave,
On which eight centuries have set their seal,
Rises in judgment, "I had rushed to save,
"My knights had made it felt that they could feel."
Shall the dark ages be more nobly brave.
Than heirs of light to heed a sad appeal?

WILLIAM MCGILL.

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Goethe on Music.*

Translated for THE WEEK.

JOHN PETER ECKERMANN would long ago have been forgotten, if he had not immortalized his name by the publication of the "Conversations with Goethe" during the last years of his life. As the son of a poor pedlar in Winsen, in Hanover, he was compelled to struggle with the most adverse conditions, and conquer almost insupportable hardships, before he at last succeeded in acquiring a liberal education, and he was quite grown up before this became possible. His struggles, however, were the means of his introduction to Goethe. The venerable poet honoured him with special favour, and soon took so much pleasure in Eckermann's society that he would not allow him to leave him, but made him his private secretary, as well as his trusted friend, with whom he shared all his thoughts.

The fruit of those seven years' close companionship and interchange of thought has been given to the world in the celebrated "Conversations" which Eckermann published after the immortal poet's death. They not only afford a deep insight into Goethe's character, and many interpretations of the meaning of his works; but they also contain a rich treasure of remarkable thoughts and judgments on Art, Poetry, Religion and Politics.

On music, too, which Goethe considered as the most indispensable of the pleasures of life, and on the great composers and their works, we find in the precious volume not a few characteristic utterances, some of the most interesting of which are here given.

Once when the conversation turned on the Demoniac in Art,† Goethe said: "In music whose magic force has been felt by mankind from the earliest ages, and still works powerfully on us, without our in the least understanding its operation; the demoniac is present in the highest degree, for it rises so far above us that no intellect can grasp it. An influence proceeds from it which overpowers everything, and of which no one is able to give an exact explanation. Even the religious cult cannot dispense with it, it is one of its most powerful instruments for influencing mankind. Among individual artists the demonic is found most in musicians, less frequently in painters. In Paganini it existed in the highest degree, and hence he produced such extraordinary results."

In a conversation on the early appearance of musical talent, Goethe observed: "Musical talent may well show itself at a very early age, for music is something entirely innate, which has need of no great nourishment, and no experience drawn from life. And yet a phenomenon such as Mozart, will always remain a mystery which cannot be fully explained. But what opportunity would there ever be for the Godhead to perform a miracle if He did not at times create some extraordinary being, at whom we marvel without in the least understanding whence he comes. And further, a genius is not born into the world simply for his own satisfaction, but that he may develop into a great master, who will use his talent to the utmost. I have to-day been reading a letter of Mozart's, where, writing to some baron who had just sent him a musical composition, he said something like

* From "Conversations with Eckermann." A memento of Eckermann's hundredth birthday. By J. H. Von Winterfeld (Neue Musik Zeitung).

† Demoniac is a very insufficient rendering of the German, *daemisch*, but what English equivalent have we?