

Artists' Corner.

NO. III.—ANTHONY WATTEAU.

Anthony Watteau was born at Valenciennes in 1684. His father carried on the business of a tiler in that city, and was a man in humble circumstances. We know little or nothing of Watteau's early history. But his youth was passed at a critical period in French history. At the commencement of the 18th century, the Parisians were almost wearied to death by the gloomy state into which their great king, Louis XIV., had been brought, by the successive defeat of his armies by the duke of Marlborough and Eugene, by the death of his best generals and the exhausted nature of his treasury, and they just waited the decease of their monarch to start off upon a new career of pleasure and dissipation. But their volatile spirits could not be enshrouded in gloom till that anticipated event took place. They could not exist without their opera, and as it required redecoration, there came from Valenciennes a decorator, who brought with him as an assistant Antoine Watteau, whose great ambition was to excel his master in painting fairs and goddesses in halls and staircases, and stage scenes. He was thus occupied for some time, but his master having left Paris he found an employer named Metayer, a picture manufacturer, who had gathered into his studio a number of young artists, to copy for him pictures of monks, infants, virgins, flowers, landscapes, and all the salins in the calendar, &c., and gave them very little for their services. Here he had a considerable and varied practice, and though he showed himself the most skillful workman of the group his salary was only three livres a week, or about a dollar and a quarter. He was employed to paint pictures for churches, and particularly in copying pictures of St. Nicholas, a saint who happened to be in especial demand at that time; so that Watteau became wearied with manufacturing St. Nicholasses, continually, and took to flight, leaving Metayer and his manufactory to take care of themselves. He was subsequently taken into the employment of Claude Gillot, an artist of some ability, who having perceived the peculiar bent of Watteau's genius, permitted him to assist him in his own works, which consisted of landscapes, into which fauns, satyrs, and such other grotesque figures are introduced. But the efforts of the pupil soon eclipsed the talents of the master, and they parted abruptly. Watteau soon commenced his professional labours as his own master, and the previous training through which he had gone eminently fitted him for prosecuting the particular style of painting which so suited the fashions of the time in which he lived. It has been doubted whether on this very account it were at all proper to place Watteau on the category of historical painters; but on this point a French critic has very justly observed, "that he wrote the memoirs of a certain age upon the folding doors of saloons, on tents and marquees, on the panels of mansions and carriages; as well as on the numerous canvasses which during his short career were sent forth from his easel."

The age in which Watteau lived was one of most fanciful, and to our ideas of the fitness of things, almost masquerade costumes, "an age of powder, and patches, and spangles; of vermilion on the cheeks and vermillion on the heels; of long pointed waists, full robes, and lofty head dresses; and the painter made a free use of the fashions which he placed on his figures, frequently beyond their actual existence, so that his pictures must not be regarded as indicating the exact costume of the period, though approaching very closely to it." Watteau grouped his figures with very great taste, and dressed them up in the richest and most brilliant colours, most completely harmonized. Life, as he painted it, knew neither sadness nor disappointment, it was one endless round of pleasure. His style of colouring was much improved by studying

the works of Rubens in the gallery of the Luxembourg in Paris. Watteau says of him,—"the genius of Watteau resembled that of his countryman, D'Uffe,—the one drew, and the other wrote of imaginary, nymphs and swains, and described a kind of impossible pastoral or rural life, led by these opposites of rural simplicity, people of rank and fashion. Watteau's shepherdesses, nay, his very sheep, are coquet, yet he avoided the glare and *cliquant* of his countryman, and though he fell short of the dignified grace of the Italians, there is an easy air in his figures, and that more familiar species of the graceful which we call gaieté. His nymphs are as much below the forbidding majesty of goddesses, as they are above the hoyden awkwardness of country girls. In his halts and marches of armies, the careless slouch of his soldiers still retains the air of a nation that aspires to be agreeable as well as victorious." Such was Watteau's opinion, and no one was more thoroughly qualified to criticize the works of such a painter. Watteau's natural disposition was restless and irritable; he was exceedingly reserved, and even somewhat misanthropic; peculiarities undoubtedly superinduced by a highly sensitive temperament and a delicate constitution, arising from pulmonary disease. He came to England in 1718 with a view to consult Dr. Meade an eminent physician of that time, and during his residence he painted two pictures for the Dr. He returned to France with his health impaired, and his temper even more gloomy and morose. His last work was a satire on the medical profession, a scene from Molière's comedy "*Le Malade Imaginaire*." When the picture was completed the pencil fell from his hand. He died soon afterwards, in the year 1721, at the age of thirty-seven. The works of Watteau are much esteemed, although his style is thought to have had a prejudicial effect on the French School. His two best pupils were Lancret and Patier.

Miscellaneous.

WEAVING IN IRON.

Strange as this idea may seem, it is no more strange than true, that iron of a thickness that would appear impossible that it could be worked by any other agency than the forge, the anvil, and the hammer, is now by the aid of new and powerful machinery, woven in the most beautiful patterns, and the designs varied with almost the same facility as in the weaving of a carpet, or a table cover. The specimens that we have seen, excel in beauty and finish any iron railing that we have ever seen, and do not cost more than the ordinary cost of even cast iron railing. Many of the first class counting-houses and offices in New York are now fitted up with this railing, in preference to any heretofore or at present in use. The uses of the invention, however, are not confined to railings, as the most tasteful verandahs, window gratings, garden fences, etc., are made by it. The coal miners of Pennsylvania prefer it above all other modes for their screens.—Charleston and New Orleans each have parks enclosed with it, and many of the rich southerners have their flower conservatories enclosed in the same manner. In fact, wherever it has been introduced, it has come into almost unlimited favor. The peculiar advantage it possesses over all other kinds of railing is that in its manufacture the rod or wires so crimped that, in the weaving process, they are crossed in a manner that one binds the other, thus giving a mutual support to the whole, that renders it more durable than work twenty times its weight, made in the old way.—*Vermont Chronicle*.

FRIENDSHIP is more firmly secured by lenity towards failings, than by attachment to excellences. The former is valued as a kindness which cannot be claimed, the latter is exacted as the payment of a debt to merit.

BENEFITS OF SCIENCE.

The practical view of agriculture cannot be more clearly or profoundly conceived than it was by the North American chief, whose speech on the subject is reported by Crèvecoeur. The chief, in recommending agriculture to his tribe, Mississippian Indians, said: "Do you not see that the whites live on corn, but we on flesh; that the flesh requires more than thirty moons to grow, and it is often scarce? that every one of the wonderful seeds which they scatter on the soil returns them more than an hundred-fold? that the flesh has four legs to run away, and we only two to catch it? that the seeds remain and grow, where the white man sows them? that the winter, which for us is the season of laborious hunts, is to them a time of rest? It is for these reasons that they have so many children, and live longer than we do. I say, then, to every one who hears me, before the trees above our huts shall have died of age, before the maples of the valley cease to yield us sugar, the race of the sowers of corn will have extirpated the race of flesh-eaters, unless the hunters resolve also to sow." In his difficult and laborious life of the chase, the Indian consumes in his limbs a large sum of force, but the effect produced is very trifling, and bears no proportion to the expense. Cultivation is the economy of force. Science teaches us the simplest means of obtaining the greatest effect with the smallest expenditure of power, and with given means to produce a maximum of force. The unprofitable exertion of power, the waste of force in agriculture, in other branches of industry, in science or in social economy, is characteristic of the want of true civilisation.—*Liebig*.

Biographical Calendar.

- Mar 7/1274 Thomas Aquinas died.
 1810 Lord Collingwood died.
 " 8/1702 William III. died.
 " 1706 Sir William Chambers died.
 1803 Francis, Duke of Bridgewater, died.
 " 9/1451 Americus Vespucius born.
 1649 James, Duke of Hamilton, beheaded.
 " 10/1792 John, Earl of Bute, died.
 1820 Benjamin West died.
 " 11/1514 Tasso born.
 1770 William Huskisson born.
 " 12/1772 Frederick Schlegel born.
 " 13/1711 Nicolas Houlou born.
 1733 Dr. Priesley born.
 1764 Charles, Earl Grey, born, (some say, on the 15th.)

Americus Vespucius, or, more properly, Amerigo Vespucci, an eminent navigator, was born at Florence, in 1451. After receiving a liberal education, he was sent by his father to Spain for the purpose of conducting his commercial affairs; and being at Seville when Columbus was making preparations for his second voyage, he resolved to quit mercantile pursuits, and enter on the career of discovery. His first expedition to the new continent was in 1499, under the command of Ojeda, a year after the discovery and examination of that part of the coast by Columbus. After this he entered the service of king Emanuel of Portugal, and made two voyages in Portuguese ships; the first in 1501, the second in 1503. The object of this last voyage was to find a westerly passage to Malacca. He arrived at Brazil, and discovered the bay of All Saints. In 1505, he again entered the service of the king of Spain, but made no more voyages, as appears from memoranda showing that he was at Seville till 1508, at which time he was appointed principal pilot. His duties were to prepare charts, and prescribe routes for vessels in their voyages to the new world, which soon received his name. This honour certainly belonged to Columbus rather than to Amerigo, for the prior discovery of the continent by the former is not to be questioned. He died in 1516.—*Maunder*.