

year's transactions would be a very serious matter, but such is the confidence felt at home and abroad in the unlimited resources and recuperative power of the United States that it is passed over as a comparatively trivial matter, scarcely affecting the success of the loan.

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### Philip Gilbert Hamerton.

THE past half century has done much for art criticism in the way of giving it a larger field for exploration and a bigger public to talk to about its conclusions. Where, at the beginning of the century, we had one art critic, we now have twenty. The ball which Ruskin set rolling in 1828, has found many to kick it back and forth. In many respects John Ruskin may be said to have started the game. He did voluminously and continuously what had been previously left to scattered and occasional efforts. He made it apparent that art was a fruitful theme to write about, and not only so, but he showed that whatever one might say on the subject there was always an opening for a reasonable rejoinder. In addition to this he set before the world such a splendid example of literary style that it is no wonder that other writers should have been inspired to try their prentice hands at the same task. As a consequence the *clientele*, so to speak, of artists has become enormously extended. In the last century a few rich men and sons of noblemen made the grand tour, saw the picture galleries of Europe, learnt something about pictures, brought back with them a few examples for the ancestral home, and in a very few instances became art connoisseurs and patrons of rising British artists. Now one finds art connoisseurs by the score on every steamboat and railway train, while in numberless magazines, not to mention less ephemeral literature, art is a recognized *piece de resistance*, and is served up with all the accessories of illustration and fine writing with which the public are so familiar. In the crowd of writers a few are distinguished. Not all are apostles, but there are a few apostles. And of these Philip Gilbert Hamerton, the news of whose decease saddened us a few weeks ago, was undoubtedly one. Mr. Hamerton was borne at Laneside near Shaw, Lancashire, in 1834, his father being a solicitor and a cadet of an ancient Yorkshire family. He was educated at Burnley and Doncaster grammar schools, and afterwards prepared by private tutors for Oxford, but a taste for the fine arts led him to study landscape painting. He also began early to write, and during the past forty years he has been a voluminous contributor to the stream of current literature. He wrote novels, essays and some considerable works, among which his well-known and stimulating "Intellectual Life" must be given the first place. But it is as an art critic that he has made his mark on literature.

It may be said that Hamerton meets conditions and covers ground not treated by Ruskin, and, more practical, but less eloquent, defines the relation of the painter to nature and the limits of imitation. He has studied nature as a man indoctrinated with the ideas of Ruskin; he has generalized about art as one who owns no servile adhesion to any lord; and he has enlarged his views by various reading, and familiarity with ancient and modern painting. To begin with he seems to have possessed exactly the mental outfit and the temporal surroundings which are most suitable to the writer on art topics. He was a man of large mind, of sufficient culture, and lifted above pecuniary cares. His note is the old fashioned gentlemanly note of the man of letters, who writes, not for daily bread, but because it is a pleasure to him, and because he finds in the task an adequate medium of expression. In addition to this he was a practical stu-

dent of the arts about which he wrote. He knew what it was to handle a brush, a graving tool, and an etching needle. He painted for months in the open air. His first volume, "A Painter's Camp in the Highlands," introduces to us one whose word, about art, we must necessarily take with some respect, since it shows him to us in the most active pursuit of painting, and painting for the love of it. There is something deliciously old timish about the atmosphere of this book which bears us far away from modern competitive methods. Here is a man who is satisfied with the work itself and finds in doing it perfect joy and satisfaction. He makes us share his camp; we see the heathery mountains that he is painting, we hear the splash of the waters against the side of his boat. Some superficial critics have found fault with the *naïveté* with which the writer introduces his own personality into this book. This is, however, one of the things which make it interesting. We see him a hearty, healthy, self-reliant Englishman, and we are pleased with every detail he gives us of his camping experience.

"A Painter's Camp" and the "Thoughts About Art" will give any reader a fair idea of Mr. Hamerton's style as an art critic. We know of no books which are the result of more faithful study and practical consideration of the painter's function and which are, at the same time, so free from technical jargon. Mr. Hamerton is pre-eminently a useful writer upon art; he is certainly accurate and comprehensive. His expositions are serious and conscientious. He spares no pains to make his readers understand the contemporary condition of art, and he fairly states and answers some of the most puzzling questions that have agitated modern painters and confused simple students. He at all times escapes cheap rhetoric and that facile enthusiasm begotten in some by the very name of art. He leaves all that to the *dilettanti* and addresses in a simple business-like style men who are not less serious and earnest than himself. Yet he does not write in a bald or meagre style, nor is he insensible to the poetic and imaginative elements of his theme. He can quicken a glow and rouse an emotion, when he writes of the mighty poetry of Turner's *Téméraire* or of the mysterious charm of a Veronese portrait. He is at all times clear, at all times exact. Common sense, patience, and no ordinary talent for analysis are manifested in every chapter of his "Thoughts About Art." If we were asked where the most intelligent, the most practical, the most trustworthy and the most interesting exposition of modern art and cognate subjects is to be found we should point to Hamerton's writings. As a critic he is free from the exaggerations of Ruskin, and he is not seduced by mere novelty. It has been well said that Mr. Hamerton is an admirable critic, but that John Ruskin is a great advocate.

The drift of Hamerton's art criticism will best be appreciated in his chapter on "The Relation Between Photography and Painting," and that which treats of transcendentalism in painting. A few extracts will convey an idea both of his style and scope of thought:

"Photography represents facts isolated from their natural companions, and without any hint of their relation to the human mind. Now it is only the unity of relation that can satisfy the artistic sense, not isolated fragments; and, therefore, so long as the artistic sense remains in the human organization the demand for pictures will certainly continue. . . . I wish I could make perfectly clear what is that *unity of relation* which is so satisfactory to the artistic sense. . . . It is enough to say that any perfect "whole" in a pictorial representation must include delicate colours and beautiful forms, *all helping each other to the utmost*, like a chorus of well-trained singers, and that in the arrangement of it all a great human soul must manifest itself, just as the soul of Handel does in a chorus from the 'Messiah.' . . .