

cesca of the same subject, also in the National Gallery, about which, as melodramatists put it, "more anon." The right side of the picture—I speak here and always from the spectator's point of view—is occupied by a most rugged and realistic St. John Baptist, clothed in a long garment of camel's hair, which, however, the artist has generously concealed during part of its length by a flowing robe of more luxurious woven fabric. The middle of the panel is filled by the constrained figure of the Saviour, girt with a small loin-cloth, and standing up to His knees in the symbolical river. On the right bank kneel two angels with towels, their faces intensely round and Giottesque, and their haloes displaying the usual frank solidity of the period. Two beetling crags, with extremely symmetrical trees, eke out the composition; above, the lightly sketched figure of the Eternal Father discharges a dove, representing the Holy Spirit, on the head of the Son with whom He is well pleased. Now this arrangement of the subject is conventional and formal, and it recurs again and again in the treatment of the Baptism from the earliest ages. As a rule, one finds on the extreme right of the picture the form of the Baptist; in the centre stands the Saviour, almost nude, in the symbolical river; and on the left we have one, two or three angels holding a towel, according to the taste and fancy of the painter. Occasionally, it is true, especially in very early works, the sides are reversed, the Baptist occupying the left and the angels the right; but in the vast majority of Baptisms, during the great developmental age of Italian art (from Giotto to Raphael) the disposition is the same as in the "Altar-piece of the School of Taddeo Gaddi," and the treatment conforms, on the whole, to this typical instance. The earlier history of the evolution of the type thus hardened into a convention by the thirteenth century is remarkable and interesting. The very first representations of the Baptism of Christ which we now possess are those which occur (as reliefs) on sarcophagi and (as mural paintings) on the walls of the Catacombs. A sarcophagus in the Lateran gives us, I believe, the most primitive realization which has yet been noted of the historical scene; though still earlier allusions occur elsewhere in such symbolic forms as Noah in the Ark and the Passage of the Red Sea. In the relief on the sarcophagus, however, a wavy line of almost Egyptian simplicity represents the Jordan, while a gigantic Baptist, clad in a loin-cloth of camel's skin, pours water from a bowl over the head of the Saviour. He is standing on the left, not, as is usual in later representations, on the right of the composition; but the attitude of the two chief persons, and especially the pose of the hand which holds the cup or bowl, is already that which was reproduced in later ages by numberless successive generations of artists. The "motive," as critics call it, was there from the beginning. One point of difference exists, none the less, between this earliest Baptism and all later representations. There is as yet no trace of the angel. He makes his first appearance, so far as I have been able to observe, in the central mosaic of the cupola in the "Baptistery of the Orthodox," at Ravenna, a work which all modern critics assign to the fifth century. And he does so even there in a disguised form, which curiously illustrates the transition from heathen to Christian art, and the way in which the conventional types of later ages were originally evolved from classical models.—*Grant Allen, in The English Illustrated Magazine.*

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Saint Genevieve.

Saint Genevieve with the shy brown eyes
That droop 'neath the sombre hood which lies
Close to her face with its sweet sad smile,
And makes you think of Heaven the while
You stand in her presence. O world and wile,
She knows you not! Saint Genevieve
With the shy brown eyes and this sweet sad smile.

Within the bounds of her calm retreat
There is rest for weary and wandering feet;
There is hope for the hopeless and light for the lost;
There is priceless peace for the soul storm-tossed;
Life's bitter wine with its dregs of guile
She hath not tasted! Saint Genevieve
With the shy brown eyes and the sweet sad smile.

MARY MARKWELL.

Foster's Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States.

VOLUME I.—(Continued.)

MR FOSTER'S book commences with an introductory historical account of the origin of the American Constitution. He then, after discussing its preamble and nature, deals successively with the three departments of Government—the term of office of members of the House of Representatives—the right of suffrage. The Senate and its officers. Apportionment of Representatives and Impeachment. We miss the explanations which ought to be given as to how the selection has been made of the order of topics. For persons not intimately acquainted with the subject there is great difficulty in following the sequence of ideas. Mr. Foster should give a reader a key to enable him to understand why the chapters are placed in their present order. One valuable feature of the book is the history of the development of each subject. For instance, under the heading of "Apportionment of Taxes" a history of the apportionment is furnished, backed up by Jefferson's opinion of 1792 and Webster's of 1832. Even the preamble to the Constitution has its history. While, as a rule of construction, a written constitution, like all documents, can only be interpreted by what is found within itself, the knowledge of the events which led to the adoption of any given clause are an aid to an intelligible appreciation of the meaning. No information is more apposite for argument or for the drawing of an analogy. The intention of the document may indeed often be ascertainable only from a knowledge of the difficulties which it was intended to meet. How far the strict technical rules of construction which a court would apply to a deed of title or a will can fairly be applicable to the constitution of a country may be questionable. It is a difficulty which is sure to arise wherever a paper constitution exists. Lawyers' quibbles and lawyers' doubts are raised where plain people know perfectly well what is intended. A narrow-minded or a corrupt or a timid bench may decide questions in such a way that, after all, the common sense of the community has to be appealed to for the purpose really of disregarding what the law is defined to be by the court. The decision may be law, but it is not what the nation requires. This generation is lawyer-ridden and it is found that the Constitution builders of the United States placed too much power in lawyers' hands. A régime founded on this basis generally yields to that of the sword. People get disgusted with the delay and hesitation caused by getting to the theoretical right of a question which they know ought to be decided promptly.

Very much that Mr. Foster writes is interesting only to people of the United States. He deals with their local rights and local law. But where we, living as we do under another system, have been able to verify his statements, he seems to us frank and impartial. For instance, in his introductory account of the rise of the Constitution, he speaks more plainly of the difficulties of the Americans at the close of the War of Independence than we remember to have seen in any other American author. He acknowledges the influence the debtor class had as a factor in the Revolution. By these men "taxes were voted to be needless burdens, courts of justice to be intolerable grievances, and lawyers a common nuisance." Mankind at large will not contradict them. Mr. Foster's introduction is exceedingly well done, and deserves careful reading. We cannot accept Mr. Foster's favourable opinion of the Constitution as adopted, but we have read his statement of facts with great interest. The topic of the theoretical right of secession is very fully, fairly, and ably discussed in this volume. At page 116 will be found an account of early assertions of the right. The first threat was made in 1789 by Senator Pierce Butler, of South Carolina. It is, or ought to be, well known that one result of the war of 1812 was to drive the New England States to the verge of breaking up the Union. In 1828 the Southern States were opposed to a new tariff then imposed, and a new doctrine, that of nullification, was invented by South Carolina to meet the emergency. General Jackson threatened to hang Calhoun higher than Hayman if he did not abandon this nullification scheme. The result was a drawn battle. The tariff was modified and South Carolina withdrew her