

of manner in Rembrandt's *Isaac blessing Jacob*; the beauty and dignity of *Jupiter sitting in Judgment*, with the immortal gods and goddesses "bestriding the lazy-pacing clouds and sailing upon the bosom of the air," by Palma il Vecchio; the soft and delicate execution of the *Head of Christ*, by Raphael, and the solemn repose in the *Madonna* by Correggio; to write all this would be, to those who have not seen the works of these artists, mere hyperbole or exaggeration. Neither is it any exaggeration to say that these six pictures alone, if studied, would do more to elevate the public taste than the combined exhibitions and teachings of all the artists, connoisseurs and amateurs in Montreal.

Thomas D. King.

[With reference to the genuineness of the paintings referred to, or the comparative merits of the artists, the SPECTATOR expresses no opinion, especially as the question rests for the decision of the Council of the Art Association. I merely insert the articles as furnished by both gentlemen, so that both sides may have a hearing.—ED.]

A GLANCE AT SUCCESS.

Seeing that all are striving after success, and striving so industriously, and yet so many come short of their aim, it might be worth while looking into the cause of this failure.

Every trade, profession and calling is crowded with men who never seem to succeed or to accomplish much, and never rise above mediocrity. The men are often talented, and the calling one affording much opportunity for distinction and success, and yet there is failure—surprising failure.

Of course in many instances circumstances over which a man has no control have to do with the misfortune—such as a certain education, or the want of it; ill health, limited ability, and the impossibility of exercising a choice for an occupation, and many other cases.

Yet for the general failure there are accounting causes which might be investigated with good results, leading to the suggestion of remedies. With many people it is the lack of judgment in choosing an occupation; with many the refusal of advice from experienced friends who understand the subject; but with most men it seems to be a want of concentration and perseverance.

Men do not often enough work at one thing thoroughly and steadily, starting at the beginning and becoming acquainted with the subject in all its bearings and aspects.

The desire of people is not so much to excel in any one thing as to dabble in many. The time appears to be passing away when men would devote themselves to an object—a work or study—and follow it out as far as they were capable, making all things secondary to this choice.

Now-a-days a man tries this to-day, that to-morrow, and the other later on, and seems to have no definite life-object.

Young men are at a business or profession, and when taken to task for want of attention to it, coolly tell you that they are only at it for a time, and have not yet made up their minds as to what they shall pursue in life, and they want to know a little of this, that and the other in the meantime. Students at College will try to distinguish themselves by taking a score of extra subjects in their course, instead of devoting themselves to what will fit them best for their intended occupation in life. Men are trying to learn and do a little of everything, and are not anxious to waste what they consider their great energies and talents on one object.

It is to this undecided, erratic style of work that much lack of success may be attributed. People are getting to be too superficial—too fond of surface-culture, while fundamentals and principles are neglected.

There are a score of new sciences, studies and accomplishments springing into life every year, and the idea seems to be to keep up with all these. The desire is good, but the trouble is, that in the effort men find they can barely afford time for smatterings of things in general, and never can devote themselves properly to one thing.

We are most of us born with a talent or aptitude for some calling, and by following this out and developing our peculiar faculties for the same, are more certain of success than by adopting any other line of life. By neglecting to make one occupation our choice, and endeavouring to know and perform what lies in the province of others, we get mere inklings and smatterings of affairs, succeed in nothing, and settle down into irksome mediocrity, disgusting our friends and ourselves. Through this petty ambition to hold forth upon everything, we destroy our chances of shining perforce of our cultivated individuality—the chance of distinction by the thorough training of natural talent. Jack-of-all-trades is called a clever fellow, and is often of good service, but he seldom amounts to much, and accomplishes little in the long run.

We have not got so much brain that we can afford to diffuse it over many subjects and then be successful. What we have to do is to make up our minds as to what we are cut out for and then to stick to it, making that work or study in its perfection our ambition, and all other objects secondary. We have got to commence at the very beginning—at the very foot of the ladder, and to follow the thing out, thoroughly satisfied that patience and perseverance will tell in the end.

We want men who will devote themselves to a science, a business or profession, and by so doing leave it in a more advanced and perfected condition than that in which they found it. Of course there is nothing like being imbued with the spirit of the age—being open and liberal to all improvements; but do not let us forget the main end for what is secondary.

Superficiality and miscellaneous acquirements will not make a "name" or a "fame" for us; but by the choice of a work, and the concentration of our energies upon it—the manful struggling after its accomplishment—we make life a success and a satisfaction to ourselves, our friends, and the world.

Guy.

PLEASURE IN GRIEF.

"Men who wear grief long
Will get to wear it, as a hat, aside,
With a flower stuck in it."

In reading the above lines the writer was much impressed with the sarcastic truth conveyed by them. It is difficult to describe Grief and Pleasure, except as opposites. Kant says that pleasure is a consequent of pain, and that we are compelled by a physical stimulus to escape from our present state. In thought, man is always dissatisfied with the actual, is always looking forward from the present to the future, and is unable to continue in the same state. What is it that causes this but pain? This statement of his is probably true, and this state of mind may be reverently regarded as having been beneficently ordered by Divine Providence in order to urge us on to better thoughts and better deeds. We instinctively feel the scant enjoyment there is in human pleasures, which soon cloy upon us so much so that we neither seek a higher ideal or make the pursuit of pleasure our occupation, thereby removing from pleasure its essential idea. Pleasure may be said, curtly, to be the liberation of pain; hence we always commence with pain.

Again, what one may consider pleasure is not so considered by another. Some are happy and joyous in adversity, whilst others in the midst of earthly prosperity are discontented. "For pain has its pleasure, and heaven its hell." A French couplet runs thus: "My mourning pleases me; it stands in place of the one whom I mourn." This brings us more directly to that rather paradoxical phase of mind in which there is pleasure in grief. We have all witnessed the grief of wives for the loss of husbands—of children for the loss of parents—and a holy grief it is when not carried to extremes. When carried to an extreme, however, this grief actually becomes a luxury, and we can see many instances of it in everyday life, where widows and others must certainly nurse their grief with a great deal of pleasure, and make a show of it "with a flower stuck in it," thereby giving an almost indubitable proof of its insincerity. They flatter themselves that their hearts are more tender than those of other people, and become conceited in their grief; nothing pleases them more than to see that their grief is noticed by others. Each year brings around the date of the sad event, and the tears gush forth ostentatiously, and they are immensely pleased with themselves in thinking that they have such fine feelings.

It may seem irreligious to criticise this "holy grief," but when we consider the uselessness and sham in it, we will arrive at a different conclusion. This indulgence in grief, no matter how great a pleasure to the bereaved ones, is most assuredly a positive annoyance to their acquaintances. It generally renders them unfit for the ordinary pursuits of life, makes them unpleasant companions, as a chance word may cause a gush of tears, and is morally wrong, being a mental rebellion, so to speak, against the decrees of Providence. No fault can be found with a proper respect for and remembrance of the dead; but we must not forget that, in case of loss, our duties are augmented toward the living. It is generally those persons who have nothing else to do that indulge in this luxury of grief. It betrays either a weak or else an unoccupied mind. Persons whose worldly circumstances do not give them time for this pleasure in grief, generally chasten their suffering in work. Is their grief less sincere on this account? Is not their case much harder than that of persons whose circumstances permit of their shutting themselves up in their closets and indulging in useless lamentations? Is not grief more poignant when associated with hardship and starvation?

It is a crying shame to see widows and others with ample means wasting their time in senseless tears when mortal frames are being blighted and withered by hunger, and human souls are growing in spiritual darkness. Usually the extravagance is carried still further by the erection of splendid monuments, vaults, etc. In this connection, a pertinent query will be of use, namely, Does this expense benefit the departed soul? The answer that it does not can hardly be disputed. Of what use, therefore, are these extravagant monuments? Merely to show the world that we want them to think that we feel more grief than does the poor person who has placed perhaps only a wooden cross. The world is not deceived by it, however; it admires these granite columns and marble vaults as works of art, but not as evidences of more intense grief. On the other hand, there is no excuse for the neglect of these memorials of the dead; but when culpable extravagance is exhibited in a totally different direction, it is proper and befitting that a claim should be made for memorials for the living.

Omega.