

Artists' Corner.

NO. V.—ALBERT DURER

Albert Durer was born at Nuremberg, on the 20th of May, 1471. His father was a Goldsmith of that city, of more than ordinary skill in his profession, and also said to have been an excellent engraver. In early life the eldest Durer worked to the Low Countries, where he learned the delicate and truthful style of ornamentation for which the Goldsmiths of Bruges had become famous, but he quitted Flanders and made his way into Germany and settled down in Nuremberg where in his twenty eighth year he married Barbara Heiberm of that city. His son Albert received a sound and liberal education, and made great progress in his instructions. His father intended him to follow his own profession, and there is little doubt that he early commenced to assist his father in the working of metals, more especially in the use of the burin. There is a difference amongst writers as to who taught Durer the art of engraving, some asserting that he was taught by Schoen of Colmar. But Schoen died in 1486 when Durer was only in his 15th year. In an autobiography from his own pen, preserved by Sandart, he says—“After having learnt to make pretty objects of jewellery, I find my inclination tends more to painting than to the work of a goldsmith. I have mentioned this to my father, who is grieved at it for he laments the loss of time expended in the acquisition of an art which I have no desire to follow. However, he acceded to my request; and in the year 1486, on St Andrew's day, my father sent me, on probation, to Michael Wohlgemuth for three years.” Here the youthful artist remained, with a manner of quiet and retired habits, working in an humble studio, a constant reader of his bible, studying nature and working at his profession as it is to fulfil a moral obligation, and having terminated his apprenticeship, he quitted Wohlgemuth and travelled through Germany, Holland, and Italy. In 1491 he returned home improved considerably by the experience he had had, and with somewhat of an increased reputation, and soon afterwards executed as his master piece, a drawing of *Opheus*. It was the custom at the time in which Durer lived, for artists to execute a certain piece, to be submitted to an acknowledged master, before they received the diploma entitling them to all the honours of the profession. In reference to his tour he says, I went out after Easter, in 1490, and I returned after the Pentecost, in 1491, when I found that Hans Frey, had agreed with my father to give me his daughter Agnes for a wife, with a portion of two hundred florins. This nice little affair so circumspectly gone about in the absence of the artist, did not turn out a happy union, but the offer was accepted to please his father. It is pretty certain that Durer again visited Italy in the beginning of the 16th century, although there is a little discrepancy as to dates—where he painted some of his pictures, such as the *Martyrdom of St. Bartholomew*, for the church of St. Mark, and *Adam and Eve*, for the German church both in Venice. In Bologna he met Raffaele who had heard a very favourable report of his German contemporary, and received him with great respect. In token of friendship, the two artists exchanged portraits with each other, and in 1507 Durer returned home with the reputation of being the first painter of his country. Vasari in his *Lives of eminent painters*, remarks that “If this diligent, industrious, and universal man, had been a native of Tuscany, and if he could have studied as we have done in Rome, he would certainly have been the best painter in our country, as he was the most celebrated, that ever Germany had.” When the picture which Durer painted in Venice, for the German church established in that city, was finished and fixed in its destined place, the Doge—the chief magistrate and the patriarch of the city, went to see it, every body was in raptures about it, and all acknowledged the genius of the

stranger. Giovanni Bellini commended the work highly, and Andrea Mantegna, was desirous of an introduction to the Gothic painter. Durer set out to pay him a visit, but reached Mantua only in time to learn the death of the great artist. The fame which he thus acquired, roused the jealousy of the Venetians, but the mental qualities of his refined and most unobtrusive master, which he had so largely imbibed, enabled him so far to overcome the enmity of his power. He exercised the utmost kindness towards all, and made himself remarkably agreeable and profitable in conversation, not only on matters connected with Art, but on the sciences generally. Possessing so happy a turn of mind, his society was much sought after, and amongst others we find that Ferdinand, King of Bohemia, and Maximilian Emperor of Germany, received him with distinction and treated him with marked familiarity. Maximilian held Durer in high esteem, retaining him at his court, and giving him commissions both for engravings and pictures. One day when the artist was about to mount a wall for the purpose of making a sketch of some object of magnitude, the ladder was too short, and the Emperor asked one of the nobles who surrounded him to hold the end of it to secure the safety of the artist. The noble considered this an insult, and refused to obey. You are a noble by birth, said the angry monarch, but my painter is noble by genius, and as it is to show that it is easier to confer a title than to make a great artist, Maximilian ennobled Durer, and gave him for his coat of arms three shields on a field of azure, two *en chef* and one *en pointe*. This device at a later period was adopted by all societies of painters.

Varieties.

PERMANENT REST is not to be expected on the road, but at the end of the journey.

MAN, says Adam Smith, is an animal that makes bargains. No other animal does this—no dog exchanges bones with another.”

I AM AFRAID you shall come to want,” said an old lady to a young gentleman. “I have come to want already,” was the reply. “I want your daughter!” The old lady opened her eyes.

HARD TIMES CONJUGATED.—A country schoolmaster thus describes a money lender:—“He serves you in the present tense; he lends you in the conditional mood; and keeps you in the subjunctive; and ruins you in the future.”

SOMETHING LIKE A CLIMATE.—The *Albany Knickerbocker*, of August, says.—“The weather has been ‘all hot.’ We saw a woman do her ironing with no other fuel than the sunshine. When we came away she hung her kettle out of the window to get the tea ready.”

IT'S THE HEART.—An old gentleman travelling some years ago inside the Bath Mall, had two ladies sisters, for companions. The younger, an invalid, soon fell asleep, and the old gentleman expressed his regret to see so charming a young lady in ill health. “Ah! yes, indeed,” sighed the elder sister, “a disease of the heart.” “Dear me,” was the sympathetic response, “at her age! Ossification, perhaps?”—“Ossification? Oh no, Sir, a lieutenant.” (*Love's labour's lost*.)

TIP FOR TAT.—A smart young student of anatomy remarked, in the hearing of his sister, that the reason there were so many old maids in the world was owing to their tight lacing, which so hardened their hearts as to make them impenetrable to the shafts of Cupid. “And the reason there are so many old bachelors,” retorted the sister, “is because of their tight strapping—they cannot get on their knees to declare their passion.”

ART COMPANION.—A soul, like an instrument of music, should be well tuned to meet the various strains the hand of destiny may call from its thrilling chords; firmly, yet sweetly, should

its tones ring out, of whatever character they are, strong but sweet music still should a God-strengthened spirit yield beneath the touch of sorrow or adversity. As sweet, though it may be sadder, as in its day of brightest power.

MODERN INVENTIONS.

Horace Mann thus sums up a few of the advantages of modern inventions.—“One boy, with a fountain machine, will make more paper in a twelvemonth, than all Egypt could have made in a hundred years during the reign of the Ptolemies. One girl, with a power-press, will strike off books faster than a million scribes could copy them before the invention of printing. One man, with an iron foundry, will turn out more utensils than Tubal Cain could have forged, had he worked diligently till this time.”

Biographical Calendar.

- Mar. 21, 1274 Robt. Bruce, King of Scotl'd, born
1556 Archbishop Cranmer, burned.
1763 Jean Paul Richter, born.
“ 23, 1768 Jonathan Edwards, died.
1832 Goethe, died.
1846 John Liston, died.
“ 23, 1819 Kotzebue, killed.
1850 Sir William Allan, died.
“ 24, 1603 Queen Elizabeth, died.
1801 Paul, Emperor of Russia, murdered.
1841 Albert Thorwaldsen, died.
“ 25, 1634 Bishop Bull, (of St. David's) born.
“ 26, 1797 James Hutton, died.
“ 27, 1635 James I. (of Eng. VI. of Scot.) died.
1699 Bishop Stillingfleet, died.
1746 Michael Bruce, born.
1822 Sir Alex. Boswell, died.

John Wolfgang von Goethe, the greatest modern poet of Germany, and the patriarch of German literature, was born at Frankfort on the Main, August 28, 1749. His father was Doctor of Law and Imperial Councillor; and being in good circumstances, possessing a taste for the fine arts, and having made a tolerable collection of pictures and other objects of vertu, young Goethe had an early opportunity of indulging his fancy and improving his mind. Drawing, Music, Natural Science, the elements of jurisprudence, and the languages occupied his early years, and when he was 15 he was sent to the university of Leipzig, but did not follow any regular course of studies. In 1768 he quitted Leipzig, and subsequently went to the university of Strasbourg to qualify himself for the law; but he paid more attention to chemistry and anatomy than to his pursuit. In 1771 he took the degree of doctor of jurisprudence, and then went to Weimar, where he found, in his own love for a betrothed lady and in the suicide of a young man named Jerusalem, the subject of his *Werther*. This appeared in 1774 and at once excited the attention of his countrymen while it produced an instantaneous effect on his country's literature. Having in 1783, entered the service of the Duke of Saxo-Weimar, whom he had met in travelling, he was made president of the council-chamber, ennobled and heaped with honors. A splendid galaxy of talent assembled at Weimar, and united itself to Goethe. The direction of the theatre was confided to him and he brought out some of the noble chefs-d'œuvre of Schiller, with an effect worthy of them. There, too, his own dramatic works first appeared, viz. *Goetz Berlichingen*, “*Erast*,” “*Iphigenia in Tauris*,” “*Tasso*,” “*Clavigo*,” “*Sisilia*,” and *Count Egmont*.” In 1786 he made a journey to Italy, where he remained two years, visited Sicily, and remained a long time in Rome. In 1793 he followed his prince during the campaign in Champagne. He was afterwards created minister; received, in 1807, the order of Alexander, Lewisky from Alexander of Russia, and the great cross of the legion of honour from Napoleon. He died at Weimar, March 9, 1832, aged 80. Goethe was an intellectual giant, and his greatest production “*Faust*,” has been repeatedly translated into English.