

## THE TORONTO EXHIBITION.

The Toronto Exhibition does certainly look now like a permanent affair—permanent because useful. In a way one knows that there is much manufacturing going on in this part of the country, but we are accustomed to think modestly of ourselves, and to regard our manufactures as “growing”. A visit to the Toronto Fair now is enough to convince us that some of them have grown.

The extent and the quality of the manufactures has visible improved of late years and in the new Process Building one can see the making of some well-known articles in actual progress. The neatness of the manner of work in every case adds much to the impression of excellence in the manufacture; and the interest of the exhibition itself is greatly enhanced by these moving pictures.

The live stock is always beautiful. In fact the substantial character of the exhibition is such that, with nothing but live stock and manufactured articles, complete and in process of production, the Fair would still be attractive. The present writer had great difficulty in tearing himself away from these things to attend to his proper business, which was amusement and the study of art.

The last was of a diffused character embracing every thing from Jules Breton's “Communicants” to the lights and shades of the avenues at night, and including the brown skins and sleek anatomy of the Igorrotes, the gentle savages from the Phillipine Islands.

There was some correspondence in the newspapers about the want of clothing of these people. One wonders if the writers saw them and if they really thought them indecent, and if so what their minds are like. They were naked enough, with only a breech-clout of dimensions no greater than was absolutely necessary; but to see one of these gentlemen leaning gracefully against the railing of their arena, clothed only in a grape-brown skin, and talking to a group of ladies with all the freedom from concern about his personal appearance which a man of the world enjoys who has confidence in his tailor, was a lesson, (the show was said to be educative), in the respectability of the body. Even in our own country where clothes are normal, (normal unfortunately, one would be inclined to say in the summer), there are occasions where we uncover, for reasons sufficient and not concerned with display for its own sake, and find ourselves at home with the situation at once. The motive is everything, and the amount of display of the body by men and women—though there was no question in this case about the women, whose dress was much properer than the fashion—is to be measured by the motive and not by inches. Not long ago, in one of our own cities, they got a bishop into the box to testify as to the impropriety of certain theatrical posters, (which this article is in no way intended to support), and the bishop, with no more *savoir faire* than a curate, permitted himself to be led, (by the opposing counsel of course,) into fixing by measurement the limits of decency; only to be confronted at once with admired pictures by the old masters in which there were no limits at all. The intention is everything. The body itself is respectable; the only question is how it came to be displayed. For this reason—being

a question of motive—it is a question very difficult to judge of with certainty; but, in the case of primitive savages, well-meaning people who write to the papers, and well-meaning missonionaries and missionaries' wives, who insist upon clothes, seem to be rather creating the feeling of indecency than preventing it.

There was nothing to offend anyone in the pictures exhibited in the Art Gallery and there was always a crowd there, apparently enjoying themselves. The remarks made were not in the recognized terminology of art criticism. “That tree is awful natural”, or “isn't that water pretty”, was briefer criticism than Ruskin's, but in line with his advice to (in general terms) find our way toward the culture of art by the admiration of what we like. There was a chance for every taste in the rather motley assemblage of loan pictures. The Frenchmen headed the show. Jules Breton's “Communicants”, familiar to everyone from the engraving, was not, as sometimes happens, disappointing in the original, but rather the other way. Its delicate colouring was an addition, as was also the size which enabled one to get into the picture and fall in with the charming sentiment of the scene. This seemed to be the favourite picture. There was always a crowd in front of it. Greater technical excellence was doubtless to be found in Benjamin Constant's “Herodiade”—a portrait of Herodias' daughter that might have been painted from the original tiger. The soft suppleness of her figure would be a study for the painters, and a moralist could find the whole Roman Empire in her face; but right thinking agriculturalists and the writer did not enjoy her long, but, moved by the noble wrath that makes a London gallery hiss the villain when he is called before the curtain, turned away to the contemplation of the excellent George Herbert in his garden, portrayed with comparative feebleness by an English R. A., (William Dyce), but full of a peaceful poetry. A Leader landscape, in fine almost finicking oil, met with a good share of approval; a Constable—so rough as to suggest that it was one of those full size studies, which he seems to have often made, and not the final result—met with no approval at all. A brief look and “I don't like that” expressed a popular feeling which the critic, paying the perfunctory tribute of study to the work of a recognized master, could not but acknowledge was natural. Gustave Doré's imagination was displayed in a landscape which, as usual, gave one the idea but nothing else. Clarkson Stanfield on the other hand represented the fine old-fashioned school of composition, full of minor beauties, all carefully noted from nature and presenting truth; but the whole a little fabricated and suggestive of the studio. Another old-fashioned artist, Mulready, was represented by two pictures, well known to us by the engravings, which turned out to be small canvases very delicately worked. The *genre* interest of “Going to the Fair” and “Choosing the Wedding Gown”, meets but moderate response now-a-days, and it is to be feared the small scale and delicate workmanship are not in our line either. But Mulready's work is of a mild kind. Sir John Gilbert, whose figures it was observed “stand out” well, was much more popular. If it is figures one one wants R. Caton Woodville is the boy. I stood long before his pictures, steeped in the contempt of a gentleman of culture who said that