

an ornament. Ornament is a pleasing conventional treatment of some form taken from nature, treated symmetrically, with variety and unity, and then judiciously applied to the principal object which it is intended to decorate, being kept subordinate—such as the acanthus leaf used by the Greeks, or the geometrical and typical forms used in Gothic architecture. The best writers affirm that the periods of art attained their greatest eminence when conventionalism prevailed, and their decline was marked by the too great introduction of naturalism.

Another writer in the same paper, speaking of prints, says: "There are lovers of the beautiful in art who are not touched or moved by the best prints, and derive neither *amusement*, nor enjoyment, nor information." To the word amusement I strongly object. Had the writer used pleasure, he would have conveyed a better idea of their mission than he can by the word amusement; and he falls into an error when he states that prints "are the only medium indeed of presenting to the eye the representation of every object of art and nature which words are inadequate to describe." This is one of those passages calculated to lead astray. There are many examples both in prose, verse and history, which the art of painting or engraving cannot adequately render. I have selected one out of a number given by Opie in his lecture on Invention. It describes the incident in the Iliad when one of Priam's younger sons, fallen before the superior force of Achilles, solicits his life on account of his youth. "Wretch," exclaims the furious hero, "dost thou complain of dying, when thou knowest that Achilles must shortly die?" Opie, speaking of the limits and difficulties which beset art in conveying the force and meaning of many passages of history, says: "They are incapable of affording more than a bald and insipid representation on canvas." This is certainly true; yet, on the other hand, painting or engraving can grasp and represent vividly many passages and incidents when words seem altogether inadequate to convey an impression. However easy it may seem in the eyes of some people, it must be said that when art passes beyond the realistic it is not so easy a matter to judge unless we understand the many rules which govern it; for art has rules which cannot be violated. We have an instance of this in the picture in the Gallery on Phillips Square, painted by Bierstadt, where he makes the shadows of the trees on the right hand of the picture run at right-angles to the course Nature intended them to go. I point out these errors, not in any cavilling spirit, but to show the necessity of thoroughly understanding art before attempting to write upon it.

I must now ask attention to another style of Art Criticism, generally found among young ladies, who tell you Mrs. or Miss ——— paints "so exquisitely, just lovely." Human nature revolts against being cheated, and when the work is seen, and it proves not "just lovely," we are apt to let our feelings carry us away, and the consequence is that in our minds we do not do Mrs. or Miss ——— (as the case may be) justice, and allow ourselves to be a little severe in our opinions. These are the most innocent, and sin more in the manner than in the intention. But if there is a class of the Art critic which artists most justly despise, they are to be found in those who wish to be thought as possessing a wonderful amount of art-knowledge, and too often with a supercilious sneer deprecate all work not up to some false ideal formed in their mind. They are ever ready to pass an opinion from which none may appeal. They bear about them the look of the "oracle has spoken, and the decision is final." They sometimes employ a detracting witticism when capable, or borrow if incapable, to mark their superiority over and contempt for the artist and his work. These forget that the artist cannot receive either praise or censure, only as he has earned it and as it is true. Washington Allston says: "The devil's heartiest laugh is at a detracting witticism, hence the phrase 'Devilish good' has sometimes a literal meaning." We have among us many grades of this Art critic, who talk loudly or write about the depth, the feeling, the force, the light and shade, the correctness of drawing and harmony of colour. Having picked up at odd times a number of technical terms, they parade them and their opinions on all occasions, never once pausing to consider if their judgment is correct or not. To them I recommend the following passage from Burke:—"It is known that the taste is improved exactly as we improve our judgment—by extending our knowledge, by a steady attention to our object, and by frequent exercise. They who have not taken these methods, if their taste decides quickly, it is always uncertainly, and their quickness is owing to their presumption and rashness, and not to any sudden irradiation."

Among us we have many men of truly cultivated taste, but these generally stay in the background, and their names are scarcely ever heard; they have no desire to flaunt their Art-knowledge in the eyes of the world. But the artists of Montreal may justly complain of that class at present among us, who have, without much Art-knowledge or experience, bullied their way to the position of what they think their right to condemn or praise what they like or dislike in the most dogmatic manner. It is from such and their baneful influence we sincerely pray His Excellency may redeem us by uniting the artists into a body to be wielded for good and mutual protection, as well as the encouragement and the improvement of Art. Let a spirit of fairness pervade the selection of the members of the proposed Academy; let the test be one of merit, open to all, without fear or favour.

J. W. Gray.

MR. GLADSTONE AS LORD RECTOR.

Phlegmatic as Scotsmen are usually supposed to be, we are liable at times to fits of enthusiasm which are intense in the direct ratio of the long continued suppression to which we accustom ourselves. Through such a fit of excitement the country has just passed in regard to Mr. Gladstone. He came North, as your readers will have known for more than a month when you read this, to contest with Lord Dalkeith the seat for Midlothian. Of course the dissolution is not yet announced, and it is supposed will not be for some time, but Mr. Gladstone took, as it were, a preliminary survey of the ground, so his presence may be regarded as a "reconnaissance in force" before the campaign. While he naturally awakened enthusiasm in the minds of the constituency more immediately in question, the stranger thing is, all Scotland soon caught the infection. Wherever Mr. Gladstone went his path was infested by deputations of one sort or another, and to each of these he was expected to deliver a speech. What made the doings of Scotland more like the results of infection than of deliberate judgment, is the fact that Mr. Gladstone is in a sense no stranger in Scotland. As his father and mother being both Scotch, his being an Englishman legally is merely accidental. His brother, the late Sir Thomas Gladstone, of Fask, was Tory member for Forfarshire. Although divided in politics, the Gladstone family are very affectionate. The ex-Prime Minister was often in Scotland. Moreover, he has been repeatedly the guest of the great Whig nobles of the North, but no such outburst of enthusiasm attended him at any previous time as on this last occasion. It is the more to be marvelled at on another account. Rumour says that he is out of favour with the Court. Yet, if there is one part of her dominions in which the Empress Queen is more loyally revered than another, it is Scotland; very much, perhaps, because of her preference for Scotland. Loyalty and Whiggery are the two poles on which Scotch political life revolves, and Queen Victoria began her reign, as everybody knows, a Whig Queen, and that may have helped the Scotch loyalty. Luckily these two feelings—that of loyalty to the Queen and reverence for the representatives of Liberalism—have not been forced into opposition to each other yet. The whole course of the late triumphal progress—for nothing else it can be called—is worthy of note; but I will restrict myself to Mr. Gladstone's Rectorial address and its concomitants.

As a member of the University, of which he was head, I was specially anxious to secure a ticket to hear him. The office was one fitted to incite his highest flights of eloquence. It was an academic audience he was to address, and with all his attention to politics and finance, Mr. Gladstone is always a scholar in the academic sense. The office was one that had been held by great men. Edmund Burke, who, if he was not followed by his contemporaries, was most profoundly respected by them; Henry Brougham, the portent of a later day, the terror of his enemies and the dread of his friends, had alike held the office; Adam Smith, the founder of modern political economy, and Sir James Mackintosh, the philosophic historian, did not despise it. Gladstone's old master, Sir Robert Peel; his old leaders, Lord Palmerston and Earl Russell; his colleague, the Duke of Argyll, had all been Lords Rector of Glasgow University, and had all made speeches (some of them remarkable speeches) to their constituents. His great antagonist, Lord Beaconsfield, had preceded him in the office, and during the short campaign associated with his speech-making at Glasgow, had managed to alienate a number of Scotch seats from their allegiance to the Liberal cause. Everything pointed to that speech as the crowning feat of the great display of Gladstone's eloquence.

As I wished to see the reception accorded Mr. Gladstone by the students and people, I went to Glasgow the night before the day which was to see him installed Lord Rector. The train most suitable was the limited mail, the train the hero of the hour was travelling by, so it was with some difficulty, through a dense crowd and at a great distance behind his carriage in the train, that I could secure a seat. Hence I missed, which of course was a great loss, the commonplace of presentation literature which greeted him at every station. When we arrived in Glasgow we saw by the orange light of the students' torches the platform, opposite the ex-Premier's carriage, laid with red cloth, as is done when Royalty is expected to alight. After being well hustled by the eagerness of hand-shaking, Mr. Gladstone was able to take refuge in Sir James Watson's carriage. As the carriage passed, the swaying line of flaming torches began to form into procession behind it. To me, who had not seen such a sight before, I can imagine nothing more striking. The fifteen hundred torches arranged in a long line four deep, and borne by youths in scarlet gowns—the gown of the College—and most of them wearing, instead of their trenchers, red and blue caps, the symbols of the two political parties, as they moved along, seemed like tongues of fire springing up from a stream of red-hot lava that forced its way through the black crowds. The tawny fog added to the mystery by rendering it impossible at any distance to distinguish anything but the blurred mass of colour. As the stream of fire flared along Sauchiehall Street, every window was seen to be occupied by the eager faces of spectators looking down on the sight. From many windows pink, green and purple lights showed the enthusiastic Liberalism of the householders. The greatest evidence I had for the uniqueness of the scene was that I heard a citizen of the great Republic