

Here are a few notes on the new Salon from the Paris correspondent of the *Argonaut*: "Have you seen the Besnards?" was a question every one asked every one else on Varnishing Day at the Champ de Mars. In point of fact, you were not likely to miss them. A woman of more than common height in an orange gown, leaning against what—after a little careful study—you found to be a high chimney-piece, painted in green onyx tones. And on a bigger canvas, two horses frolicking together. At first you are rather sore put to it to find out which is the head and which was the tail of each, but things right themselves after a bit, and you separate the legs and body of the chestnut horse from those of his companion, the crimson horse. Hitherto crimson has not been reckoned a common tint for horseflesh, but science makes such wonderful strides nowadays, and, after all, the color of the beasts is as near to nature as that of the ground they tread, which is bright violet. Whistler is more Whistler-like than ever. He has painted that curious *fin-de-siècle* specimen, the Comte Robert de Montesquiou Fezensac, not on the lofty throne on which it pleases him to seat himself at home, leaving his visitors to squat on low stools, but standing on *terra firma*, and attired in such an ill-fitting suit of clothes that no one is likely to ask him the address of his tailor. Millinery is not his forte either. Worth and Felix never put together the green and violet toilette of Mme. S., nor the brown and gold costume of Lady E. Whistler has many disciples, but his countryman, John W. Alexander, is the chief among them. His portrait of the Swedish artist, Thaulow, is an admirable bit of work, and the tall woman tying her bonnet on before a glass is excellent, too. There are much fewer full-dress, representation portraits—so to speak—this year than usual. Carolus Duran, who always deserved so well at the hands of the fashionable *courturier*, only contributes two ladies' portraits, and cuts their finery off at the waist. He has come out in another character. Imagine the clever manipulator of silks and satins brushing on a crucifixion!—the less said about which, the better. Still, I must say, I prefer it to the cast-iron "Chemin de la Croix" of Beraud. I said there were few full-dress portraits. Sargent's is an exception, and a superb exception to boot. Mrs. H. H. wears a dazzling velvet robe of fuchsia velvet, and she is a handsome *brune* and can carry it off. From Sargent to Dannat seems a natural transition, but the two artists who began very much on the same lines have floated apart. Dannat paints impressions only; but his impressions are suggestive. "Entre Femmes" shows three women in a group, two in pale green and one in mauve, colors that accentuate the bistre under the eyes.

In the June *Century* Mr. Theodore Stanton writes of the sacred pictures of Tissot at the new Salon. The following are a few paragraphs from this most interesting paper: "One of the most interesting features of this year's Champ de Mars Salon is the special exhibition, which fills two tastefully decorated rooms on the ground floor, of M. James Tissot's pictures illustrating the life of Jesus. It consists of 280 water colors, either entirely finished or in an advanced state, and 100 pen-and-ink drawings, which are to be used for a future illustrated edition of the four gospels; or rather, to be more exact, only those portions of the Scriptures which explain the pictures, and, in fact, gave birth to them, will form the text of the volume, accompanied by

notes by the artist. Seven or eight years ago artistic Paris talked for a day of the departure of Tissot for the Holy Land, in order to seek new inspirations. Tissot was then fresh in the public mind as the author of a series of etchings depicting the passions, charms and seductions of feminine life at the French capital, and many an artist smiled skeptically at this apparent contradiction. In the autumn of 1886 Tissot started for the Holy Sepulchre with all the enthusiasm of the Crusaders of old. He saw, questioned and meditated. He made scores of vivid sketches, and wrote reams of thoughtful notes. The first visit was repeated. During this second sojourn he utilized instantaneous photography, which was then first becoming known in France, and was thus able to bring back with him quantities of characteristic types, scenes and landscapes. Almost all of the striking pen-and-ink drawings made during the first visit can be seen at the Champ de Mars, while the details furnished by the photographs have been reproduced in many of the water-colors. The farther he wandered in Palestine, the more he saw there, and the deeper he studied his object, the stronger grew Tissot's conviction that his precursors in the field of biblical illustration had not caught the true spirit of their theme, had not struck the right note. He returned to France determined to catch the true spirit and to strike the right note. Once within the walls of Paris again, he buried himself in his handsome, secluded home and gave himself up entirely to his thoughts, his books, his collections and his art. He pored over musty old commentaries on the Bible, studied archæology, mastered the Talmud, devoured books of Eastern travel, read the history of the Jews and Arabs, and went over the Scriptures again and again in the Vulgate and in the French and English translations. Nor did he neglect the Apocrypha. In a word, before taking up his brush, Tissot saturated his mind with his subject, and gave full rein to an imagination now thirsting for the occult and mysterious. Society lost its charms for him. He who had been a *mon-dain* now became almost a recluse. He has been wholly absorbed by his new work, to which he has devoted all his time and strength. Tissot's work is, in a measure, a return, in spirit at least, to the methods and aspirations of the early masters in their treatment of religious subjects, and is in direct disaccord with the present tendency of French art, which is either to ignore sacred history and sacred themes altogether, or to treat them in an irreverent and sensational manner.

#### MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

We exceedingly regret that our review of the musical festival concerts has been unavoidably held over until next issue, when a full report will appear.

A noteworthy opinion of Wagner is that of Zola, which we take from the *Literary Digest*. Emile Zola has written an essay on Wagner, in which he says:—"A genius like Wagner, despotic and all-powerful, is sure to exercise enormous influence on future generations. Thus, in music, the Wagnerian formula, so full, so complete, lords it over with paramount power to such a point that outside of it, for a long time to come, it will be impossible to create better works or more original ones." Arguing that the popularity of Wagner is sure to increase, and that he will soon become both the favorite and the tyrant of the lyric stage, to

the destruction of the French art, Zola claims that the only way out of the difficulty is for French musicians to go further than Wagner has. He suggests lyric dramas, in which the orchestra would unfold the situations and the voices of the singers express only their feelings. He predicts works altogether human, not mistily mythological, full of the realism of our sorrows and our joys. He ends with the words:—"I dream of a lyric drama, human without being severed from imagination, mystery or caprice. All our race is in this passionate burst of humanity, of which music should unfold the different passions. Musicians! if you would search into our hearts for the sources of laughter and of tears, even Wagner, the modern giant, would be dwarfed. Life, life everywhere, even in the world of song!"

The *Revue de Deux Mondes* has the following interesting remarks on the German theatre: "The tendency of the German to reason about everything leads him to put emphasis on the point that the theatre should be a school of manners. In Germany there are more dramatic critics who regard a play from a moral point of view. Without insisting that the drama should teach a direct lesson, the German critic realizes that in any interpretation of life by art there always will be something taught, salutary or harmful, and that it is a matter of the first importance that this lesson should be salutary. An interesting evidence of this is the establishment of two theatres in Berlin, by Herr Bruno Wille, where representations are given to subscribers who form a society. The oldest of these, which is nearly four years old, is now directly controlled by the Socialist party. This party ousted Herr Wille from this theatre because he was considered too much of an Anarchist; so he founded the other theatre. Herr Wille is, it is true, an Anarchist, but one who is an enemy of all violence. Both these theatres are prosperous, and number their adherents by thousands. Their object is not any political or social propaganda; but simply, as the laws of the societies declare, to offer their members, in return for a very small monthly contribution, the opportunity of seeing fine works of art, dramatic or musical, or of hearing lectures at which these works are commented on and explained. Of various matters of detail concerning German theatres I will mention one only. There is in Germany no quarrel, as in France, between the dinner and the theatre. In Germany they take a bite before the play and sup afterward. Thus the head is clear, and one is better disposed for continuous attention. As a general thing the curtain goes up at seven o'clock. The punctuality is exact. Everything is regulated so as to avoid, as much as possible, the least loss of time. The waits are short, and their duration is mentioned in the programme, which also announces at what hour the representation will close. This never lasts more than two and a half or three hours. The public also is punctual. It must be there when the curtain goes up in order to understand everything, and it wishes to understand everything. The spectators lose no time in dressing before coming. In Germany a theatre is not a drawing-room. You find your place without difficulty, and in German theatres there are bad places as well as good places. No place, however, is so bad that your view can be intercepted by a woman's hat, for women are not allowed to wear hats in a German theatre.