

that lie warm and familiar under a native sky; to travel among strange races and hear strange tongues, confuses, perplexes, and paralyses; the world is too vast for them. Life has expanded so immeasurably on all sides that only the strongest spirits can safely give themselves up to it. Of these sovereign natures it is Browning's chief distinction that he is one; that he asserts and sustains the mastery of his soul over all knowledge; that instead of being overwhelmed by the vastness of modern life he rejoices in it as the swimmer rejoices when he feels the fathomless sea buoyant to his stroke and floats secure with the abysses beneath and the infinity of space overhead. No better service certainly can the greatest mind render humanity to-day than just this calm reassurance of its sovereignty in a universe whose growing immensity makes its apparent insignificance so painfully evident; no prophet could bring to us a message so charged with consolation as this. To see clearly and love intensely whatever was just and noble and ideal in the past, to understand the inevitable changes that have come over the thoughts and lives of men, to discern a unity of movement through them all, to find a deepening of soul in art and life, to bear knowledge and know that it is subordinate to character, to look the darkest facts in the face and discern purpose and love in them, to hold the note of triumph and hope amid the discordant cries of terror and perplexity and despair,—this is what Browning has done and is doing; and for this service, no matter what we think of his art, those who are wise enough to know what such a service involves will not withhold the sincerest recognition. —*Extract—Hamilton Wright Mabie, in the Andover Review.*

ART NOTES.

THE fourth and last notice of this year's Royal Academy refers in detail to the portraiture, which is characterised by its unexpectedness, so to speak, by which it is meant that, with perhaps the exception of the works of Mr. Frank Hall, the best portraits are hardly by the artists who are usually most distinguished in this branch of art. Mr. Watts, for instance, is not represented at all; Sir John Millais is perhaps less successful than he has ever been in his portraits of men with the likenesses of Lord Rosebery and the Marquis of Hartington; Mr. Poynter is entirely unrepresented; Mr. Richmond (whom rumour points out as the next Associate) has only two contributions, of which one is only nominally a portrait; and despite the fact that Mr. Frank Holl has been extremely successful in his presentation portrait of Mr. W. S. Gilbert, and Mr. Onless, in his portrait of Lord John Manners, the honours of the exhibition fall chiefly to the works of two Frenchmen—M. Fantin and M. Carolus Durau; and in a lesser degree to two young painters—Mr. J. Sargent and Mr. J. J. Shannon. Mr. Sargent's work, described in these columns some time since, depicting a garden scene with children lighting Chinese lanterns, has been purchased for the Chantrey Fund by the Royal Academy.

LONDON society has already been so much interested in the "Wild Westerns," as it has been facetiously called, and in the industrial products of America, that the numerous exhibits would hardly have been a thoroughly representative collection without works showing what modern artists are doing on this side of the Atlantic. There are, accordingly, half a dozen galleries established in England's metropolis devoted to pictures painted in the great Republic. An inspection of these works records the fact that America is comparatively a young country, a land of splendid promise, if of as yet not wholly developed powers. The pictures at the American Exhibition, perhaps, do not illustrate the perfection of the technique of art, but they very fully demonstrate serious study, imagination, and a high purpose. Perhaps the most remarkable work in the collection in the department of landscape painting is "A Storm in the Rocky Mountains," by Albert Bierstadt, of New York. Other fine pictures by the same hand are "Sentinel Rock, after a Snow Storm, Yosemite Valley," and a very large canvas of "Washingtonia Gigantea, or Great Trees of California, Mariposa Valley," a painting, which, from its rich artistic qualities, excited much attention when it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1874. The women artists of America are admirably represented in the collection, Miss Emily J. Lakey exhibiting an exceedingly able landscape and animal subject combined in "The Leader and Herd," a bull with group of cows against a dark background, "which would lose nothing by comparison with works by the eminent French artist, Rosa Bonheur, whom its best qualities recall." The portraiture too is spoken of as being highly creditable to American art. Mention should not be omitted in this general survey of a finely conceived and well-lighted design by George Innes, "Pine Grove of the Barberini Villa, Albano, Italy," which is as valuable from the subject depicted, as it is as a work of art; nor of "Moonrise, Antwerp Dock," by D. Jerome Elwell, a capital night effect—the well known Belgian dock crowded with shipping.

THE *Spectator*, in a recent review of Sir W. Butler's book, "The Campaign of the Cataracts," speaks thus favourably of Lady Butler's (Miss Elizabeth Thompson's) illustrations, of which we made some slight mention before their publication: "There is no question of the force, the vividness, of the painting of the scenes by the penman. Their effect is incalculably intensified by the skill with which Lady Butler's pencil has brought them before us in the admirable illustrations and tasteful vignettes with which the book is throughout richly furnished. She has been able to sketch on the Nile itself the solid background of most of the pictures, and few of our artists are more trained than she in exercising imagination on the stirring scenes of war, where that 'shaping spirit' can alone be her guide in giving to the realisation of her husband's lively reminiscences the aid of her own art."

PAINTERS of the younger Spanish school are making themselves known in New York by degrees. Almost all the large picture dealers show from time to time examples of work by the young Spaniards settled at Rome, Paris, or their native land. They seem like saplings of the Fortuny stock, especially in the matter of colour and luminosity of atmospheric effect. Very interesting was the modest group of small canvases by young Spanish painters recently shown at Wunderlich's Gallery, New York. Most of them were the work of Señor J. H. Beususan, who is now living in that city. Water colours and oils were equally good. Señor Clement exhibited also a large sunlight study of a Seville balcony. It was painted in a crisp and brilliant way, was strong in colour and very decorative. Some clever impressionistic studies by Jardines Sanchez, and an oil figure by J. Morillo completed this clever collection.

THE Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Montreal intends to mark its twenty-fifth anniversary next December by an Exhibition of Historical Portraits at the Art Gallery, Montreal, with the coöperation of the Art Association. The French families have so far, on informal enquiry among them, offered about a hundred, and a very much larger number is expected to select from when regular application is begun. The Society would therefore like particularly to see the English now come out, and are making efforts to have societies and families do so. Very old portraits, objects of historical interest, and portraits of historical personages (this phrase being liberally interpreted), especially in oils, are desired; and every one is requested to forward information that might possibly lead to this end. The Antiquarian Society, P.O., Montreal, should be addressed.

THE STAGE.

ONE of the prettiest Jubilee Festivals in London, which did not however take place until July, the details only lately reaching us, was the "Maske of Flowers," arranged by the Benchers of Gray's Inn at their antique hall. It was on the Twelfth Night, 1613, that the first and only public performance of the "Maske of Flowers" previous to the present revival, was held in the Banqueting House of Whitehall, where it was presented before James I. and his Court, by the gentlemen of Gray's Inn. Anything in the way of plot the masque can hardly be said to have, for the simple reason that it is a masque and not a play. A thing of quaint music, active dance and graceful spectacle, shot with a thin vein of poetic fancy, that was all that could be looked for in a "Maske of Flowers." The fancy in question consists in bringing upon the stage representatives of the two seasons, Winter and Spring, or as the author prefers to call them Invierno and Primavera, who have it in command from their master, the Sun, to devise sports appropriate to their respective characters. The performance at Gray's Inn was honoured by the presence of several members of the Royal Family, and numbers of other distinguished guests. The Master of the Revels (Mr. Arthur a Burrett) delivered a brief prologue, and then immediately assumed the rôle of Invierno, supported by Lady Cadogan as Primavera, who was in her turn attended by a charming bevy of goddesses and other fair ladies, all robed in the height of Jacobean fashion. Songs alternated with dances in the second scene, now stately and pompous, now quick and lively, but all executed with exquisite grace. The Morisco performed by eight masquers (the men turned into flowers) was a truly marvellous exhibition; but the most picturesque part of the pretty play was the dancing of the parting measure, in which the lithe forms of maskers and goddesses all seemed to merge into one mass of creamy waves covered with flowers and working with rhythmical motions. The maskers were recruited from the ranks of the Bar Musical Society, all of whom were costumed in Elizabethan doublet and hose or ruff and farthingale, after designs by the Hon. Louis Wingfield. In the skilful reproduction of the sixteenth century figures, the quaint Morisco, the swaggering Pavane, the romping Galliard and other contrasted measures—the masquers had been admirably drilled by Mr. John d'Aubac, who it was understood, vouched for the complete accuracy of the various figures on the authority of contemporary documents. The music of the masque was rendered by a small orchestra which included a genuine harpsichord. Ten days after the first performance the "Maske of Flowers" was repeated at the Prince of Wales Theatre, in aid of Guy's Hospital. The right of reproduction was secured by Mr. Horace Sedgor, and the original cast of ladies and gentlemen appeared on the boards of this popular theatre.

MRS. LANGTRY returned to New York in the end of July from her naturalisation and trip to the Pacific Slope. She is announced to appear at the Fifth Avenue Theatre on September 18 in "Cleopatra."

WITH regard to Mr. Mansfield's play of "Monsieur," lately presented at the Madison Square Theatre, the tale is a domestic sketch founded on the old story of a girl's love for and marriage with a man who was not acceptable to her family. It treats of all the difficulties which surrounded the young couple during a temporary acquaintance with poverty. Mr. Mansfield has handled his material in an original way, and has put into it much which his own experiences in Bohemia have doubtless taught him. There are many tender thoughts in "Monsieur" which often bring tears between the lines of comedy. In the cast, the author and actor is exceedingly clever as "Jaclot," at times delightfully droll, and at other times almost painfully pathetic. Mr. John Parry makes a distinct success as Charles M. Vernon; he is the realisation of Du Maurier's sketches, and he acts in an easy honest way.

THE five hundredth representation of "Erminie" at the Casino will occur on the 6th prox., and elaborate preparations are being made to mark the occasion. In addition to a souvenir, before the beauty and value of which