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nest Bordes, glows with the light from the forge, veritable fire, throwing into relief the figures of the half-naked workmen to the front of it, and lighting those at the sides. A splendid example of Rougereau is "The Women at the Tomb." Amazed and frightened, and yet with a great gladness, they look into the glory of the tomb beyond. The picture has a beauty of feeling and a delicacy of rendering, very remarkable in the transparency of flesh, not often equalled, and that, of course, does not appeal strongly to all. A slight mention has been made of Raphael Collins' "On the Sea Coast," a group of nude figures dancing so gracefully, so delicate in colour, so altogether charming! Near it hangs "In the Sunshine," by Tourle, a number of rollicking figures chasing each other through the woods. It looks so hot and heavy and altogether coarse after Collins', and yet very few have better caught the effect of sunlight on flesh, and shrub and grass. "The Poor People," by Edouard Dantan, shows a woman with a lantern just entering a most poverty-stricken hut in which the mother lies dead, apparently on the bed, while two children lie in one cot. The contrast between the buxom, sturdy appearance of the rescuer and the forlorn look of everything else is very striking. Bonnet's portraits are three, beautifully modelled and fine in colour, of course. If the work on that of M. Renan's is not a disappointment, at least the subject is. Not for any sentiment expressed, not for mother or child, but yet for its tender, beautiful colour and wonderful composition, one is drawn to look long at the "Virgin's House," by Dubufe, fils. Down the white steps of a white house the virgin comes, holding the babe in her arms, herself clothed in white, while two white doves come fluttering down. The last beams of the low sun send a red glow over all. "High Noon in Provence," by Julien Gagliardini, is a sparkling, brilliant, noontide scene with the blue sea in the foreground and the white houses of Provence clustered on the coast. A strange idea, rather it was to give, "An Eclipse of the Moon," by Luc de Fonvielle, and without reference to a catalogue would not easily be understood. A very well-rendered effect of stagnant water and reeds, is "A Swamp in April," by Rene Fath, hung rather to be well seen, though.

MUSIC AND THE DRAMA.

It is a curious fact that man, by some strange constitution of his nature, sometimes prefers to turn his eyes from the truth, and seeks to grope in darkness and uncertainty, quired. Paradoxes have always had a certain attraction for some minds; it is notable that those who find pleasure in this form of intellectual diversion are often persons who can boast of having received an academic training, and ought to have mastered the Aristotelian principles of logic, and be able to translate that science into practical use for everyday life. Is this condition of mind a moral twist? or, is it only one of the features of that perverse self-deception which sometimes afflicts us all, the desire there may be other reasons for preferring a paradox to the simple truth, self-interest, the desire to champion a faulty friend, the wish to be singular, or the dislike to be as others; each and all of these conditions may be factors in that strange love of paradox. In the case of art, the perverseness may be mixed up with what we call "taste;" on this point cannot dogmatise, and it is vain to dispute the art of music is one peculiarly liable to deceptions. Some abhor one kind of music, and declare another to be heavenly; many form their judgment from the name of the composer, rather than from a mental analysis of the music itself. In cases where the music lacks distinct individuality this adherence to one school or style is by no means an uncommon form of the paradox disease. Tell a pronounced Mendelssohnian who hears for the

first time a piece of, say, Brahms (when Brahms happens to be simple, natural and not indefinite and strained), that the music is by his special idol, and he will accept it joyfully; *per contra*, if only the name Brahms be whispered, the judgment would go quite the other way. Most of us are creatures of prejudice.

The battle of the schools, the fights over styles in opera, the never ceasing contention between the emotional and the scientific sides of music proceed from primary psychological causes too mysterious for us to understand, but the results of which are distinctly apparent. Perhaps one of the strangest forms of musical paradox is to be seen among the devotees of Gregorianism. These persons profess on grounds of religious archaeology to consider the ancient crude tones as alone fit for chanting the psalms. This is an intelligible position to stand upon—though by the way it involves a subsidiary paradox in at the same time accepting and employing the most modern form of all other arts used for religious purposes, from architecture and stained glass, to printed books and gas. But what are we to think of these people when, instead of being content to sing these chants in the bare ancient unison, they employ organs, and use extreme modern chromatic harmony to accompany the chants! It is a form of the musical paradox, art and logic are not admitted into the consideration. To the ears of most of us, these uncouth relics of a long past age sound terribly harsh and distressful, and we protest against such an illogical worship of ugliness. So much for the blind admiration of ancient music, but, as we shall presently perceive, similar paradoxes exist in more modern forms of the art. There are thick and thin admirers of all the great composers, and it seems a canon of these people to accept and exalt every bar which their several idols have written. Their music is always wonderful and unapproachable, despite what the critics say: these enthusiasts do not recognize the truth of the old aphorism, *Nemo mortalium omnibus horis sapit*; they may be all very well for others, but in the case of their hero, it does not apply. And thus it comes to pass that even downright ugliness, melodic intervals, and progressions that all trained ears are compelled to pronounce harsh and abominable, have to be somehow defended, and then comes into view the paradox. Lewes has told us that "Beauty is one of God's gifts," certainly that is a truism that does not find universal acceptance in the musical world.

A remarkable example of this condition has occurred this week, and the event may serve to direct attention to this particular form of illogical hero-worship. In a recent issue of the London *Times* appears a vigorous criticism of Mascagni's "I Rantzau." Of the merits of the new opera we do not propose to speak here. According to our contemporary it is as all round bad as music can be. Its dull libretto, feeble laying out, melody, harmony, orchestration, and colourless characterisation of the several vocal parts are all touched upon with a freedom and boldness quite refreshing to read when we recall the usual colourless operatic notices served up to the public. The able critic of the *Times* says that as next to nothing happens from one end of the opera to the other, "the attention is never diverted from the music, and every ungainly progression makes its full effect upon the ear."

The writer then goes on to observe: "In the Wagnerian trilogy there are to be discovered isolated passages where ugliness is used with artistic intention, as one of the dramatist's resources. In M. Bruneau's 'Le Réve,' hideous sequence of notes are the rule rather than the exception, but they are employed with a logical purpose which cannot but command respect, however little we may enjoy the thing as music."

Now, here we get a startling paradox, coupled with a bold claim that "ugliness" is commendable, and should command our respect, when it "is used with artistic intention." Surely an astonishing assertion to put forth! Not that the idea is quite new. It is a cardinal point of the Wagner cult that their hero is immaculate; the only trouble has been to convince the scoffers at the dreariness and poly-

phonic condition of some of the prophet's music that these so-considered defects are no defects at all, indeed, we are instructed that they are blessings in disguise, rather than blemishes. The *Times* writer has now come to their rescue; he says that in the Wagnerian trilogy all this is done with "artistic intention," and declares, *ex cathedra*, that "the hideous sequence of notes" we find in Bruneau's tiresome "Le Réve" are employed "for a logical purpose which cannot but command respect," and so the matter appears settled. There is no further need of argument, or of appeals to the ear or, for the matter of that, to the intellect of the trained contrapuntist. Thus, ugliness is put upon a pillar, and set up for public worship. The old theory that music is a beautiful, a pleasing, an emotional and logical art is abandoned; "artistic intention" effectually balances patent defects; and "however little we may enjoy the thing as music," we are bidden to set down the peculiarities to this convenient excuse, and respectfully bow our heads, at least, in the cases of Wagner and Bruneau. For, be it observed, no such absolution is accorded to Mascagni's "ungainly progressions"; he is only a young Italian composer, a representative of a school stated to be dead; of course, he cannot be permitted licenses accorded to a Wagner and a Bruneau. Some will say this is not quite fair, and ask how are we individually to perceive and differentiate so indeterminate a thing as "artistic intention," from what some might term an entire absence of inspiration. We cannot answer, save on the thick and thin admiration system.

Perhaps we may be permitted to wonder what would be said to the painter or the sculptor, who advanced by way of excuse for an arm out of drawing and improperly set on to the trunk, that the imperfection was an "artistic intention," purposely done to form a contrast with the fine pose of the head!

Shakespeare puts into the mouth of one of his characters this sentiment: "You undergo too strict a paradox, striving to make an ugly deed look fair." Has music advanced to that point of complete development that nothing more that is fresh and pleasing can be accomplished with the twelve sounds of our scale; and so, in order to exalt the newest composer we are to call his defects virtues, and henceforth to laud cacophony? If so, the present art-mysteries of music are very different from the ethics which obtained in the time of Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schumann.—Ernest Landlaw, in Musical News.

LIBRARY TABLE.

WOMEN OF THE VALOIS COURT. By Imbert de Saint-Amand. Price \$1.25. New York: Scribner's Sons. 1893.

We have spoken so highly of M. de Saint-Amand's previous works on the famous women of the French Court, in the Revolutionary period, that it might seem unnecessary to do more than chronicle the appearance of a volume going back to an earlier time. We must, however, declare that, in some ways, this volume is more interesting than any of those already noticed. Readers of French history will remember that the House of Valois was the second of the great Capet Houses, ending with Henry III and succeeded by the House of Bourbon in the person of Henry IV. Certainly there is no lack of interest in the subjects selected for treatment. First comes Margaret, Queen of Navarre, sister of Francis I, grandmother of Henry IV, and the author of the celebrated *Heptameron*, which has been thought to contest the palm with Boccaccio's *Decameron*, for literary ability and indecency. There is, however, a good deal in the author's plea for this book. "The form," he says, "is licentious, but the foundation is moral. The contrary is true of many productions of our own epoch." This is very reasonable, and the author justifies his statement at length. Still, the *Heptameron* is a little stronger than we like from a woman. Next come Catherine de' Medici and her