

## Art Notes.

The misdeed of the attorney was: he received bills from his intimate friend, M. Barat—alive to-day—signed in blank, for a determined sum that he was to fill up and have discounted. Bellnot not only did so, but added some zeros to the amounts, appropriated the proceeds and disappeared. Rumor says he was killed during the 1848 Revolution. Barat took up the bills and handed the affair over to the public prosecutor and the attorney was sentenced, having never defended his conduct. When his daughter became the wife of Merchant Faure, Barat applied to her husband, in no way legally responsible for his father-in-law's liabilities, to compound the debt; no notice taken of the demand; this was in 1866. When M. Faure became respectively Deputy-Minister and President of the Republic, Barat continued the "nagging," but never receiving any reply. Finally he threw his last card; he threatened to sell the documents connected with Bellnot's swindle and trial, to a group of the President's political enemies, and by the revelation create a scandal that would kill two birds at once: compel M. Faure to resign and and plant additional lead in "Marianne," as the Republic is designated by her foes. Like an excellent tactician, M. Faure met the mysterious and threatening paragraphs as to "the approaching crisis at the Palace of the Elysée," by authorizing a leading journal to unlock the cupboard and exhibit the skeleton *arbi et orbi*. That courageous step has but added to his popularity—and deservedly so. But several extreme anti-Republican journals keep sticking pins, not the less, into the scandal.

As one nail drives out another, so does one scandal another. The Arton, that Panama corrupter of legislators, extradition, is becoming positively an affair of state. The ancient secretary of the detective police at the Home Office has let the cat out of the bag, and by publishing the photos of original official documents, proves that three prime ministers—Messrs. Loubet, Ribot, and Dupuy—while assuring Parliament that they were zealously employed to secure the arrest of Arton, they were all the time negotiating with him to surrender most compromising documents in his possession, and to facilitate his escape. The dogging of him by the French detectives was all make-believe; throwing dust in the eyes. Ex-Premier Loubet, and for evermore an "ex," though accepted, till now, as the coming President of the Senate, confesses the indictment to be a true bill; the two other ex-premiers, Ribot and Dupuy, protest their innocence, and the public cynically smile and agree; they, like the lady, "protest too much." The Chamber has given them a terrible "scalding" and more is certainly in store for them. They all wanted to shield the big guns of their party—the Opportunist—who have been corrupted by Arton, and he holds them by terrible documentary pinchers.

M. Ribot was ejected from office in a quick-march style, because he refused to surrender the Arton legislators; his successor, M. Bourgeois, and reigning premier, is becoming idolized, because he will unearth every concealed legislator and functionary who has fattened on the widow's mites that chiefly made up the capital of the Panama Company. All eyes are fixed upon the hearing of Arton's appeal before the Queen's Bench against being handed over to France. The corrupted—whose 104 names have never been published, including an individual, "X," who has a man-with-the-Iron-Mask mystery about him—hope Arton will not be delivered up, because he would "blow" on the implicated. Sir Edward Read and English public opinion can now comprehend why previous premiers really did not desire to have Dr. Hertz back to France. He, too, might "blow." Minister Bourgeois counts upon the Lord Chief Justice simply ratifying the extradition on the plea of bankruptcy, and undertakes that Arton will be tried for that misdemeanor alone while being utilized as a "Crown witness" in a process of Panama corruption that will be re-instituted against the screened fold of black sheep now trembling at their doom. M. Bourgeois forgets that the Chief Justice will examine the appeal after hearing both sides, and will take into account the political element. To prove the latter, Arton's counsel will unfold, as only a British law court can, the whole of the Panama swindle and its corruptions, therein including the depositions—as a witness—of Dr. Hertz and his documentary bullets. After the hearing of the appeal and the Torquemada cross-examinations, under the full glare of the search-light, any further proceedings in France cannot reveal many novelties.

Paris, Dec. 14, 1895,

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WITH all the talk of war that is abroad the Toronto Club shows an admirable equanimity in busying itself with matters relating to the arts of peace; and I think it may fairly be congratulated on the public spirit it has shown in embarking on an enterprise in which there can be no commercial interest, its only reward being the reflection that a large number of people will derive pleasure and profit at its hands. The special notice relating to this enterprise says: "A loan exhibition of pictures will be held in the Toronto Club, commencing on Friday the 10th and ending on Saturday the 18th of January, upon which days, Sundays excepted, the exhibition will be open from 3.30 until 6.30 p.m., and from 8 until 12 p.m. Admission will be by cards issued in blank by the secretary to members of the Club for their guests (ladies included), but each card must be countersigned by a member of the Club before presentation. Light refreshments will be served by the Club to members and their guests during the afternoon exhibitions; and in the evening upon the order of members. Members also have the privilege of inviting their guests to dinner or supper. Afternoon visitors may remain for dinner as guests of members, and in such cases no additional cards of admission will be required for the evening exhibition."

Looked at in the light of the matter-of-fact prose of the Club's special notice, it is hard to imagine that any other feast will be offered to visitors beside what emanates from the hands of the *chef*; but the task which I have set out to accomplish is to disabuse the public mind of this idea, and to point out the real significance of the banquet of pictures which is to give an unwonted splendour to the sober chambers of the Club. It is an unfortunate fact that the public appreciation of a great achievement in the pictorial art is much less keen than is the case with the sister art of music; and out of a thousand people who would slop through the rain to hear Melba sing (and who would pay a big fee to boot), not ten would cross the street on a balmy day in June to see Turner's "Ulysses" or Regnault's portrait of General Prim. It were idle for me to speculate on the reasons for this comparative apathy, but probably one of the foremost is the fact that most people (even the musically uneducated), enjoy indulging the sense of hearing by listening to beautiful sounds—a kind of oral sensuality. But comparatively few know how great is the delight which comes with the frank surrender of the sense of sight to the enjoyment of splendour of colour, nobility of form and graciousness of line. It is not altogether the public's fault; it is largely because the greater works of painting, which should be as luminously intelligible as a song, have been girt about with whole fog-banks of literary criticism—criticism which is applicable to a novel or a treatise on theology, but which is quite inapplicable to a work of art produced during a few hours of happy inspiration by a man whose senses were riotously active and whose intellect was only valuable in producing unity of effect in the result—a proper degree of cohesiveness—in fact, in limiting it within the bounds of sanity. There is no greater sinner on these lines than Ruskin who makes a picture a text on which to hang a sermon on the degeneracy of man, and who uses an innocent water-colour as a spring-board for launching himself into unfathomable oceans of rhetoric.

It is a sufficient guarantee of the merit of the coming exhibition to merely state that amongst the collectors whose names figure on the list of contributors to it are Sir Wm. Van Horne, Sir Donald Smith, and Messrs. Ross, Angus, E. B. Osler, Drummond, Cassels, and Greenshields. Montreal, which is richer than Toronto in art treasures, has promised pictures in the most generous manner; and as the monetary value of these works is very high, the public spirit which is shown by their owners in exposing them to the risks of the journey is all the more to be commended. If I were appealing to an American audience I should be inclined to mention some of the prices given for individual pictures, but as I expect their artistic beauties to outweigh their pecuniary worth in the estimation of the enlightened readers of THE WEEK, I lay no stress on the gross consideration of these masterpieces as articles of commerce. I hope to be able, next week, to enumerate some of the pictures and their authors; and I think I can promise examples of Corot, Troyon, Fortuny, Neuheys and Daubigny. I hope,