

Art Notes.

IT is rather surprising that Leighton, the painter of languid beauties and gracefully idle athletes, should make his mark as a sculptor with a statue which is about as violent in action as anything that has yet been accomplished in the art. Strange, too, that the man of Grecian ideals should leave the easy gestures of the Parthenon period of sculpture and accomplish a work with the qualities of the comparatively decadent Greco-Roman period.

His "Athlete struggling with a python" has few equals in violence of movement in the domain of sculpture; in fact the famous Laocoon group is the only one which I can recall at this moment (amongst ancient marbles) which has the same amount of contortion and straining of muscle. Even the "Slaves," "David," and "Cupid" of Michel Angelo are reposeful as compared with the twisted figure of Leighton's "Athlete"; and the "Discobolus" and "Fighting Gladiator" are creatures of rhythmic curve in comparison. But the defence of Leighton's statue is the fact that it is successful. It is a perfect expression of the idea which he wished to convey. It represents the effort on the part of a young Greek hero of the games to subdue, by muscular strength alone, the awful power of an enormous serpent. From the standpoint of realism I question the possibility of the incident—that is to say, I doubt if even a Sandow could hold in check for ten seconds the deadly embrace of a twelve foot python. But that is no reason for rejecting a subject which offers possibilities for heroic sculpture; and Leighton has a good precedent in the Laocoon group for portraying a struggle between a man and a serpent, although in the latter work the reptile is gaining the victory.

A visitor to the South Kensington Museum will encounter Leighton's statue in one of the picture rooms upstairs. And he will have the opportunity of comparing it with the works of other masters. Downstairs are to be seen Michel Angelo's "David" (a plaster cast); the same artist's "Cupid" (original marble); Alfred Stevens' original plaster model for the groups which support the Wellington tomb, and other examples of muscular energy in marble, plaster and bronze. The "Athlete" is made in the latter material, and the dramatic intensity of the design is heightened by the deep colour, the shining lights and dull shadows of the material. The natural rich quality of the bronze has been allowed to dominate, for the most part, but here and there the tendency to variety of tint has been somewhat heightened by oxidization, and some pretty greens are the result.

The action of the figure is not unbeautiful in spite of its force. The youth is firmly planted on his feet; the right arm is held out before him, the hand having a deadly grip of the throat (if one can use the term) of the python; and the writhing monster, with one coil round the waist of the hero, and another round a foot is at a disadvantage, because its muscular antagonist has frustrated it in the intention of winding its horrid length around his body.

The President is not often given to sculpture, although his delight in it is sufficiently manifest by the marbles and bronzes in his possession. It was for him that Alfred Gilbert executed his beautiful figure of the hapless Icarus. But the President's work in sculpture is almost confined to the modelling of figures and groups for his large painted compositions, in which the contours of limbs and the disposition of the folds of drapery are all the more accurate and complete for having been carefully elaborated in clay.

E. WYLY GRIER.

There have been an unusual number of small exhibitions of pictures within the last few weeks, held in the various art galleries of Toronto, and that they are appreciated has been shown by the fact that thousands of people have visited them. At Ambrose Kent's galleries some very good pictures are shown, amongst the contributors being Messrs. O'Brien, Reid, Knowles, Fraser, Sherwood, Chaloner, Gagen, and Ede, and Mrs. Dignam.

Mr. F. McGillvry Knowles has a large collection of oil paintings on view at Matthews' art gallery, the subjects being of great variety with every possible effect of light.

At Bain's gallery Mr. O'Brien and Mr. Homer Watson

have a number of oil paintings and water colours, and there are also a great many fine pictures from the French Gallery, Bond Street, London, both in oils and water colours.

It is rumored that Sir W. Van Horne and Mr. James Ross, of Montreal, and Mr. E. B. Osler have kindly consented to lend part of their collections of paintings for the purpose of a loan exhibition to be held shortly in the Toronto Club.

The Art Institute of Chicago has been the scene of a series of exhibitions, greater in number and importance than ever before held there. The exhibition in oils and water colours of the Danish and Glasgow schools was succeeded by the annual exhibition of American paintings and sculpture which closed on the 8th Dec. At present the joint work of the Pallet Club (which is composed entirely of women) and the Art Students' League, is being shown, and comprises sculpture, paintings in oil, miniature water colours, pastels, black and white compositions, pen and ink drawing and pencil sketches.

Mr. William Chase, of New York, is forming a class of art students to spend February, March and April in Madrid, for the purpose of work and study. The party is to sail on the 22nd January by the North German Lloyd steamer *Kaiser Wilhelm III.*, and the fare for the round trip is to be only \$195.13 for each person, to include a return journey by Paris, Havre and Southampton. In '97, after taking another class to Holland, Mr. Chase intends to give up teaching and devote his whole time to painting. His studio in Tenth St. is shortly to be given up, and his collection, which has been the work of years, and comprises not only many valuable pictures, but also tapestries, porcelain, bronzes, and many fine old pieces of furniture, is to be sold by auction.

To-morrow afternoon Mr. Carl Ahrens will have on exhibition at his studio a number of his own paintings. The view will be a private one.

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This Our Land.

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This Canada of ours I celebrate,
For her dominion is from sea to sea;
The Promised Land for nations yet to be!
Coal for their hearth-fires waits 'neath shale and slate;
The bunch-grass holds in fief the prairies great,
Their fields for wheat; the sombre lordly tree
Of their homes croons; the tides of Acadie
Swing round earth singing to Vancouver's gate;—
While swift the flying shuttles of the trains
Weave West to East, and mined copper veins
Make nerves for thought; the mountains with their grand
Still patience wait to see the New Race stand,
With old Norse valour, on her sea-like plains;—
A brave strong race, earth's sceptre in her hand.

WILLIAM P. MCKENZIE.

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The Future Life.*

THE subject of man's destiny after death must ever be one of the greatest interest, and this from different points of view. Among believers in the Christian revelation there can, of course, be no question as to a future life. "If a man die, shall he live again?" is a question which has been answered conclusively for the Christian by Him who brought life and immortality to light. But even among these there exist many differences of opinion in regard to the future of those who are rejected by Christ.

But this is not all. Outside the boundaries of the Christian Church there are in our own days—probably in all ages—not a few who do not regard the testimony of Christ as final, and who still declare themselves as uncertain whether death is only a temporary sleep or a sleep which knows no waking. And to such persons the question must be one of profound interest, and, one might believe, the doubt on such a subject must sometimes be agonizing. To both of these classes the volume of Dr. Salmond, now before

* "The Christian Doctrine of Immortality." By Professor S. D. F. Salmond, D.D. Price 14s. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. Toronto: Fleming H. Revell & Co. 1895.