

It is objected to many of Rubens' pictures that their figures exhibit a voluptuousness of outline and finish which hardly consists with the highest art in the representation especially of maiden purity and beauty. This blemish, if such it may be called, is more visible in his later pictures.

Considering that he was a politician as well as artist, and made repeated trips to London, Paris, and Madrid, it is not easy to see how he found time to produce so many pictures. Nearly a thousand, many of them of colossal dimensions, bear his name. His works found their way, even in his life-time, far and wide. Many of the choicest of them are now contained in the respective galleries of London, Madrid, Paris, Munich, Vienna, and St. Petersburg.

The Antwerp Museum contains also numerous pictures by Quentin Massys, Van Dyck, Teniers, and other distinguished artists, who flourished in the golden age of Flemish art, and did so much to make Antwerp a cradle of art second perhaps to none but Florence.

I content myself now with alluding to the masterpiece of only one of these—

THE DEAD SAVIOUR,

by Quentin Massys. It was completed in 1508, and formerly served as an altar-piece in the Cathedral. The funeral cortege is represented as halting at the foot of Mt. Calvary, while on the way from the cross to the Sepulchre. The body of the Saviour is partially sustained by Nicodemus, on whose right Joseph of Arimathea supports the head with one hand, while with the other he removes the remaining shreds of the crown of thorns. The mother in an agony of grief kneels near the body of her Son, and is supported by St. John. Her face is almost as pale as that of the dead body itself.

Adjacent to the principal portal of the Cathedral is an old well, protected by a canopy of iron, which Quentin Massys executed, as the inscription on his tombstone adjoining the entrance to the tower of the Cathedral Records. He was originally a blacksmith from Louvain, who came to

seek his fortune at Antwerp, where this canopy of iron remains a specimen of his skill. The romantic story is that he became enamoured of the daughter of a painter, and to propitiate the father and win the daughter, he exchanged the anvil for the palette. His wooing and painting were successful, and he did much towards raising the school of Antwerp to a celebrity equal to that of Bruges and Ghent.

On the south side of the Cathedral stands a bronze statute of Rubens 13 feet high, while the pedestal supporting it measures 20 feet. At the feet of the statute lie scrolls and books, together with brush, palette, and hat, indicating the functions of the master, as diplomatist and statesman, as well as painter.

THIS DEGENERATE AGE.

Surely this age is one of degeneracy, both moral and physical. So we are wont to aver in some of our fits of moralizing; and we are sometimes charitable enough to class ourselves among the unworthy crowd. The past we think of as having been all bright and beautiful, as in poetry or fiction we sometimes picture the days of childhood and youth; a time when troubles were unknown, and continual sunshine lit up the smooth pathway of life; but soon memories of youthful trials, of unbridled and unsatisfied ambition recoil on our imagined felicitude, and remind us that we but dream of dreams. Admit at any time the element of distance, and the consequent variation of objects is indeed wonderful.

As in looking along a line of points after the eye has reached a certain distance, they seem to unite and form an unbroken line, so as we look back into ages remote from our own, we seem to see the great men who are the representatives of the times standing out as in an unbroken line or phalanx. In some similar way we indulge that principle inherent in our nature,* to which Horace alludes when he says that we think every position in life superior to that which we