

# THE ART JOURNAL.

## A PIONEER COLLECTION OF ENGLISH PICTURES.

A CERTAIN French critic begins his review of the British section of the last great Paris show with this curious reflection:—"Unhappily for the English, happily for ourselves, British opinion (admiration for our own school of Art) hardly clears the Channel; it comes to a full stop at the limits of the various Continental schools. More or less distinguished at home as they are, the celebrities of our neighbours seldom acquire the glory and universal vogue which carry a name to the ends of the earth, and turn a soldier, a statesman, or an artist into a sort of grandiose incarnation of humanity, and make him part of the patrimony of every race."

The satisfaction with ignorance here implied is thoroughly characteristic, but, putting that aside, these lines contain a truth as to the position of English Art in the world which often puzzles those who can form a right judgment as to its relative excellence. The true explanation is probably very simple. English Art is, above all others, individual. It is easy, for instance, to get a liking for the Dutch school as a whole, and from that to descend to especial preferences; but a liking for one English painter seldom implies one for another. The critic who has "got" Turner, has to begin all over again with Constable; and admiration for Millais does not help one



*Venetian Courtship. By Henry Woods, A.R.A. Engraved by Carl Dietrich.*

to love Burne Jones. Again, English pictures have always been very dear. During the hundred and thirty years which cover our genuine activity in picture-making, our good things have been beyond the reach of foreign purses. To be able neither to buy a work of Art, nor to fit it into one's accepted formulæ, is quite enough to deprive it of popularity with all but the fairest and most competent judges.

"Omne ignotum pro magnifico" little applies to Art. How ready most of us are to deny Art at all in that which is unfamiliar! What would have been said to one who talked but a few years ago of Swedish, or Russian, or

American painting? He would have had for answer exactly what was said beyond the Straits of Dover of our own school before the Exhibition of 1855, namely, that there was none. In 1855 the French awoke to the fact that we had at least a number of very remarkable painters; by 1867 they had forgotten the lesson, and the show of that year did little to refresh it; but in 1878 their indifference disappeared. In some quarters it was succeeded by enthusiasm, and during the seven years which have elapsed many things have combined to prevent a recurrence of the old contempt.

Ten years ago the English school was represented abroad

by three or four pictures at the Hermitage, by two Boningtons and a Constable in the Louvre, and by a stray canvas here and there in minor galleries, which were good for nothing but to make us wonder how they had strayed so far from home. Even yet things are much as they were. At the Louvre, indeed, there is a whole room—it is scarcely less than 12 feet square!—given up to English pictures; but in no other foreign collection can even a glimmering of the truth as to the status of English Art be obtained. But before many months are over a really serious breach in this exclusiveness will be made. The collection brought together by Mr. G. C. Schwabe, and lately at Yewden, near Henley, will then be at Hamburg, Mr. Schwabe's native town, where a fine annexe to the Museum is being prepared to receive it. The collection consists altogether of about one hundred and twenty pictures, three-fifths of which are English. It cannot be called strictly representative. The "St. John's Wood school" finds too large a place in it for that. But it includes a number of canvases which those who have the fame of English painting at heart may well rejoice to see among its champions. At present the pictures hang in five rooms and on the staircase of Mr. Schwabe's house in Kensington Palace Gardens. The house is No. 19, one of those in the style of the Italian Renaissance on the western side of the road. Both lighting and arrangement are so good that the collection may be examined with much greater comfort than is usual in a private house.

Taking the rooms in their order, the first thing we come to is Sir John Millais's small study for the 'Minuet' which was exhibited a few years ago at The Fine Art Society's. It is a delightful little sketch, better perhaps in colour than the large picture itself and full of the most subtle manipulation; beyond it hang an excellent Edouard Frère (peasant girls hanging up a crucifix on a cottage wall), a brilliant Calderon, and one of those Boningtons in which he gives us a sky as lofty and luminous as that of Vermeer's 'Delft,' or of a 'Hampstead Heath' by Constable. Next to the Bonington hangs a second Edouard Frère, large and "important," but, on the whole, less delightful than the first; beyond it come a Patrick Nasmyth and a Copley Fielding—both average examples—and on the other side of the window the scene from Capri which we engrave (page 4). This is the work of M. G. Brennan, a promising young Irishman who came to a premature end some few years ago. The subject is happy. A child runs after the old *tambour* and taps curiously on the stretched parchment. The action is slight enough, but it gives the touch of human nature and the pleasant arabesque which are all an artist requires. Next to the Brennan hangs a fine example of Mdlle. Henriette Browne, and next to that a little landscape which, Mr. Schwabe tells me, was a standing puzzle to artists as well as connoisseurs until he had the name attached to it. It is a mountain landscape. The foreground is forest; blue hills rise over the trees, and a grey storm-cloud rolls over all. In both conception and handling it is extremely like some of Mr. Alfred Hunt's work in oil, but the name below it is W. Dyce, R.A. Mr. Schwabe has two more examples of this once over-rated, now perhaps no less under-rated painter, the well-known 'King Joash shooting the Arrow of Deliverance,' and one of the best things he ever did, a delightful 'Meeting of Jacob and Rachel.' One of the most charming pictures in the Dresden Gallery is Palma's picture of this same subject, long ascribed to Giorgione. In that the two meet and frankly

kiss. Here, however, Rachel shrinks modestly, while Jacob's gesture is much the same as on the Venetian canvas. Dyce's colour was never fine, but in this instance it is at least inoffensive. The drawing is very good, better and less academic than in the more famous Joash, in which, again, the tints are cold and black. Below the Joash hangs a brilliant bit of sunlight by Mr. Hamilton Macallum, whose neighbourhood is trying to the older picture. Before quitting this room we must pause a moment before 'Venetian Courtship,' by Mr. Henry Woods. Mr. Schwabe, who was one of Mr. Woods' earliest admirers, has four of his pictures, and this is the best of them all (page 1). The scene is one of the numerous little quays—canal-side *campos*—which occur on the smaller canals, and afford convenient spots for repairing gondolas, etc. The story tells itself. Another Woods is a picture of the Rialto market, and a third a street-corner with fruit stalls and the usual Venetian crowd. These are all distinguished by the fine eye for "value," the good colour and the consummate manipulation with which their author captured his A.R.A.-ship but a few years ago.

The chief picture, perhaps, in the second room is a very good example of Calderon, known as 'Sighing his soul into his lady's face.' A pair of lovers are in a boat together, the man leaning towards his mistress. The picture is painted with great solidity; it is well composed, and good in colour. A second work from the same hand finds a place in the room. This is the 'Gloire de Dijon,' which we engrave (page 3). The slight emptiness of the conception is to some extent made up for by brilliant colour and breadth of handling. Mr. Schwabe has seven Calderons in all, one of them a portrait of himself and Mrs. Schwabe inspecting an addition to their gallery. To the same school as Mr. Calderon's work belongs Mr. G. D. Leslie's graceful 'By Celia's Arbour,' which also hangs in the drawing-room.

A writer in the July number of *Blackwood*, a true *laudator temporis acti*, laments that we have fallen far below "the culminating period of English Art, the period when the old rooms in Trafalgar Square rejoiced in the presence of Callcott, Collins, Turner, Etty, Mulready, Maclise, Dyce, Leslie, E. M. Ward, Webster, Poole, Landseer, Watson-Gordon, John Philip, David Roberts, Creswick, and Stanfield." Now, I wonder how he explains the disastrous effect of a good modern picture upon the productions of several who appear in this droll list. Many of his heroes have, of course, taken their places among the permanencies, but as for others, such as Collins, Maclise, Ward, Creswick, and even Stanfield, many things are sent to the Academy every year which would knock the nature out of their best work. Mr. Schwabe has a good Stanfield, the 'Bay of Ischia,' a first-rate Creswick, 'On the Conway,' a fair Collins, a 'Coast Scene with Figures,' and an average Maclise, the 'Babes in the Wood,' but no one of them would come scathless from a comparison with some of the sincere and direct studies of nature to be found in every modern exhibition. Put such a thing, for instance, as the Macallum alluded to above beside the Stanfield; there can be no question as to which would stand the ordeal best, and the explanation is to be sought only in the fact that the former is more in harmony with the taste of the day. Besides the four pictures I have named, Mr. Schwabe has examples of Callcott, Copley Fielding, Turner, W. Muller, and John Linnell. Of these the Muller is the best, but taken together they afford a fair notion as to what our landscapists of the last generation aimed at.

Retracing our steps to the drawing-room, the large Calderon is succeeded by a P. F. Poole, which was engraved in this journal a good many years ago; the subject is a pair of Highland lovers parting on the seashore in the moonlight, while a boat waits to transport the man to an emigrant ship in the offing. Next come a small but excellent Landseer, 'The Poacher;' an interior by Mr. Thomas Faed, and a coast scene by Mr. Hook, painted in 1865. The subject is a young woman gathering seaweed, in which she is helped by a child who can scarcely toddle. Sir Frederick Leighton's 'Biondina,'

well known by Mr. Cousins's engraving; Mr. Yeames' 'Last Bit of Scandal;' Mr. Val Prinsep's 'A bientôt,' lately etched for this Journal; and a very pleasant landscape by the late Auguste Bonheur, also hang in this room. With the exception of the last named all these are so well known that description here would be superfluous. The fame of M. Auguste Bonheur has been rather overshadowed by that of his sister, but this landscape, and another in Mr. Schwabe's collection, show him to have possessed a faculty of artistic conception of which few traces are to be found in her work. Mdlle. Bonheur, indeed, has seldom produced a real picture. As a realistic, or rather naturalistic, painter of animals she no doubt deserves the success that she has won, but it is likely enough that the time may come when her brother's pictures will be not less sought after than her own.

In the dining-room the principal things are two landscapes by Achenbach—the Düsseldorf painter whose seventieth birthday has just been celebrated; the scene from Albert Dürer's life by G. Koller, which we are engraving; Mr. Briton Riviere's 'Last Spoonful,' of which we shall speak later on, and Mr.

Herbert's large oil study or cartoon for his wall picture of 'Moses with the Tables of the Law' in the Peers' Robing-room at Westminster. In colour and impast the two Achenbachs are far indeed below our English standard, but they are well composed, and painted by a hand which at least thoroughly knew what it meant to do. This same assurance is to be found in the Dürer picture, but Koller is a far better colourist than Achenbach. His tints have none of the inward glow and transparency that we look for in English work, but they *are* tints, and they harmonize one with another. The

story he tells has been told, with variations, of almost every artist who has had dealings with kings. The Emperor Maximilian visited Dürer's studio while the painter was working at some tall canvases requiring a ladder. Wishing to point out something to Maximilian, Dürer asked one of his suite to steady the steps for a moment. The noble demurred, 'when Max at once did what was wanted himself, saying he could make nobles by the score, but only God could make a Dürer. Such a subject is one of those which painters had better avoid, and so is that treated in the 'Paternal Counsel' of Duverger.



*Gloire de Dijon. By P. H. Calderon, R.A. Engraved by Carl Dietrich.*

Here an old peasant on his death-bed tells his sons he has left them a hidden treasure if they will only dig for it, a "moral tale" which is too independent of action and material accessory to be paintable. The ideals of the school to which Duverger belongs are so distinct from those to which we are accustomed in this country, that his art, like that of Achenbach, would stand little chance of favour in an English gallery. But our painters might at least take a lesson from him in two respects, in composition and in that modest perfection of drawing in which lay so much of the strength of the



Dutch school. These qualities are again exemplified in a small picture by Poitevin, in which the blessing of a French fishing-boat before its first expedition is portrayed. With the exception of a Mulready or two, I don't know that it would be possible to point to a single genre picture, at least in our *ancien école*, in which what Ingres called "la probité de l'Art" is so well attended to as in this modest little canvas.

In the next room the most interesting things are a Horace Vernet, 'Napoléon à Bassano,' a portrait of Mr. Schwabe himself by Mr. H. T. Wells, R.A., a fair Gallait, and an excellent example of the Norwegian school from the brush of Mr. A. Tidemand. In essentials this is strangely like the work of our own genre painters at the beginning of the century. It is in tone a Wilkie, but not so transparent, and in action a Bird.

We now come to the last room of all, the billiard-room, which, so far as our own painters are concerned, is the *salle d'honneur*. Here

we encounter a good specimen of John Philip; Mr. Orchardson's 'Voltaire'; the fine Creswick already alluded to; a splendid Colin Hunter, the 'Mussel-Gatherers'; Mr. Pettie's 'A Death Warrant'; Mr. G. D. Leslie's 'Nausicaa'; and a good example of Mr. H. W. B. Davis's Highland landscapes. Of each of these we may fairly say that it is representative

of some one salient feature of our school, and of three at least that they are first-rate works on their merits. Mr. Orchardson is one of the six or eight men on whom the fame of our Art in this last quarter of the nineteenth century will rest. In the opinion of not a few good judges he unites more of the qualities which go to make a great painter of genre than any other living artist. But he is no prolific creator. It is easy enough to remember his chief productions from year to year. In 1880 he painted 'Napoleon on the *Bellerophon*'; in 1883 he gave us 'Voltaire'; in 1884 the 'Mariage de Convenance'; in 1885 the 'Salon of Mme. Récamier'; and from the purely technical standpoint the best of these is the 'Voltaire.' The theme is not of the happiest. There is too much outside the canvas. Unless we are familiar with the adventures of M. "Arouet"—as, no doubt, we all of us ought to be—we cannot guess what the quarrel may be between this furious little man and the thirteen cold-faced gentlemen round the table. But in

time the picture will itself provide the remedy, just as Terburg's 'Peace of Munster,' or any other famous rendering of an unpictorial subject, has had to do. And in the matters of colour, of manipulative dexterity, of linear harmony and of deep suggestive chiaroscuro, no living painter could beat it. In colour Mr. Pettie's 'Death Warrant' is a worthy pendant to the 'Voltaire.' The animation, the variety, the skill in composition, in the arrangement and painting of accessories and in the furnishing of the shadows, which help to give the one picture so rich a significance, are wanting in the other; but Mr. Pettie's tints are Venetian, and in some passages we find a vigour of modelling and a breadth of brush not unworthy of Peter Paul himself. Look, for instance, at the florid senator on the left, the old man in brown fur and plush. He was painted from the artist's father, and as a piece of realistic art he is superb. The senator beyond him, to our right, is Mr. Briton Riviere, but his beard is the beard of

Mr. Davis. The 'Mussel-Gatherers' is one of the best things Mr. Colin Hunter has done. It was painted in 1881. Mr. Leslie's 'Nausicaa,' which is to be shortly reproduced in these pages as an etching, was at the Academy some ten years ago. The name is no more than an excuse for painting pretty girls in attractive attitudes and among pleasant surroundings. For suavity of line and for pleas-



Capri. By M. G. Brennan. Engraved by J. D. Cooper.

ing colour it is perhaps Mr. Leslie's masterpiece. In the hall and on the staircase good examples of Mr. F. Goodall ('The Head of the House at Prayer'), Mr. H. S. Marks ('Author and Critics'), and Mr. G. A. Storey ('An Irish Cousin') have found places; and I might, had space allowed, have done more than note the presence in the various rooms of excellent works by Ary Scheffer, Carl Haag, B. Vautier, J. E. Hodgson, E. Gill, S. W. Cooke, Patrick Nasmyth, and D. Wvynfield.

We now come our frontispiece, Riviere, R.A. The evident *raison d'* affects the animal meal on the table, the crowd around has taught the emperor must come in eventually they are apparen

they eagerly discount the chances as to whose mouth it will reach, whether hers or one of theirs, and if the latter, which. The picture, to a certain extent, repeats the idea contained in another of Mr. Riviere's works, where a flock of ducks eagerly pursue one of their number who holds a frog in his beak.

Such is the collection with which Mr. Schwabe is about to enrich his native city. His noble gift is accompanied by conditions which are likely to secure its usefulness and to put it beyond damage from the natural prejudice with which,

at first, a collection of English pictures might be received in North Germany. It is to be placed in rooms of its own, to the cost of which Mr. Schwabe has contributed; the donor or his nominee is to arrange it, and the pictures, once hung, are to remain in their places without disturbance for twenty years. The stream of gifts to our own national collection has of late shown a tendency to dry up. May the munificence of Mr. Schwabe stimulate some of our own collectors to again increase its volume.

WALTER ARMSTRONG.

## FRANCESCO JERACE.

THE artistic power of modern Italy seems to have concentrated itself in Naples. It is as though Phœbus Apollo, that ardent lover of the sea-swept town, endowed the inhabitants of his favourite city with a special power of plastic expression. Indeed, in all matters pertaining to handicraft, the Neapolitans possess an almost fatal facility, for it often tempts them to sacrifice real study to momentary effect, and notably has this been the case of late with the Neapolitan sculptors, who, in their desire to attain something new, in their perfectly legitimate aim to emancipate themselves from rigid and fossil tradition, have somewhat forgotten the exigencies of their material and the limitations imposed upon them by the stone. One result is a form of sculpture that degenerates into unpermissible vagaries, which treads too closely in the footsteps of painting, and strives to ignore the barrier that separates the faculties. The artist who finds the happy mean between spent and rigid classicism and modern naturalism, is the artist who most truly represents our epoch; and this artist modern Naples has produced in

Francesco Jerace, whose works we lately had the opportunity of admiring in London, and who is, in the best sense of the word, a typical modern Italian sculptor, one whose very real ability is acknowledged by his countrymen, and who, young though he is, has already made a good name for himself

throughout the Peninsula. The wild mountainous district of Calabria gave birth to this artist, who saw the light at Polistena in 1853. From babyhood he showed a passion for Art, and when he succeeded in gaining admission into the Academy at Naples, he carried off successively every prize for which he competed. He very soon proved himself one

of the most versatile of modern Neapolitan sculptors, showing an equal facility in the production of those bits taken from actual life, so favoured by that school, as in the rendering of portrait busts, of ideal statues, and in the domain of monumental sculpture, that branch in which modern Neapolitan Art seems almost lacking, while in very truth it is the head and corner stone of the sculptor's profession. Thus at the 1880 Exhibition of Turin, Jerace was represented by no less than seven works of seven different characters. This is, of course, youthful exuberance, which will, which indeed has already, settled down and found its groove; but none the less the fact that Jerace thus attempted all branches of his Art has had its excellent uses, in that it has

saved him from falling into mannerism, and has developed in him an original and individual style, in which the peculiarities of the different schools are blended most felicitously and sympathetically. Modern romanticism is combined in him with correct classic tradition, and while his modelling is



*Ariadne. Engraved by R. S. Lueders.*







PAINTED BY G. D. LESLIE, R.A.

ETCHED BY C. O. MURRAY

# NAUSICAA AND HER MAIDENS

FROM THE PICTURE IN THE POSSESSION OF G. C. SCHWABE ESQ.