NOTES.

Wanted a Bureau of Art Revision. Such, The New Age believes, is one of the pressing needs of to-day. Accordingly it has set itself to the manifold interests of the Art world.

“A bureau of art revision!” I think I hear someone exclaim. “What in the name of thunder is that?” I admit the term is neither a particularly fascinating nor illuminating one. Indeed to some persons who are not interested in our present form of civilisation it will convey no meaning whatever. But to others who are conscious that we live in an age of organisation and bureaux it will have its full significance.

“And what does this bureau propose to do?” One proposed benefit is the reversal of the present state of art affairs. It hopes to perform the service of turning freaks into works of art instead of turning art into the works of freaks. For instance, there is a wearisome monotony in the make-up of our present-day art critics, even of our most responsible journals. They are lacking in balance, honesty, imagination, in a proper sense of their duty; they are either too young or too old or too timid, but never too bold; they do not suit their posts; they need sorting out, arranging, amplifying, and revising. An overdose of them has made the public turn in wrong directions for its art, and it has wandered, drugged and dazed, into dark tunnels where it now remains gasping for fresh air.

“Who is going to do the revising?” it may be asked. Mr. Walter Crane in his letter replies: 

I quite think it would be a good thing if artists would express their views openly on art matters and all that concerns the welfare and prospects of art. And Mr. F. H. S. Shepherd, dealing with the same matter says:

As a matter of fact, in my opinion no one has written on art whose works do not exhibit about an equal proportion (at their best) of sense and nonsense; but being a painter myself, I, perhaps naturally, feel that the writings of painters occasionally exhibit a higher percentage of sense, so that, from that point of view, I should think your supplement might be extremely interesting.

I might point out to Mr. Shepherd that in one particular of his opinion painters themselves will entirely concur. From many other letters I gather that the bureau of revision should be controlled and directed by painters themselves.

These letters come from artists who, like Whistler, are naturally interested in any efforts made by painters to prove they are alive. Of course there are painters on the other side who have made Wilde’s discovery, that there were once two painters called Benjamin West and Paul Delaroche, who rashly lectured upon art. As of their works nothing at all remained, Wilde concluded that they had explained themselves away, his conclusion being, “to be great is to be misunderstood.” I fear this will be Mr. Robert Anning’s fate if he persists in saying:

I find I haven’t anything that I want to say in the Press.

To tell you the truth, I think that if the papers were forbidden to say anything about artists at all it might be a good thing for art. Nevertheless, I expect you will get over interesting matter. I find that I generally read whatever I come across about art and artists, though theoretically I feel that it would be better left unpublished.

Mr. Anning appears to have some doubt, not openly expressed, as to whether a painter is a judge of painting. I too have a doubt as to whether a culprit who treats prison as though it were his private residence is a judge of painting. Mr. Anning assures me he does not write—i.e., he does not write in a deliberate, precise, and formal manner. Well, I should like to invite him to write in his own humorous, self-expressive way, and I would guarantee that he would write in the columns of this journal for more than an hour with really astonishing humour and eloquence on the absolute uselessness of all efforts of artists to air their own grievances. And he would succeed in proving to the entire satisfaction of everyone, including himself, that the artist is the only one who can write charmingly and convincingly on his own subject. He is indeed, when he likes, a master of expression. And in this opinion Mr. Anning would, as I suggest, receive the firm support of Mr. Anning himself.

“Well then,” a painter inquires, “if we are to do the talking what are we to talk about? What is to be the ground of our complaint?” I reply everything concerning Art that is not exactly as it should be. And there is nothing concerning Art exactly as it should be it means the ground of your complaint covers the whole wide domain of Art itself. Art and Science (Art in relation to the individual and Society, in psychology, biology, and sociology); Art and Philosophy (Aesthetic and the nature of Art); Art and Ethics (Art in the abstract); Art in the concrete, in its many and varied forms (Architecture, Painting, Sculpture, Music, Drama, and Literature); Art and Politics (the encouragement, protection, and promotion of Art); Art and Economics (Art Education and Art in its relation to the prosperity and advancement of the individual and the race); Art and Sex (Art as it concerns the relations of the sexes, as shown in the work by Finck).

Of the great multitude of questions springing from these various fields perhaps the most important and urgent arise in the regions of politics and economics. The main question which is agitating the minds of artists to-day is not that of producing works of art, but that of the conditions under which works of art may be produced. And the grim fact is that these conditions are about as bad as they possibly could be.

To those persons who have a clear vision it is apparent there is a giant conspiracy afoot to rob the artist of the reward of his labour, and to prevent him from producing work save that which shall enrich others. Greed and Ignorance are abroad, and behind them a far-reaching, ever-widening trail of burning questions outline rebellion against tradition and convention, against cant and hypocrisy in high places. Questions of State aid rush forward. Ought artists to be subsidised? Ought genius and original talent to be endowed? Ought modern forms of Art to be rejected? Ought Art to be placed on a heap of neglect? Ought artists to be employed to embellish cities and public institutions? Ought matters of Art that come before the Government to be handled
over to a consultative body of experts, and not left at the mercy of an ignorant government department? Ought there to be a Minister of Art? Ought there to be free exhibition galleries for struggling artists? Ought the Government to take part in the provision of private aid, workshops, studios, etc., and, in short, to set the ball rolling and make a disturbance of the peace? For answer I hasten to assure Mr. Reynolds that it will not be in the form of Lords withering to a skeleton, and then disappearing altogether.

The attitude of the active spirits, those who are thirsting to come into the open and have it out with their critics, may be nicely expressed in the words of Mr. Victor Reynolds:

The scheme put forward is an interesting one, and one to which I shall enjoy making a contribution. My views upon modern French painting are pretty definite, but as I know THE NEW AGE to be hospitable to free speaking, I do not suppose this will be much of a drawback.

Having thus set forth with my accustomed elaborateness of a scientific treatise the need, aim, and scope of THE NEW AGE open court for the claims of artists, and for the elevation of art, the question may be asked who is going to set the ball rolling and make a disturbance of the peace? For answer I may point to the names under which the articles in this Supplement are written. Collectively they make a far greater deal of attention, and many of them are divided broadly into two classes, those that are actively attracted and those that are passively attracted.

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I hasten to assure Mr. Reynolds that it will not be in any sense a drawback. THE NEW AGE certainly stands to encourage free and frank speaking. It does not aim to be violently aggressive, neither does it seek to bury the hatchet. It does not prune riotous imagination nor deny the use of adjectives. It is not a devastating machine. It does not invite authors into a maze of cog wheels of revision in order to have the spontaneous produced and carefully nourished children of their brains torn and lacerated, tricked out in the fripperies of rhetoric and rigid uniformity, arrayed in a straw-jacket, and presented to a fainting public as the natural children of talent or genius. In a word, it does not seek to out-Herod Herod in the matter of the slaughter of the innocents.

As to the nature of the present contributions not much need be said. Mr. Sickert in his article is chiefly concerned with Art and Economics. He shows intensely the feeling which many artists have against the mad action of certain well-meaning but light-headed and top-sped philanthropists and social reformers who seek to do good through the medium of art. He tells the public, all sans what time this culture-men and women, the artists—the only real fount of culture—are perishing in our midst of neglect. Mr. Sturge Moore seeks to expose the fallacies underlying the notions of Realism and Impressionism. His tilt at Realism comes at the right moment, at a moment when our notions of realism certainly need revising, and this on a basis of metaphysics. Both Mr. Shackleton, Mr. French, and Mr. Victor Reynolds are in revolt against certain methods of the moderns, and strongly declare for a return to the original sources of inspiration. A genuine reaction which is a revolt against tyranny or a protest against their petty colleagues. It adds a new impulse to Art and strengthens the springs of originality and productiveness. It is chiefly in this direction, I believe, that these three painters are revolutionary.

Among the passive sympathisers who are attracted to THE NEW AGE scheme, but are unable to turn aside from work to which they are pledged to writing for it, is Professor C. J. Holmes whose words, "I sympathise with your aims," tersely summarise the views of many other correspondents. Mr. Will Rothenstein, busy though he is preparing a paper on the Social Aspect of Art, to be read before the Sociological Society on April 12th, at once promised to send a digest of his paper for the Supplement or for a subsequent issue.

To complete my survey of the whole field of battle, which I have sketched out together with the warring tribes, I should mention the author of The New Art. I received from a clever child artist. It says

Mr. Pollon, Mr. Fren}, and Mr. Victor Reynolds are in revolt against certain methods of the moderns, and strongly declare for a return to the original sources of inspiration. A genuine reaction which is a revolt against tyranny or a protest against their petty colleagues. It adds a new impulse to Art and strengthens the springs of originality and productiveness. It is chiefly in this direction, I believe, that these three painters are revolutionary.

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The Revival of Indian Art.

By E. B. Havell.

The Mogul style is a symphony of artistic ideas formed into an interchanging harmony by the fusion of Hindu thought with the art of the two rival sects of Muhammedanism, the Sunni and the Shia. Ruskin's criticism of Mogul architecture as an "evanescent style" is a very superficial one. The great development of Mogul art represented by the Taj died out because during Aurangzebe's long reign the bigotry of the Sunni sect was in the ascendant, and the Shia and Hindu artists were banished from the Mogul Court. But before Aurangzebe's accession the traditions of Mogul architecture were firmly established in the more distant parts of his dominions, and there they survive to this day, absorbed into the great synthesis of Indian art, and only prevented from continuing their natural evolution through the fatal want of artistic understanding which has made the dead styles of Europe the official architecture of India.

To the art student nothing can be more fascinating than the endeavour to analyse the artistic thoughts of different countries and different races. But England as a nation has a concern in trying to understand Indian ideals. For it is neither by railways and canals, sanitation and police, coal-mines and gold-mines, factories and mills, nor by English text-books, and the real or imaginary just laws and regulations of Eastern and Western culture, that we shall build for ourselves a permanent Indian Empire. Nor should we flatter ourselves that British justice is creating in India a lasting sense of gratitude for British rule. The very uprightness of our rule is slowly destroying, they brought with them the genius to reconstruct. But we, a nation whose aesthetic understanding has been deadened by generations of pedantry and philistinism, could do to suppress the lively inborn artistic sense of the Indian peoples. All that recent Indian administrations have done to support and encourage art is but a feather in the scale against the destructive counter-influences, originating in times less sympathetic to Indian art, which have been allowed to continue under their authority.

The artificial culture of the West has destroyed the natural culture of the East. The want of a consistent artistic policy is conspicuous in the whole administration of India, and the abstract and artificial considerations in the education of the youth of the country, have not only suppressed originality of thought and lowered the standard of culture, but they have brought about the most disastrous things that modern educationalists nor statesmen can afford to ignore. From "Essays on Indian Art."
Encouragement for Art.

By Walter Sickert.

In an article on Whistler in the "Fortnightly" of December, 1908, I defined genius as "the instinct of self-preservation in a talent." Talent is not infrequent, but has occasionally been mentioned in a Socialist paper ("il ne faut être sauce-socialiste dans sa cuisine," as Daumier's chef says to his little apprentice-cook) some such questions as the following:--"What conditions have you found favourable to the most development of your talent?" Have you, fellow-craftsmen, what should you say is a fostering or blighting atmosphere? Don't you think to the utmost development of such talent as you have? We are forced by hunger, or the need of rest, to an incessant dribbling production, entirely precluding all leisured theorising, or grandiose recasting of our talent, which it is desired to turn to account in the most remunerative manner.

For this purpose is best an unsympathetic and callous form of capital, which it is desired to turn to account for this purpose, then, we are most fortunate if we are deprived by fortune of any property whatever; if we are forced by hunger, or the need of rest, to an incessant dribbling production, entirely precluding all leisurely theorising, or grandiose recasting of our talent, or readjustment of it to what we, in our limited and ignorant self-criticism, consider a higher walk of our art.

For this purpose is best an unsympathetic and callous contractor, man, or, better, company, in that less per-
the blessed monogamy (reasonably tempered by an occasional caprice) to which our restricted means have condemned us for our good.

When you can offer to gentle and simple a more wholesome and more fortifying ideal than to do your duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call you, your sneers at the Christian religion may fall a little less flat. And note that this formula does not exclude God's calling you from the plough or the last to the telescope, or the type-writer, or the palette—if that is any catch—which I doubt!

A Formula of Art.

By William Shackleton

I.
The formula of Art as I conceive it to be, and what it conveys, is as follows:—

It is to visualise the ideas that life gives, whether these ideas arise by abstract thought working from observation, or from personal experience.

It is concerned as much with thinking and feeling as with seeing.

It is rarely the appearances of things only, but more the significance of things that lies within.

What do you see in Life? and what have you got to say about it? are questions that I mentally ask of an artist, whether musician, writer, sculptor, or painter. Indeed, these are the questions we unconsciously ask of all men, and as a man has some gift of answering, and has something worth saying—so he is to be accounted an artist.

Thus, to my mind "Art for Art's Sake" is far from holding first place as a standard of aesthetics. Indeed, a beautiful formula may hold little or no intellectual or emotional outlook.

I sometimes think there is a talent of formulæ alone. Men are born with a gift of saying "This is how the Venetians looked at life," or "This is how the Greeks rendered life," when what is needful is that an artist should say "This is how I look at life." Moreover, "Art for Art's Sake" means, simply, adequate workmanship, and all that it gives is included in the standard I set up. It has to be there before the work is worthy of serious notice.

"Idealism," also, is just a part, and not the whole of this standard. It is merely one, though one of the most beautiful, of the many chords. It is obvious that it answers neither of the two questions directly. It is often the refuge of a sensitive nature that cannot bear the contact of reality.

What I have stated in the few preceding paragraphs of course precludes beauty as an end in itself. It has its place incidentally. But if an artist's work has any great place in life, the need of humanity is that existence should be so revealed as to be made more tolerable.

To my mind Idealism and Beauty avoid the issue, and the natures that feed thereon have endeavoured thereby less tolerable. Nevertheless, I would repeat, all these things are right in due proportion. A work of Art, to be of use in the world, is like a man; it must have vitality to live; it must have thought in it if it is to make people think; it must have feeling in it if it is to make people feel; it must have ecstasy in it if it is to move the soul.

Nearly all my works treat of some aspect of man and his destiny—of man, woman and child in the absorbing problem of life.

Man has a mind, a heart, a soul and a body; and passion dominates all four. It leads, to intellectual activity in the mind, to feelings in the heart, in the soul to religion and ecstasies, and in the body to the desires of the flesh.

And the interplay of all these in the setting of man's environment is the greatest of all themes for expression. An artist is as surely a realist in painting the visions or aspirations of man as in imitating externals—the colour and form of his body and clothes.

The environment, from a visual point of view, one may simply say is the land, the sea, and the sky. These, it is scarcely an exaggeration to say, have also a mind, a heart, and a soul.

At any rate a sky, for instance, is very like man in its inner nature. A sky can be calm or stormy, it can be ecstatic or depressed in mood, voluptuous, passionate, cold or austere or mystical. In fact the range is the whole gamut of human emotions, and seems not so much a thing apart as one intimately concerned with man, even in its indifferenceness.

All things interpenetrate, and the mystery of the Infinite is over all.

My pictures, I think, might almost be classified under different headings, as Symbolical, Historical Visions, Realism, Romantic Idylls, and Poetic Realism. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that they incline towards one or other of these.

To several I have added short descriptive notices that may indicate my intentions. In most cases the intentions developed as the work progressed; this is, when the work had started from something seen. When I had an idea in my mind I had slowly to gather material in order to use it as a means of conveying the idea. One cannot imitate an idea as one can imitate an object, and the workmanship or treatment is conditioned by this fact.

However, I like good workmanship, colour, form and light; and I shall be quite content if any one who is not interested in the foregoing ideas will look at my work from this point of view—the Technical one.

As the Spell of Art is that which is left over when the last analysis has been made, it may seem that an artist ought not to be too conscious of his intentions; but I hold that the more that can be reduced to system, the greater will be the field of mystery open to us. And the greater the consciousness we achieve, the larger is the import of life.

An artist ought not to be afraid of using his capacities to the full, knowing well that they make, not Art, but a nobler setting for the indefinable.

II.

Notes on Pictures.

No. 56.—"The Passing Hour." A meditation on life. Humanity is represented by a group of naked children at the edge of a vast sea. Children are playing, with gaiety or thoughtfulness, and all heedless of the beauty and the mystery and the solemnity of the brooding spirit of the passing hour.

The ship starting on its unknown voyage—the wreck—somewhat obvious symbols—also a few sea gulls in the left-hand bottom corner hovering over a bone—all suggested the mortality that lurks behind the veil of beauty.

No. 59.—"Shrimpers at Night." On the north coast of France the fisher-people go with their nets into the sea at all times, when it is low tide. When the nights are warm in August the sea is phosphorescent, and the breakers gleam with green and blue light. And when the big shrimp nets are lifted, all
saturated and dripping, they glow with this blue light, and trickling stars of it ripple down to the ground.

The shore life at such times appears most magical and bewitching, men and women and children flitting about with golden lanterns, intent upon their tasks, the light flashing back on their faces, baskets, costumes, and making beautiful reflections in the pools.

The fisherman in this picture has come ashore to empty his basket of shrimps, just caught, into the one the woman holds. A little girl peeps in, and a lantern, held in the middle of the group, but hidden by the woman's body, glows on her face and on the man's hands as he removes bits of seaweed, crabs and little fishes. These have just been darting about like streaks of green fire in the shallow ebbing water, which, lapping on the sand, leaves chains of flickering phosphorescent sparks like diamonds.

No. 61.—"THE ROAD."

A sombre aspect of life, typifying the fatality that impels people along their unknown life's course. The road leads to an unknown destination.

Three types of people are represented. First comes the woman, the strongest character, the motive force, the character that realises and acts. Somewhat apart, she draws with greater will power the weaker characters with her. A type that fights to the end, however much the victim of fatality.

The man next to her is of the weak kind that submits nervously without questioning. He would not be there at all without the others.

The man at the right is big, physically strong, of the type that never thinks, but takes for granted that all it does does because it wants to. This type is fatuous, and would be helpless without the forceful active character supplied by the woman.

The sky in this picture is as important as the figures. It typifies the mysterious power—to all seeming indifferent to humanity's woes—that nevertheless seems to hold all life's hardships and injustices, could it but be understood. But it remains mystic, and unfathomable, and terrible.

No. 67.—"THE LOVE CHILD."

It is difficult to trace any meaning into life at all in terms of our human understanding, but sometimes one can trace a certain training and development of consciousness by the events that come to one, whether the result of our own or others' actions, that seem to imply a purpose we do not understand but have to take on trust.

This is usually the outcome of suffering, and suffering seems to be either the outcome of excessive sensibilities and sympathies or, as in this case, the putting on the sophistries of civilisation. For the first time in her life, she has drawn with greater will power the weaker characters with her. A type that fights to the end, however much the victim of fatality.

No. 68.—"CHRIST AT JERUSALEM."

"Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another."—St. Mark, xiii.

I have taken this episode not as representing the passionate mysticism of Christianity has caused almost as many woes to humanity as it purports to alleviate. The picture has been painted representing all that is material wrapped in an unsubstantial glamour, as if indeed the great buildings were even now fading away like a beautiful dream.

People are coming out of the Temple door on the left, and as they come within the spell of the utterance, they listen in groups. The man with the blue hood is of acutely intellectual, disbelieving, mocking and ironical nature—the contrasting type to the religious enthusiast. The short man in dark red is of the credulous kind, easily led, easily believing and easily doubting—the Thomas type. The woman seated on the steps is more interested in her baby than in any dissertation on the vanities of this life.

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The other woman in front with two babies, who has her full share of daily worries and is puzzled with life's perplexities, is held with the fascination of the voice and dimly and vainly hopes once again for some elucidation of practical and immediate difficulties. This picture, together with its fellow "Phryne at Eleusis," may be said to represent the things that are seen are temporal, the things that are unseen are eternal.

No. 72.—"PHRYNE AT ELEUSIS."

This picture, in contradistinction to "Christ at Jerusalem," is intended to represent the natural or pagan life and its philosophy, that fights so hard against the self-renunciation of the Christian ideal. The episode is the well-known one of Phryne the courtee, beloved of Alexander and the sculptor Praxiteles, who went with the Athenians to the great festival of Eleusis, and there on the sea-shore disrobed and went into the sea nude in front of all the Greeks.

In my picture Phryne symbolises not only woman and love, but the allurement of material life in all ways, and also on the physical plane at its best.

The three principal male figures in the picture are—the Priest in purple, the Soldier in the helmet, and the Artist just showing his head between the other two, and holding in his hand a little green statuette of Eros (Praxiteles gave her one). These I have taken to represent the malevolent effect of the overpowering allurements of the material life—the Priest corrupted; the man of strength and will weakened; the man of imagination selling his soul.

Over all lies the appealing pathos and pity, and the passion of it all in a transient splendour of a voluptuous sea and sunset of scarlet and green and gold.

This picture also, like that of "Christ of Jerusalem," is a dream fabric of the transience of the things that are seen.

Aesthetic Aims.

By T. Sturge Moore.

1.—REALISM.

"It looks just as if it were real." That is praise, though no longer fashionable praise. Did not Shakespeare so commend acting whose end both at the first and now was, and is, to hold as it were the mirror up to nature? Hold a mirror up to nature; the sunlight will so flash from it as to nearly blind you. Can the riddle of this silver-backed glass be formed with pigment? Certainly not. Then why strain after a goal which no intelligent improvement in human capacity would bring within reach?

No. 69.—"CHRIST AT JERUSALEM."

"Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another."—St. Mark, xiii.

I have taken this episode not as representing the particular incident of the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem, but in the larger sense of proclaiming the transience of all earthly things, and, in its full purpose, the need for the renunciation of all things as of no account when put in the balance with the soul.
unwilling to take such simple steps to attain as near the goal as circumstance will admit?

Yet surely such extravagance does not underlie every assertion that imitation is the end of art.

"Experience and design, and the fact that all imitations are universally delighted in. The lively pleasure which learning involves, not only for philosophers, but for all men, however limited their powers, causes them to gladly contemplate the minutely faithful representation even of things as repulsive as savage animals and corpses. Thus men love to gaze at a portrait, because they infer the while, and say: 'Ah! that is the man himself.' But for those who have never seen the original, pleasure from the copy will be due to the exact imitation. Styles and traditions may develop slowly, or they may develop fast; they may take one lifetime of fifty years to complete them, or they may take six generations and a couple of centuries; but sooner or later there comes a point in their course when nothing else remains to be said. In Italian art this point is represented by the Renaissance, which (unhappy misnomer), far from being a rebirth or a reawakening, does but represent the triumphal completion and sub-rejecting of the entire artistic genius of the Italian people."

We habitually regard this completion as taking place at the hands of three or four supreme artists, whom we have consequently named classics. We have agreed to treat their work as an impetus to the contemplation, rightly regarding their work as but a pawing-over of dry bones, empty, mechanical, and eclectic.

This law of artistic evolution is neither strange nor unnatural; it is probably true in an equal degree of most other phases of human activity. Nowhere, however, do we observe its action so clearly as in the history of art.

"The glamour of the past lies heavy upon the human mind. It is, says Nietzsche, when Art puts on her oldest clothes that we recognise her most clearly for Art. The seed of all new movements, of all that is most daring and vital, most full of effrontery and idiocy," he discovered a truth by no means confined in its application to the Tuscan master. It must have been a new idea in Ruskin's day, for in a footnote to the passage he regards himself on the back for having thought of it. Nowadays, however, we possess the materials for a survey of art-history undreamed of by Ruskin, and throughout the whole course of it we find this condition of affairs, repeating itself again and again. Styles and traditions may develop slowly, or they may develop fast; they may take one lifetime of fifty years to complete them, or they may take six generations and a couple of centuries; but sooner or later there comes a point in their course when nothing else remains to be said. In Italian art this point is represented by the Renaissance, which (unhappy misnomer), far from being a rebirth or a reawakening, does but represent the triumphal completion and sub-rejecting of the entire artistic genius of the Italian people.

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modernity, has ever lain deep buried in the earth or under numberless fathoms of the sea; and like those men of fourteenth century Florence we are, of all of us, as we desire any progress for our Art, grubbbers and scrapers in the earth of the past, or scrapers of its thick-written palimpsest.

In a recent work on Paris, the writer, wishing to express his dislike of the exhibits at the Autumn Salon, says that they are “like Aztec decorations.” If intended as a strain in the comparison, it is scarcely happy, since the decorative powers of the Aztec people to judge by such specimens as we possess of their pottery, must have been very remarkable indeed. It is just in such instances of return to primitive sources of inspiration, and a resemblance to such things as Aztec decoration, that the hope of any future for art lies.

It was, no doubt, certain of the recent works of M. Picasso which prompted the comparison. In him one sees an almost isolated instance of the power to react against the current tradition, and one of the very few men in modern painters of whom one can in any real sense be called progressive. I believe that at a very early age he was producing work in the manner of the Spanish classics like Velasquez and Goya. After he came to Paris, however (he is a native of Barcelona), his most evident aspect is that of a painter of Mr. Leo Stein there are several exquisite studies of heads painted in a bluish monochrome on millboard, or religious air, which seems to suggest a profound emotion of form by the use of an extremely large and simple curve. I believe that we actually produced under a combined influence of Ingres and of negro carving; they are, in fact, like “Aztec decorations” or the statues from Easter Island.

M. Henri Mattisse is regarded as the chef d'oeuvre among that section of the art world over here who, I believe, style themselves the “excessivistes,” and are popularly known as les fauves, owing to their practice of shaving clean. Everything certainly looks a little tame after he walks in. The general scheme of vermilion and olive, the vert emeraude play an unsullied and unstained part. Colour is not used by him with any merely decorative or harmonious intent, but rather as a means of more vividly expressing the qualities of things inherent in their form. He would paint mustard red because it possesses the faculty of burning the tongue. As to the great originality claimed for his work, I confess that it seems to me not vastly different from that of M. Felix Vallotton recently gave a one-man show of paintings in the Galeries Druet. These show the keen sense of temporary English cutting; but he is, unfortunately, wholly devoid of colour sense. I do not remember to have seen anything more unpleasant in painted art than the bricky mixture of vermilion and black with which he usually symbolise flesh. For hour, month, or year, the more unpleasant by the uncompromising realism of form to which it is allied. Indeed, these paintings are little more than stylish life-studies. With a few exceptions, such as the young English, a brick-coloured figure sprawling on a chocolate-coloured bison in the midst of a Reckitt’s-blue sea, the paintings have the heavy static look of certain modern German efforts.

Sculpture has generally taken the lead in painting in the solution of its problems and the development of its technique, and it is the fore-runners of the rapid growth of early Italian sculpture to the fact that such ancient fragments as were unearthed, being exclu-

The Virtue of Tradition.

By Cecil French.

Were we not persuaded that in the acknowledged masterpieces of art we beheld in some degree or other an exposition of our own particular theories, I think that those theories would not hold us long. Indeed supremely great works gather together so many aspects of the human intelligence that they may almost be likened to magic mirrors, wherein each beholder finds the qualities he most loves. I have heard the masters of the past upheld as examples of an all but unlimited number of conflicting opinions. Our analytical faculty may enable us to give a reason for our delight, but when this is done something yet evades us; every great work, as though it were an ever-brimming fountain, reveals some fresh facet of its glory to the latest comers. It would seem as though the smile of Mona Lisa, that mystery which the generations have not been able to unravel, were common to all beautiful and enduring creation. Our first attempt at analysis, when brought face to face with a work of art, should naturally be: “What does this bring into the world which we cannot find and possess equally well elsewhere?” But this is not all, for fine painting, in addition to representing an activity of the brain, is a thing of sensuous enchantment, and can affect us as will a bunch of flowers, a noble countenance beheld in passing, the flush of an evening sky. The painter-hero of Rossetti’s youthful story not only prayed to S. Mary Virgin and meditated over the evils of mortal existence, but “would feel faint in sunsets and at the sight of stately persons.”

The more I live and observe, the more am I convinced that vision is mainly a quality of the mind. When Blake said “A fool sees not the same tree as a wise man sees,” he was forestalling science in that as in many another particular. Any scientist will explain by repeated experience we have come to accept as...
realism. No one denies that qualities of brain suffer very widely; as regards their application to vision we need only ask several persons to describe with care some particular scene or event in order to be convinced how varying have been the images received by each of them; or those who can evoke memory with sufficient lucidity can convey the sense-impression received in the past from some particular locality with that received by us to-day. Certain drugs may entirely alter our perception of natural objects, either heightening the sense of beauty or producing unreasoning terror. A glass or two of whisky even may cause a man to behold two moons in the heavens and otherwise distort for the time being his relation with the visible world. From such crude evidences I am convinced that subtler causes are continually modifying our standard of objective reality; nay, objective reality may hardly be said to exist. The pictorial efforts of very primitive peoples are expressed, I believe, in strong, crude outlines, and lately I was speaking with an individual of little aesthetic sensibility, and found that he could not understand shadow or relief, for he complained if the flesh in a painting were not of an uniform reddish tint. A certain painter whom I have the honour of knowing, a designer of vigorous masculine themes, is all but insensitive to the delicate rose and violet of so much contemporary painting. His art, untouched by recent subtleties, belongs entirely to another age, and he glories in its ancestry. Others with whom I am acquainted, colourists learned in the art of exquisite evasion, regard my friend's clariand notes with amazed suspicion. Once I questioned a man who was almost completely colour-blind as to the world he lived in, but unfortunately he had not sufficient introspective power or sufficient command of speech to be able to convey any adequate idea of it.

I hold that thought and those who transmute thought into definite achievement are ever making and unmaking the successive generations of mankind. Homer, maybe, has given us energy and freedom, while the translators of the Bible and the nameless carvers of Gothic chancel may have dowered our sweethearts with an added wistfulness. Had not the Emperor Constantine, having become the receptacle of the thoughts of many, rendered them into an edict, we and our uncles and aunts might be uncertain and an admixture of Pagan and Christian, instead of attending a church service every seven days; modern England might have been ruled by another Heliogabalus, and have possessed no Albert Memorial. In like manner it is not difficult to regard our vision of form and colour as the collective result of the art of bygone ages. Moreover, our very position in the world may have been brought about by such influences, for had not the Greeks and, in later times, Raphael set the standard of physical loveliness, who can be certain that our grandparents, looking upon our grandparents, would have found them fair, and so have wooed and won them?

To thoroughly understand that we are creatures made by the past is to understand how important to us is the study of that past. One who could pick out the variously coloured threads that make up his own little pattern in the unending tapestry would be far on the way to mastering his destiny, but so remote and complicated are the forces which have moulded us that we can but watch the straws blown by the wind. Many, however, neglect even such clues as we may possess. Nobody, I imagine, would deny that the study of history is necessary for the man of action who would have a right understanding of the contemporary outlook, yet one hears of artists (inferior artists, I admit) who maintain that the "Old Masters," as they are so vaguely termed, should not be considered overmuch. Presumably such inspired leaders are fearful lest they should lose their much-vaulted innovations; they resemble those timid persons who retire to monasteries and convents through no other reason than that of sheer terror. I found this attitude reduced to its barest essentials in a student who wished he had never seen a picture, imagining that under such conditions he might be entirely original in his art. Had his wish but been made a reality through some peculiarity of his upbringing, of what order would have been his aesthetic impulse? Or had his ancestors passed their years in an atmosphere equally unique, would the aesthetic impulse have arisen in their descendant? But questions such as these are fantastic. I confess that I am impatient of such views, for I have nowhere met with this unique originality, springing of a sudden like Pallas, fully armed, from the brain of Zeus. Rather have I found originality to be as the perfume added to the brightness of the flower, some mysterious last gift of the gods, bestowed now here, now there, living its life all unconscious of its power.

A child of peculiar and freakish habits finds out only gradually through experience and the shock of repeated contact that he is different from other children; so, too, the man of distinguished thought may continue for years to be in ignorance of the fact that his thoughts are not shared by the multitude. The true eccentric is not usually self-conscious, and is apt to resent the interest and curiosity about him displayed by his neighbours.

The evolution of Art, as in that of Nature, I find few shots or violent developments. Italian painting may be likened to a number of boxes, the one fitting within the other; Flemish and Dutch painting have an ordered growth scarcely less marked. The visit of Van Dyck to England and his employment by the Martyr-King led the way for those stately canvases of the eighteenth century which have become our especial pride. Constable is true, affirmed that he would Jain forget the sight of pictures other than his own, but the practise of his art was otherwise. An early Constable has its sure foundation in the monochrome of his forerunners, and daring innovator as he may have appeared this gravity of method never wholly vanished, even under the fierce impasto of his latest manner. The Pre-Raphaelites, in their scorn of mere technical skill, upset the tradition of English painting, but Rossetti as we know, used to lament his lack of early training, and in his latter days evolved a system so mathematical as often to all but swamp his magnificent natural gifts.

Burne-Jones also, after his first careless rapture, settled down to a technique than which nothing could be more patient and exacting, so that we find the brooding ecstasy of his King Cophetua echoed in every inch of that canvas, which is still the meeting ground of sunless admiration and unlimited contempt. In France, Rubens, Rubens, Rubens, was a chief conscious of his efforts to equal Poussin, whose originality was so pronounced and who wished to be regarded as another Phidias, fully armed, from the brain of Zeus. Rather have I found originality to be as the perfume added to the brightness of the flower, some mysterious last gift of the gods, bestowed now here, now there, living its life all unconscious of its power.
seventeenth century. Rembrandt beheld humanity in a glow so mysterious that we can hardly know whether it is because of the shifting cloud-charged skies or because of his own passionate reverence. In his famous “View of Haarlem,” Jan Vermeer, of Delft, I am informed, beats the “impressionists” on their own ground. I have not the good fortune to know this picture save in reproduction from Life magazine, but I am willing to hazard the opinion that in arriving at the world-mouse, more refined, more sensitive than in the little masterpieces which can be studied with such advantage by Vermeer’s untravelled admirers. It must be remembered that even Monet, whose very name became a battle-cry, was no sudden irruption of fresh forces; for instance, he studied Turner with reverent care, as is well known. Moreover, the French impressionists, who are popularly supposed to have revolutionised modern painting, will stand or fall inasmuch as they may or may not have produced harmonious decorations charged with an emotional significance. Mr. George Moore, in a moment of petulance, may proclaim that oil paint has at last emerged from its long misuse, but such sudden setting-up and throwing-down has ever proved to be misleading. Who can point out exactly where the old ends and the new begins? To be new must always be but a relative virtue; the process of time is inexorable. Art, in a degree even less than science, can never consist of a series of epoch-making discoveries, for it may never enter into competition with the old. It may be taught as such, even as shoe-making is taught, and to my thinking painting should be taught to-day. Nowadays the student, on leaving the art school, has to begin all over again if he wishes to express himself with sincerity. Ignorant of the working of any system, he has before him that most difficult of all tasks, to evolve a system for himself, whereas, had he been apprenticed as of old to some master of his own personality might by degrees have been added. Our vaunted freedom has led to chaos, the energies of the best years of a young painter’s life being too often dissipated in repeated experiment. In this relation, however general influences also the position has become more complicated. The enormous advance made by museums and the facilities of reproduction have brought the whole world’s art to our very doors. It is hard for us to realise the enthusiasm which fired Gainsborough at the sight of a Naysmith, or Blake at the sight of engravings after Michael Angelo or even to understand how Burne-Jones in his turn was quickened to activity by the discovery of a Rossetti water-colour at Oxford. To-day we cannot avoid great works, even if we would. The periodical Press from time to time may show us how the Florentines made space rhythmical, or how the Greeks treated the human form. This being so, were it not reasonable to expect that some hint in an artist to-day should ring the past? Photography, it would be imagined, might have caused a greater reverence for style and tradition and a lessening of the prosaic faculty for mere imitation, but the reverse has been the case. Many painters would seem to have little aim but to compete with the photographer, and seeking to render some obvious phenomenon of nature, in their disregard of the gracious caressing surfaces of their forerunners, to offer us craftsmanship so unpleasant in its violence that their pictures keep us at an uneasy distance as though they were so many snarling dogs.

Those who think that truth in Art is of no value when divorced from beauty have a difficult road to follow; theirs is the necessity of gathering up something which has been all but lost. Style, like the manners of a person of breeding, has to be mainly unconscious. Let us not, therefore, be too critical of such painters as would appear sometimes to be consciously striving rather than born stalkists. Those who perforce must contend against the fashions of their age have sorrows and difficulties which the more easily pleased, unhappily many do not even suspect. To recover the gold coins which have fallen by the way-side certain travellers have need to turn back, enduring the laughter of their comrades who journey on all untroubled towards the fair city of the journey’s end. But which will be the wealthier when all may have been admitted at the gate?

Happily there are signs that artists of a newer generation are seeking something which will help them to carry on the great flowing pattern which is the world’s inheritance. A general dissatisfaction with recently prevailing standards has made itself felt; an attitude of greater weight and seriousness is taking the place of the old instants. Men such as Messrs. Shannon, Mr. Cailey Robinson, and Mr. William Shackleton have produced works, each in their varying sphere of achievement, which have a decorative fitness and a rhythmic and unity which gives them a place apart from the mere recording of passing phenomena. To these and to their fellows we should render our thanks. Such artists need no praise or apology from any writer, obscure or otherwise. They may well stand by what they have expressed, but for those who as yet have achieved little or nothing of recognised accomplishment I would that my words might be “the trumpet of a prophecy.”

The Artist in the Making.

His Origin: Ideals and Ideas.

At a moment when the painter is engaged with a new form of art, when he is searching for the means to meet the needs created by new conceptions of life, and when the idea of a return to the past is firing the souls of certain artists here in England and abroad, it is peculiarly interesting and instructive to turn to books containing the different aims of painters in different ages in order to examine the old theories with regard to the production of a work of art. In doing so the question naturally arises, Of what precise value are the ideas and ideals of the old masters to modern men? How far are they useful and necessary to them? For instance, is Cennini Cennino’s animated discussion of the mysteries of painting of his day—a discussion concerned with the chemistry of paint and other mediums, the preparation of ground, in a word, with the early efforts to obtain material beauty—of use to the modern man who seeks a method peculiarly suited to his personality and period? Likewise, what value may artists attach to a study of the aims, ambitions, and methods of Lionardo as contained in his book of philosophical and scientific types? The real question is that on the historical side they will find that the writings of Lionardo, who as Vasari said laboured much more by his word than in fact or deed, afford a clear insight into the great Florentine’s conception of nature and man and the intention of the soul of man, each with his particular form and method of expressing it, namely, that adopted by the great early Florentine school, from Giotto downward, through the attitude and movements of the limbs. On the modern side they will turn to it for that vital principle which underlies all forms of art, binding them together and linking the present with the past, as well as for many pieces of
practical instruction in the principles of modern impressionism which Lionardo apparently understood but did not apply. Herein his precepts may be said to differ from his practice, as is crooked though in a different way. It is interesting to compare these principles with those contained in modern works on impressionism, as for example those by Maclaurin and Drtec. Perhaps the most noticeable thing about Lionardo’s revelations is his book. In the latter of great value to other readers besides artists, is the fact that he was that astounding paradox, a scientist, a philosopher, and a great artist. As a rule, we are inclined to accept the philosopher as a bad artist, and by no means a judge of art. If faced with the incontrovertible proof of the existence of a man who successfully combines the two qualities, we hasten to set the dictum aside in order to give an attentive consideration to individuals the philosophy of art we meet. Though he has never produced a work of art, lest he should betray not only the ability to reason skilfully, but also some knowledge of his subject matter.

"Lionardo’s Notebook." Ed. by E. McCurdy. (Seeley, 15s. net.)

His Temperament: The Creative Spirit.

"This habit of presupposing each proverbially barren place to be an unworked mine of precious minerals has led me to become acquainted with Benedetto Croce. Most painters and art critics who maintain that only an artist is a judge of art, that the aesthetic philosopher is a very barren person and the philosophy of art a very barren discussion, and of no use whatever to artists who are pre-occupied with producing tangible expressions of beauty and not with discussing the nature of art, such persons would have taken up his bulky volume and laid it down again without a sigh, unopened. But, remembering my responsibility as a reviewer, not only do I read it, but read it through, in fairness to the author, I must say that it expresses many opinions in which I entirely concur. Oddly enough, they do not belong to the author. But it also contains opinions from which I dissent. And the one which belong to the author, for instance, I do not agree with Mr. Ainslie, who has given the book its present admirable English dress, that “Aesthetic” is a work of art. Possibly he has been influenced by the author’s own statement that the theory is not new, it has been in the air for some time, and it has now received complete expression for the first time. This is really Mr. Croce’s excuse for writing his book. He had a theory to expound, and he desired to illustrate it from the opinions of many artists who have completely failed to hold correct tongues on all subjects save mediums and methods. In so doing he has established the harmony of philosophy with art, and proved that between the two there is no wide gulf. Yet, those who have not experience, save in the use of terms. The language of art remains entirely charming, whereas philosophy continues to search for the beau dans l’invisible. Thus when Mr. Croce, who is a philosopher, turns to his theory and begins by defining art as the creation of something out of nothing, he says, “Art is pure intuition completely expressed.” And Puvis de Chavannes, in order to express the same idea, says quite simply, “Once I had evoked all the world from nothingness”; and William Blake, “I know that the world is a world of illusion”; and Tennyson says, “It is nothing but the art of expressing the visible by the invisible”; and Whistler, “Art happens”; and George Moore, “Art is wholly intransmissible”; all which is equal to saying that art is the manifestation of the creative spirit in search of truth and beauty. So it follows in the words of Wilde, “There are not many arts, but one art merely: poem, picture, and Parthenon, sonnet and statue—all are in their essence the same, and he who knows one knows all. But there are forms of art, and as new forms are the offspring of the creative imagination, while there is a creative imagination there will be new forms of art also. Consequently there is no such thing as progress in art, only development of the artists; the author defines a complete expression—soul speaking lucidly to soul, as it were; ugliness is incomplete expression—soul failing to commu- nicate itself to soul, so to speak. ’Ugly is only half-way to a thing’,” says Meredith. This much, and more, Mr. Croce says, but tersely, in the place of philosophy.

"Philosophy needs art, but art does not need philo-
sophy,” is the Crocean way of telling us that art is not concerned with messages and nonsense of the sort, but with clothing the world of phenomena with beauty and eternal you in his own manner. The advantage of poetry first in the scale of conscious activities and the poet nearest the truth of things. This supremacy of the lyricism of the soul was foreseen by Wilde where he says, “The poet is the supreme artist and word over all wails.”"
The specific beauty with which Professor Holmes is concerned is that of decoration. In his view, the painter should be able, before all things, to seize, emphasize, convey, and perpetuate the decorative value of life. He pays no heed to the importance of the practice of recording the irradiation of light as colour. He attempts rather to break away from impressionism, and to return to pattern-designing. He is therefore taken up with a statement of the rules and precepts, with the great question, which appears to him, to be the wonderful formal and precise surfaces of the great pattern-designers past and present, from the primitives to the Burne-Jones. Design is the first element, the groundwork, the foundation of all art. He now, and for the purpose of solving the decorative problem the plan of his book shall speak. The work is divided into three main parts — namely, Emphasis of Design; of Materials; and of Character. Each emphasis has a dual aim, expression and decoration. Each good picture should contain four qualities — unity, vitality, infinity and repose. The purely technical part of the book is occupied with a discussion of the use of different mediums, the different methods of oil and water-colour painting, and the different processes of drawing and engraving. The concluding section of the book deals with the emphasis of character, and raises problems of a sociological nature, more so, it is true, than the claim of making his book a standard. According to Professor Holmes' admirable plan to confer upon the student the knowledge of the science of picture-making, both in theory and practice, the professor himself possesses, and to enable him to give full expression to his own emotion, the book may be described by instruction. So far as may be done — and here Professor Holmes places me in a difficulty. In his preface he writes against himself, so to speak, urging upon the art the the paramount of asserting his individuality. Accordingly I want to tell artists to keep away as much as possible from manuals, treatises, and text-books, and to work out their own artistic salvation in their own way. But then I want to praise Professor Holmes very mildly. If I were to do that I should perhaps better tell artists to buy the book and decide for themselves.

*Notes on the Science of Picture Making.* By C. J. Holmes (Chatto and Windus.)

* If it is true, as Whistler said, that the artist is born and -"The Winchester Charts of Italian Painters." (W. A. Mansell and Co. Cloth, 25s. 6d.)

* "Great Painters of the XIXth Century." By Léonce Bénédicté, of the Luxembourg, has compiled over 800 brief records. Though it would be impossible to include in a series of this sort the name of every well-known European painter, there are a fairly pleasant time providing he is not convinced that the whole system of art education is wrong, that neither colour nor composition can be taught, and he can see his way to wax enthusiastic over the old men in the National Gallery. If he is a beginner or amateur he will greatly enjoy Mr. Solomon's manner and matter. But if he is a hardened veteran, like myself, he may complain that Mr. Solomon has written his book mainly for the purpose of introducing a large number of really excellent plates and in order to air his opinion.

"The Principles of Oil Painting." By S. J. Solomon (Seeley. 6s.)

** His Chronology.** Those who are concerned with research work, or with sketching out the history of the gradual evolution of painting and schools of painting, would gain much assistance from the use of the Winchester Charts. These charts contain a great deal of useful information, chronological and other, and the text is clearly and simply traced. Possibly owing to a desire to avoid unnecessary complication is due the fact that certain influences are not shown. To take but one instance, Michael Angelo is seen to be influenced by Ghirlandaio. But his return to his old allegiance, together with the wisdom of his later years, doubtless has been more in evidence than is shown. The charts are contained in special covers which are copies of beautiful specimens of Byzantine art and Venetian binding. The twelve parts of the Great Painters of the XIXth Century form a very useful work of reference, containing extensive information on the subject with which it deals. The entire work, indeed, constitutes a careful chronological history of the most important European painters of the period, together with a well-selected gallery of 400 reproductions of their principal works. Herein M. Léonce Bénédicté, of the Luxembourg, has compiled over 800 brief records. Though it would be impossible to include in a series of this sort the name of every well-known European painter, there are a fairly pleasant time providing he is not convinced that the whole system of art education is wrong, that neither colour nor composition can be taught, and he can see his way to wax enthusiastic over the old men in the National Gallery. If he is a beginner or amateur he will greatly enjoy Mr. Solomon's manner and matter. But if he is a hardened veteran, like myself, he may complain that Mr. Solomon has written his book mainly for the purpose of introducing a large number of really excellent plates and in order to air his opinion.

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*"Great Painters of the XIXth Century." By Léonce Bénédicté, (Pitman. 7s.)

HUNTY CARTER.

Books received: "Manet and the French Impressionists." By T. Drucet. (Grant Richards.)[An admirable version of Drucet's comprehensive and intimate survey of the work of Manet and the Impressionists immediately influenced by him. A review will follow.]