

THE FINE ARTS.

TITIAN.—W. Holman Hunt, in a second letter to the London Athenaeum, indicates the damage which is done to the works of Titian and other old masters by restorers and copyists.

FLORENCE, October, 1868.—In my last letter concerning the state of the Titian Venus I had to express a hope that something would be done to arrest what is simply the premature wearing out of the picture. I now feel compelled to complain, not only of mere want of attention, but of carelessness of what, indeed, without full recognition of the religious determination in the Florentine to take life easy himself, and then to make it so for his friends at any unprotesting cost, might be called absolute indifference to the value of many of the great works of whose authorship and possession the Italians have to boast. I should be most ungrateful here, speaking for my compatriots, if I allowed my remarks to suggest that the Tuscan urbanity was not for foreigners as well as for natives, for we certainly are obliged in no niggardly spirit; but in the interest of the great deal we are equally called upon to spare such wasteful indulgences, under the moral sentence of "the living yet to live." The evil is one which, with the new order of things in Italy, is, perhaps, fast disappearing; but with all the speed of the reformation the pictures are suffering not slowly; and feeling this, I believe many an Italian would rejoice if the power of this letter could be increased a thousandfold to arrest the existing abuses.

In the Grand-Duke days it was no uncommon thing for a precious heirloom of art in perfectly good and brilliant condition to be removed for three or four months to undergo a process of restoration. When the picture was restored and the restorer was satisfied with the amount of reparations bestowed upon the work, and upon the claims that had established on the public purse, the Titian or Tintoretto was brought back resplendent with varnish, with the background in some cases considerably changed in tone, and even in extent, inasmuch that loose curls and objects that floated away from the figure were altogether cut away; and I am assured by no doubtful authority that this process was not alone applied to the background, but even to the most pictorial parts of the work. Certainly no personal anxiety is needed for these facts, but it is well to know of them from an eye-witness, to excuse oneself for being disappointed with works which once enjoyed, and which still with the traditionally prejudiced eye, the greatest reputation. The higher order of honor in public men of this day makes this in part a matter of the past; but I mention it because the remarkable fact in the case is not the dishonesty, it is the apathy to the sacred worth of work which for three, four, or five centuries was the tribute of admiration from succeeding generations, and of this have to maintain I still see many painful examples in the practices in vogue in the galleries in this city. In no English or French galleries that I know are the pictures ever taken off the wall for the convenience of copyists. Until the nation produce better galleries than the miserably dark Uffizi and Pitti for the paintings, it may certainly be desirable to take them down for the convenience of artists competent to repeat their beauties for the enjoyment of people of other countries and times. The German gentlemen mentioned in my last letter well merited their rebuke, as also the native copyist who has succeeded him, and Gallati, who some years since made some duplicates of Titians here, or perhaps any serious, properly prepared student might be indulged (the first of all, I should say, if I believed, as some do, that extensive copying is desirable as exercise for young artists); but now, in the majority of instances, the opportunity is altogether thrown away. What could it matter to the gentlemen and ladies who paint their flesh of one uniform pink color, with brushes held down by the hair, that in a brilliant light? To place a Raphael or a Titian on a three-legged easel in the middle of a room, with idle men and women with long skirts moving about as in a fashionable lounge, for such copyists, is to say the least, to run a risk altogether out of proportion to the advantage gained. I know of valuable pictures which, within the last few years, have in this way had holes made in them—holes now repaired, but not without irreparable loss to the paintings. When even the privilege is properly accorded, why cannot the pictures always be placed as in the corner of a room? With this abuse remedied, I should still have one more favor to beg, i. e., that the best pictures be covered with glass; for the attendants exercise their own provincial amiability so unrestrainedly, that they sit by, conversing the while an old pained painter holds up a trembling palette-knife charged with slimy color within half an inch of the original he is copying. Again I am hinting at no merely imaginary but a very possible evil. I have seen bits of paint on a picture deposited in this manner; and I am sorry to have to add, that it is no unimportant matter during the process of taking their own dusts and wipe the pictures whenever it pleases them, and that in this manner five curved scratches, still perfectly distinct, which traverse nearly the whole picture, crossing the face, were made on the varnish of Titian's "Flora" nearly two years ago—a piece of dry bread being in the handkerchief used by a copyist.

FINE ART ITEMS.

The Arundel Society is about to issue a new work, being a description of its own publications during twenty years. This book will be illustrated, and has resulted from the success of some experiments in photographing the prints, casts, etc., on small scales, suitable for book illustration, which the society has issued during the period in question. The whole of the society's works, including the ivory carvings, will be reproduced in the chronological order of their former publication, and one-fifth the size of the originals. The society will soon receive drawings, made by its artists in Italy and Germany, from the following famous pictures:—1. "The Last Supper," from the fresco, by Andrea del Barto, in S. Salvi, near Florence; 2. "The Resurrection," and "Christ in the Garden," from frescoes, by Fra Angelico, in S. Marco, Florence; 3. "The Virgin and Child," after a lately discovered fresco by Fra Bartolomeo; 4. "Christ and His Disciples," from the fresco, by Fra Bartolomeo; 5. "The Adoration of the Shepherds," after Perugino, at Perugia; 6. "The Madonna," after Holbein, in the palace of Hesse Darmstadt; 7. and 9. Two paintings by A. Dürer, "The Four Apostles," at Munich; 10, 11, and 12. Three interesting drawings after Piero della Francesca.

The National Gallery, says the Athenaeum, has just purchased in Rome, for £2000, a large picture, or rather unfinished composition, which, on excellent critical and other grounds, is ascribed to Michael Angelo. Experts will remember the work as having been for some time on view at Signor Pinti's house. The subject is "The Entombment of Christ." The numerous figures are of small life size;

some of them are but barely sketched on the canvas; others are much more advanced towards completion, and are strongly finished. Visitors to the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition will remember Mr. Labouchere's "Holy Family," which was also ascribed to Buonarroti, representing four angels holding scrolls, and was, like the picture now in question, unfinished. This new picture, with several recent acquisitions to the National Gallery, the comparatively large size of which is unusual in our purchases, will not be placed before the public until after the Royal Academy has removed to Burlington House, and so left vacant the eastern portion of the National Gallery. This removal will certainly happen early in the spring of next year, in time for the opening of the Royal Academy Exhibition in the new building in Piccadilly.

The Athenaeum records the recent death of Mr. Henry Le Keux, once well known as an engraver, who was born in 1787, and a pupil of James Basire, in Quality Court, Chancery Lane. Mr. Henry Le Keux was employed on the large plates, of which Basire did so many, for the publications of the Society of Antiquaries, the Oxford Almanac, and the like. After the ending of his apprenticeship, the engraver was occupied on "The Beauties of England and Wales," and, with his brother John, who died in 1846, on Britton's "Cathedrals." Henry Le Keux was never known to take pupils, but worked with his own hands on all his commissions. His productions may be cited as models of painstaking. In after life, he, in conjunction with E. Blore, produced the well-known "Monumental Remains." Among other plates engraved by him are Henry the Seventh's Chapel in Neale's "Westminster Abbey," "Chimney Lake," after Turner, in Whittaker's "Richmondshire," upon which book Mr. John Le Keux was also engaged; the small plates which appeared in the "Forget Me Not" and other annuals, after Martin; the large plate of "Venice," after Proust, and the small plates after Turner, in "Rogers' Poems"; some of the same in "The Provincial Antiquities of Scotland," after Turner and others; many plates in Neale's and Le Keux's "Chronicles;" others from "The National Gallery," by the Associated Engravers, of which body Mr. H. Le Keux was a member, the last plate of which series he produced being "The Embarkation of St. Ursula," after Claude. More than thirty years ago he gave up engraving, and retired to Boring, in Essex, and being engaged by the firm of Samuel Colnaghi & Co., copper manufacturers, continued in this employment until, at the age of eighty-four, his health failed, a short time before his death on the 11th instant. Mr. Le Keux was one of the early members of the Artists' Annuity Fund, and should be remembered as one of the few artists who have lived until our time and were engaged in the prosecution of line-engraving at a time when our countrymen were unrivalled in that branch of art, and before engraving on steel came into vogue—before the death of H. Heath and the Findens. The death of Henry Le Keux, the eminent Prussian landscape painter, is announced.

Interesting Historical Documents to be Made Accessible.

It will be remembered that the Governor and Court of Assistants of the Muscovy or Russia Company and the Chairman and Directors of the Honorable East India Company have forwarded official letters to General John Meredith Read, Jr., thanking him for the new and interesting list cast upon their early history. The former great corporation was founded in London by Sebastian Cabot, in 1555, and it originated the commerce and diplomatic intercourse between Russia and England. For a long series of years this company, in return for certain exclusive privileges of trade, bore the expense of the various embassies from Russia, and entertained the Muscovite representatives sumptuously, during their stay in England, at its house in London. In the course of his investigations General Read found that the large masses of state papers and valuable manuscripts which have been accumulating in the possession of the Russia Company, for upwards of three hundred years, lying unarranged, and without suitable indexes; so that the points he eagerly desired to arrive at were hopelessly buried in a vast mass of papers. Gradually becoming aware of the great importance of this collection to scholars throughout the world, he determined, if possible, to bring the matter to the attention of the British Government, for the purpose of inducing the English authorities to have these rare materials for history properly arranged, copiously indexed, and printed in the regular series of calendar of state papers, which are published from time to time by the English State Paper Office. In pursuance of this idea General Read visited Washington, and had several interviews with Mr. Thornton, the English Minister, who expressed great interest in the subject. Through Mr. Thornton, General Read formed the acquaintance of Mr. Herman Merivale, who is one of the Under Secretaries of State for India, and author of the recent admirable "Life of Sir Philip Francis." Mr. Merivale at once saw the importance of the subject; and at his suggestion General Read has prepared a petition to the English Government embodying the important points in the matter. The sympathies of Mr. Charles Merivale, the Roman historian, and of Mr. Proude, the historian of Elizabeth, have also been fully enlisted.

The Bread Basket of the World.

The figures presented by the Agricultural Bureau show by the returns of the growth of wheat that the West is bound to be the bread basket of the world, and to furnish food enough to feed all creation. The progress of wheat culture, observes the report, is remarkable. Not only does it go with population, but its movement is in an accelerating ratio, yielding results in bushels to each inhabitant surprising to Eastern farmers. This has the territory between the Mississippi river and the Pacific Ocean, which in 1859 yielded about 25,000,000 of bushels, harvested about 65,000,000; while the country east of the Mississippi, with its accession of population and wide distribution of agricultural implements, has made no increase as a whole. A few of the Western States barely making up the deficiency suffered in Virginia and Kentucky. It is a remarkable fact that a region which nine years ago produced only one-seventh of the wheat in the country now supplies nearly one-third of it. A similar progress in another decade will carry the centre of wheat production beyond the Mississippi, and were it possible for the Pacific coast again to quadruple its yield, that distant wheat field will give a larger product than the aggregate production of the United States in 1850. The history of wheat-raising is not altogether unlike that of cotton in its occupancy of new lands, and their desertion after a few years' use, not, indeed, to grow up in sedge or forest, but to be laid out in grass or employed in a more varied range of production. —John B. Gough will celebrate his silver wedding at Worcester, Mass., Nov. 24. —A memorial concert to Artemus Ward is to be given in Portland for a memorial fund.

RAILROAD LINES.

NORTH PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD.—The Erie, Lehigh Valley, and Delaware and Hudson Railroads, and the Pennsylvania Railroad, will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence their winter season of operations. The Pennsylvania Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations. The Erie Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations. The Lehigh Valley Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations. The Delaware and Hudson Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations.

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PHILADELPHIA, WILMINGTON AND BALTIMORE RAILROAD.—The Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations. The Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations. The Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations.

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PENNSYLVANIA CENTRAL RAILROAD.—The Pennsylvania Central Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations. The Pennsylvania Central Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations. The Pennsylvania Central Railroad will on Monday, October 19, 1868, commence its winter season of operations.

AUCTION SALES.

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