NEW PUBLICATIONS.

"The Ideal in Art." By H. Taine. Translated by J. Durand. Published by Leyboldt & Holt, for sale by Lippincott.

We are always glad to welcome the criticisms of M. Taine. As a judge we think he unites the qualities of emotional susceptibility and of broad intelligence in the highest degree of any living critic; his education, too, is more ranging and catholic than that of any contemporary writer. Sainte-Beuve has a more exquisite estimate of a certain kind of boudoir literature; Gautier can rhapsodize with more dazzling effect the pictures he understands; Ruskin perhaps comprehends better the minds of the Gothic architects; Hamerton knows more of the aspects of out-door nature; Victor Hugo can hem himself more over Shakespeare; George Ticknor understands Cervantes better; Wagner can write with more enthusiasm about the future of music, but there is none of them, there is nobody, to take the whole field of art with Taine, and give to his judgment of it the broad contemplation which Buckle gave to the history of intelligence. And then, for style, what a contrast to Taine! What a bound out of flesh, what a clarion note the man has! Although we by no means agree with the opinion of a certain oft-quoted reviewer who, of over Taine's faults of over-glitter, and who thinks him "indeed the most powerful writer of the day"—a reviewer too much given to like what is incisive, dictatorial and positive we still place Taine over all the *critics* by the head and shoulders. To be the "most powerful," we think, belongs to the artist; to the artist's estimate we assign the second place; to the head of this form where the judges sit in banc we would indeed M. Taine, and allow him the amplest and most lustrous ermine in the vestry.

A few months since we were examining Taine's "Italy," and sharing with our readers some of the exquisite pen-drawings included therein; the journey there portrayed was undertaken for the purpose of studying Italian art, to fit M. Taine better for the important assumed chair of aesthetics in the School of Beaux-Arts; and the present group of three essays, as well as the group called "Philosophie de l'Histoire," is formed of addresses read from the tribune in the Rue Bonaparte, in the most exquisite lecture-room which the world perhaps contains, where the speaker seems to be the latest of a long line of elevated vibrant figures of Delaroche's *Hemicycle* sitting in audience around the curving wall.

In the "Philosophie de l'Art in Italy" M. Taine attempted to evolve the progress of Italian art from the civilization-forces of Italian history. We do not think his theory perfect, since it greatly inclined before the Anglo-Saxon readers were seized, however, by a method so little Ruskinian; the differences are radical, and lies in a word. Ruskin loves to take up Cesar's penny and from the profile upon it, its chiselling and expression, argue the character of the dynasty; his thirteen years' contemplation of a Venice resulted in what we think an egregiously sentimental view of mediæval character. Taine turns the medal. He finds dates and disappearances; he reverts to history; from that he works up, as if it were a necessary result, the inspiration of a country's art. Taine studies the root, and works outward mainly to fop, from top to coxcomb, to dandy, to lion, to *gandin*, to *petit crevé*. The Parisian returning from a journey finds the dandy in other waistcoats, expressing himself in a different vocabulary. *He* is not one of society's permanent characteristics.

"Below this," pursues the writer, "we find a substratum of character a little more solid; it lasts twenty, thirty, or forty years; about the half of a historic period. We have just seen the end of one, that which had its existence in the society of 1830. You will find its representative personage in the *Antony* of Dumas, in the young heroes of the Hernani of Victor Hugo, in the souvenirs and narratives of your uncles and of your fathers. Do refer to the ideas of strong passions and some-how reverie, to the enthusiast and the poet, to the politician and the revolutionist, to the humanitarian and the innovator, the would-be consumptive, the seeming Faublas, wearing the long curls and the pompous hair to be seen in the engravings of Deveria; he now seems to us at once bombastic and artless, but we cannot refuse to recognize him as being ardent and magnanimous. In order to be in the pleasant a new class, richly endowed with faculties and with desires, who, having for the first time attained to the heights of "society," boisterously displays the trouble of his mind and of his heart.

"The substratum of the band order is much vaster and deeper. Such a substratum gave to France the ideal, central Brewhandon, gallant, courteous and elegant,—gave to the Grand Monarque, and finished with the turbulent ideas that led up the Revolution. Back of these lies the Attic hero, intact from Burlesque away of to Homer, "who knows not the prattling nerve on the battle field rentes genealogies and histories to his adversary before giving him blows with his sword." This wielder of language, of the pen, of dialectics and subtlety, prevails over twenty-five full centuries of classic civilization and decadence. In the Middle Ages, a different type defines the energetic, proud, moral, and, profoundly free Briton; in Spain, the intractable, dark Spaniard lasts all the way back to the Iberian or Celtic ancestor; the prince, live Gaule, defined by the Romans as men who prided themselves on "fighting bravely and talking adroitly," underlie as one the Parisian of Versailles and the type of modern Paris.

This method of analysis, applied to types of history, M. Taine extends, through some chapters of very delicate investigation, to types of art models, in painting and literature, from the Greeks down to Balzac and the French school of art. In a supposed case of the characters in English and French drama are most close and sympathetic, without the betrayal of the slightest preference, we find one hand for Racine's finished modulation, on the other, for Shakespeare's striking accent. And the book closes with admirable description of the artist's ideal world before the eyes of a few representative grand masters, such as Correggio, Leonardo, and Michael Angelo. The eloquence and distinctness with which Taine sets forth the ideal of each, his total absence of vapor—render him most entertaining, while they lay him all frankly open to hostile criticism. Such a method