

cousin, who has flitted in from the quiet of her convent school to pass the swift flying Christmas days in mundane pleasures among her fond, worldly friends. She is talking with our fair-haired young literateur: he is speaking with enthusiasm of the great Exposition Universel, whither his brilliant talent will take him the coming year. A visit to the fairy city is to the talented Americus a pleasure as yet enjoyed only in anticipation, and through the medium of golden tinted dreams; but to the lovely Linda the Old World has long lost the attraction of novelty; repeated visits to Europe have made her familiar with distant lands, and her glowing souvenirs of her child-days passed in *la belle ville de Paris*, in the Linden City, the great picture-capital of Germany, and even in Rome, that mournful monument of ancient glory, are received by her rapt listener with eager delight. Observe her head uplifted slightly to meet the gaze of those earnest blue eyes; the head is of Jovianian proportions; the face beautiful, though not strictly harmonious; a superb coil of lustreless black hair encircles a brow of marble whiteness. The nose, though small is of classic type, and the flashing, passionate dark eyes, pointed at the corners, impart a sphynx-like expression to her face. No dreamer is Linda, nor yet an enthusiast, for high intelligence and superior judgment temper the imagination of that powerful brain. A scientist she is, rather than artist; yet in that mind of masculine breadth, there lie the possibilities of all womanly greatness.

Seldom do we find in so small a group, such diverse characteristics of genius. Mignon too is here, sweet, impassionate improvisatrice, sois-disant "Minette," her Godivan wealth of bright colored hair glittering over her mourning robes, reminds me of that charming fiction of the old Roman mythology where Jupiter, under the form of a shower of gold penetrates into the darksome dungeon of Danae, his beloved. She is conversing with the "merry, mocking Mephistopheles:" the tones of her voice are singularly high, and her utterances flow out in rhythmic cadences like the inspiration of a Southern Sairus. Strange seems their discourse as from the distant sofa broken phrases reach us; they talk of counterparts, and odyles, of temperament, and the power of will.

And is he mocking, the metaphysical Diabolus, as he listens to Mignon's wild improvisations? Or whence the Mephistophelean resemblance? Is it in the breadth of that pale brow that indicates a predominance of intellect over the affections? Or is it in that mysterious iris-grey eye that glitters and flashes like a changeable meteor in its weird and ominous splendor?

Strange themes are these for grave discussion by two so young: Mignon, who is yet a child in years, though entitled to the dignity of womanhood by the precocity of her attainments, both in art and poesy; and Diabolus, a youth just out of boyhood, yet already known in the world of letters as a second Janus, with his dual glance directed towards Art and the Drama.

And is she beautiful, Mignon, the darling of all hearts? Observe her and decide. Regard her sylph-like form; she is not tall, but an intellectual buoyancy, a spiritual exaltation impart a delu-

sive stature to that petite figure. In the excitement of conversation she has thrown herself into a careless though not ungraceful attitude, half reclining over the arm of the sofa. A fairy foot *bien chaussé* has, in its restless movement, obtruded from under the folds of her mourning robes. Her complexion, which in repose is of transparent paleness, now in the flush of excitement is as exquisitely tinted as a June rose. The features are more noble than delicate, the nose has almost an Oriental prominence. And those eyes—who shall describe them? Their shades are various as her infinite moods. Whether you deem their color opal-blue or odyllic-grey, they are large, open and full of inspiration.

Upon a low ottoman besides the furnace-grate sits the sage Pensierosa. Her face is averted, so that you see only the profile. She is listening to the Chevalier Britanicus, and her serious face is relaxed into a complex expression of pleasure and surprise. The Chevalier is narrating his heroic exploits when as boy-soldier he served in the Italian wars under his beau-ideal leader, Garibaldi. The figure of Britanicus is tall and magnificently slender. The face handsome and full of manly character. Courage, intrepidity and never failing hope are expressed in those clear blue eyes. No weakness is betrayed by those finely cut features, but spirit, feeling and talent. This temperament is rather more chivalrous than romantic, and more romantic than poetical. But it is the strong though well-proportioned nose that reveals the indomitable will, the love of exciting, spirit-stirring scenes, and lofty, bold enterprises, stamping the character of our youthful Chevalier with the impress of knight-errantry.

And does the narration of these wild adventures in foreign climes interest his listener, Pensierosa, so thoughtful and grave? Like the complex expression that plays over those mobile features, her nature is somewhat of an involved one. Now lucid as the morning beams, now inexplicable as the laws of fate. Not an ordinary character is she, for usually her mind is occupied with other thoughts than those the present scene commands. Regard her face, more interesting, perhaps, you may style it, than beautiful, for deep reflection has thus too early left its impress upon that virgin countenance, that seen in repose is serious almost to sorrow, but now in the soft, falling light the too intense emotions are dissipated, and vivacity succeeds calm contemplativeness, and mirth and pleasure combine to give joyful animation. And now as she rises to comply with the request to play for our little party that tenderly imaginative tone-poem of dear, dead Prudent (*La Danse des Fées*), we see her face and figure in relief. A soft glimmer of pearl-shades in-spheres her fragile form, and the same delicate hue gleams from the velvet hand that confines those waves of fawn-dappled hair. No dazzling ornaments conflict with the chaste simplicity of her nun-like dress; only an ebon cross is suspended from that graceful throat. And the pure cerulean eye comports with the soft outline, and the brilliant whiteness of the complexion. Music is one of the passions that animate her talented, artistic soul, artistic she is emphatically in her tastes and pursuits. Artist she might be pre-eminently was her talent less diversified. Novelty

has for her an inordinate charm, imitation is more pleasing than completion. Passionately fond of reading, she prefers history to fiction, and ancient to modern, and sacred to profane. Dearer too to her are the writings of the sombre Ghibelline, Dante, than the deliciously romantic romantic poems of Tasso. Grandeur is the quality after which this ardent soul passionately yearns, whether in Art or Nature. Thus, mountains, the ocean, oratorio, the Latin Mass, and Paradise Lost are dearly cherished by her.

And now how shall I class them, these three almost heroines? Each so beautiful, all so young.

"Standing still with waiting feet,
Where woman hood and childhood meet."

Each a queen in chrysalis. Linda, resplendent beauty, with her dark, electrical eyes and carnation lips, her accomplished mind and winning ways. Mignon, whose passionate heart flows out in song and picture, and Pensierosa, so sensitive and so sage, so simple and so profound, half-coquette and half *religieuse*.

But the holy vigil is passing: in music and conversation within—without, a slumbering, hopeful world, while enwrapping all are the same glimmering golden stars in the high empyrean, Arcturus and Orion, and all those crystal spheres that shone upon the plains of Bethlehem,

"In the solemn midnight,
Centuries ago."

Adieu, mes belles amies; adieu, beaux cavaliers.
CECILIA.

ART MATTERS.

As intimated last week the "Art Matters" of the present number are to be devoted exclusively to the ladies, and it is with considerable diffidence and trepidation that their devoted admirer enters upon the criticism of the work of their fair and lovely hands. Now, to write of the work of men—big, grizzly, bearded men—is a different matter entirely; one feels at liberty then to speak out the plain, honest, downright truth and, at worst can but receive sound abuse—an article to which the critic becomes so thoroughly accustomed that a day passed without it, in some form or another, is to him a *dies non*, a day lacking in interest or excitement; for, to your critic, abuse is the sauce which adds piquancy and flavor to life, whereas flattery is but the oil which is pleasant to him in his "salad days," when he is but a fledgling and has not yet learned to appreciate the delicious satisfaction of knowing that he possesses the power of bringing down upon his devoted head a perfect avalanche of abuse by a few strokes of the pen. But then the abuse of men is one thing and the abuse of the ladies is another—he can stand the male invectives, whereas the sight of a severe, reproachful look on the face of one of the dainty little sylphs would drive him to distraction, doggerel, or an ignominious death in his own inkstand. Either one of these fates would be decidedly far from pleasant—distraction would naturally lead to the insane asylum, doggerel would involve long hair and unclean linen, while drowning in an inkstand might, perhaps, be somewhat novel and astounding, but then for one instant imagine the extremely absurd and ridiculous fig-

ure the unhappy critic would present, dressed in such an uncommonly sably "suit of sables."

On second thought, however, I do not know but what it might, perhaps, be refreshing to the fair ones to be told a few unpleasant truths, not with a feeling of unkindness, but with the idea of, if possible, pointing out to them the path by which they may attain that fame and reputation for which they strive, show them their faults in order that they may correct them, take them from the sphere of self content to which the unwise flattery of friends has raised them; in short, play the part of an exceedingly unpleasant and disagreeable Mentor. The task is a most ungracious one undoubtedly, and may, perhaps, be productive of little or no good, still, prompted by no other motive than the advancement of art, and utterly ignoring self, your humble servant will undertake it, trusting that the lady artists of New York will not hereafter look at him with eyes askance for a too free utterance of what he deems truth and justice.

One of the greatest faults to be found in the pictures of the majority of our lady painters is the lack of color by which they are, for the most part characterized—the drawing is generally careful and finished; but color seems to be a block over which many of them stumble and are lost. Whether it is their delicate hands are afraid of pigment or their gentle eyes are incapable of seeing it in its proper light I know not, suffice it the fact stands incontestably forward that their pictures are, as a general thing, colorless and weak. There are some notable exceptions to this rule, however, and among them is Miss Stone, a pupil of Mr. Edwin White, who has in her studio some studies of drapery which are remarkably effective in color, and display a strength and breadth of handling and treatment which is almost masculine—not that all masculine painting is strong in color and treatment, far from it, there are many male painters in New York whose works would rank far below Miss Stone's in those qualities. The lady is on the right track and the critical ink need not spatter her unsullied garments.

Mrs. E. Greatorex, although a veteran artist, does not seem to have thoroughly attained this desirable desideratum, albeit her pictures are always pleasing and attractive, they still are characterized by a certain lack of color which renders them not altogether satisfactory. Mrs. Greatorex has on her easel a very taking picture which represents an old country barn, into which a batch of sturdy farmers are unloading a wagon of hay; a road stretches down the middle of the picture, bordered on each side by trees, while over the adjoining meadow we catch a glimpse of nicely painted landscape. The subject is admirably treated and, in many parts, finely painted, but there is still the same lack of color which we find in all the lady's work, and while one cannot but admire the fancy and imagination of the artist, he is compelled, in a spirit of candor, to withhold the praise which he would otherwise bestow on the picture in question.

Mrs. Lilly M. Spencer has just finished a capital *genre* picture which she calls "The Remedy worse than the Evil," in which an excellently painted grey cat plays a very prominent part. The scene is laid on a dinner-table, where a harm-

less and meekly inoffensive looking little mouse has been committing some slight depredations upon the vivands, when Sir Thomas, with fur erect, leaps from his ambush and incontinently slays the youthful robber; in his course, however, Sir Thomas succeeds in breaking an unlimited amount of crockery, hence "The Remedy is worse than the Evil."

The picture possesses a great deal of genuine humor and the cat, as I have before said, is excellently painted, being good both in action, color and effect; the accessories, however, do not impress one so favorably, as they are marked by a certain disagreeable hardness which is far from satisfactory.

Miss G. A. Davis has some of the finest pen and ink studies that I have yet seen in the studios of any of our New York artists, either male or female. They are marked by a delicacy of finish which is almost wonderful, while, at the same time, there is a strength and boldness in their execution that smack strongly of a masculine master hand. Miss Davis is at present engaged in illustrating a local novel which she is writing, and the drawings are characterized throughout by a keen sense of the humorous as well as a true poetic feeling. One of them struck me as being particularly excellent and brought back some of the more finished and elaborate drawings for which "Punch" was at one time so justly celebrated. The illustration in question represents a view behind the scenes of a private *tableaux vivants* party; two gentlemen are discussing the becomingness of their respective costumes, one leaning easily against a table, while the other, with burnt cork in hand, is about to give the finishing touches to the moustache which is to impart to his face the necessary fiendish expression for the part he is about to represent—Mephistopheles. The whole picture is treated in a quietly humorous way which is perfectly irresistible—the easy, graceful action of the leaning figure, the funnily quizzical expression of the other, and the truthful representation of a private theatrical dressing-room, are all admirable and entitle Miss Davis to a high position among American figure painters. The lady is still quite young and, so far as I have been able to see, her works possess all the elements of success, let her but pursue her present course and there is not the slightest doubt that in time she will become one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of American pen and ink draughtsmen or women.

Mrs. Daniels, another pupil of Mr. Edwin White, has two exquisite little pictures which she calls respectively "Spinning" and "Girl at Gate;" of the two the latter is probably the best. It represents a bright, mischievous little country girl swinging on one of those large, unwieldy gates which we have all met in our country rambles; behind is a sunny bit of landscape, while over all hangs a clear blue sky which sheds light and sunshine over the whole picture. Mrs. Daniels is an excellent colorist and this quality is well displayed in the picture in question, which is simply delicious, not only from the coloring, but from the bright, happy feeling of innocent childishness and mirth which pervades it all.

Miss Alice Donlevy, a young lady of considerable promise, has at her studio some finely finished

specimens of illumination which are marked by great care and delicacy of finish. The lady, however, has adopted a school, the "Renaissance," which she must in time discover is not the true one for illumination; it possesses many good points undoubtedly, graceful and intricate lines and, in many instances, good coloring, but at the same time is a style which never has, nor never can, carry out truly the ideas of symbolism which is the great end of this most beautiful art. Miss Donlevy is an authoress as well as artist and has published, through Mr. A. D. F. Randolph, a work which she calls "Practical Hints on the Art of Illumination," which contains many good hints and suggestions to beginners.

Mrs. Dame, one of the few lady sculptors of New York, is engaged on a portrait bust which is really excellent. It represents a bright looking child, dimpled with smiles and brimful of fun and good humor. Mrs. Dame has caught the spirit of the head admirably and gives us a bust which for life, character and finish is nearly perfect.

Mrs. Goldbeck, *née* Freeman, has some nicely drawn portraits in pencil which show great talent; her ideal heads, one of Tennyson's "Maud" in particular, are not so good, displaying but little imagination and greatly lacking in poetic sentiment or feeling.

Miss E. W. Cook has some very clever landscapes, weak in coloring and effect it is true, but still possessing many points of real excellence. One of the best of the lady's productions is a "Twilight in the Adirondacs," in which she has caught what the painters call "the true spirit of the woods." The feeling of loneliness and desolation is well rendered, while the sky is much stronger in color and effect than the majority of the lady's pictures.

Miss A. Browne has some well painted portraits on her easel, prominent among which is one of "A Gentleman," which is quite rich in tone.

Miss M. J. Macdonald has just finished two admirable portraits in pencil of two of our leading physicians, in which she has been extremely successful in catching the expression and character of the gentlemen represented.

And this ends the notice of the lady artists of New York, for the present; at some future day I hope to be able to return to this pleasant subject and speak at still greater length of the work of their fair and dainty hands.

Yet ere this column of "Art Matters" ends,
I hope no wayward shafts have wounded friends.
I've viewed your pictures, ladies, with a critic's
eyes,
And own it, have viewed some with great surprise.
Then pardon any errors I have made
And by your smiles I will be amply paid—
But, if he's sinned, forth now Paletta stands
To beg forgiveness at your gentle hands.

PALETTA.

Mlle. Dejazet, while recently tripping across the stage at rehearsal, stumbled, fell, and badly wounded herself. The author of the piece in rehearsal, an old friend of her's, exclaimed: "Plague take it, Dejazet, are you always going to think yourself 50!" Everybody knows she is a great deal nearer 80 than 50.

M. Ernest Reyer (the composer of *La Statue*, etc.), succeeds M. d'Ortigue as musical critic of *Le Journal Des Débats*.