

knowledge and conscience of the directing artist are of value, not sought out in dreamy chance, not brought forward to please anyone, not to please any critic, or literary historian, or virtuoso, or gaping fool, but rightly brought forward for their own sake, produced in love.

FLORESTAN.—That sounds fine, but is worth nothing. Tell me first the other half—about the good public. Where is it?

EUSEBIUS.—Everywhere and nowhere. Everywhere that there is ingenuousness at bottom, that people do not suck judgment out of patchwork journalistic phrases everywhere that people go to a concert to be refreshed by tune, that they—

FLORESTAN.—That, in a word, as you in your grim humor once proposed, they should have stopped all reading for a month, reduced every newspaper to complete silence, and issued an order through the police to prohibit applause—*synctas implicitas!* Tell me where such a place is to be found under the face of the sun!

EUSEBIUS.—If it exists nowhere, an objective argument is impossible. Once, however, we both together saw somewhere how a mixed audience, comprising a few connoisseurs, a few amateurs, and a majority of simple-minded individuals, listened with silent attention in the concert-room, from beginning to end, to the first performance of *The Messiah*, in a complete, and totally un mutilated form; went home serious and delighted, and; at the next performance, attended in greater number than at first.

FLORESTAN.—Good things and good people! Such a case may occur once in a hundred times. With this we are far from having arrived at the judgment of human judgment.

EUSEBIUS.—I speak only of the possibility, which is proved by a single actual instance. So much, at least, we learn from this, namely, that the Learned are the chief persons responsible, and thus the chief persons to be blamed, when matters are otherwise. A wise director, full of high courage, and, at the same time, humble, has a conscience that compels him not to introduce at public performances anything he himself despises in his own heart. If he gives only what is good, he shall see who is most delighted, he or the people. What took place with *The Messiah*, occurred, also, with *Die Zauberflöte* and *Die Vestalin*, the "first impression" struck root among the people, partly influencing them instantaneously, and partly acting in such a way as to render a repetition welcome. The old Horatian maxim: "*Decies repetita placebit*"—"If repeated ten times, it will still always please," does not mean what certain modern prophets would make us believe: "Look at those ugly features, look at them steadily and earnestly; do so ten times, and they will at last please you."—Absurd. Will an ugly person become more beautiful for being looked at ten times?—I believe the hidden meaning of the above maxim to be: "that only what is suspected, and leaves in the heart a prickle from the first impression, awakes a yearning for its repetition. As principal result, I would, translated into ordinary German, retain this point: that valuable things, chosen by the Learned for public exhibition before such unprejudiced persons, as are not led in strings from without, and receive the first impressions with genuine *naivete*, have their reward in as much as he fact of teachers who love the truth offering genuine works of art effects what it

ought: elevated life in the people looking on, unanimous or multi-voiced recognition.

FLORESTAN.—Very fine! If falsehood did not exist. Were everything right in the world, we should need no criticism.

EUSEBIUS.—You are riding the idle horse of your last feuilleton, in which you could not praise a virtuoso, our dear Joachim, except with the shrivelled flower: "All criticism ends here."—What! Is it possible that an educated critic does not blush at understanding the whole range of criticism merely as a spy to pounce upon rogues? Does criticism consist in merely noting a man's furuncles and freckles, and not rather in what you were before seeking, *the art of judging*, the consciousness of judging on principle?—You should be ashamed at being false to yourself!

FLORESTAN.—I am ashamed, and will behave better in future; but, with all this, I do not see that we are moving an inch. First, answer my question about falsehood, which flourishes everywhere, among the Learned as well as among fools.

EUSEBIUS.—That's it! Because falsehood and sin exist in the world, how are we to find truth, and hold it fast when found, that it may shine and not be lost?

FLORESTAN.—You previously stated that, despite of falsehood, an indestructible yearning after truth was inherent to man.

EUSEBIUS.—And for that very reason I think that falsehood is unstable, and truth, stable. Of what use to Meyerbeer was all the puffing, all the fuss made about him in the newspapers?

FLORESTAN.—It enabled him to start as a trimillionaire, though not to reach the heaven of Mozart; but he was very tranquil on that point, it appears.

EUSEBIUS.—His tranquillity has nothing to do with us in following up the idea of the criticism of reason. What, however, was good in that lost son, the palpable, comprehensible, sensually exciting element in his miserably poor creations, has held its ground, and will be brought forward from time to time, though it will scarcely survive two generations, like certain works of imperishable beauty.

FLORESTAN.—You are now touching upon another point; the ideals of culture change with individuals and peoples. Remember Klopstock and Opits, who, after being quoted by their contemporaries as artists influencing the world, have, in a few generations, though not forgotten, descended considerably from their elevated position. Of Ossian, I will say nothing, as that hero, despite the admiration of Napoleon and Goethe, has now been *radicitus* extirpated, thanks to the crushing criticism of a bluestocking. You still admire him, I know—and yet you cannot help accepting, in certain cases, a changeable, and, therefore, scarcely an objective judgment. And whose place is it—that of the scholar or the layman—to utter such a judgment?

EUSEBIUS.—It is the scholar alone who can utter it. Wherefore, however, is a man a scholar, except from moreness of experience? If anyone thirty years ago passed the same opinion on Mendelssohn as that passed to-day, after his reputation or his uniqueness has paled [?], everyone [?] says: In addition to his natural talent his greater experience and acquisitions paved the way for him.

FLORESTAN.—So, you are at length approximating to me, in conceding something more to the scholar! *Bygo*, his judgment is

worth something more than the "first impression" of the layman.

EUSEBIUS.—But even he, the scholar, was once a layman, that is to say, one who simply received natural impressions, no matter for how long, and this *laydom of first sensations* has, by God's help, never left him. Had he lost it entirely, he would be merely a registrar and summer-up of reminiscences of himself, or even a scribbler, growing fat upon the impressions of others.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

DEATH OF MADAME MERIC-LALANDE.—That once celebrated songstress, Madame Meric-Lalande, who was identified with the Malibran, Velluti, Sontag, Pasta, Ambrogetti, Lablache, and Donzelli period, died a few days since at Chantilly. Madame Meric-Lalande had quitted the stage for many years. She was the mother of the popular contralto, Madame Meric-Lablache. In 1824, she sang in Meyerbeer's *Crociato in Egitto*, with Velluti and Lablache, and was mainly instrumental to the success of that work.

ART MATTERS.

De Haas, who has just returned from Naragansett, is putting the finishing touches to a picture that stamps him as eminently the greatest marine painter of the country. The gentleman has accomplished much good work before this, but never has he so thoroughly succeeded in imbuing a picture so fully with poetry, sentiment and breadth as he has done in the work in question. The subject is suggested by portions of the rocky coast of Rhode Island: An angry sea is tossing and fretting itself against a mass of rocks to the left; off into the distance we see the expanse of water, athwart which the moon is casting the pale color of its arising. The foreground is bathed in the warm color of the setting sun, while up in the sky we see a mass of rosy, fleecy clouds.

The whole canvas breathes of loneliness, dignity, power. There is nothing trivial; nothing to detract from the innate grandeur of the subject. We are here face to face with Nature in her grandest mood; there are no smiles upon her face, she is calm, dignified, commanding, and we bow before her shrine with feelings of reverential awe.

Metaphor aside, there are passages in this picture that have never been excelled, if equalled, by Mr. De Haas, or any other American marine painter. Among the prominent features are the rocks, and the effect of sunlight upon them; the dashing spray, and the sky. The only real fault one can find in the picture is the reflection of the moonlight on the water; this is, to say the least, "painty," and Mr. De Haas should remedy it. It is seldom that pictures such as this are painted, and one is all the more apt to look for blemishes; the painting of the moonlight is the only one I can find in the present work; remedy that, and we would

have a picture approaching almost to perfection.

J. B. Irving is at work on another of those delightful little *genre* pictures, in the treatment of which he is so happy. A little urchin *en dishabille*, with stick in hand, is just about to pounce upon a mouse, who has been committing some depredation and now sits quietly enjoying his plunder. The subject is a trifling one, but it gives Mr. Irving an opportunity to revel in a vast amount of careful and elaborate detail. In subjects of this character, Mr. Irving is without a rival, and his last effort is fully up to his usual standard.

Constant Mayer is at work on an exquisite *genre* picture, which he calls "Love's Messenger." It is the old story of the poetic dove and love letter. Mr. Mayer has treated his subject with rare delicacy; and, as he always does, managed to infuse into it a deal of poetry. The picture is purely classical, and a fine opportunity for color and design is afforded by the Pompeian architecture, of which Mr. Mayer has not neglected to avail himself.

Edwin White, who has just returned from his summer trip at West Springfield, Mass., has on his easel a remarkably pleasing picture, which he calls the "Country Post Office." It is full of sunlight, color, and home-like naturalness. In all Mr. White's pictures we trace the conscientious worker and the gentleman of refinement. There is never anything gross or exaggerated in his ideas, but always a fidelity to nature and an apparent love for what is beautiful and good. Mr. White will soon begin a large picture, for which he has already drawn the cartoon, of the "Signing of the Bond, on board the Mayflower," an incident in American history which will doubtless prove interesting in a picture.

Grenville Perkins has on the easel a fine picture of the "Pacific Coast," in which there is some uncommonly good sky and water painting. The great fault in Mr. Perkins' painting heretofore has been an unpleasant prominence of purple tones: these he appears to be getting rid of now, and is painting some thoroughly good pictures; good alike in treatment as in color.

The cold snap has brought many of the artists home to their winter quarters, and the studios are beginning to assume their natural appearance once more, being no longer the cold, blank, dreary and inanimate things they were during the summer. It is a merry season, this return of the artists, and keeps the critic remarkably busy: new sketches are to be looked at, new pictures criticised, new men praised or picked to pieces, new ideas developed, and news, generally collected, sifted down, and made available. PALETTA.

MATTERS THEATRIC.

"Myrrha," the most revolting, and at the same time most powerful, of Italian plays, was presented at the French Theatre on Monday evening, with Madame Ristori in the title rôle. This is the part in which she dethroned Rachel from the hearts of the Parisians, and which stamped her in Europe as the now acknowledged Queen of Tragedy. It is almost to be regretted that she has not enacted the character before in this country. It is her masterpiece—the culmination of tragic acting.

The plot of "Myrrha" is familiar to all play-goers. Myrrha, like Phœdra, is the victim of the vengeance of Venus, who for a supposed slight to her power inspires the unfortunate girl with a sickening and unholy passion, the object being her own father. A subject such as this, revolting in its idea, required the genius of an Alfieri to preserve it from being disgusting; and, furthermore, it also demands the most delicate, refined, and transcendent power in the actress to be tolerated in the representation. This Ristori most triumphantly achieves. From the opening scene to the tragic denouement, not a word, look, or action is there that could offend the most fastidious—we see but the victim of Fate struggling with even more than mortal energy under the decree of the incensed goddess. So thrillingly are these struggles embodied by Ristori that they fairly become realities to the spectator. Such intensity of grief, such horror and remorse as she exhibits, are new to the American stage, are phases of acting and character that we have never before witnessed.

Madame Ristori was ably supported throughout. Bozzo, as Ciniro, the father of Myrrha, gave a severely classic and finished picture which almost equalled in excellence the Myrrha of Ristori, while Mmes. Cottin and Casati, in the rôles of Ceeri and Euriclea, were deserving of great praise.

Giacometti's new tragedy, "Marie Antoinette," is announced for performance on Monday evening of next week. This work was written especially for Madame Ristori, and will doubtless afford a fine scope for her tragic powers.

Wallack's Theatre opened on Wednesday evening of last week to a house filled to overflowing. The programme consisted of Craven's "Meg's Diversion" and Bernard's burlesque of the "Latest edition of Black-eyed Susan."

Mr. Craven is well known in this country as the author of that delightful bit of domestic drama the "Chimney Corner." As is customary with modern English plays, or the modern plays of any other nationality for the matter of that, the plot of "Meg's Diversion" is composed of the flimsiest materials, depending more upon its innate naturalness and

the talents of the actors to make a success of it. Mr. Wallack's company do it full justice. Mrs. Jennings displays in the rôle of Meg a vivacity and earnestness which her warmest admirers never could have supposed her capable of, while Messrs. Young and Polk, as the two Pidgeons; Mr. Gilbert, as Jeremy Crow; Mr. Ringgold as Ashley Merton, and Mrs. Winter and Ward as Cornelia and Mrs. Netwold, all went to make up a delightful performance. Mr. Young's Jasper Pidgeon is a really exquisite piece of acting; droll, humorous, pathetic by turns, and always true to nature.

The burlesque is a wonderfully stupid affair, containing hardly a pun, and what there are so exceedingly mediocre that they fail to excite in any way the risibilities of the audience. Miss Ranoe, a new London importation, makes the most there can be made of the part of William. Miss Gannon is a very sweet See-u-san. Holland the drollest of Doggrasses; Young the most absurd of Dame Hatlys. Of Mark Smith's *Capt. Crosstree* it is difficult to speak; a more thoroughly, utterly, and entirely funny piece of acting it would be difficult to imagine. The scenery both in the play and burlesque is remarkably fine, particularly so in the latter.

The theatre has undergone a complete change in the matter of decoration, &c. A rich crimson, picked out with gold and bordered with gray and green, is now the prevailing color, and gives a great air of elegance to the whole establishment.

Jefferson is still drawing crowded houses at the Olympic, but is to give place on the 14th to the "Midsummer Night's Dream," which is to be gotten up in splendid style.

Forrest has appeared during the week in the "Gladiator," "Richelieu," and "Richard III.," drawing crowded houses, and eliciting much applause. He is to give place shortly to Mrs. Julia Dean, who will appear in a round of her favorite characters.

At the New York Theatre we are to have the "Cuban sylph," Zoe, next week. Anything is a relief after the ponderosity of "Under the Gaslight."

Madame Fanny Janauschek, who has been termed "the Ristori of Germany" will make her first appearance in this country, at the Academy of Music, on Wednesday evening of next week, as "Medea."

The fickle gods would appear to have set their faces against the "Devil's Auction," so often has it been postponed; but on Thursday evening, after much preparation and great outlay, it really was presented, too late, unfortunately, for notice this week. There are wonderful stories afloat of the marvels that are to be exhibited in this diabolical work, to say nothing of the surprising beauty of the *danseuses*. Next week we will see.

SHUGGE.