

Foreign Correspondence, Items, etc.

(Extract from a Private Letter.)

PARIS, Feb. 1853.

"Of our artist countrymen here, I have as yet only seen the works of Edwin White. He has greatly advanced his picture for the State of Maryland, of Washington Resigning his Commission. He has also on his easel 'The Huguenots—the Evening Hymn,' the design for which he had with him in New York: it is a subject after his own heart, and is filled with a deep sentiment of faith and hope; it already, in its unfinished state, has attracted much favorable notice.

"A millionaire of New York, now here, has purchased a picture of Sheffer's to enrich his gallery with. It was bought from a dealer. To verify the work, the artist was called on, and, inquiry made, he stated he had only painted two pictures of the subject, and they were in possession of two of his friends. This annoyed the purchaser, as he deemed the work fine, and worthy the fame of Scheffer. So at a later period he took the picture in his carriage to the artist, who expressed much surprise when he saw it, as it was the original study for the pictures referred to. He did not know how it had fallen into the picture-dealer's hands; New York will gain what is doubtless a fine addition to her list of modern works. The enormous sums that are paid to artists of reputation here at present is almost fabulous; a friend of mine, who was asked to procure some sketch by a celebrated cattle-painter, is unable to accomplish it on any terms. The winter has been charming. Two days there was skating at the Bois de Boulogne, the Emperor being one day among the crowd."

LONDON, February, 1853.

... I perceive by the CRAYON, that the first *conversazione* has come off with great éclat. What is the object of the rule to admit on exhibition only the works of resident members? If Kensett should come abroad to reside for two or three years, would you exclude a portfolio of sketches made by him in Norway or the Holy Land? I think such an association ought to have the liberty of admitting anything they choose, except *old pictures*, although I should have no serious objection to an original sketch by Raphael or Titian. . . . I went a few evenings since to a *conversazione* here. There were no ladies present. They had a number of portfolios, studies, and sketches of all sorts,—some extremely clever and interesting things by members of the Water-color societies. There was a portfolio of American sketches by Cropsey, which attracted much interest.

... I have just returned from the Life-school. I enjoy these evenings extremely; the society of the painters there being agreeable, interesting, and instructive. Mulready is very careful in making his drawings from life; he frequently has the model at his own studio in order to finish up the minutia in a strong light. These drawings have made a great sensation lately; three of them have been purchased for the Government museum at £100 each. For his little picture of "Choosing the Wedding-gown" he was paid 1,000 guineas. . . . While New York has been so rich in modern works during the past winter, there has been a perfect dearth of anything *new* in the way of Art in London. To be sure there is the National Gallery, with here and there a Titian, a Paul Veronese, and a Correggio, or some of those "trumpety old dead fellows;" but one does not like to be so unfashionable as to admire the "old masters," since the geniuses of the present day have discovered them to have

been such fools. I have ventured, however, now and then to sneak into the National Gallery; once in there, you need never be afraid of meeting any of the opponents of antiquity. One must occasionally yield to the prejudices of early education, just as an enlightened and philosophical infidel will once in a while look over a chapter in the Bible out of respect for the weaknesses of his ancestors.

ENGLAND.—In our last number we quoted an extract from a letter by Ruskin, called forth by a Pre-Raphaelite quarrel in Liverpool. A further consequence of the quarrel is a scheme to found a new institution, "associated with the public, and called the Liverpool Society of Fine Arts." The objects of the institution are as follows: 1st. The establishment of an annual exhibition of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture. 2d. Lectures. 3d. The education of students in the Fine Arts. 4th. The establishment of a permanent gallery. One peculiar feature of the society is the element of non-professional members, consisting of ladies and gentlemen paying annual subscriptions. Another, and an important one, is *conversazione*. The Athenæum says: "The Liverpool reformers have got hold of the true principle in making the society *public*. All Art bodies in London—probably all those in the country—ignore the public, except on pay-day. Even the Royal Academy, with a semi-public character, does nothing for the general education and refinement of popular taste. They are all academies of artists—not of Art. They study individual interests—not general interests—a narrow and ruinous policy! The first care of an academy of Art should be—not to make artists—"but to make an Art-public." Quite true, and worthy of serious consideration in this city and country.

A collection of pictures formed by Henry Wallis, Esq., was lately disposed of by auction in London. There were 128 pictures in the collection, all by modern masters—mostly living—and the whole realized \$38,000. A Landscape by Creswick, size 2 feet 3 by 3 feet 6 brought £110. *David slaying the lion*, a landscape by Linnell, size 4½ feet by 7, brought £555. A landscape by Constable, *The Opening of Waterloo Bridge, June 1817*, a thunder-shower passing off; size 4 feet 3 by 7 feet 2, £555. A landscape by Turner, *Kilgarrn Castle on the Troveey*, £425. At a subsequent sale of water-color drawings, collected by the same gentleman, a drawing by Turner, *Land's End*, size 8½ inches by 5½, brought 49 guineas; *Hastings Beach with a Fish-market*, by the same artist, size 26½ inches by 18, brought 285 guineas. *Temple at Peestum*, by D. Roberts, brought 250 guineas. *Scene in Normandy*, by F. Goodall, 19 inches by 16, 185 guineas. *The Cruel Sister*, by John Faed, 14½ inches by 11, 189 guineas.

ROME, February 25th.

... Read, Rothermel and many others are doing as well or better than in former years. Rothermel has sold several pictures to the Duchess Helena of Russia. Brown is busily engaged, and Tilton likewise.

The Evening Post informs us that American sculptors in Rome are busy. Akers is engaged upon a figure called the "Pearl Diver;" Mosier has completed a work entitled "The Prodigal Son," and has on hand a figure called the "Wept of Wish-ton-Wish;" Bartholomew is finishing his colossal statue of Washington; Chapman is painting a picture called the "Seasons." Miss Hosmer, Miss Lander and Miss Stebbins are engaged upon several important works.

An interesting letter from Dusseldorf is unavoidably postponed.