

ample of realistic painting is No. 61, *Miss Chanler*, by J. S. Sargent, R.A. It is a strong and earnest portrait, not very pleasing, but strikingly clever, as all this artist's works are. The faults of this school are very visible in H. H. la Thangue's *The song of the lark and the blind girl*, No. 596, a large painful picture, full of harsh colour and aggressive ugliness, notwithstanding its strength of treatment. In the same gallery, William Stott's *Awakening of the Spirit of the Rose*, No. 584, has most of the faults of the new Art in its extreme crudeness, and does not justify its pretty title—

"See rosy is her bower; her floor is all thy flowers,  
Her bed a rosy nest, by a bed of roses prest."

These are all in Gallery No. VIII, which has many pictures of interest in it. There is, for instance, No. 577, *Mary in the House of Elizabeth*, a picture full of the new spirit which is pervading art; it is painted with evident fidelity to nature, and, probably, in the open air. Mary is represented with a lily in her hand in the midst of a blaze of colour, of marygolds, and blue flowers; but why should she be painted with the headgear of a modern Dutch maiden, silver ornaments and all? It is, however, a picture of great merit and interest; but it looks in the catalogue as if its title had gone astray. Near it, in the centre of the wall, is a picture by Mrs. Ernest Norman, better known as Henrietta Rae. It is called, *Psyche before the throne of Venus*. It is an important picture, and is probably one of the largest ever contributed to the Royal Academy by a woman artist. The composition is beautiful; very beautiful also is the scheme of colour, the golden light of sunshine shining on the golden throne where Venus sits gazing on the prostrate figure of Psyche. The groups of charming figures, and the tender grey-green of the landscape help to make the whole picture an exquisite creation; its treatment, perhaps, errs on the side of over-prettiness.

One of the most original and strangely interesting pictures is that by Mr. T. C. Gotch, No. 540, *The Child Enthroned*. It is most singular in treatment, the careful drawing of the face and hands are worthy of Memling, while the general treatment is thoroughly early Italian; it should, on no account, be missed if only for the careful beauty of the drawing.

Naturally, the picture which will excite the most interest in the Exhibition is the portrait of *H.R.H. The Princess of Wales*, by Mr. Luke Fildes, R.A. It is painted with all this artist's great skill, and is a work which the people will love.

No one will end their first visit to the Academy without seeing the poetic and masterly treatment which Mr. Albert Gilbert, R.A., has bestowed on the *Sketch Model of the Tomb of His Royal Highness the late Duke of Clarence*, No. 1849. No one else could have done this, and it recalls the best art-decorative work of the Renaissance. The recumbent figure of the late prince rests on a tomb; an angel is bending forward and holding a celestial crown of great beauty over the dead face, while, at the feet, a cupid has dropped on the earthly crown, an unfinished wreath. The sides of the tomb consist of a truly splendid grille, which reveals the sarcophagus within; and Mr. Gilbert has shown us what the work of the artist, goldsmith, and sculptor, can be like.

## A Book of the Week.

"ESTHER WATERS."\*

THE Society of Authors contemplated taking some action in reference to the boycotting of Mr. George Moore's new novel, "Esther Waters," by one of the great circulating libraries; but the protest made by many men of mark in the columns of the daily press has made such an action superfluous. Nevertheless, it is a matter for congratulation that such a protest should have been made, because, without doubt, if all the libraries had co-operated and succeeded in suppressing "Esther Waters," we should have lost the most valuable book, of its kind, that has appeared since "Tess of the d'Urbervilles." And what, after all, is the censorship of the libraries worth that would submerge such a profitable moral lesson as is given in "Esther Waters," and which floats triumphantly the carrion society novel; which can stomach the passionate episodes in those works of fiction, and which turns squeamish at a few pages of description of the mental and physical agonies endured by a poor woman in the labour ward of Queen Charlotte's Hospital? Yet any sensible mother would not hesitate, for an instant, in her decision as to which of these works would have the worst influence over her young daughter's expanding mind. She might, for pity's sake, wish to spare her child the premature knowledge of the sorrow and suffering endured by women in this world; but, setting the tragedy aside, there is nothing in this novel to harm a pure-minded girl, and very much that will make her think and realise the hopeless tragedy of some poor women's lives. Mr. George Moore has improved enormously in the art of reticence since he wrote the "Mummer's Wife," clever as that book was, it startled and shocked the reader more than it convinced; but "Esther Waters" never lifts the veil from the decencies of life unnecessarily, and yet it vibrates throughout with almost passionate sympathy for the sorrows of this poor victim of the vice of gambling. After reading it, never again can we hear the newspaper-boy, passing along the slums and mews of London, crying, "Winner! Winner! all the Winners!" without remembering Esther and her misery. Surely this is a great triumph to have made a character in fiction so live, that for evermore she must be associated in our minds with this curse of gambling. She preaches to us the most powerful sermon, and not didactically, for Mr. Moore never falls into the error of moralising over his situations. He tells us a simple story, and the tale teaches us its own lesson.

Esther Waters is a young servant, and when we first make her acquaintance, she is on her way to be kitchen-maid at Wood View Lodge. Her master is a great horse-trainer and racer, and the rather scratch establishment of servants consists principally of grooms and jockeys. Esther "gets into trouble" with the foot-man, William, who leaves the house without knowing that she is about to become a mother. Homeless, she goes to Queen Charlotte's Hospital, where her baby is born while she is surrounded by

\*"Esther Waters." A novel by George Moore. (London: Walter Scott & Co. Price 6s. 24, Warwick Lane, Paternoster Row. 1894.)

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