

it is some seventeen hundred years old. Near it, in No. 4, is one of Holbein's wonderful portraits; in fact, it may be doubted whether this great painter has ever been better represented. He was born at Augsburg, in 1497. His skill as a designer attracted the notice of Erasmus, and, after working at Basel and Lucerne, he visited England in 1526, with letters of introduction to Sir Thomas Moore. He painted many portraits in this country, died in London about 1543, and is said to have been buried in the church of St. Catherine Cree, in Leadenhall Street. The portrait, however, we are considering is of *Christina, Duchess of Milan*; it has all Holbein's characteristics, the carefully drawn face, with a subtle half-smile on the delicately tinted lips, an expression Holbein was particularly fond of. The heavy fur-bordered robe and the sharply drawn hands are typical of the Master. It belongs to the Duke of Norfolk. Next to it is a Boticelli, No. 5, a somewhat coarse one, and not very pleasing.

No. 12, by Titian (1477-1576), is a portrait of *Catarina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus*, who gave up her throne in favour of the Venetian Republic in 1489. It is a work of great beauty, and a strange incident in the picture is the pet rat with a golden collar round its neck, a chain attaching it to the Queen's bracelet. There is a good example of Luini (1460-1530) in No. 13. It has the soft modelling and the dark shadows that he loved to paint.

No. 15, *Isabella Holcroft, Countess of Rutland*, deserves mention, as it is by an artist who is not represented in the National Gallery, Fedrigo Zuccherò (1543-1609). He painted Queen Elizabeth, but his work generally is little known in this country. After looking at No. 23, *Elizabeth de Valois*, by Sir Anthony Moore (1512-1581), and No. 27, a portrait of *Venetia, Lady Digby*, by Cornelis Janssens (1590-1663), we will pass on to the next room, called the Music Room, and look at the women who were famous in the reign of Charles II., and in the following century. First notice No. 36, Kneller's portrait of *Sarah Jennings, the celebrated Duchess of Marlborough*, and, on looking at it, we realize what a temper she must have had, and what "a life" she must have led good Queen Anne. A very clever picture is, however, the earlier one, No. 38, by Francisco Zurbaran (1598-1662). It is the portrait of *A Spanish Lady in the Garb of St. Elizabeth of Hungary*, and is an excellent picture with a very clever expression. No. 46, of *Anne of Austria*, by Peter Paul Rubens, should not be missed. A thoroughly typical "beauty" of the time of Charles II. is No. 47, *Elizabeth Hamilton, afterwards Comtesse de Grammont*, whom Sir Peter Lely has drawn with the usual round chinless face and simpering prettiness that was so much admired at the time. Another beauty of the same period is drawn for us in No. 52, *Silvie, a celebrated actress*, painted by Jean François de Troy. She has the same simper, but is certainly one of the prettiest of the series. There are several works by Greuze (1725-1805), No. 58, *A Girl's Head*, is very sweet; he is, however, better represented in the National Gallery.

In cases throughout the rooms there are various objects, articles of dress and ornaments with which from time to time fair women have adorned themselves, and these are not without interest. The Exhibition is, as a whole, so full of merit that we will return to it next week in a second notice.

## A Book of the Week.

### "THE INVISIBLE PLAYMATE."\*

"The Invisible Playmate" appeared originally in *Good Words*, under the title of "An Enigma." It is a strange study of a spiritual experience undergone by the writer who had lost a little child. I do not propose to tell the story, but I do wish to draw the reader's attention to the literary merit of this tiny booklet. It is so rare to find grown-up *men* people writing with comprehension about little babies, and *women* people who feel and understand the charm of the gracious awkward ways of tiny infants, seldom have the gift of artistic reticence, which alone makes a book about babies readable. But, undoubtedly, the fascination of the Rhymes about a little Woman contained in this collection is a lingering one. The author tells us himself that, "In trotting up and down with the Immortal in my arms, crooning her to sleep, the rhymes came, I did not make them." And this is the charm of these rare little child-poems, they are so spontaneous, so fresh, and through them all runs a dainty lilt that is indescribably fascinating. Here is an example, but it must be read aloud or rather sing-songed to be appreciated:—

"She was a treasure; she was a sweet;  
She was the darling of the Army and the Fleet!  
When—she—smiled—  
The crews of the line-of-battle ships went wild!  
When—she—cried—  
Whole regiments reversed their arms and sighed!  
When she was sick, for her sake,  
The Queen took off her crown and sobbed as if her  
heart would break."

There are, alas! only twelve of these little rhymes, but each one of them has—quality, and that indescribable something which defies description in mere words, but which bewitches the imagination and lingers in the memory long after many historical tomes and weary up-to-date novels are replaced on the book-shelves, and returned to the circulating library. Here is another example:—

"What shall we do to be rid of care?  
Pack up her best clothes and pay her fare.  
Pay her fare and let her go  
By an early train to Jer—I—cho."

Then follows several delicious lines describing the baby's arrival in the Desert, and how she will wed an Arab chief, and how he will deck her with silks and satins, and—

"With bangles for her feet and jewels for her hair,  
And other articles that ladies wear!"

Mr. William Canton well understands the mingling of joy and care that a child brings into the home as will be seen in the following verse:—

"She is my pride, my plague, my rest, my rack, my bliss,  
my bane;  
She brings me sunshine of the heart, and soft'ning of  
the brain."

\*"The Invisible Playmate." A Story of the Unseen: with appendices. By William Canton. 1, 6. Isbister & Co.

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