

reduced by only 1.68. When an animal breathes in a confined space, the carbon dioxide increases at the expense of the oxygen, while the nitrogen remains constant, hence the animal suffers not merely from the accumulation of carbon dioxide, but also from oxygen starvation, and would not survive long in such an atmosphere.

Notes on Art.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF PAINTERS IN WATER COLOURS.

It is always a pleasure to visit this Exhibition; a quiet pleasure without much expectation of new or startling effects, but with the certainty of seeing excellently painted pictures, dainty in colour and finished manipulation—work in which water-colour, as a medium, is perfectly understood. This year the exhibition is unusually good, and even here, the home of matured skill, there is a feeling of freshness, something newer in art, that is so characteristic of this year's work. Among the most attractive are the seven pictures by Mr. Tom Floyd, Nos. 2, 23, 35, 110, 112, 195 and 210. His work is always delightful, perhaps No. 2, *Desolate and Oppressed*, and No. 110, *Home with the Barley Waggon*, are the most noteworthy. The many sketches by Mr. R. W. Allan are wonderfully bright and clever, and so well understood that, in spite of the roughness of his method of work, we could not wish for more detail; in No. 133, *The Palace Court, Oodeypore, India*, we see this artist's work at its brightest and best. Sir E. Burne Jones contributes one picture, No. 64, *Bors, Percival, and Gelahead at the Chapel of the Sangracl, from the "Morte d'Arthur."* It is not a happy example of his work, the colours are heavy, dull and leaden, with the opaque effect caused by the too free use of body-colour; the green of the grass on which the Knights are standing is dull and crude. Very different is this formal painting from the exquisite picture of *Circe* in the Grafton Gallery, by the same great artist, which is full of transparent golden colour, and with a charming freshness over it all.

Mr. J. H. Henshall has succeeded in painting a new rendering of a religious subject in his picture, No. 131, *Gethsemane, "and there appeared an Angel unto Him from heaven strengthening Him."* The expression of agony of the face of Christ is very real and strong, the grouping of the figures is original, but the effect is somewhat marred by the muddy colouring.

We cannot help regretting that there is so little work from the hands of our women painters. Miss Clara Montalba sends a study of her favourite subject, *St. Mark's, Venice*, and two charming studies, Nos. 240 and 247, both of "Asolo," *The Old Fortifications: Catarina-Coruaros Tower and Browning's House*. Miss Rose Barton's "Fire" is spirited, but Mrs. Allingham's *In the Garden* is hardly equal to her usual work; it is slightly formal and crude. Among the most striking of the newer work is No. 79, by Arthur Melville, *Tangiers*; quite wonderfully clever, full of life and freshness.

In criticising a perfect little exhibition, such as the one we are now considering, there is very little to

say, but go and look at the impressionist studies by Mr. J. R. Weguelin, No. 43, *A Battle of Flowers*, and No. 176, *Venetian Gold*, and the few pictures we have mentioned, and you will see how charming an art, water-colour painting can be.

A Book of the Week.

"THE PRISONER OF ZENDA."*

MR. ANTHONY HOPE'S "The Prisoner of Zenda" received the honour of being spoken of by Mr. Andrew Lang at the Royal Academy dinner as one of the most interesting publications of the year. The book should hardly be called a novel—it may perhaps best be described as a romantic story—but it is so romantic, and so interesting, that it almost fulfils Mr. Andrew Lang's prophecy that King Romance would come again upon the earth and claim us all as his subjects, and would rout the realistic novel with clarion and with drum. Whether this be true or not, "The Prisoner of Zenda" has certainly achieved popularity, and there are few drawing room tables in London where the neat little red-brown volume is not to be found among the other books.

"The Prisoner of Zenda," I may say at once, is not realistic. It is almost impossibly improbable from start to finish, and yet the writer has made us forget the fact that it is nearly a fairy tale by the art with which he unfolds and displays the various incidents connected with the development of the narrative. I think it would be unfair to spoil the story by telling it here, as so much in a romance depends upon the gradual unfolding of the plot, and the attraction of adventure is lost if the charm of the unexpected is riven from a tale. The manly heroism of the chief actor in the book is attractive from start to finish. The heroine would perhaps gain in interest if she were possessed of a few more womanly wiles. She is at times so much the princess and so little feminine in her attitude towards the hero. The kidnapping of a king and all the adventures undertaken for his rescue form the central interest of this romance, which is a genuine romance and not the electroplate imitation which we have seen served up in so many circulating library novels of late years.

The villain is a real villain, and never repents. In romance we want our villains unadulterated, hardened and pickled in crime. We feel that there is a want of colour and tone in the blood of persons who weakly deplore their small faults of murder and robbery! Tales of anemic sinners do not beguile our interest like stories of strong-hearted, stern-natured ruffians. Readers may set their mind at rest when they open this volume, for Black Michael remains most satisfactorily black, and never repents, not even in the very last page of the very last chapter.

The two friends that accompany the red-headed hero through his adventures are most true-hearted allies in his prosperity and his adversity, and everybody is noble, brave, and good, or cruel, wicked, and bad in the most comfortable manner imaginable; and

* "The Prisoner of Zenda," by Anthony Hope. 3s. 6d. (J. W. Arrowsmith, Bristol and London.)

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