

the independence of the village. Nobody should expect a material advantage by going to church. Ah!" she added reflectively, "it's a grand thing to have a Village Parliament."

The talk then became desultory and personal. Probably the fire, as we both looked into it, from the depths of our arm-chairs, was producing a somnolent effect.

E. M. H.

Notes on Art.

THE NEW ENGLISH ART CLUB.

We have said some very hard things in these pages respecting the productions of this group of artists—"the left wing of the English impressionist school as some of their prominent members have been called. We have even heard it whispered lately in a "non-sense rhyme," that certain of them :—

"hold all early art in abhorrence,
"and much prefer Margate to Florence."

In spite, however, of the air of unreality which marks the work of the New English Art Club, we confess we have a strong and kindly feeling for "impressionism," and a vision of one or two lovely little studies in our possession, by Japanese artists, of "Moonlight rising above the Mist," sends us to the Galleries with the hope that we may be better pleased than we were last year when we were obliged to protest against Mr. W. Sickert's three strips of colour which he called the "Hotel Royal, Dieppe." This year, he returns to the same subject, to which he gives a rosy sky above the well-known white house, and treats his subject in a far more satisfactory way than in his finished work.

The most characteristic picture of the "School" is, perhaps, No. 84, "Coster Girls," by Will Rothenstein. It is a large important work, and represents two coster girls in a luminous effect of twilight; the eager, hungry, poor, effect of the girls is very cleverly rendered. Their spare frames and faces, eloquent with hard East End life through its endless struggle for existence, are pathetic in their pitiful striving for such meagre decorative relief as they think befeathered hats will afford. There is a portrait of Mr. Rothenstein, by E. Friant, No. 94, which is very cleverly painted, and shows a youthful face which leads us to hope for more mature work in the future.

No. 84. "The Japanese Gown," by P. Wilson Steer, is another of the few large pictures in the Exhibition. His work was much praised last year in several Exhibitions, but although this picture hardly sustains his reputation, the effect of the sunlight on the wall against which the Japanese girl is standing, is wonderfully true to life.

Mr. John Sargent, whose work is so well known, sends three little sketches, No. 28. The centre study is very clever. There is a very interesting portrait of a child, "Miss Francis Townsend," No. 19, by Miss Beatrice Malcolm; it is a life-size figure in dim white, with faint touches of red against a dark background, very well composed and vigorous in treatment. Near to it, No. 20, is a little study by R. Anning Bell, "Helena of London," remarkable for the extreme beauty of the vivid light-red of the cloak—a wonderful red—a colour we associate with the Florentine painters of the 15th century. It is to be regretted that the rest of the little sketch is not worthy of the

colour. We would call attention to the poems in faint colours, No. 8 & 9, "Venetian Sketches," by Moffat Lindener, and to the Velasquez effect produced by Albert Belleruche in No. 66, "London."

Viewing the Exhibition as a whole, we must confess that the New English Art Club is distinctly softening our feeling towards its work; but still, we are unable to advance much beyond the position of certain of Mr. Anstey's friends who, at a well-known "Impressionist" Exhibition, realized that a certain artist's work "is now entitled to serious consideration, but felt themselves unable to get beyond a timid tolerance of it." Of some of the works we are inclined to say as another of Mr. Anstey's Philistines said of a "Caprice in Purple and Gold": "Where is the sense in such things? What do they teach you? What story do they tell? Where is the *human interest* in them." But when we feel like that, we turn to our Japanese impressionists—the moon-lit mist, to which we have referred—and are reassured and comforted.

Dramatic Notes.

In spite of all the gleams of latent talent perceptible in "The Wife of Dives," Mr. S. X. Courte is scarcely to be congratulated on the unsavoury theme selected for the plot of his new play at the Opera Comique. Some excuse might be found for this modern method of perpetually exposing, in all its coarse hideousness, a social sore as old as the human race, were the public feeling so aroused as to insist on, or submit to, drastic measures for its cure, but the only apparent results are to familiarise the most innocent with a very undesirable side of existence, to condone rather than condemn a culpable standard of morality, and to disgust modest women with a stage which, properly conducted, is equally a power for good and source of desirable recreation and amusement.

In spite of the efforts of a fairly good cast, the inherent weakness of the plot, and somewhat forced dialogue, palpably show a novice hand. Miss Olga Brandon is certainly clever and unconventional in her rendering of the character of Mrs. Van Duccat, and Miss Carlotta Addison, Mr. Cosmo Stuart, and Mr. Cecil Ramsay do their best for parts which are somewhat hackneyed, but the impression of the play as a whole is that it is ill-constructed and unpleasant, scarcely likely, in fact, to be very long-lived.

Inventions, Preparations, &c.

DECORATIONS.

Messrs. F. B. Goodyer, of 155, New Bond Street, are too well known as artistic decorators to need any new commendation to the public. But the manner in which this Firm draped the stalls of the recent Bazaar of the Royal British Nurses' Association, and the artistic manner in which they carried out all the necessary decorations, elicited so much admiration, and was, in every way, so excellently done, that it is incumbent upon us to express the pleasure which their arrangements caused to all visitors who were possessed of any æsthetic taste. It is not so well known as it ought to be that Messrs. Goodyer also possess a very large collection of artistic furniture and fancy articles such as lamp-shades, fans, writing sets, and so forth—all of

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)