

date. Moreover, a member of the same club has written to the Prince of Wales asking his opinion on the subject. The Prince's reply, expressing as it does not only the opinion that the practice is unnecessary and a cause of suffering, but also that it has been his custom to keep dogs and to exhibit them, but never to permit of their being mutilated, has been hailed with great satisfaction. Even the Republican must feel that His Royal Highness is making the very best use of his position in setting an example, and so ruling with the sceptre of fashion, that burdens may be removed from the oppressed whether they are human beings or dumb animals.

Notes on Art.

THE OLD MASTERS AT THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

(SECOND NOTICE.)

It is unfortunate that the Dutch School of painting is so uninteresting to the general superficial observer of Art, because there is much beautiful work to be seen in the second gallery of the Royal Academy; but it is passed by with hasty and indifferent glances. Is it because the minute fidelity of rendering details, and the over smooth painting gives an air of unreality, and such material subjects as pots, pans and vegetables leave nothing to the imagination? "The Chateau of Teniers" by Teniers (80), "Interior" by Van Ostade, "Landscapes" by Cuypt, "Fruit and Flowers" by Jan Weenix, more "Interiors" by Gerard Dow; how well we know them all!

In the same gallery are several very fine pictures by Rembrandt, notably (53) "A Landscape," No. 55, and No. 83 "Portrait of the Wife of Nicholas Bergheni." "Man and Woman with a Parrot" is an unusually good Jordaens; the modelling of the woman's face is wonderfully life-like.

Jacob Jordaens, the most animal of all the materialistic painters, had at times a splendid strength, both in drawing and colour; in the third gallery there is another picture by him; this time it is the painting of the man's face that is so ably drawn with even delicacy in the fine lines, while the woman's face has all the coarse hard drawing and colour peculiar to Jordaens.

Together with the Flemish and Dutch pictures, and in striking contrast to them, are the beauties of the time of Charles the Second, painted by the court painter, Sir Peter Lely; the most attractive of these is No. 45, "Portrait of Queen Mary." There is more individuality and force than in (67) "Portrait of Mrs. Hughes," or (89) "Portrait of William III."

It is pleasant to go into the third and fourth galleries, where the older masters of painting are to be found. There is a delightful picture by Albert Durer (143), "St. Francis and St. Catherine," No. 135, "A portrait of a Young Man," by Velazquez; a fine Canaletto (165) "The Capitol at Rome," and an excellent work bearing no name, No. 170, "A Triptych."

A very indifferent picture is said to be by Raphael (102); a fine portrait of "Ariosto," the great Italian

poet, by Titian (109); the clever keen face is most expressive, and the painting of the dark robe, with wide quilted sleeves in cold grays is marvellous. Look also at 115, a quite charming picture Giorgione in golden and tender blue colours, and near it (117) the glowing colours of Tintoretto's "Adoration of the Shepherds." When you leave the painters of the fifteenth century, go and look at the works of their contemporaries the sculptors, goldsmiths, and gem engravers, and the cases in the Water Colour Room of the Exhibition, and notice carefully among the many beautiful things (146) Alto Relievo in lead or pewter, by Ghiberto; (146) a wax model,—the original is by Donatello; (145) a small altar piece; (51) a Spanish embroidered cloth; (44) a mother-of-pearl set in silver and gems; and spend what time you have remaining in finding out the exquisite work of the greatest period in Art, the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries.

A Book of the Week.

LITTLE EYOLF.*

It is impossible to ignore the influence for good or for evil that Ibsen has upon the literature and the plays of the present generation. It is difficult to account for this, because Ibsen, like many other advanced thinkers, is still "caviare to the general," who fail to understand the drift or purpose of his dreary and pessimistic teachings, and indeed, it is to be suspected that the outside public know the Norwegian writer's works chiefly from Mr. Anstey's admirable parodies of them in the pages of *Punch*. Yet perhaps it is as well to recognise that there is a large and growing section of the literary and reading world who are possessed by a very enthusiastic appreciation of these remarkable plays, and some of them are even prepared to hail their author as the prophet and teacher of the latter end of this the nineteenth century. I must own to personally rather disliking than appreciating Ibsen's writings, yet there is this curious quality about them—once read or seen upon the stage it is impossible to forget them. They fill the imagination with suggestions (often very disagreeable and uncomfortable ones) and against our will, we remember them *because they will not be forgotten*.

"Little Eyolf" is a strange play, and so far as any one can judge who has not seen it performed, seems to sin against every principle of dramatic construction. All the incidents happen in the first act, and the second and third acts are absorbed with talking about them, and in endeavouring to show the result of the catastrophe upon the principal characters. The story of the play, briefly related, is this:—Alfred Allmers, a well-to-do estate owner and student, marries his wife Rita for her beauty and her mind, under the mistaken impression that it is for love. Rita's passion for her husband is greedy and sensual; it desires to monopo-

* "Little Eyolf," a play in three acts, by Henrik Ibsen. Translated from the Norwegian by William Archer. (London: William Heinemann. 5s.)

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)