

the privilege of the friendship of the wife of the Squire, a woman typical of everything that is large and beautiful and true in woman, and I found that, in her charity and work, she acted on the real Christian principle, "help the weak, comfort the sick." In her village the standard of morality is no better and no worse than in other villages; there are Magdalenes and mothers whose union has not been sanctioned by bell or book. And there are helpless little children, conceived in shame, brought forth in fear and desperation—all these, crying out for help. My friend sets apart one cow to supply the sick and poor of her village community with milk. "Oh," say her horrified friends, "but you surely don't encourage immorality by sending milk to illegitimate babies? I think you are doing very wrong."

Poor little mouths!—to go unfed, so that the hunger crying out of them might be a sermon on morality! Horrible hypocrisy that would leave a helpless baby to starve, lest a meal of milk might be interpreted as showing a rift in the moral nature of the giver.

The Rector's wife most strongly disapproves of my large-hearted friend's charity, and has taken her to task for including the mothers of illegitimate children in her tea-parties and village recreations, and for visiting them in their homes. "For my part," says this Rector's wife, "my husband has forbidden me even to enter a house where the conjugal relations are not above suspicion!"

By which it would appear that she regards herself as "called to the righteous," and is thinking most of the moral contamination which might attack her little soul, were she to be seen comforting a woman who may have sinned much because she loved much. Does this Rector, I wonder, exercise the same caution with regard to the *men* visitors of his own class? Would he refuse an invitation to Lord Z.'s dinner-party because Lord Z.'s moral character was not above suspicion? I think not. I would say in conclusion, lest misunderstanding might accrue, that I have the greatest admiration for the working of the Church as a whole—especially the Church of our cities and towns, where fine organisations exist for the relief of the erring woman—but I have constantly met in country villages this spirit of exclusiveness which Mr. Horsley (himself a clergyman), has called the "Respectability of the Church," and this respectability is seen to worst advantage when it is "the first to cast the stone" of contempt at helpless babyhood.

Sincerely yours,

One who would like to sign herself

A BROAD-HEARTED WOMAN.

Notes on Art.

GUILDHALL LOAN EXHIBITION.

(FIRST NOTICE.)

OF the making of loan collections, there is, apparently, no end; and the exhibition which opens at the Guildhall this week, is a speaking witness to the kindness of the numerous owners who nobly part with the gems of their collection for so many months in the year.

The "Orlando pursuing the Fata Morgana" of Watts (No. 5) is a glorious example of the greatest of English colourists at his very best. It is Titian-like in the massive breadth of handling and the richness of its glowing depths. The way in which the warm scheme of colour works through the picture from right to left—from brown to red and orange—and the cool from left to right—from green foliage through the turquoise lining of the nymph's cloak to blue sky—is incomparable; but need Orlando have been so very dark? He is positively Moorish.

Among pictures which may be almost called historical, the "Claud Duval" of Mr. Frith (No. 14) is especially interesting. It is full of clever detail and conscientious painting. The white-haired gentleman with his expression of bitter mortification, the spirit that shows out through the lady's terror, the leer of the rogue who lifts her veil to have a peep at her beauty, the dreary heath, the irony of the distant gibbets, are all most eloquent and expressive.

"Eastward Ho!" (No. 16) is another clever picture of the same date, but marked so strongly with the bad taste of the period in which it was painted, as somewhat to destroy its effect upon the gazer of to-day. It may be remarked in passing, how much less the work of the Pre-Raphaelite brothers "carries date" in this way, than the work of most of their contemporaries.

Millais' "Jephthah" and "Rosalind and Celia" were exhibited in 1867 and 1868 respectively, and scarcely contain a hint that they belong to the age of crinoline and flat-plastered hair. Neither of these is to be compared, in point of interest, to his early works shown last year; but both are beautiful, and No. 26 especially contains that wonderful sympathy of the landscape with the figures, which was so noticeable in "The Huguenots" and "The Proscribed Royalist."

Sir F. Leighton's well-known "Garden of the Hesperides" is hardly to be called a picture—it is a superb decorative design. In conjunction with this, his picture in the next room (No. 53) is interesting, as showing how decorative his turn of mind was, even twenty-one years ago; for the garden background is entirely conventional—not a real garden at all.

This first room contains several gems of landscape, notably Peter Graham's "Where deep seas moan," McWhirter's "Ossian's Grave," Millais' incomparable "Over the hills and far away," and the tenderly beautiful "Ripening Sunbeams" of Vicat Cole, now, alas, numbered with the "old masters."

Of recent favourites may be mentioned Stanhope Forbes' fine "Forging the Anchor," Solomon's "Samson," which appears here to more advantage than it did in the Academy; and the "Circe" of Waterhouse, which, in spite of its fine drawing and lovely scheme of blue and purple colour, somehow manages to suggest the studio model a little uncomfortably.

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)