

treatment. One example of an entirely new conception of an old subject, which charms us first by its beauty, is No. 18, "The Flight into Egypt" by Mr. Hitchcock, an exquisite picture, so fresh and tender are the tones of white, blue, grey and green. Mr. Hitchcock made a sudden reputation last year at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy, by his picture of "Mary in the House of Elizabeth," but the picture we are now considering is more delicately lovely. Among the work by the artists of the newest school of painting, the first place must be given to the marvellous picture by T. C. Gotch (No. 207), "The Child in the World." The workmanship is nearly, if not quite perfect; it represents a simple child standing in the centre of the picture clothed in a white garment, quiet and unalarmed, although almost surrounded by a wonderful dragon—the spirit of evil that is in the world—who is as yet unable to harm one who is pure and innocent, stronger than evil. The iridescent blue lines of the dragon are excellently well painted.

Mr. Alfred East's landscape (No. 225) "The Misty Morn," is even more than usually decoratively charming, it is so aerial and softly lovely in its misty grey tones, that it needs more romantic setting than the walls of an exhibition. Moving round the room we pass (No. 238) "The Laboratory" by Mr. John Collier; here all is clear and hard, carefully painted, and although more interesting than much of Mr. Collier's work, it does not bring home the strength and fascination of wickedness which lies in the women suggested by Browning's well-known poem illustrated.

"Tales of the Jungle" (No. 243), by J. J. Shannon, is perfectly charming in every way—colour, the listening faces of the children—all is good; so is a smaller picture by the same artist in the next room, called "Kit," a study in grey-blue, with red, of a child with a cat. Going back to the north room, let us stand before the masterpiece of the exhibition, "Charity" (No. 250), by G. F. Watts, R.A., a grand picture in Watts' best style, taking us back to the fifteenth century, and Titian colouring; but although even this gorgeous colour pales before the reds and blues of the old Venetian school, the poetry in Watts' picture is of far higher meaning, showing us the Christian idea of charity, which surely was not in Venice when Titian lived and worked. Glancing round the room, we notice Mrs. Swynnerton's ambitious picture, well hung on the line (No. 259); it is called "The Sense of Sight" and shows us a simple strong face looking upwards; the expression is full of dignity and purity, reminding us slightly of Watts' picture in its broad treatment and strong drawing; it is to be regretted that the colour is, in parts, so crude; much of the colour and painting is admirable.

Across the room is a large portrait by Mr. Sargent, "Miss Ada Rehan," almost unpleasant in its insolent cleverness and daring background; but there is no denying the extreme ability which has produced this life-like portrait, which seems really to live.

Next week we must consider the work of Sir E. Burne-Jones, Sir John Millais, and others.

A Book of the Week.

"HIGHWAYS AND HEDGES."*

THIS book is in every way a very remarkable publication. It is, I believe, the author's first book, and it has achieved success, and has attained reviews and notices in all the more important literary papers, such as are very seldom accorded to writers of well assured and established reputation. "Into the Highways and Hedges" is not only original in conception and admirable in style, but from first to last it is deeply and humanly interesting.

The authoress—for though many reviewers have written of this novel as if it were the work of a male pen, the distinction of having produced the most remarkable book yet published in 1895 belongs to a Miss Montrésor, the daughter of Admiral Montrésor, and the sister of Lieut. Montrésor, who was killed while defending the guns at Tamai—the authoress says in her preface:—

"This is not meant to be a controversial novel. I by no means agree with all Barnabas Thorpe's opinions. Nevertheless, I believe that the men who fight for their ideals have been, and always will be, the saving element in a world which happily has never yet been left without them. . . . Their failures, their apparently hopeless mistakes, are often evident enough, yet the mistakes die, and the spirit which animates them lives. It would be dark indeed, if the torches of those eager runners were to go out."

This preface sounds the dominant note of the story. The life of Barnabas Thorpe, the low-born, uneducated preacher, and his highly cultured and refined wife, is, I will venture to say, the most profoundly attractive story that we have had to deal with for many a long and dreary day. There are certain qualities about Miss Montrésor's workmanship which recall George Eliot, and there is something in the single-minded devotion of the preacher to his cause that reminds one irresistibly of Dinah in "Adam Bede." Almost all the struggles and miseries that his wife endures by reason of his self-devotion draw her nearer to her husband. The suffering that this conduct causes her purifies her nature and refines her soul, so that against all the natural antipathies of race refinements she is forced to love him with all her strength, and all her womanhood. The preacher's crippled brother is very forcibly and naturally described, and the life at the lonely farm when Barnabas first brings his well-born wife for shelter, is graphic in its artistic presentment. There is not one superfluous page of detail, and yet the scene, with its discomforts, which Margaret cannot help feeling, in spite of the kindly nature of Barnabas's people, is alive for us. But after all, the interest centres round the preacher and his wife, and this is what Mr. Bagshotte the clergyman thought about Barnabas:—

"A bit of a fatalist (though he doesn't know it), a bit of a fanatic, and a bit of a saint, with an inconveniently big heart," thought the parson. "The man gives the saint some trouble I fancy. I wonder what his wife is like?"

What Margaret his wife was like, and what Barnabas's influence made her, readers must find out for themselves in the fascinating pages of the book itself.

* "Into the Highways and Hedges," by J. J. Montrésor. 6s. (Hutchinson & Co., 1895.)

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