

Notes on Art.

ACADEMY EXHIBITION.

(SECOND NOTICE.)

MR. LAVERY is, I believe, one of the leading impressionists of the Glasgow school, so I looked eagerly for his work. But "A Lady in White" (No. 88) is very disappointing. It must be allowed that it is badly hung, but that does not alter the radical fault of the composition, which is that the head is not by any means the thing to which the composition leads up, but the lady's waist is what faces you with an uncomfortable persistency; the painter's "impression" of his sitter was a curious one, or she is a curious person. The colour too, is relentlessly ugly—chalky-white and lavender; and I found nothing in the drawing that atoned for these defects.

Mr. Greiffenhagen, too, has fallen a victim to this pitiless ugliness, which seems so to enthrall this type of painters; one wonders if his sitters can really be as unattractive as he paints them: the children of Mr. Rider Haggard, for instance (No. 264). In this the brush-work is admirable, but the colour is unpleasant, and the arrangement, if we may dare to say so of so prominent an artist, ungainly.

One of the most daring of the younger artists infected with French methods is Mr. Bunny. His picture, "The Forerunners," may be forgiven much on two grounds, its originality, and its vitality. Of course there is no necessity for beauty in such a picture, and of beauty there is not a jot, but there is life and movement everywhere,—in the sea as it rolls in—although it is not well painted—and above all in the grotesque and fantastic riders of the white horses. But after all, as you stand before the great canvas, you do wonder what made him try to paint such a thing with a brush within reach of so much.

"Glen Orchy" (No. 201) is a most lovely and satisfying example of Mr. Henry Moore, very unlike his usual style; the shadow of the coming storm over the glen is very fine. There are two landscapes of a very fascinating kind by Gilbert Foster (Nos. 259, 400)—"The Azure Mead" and "The Silver Strand." One is a bit of country overrun with bluebells, and one a meadow starred with ox-eyed daisies. The idea is poetic, and not at all exaggerated.

Mr. Solomon J. Solomon's "Echo and Narcissus" is very beautiful, both in colour and drawing, and shows the artist in a somewhat new light; the upturned face of Echo is lovely in its intentness. There is quite an epidemic of pictures of Waterloo, foremost among them being Lady Butler's "Reveille of the Scots Greys." This is an admirable picture of its kind. The tragedy in the face of the young soldier in the foreground, just awakened from sleep, is real and striking. There is certainly no falling off in the work of this artist.

Mr. Calderon's "Ariadne" is not at all satisfactory. It seems that he does not mean to repeat his *tour de force*—Aphrodite—which we had an opportunity of seeing again last year at the Grafton Gallery. Ariadne is as limp and unreal as Aphrodite was living and breathing.

Mr. J. J. Shannon's exquisite portrait of Miss Winifred Pember (324) must not be forgotten. There is another charming portrait of a child, by Tom Mostyn (No. 733)—"Portrait of my Daughter." But, on the whole, this is not an Academy of memorable portraits.

A Book of the Week.

"A STUDY IN PREJUDICES."*

THE volume under our consideration this week may well be entitled "A Study in Prejudices," though possibly the aptness of the title applies more to the author's personal views than to the mistakes and faults of the hero of the novel who is evidently intended to be the object of this so-called "study." If I had to re-name the novel over again I should like therefore to call it "A Prejudiced Study," by George Paston, who, by-the-way, is self-evidently a woman and a very one-ideal specimen of that sex. Now this is provoking, because up to a certain point and within certain limitations George Paston is a clever woman, and an amusing woman. She writes easily, without visible effort and at times brilliantly, so I can't help hoping that after all George Paston is very young and will out-grow her strained and distorted views concerning men and women and life, and that experience of life will enlarge her cramped ideas, that her powers of quick observation will be strengthened and her smartness will develop into something of more permanent value in a novel writer, who aspires to reflect in the pages of her books the knowledge that she has acquired from life. Smart but shallow must be the conscientious criticism of the two novels that she has published up to present date, but this verdict must be qualified by pointing out that this criticism applies only to her ideas and that her prose is full of excellent promise, and that her pen is dexterous and nimble, and therefore, as I have said before, *if* George Paston is young her faults will most likely merge into virtues, she will out-grow her juvenile prejudices, and she will in the future, it may be evidently expected, produce good and valuable work.

But one merit she possesses already, and that is she is not dull—provoking and prejudiced and harassing—but never dull, and she endows her characters, with one exception, with so much vitality that it makes readers all the more indignant when she forces her creations to do and say things that we feel convinced they never would have said and done out of the pages of an up-to-date novel. Yet the conversations are well managed, and it would not be at all difficult to select several paragraphs and sentences from the volume that would be well worth remembering, such, for instance, as the following, chosen rather at random—

"I am sure that a man cannot write books worth reading unless there is much of the human being in him. He must have felt and suffered, as well as seen and heard a great deal."

And when Miles suggests that his wife should abandon her project of attending art classes, in order to illustrate *his* stories, and design initial letters and tail-pieces for *his* books, Cecily, the wife, felt disappointed, for "It was hard to give up her own little private ambition altogether. She had the genuine creative impulse which burns in the soul of its possessor as money burns in the pocket of a spendthrift, and her whole nature craved for a fuller, freer development."

I do not wish to give a false impression of this book. Cicely, the wife, is not at all a new woman; she is a

* "A Study in Prejudices," by George Paston. 6s. (Hutchinson.) 1895.

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