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levied on every foreign painting, without regard to its value. This, as was pointed out in these columns, would not affect the importation of the best pictures, but would keep out such rubbish as doubtless constitutes the bulk of the Borniche collection.

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HEREAFTER it is probable that the term "Borniche" will be added to the picture-buyer's vocabulary to designate a worthless kind of painting, like "croute," "pastiche" and the rest.

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MR. WALTERS, of Baltimore, has just bought one of Corot's very finest works—"Saint-Sebastien." The picture is some ten feet high. In the foreground Saint-Sebastien is reclining on a piece of drapery, while two women lean over him and care for his wounds; the middle distance is occupied by trees shooting up like silver birches, arching over to fill up the top of the canvas and leaving in the middle an opening through which the torturers of the saint are seen going away in the distance. In the trees are two cherubim. The composition of this work is somewhat like that of Titian's famous "Peter Martyr" which was burned at Venice some years ago. Corot may have seen that picture during his journey to Italy in 1826. Originally, too, Corot's was rounded at the top like Titian's.

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THE "Saint-Sebastien" was first exhibited at the salon of 1853. It was seen again at the Universal Exhibition of 1867, when the artist had altered the conformation of the trees on the left and made them straight as they now are and at the same time enlarged the background. At the close of the exhibition the picture was returned to Corot's studio, where it remained until 1871 when he gave it to a lottery in aid of the wounded in the Franco-German war, on which occasion it was once more exhibited at the Opera, where the lottery was held. The winner offered the picture to the dealer, Durand-Ruel, who objected that round-topped pictures were difficult to sell, and suggested that the artist should be asked to fill in the top corners. Corot, the most obliging of men, consented, and so the Saint-Sebastien became the tall oblong picture it now is. This alteration having been made, Durand-Ruel gave \$1800 for the picture and sold it for \$3000. We next find the picture in England in the possession of a Mr. Barlow, from whose hands it passed into the hands of Messrs. Wallis, who sold the picture to Mr. Walters for \$10,000. If the picture had been sold in Paris it would, as things go, have certainly reached \$16,000, for it is as fine a Corot as one could desire. In none of his composed landscapes, such as "Homer and the Shepherds," "Daphnis and Chloe" (1845), "Christ in the Garden of Olives" (1849), "Dante and Virgil," "Macbeth" (1859), "Dance of Nymphs" (1861) or "Biblis Changed into a Spring," one of his last works, has the artist put more grace, exquisite sensibility and poetic emotion than in the splendid silvery landscape of the "Saint-Sebastien." No price is too great for such a work.

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THE enthusiastic American admirers of the late Manet who have given his two portraits in the Pedestal Fund Art Loan Exhibition at the Academy of Design the places of honor will be interested to learn that an exhibition of some of the most important works of the Zola of the brush will take place at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in January and February, to be followed by the sale of the contents of his studio.

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A PROOF that the agitation against false pictures is not in vain was furnished by an incident in the sale of the Becherel collection in Paris, which began on November 26th. The catalogue contained notice of three examples, works of Corot, "A Landscape," "A Study of a Woman," and a view of the "Moulin de la Gallette at Montmartre" (24 x 31 centimetres), and two by Diaz, "A Woman Bathing" and "Hautours d'Apremont," in the forest of Fontainebleau (32 x 44 centimetres) "signé et daté 64," said the catalogue. At the last moment the experts, M. M. Ch. George and Lasquin were warned that all five were forgeries, and the pictures were withdrawn before the sale began, and even before the public view. As Parisian dealers generally ship such doubtful canvases to the United States, let American buyers bear this description of these in mind.

MONTEZUMA.

Dramatic Feuilleton.

Hamlet.—Good, my lord, will you see the players well bestowed?
Polonius.—My lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Hamlet.

THE compliments of the season—the Merrie Christmas and Happy New Year—are by no means merely conventional wishes, so far as the theatrical managers are concerned. For them this Christmas time is not at all "merrie," and they sadly need a happier New Year. The season which opened so brilliantly and hopefully has been beclouded by pecuniary losses and seems likely to culminate in disasters.

That the theatres should be obliged to compete with two Italian opera houses was hard enough; but when the operatic managers began to distribute free tickets by mail to theatre-goers competition became impossible. Then the Irving engagement engrossed the public attention and a great deal of the public money. Finally, to make bad worse, the burning of the Windsor theatre aroused that fear of fire which, next to a heavy snow-storm, is the manager's worst enemy.

Early in December the effects of this combination of misfortunes were evident. Almost simultaneously, the theatres changed their bills, which is always a sign of weakness during the holidays. Pieces which had been relied upon to run through the whole season showed such a falling off that they had to be withdrawn. The Union Square surprised everybody by opening with a failure. The new Bijou was not more fortunate. The San Francisco Minstrels, which had monopolized that branch of amusements in New York for years, hung out the white flag and capitulated to Colonel Haverly.

The significance of this surrender of the San Francisco Minstrels will not be overlooked by professionals. In popularity, which some people mistake for a test of merit, the different forms of amusement rank as follows: (1) the circus; (2) the variety shows; (3) negro minstrels; (4) the theatres. It follows logically that if a negro minstrel company cannot prosper, the theatres must do a very bad business. The only minstrel troupe in New York has had to take the proprietor of a rival organization into partnership.

You may laugh at this odd theory; but you will find it sustained by the facts. No sooner was the failure of the San Francisco management made public than the other managers displayed signals of distress.

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AT Wallack's, "Moths," which should have run for a year, so admirably was it acted by Miss Rose Coghlan, Miss Caroline Hill, Miss Evesson and Mr. Charles Glenny, was taken off and "The Road to Ruin" substituted. Excellently as Madame Ponisi and the veteran John Gilbert play in this piece, the old comedies have lost, for the present, their power to charm modern audiences, and everybody felt that "The Road to Ruin" was only revived as a stopgap until "Impulse" could be properly rehearsed. But "Impulse" is an improbable and disagreeable play, which has already failed at Boston, and I cannot anticipate any success for it here.

"In the Ranks," at the Standard, which I described to you as a success of scenery, was as suddenly sent upon the road to give place to a so-called comic opera, "Estrella," which failed in London. This was another stopgap, to keep the theatre open until the new work by Gilbert and Sullivan, based upon Tennyson's poem, "The Princess," could be produced.

The programme of the unfortunate Fifth Avenue was repeatedly changed. At first, Manager Stetson put on "Monte Cristo" to hold the boards until he could get ready a farcical comedy called "Confusion" and a burlesque of Mr. Irving and Miss Terry in "The Merchant of Venice." Then he announced another London comedy, "The Glass of Fashion." This is a satire upon society papers and their editors, and has worked up into something like a success in London, where Edmund Yates, of *The World*, Henry Labouchère, of *Truth*, and Thomas Bowles, of *Vanity Fair*, are well-known men about town. But here we have no society journals to satirize, and an actor might make up as Thieblin, of *The Sun*, without a dozen persons in the audience being aware of whom he intended to caricature.

At Daly's, "Dollars and Sense," in which there were few dollars and no sense, was withdrawn in favor of Pinero's comedy, "Girls and Boys." This

was a failure in London, although John L. Toole, a great London favorite, played the principal part.

"The Stranglers of Paris," at the Park, which had been boldly advertised as "a melodramatic masterpiece," although every scene showed the 'prentice hand, expired as quickly as if it had been strangled, and a travelling company, with a drama called "The Princess Chuck," were chucked in—if you will excuse the pun—to fill up a week or two until the transfer of the house to Manager Stevens, of the burned Windsor, could be arranged.

"Excelsior," at Niblo's Garden, a ballet equally full of beauty and brains, which had been expected to draw crowded houses until next May, was supplanted by another French melodrama, adapted from one of Gaboriau's novels, called "The Pavements of Paris."

Most ominous of all, that little miracle theatre, the Madison Square, found it necessary to shelve "The Rajah," before the two hundredth performance, and produce Mr. De Mille's comedy, "Duty, or Delmer's Daughters," the very sensational plot of which is the struggle of a husband to induce his wife to leave the house of his mother-in-law and go to a home of her own!

The force of argument can no further go. When, in the middle of a season, and close upon the holidays, the Madison Square is obliged to change its bill, you may be sure that there is something rotten in the theatrical Denmark.

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THE new Bijou, opposite Wallack's, was opened, like Wallack's, without waiting to complete the front of the building. It is entirely new, and the first impression which the interior makes upon you is that it is pretty; the second impression is that it is cheap. The prettiness is not only in the form but in the colors of the proscenium decorations; the cheapness is suggested by the conventionally frescoed walls.

The front of the theatre is of cream-colored bricks, relieved by ornaments of brown stone and bands of blue. It is divided into two high Moorish arches. The proscenium opening is also a Moorish arch, and the private boxes are shaped like small Moorish temples.

Gay colors are used freely, but tastefully, in the decorations; but the act-drop, which represents part of a Grecian villa by the sea, is much too severe in form for so light and bright a theatre. This contrast was heightened, on the opening night, by the style of the entertainment. Imagine that classical curtain falling between the acts of a burlesque upon Offenbach's "Orphée aux Enfers," with its can-can scenes and costumes!

"Orpheus and Eurydice," the new version of "Orphée," was not intended to be a burlesque; the management supposed that they had revived Offenbach's opera. But the libretto settled the distinction at once. It was by Max Freeman, formerly a stock member of the Thalia theatre; and the results of engaging a German actor to translate a French opera into English for an American company can more readily be imagined than described.

The troupe engaged for the burlesque were as polyglot as the libretto. There were Marie Vanoni as *Eurydice*; Digby Bell as *Jupiter*; Laura Joyce as *Diana*; Max Freeman as *Pluto*; Ida Muelle as *Cupid*; Augusta Roche as *Public Opinion*, and so on—English, French, Germans and Americans mixed up among the gods and goddesses. The vocal hit of the evening was a French song by Madame Vanoni. The artistic hit was the *Cupid* of Miss Muelle.

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"STORM-BEATEN," dramatized by Robert Buchanan from his own novel, "God and the Man," was brought out at the Union Square, before a professional audience, on the evening of Evacuation Day. The audience suffered from the storm outside and from the play and Steele Mackaye's patent safety automatic chairs inside. In a word, they were doubly storm-beaten.

Mr. Mackaye is so universal a genius, and has been so unfortunate, that I should be glad to say a good word for his latest invention, the automatic patent safety chairs. But, unfortunately, the chairs were intended for a flat floor and he put them upon the very slanting floor of the Union Square. The consequence was that they tilted forward, and the difficulty was, not to get out of the theatre, but to keep your seat.

When properly placed and in working order, Mr. Mackaye intends his chairs to be comfortable; to afford a rest for the feet, a hook for the hat and a rack for the cane or umbrella, and to fold up and swing round, so as to form an aisle between every two rows of seats. At the Union Square, on the contrary, they were exquisitely uncomfortable; they broke down, and they obstructed the passage of the audience. These were obviously the faults of the theatre, not of the chairs; but, as the theatre cannot be taken away, and the chairs may be removed, I venture to predict that Mr. Mackaye will again be the victim of circumstances.

As to the play, it begins with three preliminary acts, and then wanders into the Polar regions and a foolish imitation of "The Frozen Deep," by Wilkie Collins. The intention is to show how a man's purposes of vengeance may be frustrated by Providence. The hero starts out to kill the villain, and, being left alone on an island of snow, longs for the society of the bad man, whom he has pushed overboard. This is intended to be very pathetic; but, in the play, it becomes very amusing, not to say ridiculous.

I will try to boil the piece down into a paragraph. Act I: the *Orchardsons* and *Christiansons* have a family feud; but *Dick Orchardson* comes a-courting *Kate Christianson* and *Kate's* brother, *Christian*, falls in love with *Priscilla*, whom *Dick* is destined to marry. Act II: *Christian* discovers that *Dick* has seduced *Kate* and gone on a voyage with *Priscilla*; so he swears to follow and kill *Dick*. Act III: the parties meet on shipboard; *Christian* is locked up for threatening to murder *Dick*, who then sets fire to the ship, and an iceberg crushes all concerned. Act IV: *Christian* and *Dick* have a fight on the ice; *Dick* is pushed overboard and both float away. Act V: *Christian* is on a desolate island; *Dick* appears and begs for fire and food; the ice breaks and both float away again. Act VI: *Dick* returns home and marries *Kate*, and *Christian* turns up in time to wed *Priscilla*. Upon my word, this is the whole six-act story, which differs in dénouement from the novel.

Before these lines are printed, Edwin Booth will be drawing all New York to the Star Theatre around the corner, and the Union Square will be glad to change its bill in the hope of catching some of Booth's overflow.

STEPHEN FISKE.

TWO PICTURE EXHIBITIONS.

THE artists who masquerade in the yearly exhibitions of the jovial fellowship which calls itself the Salmagundi Club, are at no little disadvantage in this livery of black-and-white which they have decreed to wear, for if it does not actually confound their identity it seriously disguises it. Had all the men who have contributed to this exhibition worked upon these same themes in color, instead of in black-and-white, the difference between their methods as artists would have been easily perceived; but as it is, the most striking feature of the exhibition, so far, at least, as the landscapes are concerned, is the family likeness that seems to run through them—a likeness that it must be confessed does not wholly disappear on a closer examination. Ever since Mr. J. F. Murphy shunted off from the track which Corot had laid down through the wood of Arcady, he has led in his train a number of younger spirits who, had they been artists of as much force as he, would have themselves been leaders in the same or in some other direction. Probably it would have been in the same direction, for of all the landscape painters of our time Corot is the one who has had the strongest fascination for the rising generation.

But, however this may be, it is plain enough that Mr. Murphy is Corot's son by adoption, and that Messrs. C. H. Eaton, Melville Dewey, A. V. Dodshun, W. Lathrop, with two or three others, less important, are Corot's grandchildren, with Mr. Murphy for father. In other words, none of these men has an individual method, or gives any sign of having looked at nature through his own eyes, and it is easy to believe that such work as they show us might all of it have been done in the studio without any direct reference to nature beyond a few hasty memoranda of leading lines. This is not to deny the cleverness of these men. Some may think it proves them to be very clever indeed. All we say for our part, is, that to our mind such work is of almost no interest.

And there is another serious criticism to be made.

If the visitor will look at the two frames of sketches by G. H. Smillie, he may sneer, with the younger fellows, at the old-fashioned, cut-and-dried drawing-school methods of the artist bringing back to old stagers the Huberts, Calames, and Hardings who made the "flats" from which they used to study. But, although Mr. Smillie, clever and dexterous as he is in the use of his short-hand, wearies us with a conventionality which is wholly out of fashion, it may be wise for the band of beardless scoffers to meditate on the prophecy that in a few short years, if they keep on working after the recipes now in fashion, they will become as antiquated as Mr. Smillie himself, and perhaps will be looked upon by the critics of the new generation as not half so clever. It is plain, too, that the increasing demand, by our publishers, for "illustrations" for their books and magazines, a field to which so many of our younger artists are turning as a source of income, is affecting their practice as makers of pictures. The greater part of the landscapes in this collection look as if they had been made to be engraved on wood. Many of them are treated as if they were to be served up as vignettes, and while we are bound to remember that they present themselves as the work of a sketch-club, yet just what we complain of is that the sketches themselves, from which pictures are presumably to be made, are the result of processes which it is not unjust to call processes of manufacture.

No one, however, will deny that here are the evidences of much technical cleverness: the only thing to be regretted is that so few of these clever men should have been able to strike out a path for himself. Who can deny that, had Mr. Murphy gone out into the field and woods, here at home, and translated what he saw into his own words, we should have had to chronicle a distinct gain to our landscape art? As it is the title of Mr. Murphy's book must be, "Nature: a Series of Essays Translated from the French of Corot." But, of course, Mr. Murphy is not the only one of whom this may be said. Since Whistler took his cue from Fortuny, we have a whole tribe of Americans singing a refrain to Mr. Whistler's song, and it is now difficult to distinguish between Mr. Blum, Mr. Pennell, Mr. Duveneck, and Mr. Packer; though it must be said that Mr. Duveneck's etchings in this exhibition mark the low-water mark in the line of "Sketches of Venice," and show this artist, from whom so much was once expected, in a most disappointing light; his brilliant sun we hope, however, is only under a cloud. Mr. Pennell's sketches are very coarse and unimaginative, and make us regret the absence of Mr. Blum's drawings, which have so abounded in late exhibitions, and which, if they were imitations, were imitations done with a delicate and sympathetic hand. Mr. C. Graham's "New York City" tries to make a sky-line for our bedevilled city that shall show better than the one she has, but with all praise to the artist's good intention he cannot be said to have succeeded in making an omelette without eggs. The sky-line is ugly beyond redemption. To help it out Mr. Graham has given Trinity Church spire a prominence it has long lost. Mr. Edwards, Mr. Gregory, and Mr. Burleigh all show clever work, albeit somewhat more of originality could be wished. The best figure-piece in the exhibition is Mr. Percy Moran's "Sisters." This is an honest little drawing, which does the artist equal credit as a study from life and as a proof of skill.

Although the present Brooklyn Art Association Exhibition makes no pretensions to be representative of American art, yet it is, for all that, fairly representative of the tendencies of art in this country. Lack of poetic feeling, lack of sentiment, lack of technical skill—these are deficiencies that force themselves upon us as we study any collection of pictures distinctively American. Another lack as serious, though, in truth, it belongs to the same category, is the want of taste in many of our American pictures. Take, for instance, W. M. Brown's "Peaches and Vase," in the Brooklyn Exhibition. Here the peaches are painted with the utmost care and skill: as mere imitation of texture they could not be better, but what a composition is this, what a discord of color, what ugly forms, what a stiff arrangement! In the background, against a hard "leather" wall-paper are ranged a cup and saucer, a vase, and a glass decanter; in front of these incongruous objects on a fruit-napkin of the crudest green, are set a half dozen peaches, and we are asked to accept this as a "picture," because of the

skill with which the peaches are painted, forgetting that a "picture" must be a whole, and that even a slight subject like this must be as carefully thought out as a little poem, to deserve acceptance. The artist is so evidently a painstaking and conscientious workman, that we venture to ask him whether he has ever seen a picture of still-life by Villon or by Philippe Rousseau. Why cannot he learn, like them, to put his apples of gold in pictures of silver? But Mr. Brown is not alone in his want of taste; C. P. Ream in his "Cup of Raspberries" and J. Decker in his "Fruit," show as little power as he to hitch their wagon to Beauty's star. Mr. Ream's white china cup would spoil any picture. Mr. Decker's "Fruit" is merely so many square feet of pear tree seen through an upright frame.

The portraits in the exhibition are few and indifferent. Oliver J. Lay takes too much the same view of human beings that Mr. Ream does of raspberries—that they are all outside. And this outside he paints with great pains, and now and then surprises us with a suspicion that at some time or other his subject may have been alive; that if you pricked it, it would bleed, and that if you tickled it, it might laugh. On this occasion he has not been so fortunate. Benoni Irwin shines in the comparison, and Mr. Irwin is not used to shining. Yet his picture of a lady knitting has some look of life in it and some naturalness of pose.

The figure subjects of the exhibition are the weakest. Mr. Loop in his "Awakening," shows plainly enough that neither the true classic art nor the art of the Renaissance has taken any real hold of his mind. As for Mr. Schuchard we sincerely wish that he would take seriously to study in some place where he would be safe from the dangers of silly admiration. He has a vein of sentiment in him, almost a trickling spring of poetry, but what to do with it he is sadly at a loss, and he seems too indolent to study to give his vague ideas a substantial form. C. Y. Turner, having had a success of a season with a sad-eyed widow and her little girl on a churchyard stile in the gloaming, is bent on melancholy as a good paying investment, and sets one sad maiden at picking up driftwood and another at looking out at window into the gathering twilight, but both of them with the air of models obeying orders, and quite ready, if some one were to pull joviality in the picture market, to dance or sing with the merriest. The unreality of Mr. Turner's art is shown by his large picture called "The Armor," in which a New York model stripped to the waist and seated amid the incongruous "properties" of a New York studio, is doing duty over again for the hundredth time as Fortuny's Arab, but with not a spark of Fortuny's authentic fire.

Landscape is the only field in which American artists have shown the ability to mark out an independent path. And the Brooklyn exhibition is manifestly inadequate as a representative of American effort in this direction, although artists like Mr. Hubbard and Mr. Bristol send pictures as good as they are in the habit of painting. But though there are names of merit in the catalogue—Bolmer and Parton, Crane and Dewey, Harry Chase and Quartley, and a score of others—from few of them do we get what might have been hoped for. The burden of the exhibition falls upon shoulders not generally called upon to bear such a responsibility, and Carleton Wiggins and G. H. McCord carry off unaccustomed laurels. Mr. Wiggins's "Landscape with Sheep" is one of the best he has painted, and Mr. McCord's "In Morris County, New Jersey," would attract the eye anywhere. Kenyon Cox's "Summer Evening" is well enough for a few inches below the top lines of the canvas, but the rest, a barren waste. It is a pity if F. S. Kirkpatrick is encouraged by his friends to believe that such a meaningless performance as "In the Museum," is a work of art in any sense. It is an audacious travesty on the laborious if not very profound pictures of Alma Tadema, mingled with nightmare reminiscences of Turner. So clever a painter as Mr. De Haas ought to have made a more interesting picture out of the pretty "Harbor of Marblehead," and Mr. Quartley does himself no justice in either of his contributions. It is unfortunate that more artists did not see it to be their interest to send the best they could do in furtherance, not only of the cause of art among our people, but to uphold a committee determined, against no little opposition, to admit American pictures only.

CLARENCE COOK.