

HARPER'S NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

No. CCCXXII.—MARCH, 1877.—Vol. LIV.

CONTEMPORARY ART IN FRANCE.



THE ORANGES.—[GUILLAUME ADOLPHE BOUGUEREAU. DONE 1825.]

IT can not be too often repeated that art is a result rather than a cause, a form of utterance as much as a thought expressed, a means for giving expression to certain individual or national impulses. Only thus can we best explain the reason for the wide divergences between the art of different ages and races; while if we thus define and consider the nature of art, we also gain more

mental breadth and instruction by studying through its art the characteristics of each race producing an art of its own, and at the same time, by accepting these conditions, on which all true art is based, we should do away with much of the narrow, rapid, arrogant art criticism on the part of those artists, art critics, and amateurs who confine themselves to admiring only certain schools

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1877, by Harper and Brothers, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

Vol. LIV.—No. 332.—31

MY GREAT-AUNT'S WILL.

I AM a clerk in a country store, and sometimes I wish I'd been a martyr in those days when they stretched people on beds of spikes or roasted them on a gridiron. Then I think I could have taken a little comfort in life.

This is the way of it: I am behind the counter on the side where we keep prints, and there trots up to the opposite side, where we keep flannels, a customer neither young nor beautiful; I hurry around and across, and she asks for calicoes; then I turn her about and make my way back, and I pull down half a dozen pieces, but she just gazes at the shelves, says she'd like to look at the under piece on the top shelf; I climb up, at the risk of breaking my neck, and get the under piece out, and she concludes 'tisn't what she thought it was. Then she says she'd like to look "at that stripe;" I blunder on to every other stripe before I get her particular stripe. Then she says she wants a little figure, and I get all the little figures out for her. She wants to know how much 'tis a yard; I say six cents, and she says she can get better in Springfield for five, and she looks at me suspiciously, as if I was a cheating youth. She wants to know if it'll wash, and I say I presume so, most calico does wash, and she looks at me indignantly, as if I was a saucy youth. Then she asks me if we take eggs, and I say we do, and we pay twenty-eight cents, and she says they're paying thirty at the other store; and off she goes, and I put up the prints, and am down at the farther end of the room turning fragments out of a cracker barrel, when back she comes and wants samples.

We keep the post-office, and by the time I get back to my cracker barrel, in comes a man who wants to know if he hasn't a letter. He never had a letter in his life, and he knows it, and I know it; but it is one of those facts that both parties ignore, and I go and look, and give him the consoling assurance that he hasn't any, and he departs in peace of mind.

Then there is a lady who wants to match a confounded bit of silk braid, drab bordering on the lilac. It takes me five minutes to find one box of silk braids, and five more to find we haven't drab bordering on the lilac. Then she wants sewing silk the same shade, and I hunt through all the sewing silks, and there's drab bordering on every thing else under the sun excepting lilac; but I know by the way her frowns sweep out that a mercantile house not keeping drab bordering on the lilac stands very low.

I get down to the farther end of the store again, and there comes a man to the front-door, and yelps out loud enough for every customer to hear that he's brought back that barrel of flour; says the bread was

black and all dough in the middle. Now that man understood, when he had that flour, that it was inferior quality, not recommended, and he had it cheap, and took it because it was cheap. I help him roll the flour in, and I can see that he thinks he has circumvented a villain.

That's the way it goes day after day, week after week, and I hate tea, detest saleratus, abhor cod-fish, and wish calico, cotton cloth, drilling, hooks and eyes, and all the rest of the wretched necessities of an artificial civilization were at the bottom of the Indian Ocean. I long to be a savage more than I do to be an angel, and I shall be, one of these days, though I do wear cloth suits, and have a shaving mug at the barber's marked in gilt letters, S. O. Haynes. I wonder that all self-respect and sentiment of humanity hasn't long ago perished from out my bosom.

Such were my reflections one fine morning just after train time, while I was weighing out half a pound of black tea, when my fellow-sufferer in the dry-goods and grocery inflection called out,

"Here's a lady inquiring for you, Sam."

In distinct outline before the door stood a little woman, her skirts spread out by a triangular hoop like the skirts of the female figures we used to draw on our slates at school. I came up to make my bow, and saw she had deposited a brown willow basket on the show-case and dropped a black glazed bag at her side. She wore a stringy kind of shawl, with fearfully long fringe, and seemed to be afflicted with numb palsy.

"Are you my nephew Sam'wel?" asked she.

"My name is Samuel Haynes, ma'am."

"I'm your father's aunt, Louezer Haynes."

"I'm glad to see you, Aunt Louisa."

She looked at me sharply, as if I was making fun of her. I suppose it is because the corners of my mouth turn up, people are always suspecting me of making fun of them. I wish those corners would sink, and wonder they don't.

"I'm your only living female relative on the father's side," said she.

My business experience with females had been so imbittering, I was glad to learn she was the only one on the father's side.

"As you've no mother, I feel it my duty to help make a home for you."

Instantly I remembered that Aunt Louisa was worth seventy-five thousand. I think I learned that fact in early years at the parental knee, along with who made me, and what State I lived in. I know it always stood to my infantile consciousness in the relation of a primary truth. My father, all his life, courted poverty through the medium of dry-goods and groceries, and went through bankruptcy as often as the law would allow. During the periodic seasons, before calling the creditors and making an

assignment, he used to clasp his hands to his head and ejaculate, "Louisa might help me if she only would!"

But Louisa wouldn't, or at least didn't, and whatever may be thought of her filial affection, mature observations on the oscillations in the molasses and ginger market have convinced me of the soundness of her judgment.

"I'm delighted to see you, Aunt Louisa. I'll go right down to my boarding place with you."

Hence, with a brown willow basket in one hand and a shiny leather bag in the other, and my great-aunt trotting behind—why under heaven she didn't walk by my side I couldn't see!—we meandered down the street.

We met Evelina Angelia Plimpton. I was engaged to Evelina Angelia. I had enjoyed that honor ever since one July evening when there came up a sudden thunder-shower, and she clasped my arm and ejaculated she was "so tim-id." An engagement was an annual episode with Evelina. When I solemnly asked Pa Plimpton's consent, he didn't remove his pipe from his mouth, but just nodded and pursued his previous train of thought. Evelina smiled patronizingly upon me. Deference to the aged I knew she considered beautiful.

My aunt didn't like my boarding place, and wasn't pleased with my boarding mistress. She thought we'd better keep house, and I spent the next fortnight house-hunting with her. The great *desideratum* seemed to be the right kind of a "buttery;" one would have supposed butter was to be the staff of life with us. We at last found a "buttery" on the northwest corner, opening into both kitchen and dining-room, having the requisite number of cupboards, having shelves that admitted of being taken out in house-cleaning time, painted a bewitching cream-color; and we engaged that buttery, regardless of cost or the character of the neighbors.

The next momentous step was to get my aunt's "things" moved. Were I writing a scientific essay on psychological distinctions of sex, I should make one strong point the tenacious attachment of the feminine mind to "things." Ten thousand dollars in stocks and bonds at stake in an unsettled estate have been known to excite less interest and create less jealousy than the disposition of an odd table-cloth.

My aunt was for some days in a harrowing state of indecision as to whether she had better have her things invoiced as freight or to hire a car. By virtue of the handsome figures I learned to make at Commercial College, I proved to her it would be cheapest to hire the car. I had to go to her former place of abode to see about getting the things en route, and I had to "meet them with a car-

riage" at our dépôt. I felt like a collector of antiquities just getting an assortment over from Egypt. I shall ever feel grateful to the small boys of our village for their self-restraint on this tempting occasion. I don't recollect a single opprobrious epithet. They treated my loads with a respect to which nothing but hoary hairs could entitle them.

There was a cheese-press, and I don't know but a cider mill; there was something, with four tremendously heavy legs, I always believed to be something in disguise of a bedstead. There were seven bandboxes (four large and three small), five feather-beds, seventeen comfortables, and a great deal of crockery which evidently came over in the *Mayflower*, but had much better have put back to land in the *Speedwell*.

I need not say that our residence when furnished was neat but not gaudy. I slept under a "rising-sun" bed-quilt, and had a round braided mat to put my feet on when I got out in the morning. I sighed for my former cozy quarters, but I remembered my aunt's valuation, and reasoned that if she was my only living female relative on the father's side, I must of necessity be her only living male relative on the mother's side.

Soon after we were domesticated, I found that my aunt was subject to mysterious attacks, which attacks invariably seized her in the night-time, and made it imperative that I should run for the doctor. Liability to these attacks precluded the possibility of my being away from home evenings, excepting Sunday and Thursday evenings, when I was expected to see my aunt to prayer-meetings and attend her home, though Evelina went off in an opposite direction with another fellow. I didn't know but justice both to myself and Evelina demanded that I should have a conversation with my aunt, and set before her, in language which even a child might understand, my views of the duties and privileges of an engaged man; but I felt extremely doubtful of her sympathy, and seventy-five thousand was a good deal to risk.

We kept one servant, whose wages my aunt thought it right I should pay, because, as she said, if there was no one but herself, she shouldn't keep a girl. Our *cuisine* was managed with strictest regard to economy. We lived largely upon soup, which consisted principally of broth. My aunt highly esteemed marrow-bones. I wonder if it is generally known among physiologists how long a healthy person can subsist on a persistently boiled marrow-bone?

For two or three years I had been in the habit of smoking a single cigar at the close of the day's labors. One evening I was sitting on the piazza indulging in this luxury, when out came my aunt.

"Sam'wel!" cried she, "are you smoking?"

"Yes'm," very meekly.

"Well," said she, calmly but firmly, "none of my money shall ever go up in cigar smoke." Then again, "How much do you pay for cigars?"

"Ten cents."

"Now, Sam'wel, I want you to take your pencil and calculate how much ten cents a day will amount to in a year, then how much in fifty years, then I want you to put this sum at compound interest, and see how much it will amount to by the time you are seventy-five years of age."

It struck me that I had somehow, during my lifetime, met with similar problems, but I conscientiously made the calculation.

"Aunt," cried I, "I'm perfectly appalled. Never did I dream of this. Of what mad extravagance have I been guilty!" and wildly I hurled my cigar into the camomile bed.

It became generally known throughout our village that my aunt was wealthy and I was heir-expectant, and I soon perceived that whether or not I ever obtained the gold, I was going to have the glory. At a town-meeting, legally called, and with the Moderator in the chair, I was elected one of nine prudential committee-men: duty—"to see about getting the wood." Our Sabbath-school appointed me delegate to a Conference at Cummingford: privileges—lose my time, pay my own fare, change cars twice, stage it five miles over a country road and through a November landscape: prospects—address by Deacon Thomas Jones; music, that rare and intricate composition, "Shall we gather at the river?"

I secured the position of watchman at our store every other Sunday night. Aunt asked me if I expected extra pay for this service, and I said I did. Evelina had talked of green reps for our parlor, but I found that calculations had now ascended to some kind of rose-colored something, value about treble that of the reps.

Aunt was at length seized with an "attack" of more than ordinary violence. I called three physicians, for I shrunk from exposing myself to the irresponsible village gossip which might accuse me of not employing every effort for the prolongation of her life. With three doctors in attendance, she not unreasonably felt that this attack would prove final, and sent for a lawyer. I was in a state of great nervous trepidation.

"Is there any thing I can do for you, aunt?"

"Nothing now."

"Has your nurse arranged your pillows quite comfortable?"

"Perfectly comfortable."

Solemn scenes have no place in this narrative, and I pass on to the time when we were assembled for the reading of the will—the lawyer, the doctor, the minister, and myself. That instrument ran as follows:

"After paying my just dues and my funeral expenses, and providing a suitable monument, I give and bequeath to my beloved nephew, Samuel O. Haynes, his heirs and assigns, for their use and behoof forever, all my wearing apparel and personal ornaments, with the exception of my gold beads, which I bequeath to my namesake, Louise Haynes, of St. Joseph, Missouri; all my beds and bedding, household utensils and furniture, with the exception of my great arm-chair, which, as it came in on the Jones side, I wish to go to some deserving member of that family. I also give my nephew Samuel five dollars, with which to buy a reference Bible in my remembrance, and also the sealed paper of instructions accompanying this instrument, which I wish him to read a year hence in the presence of the witnesses now assembled for the reading of this my will.

"The remainder of my property, both real and personal, with the exception of the legacies hereinafter named, I bequeath to the American Missionary Society, neither legacies nor bequests to be paid until a year and a day hence."

When the lawyer was through reading, I had no clear idea to whom these legacies were devised, but I remarked that the American Missionary Society was a most worthy organization.

The nature of the will was soon made public. Popular sentiment was that of resignation, not to say of satisfaction, on my account. My companions, who had never seen why deserving merit in my case should meet such disproportionate reward, while their own plodded along on a weekly stipend with no great-aunt's estate in prospective, naturally experienced a revival of confidence in the equitable government of the universe. Elderly friends in church and Sabbath-school felt that I had cause for rejoicing in being spared the snares and temptations which accompany wealth. My employer privately expressed the opinion that I had been getting above my business, and he was glad to see me taken down a peg. Evelina said, "Never mind; we don't care for money." But not many days after, Evelina told me she had begun to realize what a solemn ordinance was matrimony; she and I were both young, and had our way to make, and she thought perhaps, for the present, it would be better for us to consider ourselves only friends.

I said, "Very well," and felt that I was a lonely bark tossed on a wild and watery waste.

I had read of instances similar to mine where the sealed packet or the old Bible proved to contain bank-notes; but finger the paper left me as I would, I could make nothing of it but paper.

For a year I went calmly but hopelessly forward in the dry-goods and grocery way, and we then assembled for the opening of my sealed orders—the lawyer, the doctor, the minister, and myself. The first words that met my eyes as I unfolded the paper were, "And all former wills by me made I do hereby revoke," etc. With palpitating heart I passed the document to the lawyer. After provisions and legacies similar to those

in the first instrument, this latter document proceeded as follows:

"To the American Missionary Society I give and bequeath the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars."

"To my beloved nephew Samuel O. Haynes, who I hope may have learned, during the year that has elapsed, lessons of wisdom more valuable than money, I bequeath the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, which I direct my executor to pay over to said Haynes as soon as may be convenient. I farther direct my executor to annually pay to said Haynes the income from the remainder of my property, both real and personal, and to pay from the principal to said Haynes on his thirtieth birthday, if he be living, or to his heirs or assigns if deceased, the sum of twenty-five thousand dollars, and to pay to said Haynes on his thirty-fifth birthday the remainder of my property, be it more or less."

I went down to the store just as usual the next morning, for I wished to show people that I had too good sense to have my head turned. When I filled our best customer's molasses jug with kerosene, I knew I had demonstrated my coolness.

The chairman of the Board of Selectmen wanted to know what I should advise in regard to rebuilding the Piper stone bridge; the doctor asked what my candid opinion was concerning the comparative merits of muriate of ammonia and iodide of potassium in a case of pleuritis where egophony denotes slight effusion, but with strong indications of adhesion of the mediastinum; and the minister said there was an article on "Semi-Pelagianism in the fourteenth Century" in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* he thought I would enjoy perusing. As I stood on the hall doorstep after singing-school that evening, Evelina came out back of me, and said she, with a little shiver, "Oh, how *da-ark* it is!"

It flashed across me, as I offered my arm for escort home, that to the feminine imagination matrimony on the income of seventy-five thousand is naturally a less "solemn ordinance" than on a precarious salary of eight dollars a week, and nothing found but peppermint drops.

Presently Evelina remarked, "Aren't you very *lonely* since your aunt died?"—tender emphasis on the *lonely*. My aunt had been dead a year, and Evelina "engaged" at least once in the mean time.

"Not at all; my time and attention are likely to be entirely absorbed in business."

"No one can rejoice more sincerely in your good fortune than do I, Samuel."

"I don't doubt it, Evelina; I shall always feel confident of your friendship."

I leave Evelina at her cottage gate, and I feel that,

Of all the glad words of tongue or of pen,
The gladdest are these—"It wasn't to have been."

The next afternoon my employer invited me to be seated behind the railing that fenced in our office, and said he, laying his hand on my shoulder with a confidential, a parental, a sacrificial air:

"Samuel, I have been reflecting upon my

duty to you. You are a young man just starting in life, and starting in some respects under favorable circumstances, but every thing depends upon your starting *right*. You have always been faithful to my interests, and I have determined to show my appreciation of that faithfulness. I have decided to *sell out to you!*"

A glance at the door showed me that the way of escape was not cut off.

"With all the varied interests of the business you are already familiar; we are yearly drawing in more of the trade from surrounding towns; we have the confidence of our customers; we have the confidence of wholesale dealers; we can buy to the best advantage. To all these privileges you will succeed. Rarely is there such an opening for a young man. Consult our books, consider our profits, reflect upon the income from the post-office—"

"Sir," interrupted I, in thunderous tones, "by the blessing of Providence and the benevolence of my aunt, who is to have a monument that will bring a glow to the bosom of the president of our Cemetery Association, I am now the recipient of a modest competence; and shall I squander more years of precious life on vulgar, soul-wearying dry-goods and groceries, subject ever to the fluctuations of Amoskeags and Peppereles, or shall I live on my income and avail myself of the humanizing influences of leisure and culture? Conscience and the voice of Reason within my soul cry, 'Live on your income!' Never more will I lift my aching eyeballs to scan you top shelf for cotton batting and Agawam mixed; never shall my trembling fingers seek to fit on warped pasteboard box covers; never shall my wearied ears be greeted by the ceaseless tinkle of the money-drawer bell, or my sated nostrils by the odors of the grinding coffee! No more shall the brown paper bag and the white cotton string mingle in all my dreams! Sir, I hate tea, detest saleratus, abhor cod-fish, and *loathe* that post-office and three-cent stamps!"

I was done, and I knew by the hush that fell upon that store that whatever else I might be, I was an—orator.

MY VALENTINE.

If you would be my valentine,
I should not heed though skies were gray—
What time the sun forgot to shine,
What time the shuddering frosts delay.

I should not heed the pinching cold,
Nor yet the wind's unkindly touch;
And fortune's frowns, though manifold,
Would wound nor vex me overmuch.

If you would be my valentine,
My love, while sense and soul endure,
You'd make to-day a thing divine,
And heaven on earth insure!