
SOUTHERN LITERARY MESSENGER.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY AT FIVE DOLLARS PER ANNUM—JNO. R. THOMPSON, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

VOL. XVI.

RICHMOND, MAY, 1850.

NO. 5.

A Glance at the Streets of Paris during the Winter of 1849--50.

BY AN AMERICAN.

Expectations of an American—Street-Sweepers—Beggars—Exhibitions—Coachmen and Valets—Vehicles—Abuse of Animals—Funerals—Soldiers—Children—Fondness for Dogs—Parisian Shops—Paris at Night—Historical Associations.

There must be to a citizen of the United States, visiting Paris for the first time, a thousand objects and a thousand usages which strike him with all the force of entire novelty. I speak merely of those objects which one sees, and of those usages which one observes in the streets, where the *mœurs* of a people can always be studied to the greatest advantage.

It is most true, as Washington Irving remarks, that to an American, Europe is the land of promise: he fancies it the acme of human happiness, as he looks at the Old World through the kaleidoscope of imagination and the intervening distance of three thousand miles, to be able to gaze directly on magnificent palaces darkened by the lapse of centuries, and associated in the annals of history with important political intrigues, with fêtes of incomparable brilliancy, and often with "midnight murder foul." Vague images also of ruined châteaux, ivy-mantled towers, sequestered vales, inexhaustible treasures of art, tend to fix in his mind ideas of unmingled pleasure. He does not care to reflect that wherever man is, there are necessarily poverty and misery and crime. An experience of realities soon opens his eyes, and not unfrequently a powerful reaction takes place: he regrets the bright rays of a western sun, the deep blue sky of his native land, and at a distance of several thousand miles he discovers unequalled beauties in those scenes which had surrounded him in his thoughtless infancy and had never before excited the slightest sensibility. In common with many of our countrymen, I have experienced these emotions, and I have also felt a heart-sinking in vividly realizing that in Paris—the gayest and most brilliant metropolis on earth—there is no exemption from inclement seasons, nor from all the various forms of human misery.

I shall give a rapid sketch of what has met my eyes and attracted my attention, in the course of my walks, with the hope that so simple a record will produce a juster impression of Parisian realities, than any attempt at elaborate essay, in which truth is so often sacrificed to effect and the details of every-day life to the pomp of language.

It has been only during the winter season that I have seen Paris, and, in not expatiating upon the vernal beauties of the Garden of the Tuileries, or the *Champs Elysées*, I do not mean to accuse myself of being a Visigoth, as older residents would undoubtedly dub me, did I admit an insensibility to such charms.

No American has ever sojourned in Paris during the most inclement months of the year, without being thoroughly annoyed by the inexhaustible supplies of mud which cover the pavements and sidewalks of every part of the city. An explanation of causes, it is to be feared, will have no consolatory tendencies, and, it is perhaps unnecessary to say, that the only sure remedy against the evil, is to trudge along with a good-natured and never failing patience. The filthiness of the streets of Paris is chiefly occasioned by the plastic clay which forms the natural soil, and which continually works its way up between the paving stones. Though carried off every day by the carts of the municipality, a supply is immediately re-formed by an invisible process which seems to proportion itself to the labor bestowed on the removal of the nuisance. An immense corps of street-sweepers is always at work brushing the liquid mud into the sewers of the city. These sweepers are usually women, who wear slouched straw hats and dresses, originally of every variety of colour, reduced to a certain uniformity by the nature of their vocations. They apply themselves with the greatest imaginable zeal to their task and attack their unconquerable enemy with a *fureur* which evinces a determination to sweep it, (if such a thing were possible,) with the besom of destruction. Their activity, the apparent eccentricity of their movements, and the originality of their costume, reminds one of the witches in Macbeth. I saw a corps some days ago drawn up in military array, on the side walk, under the command of a Paddock or Grimalkin, whose duty it was to see that they were all in place and to pay them their daily wages. These poor creatures seem to be perfectly content with

Hither bring thy Magic Pencil.

Translated from the Greek of Anacreon.

Hither bring thy magic pencil,
Master of the Rhodian art;
Draw for me my absent loved one,
Paint the mistress of my heart.

First upon the glowing canvass
Trace her soft and jetty hair,—
If thou canst, upon the tablet,
Make it breathing fragrance rare.

Form for her an ivory forehead,
Let the cheek no fulness lack,
Arch the brows in just proportion,
Paint the lashes long and black.

Catch a ray of light celestial,
Give her eyes a heavenly hue,—
Like Minerva's, brightly flashing,
Like Cytherea's, liquid blue.

Mingle softly rose and lily
On a cheek as fair as this,
Make her lips like sweet Persuasion's,
Softly suing for a kiss!

Mould her chin with dimpled beauty,
Delicate as dawning day;
Round her neck of alabaster,
Let the lovely Graces play.

Robe her form in regal purple,—
Let her skin as fair as snow,
Shine through the transparent vesture,
As a star on morning's brow.

Ha! It is enough,—I see her!
Sparkling eyes and glowing cheek!
Painter, hasten!—lifeless canvass,
Wilt thou soon begin to speak?

Lexington, Va.

M. J.

OUR LANDSCAPE PAINTERS.

BY CHARLES LANMAN.

We purpose in the present paper to indite a few brief remarks upon our living landscape painters, with a view of informing the uninitiated in matters of this sort, of the present condition of the landscape art in the United States. Those who would acquaint themselves with the past history of the art, so far as our country is concerned, are referred to the productions of the late Thomas Cole, as well as to a portion of those bequeathed to his country by Washington Allston. The interesting brotherhood we now

intend to notice, is not a very extensive one, and we shall, therefore, not only comment upon the peculiarities of those who have already established their reputations, but of those also who, in our opinion, are certain of establishing a good name in their beautiful art.

The subject of our first paragraph is the President of the National Academy of Design, *A. B. Durand*. This gentleman has long borne the amiable reputation of being our best engraver of the human figure, as the *Ariadne* after *Vanderlyn* will testify. It is also a well known fact that he has executed some fine pictures in the way of portraiture and fanciful history; but for the last few years he has devoted himself exclusively to landscape painting, where his merits were at once recognized. His better pictures are truly American, and for that reason truly classical. His knowledge of drawing and coloring is coextensive with his love of art, and few are the men in any country who have lived the life of an artist more faithfully. We think him destitute of what is generally termed the imaginative faculty; but he has a passion for the poetry and more beautiful sentiment of the external world. He cannot, like *Salvator Rosa*, dash off a bold, wild picture at one heat, and people it with robbers; but with *Claude* he would wander amid the more charming scenes of the country, like a timid but affectionate lover, portraying only those features in the sky, and upon the earth, which fill the heart with peace. He is a true poet, but one who loves the shady wood-lawns of a cultivated country, more than the beetling crag and deep caverns of a mountain land. He has ever been a devoted student of nature, and has learned from experience, that our great mother "never did betray the heart that loved her." Few men have spent a more laborious life, none can claim a greater number of warmly attached friends, and in every particular, he is fully deserving of the many praises which are showered upon his head. His name and works are among the treasures which the people of this land should cherish with peculiar care.

Mr. Durand has visited Europe, and hence it is that his productions, which are quite numerous, possess a great variety of attractions. Not only has he portrayed some of the finer points of Swiss scenery, but he has given as beautiful views in England, and an occasional prospect of the ocean. Among his American pictures, however, are to be found his master-pieces; but these are too numerous to be described in detail, and we shall therefore endeavor to give an idea of the class by describing two specimens.

Forenoon and *Afternoon*, for example, are the unpretending titles which this artist has given to