

A TRIM EXPLOIT.

The "fine of the year was February, the day still in its youth, the sun was shining brightly, when Mr. Edward Erroll, happening to have a spare hour on his hands, strolled into a friend's studio, near Langham Place, to see how he was "getting on" with his pictures. Drummond was, of course, painting, and the look which he gave the intruder was by no means encouraging. Erroll, being not easily daunted, only said, "Good-morning, Drummond; I know that coming in now seems like being determined to take off the cream of your day, but don't regard it in that light, I entreat you; just make up your mind that you won't be disturbed by me, and let me have a look at all your pictures."

"All my pictures!" echoed Drummond ruefully. "Yes, all your pictures; the more the better; but where are they?" And he examined the room in surprise, for usually at this season of the year he could not even shake his friend's hand without having to pick his way delicately through groves of easels with pictures on them. To-day all the spare easels were run into one corner and untenanted; and, so far as Erroll could see, Drummond had nothing in hand but the one small picture on which he was working. This was, however, so improbable that Erroll glanced around to see how many canvases were standing on the floor with their faces turned to the walls; how many empty frames were waiting for their reception; how much preparation, in fact, was being made for the various picture-shows which would burst into being with the rapidly approaching month of May.

"You needn't look for pictures here," growled Drummond, "for I have got none."

"What none for the Academy?"

"No; none for the Academy. None for anywhere."

"How unwise!" said Erroll, taking the most uncomfortable seat that he could find. "You were ill-treated last year, but why should that go on? Any year might bring you a rattling success."

"It's not likely—anyhow, I can't send. Don't think that I am not mortified, but it can't be helped. I must make up my mind to lose one year of artistic life."

"And why, pray?"

"Because that fellow Clarke has lured away my model, and I can do nothing till she comes back. Its abominable of her to go; it is infamous of him to take her; but that's how it is. I do believe the design is good. You shall see it."

So saying, Drummond went into an inner room and brought out a canvas.

"Good heavens, man how well that comes!" cried Erroll. "You really ought to finish it. It is a classical subject, and I hate classical subjects; the design is original, and you know how impudent I think it to paint original pictures, but I never in my life saw anything more masterly. What is it, and why on earth don't you get another model and finish it?"

"It is Creusa just as she is about to put on the garment which will shroud her youth and beauty. She is turning it over, and wondering at its strange magnificence. I don't finish the picture because I can't—it is a grievous vexation to me."

"But you can if you like, and you must, for if it were well hung it would make your fortune."

"It wouldn't be hung it would be rejected."

"That might happen, of course, but I don't believe it would; anyhow, it is your duty to finish it, for you are one of the heaven-sent prophets who have a distinct message to deliver."

"Obadiah had an hundred men of the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them on bread and water; this poor prophet would be hidden away in the cellars of the Academy, and have to make a shift to provide himself with bread and water."

"And if it were so, you might suck comfort out of your rejection. Original work is always difficult of comprehension. You seem to forget that it is by no means easy to recognize a prophet when he does appear, and to my mind you have always been in far too great a hurry to show that you were one. It is a great mistake for any young man who is original to give the least hint of it until he is landed in a position which gives him the right to show his pictures. Till then he should play dark horse. I mean he should never paint according to the spirit which is in him until he has made a real and well-but-dressed-up success by glorious and most unmistakable mediocrity. For one person who can recognize a prophet there are tens of thousands who would infinitely rather be without him, and adore commonplaceness. It is an excellent gift—he who has it is certain of glory, honor, and prize-money, and what can mortal man have that is better?"

"You don't know what you are saying—you would not like me to be commonplace," said Drummond.

"I don't suppose you could if you tried," answered Erroll provokingly. "It would be just as hard for you to be commonplace as it would for a commonplace man to be original—besides, it requires something very like genius to hit on the kind of commonplaceness that is certain to be popular. Look at the painters who were the god of our father's idolatry—you might fret your soul out in trying to be as bad and as highly thought of as they were, and at last reproduce their work exactly, and yet never be noticed at all—there is a fashion even in commonplaceness."

"I don't want to be popular. I have no desire of any kind but to paint my picture as well as I can according to my own idea of what is best, and to have permission to show it."

"You must paint one before you can show it; so, for heaven's sake, get to work; it is madness to lose a year of your artistic life in this way—perfect madness. Finish this if you want to send one of your original works—do anything you like, so long as you do something. I saw Stukeley last night—that's partly what brought me here to-day. I could see that he was well disposed to you, and quite aware that there was something in your work which gave it a right to be seen. He said that he was on the hanging committee this year, so just think what a chance you are losing if you don't send in. Now I am going, but if you don't take what I have said to heart and set to work with an Academy picture at once, all I can say is that you are your own worst enemy. Good-morning."

"Perhaps he is right," thought Drummond, as soon as he was alone. "I dare say he is, but what can I do? This thing that I have on the easel would be lost at the Academy, and this other which might have done me credit can't be finished until Clarke lets me have my model back. It was disgraceful of her to go—I shall never feel comfortable about her again."

Then he fell to perusing the lines in his deserted picture, and it was so impossible not to see that they were good, that they restored him to peace with himself, only his vexation at being unable to finish it grew more and more intense. "It would be such a good thing for me if I could send it," he thought; "I am almost certain that they would hang it—it would sell if they put it in a good place, and then for another year at least I would work without anxiety. I will write a moving appeal to Clarke—I dare say he is not a bad fellow, after all. I will tell him exactly how I am situated, and get him to let me have my model if only for ten days."

"Dear Clarke," he wrote, "how are you getting on with your picture? Would it be possible—"

At this moment he was aware of a knock at his door; there was something unusual about it—it was not like the easy confidence of a model's knock, and none of his brother artists were likely to be abroad at that hour. While his thought was in his mind the knock was repeated, and this time even more faintly.

"Come in," he said, but no one came, so he went to the door and opened it. A girl was standing outside, a girl of twenty or so dressed in what he would have described as ultra-marine-ash color, and she wore a large black hat which shaded one of the handsomest and most expressive faces he had ever seen. There was a certain likeness to the model he had lost, and for one moment he thought that it was the truant girl herself, improved almost beyond recognition by good fare, good dress, and good gifts of all kinds, but the moment the new-comer opened her lips he knew better. His Hetty Harris—a name she herself preferred to pronounce "Etty"—had received at her birth the gift that every time she spoke showers of superfluous h's should alight on every side, and no "a" should ever be uttered by her without being turned into an "i," but now a sweet voice said, or rather faltered, "Mr. Drummond, will you allow me to ask you a question?"

"Certainly I will," said Drummond with eyes riveted to her face, while in imagination he was painting her, and painting with delight.

She hesitated.

"What is it?" he asked. "Pray don't mind speaking."

"You must excuse me if I am taking a liberty," she said, never raising her frightened eyes from the ground, though their lashes were quite long enough to be a protection. "I was told that you—that artists, I mean—sometimes wanted models, so I came; at least I thought I might perhaps come to see if you happened to want one now, and if I was at all the kind of person that you would ever care to paint."

"Ever care to paint!" She was exactly what he wanted. She was a thousand times better than Miss Hetty Harris at her very best. An h-dropping London model may be the painter's craft be turned into Helen of Troy, or Joan of Arc, but there was a girl who could lead him and inspire him.

"Of course you will do," he said; "you will do admirably. You are exactly what I want for a picture which is at a standstill because I have not been able to have the only model who would suit."

She raised her eyes now—they were light, golden-brown eyes, with dark eyelashes and eyebrows—she looked somewhat reassured. "And there was something else," she began, and stopped.

"Yes," he said encouragingly. "Go on."

"Do you—oh, I can't say it—I am ashamed to ask." Then she seemed to gather her courage together for a moment, and got so far as to say, "When people sit to you, Mr. Drummond—girls like me, I mean—do you ever—"

"Pay them, do you mean?" he suggested, thinking she must be young at the business. "Oh, yes! I always pay them; it is eighteenpence an hour. I will give you ten and sixpence for three or four hours daily."

"Oh, ten and sixpence!" she repeated, with an air that betokened leisurely consideration of how much ten and sixpence would buy.

"Yes; but you must not fail me till my picture is done; that's why I am giving you more."

"For how many weeks should I have to promise to come?"

"Three, for certain, and perhaps longer; but we need not be so particular, need we; you will come as long as I want you?"

"I will come as long as I can. I promise you faithfully to come for three weeks."

"All right," said Drummond joyously. "Come inside, and I will get to work at once."

"Should I have to be here early?" she inquired before entering the studio; "for I am afraid I couldn't."

"At half past nine," he said.

"Oh, I can't come till eleven!"

"Very well," said Drummond; "if you can't, you can't, and it shall be eleven; but remember that it won't do for me to be left in the lurch when once I have begun to paint you. You must make a definite bargain with me. You promise to come every day for the next three weeks at eleven, and after that we can, if necessary, make a new arrangement."

"That is much the best," she said, with an air of relief. "I do promise; I will come every day for three weeks at eleven; working days of course I mean, not Sundays."

"You have sat before?"

"No," she answered, and then altered it to, "Yes, I have sat before, but I am not a professional model."

Drummond was used to people who said that they were not professional models, and took occasion to reveal that they were daughters of colonels in the army, or of physicians who had not been able to heal themselves, and had left a struggling family behind them. He was wont to deal tenderly with these tender growths of fiction, but it was quite possible that what this girl was saying was no fiction, for she looked very superior to any model he had ever painted from; besides, models are generally proud to bring out a long array of names of artists who have found their services valuable.

"I must have your name and address," he said, taking out his note-book. "I might have to write to you."

"Alice Hayley, 4 Wolseley Buildings, Canonbury."

"Models and persons who beg in the street always live at the other end of London," thought Drummond. "What artists have you sat to?" he demanded casually, as he was setting his palette afresh. When he looked at Miss Alice Hayley she was blushing to the roots of her hair.

"I will tell you the truth," she said. "I have sat to none; I have never sat to any one but an amateur. I want to earn a little money, and I came to you because I liked a picture of yours I once saw in the Grosvenor Gallery—that's all."

This was eminently pleasant to hear, and she was charming to look upon. He placed her with care in the attitude which he had chosen for the treacherous woman who had deserted him, and then with a feeling of extreme hopefulness began to work. She sat much better than he had expected, and for more than an hour he only opened his lips to say, "A little more this way, please," or "Try to keep the position, unless you are too tired." Suddenly, to his surprise, for his thoughts were so entirely given to what he was doing, he found that she was speaking. By an effort he understood that she was telling him that he really did work hard. "Do you never stop to rest? Even you must want rest," she added.

"I scarcely know what I do. I suppose I stop now and then, but I am afraid when I do I am still thinking of my picture. You must rest though; I am forgetting that. You have been in that position more than an hour. Get up and walk about the room a while."

He spoke with authority; perhaps that was why her lip curled. But what a beautiful mouth she had.

"Artists order their models about!" she said, rising to obey him.

"They must, but I hope they don't do it discourteously. Models who have had no practice do not know how to spare themselves. It will do you good to walk about."

"I suppose you would rather I didn't look at what you are doing," observed Miss Hayley rather coolly, as she rose from her chair.

"Not till it is farther advanced, if you please."

She strolled about the studio, or rather about such parts of it as did not command a view of his canvas; and he worked on, taking little or no notice of what she was doing, for heart and soul were now wholly given to work. It was not long before he began to wish that she would come back, and he turned to see if she were nearly ready. He had always been supposed to have one of the most artistically arranged studios in London. Miss Hayley, of Canonbury, was standing looking first on one side of it and then on another, with an air of deep commiseration. When she saw that for a moment his attention was withdrawn from his canvas, she exclaimed,—

"I had been told that artist's studios were so pretty and comfortable!"

"Don't you call this pretty and comfortable?" said he, much nettled.

"Well, no; but perhaps it is. You see I know nothing about such things. You want me to come back to my place?"

She returned, but being new to sitting, did not resume the original attitude, so he had to place her again. A little before one she suppressed a yawn, and said tentatively,

"You can't both talk and work can you?"

"Not to-day," he answered. "When I have conquered some of my difficulties I shall be more able."

"Very well," she said, in a semi-discontented manner. "I dare say I can amuse myself with my own thoughts."

She sat for another hour, and then he saw that she had turned very pale.

"You are not used to this kind of work," he remarked compassionately. "Would you like to go out and get some luncheon? The air might do you good."

"No, I don't want to go out and then have to come back again," she replied promptly. "But won't you want luncheon yourself?"

"Not yet. I don't trouble myself much about luncheon. What I like is a cup of tea."

"Then you may go on with your work, and I will make you some tea and have a cup myself—that is, if you have any tea-things."

He was surprised at her coolness, but attracted by the prospect of having some tea without the trouble of making it, so he told her where to find everything, and left her to do what she liked. She first of all carefully inspected two or three bits of embroidery that were in the room, to see which would make the best table-cover, then set the cups on it, discovered biscuits in the same cupboard as the cups, dusted some Persian plates, and pressed them into her service, and when all was ready said,—

"Shall I bring your tea to you, or will you come here?"

"I will come there," he answered, and went to an easy-chair by the fire; and as she gave him his tea he realized that she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

AN OLD ESTATE IN DANGER.

Creditors Clamoring for a Division of Saverlake Forest.

Lord Henry Augustus Bruce, who is brother and heir to the Marquis of Ailesbury, and others interested in the presentation of the splendid estate known as Saverlake Forest, Marlborough, Wilts, have carried to the House of Lords the question whether Saverlake Forest shall be disposed of to meet the encumbrances upon it, and to relieve the present Marquis from his load of indebtedness. The judicial tribunals have already decided in favor of the sale. Lord Henry Bruce, however, has all along been opposed to the disposal of the estate, believing that when the Marquis and his debts disappear in the course of nature there will be no difficulty in restoring the glory which used to attach to the magnificent seat of the Bruces.

The question was argued to-day before the House of Lords, and in behalf of the sale it was maintained that the trustees had sanctioned the sale and the Court of Appeal had consented to it. Sir Horace Davy appeared for Lord Henry Bruce and the other opposing relatives, and the case is likely to occupy days in hearing.

THE LAND OF PIGTAILS.

China not so Fair as Fancy Paints Her.

A Country Where the Inhabitants Think They Have a Sun of Their own, Split at Foreigners, and do Every Thing Backward—Civil Service but no Civility.

The Chinaman abroad is a different being from the Chinaman at home. Here he permits himself to hold an opinion of foreigners, and he permits his boys to express it with mud and pieces of tiles. The first glimpse we had of China was within the mighty semi-circle of hills that forms the harbor of Hong-kong, a port equal in respect of its tonnage to New-York, and in no way suggestive of the China of the geographies, the land of tea chests and missionaries.

The name means "fragrant streams," and nothing could be more appropriate than this appellation if applied to the native quarter, for there the streams are fragrant, indeed, in these festering Summer days. Even one who knows the hideousness of the Chinese quarter of Victoria or San Francisco is appalled at the foulness and loathsomeness of the creeping lanes and mazes of the homes of the Chinese in their own country. And when one gets hopelessly entangled in their crooked streets it seems as if it were only by a special dispensation of Providence that one might be delivered alive from these shuffling, stolid-faced crowds of cue-wearers who shout out "foreign devil" and spit in your face as you pass. It is only in China one realizes how foul a habit expectation may become.

The Chinese at home are of all people the most uninteresting, their country the grimmest and most grotesque, and their religion as dull and stupid as their stony and ferocious gods. Western civilization is a mere hem to this great garment, a few dots here and there, and, though we are not a hundred miles from an English port, Canton is as heathen as it was a million years ago. Since the eccentric theories of Palgrave and Abbe Carreau, it has become the fashion to speak of the Chinese as the coming race, and even Lord Wolseley has lent his support to some such view. Mr. Carreau has even gone the length of expressing the belief that the conquests of Tamerlane and Genghis Khan will be repeated and the sovereigns of the West will regret having provoked the descendants of Han-Yen. If they ever do accomplish anything, it will be by sheer force and brutality of numbers.

The Chinese do everything backward. Their compass points to the south instead of the north. The men wear shirts and the women trousers; while the men wear their hair long, the women coil theirs in a knot. The dressmakers are men; the women carry burdens. The spoken language is not written and the written language is not spoken. Books are read backward, and any notes are inserted at the top. White is used for mourning and bridesmaids wear black. Instead of being maidens, these functionaries are old women. The Chinese surname comes first, and they shake their own hands instead of the hand of one whom they would greet. Vessels are launched sideways and horses are mounted from the off side. They commence their dinner with dessert and end up with soup and fish. In shaving, the barber operates on the head, cutting the hair upward, then downward, and then polishes it off with a small knife, which is passed over the eyebrows and into the nose to remove any superfluous hairs, and the performance is completed by removing the wax from the ears with a bit of cotton wool on a wire.

The Chinese have no religion, that is, if by religion is meant anything more than a code of morals which is not to be carried out. They have cults, but no creeds, and innumerable forms of childish idolatry which are never believed in and often are laughed at. They are a practical race. They have no god of their own and are ready to chin-chin any joss whose claims may appear to be the best and whose powers of evil and good are the most easily recognized. Confucius himself was a practical, conservative, and sober-minded realist, and he laid down five essentials; disinterestedness, justice and public spirit, good form in devotion and manner, education and good faith. Excellent in themselves these are, but the only thing that will excite a Chinaman to mirth is the idea that these are in any way being carried out. A well-known lady who wandered in China and was unable to keep it to herself, was "attracted by a bright little fellow about eight years of age, who for some months had refused to worship the village idols, and who repeated various Christian hymns with much feeling." And yet with all his perspicuity he carried in his arms a "wee baby girl whom he confessed was his wife."

The labor question is in its crudest stage and it is absolutely impossible to make head against the secret societies. If a lady in any of the Straits Settlements discharge her cook she will find it quite impossible to engage another. They have taken to banishing the leaders with good effect. At Penang two police officers accompanied a Chinaman named Lu Thien on board the Empress of China with his wife and four daughters. They were escorted beyond the lines and will not return from China. Last year another labor leader was exiled, but he disregarded the decree and came back. He was at once sentenced to imprisonment for life. Lu Thien, before leaving, made his will in favor of his family for \$115,000, so that labor leading appears to be a profitable employment here as well as in America. He is accompanied by his clerk or secretary and an imposing retinue of servants, and is much afraid that his old friends in China will reason that if he is not good enough for Penang he cannot be good enough for China, and that his head will fall.

The restaurants are arranged in the same manner as those in Paris. The customer eats his food on the sidewalk, and at the same time gives a demonstration on the elasticity of the human stomach, but the Chinese dinner-out is a little too free in his expectation. For common people the Chinese have no recognition and no forms of politeness, but if the circumstances warrant, the host has ready: "God be with you forever. Take my house, my home, my all; I am your slave; I bow down and kiss your foot" but it does not follow that the stranger will not be murdered before morning.

The physicians are admirable for their outspokenness. They prescribe for a patient by permitting him to draw one out of a bundle of straws, which indicates the disease

and the prescription required for it. They are most inveterate medicine-chasers, and in certain quarters the air is heavy with the fragrance of a special preparation of rhubarb, licorice root, orris root, lovage, and musk. During the season whole junk-loads of these drugs come down from the interior.

The mixture of old and new is grotesque. The civil service is based entirely on examination and education is the only passport to office. The highest university in the empire is the Imperial Academy at Peking, where the highest degree, that of hianlin, is conferred. About one in seventy succeed in graduating. Sometimes 6,000 students are examined and only 200 succeed in passing. These students have already been examined in their native town and again in the capitals of the provinces, so that they are the picked men of China. And yet these students, many of them sixty years of age, have been known to ask if the sun which rises in China is the same as that which shines in other countries. The fame of Chinese literature rests upon some antiquated maxims of morality. Here are some examples of their poetry:

"Climbing the trees, the village boys fill the air with the songs of their age; Each of the trees has its owner. But every one respects his neighbor's. The living leaf flies to-day into my basket, And the zephyr is less quick than the hand that gathers it."

"In Szechuen our ancestors in ancient times became masters of the precious worms: So, when the snowy skins we see, Let us pay our vows all at Loni Tsien's feet, Bending our heads before her shrine, Offering her silk and the flowers of the land. A peculiar lustre of the worm's belly— It is a sign that is about to change. And that its mouth will spin its silk. Madame busies herself in preparing its bed, And lays it on straw, that nothing may soil The immaculate thread which itself fixes."

TO BRING THE MOON CLOSE TO US. A French Savant Proposes a Gigantic Crystal Mirror.

M. Francois Deloncle, a French savant, and Deputy for the Basse Alpes, has a marvelous project in hand which he hopes to see completed in time to astonish mankind at the Paris Exhibition of 1900. Though the moon is 240,000 miles distant from the earth, M. Deloncle thinks he can construct an apparatus which will enable us to examine that luminary at very close quarters.

The idea has been expounded by the author before a French scientific society, and M. Deloncle says, in substance, that the only obstacle to a close observation of celestial bodies is the relative imperfection of instruments, and that all that is required is an enlargement and improvement of the present instruments. Astronomers, says M. Deloncle, have reckoned that the image of the moon can be brought quite close to the earth by means of a crystal mirror eight meters in diameter, but which, owing to the thickness required, would weigh about eight tons. He has consulted various opticians in Paris and they are prepared to execute the work before the year 1900.

There remains, however, the question of the structure which would be required to hold this gigantic mirror, and upon this point M. Maurice Loewy, a distinguished French astronomer, says that while in principle M. Deloncle's scheme is possible, there are enormous difficulties in the way of its realization, the chief of which, so far as the exhibition is concerned, is that the apparatus must be erected on a mountain about two miles in height in order to secure the proper atmospheric conditions. If this and other difficulties were surmounted, says M. Loewy, there would be some very remarkable results, for it would be possible to clearly distinguish in the movement objects about the size of a four-storey house.

BRILLIANT ENGINEERING. Creation of a Great Lake to Supply Liverpool with Water.

For a small country we do a big thing now and then, even by the admission of our American cousins. The Forth bridge was one; another is the creation of Lake Vyrnwy, in Mid Wales, which was yesterday declared by the Duke of Connaught at Liverpool to be "open" and fit to act as the source of the water supply of that city and the surrounding district. This means a great deal. It means that the corporation of Liverpool and their engineer have actually re-made a great lake which existed as a lake in the glacial epoch, but which during the time cognizable by human record has been a marshy valley, through which a tributary of the Severn slowly wound.

It means that a village, a church, a burial-ground and a pleasant country house had to be removed bodily; that a vast dam, unequalled in the world, had to be built, and that the water had to be conveyed through pipes and storage tanks as far as Liverpool, across the Mersey and over seventy miles away. The work has taken eleven years to bring to completion, and has employed an army of workmen and an engineer, whose name will always be associated with this great achievement. Mr. George P. Deacon. Everybody will join the Duke of Connaught in congratulating the engineer, the men and the corporation on the conclusion of so great a work, and not the least element in the public satisfaction will be the thought that it has been done without hurting the susceptibilities of even the most ardent devotee of natural beauty. Ten years ago the Vyrnwy Valley was a bare, marshy, uninteresting region, which had been a lake once, but the waters from which had flowed away. Now, though, of course, the engineer's work looks raw and new as yet, the good achievement of nature has been done over again and there is a lake where a lake existed till the barrier was for some reason worn away. An enormous improvement, indeed, has been effected, as everybody will admit when the masonry has toned down and the trees have grown. We are not without hopes that the same will one day be found to be the case with Thirlmere; but it was not to be expected that good Wordsworthians and lake-dwellers should believe that to be possible when first Manchester asked for leave to make her works in that sacred region. We shall see; and, meanwhile, it may be hoped that Manchester will lose no time in her friendly race with Liverpool. The making of waterworks in a beautiful country, with all their accompaniments of unsightly mounds of earth and heaps of piping, is a thing which, if done at all, should be done quickly. There have been, we know, many unexpected difficulties in the way; Manchester is rather unlucky in these matters, but it is to be hoped that these have now been overcome.—[London Times.]