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women are slightly in the majority. All but one belong to the lower classes. On St. Kitts the last leper died about three years ago. The proportion of lepers to the whole population is four per thousand. A serious feature of the disease is the lack of isolation of patients. No law requires them to be placed in the asylum on St. Croix, and patients already quartered there may leave at any time. On St. Thomas they are placed in the same hospital with other patients. It is none too soon that the Board of Health has begun to attempt reforms which, if successful, will provide isolated hospitals, with obligatory residence of all lepers known to the authorities.

—Very few mathematicians of the strength and originality of the late James Joseph Sylvester, who died in London on March 15, have ever lived. There have been great analysts whose secret was a symbolical method—it was, so to speak, their little game, by which they made problems of a certain class easy; others have accomplished great things by turning problems into geometrical shape; others have carefully avoided problems that were not adapted to their peculiar powers; but Sylvester seemed ready to attack any problem, provided only it was difficult—even problems in geometry, for which he was wanting in the peculiar knack that some men have; he never employed symbolical methods, but seemed to create a method specially adapted to each problem he took up. Perhaps he was not, on the whole, a mathematician of the greatest kind; but for naked logical strength but two or three have ever equalled him. He was of Jewish extraction, and was born September 3, 1814, in London. In 1837 he graduated from Johns, Cambridge, being second senior wrangler. After an inappropriate appointment to the professorship of natural philosophy in the University of London, he accepted a professorship in the University of Virginia, where he stayed less than a year, however. Other experiments, in England, were equally uncongenial or unfruitful. In 1876, at the instance of Peirce, he was called to the Johns Hopkins University. He accepted with much diffidence, for he always said he had not much mathematical reading. Nevertheless, his occupancy of the chair proved a glorious success, and a school of enthusiastic and very able young mathematicians grew up under his guidance. His students were always introduced to the matter that was glowing upon the anvil of his own workshop, and so learned how to make researches. In this way he conferred upon this country an inestimable benefit. He established here the *American Journal of Mathematics*, which continues to occupy a more than respectable position among journals of discovery. In December, 1883, he was elected Savilian professor of geometry in the University of Oxford, and thereupon returned to his native land, where, at length occupying a position such as ought to have been imposed upon him forty-five years earlier, he immediately began to stimulate the development of mathematics as he had done here.

THE NEW VASARI.

Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects. By Giorgio Vasari. Edited and annotated in the light of recent discoveries by E. H. and E. W. Blashfield and A. A. Hopkins. With reproductions in photogravure of 48 master-

pieces of Italian painting and sculpture. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1896. 4 vols. 8vo. ONE of the most signal services that could be done to the study of the history of Italian art would be the bringing out of such an edition of Vasari as could now be made. Messer Giorgio's text should be apportioned to three specialists in architecture, sculpture, and painting respectively. By specialist we of course do not mean a person exceedingly learned in his subject. That is not enough, for "knowledge comes and wisdom lingers," and wisdom in art can come only to the student gifted with a good eye and artistic sensibility, who has had much experience of the work of art as a sensation. Still less than men of learning do we mean to include among specialists the enthusiasts who delve in archives from which they extract documents chiefly of great insignificance, to whom, as to the proverbial professor for whom Greek literature was nothing but a providential illustration to the grammar, the work of art has no value whatever except such as the document lends it. By specialist we mean, in short, a connoisseur in his subject—that is to say, one who knows the works of art intimately, subtly, and minutely, and knows all the valuable (for of worthless writing on art there is no end) literature concerning them.

The difficulties would not be the same for each of the three specialists to whom our ideal edition of Vasari would be assigned. The student of architecture would have the easiest task. Either the buildings have remained or they have perished, and that is the end of it. They cannot be hidden away in some private collection among the Dacians, Scythians, or Picts. Then, as architecture was always a more serious undertaking than painting, involving more persons and taking more time, it is natural that documents regarding it should be more plentiful. Nor is this all. The interpretation of documents for architecture is a comparatively simple matter. In this art, styles are so limited and so obvious that even the obtusest archivist will not commit, as in painting the cleverest have done, the mistake of confusing a late work with the earlier that it replaces—the earlier being the subject of his document.

The writer on sculpture has a task not quite so easy, but yet not fraught with the difficulties that stand in the way of the student of the history of Italian paintings. So frequently have works described in documents perished, and been replaced by pictures answering equally well to the descriptions, so often have originals been sold secretly and copies made to supply their place, that no document can possibly guarantee the authenticity of a picture. The greatest of all archivists, Gaetano Milanesi, had so little competence when brought face to face with the work of art that, to choose one example out of many, he could mistake an "Assumption" at S. Agostino in Borgo S. Sepolcro, painted by some feeble follower of Perugino, for a picture of the same subject, and for the same church, that, according to documents, the great and severe Piero del Franceschi should have painted sixty years earlier.

But the interpretation of documents is not the only difficulty that the student of the history of painting has to encounter; a much greater is the scattering of the material. To acquire such an acquaintance with the style of a painter in all its phases as the connoisseur must have, demands years of travel, the visiting not only of every public gallery in Europe,

but of the even more numerous and frequently inaccessible private collections. This is a labor-costly and full of hardships, and the reward is small. No wonder it is undertaken but seldom. Yet without all this toil no student would be fit to edit Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*.

The edition before us has not been edited by specialists, but by compilers. Let us say at once that they have acquitted themselves of their task as well as outsiders to the subject possibly could have done. They are well informed, unpartisan, fair—according to their light. Yet their commentary is a jumble of material, some valuable, other questionable; much, worse than useless. For them every person who fairly recently has written a book is an authority, and the bulkier the book the weightier the authority. To take one instance out of a number, they cite and quote M. Müntz constantly. Now M. Müntz has done nothing to deserve such honor except to publish some documents throwing light for the most part on petty craftsmen only, and several huge compilations on the Renaissance and Raphael. This compiler has been for the editors of our Vasari a far greater authority than Cavalcaselle, Morelli, or Bode. The trouble with the compiler is that he cannot possibly judge of the real value of the material before him. He is sure, in spite of the best intentions, to fall a victim to standards of criticism that are irrelevant. He has none of that power of weighing evidence which to the well-trained specialist becomes almost instinctive. He will, in despair, end with some rough-and-ready balancing of authorities such as we find in the notes to the volume now occupying us.

There is one thing for which Vasari never can be made to serve, and that is as a complete history of Italian art. We fear some such intention has misguided Messrs. Blashfield and Hopkins. They have tried not only to correct Vasari's many errors and to tell us of the fate or the present resting-place of the works of art he mentions, but to piece him out with much new information, and to correct his judgments where they do not think him sound. Now so to supplement him as to make him a complete guide to Italian art is next to impossible—or, if you must attempt it, you end by writing some such work as Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle have produced on painting. It no longer is Vasari. Messer Giorgio was true to his kindred points of heaven and home. Of Lombard art he knew nothing; of Emilian and Veronese, not much more. Even the Venetians he knew most superficially—only a few names—the Bellini, Carpaccio, Giorgione, Palma, Lotto, Titian, Tintoretto; and that is all. When he mentions others it is to confuse them hopelessly. Our editors have attempted to put Vasari straight, but we cannot commend them for their success quite as warmly as we should like.

But of this more presently. Our chief objection is to correcting Vasari's estimates. In the first place they are better in almost every instance than any that have been given since; but even if they were not, who would care to have him annotated with corrections? To the beginner such contradictions of the master can bring confusion only, and that despairing feeling of art being all "a matter of taste" which certainly does not invite to further study. To the person who already knows the artists, these emendations are worthless because he has his own estimates, and when he turns to Vasari it is either as to literature or as to a source of information. We should not

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